

THE BELOIT POETRY JOURNAL
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SORRY, SWEETHEART, HERE'S

another, a jumping, a clumsy,
big / bouncing / loud
all over you just like somebody
else's eager dog,
rough / red / tongue
out and the thick turned-down-
at-the-corners lips / letting a gusher
spatter your jacket, poem.

 you've struck it today
out here in the hallway, don't have to come
 in, you wanted
something, had in mind someone
then, when you married me, graceful
fine haunches, could give tongue gently,
exact

 (no turmoil, lost slippers, bones out in the
 garden
 bigmouth loudmouth blabbermouth yammerer)
could make comfort lie down
with you and not get riled
 (but this, too, hates to hurt, tries too
 hard to please,
 paws, full of mud,
 up on you, it will come
 when it wants, won't do as you choose)

Judith Johnson Sherwin

YOU GET UP TOO

I'm up because
most mornings the heat
at the sunny window on my
side wakes me first.
I can open my eyes. It's day and the
dreams I had all back down immediately.

Once I've washed and dressed again the
rooms feel
cleared,
like a few acres we could put up the house on,
except you're still sleeping there like
several impossible big stones.

Other people's overnight
dreams and real deaths no doubt
choke places we never get to,
holes, springs, and
thickets their beasts' eyes and powerful berries
shine in,

but I wish you'd not sleep now. Not be
out wild when I'm not.

Martha Zweig

THREE POEMS**The Babymaker**

Into the local bar comes a girl who looks an undiscovered mine: her charms may be in there but only a man with timbers and a sledge will ever find them.

She gives us her card, one for each of us:

Round-Heels Rona
former punchboard
&
object of general vilification
NOW
Darling of the Untrammeled

She pats her stomach and says, "Everything's ready to go. The egg, the temperature, the whole shot. What I'm after right now is a guy with a little class. What if an IBM operator gets to me first, or a jockey."

We present our credentials, two poets and an engineer. Gerry and I have published narrowly in magazines smaller than the little mags. These are the miniscule magazines, edited by women with four names, all of whom live in the Southwest, in a sunset.

Still, a bard is a bard is a bard. Orville
builds models of shopping centers and worries
about things like balsam wood. He is a friend,
but this is no contest.

Wrong again. Round-Heels chooses Orville.
"This is 1971," she says. "I want my kid to
amount to something. You guys are being
phased out."

Grumble grumble. Grumbling at the table. Our
former friend, master of the cosine and acknowledged
slide-rule wizard promises to return but never does.
We grumble until 6:00 and then part

only to meet again in the Science Library. We
look at one another's choices

The Romance of the Flying Buttress
&
Cantilevers Forever!

"Two years ago," Gerry says, "we would have laughed
at this and had another ten rum-and-cokes."

He passes the pen to me as I search for the call
number.

"I know."

A cold wind rushes past the Ionic pillars,
a cold wind from off the megalopolis.
"But this is 1971 and us guys are being phased out."

The Affair

And in a little while she stood right up next
to me like a Hemingway lady and said

Let us not go outside until the rain has stopped
and then let us go very much outside.

My friends pass with their honky-tonk eyes:
Hey, hey, says one.

And another — Do you good, sport.

A third: Gladda seeya backinaction.

And I imagine the ride home, her body abrupt and
occult, cannibal demands.

Let's make a list, she says, of the things we like.

HERS	MINE
My TR-4	solitaire
Gable movies	the monologue
Big breakfasts	my narrow body and
afterward	the looking glass

Is that right? Well, maybe later, stud.

Still, I think we have come together successfully
because as she turns away I see in my beloved's
eyes the reflection of my beloved self.

I Never Touch My Penis

I was taught that touching it is nasty, so
I never do. I have tongs made to hold it

so that I will never do anything nasty and
call attention to myself in some public

place. Next to doing something nasty, being stared at is one of my greatest fears.

I use the tongs when I go out to a symphony or a stock car race. My newest pair

is gold and plays "Getting To Know You" when the tips meet. People did stare at

me when I used my new tongs last night but I think it was just envy on their part and

chagrin at their own flagrant nastiness.

Ronald Koertge

A HARPSICHORD CONCERT

Margaret Fabrizio,
tonight you helped Bach sharpen down
something of the centers of stars, and what
keeps our universe tight.

Your music feels
like the rustle and tips
of I-Ching sticks half-dropped
on palms or thighs.

It is the green-sharp points of pine needles,
many, tensing together wind and cool blue sky.
Steel strings plucked,
you have left me golden,
carbonated with the stem-fresh nip
of apples wrung, near voiceless,
into seethe of cider.

Brian Klimkowsky

THE MOVIE OF HORSE HUNTING

The horse's mane flaps like teeth
in the wind above the mountain.

Sleeping pills on the table
six inches inches from her lips.

The lamp is a camera shooting
the bottle's reflection

through her eye. Two withered
cowboys watch the rodeo and her,

follow the cleavage to her toes.
After flowers and the drunken

dance and the smiles of profound
stupors, one man lifts her

off the flat bed of the truck.
His moustache pierces lipstick

like quills. Her fingers keep
losing their grip on his arms.

She touches the other's scarred
face, traces the lines of his

cheek, like a puzzle.

She feels the blood shot through

his eyes. In the camera's
reflection, she sees sequin

costumes in her closet.

The bottle falls into her face.

Rush Rankin

TWO POEMS**Homage To Keats***1 The Epitaph*

Outside your window
the barcaccia
is still swamped
in its own flow.

One woman is enough
to make us stare
across the water for hours.
She looks into it
while we gaze at her
and see the water
well enough.
We might fall in
but never really touch.
You are right such things elude us.

But if you look at the water itself,
the way it comes clear
and glistens over the lip
to fall
then you say

Write the name in that, smear,
become the part of flow
that melts across the bones.

At the fountain of Trevi
people from all nations
babble in all tongues,
wishes and coins a polyglot.
We come back to water and sign in.

We are the smallest tributary
of galaxies.

But I am afraid of drowning too.

2 In Time

Time vexed you,
winds kept you in port,
or quarantined
you stayed on water.

Last night I sat alone
facing a girl who ate
by herself,
avoiding my eyes.
She read a magazine
and course by course
I watched our dinner pass
as though what acts
and what deliberates
can't join.

She left as I was finishing my wine
and when I reached the street
she was gone.

Later at a vender's
I watched fruit flies
hover over scales.
They grained the air.
He weighed bananas.
The fragment of a column
burst the pavement,
a rotted tooth.
I took my orange
up the Pincian hill and ate
above the chains of light.

Your best poem was to August.
It was not desperate.

The Argentine is full of kittens.
There is always return.
But I hear you say, Not mine.

3 The Mouth

Walking to see your grave
I passed the Mouth of Truth.

A father laughed
at his daughter's hesitation,
took her hand
and thrust it in the mouth.
He was sorry when she cried.
Truth was real to her.

Those sad eyes,
the gape of mouth
grieve
that he must eat us
for deceits.

A poem that lies
has spent the evening among friends
intending to be true,
but twists things
in the hole of its mouth.

I walked away.

They were making repairs.
Beyond the plywood wall
your grave was gaping.
Around the tilted stone
they dug with trowels
like dragging wings.
I walked back to the city

not allowed to make
the usual homage, some words
or gesture over your bones,

but look, Keats, this is better:

I stood in the room where you died,
looked at the ceiling you last saw
(falsely opulent, a trompe-l'oeil),
walked to the edge of where you went
and listened at night to you say

 Don't breathe on me,
 it comes like ice
 (or similar words in voices
 of this lover or that)

and rather than paying such false respects
as flowers on a piece of earth,
on the way back I will put my hand
deep in the mouth.

Shadows are on the lips.
I feel the tug
as if it takes the bait.

I too am swallowed up
to stand on the other side
of this face.

In The Face of Descent

1

She said

My God, he's falling.

I watched the whole thing in her face:
her eyes descending with him,
her mouth sprung open,
a ventriloquist's hole.

The sound when he reached earth
was of distant dynamiting.

She put one hand across her mouth and nose
as if someone had grabbed her from behind.

I could not turn away from her.
All I said was

Is he dead?

2

Afterwards I might have said:

there was something in the ragged pitch of clouds—
the shadows slanted too abruptly to the lawn—

I was too calm.

But always after the fact.
Better not to be clairvoyant
as she was
if only because the suffering stretches out.

Her back to me at dawn
and curtains blowing to her face
she said

Something is wrong today.

My bitter laugh was for love
dying night by night,
guttering in vacant motions of our bodies.

Her face closed over my laughter all morning.

3

I think his father said he was fifteen
and had been climbing flagpoles
since he was eight.
The old man had arthritis
and was reduced to handling ropes
from below.

An ordinary face:
pale, a little acned—
and he stood as though
the big bones of his hands
were hard to lift.

But when she said

You're young to go so high
it was the smile that tipped him
favorably into light
as though he had a vantage point
from poles that we would never know.

He said

I'm old enough.

Odd to hear a human being
say only one thing in his lifetime.
He did not even cry out when he fell.

4

It was sixty feet tall.

I said

why do you want to watch if
you're only going to worry?

She would not give me more than

We're paying for it, aren't we?

I came and went twice.

Still she was there,

her arms folded

watching the way the father stood below
and sent up what the boy needed.

I threw rocks in the lake

wanting to break through the surface of her face,
fall and plunge as we used to
when to come into her was

to bring back things I valued
all day long.

She said

My God, he's falling.

5

His father's back was turned.
Neither of us saw him fall.
Only my wife.

The spine snapped.
He landed precisely
on the back of his neck
and all his weight
followed down on it
as though his own body
fell across his shoulders

We did not fly the flag that summer
or walk on the point
or accept the crying of curlews.

Her face is now
the face of all things descending
and in her eyes
I watch them falling.

T. Alan Broughton

**MY DAUGHTER ASKS RELIEF FROM
MONOTONY OF RESPONSE**

“Tell me another secret, not that you love me!”
Say a bright stone, held by magic between
Eagles and elephants, dips down with evening
To gleam over seal-flocks swimming at play.

Not just the same, another kind of secret!
What was the weather the day I was born?
Did you choose me, from how many others,
To live in your house with you? No, when I say

Tell me a secret, I don't mean you love me!
That's the same secret you tell every time.
Tell me how far to the moon if I travel,
Tell me how old is the earth if I stay,

Not that you love me, that wrong kind of secret,
Not what I mean by a secret. Pretend
Somebody's knocking, you say it's for me,
We'll both say goodbye, then you can say

That secret you tell when I ask, every day.

Charles Black

WATCH WITH ME

Come back
and watch with me:
(1936!)
the old front porch
it's June or July
in the afternoon
and bigstepping down Fremont Street
comes Henry (can't remember
his last name now) with the harelip
and his barrel dog
and right behind them
(closing fast!)
towers a thunderstorm

Watch now:
Henry ducks his head
and runs straight for us
leaving the dog
to roll on home
here comes Henry
blowing up the porch steps
on a rattling thunderclap
bumping past us
into the house
and (slide, Henry, slide)
under my Grandma's settee

That's my father
trying to coax him out
but (if you've time
to wait)
he won't do it
until the storm passes

and Henry's sure it's gone
 then it'll be
 my grandfather who says
 (sincerely impressed)
 that he was never
 brave enough
 to be that scared

Robert Hillebrand

A MAN IN THE CLOUDS

*Dost thou love picking meat? Or would'st thou see
 A man in the clouds, and have him speak to thee?*

—John Bunyan

Bring on your cloud-borne man, John. Of late
 We've had a glut of picking meat, and body counts,
 Living as we do in what the Chinese call
 (By way of malediction) "interesting times".
 We are buried under blood and bone and stone
 And the slag of daily living, burdened by the State.
 A cloud-man offers some relief. But what
 Will he say to us? Ask him, in the name of mercy,
 Not to speak to us of us, but rather tell us tales
 Of hope and star-shine, peace and children's eyes,
 And a wind that maybe sings behind the moon.

Warren Thomas

TWO POEMS

Uncle Toby's Garlic Armchair Diesel

He drives it to work every Saturday afternoon
enjoying the shore air and plumes of sea spray
rising round the atlas of sorrow and desire
he carries in a baggie by his side
wending down the crooked beach
toward some elemental Oz. . . .

often he is seen among the shells
crazy man with a chair and a limp
biting crabs and starlets on the ass
muttering from the entire lexicon
of the hundred and twenty Martian words for pain

The rest of the time he watches tv, cracks
his knuckles and Brazil nuts, rants
at the news in the Seven Positions of Adoration,
arbitrates among the household insects,
defiles the living room with his years,
expects too much from fewer people every day.

hunched over like a kingfisher by the bay
he seems sensing the tiny currents
of the littoral that curl plankton
through his toes and tell him the way
to hold his head to see time move

Where are his progenitors? Why listen
with such intensity to the warp and woof of growth?

When did he discover childhood?
How he knows the history of sand in so short time?
he just smiles and nods
and bites his pipestem harder.

Galactophilia: According to Hoyle

When they kiss, one grows warm. It's the piano.
We measure their radiation as t minus r . Its
distance equal to the time light left it.
Its come in light. Its love a radio source.

At home we wait over the giant dish
for the telltale tones of hydrogen. Glasses
pushed back on the forehead, coffee beside us,
we listen with the intensity of marksmen.

What we hear in the faint tendrils of voice:
colors that deepen into the infrared, that twitch
beyond violet, that beat across days like hearts,
that sing of ecstasies beyond hearing.

They are measured against the atomic clock;
their kiss ends when lips can no longer feel
the loosening hold of matter, gravity
lets its dependants escape. Things die.

Yet in the small room with the amplifiers
ends are at best uncertain; the moment
we are listening to is really now
though the lovers themselves are unimaginably far.

Rob Swigart

THE SPRUCE AT BUZZARD'S BAY

These are the nights
of the red lobster
come, come up from the bay
to scratch at the flagstones
and rattle in the drain.

I am sitting here
alone, alive,
the dishes done,
the forks in a scrambled jibberish
are drying on the sideboard.

It's all an old story.
I am hardly the first
or the last
to be left so . . .
Rust begins to spot
his sporting gear
lying in the breezeway.
Oh Jerry. My blue-eyed Jerry.
This much is clear—
He'll find no lack of welcome,
no, that much certainly,
a man's man with a gusty handshake,
courage of a robin
handsome as the sun.
This summer I have the children
sleeping in our double bed.

The clock strikes the quarter hour.

Marina stirs.

She smiles, drifting in her dream

of bunnies and lemons.
She finds wishes in her dress.
In the gingerbread forest
a purple bear dances by the lake.

And Bucky clings to her,
half her size.
Little stag that he is,
his thighs move against her leg,
I must have him turn around.
He whimpers from the herds he sees
the men on the steep slant upward.
His dream is a whirl
of clicking poles,
of kites,
the gale,
the ninety kites
migrating by the cliff face
in hooks and dives.

These are nights . . . the nights
of the spruce and August
sending up her wash of ABCs
along his trunk.
To both sides
the cliff face has slumped away
till he's standing now
alone on the precipice
holding the earth under him with his roots.
King of the bluff
a sighting point for fishermen
even the sea seems to ride
moored at his waist.
Hold me, roots, beloved roots.

Love is more than a pretty flutter.
My beauty has changed,
has gone inside, deepened.

All along the headland
the flowers come nuzzling his bark
licking his long thoughts.
This afternoon I went and stood inside those branches.

And I would go again now,
but the wind drags a towel off the line,
it feels like something's looking in,
after dark, always,
this sort of murderous creeping into the rosebush,
I don't know . . .
an eye, maybe
waving on a stalk
along the counterpane.

Help me hold this house.
There is something good and right
in the atmosphere
of man and wife
at night, at home,
the children asleep—
it's all an old story.

My beauty turns to iron
in the hunting rifle
propped by the door.

These are the nights
when the freighter
is an eye
traveling the loveless mile

across the pane.
It changes, seems to rest against the glass,
a twig end scraping there
moved by the wind
or by its own probing,
bud on a stalk
lidless
staring in.

William Whitman

TWO POEMS

Thumbs and Other Camels

(from an abortionist's notebook)

I was in such confusion, night, last night,
fell on ammoniated nothing.
I was at the beach, I was tallying gulls
(uncommon enough on a weekday),
when air began to beat upon the gelid wings.
Mrs. Cannon's wine companioning me (so it seemed),
I was down to the last wet inch (it was five
. . . or thereabouts) when I felt this tunneling
through the throat's canyon.
(It was like swallowing a lighted match.)

Had Moses had three hot bushes, Bellevue might
have admitted him.
As late as this morning, there were two-bush men
in the Outpatient Department; but excepting

the mirrored self, I saw no
one-bushers. (Roxanne,
my receptionist, thought she good-morninged
a man of that caloric stripe in the hallway
divorcing my office from the street; but Roxanne
doesn't wear enough beneath her sweaters,
she always thinks she sees a fire.)

For a single bush (full-grown or seedling)
there are physics, not physicians.
Segler Drug, though one-aisle-and-a-water-closet,
could literally bury you in patent medicines if
shelves gave way (as they may well do
when Rutherford Laboratories turns out another
antihistamine).

Providing your glasses are too strong and you see
microbes in milk, you may choose any one of a dozen
drugs for whatever-it-is you think you burn of.
Only your trouble is
you have trouble thinking.

Should you think the world is round because apples
are round?

That atoms fly toward twinning selves?

Shall you sail Columbus westward-home, thinking
that continent stands in his way?

You have fingers one, two, three, four, five
per hand, should you amputate thumbs (wrecking,
as they do, the mind's ache for pairings)?

Here are camels—altogether too many—for double,
even, my supply of needles. I cut parasites
out of ladies, I un-complicate, I do
what one-bushers think God should have done;
I make my own calculated incisions, avoiding

(as it were acid) the butchery
of thinking.

Why, this past week alone I've counted scores
of fellow-Moseses moving, as I,
to the backside of the desert.

At sand's end, you come out of the unthinkable
into the unthinking thinkable: camels
two-by-two—no rutting males, no random
females; women's bodies singular—no jacks-
in-the-box, no sly fetuses stealing room-and-board;
a moon, and its twin
swimming on the water; an absence of pears,
pineapples, teardrops; in sum, a world without
excesses or obtrusions—orderly,
round, tallyable,
thumbless.

Above all, no exiles to bring back (no
thing out of place).

Night before last, as I was putting Mrs. Cannon's
wine in the picnic-basket (I always
plan ahead, I always pack
the night before), I think it half dawned on me
to subtract Egypt from Moses. (Certainly, it did
occur to me to subtract Moses from Egypt;
I was going on a trip,
wasn't I?)

But I'd been at the beach fully six
hours before that match went down and I saw
all those bosky one-bushers (I, decidedly
the least lit of the lot); we were swimming
in the black of Egypt's absence.
I think we were damning that truancy, I know

we were dirty-naming God
for it.

And praying. That, too. Not
a Hail-Mary-Kaddish sort of petition.
(It was a personal, man-to-man, soul-to-soul
kind of thing.)
Lord, we said (I think that's what we said),
PUT THUMBS BACK ON.

Ultimately,
I had to let that seventy-sixth gull go by,
believing I could not count him.

Twelve Warm Doves

*(or "Longhouse," former British Home
for the Aged at Muskeen)*

Lord Snowdon was there. And the dark princess.
We dined at a quarter to three.
Two glasses for wine, and damask and duck,
and the princess spoke to me.

"Stunning—your yellow dress," she said;
"oh, ingeniously bright. Like a penny!"
"Well, my five-month dole it cost me, Ma'am,
and no sweets and no larking. Not any.

"'Twas scrimp, Love; scrimp!" None of this
"Highness,"
this pomp with "Your Royal" before.
"But some of us muffed—Mrs. Hollingsworth there
in that rabbit green. And Miss Gore.

"She, with the sag and the rip in the blue;
Mr. Bitter you met on the lawn,
he hadn't the price of a snippety tie!
But Mr. Bitter's . . . gone.

"And somehow the day's too uncommonly fine
for thinking of what we needn't.
Always, I say, enjoy the hour;
forget its antecedent!"

"But you're wise," Her Royal Highness said;
"'tis the crown of years, to be wise."
Yes, and how did she hit on that; this chit
—this dove—philosophize?

Was I to believe her Lords and her Ladies
were boxed, seven days out of seven?
In a bin where the lot to be blathered about
is that inch-along agent of Heaven?

Or Hell or whatever, what difference?
Were her Lords and Ladies rabbits
—timorous, burrowing, nose-y beasts
and slave to oh, what habits?

"John Bitter, he was a man . . . once.
Could you doubt it, Ma'am? Or that I
had welkin-eyes? As blue as the Queen's?
'Tis only those spinsters, lie!

"And them, not much—Miss Gore, Miss Jute,
Miss McCall. They know what you're after;
nobs like yourself—you jolly well like
your truth, you do. And your laughter.

"That's what you want; oh, I own it, Ma'am!
If you only knew Mr. Bitter.

But he's not here. Not here any more.
You met Mrs. Budd? Our knitter?

"Lord love us, daft—that one's utterly daft;
imagine six-fingered gloves!
Or this cat—Mr. Bitter's dumb-fool cat;
that cat, and a dozen doves!

"And they all come calling, Your Royal . . . Grace
. . . come billing and cooing and billing
as though they'd cozen that . . . tramp-cat.
Oh, strange. Strange. And thrilling!"

I would have continued, indeed I would;
she was fascinated, the dear,
darling, beautiful, black-haired princess.
Hushed I was by . . . fear.

Now? Was she? Ready? Could she
. . . ripen the more? Should I wait?
My head, it reeled. It spun from the wine
—yes, the wine of love. Or of hate.

But them I couldn't mention, you see;
they were bringing on the dessert
—a lofty, pastry, flim-flammy thing
so beautiful, it hurt.

I knew, don't you know, he never would taste
one snippet the more. What a . . . loss.
"John . . . went . . . an hour back
to build it, love. The cross!

"Hanging he is, on it. Now, Ma'am."
Whichever wine had spoken,
twelve warm doves lay on my breast
when I saw her glass was broken.

Gloria MacArthur

WITH AMY, LISTENING TO THE FOREST

Listen
to this
forest.
Listen
breathless
to this
forest
this forest
unique
among forests
this forest
alone
in the sound
of its own
partic-
ular
silences.

Listen.

What are those
tall
whispers?

Where does that
gnarled
sound
come from?

Those splinters
of silence.
Where do they
come from?

Listen.

There is a
blue
cast
to this
silence.
Over there
it is almost
lavender.
It is a round
sound
almost a
lavender
sound.

I hear something
red.
It is a
quiet
red.
It has a
blue
cast to it.
It sounds like
old
blood
it is so
blue
and quiet.

I hear a bird.
Loud.
He has a brown
almost a brown

sound.
His sound
is transformed
by this
forest.
It is
transmuted
by leaves
transfigured
by columns
of whispers.
His brown
song
has a blue
cast to it.
It is almost
cinnamon.
Only
in this forest
only
at this
season
will his brown
song
be almost
cinnamon.

Now breathe
my daughter
breathe
and listen
listen simply
to your own
breath
breathing
breathing in this
forest.

Listen.

You will
never
breathe
that sound
again.

Listen.

Donald Lawder

TWO POEMS

Lycanthropy

I am old suddenly, overnight:
not as a man may live long and grow
old but as an animal is old
if it survives to reach a human's
years of youth. My face, that men must judge
me by, is changed: roughly hooded with
shaggy hair grizzled to the eyebrows;
and my eyes in any company
I know glitter with danger, not now
what I threaten but what threatens me.

I too have noticed how my teeth are
broken and displaced to writhe my lips
in a voiceless grimace of distrust.
I can see that, and the long jawbone
thrusting out the muzzle of my face
to find in invisible shiftings
of air the secrets I must master.
I see it well enough: that my face
is the face of an old wolf that was
alpha wolf even in earliest
maturity, the terror and teacher
of the running deer, and the nightmare
bogey of apathetic shepherds
and complacent sheep; stark defender
and preserver of my own, fearless
and fierce, and exasperating men
with an intelligence they hated

to have to acknowledge. When even
strangers see my face they see in it
I am deposed; those who were my friends

can see there how I have no friends, how
any that goes with me goes by chance
or by necessity, and never
for long; and how since I am driven
to, I choose to be solitary,
secret as the snow: a track, a voice,

a shadow at the farthest edges
of my former range; and so I seem
mysterious, and so more cunning
and more deadly than I ever was.

I am trap and rifle wise, I know,
none wiser in a land where I am
prey. In any mirror, even ice,
I see how old and new suspicions
mold my face with hunger: all structures
are to trap me and all sticks to kill:
all that man may make is for my harm.

Such sleep as I dare indulge in now
is haunted by the ache of loping
endlessly along the path that bounds
my only home, that line within which
I am outcast, a mere intruder
beyond. Now it is always winter

in my dreams, snow over everything,
even the trees, a high, white, tiny
moon freezing the opened earth and sky.
Everywhere the streams are frozen deep;
I run on meandering rivers
of ice, perfectly silent, alone,

knowing all the time it is a dream,
but whether of the past or future
or of something I myself desire,
I do not know. Sometimes, forgetting,
or weakened by hope, I lift my head
to send a sorrowing chill music
arcing outward from my clouded mouth.
Men say that a wolf howls; my people
call it song. Never, almost never
will a distant singer of my kind
respond, and if one does at last, we
make a moving chord of loneliness
a while, and then sink back to silence,
never meeting and afraid to meet.

Art Lesson

Yesterday my daughter came to stand
beside me where I sat at my desk,
holding a pen in her ink-blotched hand,
wonderfully tattooed with random
interlacing patterns on her face
and arms, the usual meanders
I had always seen her make. She took
a stack of paper from the drawer,
then a sheet of paper from the stack,
placed the one sheet with diagonal
precision at the right-hand corner
of the desk, and wobbled over it
a series of loops with her pen. "What

is it going to be?" I asked her.
"What's it gonna be!" she shouted; then
she moved the pen among the loops. "Look,"
I said, "it's a bear." "It's a, it's a,
bear!" she said, and she wriggled and grinned,
quickly giving it huge poached-egg eyes,
a wirehaired rhinoceros's tail,
and an overshot leer. She turned the
paper over and began to draw
again. "What's it gonna be," she screamed.
"It's a jellyfish," I said. "It's not,"
she said, "it's a pig." A portuguese
man-o'-war pig it was, with an eye
like a fried-cake. Then she drew some more,
shrieking "what's it gonna be" each time
she started something new, and telling
me each time she finished, what it was:
"a rabbit; a donkey; Dick Tracy
with long, smiley eyes," taking a new
sheet of paper for each one. She drew
a large curving polygon with two
nucleoles up near the top, a thin
mandarin's goatee at the bottom,
and in between, a three-sided smirk.
All of a sudden she shouted "It's
Daddy," and squealed in rapture, "I'm scared."
Then she drew another shape like this,
moving the pen with terrifying
speed and certainty; stroked a few

lines on the lower curve, dabbed in two
tiny rounds side by side, and finished
with a raggedy bush of hatches

high up on the right side where the outline
sloped up and inward to the top. "It's
a walrus," she told me. And it was.

Had she whispered It is a bison,
and held the torch a little higher
so I might see for myself how it

loomed and lived inside the holy cave,
I would not have been surprised. How far
she came in those few seconds, and from

where, I cannot imagine. How far
back I staggered into time, I know:
before the stone is scratched a certain

way with antler, before the antler
is sharpened to scratch, before the wolves
and bowerbirds begin to teach us.

Suzanne Gross

DRIED BUTTERFLIES

Being clear about what is close,
one becomes decidedly eccentric.
Placing pieces of his personality
in a glass case, he observes him-
self as a natural history and
an aesthetic exhibition in tangible
displays of unknown, yet somehow
chosen content.

Things just are and outlast the living
who create them, and by them mean
something as they then make us more.

Museums in time are mortal.

So what then is the connection
between yourself and perhaps
a particular color or taste,
one selected shell from an entire shore,
the plant chosen to grow daily under
your unconscious observance of time
and change though maybe the weather
wills out.

How or who says beautiful in you
or more so mine?

I recall dried butterflies
pressed into transparencies
found in shoe boxes with shoes
of dead Aunt Gertrude's closet.
No one said anything about them
maybe since she never did
but it confused an issue

in some confine of the mind,
made mourning more mysterious
like the coffin closed with
the person inside still changing.

We are collectors all,
glass cased or closet closed
gathering information, artifacts,
icons of identification,
signs and symbols of self
on walls, tables, bodies
in drawers, sheds, and attics.

All paraphernalia of the person is
an adhesion to the unknown archetype
of ourselves, of who we are
and will have been always
an inheritance.

Susan L. Baumann

WEIGHT AND LIGHT

The burdened apple boughs
bear fruit
in their heavy rural way
while we
burdened with barrenness
bear fruitless thought
through our wandering days:

Oh for dog joy stick chasing light
for sparrowhawk flight
daylong nightlong sound
as solid ringing in every phlox bud
solid
as the snap of bright sheets
in the white light wind
sound
as the green clovered grass
sunburst
out of shadow:
light light.

Kenneth Lee Taylor