

*THE BELOIT POETRY JOURNAL*  
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**CERTAINTY**

Early light comes  
taut through the curtains.  
Plums ripen on the sill.  
The sheets are cool and do not yield.

My body is drawn down  
to the center of the bed; you groove  
a hollow and pulse warm,  
welcoming me even in sleep  
to touch what is dry in you.

Hard sun after the last  
night threatens to open  
your eyes, but I want to awaken you  
to press  
my breasts against your back  
and find our harmony.

We have no dreams, only  
a sustaining rhythm, solid  
as bread.

**Jennie Orvino**

**THREE POEMS****Getting the License**

I am causing a sensation here in the County Clerk's  
crummy  
office, but it is only because I am not wearing Hush  
Puppies  
like my colleagues in near-groomdom. Yes, that must  
be it,

there is nothing else it could be: the prancing  
Arabian stands  
docile at the curb, the ocelot lies quietly at my booted  
feet,  
the canaries and kingfishers are active but not noisy.  
I wonder

if it can be the salamander? I do not think so, that  
man  
over there has one also, or is that his tie? No time for  
conjecture now, they require our signatures. My  
child-bride

looks up at me as we swear the information given  
above is the  
truth and the whole truth. I give my love a ruby for  
her smile,  
hand the unmarried clerk a check for a zillion dollars  
and

shake hands all around. In each eager palm I leave a  
coin, a  
gold doubloon still cold and wet from the sea. Outside  
the crowd

Ahhhhhhhs as I throw her across the saddle. The  
steed whirls once,  
twice and suddenly rises into the air. As we float into  
the  
evening sky a million children light their matches  
and her name  
appears in flame across a hundred square miles of  
wilderness. She  
looks down at the speeding earth. "Yes," she says.  
"Of course,  
but do you love me? Do you really, *really* love me?"  
What a  
girl! I lean forward, spurring the horse to incredible  
heights.  
As the galaxies spin themselves out behind us, I call  
to her,  
"Look," I shout. "Look at this." I rise in my stirrups  
and —  
because she wisely prefers gesture to emotion — I  
eat the moon.

### Number 10

Excited  
I remove  
her bra.  
Out flies  
a dove,  
nestled  
Between her  
breasts.  
Surprised

Isn't the  
 word. Now  
 I resemble  
 A lazy angler,  
 no more the  
 lancer.

### Mirror Man

There is a strange man in my shaving mirror  
 these mornings. His lop-sided leer and hunched  
 back remind me a little of myself, me of the  
 even teeth and level frame.

Certain lupine qualities and a general unwholesome  
 toothfulness in him lead me to make notes on my  
 Things-To-Do pad:

see who that guy is in  
 there. Call mgr.???

He is half-ludicrous, half eerie with those faun's  
 ears and that withered arm. He is for sure a lying  
 bastard, all he can do is lie. He tells me he loves  
 me. He promises me the world and all its charms if  
 I'll just —————.

What? Me do that? What the hell do you think I am?

And then he lies some more, says that he's the only  
 one  
 left, that he's all I've got, that my number was up  
 months ago, that I'm not even a laughing-stock  
 anymore.

Well, those are lies, all lies. I know who loves, is loved. I know what it takes and where it takes it. I am cunning and blond and hard. I look good, real good.

Ask anybody who knows me, look for yourself.

There's  
nothing like me this side of the Mississippi.

**Ronald Koertge**

## **TOAD**

Coruscate eyes of gold in sable,  
Intuitive lessons in ancient depth;  
Cellini cried when he saw these eyes.

The mouth is wide, habit of hunger,  
Stretched-drum throat trembles, alive, and  
The fourth finger quivers in its sleep.

In greens and blues a fly shines and preens.  
A white nerve throbs between sight and hunger,  
Tense the quickened throat, bright eyes compelled:

Tongue-song! a wing spirals in jarred light.  
The gifted eyes sink closed, content,  
And slow as their depth arise and gaze again.

Eyes coruscate dream in depths of gold  
Sanguine consummations, and  
The fourth finger quivers in its sleep.

**John Caddy**

**OFFICE HOURS:**

Students trickle in, talk awhile, leave.  
I hear myself drone counsel and support—  
a pseudo priest.

The rites drain me to loneliness,  
loneliness brittles to waiting:  
I'm waiting for the boy I once was.

I think of the California slope, notched at the ocean  
edge

with innumerable canyons that water cut,  
then nourished into green veins  
now choked with liveoak, sycamore, buckeye, ma-  
drone, and laurel trees.

In the wet North, redwoods plume up,  
with fern, trillia, sorrel underneath.  
They're still there—even housing tracts avoid them.

I've plunged into them, slid, stumbled down  
the leafmold banks, snapping twigs, panicking  
through cobwebs

to the bottom, as in a river,  
bathed in the shimmering green half-light,  
my gills sucking in the brackish air,  
branches like waves fanning out above,  
lapping over and over: not a pinpoint of sun  
breaks through as they shift.

Once more I drown,  
Here & Now on the bank above calling for me.  
My lungs again fill with strangeness.  
Bushtits swim in schools between dark saplings;  
I flounder through years of leaves,  
a crawling thing,  
out of my mother's earshot, but not beyond the  
    lifeline of the path  
that dangles down the edge out of my backyard.

Older, I trudge upstream, the ravine winding and  
    narrowing,  
till I step into the full sun at the source:  
a gully cut into the bare clay,  
pointing to the drip of a corrugated stormdrain  
littered with beercans, old tires, smashed paper cups,  
at the edge of a city.

Yet older, I walk seawards where wracks of fog drift  
into the mouth of the canyon, to the flat stink of  
    backwater,  
circle the skin-tearing sedge, plod over the humped  
    tongue of sand  
tufted with grass that hides the sea.  
I sit on a dead-white log of driftwood  
surrounded by patches of wilted seaweed  
humming with flies that rise to torment me.  
The sea's dregs are becoming the land,  
only the driftwood is stubborn and lovely.

I can't see beyond the first row of flaccid breakers;  
the fog closes in on me.  
The water is oily gray;  
sand, dark with moisture, numbs my feet.  
My legs are cramped from the long walk—  
I don't want to go back,

but there's no road down the beach, only the rocky  
fold  
at the bottom of the green notch behind me.

I have come three or four miles that seemed like a  
continent

and have found a fetid beach.

A terrible shame grows out of my belly,

fills the hole of my awareness,

funnels back into the groin of the canyon.

It shrivels the leaves and ferns like a September wind,  
touches away cobwebs, chaps treebark into shreds.

I walk back now.

I don't see what's ahead or beside me.

I don't care.

Here & Now is sitting on the bank pulling blades of  
grass.

We nod.

I nod.

Another student leaves.

James Mauch

## THREE POEMS

## Man Made Egg

*(for Judy)*

I am starving, a jackal  
by the sound,  
turning gut-burning circles  
round a big, pink egg,  
to which I am bound.

Tyrannosaurus Rex,  
perhaps, resides within,  
two feet high when  
stretched, with scales,  
and teeth enough  
to mush a jackal's heart.

They say a python coils  
very small when it wants,  
but can hold objects  
larger than a dog.

Baby snapping turtles  
can maim toes.  
An ostrich youth  
would kick going down.

I hear through the  
outer skin — heart  
beats, heart beats —  
faint but ominous.  
Were I not carnivorous,  
grass would do, or  
just the shell.

**At Thirty-Three**

I am alright; we have talked  
and you know — also know  
that, despite commitments,  
I have often touched her  
in tender ways, eager to  
hail my wet-haired boy.

Ear to her belly, I whisper  
through her skin, never  
knowing if she hears. His  
voice calls me in, though  
never by my name, but I  
deny my inclination to  
join him in the swim.  
I am no longer embryonic.

Reminds me of Magoo watching  
Florence Chadwick churn  
to Dover in a side-load  
Bendix, waiting for her  
greased, joyous form to  
crawl from the sea. By  
such jokes I know I am OK.

But for a dream.

At thirty-three, I see my pink  
heedless boy flail by, doing  
antic strokes through waves  
of clear, liquid plastic,  
a fat-fingered doll to whom  
I call and call, mouthing  
like a goldfish in a bowl.

Why does he reject my element?  
I know he's in there. Do his  
slit, swimmer's eyes know me  
out here, squinting? Do I  
embarrass him; does my world?  
Has he made a vow to her her  
silence hints, and must I be  
thirty-four, tuned to skin?

### Grass, Walt

In current use, you find  
that grass blows  
all colors: people, blood  
and bellow. Not: cold,  
intellectual and thin.

Grass, then, like a  
brass hen found deep  
down in India, cradled  
in the swarthy beam  
and bosom of a wavy  
Mama-sutra, can be many  
things. It has nocks,  
strums and bush-fiddies,  
like the God Zig-Zag's  
gun. Not: cold, intellectual  
and thin.

Thin as T. S. Eliot, ranged  
in his leather chair.  
Cold as old Ezra, shawl and all.

Intellectual as Fuji  
in William's tidy flicks.

No. Grass grows greener  
than Anglicans, lovely  
and balmier than teachers  
and word gardeners.

That, Walt, is what they  
say of grass to me and  
blackboards — what I  
wrestle with as I break  
chicken legs and salt eggs  
in the forty minutes  
between flights of them.

I try to let them say  
how much it cost to cross  
Brooklyn Ferry, to grow  
grass from mouth tops.  
But grass is greener,  
higher and tickles more  
where they are. And you  
and I dream of wavy Mama-sutras  
in real beds of warm, green  
blades, like swords through  
the cold, thin snow, two  
anticipatory ants, toting  
several times their  
weight in eggs.

Paul Nelson

## GERMAN

*Every woman adores a Fascist.*  
Sylvia Plath

Order, I cried,  
clicking my bootheels,  
swishing my swagger stick, marching around the  
    room.  
O but the room wouldn't listen,  
nothing would brace itself, the walls  
wouldn't snap to. Pictures askew,  
dishes dirty, carpet sown with crumbs and finger-  
    nails,  
records scattered and jacketless, fuzzy with dust—  
O dull! O heavy  
sleepless torpor of amputees from the western front!  
Grandfather's clock, old movies, newspapers,  
Dresden china. Jews  
mooing in boxcars. ORDER ORDER ORDER, I  
    cried,  
but the room soiled itself like a frightened soldier,  
    ach!  
So I kick it in,  
shattering dishes, windows, skulls  
of pedestrian friends with my shiny boot, break  
    through  
like a hairy giant  
to Asgard, vistas, clouds, the distant Sturm und  
    Drang—  
Freude, schöner Götterfunken,  
Tochter aus Elysium!

William Zander

## TWO POEMS

**The Situation in the Silent Generation**

Our lives would be secret:  
only collaboration made sense,  
we said: our success  
would be an adequate  
revenge. Besides

nice people accept their misery,  
and we were nice.  
Not that we believed in it.  
Only, we said, what's gained  
putting people in a rage?

Gradually succumbing  
to defective wills,  
we passed into our dreams.  
Some vanished, most kept busy.  
Who can say he survived?

We were your pride.  
We learned our tricks from you:  
the small talk of beautiful things,  
and the great lies that paid off —  
our economic freedom, our democracy.  
If pressed, you said  
all values are personal anyway,  
or else Absurd, and you called that  
good news.

Eventually,  
the only truth we recognized  
was a confession —  
and O how we understood  
the kind smile of the despised,  
the simpering of the suicides.

Things got better: I began to work,  
I began to think of forgiving you  
for my sake.

Besides, the righteous sceptic begins  
to bore himself. Mental hygiene  
demands faith,

you might say, demands action.  
I began to think it wasn't Life  
that was screwed up

but me: something wrong from the start  
with me, something I can't change —  
circumstances.

It's hard to accept, isn't it,  
dragging to the end this cowardice  
like a bad leg?

### **Orpheus**

Awake with shouts, with shrieks  
of laughter, strange bodies  
scuffling on the street

below. The body gropes  
among the sheets, arms  
on the pillow grope.

Voices are whispering:  
someone is hurt, someone  
is shuddering with sobs, someone  
will not be quiet. The body moves,  
the body turns away. Shadows  
swing across the wall, the bed  
torn up where the body lies, the chair  
where the body huddled late at night.

**Kenneth Eisold**

## REMORSE

Malgré her fat legs  
and malgré her fat face  
and malgré her fat elegies  
I said oh hell miss lady poetess  
let's go drink beer

(she couldn't go  
because her fiancé because  
her Chanukah because her  
fat afflatus )

Good said I her legs  
are fat her face is  
fat her elegies are  
fat as carp  
and I was right  
but yesterday she said I've broke  
up with my fiancé let's go  
drink only with our eyes

**Gerald Locklin**

**TWO POEMS****In The Cutting Room**

Now I have flashed the footage of a year  
where still the door closes slowly,  
and I have set to work,  
scissors and brain, cruel  
falconeye over a table of fragments.

Now if certain recollected images of you  
are juxtaposed in a certain way—  
you smiling characteristically,  
you entering a room the way you do,  
and you leaving:

then all this bitterness is a meaningless thing;  
for leaving becomes a luminous shape  
cut in clarities of white and black,  
and the last flash of your hair over your shoulders  
dissolves harmoniously into the credits.  
And all this bitterness is a meaningless thing.

**Meanwhile In The Electric Circus  
or, Ko Strikes Out The Side**

Meanwhile in The Electric Circus,  
Sam is desperate for a partner, since  
The contest is about to start. He gangles  
Around the room, worried, scratching his pimples.

But back to Foot-Bascomb, who is turning  
 Cape Horn in solo canoe around the world.  
 The sea is white, the waves block off the sky.  
 One catches him broadside, crashing his last  
 Paddle into a thousand smithereens.  
 Grimly he sets his jaw, and with both hands  
 He carries on. Dark is near, and the old  
 Malaria is acting up.

#### Meanwhile

In The Electric Circus, Sam, his dog's  
 Eyes begging, stammers at a blonde in sequins  
 Who doesn't boogaloo, and Sam is off;  
 But the band is back and the finalists  
 Are already stationed on the floor.

Foot-Bascomb has been underwater all  
 This time, seeing his life before his eyes,  
 But somehow in the tumult keeps his knees  
 Agrip the thwart. Before his bow opens  
 A whirlpool to the bottom of the sea.

Meanwhile in The Electric Circus,  
 Sam has found a plump and giggly girl  
 And drags her out into the music, where  
 The others, having a headstart, already  
 Dazzle the jury with advanced maneuvers.

Foot-Bascomb flying through the air, pursued  
 By malevolent geysers hundreds of feet  
 High. Then, by a miracle, he finds himself  
 Gently deposited upon his seat  
 In waves so calm he might be on a lake.  
 He opens up a can of beans and lights  
 His pipe. Sighing, he settles back to watch  
 (What no one else, it seems, has ever seen)  
 The Cape drift by.

Meanwhile in The Electric  
Circus: his skinny body angled out  
Of human shape, Sam rests on the downbeat  
(Having completed a series of splits),  
Eyes closed in bliss, fist to chin like The Thinker.  
He is in some other world, as are all  
The other dancers, who have stopped to watch.

**Thomas Frosch**

### MYTHS OF THE GREAT WAR

Wilfred Owen was dropped  
("My nerves are in perfect order")  
Dead, trying to cross a canal,  
One week before it stopped.

Guillaume Apollinaire  
Went dead on the armistice day.  
Under the bandage on his head  
He bled into his hair.

Then nineteen-nineteen, when  
One khakied victor, my father,  
Churned home aboard the four-funnelled  
Troopship *Agamemnon*.

None of this I believe—  
Atrocity propaganda,  
Scare stories for kids. Life couldn't  
Manage such a weave.

**Karl Patten**

**YESSINGMAKES****A Child's Ungodding of Versus**

A no was always hauntedhousing great  
 A no was always secondhanding night  
 A no was always handmedowning fate  
 A no was always orphaning its light.  
 A no was always greeking up its real  
 A no was always corpsing up its way  
 A no was always thinkering its feel  
 A no was always cemetearing play.  
 A no was always godding up its grow  
 A no was always fating up its free  
 A no was always bigging up its o  
 A no was always littling its be.  
 A no was always grannysmallling yes  
 And yes is yessing smalls is yessing Yes.

A no was always wouldnting its sings  
 A no was always couldnting its give  
 A no was always mustnting its wings  
 A no was always shouldnting its live.  
 A no was always mightnting reveal  
 A no was always mayenting confess  
 A no was always darenting conceal  
 A no was always oughtnting its bless.  
 A no was always wonting up its tell  
 A no was always shanting its believe  
 A no was always canting up its hell  
 A no was always donting its conceive.  
 A no was always grannynotting yes  
 And yesnt sing for anyone but Yes.

A no was always unningtrusting act  
A no was always unbeginning do  
A no was always unningmaking fact  
A no was always unningfessing true.  
A no was always unningblessing breath  
A no was always unningdoing make  
A no was always unningfinish death  
A no was always unninggiving take.  
A no was always unningover past  
A no was always unningfunning gay  
A no was always unningending fast  
A no was always unningspeaking say.  
A no was always unningbirthing yes  
And yes is yessing uns is yessing Yes.

A yes was always whattering its wings  
A yes was always whichering its glad  
A yes was always howering its sings  
A yes was always whyering its sad.  
A yes was always learnering its how  
A yes was always studenting its live  
A yes was always touchering its now  
A yes was always lovering its give.  
A yes was always lispering its be  
A yes was always walkering its move  
A yes was always wordering its me  
A yes was always rhymering its love.  
A yes was always knowing it was yes  
And yes is yessing knows is yessing Yes.

A no was always langingswitch desire  
 A no was always langingrodding leap  
 A no was always langinggreek aspire  
 A no was always langinglatin creep.  
 A no was always langingfrenching die  
 A no was always langingtalian when  
 A no was always langingpriesting why  
 A no was always langinggodding sin.  
 A no was always langingfess betray  
 A no was always langingmake destroy  
 A no was always langinglocking say  
 A no was always langingspanking joy.  
 A no was always grimmsylawing yes  
 And yes is yessing langs is yessing Yes.

A no was always goddessing seduce  
 A no was always priesting up its lust  
 A no was always nunningdemon use  
 A no was always hagggriding trust.  
 A no was always prouddingflesh its love  
 A no was always sinningcyst forgive  
 A no was always caveincesting move  
 A no was always eleusinning live.  
 A no was always ceremoothing day  
 A no was always crucificting bed  
 A no was always sacrilaming say  
 A no was always hecating instead.  
 A no was always witchembedding yes  
 And yes is yessing steads is yessing Yes.

A no was always adjectiving o  
 A no was always hideyholing bless  
 A no was always nouningfencing grow  
 A no was always prettyupping mess.  
 A no was always syllababbling great  
 A no was always howardjohnsing be  
 A no was always pentameating hate  
 A no was always persemoaning be.  
 A no was always straitingjacket thank  
 A no was always exingcuting told  
 A no was always crucifessing spank  
 A no was always synningtax withhold.  
 A no was always unningverbing yes  
 And yes is yessing verbs is yessing Yes.

A no was always yeatsing up remorse  
 A no was always mansioning its pitch  
 A no was always sophoclosing doors  
 A no was always antigoning bitch.  
 A no was always eddypushing damn  
 A no was always persephoning died  
 A no was always prometheussing am  
 A no was always fausterupping pride.  
 A no was always aeschylosing real  
 A no was always guiltmachining good  
 A no was always electrazzing feel  
 A no was always sphinxterupping would.  
 A no was always mythymocking yes  
 And yes is yessing mocks is yessing Yes.

A no was always | sheing it was he  
 A no was always | cruciforming it  
 A no was always | heing it was she  
 A no was always | keeningquinging split.  
 A no was always | electrussing trust  
 A no was always | manynoning one  
 A no was always | trinitearing must  
 A no was always | manytwoing un.  
 A no was always | swording up its ring  
 A no was always | axingslaughter name  
 A no was always | gunnessbelling sing  
 A no was always | collaring its aim.  
 A no was always | noingsplitting yes  
 And yes is yessing splits is yessing Yes.

A NO was always  
     uppingstringing  
     nooseaflinging  
     neckawringing  
     gallowssinging  
     doomingcalling  
     hellingbawling  
     grannyhauling  
     pridingfalling  
     downadropping  
     hoperchopping  
     singinglopping  
     halfhangedstopping

A NO was always noingthrottle yes  
 And yes is yessing no is yessing Yes.

A NO WAS ALWAYS

INBEGINNING

givingskinning

grannygrinning

pottysinning

goddingstanding

overgranding

heavyhanding

guiltingbranding

sinnerspottting

blessingpotting

yessingrotting

THOUSHALTKNOTTING

A NO was WORD was GOD was all ways yes

And yes is making yes is yessing

Yes.

**Joanne Turner**

**AESAKOS**

We found him on the beach one afternoon,  
lying where he fell hundreds of feet  
down the sky, perhaps; perhaps an hour  
or half an hour before we women  
came painfully down the snow-wrinkled  
face of the cliff to the inland sea,  
searching all that narrow shore for signs

of spring. Still that afternoon the air  
gnawed our bones, and still the water heaved  
in to us black, and choking with snow.  
Eight months that sea and the ship-killing  
wind moved against the western beaches  
so, locking all the shallow harbors  
dark behind the ramparts of the ice  
from Wind Point to the Gate of Death, Now,

we women walked there, along the berm,  
or stood together on the seaward  
parapet and were silent, hearing  
the water under us boom and growl,  
mining it down. Once, but once only  
we saw water burst from a chimney's  
throat in the ice, driven twenty feet  
whole into the air, and explode, blown

away mist and a moving rainbow.  
Behind us, over the patterned sand,  
filmed with limpid ice the snow-water  
ran perfect and silently seaward.  
Here and there it found a tiny pore  
in the crystal skin, where we watched it  
well and well into a soundless, smooth

dome, and sink, and seem to disappear.  
Then, when we had seen all this, we found  
the sea-drake lying on the rough ice.

We sat on the ground by him, crying  
prince of winter and the organ throat  
of spring, diver and song of the sea,  
nothing so lovely ever should die.  
There was no wound on him, nor any  
blood, no mark, nothing. His carmine eyes  
were still untouched and the white fluted  
eyelids delicately pursed. Shyly,  
we touched him, afraid that he might live  
and a touch kill him, and we, helpless,  
see him die; and shy with pity too.

We felt of the deep obsidian  
sheen of his breast and folded his wings  
as they would have been folded before,  
spreading the scapulars' silver robe  
over them, and preening his feathers  
as well as we could for him, as we  
women were birds from the winter sea.  
The eldest clasped his feet in her hands,  
and showed us the water-blue webs rayed  
with broken thin black lines, and we touched  
them, wishing he lived and we heard him sing.

Having done this, we lifted him up.  
As we walked with his body slowly  
over the ice, a little serum  
flowed from his nostrils down the mottled  
slate and ruby of his bill and dropped,  
at every other step, on the snow.

Suzanne Gross

**TAMIAMI TRAIL**

In 1924, in Florida,  
your father gave a \$20 bill  
to a man who said he'd sell him  
all the pots, the birdbaths,  
the stucco flamingoes  
strutting around the yard  
of a tourist stop, crowding  
the highway—he paid  
then ran his model A  
straight through them,  
its bumper harrowing the lot,  
strewing cheap potsherds  
over the crushed shell—  
an impulse, a monument  
to a proud sense of what  
was proper order, to  
the austere Presbyterian  
lines he'd known, back  
in the Valley, where the Scotch  
made whisky but dressed  
their women in black, and kept  
their houses hard and bare.

Flamingoes reappeared  
in plaster plumage,  
and when the big orange  
was squeezed dry, they  
weathered, mostly unsold,  
through the Depression—  
waiting for a change, waiting  
with the wives through  
the war, till cars and money  
rolled again (memories  
of the twenties hanging

as bait), and then  
the conches, the stone  
garden phoenixes  
and grotesque goddesses  
sold again to tourists  
from Ohio and from Michigan,  
and the shops stayed  
part of the landscape,  
spreading like crab grass.

The road is flat. Between  
retirement villages  
and the roadside stands,  
palmetto stretches in deep  
patches, on land not worth  
a hoe, but high-priced.  
People drive along,  
under the insolent  
sunshine of November,  
beside tourist courts  
with special rates,  
and trailers established  
for eternity in their own  
cities (raggedy palms batting  
in the wind, and oleanders  
planted in suburban plots,  
spreading their poisonous  
pink blossoms). Autumn  
has scarcely stopped here:  
just another windstorm,  
another windy day  
when the seagrape groans  
as gusts tear its tentacles.  
Seasons have lost their  
nice identity, and wear  
plain green. Your father

waits for winter, dreaming  
stubbornly of bare trees  
in naked fields, and goes  
to hang a ham in the garage.

The sun, low, grows plump  
like a grapefruit. Over  
the blanched skin  
of the sand, the horizon  
flames—then night moves  
rapidly into the sloughs.  
This is no place for those  
without imagination: in  
the country of the mind  
the swamp is king,  
all trees are beautiful  
and the plainest lines  
lie tangent to a perfect  
circle. There, a landscape  
is content being itself.  
Where inlets wind, broken,  
around the peninsula  
(the land following  
in indolent shapes),  
gaudy skies light up  
the disarray of mangroves.  
There, beauty is an open  
eye, loving the earth  
masked behind the scrub;  
and even paradise is more  
the little triumphs  
of birds and men, moving  
twigs, and the whole portion  
of the pedestrian—neon signs  
and shacks lined up, careless  
of the slapping of the sea.

Catharine Savage

**TWO POEMS**

**Small Talk**

The #3 hotel  
in Sudbury, Pa.  
is the Hotel Nerr.

Takes character  
to be so ugly  
and not tip over.

And yet no naked  
Rumanian countess  
will tiptoe down

at three A.M.  
waltz its lobby  
while sofas sleep.

What's that? There  
are no countesses  
in Rumania? Ah

well. There are  
just two hotels  
in Sudbury, Pa.

**To Whom**

It's three A.M.,  
I'm still awake.

So are several crickets  
and some sport in a fat car  
who likes this block.

Well, everything's okay  
in these downstairs rooms  
at three A.M.

No worms at the wax pears  
or any of that. Nobody  
fiddling with the lock  
on the back door. Every  
thing's fine and dandy.

(Two mice appear; one squeaks  
"I'm Fine, he's Dandy —

no, not really)  
By the way,

in case you're wondering,  
the flower you put in a vase  
on the dining room table

doesn't climb off its stem  
in the middle of the night  
and dance joyfully about,

in case  
you're wondering.

**Dennis Trudell**

**BALDESSAR**

Baldessar, Baldessar,  
 up on the mountain far—  
     there is no why,  
             there's only  
                     yesterday.

Yesterday  
 Luci Baines Nugent  
 (née Johnson) had a baby,  
     yesterday  
 her father, the President,  
     in his relentless  
     quest for peace,  
 ordered another bombing strike  
     on Vietnam.

Yesterday

the Romans  
 beat the Jews  
 from Palestine.

Yesterday

the Jews, for the third  
 time running, beat the beJesus  
     out of the Arabs  
     and made them new refugees  
 to join all the millions.

Yesterday  
the Jews  
had their middle third  
sliced away  
by Hitler's sword. Tomorrow  
today  
will be  
yesterday

Baldessar, Baldessar,  
that's not my name. My parents  
named me  
by one name, and  
called me by another. But  
it might as well  
be Baldessar.  
There is no why, there's only  
yesterday

Today  
I hated, tomorrow  
I will die; and the day  
after that, today's  
tomorrow will be  
yesterday.

CJ Newman

**THE PURPOSE**

I stammer  
to tell  
you

but  
I mean  
I must

You know  
You have to  
I mean  
In my class  
At least  
Young lady

Here

You must  
I mean  
Yes  
Must  
Wear  
Underwear

**Douglas Calhoun**

**POEM FOR MY STUDENTS**

If I were a rich man, I'd pay  
for the privilege of teaching.  
*Randall Jarrell*

And yet this is a poem  
AGAINST you. I have been  
warned: familiarity breeds  
contempt. So I tell you

to write a paper about apathy.  
Write a paper about apathy 500 words long.

Each day my voice  
changes. Today there is a new pitch. I will not tell  
you to write a paper about apathy. Today I will write  
myself.

I begin with a soft  
shoe on the table top.  
I write APPLAUSE  
on the greenboard. You  
applaud. By now  
you know that this is mime.  
I stand with my mouth  
in my pocket.  
Do you read me.  
I open myself  
like a book and begin to tear out pages.  
My tie first.  
I give you all my ties.  
The only sport  
coat I own. Onto the pile, my shirt  
ironed only on the front. Shoes. Socks. The floor  
is cold. I start to shiver, then get mad and reverse  
the film.

Listen, do not  
use metaphors  
or figurative  
language, it can  
only hurt you.

Robert McRoberts

**WIRE**

Wire is the finest thing for holding together  
car doors  
circus tents  
cities or

One of those boxkite planes built like a poem:  
Strung together (lyre—wire) like a rimed couplet  
That pulls music out of the wind  
Getting its lift out of pure song  
Practically.

Then some clod shoots you down,  
Ka-pow!

But you don't stay shot down. You bounce  
Once or twice, and start wiring wings.  
Soon they're singing again, for wire  
Is the finest thing for holding together.

**Robert Dunn**

**THE COMPLETE POEMS OF MARIANNE MOORE.**  
*Viking. \$8.50.*

This book is mis-named. Obviously none of Miss Moore's poetical works will be truly completed while she lives. She reworks and revises old favorites time and time again. But here are all the poems she currently wishes to be remembered by—plus the Fontaine translations, of course. It is a memorable body of work—quite probably the finest done by any living poet. Any poem will prove the point.

**COLLECTED POEMS OF HUGH MAC DIARMID.**  
*Macmillan. \$7.95.*

He started life as Christopher Murray Grieve but a casual encounter with a Scots dictionary converted him into Hugh MacDiarmid—Scottish Nationalist, Marxist, sworn enemy of Britain and one of the most original and powerful poets of our generation. He is not very well known. Many of the poems are larded with Scots words and so are difficult to read. But they are worth the effort! There is no one else who writes quite like MacDiarmid. And there is a glossary for the timid non-Scot.

**SELECTED POEMS.** *C. Day Lewis. Harper & Row. \$5.* C. Day Lewis was recently appointed Poet Laureate. If one may judge by his past performance, it is an honor that he will fill with a good deal more distinction than most of his predecessors. As this volume quickly demonstrates, he is a poet of superb range. Three themes seem to recur over the years: an admiration for all that is truly heroic, a feeling for the ephemeral quality of life, and a quest for pure and true identity. But there are other themes, too—lighter, less cerebral. But everything he writes is touched with a sense of the truly poetic. He is a major figure.

**WORDS.** *Robert Creeley. Scribner. \$4.95.*

There is something new in Creeley's verse that shows up in this collection—longer, rhythmically more complex poems. The lines remain short and crackling and very much to the point, but the pacing

has been slowed down a good deal. Creeley seldom writes a really bad poem, but some of these seem a bit unfocused, as if a short poem had artificially been spun out into a long one. Yet they are worth reading as an indication of a possibly important new direction in Creeley's emerging identity.

**BODY RAGS.** *Galway Kinnell. Houghton Mifflin. \$4.*

Kinnell has developed steadily. He has long had a dark awareness of some of the less pleasant aspects of man's nature. But he has added a pathetic compassion that is quite deceptive. He reports now, with a sharp eye and a sassy tongue, much that he sees and hears in some of man's least appealing struggles in Asia and the South. The results are often extremely fine as poems but hard on the reader's conscience. In the long poem, "The Last River," he has his finest work to date—a frightening and frightful exploration of motives. It is good to see a poet fulfill his early promise.

**O THE CHIMNEYS.** *Nelly Sachs. Farrar, Straus & Giroux. \$7.50.*

This volume consists of liberal selections from more than half-dozen books by the 1966 Nobel Prize winner. Most of the poems treat in one way or another the theme that is set in the first four lines of the first poem: "O the chimneys / On the ingeniously devised habitations of death / When Israel's body drifted as smoke / Through the air." The poems, haunted with death and tragedy, are yet alive in the hope of Israel. The book is testimony to the spirit that cannot be overcome—or burned away.

**NOTE:** Harcourt Brace & World has published **THE FEAST**, a new book of poems by Bink Noll. Mr. Noll is a former member of the Journal's editorial board.