1978

UA68/6/1 Zephyrus

Western Kentucky University

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Zephyrus 1978

Contributors:
Denise Boston - Poem
S.D. Cole – Through Crystal Mist
   Futile Garden
   As I Am Leaving
   From Whence Comes That Western
Glow
   For An Instant
   Poem
   As You Play Guitar
Letha Edison – It Remains to be Seen
   Cool
Elise Frederick – Never
   Too Late
Cindy Glaysbrook – Two Poems
   To a Dead Cat
James Gover – The Room
   Bookends
G.L. Hottinger – 3 Trigrams from the I Ching
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Zell Page – Possessions of the Dead
Sheila Riley – In Memory
   Mam Ma
Denise Russell - Poem
Janna Sellmer – Two Poems
George Simpson – A Stranger of My Million Ways
   Apple Peelins
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   The Rich, The Poor
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Night Comes
Dwight Trabue – Wanderings
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William Valentino – Grain of Sand
   Conversation of Two Men on a Road
L.D. Whitley – Sonnet V
Jacki Wood – To Terry
   To Ben
   In Flight
   A Salty Song

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ZEPHYRUS

Spring 1978

A publication of
the English Department of Western Kentucky University
at Bowling Green
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David Surface

THE PERFECT LINE

Driving down a country road late last night
I was composing a poem about nature and man.
I was searching for the perfect line
When suddenly I saw a small flapping shape in the road
—just ahead
—a piece of paper or cloth, perhaps—
Just as my wheels passed over it, two things happened—
I saw that it was a wounded animal
And I thought of the perfect line.

I-65 NORTH

Watching the other little steel bugs swim past
through the inky blackness,
I catch a glimpse of a pale face in a window
And I feel a strange thrill to know
that the cold black space outside is inhabited
with warm, breathing creatures like me,
encased in their own individual worlds of metal, upholstery,
and warmth.
Turning to you, I look into your eye’s window
for a glimpse of the face inside.

WITNESS

At dawn in bed, I closed my eyes and saw
the distant places you wander when the seasons change
—saw the sun set over strange green mountains
and heard people speak with strange voices
—that turn to fog in the cold morning air—
And opened my eyes to see the white plaster ceiling
staring down at me with snowblind eyes.

In dark rooms at dusk, I ran my tongue
through my dry mouth and almost tasted
the dark fruits you partake of
—felt my laughing thoughts change partners
in a mad dance with no name—
And left the room with the moon waning in my skull
and the taste of stars still in my mouth.

Alone in bed at midnight, I heard my own heart
stop
And I swear that I tasted the lips and felt the warmth
of the others you have held
—witnessed the rush of passion like a pebble
left alone on the beach watches the waves crash together—
And awoke to the taste of their salty spray.

DEFERENCE

Stopping my old bicycle on a summer trail
I rest and admire the wildflowers
There on a large bed of Queen Anne’s lace
two beetles are making love
A third stumbles in but quickly scurries away
in deference to their privacy
I take the hint
David Surface

Night comes
and I go to the fields with no light to guide my feet
like a child runs from his house with no clothes
to gladly greet the freeze of winter
in glorious nakedness
or one who walks atop the highest fence with eyes closed
smiling in secret anticipation
of the luxurious fall
So do I go to the leafy blindness
seeking its freezing deepness
its luxurious fall

The night is glad that I have come alone
It reaches up to caress—to claw cruelly—
and then soothe with another gentle caress
Further and further into that blind country I go
until the ice-cold stars above seem more near and real
than the uncertain ghost-lights of houses that dream in distance

There in a place where the gray land touches the black sky
and a crippled old plow lies rotting
like the bones of some unthinkable animal
I take off my clothes to show the night that I am not afraid
My blood quickens
as if I stood naked before a lover for the first time
—a sudden storm of clapping and shrieking from the trees—
vulgar applause—
I jerk my clothes back around me
like a lover caught by an angry father

A flight of bats bursts from the high cedars
and circles laughing round the stars

S. D. Cole

THROUGH CRYSTAL MIST

This supple girl,
this moving light,
walks slowly,
as though unable
to bear the beauty
she carries,
guilelessly apparent,
like the breasts
of newly-expectant mothers.

FUTILE GARDEN

Fatal words that fall to dust,
spoken ten-thousand years ago,
and again last night;
history moving inexorably
falling once and once again
into dust.

and yet,
Still they come and come,
perhaps to last a day;
fragments for ages not yet
conceived in ashes.
AS I AM LEAVING
There is another side
of you
that's not hard,
or cynical,
or coldly grasping.
It's soft
and fragile feeling,
like a hummingbird,
or a violin.

FROM WHENCE COMES THAT WESTERN GLOW
I, myself
can think of no other
indictment
than the crowning sun's
aurora
placed at your feet.

FOR AN INSTANT
The sun is a hard orange chip,
like a marble cut in half,
balanced on the mountains,
against a fragile turquoise sky.
a small, white owl
sits on a fire hydrant
watching ground squirrels,
unaware of his presence,
in the sand beneath him.
a runway stretches quietly
into desert behind him.
the land lies flat and gray.
Farther down the concrete apron
Attack Planes whine to life,
 warming up for daily exercises,
scream that scream
of certain death approaching.
the owl looks up—
as if awakened,
his cry an echo,
flies off;
ground squirrels terrified—
clamber for cover,
the safety of darkness.
The Attack Planes taxi.
You merely ask me
how I am,
    hardly pausing
in your steps
    to where you go.
as if you were
impatient to be on your
    way,
having shattered my
resolve into
    a thousand piece catastrophe
of longing
to be near you once again.

I cannot make a poem
how I am,
    how much I
love you, how much I will.
So I turn into a nightmare
    you once had
and hated until you had
    grown too old
to fear the dark of night,
going now like a long
    shiny hearse,
toward the final road.

S. D. Cole

AS YOU PLAY GUITAR

The fears you keep
that hold you from me
you hide like the scars
you feel have ruined
your perfect body.

Yet,
those faint lines
are signs
of outward healing,
unimportant,
except that they are yours:
part of the life you led
long before
I knew of their existance,
reminding me of your fear.

What words will tell you,
assure and re-assure,
that as a part
of all you were,
or are,
or ever will be,
is the thing
that make them beautiful
to me?
Your’re drifting...
Like the maple-leaf boats on the free-flowing river,
You go further away from me. With each new day
I reach out, and find I must stretch further to touch you.
But that was yesterday.
Today I reached for you, and found that you were
beyond my grasp. I am alone.
Your new sails are those which last only for a short time.
They are sails that blind you from reality
and take your mind to a place where there are no problems;
where all things are carefree and beautiful.
Backfire.
What happens when your sails steer you differently;
When the beauty turns into the most vivid horror your
brain can create;
What happens when you are left in the black night,
all alone with your terror?
Return.
When you have come back to reality, and you find
that your sails are not lasting,
Where to then?
Back to me.
For just as the shore awaits the drifting boat’s
return, I will wait, silently and patiently, for your return.
No matter how long
You choose to float
I’ll always be here...
Waiting.

Cindy Glaysbrook
Quietly she sits
Staring as they search the charred rubble—
Hoping to find a sign of life or death.
It’s the not knowing that frightens her.
Her thoughts go back
To the birth of the fifth child.
One more mouth to feed.
One more that they could not afford.
"But havin' babies is a matter of chance.
There ain't nothin' to do about it
Unless you just don't have sex."
And her ol’ man would never stand for that.
They call to her—
With no sympathy.
They’ve found the bodies—one, two, three.
And would she identify them;
She rises—
In a zombic trance.
And moves to the black heap.
She looks—yes, they are hers.
She can tell—even in their condition.
Yet she is ashamed that she cannot cry.
She feels no remorse.
Only a sick kind of evil joy—
"That’s what the ol’ man gets for makin’ me have babies."
But she knows
that there will only be more
To replace the lost.
And she’ll have to strike the match once again.
Cindy Glaysbrook

TO A DEAD CAT

The ball with the bell inside
Lies in the corner—
Untouched and still.

It once rolled—
Jingling across the floor.
Pushed by the paw
Of the gray-eyed cat.

That faithful cat that comforted me.
Through broken hearts
And lonely times.

Who purred at me
As I stroked his fur.
Oh, my friend!

Raised from a kitten
to a full-grown cat.
Only to have you taken away
By a careless driver
On a summer night.

The cushion is cold
Where you once napped.
But the place in my heart
Remains warm.

Jacki Wood

TO TERRY

Silver-tipped words,
Upon a sister-tongue,
Of love speak,

Dove-soft, and
The pitter-patter pillow feet
Of our two souls combine,

Wind,
And climb the
Staircase of care

To places where
Alone we
Could not go,

Nor show the
Joy we bring and sing,
Each to the other,

True sisters together,
Our souls' love forever.
TO BEN

Sometimes,
Behind dark flecks
In soft brown cushions
Of your eyes,

I think I see a reason,
Or maybe a clue
To the everchanging
You.

Sometimes,
Within the comfort of
Your downy
Pillow smile,

I think I see a glow,
Sweet mellow flow
Of spirit that is
You.

But, like the soft, chased
Butterfly that flutters in the widest sky,
Like the mirror flash, too quick to see
What shines on me
And where its origin may be,

You go to places
I don’t know
And take your heart...

And I stand here
Alone,
A leaf upon
A winter tree.

IN FLIGHT

There must be a Heaven,
I hear it in my dreams;
I see it in my thoughts.

Striving, throbbing, flapping
Toward perfection,
My soul on wing
Must sing

A song of ever-wending,
Never-ending journey
Through the final misty,
Water-bearing cloud,

Out, above, into
The smiling symphony
Of the ever-blue sky.
Jacki Wood

A SALTY SONG

Part-painted pictures,
And undone puzzles
Tell me more than you.

Like Sherlock,
I weezle through
Your words,

My Glass against my eye,
Seeking treasures
Better left unknown,

And start upon a
Sudden find,
Silver mine,

Glitter-ore
Reflections of your
Wolfish ways within.

And then begin
The sea-wave slaps
Upon my face

That leave a bitter
Trace of care,
Of understanding there.

James Gover

THE ROOM

The nightclub singer keeps on singin’ tho’ nobodies listenin’.

She watches the couple in the corner noisily discussin’
Armageddon, ‘n’ tries to ignore the drunk who’s throwin’
Up on her shoes.

The cops stand around in ratty jeans ‘n’ marine corp
Haircuts, waitin’ for the comediene to say a bad word.

The resident poets lecture on existentialism to those
Too drunk to walk away, while the unpublished author
Spills his J&B on Albert Camus in the pocket of his
Inevitable tweed jacket.

The hookers stand in the doorways with warm smiles on
Their lips ‘n’ empty eyes. ‘n’ all the broken men come to
Them, payin’ the price of loneliness.
BOOKENDS

You will find them wandering through the used book stores, searching, seeking, for something to explain it all, to fit the pieces together.

The smells of musk, the names, the titles, the old clerk in the dirty cap. This is their cathedral, he, their priest.
There is good here, but also pain and long suffering, heroes crushed at the hands of tyrants.

They seek communion. The altar is stacked high with books. They read each other’s eyes from either side.

But you know they only scan the covers, then move on to the next shelf. Pages left unturned. One gone this; one gone that. Sartre and Joyce weep together. Nietzsche snorts.
The old priest only puffs his pipe and shakes his head.

Denise Boston

Shadowed images outline budding trees and sway gracefully in the darkness.

They move with all the skill of a violinist, possessed with the emotion and glory of sound and all the gentleness of starry-eyed lovers embraced in stormy night dances.

Leaves rustle in the blustery lack of light and lonely thoughts run rampant on the mind’s dusty backroads.

The music stops... the mood is broken by empty words and wasted time.
POSESSIONS OF THE DEAD

Rotten Threads on
rusted hangers
Soaking up the gloom
musty old trunk
of sentimental trinkets
Occuqies a corner of
the room

Numerous cobwebs
paper the ceiling
While crickets carpet
the floor
And memories dwell
in the minds of survivors
when absorbing the sights
from the door

Steve Smith

THE LAST DANCE

One afternoon when I was young of heart
And long before the seasons did impart
To me memories of more pleasant days
I saw two butterflies in the warm haze.
On gay wings of bright but mortal delight
They flitted within the heavenly light
Which illumined their dancing. A spiral
Entwined, they seemed, with meek and holy will
As against the sky they wove the symbol
Of eternal love, which young hearts worship still.
But all sweet earthly steps come to some end
And before the light began to fade
They drifted apart, their betrothal made
Most likely, never to dance again.

OF COURSE

Of course it wasn’t me
I’m only five foot three.
Can’t you see?
It couldn’t be me.
Late at night?
Why I give my mind to thoughts of blue
On a blue background.
Full of waves, full of sound
Underneath, underground.
Where ladies glide
Caress their side
Pinch their hide
Can’t you see?
She lied, she lied, she lied.
SONNET V

Our words are grains of sand under our feet
That stir and slip away with rushing waves.
We slowly sink and fall; our words are just
—dead weight—which pulls us down and buries us.
    They wear between us every time we meet;
    Each touch becomes a burn that we forgave.
We're crushed beneath their weight; You surely must
    Realize our meanings are so nebulous.
If but existence were allowed to me
In silence . . . There is flaming subtlety
Below the surface, and I never knew.
    . . . the clouded waters churn to brown from blue. . . .
    Perhaps if we could just lay words aside
We might perceive what words would only hide.

GRAIN OF SAND

I saw a man on the beach yesterday
Who looked like his mind was a mile away
Glancing around, he reached down with his hand
And brought it back up with a pile of sand

He looked at it thoughtfully; loosened his grip
The sand, through his fingers, was starting to slip
He dropped it till all that remained in his hand
Was one single, tiny, brown, wet grain of sand

He turned and he saw me and said, "This my friend
Is what everybody becomes in the end."
CONVERSATION OF TWO MEN ON A ROAD

A man set out on a journey
Searching for wrong and right
Looking for all the ideals
That make men love and fight

Trying to find all the meanings
Trying to catch the Sun
He grew no wearier thinking
That his search had just begun

He came upon a young man
Full of sorrows and griefs
He asked him to open his heart up
And tell him his beliefs

The young man smiled grimly
And said, "Now I must go,
But while we're walking this way
I'll tell you what I know."

"I believe, of course, in true love,
And love for all mankind
But still, I've sometimes hated
And murder's come to mind."

"I believe in being honest
But do I really try?
Because sometimes I've cheated
Or told a little lie."

"And I believe in Beauty
But you can't make that stick
Because I've littered highways
And laid an ugly chick

"And I believe in Justice,"
He said with stiffened jaw
"But I'm still disrespectful
To elders, and the Law."

"I believe, sans doubt, in Freedom
And going my own way
Yet I defer to others
Nearly every single day."

"I believe in God and Heaven
But still my morals stink
I've broken His Commandments
'Cause I really didn't think."

"I know it sounds confusing
All logic disappears
The world still turns the same way
With all its wants and fears."

The young man then grew silent
Then said, "I need a drink."
He walked into a bar room
And left the man to think

And so the man walked onward
He then began to run
But grew no wearier thinking
That his search had just begun.
Lisa Claire Lewis

If this awkward age passes
And I am left coordinated—
I will cry gratitude
And also rain regret.
I want to fulfill
The potentials of youth—
But the ambitions of
An arrogant adult
Shake my cracking rattle.

The sound that the world makes
As it spins
Is heard at night when all
Is hushed and dim,
Revolving in the void
The earth sings
And to all who are patient to listen
It brings,
An old song with lonely lyrics
Of days passed
And the melody of mourning
When no one shall last.
The sound that the world makes
As it spins
Will be echoed between cold steel creatures
Left by men.

Beware of:
Mirrors without glass...
Therein lives—
A perfect reflection.

Look in:
Rivers reflecting images...
Temporary pictures—
For nothing lasts.

Shallow in your presence
Lazy in your eyes
Happy...
Forget the words
Take off the disguise
Simply...
Let someone knock and
Enter your surprise
Possibly...
Comfort your existence
Unroof the height you fly
Maybe...
Wash away those colors
That smear truths with lies
FANTASY IN MY NURSERY

Galloping down a windy moon lane
My rocking horse slapping my face with his mane,
I could scarce view a young rogue all alone
So I halted my mount to focus upon
A lad whose shivering body shone.
"Whoa there, fine sir!" I cried a greeting.
"Take my cloak and my warmth and enjoy our meeting!"
And with that he grinned slightly underneath a cloudy shroud
And said not a word
But grabbed my laughter
And touched me off my fine rocking steed
Leaving me in quiet wonder after
God as my witness cannot remember
Dapple grey prancers all made of timber
All that flows in my memory
Is a sly touch in the moon night shimmery.

PASSION PLEA

Heartbreak is what
my hard heart needs...
Its shabby molded case
needs attention
So
take your strong
but tender feeling
and gently
Oh gently
pry open my loneliness
replace hate with love
stitch it with caring
and stay
Oh stay
with me forever
so I will never
Bleed.
Elise Frederick

NEVER

I also have feelings.
They are there, whether you have noticed,
I don’t know.
I sometimes wonder what brought us together anyway.
We are so totally different.
I am like a sea gull—free, soaring high to great horizons and other places.
But you... you are... I don’t know.
I can’t describe you. Why?
My God...what is it? Are you really there at all?
Are you?!? You aren’t.
You never were... I never was...
Never.
Such a lonely-word...
that’s me...
never.

TOO LATE

Did you know that I love you?
No, I thought not.
I was always so proud that I never told you,
Never told anyone.
I kept it all to myself.
It was a secret just for me and you never knew.
I almost told you once, but I got scared and didn’t.
That was the first night you kissed me.
I loved you then.
I love you now.
And you love me because I know.
But it’s too late now.
It’s always too late.
Death is too early and love is too late.
Can I still love you, even now?

G. L. Hottinger

3 TRIGRAMS FROM THE I CHING

——
the gentle wind bewildered in the wood
——
stares in each vain direction unsure
——
he shuffles tentatively spreading cold fingers
——
stirring abysmal waters black and expressionless
——
heavy and slow in the half-evening
——
charcoal tentacles of ferns are mocked
——
by the joyous mist pirouetting on the lake
——
(the forms with bound souls bending down
——
each essence dropping to one essence alone)
IN MEMORY

I watched my grandpa as he smoked his pipe
And gently turned the pages of his photograph album,
Sometimes he would tell me the stories "behind the pictures."
But I never could find anything behind them when I looked.
I studied him when he smiled and mumbled
Some old-time expressions about the way things used to be...
He told me that I resembled Great-Aunt-Somebody,
But I never could remember her name.
When I was younger, he would hold me
In his lap and whisper to me all his good memories.
As he grew older, I grew older,
He couldn't get around very well and
I got around better, and things changed.
Sitting in his chair, he smoked his pipe for a while,
And gently turned the pages of his album.
And he tried to tell me the stories behind the pictures...
I knew not to look for them anymore.
There was more to it than just faded faces.
I watched him as he closed his eyes,
And disappeared into his pictures to live in memory.

MAM MA

I passed by Mam Ma's window and
Saw her sittin' in the big chair,
Daddy told me to be real quiet 'cause
Grandma needed all the rest she could
Get, 'cause she was tired, he said.
I noticed a crack in the door, just
Big enough for my small nose and pair of
Eyes to get through.
As I nudged the rest of my body into
The room, Mam Ma woke up real quick
And smiled big at me.
She explained that she hadn't been
Sleepin' too good lately and, as she
drew me to her lap, added that a
Nap now and then didn't hurt a person.
I told her "Yes" 'cause that seemed
Like a good thing to say.
She asked where Andrew was,
(Andrew is my daddy, her son.), and
I said he was busy someplace.
Mam Ma said, "Oh."
'cause it seemed
Like a good thing to say.
We just sat there for a while,
Thinkin' to ourselves, when Mam Ma
Said, maybe I ought to start fixin'
Us some supper.
I said, Mam Ma you don't have to
Go botherin'. But my words fell
On half-deaf ears.
She fixed up some left-overs that,
It looked, had been left over
Many times before.
But I didn’t say anything, ’cause I
Love Mam Ma, and didn’t want her
Thinkin’ I didn’t appreciate her trouble.
We finished eatin’ and went back
To the big chair but before she sat
Down, Mam Ma went and
Fastened the door and said,
We have to be careful.
And I said, “Oh”’ cause it seemed
Like a good thing to say.
I happened to pass by the window
And noticed that Daddy had drove
Up front and was waitin’ for me.
I told Mam Ma, there he is.
And she said, “Andrew? Yes.”’ cause
That was the right thing to say.
I told her I’d be back to visit
One afternoon, soon. And
I’d let her keep my teddy bear ’til
I visited again.
She didn’t hear too good what I said
But I put the toy in her lap and
She seemed to understand.
I went to the door, unlocked it and
Turned to say, “Goodbye,” but I
Couldn’t ’cause it didn’t seem
Like the right thing to say.
Mam Ma’s tears were strong

Like she used to be, and I went
To her and she said, “I Love You so
Much that...it hurts.”
I said, “Yes, Mam Ma” and
As I closed the door behind me,
I saw her put her head back, and
Take up the bear to her heart.
I walked on out on the proch, and
She started to sing “Somewhere Over
The Rainbow.”
Mam Ma’s voice was strong
Like she used to be, and when I
Open the car door, Daddy said,
How’s Grandma? I told him
She was fine but I really wanted
To cry,
Daddy, her heart hurts and
The house is cold. She won’t
Stay here long. I love Mam Ma, so much,
Daddy, help her.
But I didn’t say anything ’cause
He couldn’t understand and
Pullin’ out of the driveway, I
Heard Mam Ma’s singin’ as it
Drifted out an open window, singin’
“...Why can’t I...”
I said, to myself, Why can’t I Mam Ma?,
I thought, and I almost heard her
Mumbled reply but I didn’t.
Anyhow, I said “Yes”’ cause it seemed
Like the right thing to say.
Letha Carol Edison

IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN

Today, I saw a symbol of hope or hopelessness?
I saw a symbol of defeat or rebellion against cruel fate?
What is a symbol? Or just a human misinterpretation
of an everyday thing?
I saw the remains of a rabbit in the road with one leg
pointed upward.

COOL

It’s cold now. No special reason, it’s
just that time of the year.
It seems I’ve changed season too.
Not depressed, just not enthused. Not
unemotional, cruel, or unkind.
I’m just here and that’s not enough.

Now I do good not for good’s sake, but because
it’s easier—things run smoother. My warmth
has left me—cool. I’m between winter and
spring. Not cold, not warm but cool.

I’m dormant. Maybe Christmas will enthuse me
with its cheer and warmth.
At the moment I’m just here and that’s not good.

George Simpson

A STRANGER OF MY MILLION WAYS

I am rarely twice the same,
A million men within one name,

A face for every one I meet,
From humble friend to cold elite.

From sadist punk to christian man,
From president to rancher’s hand,

Mixed within me in vast blend,
A different me each breath I spend.

So can no one say they know,
What is myself concealed below;

And I don’t know myself like they,
A stranger of my million ways.

APPLE PEELINS

Apple peelins in the chicken yard
Dried from two day’s sunshine, wrinkled hard

Product of a knife and grandma’s hands
Tossed for chicken slop into a can

Separated from the apples meat
Not good enough in grandma’s pies to eat

Cause sure as mountains point towards the sky
Grandma makes the finest apple pies

And so the ants and flies and peckin hens
Will be the one to do them peelins in.
OF WINDS AND FEATHERS

March is the month of wind and feathers
Bloated clouds and dreamy weather

Tangy, soft aromas blown
From rousing vegetation grown

Waters from a vile chill
Melt into a merry spill

Children's feet escape from shoes
Into the grass they scamper through

Fowl ascend from thawing perch
To float aloft in famished search

Cattle shed a ragged coat
Frogs and song-birds clash their notes

Daylight steals a bit of night
Bringing sooner, things in sight

Timid bees and butterflies
Venture thru the days less shy

Nature's tender voice prompts heed
For pairs to spawn their precious seed

Every year's before
Continuing a thousand more.

THE RICH, THE POOR

The rich, the poor, the middle class
The meager 'neath aristocrats

Jealousy in needy eyes
Watching rich in their disguise

Dressed as happy, so to hide
Insecurities inside

Fooling poor who only see
Their own worn flesh in poverty

And middle class in ruthless search
Of ever higher status perch

Terrified of that below
Where failures of the dollar go

Driven to engage in war
Battling for ever more

And so the cycle never ends
It only dies to then begin

And happiness must flourish, where
The love is not to take but share

And human care is first in line
Giving you what once was mine.
George Simpson

MY GRANDMOTHER

I see her silhouette in thought, as years ago,
In the window of her house against the kitchen's glow;
Making fudge for little hands to snatch from off the plate,
Knowing what a pain it is for appetites to wait.

Burning knuckles in the rush, but all was worth the while,
When she would eye us at the fudge, in laughs and messy smiles.

She would answer mounds of questions spewed from childish minds,
She'd do her daily household chores as we tagged close behind.

She'd give us bread to feed the ducks that clustered on the lake.
Oh, the effort she put forth for our ungrateful sakes!

She must have tied a thousand shoes and played a thousand games,
She must have been too tired sometimes, but did it just the same.

She wakened us in shady dawn with the smell of frying eggs;
She'd let us feed the family dog a scrap when he would beg.

She sympathized with teary eyes and kissed a thousand scrapes;
And looking back, with us around, she was in worse shape.

She made us mind when we weren't good, and how she seemed so cruel;
Now I see how kind she was to discipline young fools;

And she is part of me today from what we shared back then,
A grandma every boy should have, to make them better men.

Janna Sellmer

I thought I was alone
But wrong
I'm with the flicker
of a candle
that imitates
your brilliant and fiery
movement
of thought
I'm not alone

I love the wind
It comes in whispering
the secret
audible enough
for only me
to hear
touching everything
lightly
with a newness
in each breath
much like the breath
of ambition
I'm reminded

The rain robs the silence
It christens with growing
And only the loving
can brow with the rain
a gift from the sky

Why is it
that you never
leave me?

Isn't it strange?
Everything's an omen
I
Life was granted in the spring
And I alone with absent eyes
Had witnessed my aesthetic rite
My presence not yet verified

Those darkened walls in which I lived
Bestowed my soul, identified
And she controlled my unshun fate
Gestating towards a world outside

And then my foresights narrowed off
My senses numbed to everything
For none should hold their mystic clues
This knowingness would hinder spring

So I, no doubt, surrendered them
My spiritual truths became a haze
This ignorance induced my birth
And with it came my summer days

II
From the first days of summer they pondered my questions
In vague, if not asinine, riddles and rhymes
And though I might ask when my whys could be answered
They never supplied me with definite times.

I searched and I struggled to find understanding
In all their responses they failed to explain
It was close to this time when I soundly decided
There was nothing that couldn’t be learned or attained

And then I was slapped with my own misconstruction
For I had been blind in my absolute plea
I wrongly assumed that all questions have answers
And all could be sought out definitively

I realized the error and childish deductions
Displeased that my thinking was narrow and small
I learned for myself that there’s always exceptions
And with this earned wisdom I entered my fall

III
The autumn sung my new-found creed
A once closed world was mine to take
I amplified my moral goals
And simplified my worst mistakes

I idealized and valued truth
And gained a love both pure and free
We borrowed time and shared our dreams
The love I gave returned to me

But I recessed in recognition
Withdrawn again in thoughts of rage
I noticed now my limitation
My body old and marked with age

My confidence and strict ambition
Diminished then to hopeless fears
My uselessness took hold of me
And this brought on my winter years

IV
The winter brought changes I hadn’t expected
My life grew increasingly stagnant and slow
I ceased my improvements and changed my directions
No longer concerned with how far I might go

And all those around me inhaled revolution
With ideas of righting the wrongs they despised
I grew very anxious and wept for their battle
For I had once lost to the same compromise
They worked with persistence and youthful contentment
That I falsely labeled as pride and conceit
Proclaiming uniqueness in all their decisions
I wrongly assumed they would welcome defeat

But they had the newness that I had been lacking
And earned satisfaction that I never found
My corpse-like evasion inspired desecration
Immobilization was bringing them down

And then I was slapped once again with my finding
My age had been caused by the goals I erased
And all of the efforts I never accomplished
And all of the love and the truth I misplaced

And with this new wisdom I ended my winter
And once again witnessed my spiritual rite
My living glowed brightness, my dying found darkness
I laid myself down and I turned off the light

My state of perfection had banished me senseless
And vanished the instant it had been received
And everyone knows that the spring follows winter

Could it be that I've just been conceived?

   Life was granted
   In the spring
   And I alone
   With absent eyes . . . .


Denise Russell

sir, I have heard you created
heaven, and earth,
night, and day, and even
man and woman?

That is true.

what is truth, sir?

Truth beareth no false witness,
rather is in agreement with reality.

what then, sir, is reality?

Reality is deemed by that
which is eternal.
A truth that can be ignored,
yet, even so, absolute.

sir forgive me, however,
many doubt your existence.

I am truth. I am reality.
It matters not whether man
chooses to ignore me,
for I, nonetheless exist.
I am that I am.

   I am
WANDERINGS

It seems that I never
stay put, for very long.
Necessity demands
that I always
keep
moving on,
and on and on...
soon I'm gone.

following the wind
a journey that never ends
it doesn't really ever begin
it just keeps on revolving
from beginning to end
nowhere to nothing
somewhere to something.
Where I am
is just a shadow
of where I've been,
and where I've been
is a reflection
of
where
I'm
bound.

SHADOWS FROM THE PAST

I'm haunted by
shadows of my past.
floating shadows of my memories,
apparitions of forgotten miseries,
of a love,
that
did not,
last.

Lord, it ended so very fast.
Changes came too quick to cope,
so swift it's hard to even hope...
and these cold-hearted days,
they just keep right on changing,
days turn to dusk and
the dusk is swiftly swallowed
into the night, then night
to dawn, then dawn gives way
to the morning light.
This senseless world, swirls on
its endless flight,
oblivious to my plight...
...I'm haunted by
shadows from my past.
floating shadows that resemble you,
apparitions my mind construes,
they haunt me at every turn I take,
reminding me of the things we knew...
Back in those hazy day
of me
and you.
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