

THE BELOIT POETRY JOURNAL
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SOLILOQUY, 1958

Do not accuse me of this lost beauty.
I neither created nor destroyed
The terrible suffering I avoid.
I am sorry if I am guilty.

I only see the soothing pity
That shines in the understanding eye
Of the clinician as I sigh,
I am sorry if I am guilty.

Had Hamlet had such sympathy
From his father's ghost, he might have found
Peace in his time and lived his round,
Sorry only that he was guilty.

Oedipus could have saved his city
And self as well had he learned to deal
Prudently with the oracle,
Sorry only that he was guilty.

I am sorry for Antigone,
Who had no choice. Now if we lose
The middle way we still may choose,
Worried only at feeling guilty.

Do not accuse me of my morality.
Prudence and sympathy shift with the crime,
And there is always another time.
I am sorry if I am guilty.

Samuel Moon

TWO POEMS**Ritual**

I feel the touch of fresh-turned earth,
soft as a field mouse—and the color,
lying on my back at twilight
in a furrowed field. I hear
peent, peent in a parabolic sky,
high-pitched cry of the nighthawk.
Catching a sun I no longer see,
silver swathed, he soars. Darting
down in darker air, wings folded:
wide-spread thrum bass as he pulls up:
throaty like the bellow of a dying bull
his resonant boom resounds. On out-
spread wings white ovals, eyes,
probe. Earthbound shadows shoot up,
an ever widening wedge: light fades.
I wait for dark and think of an old saying
I have heard and half-believed, embraced,
fringed with a child's cherished fear,
"Don't fall asleep in the field
or the bullbat will pluck out your eyes."
I wonder, whose eyes project my wonder,
socketed in the nighthawk's wings.
Are those my father's eyes? I ask
like Isaac, silent on his gathered fagots,
seeking an answer through the ritual of fear.

Robert Meredith

Haypress

Sweet sorghum lies curing
in the arched oast of summer,
acres of sun, rain, elements of earth
grown in serial hours and days
winnowed out of space and time:
interstices of empty stubble.
Surface sway, sea that surged in June,
undermined by the mower's sweep,
is stilled.

Windrow ridges curve across the plain
like sand when wave-tossed tides
withdraw.

Water and green are gone,
gold of summer sun is shrunk in stems,
stored against December's darkened day.
Bull rakes fork up
rolls of golden carpet, mounds of muted motion,
bear them on high to the press,
where fields are funneled in,
further furled in bales and bound:
ten acres to be stacked in the barn.

Next winter the horse
who walks in a circle,
driving the press,
will stand motionless in his stall
with a hundred miles cross-country
coiled in the loft above
and cows will munch on filaments of sun
pulled from the manger,
glowing gold in the darkened barn.
A boy will build a hay bale house
to while away a dreary day,
and sitting in a high hay chamber,

chewing memories of summer,
musing on the smell
(twice as sweet for their compression),
will, loosening the tight wire of memory,
unfurl a summer field.

Robert Meredith

TWO POEMS

Faith of our Fathers

Of the faith of our fathers roaming the sacred wood
Alive to the promise of birch and the menace of yew,
Only credulity lingers, neither the search nor the
 clew.

Gaily the Druid mistletoe is misunderstood;
No magic hellebore, nor sprouting wand
No ritual dolmen stirs our modern mind;
We laugh with uncertain mirth at our ancient fears.
Even our sacred God (an amalgamation of powers
Into a single One, or at most a Trinity) roars
Through His spangled nebulae into our stony ears.
When shall we feel again akin to the loon,
To the leaping fish, to the mouse caroling the moon?
Remember that we are merely a singing phrase,
Perhaps a pause, in the infinite cadence of days?

Blanche A. Price

Outer Space

Among the swinging citadels of silent stars
 Through Perseus, the Pleiades and the Great Bear
 Around the spangled orbits of familiar planets
 Between the towers of light in cold, shrill air,
 Cutting the Milky way with jeweled scimitars,
 We seek Him, the First among the constellations.

For He lives only partly in our muddied world
 Where we arrange His attributes, enchain His wonder
 Everlasting to our mediocre tenets.
 He lives beyond the thunder with the thought of
 thunder

Crashing in His mind. He thinks of rhythms swirled
 On Being, ordered progress, parturient vibration.

His scepter is His will. Decision is His word.
 All that is, the universe, the rock, the man,
 From starry spaces to these human parapets,
 Was once abstraction, calculated dream and plan.
 Beyond our small religions, naive or absurd,
 God thinks the abstract into Adam's jubilation.

Blanche A. Price

ON KNOCKING A HUGE ANT INTO THE FIRE

His look was black, unnatural, obscene,
 But he would now live insolent and whole
 Had I more vividly foreseen
 His curl and wither on the coal.

Conrad Hilberry

**THE APTERYX (1/35) OF WEBSTER'S
DICTIONARY, —AND NEW ZEALAND**

The inflected apteryx (or kiwi) would appear
To be a rudimentary, an essentially
Webster-bird. The apteryx (from the Greek *a* +
Pyteryx) does not fly, and, in fact
Lacks all regard (and need) for flight.

Flat-breastboned, hen-sized and scratchy,
The apteryx stands on two, declining
And unlikely chicken-legs. It ooo's for food
Through a long, thin, reed- like beak:
Insects, snails, crippled fleas and berries.

The nostrils of the apteryx
Are at the last half-inch of its beak.
And the bird—not quite extinct—survives
Under government protection. It reproduces
Slowly, and in public, burrow- hiding.

If its hairs were feathers, ocellated,
Aphrodisiacal, the sleepy- marginal- asterisk-eyed
Apteryx . . . could (conceivably) strut, cock
And play the peacock; however, with its one hint
Of a tail, and grayish, short shag-brown hair

The apteryx would seem content to ooo. And,
Its beak alone, apt & straight, endears one
To it;—but when it curls itself, extinct
Within its sleeping- back (by day),
Enwhiskering its ooo, the apteryx returns
Upon the government and Webster of it all.

Robert S. Sward

THE BONFIRE

The last tin-soldier melts; the bonfire flares;
He sweats great silver drops, has lost his head,
Will soon be nothing but a pool of lead,
And we are listless after so much joy:
How slowly we recall those gloating stares
From siege and plunder of a mimic Troy!

For as the pasteboard ramparts warp and burn
With flames pale in the sunlight, as the men
We set to guard their gates sink once again
Into the shape of nothingness, we feel
The ichor to our mortal limbs return
Where huge as gods beside the fire we kneel.

J. E. M. Lucie-Smith

THREE POEMS**Delire des Profondeurs**

In the deeps, depths, sea's night of noon,
In the slow-motion silent sliding slip
Of weed, wash, fish, in the night motion
Heavy with fathoms' lapses from the sun

The diver in the black clasp of his ocean
 Flares instantly lit like a salty god
 In delirium. Breaks free as flame
 From the pearl or plan or message of his mission;
 May hand a shark his helmet, lose his name,
 Cut the earth's cord. . .

while far far far above

Light lights the sea's blue pleasure—
 Boat, sky, sun; the hissing swans of foam.

Love, love, these depths we seriously measure
 All unprotected, the chart has showed
 Unsounded. Yet so far our trove
 Comes up, our precious blaze of treasure.

Josephine Jacobsen

Persephone This Morning

Persephone this morning broke the sod
 Broke on the grass in blossom and delight
 Broke out of bitter black to green the grass;
 Morning delight and blossom Persephone brought.

Grass, flowers dazzled her Dis-dark look
 Persephone dazed by the daisies' eyes
 And glance of grasses in the bright wind's web;
 Blaze of the dew dazzled escaped Persephone.

Out of her throat birdsong broke
 Under blue over green Persephone ran
 Sky blue grass green birds in the branches;
 Persephone ran, with Pluto beneath.

Josephine Jacobsen

The Stranger and Corrigan

I asked Corrigan about the man, alone at the wood's
edge,
Who stood in shadow; the motionless stranger,
He did not stir or speak, and he bore in his face and
eyes
The marks perhaps of terrible cold and certainly
hunger.

I had come through the journey alive, and into the
field
And the sun would have warmed the dead and made
them answer;
And I saw the way he stood, and his coat, and hands.
A stranger returned from this trip is more close than
a brother.

So I spoke the word of the way, and he answered
once;
But he never moved or came through the windy
flowers.
And I said to Corrigan, "He is one of them
But he will not smile or speak—only watches the
mowers.

"The field will be gone," I said, "while he stands and
looks—
Tell him I am one—though I went, it is true, in
summer."
But Corrigan would not question him and the
mowers moved
Bright in the glitter of grasses, toward the newcomer.

"Bitter and strange, I agree, in summer as in winter;
But different in winter. Also," Corrigan said,
"Tell me, when you went, and lived, and returned—
Did you travel alone, and without bread?"

Josephine Jacobsen

MONTOYA'S BESTIARY

La Mariposa

has four wings
to mock the seraphim.
It will be found a choke of brightness
shattered, caught, in the radiator of a car,
and a smear of gold powder pressed
in the asphalt on Candelaria road.

El Gorrión

never migrates, never sings.
In small brotherhoods it spins all seasons
from curb to curb on ash-blank wings,
not always avoiding the smash of wheels.
On Lead and Iron, at Fourth and Gold,
it is busy in the gutters, rattling
empty peanut-sacks to find no crumb forgotten,
stepping into fragrant popcorn bags
to find a greasy emptiness.
It pierces cigaret-butts with its bill
and eats the stale tobacco.
It chirps. The sounds it makes
for pleasure and for pain
are indistinguishable.

La Paloma

lives on the flat roofs
of the Albuquerque National Bank,
the Federal Courthouse, and the Sunshine Building.
Dragging his wings in the dust the male struts
and swells his sleek, soft, feathered sex;
the black and purple female squats on debris
of eggs fallen from a nest
hidden in the red clay roof-tiles.

Songs say the dove speaks love,
y canta cu-cu.
But these are the sweet songs
of another country.

La Trucha

is a fish from whose rose flash
and glittering repose the heights
of the Sangre de Cristo take their name.
Agents of the Interior Department plant them,
in thousands, in the old trout-streams
and in the drainage canals,
from which they are fished out, in thousands,
by Rocky Mountain Fresh Fish of Los Angeles,
and by sportsmen from west Texas and Dakota,
whose glass rods bend like whips.
It is served skinned-out and fire-dried
in the Liberty cafe, with cole-slaw,
and brown slices of a shrivelled lemon.

El Venado

of all antlered cattle,
men agree is prettiest,
with his delicate nose, proud mouth and graceful neck,
his soft pelt the color of fifteen-cent tokay.
Multiplied, his luminous, dark-sorrowing glass eyes
look down from the walls of Charlie's Bar,
La Casablanca and the Golden West.

El Buey

is eunuch to his kind,
helplessly false friend to the brave bulls.
His strength deprived of its heat,
he is yoked to servitude.
His horns are mounted in his hide
to hang in offices and clubrooms

in Minnesota, Carolina, and the Hilton Hotel.
 Men say, in Córdoba,
 in Trampas, Truchas, Peña Blanca,
 that when San Ysidro knelt in the furrow to pray,
 an angel came to him from heaven,
 and ploughed the land with his oxen.
 But these are old men
 who have never left the mountains
 called Sangre de Cristo.

Suzanne Gross

TWO POEMS

The Breeze Speaks . . .

You delicate boy on the branch,
 you who whistle for wind
 to roughen the weather, when
 will you see the tree you have climbed
 is for me? The swaying branch
 dividing you now cannot hold
 forever. Know, dear boy, the wind
 cannot abide to keep you
 where you ride. So why not ask
 for quiet skies, a chance
 to take wisdom awhile and grow green?
 Where would your world be
 if everyone stayed up in a tree?
 Climb down to the ground, hold on
 to your cap. I'm a breeze today,
 but whispered to by the God of wrath:
 finish it! Cut the earth in half!

Neil Weiss

Summer

Summer: the sparkle haze on the water,
as if a god dropped golden needles.
Current swirls when it rains,
bubbles burst and face is wet.
Earth turns and groans as it turns.
The heart is not made for pain,
but is a thing as any other.
Come lie with me here, and we will weave
and wait for the hill to waver.
But summer bit through a stalk
and snapped it. The first blast
of heat blew out the sodden door,
warped and tilted up the cabin floor
and we woke up in the soaking grass.
We saw the roof begin to dance
in air that prodded, burst and swore.
Bedding was damp. Nothing was better
than running fast into the water.

Birdcalls lasted into night,
weeds dried on the floor,
and it rained petals outside
until my mouth was sore
with a kind of mothwing fiber edge.
Nothing was better
than running fast into the water.

Neil Weiss

COAST ENDYMION

Ellis could never sleep when the moon was full;
The sea was of him, he was of the sea,
And like the sea he yielded to the moon
That lifted mammoth tides in him and brimmed
His mind to wakeful fervor once a month.
He lived surrounded by the changing tides
On a spruce-clad island of Penobscot Bay
Whose evergreen treetops in the full moon's light
Yielded a monthly harvest like the tree
That blossomed by the side of the River of Life
In Saint John's vision on lone Patmos Isle.
The granite boulders on indented shores
Forgot their hardness, and the flooding coves
Monthly received new blossoms from the sky.
Full moon was more than Ellis Hood could stand;
While others slept he roamed about the shores,
Over high cliffs and through the dark spruce woods,
Hunting for something lost out of his life,
Something the moon might one day help him find.

In any crowd one recognized Hood's beard
As one would recognize an ominous ring
Around the moon the night before a storm:
Coal black, it gave his penetrating eye
A look of fierceness like the face of Jephthah.
His sinewy muscles bulged and shone out through
Blouses and shirts, and rippled to small waves
Tight fitting yellow oil-skins when it rained.

He shod his feet in red-grained cowhide leather
After his friends had changed to rubber boots,
Stood in his wherry rowing from trap to trap
While his neighbors sped to theirs in motor-boats.

The fumes of gasoline exhausted him,
And the *took-took-too-ruks* of the little engines
Were morning insults to his sensitive ears.
He would not let his wife destroy a fly,
Saying, like some old Hindu Jainist of India,
"They have as much right to live as any of us."

Each Sunday he strode up the chapel aisle
Dressed in a stiff white shirt without a collar,
Accompanied by his solemn helpmate, Alice,
Who hid her face behind a black lace veil
As if her pilgrimage were endless mourning;
And if the sermon was about the moon
That once stood still in the Valley of Ajalon,
His heed to every word was so attentive
It brought a hush upon the worshippers.

At fifty-nine the moon had worn him out,
As his self-centred, domineering ways
Had worn out Alice and her seven children;
And when the harvest moon of late October
Rose from the eastern sea that fall to plague him,
The roots of trees that rose above the turf
Had grown to be intolerable burdens,
Hence he was forced to sit for hours and gaze
While Maine's October night air drilled his bones,
Night air that ushered in pneumonia,
And brought him to his bed in sullen rage.

Two daughters made their mother sleep at night
While they kept vigil with this later Jephthah
Who roamed himself the island woods and cliffs
Bewailing his long-standing feud with sleep.

He grew delirious in mid-November,
And stories of his raving reached the village.

The white November moon waxed more and more,
But he was not so wasted with disease
That earth's lone satellite would mitigate
Its fatal charm upon his tired brain ;
And when the chill November moon had reached
Its ultimate fullness he jumped out of bed,
With superhuman strength from some deep source,
And scrambled over the rocks like one gone mad.
He stretched both hands out toward his cup of doom
As if to break its seal and gulp its gold,
And like Li Po who, drunk with too much wine
And a poet's love of beauty, reached for the moon
And perished in a stream it glorified,
Our Ellis reached emaciated hands
And stretched them toward the moon with piteous
 longing,
Taking his leave of earth in its embrace.
Unlike Li Po, he knew not what it was
That monthly tore his tortured soul apart,
Drenched though he was in its persuasive power ;
To him it was no "thing of joy forever,"
This force he could not fathom, nor resist.

Wilbert Snow

DIDN'T KNOW

Mother, I said,
when hardly five,
where do we live
when we're not alive,
where do we go
when there's nothing to know . . .
and she walked by
with a nervous eye,
hushed down the shade
and kissed me afraid.
*she didn't know
didn't know*

My love, I said,
when twenty five,
where do we touch
when we're not alive,
where do we go
when there's no love to know . . .
and he walked by
with an animal eye,
snapped down the shade
and found me afraid.
*he didn't know
didn't know*

Anne Sexton

JOEL CAHILL DEAD

The farmer, fighting busily for his home,
Heard, in the pouring sound of fire,
From the blackened bushes something run
Straight up the back of his neck into the air.
Through smoke, he saw a stiff-winged shape
Smash into earth, and a great flame come from flame.

Like a man sent for, he ran,
Waving his arms, and yelled through his sooty ker-
chief

In a curving voice around
The boy who stood, amazed, beside the plane,
Exhaled in fire, his shirt at the shoulders smoking,
Who got then down upon one ragged knee.

The farmer threw his hat away
As if it would take fire, and knelt beside the boy,
Who then, by opening his own,
Opened the farmer's champing mouth
To speak. Between them, missing their hands,
Blood fell, and seemed to splash up from the heart

Of stone. The wind around them changed.
Over and through them, invisible in midair,
Fire leapt, from leaf to leaf.
From the other side of the house, the farmer's wife,
Expressionless, came. They picked the boy between
them
Up, and stumbled him inside, where he lay down.

He lay on top of a peacock quilt
And gave off a fragile steam. Above him,
A lantern on a nail
Showed him nothing but the toothy edge of light.

He smiled, not having to breathe,
But stiffened, then, remembering the Colonel,

To whom he must affirm
That he had less than no excuse to lie
Alone, in a carven bed, to hear a woman weep,
To fade in and out of his open eyes,
And see a forest, blazing, in the teeth
Of a cock's-combed, motionless flame,

Turned down, to bother no one while he slept
In its fluted veil of glass.

James Dickey

MOTION: A PRINT

Above, a single pinetree tops
The hill explicit clouds deny
That rises, where the village stops,
Against the flat, omitted sky.

Out from a bamboo waterfront,
Across a world that has four sides,
A peasant, in a kind of punt,
Poles, and the gray, real water glides.

John N. Morris

CHAGALL

Chagall came striding
Out of sullen Russia
In his beggar's sack he has
Violins and roses
Lovers lighter than angels
And tramps in frock-coats
Musicians and archangels
And synagogues

He has meadows and villages
That capsize in the storm
Cabarets balls beautiful ladies
Windows in a rainbow

The lily-covered throne of the Betrothed
Under a purple silk dais
The whole Bible in images
All the great people
With long beards long robes
And their sheep and their doves
Variegated cocks and cows
La Fontaine's animals and those of the Ark
Crowds weddings tears kisses
Fanciful horses
Knights and ladies
And circuses

CHAGALL

Chagall est venu à grands pas
De la Russie morose
Il a dans sa besace
Des violons et des roses
Des amoureux plus légers que des anges
Et des mendiants en redingote
Des musiciens et des archanges
Et des synagogues

Il a des prés et des villages
Qui chavirent dans l'orage
Des cabarets des bals des belles
Des fenêtres dans l'arc-en-ciel

Le trône de lys de la Fiancée
Sous le dais de soie empourprée
Toute la Bible en images
Tous les grands personnages
En longues barbes en longues robes
Et leurs agneaux et leurs colombes
Des coqs diaprés et des vaches
Les animaux de La Fontaine et ceux de l'Arche
Des foules des noces des larmes des baisers
Des chevaux chimériques
Des dames et des cavaliers
Et des cirques

He has painted the whole universe
Nothing is missing there
With all colors of the sun
Dancing in it

Then he has a Christ stretched out
Through the lost world
In a great ivory space
A candlestick at his feet lighted
Inadvertently with six candles
And in the sky disconsolate men
Watching

At the four corners of the horizon
Fire and flames
Poor Jews go away from everywhere
No one claims them
They have no place left on earth
To rest not a stone
The wandering Jews
They must take refuge in the sky
Dead or alive
With these friends of Chagall
Who are so bad off down here
Who are always in the air in the clouds

Those pensive rabbis
And those violinists
Who play the accordion in the snow

Raissa Maritain
translated by **Charles Guenther**

Il a peint l'univers entier
Rien n'y manque
Avec toutes les couleurs du soleil
Qui y dansent

Puis il a un Christ étendu
A travers le monde perdu
Dans un grand espace d'ivoire
A ses pieds un chandelier allumé
A six bougies par mégarde
Et dans le ciel des hommes éplorés
Qui regardent

Aux quatre coins de l'horizon
Feu et flammes
De pauvres Juifs de partout s'en vont
Personne qui les réclame
Ils n'ont plus de lieu sur la terre
Pour se reposer pas une pierre
Les Juifs errants
Il faut donc qu'ils logent au ciel
Morts ou vivants
Avec ces amis de Chagall
Qui ici-bas se tiennent si mal
Qui sont toujours en l'air dans les nuages

Ces rabbins pensifs
Et ces violonistes
Qui jouent de l'accordéon dans la neige

JOURNEY

Dusk changing window to mirror, the woman rode beside herself on a ridge outside the train, linked to a row of unreal passengers, their naked faces pensive. Travel-strain unites us all, she thought. Does each return from strange to known, as I? "Your ticket, lady?" His question failed to reach her. As the engine raced towards foothills curved on fading apricot sky, she was lost in a spangled world discarding space to chart its predictable path. "Your ticket, lady!"

"The first conductor took it." "Then the next stop is yours," he said. "No, I go farther on." "How far? Where to?" He sighed. "Have another look."

She heard the whistle whimper like a hound running with night— "I'm sorry, I was wrong." He punched the cardboard; "Watch it if you plan to go beyond the next stop." Odd sort of man, mumbling about the next stop, his blue stare intense. She licked her lips. Does he mean to tell me the train may choose a new direction there.

Jocelyn Macy Sloan

APPLICATION

Consider gentlemen,
 Since I have tried them all already, tried them all,
 Have measured out my verses in
 A beautiful perning gyre,
 Lushed and trimmed 1 ounce Y and 2 T S E
 A little Lawrence cut with Dylan in a Canto
 Till the force that through the quick pun
 Burned a fusion
 Between elison and illusion
 Was fit for the Brooks boys.

I have placed in a certain *Little* of distinction
 A cumulative of extra-ordinary force from
 Heaven
 all
 the
 way
 to
 Hell
 and
 then
 back
 up

Again.
 Likewise another *Little* magnificently defunct
 (That used to publish
 onetwothreefourfivepoems justlikethat)
 Used a poem of mine once which

melled meaning magnificiently and
joyful

-ly got two pages in
Explanation which showed
That Hell-and-Heaven is a crux.

And what I want to know is [switching back to
prose]:

Am I not ready for a Guggenheim?

Marion Montgomery

A SENSE OF SIN

Under the house was inside of the world,
that tangle of pipe and wire where Nature worked
her juices of supply, evacuation—

the strands and arteries, the acrid groin.
Such play was serious: we wormed under,
earthbound. Above, the toilet flushed like thunder.

No dirt was dirtier: nails, splinters, bottles
threatened, and spiders laced the ways of hell.

Oh, we were seekers; sissies stayed behind

never to breathe dark air, the chill within.

A sense of sin required us so to suffer
what sin itself impelled us to discover.

Judson Jerome

TWO POEMS

Omen (1957)

*Red disk and copper sun sparked
but a smile on Mussolini's bullets;
while spears, butt-end first in the dust
of Abyssinia's bones, could serve as markers
for the heathen dead.*

But that was long ago.

Now we have a lioness casting bones.

On Oman

Land,

the British drums loom large
on rebel shields. The English queen

(God save her) looks prettily.

Ghalib's a brick in Abadhiya's mud.

But no marching Tommy Atkins will ever say
(not even Cameronians) tis good to die

when grapes have turned
rich purple with the warming

prayer and chant. No man of vision

will think that. Not one who counts

his due from birth.

Not one!

Yet here tis summer ;
 the muscat seed but a fluff in its pod.
 This is not war!

This is no war where withered males
 taunt blithe determination
 tooth-&-nail, their testacles
 shrivelled in death. Their minds
 burned to a speck, blowing
 hand in hand with a thousand heaped feet
 of sand blown solar spectrum high.
 The laugh of liberty's lost: the laughing
 in a fiery mouth stinking of trinity
 has chewed of too much antelope.

Perhaps then love is not so weaned on hate;
 perhaps the love is burning, consuming,
 anti-cruelty with fire and fear;
 yet against sadness too. Against life
 and its sad unreasoned movement.

Yet we have advanced
 from fish to man.

*the queen the queen the english queen
 I have nothing against the queen . . .*

No, *Dieu* sits and spits fire with fire:
mon droit is might all swashed in red,
 the symbol of a running life.

From dust we came; and therefore wrong
 to whisper into tantamount ears:
 might's right!
 and Saxon banners woof to the blind
 (we are the stalwart strong!);
 cast on high Sinai's Mount;
 our purpose lofty, and flags

held high to the ontogenetic glory
of our Lords, our swords; and Peers,
sweet fears on an innocent lie:
the turbaned Moslem's but a dog
lucky with a jackal's fate;
and *Honi soit qui mal y pense!*

Ah, but the wolf, in the old story, was best
brought out to light when an arrow,
once put to flight, was shot into the sea.

Yet here we have the seed of the muscat
only a fluff in its pod. Godallmighty
sits on the throne.

Christopher Perret

Elegy For The Golden Bird

When fire was closely on the sun
I spied a little golden bird
and thought of its comparison
to landscapes and the bison herd
trampled by cities stone on stone.

I watched the outline of a girl
unfurl her hair upon a comb
till darkness buttoned on the world;

then where she'd stood, bereft of gold,
the little bird toppled to earth,
there lifeless lay and never told
why generations mocked its birth.

The moon banged shutters like a moth

and overwhelmed me with a fear,
mantled my heart and drew me forth
into the lonely hemisphere
where force is turning wheel and mill.

I watched the clay-birds and young boys
with rifles cocked and aimed to spill
the dust-blood in a world of toys;

upon a little wooden mare
a girl rode round and round the world,
she called the moon and furled her hair
into a little golden bird.

*the bird to stone:
the bone unearthed*

Christopher Perret

FOR THE BRIDE

Already you have come alone
To humanness of tears,
To a joy that rises
And the fears shattering
Like panicked birds
That plummet into stone.
Already you have known
The black cat buried
In the bush, the still bird

Bloodied on the wing,
The feathered furry deaths
That are your own.

Still where the great trees
Wear their banded years
Like bracelets on the arm,
Where light and darkness
Lace and mingle unalarmed
Veiling the mystery,
Come we silently and move
Within the sacred shadow
Winged, haunched and hooved
Between the living trees
Rooted, stemmed and petaled
In the meadow.

Then to your crossroad
Where I let you go
I kiss your lovely brow
Godspeed, Godspeed
And gift you with the secret
Paining joyfully.
Step slow, awake, aware
As you begin nor doubt
That which I know.
The journey is
As lovely as the Inn.

Ruth Finer Mintz

THE HUNTER

The October dawn was shuttered
Against his scrutiny by locks of vapor
Through which he saw the promise of form
Defined in tattered
Glimpses. He pursued red deer
In forests of this body, relishing the charm
Of chase against high odds.
The crash of undergrowth, his dogs' excited
Yelps, a taut bow twanging,
Quick, whispered words,
The hunters' crunching footsteps greeted
By the crust of frost, the crust dissolved in singing
As the mist rose—those noises
Rang in his blood, blooded him for the kill.
At noon the others called to him
To stop; their voices
Barely reached him; he ran in a spell
Into sharp, secret thickets, lost, beyond them,
Pursuing a perfection of prongs.
The sun was plumb-straight, dripping hot gold;
It sent its quick eye into the cypress
Grove, found springs
In their young glitter, arrogantly cold,
Unveiled the limbs of crumbling alders, leprous,
Altered in the light.
Then—stillness; far off the blooded hounds bayed
After an elusive beast. Water
Refracted the bright
Sunrays into his eyes, bled
Him of will; obeisant as the trees, he saw her:
A white, quivering shaft,

Perceptive as an arrow in the bow,
She stood, breasts vulnerable
And downy as the white
Snow-rabbit in a nest of snow.
Her nipples watched him like the eyes of a captured
seal.

Once, on his hunter's belt
Had hung a red fox killed after hot chase;
Its glossy fur, as red as apples,
Was the color of her pelt.
But none of her was like her eyes:
They were without color; they drank him sapless.

Water roused him. "Go now,
Tell if you can that you have seen a goddess
Nude!" He stepped toward her,
Stumbled, knew
That he was not to reach across
That unpolluted moat, that vestal water.

From the dank grass where
He lay, he tried to lift and turn his head;
His neck felt as thick as the trunk of an oak,
Rigid. In anger
He shouted for his dogs; the glade
Circled him in silence like a hawk.

He shifted, felt his leg
Tense, lengthen; stretched him arm: rough
On his bare skin crept the mossy fur
Of a stag.
He watched his hand contort to hoof.
At the same moment, his hunter's eyes saw blur.

He gave one hoarse, hot cry,
Leaped up with arching strength, amazed at his
stride,

Then halted at his image in the stream.
 With sick, blurred eye
 He saw his antlered crown displayed;
 Then heard his hounds; and gave his last, sentient
 scream.

Beth Singer Bentley

INBRED

The flowering crabapple tree, the blossoms
 are beginning to scatter; to the clipped grass
 they sift down.
 They drift as far as the iris bordering the fence,
 fading pink petals, bleached white by the smouldering
 sun, and curling to brown.
 Soon they will all be shards, lost into summer,
 forgotten with spring, and the high, sweet scent in
 the air . . .
 The blossoms are shaggy and old, they blanch on the
 limbs; once delicate and fair,
 frail as the breeze, they now drift limp to the
 lawn;
 and from these branches, as from my own, no earthly
 fruit will be born.
 O happier by far must be the unbred root of unpruned
 tree in an orchard, forgotten of men:
 O happy, ancestorless children, producing the yield
 of the earth, the earth will cover my kind. We
 cannot come forth again.

Willis Eberman

HEELS WEAR DOWN

Michigan Blvd. at 6:00 is risky, but he left the walk to hail a cab, and sparks undid the cold november curb.

Too much Picasso had me swaying, and I shivered as we rode to catch a drink "somewhere within an English otherworld" because he liked a far-off atmosphere.

Pineapple soaking in a rum, the almond, and the never bitter raisin sauce pampered the tongue, and we talked poetry, and were not once ashamed as men: outrunning beauty and without a frequent soul to bargain with.

I thought it rather strange, however, he should be annoyed that I had sermonized how stars came from his shoes and broke the night. He found a deeper vein beneath my careless parable than I had counted on.

"Just cleats," he said, "my heels wear down too fast." He had the master's knack of flattening with words.

"And so does ale—shrimp curry—and the spirit" (now I felt my way into the homily).

"Let's not have God tonight." He dulled my pulpit plan. Then looked at me and spoke with louder eyes

than voices from Picasso.

Paid the check.

And hailed another cab which brought us to
a public reading of his poems: not
so bright as sparks that briefly warmed or died
along the curb.

Raymond Roseliep

LYRIC

So brief the browse of bee
within the flower's cuff,
whom shall I say has called,
and how sweet the bluff?

He cannot have referred so much,
he could hardly have been
humming had he had his fill
of honey under the skin.

But I guess a skimming burr
takes enough of me with him
that he can let the flower be
after I rose to the brim.

Gil Orlovitz

THE METAMORPHOSIS OF LOVE

I

Please don't let your round eyes search me
For the sense of smile I cannot give;
I have seen the blue of them turn green
And halos of hilarity, those pinks, grow gray.

What has grown still is still the evil
The form of love would wear,
And my fast tongue is full of silence
And cannot praise your quality of tears.

I am turned turtle, and back into my being,
From stoic into stone;
For pleasure which lips once would whistle
Is formal, external and nearly bone.

Let your mouth marshall as much of loops
As circle hell in a word,
And we count down the rings and go
Gravely—while lesser dragons stay—

Towards our walk-down with pull-bell,
Mated 'horses, a saltwater flat;
For publicly I drown within your person,
And somewhere under Sea, a shell.

II

Coyness as ever quicksand clasped the prancing feet of
stallion

Conceals that tongue precisely where
—In rings of stamped flesh, lips of sand, much
mouth—

A circle of the slowly sinking figure
Eyes the distance and the depths,
Strikes precision from the air, and drowns.

Around whose border dust of daisies hangs

Like some suggestion of the tree-frog,
—Since sequence of symphony bears outward
Sound without measure, baseless sound—
And all moves on muted Irish harp of song
Into silence. Though at last the sand
Gives with the spasm, there is a period of face
And it's discreet.

III

As long as he and she were one together
 He was one apart;
The more his mind would reconcile her measure,
 The less his heart.

She said that it was proper to consider
 The final verse;
Her words were sweet: her words were bitter;
 And even worse

Than double pain was pride of single leisure.
 But even worse
Than single pain was double pleasure.

IV

Love is like an architect of spruce that's evergreen,
 And plants the final form within the seed.
But spruce is like a green love on the whiter scene
 That's penalty of interest in a warmer need.

V

Soft there on that seething surf!
Lash no more the star-sailor.

Islands of encumbered dream
No soul's spinnaker, hope blown

May beat toward, tonight.

Upon the tide changing sands
Lydia looks up and sees
Arched and graceful wings of gull
Hold high the ravenous hard beak.
Lydia coils. And sands her warm shell enclose
Sink there; but rising skyward to the West
Make rookeries where even albatross and hawks may
nest.

From that vagrancy her swift soul keeps
Far travelling sands, bear Lydia out,
For Lydia sleeps.

James Hiner

TWO POEMS

Lost

Flashing brief as matchfire, as flame
in wind, as sparks from flint on flint,
the darting nightflies veer and glint
toward me while I call your name,
toward me while I call your name.

I hear the unstalked rabbits flee
the dark, untrampled fields I pass.
I wait and wait on a coast of grass
for the night to yield you like the sea,
for the night to yield you like the sea.

Samuel J. Hazo

Prey

While grizzlies trundle from cool caves to scowl
bearwise to windward where the gibbons rage,
and monkeys, dangling by prehensile tails,
trapeze in panic at the panther's growl—
the child ogles, cage by cage,
bewildered as a startled clown.

The elephants loll hulking in their dung,
twitching their hides in place against the fleas.
The child laughs behind the laddered bars,
is boosted, balanced on the topmost rung
to pitch his peanut at their knees
cylindrical and bulged by bone.

Tensely the condors roost in driftwood crags,
their beaks like blunted scissors clamped secure,
their eyes death-wild between the hooding wings.
Flocked in the dark, they hunch like famished hags.
The child sidles with his fear
away—and to the stairs—and down.

Samuel J. Hazo