

# THE BELOIT POETRY JOURNAL

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**THE HUNT**

Bid the white fox  
Run through clover,  
The lean hound searches  
The meadow over,

Captures no hint  
On the scented air,  
Will never find  
The secret lair.

Shadow defeats  
Substance ever,  
The veil of sense  
Is lifted never

Until the hound  
Lies panting, done—  
Then shall he  
And the fox be one.

**Marden Dahlstedt**

**IN OSTIA**

ALONE, gladly alone,  
I held a gold-eyed lizard  
I had caught scuttling  
Across a square of sun-blurred brick  
In Ostia.

He was the fine-scaled Caesar of the City,  
The throat-proud king of ruins,  
Master of empty sun and silence  
. . . and dead streets,  
Which, twenty hundred years ago  
Had pulsed with togas and slaves,  
Chariots and centurions.

Then, O then, Ostia was proud Port of Rome  
With ten thousand citizens, and wharves  
Choked with spoil from the world over,  
Cargo'd by galleys creaming the Tiber.

Now all was gone.  
Life's only fragment was  
My lizard.

I parted my fingers and he flashed  
Into a razor-edged shadow,  
Deep as ink.

The silence of Ostia had congealed  
As the sea dried; a tide of sand  
Had come and ebbed, leaving  
The city's bones to spellbind me.

I found a wall where long ago  
An artist painted corn sheaves  
(Did he dream his colors would be seen  
Fading on this far shore of time?).  
Here was a fish shop, on its floor  
A fish still swam in gay mosaic.

Bottle green the cypresses;  
Blue, blue the sky—so hot  
The flat red bricks!

I trod in a topless temple,  
Neptune's.  
Who cares now for his dolphined chariot?  
Not the lizards.

I climbed tier on tier on tier  
Of an amphitheatre where  
Comedy and Tragedy had grown old  
Jostling each other.

I stood sky-dizzy at the top,  
Thoughts combering the reef of my mind  
When, far beyond the livid squares,  
Once houses, came a laugh—  
Brash, young and loud.

Down a heat-throbbing alley I crept  
And into a courtyard where  
A goddess stood—nude, headless, proud—  
While a tourist, in a wallpaper shirt,  
Recorded his woman  
With ticking movie camera.  
In crotch-catching jeans she capered,  
Then fell belly flat, her head  
Protruding through the stone legs  
Of Venus.

Child-like, she waved her limbs  
And stuck out her tongue:  
“Heiny, this’ll wow ’em all  
Back home!”

A hole had been punched  
In the silence.  
Reality flooded in and I left,  
For the first time LONELY.

Helen C. Smith

## TWO POEMS

## Arlene Love: Philadelphia Sculptress

Be not deceived by slender fingers  
Or the narrow wrist;  
They insist earth leap into shape.

There is a witch in woman  
That spells man to his birth  
In the wonderous womb.  
But she would have a firmer clay  
Between her hands than mercury man  
Who in a quicksilver flash  
Turns from child to man, from bone to ash.

The figures that she shapes  
Assault, defy lime and time.  
The stone child will never wake  
And graven gravid woman never make  
The air red with the sound of birth,  
But the unwinking eyes  
Will stare down the years.  
Finger, knee and lip, images so hard  
It is the air, not they, will chip.

Cats at her feet,  
Elite, alight—  
Hair a yellow helmet,  
She is poised among her fashioned stones.  
Be not deceived by fragile fingers  
Or the narrow wrist—  
They insist earth leap into shape.

Sy Kahn

**Merry-Go-Round**

At the center of the whirling world,  
At the still point,  
David stands tranced  
By the prancing, skewered horses  
And the circling, golden cars.  
Spotted, striped  
They gallop in the air,  
Flying mares and stallions,  
Charging and churning  
In the burning summer light.  
One hand upon the center pole,  
He, not yet four, seems  
A tiny Atlas, an axis  
For the clanging, tumblerumble world  
All shadowed in his  
Unblinking, brownblond stare.  
And my prayer as I watch him,  
He, unruffled except by the wind  
In his hair, is this:  
That when he has ten times his age  
He will be as stable and as sage  
At the center of the spinning globe,  
Tranced still, aglow,  
Moved but unmoving,  
Watching the golden horses go.

**Sy Kahn**

**TWO POEMS****Three Elegiacs for My Father****I—Funeral of a Comedian**

This is the public thing, my papa propped  
In finest cherry wood and velveteen  
His hired room waiting and finally become  
Loud with floral applause—some so unexpected.  
His biography caught, they come to touch  
Our mourning hands, to watch—  
Hour after hour of them—to say  
Only what rises both kind and true.  
My father propped and laughterless,  
The face not as I will remember it.  
The lady from the cafeteria, the druggist,  
Sidewalk neighbors, relatives arrived for death  
And of course the important ones he wanted,  
All noticing the autumn flowers rushing over walls  
Into the other rooms until suddenly I am seated  
Knowing how many years he has made how much  
mirth.

“O Death, where is thy sting” and all of us listen  
While Papa hovers to his one of many mansions,  
Settles. I cannot grieve while psalms are read,  
The audience at solace, the public thing being:  
His cherry wood then closed and opulent.  
I recall my daughter growing and my wife  
Happy with child, my mother at my side in black.  
All these years coming, coming  
And the public thing, it is done.



**II—Pastorale**

To get it settled then  
My poise as steady as this countryside,  
What can I make of grief now  
That the months for tears are done tearless?  
Shall I forget all but our holidays?  
The Saturdays you taught me the city  
(Ferryboats, zoos, mummies)  
Or the twilights you played ball  
Or the Augusts glaring on Cape Cod,  
As if you had acted nothing but gala?  
But would it be nicer to settle so:  
You never cared to measure me  
Along the springing of my own growth?  
That I have been pleached, wracked, nipped?  
In such belief I may carelessly corrupt,  
Enjoy my stuntedness as your stupidity  
A creature thought to no image, grotesque, excused.  
Or might I savagely repent so late  
My long splintering of your dream of me?  
So, polish my house to a perfection of yours  
And me to a success fabulously unfitting.  
Then might I prove your immense righteousness  
And torture my wife into a likeness of your wife.  
Answers soften in such greenery.

This is a pastoral not because I sit on grass  
And two seasons later think among birds,  
Pastoral because in all simplicity once  
Three clear decisions existed, each absurd.  
Any pastorale is an air and grace  
To play as free as any woodwind.  
A seed of me has settled beyond guilt.

I do not even have to know why I care  
 When in the obvious face of your dying  
 I could not be moved to understand.  
 For half my life we destroyed hope  
 In a contest of exquisite skill.  
 I will not keep that seed dry,  
 Sit here toying and unintense  
 As if the day were a great round noon  
 The birds to remain mateless and singing.  
 It will move green along my limbs  
 To sever the bones, thrive like miracles.  
 Crack it must through the winters  
 Till one season, my hand trembling into leaf,  
 We shall discover that I am someone  
 We never expected, striding beyond questions  
 Into a relief we never shared.

### III—Memento Mori

Drive far out hot Sunday afternoon  
 Left turn down the crush white gravel road  
 Under nave of elms to sun again,  
 Stones flung across the lawns, until the proper plot.  
 Here, an area of monuments, step out

From the long car. Women high-heeled, filmed  
 In their prints and men in summer grey,  
 Tread beneath their hats to favorite graves,  
 Newsprint wrapped bouquets protected all the way  
 From home to here, its monument. Step out.

There it sticks gunblue like dragonflies  
 Cast in angles of the architect  
 Metal construct mounting unsurprised  
 To its baroque urn draped and wrecked;  
 Spills down transparent grief on our perpetual care.

Here lie the contents of our heads,  
 Our ganglia, our recipes, our gifts,  
 Here lie I and you in staid corruption.  
 And I the child still skip down the road  
 To draw the flowers water from the central pump  
 To squeak the air and recollect my father.

Here lie you and I and our tradition  
 I like such special afternoons with him  
 With grandpa and wife Anna, Sutphen, the twins  
 Who died at two, the Baileys, cousins, aunts  
 The concatenation of my past, I on this end  
 Swinging like a daisy in the sun.

I like the comfort of the birds and stones  
 Of damp and worms, the preacher's petals gone.  
 I rejoice that I shall have my dates  
 And my wife shall and my many children  
 While the urn stays trite and honest  
 Through these summer afternoons.

**Bink Noll**

### **Moses on Nebo**

Sharp of eye, of voice, lean, but tired  
 He preceded Joshua and priests  
 To the outcrop, hurried to look first.  
 The summit breeze, the view, the end

Of exertion caught them in silence  
 And pondering the Lord's promise  
 That, desolate, fell like the dust  
 On mountains at every perimeter.

Only Jericho a joy in the eye of hope.

It leapt whole from west to Joshua,  
An emerald to hide the crust of poverty,  
The chalk hills dazzlingly sterile  
And the yellow Jordan not broad.

To the south the fishless sea thick in fumes  
And salt hills that flashed their limits.  
The north, less bleak, shimmered to the eye  
Highlands perhaps, snow, even a fast stream.

But Moses' eye dimmed, went hard.

For to the west the same illusion,  
The same absence of the facts of Eden:  
A crystalline wall, perfect vast straight  
Vineyards, the flash of a million fruits

Amid a darkness of large leaves,  
Knee-high pasture, gates to march in  
At a dignity paced by seraphic song—  
Flickered down to anger, to waste.

One gasp at tall Joshua though,

Teeth gleaming, ready to bellow with joy  
Frightened the old man at how he'd taught  
Their raw hope to leap, to exult thus  
Over such evident aridity.

Though exhaustion crept like a truth  
Down every finger of his generalship,  
He kept on his reverence, his robes  
And led their adoration of what?

Of Yahweh? Victory? Himself?

Violence of thought dried the juices in him.  
He felt with relief the closing of his eyes,  
Heard the tribal grief rise keenly  
Through that last moment of his confusion.

**Bink Noll**

## **TWO POEMS**

### **Dependency**

**(For William Carlos Williams)**

it was a new morning  
and i was looking—  
for my slippers.

i found four new kittens  
huddled beneath a tongue licking;  
three white and one black.

three snows  
and a black carnation;  
ices melting in a breadless room

**Theodore Holmes**

**Down Boy, Down**

ever since

the human race became conscious  
 enough of itself, to convince itself  
 a real difference exists  
 between the prehension and the apprehension,  
 to refute the ape,  
 has been its chief concern.

what it accomplished is plain to see:  
 if two boys and two girls  
 close between them  
 patches  
 on a sidewalk in the Spring,  
 they bleed their eyes ten feet or more,  
 fixing them before  
 a jewel tastes drought in a stone setting;  
 ten feet, are what it takes to measure them:

A baby's name; a string of loose beads  
 In the bottom of an open crib.  
 Before a mirror, naked arms holding  
 Back soft hair from the neck;  
 The double you. An invitation like perfume  
 Until it lies about everything but the dance.  
 And yet, the anatomy lesson; a canvas  
 Copied differently since Rembrandt.  
 Machinery believed crowded under canvas.  
 The supper taken at Holy Communion  
 By the few that are ever really hungry.  
 The protagonist, stuffed and hanging  
 With an apple in his mouth. The tenth;  
 Of an animal bleating in untold heat.

the distance of the accomplished feat.

**Theodore Holmes**

**THE FAT MAN IN THE EASY CHAIR**

Reads his verse aloud.

Mincing gestures and a florid face  
Have captured a college crowd. Two Jewish  
Girls are young, and most intent; sniggering  
Softly, some better poets rim the room.  
An obliged professor yawns secretly.  
But most will leave the exhibition  
Enriched, and gratified that over coffee  
They can talk about their subject, poetry.

The huge fingers of evening enter  
The smoky room, touch and merge the meagre  
Faces, darken the thin sad skin.

Pigeons,  
Somersaulting, catch the last cold rays  
Of the bloody sun, glint the empty bowl,  
The thin, the distant blue. Through a window  
One magnifies, glides smoothly to the ledge,  
Softly, coos, struts, puffs his iridescence.  
He ignores the stuffy room; the fat man  
Puffs his cheeks, ignores the easy pigeon.

**Edwin Ochester**

**ONION**

To dream of onions signifies  
Illnesses for private eyes  
And hearts that are healthy otherwise.

Onion seeds are fairly delicate  
But you can check the onion thrip  
By spraying seeds with tartar emetic.

For onion smut, use formaldehyde.  
For onion dreams—there I'm afraid  
You're on your own. I have made

A dream-book survey, and I'm as willing  
To share a fact as fear. But the chilling  
Truth remains: dreams, like spring

Hunch beyond medicine. Onion  
Dreams enormously mean  
Like spring. I recommend

You dwell with packaged vegetables,  
Thinking winter thoughts involved  
With no green leaves or edible bulbs.

Be vigilant against a battered  
Heart, and eyes that senseless water  
Thinking domestic matters matter.

**Hollis Summers**



**THE APPRAISAL**

Heretofore, hereafter, and herewith,  
 I think of my father and his guns:  
 A sanguine, emotional man, part bronze,  
 Divided, and yet blent, by tool and myth.

He was brought up to shoot more rabbits  
 Than any boy in Davie County;  
 Carolina is both rich and poor of bounty—  
 Papa kept a gun trained on his sensual habits.

When he became the Mayor of his town,  
 He hunted better, and, so I thought, demeaned  
 Me, holding furry corpses while he cleaned—  
 I still have dreams of bloody rabbits hanging down.

Harsh smell of dung in their little bodies,  
 A sound of shot against the pan—  
 I never liked the work but still can  
 Eat jugged hare with friends who euphemize.

Devotions in those days were absolute—  
 Papa saw me as both myth and tool:  
 Someone, steady as a god, must blood the Golden Rule  
 And show how strong men differ from the brute.

**Charles Edward Eaton**

**TALL SALT**

We met an old mariner  
 with fish in his pocket.  
 (Aie, Salvador, nothing can save you).  
 He'd been floating in brine  
 for so many years the oils  
 were all pickled out of him.

(It was a salt barrel he'd sailed  
to shrink into such a strong olive).

"Oh the girls!" he said,  
watching them pass.

"They go in one eye  
"and out the other.

"But when I was young!"

(A young man can jump over an island).

We asked him how long  
he'd been on the sea,  
and flipping the fish  
down into his pocket

(Old Salvador, there is no safety)

he said:

"She's an old, ugly woman

"in her roaring skirts,

"and I've been lost

"in her petticoat since

"I was a boy.

"Here's my mother," he said,

and out of his wallet

he drew a dry mermaid,

pressed like a flower.

(Safe on the earth lie the shipwrecks).

"My father," he said,

"was a sailor before me,

"and found her one night

"awEEP on the anchor-line.

"She died on the shore,

"and so did my father.

"Not me!" said the sailor

and drank up his whiskey.

(Have you wept for yourself, Salvador)?

S. Dorman

**TWO POEMS****Sparrowfall**

A sparrow caught between me and the glass  
Chose instantly the window pane, and flung  
Its ounce of panic on that footless wall  
Till blood broke from its beak, and still it clung  
To the harsh mullion, weakly fluttering,  
Then crashed the glass again, and crashed again.

“I must have it, take it in my hand.”

“Terror of hands may kill if come too close.”

“My hand is food, shelter from cold and cat.”

“And five huge reptile claws whose scaling pads  
Are creased to crush a beak into its throat.”

“One wing’s already broken; the claws split.”

“Bones are only broken when they break.  
But to ooze beneath the nails of a Cyclops’ fist?  
To be rolled, cracked, spat from a roc’s beak?”

**Alberta T. Turner**

### Pity for Gods

My son laid broken power at my feet,  
And asked, "Will you mend my plastic bow?"  
Nor questioned my strength but only my caprice,  
Reasoned that if my bowshot could outreach  
The farthest arrow from his straightest aim  
So must my power to repair outrange  
His utmost skill. Long, but quite in vain,  
I argued the laws of glue and plastic strain.  
With ageless patience he agreed, forgave,  
And asked again, "Will you mend it, though?"

My cat brought her dead kitten to my chair,  
Licked it and pressed her face into my hand.  
Hand of the milk of life, the hand of grace  
Would touch the kitten till it nursed again;  
And when my fingers still hung limp, inert  
She nuzzled them and grieved into my face.

Oh, pity, pity for gods who cannot give,  
For the leaking heart unpowered at the hand,  
For the tender whinney that stirs unfingered hooves,  
The wordless lip—the lipless Word.

**Alberta T. Turner**

**THREE POEMS****Dance**

Sweating like a saint in holy pain,  
 The trumpeter weaves back and waves his horn  
 Above the dance, as though the sound were born  
 In aching blood and pulsed through every vein

Of that taut shape to bell at last on air.  
 Behind the horns, brushes touch the drum's  
 Skin, dry as locusts; and the beat comes  
 Walking, as the bass man, hunched like a bear,

Fingers the big-hipped fiddle. All bells ring  
 In dim, mysterious schoolroom where  
 Girls, gold as saxophones, teach youths to wear  
 The coat of music and the pants of spring.

**Conrad Hilberry**

**Essay on Nature and Art**

Thirsting for Nature's springs, the urban man  
 Packs children, lunch in salmon-pink sedan  
 And seeks the lake. There, keen to feel the breeze  
 He hires a boat, mounts his water skis,  
 And waving to a pier of sunning wives  
 He rises from the surf and coolly drives—  
 His white legs bent in rural attitude—  
 The forty horses tamed by Evenrude.  
 The children, meanwhile, taste the very water:  
 The girl does strokes as her instructor taught her,

And older brothers, full of derring-do,  
 Put on their fins, and snorkle in the blue.  
 And so goes Nature's day.

But stricter sects

Eschew the life the clubby type elects  
 And sleep with nothing but umbrella tents  
 Between themselves and northern elements.  
 (Close by, the state has cunningly designed  
 A house where Nature is relieved to find  
 Porcelain plumbing, and outlets for a razor.)

Nature's friends, in varied guises, praise her:  
 The angler with the Shakespeare spinning reel;  
 The khaki Scout, stirred with official zeal;  
 Cyclists, who scorn exhaust and supercharger,  
 Preferring three-speed shift by Sturmey-Archer;  
 And mountaineers, high on an Apennine,  
 Who execute rappelles on nylon line.

So Art improves on Nature; rightly so,  
 For who are those that scorn what Art can do?  
 Fallen in the pool from which he daily drinks,  
 The artless swimmer gives a cry, and sinks;  
 And Nature's climber, innocent of rope,  
 Slips from the face, and bloodies all the slope.

Then let Art thrive, let backyard chef go to it  
 With brazier, spit, briquettes, and lighter fluid;  
 Let golfer ride, and roto-gardener rest;  
 And let the artful ornithologist,  
 Remembering the chill of dawning tree,  
 Study his birds in high fidelity.

Conrad Hilberry

**Gift on a Thirty-First Birthday**

Though comically the giver planned  
 The gift bow tie, discreetly gay,  
 I, who had gone four-in-hand,  
 Now sport the small bow every day.

And other fopperies ensue:  
 I wear plaid walking shorts for tennis  
 And ask my haberdasher's view  
 Of what the right beret for men is.

Already I begin to covet  
 A Volkswagon to drive to school in  
 Or better—indeed, far above it—  
 An Alfa Romeo to tool in.

What voice is it of summer ruth  
 Calls up the spurious, the sporty  
 And makes an unpretentious youth  
 Go gaudily toward forty?

Conrad Hilberry

**THREE POEMS****Iran**

I am what this land is: adverse:  
 a seabed quenched, a sulfur sky, where  
 nurture is hard, there milk is wine, where  
 tender and perishing blooms the rain,  
 its petals fall sweet on hands and eyes . . .

Grace Mojtabai

**I First Saw the World**

I first saw the world  
through lattice and shutter;  
it hurt me, so fleshful: each  
rose was a wound;  
but since  
I can safely come out in the open,  
I'm as carnal as summer, as  
ravaged as dawn.

Grace Mojtabai

**An Onion**

Youth was the time to cast for windfalls:  
soon, I turn to find my fortune in the earth:  
I grub in rumination, fist a token of those riches;  
an onion, incandescent, deep in dusk, a dram ecstatic;  
an onion, a small coin in the mintage of the soil.

Hobgoblin fruit, spoked as the sun:  
a flask of fire, a well of cool: worth any liquor  
that I know—for tucks and stitches of the tongue.

Small coin, large prosperity: sovereign  
in a dynasty of dun: of textures, prodigal; of  
chiaroscuro suns and dims: crackling bronze chaff,  
lustrous satin—laved deep, yet deep within—  
the pearl of the earth lies, glistening.

Grace Mojtabai



**FOUR POEMS****To a Modern Tess in a Waiting Room**

This autumn Sunday night  
The moon curls on the sky  
Like a rotting melon husk;  
The last train joggles to a crawl  
Through snapping, lanterned switchtracks  
And freezes with a hiss.  
Rigor mortis in a dead black eel.

Inside North Station  
Attendants broom the midnight floor  
And sawdust piles around your tired feet.  
You hardly cared at all  
For random stares owled out  
From dipping magazines, and fell asleep.

Your ringless hands  
Beneath your knitted shawl,  
You drowse a double-body drowse,  
A sewing sleep  
Like mending sailors jabbing awls.  
Events flash by like camera bulbs exploding dead.  
You dream of gliding birds at dusk  
And wounded creatures drinking at the sea;  
You fly with outstretched arms  
Through hot bleached hills of Queen Anne's lace.

A buzzer rings.  
You stir and half-nod in the vacant room,  
Caress your uncombed fingered hair  
And vaguely hear the train outside  
Like angry cats within your head.  
The mucus ceiling lights grow large

And you awake.  
Conscious of the gaudy walls,  
The billboard for the Passion Play,  
The Breck girl with the virginal face,  
You stand, one leg numb with sleep  
And scratch your belly itch.

This waiting room is a dead animal  
Curled around a nursing hare.  
You limp across the lobby floor;  
Your loneliness is quick,  
Like tearing tape from hairy flesh.

On Atlantic Avenue, carbon streetlamps purr  
Like patient, tubercular cats.  
Snug against your flesh, a tiny body  
Kicks against the dark.

**Donald Junkins**

### **Elegy for Cressida**

Gone from Troy! Now tongues wag pity and abuse  
And senile scholars smirk in public at your loose  
Behavior. So you gave young Troilus the axe?  
They rail at you about your morals being lax.

But could soldier's pay keep you there outside the  
Gates

So long, a weakling whore, trick of the Fates?  
A kind of Trojan Helen, dished among the Greeks?  
Where, I ask, was Diomedes all those weeks?

He was no second-rater, that's for sure;  
No small time caddy for the ageing pure.  
He was a Greek commander, sick of Troy  
Who stole a lover from King Priam's boy.

Agamemnon ordered him inside the Trojan fence;  
"Escort the ransomed Cressid to our tents."  
This was a switch; a plush detail. He did his job.  
Back with his men, he kept you from a horny mob.

Here were no paltry pimps with hungry red eyes  
peeled.

There were flies and blood here. This was a battlefield.  
No boudoir bantering; no headstrong, giddy boys.  
No time for whimsy; no time at all for toys.

You made a choice, Cressida, in the dark.  
This was no "adventure," no common bivouac lark.  
Ignore the tawdry tongues that mutter, "Weak!"  
You sacked the Trojan Prince to love that Greek.

**Donald Junkins**

### **The March Snows**

In Boston, marshmallow streets  
Are black and iron underneath  
As midnight tracks are slushed aside  
By wavering sedans. The heat from sewers  
Steams the incandescent air  
And red and orange signs blink rhythm, on and off.  
A hound's tooth gleams, saliva drips;  
The cats pad over alley garbages, and  
Leaning out of windows, the night curses  
Down the alley's echoing darkness  
As fluffy sputum settles on the streets.  
The carcass of the night  
Is the city under fire  
Like a corpse burning numbly in the snow.

In Wellesley, the creamy golf course  
Levels, like liquid beveling in a cup.  
The sun has fired the greening grass  
That waters with this weight of snow,  
But no blind man is teeing off tonight  
Nor does the caddy search for pearls  
Among the trees. The dark  
Empties its dipper on the land  
As one over-salts a steak,  
And trackless hills are quiet  
This off-season night  
When furniture is draped with sheets.  
Blown by the wind, an occasional tree  
Fingers the shedding night  
Like a cadaver raising a hand in protest.

**Donald Junkins**

### **Arlington Street Swan Song**

This inventory night of rain and hush  
My mind meanders like a stricken swan.  
Twelve hours ago, your heels clicking on cement  
I caught your eye, inhaled quickly  
Turned, my stomach stumbling  
Caught empty like a leaky pail  
But you hurried down the subway  
With a friend at five o'clock.  
Now in the night harbor of my mind  
Where water laps at lichen logs  
Sunk straight and slippery  
Like wooden tongues with rope  
I'll stand inspection. Liquid mausoleum!

All the night long  
I'll pass you by in my mind's eye  
And turn to speak, and you ignore my look.  
Three years disappear in a crowd.  
And once again my brain hardens  
Like old jello.

This old love of ours, this tired swan  
That paddles through my tired mind this night  
Approaches death. These last hours  
Before the sun burns through the falling dark  
I'll stand watch over surd remains.  
Five o'clock tomorrow and the man selling flowers  
In a cart. For a quarter I can stand by the water  
Throwing pom-poms under the paddles of the swan  
boats  
Shuffling by.

Donald Junkins

### A KIND OF ANTENNA

A man with a grotesque bone  
sprouting from his brow—  
He won't let you press it.

He says: "I'm the advance commando  
beachheaded from Alpha Centaurus.  
This chunk of bone rips my armor off.  
Poke it and I blaze before you  
in my most dragoned shape,  
which nothing human can stand."

Yesterday he said:  
"It's a devils' vault.  
I sealed it with the wax  
of my holy signet  
when, in an earlier, smokier life  
I moved as Solomon, son of gaunt David,  
lover of dark, glowing Sheba,  
prince of the seven levels  
and corners of the universe.  
It prisons six one-eyed djinns  
with fists and faces  
of congealed thunder,  
pummeling fretfully  
at its creepy thickness."

Sally waves a simpler image.  
She says: "It's a kind of antenna  
for reaching across—somewhere—and touching  
someone.  
You get to use it just once,  
and he's not ready."

And Maggie the most simple:  
"He means you should all drop dead,  
or take your rotten side-show  
to someone else's deformity."

**Howard Ant**

**THE REAL**

We kick our heels against the rocks.  
 Loons rush, two fluttering spots,  
 on the crimson pond. Head on head,  
 each one harder now succeeds  
 itself in a race to the black edge.  
 The child leans back against the rock,  
 clasps her hands about her knees,  
 and asks me if it's real or not.  
 I have told her that it is,  
 but watch the slicks turn slowly red  
 about the haunted island's edge;  
 watch the mist blur out the lines  
 that usually reassure our eyes . . .

Myrtle Chamberlin

**THREE POEMS****Central Park Zoo:****The Macaw Takes a Bath**

The macaw is fuddled, she goes to the water,  
 silly old bird with blue wing feathers,  
 fire red breast and an orange body,  
 a jet black beak and a gear shot voice.

Eugenia Dolphin of Dallas Texas  
 is spending the winter months at the Plaza.

Sixty, but thinks of herself as thirty:  
a dark of the eyes and a red of the nails,  
a sky blue coat and fire red slippers  
and a little black hat from Bonwit Teller's  
cocked like a crest over bangs of henna.

Pert old bird with the gaudy feathers  
down on her belly flat in the basin  
fluffing her wings and ducking her head  
trickling the water over her shoulders.

Mrs. Eugenia wanders shopping, and rain  
has left its pool at the curbstone  
and there in the puddle after the shower  
is Mrs. Eugenia's bright reflection  
flat on its belly over the water.

Fluffing her wings and scattering water  
(the bird) and my dear what a beautiful sapphire  
and do you think I should buy it really  
dipping her head and squawking with pleasure,  
but it wasn't the puddle along Fifth Avenue  
that Mrs. Eugenia tried to wash herself in,  
it was only the bathroom bowl at the Plaza  
(guilt complex maybe) my dear it's awful  
with a squawk and a flirt of the feathers  
and now the breast and now the buttocks  
(that of course has to be Mrs. Eugenia)  
and then a preen of the tail and a chortle  
and I said it's only a thousand dollars  
and if I want it I'm going to have it  
and don't we have a good time in our puddle?

**Fred Lape**



**Woman under the Pines**

She dropped her bulk on arbutus. "O nature,  
my only temple. I merge with the all."  
The pines above her were sweet with blossom.  
The wind puffed pollen in yellow clouds.  
It fell on her hands and she blew it off.  
Trees might be a little cleaner.

A woodthrush poured water in the distance.  
"When I'm in the woods I'm a pagan.  
I should have been born in the olden days.  
I wish I could hear a nightingale."  
The woodthrush sang again, but her words  
overpowered it. She squinted at sunlight  
daring to find her face through the branches,  
and drawing a compact, slendered the line  
of her lips. "The sun makes me freckle."

An ant was crawling up her leg.  
I let it bite her. The earth,  
I figured, deserved some answer.

Fred Lape

**John Beam**

A little man, round faced and pudgy.  
The neighbors wrote him off as cracked.  
He lived with a dozen cats, five dogs,  
a bowl of goldfish and a parakeet,  
on a back road in the country.  
When he was hungry he went to work.  
The cats and dogs were never hungry.

I saw him once on an autumn night  
after a round at the village bar,  
trying to breast a roaring wind  
that was tossing clouds at the moon.  
It tossed him finally off the path  
and left him lying flat in the leaves.  
All five of his dogs jumped upon him,  
whining and licking his face and hands.  
He opened his arms and folded them in.  
The moon came out and he grinned it back,  
a drunken man and a drunken moon  
in a world made for the happy.

**Fred Lape**

### **THE WATCH CHAIN**

There was a man like other men  
but more a man than many are.  
He kept a watch upon a chain  
and (also on the chain) a star.

Each morning, when the watch was wound,  
he rubbed the star to make it shine.  
The watch hands moved, and time went round,  
and every day was dark or fine.

Save for a quiet, reaching pride,  
there was not much the man could own.  
When time had stopped for him, he died  
and left the watch to run alone.

Although it told the hours as true,  
the watch brought little, being old.  
The star (as private stars will do)  
tarnished the moment it was sold.

**Kaye Starbird**

**GROUNDS FOR GRIEF**

Imprisoned here in the long dark  
The grounds of our grief give in, the earth drifts  
In crusted pieces slowly around the pole  
As in the midst of tears a child sighs,  
The bowels shift, softly the lungs lift,  
The round rib-cage heaves, and suddenly, released,  
Collapses into temporary calm. So in the ark  
The troubled old bone-shed of our caged loves,  
Approaching the mooring-place the cargo moves  
From one side to the other. We bump into the dock  
And the dove suddenly appears, white as a sigh  
She whispers and breathes above us rest, rest,  
And we rest on a soft green breast  
But oh, my child, we are here such a little while.  
Though we circle the pole and return again and again  
To this bright weather, these latitudes, and this light  
We are moving, we are moving inexorably towards  
night.

**Patricia Goedicke**

**I HEAR THE HOCKED HORSE**

I hear the hocked horse, its hooves;  
Its bones under the boy; and bells  
Breaking; the spell of spine; the rib-barred  
Belly sides. How he rode! the boy's  
Brittle belt bones; hoof-clomp; noise  
Scattering chickens, their hackles,  
Heads; their flaming squawks fanning past  
Hacking the wind; past wagons of corn;  
Past pond, small silver oval, pale  
With enchanted oaks; owls;  
Grassy to the water's edge the grave  
Gray nag; plush hooves pressing;  
And under the oaks; shades, shadows;  
With hoof strokes. Boy, the hay  
Was heaven! the white dust rising  
In the loft flame, and the burning birds;  
How they slipped their wings! under the roof  
Shafts of sun; and how  
Wasps went with nipped waists;  
Mud makers; and the swallows slept.  
And the small boy, sleeping and waking  
Under the haystack; suns and moons  
Whitening doorways, the black night's  
Domain; and the owl's hoot  
Hovering; and on the water's sheen  
Images of silence, and the soaring  
Green  
Unbreakable oaks.

Jack Crawford, Jr.

**EXERCISE IN CONSONANCE**

Sam, sorting piles of lettuce, stacked to add,  
 Looked up and saw the Law with stick and badge.  
 He found this new experience very odd,  
 But when the Uniform refused to budge,  
 He left his kit and tools, turned tail and fled  
 Down to the river-bank, plunged in to dredge  
 His sharp nose in the weeds below the flood.  
 Across, and soaking, he approached his drudge,  
 (Sometime ago his doll), and made a bid  
 For dry apparel and a crackling ridge  
 Of greenbacks for the pockets. "Mame's no bud,"  
 He thought, "Her hide's all cracked beneath her  
                   rouge.

I don't want her in bed, but in a bout  
 Like this, she can be useful, not a doubt."

Sara deFord

**HOMAGE TO COLERIDGE  
 (Hommage à Coleradge)**

Albert Ross  
 perched on a pinnacle  
 pierced the pie in the sky  
 with his piquéd beak  
 outseeing eye.

O marin err  
 which marin ate  
 the herring do  
 the wedding guest  
 who came too late

the groggy groom  
who came too soon  
the broody bride  
the dewy doom  
say who are the wild waves wooing?

O shrink  
the shriving boards  
and sheathe  
the glistening scale  
of crab and snail  
of snowy whale  
and rusted cans of vanished ale  
the salt encrusted sperm.

Who fears thy fang  
the mermaids sang  
to do the doe who did the same  
to doe the did the same who do  
they made her QUEEN!—

Miss Upper Seeweedia  
from the lower depths.

L'Envoi

Becrowned insceptered  
And conthroned  
She stoppeth one of three

While Albert Ross  
With leaden thunk  
Kaplunketh to the sea.

Nicholas Biel

**TWO POEMS****Feeding Stations**

When the brain rattles with winter  
sometimes the icy eye will melt  
and know the little famines in the snow,  
the gang of starlings that shriek and slash  
around the crusts and the fish scraps,  
good woman's mite, dropped by her daughter  
for dove, song sparrow, and Christ child.

A frozen dozen have ridden the white wind  
from garage to ground, clash wildly,  
scatter the flakes with Chaplin staggers,  
turned ravenous by no confetti Yukon,  
their yellow stabbings a fury against kind.

The fluttering mates they excite,  
deep and vestigial in the viscera!  
Whirled out of storms of the past,  
squeezed through the sinews from groin  
to heart, pumped to the throat, they pop  
at last into the mind, a flock of hungers  
that swoop upon sparrow, child, wife,  
and the scraps of a frozen god.

Who reads and translates these orgies of birds?  
No comic drunk in tuxedo has mimed such pathetic  
horror.

No Buchenwald stick-man has raked so over garbage.

For the black scavengers fly from the eye  
at the window: they stream up the white wind  
over the glaciated roof; and the frantic  
wings, the fierce beaks, the prints

