

# THE BELOIT POETRY JOURNAL

Volume 10 - Number 2 Winter 1959-60

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## THE POET AND THE CRIPPLE

They would never understand how, in April,  
    Confident and young  
He had been led to lead the crippled girl  
    Underneath the shedding blossoms;  
Nor would she afterwards, except as her testimony  
    To the court subscribers  
Phrased the violation of the flowers,  
    Come upon the need or the knowing.  
There was suddenly inexplicable brutality  
    In a soft and honeyed weather  
And the bruise upon her body  
    Overwhelmed her memory.  
Something strange and perverse  
    Deferred her deformity  
Though over his urgent possessing shoulder  
    Her eyes fractured against the blossoms.  
It was not only his darkness that seized her mouth  
    As he was turning to the earth beneath her  
But that he had forgotten or been unable to feel  
    The petals that fell upon him.  
They would never understand  
    How April could be so abused  
And congruity violated in a pleasing season:  
    For the sake of a Spring and a passion  
He had gone, they would say, to the devil.  
    They would never understand the charity  
Of the heart to itself.

Robert Gajdusek

**THE MAN WHO GRIEVED FOR GOD**

*At last, my Christ has gone to bed:*  
he sprang the catchword since he bled  
the berry on our thorn of truth.  
Allowing some leftover pain  
which haunted him, and would again,  
he shrouded his anemic youth.

With Christ so tired and so asleep,  
now he could fret, or even weep  
as sometimes tougher men will do;  
he could revise theology  
a little, though eternity  
was still a primer for review.

But glossing God was his mistake  
which grazed the bones and made them shake.  
At most a fly-by-night relief  
was all the intellect dare claim  
in awkwardly engrafting shame  
that rotted to a husk of grief.

With Christ unstirring, night was long  
as wintertime, and bare of song.  
The sounds were sharp enough to slice  
a door, and he could set no lock  
to stem the triple-crowing cock  
or hush a soldier's clacking dice.

In shadow he must try to hide  
(though Christ might toss against his side).  
He troubled no one with his sighs,  
but when a cracking lance of breath  
suggested his (or God's) own death  
he chilled, and almost said, *Arise*.

**Raymond Roseliep**

LITTLE BELL

This bell is too small  
to herald the coming of a king,  
but big enough to know under what stone  
right answers are buried.

Ten-toothed and open-mouthed,  
it sings of Indra and of Siva,  
with sweet breath and soft brass words  
like: natya, nrtya, and nrta.

Little bell, I said, Tell me  
how high the soul leaps  
when the bones are unjointed one by one  
and left to whiten on uncircled sand?

There was almost no sound,  
as if an elephant was walking on marble  
or a mouse was climbing a pagoda.  
But the bell sat on its tongue,  
as if it were afraid a cat would get it.

Listen to me, little bell, I said,  
and shook it to enliven its overtones,  
I want to believe how high the soul leaps  
and what happens to the silhouette.

Breath came,  
and the bell sang of Indra and of Siva,  
with sweet breath and soft brass words  
like: natya, nrtya, and nrta;  
(which neither the gravity-minded world,  
nor the tormented night, nor I,  
could understand)  
then sat on its tongue,  
as if it were afraid a cat would get it.

There was a beating of too-much drum

and the house lights dimmed  
as I gathered the little bell  
and hurtled it as high as the soul leaps  
when the bones are unjointed one by one  
and left to whiten on uncircled sand.

And, on whatever is left untouched.

**Parm Mayer**

## **SURVIVOR**

Now I remember nothing but snow blown  
over runways after chocks released the wheels  
while throttles spun four stopped propellers one  
by one into four arcs and blurs of steel . . .  
Plateaus receded underneath the wings  
like shores withdrawing in a clipper's wake.  
Lakes lidded with ice opaque as paraffin  
diminished downward as I watched quick flakes  
of snow

and frost congealing on the cockpit glass  
or swirling back into the slipstream night.  
I saw the motors flare blue jets of gas  
below the ailerons until the lights  
at each dihedral-tip revealed high peaks  
too near to be avoided and a wall  
of rock that split the fuselage like flak  
before we crashed and vanished in a pall  
of snow.

**Samuel Hazo**

## THE JUDGMENT OF PARIS

## 1.

God was first a dog and loving him  
As much a sport as ball or rolling down  
A hill to see the worlds go spin around—  
The latest sun to throw a galaxy.  
His eyes were blameless dead under your hands  
And with his tongue he licked away the fat  
Of womb to shape a scrappy son of God,  
A secret playmate of the balls of heaven.

Grinding your teeth at fathers in their towers,  
Whitened faces in the wine, and mothers,  
Hiding from their men, behind the looms—  
Left to wilder into namelessness—  
How you came to praise these bitter ferns!  
Until what woke, snarled, snapped at your belt?  
An old shepherd dog come out of the wood  
To eat your rage and warm your loins with fur.

His doggy shape domesticated fire,  
Made you family to the sparks of night,  
The sighs beneath the boughs, a smiler to stars,  
And under an igloo sheet in the midnight sun,  
He played at Eskimo with a cold nose,  
Harpooned you, skewered and turned you above the  
flames,  
Making you sing: O fire, me, the young rider!  
Alive at last and kinsman to my father!

## 2.

But Paris grew a foot and turned away  
From fabled woods and ghosts at the mirror lake;  
The black bread of shepherds began to stale.  
His heart demanded touch of Priam's beard

In kiss of lineage or another king,  
Ichor-veined, or was it what the wind  
One day said he could be? So down to Troy,  
Freighted with a soul of skinny birds  
And croaker frogs to sell there in a plaza  
Where good flesh is dear. The traders laughed  
To see the way he held his cages high:  
"Ho boy, let's see 'em, touch 'em before we buy!"

So all the holes within him opened up  
And pigeons flew with messages for kings  
Among the vats and baskets by the gates,  
Where every fruit was bruised, each thumb  
grape-stained,  
And yet the ogre fed and called for more:  
For snow, for mead, for what the city's tariff  
Choked and burned outside the city's walls,  
And the lad sickened to see men work at God,  
Laying populations as a plank  
So that the modish deity could stroll  
Down boulevards of quiet symmetry:  
A god who picked at night in garbage pails  
Or wept at all that slithered down the drain.  
A god of double cross, a god in two,  
A god afoot to find his other face!  
So did men pay for cenotaphs and peace,  
Hoarding the tarnished gold picked in a war  
With brother self no victory could claim,  
And into Paris tramped the veterans  
Who knew a leg or finger when they saw one  
Waiting to be used on peg or stump.  
Then Paris called for God to fill him up  
Because he saw that now he was half-made,  
A slave with open mouth before his Lord  
Or one back-turned to bear his might behind.  
And God was a Russian bondsman pummeling stones

Into a street. Across the gutter there,  
What envy shook these two aristocrats,  
What admiring pity that so held them  
In hot vibrato between two magnet horns?  
One City fell and rose upon that sight  
In hopeless dream that could not last the night.

## 3.

She found him broken by the two  
That never would be one  
And so she taught him love  
By number three:  
A cave where buried hope would grow,  
Two springs where infant joy could feed  
To climb beyond the slough.

But God and I were one, he cried.

Be still, my love,  
A home, a love,  
A work is what you need to do.

But I must wrestle with my God:  
I must take him, he must take me,  
Old Priam cannot long deny his blood.

Others will be,  
Others will be,  
Her whispers swelling into echoes,  
Let a holy trinity  
Shape, define, and comfort you.

*Hausfrau!* Witch!  
You steal the cream  
Wrought from my pains and dreams  
To churn a common butter  
For rotting banquet boards.  
Let cities fall



If men cannot be lovers.

O flesh that would be God!  
O man made dumb and mad  
By holiest dream  
Of man's nobility!

Either the two be one  
Or else will there be none.

The world is never turned by twos  
But three.

Then what of me and history,  
Am I of no account,  
Never ends, merely means,  
Holding breath on mere caprice  
Out of smashing eggs with worms?  
My will no more than testaments  
Written on my guttering bones?

Come make your peace  
Not with a one or two  
But three.

You cannot leap into Ptolemy's mirrors  
Or wear as jewels the Hapsburg pox.  
But turn,  
Turn, O love,  
To the wild life beyond  
These chartered waves.  
Hitch a new spring  
To these winter loins  
And bring—

Wars and rage!  
Bodies fit for birds and dogs,  
While shades moan at the gates.  
Your three's a wheel of Jagannath,  
Balabhadra and Subhadra.

My wheel's the only ride to hope  
 For fathers and sons,  
 Enemies and lovers,  
 Who kill each other with hate and love.  
 Rape a maid, if rape you will,  
 And I will grant you history,  
 For just the apple, please,  
 To show that I am right.

And Paris sailed to Sparta  
 Out of spite.

Gerard G. Brissette

## VACUUM

AS under bell-jar the stridently clattering  
 alarm-clock's rage dulls to a tinny  
 buzz, and silence (save sibilance  
 of air-pump) dead to a deaf sense,  
 though beneath the exhausted dome the tiny  
 hammer is furiously soundlessly continuously beating,

SO after violence—  
 hand come bloody away from  
 belly; wheels still stupidly revolving;  
 soft echoes of detonation blundering  
 about—is suddenly nothing,  
 in that peculiar silence,

to breathe: nothing to do: under the glass dome  
 all is unmoving, unbreathing  
 (save a frantic unheard clattering:  
 the heart furiously soundlessly continuously beating).

Tim Reynolds

**A RIVER IS NAMED**

*“. . . and one of the conquistadores, Don Luis Ar-  
guello, striking east from the Pueblo de San Fran-  
cisco in quest of gold, glory, and the souls of men,  
came upon a river along which a myriad of birds  
nested in the lofty cliffs.”*

The day ends  
when my armor chills  
and my skin shrinks from the wet leather.  
We marched against the sun all day  
through hills like smooth brown buttocks  
with the fine dark hair of little fir trees  
in the crotches of the slopes . . .  
Damn the image! We are gone many days,  
and my loins ache . . .

This is high country now,  
the peaks lifted with spruce,  
the open saddles brush-choked  
with bushes of strange red bark, pale leaves,  
and fibrous wood tough enough  
to blunt good Spanish steel.  
In the dark declivities  
ferns dampen the red earth.  
The river here is cold even in the shallows  
and tasteless with purity.

We camp tonight  
on a beach of big gravel,  
smooth eggs spawned by the hissing serpent-stream,  
but dark, slimed with flung spray.  
There is a rubble of rock  
out of the mountain behind us,  
a tailing chalked and whited like a mound of skulls.  
I think of this valley as an alien serpent's den—

cold, moss-smear'd, wet with green juice.  
My head aches from my helmet  
and the ceaseless noise of water  
smashed like bottle glass  
against the tilted black teeth of the river . . .  
My armor will have rusted by morning . . .  
I miss the hot plains and the easy dust.

I walk down to the stream through the heavy pines.  
They shake me.  
They are so upright, so full of green calm,  
like the admonishing fingers of God . . .  
I stand in the long brown grass  
near an eddy  
watching a rose-blue sunset film the water . . .  
Flecks of solid color float the pool.  
I stoop and catch some. Mother of God!  
Here are feathers!  
The river is breasted like a wild pigeon—  
white, gold, rose, blue, gray—  
delicate filaments of the darkening sky,  
a molting of fallen angels!

Tomorrow  
we will break camp early,  
cross the plumed water,  
and ascend these twisted hills.  
There can be no gold here,  
not even of the sun.  
Too much of the beauty of darkness  
is here,  
along this—River of the Feathers.

Richard Curry Esler

## POET

If the poet is tone-deaf as to sounds, it is best to rely upon the phonetic symbols above each group of rhyming words in the rhyming dictionary that terminates this book, or upon dictionary markings. Many people can not distinguish the obvious difference in sounds between this pair of words, which do not rhyme:

north, forth.

Take away the **th** sound, and many people still hear no difference between this pair of words, which do not rhyme:

nor, fore.

Take away the **r** sound, and some people still hear no difference between this pair of words, which do not rhyme:

↵ gnaw, foe.

Gnaw plus **r** plus **th** can not rhyme with foe plus **r** plus **th**.  
—Clement Wood, *The Complete Rhyming Dictionary and Poet's Craft Book* (1936), pp. 26-27.

O, lucky poet tone-deaf  
As to something else than sounds!  
(Tone-deaf to the turning leaf?  
Tone-deaf to autumn wounds?)

He walks in step with what he hears,  
Observes both beat and pitch;  
Without a circumflex he fares  
*Foe plus r plus th.*

This striding, compass-perfect poet  
Never strays to *know-earth*.  
Impeccably he sounds the note  
And sets his foot to *gnaw-earth*.

Conrad Hilberry

## THE BAWDY BALLAD OF HENRY SAINT-JOHN VISCOUNT BOLINGBROKE

Lord Bolingbroke was not a couth youth  
(says the *DNB* with regrets). Even marriage vows  
for him were for naught (says the book said his  
spouse).

Sing *Hosanna!* Sing *Halloween!*  
Sing *Tenderloin!* Sing *O'Faolain!*  
*More power to the swain!*

He took up with a demi-rep  
which is (says Webster and I quote)  
a lady whose chastity is suspect.

Sing *Bon Appetit!* Sing *Seven Up!*  
Sing *Boling!* and sing *Broke!*  
*More power to the bloke!*

A demi-rep, then, (one suspects)  
is half of a rep and the opposite sex  
of a lady suspected of chastity, shucks.

Sing *Mint Julep!* Sing *Chastitit!*  
Sing *Demi!* and sing *Rep!*  
*More power to the chap!*

One day (the learned *DNB* snitches)  
His Lordship rode horseback minus his breeches  
(or for that matter any other stitches).

Sing *My!* Sing *O'My!* Sing *Godiva!*  
Sing *Gomorrhah!* Sing *For Shame!* Sing *Egad!*  
*More power to the lad!*

It is hinted by our Impeccable Source  
that the drunkard could barely sit up on his horse  
in pursuit of a maid with a peccable arse.

Sing *Hiho!* Tallyho! Sing *Oh Catch Her!*  
Sing *Goings On Than There Were None Sucher!*  
*More power to the lecher!*

But at last even this contagious high fever  
of living with joy and of *joie de vivre*  
came to an end on a lonely pillow.  
Sing *Alas!* and *Alack!* and *A'Never!*  
Sing *O Bit of a Rotter in Hellow!*  
*More power to the fellow!*

Felix Anselm

### THREE POEMS

#### To a Former Dinosaur

You, my poor contemporary lizard,  
Viewed through the wrong end of our  
                        binoculars,  
What Alice-potion have you imbibed  
Falling down time's unlit rabbit hole?

And Brontosaurus, they say, was bigger yet  
Having two brains (one for his monstrous tail).  
I forget how many other dwindled  
While you, at least, learned to change  
                        your colors.

Maxine Cassin

### **Dismemberment at the Beach**

I buried you  
ceremoniously mounding sand over limbs and torso.  
Your head detached itself  
and lay lonely-eyed upon the burning shore.  
After some buffeting of waves  
A hand crept forth,  
A warm and living thing upon the sand.  
The message passed from head to friendly hand:  
"Have we met before?  
Some feeling seems to bind us in the sun."  
"How hot I am!" the hand said to the head.  
"I, too," replied the head. "Could we be one?"  
**Maxine Cassin**

### **Chicken**

Living in coops  
Hardly aware how our dregs accumulate,  
We too have some pecking order  
And surmise a cleaner environment exists  
somewhere  
Beyond the cage,  
But (tell me) who will leave?  
Here we have quite enough scratch  
And cans of water thoughtfully provided  
By the kindly gent  
Who one by one removes  
And solemnly weighs each feathered friend.  
**Maxine Cassin**



**TWO POEMS****The Innocence of Narcissus**

The red claws of the hawk confess a guilt  
She would not hide even if she knew the way;  
Murder lies openly putrescent to mortals,  
Making them fly cringing from the charnel house:  
All know, all see, all acquiesce in pain.  
Death to the cruel; we know him by his scar.

But here is one so fair the hells of longing  
Shrink at his approach for shame at staining  
Beauty. The very pool in which he gazes  
Rises toward the source of his reflection.  
Only the echoes dare entreat him; lacking  
Body, they know that he is safe. Dreaming  
Of his image, his guiltless joy surges,  
A mirrored sea of love,

while at his feet

The purple flowers claw the air, and die.

Larry Rubin

**This Side of the Looking Glass**

When I awoke in June, I saw  
A model plane dangling by a thread  
From the ceiling light, its nose block  
Lumpily unsandpapered, splotches  
Where the dope had failed to dry  
Properly; a sticky flag nailed  
Over the bureau, candy stripes  
And grotto blue; the round mirror

Doubling the image of June outside:  
Oleander, pink against the almost  
Purple sky (no spectrum touches  
Those perfect shades). Like adult lust,  
There would be a pull toward the blue  
In the mirror, a flush of thrusting thought  
To go through, like Alice, drink the blue  
Elixir, and melt into purple forever.

To dissolve into the blue and pink of June  
Was hard, for everything was solid:  
The plane, the flag, the mirror—even the sun  
That flashed them into essence—it too was rock.  
I found I had to be content with breathing  
Their separate patterns into my single brain,  
Keeping the melting merely an idea.

Yet locking me this side of the looking glass  
Was wisdom on somebody's part  
For all June's purple sky—  
I would have been away for the summer,  
And oleander deepens in July.

Larry Rubin

**TWO POEMS****Jack Kelleher and the Hatchet Club**

In Newport, on lower Thames Street, there is or was  
A club for old men, run with young men's dollars:  
The Hatchet Club. It is; that is all it does  
Or did. It has no high purpose, no parlors.

There, old men, nodding like pigeons in a park,  
Their heads low on scraggy fronts, their feet absurd  
Listen to an ancient radio, a Romanesque church,  
Chant out the ballgame, the weather, the word.

Here at ninety, when I knew him best,  
Came Jack Kelleher to hack out his weeks  
In chill spells of coughs and quirks,  
Having lived a plateau without valleys or peaks.

Jack Kelleher, once a maker of gates and fences,  
Could still see the curlicued wenchers  
And staves which he wrought  
To imprison the rich from the poor.

For pleasure he walked and saved  
The dollars chipped from his stone and iron  
Until they built his wall and caved  
Him up like a dowdy and lonely lion.

Now with others of his kind he sits to wait  
For what it is the old wait for—  
Knowing it must come, hopeful it will be late.  
The Hatchet Club: good place for such a watch.

**Nancy Sullivan**

**Drowning**

*(In memory of seventy-five men drowned aboard the submarine Affray in the English Channel one Spring morning.)*

When Caesar's craft toppled and sank  
Who bothered? Anyone?  
It was a quiet procedure.  
I doubt that Cleopatra shed any Shavian tears  
When a Roman seaman slipped under some sprightly  
    wave  
And caused just the slightest tremor in a world not  
    wholly hers.  
But the *Affray* could not fall further.  
In a common casket, the silent seventy five,  
Wedged between rock and Norman treasure,  
Lie snarled in the wild channel seizure  
Under a greater conqueror than Caesar.

What of drowning? Though the craft be a canoe?  
To dive deep in whirling water hurls the body  
Down and under screeching pressure  
Into a mocking green-grey pleasure.  
Yet, a head held under thinks it torture.  
Who of those on the valuable sea floor  
Dying close by some imperial galleon  
Knows, or knowing, seeks its lure?

All I know of bravery are some rather pleasant stories  
From the *Iliad*.

I wonder if one of the *Affray's* crew,  
As his ship slipped slowly down  
Like a broken and heroic snail,  
Died with some other definition on his lips?

Nancy Sullivan

**ADAM**

On the third day I was dust,  
ordinary common dust  
like you see on a country road  
in a dry spell nothing  
expected of me, me  
expecting nothing neither.

On the sixth day hé comes along  
and blows. "In my own image too,"  
he says like he was doing  
me a favor.

Sometimes I think if he'd  
waited a million years  
by then I'd been tired  
maybe being dust  
but after only two, three  
days, what can you expect? I  
wasn't used to being  
even dust and he goes  
and makes me into Man.

He could see right away  
from the expression on my face I  
didn't like it so  
he's going to butter me up  
he puts me in this garden only I  
don't butter.

He brings me all the animals I  
should give them names—what  
do I know of names? “Call  
it something,” he says, “anything  
you want,” so I make names up—  
lion, tiger, elephant, giraffe—  
crazy, but that’s what he wants.

I’m naming animals since 5 A.M.,  
in the evening I’m tired I  
go to bed early, in the  
morning I wake up, there she  
is sitting by a pool  
of water admiring herself.

“Hello, Adam,” she says, “I’m  
your mate. I’m Eve.” “Pleased  
to meet you,” I tell her  
and we shake hands.

Actually I’m not so pleased—  
from time immemorial nothing,  
now rush rush rush; two  
days ago I’m dust, yesterday  
all day I’m naming animals,  
today I got a mate already.

Also I didn’t like the way  
she looked at me  
or at herself in the water.

Well, you know what happened, I  
don’t have to tell you, there  
were all those fruit trees—  
she took a bite, I  
took a bite, the  
snake took a bite and

quick like a flash—  
out of the garden.

Now I'm not complaining ;  
after all, it's his garden,  
he don't want nobody eating  
his apples, that's his business.

What irritates me is  
the nerve of the guy.

I didn't ask him to make me  
even dust; he could have left me  
nothing like I was before—  
and such a fuss for one lousy  
little apple not even ripe  
(there wasn't that much time  
from Creation, it was  
still Spring), I didn't  
ask for a mate, I didn't  
ask for Cain, for Abel, I  
didn't ask for nothing but  
anything goes wrong, who's to blame?  
. . . Sodom, Gomorrah, Babel, Ararat . . .  
me or my kids catch it,  
. . . fire, flood, pillar of salt.  
"Be patient," Eve said, "a  
little understanding. Look,  
he made it, it was his idea,  
it breaks down, so he'll fix it."

But I told him one day. "You're  
in too much of a hurry. In  
six days you make everything  
there is, you expect it to run  
smoothly? Something's always  
going to happen. If you'd a thought

quick like a flash—  
out of the garden.

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ask for Cain, for Abel, I  
didn't ask for nothing but  
anything goes wrong, who's to blame?  
. . . Sodom, Gomorrah, Babel, Ararat . . .  
me or my kids catch it,  
. . . fire, flood, pillar of salt.  
"Be patient," Eve said, "a  
little understanding. Look,  
he made it, it was his idea,  
it breaks down, so he'll fix it."

But I told him one day. "You're  
in too much of a hurry. In  
six days you make everything  
there is, you expect it to run  
smoothly? Something's always  
going to happen. If you'd a thought



first, conceived a plan,  
consulted a specialist, you  
wouldn't have so much trouble  
all the time."

But you can't tell him  
nothing. He knows it all.

Like I say, he means well  
but he's a meddler and  
he's careless. He could  
have made that woman so  
she wouldn't bite no apple.

All right, all right,  
so what's done is done  
but all the same he  
should have known better  
or at least he could have blown  
on other dust.

Nicholas Biel

**DOVE COTE**

We crossed the stable yard where brood mares paced, (our nurse had turned us out—"Go take a run before it rains.") slid through the fence, then climbed the ladder to the dove cote—playhouse size—above the whining kennels. Coral feet pattered down small verandahs; coral set eyes watched us swarm aloft. When murmurous silk wings finally rose, we children opened the door, scrambled inside. Our wrinkling noses sniffed odor of whitewash droppings. "Smells like chalk." "No, smells a bit like church." "It looks like one—a little church." We stared at the slanting room as explorers will (we'd not been there before) saw streamers of moted light, saw cloistered nests where pin feathered fledglings lay, where patient birds

crooned drowsily. Arms hugging skinny breasts, knees hunched to chin, the three of us settled down, safe in this midway place. "I feel like an egg," one brother whispered, "waiting to be born." Hounds wailed below. Doves, sighing on the roof, moved with the gentle sound of beginning rain.

**Jocelyn Macy Sloan**

## FALLING PAST

falling past the unpeering people  
he admits yes this is the worst of it  
thinking he'll reach ticktock rockbottom  
and that he will not be the wiser  
nor even really more beautiful  
it had been the ease of letting go that had commended  
the start of the fall  
nobody had told him particularly not to do it  
they had said after all that he was the sign and the  
signatory  
he had only to vault the railing and smile at the  
nature of the game  
he had only to say to himself smiling that his fingers  
would hold to the railing  
and as a matter of sheer principle his fingers had held  
for a good long while  
and nobody had seen him either to tell him to hoist  
back up  
or let go  
because after all he was the sign and the signatory  
so that smiling he had thought it was just as much in  
the nature of the game  
to see what would happen if he let go  
and stopped insulting himself by the fingerbent  
posture  
which was not an attitude of giving at all but  
curving into oneself  
so that with a scream that instantly in the falling  
became a sigh  
he had spread out his white fingers  
and resuming their normal color they spread out at  
white  
falling past the unpeering people

he admits yes this is the worst of it  
because his imagination is stricken  
since all he does is fall  
and all he can see is outside  
he flushes with embarrassment  
falling past a broken-nosed shovel  
and a mirror buttoning its vest  
and a cup of eyebrows  
and a dogeared drainpipe  
falling past something like spring something like  
summer something like autumn and winter  
and something for christ's sake like waking up  
but he keeps on falling  
and he starts to feel the bad taste of morality  
it isn't right he's being punished for the game  
and the scream that became a sigh once again is a  
scream            &

perhaps the punishment will be broken  
and the unpeering people begin to peer  
and now he suffers with embarrassment  
so swift his fall that they see him as a child  
look at the poor child falling they cry  
and they pity the child  
and his embarrassment is agony  
I am not a child I am not a child he cries  
but nobody can hear him  
he can only hear himself  
and it fails to convince him  
falling through his body that breaks his fall  
so that he lives to find himself in the center of a  
furnace of fire  
wide flat thin flames that wave through him like  
banners  
but surely after falling he cannot die by fire  
it is somehow the height of embarrassment but he  
cannot think why

so that he beats against the furnace walls seeking a  
way out  
but there is none  
and he burns and burns and burns  
dying at the height of his embarrassment because he  
knows in a moment he will be able to go up  
again in flame

Gil Orlovitz

## SUMMER CONCERT

He attacked that console  
like a terrier after a woodchuck.  
Bach rumped the cricket night:  
The bright little musical mice  
chased in and out of the pipes,  
slid down the balcony banisters,  
did cartwheels into the orchestra.  
And then, with magnificent aplomb,  
Chin up and shoulders swaying,  
He rippled his fingers  
and twiddled his toes  
And charmed them all back to the nest again.  
Ray Mizer

**PETTY MURDER**

A curious business,  
This killing of porcupines.  
The town pays fifty cents apiece  
To know that they are dead,  
And every one I kill means  
One less to tear apart our apple trees.  
These reasons make petty murder  
A good thing.

But there at evening  
In the orchard, along the road,  
Or in a clump of aspen,  
Where I have heard the snap  
Of tender twigs  
And the rustling of tree tops,  
I am not thinking about bounties  
Or apple crops.

It is a mastery over dumbness  
To lodge soft lead in their flat skulls,  
To watch the heavy blackness thrash,  
Sicken, and tumble backward  
Through the foliage  
Until it lies bedded in its blood.  
Yet petty murder makes me wonder  
What it is that dies at dusk.

Albert McLean, Jr .

## FRANCESCA DA RIMINI

Nevertheless,  
although her dress was white and gold,  
the girl has sinned; for she has held  
huge ugliness

upon the slight  
hold of her bright thighs, accepted  
the grey husband into her bed,  
permitting night,

by leveling  
its cordial blind, to ease her task  
(a darkness on what he might ask  
of reveling),

before her sleep.  
This is my case: this woman's was  
the rose's face: if beauty owes  
its beauty keep

and grace, traitor  
to its bone, who then can mention  
what she has sinned: sold for crude stone  
all her rare store

of loveliness,  
as if the gift demanded no  
long service to be done. If so,  
then is not this

the sin that bent  
Francesca down? Rose pressed to rose  
and thorn crushed into thorn: love was  
her punishment.

T. Henry Smith

## SONNET FOR A RAINY DAY

*"May you be greeted by a sun that does not burn, in a home without dust, by friends without stain, by a love without flaw. You wise and gentle Buddha . . . grant us patience in our ordeal and purity of will, so that this hope may not be confounded . . ."*  
(Strindberg, *The Ghost Sonata*)

The secret of the sun that does not burn,  
The dustless home, the love that bears no stain,  
Is innocence. Without the will to learn

That cloudless skies are really blank with pain,  
You bless that sun for mellow-tempered days—  
Until the dark reality of rain

Pours doubt upon that pretense of a blaze,  
Drowns illusion, but grows the will to grieve.  
No star defines itself with gentle rays:

That paradox you managed to believe—  
The flameless sun—will mockingly return,  
Perfected in a puddle. There perceive

The secret of the sun that does not burn  
Is innocence without the will to learn.

Rosellen Brown



**THREE POEMS****Song for Two Lovers**

SHE. All longing is more bearable unloosed.  
Oh, think of plotted shafts that targets break!  
For fear your love in flight may be despised  
Let caul and danger tame it now,  
Let stillness reign, and lies.

HE. No longing is more bearable unloosed,  
For left not arrowed hard our longings quake,  
Contained in quiver, never spent, deprived:  
Should mourn or danger caul my love  
When mercy reigns your eyes?

**Barry Spacks**

**To Her Priestly Lover**

So full of poems prised in her head,  
Of richer piety than you conceive,  
She groans, the graced one, on her bed,  
And you the mortal makes her grieve.

I'd tell you drink her blood, consume her flesh:  
Whatever else of love you understand,  
Be careless of the doctrine you profess  
And take the true communion from her hand . . .

But could your appetite accept such fare?  
The Word drums here in body's imagery,  
And braver priest than you might well beware  
Of vows to so profound a ministry.

**Barry Spacks**

**The City Mouse and the Country Mouse**

*Coelum non animum mutant qui trans mare currunt*

Out from Bedlam on the train  
That clackets you to boxer pup  
To evening bridge to entertain  
To sleep to struggle to wake up,  
Speed the length of half-housed fields,  
Released at dusk yet on a tether;  
Don the mask of face that yields  
To charms of semi-urban weather;  
Heal the mind with native lore;  
Let the heart be countrified;  
For your sea and foreign shore  
The wife-filled car at station side.

**Barry Spacks**

**ITALIAN SECTION****1. Thomaso the baker**

Loaf here on a cool day  
and see the bread brown,  
the stone oven stoked with coal.

Note the loaves leave  
on the long wood spatula  
as Thomaso's arms, like  
brown loaves themselves,  
move in and out among  
the rustle of the thin white bags.

There's measured bustle here  
and eh! says Thomaso, hey!  
make some dough, make some more  
dough.

And so they make the dough—  
they mix it, they knead it,  
they cut it, they mold it,  
then into the oven, the  
hot coal oven.

We buy it, hot for a quarter, hot,  
for they're waiting at home and  
go, says Thomaso, go, run!

Bread gets cold quick on a  
cool day.

**2. Mrs. Martino the Candy Store Lady**

Listen to the hum of the  
lemon ice machine, mashing

sugar, mushing ice, crushing  
the pucker bellies of chubby lemons.

Twenty minutes, can you wait,  
twenty minutes for lemon ice,  
mumbles Mrs. Martino.

Meanwhile have a Milky Way,  
look, they've been in the Frigidaire:  
they're hard as bricks, they'll  
chill your teeth  
look, have a Milky Way.

So nibble while the engine jiggles,  
the ice goes smash, the candy bars  
go limp behind your teeth and  
twenty minutes spin around,  
twenty minutes spin around.

There are shadows in the shop,  
there are candies on the counter,  
there is ice cream in the freezer  
but your eyes are on the accordion cups  
the lemon ice is eaten from.

And twenty minutes pass like sluggish ice  
as the cups grow larger with your eyes.

### 3. Ercole the Butcher

How many you want? asks Ercole  
slowly, how many chops you want?  
These will go nice in a big pot of sauce,  
that's prime pork, Mrs. Spinelli.  
Sometimes a floorsweep will earn you a bag  
of potato chips or, if the sun's mean,  
the big cold room door will let you in  
to sit and freeze a little.

And Ercole's a black thing  
with a white apron on his barrel front  
with some red stain then and now  
and there goes Ercole to saw a bone,  
there goes Ercole to chop some bone.  
Slip on the sawdust, slide on the floor,  
listen to the beat of the chopping block  
chunk, chunk,  
chunk, says the chopper.  
Ercole steps to wrap the pink slabs  
we'll eat tonight, redder then  
with salsa di pomadore simmered  
for seeming fragrant centuries.  
Ercole goes, slowly, to wrap the chops  
and chunk, chunk go his big feet,  
chunk, chunk.

#### 4. Louie the Barber

Up the block, all you kids,  
it's time for the shearing of hairs;  
it's the day the sun makes Saturday,  
church day tomorrow; it's the day  
baldy Lou, he of the lollipops,  
lowers the boom on your cowlicks and locks.  
No pied piper, he: behind his chair  
he's minstrel, however, once you're inside  
with your nose a trunkful of pomade smells,  
Vitalis, Wild Root Cream Oil, Charlie.  
Is it baseball you're missing?  
Are the bats thwacking in the back lot  
while you bend your head and want to itch,  
and the scissors snip and the mirror

**TWO POEMS****Dahlia-Cats**

Like Persian cat faces, the red and yellow dahlias drowse in the vase. The large yellow one, quite frowsy, like an asleep Tom, one petal, a fore-paw, leans on the orange center, cat-mouth-colored, and immobile.

The red one has sheathed claws under its velvet sleeping. What world do they dream of? Perhaps an unstemmed one, with freedom to pounce upon the bees, like mice.

Willis Eberman

**Second Leafing**

The crabapple will not flower again this year,  
but a second leafing  
has come to the lichen-spotted branches. How  
delicate and pale  
are the sparse, new leaves that came so late  
after the blossoms had scattered.

I remember comparing this tree to my life, this

slender tree that bears no fruit at all,  
but only fragile flowers that are crumbled by  
the sun,  
and die, and drift . . . “and from these branches,  
as from my own,  
no earthly fruit will be born.”

The spiky branches sway  
under the hot, low wind, and the new leaves  
tremble.

Well, we have borne a little: those early blossoms  
that went with an early wind to nowhere . . . and now  
this second leafing  
is like an attempt of the heart to conceive new  
poems.

Willis Eberman

## THE PRESIDENT

The President, and Mr. Nixon  
 Are in the kitchen, in the ice-box  
 Eating eggs (shells & all) the lettuce  
 The onions, and the garlic —which I  
 Eat fried. —Well, and fine! let them. Just now  
 I really don't give a damn. They eat.  
 They deserve to eat. And I eat too.  
 I eat the entire kitchen, the two  
 Of them, and the two of them, *themselves*.  
 It is not in the least difficult.  
 I mean for me. And I wash them down  
 With nineteen-cent blueblack Scripto ink.  
 Easily digested, in no way  
 Upsetting to the stomach. One eats.  
 It is a matter of creation.  
 Or can be. Is, eventually.  
 —And it is only democratic.  
 Altogether fitting and proper.  
 They, to be there in my kitchen, mad,  
 Ferocious, hungry, devouring, wise  
 Discreet —all my interests at heart.  
 My best interests. And *I*, sipping  
 My ink, *mad*, ferocious & hungry  
 Devouring them, discreetly, wisely  
 And *mad*, *mad*, creating the lettuce  
 The eggs, the egg-shells, the President  
 And Mr. Nixon, the onions, milk  
 The impossible; —mystery, *time*  
 God, God . . . TV-set before him, Ike  
 (Devourer, admirer, gourmet  
 Grinning, and inescapable)  
 Ike upon the screen, *Ike* within me,  
 The kitchen, the ice-box, my Scripto . . .

Robert Sward