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STILL LIFE

Negation of movement.

Interrupted

*Only by the silent throbbing of
Life*

Within the petals of a lone flower;

Standing as a pillar;

Delighted in its uniqueness.

*Benevolently gazing, with a flavor of
Stoicism,*

On the mobs below:

Green and gaunt,

Spearing the air with a

Piercing

Delicacy.

Richly scented essences

Hover,

Perfuming the air with

A film of

Summer.

Marianne Walder

Marsha White Johnson



THE PEACH TREE

*Driving to see their old residence,
the parents said it looked the same,
yet different.*

*Five years growth of morning glories,
propped by a trellis.
Brave brown paint
covering front door wrinkles.
Burglar bars blocking the gate:
no dog to beware of.
A newly rooted mailbox
in place of the old [perhaps defunct
from the weight of written words.]*

*Father said there were signs of progress.
Mother shook her head.
"Signs of caution that come with age."*

*"The peach tree!"
The children saw it first.
Sucking clean the pitted remains
of a sprinkler-hot July afternoon,
they had sought to bury their precious seed,
and perhaps had boasted a garden coup.
Mother's mind had dismissed their glee,
with wisdom's sanction.
"The birds will devour those pits."*

*Only the children could remember the conception.
Yet now ripening with green, pungent promises,
the tree celebrated the family homecoming,
and mocked the old folks
for forgetting a birthday.*

Diane Stevens





CLASSICAL LECTURE #219

*After a bright blue afternoon
that tickled us to laughter,
we're in your room, sipping red wine,
and I am unaware of the point at which
the conversation turns philosophical.*

*I listen only to your every other word
as I lay across your bed
and study the woven green curtains
winking in the last bit of sun.
Musing on your Milton and Eliot
next to my Coleridge, Shelley and
Keats on your bookcase,
I giggle.*

*Then, with the kind of glare
that mothers give their children
who misbehave in church,
you admonish me to listen.
I am attentive.*

*You lose me again, somewhere between
the Sophists and the Stoics,
and I drift away,
thinking of how you resemble a young Kant--
methodical
meticulous
and persistent.
You catch me grinning [again].*



*Will you never learn?
Your Hegelian discourse on the Absolute Mind
leaves no room for romantic experience,
and should never be attempted
on one who's had too much bordeaux.*

*Mary Kaznowski
Literary Award
Our Lady of the Lake University*



Paul Carey



Rachel Pousson

BANKRUPTCY

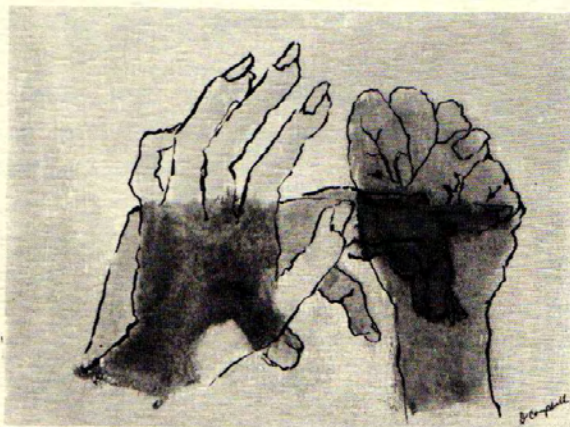
*To lose a friend by death
conjures grey, vacant lines
that never meet,
make no pattern, form no design.
To lose a friend from blaring red words
opens a human account.
self-righteous credits and gnawing debits
form two parallel columns.*

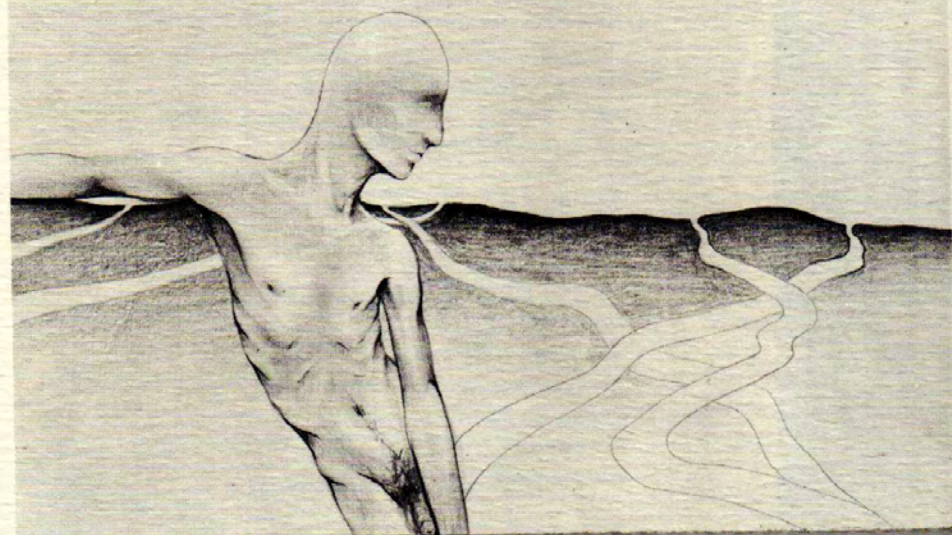
*The fault of death is not mine
to claim.
But questions linger
when a friend requests withdrawal
from safe deposit
and I come up short.
To lose that lending power
multiplies death tenfold,
cancels out the credit column
and closes the account. Bankruptcy.*

*The statement arrives later
and the cancelled checks keep coming.
The transaction is concluded
but the entries still glare boldly
in black and white.*

Diane Stevens

Diana Campbell





Rachel Pousson

HOY, COMO AYER

*Hoy, como ayer, mi pensamiento vuela--
hoy hacia la sombra,
ayer hacia la tierra.*

*Hoy, como ayer, mi cuerpo entero tiembla--
hoy de gran cansancio,
ayer de vida nueva.*

*Hoy, como ayer, esta alma triste llora--
hoy por unos besos,
ayer por ver la aurora.*

*Hoy, como ayer, en el futuro sueño,
pensándolo muy grande. . . .
sabiéndolo pequeño.*

*Mi cuerpo y mi alma lloran en silencio
hoy, como mañana:
en las ruinas del desprecio.*

Jose Rosario Gonzalez

HILL COUNTRY AUTUMN

*Solo sheep appears a walking stone
or a sponge to soak up the sun
of this despairing land;
wild it is within barren scrub
as it watches my slow descent
from the flinty jumble of hill.*

*It gazes in disdainful reign;
authority with an impassioned
gint of life emerging from the eyes--
it could run where I so carefully step.*

*I am allowed to approach
to almost touch the swirling curls
of muddy gray, the spiral crown,
the sure strength of hoof--
all I seek, a communion with
its alienable good: within me seeks without.*

*But then, in my stopping
on the blasted pasture of nil,
in my reaching out, it flashes away,
gone to where I was before;
a sponge to soak up the mesquite shade.*

*Next time then, I'll sit stone-still
near the cactus, amid the jagged rocks
of yesterday's mountain
and wait for it to come to me.*

Dorothy Price

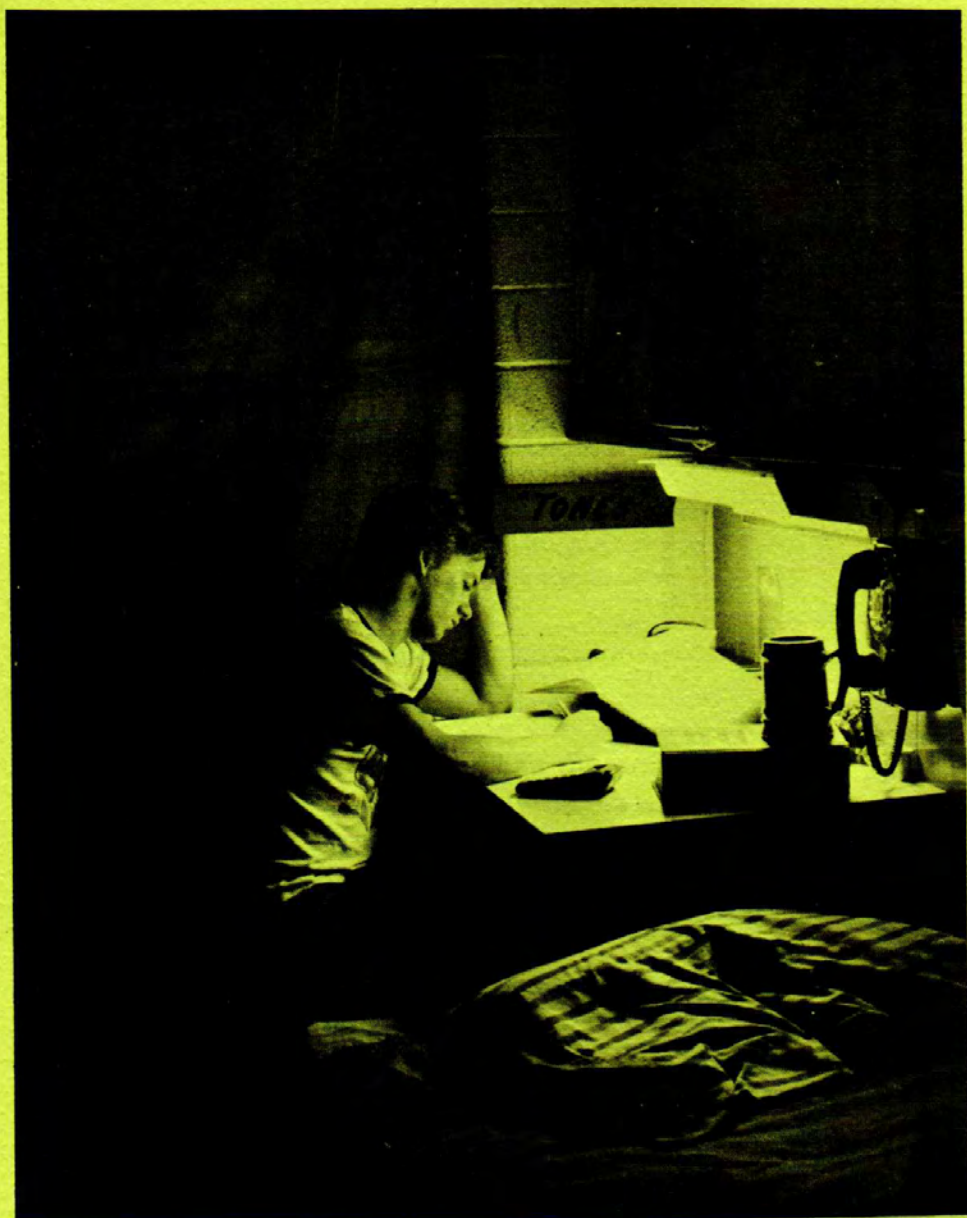


photo "TONES"
Wayne Malouf

Art Award
St. Mary's University

ALEXANDRIE, 1.

*Over sixty years ago, in early September,
the young man left Krakow.
Drawn by the promise of freedom and prosperity
in a land of plenty,
he boarded the ship with a gold pocketwatch,
a fiber suitcase,
and a pregnant wife.*

*Their last night on the Atlantic,
he stood at the railing and watched
the rolling waves reflect the mellow light of the moon.
Alexandrie closed his crystalline-blue eyes
and recalled melodic strains of polonaises
and hauntingly happy mazurkas,
past soft summers
under the willows with Marya,
and hearty family feasts that always followed
baptisms, weddings, and funerals.
He wondered what the new world would be like.*

*The touch of a familiar hand on his arm,
prompted him to speak
and promise Marya
and himself
to give his son the gold pocketwatch
and plant a willow in America
whose sweeping branches
and tender leaves
would dance and sway
like pendulums of metronomes
beating out the rhythm
of a poignant Polish waltz.*

ALEXANDRIE, II.

*For many years in the new land
he swung a hammer and laid the rails,
and his mind overflowed with the vision
of being a part of the mechanism
that kept this land of wonders growing.*

*In wintery weather he wrapped in sheep leather,
and paused only when the others did.
He stood with them,*

*a grey pelt around his neck,
and spat into the fire
 wood growing white with heat
by the unfinished tracks.*

*They thawed blue faces and hands
 drank bad vodka
and devoured black bread and ham--
their hammers' handles coating with ice--
until the dying logs,*

*snow dampened,
 emitted slow spirals
of smoke from their embers.*

*He journeyed home along roads
 like black velvet ribbons
strewn carelessly
 across
 heavy banks of snow.*

*The willows in the yard
stood naked but for the sheer coating
that crackled with the buffeting wind.
Amber light glowed
 through translucent, frosted windows
and beckoned him enter into the warmth within.*

*Alexandrie made his way to the kitchen,
where he tousled the heads of his four sons
and interrupted Marya
 who punched loaves of bread
 and stewed the supper
 of kielbassa and kapusta
to waltz her around the room.*

*You will see Marya--my children--
Here in America, we work our lives
 you will work your lives
and have plenty.*

*By the Virgin, you will see.
Within two months, the snow will thaw,
 the willow will bud.*

*And we will get a piano, yes?
The music will not seem so faraway,
for we know what it means, now.
Here it is different--
By the Virgin,
you will see.*

Mary Kaznowski

TO BIRDS WHO SING IN MINOR KEYS

*Blackbird, don't stop your singing!
It pleases me more, oh a thousand times more
than the lie the sparrow told.*

*Though she lied,
we all smiled
and applauded her.*

*A song of freedom she did sing
- so clear, so pure -
like the sound of gentle raindrops
on flowers
in the spring.*

*And for all her singing and
all our applause,
It came as no surprise when we heard that
She died with a song stuck in her throat.*



HAIKU SEASONS

*A rain droplet falls,
from a leaf greening in sun
to raw Earth now open.*

*The flush of red roses
beams full as the long day ticks
toward a nipping draft.*

*Squirrel hides brown nuts
in the womb of his tree home
while orange moon glows fatly.*

*Darting scaly quick
a lizard slips under a rock
safe from winter's tread.*

Shawn O'Donnell

SCHOONER DOLL

Attic toy

*Once a comfort to pioneer girl
A breed now dry as the husks
Corn wraps for arms and legs.*

*The frontier was pierced once
Reached surely in triumph
The surge west was slowed
And prairie settled in pools.*

Faded toy brittle

*Like a lizard's dry rib in the desert
More precious and periled with age
But saved by abandonment.*

*Temper of that brave thrust
Gone but for memory and relic
Scraps left in the bin
Of the heart's harvested crop.*

*No dreams are ever planted
To take root in the rich black loam.
They are shucked and combed
Through the ridged teeth of mountains.*

Shawn O'Donnell



Marilyn Springs

AFTERNOON BEACH

*Sea wind and the sea's irregular rhythm,
Great dunes with their pale grass, and on the beach
Driftwood, tangle of bones, an occasional shell,
Now coarse, now carven and delicate--whorls of time
Stranded in space, deaf ears listening
To lost time, old oceanic secrets.*

*Along the water's edge, in pattern casual
As the pattern of the stars, the pin-point air holes
Left by the sand flea under the receding spume,
Wink and blink out again. A gull drifts over,
Wide wings crucified against the sky-
His shadow travels the shore; upon its margins
You will find his signature: one long line,
Two shorter lines curving out from it, a nearly
Perfect graph of the bird himself in flight.
His footprint is his image fallen from heaven.*

Debbie Collins

Untitled photo [track]

THE SEERESS

*" . . . true prophecy shivers my
brain in a storm of things foreseen."
Aeschylus, AGAMEMNON*

The spell is spun.

*With a smile
and a poison
sheer as air
it takes effect.*

*The stabbing anguish
gushes forth
as your words ring
like late summer thunders
to sing,
and then fade,
having spoken
the fever of the season;
ready to brave
the ensuing storm.*

Chalk up another one, Cassandra.

*With the night
not nearly over
your victory banner
unfurls in the air.*

Mary Kaznowski





LIFE'S WORK

*The journey north foretold
an untimely death, to the
west mine eyes confirmed
infinity.*

*During the interlude
I travelled as a whispering
interpreter between sea
and sky leaving bits
of the dream along the
way, rags whipped limply
through the deserted streets.*

*The wind told my
Mother I would wander
my life away and come
home only to the Earth
in silence and ashes.*

E. Schroeder II

*Tom Taylor
Art Award
Incarnate Word College*



Veronica Gonzalez

THE AWAKENING

*In the twilight
there cries a rose.
Wrinkled with age
and drenched with dew
its tears drop silently
onto the earth.*

*Yet when the morning comes
a small brilliance
comes upon the rose.
Raising its petals
it blooms in glory
and smiles upon
the untouched dew.*

Annette Kline

COMPROMISE

*Under the halo of a street light
a woman/child
stands and waits
for love,
but settles for a twenty —
and taxi fare. . .*

Marie Holloway



E Vasquez

"Femme"

Mary Kaznowski

Art Award

Our Lady of the Lake University




CIRCLES

*It's a long way we've come from the merry-go-round—
[the lovely painted horses are wooden after all]
Ring-around-the-rosey echoes faintly in my mind—
holding hands. . .
falling down. . .
[how far we must fall from the innocence
to where truth and lies bend and meet—
like the brass ring of the carousel]*

Marie Holloway



Marsha White Johnson



THE WILD DUCK'S NEST

The sun was setting, spilling gold light on the western hills. A small boy walked jauntily along a hoof-printed path that wriggled between the folds of these hills and opened out into a crater-like valley on the cliff-top. Presently he stopped as if remembering something, then suddenly he left the patch, and began running up one of the hills. When he reached the top he was out of breath and stood watching streaks of light from the clouds. A short distance below him was the cow standing at the edge of a reedy lake. Colm ran down to meet her waving his stick in the air, and the wind rumbling in his ears made him give an exultant whoop which splashed upon the hills in a shower of echoed sound. A flock of gulls lying on the short grass near the lake rose up lauguidly, drifting like blown snowflakes over the rim of the cliff.

The lake faced west and was fed by a stream, the drainings of the semi-circling hills. One side was open to the winds from the sea, and in winter a little outlet trickled over the cliffs making a black vein in their gray sides. The boy lifted stones and began throwing them into the lake, weaving web after web on its calm surface. Then he skimmed the water with flat stones, some of them jumping the surface and coming to rest on the other side. He was delighted with himself, and after listening to his shouts of delight he ran to fetch the cow. Gently he tapped her on the side, and reluctantly she went about the brown-mudded path that led out of the valley. The boy was about to throw a final stone into the lake when a bird flew low over his head, its neck astrain, and its orange-colored legs clear in the soft light. It was a wild duck. It circled the lake twice, coming lower each time and then with a nervous flapping of wings it skidded along the surface. Wings closed, it lit, shivered slightly, and began pecking indifferently at the water.

Colm, with dilated eyes, eagerly watched it making for the farther end of the lake. It meandered between tall bulrushes, its body black and solid as stone against the graying water. Then, as if it had sunk, it was gone. The boy ran stealthily along the bank leading away from the lake, pretending indifference. He came and peered through the sighing reeds whose shadows streaked the water in a maze of strokes. In front of him was a soddy islet guarded by the spears of sedge, and separated from the bank by a narrow channel of water. The water wasn't too deep, he could wade across with care.

Rolling up his short trousers he began to wade, his arms outstretched, and his legs brown in the mountain water. As he drew near the islet, his feet sank in the cold mud. Then one trouser leg fell and dipped into the water. The boy dropped his hands to roll it up; he unbalanced, made a splashing sound, and the bird arose with a squawk, and whirred away over the cliffs.

Into each hummock he looked, pulling back the long grass. At last he came on the nest, facing seawards. Two flat rocks dimpled the face of the water and between them was a neck of land matted with coarse grass containing the nest. He looked around and saw no one. The nest was his. He lifted the egg, smooth and green as the sky, with a faint tinge of yellow like the reflected light from a buttercup. Then he felt he had done wrong. He put it back. He knew he shouldn't have touched it, and he wondered if the bird would forsake the nest. A vague sadness stole over him, and he felt he had sinned. Carefully smoothing out his footprints he hurriedly left the islet and ran after his cow. The sun had now set and the cold shiver of evening enveloped him, chilling his body and saddening his mind.

In the morning he was up and away to school. He took the grass rut that edged the road, for it was softer on the bare feet. His house was the last on the western head, and after a mile or so he was joined by Paddy. Both boys, in similar handknitted blue jerseys and gray trousers carried homemade school bags. Colm was full of the nest and as soon as he joined his companion he said eagerly; "Paddy, I've a nest, a wild duck's nest."

"And how do you know it's a wild duck's?" asked Paddy, slightly jealous.

"Sure I saw her with my own two eyes, her brown speckled back with a crow's patch on, and yellow legs."

"Where is it?" interrupted Paddy in a challenging tone.

"I'm not going to tell you for you'd rob it!"

Colm put out his tongue at him. "A lot you know!" he said, "for a gull's egg has spots and this one is greenish white, for I had it in my hand."

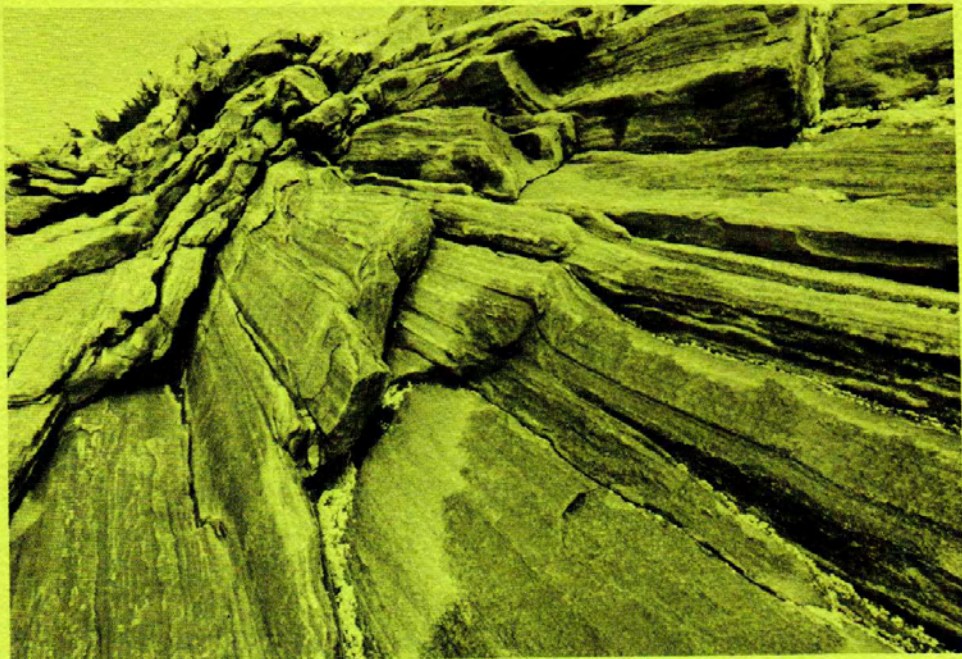
And then the words he didn't want to hear rushed from Paddy in mocking chant, "You had it in your hand! She'll forsake it!"

But in school his faith wavered. Through the windows he could see moving sheets of rain that dribbled down the panes filling his mind with thoughts of the lake creased and chilled by wind, the nest sodden and black with wetness, and the egg cold as a cave stone. He shivered from the thoughts and fidgeted with the inkwell, sliding it backwards and forwards. The school day dragged on interminably. But at last they were out in the rain, Colm rushing home as fast as he could.

He was no time at all at his dinner of potatoes and salted fish until he was out in the valley now smoky with drifts of slanting rain. Opposite the islet he entered the water. The wind was blowing into his face, rustling noisily the rushes heavy with the dust of rain. A moss-cheeper, swaying on a reed like a mouse, filled the air with light cries of loneliness.

The boy reached the islet, his heart thumping with excitement, wondering did the bird forsake. He went slowly, quietly, on to the strip of land that led to the nest. He rose on his toes, looking over the ledge to see if he could see her. And then every muscle went taut. She was on, her shoulders hunched up, and her bill lying on her breast as if she were asleep. Colm's heart hammered wildly in his ears. She hadn't forsaken. He was about to turn away. Something happened. The bird moved, her neck straightened, twitching nervously from side to side. The boy's head swam with lightness. The duck with a panicky flapping, rose heavily, and flew off towards the sea. A guilty silence enveloped the boy.

He glanced at the bare nest. There in the nest lay two eggs. He drew in his breath with delight, splashed quickly from the island and ran off whistling in the rain.



SUNSHINE

*A pot of honey
overflowing. . .
streaming liquid gold in
fringed bursts
Igniting dismal shadows
into flaming hues
Caressing small children
with warm fingertips
Enriching the earth. . .*

*Inching through slices in trees
Bearing
 Down
upon the forest floor
Teasing the woods with
inexhaustible
 mischief. . .
Wandering along
forsaken trails
on an unknown mission.*

*Fatigued--
climbs back to the clouds,
Decks itself in an
 evening gown
 of
 Splendour!*

*Reds
 Pinks
 Oranges
make up the train
that,
upon departure,
leave a tinted film
across
 the
 sky. . .*

Marianne Walder



E. Vasquez

ROW YOUR BOAT

*Today I row my boat gently,
on a jostling sea.*

*Still learning how to row,
my son sets to sea this morning
to laugh at clowns;
Lolly boasts long red lashes;
Lenny juggles, in flapping shoes;
and Rainbo carols "Row your Boat."
My son's laughter rocks his sturdy craft,
sending ripples whirling
to my boat
and I sway in rhythm to his smiles.*

*Midday, my sister drifts
to join another, midstream,
and ringed by floating flower
reflections
and rainbow promises,
my boat stills,
anchored in forevermore.*

*Evening time, my mother's skiff
is nearing shore.
Her oars have slowed
'til now they linger in their lock.
Her boat scrapes the rocky shore
and sends a wake
of pitching sadness on the sea.*

*The tumult wrests my anchor from soft sand,
and my listing craft is tossed and whirled
midst pools of fathomless deep.
And then my son's vessel
Veers closer to my own.
And reaching across the waves,
he steadys my boat,
setting the course again
on rippling waters.*

"Row it gently, mom," he says.

Diane Stevens



Marsha White Johnson

THE JADE TREE

*She asked me if I'd take it home-
the jade tree-
just until it started looking well.
It needed more attention than she had time
to give it, for a while.
And I knew
that the jade tree would be mine
to keep.*

*Her southern window's light
was less direct than it had been
in spring.
A showcase garden once
had thrived here:
now dangling ivy whispered
of neglect,
needing more moisture from the air than tears.*

*The jade had not reached the downhill side
of aging,
but hovered on the highest, jagged peak.
Too young to be re-potted,
the jade had lost the shine
of newly polished flint.
The diagnosis was uncertain:
blight, perhaps, from unrelenting heat;
or fungus, eating from within.*

*But my friend felt sure
the jade tree only needed moving
and light, and care
and honest talking to.
And now her jade is thriving in my window,
her ivy trails along my mantelpiece.
In the rainy, healing light of morning,
my foster garden hints of early spring.*

Diane Stevens



Joann Louie Gunoy

THE MELODRAMATIC SONG OF LIFE

*The song of life is sweet and tranquil
Life itself mocks in refrain
Paradoxical moods entangle
Like picnics with ants in the rain*

*It is a song of victor's splendor
From the larynx of gross defeat
For juxtaposed with bleak surrender
Is jubilant dancing in the street*

*Somber faces and swift feet dancing
Heartaches bitter — music sweet
Its mellifluous tune nonenhancing
Mirth and laughter in the street*

*Like sugar pebbles amid quinine boulders
Like Happiness alley at Agony Street
Flaccid arms --drooping shoulders
And rapidly dancing happy Feet*

*The song evokes a climate of madness
Such as befit the jester's art
Feigning its fervent perpetual gladness
While there's weeping in the heart*

Ruth Clark Lee

ON THE CAMPUS OF OUR LADY OF THE LAKE UNIVERSITY

*The Gothic chapel, styled in mysteries, is always first.
Whoever talks describes fleches in wedding-white, rose windows
colored in translucents.*

*Far on the other side of our chapel,
silver cones lacking ivory-tower pennants,
greens as happy as morning,
shrubs, and maples, pines, palms, elms,
complete with skittering, darting, brown squirrels,
lampposts painted water-blue by the rain,
and garden lanterns that warmly light up nights
[for couples] and looming fogs,
lancet windows for an echoey corridor,
marble stairways that go toward heaven
or toward a statue of Our Lady of the Lake,
reticent candles awaiting a coming Christmas;
outside again, a soothing promenade, or mall,
or a bit of a forest brought from somewhere unknown,
by someone unnamed a long time ago,
silent evergreen benches,
and a staunch bulletin board forever displaying;
a path leads past an ivy-covered place filled with smiles
and pastimes and murals brushed with emotions depicting
an awareness of culture,
but the path yields a destination in the form of a bower--
umbrellas in a rainy down-pour--and farther
comes autumn, dressed by shriveled, brittled leaves
that change from their usual to a crisp burnt sienna,
and farther on, beyond the place with shelves and shelves
of books and newly-printed manuals written by the learned
doctorates, the place filled by the geniuses and voraciously
thumbed by the lay people,
farther than that, lies a tiny creek ever-winding and easing
the sun's hotness to silver-cooled flashes,
diamond-sparkling and moving on,
creating currents that curl as if a fish
and its gills were swimming.*

Mike Diaz



THE THING ITSELF

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