

# THE BELOIT POETRY JOURNAL

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## **TWO POEMS**

### **The Knowledgeable Cat**

The owner of the fruit stand's the black  
Cat, sleeping in the sun behind  
A pyramid of oranges his paws  
Touch but do not roll. At noon,  
He's always there. As the sun moves,  
He rises, designs a dozen arcs,  
Tidies his apron and quietly flows  
To warm rays near artichokes  
And buffed peppers. After a snack  
In his private office at closing hour,  
He leaves by the front door, slips  
Through a gap in a paling fence with such  
Finesse he might be president  
Of a city bank making his way  
Through crowds to a waiting limousine.  
But I think he prefers to manage his store  
And retire at end of day to a place  
Where the lion in him can lash its tail  
In a manner not guessed by his clientele.

**Louise D. Peck**

## Lambing

The farmland walls leapt lavender  
When lightning breached the sky. The old  
Ewe strained in the bright straw, her lips  
Rolled pain. Maybe, I thought, I was wrong  
To have bred her again, but she'd always lambed well,  
Been proud.

          The great gelatinous sack hung  
Purple, picked up straw, announced first  
Miracle. She rose, the vegetarian,  
Licked blood, turned, pawed, yawned  
For air, nested. Her groans ground against  
The cudding of the quiet flock, watchful, aware.  
Amber eyes trusted, questioned me.  
"It's all right, Susan. You'll be all right."  
I washed, greased my arms to the elbow, knelt  
In the worried straw. My fingers found the lamb,  
Rump first, and something I'd never felt  
Before. I swore for the loved ewe and the lamb  
We hoped. What could be done, I did, blind  
Among treasures in the old sheep's womb. I'd have  
run.

But the lamb bruised through, shoving his dam's  
Life out of her as he gained his own.  
The lamb steamed on the spilled-wine straw.  
Spasms seized, shook, woke him. He coughed.  
I placed him by her head and she licked the sack  
From his nose, busied herself with life while her own  
Lay in a mass behind her. She licked

Him dry. I moved him so he could suck the first,  
Precious milk. When he was full, he walked  
To her head and lay there while she talked gentle  
sounds  
That echoed longer than the pistol shot.

Louise D. Peck

### BLACK IS ALWAYS BLACK

Snatch a black olive from the dish!  
Run to look at the seals!  
Enjoy the taste secretly—  
Don't laugh too loudly; they're not fish.

How strange each toothpicked olive feels!  
What dainty ears and silly whiskers that one has!  
Dripping on the tablecloth—  
Shining in the sun.

Olives frighten small children—  
Seals bewilder them;  
Animal-colored food makes them cry—  
But olive-backed sea-cats can't be understood.

Could a seal balance an olive on his nose?  
Can an olive be compared to a seal?  
If so, it would be quite an awkward pose—  
Yet poems are, although unnecessary, real.

Florence Victor

**FEARS**

The streets are dark. Stray dogs—  
old blankets thrown over sticks—  
examine the life of alleys  
while simple enemies in pool halls  
practice their assaults with cues,  
long and wooden. Grinning, they nod  
at each woman on each corner.

But somewhere, in a dusty room perhaps—  
where he hides from a loving wife—  
the man waits amusing himself by plotting  
all the routes of women who come home late.  
By climbing lamp posts and unscrewing bulbs  
he prepares the streets and then crouches  
in shadow stroking his mustache and listening  
for the delicate step of embroidered maidens who  
bring  
the feather boa of their innocence to his hands.

The ladies, pursed lips daring  
the dark to leap at them, stroll sedately  
and behind rimless glasses their eyes prod alleys  
as they plan the stories they will tell  
and the weeks devoted to recovery.  
Each night they wander all the streets,  
poking at the shadows with their eyes,  
imagining the unwashed man who must hide there  
aching for the dry sandwiches of their bodies.

**Vern Rutsala**

## TWO POEMS

## Notes from My Mother

Because of my mother's penchant for leaving notes to herself or God or anyone who would in divers nooks and drawers, I still am finding (though it is two years since her bright book's colophon was traced in marble glossed with year-round grass) the poems of her girlhood and old recipes, adages and patterns for embroidery, an envelope addressed to her young sister, a grocery list: *Three doz. Rings, Parafeen (sic), Envelopes & Tablet.*

Now I know that in some undated year there was supper & singing each first Friday night at Liberty lodge hall, though it isn't now. My mother listed her blessings, and I was one. She listed her faults, and "Time spent on phone" was underscored three times; but to my mind that fault was mine, who thought the telephone would be good company. Then folks called up and ate the hours out from under her that when she stood the black hole towered above her—  
but she keeps sending these forgiving notes,  
God love her.

Edsel Ford

**Hunting Fishing and Forest Scenes. By Currier & Ives. ("Good Luck All Around")**

Because I have lined my creel with trout, and you display a brace of snipe which you have bagged, and nearby a gentlewoman and her son smile on arriving at an eddying pool and the sun prisms the sky all down the wood,

does this, does this convince the looker-on that God's in His heaven and October sweet when one may see backgrounded in the scene the fire-red blast, and the partridge torn from air?

Our backs are turned: we all are trading tales. I have a trout to take a hook from, you must praise your snipe, the gentlewoman peers as if to see what father to her son will offer supper if she catches none.

Yet one need not tripod nor plumb nor sextant to know that here is not good luck all around, for dead beyond the partridge broke in air are two vague, innocent figures in their shelter above the lake. It is a dirty trick.

Not one of all the pampered pastoral pups lapping the trout-laden waters at our feet has pricked an ear, nor I, nor you, nor even that gentle woman's incurious son.

I do not blame such things for happening nor their occasional necessity.

It is the *how* that troubles me, the rendering. I should have caught this moment a moment later and we should all be laughing through October instead of wondering if it would be proper.

Now I rustle the pages of this essential calendar  
to see if perhaps in November's frosted field  
two innocent figures lie in a chilling heap  
of broken partridges. But no. A bright red engine  
of the Chattanooga chuffs placidly  
under the green vantages of Lookout Mountain.

**Edsel Ford**

## **BLASTING AT THE RESERVOIR**

After the steel-like flash of noon,  
Heat pale as insect-spray or gasoline  
Washed forms and color out of the air  
Though the greenhouse burned in the blankness  
there.

Or when the scald was rifted by indigo space  
Against thermal structures of nickel and glass  
Like great Leyden jars holding the line-storm's  
fluid.

But only the radio reception was affected  
In the low sky condensing its warm narcosis  
Like pipes beneath the plants in the forcing house.  
At sunset the ferment blocked out the light.  
I would walk down on the car-tracks to the pit  
Where men worked covered with dynamited stone  
By the dam and the cold detonation of spray,  
To see the fiery sum of water and gravity  
Deep in ammonia suburbs ignite the town.

**Byron Colt**



## TWO POEMS

### The Trial of the Poet

1. Containing as much of the early life of the poet as is necessary or proper to acquaint the reader with the beginning of this history.

It's true that mother had always struck me as being a bit zany. That business of making her bats fast over the weekends, for example. But when my eldest brother vanished, I first began to divine her avocation. She maintained to the end that the good fairies had stolen him, but I knew only too well that there were no good fairies in that neck of the dark forest. Shortly after this we all moved to the cathedral, but my other brothers continued to disappear at regular intervals until only I was left. And when mother flew up into the belfry on a crucifix, my suspicions were confirmed. One particularly wild night when the wind was bullying the bells and snuffing out the candles, I determined to have it out with her. Descending the tower stairs, I surprised her at her ablutions. Needless to say, she slashed away at me, but I cornered her in the sacristy and beheaded her with quiet ceremony. When I placed her head on the altar, she congratulated me, saying, "Well done, Hagseed; I am pleased to find that you hold nothing sacred." So I anointed my feet and shoulders in her bloody chalice and went forth to join the other poets.

2. A digression concerning the marvellous, from which it may be inferred that some things are liable to be misunderstood and misinterpreted.

The driver  
beard afire  
hotrodded in and out  
around the Sunday drivers,  
whoaed his wagon  
slambang still  
in front of the saloon,  
and let the air  
out of his white horse.  
Then he turned 3 cartwheels  
and began his pitch.  
"Step right up, folks,  
Step right up.  
Tell you what I'm gonna do.  
I ain't gonna  
Turn cowflaps into gold bricks,  
But if it's tinned truth you want,  
I've got it,  
And if it's bottled beauty,  
Well, I've got that too."  
But they weren't buying any  
so the driver  
extinguished his beard  
and with 3 deep breaths  
blew his white horse up again.  
Then he tipped his hat politely  
and they loped out through the summer air  
and climbed right up the stars.

3. A broadside in which the poet himself steps forth and makes his appearance in print.

*Once upon a time,  
A Stickleback,  
A Clatterbuck,  
And a Ticklebug  
Went for a walk in the Forest.  
And they walked,  
And they walked,  
And they walked.  
After a while  
They met a Ruffed Grouse,  
A Whiffled Moose,  
And an Awfully Shy Gnu.  
And they all fell in love  
At first sight  
And lived happily ever after.  
But that was in another Forest,  
And besides,  
Those fools are dead.*

4. A digression concerning a very domestic scene with connotations of old mythology.

The man

and his gimpy woman  
entered the park through the west gate  
she carrying a picnic basket,  
he a battered banjo.

Eventually they spread their poncho  
and ate.

Nearby, a small  
boy shoved a snowball  
through the wet snow.

the man, After lunch,  
strumming on his banjo,  
sang Home Sweet Home  
His gimpy woman  
turned her back to him  
and died of boredom.  
Nearby, the frozen  
snowman  
chuckled in the snow.

**5. Containing the whimsical adventure which concludes this history.**

My bats, hanging head down in the charcoal air, heard them first and fluttered in their sleep. When the first hobnails rang on the stone stairs, the host smashed through the stained glass window and, swarming out Abaddon's forehead, streamed into the night. The red eyes on the threshold thrust my broadsides in my face. Then they dragged me down the tower to the crossroads and hammered seven stakes into my heart. And all the time the full moon writhed behind the clouds. Oh, the night I died, my kith and kin sat down and cried, for joy.

James C. Waugh

### On Hearing George Lewis' Jazz Clarinet

When George Lewis  
 picks  
 up his licorice  
 stick  
 all  
 of the swallows  
 slip  
 out  
 of the willows  
 to  
 hop  
 right  
 down  
 the  
 branches  
 of  
 my  
 spine

James C. Waugh

### THERE IS NO CITY WITH NO SPARROWS IN IT

What the sparrow has is not a nest  
 But public indifference, as if the air  
 Had nothing in it save smoke from cigarettes.

Poems are also absences: no city cares  
 That the sky is painted with electric words,  
 But no man lives in towns that keep no birds.

F. D. Reeve

## AHAB

At four thousand feet

is dust and drowze and wretched meals,  
limbs turned to sun,  
eyes turned away from the sun.  
Around the campfire circle stones  
one druid speaks to another,  
“Thirty years on the job.  
They gave me a medal.”

Beach balls bound from the pool.  
Someone is playing “Valencia.”  
And with scrabble, ping pong, shared  
complaints—  
“I’d never come if it wasn’t for the children”—  
they hold to the slipping ball of the world  
as if it would bounce through space  
and spin them off.

At six thousand feet

in mountain country there are signs—  
pickaxes, crampons, alpenstocks—  
of the climber, already feeling snow on his head,  
purified, skull packed with ozone, above  
the beercans, fishskins, bonemeal, mulch,  
ready to stamp on the world with climbing shoes  
and imprint on the faces of bathers  
the mark of his scorn.

But already the mountains  
are writing his elegy.

At eight thousand feet

the wall-eyed waker

sees on the wall  
of his tent, in his fever,  
a shape as tall  
as the mountains, as real,  
and cries, "O never  
changing, O final, O love!" and thinks  
this is some comfort.

But as he puts out his hand to touch  
the final untouched thing he prizes—  
the one organic, pure, real vision,  
ambergris image of white, of water—  
he sees, through its blood and phosphor  
the marks of a million harpoons.

At ten thousand feet

is heaven, an uninhabited place.

**Joseph Kostolefsky**

## CONVENT SWALLOWS

Clustered in curves carved from arches  
pinioned where arcs join firmly  
swallows hive or bead in the roof  
white-edged feather flurries on each  
in fourteenth-century-rhythmed wings  
diving and swooping (in gloria mundi)  
from sun atrium into deep high dark:  
over the heads of nun-ghosts hushed  
in their chanting, wings brush out  
ovally toward the dome inverted  
sweep for centuries like rosaries  
hanging sharp-beaked as wasps, round-  
nested, curved in arches like beads  
telling natural songs to lives.

**C. P. Berge**

## PROLOGUE TO A READING

Ladies and Gentlemen!

If by a secret sign I fail to summon  
a bevy of blue doves to flutter here,  
please bear with me. The conjuration  
for this illusion may be difficult.  
On my way here I came upon a coven  
of envious magicians who cursed me  
and pointed sticks at me tipped with cat's fangs.  
I defended myself as best I could  
with my wax image of Horus; and retired,  
if I do say so, with dignity. But the experience  
left me somewhat shaken, especially  
since some of them followed me into this hall.

So if I fail to make chrysanthemums  
bloom from an empty wall-socket  
ascribe this to unfriendly sorcery,  
not to a failure of my own powers.  
I see you lurking there, wicked enchanters,  
spawn of Asmodeus, devotees  
of the Black Mass! and you, Madame,  
you need not try to conceal that broomstick!  
Defend me, young devil-dancers, shield me  
from their scorpion stings, intercede for me  
with the radiant Baalith of moonlights!

Ladies and Gentlemen, my credentials:  
though once a novitiate of the Sabbaths  
I am now content with practical charms,  
the more common exorcisms, the minor  
rites of Dionysus. Now, if I were to tell you



that a certain whisper of mine concerning  
death's profile in the moonlight  
caused stones to suddenly blossom  
and the air to carry a sharp new sweetness—  
would you regard me as mad . . . or merely tiresome?

But I see disbelief written clearly  
on all your faces! At times I swear I'd rather  
perform only before my colleagues!  
Was it for this that I haunted  
stone vaults and dusty shadows  
for rare volumes on divination,  
alchemy, theurgy, moon-lore?

At times I wish that the white witch Hecate,  
disguised as our housemaid when I was an infant,  
did not wet my tongue with Stygian water  
enveloping me in a numinous aura;  
sending me to kneel before the nymph Diana,  
dreamy and motionless, barely breathing,  
while scrolls of my parchment gathered  
glows and glimmers of her radiant tresses.

However, Ladies and Gentlemen, hear me!  
I am about to perform my favorite wonder.  
I will surround myself with a wall of silence,  
a glass-like wall with stars and lunettes  
and multitudinous eyes shining in it.  
Listen intently; you will hear a canzonetta,  
a theme with variations of tinkling iambs.  
This is a delicate trick—so watch closely!

You do not see it? You do not hear it?

Clearly, this audience  
is bewitched by unfriendly wizards!

**William Pillin**

**A JEW RETURNS TO GERMANY**

My feet touch these cobblestones  
and I suddenly sense a cry from bodies  
buried somewhere underneath.  
But I must control my mind. I must move  
as a ghost among six million forgotten ghosts.

I sniff the country like a man  
hunting for his lost home,  
and I suffocate ashamed to be alive.  
Irony plants European guilt in me.

I feel like the last man  
on a betrayed planet. I feel as though  
the atmosphere is clogged with names  
begging for their tombstones. I must control  
my breathing for fear of inhaling  
too many souls of murdered Jews.  
My lungs are too fragile for such crimes.

I must behave as one newly resurrected.  
But should I act the part of Christ?  
Must a Jew become a Christian god again?

I will search German faces for some sign  
or fleck of blood. I will look into their eyes  
and watch for shadows of concentration camps.  
There must be some memory that wrinkles the skin  
or paints the pupil with a taint of shame.

But the avenues are clean, the parks tidy,  
students study how to be German,  
restaurants sell *Coca-Cola*, waiters eagerly serve  
even wandering Jews who somehow survived,  
and history has quickly washed the haunted air  
until even existing phantoms are invisible there.

**Leslie Woolf Hedley**

**TWO POEMS****Apology for Distance**

Lady I will not lie —  
there are three reasons why  
I am so silent now;  
the first is an old vow  
I took to an oak tree  
aeons ago; and free  
of that, the second one  
is worship of the sun  
that sends its dreadful rays  
down my indifferent days;  
and free of that, the third  
concerns a certain bird  
whose dying now and then  
must raise him up again  
until with restless wings  
of ecstasy, he sings; —  
and Lady, in that song  
whatever comes along  
to celebrate our love  
will be made good use of:  
then I shall sing your hair,  
your hands, and all the fair  
desires of your eyes;  
and I will tell no lies.

**William Packard**

**Near Hannover in Lower Saxony**

Know that near Hannover, in German earth,  
some fifty thousand Russian soldiers lie  
where they were lined up, shot, and left to die  
absorbed by soil that never nursed their birth.  
Here searchlight, shriek, machine gun and grenade  
undid in one brief day what ages raised:  
these men had seen the light, breathed life, and  
    praised,  
and now their fifty thousand glories fade.  
Our minds cannot contain so grave a mound  
as rises in this field of German spring:  
we make the same mistake, tomb everything  
into the silence of indifferent ground.

O where is there a resurrection wreath  
to place upon this earth, this underneath?

**William Packard**

**THE DREAM OF ALBERT CAMUS  
(1913-1960)**

Behind me a sea, and prophecy asleep in the sand,  
and pebbles flung in the cosmos of sleep.

Phoenician come inland, sailor found native  
to ruins, and borne up on the sweep  
of sand over ruins—am I  
of the blind singing columns, brokenness of  
man?

Shards cry: my people, my land.

Sisyphian stones leap  
beyond old cairns. Sky will not keep  
covenants with my darings. Yet I dare to own  
deaths heaped beneath my sky  
—beneath its barren blue where I'm paced  
by tombed millennia . . .

Faust, who can leap  
up to God from this whirl of stone?

I am compelled. By old quarries I'm seized,  
beset by blocked sky, caught in the stone-heap,  
path-yoked by rebellious griefs,  
fragments, fables. Here is scrolled  
"the limits of the possible," here, on the great  
columns of brokenness. Will chalked pentagram  
hold  
any crush from me?

By old quarries I'm seized.  
Debris overawes—will not be appeased.  
I, anxiously essaying a fastness of love,  
stumble, curse. An old path. Toward what God?  
Some Bearer of All? Burden shortens my  
breath.

On sand a surging, trembling. What unyielding above  
 my yielding? Come to hasten my death,  
 a sun savagely rebukes me.  
 And ever, as I serve suffering, as I serve beauty,  
 a waste falls before me  
 (something inhuman that's part of all beauty),  
 and wherever I run, stones run before me . . .  
 Has a God beheld me? Or is Nothingness the  
 word  
 that tenders a bread of indifference  
 and a wine of the absurd?

Sam Bradley

### MADAME, WITHOUTEN MANY WORDES

Wyatt's mistress fled lament's refrain  
 And Sidney's Stella found that rime was poor;  
 A brittle lady gave our Shakespeare pain,  
 And Maud left Yeats's book upon the floor.  
 All play charades until time's strict arraign,  
 Then drop the mask, take off the gown we tore,  
 Accept some proper fellow with a crest,  
 And give some wailing babe that flawless breast.

We lay our hard-wrought, ground, bright stones  
 Before their feet, for which they give the cry  
 Of joy they know we cherish in our bones.  
 And still it is the most that we can try  
 For them because it is the most that hones  
 Our edges whet in blood against the sky.  
 But all their awe is fine pretense, a game  
 To match our enterprise, protect our shame.

Harry Morris

## FOUR POEMS

### First Confession

Giddy with goodness in an advent world  
 laid out in ices hard and cold as evil,  
 the frozen night of my first confession I hurled  
 saucy schoolboy taunts at the Devil,  
 the stars igniting the ricks of rigid snow  
 in the courtyard, and I blued the blinking stars  
 like coppers in a sweet-shop vertigo.

I lavished Venus on Mary, threw away Mars  
 on Michael, and squandered the petals of rose-colored  
 Sirius

on the Little Flower, hoyden to the rose.

Oh I laughed to think I had thought God furious,  
 and my neck grew stiff from laughing up, my  
 clothes

gone white and I was heaven's snowman.

My laughter linked with the shooting-stars to  
 vanish

like spent fireflies at morning, omen

of laughter which a smile would learn to banish.

Paris Leary

### Hal Ogilvie, Sewanee '48

He turned, dismissed her gladness like a cab,  
 and walked into a month of isolation,  
 saying he needed to give up alcohol,  
 sex, routine . . . in short, to chuck it all—  
 but just for a month, not quite in the fashion  
 of cenobites who make detachment drab  
 by the very permanency of the thing.  
 He took back her engagement ring—

but just for the month—to symbolize his release and freedom from all entanglements and ties, needing to get inside himself, he said, to see what really went on in his head, smiling when she called it “the cold-feet phase.” “No, not cold feet, just a quest for peace—the kind of trip one has to take alone, quite unchartered, with ports of call unknown.”

With a patience more effective than her love she stepped aside and took up films and lectures. Though she threw her slow calendar away she felt the pull of each adhesive day as it roused, not stilled, in her the absurd mixture of passion and boredom over and above the mere intensity she had expected.

He had claimed so many times that she erected walls round him; if he let her she would mother him, make him feel trapped, hemmed in, caught and fixed by love. He taught her to say, “I like you so much, Hal,” turning away from lovers’ words lest the clear thin wall between them shatter and she smother him beneath her fragile hands or seize him in the quicksand of her gentle eyes.

Mere sex they found elsewhere, like a wife and spouse who go to different churches. “*That* would spoil it between us . . .” “Oh, yes,” she agreed, “but only until that day when our need for one another has consumed what life we have apart from one another, We’ll wait, because when it happens, there will never be anything else, anyone else for me.”



He was to go back for a month to the Deep South, the place of his boyhood. "Tennessee will purge me," he said when leaving. "I can feel the clarity of those simple skies, the real uncomplicatedness of it. I've an urge already to revert. I want the truth about myself, and if I can't find it there, well, then I won't find it anywhere."

"How curious," she thought, just as he left, "that he can be 'in love' yet not be able to grasp a single consequence of the word." Small wonder that he never could have heard her if she told him he was capable of re-opening Eden to her in his laugh, for she rarely offered anything but chatter about the most profoundly trivial matter—

her shield against the possibility that in a silent moment she might give the one thing that he could not yet accept—herself. His indifferences she kept like gifts, the only things he ever gave which belonged to her wholly and uniquely; and she filled his absence somewhat with a quick affair which made her only mildly sick.

Wandering alone through the green Domain empty of gowns in the last of the summer sun, he found no answer waiting in the woods, at the KA House, in the changing moods of Gothic visages of featured stone shifting under heat, in the fresh pain of seeing what he had once been part of without so much as learning how to love

it or what it gave him. By St. Luke's Hall he stopped for a moment, suddenly realising that not once in his life, except when bound by blood, as to his father, had he found anything he didn't start despising when it held him!—but that was the meaning of hell, to be unable to accept love given, as well as earn it striving after heaven.

The rest of the time, in Chattanooga, he spent finding Thomas Wolfe had got it wrong—that one can go home again. All was the same, except one of his sisters' maiden name, and he found no more of himself through the long heat than what his mother could have sent by post: old letters, snapshots, souvenirs, and beer-mats from a hundred college bars.

And when he returned, tanned and heavier, with talk of food and kin and the Negro Question, and, blushing a little, told her, "I'm afraid it will take a little longer than I said to get to the bottom of things," the last bastion of her defences trembled but upheld her, the patience in her eyes like a migraine dulled by Christian Science or codeine.

**Paris Leary**

**Atavist**

Not even the poets with their chalk-faced girls  
and Greek-love buddies knew what to make of him.  
So young, with those yellow-blond curls  
on his white forehead, skinny too, not slim,  
he stood like a colt and stammered when he spoke.  
Most everyone dismissed him as a joke.

He called the Boy Scouts "Philistine,"  
I remember, once. He was the younger—  
he couldn't have been more than eight or nine,  
and I twelve. And though I was the stronger,  
with a lot more common-sense, I thought that he  
had got an in on some mystery,

and rather envied him because I guessed  
he liked me not because of what I was,  
not because I played and fought the best  
or did his Latin for him, but because  
of something in me I couldn't see,  
*someone*, perhaps, a different, ideal Me.

Older women, and men sometimes too,  
sensed he had a certain beauty, tried  
to tell each other what they thought they knew,  
but never with success. They were defied—  
not by that voice, his strangeness, or his mien,  
but by something he, not they, had seen

and kept his face turned to, like an unheard  
voice, like a sort of private sunrise  
in the face of a God who had a morning word  
for him alone. The college thought him wise  
with something he had found in a book;  
but even as a child he had had that look.

Odd, yet never quite unpopular,  
he seemed a throw-back to another age:  
brooding on the "next and final" war,  
he tried to turn our apathy to rage,  
talking as if Spain and Budapest  
constituted one event, one test,

a single betrayal, and how his little feet  
danced as he called us "ex-liberal"!  
We laughed when he said that we were "beat"—  
the word so strange on his unmanageable  
soft voice—but when he took up the Poor,  
he was set down finally for a bore.

No one paid attention, even at first,  
when he started in canvassing the House—  
something to do with how we had cursed  
some Jap sailors, and he wanted to "rouse  
our lethargy." They all called him a fool,  
and the pledges threw him in the swimming-pool.

He took the hint, all right, and receded  
into the weird world of committee,  
panel, and debating, always pleaded  
his work whenever conscience got after me  
and I asked him out for coffee or a drink.  
"You're going to save the world, that's what you  
think,

isn't it?" I asked him on the phone.  
There was a pause, and then with that same  
voice that used to cut me to the bone  
when we were kids together, he spoke my name  
and said, "I'd like to. That's the difference  
between us," still low on common-sense.

We lost touch, after college, with each other,  
and I hadn't heard of him in several years  
until I read in a note from his mother,  
which, thinking of our past, she wrote in tears,  
that he was dead. Something of the throat.  
And I sat, folding up the quiet note,  
thinking, not of what it must have cost  
him to die so young, before he knew  
whether his world would be saved or lost,  
but of his beauty noticed by so few,  
wondering if death had turned away his eyes  
from that damned invisible sunrise.

Paris Leary

### Miss Dodie

It was a shut house, but it drew the wind within it  
by flue and floor and fastened double window.  
It was a Yale-locked, chain-locked, bolted, tight-shut  
house,  
but the wind brought burglars, peeping-toms, and  
neighbours—  
all one to her—by screen and scratch and pane  
and walked them through her dozing and her waking.  
She slept, her body arched against assault,  
the electric flakes between her eyes and eyelids  
charged with fluttering dreams of knock or step.  
She slept, and woke, and slept again, starting  
at sound of leaf or creak of masonry.  
She heard the buzz of the eiderdowned receiver  
on the landing, taken off its hook in fear  
of improper messages and threats,

and the dirty words and promises of death  
 hummed in the wires the wind whined through  
 outside.

And silent, silent, by the steamer-trunk  
 the rats had their way with kitty, wicked Puff,  
 locked away last month in the silent attic  
 as punishment for crying in the night.

Paris Leary

### GAMES, HARD PRESS AND BRUISE OF THE FLESH

boys banging oneanother break and breathless  
 brush past arms brash Flagnatcher!  
 but blocked bash bam hearts thick  
 in the birdchests ache squeeze topple and tum-  
 ble tornshirted and kinder crazy scramble and scratch  
 in the grass bump bone and shoulderscratch  
 smack slap swat greenkneed raw  
 push press pound pummel and pop  
 bodies—nosewhacked breath faster and cold  
 shove! and then rip-out-ragged, knuckle ankle,  
 stomach sucked tight on the run balls  
 hugged up trip but though thump overhead  
 overheels crumple safe at base, spit rise and spout  
 snot and tearstreakers bloodyhot rage ram-  
 page weep holler clobber them clout o snort  
 triumph! trample gag and rout:  
 not flags of sex even can brag such sport.

R. G. Vliet

**FOR ALLEN AND NATALIE MARQUARDT,  
KILLED ON THE HIGHWAY**

On the gray frenzy of the highway, still  
The broken line points beyond frenzy  
With authority admitting of no doubt.

Your car was headed for a wedding. Underneath  
The asphalt uncoiled, steady in the morning glare  
Of Midwest summer. Suddenly the noon of your life  
came in a

Crash, never to be repealed:

It hangs forever on the published smile  
That proclaims queen of local youth the vanished  
Bride. And while that halo in the newspaper  
Begins relentlessly to yellow, you  
Gently mock us survivors left to how many highways  
And to the mercy of statistics. To be, then not to bear  
Nor to become: one swerve from the white spine  
Of the road was enough. Reptilian shudders  
Rippled the asphalt skin, a metamorphosis  
Was improvised under the sky,  
Most unbecoming ceremony! The day came of age.  
But you, newcomers almost, could not tell.  
You had a rendezvous to keep. At the end of the way  
Another consummation waited; marriages are formal.

Now, lifted beyond voice and listening, baptized  
And remarried in blood, you hold secret discourse  
With me. I grieve over lost youth; you insist  
From the immobility of a photograph  
That the art to shed a world, untaught, unlearned  
But in a totally unrehearsed flash,  
Is appropriate goal for any journey.

**Glauco Cambon**

**TWELVE HAWKS**

From the burning highway where I drove  
with my small daughter, I saw their shapes,  
blurred through the pane of August,  
black lumps sticking to the bones of oak,  
and my gorge filled with ancient sickness  
and my daughter with strange fire.

When we had climbed the wire to invade  
their wild land, and bleached in its blue shroud  
the bone-bare tree grew taller,  
hooked heads swiveled to our captured eyes,  
and the song I had thought was silence  
became a dirge of locusts.

A hot wind rustled in the grasses  
where the small prey crouched. Close to the creek  
a cardinal flashed and whistled.  
And she, thigh-deep in briars, hands bright  
with goldenrod, laid bare with wary foot  
the tiny, broken skull.

Then the heavy, deliberate wings  
shrugged loose, broke black against bright air,  
exploding out of the bone,  
a slow storm of brutal, beautiful  
hawks, climbing the wind with heavy grace  
and sun-raking symmetry,

until, shooting the blue cataracts,  
coasting the cold mountains of the air  
between our flesh and the sun,  
the twelve circled through a zodiac,  
trailing shadows that possessed the world  
and my daughter's upraised face.



Full of the skull, sky, oak, and wild land,  
I drove on, on the burning highway,  
my daughter listening beyond  
the wings, the music, and her father's voice  
that fought hawk shadows fondling the earth  
through an August of savage flight.

Donald W. Baker

### ONLY MY HEART

Only

I child-walked with stovewood  
Indignantly splintered they said.

Only

I foot-squashed a ripe peach

Only

The peach stone burst out

Only

The peach had down-feathers

Only

Blood circled a spout

Only

They reasoned, a chicken  
Had only a little bled.

Only

I stepped toward darkness

Only

My heart wept dead.

Genie Rollings Valentine

**ELEMENTAL**

Denied the upper air  
Where burning is clean and free,  
Fire sinks below the stair  
And creeps along the floor  
To plunder endlessly.

Behind the inner door  
In mounds of castoff clothes,  
It billows to their shape  
And confidently goes  
Down corridors of cold  
To kindle my threshold.

I waken from the sleep  
Of disciplined desire  
To waterfalls of light  
And pinnacles of fire;  
Survey the flaming north,  
The whirling upper air,  
And fling myself to earth  
To take my comfort bare.

Sister Mary Gilbert, SNJM

**FOUR POEMS****violence is love****(to jeanette)**

it was simple for us  
we had no place to go  
but to ourselves  
through each other  
no one who cared  
to keep us apart,  
bread of hunger  
when you're hungry  
angry  
sweet angry bread of love  
you tend to food  
there is no time  
for introduction  
violence is now  
is love  
it helps  
when you are poor,  
we met that way  
worlds too busy  
with other things.

**Emile Snyder**

**lullabye to no child****(and my son)**

if the mountains stood still  
and stable horses came back  
if the sun was no one  
and streams flowed downward  
you'd be a man  
with no dream  
a man  
no dream

but the mountains travel far  
and stable horses disappear  
where the sun has a scar  
and streams find their spring  
for the child with a dream  
a child  
a dream

**Emile Snyder****illegal**

1. i live in constant terror  
of being illegal  
steal a flower  
*par megarde*  
in someone's garden  
put it in my pocket  
people after me  
to my doorstep  
for restitution  
it is even worse

when i lose it  
or swallow it  
for sheer pleasure  
they're sore at me  
think i'm lying  
or perverted  
that is illegal  
too

2. where is the permissible  
and how many tickets  
(for i have many friends)  
can i buy  
at the airport  
i don't attack  
your restrictions  
only i feel  
you do not understand  
my faith

they looked at him  
without meanness  
with amusement even  
closed the windows  
locked the place  
went home

and around the child  
who spoke miracles  
the walls caved in

Emile Snyder

**goldfish at home****(for my daughter)**

in the fish bowl there is  
a water snail  
a green plant  
two small fish  
a gold a black  
that is all  
but some afternoon  
between two naps  
a child  
perched on her youth  
stares with delight  
like a cat

**Emile Snyder****SUBURBAN MATRON ABHORRING  
UNPLANNED PARENTAGE**

Hers is a chaste crusade in the pure cause  
Of order in the orchard; she will pause  
A tense tendentious week computing needs  
Before she violates a pack of seeds.  
She will not set a plant before she knows  
Precisely its portent, the shade it throws,  
Its height, its breadth, its fragrance, its diseases,  
The bugs it tempts, the type of bee it pleases.

Behind her back, the renegade breeze steals  
Pollen from pure bred blooms; incestuous roots  
Clandestinely entwine beneath her heels;  
Fat weeds thrust insolent unlicensed shoots  
Between the virgin rows; a dim worm creeps  
Into her teeming hot bed while she sleeps.

**J. Rachuy**

**TWO POEMS****The Yellow Packard**

My Uncle Jopie, a quite successful  
And very dashing medical doctor,  
Married a slightly neurotic widow,  
With whom he traveled brightly to Florence,  
Bought wrought-iron gates and intricate windows,  
Gessoed ceilings and piles of pilasters,  
Even brought in some kind of Italian,  
To build a dashing Renaissance right in  
The old home town. It was a beauty,  
Except it somehow never got finished:  
She was forever tearing a wall out  
Or changing the loft to take the organ,  
And he'd go blithely singing and tearing  
Along the back roads without his hat on,  
Cheering his patients. Each of them carved in  
A deep relief a beautiful bedroom  
Door full of mendicant friars, abbots,  
Nuns and virgins with beautiful niches.  
His gold pompadour sang like a comet in  
Beautiful tenor, heading a rolling  
Curdle of dust of back roads merrily,  
Taking the hills like cream in the yellow  
Packard with bulging F. Scott Fitzgerald  
Fender boxes and steps to the rumble,  
Snappy cylindrical shock absorbers,  
And sixty-pound tires that blew one morning,  
Smashing the dart on the dash at sixty.

**Sheridan Baker**

**The Cottage**

My Uncle Bill knew how to putter and  
Turn seasoned time on a lathe of humor.  
He knew, as the bright wood skirled, that life was  
Really something you didn't want finished.  
He and his boys made a diving helmet  
To watch the fish come twitching and drifting  
In through undulant trunks of kelp with a  
Lazy fan of green sun and crepe shadow.  
Later he carved a marvelous chess set  
With different comic worried faces and  
Odds and ends of hand-me-down helmets that  
Never quite fit. He never used it. He  
Dabbled in potting, he planned and built a  
Tight redwood cottage, plumb as a box, with  
A pitch to the roof like a Greek temple.  
There were powdery grapes, and an arbor,  
A little stippled lawn of dichondra,  
Stepping stones, tropical leaves, a fruit tree,  
Sun and shade and big pots of begonias  
Hanging on wires. He went partly blind. The  
Lazy humorous light would sway slightly,  
The chessmen waited as if expecting  
A wide-eyed fish at the square window where  
Shadows curled from the waxy begonias.

**Sheridan Baker**