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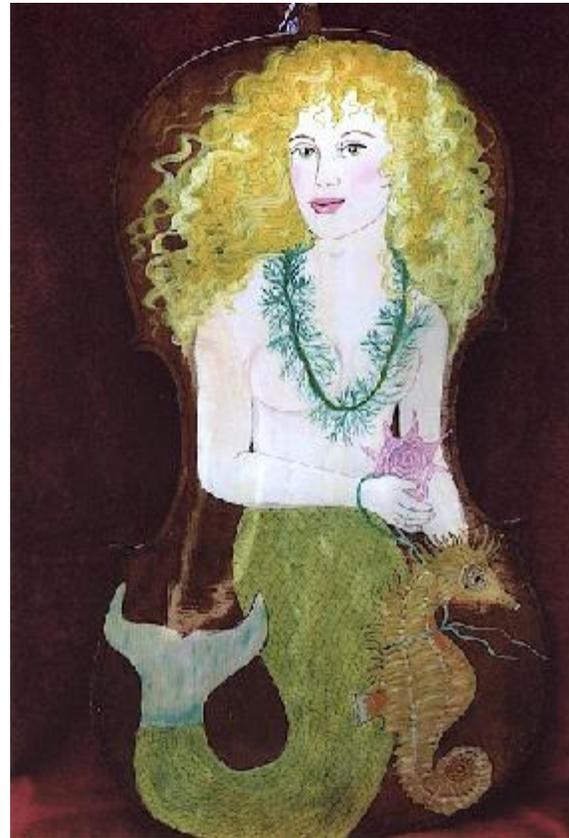
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Come in...and be captivated...



"Mermaid with Topaz Hair" by Denise Morris Curt;
www.ctlimner.com

Denise Morris Curt, The Connecticut Limner

The colors for "Mermaid with Topaz Hair" are made with Renaissance and earlier paint recipes.

The colors for "Mermaid with Topaz Hair" are made with Renaissance and earthen paint recipes:

#95 mermaid cello- Hair is melted amber, ground topaz, melted frankincense, Columbian emerald particles for sea weed necklace, the sea horse is soil from Siena, Italy, rhodochrosite minerals from Argentina, the scales of the mermaid are malachite dust, citrine bits, garnet bits and mica from Madison, CT. The varnish is melted amber and beeswax on this stilled cello. Because wood expands and contracts with each season, temperature, humidity and moisture change, manufactured oil paints or acrylics either powder off, or peel because they lose their elasticity through a time of about 5 years. The finished varnish is applied hot and consists of melted amber and beeswax, which moves with the wood's breathing.

Warrior Sunset

by Michael Jerry Tupa

The ancient ships are gone, a glory of their time--
but swooping seagulls remain, caught in the frosty rime--
homesick sailors consigned to the murky deep,
their graves looking up to where the dolphins leap.

They loved, they laughed, these warriors of the sea,
They marveled at glowing sunsets, as do we.
The world they once knew is entombed in progress,
horizons shaded through misty turmoil and stress.

They didn't feel the waters close over their head,
each of these silent ones--these forgotten dead.
No loving hands to burrow a lasting grave,
last funeral rites swamped by a breaking wave.

But, did it really matter, shovel or splash?
Life is an eternity, ended in a flash.
What matters most is they sailed after a dream,
their visions to fulfill, their hopes to redeem.

Midnight Rainbows

by Michael Jerry Tupa

Midnight stole my childhood
(while I slept one night)
somewhere in the middle of a dream
about football;
about warm, summer days
wading in the muddy lake.

Midnight stole my childhood.
Unseen, it took flight,
skimming and spinning away,
like a frisky bumblee
bouncing into memories.

Midnight stole my childhood,
swallowed in moonlight,
no more games of hide n' seek
or homemade tents stocked
with comics and candy.

Midnight stole my childhood.
(All I see is hindsight
of dirty-faced years, muddy shoes,
snowball fights, climbing trees
flying a kite in the breeze.)

But, wait -- perhaps I've lied.
What is truth? What's right?
Perhaps childhood's rainbows remain

inside my heart, inside my mind.
Perhaps, the magic never died.
Perhaps, I just forget sometimes,
perhaps sometimes, I just forget.

To Ayn

by Katherine Horrigan

Ms. Rand struck a deal
She and Nathaniel

With spouses uncertain

But willing to grant them

Time in a bottle

One day out of seven

And into the night

Their own private heaven.

Is self-interest rational?

Was the question they asked

The good wife of Branden

The husband of Rand and

Others that knew of this

Fourteen year near-bliss

Of playgods and heroes

Nathaniel and Rand.

We, too, made a bargain –

Your best self and mine –

We'd keep ourselves hidden

In this glory time.

Our spouses protected

Our friends made secure

By the veil of unknowing

We'd keep our minds pure.

My heart you wrenched from me

Yours too I did take

We played gods and heroes

We stood fast, awake

Just one simple query

I ask for Rand's sake

For a decade and four

Will we thrill and elate?

*With their spouses' consent, Ayn Rand & Nathaniel Branden had an affair

that lasted 14 years

The Gift

by Katherine Horrigan

I try to put my finger on this private joy
And pin it down

Saying it is merely this, or obviously that.

But it is only when I see the moon

Or read a poem

Or think of canyons

That I feel the truth

Of the softer, warmer place

Where once my whole heart beat

Until I chose a part of it

And sent it, full,

To you.



The Dinner



"Reflection" N.M.B Copyright 2009

THE LINNER

by Denise Bouchard

An afternoon in May
The tulips are in bloom
Amidst great works of Art
She holds sway
A bright crimson flower
In the center of a garden room

Enchantment fills the air
Harps are playing, the music
seemingly
Coming from the trees
I watch as she magically brings
like-minded souls together
Such flair, such ease

In her photographs are glimpses of
doors
Of ancient places, where I yearn to
roam

The smell of frankincense fills her
tent
She's an alchemist turning dross
into gold

A question is put to her "What is a
linner?"
And she replies, "Someone who
illuminates from within "

illumines from within.

My head spins with symbols of
mermaids, golden eggs,
Apothecarist bowls
Beautiful mermaid's eyes stare
back at me
Windows of the soul
And so it begins...

An invitation to her home follows-
all so surreal
Gray viney arbors entangle with a
large pergola
It's corner a home to cooing
mourning doves

Holds a constellation of lilacs,
Casting purple shadows in the dusk
Below as above

Stone goddesses and angels
Weave their spell all the while

Strangers, but we pour out our
hearts
As the wine flows,
And the angels smile

Her bedroom, a church of stained-
glass
And the evidence of a miracle of
her own manifestation

HER OWN MANIFESTATION
Hangs on the wall

Rumi on the bedside table
Ancient Persian philosopher
Still a guide to us all

The old world European kitchen
Thick crockery sits on open
shelving
With a cafe window from floor to
ceiling

Looks out upon the magical arbor
Where her pink stuccoed studio sits
Imbuing it all with a fairy tale
feeling

She bids us enter the studio
A peak into another dimension

I pass stairways lined with
mandolins
And I spy dwarf shoes on my
ascension

The look and smell of her tools
intoxicates
A round table awaits
Chairs hold a place for many more

One almost expects Snow White

~~One almost expects snow white~~
To enter through the door

The stained-glass windows create a
soft, rosy glow
In the setting sun

More mandolins and guitars on the
wall
Awaiting their illumination,
Will their music be sweeter when
done?

Such visions of another universe,
A place beyond time
More ancient doors on the walls
open to me
I'm in Europa, walking in fields of
lavender
Grapes abundant on the vines

We come back to the arbor
The enchanted center
And the talk grows deep

Scathing truths are revealed on this
night
Enough to make one weep

Of how we were the mermaids once
With our enchanting green eyes,
our thick and lustrous hair

Of the men who loved us, the
women who hated us
And how even male strangers still
treat us with care
And how both the lack of gifts given
and those which were received
Brought us here

In the ensuing days, I feel lifted and
buoyant,
As though I was shown a different
way to be
To live without apology

In the following weeks, I also cut
the female haters adrift
They go under without their sturdy
raft- their hate of me

I decide to let my hair grow out
again
I stop cutting it off, stopping the
self-sabotage
Of making it less voluminous,
making it appear thin

Why do I feel so light

It's because I was a mermaid once
And I have met a limner
Who, by reminding me of this,
Has illuminated

Me
From within

Freedom

by Lynn Russell

What do you see?
When you lie in the grass,
Staring into the sky

How do you feel?
As the clouds gently roll,
Forming shapes on their own

What goes through your mind?
Feeling the heat of the sun, and
The soft gentle breeze

Can you imagine the feeling?
Flying high in the sky,
Soaring like an eagle toward freedom

You

by Natalie J. Geeban

I can't eat, I can't sleep, I can't think clearly

You consume me, like a wild fire with endless flame

I am limited to give, as much as you give me.

You affect me

You give and you take

so it's about everything and nothing at all

The barriers exist, when you feel the need to remind me

that this is above and beyond us both

You affect me

We look at each other with such intensity, and its enough

to sate us.

Shall I tell you now; it is when I'm not looking at you,

that I see you the most.

Oh you so affect me!

Agreeing With the Nootkas*

by Fredrick Zydek

The Nootkas believe that Earth has a soul of its own. They believe that everything has a soul of its own. They also believe each thing is connected to the soul that

gave it birth. In this way, each of us has a soul of our own yet remain connected to the souls of our fathers and mothers, who remain connected to their parents and all

who came before them from the beginning time when something on the earth that had not yet become what we know as man made the transition without knowing it. Nootkas

believe all things are connected to the earth's soul in the same way a child is connected to the souls of its sire and dame. This goes into each totem hacked and carved into place.

Nootkas believe that who they are is one of the ways in which the Great Spirit explores the world. They believe that once they slice and chip a cedar tree into the forms of thunder-

birds, bears and whales, they allow the spirit of the people to explore what it would be like to hunt as well as a pack of wolves and fish with the marksmanship of a hungry eagle.

* Nootkas: Indigenous Americans living on the west coast of upper Washington State and the southwest coast of Canada. The Nootka carvers are among the best in the world.

Quinault Winter

by Fredrick Zydek

Winter's shapelessness
waits by the sea.
The sky weeps sheets
of silver. They dance
their way along the river
to the great lake resting
beneath its lid of ice.

A lone gull, walking
knee-deep into the white
morning, scolds the cold,
the great wooded places
drenched in chill,
the lack of booty
washing up on the shore.

I pay him little mind.
This is basket weaving
time - that season when
pale roots wait out
the cold to reupholster
themselves with spring.

He knows as well as I
that these are the moons
of the earth's renewal,
a time for her to rest
from giving until the big

winds move again through

budding trees, and the Moon
of Frogs returning lights
his way to the days
of feasting like the king
he always pretends to be.

Snoqualmie Medicine Woman Sings to the Moon

by Fredrick Zydek

Some say she can talk with birds.
I'm sure the frogs know her name,
for none of them bolts when she walks
among them filling her bowl with herbs.

She knows the secret of every leaf,
twig, root, bark and blossom growing
on this side of the mountain. She sings
them songs spun from a mystery she claims

was born the night the people of the moon
pitched their tents beside the great falls
and decided to call this planet their home.
I have seen her dance at the river's edge

wrapped in only a ceremony of words.
She danced until a single loon lifted

its feathers in the face of the moon and flew
into the memory of what stars know of healing.

Only then would she begin her singing.
The song was always gentle as river moss,
perfect as a blossom, soft and silvery
as the moon's sweet reflected light.



"Spring" N.M.B Copyright 2008

Enlightenment

by Fernando Anzola

All the astronauts and deities of
travel
could never hope to begin to
unravel
the truth behind it all

no matter how hard they call to
them
the suns will always be out of
reach
you will never touch the stars
another grain in this desolate
beach

Dost thou see the ecstasy of colors
an enthralling linear prism of
wonders

farther down you follow its ray
you'll never find where it once lay
at the end of the rainbow

-- - . . . -- -

all your destinies lie dormant
to remain always and linger below

'Tis my conception
when I look above
at this black contraption
I was taught to love

could this be so
the figure cried "No"

Young blade of grass
although covered in snow
you are still of jade and green
once the suns soon congregate
soar above and be all that is seen

The Emergence

by Ben Nardolilli

Some hope to fall like the rain,
I don't know why,
The rain falls fast and puddles,
No one can play with the rain,
Cut it or pull it across
To make curtains, the beads
Glisten and then fade too fast.

Hail, that's a solution,
Yet one like the barbarians,
It cuts and slices leaving wounds
But the weapon evaporates,
It assimilates too easily

it assimilates too easily
And drifts away after battle,
Leaving everyone annoyed,
But still standing.

Falling like the snow
Is an act full of grace,
But a little slow for my tastes,
The spinning of one beautiful thing
Cut into corners unique,
Is wonderful to watch and then
Is ignored in favor of something else.

Everyone else can fall like it,
Straight down with nothing
Except resistance for the air,
Yet I enjoy the dance,
The tease above the destination,
With the tempo sped up and spirals
Giving extra shine to my crystals,
I will fall like the snow in the wind.

Rainshine

by Ben Nardolilli

The storm does not break,
It shatters and the world
Is expected to imitate it,
Everything blown over

So that the lightning is no flash

So that the lightning is no flash
And the thunder greeted
With only an echo in return,
The trees snapped in half,

And the tubers underground
Now exposed with the leaves
They never had chance to meet
In life, here the storm brings heaven.

Unless stronger things endure,
The sun, the hills, the forests,
If not the trees, are landmarks
To the world the storm has disturbed

These keep the world from being made anew
Every time the sunshine fades,
Storms descend into mere cycle,
Never the end alone.

And storms seek out such structures,
But are defeated most by trees,
Though the leaves and branches are lost,
The trunk remains, and life is underground.

Enough water down the hill,
And roots themselves fade away,
But roots are otherwise strong
And can endure the everyday rains.

I'll Fix it in the Morning

by Ben Nardolilli

Avoid the gift of pearls,
At least the ones from the sea,
Give me the ring of praise instead,
Words that do not become tarnished,
Sweet phrases perfumed with hope
Those silken syllables you let rest on your tongue,
Given them a crimson push tonight-
I am open to receive your call,
The laurel of your arms around my neck.

The Adventures of Mr. Microcosm

by Ben Nardolilli

Nasty business, he has gone around the world
In several possible loops, passed through zones
Of freezing and sweating, his travels silver bars
That stretch through antipodes of his making.

Airports, regional and international,
He is a connoisseur of which lines to avoid,
Which lines are worth standing hours in,
His name is strange, but his face is waved at

All the franchises of the world know him,
His plastic exchange ties them up
Into a bundle all competing for his growl,
Nothing can count on being familiar with him.

He is the perfect anarchist, owns nothing,
Even his shoes are given up to security,
The memories remain cast in his mind,
We all make cameos at night on his hotel bed.

Crossing the dateline twice in a day,
Causes him to wonder how to set his clock,
Straddling two days has caused him
To straddle weeks, then months, now years.

When he needs rest, he takes to trains,
And if on the verge of a breakdown,
He relies on the bus, a small ride and crowd,
His ears pop from all the pressure outside.

Tonight, he notices blood on his breast pocket,
Has the stewardess let him cough in his sleep?
The hospital will not receive him, the building
Cannot allow air traffic anywhere near it.

Night sweats and day sweats, almost radioactive,
Every airport is as cold as the familiar fuselages
Security pulls him aside at every gate,
Asking him questions reserved for the swarthy.

Mr. Microcosm you have traveled with the help
Of all our dreams of movement tied together,
Clippings of our occasional fancies woven
To make your glossy windows on the world.

You have taken your adventures from us,
But only as a river or sea can take the rain,
Everything returns in time, and I worry,
Is your breakdown my breakdown as well?

Thoughts on an Exterior

by Ben Nardolilli

Your silhouette
Is what persuades,
The first sight of you
Was enough,
That nose and those lips
With their pride
Gave me all
I needed to know,
The rest were distractions,
Illusions out of bottles,
Yours and mine.

Against the day
You look even lovelier,
Facing away
Or towards me?
It is another mystery,
I am taking in
By your coastline,
Where you cut the light
Is the place of power
That interests me.

It is the loyal image,
It is the simple presence,
It is the laughing ghost
That brings me sleep
And makes my life
More than an echo,
Beyond those curves
Inside the edges
There are things of value too,
But it is your outline
That marks the impact
Where I sit by the edge of you.

Sad-Eyed Lady of the Dogs

by Ben Nardolilli

All along the basement are your clothes,
In this hotbed, you sleep on the floor,
But it's okay you say and grin,
You're close to the center of a galaxy
That is so bright it escapes me,
It excuses the topography of stains all around.

I see this place has made you resourceful,
With coats for sheets and shoes for boxes,
You need a clock, how else to tell
If the sun is outside or the moon reigns?

You wear the dress I remember you in,
Black and white spots, floral patterns
Of dogmatic flowers attracting my eye

And no attention from nearby bees,
It hides your thin thighs and prevents
Me from counting out all your ribs.

It looks clean and crisp, am I the first
It made sense to take it out for?
Or maybe you want to look better
Than this ruin of a world around you,
Beauty is easy to achieve
When your background is rusty pipes
And the sun is too afraid to enter your home.

One Kiss Doesn't Make A Prince

by Hal Sirowitz

Your mother likes telling others
the story of my life, father said.
Of course, she's biased. She tells
how her entrance into my world
saved me. It's like I was
a frog before we met. Then with
just one kiss, I became a prince.
What she forgets to mention is the kiss
was my idea. Plus, it was more
than one. It was a few nights of them

before I started feeling the results.

Constant Companion

by Hal Sirowitz

The one fact I can't forget

is that I have Parkinson's.

It's like a constant companion,

always asserting itself.

I step out the door. My

balance is slightly unsteady.

That's the Parkinson's saying,

'Don't leave home without me.

We're a team.' Some team.

I'm a human being. It's

just a disease. Like any

other parasite it depends

on someone else to keep it alive.

She Loves Paris In The Springtime

by Hal Sirowitz

My wife wakes up at three thirty
in the morning to massage my feet.
The Parkinson's gives me leg cramps.
I hope I didn't disturb one of her pleasant dreams.
That's where she does her adventure travel.
Otherwise, she'd go to Paris. 'I'd love
to see the Eiffel Tower,' she says.
'You don't like heights,' I say.
'It gives you vertigo.' 'I'm dying
to see the Mona Lisa,' she says.
'You don't like crowds,' I say.
'You have to fight your way
to the front for a decent view.'
'I'd love to sit in a café,' she says.
'It's cheaper if you stand,' I say.
'Imagine that. The same glass
of beer costs more if you're sitting.'

My toes feel better. I'm no longer
in pain. She's no longer in Paris.

Changed Colors

by Dawnell Harrison

The sun tastes cold
and has gone down
early tonight.

The map of the world
is witnessed by the
sun, moon, and
celestial bodies.

I never was one
for crying but
to think of such
beauty laid
out like a
robin's egg blue sky
against the map of the world
makes me weep.

An early winter.
The earth has already
changed colors.

Exhale

by Dawnell Harrison

We are all
Waiting for

That next
Great moment

In time where
The sparrows

Stop momentarily,
Leaving their mark

On your life.
You exhale

Knowing that
The moment is

Embedded forever
On your soul

Like an embossed
Stamp that you

Place on
The back

Of an envelope
For decoration.

Coffee

by Dawnell Harrison

If I pour
You a cup

Of coffee,
Will you

Stay awhile?
If I pour

You a cup
Of coffee,

Will you
Spill your

Heart out
Like milk

Being poured
Into a breakfast glass?

The dishes
Are piled

High and the air
Smells like rain,

But if I
Pour you

A cup
Of coffee,

Will you
Stay awhile?

Argentina

by Michelle Kennedy

I want to go to Argentina
to tango with my poet
under a moonless sky
with only butterfly lanterns
lighting the maple wood dance floor
placed so closely to the Atlantic
in Comodoro Rivadavia
I will feel the ocean's salty mist
dance with me, licking the air
as my partner dips me in his arms
moves me and grooves me
over and over again
Pull me closer, my poet love
Let our arms and legs stir our words
as you lead me in the frame
slow, quick, slow, slide
front, side, back
inside, outside, inside, again
as we create our sultry rhythm

*Poems will arise to our tongues
waiting to be spoken later
between soft cotton sheets*

Clockwork

by Frank J. Hopkins

by FRANK J. FORTNUS

The details for this one
should have been easy,
the facts simple, the conclusion
obvious and ironclad.

The apt was immaculate
from floor to counter-top
not a stain or smudge,
nothing... out of place or
askew.

We did what we do
-looking through closets,
checking crevices for
clues and determinations;
tacking the measure of time
as witness and snapshot.

There were as there always are
pictures of family and friends,
letters read and discarded,
expectations and promises
read aloud with others written

on expensive stationary.

The handwriting was strong,
elegant, cogent and concise.

The refrigerator was half-full
with yesterday's meals and
tomorrow's dinner,
with secret treats and indulgences.

We did what we do:
speaking to this one and that one,
asking leading questions,
evaluating responses...
looking for clues.

We watched hawk-eyed
the faces we questioned
probing for half-truth and
deception.

The apartment was awash in
natural light, a beaming grace
that led to a makeshift garden-
tended with care and thought.

The sun shone through windows
recently cleaned,
wicked shadows ill with portent
held at bay by the light and day.
Such a beautiful face
features carved from the perfect
geometry of frail ice;
deep features forever quieted.
The answering machine held
no messages,
a laptop abandoned sat waiting,
weary of the examination to come.
And we-doing what we do-
hoped, knew, had belief that
there would be clues left there,
some truth to explain or clarify.
In the lightness of that apartment
loss poked out it's head
appearing and disappearing before
it could be held to speak.

We did what we do
-a gaggle of feet tramping over
wood floors,
a melange of hands digging here
and groping there,
turning on this, opening that...
a collection of eyes, of mouths,
of minds and methods...
With instructions and precision
taking measures and calculations,
making notes, "Hey! Look at this."
Sun doused hand offering photographs,
"See that smile?" And there it was-
shimmering, gleaming, tangible like
something built upon an unseen but
deeply held truth... built with affection
and love.
"I don't believe in Heaven."
No more words just the sounds of
men in suits and uniforms trying to

build a finality from snapshot and
supposition.

We do what we do:

excavating things left behind

hoping to assemble from stray parts

and incomplete pieces some map

to explain it all as afternoon turns

to evening

knowing there will be another call and

more truths that will require assembly

and reconstruction.

The Last Wish

by Ivan Jenson

where did you put that wish
is it lost in your fiction
or romance compartment
did it lift off like a dandelion
from your fingers

do you wish you
hadn't
left it

in her hands

or lose it in that class
about the
odds?

did you drop it into
your suggestion
box
can you wish
your way out

of this one
when there is a chance
that
someone stole it
from the heart
of your song

in the heat
of your moment

almost
granted

Make 'em Laugh

by Ivan Jenson

Used to make 'em laugh
in restaurants
at weddings
in bars

used to crack 'em up
in classrooms
in echoey halls

now in the middle
of this stage
of the set up

I somehow
became the
punch line

the one that goes:

knock knock

who's there?

me

me who?

I'm really not so sure anymore

not a single laugh

To you

by Ivan Jenson

To you
I am a name
I might be your brother, your son,
your friend or just an
acquaintance

To you
I'm just a guy
writing in a coffee shop
or I walk past you on the sidewalk

To you
I might just be an American
a man
or a patient you treated
in your office

To you
I might be a student you remember
for the jokes he cracked
I might be your ex-boyfriend
somebody you try not to mention to your husband
I might just be an address on an envelope
on your postal route

or maybe I am a sweating body
in your exercise class

To you
I might be a nephew
or the the painter of
a canvas you bought on a New York street corner

maybe to you
I am only this poem
or I could be your future husband
or father

or maybe you heard my laughter
in a movie theatre

To you
I am a man of infinite faces

each morning I wake and wonder
who I am going to be

To you

My Childhood Roads

by Pat Greene

The Ireland of my childhood no longer exists and it saddens me now, when I go home and I can no longer walk down memory roads.

The height at Meehan's ditch
Judy Webb's cross, over the road
Down to Sarah's well
And up to The Conna Stake.
Into the village, at the butt of the hill
Across Lyods bog and back to Coole.
Up to Trossies orchard, on the hill of Cromhill
The Cross of Ballinamona and in to Limerick
Up to Hospital and back to Emly
Over to Knockainey and onto Herbertstown
Down to Caherconlish and into Ballybricken.

The Ballinlough bridges
The cross of Barnacoola
Down to Kildromin and right for the Cross of the Line
Back to the Pallas's, old and new.
Knicker and Barna
Cullen and Latin
Over to Knockane and back to Templebraden
The cross of Carrikettle and out to Dark.
Wonderhill to Cloverfield and down to Dromkeen.

Knocklong and Elton
The Pattern of Ballylanders, on the fifteenth of August
The festivals at kilmallock and Kilfinane too
Lough Gur and Grange
The pictures in Cappamore
Forty-five and rings and hurling till dark

Walking and cycling and a lift if it came
Breaking for dawn after miles of moonlit roads
Blackberries and ripe red haws
Sour grass and gooseberries
Heads of cabbage and big raw turnips
Scallions and carrots
Cream from the churns

Running from dogs
And resting in barns

Potholes and bends
Hills and ditches
Dikes and rivers
Friendly welcomes and wicked bulls
Terrified of ghosts, on dark moonless nights
Listening to vixens and following their journey
Whispering to a lover, the silence surreal
Talking to yourself, there's no one to hear.

Every step of those roads
Every voice on the way
Each smile I can see
The laughters and joys, our sorrows and pains
I haven't forgotten
No - I haven't forgotten
My childhood roads.

Father and Son

by Pat Greene

Tell me.....I was there.
Talk to me.....I understand.
Trust me.....I love you.
Remember me?.....I'm still your dad.
It's not so difficult.....let me help you.
I'm here!...look at me!....I'm here!
I'm listening.....my love for you forgives everything.
We will get through this....wait and see.
Please let me be your father again.....Don't shut me out!

This is good...really it is.....talking is very good.
 Talk some more....tell me more.....I am listening.
 I will always listen to you.
 I will always love you.
 Don't you know that!

Reading Articles in a Magazine

by Tim Bellows

Paging through, I find that Southeast peoples once
 used dugout canoes to get around, move
 along crisscrossing waterways and coastal shallows.
 They'd char parts of logs with fire-embers,
 hollow the softened parts with bone scrapers.

Inside their skulls they guarded pictures
 of spring-green waterways or maybe the moon
 which had not yet begun to sing - only
 to question a little - of mankind's fate.
 All those spears to come with time. And catapults,
 computer-wired bombs. Such grand progressions
 out of warriors' brains. Come, mystic god

riding your sea arch and that matching arch
 draped out beyond the sky; ferry me by any
 floating, genuine craft to another waltzing Vienna,
 where peace and sonatas can dance me into some entirely
 liquid world, clean as music that sounds between raindrops;
 between citizens' feet kick-splashing
 through pools in the road. While an emperor

nods in and out of sleep: Out and back;
 out and back. And under his white cap,

gleaming all through his brain, it's
the hum of ideas that can glide a nation back
toward days of canoes hollowed
by fire and tools of wood or bone.

The Dead Woman

by Vince Corvaia

When I read
how Inspector Maigret
gathered the suspects
in the living room
to recreate the events
of that fateful evening,
I want to put
my sister and me
back in my parents'
doublewide, sitting
beside our mother's
hospice bed
on our folding chairs,
hearing Death jimmy the glass

door, creep across the
kitchen carpet,
shush the Chihuahua
with a gentle bony finger.

I want to turn to him,
casually light my pipe,
and declare that he
had the only motive.

But would he flee
before he could be
positively identified?

Not even Maigret
could stop Death,
only confirm his
ghastly visage
before the sheet was drawn.

I Enter the Haunted House at Night

by Vince Corvaia

carrying a Dixie cup

carrying a blue cup
of tap water I hope
to fool her into
thinking is holy.
From room to
room I feel my way,
cobwebs caressing
my outstretched hand
like a lover—
There! In the
living room, on the
dust-covered sofa,
the ghost of
my mother, smoking
her red-ash cigarette,
thinking of Richard,
the man she gave up
to exist here with
my father. Richard,
who haunted the chambers
of her heart until she

closed all the shutters
and spent her life here,
dragging chains of regret
down the long hallway
from the hollowness
of the marital bed.
She breathes smoke
and I am too sad
to destroy her.
I back away and
spill my water
into the kitchen sink
where the cold bone of moon
hurls its parallelograms of light
through the panes.

Untitled

by Vince Corvaia

A north wind blew between us

A HORROR WIND BLEW BETWEEN US.

We stepped apart to embrace ourselves.

Years later, I can still see
the white waving curtain of your heart.

Astronomy

by Vince Corvaia

Our planet is
the size of a bullet fragment
when you think about
the scheme of things.
Our galaxy, a random splattering
of collateral damage.

On a sun porch
the size of a nerve-ending,
an old man lifts the muzzle
to his mouth, thinks
of his wife now dead of cancer,
the abused children who never call.

the savior he never knew.

Courageous, he pulls the trigger,
hurls himself into infinity,
that infinitesimal afterthought
of God . . .

while a poet, listening desperately
to Barber's Adagio,
looks up from his monitor
into the tragic night sky
and sees that art
is never enough.

Leaving Home

by Vince Corvaia

I hung my shadow
in the closet,

folded my bedroom
in the shape
of a suitcase.
Who cared
where I was going
or what my father
once meant to me?
I would carry
everything I owned
into the shadowless night
and eat the soft blushing belly
of a peach
in a fast blue bus.

The Right Place At the Right Time

by Mark Barkawitz

i've been fortunate in my lifetime
to have helped save the lives
of three people: two kids—
one at the bottom of a swimming pool,

the other trapped in machinery—
and a man riding a bicycle.

admittedly, none of these good deeds
was greatly heroic on my part.
my life was never in jeopardy
because of my actions.

i just happened to be in

the right place at the right time.

at best, i was quicker to react

than others around me.

but i've always been impetuous.

occasionally, it's a virtue.

Iron Wheels

by Mark Barkawitz

as i push the heavily-loaded cart
with sacks of concrete across

the shopping center parking lot,
its iron wheels threaten the asphalt,
already softened by an oppressive sun.

at my truck, i lift each
dusty sack onto the open bed,
causing the leafsprings to creak
and lower proportionately.
across the lot, a man about my age

walks sideways out the barber shop doorway.
in his arms, he carries like a baby
a newly shorn boy of about twelve—
his son, i figure—
who wears thick glasses with a band to hold them,

and drool down his chin.
the boy's arms and legs jut out awkwardly,
like bent antennae,
purveying a haywire inability

to function and support.

as they cross the asphalt,
the man speaks to the boy,
probably complimenting
how nice he looks
with his new haircut,

just as i would my son.

into the passenger side of a parked stationwagon,
the man straps the boy into the seat with
the dexterity of someone who is
repeating the process for the umpteenth time.

almost forgotten in my arms,
i drop another sack of 'crete
onto the bed of my truck.
a small cloud of dust rises
and the leafsprings creak their protest.

One Star Too Many

by Mark Barkawitz

sitting comfortably in
a tubful of steamy water,
sipping a cold beer,
i read my former teacher gerald
locklin's little red chapbook,

the iceberg theory & other poems.
halfway through, i come across
the poem, "sedation time."
gerry is having trouble falling
asleep in his hotel room,

so he checks the tv
guide for a movie
"to relax in front of."
he considers a noir classic
and a supernatural thriller,

but isn't sold on either.
"his final option is entitled 'zipperface.'
one star. he doesn't read the description.
just reaches for the sleeping pills."
now to most readers,

this is probably just a funny punchline.

but i'm spraying beer out my nose
because i helped write that piece-of-crap movie!
specifically, i was the fourth of six writers,
and can't believe it was ever released,

even if only on some obscure cable channel.
it had been my first writing job after college.
five grand for a complete rewrite.
the producer condemned my draft
as "dyke bullshit" for its

strong female protagonist.
two writers and multiple drafts later,
the producer had his bondage/slasher script.
the best things i can say about the movie
are that i got paid and had the foresight

to have my name removed from the credits.
because you never know
when some former teacher
you still hope to impress
will run out of prescription drugs.

Aphrodite

by Nicole M. Bouchard

Timeless, endless, ancient
She represents the immortal inkwell
of fine nuns

of fire pure

Which feeds generations of hearts, minds,
imaginations and lore

Great Goddess, arisen from the sea,
we mortals humbly pray more of
the passionate ties that bind, wind,
and set ardent hearts and souls to free

It is truly a great force you hold
in your delicate but capable hands,
one that when true,
never grows old
never turns cold
and never withers
but expands

A well-kept mystery to
maiden and madam,
to boy and man
is the enduring thought of love...

A hunger that compels, a secret that tells,
desperation recant spells,
piercing the heart of a dove

Many faces does it wear,
precious few hearts does it spare
and far too many varied fates does it bestow
to compare

Love is a thread stretching aways beyond

Love is a thread stretching away beyond
paper white life and death
Love is a city, a reason, a memory
upon first and last breath

Blessed may we be with long loving lives
to which in dreams and speech do we aspire

Thanks be to you, Great Aphrodite,
for the warmth, devotion, and needed flames of desire

What the Lining Says

by Cheryl Sommese

Maybe ten years ago I could have done it:

the news has always been grim,
and strewn bodies are not novel,
they present themselves in every age
like anger festering in trenches;
casualties
of man's harsher side.

But ten years ago I was newer
and time was stockpiled

without a shelf life

without a sign me.

Traveling from one hour to the next—
within the confines of my stupor
oblivious
to the surrounding world.

It almost seemed as if the photos were put there
to confuse comfort,
mock contentment,
they couldn't be too real,
not when life was pleasing.
Perhaps they were printed
to intercept boredom?

Ten years can mean so much, though,
the difference between inexperience and maturity,
indifference and caring,
life and death.

Ten years can mean
blindness
or sight

or salvation.

Maybe ten years ago I could have lined the bird's cage
with carnage,
allowing the droppings to conceal
what was invisible to me anyway;
but today I just couldn't do it.

What Will We Say

By Cheryl Sommese

When we leave this existence,
taking with us nothing more than our transparency
and it is time to face our Creator,
what will we say?

Will we explain that we labored to acquire printed paper
for the betterment of humanity?
Or will it be revealed our stockpile of possessions
was the impetus for the zeal,

because we somehow believed

they

could define who we are.

What strategy will we conjure up

as we attempt to defend why we ignored opportunities

to help our neighbor?

Might we argue that these people were really just bumbling bores,

with roots or education well beneath our own:

and their whining about one thing or another was often a nuisance,

so it grew easier to mute their noise

than to listen?

As we conclude our chat,

how might justify the reasons we undermined others—

sometimes even those we loved?

Perhaps we'll highlight the rules were brutal,

and in order

to protect our rightful place in a competitive environment,

it sadly became necessary

to subvert the opposition?

When pretenses no longer
possess the power to disguise
who we are
and our masks come off,
when we stand before God
on Judgment Day,
what will He see?

This Journey

by Cheryl Sommese

Down the frosty path—along the winding road,
I stop only briefly to lighten my load.
I soon proceed until I near the end,
just to begin this journey once again.

I've been this way some times before,
and I guess I'll be back several more;

but do not fret over my wandering ways,
I have known some happiness in my days.

There was the man who taught me how to share,
for I then possessed only rags to wear;
and though he had but little to give,
he gave it to me to help her live.

And then there was the girl with the gentle smile,
she lifted my spirits upward for a while,
by telling me that my deep dreams were true,
and what I put my mind to, I could do.

As I traveled on, though, my hours grew sad,
until I came upon a handsome lad,
when he witnessed the weariness in my bones,
he, gallant, refused to leave me all alone.

I've learned much from those who crossed my path,
and realize that love is what will last,
when everything else in life has gone.

it's only love that carries on.

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Come in...and be captivated...



"Mermaid with Topaz Hair" by Denise Morris Curt;
www.ctlimner.com

Denise Morris Curt, The Connecticut Limner

The colors for "Mermaid with Topaz Hair" are made with Renaissance and earlier paint recipes.

The colors for "Mermaid with Topaz Hair" are made with Renaissance and earthen paint recipes:

#95 mermaid cello- Hair is melted amber, ground topaz, melted frankincense, Columbian emerald particles for sea weed necklace, the sea horse is soil from Siena, Italy, rhodochrosite minerals from Argentina, the scales of the mermaid are malachite dust, citrine bits, garnet bits and mica from Madison, CT. The varnish is melted amber and beeswax on this stilled cello. Because wood expands and contracts with each season, temperature, humidity and moisture change, manufactured oil paints or acrylics either powder off, or peel because they lose their elasticity through a time of about 5 years. The finished varnish is applied hot and consists of melted amber and beeswax, which moves with the wood's breathing.

Warrior Sunset

by Michael Jerry Tupa

The ancient ships are gone, a glory of their time--
but swooping seagulls remain, caught in the frosty rime--
homesick sailors consigned to the murky deep,
their graves looking up to where the dolphins leap.

They loved, they laughed, these warriors of the sea,
They marveled at glowing sunsets, as do we.
The world they once knew is entombed in progress,
horizons shaded through misty turmoil and stress.

They didn't feel the waters close over their head,
each of these silent ones--these forgotten dead.
No loving hands to burrow a lasting grave,
last funeral rites swamped by a breaking wave.

But, did it really matter, shovel or splash?
Life is an eternity, ended in a flash.
What matters most is they sailed after a dream,
their visions to fulfill, their hopes to redeem.

Midnight Rainbows

by Michael Jerry Tupa

Midnight stole my childhood
(while I slept one night)
somewhere in the middle of a dream
about football;
about warm, summer days
wading in the muddy lake.

Midnight stole my childhood.
Unseen, it took flight,
skimming and spinning away,
like a frisky bumblee
bouncing into memories.

Midnight stole my childhood,
swallowed in moonlight,
no more games of hide n' seek
or homemade tents stocked
with comics and candy.

Midnight stole my childhood.
(All I see is hindsight
of dirty-faced years, muddy shoes,
snowball fights, climbing trees
flying a kite in the breeze.)

But, wait -- perhaps I've lied.
What is truth? What's right?
Perhaps childhood's rainbows remain

inside my heart, inside my mind.
Perhaps, the magic never died.
Perhaps, I just forget sometimes,
perhaps sometimes, I just forget.

To Ayn

by Katherine Horrigan

Ms. Rand struck a deal
She and Nathaniel

With spouses uncertain

But willing to grant them

Time in a bottle

One day out of seven

And into the night

Their own private heaven.

Is self-interest rational?

Was the question they asked

The good wife of Branden

The husband of Rand and

Others that knew of this

Fourteen year near-bliss

Of playgods and heroes

Nathaniel and Rand.

We, too, made a bargain –

Your best self and mine –

We'd keep ourselves hidden

In this glory time.

Our spouses protected

Our friends made secure

By the veil of unknowing

We'd keep our minds pure.

My heart you wrenched from me

Yours too I did take

We played gods and heroes

We stood fast, awake

Just one simple query

I ask for Rand's sake

For a decade and four

Will we thrill and elate?

*With their spouses' consent, Ayn Rand & Nathaniel Branden had an affair

that lasted 14 years

The Gift

by Katherine Horrigan

I try to put my finger on this private joy
And pin it down

Saying it is merely this, or obviously that.

But it is only when I see the moon

Or read a poem

Or think of canyons

That I feel the truth

Of the softer, warmer place

Where once my whole heart beat

Until I chose a part of it

And sent it, full,

To you.



The Dinner



"Reflection" N.M.B Copyright 2009

THE LINNER

by Denise Bouchard

An afternoon in May
The tulips are in bloom
Amidst great works of Art
She holds sway
A bright crimson flower
In the center of a garden room

Enchantment fills the air
Harps are playing, the music
seemingly
Coming from the trees
I watch as she magically brings
like-minded souls together
Such flair, such ease

In her photographs are glimpses of
doors
Of ancient places, where I yearn to
roam

The smell of frankincense fills her
tent
She's an alchemist turning dross
into gold

A question is put to her "What is a
linner?"
And she replies, "Someone who
illuminates from within "

illumines from within.

My head spins with symbols of
mermaids, golden eggs,
Apothecarist bowls
Beautiful mermaid's eyes stare
back at me
Windows of the soul
And so it begins...

An invitation to her home follows-
all so surreal
Gray viney arbors entangle with a
large pergola
It's corner a home to cooing
mourning doves

Holds a constellation of lilacs,
Casting purple shadows in the dusk
Below as above

Stone goddesses and angels
Weave their spell all the while

Strangers, but we pour out our
hearts
As the wine flows,
And the angels smile

Her bedroom, a church of stained-
glass
And the evidence of a miracle of
her own manifestation

HER OWN MANIFESTATION
Hangs on the wall

Rumi on the bedside table
Ancient Persian philosopher
Still a guide to us all

The old world European kitchen
Thick crockery sits on open
shelving
With a cafe window from floor to
ceiling

Looks out upon the magical arbor
Where her pink stuccoed studio sits
Imbuing it all with a fairy tale
feeling

She bids us enter the studio
A peak into another dimension

I pass stairways lined with
mandolins
And I spy dwarf shoes on my
ascension

The look and smell of her tools
intoxicates
A round table awaits
Chairs hold a place for many more

One almost expects Snow White

~~One almost expects snow white~~
To enter through the door

The stained-glass windows create a
soft, rosy glow
In the setting sun

More mandolins and guitars on the
wall
Awaiting their illumination,
Will their music be sweeter when
done?

Such visions of another universe,
A place beyond time
More ancient doors on the walls
open to me
I'm in Europa, walking in fields of
lavender
Grapes abundant on the vines

We come back to the arbor
The enchanted center
And the talk grows deep

Scathing truths are revealed on this
night
Enough to make one weep

Of how we were the mermaids once
With our enchanting green eyes,
our thick and lustrous hair

Of the men who loved us, the
women who hated us
And how even male strangers still
treat us with care
And how both the lack of gifts given
and those which were received
Brought us here

In the ensuing days, I feel lifted and
buoyant,
As though I was shown a different
way to be
To live without apology

In the following weeks, I also cut
the female haters adrift
They go under without their sturdy
raft- their hate of me

I decide to let my hair grow out
again
I stop cutting it off, stopping the
self-sabotage
Of making it less voluminous,
making it appear thin

Why do I feel so light

It's because I was a mermaid once
And I have met a limner
Who, by reminding me of this,
Has illuminated

Me
From within

Freedom

by Lynn Russell

What do you see?
When you lie in the grass,
Staring into the sky

How do you feel?
As the clouds gently roll,
Forming shapes on their own

What goes through your mind?
Feeling the heat of the sun, and
The soft gentle breeze

Can you imagine the feeling?
Flying high in the sky,
Soaring like an eagle toward freedom

You

by Natalie J. Geeban

I can't eat, I can't sleep, I can't think clearly

You consume me, like a wild fire with endless flame

I am limited to give, as much as you give me.

You affect me

You give and you take

so it's about everything and nothing at all

The barriers exist, when you feel the need to remind me

that this is above and beyond us both

You affect me

We look at each other with such intensity, and its enough

to sate us.

Shall I tell you now; it is when I'm not looking at you,

that I see you the most.

Oh you so affect me!

Agreeing With the Nootkas*

by Fredrick Zydek

The Nootkas believe that Earth has a soul of its own. They believe that everything has a soul of its own. They also believe each thing is connected to the soul that

gave it birth. In this way, each of us has a soul of our own yet remain connected to the souls of our fathers and mothers, who remain connected to their parents and all

who came before them from the beginning time when something on the earth that had not yet become what we know as man made the transition without knowing it. Nootkas

believe all things are connected to the earth's soul in the same way a child is connected to the souls of its sire and dame. This goes into each totem hacked and carved into place.

Nootkas believe that who they are is one of the ways in which the Great Spirit explores the world. They believe that once they slice and chip a cedar tree into the forms of thunder-

birds, bears and whales, they allow the spirit of the people to explore what it would be like to hunt as well as a pack of wolves and fish with the marksmanship of a hungry eagle.

* Nootkas: Indigenous Americans living on the west coast of upper Washington State and the southwest coast of Canada. The Nootka carvers are among the best in the world.

Quinault Winter

by Fredrick Zydek

Winter's shapelessness
waits by the sea.
The sky weeps sheets
of silver. They dance
their way along the river
to the great lake resting
beneath its lid of ice.

A lone gull, walking
knee-deep into the white
morning, scolds the cold,
the great wooded places
drenched in chill,
the lack of booty
washing up on the shore.

I pay him little mind.
This is basket weaving
time - that season when
pale roots wait out
the cold to reupholster
themselves with spring.

He knows as well as I
that these are the moons
of the earth's renewal,
a time for her to rest
from giving until the big

winds move again through

budding trees, and the Moon
of Frogs returning lights
his way to the days
of feasting like the king
he always pretends to be.

Snoqualmie Medicine Woman Sings to the Moon

by Fredrick Zydek

Some say she can talk with birds.
I'm sure the frogs know her name,
for none of them bolts when she walks
among them filling her bowl with herbs.

She knows the secret of every leaf,
twig, root, bark and blossom growing
on this side of the mountain. She sings
them songs spun from a mystery she claims

was born the night the people of the moon
pitched their tents beside the great falls
and decided to call this planet their home.
I have seen her dance at the river's edge

wrapped in only a ceremony of words.
She danced until a single loon lifted

its feathers in the face of the moon and flew
into the memory of what stars know of healing.

Only then would she begin her singing.
The song was always gentle as river moss,
perfect as a blossom, soft and silvery
as the moon's sweet reflected light.



"Spring" N.M.B Copyright 2008

Enlightenment

by Fernando Anzola

All the astronauts and deities of
travel
could never hope to begin to
unravel
the truth behind it all

no matter how hard they call to
them
the suns will always be out of
reach
you will never touch the stars
another grain in this desolate
beach

Dost thou see the ecstasy of colors
an enthralling linear prism of
wonders

farther down you follow its ray
you'll never find where it once lay
at the end of the rainbow

-- - . . . -- -

all your destinies lie dormant
to remain always and linger below

'Tis my conception
when I look above
at this black contraption
I was taught to love

could this be so
the figure cried "No"

Young blade of grass
although covered in snow
you are still of jade and green
once the suns soon congregate
soar above and be all that is seen

The Emergence

by Ben Nardolilli

Some hope to fall like the rain,
I don't know why,
The rain falls fast and puddles,
No one can play with the rain,
Cut it or pull it across
To make curtains, the beads
Glisten and then fade too fast.

Hail, that's a solution,
Yet one like the barbarians,
It cuts and slices leaving wounds
But the weapon evaporates,
It assimilates too easily

it assimilates too easily
And drifts away after battle,
Leaving everyone annoyed,
But still standing.

Falling like the snow
Is an act full of grace,
But a little slow for my tastes,
The spinning of one beautiful thing
Cut into corners unique,
Is wonderful to watch and then
Is ignored in favor of something else.

Everyone else can fall like it,
Straight down with nothing
Except resistance for the air,
Yet I enjoy the dance,
The tease above the destination,
With the tempo sped up and spirals
Giving extra shine to my crystals,
I will fall like the snow in the wind.

Rainshine

by Ben Nardolilli

The storm does not break,
It shatters and the world
Is expected to imitate it,
Everything blown over

So that the lightning is no flash

So that the lightning is no flash
And the thunder greeted
With only an echo in return,
The trees snapped in half,

And the tubers underground
Now exposed with the leaves
They never had chance to meet
In life, here the storm brings heaven.

Unless stronger things endure,
The sun, the hills, the forests,
If not the trees, are landmarks
To the world the storm has disturbed

These keep the world from being made anew
Every time the sunshine fades,
Storms descend into mere cycle,
Never the end alone.

And storms seek out such structures,
But are defeated most by trees,
Though the leaves and branches are lost,
The trunk remains, and life is underground.

Enough water down the hill,
And roots themselves fade away,
But roots are otherwise strong
And can endure the everyday rains.

I'll Fix it in the Morning

by Ben Nardolilli

Avoid the gift of pearls,
At least the ones from the sea,
Give me the ring of praise instead,
Words that do not become tarnished,
Sweet phrases perfumed with hope
Those silken syllables you let rest on your tongue,
Given them a crimson push tonight-
I am open to receive your call,
The laurel of your arms around my neck.

The Adventures of Mr. Microcosm

by Ben Nardolilli

Nasty business, he has gone around the world
In several possible loops, passed through zones
Of freezing and sweating, his travels silver bars
That stretch through antipodes of his making.

Airports, regional and international,
He is a connoisseur of which lines to avoid,
Which lines are worth standing hours in,
His name is strange, but his face is waved at

All the franchises of the world know him,
His plastic exchange ties them up
Into a bundle all competing for his growl,
Nothing can count on being familiar with him.

He is the perfect anarchist, owns nothing,
Even his shoes are given up to security,
The memories remain cast in his mind,
We all make cameos at night on his hotel bed.

Crossing the dateline twice in a day,
Causes him to wonder how to set his clock,
Straddling two days has caused him
To straddle weeks, then months, now years.

When he needs rest, he takes to trains,
And if on the verge of a breakdown,
He relies on the bus, a small ride and crowd,
His ears pop from all the pressure outside.

Tonight, he notices blood on his breast pocket,
Has the stewardess let him cough in his sleep?
The hospital will not receive him, the building
Cannot allow air traffic anywhere near it.

Night sweats and day sweats, almost radioactive,
Every airport is as cold as the familiar fuselages
Security pulls him aside at every gate,
Asking him questions reserved for the swarthy.

Mr. Microcosm you have traveled with the help
Of all our dreams of movement tied together,
Clippings of our occasional fancies woven
To make your glossy windows on the world.

You have taken your adventures from us,
But only as a river or sea can take the rain,
Everything returns in time, and I worry,
Is your breakdown my breakdown as well?

Thoughts on an Exterior

by Ben Nardolilli

Your silhouette
Is what persuades,
The first sight of you
Was enough,
That nose and those lips
With their pride
Gave me all
I needed to know,
The rest were distractions,
Illusions out of bottles,
Yours and mine.

Against the day
You look even lovelier,
Facing away
Or towards me?
It is another mystery,
I am taking in
By your coastline,
Where you cut the light
Is the place of power
That interests me.

It is the loyal image,
It is the simple presence,
It is the laughing ghost
That brings me sleep
And makes my life
More than an echo,
Beyond those curves
Inside the edges
There are things of value too,
But it is your outline
That marks the impact
Where I sit by the edge of you.

Sad-Eyed Lady of the Dogs

by Ben Nardolilli

All along the basement are your clothes,
In this hotbed, you sleep on the floor,
But it's okay you say and grin,
You're close to the center of a galaxy
That is so bright it escapes me,
It excuses the topography of stains all around.

I see this place has made you resourceful,
With coats for sheets and shoes for boxes,
You need a clock, how else to tell
If the sun is outside or the moon reigns?

You wear the dress I remember you in,
Black and white spots, floral patterns
Of dogmatic flowers attracting my eye

And no attention from nearby bees,
It hides your thin thighs and prevents
Me from counting out all your ribs.

It looks clean and crisp, am I the first
It made sense to take it out for?
Or maybe you want to look better
Than this ruin of a world around you,
Beauty is easy to achieve
When your background is rusty pipes
And the sun is too afraid to enter your home.

One Kiss Doesn't Make A Prince

by Hal Sirowitz

Your mother likes telling others
the story of my life, father said.
Of course, she's biased. She tells
how her entrance into my world
saved me. It's like I was
a frog before we met. Then with
just one kiss, I became a prince.
What she forgets to mention is the kiss
was my idea. Plus, it was more
than one. It was a few nights of them

before I started feeling the results.

Constant Companion

by Hal Sirowitz

The one fact I can't forget

is that I have Parkinson's.

It's like a constant companion,

always asserting itself.

I step out the door. My

balance is slightly unsteady.

That's the Parkinson's saying,

'Don't leave home without me.

We're a team.' Some team.

I'm a human being. It's

just a disease. Like any

other parasite it depends

on someone else to keep it alive.

She Loves Paris In The Springtime

by Hal Sirowitz

My wife wakes up at three thirty
in the morning to massage my feet.
The Parkinson's gives me leg cramps.
I hope I didn't disturb one of her pleasant dreams.
That's where she does her adventure travel.
Otherwise, she'd go to Paris. 'I'd love
to see the Eiffel Tower,' she says.
'You don't like heights,' I say.
'It gives you vertigo.' 'I'm dying
to see the Mona Lisa,' she says.
'You don't like crowds,' I say.
'You have to fight your way
to the front for a decent view.'
'I'd love to sit in a café,' she says.
'It's cheaper if you stand,' I say.
'Imagine that. The same glass
of beer costs more if you're sitting.'

My toes feel better. I'm no longer
in pain. She's no longer in Paris.

Changed Colors

by Dawnell Harrison

The sun tastes cold
and has gone down
early tonight.

The map of the world
is witnessed by the
sun, moon, and
celestial bodies.

I never was one
for crying but
to think of such
beauty laid
out like a
robin's egg blue sky
against the map of the world
makes me weep.

An early winter.
The earth has already
changed colors.

Exhale

by Dawnell Harrison

We are all
Waiting for

That next
Great moment

In time where
The sparrows

Stop momentarily,
Leaving their mark

On your life.
You exhale

Knowing that
The moment is

Embedded forever
On your soul

Like an embossed
Stamp that you

Place on
The back

Of an envelope
For decoration.

Coffee

by Dawnell Harrison

If I pour
You a cup

Of coffee,
Will you

Stay awhile?
If I pour

You a cup
Of coffee,

Will you
Spill your

Heart out
Like milk

Being poured
Into a breakfast glass?

The dishes
Are piled

High and the air
Smells like rain,

But if I
Pour you

A cup
Of coffee,

Will you
Stay awhile?

Argentina

by Michelle Kennedy

I want to go to Argentina
to tango with my poet
under a moonless sky
with only butterfly lanterns
lighting the maple wood dance floor
placed so closely to the Atlantic
in Comodoro Rivadavia
I will feel the ocean's salty mist
dance with me, licking the air
as my partner dips me in his arms
moves me and grooves me
over and over again
Pull me closer, my poet love
Let our arms and legs stir our words
as you lead me in the frame
slow, quick, slow, slide
front, side, back
inside, outside, inside, again
as we create our sultry rhythm

*Poems will arise to our tongues
waiting to be spoken later
between soft cotton sheets*

Clockwork

by Frank J. Hopkins

by FRANK J. FORTNUS

The details for this one
should have been easy,
the facts simple, the conclusion
obvious and ironclad.

The apt was immaculate
from floor to counter-top
not a stain or smudge,
nothing... out of place or
askew.

We did what we do
-looking through closets,
checking crevices for
clues and determinations;
tacking the measure of time
as witness and snapshot.

There were as there always are
pictures of family and friends,
letters read and discarded,
expectations and promises
read aloud with others written

on expensive stationary.

The handwriting was strong,
elegant, cogent and concise.

The refrigerator was half-full
with yesterday's meals and
tomorrow's dinner,
with secret treats and indulgences.

We did what we do:
speaking to this one and that one,
asking leading questions,
evaluating responses...
looking for clues.

We watched hawk-eyed
the faces we questioned
probing for half-truth and
deception.

The apartment was awash in
natural light, a beaming grace
that led to a makeshift garden-
tended with care and thought.

The sun shone through windows
recently cleaned,
wicked shadows ill with portent
held at bay by the light and day.
Such a beautiful face
features carved from the perfect
geometry of frail ice;
deep features forever quieted.
The answering machine held
no messages,
a laptop abandoned sat waiting,
weary of the examination to come.
And we-doing what we do-
hoped, knew, had belief that
there would be clues left there,
some truth to explain or clarify.
In the lightness of that apartment
loss poked out it's head
appearing and disappearing before
it could be held to speak.

We did what we do
-a gaggle of feet tramping over
wood floors,
a melange of hands digging here
and groping there,
turning on this, opening that...
a collection of eyes, of mouths,
of minds and methods...
With instructions and precision
taking measures and calculations,
making notes, "Hey! Look at this."
Sun doused hand offering photographs,
"See that smile?" And there it was-
shimmering, gleaming, tangible like
something built upon an unseen but
deeply held truth... built with affection
and love.
"I don't believe in Heaven."
No more words just the sounds of
men in suits and uniforms trying to

build a finality from snapshot and
supposition.

We do what we do:

excavating things left behind

hoping to assemble from stray parts

and incomplete pieces some map

to explain it all as afternoon turns

to evening

knowing there will be another call and

more truths that will require assembly

and reconstruction.

The Last Wish

by Ivan Jenson

where did you put that wish
is it lost in your fiction
or romance compartment
did it lift off like a dandelion
from your fingers

do you wish you
hadn't
left it

in her hands

or lose it in that class
about the
odds?

did you drop it into
your suggestion
box
can you wish
your way out

of this one
when there is a chance
that
someone stole it
from the heart
of your song

in the heat
of your moment

almost
granted

Make 'em Laugh

by Ivan Jenson

Used to make 'em laugh
in restaurants
at weddings
in bars

used to crack 'em up
in classrooms
in echoey halls

now in the middle
of this stage
of the set up

I somehow
became the
punch line

the one that goes:

knock knock

who's there?

me

me who?

I'm really not so sure anymore

not a single laugh

To you

by Ivan Jenson

To you
I am a name
I might be your brother, your son,
your friend or just an
acquaintance

To you
I'm just a guy
writing in a coffee shop
or I walk past you on the sidewalk

To you
I might just be an American
a man
or a patient you treated
in your office

To you
I might be a student you remember
for the jokes he cracked
I might be your ex-boyfriend
somebody you try not to mention to your husband
I might just be an address on an envelope
on your postal route

or maybe I am a sweating body
in your exercise class

To you
I might be a nephew
or the the painter of
a canvas you bought on a New York street corner

maybe to you
I am only this poem
or I could be your future husband
or father

or maybe you heard my laughter
in a movie theatre

To you
I am a man of infinite faces

each morning I wake and wonder
who I am going to be

To you

My Childhood Roads

by Pat Greene

The Ireland of my childhood no longer exists and it saddens me now, when I go home and I can no longer walk down memory roads.

The height at Meehan's ditch
Judy Webb's cross, over the road
Down to Sarah's well
And up to The Conna Stake.
Into the village, at the butt of the hill
Across Lyods bog and back to Coole.
Up to Trossies orchard, on the hill of Cromhill
The Cross of Ballinamona and in to Limerick
Up to Hospital and back to Emly
Over to Knockainey and onto Herbertstown
Down to Caherconlish and into Ballybricken.

The Ballinlough bridges
The cross of Barnacoola
Down to Kildromin and right for the Cross of the Line
Back to the Pallas's, old and new.
Knicker and Barna
Cullen and Latin
Over to Knockane and back to Templebraden
The cross of Carrikettle and out to Dark.
Wonderhill to Cloverfield and down to Dromkeen.

Knocklong and Elton
The Pattern of Ballylanders, on the fifteenth of August
The festivals at kilmallock and Kilfinane too
Lough Gur and Grange
The pictures in Cappamore
Forty-five and rings and hurling till dark

Walking and cycling and a lift if it came
Breaking for dawn after miles of moonlit roads
Blackberries and ripe red haws
Sour grass and gooseberries
Heads of cabbage and big raw turnips
Scallions and carrots
Cream from the churns

Running from dogs
And resting in barns

Potholes and bends
Hills and ditches
Dikes and rivers
Friendly welcomes and wicked bulls
Terrified of ghosts, on dark moonless nights
Listening to vixens and following their journey
Whispering to a lover, the silence surreal
Talking to yourself, there's no one to hear.

Every step of those roads
Every voice on the way
Each smile I can see
The laughters and joys, our sorrows and pains
I haven't forgotten
No - I haven't forgotten
My childhood roads.

Father and Son

by Pat Greene

Tell me.....I was there.
Talk to me.....I understand.
Trust me.....I love you.
Remember me?.....I'm still your dad.
It's not so difficult.....let me help you.
I'm here!...look at me!....I'm here!
I'm listening.....my love for you forgives everything.
We will get through this....wait and see.
Please let me be your father again.....Don't shut me out!

This is good...really it is.....talking is very good.
 Talk some more....tell me more.....I am listening.
 I will always listen to you.
 I will always love you.
 Don't you know that!

Reading Articles in a Magazine

by Tim Bellows

Paging through, I find that Southeast peoples once
 used dugout canoes to get around, move
 along crisscrossing waterways and coastal shallows.
 They'd char parts of logs with fire-embers,
 hollow the softened parts with bone scrapers.

Inside their skulls they guarded pictures
 of spring-green waterways or maybe the moon
 which had not yet begun to sing - only
 to question a little - of mankind's fate.
 All those spears to come with time. And catapults,
 computer-wired bombs. Such grand progressions
 out of warriors' brains. Come, mystic god

riding your sea arch and that matching arch
 draped out beyond the sky; ferry me by any
 floating, genuine craft to another waltzing Vienna,
 where peace and sonatas can dance me into some entirely
 liquid world, clean as music that sounds between raindrops;
 between citizens' feet kick-splashing
 through pools in the road. While an emperor

nods in and out of sleep: Out and back;
 out and back. And under his white cap,

gleaming all through his brain, it's
the hum of ideas that can glide a nation back
toward days of canoes hollowed
by fire and tools of wood or bone.

The Dead Woman

by Vince Corvaia

When I read
how Inspector Maigret
gathered the suspects
in the living room
to recreate the events
of that fateful evening,
I want to put
my sister and me
back in my parents'
doublewide, sitting
beside our mother's
hospice bed
on our folding chairs,
hearing Death jimmy the glass

door, creep across the
kitchen carpet,
shush the Chihuahua
with a gentle bony finger.

I want to turn to him,
casually light my pipe,
and declare that he
had the only motive.

But would he flee
before he could be
positively identified?

Not even Maigret
could stop Death,
only confirm his
ghastly visage
before the sheet was drawn.

I Enter the Haunted House at Night

by Vince Corvaia

carrying a Dixie cup

carrying a blue cup
of tap water I hope
to fool her into
thinking is holy.
From room to
room I feel my way,
cobwebs caressing
my outstretched hand
like a lover—
There! In the
living room, on the
dust-covered sofa,
the ghost of
my mother, smoking
her red-ash cigarette,
thinking of Richard,
the man she gave up
to exist here with
my father. Richard,
who haunted the chambers
of her heart until she

closed all the shutters
and spent her life here,
dragging chains of regret
down the long hallway
from the hollowness
of the marital bed.
She breathes smoke
and I am too sad
to destroy her.
I back away and
spill my water
into the kitchen sink
where the cold bone of moon
hurls its parallelograms of light
through the panes.

Untitled

by Vince Corvaia

A north wind blew between us

A HORROR WIND BLEW BETWEEN US.

We stepped apart to embrace ourselves.

Years later, I can still see
the white waving curtain of your heart.

Astronomy

by Vince Corvaia

Our planet is
the size of a bullet fragment
when you think about
the scheme of things.
Our galaxy, a random splattering
of collateral damage.

On a sun porch
the size of a nerve-ending,
an old man lifts the muzzle
to his mouth, thinks
of his wife now dead of cancer,
the abused children who never call.

the savior he never knew.

Courageous, he pulls the trigger,
hurls himself into infinity,
that infinitesimal afterthought
of God . . .

while a poet, listening desperately
to Barber's Adagio,
looks up from his monitor
into the tragic night sky
and sees that art
is never enough.

Leaving Home

by Vince Corvaia

I hung my shadow
in the closet,

folded my bedroom
in the shape
of a suitcase.
Who cared
where I was going
or what my father
once meant to me?
I would carry
everything I owned
into the shadowless night
and eat the soft blushing belly
of a peach
in a fast blue bus.

The Right Place At the Right Time

by Mark Barkawitz

i've been fortunate in my lifetime
to have helped save the lives
of three people: two kids—
one at the bottom of a swimming pool,

the other trapped in machinery—
and a man riding a bicycle.

admittedly, none of these good deeds
was greatly heroic on my part.
my life was never in jeopardy
because of my actions.

i just happened to be in

the right place at the right time.

at best, i was quicker to react

than others around me.

but i've always been impetuous.

occasionally, it's a virtue.

Iron Wheels

by Mark Barkawitz

as i push the heavily-loaded cart
with sacks of concrete across

the shopping center parking lot,
its iron wheels threaten the asphalt,
already softened by an oppressive sun.

at my truck, i lift each
dusty sack onto the open bed,
causing the leafsprings to creak
and lower proportionately.
across the lot, a man about my age

walks sideways out the barber shop doorway.
in his arms, he carries like a baby
a newly shorn boy of about twelve—
his son, i figure—
who wears thick glasses with a band to hold them,

and drool down his chin.
the boy's arms and legs jut out awkwardly,
like bent antennae,
purveying a haywire inability

to function and support.

as they cross the asphalt,
the man speaks to the boy,
probably complimenting
how nice he looks
with his new haircut,

just as i would my son.

into the passenger side of a parked stationwagon,
the man straps the boy into the seat with
the dexterity of someone who is
repeating the process for the umpteenth time.

almost forgotten in my arms,
i drop another sack of 'crete
onto the bed of my truck.
a small cloud of dust rises
and the leafsprings creak their protest.

One Star Too Many

by Mark Barkawitz

sitting comfortably in
a tubful of steamy water,
sipping a cold beer,
i read my former teacher gerald
locklin's little red chapbook,

the iceberg theory & other poems.
halfway through, i come across
the poem, "sedation time."
gerry is having trouble falling
asleep in his hotel room,

so he checks the tv
guide for a movie
"to relax in front of."
he considers a noir classic
and a supernatural thriller,

but isn't sold on either.
"his final option is entitled 'zipperface.'
one star. he doesn't read the description.
just reaches for the sleeping pills."
now to most readers,

this is probably just a funny punchline.

but i'm spraying beer out my nose
because i helped write that piece-of-crap movie!
specifically, i was the fourth of six writers,
and can't believe it was ever released,

even if only on some obscure cable channel.
it had been my first writing job after college.
five grand for a complete rewrite.
the producer condemned my draft
as "dyke bullshit" for its

strong female protagonist.
two writers and multiple drafts later,
the producer had his bondage/slasher script.
the best things i can say about the movie
are that i got paid and had the foresight

to have my name removed from the credits.
because you never know
when some former teacher
you still hope to impress
will run out of prescription drugs.

Aphrodite

by Nicole M. Bouchard

Timeless, endless, ancient
She represents the immortal inkwell
of fine rum

of fire pure

Which feeds generations of hearts, minds,
imaginations and lore

Great Goddess, arisen from the sea,
we mortals humbly pray more of
the passionate ties that bind, wind,
and set ardent hearts and souls to free

It is truly a great force you hold
in your delicate but capable hands,
one that when true,
never grows old
never turns cold
and never withers
but expands

A well-kept mystery to
maiden and madam,
to boy and man
is the enduring thought of love...

A hunger that compels, a secret that tells,
desperation recant spells,
piercing the heart of a dove

Many faces does it wear,
precious few hearts does it spare
and far too many varied fates does it bestow
to compare

Love is a thread stretching aways beyond

Love is a thread stretching away beyond
paper white life and death
Love is a city, a reason, a memory
upon first and last breath

Blessed may we be with long loving lives
to which in dreams and speech do we aspire

Thanks be to you, Great Aphrodite,
for the warmth, devotion, and needed flames of desire

What the Lining Says

by Cheryl Sommese

Maybe ten years ago I could have done it:

the news has always been grim,
and strewn bodies are not novel,
they present themselves in every age
like anger festering in trenches;
casualties
of man's harsher side.

But ten years ago I was newer
and time was stockpiled

without a shelf life

without a sign me.

Traveling from one hour to the next—
within the confines of my stupor
oblivious
to the surrounding world.

It almost seemed as if the photos were put there
to confuse comfort,
mock contentment,
they couldn't be too real,
not when life was pleasing.
Perhaps they were printed
to intercept boredom?

Ten years can mean so much, though,
the difference between inexperience and maturity,
indifference and caring,
life and death.

Ten years can mean
blindness
or sight

or salvation.

Maybe ten years ago I could have lined the bird's cage

with carnage,

allowing the droppings to conceal

what was invisible to me anyway;

but today I just couldn't do it.

What Will We Say

By Cheryl Sommese

When we leave this existence,

taking with us nothing more than our transparency

and it is time to face our Creator,

what will we say?

Will we explain that we labored to acquire printed paper

for the betterment of humanity?

Or will it be revealed our stockpile of possessions

was the impetus for the zeal,

because we somehow believed

they

could define who we are.

What strategy will we conjure up

as we attempt to defend why we ignored opportunities

to help our neighbor?

Might we argue that these people were really just bumbling bores,

with roots or education well beneath our own:

and their whining about one thing or another was often a nuisance,

so it grew easier to mute their noise

than to listen?

As we conclude our chat,

how might justify the reasons we undermined others—

sometimes even those we loved?

Perhaps we'll highlight the rules were brutal,

and in order

to protect our rightful place in a competitive environment,

it sadly became necessary

to subvert the opposition?

When pretenses no longer
possess the power to disguise
who we are
and our masks come off,
when we stand before God
on Judgment Day,
what will He see?

This Journey

by Cheryl Sommese

Down the frosty path—along the winding road,
I stop only briefly to lighten my load.
I soon proceed until I near the end,
just to begin this journey once again.

I've been this way some times before,
and I guess I'll be back several more;

but do not fret over my wandering ways,
I have known some happiness in my days.

There was the man who taught me how to share,
for I then possessed only rags to wear;
and though he had but little to give,
he gave it to me to help her live.

And then there was the girl with the gentle smile,
she lifted my spirits upward for a while,
by telling me that my deep dreams were true,
and what I put my mind to, I could do.

As I traveled on, though, my hours grew sad,
until I came upon a handsome lad,
when he witnessed the weariness in my bones,
he, gallant, refused to leave me all alone.

I've learned much from those who crossed my path,
and realize that love is what will last,
when everything else in life has gone.

it's only love that carries on.

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