

**THE BELOIT POETRY JOURNAL**  
**Volume 24 - Number 3**      **Spring 1974**

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## **FORM 1040-L (LOVE REVENUE)**

Enter on line 1 the total of love earned from all sources (itemize) including love due (specify whether it is to be collected or is considered uncollectable). On line 2 enter love interest and dividends received, and enter sum of lines 1 and 2 on line 3. On lines 4-10 enter deductions for depreciation, contributions, costs of maintenance and repair, bad debts and losses, unmarketable inventories, moving expenses and costs of treating despair and restoring hope. On line 11 enter credit for dependents: if there is no one to depend on you, you may deduct the maximum allowable. Subtract total deductions from line 3 and enter net love on line 12. You may apply love withheld last year to the tax indicated in Table A. (If there is nothing left or if you have a net loss, you will not be taxed further.)

**William Sayres**

**SEVEN POEMS****Across the Bridge to Which There is No**

The bridge across to which  
There is no bridge to cross to which  
The cross I walk upon and with and in  
is the cross of bone I'm strung upon  
and with and for

The cross I carry strung with flesh  
The cross I cross my bridges in  
The bridges I cross by falling down  
I am falling down

The bridge across the chasm wide  
There is no cross to bridge it by  
There is no cross there is no bridge  
but sunlight

abysmal sunlight

**John Janice and the Rhinoceros**

In the whole damned history of the bullfight  
there has only been one John Janice McCobb  
He could draw a circle in the air  
climb up and invite the bull to come  
tippytoeing around the corner into oblivion  
A friendly chap with a half-closed smile like a  
trap  
and everything in his ribcage for bait

And in the whole damned history of the bull-  
fight  
there has never been another day like the day  
they let the rhinoceros out of the dark  
and John Janice fought him with a lighted  
candle

I can still recall the cheers of the crowd  
pouring down the stream into the canyon  
and how the leaves clapped in the breeze

Meanwhile, John Janice fought for his life  
making a mockery of infantile paralysis  
while the rhinoceros, named Stone Mountain  
made his move by standing perfectly still

**The Eyes of the Jaguar Hunter**

Are soft, softly blue  
He is counting the dogs  
This one is missing, and that  
The eyes of the jaguar hunter  
Are blankly flat, reflect nothing  
Beyond all thought, beyond emotion  
For the stop-hesitation of surprise

Is measured in feet-per-second  
Muzzle velocity  
Action first, then another  
Action and another  
The jaguar hunter is counting the dogs  
Born in his house  
Nursed by his wife  
Raised with his children  
One is missing, and another  
The eyes of the jaguar hunter  
Softly, softly

### **The Lake and the Mountain**

The man I ride to work with  
is one-half White Mountain Apache  
so I claim some  
Lac du Flambeau Chippewa although  
"I don't know, some eastern tribe"  
my grandmother had said

We get drunk sometimes, riding home  
and I listen to him calling  
on his short wave radio;  
"This is KPK7-257 KPK7-257 This is  
KPK7-257 callingover  
KPK7-257 This is KPK7-257 This is  
KPK7-257 mobilecalling  
Calling

I recognize in this his search  
for a vision  
As I recognize my own, bending  
over these words

Tonight with a blue stone  
tied behind his ear  
Tonight with a white stripe  
painted beneath his eye  
He will wander among the radio waves  
like Geronimo, on a pale horse

### **Beware, You're Not**

The Bitter Rock  
And Graves Used Car Lot  
is just down the street  
from your  
First and Last Chance Tavern  
beyond that  
lies the Holiday Inn  
and then,  
the open countryside

Driving out from  
Beloit, Wisconsin  
I glanced through  
the rear-view mirror at you  
reality,  
it's a transverse pleasure  
to be where you're not

### **A Japanese Comic Book Story**

A long time ago  
when all the flowers were in bloom  
and there is nothing disgraceful anywhere  
there were people living too

in mushroom houses  
and brave and famous samurai  
wandering the countryside  
keeping their souls  
as bright and sharp as their swords  
And in those days of every day is sunlight  
and in flowers and in birds and sturdy  
but lighthearted and carefree we turn  
the page into gross misfortune

The blood from an empty eye socket  
trickles into the moaning earth  
muscles and armor, muscles and armor,  
cheekplates crusted with gore  
ranks of soldiers looking foolish and absurd  
. . . and bad samurai, wicked, evil  
I counted 'bout half a dozen  
an they looked tough  
an they looked  
real bad

What are they doing?  
Why did they come here?  
Why, they're burning the women and children!  
They're pulling the mountains down!  
Making the sea turn red!  
and what's more, they're bad,  
pure bad

What can we do?  
What's to be done? But look!  
Breaking into focus on a near-by hill  
It's the pony-tail hairdo samurai!  
A scar running down to close his eye  
Looking good, looking handsome,  
and looking super-Grim!  
And now we see in his other eye

the only window in the night  
is growing light  
with the rise of a terrible power!

He's stepping up to the bad guy  
who's drowning the young lady  
His sword flashes out  
and the way you spill water  
on the road  
to quiet the dust

Now where's their leader  
And there he is in the flames  
With a sword of ice  
And from his eyes a cold white light  
Scorches the air!

How can words describe  
his eyes are inner mountains  
rising up black in a nightmare storm  
. . . our hero slightly turns his wrist  
. . . waiting  
And then all the vortexes of the world unite  
someone ran, someone shortened up,  
and the stream ran over the pebbles

The rest we know  
spring has come at last to the cherry tree  
with blossoms artistically arranged  
Our hero has gone off somewhere  
chasing thunderstorms  
and the young lady, left alone,  
to cherish a single tear



**Rinnoji**

The song of the frog  
over the temple garden pond  
echoes back again  
more clearly, and more far away  
it echoes back again  
more clearly, and still more far away  
the sound of the rain  
becomes a rapid silence

And still more rapid  
and still more far away  
until the wind in the branches of the cedar tree  
is only the wind  
in the branches against the sky

**Gary Hulbert**

**COMMISSIONER OF WATER**

After I authored the bill forbidding erosion  
I became responsible for the water.

When the Mississippi rises, my inbox  
floods with complaints I answer  
with the 'drink more' letter  
and during droughts on the Eastern seaboard  
I commission prayers for rain.

During campaigns I commemorate  
water towers, reservoirs and swimming pools  
by speaking against the invention  
of the faucet and praising the uses  
of the pail. I am forever mute  
on the wages of plumbers

and always outside my office  
a delegation of angry Baptists.

When a child drowns, I send out  
my assistant to skip stones  
across the water.

Once a week,  
after rum and water, my wife and I  
paint ourselves blue and practice  
the rain dance of the Chickasaw

and August nights I can be found  
on a beach in Delaware waving  
waving my arms at the sea.

**William Aarnes**

**THREE POEMS****The Screech Owl**

does, of course, since the spine imagines it.  
 Never the ear, never the ear at all.

Corrupted by its inner voids, the brain  
 drags owl past ear and turns owl-song to screech  
 and makes the spine imagine shiver/shake.

So:

image of a word cut from its sound.

The *sound* is tremolo,  
a liquid mourn  
 across the springtime dark;  
in the owl's throat  
 is singing darkness;  
or it is a song,  
 a softened dark song in the dark called Time.

**A Spring Vignette Forty Years Remembered**

When the white fell of winter learned the sun  
 in late March and the gravel road rose up  
 above the drifted ditches four months lost,  
 snow water in the wheel-rut rivulets  
 was Eden water or a rush of light.

Boylake and wet — wet nearly all the way —  
 I thrust my hand down through sharp coldness  
 for  
 a jewelled stone that wavered in the flow.

The water hurt my hand but not too much.  
Clumped pussywillows just outside my thought  
swayed grey-green where they grew beside  
the road.

Deep in the crystal force, my fingers tugged  
numbly at the gleam.

And the captive stone  
dried and grew dull inside the windy light  
that warmed my fingers loosening in air.

### Extrapolation

In saurian pose, in miniature, in rainbowed  
patterns of delicate scales, the ameiva  
sleeps in the terrarium. Always silent,  
it compounds silence there.

Still, it is  
not hard to imagine how (if the species should  
live  
a million years: in black/ bronze/ green/ white/  
blue-green/ yellow/ green-blue/ gold) the  
ameiva would change  
imperceptibly into the purely perceptible  
cockatoo  
sidling left/right on a branch,  
its voice busy,  
its colors busy,  
its bird-blood heart busy  
under the feathers that flash a winnowed light,  
In some far April not called April then.

John Bennett

## TWO POEMS

## The Moth's Star

["A black hole is a region of space into which a star . . . has fallen and from which no light . . . can escape." —*Scientific American*, May 1972.]

In weightless darkness, light pulls like a stone—  
the centripetal eye of the spiral, fiery  
magnetic pole to which  
all things fall.

A galaxy, bright spinning helix, reels in  
its trailing streamers, pinwheeling  
on its incandescent disc,  
where a white sun,

heavy with heat, feeding on ashes of stars,  
caves in, so dense its very light  
is drawn back in to the center,  
to the black hole.

In cold space night curls inward; flame is the core.  
A moth, as light as an ash, her sun-  
begotten lifetime spent,  
begins her last

decelerating spin. Her spiral flight  
traces the curve of the dying roulette,  
the circumstantial dance toward  
the gravity of light.

And with her fall the flame falls too, closing  
in like an iris and drawing her far  
into the bright center, deep  
in the dark star.

**The Invasion**

Beware  
the giant squash plant crawling  
implacably across the grass. Its huge  
green ears,  
erect and twitching,  
are chewed with bugs and specked with gray  
mold.

Fifty  
flabby, sticky mouths  
droop like orange shreds of popped balloon,  
and great  
bulbous noses  
flop in the mud, bloating yellow in the hot sun.

Sprouting  
from their hairy stems,  
skinny tendrils kink to grasp  
helpless weeds  
and pull the whole sprawling  
bulk forward on its belly, like a tank battalion,  
over the border  
into enemy territory,  
inching toward its destined Lebensraum.

**Barbara Bennett**

**GHOST SONATA IN THREE MOODS****1.**

There are no ghosts. For if there were,  
you would be here this long night, haunting,  
streaming the air beneath the lamp  
with the wavery presence of undersea,  
or sowing suspicions of afterlife  
in the slow breath of the white curtains.  
The night you touched could never lie  
so nameless over the closed piano,  
or creep so flat across the wall  
without intentions of spirit or dawn.

**2.**

There are no ghosts. I looked today  
for shapes of you among the clothes  
I packed away. I could not coax  
an apparition from the shirts.  
Still, as I filled the box, I searched  
for something to contain you still.  
But nothing moved. No sudden pain  
ran through the placid room. Outside,  
cicadas drilled their way toward winter.  
But the stillness was terrific.

**3.**

There are no ghosts. Life is conceived  
in a moment; death, in years. I will  
not yet be taken, not accept  
familiarities of death.  
Tomorrow evening's lamp may find me  
happily wed to vacancy,  
at home with insufficiency,  
hankering after ghosts no more.  
Tonight, I cast about for shades,  
squinting for sails on the desert shore.

**Helen J. Williams**

**TWO POEMS****The Resurrectionist**

What do you think of me you who never  
see my face and hear me only in caves  
where the wind stops or beds as lamps  
fail do you think I am never with you  
no think of me as one trying for this  
contact I am he who sends the letters  
you never receive I am the caller who  
awakens you and fades before you come  
see now mine is the labor of a solemn  
and lonely man though I am not morbid  
nor have I belief in the dark hazards  
that grieve men of my trade no ghosts  
no saints no neither are there wolves  
nor vampires nothing but this silence  
that passes the strange years between  
our lost lives as though we were mute  
mongers of a secret we alone had made  
and so what goes with me goes in lies  
goes in the dark absences of evenings  
without sleep and a loneliness I come  
to need as if it were a meat or drink  
for what could I tell them what quick  
tales of barbers or kings would do it  
I would do it saying *Friends up we go*  
or *Rise and shine* I would do anything  
to make some human cry in recognition  
of such sleep while I set a post-hole  
and ream it out wide as a man until I  
am an ice-fisher poaching on the dead



I would post them letters or dig deep  
as their fathers just for some having  
of that history  
while I in fishing drop down the hook  
and snag them under the chin and bear  
them up head first into the new world  
that rises before them dark shameless  
make-do I would love them I would cup  
their heads in my arms then kiss them  
as they stare at the world that feeds  
on itself and I say *How well you seem*  
*So thin* and I make small talk just so  
I tell them how lovely are their eyes  
black as junebugs and their old robes  
how quaint and I show them to my cart  
come I say into this land of children  
O I am a lonely man  
with work to do come with me homeward  
and sleep in my bed I have no answers  
my rooms are humble  
I am the resurrectionist I am the dark  
the father your bones I will rive them  
and cast them away like baskets of tea  
O Americans I will make you  
lonely come deep snorers come sleepers  
so I in my loneliness can sing for you  
life's footman sing to our risen lives  
as I take you in and out of the moon's  
shadow falling on the roads as we ride  
toward the hospital where old men come  
O even this night  
they come to lay strange hands on you

**Francis Parkman Imagines the Revolution (1869)**

Insomnia and sickness: what is the force that moves  
my life, my hands, that brings  
me always home

to this:

a sister for amanuensis, a mother who cares for me  
completely as though I were a god  
in a pram. Their kindnesses

are formal

as the amenities of strangers who meet in a common  
town. Together on the piazza

of my summer house  
at Jamaica Plain,

we have our cambric tea overlooking the rose garden,  
and we talk of my stay in Paris,  
of my new book, my blue  
devils.  
And between their words, in the silence that grows  
over me. profuse as wisteria,  
I feel my body  
revolt,  
so small and base, I think of LaSalle's deserters  
who put on war-paint and feathers  
in the wilderness  
and carved  
on the keel of their scow: *Nous sommes tous sauvages.*  
I comment on the Tuileries,  
on Boston and the codfish  
aristocracy  
making their grand tours through Europe with nothing  
learned, nothing to give,  
nothing to have  
taken away,  
and I recount that incident of how once at Niagara

I viewed the great cataract  
at all angles and saw  
an old Yankee  
who scrutinized it like a banknote, and there comes  
over our conversation a sudden  
and too infrequent  
laughter.  
In the keen angle of afternoon sun over the meadow,  
its light falling on the Queen  
of Flowers, I turn my face  
to the shade.  
When I write I close my eyes while a mechanical rule  
guides my hand over the page.  
It will do, that blind  
force,  
that prime mover, moving me in sickness I have known  
so long I have come to call  
it "The Enemy."  
It stalls  
my life for years on end when there is nothing for me  
to do but sit in the garden

with a blanket up  
to my knees  
and wait for an era to pass: whatever force it is,  
    whatever purpose, it is concealed  
    from me as in the picture  
games of children  
where elephants and pigs hide in trees, in clouds,  
    in such familiar notions  
    we can not divest  
ourselves  
enough to say that there are animals in the air,  
    or that there are not.  
    My youthful hero,  
Vassall Morton,  
says "whoever would be wise must sentinel his thoughts  
    and rule his mind by martial  
    law." I close my eyes  
and imagine  
what is past: in the siege of Boston, a severe light  
    like this, keen and white  
    as an angle of main-

mast sail,  
and from their garrisons the Loyalists lobbing shot  
    that bounce and skid over the field  
    while the militia  
chase after them  
as if they were black hens, and load them up to send  
    them back again. All day,  
    the cannon sacked  
from Ticonderoga  
where Allen in his populist grandeur made the fort  
    bow "for the Great Jehovah  
    and the Continental  
Congress,"  
all day their armaments return fire and knock down  
    two cows. Then the British  
    return to the theatre  
where Burgoyne  
writes an epilogue for the tragedy of *Zeus* at Faneuil  
    Hall, and the officers  
    put on a Yankee  
farce

before General Washington breaks up opening night  
with a raid on Bunker Hill.

And I keep my eyes  
shut on it,  
on the officers made up for their play as they run  
into battle in petticoats  
and blackface,

on the balls  
that find nothing worth hitting. Enemies, enemies.

Where is there a man of first  
power like Cavelier,  
Sieur de la Salle,  
who of fixed purpose, the mover and not the moved,  
staked out for the Sultan  
of Versailles

the great  
wilderness of North America as if it were a meadow  
like this, turning blue and dark  
in the evening. Mother, I say,  
bring me my shawl,  
and with Lizzie we pass the double-flowering crab

and enter the rose garden I began  
in the year of Darwin's *Origin*,  
Brown's folly,  
and there I recall for them how in my *Book of Roses*  
I noted that these strains  
were "the patricians  
of the floral  
commonwealth, gifted with fame, beauty, and rank."

Jay Meek

### WHAT I WANT OUT OF WORDSONG

What I want out of wordsong is something high-  
er and wilder, of more scraggly cut in air,  
Focusing sierras no one lives on, against a buttejagged sky,  
Than what in the quotidian rubble we are:  
Something to redeem the hangdoggery we feel



At noon, bland noon, standing in the kitchen, the weather fair,  
 Watching a robin jab a rotcrinkled apple  
 On the driveway, then jab it again and take a robinney  
 Gulp, before a starling  
 diving  
 Hooded with iridescence, drives it away.

As when a bald eagle drops down in his own  
 Version of loping out of the updraft thermal drift,  
 And lowering his aileron-  
 set bodyward of the sabred primaries sheathed against lift,  
 Descending like a grappling-hook with wings,  
 Slows quickly into the freshbloomed fear in the left  
 Eye of the jackrabbit caught beyond clumpings  
 Of sage

and then planes low over the tun-  
 dra, steady toward the prey,  
 A billcrooked cowling growing larger  
 And larger between the feather-scythes and suddenly  
 The rabbit shudders nimble in its aggrieving plight  
 And plightedness to maw and claw, coyote and harrier cry,

The snowdivots plumed from its zigzag flight  
Dusting the beak on the increment  
To silence behind it now like a trap's set bite,  
Like a downy harrow, or a bow killing-bent,  
For an aeon-second longer  
till, coevally  
The wings brake, windrush-clapping, with the breast  
Back-lurching to extend the talons and

The rabbit swivels behind a bush, to  
Safety, his fearmusk settling, now,  
Around the flailing eagle—  
so  
We grope to fly up  
up out of the narrow  
Caves of our dayhanging, the batty dark,  
Beyond the plotted bottomlands of Beu-  
lah, the yellowbrindling cedarlight and garden-lark,  
Till finally a-dazzle with our hunger, how  
We drop  
down-softly  
To the poisoned bait.

**THE DEATH OF HEKTOR***for Konstantinos Lardas***1. Patrokles**

Do you hear him hissing:

"FOOL!"

The name echoes in your helmet,  
bugles in your humid helmet: "FOOL!"

True, Patrokles.

Golden Hektor harpoons you,  
strews you strap-wise into the sand;  
and the horns sound back to Achilles  
through the parachuting scarves  
all the whores throw down from Troy:

"FOOL!"

But, though you swoon loose,  
from your ruby, flying youth,  
embrace the title, Patrokles:  
you glued them flat against their wall.  
You turned their Skamander off its course.  
And Golden Hektor lost his lunch  
whooping away from your silver trumpets.

You schooled him, Pupil,  
so let it go; your tutor comes.

Now fall, buffoon, pull loose your hands,  
and die, Patrokles,  
wrecked like a car before Ilium.

**2. Achilles**

Sweeping into your tent  
six Greek soldiers stare at you,  
“Listen, General,” the first one finally . . .  
“Patrokles is dead by Hektor.”

DEAD . . . that word again.  
It stops your mind.  
“Dead?” . . . turning toward them.  
“How? Who? Hektor you said?  
Hektor killed Patrokles?”

The tent is still.

“Hektor killed Patrokles?”

The answer fills the air unspoken.  
The six Greek soldiers leak blood.  
You look at them & look at them &

then:

“Did you bring my armor back?”

“No.”

“Does Hektor have it?”

“Yes.”

“& my horses, the black?”

“No.”

silence like a thing. Worse,  
swelling the tent, oppressive,  
swirling, too large, unsafe

then:

“HEKTOR!”

“COCKSUCKING HEKTOR!”

& the six Greek soldiers  
more frightened than battle running backwards

& you like a statue: CLENCHED  
looking for something to kill  
short jerking looks at things  
till things are good enough &  
you pull your tent down like a sail  
rip it & tear it with teeth & hands  
lift your shield like a plate  
huge above your head & break it  
break the broken pieces again & again till  
the ground seesaws away from you  
& you stagger with hatred whirling like a world  
weeping & moaning for Patrokles.  
Lovely Patrokles,  
crushed against the walls of Ilium.

Your army sidles toward you  
like woods grown round a hill.

Your anger was a fist  
now you open into hands.  
There is nothing left to break.  
You fall against the ground, weeping,  
like a girl whose plans are ruined.

& a soldier bending over you says,  
"General . . . General . . ."  
his voice is soft & everywhere  
says, "Achilles . . . (louder)  
"Achilles . . . (angry for you)  
then like a thunder storm:

"ACHILLES WRECKER OF CITIES, WIDOW-  
MAKER!"

& you rise with his help to your feet  
& the army stabbing the night with their spears  
like a rain falling upwards, chanting . . .

& this soldier with his arm around you  
gives you his cup of strong bare wine  
turns to the army & the army quiets  
yells to them, loudly to their names:

“WHERE IS THIS WOMAN-STROKING  
HEKTOR?”

the army murmurs. Then again:

“WHERE IS THIS BOY WHO FIGHTS FROM  
A DITCH?”

laughter & he yells again:

“HOW WILL HE HIDE NOW WHEN ACHILLES  
COMES?”

& then the banging of shields  
like something awful in the night  
like a hailstorm against houses.

“WHEN ACHILLES BURNS THE AXLES  
TOWARD HIM!”

“WHEN ACHILLES SWEATS THE HORSES  
WHITE TOWARD HIM!”

“WHEN BEAR-KILLING ACHILLES SMOKES  
THE FIELD TOWARD HIM!”

and the army gone mad spearing the moon  
and this soldier turning toward you  
who focus finally your tear-stained eyes  
to see a woman with a planet held in her hands  
& you gasp and the army falls on its knees  
to see Grey-eyed Athena, the Daughter of God  
step close as the night and whisper in your hair:

“Tomorrow he dies.”

### 3. Hektor

From the top of the wall, your father yells,  
The others are watching. Your mother screams.

Achilles is streaking across the field.  
His horses are white with sweat.  
The seizing axles smoke and howl.  
But even worse, Athena, whom you can't see  
rides beside him and their hairs mingle.

The Grey-eyed Daughter of God, Hektor,  
flies with Achilles toward your city.

Throw your spear, pull the long bronze sword,  
throw the temples, none of it will help you.  
You were dead when Athena touched her  
    father's arm,  
when he knew that shiver he dare not name.

Before this day is out  
you will know the distance of your city.  
Your white-handed throat will beat like a heart  
as awful Achilles comes whirling and sneering  
hulking your army across his knees.  
You will strip your priceless armor  
and crawl backward to your mother.  
You will drag by your feet from Achilles' car.  
You will plead for your life  
and your wall-bound, stomping men will hear;  
and all the poets will strike your name  
from the pages of their singing books.

It is so, Hektor.

For even now your courage fails  
as History coils around you rattling.

Even now the white-eyed terror of horses  
rolls you out from your name-walled room  
as twice-crossed Achilles arches toward you  
end over end through the scattering faces.

And you come to realize how you, too,  
will bite the strings that rise from your hands  
straight-tight into the buzzing afternoon,  
the gaudy silver wires of your orchid life.

But even worse, Hektor,  
when this auburn-eyed Achilles  
comes broad against the hunting sun,  
you will find that you love him,  
and your muscled arms will forfeit  
the warlocked falcon of your pride.

And that's what will destroy you.  
and that's what will send you running  
round the disbelief of your watching town,  
caterwauling, as bridge-falling Death  
closes upon you sectioning this field  
with the hand made measures of Time.

Raise your pitiful stick  
bellow and curse, but look  
look how the afternoon bends  
as something comes you cannot see.

It is not Achilles  
(though it is Achilles)  
It is not even Death  
(though it is Death)  
look how even Athena  
and her proud father  
scurry away, somersaulting,



for behind them the air trembles  
hits itself like a deaf mute to speak  
as man-breaking Time, that has no equal,  
rolls appointed on its sky-wide wheels.

But all you can see is Achilles,  
tail-gating Achilles; and so for you

Goddamned Hektor, Panting Hektor,  
cast the one good perfect spear  
the only accomplishment of your life.  
Throw it soldier, at the afternoon.  
See how it flies as it was made  
perfectly straight and kills the ground.

Inside you now an eight year old boy  
charges the flowers with wooden sword.  
Charging Achilles, Athena and Zeus;  
Charging the thing that stands aloof  
that doesn't move, that moves, and doesn't  
move.

Do it Hektor; even in this hopelessness.  
Lower your head and charge the afternoon.  
It is right and proper that you should.

**Raymond Biasotti**

**NEEDLE MAN****1**

*“One way of regarding the structure of the Book of Changes involves the family: “parents” (or grandparents) appear first in the work, followed by brothers and sisters, sons and daughters . . . ”*

Lying  
down as a penned  
white mouse, the die  
of intestines rolling.

A voice says: *Your Father*  
*had to lie*  
down, kidneys and liver  
drained of desire,

I saw the sky was a lover  
lying on stripped coal  
that glittered like slaves  
in his hold.

**2**

*“According to one legend acupuncture was discovered accidentally on the field of battle, when arrow wounds in one part of the body affected organs in another part . . . ”*

Once there was a needle man  
to fix these shivers,  
shoot up the veins with stars

centuries ago in the sick  
high of battle near Anyang  
where a soldier is pierced:  
he sees *A line must run*  
*from the hand to the heart*

and writes it down:  
 lines of coursing depth  
 and tender surface,  
 a knowledgeable mystery  
 when the soldier's death  
 punctures the dynasty of white house  
 administration collapsing.

## 3

*"Emperor Huang Ti was probably the first to recognize acupuncture, which then persisted as a medical practice into the Period of the Warring States . . ."*

The Emperor  
 discovered the embrace of health  
 in blades of the moon.  
 He swallowed wind-swords.

But the Emperor  
 gave peace to his people at spear-point.  
 He rode into battle on screams and erections.  
 Sages spoke of the superior man.

## 4

Bedridden.  
 Slugs of arthritis  
 gunning you down, Grandfather.

Where is this sickness?  
 Reeling from joint to joint,  
 swilling on fingers  
 and logged tongue.

What birds are these  
 who carouse into vertebrae  
 to make love  
 droppings?

I saw you once  
 in daguerreotype, Grandfather,  
 riding a horse of copper  
 and carouseling Grandmother away.

You were no grandfather  
 but a grown first son  
 driven to your woman's wood  
 to carpenter a Mother.

## 5

*A man now writes: 'Her painful menstruation caused her to stay in bed, and drugs were no help. I needled her on the inside of the knee once a month. After six treatments she was cured and has felt no pain for ten years.'*

Faith is a slack muscle, Sister.  
 Faith is a firm thumb.

The man who can pedal the earth's  
 organs and relish the chords  
 of livers: ride the golden meridians  
 of your thigh, Sister,  
 and sound the anemones' depths.

The whole point  
 of the Lord telling Lazarus to rise:  
 whether six feet through or membrane,  
 let the skin be open.

## 6

*"The work of the mosquito might be seen  
 as a type of acupuncture . . ."*

A needle girl is saying,  
 Let me enter skin,  
 charm coagulation from the blood  
 and pass your precious headwaters

down to my children wading in their pool.

Where I have been your flesh leaps—  
you smile it off.

## 7

*“Did Odysseus do more good than harm  
to Polyphemus? . . .”*

No man  
could reach for a giant's eye  
and cure him of looking with bare metal.

It must have been a needle man  
to blind that killing,  
bring on the touching of lambs

and teach how to bed down  
finally and sleep with half  
truths.

## 8

Eldest daughter, in my nightmare  
you diminish winds  
and fork your only lung  
in a candleless cenacle.

Voices will say, *She is better off now.*  
Grandmother, in your last old home  
you could not speak: would not  
keep quiet.

Before dawn your words  
and tunes are coming back.  
Your voice that tonified a household,  
piano rolls, a popular waltz.

## 9

Illness returns,  
mice of cancer,  
honeybee cirrhosis.

Who will heal this healer?

On a field of third-take epics  
pincerred bees dig into dust.  
Weaponless defenders who have never seen  
the queen.

10

At Guadalcanal rifles pointed  
the way, Cousin.

You gave as you received:  
needles of morphine  
that sucked you to sleep.

11

*"When Martin Luther King spoke . . ."*

Causes go on lying  
down, visions of white  
mice pinned with hypotheses.  
My body in rags at thirty . . .

A needle man in black  
purlled some of those bones,  
stirring the lymph  
of Brothers and Sisters,

lock your arms  
and march down Main Street!  
Open the windows and help me  
sweep up last night's sirens.

12

*"The ancient sages also taught that if a  
man withdrew before ejaculation he  
might satisfy a hundred women and lose  
none of his own substance . . ."*

I saw the ancient rods were silver.  
Sunk in the flesh and deftly removed  
they could march a hundred women

off to miracle  
cures of imbalance.

Bellies contented themselves  
with emperors hooked on design  
of wounds that do not close.

But now your golden rod  
most lose itself in the dead  
flesh of the plane tree:

mainline addicted rivers  
and course through sisterly  
seedlings of white pine  
to flourish,

divine  
the one woman.

### 13

*"Just as St George was intent on ridding  
the world of every evil . . ."*

The monster could not slaughter.  
Sick as a lab  
experiment the dragon's hot air  
came hard.

A knight rode by,  
singing of queens and stalemates.  
He saw the bloodshot beast:  
he charged: the dragon dodged like a truck  
too late: the spear blessed of St Catherine  
lanced him like a boil.

But suddenly the dragon could breathe.  
An oak caught fire: his sickness was gone!

He kissed the knight (no tongue in cheek)  
and ran to tell his mother in Rome.

But the knight wiped off the kiss.  
He wondered, Who am I?

He finally resolved to keep the lance,  
and his horse, but not his armor:  
as someone now might lance *him*,  
he put on a knightly nakedness.

## 14

The night that I was lying  
with prostate belching  
and obese aorta

a woman aimed her finger:  
ungagged with pride  
I tasted honey  
and rolled on her water with dragoning cats.

## 15

*"For above and below, yang and yin,  
must be returned to balance."*

Reborn,  
a next life,  
to be Godwit  
aimed at the heart of waterbugs:

spearing yourself alive  
to write the day's lines  
in shallow survival

where each stroke knows  
the above,  
the below,  
where they touch.

## 16

Who was this drunkard?  
An eye gorged on nothing.



The gravity of a young son  
pulling itself down.

I carried you home, Brother.  
Unlocked your temples  
for needles of starlight to rush in.

They have planted fully grown chestnuts  
on your sidewalks.

Come and walk there,  
wink at the damselflies  
on your green mall.

17

Georgiaville Pond,  
your body divides  
when the children who are rods  
enter.

Whole afterwards,  
my youngest daughter,  
you will needle  
children of your own from their caverns,

forming a circle  
fragile as fingers  
on the shore of this page.

Not blind to the sickness.  
Seeing what terminal pain  
is leaching down these hills.

Steady my hand.  
Give us your aim.  
The imaginable cure.

**Edward McCrorie**

## TWO POEMS

### Sitka

The rain is so quiet here,  
So faint and so barely visible,  
So clear you can watch the mountains  
Rise and smolder with fog,  
So quiet only the taut thick leaves  
Of the skunk flower drum a sound,  
So plain you can catch the gulls  
Sliding out over the Pacific  
Searching for trawlers,  
So still they mistake the rain  
For bugs just hatching,  
Just flickering on the water.

### The Snow Country

Up on Verstovia the snow country is silent  
tonight.

I can see it from our window,  
A white sea whose tide flattens over the  
darkness.

This is where the animals must go—  
The old foxes, the bears too slow to catch  
The fall run of salmon, even the salmon them-  
selves—

All brought together in the snow country of  
Verstovia.

This must be where the ravens turn to geese,  
The weasels to wolves, where the rabbits turn  
to owls.

I wonder if birds even nest on that floating sea,  
What hunters have forgotten their trails and  
sunk out of sight.

I wonder if the snow country is green under-  
neath,

If there are forests and paths

And cabins with wood-burning stoves.

Or does it move down silently gyrating forever,  
Glistening with the bones of animals and  
trappers,

Eggs that are cold and turning to stones.

I wonder if I should turn, tap and even wake you.

**Robert A. Hedin**

**COPROLITES.** *Albert Goldbarth. New Rivers.* \$2.50 paper, \$5.00 cloth.

Congratulations to New Rivers for presenting one of the great word-magicians of our time in a beautifully-produced book that will stand up to the heavy reading and rereading each one of those 600 copies will get (but why so small a run of one of the most powerful and influential of the new poets?). These poems have the dimensions of greatness: great fertility of imagination, under strong control; an unique voice and vision, with its own idiom; abundance and depth in history, prehistory, and inner history. There is an astonishing range of topologies: the body cell, the body, the midwest, the American earth, and the ancient sanctuary of "The Wildernesse." Goldbarth's ear is excellent; the experience of reading aloud from his poems is spell-binding. The diversity too is dazzling: the atavistic voyage of "The Fisher's Wish" balanced by the dramatic dialogue of William Harvey (!) and Joan of Arc in another. Goldbarth is a literary banyan—strongly rooted, widely-branching, and forever putting down new trunks from the branch-tips.

Another publisher who matches the quality of the poetry with the quality of the book production is *David L. Godine*. An elegant pair from Godine: **SELECTED POEMS OF THOMAS CAMPION**, selected and prefaced by *W. H. Auden* and introduced by *John Hollander*, \$15. *cloth*. Auden chose forty-eight poems and a masque by this poet-composer, and twenty of these have their music, in modern calligraphy and in facsimiles of the Renaissance performing versions. **TOWN & COUNTRY MATTERS: EROTICA & SATIRICA**, by *John Hollander*, \$6.95, with *Anne Hollander's* wicked and witty drawings, is classic in several senses. There are some tight, sharp translations of *Catullus*. And in his own Augustan poems *Hollander* displays

a honed scalpel and great linguistic virtuosity. Byron would have relished these poems as he relished Pope and Gifford.

Now shame on Ithaca House for giving Lynn Shoemaker's excellent **COMING HOME**, \$2.95, such a pallid production. The nearly-blank cover and the greyish type are apt to prove a barrier to the crisp, imaginative poems. Ithaca House poets usually are fresh and intense, always worth reading. They deserve more appropriate book design.

**THE BEASTS AND THE ELDERS.** *Robert Siegel. The University Press of New England. \$3.50 paper, \$7.00 cloth.*

Siegel writes spare and intense poems and attacks his material with vigor. His sentences are usually long. But his poems have momentum, and the long sentences tend to layer details to shape a densely impacted idea topped with a tough-minded final line. The poems sustain themselves largely because Siegel has a fine eye for varieties of detail which he can adeptly juxtapose. A master of synthesis, he sustains his images by transforming their shape; sometimes the sharp outlines of these images melt into totally different ones:

That night the dog let night in  
Moonlight bubbled down his chin

Spilling across the porch. Thoughtful, he  
Tore the black grass, sniffed what he'd torn,

Bayed a silk slip weeping from a line.

Here we are reminded of Wallace Stevens' "sleight-of-hand man"; the poet's magic is his ability to summon fresh forms from old details. Siegel's vision is always seeking the unusual in the commonplace.