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I have put on my badge, and I repose me upon this pillow beside my gross Familiar.

My Nurse attends me—coffee, mead, or bile?
I am in good Humour.

The room grows close with folk: Stepmother waddles among the lamps, tobacco thick as bats. Gualter and Burton hover above the Author, bid him take but little notice of the Nurse—or, better—none at all.

Aquarius saddens the now turned year: The time requires, and the Autumn breeds it. One's arse begins to itch, digits cramp; Stepmother leaves the room. Burton suggests, They wear their brains in their bellies, and their guts in their heads, these revelers in idleness:

Who can drink most, and fox

his fellow soonest? I belch and nudge my pen. The Seven Sins dance slyly through my spheres. My tongue is thick, my ink stumbles among these leaves,

somniferous potions,

**Change of Address**

Notify us promptly when you change your mailing address.
Send both the old address and the new—and the ZIP code numbers.
Allow us at least six weeks for processing the change.
knots, amulets, words, philters. They that stutter
and are bald will be soonest melancholy, by
reason of the dryness of their brains. I
can no longer see, nor

may I breathe, so thick has grown the air with these
bleak phantasms of the skull. Circumforanean
Rogues and Gipsies ride in the air upon
a coulstaff out of a

chimney-top. Enow! I will be idle hence,
though "the mind can never rest, but still meditates
on one thing or other; except it be
occupied about some

honest business"—one cannot be a common
Clark of Poesy. My mind of his own accord
it rusheth into Melancholy. The
Devil take his repose.

THE MOON OF MELANCHOLY

a silly country fellow...killed his ass for drinking
up the moon, that he might restore the moon to the world.
—Burton

It was late when they came in
through the stile. He dismounted
beside the water trough, and the donkey
dropped its nose into the moon to drink.

He stood fatigued underneath
the wind scudding high cloud. No
light beyond reflection lit the windows
of the house. The barn soughed. The long grass

of the fields grew longer in
shadow laid over shadow.
The journey had taken forever. For
as long as it takes to remember,

he forgot where he had been,
and then recalled again. He
closed his eyes, listened to the beast drinking,
and was afraid, suspended

in that quiet of the mind.
When he looked again, when wind
had become too hollow against silence,
he found his eyes were opened,

but still he could not see. His
animal had drunk the moon
out of the water. He tried to discern
clouds, moon, sky, stars, the edge of the wind,

but found there a well into
which he felt himself to be
sinking. It was a vortex no world
could withstand. In the morning he wept

over the animal that
had carried him home; he wept
in the sun that had risen with him. He
remembered the image of

bone, restored as the blade sank
homing. The moon floating in
the trough of water and blood, and the wind
not quite too hollow to hear.

MELANCHOLY'S HERBAL

"What a pother have authors made with Roses! What
a racket they have kept! I shall add, red Roses are under
Jupiter, damask under Venus, white under the Moon, and
Provence under the King of France." —Culpepper

There are others: Black Hellebore, being an herb of Saturn,
(it is no marvel) is a sullen plant. If taken raw,
it is safer to purify it by the art of the
alchymist. It is specified against all Melancholies, quartan agues and madness. The root consisteth of numberless black strings all united into one head.

Balm is an herb of Jupiter, under Cancer. Used as an electuary with honey, it drives out troublesome cares, thoughts blooming darkly out of Melancholy or black choler. It causeth the mind and heart to be merry, expels those melancholy vapors from the spirits and blood which are in the heart and arteries, deep-rooted.

Hops are martial, under the dominion of Mars, that hot-blooded planet. They may be profitably given in long and hot agues that rise in fever and blood. Despite its name, Sow-Fennel (Mercury under Virgo) is indicated in cases of lethargy, frenzy, giddiness of the head, its juice mixed with vinegar or rosewater.

Borage and Bugloss are Jupiter’s, under Leo. The leaves, flower, and seed, given as cordials, expel pensiveness and Melancholy if used green. How they strengthen Nature! Endive is a fine, cooling, cleansing, jovial plant. It is recommended for faintings, swoonings, and passions of the heart. It is conducive to the best of Humours.

But those Roses!—what a pother and racket! What elixirs and compounds: Sugar of Roses, Syrup of dry Roses, and honey of Roses! Rose vapor—rosewater cast on a hot fireshovel and inhaled. Rose hips, rosepetals plucked or crushed, fit for all Melancholies: Provence spread like damask under Venus, tapestries beneath the Moon!

THAT PARTICULAR AIR

How come they to dig up fish bones, shells, beams, iron-works, many fathoms under ground, & anchors in mountains far remote from all seas? —Burton

The hook has let go, and the conestoga has rolled down the cliff, along with the television set. All the women sorrow, for their struggle has been for nothing, which they have achieved. The men do not give up. They have yet to understand that the wagon train will not get through. Of course, the wagon train will not follow the Tube, it will follow the script; the prairie schooners will reach California. There, the women will gaze at the Pacific Ocean; glance, with that particular air, at each other, at their men; they will lie down to have the children who will sit on the shore among soundings:

You owe to yourself your own destruction.
EACH ONE

Each one
a light in one of her dusk rooms, but none
stretch beyond their cords,
none trust a torch, a pocketful of candlestubs
into the auricular cave, face down
the untamed Altamira of her walls,
nor ravel a Minoan thread down the branched vein
in the dark of the imagined horn.
For lack of light, she herself can sketch
but fragments of charts, warnings: “the foot
steps into nothing here, here the fissure
narrows, the tunnel fills with water. Bulls
painted on walls are dangerous to touch.
Take nothing; nothing taken from dark
will forget the dark.” No maps of that mine,
no claims filed, no use known for the vein.
She herself has been lost for days at a time,
has brought out pockets full of stones
fossiled, polished by current, half-life unknown,
but none can follow her down, each one
a light turned savingly lower.

BRAILLE

We’ve come too late, the light is gone.
We tap our left senses on this dark
expecting echoes (the horn! the horn!)
as taste has (the water at Cruz, remember?)
as scent (what moves is a cat
not seen since the ice drew back)
touch, then: the faces we cannot see,
rock face, body, clock, can none
tell time in the dark, what hour? what century?
what weapon the darkened hand will grapple for
when the ears in the cave of the skull

alert to a footfall? by touch,
hammerstone, atl atl, bow, long rifle, tell
what time we’re darkened in—grenade,
the rag in the bottle, plastic, what age
makes fossil fuel of our warmth, what ice
begins to form its claws on the skim of the water?

LEGACY

He promised each of his sons a legacy.
“He left nothing.” They mean he died owing
the bank, the grocer, the doctor, the REA,
the house mortgaged, furniture sagged apart,
his mining stocks worthless, his diamond flawed.
“Nothing.” They forget the blood, long-lived and
strong enough to conjure with. First generation,
taken straight, or only cut with hers,
it carried madness. But cut again by love,
quartered, the strain came music from the vein.
Now when no one is named for the man, his blood
slumps through the ventricles of great-grandchildren,
ready, mixed with the sperm of lowlanders, to be
his legacy: one child in eight will sing;
no old aunt will say how many may be mad.

AFTER WORLD WAR II

We piled in the car
& went for a ride!
My mother wore lipstick,
my father wore slippers
& the kids poked their heads
out the windows & giggled
at people kissing.
Later we stopped
and look at the dark
at a Bo-Kay stand R punched
each other in the fuzzy back seat
while waiting for seven flavors.
Then my father lit up, my mother
blotted her lips,
and we pulled into
Country Club Lane
which went in a circle under the moon,
and we promised to behave—
and look at the dark
brick houses, the long
carpet lawns feeding little brown deer,
and the swoosh  swoosh
of sprinklers
and the colored cars, and a lady
wearing high yellow hair and holding
a little white cup,
out strolling a yellow dog
that looked back at us
until we were out of sight.

THAT SUMMER

That summer at the lake
when the malamute babies
nuzzled their bones
under the cabin’s floor;
when Cyrus and Meeno
stayed up late to watch
a moth weave the screen
then each other,
taking days to blink;
when the patient waves
nudged the alewives
to shore, and a startled possum
flicked his pink paws at us;
when the path we took
on our morning walk
sparkled with tracks

and our feet and knees
and then our backs
and tongues got wet
there was nothing,
not one thing
under the sun or moon
or those sweet cedar boughs
that could touch us.

Jack Tootell

WELCOME: ABANDON HOPE

There is at this moment, for all you
within earshot, so little premonition
of descent to the infernal (such facility!)
from the brotherhood of the common highway
noisy and sociable and comfortable.
Where a faint path digresses—a temptation—
won’t a moment, do not stop, pass on.

Yet Necessity itself, which I have loved
(ask Marcus Aurelius, ask Friedrich Nietzsche)
is split by the living wedge of this day and hour.
At the back of the garden, centuries
scarcely noticed and surely never opened
(cascade of ivy blurring the ancient walls,
see the insect corpses in the spider web)
the hinges rusted virtually solid
but the knob holds; groans, yes, but opens;
and past the somnolent afternoon the gate
welcomes, compels. An inorganic thing
draws on my longing like remembrances
into what loneliness
into what depths and deserts
and for indeterminate time
into what succession of lost narrow doors.

POETRY NORTHWEST
Joseph Beatty

THE ANIMALS ON THE AMATEUR TAXIDERMIST

False dawn lounges before your eyes
Like a fat cat. You want to hoist
It over the horizon by its scruff.

Your heart leans in the leash you hold
Against it. Every tree is full of life,
Rattling its bones and grinding its teeth

Behind the bark, nesting in the trunk
Or hollow, scratching in testimony:
We are the living and feed on our secrets in our hands.

We leap and burrow across your field of vision
But when you follow and beat bushes
You find only signs we have been there—

Groundmarks, smells, the shaking twig,
A hole as empty as your eye.
Your sights are shot through with contradictions.

Hunting us to a standstill, you try to make us move.
You run us down with hounds and guns until we're still.
You call it art or sport.

Your imagination runs away with you
When you hang us in your living room
And dare believe you have us as we are.

Resist these dreams. Tell yourself the truth:
We exercise you, provide the free range,
But become the wen on your mind's eye.

It is yourselves you flush out of our holes,
More life for your heart's horn of too little.
We make you come to life and come again

Doug Flaberty

THE VILLAGE IDIOT

If I should die
before I wake

to the moon take me
into your round womb

where pain is no less
part of the giving

the glad ritual of
all inheritance

as love is the only
word love breathes

when breath passes—
shadow of a heron

over still water
ice on the stiff wing

of a dragonfly
Then the owl's lone

syllable enters the
frail desert flowers

to settle my body
like dark beneath a cat
Take me where grass will grow from my head

where no one else has seen a vision

where I'll never touch any life but water

Shape me knotted and drafty as nets

Quinton Duval

THE PROPHET

It is extremely cold. So cold we do not speak to each other, only with thick fingers of wool.

A man in a green suit stands above us and blows into his hands. This day when the band never showed up. And everyone wished they had some small vial of something stashed away in themselves.

We have been treated fairly though. We cannot complain. There is news that startles and there is news that no one can deny.

We choose the latter and begin to think about the fires, and the eyes time the beat of the green suit as it rises and becomes, on the spot, an evergreen. (This is symbolic of our love for ourselves.) Everyone cheers as the first branches catch fire.

Paul Hunter

FROM THE DESK OF . . .

1
Father, I read into your slight notes as if poems. The hard pressed words yield so little I turn them face down on my table to feel how hard you leaned on the pen.

Against the grain
I rub your stationery.

2
I remember your desk home & work, the two identical, aquarium shots of your children pressed under glass, frozen in the ice of youthful promise.

Three, five, seven, toothless, freckled,
a sister's drawings of smiling vegetable children.

It is safety glass you sandwiched us in:
without a scratch we look back.

3
I wish I could show you a seat at my desk.

It is bare boards oiled lightly.
Its wings fold.
To do one thing
I must clear
others away,
there is so little
room this level.

When your grandson
leans into his drawing—
fish smoking cigars—
the smoke swirls away with him.
A ballpoint outlines
what he leaves
to be filled in
another weekend.

And what we spill
eating, clowning
at the same time
gets rubbed in.

It is no party,
no platform,
it is a place
to be moved,
furniture to raise
thoughts from the floor,
little more.

4
We are a continent apart, Father,
most of us not so flat.

What your notes are
is unfair: but from here
my own turn heavy handed
too easily to answer.

I know what etiquette you taught,
but that too is no answer.

Why should men simply
take it and dish it out?
I’d rather be this table,
wings spread for trials,
guests, my few wants.

I built this to bear insults.

So if you’re ever by here,
let me lend you
these iron legs,
this stubborn back.

John Kostmayer

HE FALLS ASLEEP WHILE READING SAINT JOHN

He is packing sheets in his sleep.
His hands are knots!
He is working his way
Through vats of slaughtered sheep
To the bright side of the zoo,
Where animals in heat
Vote the freedom ticket
With their toes and teeth.

Here bottles never bottom, shills depart,
And lovers never waste their time
With dollar bills or traffic lights.
Even their most violent movements
Resemble the shape of your body

Close to mine. Otherwise, the air
Is almost empty there, as clear
As the word in which the prophet
Saw the light he heard within
And called them to eternal life.
Ronald Wallace  Two Poems

WHAT HERR SPILLMANN TOLD ME ABOUT HIS VILLAGE

These green hills
were made by hand
in Grindelwald.
The gardens carved in stone,
the pastures sewn together
with the patchwork of our lives.
The Eiger makes us frugal.
See the hay
crocheted against the sun,
Frau Baumann weaving flowers
on the margins of her garden.
Her house is brocaded with cows.
We are craftsmen and
the land's our palette.
But old women's bones
rattle in the chalets,
our sons leave home,
and every summer tourists come
to steal our poems.

RECOGNITIONS: GRINDELWALD

You will know it's Frau Baumann
by the way the morning laundry
shakes her out to dry,
Or if she's in the garden
how the weeds pull up her fingers.
Every day the hay around the chalet
rakes her shoulders with slow strokes.
You will notice that
she carries winter on her back
like a hump your heart would weep for.
And every summer evening

you can see her thin limbs
prancing to the wind chimes of her cows
on higher pastures.

Beatrice Cameron

BALLAD OF THE FISHERMAN'S WIFE

Paths meet in the distance,
Rocks bow down in the spray,
And as we sat speaking
Our thoughts went walking away:
Like leaves from under the tree,
Like rain we passed to the sea—

Two griefs, and a single cure!

The sky was gray, a dimmed pearl,
And our boat seaweed-brown,
Midships the sun was couched
And gave pale shine,
And hard under our keel
The flounder sang—

Two griefs, and a single cure!

Wind is cold and soft,
Soft and cold the rain,
Sea-kine rise, and drift
Over the gray plain,
And the pale sisters drive them down
To the sea again—

Two griefs, and never the cure!
AFTER THE GREAT GAMES: A SONG OF THE FIFTIES

1
The cheers of the crowd rose and
fell like swords spun into the sky
and caught in the same hand.
The light came down from another planet.
It changed the color of the grass.
Girls in purple skirts leaned across
the sidelines to sprinkle us with limedust
and frost. We panted and swore
and threw our bodies onto rocks
until the bruises deepened into pools
where we swam away from the shore
while the god of football
splashed our names across the earth.

2
We wore new skin.
We danced in stockingfeet
to slow music and the smell of wax
and walked back to the bleachers, careful
to keep our hands in our pockets.
The blood washed out fences in our throats.
We drove into the country and stopped
on back roads where we planted our lives
with a forest of redwoods, got down
under them on our knees and searched
for love in the leaves and the grass.

3
We lay in beds in a small town
that covered half the earth
and when we ached
and imagined death we stuffed balloons
in the mouths of the dead
and made them laugh

until the balloons were full
and then we let them
lift us into sleep.

Martha Zweig

BLOOD

They have been cute since
birth. At twelve they start to bleed
like their mothers.
Boys are
horrified about the blood.
They will have to do what their fathers do.

They have been bloody since
birth. The war
rattles up & down their
villages. At twelve they start
to fight. The Americans
are horrified.

Boys have to
ask about the blood. At twelve
girls know like villagers
what boys will
do & are horrified. So they will have to
make themselves cute

since birth
for the horrified
boys
for the horrified
Americans
or fight.
THE GOLFER

Quietly desperate, he kept coming home to inlaws from the east in his favorite chair—Grace's cousin or her Aunt Therese, one or the other knitting an afghan there and how they packed away the spuds and beef!

Or else they went out with Grace to some affair or met the Old Dame coming in on the train and he was left with a cold cut icebox supper and the ads to read—in the middle of round three they'd troop in gabbing and Grace would say "Kiss Mother."

He had to drive them down to look at the beach or else to the Hollywood hills for a glimpse of the stars as they yakked and yakked with Grace across the seat shrilling into his ears their Oh my dears! and at every jerk of the brake giving a leap.

And he couldn't have stood it—Grace always so tired and having those headaches, too, if while they snored on Sunday mornings he hadn't got out his irons and pretending to whistle off for some strokes at the course parked the Ford near the house of a widow he knew and they rolled and roared on her floor like coupling lions.

HATTIE KING

Most people couldn't stand the ugly end of things—a bowel case—drooling mother?—they called in Hattie King, went out to a movie while she wiped bedsores clean—

with a bag of tidy ointments, a smile in a nurse's cap, came and mopped the vomit, slipped the needed pan under the wrinkled buttock of what had been a man—

sat up with the dying, never took a drink, crooned tunes to stop their crying, tried hard not to think, fed spoons of warm pap, lying they'd soon be in the pink.

But when she finally sickened none came to minister—her wrists and ankles thickened, she lay there old and poor gazing enraptured at the face of Christ on a calendar.

LETTER TO A POET

I have repeatedly dived deep, in cold water, holding my lungs full of surface air. Gasping for breath, I have been pulled in from the poem, hand over hand, called breaching. With the poem's form, a shellfish, in the boat, I have held to the descending line, begun to breathe, slow and deep. Out comes the plaintive whistle of the poem's sound.

Together we jackknife at the surface and swim to the sea floor sixty feet below; we are after what clamps on rocks under kelp forests, is edible in that minute.
THE ENEMY IDENTIFIED IN A BLINDING FLASH

Look what’s that on TV
look what’s that colonizing the moon
look what’s that bombing the hospital for yellow folks
what’s that building the hospital for rich white folks
hey what’s that flashing off and on
on top of the world’s biggest motor hotel
where the boys who park your car wear red uniforms
and the girls who wash your breakfast plates wear yellow ones
look what’s that sucking on a flag
selling remote control garage door openers
spewing vinyl and asphalt
that special stripe on your ten new ties
that wise voice saying “You just don’t understand politics”
that extra string in your new gut squash racquet
extra steak in the garbage
hey hey what is that blue chip Pledge of Allegiance
what is that dark stain in a child’s head
look! what’s that in the flesh of your full cheeks
what’s that, hey, sticking out of your wallet?

I’ll be damned if I don’t see—yes,
yes I see now, yes it’s

a group of wealthy yachtsmen and their yachts
a group of wealthy yachtsmen and their gasoline
a group of wealthy yachtsmen and their souvenir pistols
a group of wealthy yachtsmen and their cleverness
a group of wealthy yachtsmen and their dying lobster
a group of wealthy yachtsmen and their golf trophies
a group of wealthy yachtsmen and their smooth replies
a group of wealthy yachtsmen and their glossy unread books
a group of wealthy yachtsmen and their sheepdogs
a group of wealthy yachtsmen and their women

CONQUEST AND REVOLUTION

If I have just hit
a hard low deep cross-court backhand
I am Alexander the Great
and my face is made of sky,
royal blue with full clouds whose white is pure.
My hair, in its similarity to rope,
terrifies.
I am marching toward the Danube.
“Let the archers act as decoys!”
Aha. And now my cavalry volleys
forth from the denseness of a glen:
perfect; and only fifty-one dead
among all my loyal Macedonians.

Tennis is a sport for the rich.
I know it best when I double-fault
for then my self-contempt billows
like mustard gas, engulfing the ethos
of indoor courts that are tended, tended:
suddenly I am a Persian slave
used as a footrest by noble killers
and my face is made of gloryless molecules.
“Tear it down!”

THE WITNESS

Without light, there is no face;
a mirror without reflection.
Before sunrise; this blank vision.

It moves, and I move too,
filling out the dark space,
breath flush against my pillow.
The dark side of the moon
is no nearer my imagination
than the body in this room.

The tongue begins to stir,
rooted deep, now the pulse
rising with each heartbeat.

The body in my bed is waking,
moves slowly, discovering
its shape, sinuous and naked.

The face I can't escape or see,
the warm familiar scent
leads me to new evidence.

This then is my deposition:
I swear, as solitary witness,
she is my living accomplice.

SONG FOR OLD AGE

The earth masters me,
my rock of words,
the pulse's spring;
each bone goes dry.

My limbs grow hard,
the weathered lines.
The sounds I make
go underground.

This tender root
makes me cling,
a drooping song
waiting for wind.

ADAM'S LABOR

Bone from burning bone
Adam must have cried out
to feel the rising pain
deep beneath his heart:

to sense her beginning
as blood streamed down
bathing the sweet flesh
of his immaculate wound.

Adam must have moaned,
the flap of his left side
laid wide apart, a rib
lifted from its cage.

And above, a shape
moving hand over hand,
a lengthening shadow
passing with the wind.

Ira Sadoff

NOBODY WANTS TO GO

Nobody wants to go to the moon
this year it's Mars
the President wants a space station
to revolve around him
taking pictures of his good side
the diplomats shaking hands
the spies
in the bedrooms the pornographers
could not escape it
it would clean up America

NORTHWEST
in the end it would save money
& make jobs for the poor
folks who’ve run out of bombs
to make this year
we will be number one in the race
for space it will be good
to win something if nobody wants
to go we will take their pictures
we could send them to the moon
they can bring all the rocks back
if they want to we can show them
nothing we do lacks a purpose

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My mother was first:
when I popped out and forgot
to say thank you I never
heard the end of it. Then
my father whacked the thank
you right out of me. To my
first friends I am forever
thankful for seeing me
through the worst of times,
they always told me when
my shoes were all wrong,
and when I went too far.
I can never thank my
first girl friend enough:
she taught me not to let myself
go in her presence, but I let
myself go anyway, and she,
thank you, let me go faster
than I could say I’m sorry.
I don’t want to forget the
government to whom I am

delously thankful. I could not
thank my wife in her presence.
And since we have no children
to thank, there is just enough
time to thank the world for
letting us visit, and taking us
out of it just when we learn
we can almost live without it.

Helen Sorrells

GOING ON FROM HERE

Going on from here—(we’d intended
some startling adventure under virgin skies,
a climbing of the blue to prospect the sun,
perhaps?)—but found instead going on
meant each morning scuffing over our same
mind-set, as if it were a house in which
we must always live, the address
on every mailing list, remnants of the past
drifting in like junk mail re-delivered.

Oh, we changed a little—bought new clothes
that walked us down old streets in an aura
of newness; spoke words earthy as potatoes
to express our need to reveal nothing;
starved our despair with bright affirmations
and a little church-going; smiled often
and were witty as Xmas trees; acknowledged
in our two a.m. tunnels of darkness that in any
country, however pastoral, we would be
our same warring selves;
gone on, gone on, gone on,
discovering the wheels and discs and jewels
of courage, how it works like a fine watch;
discovered at last we had joined the ranks
of Most People.

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when I popped out and forgot
to say thank you I never
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my shoes were all wrong,
and when I went too far.
I can never thank my
first girl friend enough:
she taught me not to let myself
go in her presence, but I let
myself go anyway, and she,
thank you, let me go faster
than I could say I’m sorry.
I don’t want to forget the
government to whom I am
**Susan Hankla**

**EVENTS**

I. **Blue**
Someone walks over hills
as you imagined.
Distance is the color of rivers.
A mountain. Bodies of water.
Rain.
It is a lack of dust.
Something travels the corners of your eyes.
I had to cross three waterfalls to reach you.

II. **White**
A knowing spot of sun
on the stoop.
Morning's corner.
A knocking. Opening doors.
Arrivals by plane.
An old word climbs her mind.
Windows. Laundry.
The small room where we slept like giants.

III. **Black**
An envelope.
A frightening hat.
The streets.
No one's glove.
You scissored the crumbling paper.
The faceless guest.
You waited in the shadow's climate.
Lightning. No return.

IV. **Danger**
It is in clothes spread for a party
on your bed.
You test the air for limits.
Cling to the garden.
There is no safety.

---

**John Taylor**

**Two Poems**

**SONG**

Out of the mountainside the last light looms
Unappeasable as the light of the star
That watches without caring.
The town shrinks
Down to one streetlight and one bar.

On the road, on the narrow highway
The highbeams play
In front of the lonely car
And the darkness drinks
Whatever the couple inside are sharing.
Whatever they see I cannot say,
Having been so far apart from love
I cannot say what they see above.
All I can see
Is a single cloud that burns.

The mountainside's severity
Dwindles and goes away,
But the town is far
And lovers must have their rooms.

But the star still stares from the sky
Though the car turns
And the trees are passing by.
However they get to town tonight
They travel by a long-sent light.

MACHINEGUN

In the muzzle of the machinegun
There is a hole.
Things vanish in it.
Things do. You can't be sure.
You won't be sure you won't
It looks so dim.

There are machineguns in the park
Waiting for all the picnickers
So stay away.

The bullets in the belt are teeth.
They're starving.
Why do you starve too

Looking so hungrily into the hole,
Waiting to go
When it turns on you?

Are you ready to listen?
The machinegun is ready to speak
So listen as long as you can

While the bolt is drawn back
And the cartridge chambered
And the trigger tensed.

Goodbye, goodbye
To anybody who waits to hear
What the machinegun can say.

Paul Jenkins

IS THAT A THREAT OR A PROMISE?

Ardor of the arbor, rhodomontade by the sea:
all this is yours if you take me seriously.

When a passel of songbirds and a lug of plums
arrive Air Freight, don't worry who, don't bite your thumbs;

I promise composure in any circumstance.
Let's pull wry faces—pout and grin and grit. Let's dance

like manatees in the everglades
the bump and roll, the slow blue chew. Charades,

I can hear you claim, all fake! all bombast
hiding from love-light what it needs to last—

deep feeling, not fine words—and would you try
to reconsider psychotherapy?

OK. I'm going. But I warn you to expect
me back in a flash with proof that trouble rejects

all cures. I'll pound your door each night with my nonsense.
Love has no logic but resilience.
TABLEAU FOR THE PUBLIC

Certain days are prescribed, uniformly textured. Nothing unscheduled happens, this is easiest for us all. Economic monotony, occasional splashes of purple shadow, from pigeons. Anyone may lift his eyes, small candles flickering.

Eating is unnecessary but fashionable, a way of leaving dry interiors. Thus tinkling of ice cubes is soothing, as for the toothache of a man alone at a small table. His presence, a distress without companions, we accept as accurate, a curious replica of all that is possible.

Women are blonde, a universal color. The children in school. The children, little fragments. Their fathers come for them at dusk, in silver cars. The fathers’ faces color of exhaust. Beside them the children cry softly, like rabbits.

And it is evening, a frieze of positions ritually taken. Women’s posed lips question the children’s foreheads for fever, that hot, historic game in the dark, dark which is the beginning of forgetting we now exactly reproduce. We do forget and expect the reassuring repetition of exhaustion and put away the frozen moon, unbroken, and a concentric series of doors like waves lap and close. Within the last rippling fold of dream lies the relieved brain.

John Unterecker

FIVE CATTLE ON AN EVENING MEADOW

I
Rain curtains the sea, a grey memory ravelled on sunset.

There are lakes in chipped pavement, blue lakes stained grey.

Trailing her broken chain a heifer climbs out of sunset.

II
evening darkens the cliff.
I think of cities’ dark stains,

a trail of stains that curdle in gutters.
A stream divides four cattle from a brown heifer; the stream is lined with grey willows.

III
Now the sun has dropped into the dark sea.
Frogs that serenade darkness blur the slow stream.
A brown heifer hesitates at the edge of water.

IV
The grass is wet: I do not stretch out to count stars.
I know there are cities that crumble into sickness, a swill of saliva, dead animals rank in dead sewers.

V
In this breathing meadow, cattle move, invisible in the blurred starlight.
At the edge of every sea, ghost figures brush mouth against mouth. I stretch out on the wet grass. Tomorrows . . .
Edward Harkness

SIGNING MY NAME

It is nearly twilight.
Nearly.
I'm signing my name.

I sweep away the broken brooms,
I lock the storeroom of useless hinges.

At the edge of the prairie
I dig up my shoes.

Already it is July
And dusk falls on one side of the mountains.
This is another side.
I'm signing my name on the skull of a hawk.

It wasn't so long ago the stars were real,
And the cherries fell.
Nothing could stop them.

So I confess again:
What I label owns me—
The buried spoons, the shells,
The sadness of doors,
The shadow my hand makes at night.

I keep spelling.

I pass from one dark thing to the next,
Subtracting my footprints
Until I arrive at the starless,
Dense middle of my name.

I hear myself shout,
Where are the guitars?
Why this hunger for salt?
Ice in Chicago. Darling,
hard times. Anything wet
becomes monumental.
The lonely man
haunts the streets with an egg
of semen
cracked in the palm of his hand.

I need you. By the way
my fingers travel
over the swells of you
like refugees
leaving America
I know. The thumb
is blind from birth.
It bends
its head to the ground
and moves
by what it hears there.

A time of need.
Voices in a telephone cable
twine without touching.
Lovers too
have been known
to keep rubber between them.
Ice:
words in a wire
die of cold
waiting outside
for their ring to be answered.

I need you
to say: to a herbivore
the whole world's a salad.
You're silly
like that. I need to feel your breasts
burn like bulbs.

And we need the bulbs.
They make their own light

and we do with them,
in a hard time,
for cherubim.

TOWARD CLARITY

The brain,
the great snail, twitches
the two shafts of light striking through your eyes,
its antennae... and slowly moves
on its own secretions
no matter how fast the car goes.
Ride the tollway:

you're small, just one more hubcap
lost in the Illinois fields. A crow
catches last light along the undersides of its wings
and glows
against the coming dusk like a flare
above where a trucker's waiting, hundreds of miles away,
for splints and a jar of plasma.
The tollway: you're small. The tollway: the edges of signs
shave off your peripheral vision.

What you stare at
on the tollway's
a point where your two shafts of looking
meet,
it could be hundreds of miles distant, and driving
the car's an attempt
to reach by sunset
some unknown town
beyond the state line
where your eyes cross
far ahead of you
to spend their night introspecting.
It's true; it's summer, the gleam
along each stalk in the blonde stretch of wheat
emanates from within; what could be colder,
now, than when your Volks pulls
into a beef truck's shadow
and, dreaming of piped-in ice,
your ribs contract
with an empathy sharp as a meathook;
even prayer—how long could that stay warm
* on its knees in this interstate night? The blood
italicizes itself at that,
the skin needs to pucker
as if for the rare white kiss of adhesive tape
against an I.V. needle, every inch
of your motor skills tics
wrist-thick
up your temples; and the eyelid jerks
like crazy, at last, a nervous breakdown
one nerve big. The tollway:
* wreckage. The tollway: how does it seem from the height
of a rescue plane? when the pilot spots
a coil of gutted colon
on the windshield, intricate to him
as a thumbprint. Wreckage:
* you need perspective, some progression until it's small
and transparent, a figurine; and passing
a melanoid raccoon
struck at the side of the road, counting mileage
by carcasses, the dark snouts draining
dark skulls out on gravel: you want the next one
* albino, a hare in your headlights
gone blanch enough
to accent its matted red message
clearer than warning on a roadsign,
telling you what to avoid in the twists up ahead,
from a gunman holding up a liquor store!
Of course he got shot,
but they say he's going to make it,
going to come out good as new.
Why did he do it? people ask.
Hell, he's committed to this town.
It's his place and he aims to stay put.
It's no great thrill, I'll tell you,
to have to walk up to the Square
for cough drops or White Owl cigars
and have to stomach
"How's the old yellow-belly?"

O. E. MOONEY

Well, here I am in a Rock Island caboose
eating bread and onions for lunch
and watching a heavy summer rain
steam on the Middle Western streets.

"Be good," said Mark Twain,
"and you will be lonesome."

Cold rain in Culpeper County, Virginia:
I was alone and silent there, also.

I know how the talk goes, what they say:
That Mooney, he's no damn fun, you know.
He won't gamble, won't take a drink.

Why can't I swear, knock a man down?
The railroad is the only body I've bruised.
I need a bad woman to be bad with.
But I'm Mooney, the shy onion eater.

THE VICTIMS

These are the victims keep them
happy keep them away from fire and
flame they will be needed later
put them aside don't let them bother
you you are better than they are
don't leave them out in the air
some may rot they are known to chip
and crack in the cold they need
to be kept fresh nonetheless make
sure they have their eyes open though
some will never know what hit
them don't feed the victims and
don't walk on them stand them up
in the hall keep them oiled they
will need to fall apart quickly
and easily when the time comes they

sometimes don't wear well you
should dispose of them promptly
try not to overcook a few minutes
in scalding water usually suffices
check their color so as it goes with
your eyes work for a good fit
you don't know where you'll be
maybe in a tight spot you don't
want anything hanging out making
you obvious

stay calm when they will look
you in the eye

accompanying them beware of dark
streets dark alleys seductive
saloons they like to hang out
there tell their stories they like
to walk into dark alleys pants full
of money jingling

they are always flaunting their scars
they have long memories for the
horrible whatever

you do don't let them get in the
first word don't take them home
right away give them a few feet
of rope give them a few feet of rope

FOR MY FATHER

I am the bones that grew into his suits
and brought them back into fashion,
his ties around my neck drew great applause.
I fired his guns, the first time they had been
fired in years, I changed the tire on his car,
I was his jack and jill, his up the hill,
the water in his steaming iron. I am the
bulb in his garden still warm from his hand,
doing my hair up in blue. The rust in the barrels
of his guns loves me, I set it free. And
I am the one who tore all his wallpaper down
that was making his teeth seem yellow, that
put the kick back in his leg, restored the oil
to his french fries, boy they were getting
dry. I am his dreams dressed up as girls,
I am his first deer of deer season, ducks
breaking from cover, wings dripping. Once
I was his ladder when he fixed his roof,
and once the radio. He liked old country
songs, I had a good station, needed a tube
later, but he didn't bother. Now I am
the dust collected there around the wires,
the irritating static. He needs a screw driver,
something is broken, I lie long and still
in the drawer. I am the thing broken, the
new thing, the thing they don't make like
they used to, nobody can fix. I am the wall
where he runs out of patience, the swear word
left by itself on the counter, hands in its
pockets, no one to talk to. The empty whiskey
glass, the car keys laid by the toaster, the
pencil and the pad on which he'll write his
grocery list. Midnight now, I am his tomorrow
beginning to get dressed.

In the morning I am his orange juice, cold
enough. I am the snow on his roof.

CLEANING THE FISH

After he had cleaned the fish,
taking out their mangle of guts,
ripping their gills out the way
you rip a pop top beer can top,
then, as an afterthought, chopping
the heads off besides, instead of
gouging out the eyes so that they
would not spoil, turning inward,
and rot the head and then rot,
in turn, the meat, the fish got up
on their tails, which he had
neglected to cut off, and spoke
thus: We are from these waters,
we are the deposit the rain leaves
against the drought, we are the
mothers of the weeds, who tuck
them to bed for the night, we are
the nightmares of the drowning
worms, washed down into streams,
we are the sun if it could come
up out of the river it would
shine in the colors of our spots:
And you have killed us early in
the morning of this day. But
he heard nothing, being busy
taking apart his fishing pole,
washing his handsome and handy
pocket knife that had once
belonged to his grandfather,
lighting up the last of the
cigarettes, the best one of the
day, whereas the others had been
spent in nervousness and thrown
to the snagged lines and slippery
rocks of the white water. This
last one was for the fish, and as
a tribute to them. Beneath his
feet, small water leeches gathered
in the pool, where the fish heads
stared up blind.

BEFORE LEAVING THE ROOM

he checks the way the light crosses his path,
the left hand's position on the curtain,
the row of red spots on the skin.
He checks the angle of the toe, the muscle knot
his calf, slightly raised, begins to pronounce
in his mind. He checks the width of the wind's
progress among the trees. The buttercups do
the dance of the buttercups, the moon, where
is the moon? Is the moon on the list? No.
He dusts his fingernails for fingerprints.
He cracks his voice to check the depth of
his voice. And then he is nearly ready.
He checks the spell put on the vase of flowers
by the tabletop, to see if it's unbroken,
the smudge of mayonnaise perhaps, where a finger,
far from its best work, had idled in some
dim amusement. Cigars? He counts them.
There are ten. Five books are open and he
closes them. Where is the marker he needs

now to indicate the preference of his finishing?
He reaches for the light switch and he finds
it there.

POEM IN TWO PARTS

I watch myself grow thinner and thinner.
I study my hands receding.
I study the worms of my feet as they nose the ground.
I feel a breeze down my neck.
I turn, there is nothing, a face, a woman
pushing a cart, a street with white houses.
I sit while food is laid before me.
I reply to the aroma with copious saliva.
I eat and am made fat.
I study the pages of books, perhaps
I will find myself in them.
Perhaps I will be at home when you call.
My voice will be the one I seem most
tired of, the one I am resting now,
preserving for promises and the sake
of promises.

If you are coming remember I am rude,
I tire easily, I fall asleep in awkward
positions. I am almost capable of saying
yes, if that is something which can be
completed over coffee. I am ready for
coffee. I am ready to be removed from my
clothes and studied. You will see how I
have never loved a thing. You will see
how many strangers are inside me. A plague
of insults rides my tongue. Chances are
we will not hit it off. I am out of excuses,
sick of robbing my life for poems. Avoid
me, I have grown too proud of my scars.
About Our Contributors


LINDA ALLARDY lives in Pittsford, New York, and has appeared in many literary magazines.

GARY GILDNER lives and teaches in Des Moines, Iowa, and his most recent book of poems is Digging for Indians (University of Pittsburgh Press, 1971).

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The Donors' Fund, generously subscribed to in the past, made possible the beautiful covers, chiefly by Northwest artists, and the annual poetry prizes: the $100 Helen Bullis Prize and the $50 Theodore Roethke Prize. In the last issue we announced the establishment of a third award: the $25 Young Poet's Prize.

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If anyone would care to establish, or help establish, a new prize, in any amount or of any kind, the editor would be glad to discuss the possibilities by correspondence.
**Susan Hanka**

**EVENTS**

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