

THE BELOIT POETRY JOURNAL

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TEN

Desire was a GI walking alone
On Hamburg-Strasse. Marie was ten
Big sister Giesela had been known
By twenty soldiers, and she was only
Four years older; and again
One is lonelier at ten.

He was American and seemed lost
Within the wide hope of her eye.
He would be glad she did not cost
Eighty Marks like other Frauleins.
After he had sauntered by,
She followed with an anxious eye.

Then drawing close, she said aloud,
"Who is it you are looking for?"
His quick smile made her very proud
Until he murmured "Where's your sister?" . . .
And she thought back upon the war
She had not known, but waited for,
When every soldier kissed her.

Edsel Ford

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THE LADDER WIRE

The top floor was six
feet high, a box
and the bottom, five.

Electric current ran all
every inch, it could
through the walls and floor.

The current on the top
soothed, off
and she kneeled there

Waiting to be tipped
and herself
to fall, the floor down

To the electric and the five,
burning, shocks: A wire
ladder ran from the lower

To the floor again above,
and she would climb
up, over of the current.

Then the top standing
under her feet
would tilt her down,

And unable of the current
she would climb, setting
more to be fallen:

The ladder wire tore her
with lines, blood
the necessity, her climb.

Robert S. Sward

THE PICNIC PARTY

. . . what sort of bread moldy nerve
was the doughy crumb-sized spider?
a bunch of neural weaving web-gut,
gossamer head with ruddy grey legs
arms, and browner than white body,
not dappled, but rotten colored
like some dry discarded bite
of an old peanut butter sandwich—
. . . here's the story:

I'm sitting at the picnic table,
reading and eating, dripping a peach
when across a napkin comes small,
a grub ant queen, complete with wings.
She poises at the edge of the juice,
and I snap down my fingernail
and push her between the table-
boards, into a spider web.

She isn't quite dead, and kicks
and tries to fly up a fuss,
when the dirty peanut butter spider
swings into her with six or seven legs;
the old queen flutters and courtiers around,
nearly unleaven, a formic, saltine virgin,
but she's webbed, the spider's at her,
has her and drags her good into a corner,
and what knows what's in his head?
The queen's wings are off, worm-wind,
maybe, now, and the spider's on top of her
with all his arms and legs all around;
the web's a wreck of itself, and its threads,

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and there's nothing gossamer about it.

Soon the queen is gone, barely there,
all spread and leavened-back,
the spider underneath, half hidden,
cleaner, again new, spinning like a moon
neural out of mold, . . . ant-belly, wings,
formic out of flight.

Robert S. Sward

THE LOSER

Playing Monopoly on the porte-cochere,
The dice rattling like a run-down clock,
With torpid terror I realized my token was melting,
That slow rain was falling on the underside
Of time: rust on the chain-guard of my
Bicycle, bearings rotting in my skate wheels,
Tangled cat gut in my tennis racket.
Nearing bankruptcy, I mortgaged all
I could: flimsy railroads, paper lots—
Mean investments valueless in rain.
My sports equipment by now was junk. No player
Would even make an offer.

We hardly noticed the sedan drive up beneath
The roof, scattering the game. My token
Was crushed under the left front wheel,
Unmelted. The banker shrieked under the axle,
So nobody knew who won. Gathering my broken
Playthings, I drifted pale into the rain.

Larry Rubin

IN ROARTIOUS INDIGNACITY

**Commemorating lines to a
vegetarian, anarchist, &
Irishman**

O

Most pee pole certainly
But not Mac Who
Came out in's 20th year,
Tosub ur(b)inate?
Not on your wife! Tho
Right by that wight they
Stopped on the way cal-
Esthenating and cal-
umniating the Blight
Born high or lowdown:
DOWN THE CITY! Willie! Ned!
Downdown the wittynittycitty
And be Gad! For-
En(sic)ally you mustyou
Mustyou MUST greetha
Hard big fast held rocks and spit
Out of pump a nickle bread.

No

Fish, no bonesmeat no
Red flesch fishy need-
Less-to-say meatain't
Tainted good. Sohesa
Vegitarinating on
The rubric of a cubic
Cucumbersome or pickle
But no meat for

6

Sickey would b.
Or else, 'rinding 'is tatters thers
Grass green bees eggs
Roots of cuneiform um-
Brageousness (sup)plied
With ketchup sauce and
Turnip greens or
Dandelion pimples, first
And then fried Joshuas
Or Conscientiousnesscity.

So

There's a rub a drake masseur
Down upon the lean dearth moor,
In might, in pur(PAL!)
Clothing 'rayed, rain down
The brackish carrotstalk!
Awalk among the finest facts
Of facing Nature's Herbs.

O Herb!

O Rubel!

Come down oh mighty down
Down come the mighty land:

O say freed of fricasseed, the

Stangled sparrycoast to lee:

Only LEAF, or leave it!

NOT, sees he

IN ROARTIOUS INDIGNACITY!

James Hiner

TWO VOICES NORTH OF COGGESHALL POINT

Look. A barge in the bay.
 Standing so still, it is
 The voyage of its own reflection,
 Or the deck of the sea,
 The summerhouse of a wave.

It's a dredge.

A dredge? But see
 Troy on its sea-side:
 Four ladders, squared, lean to a perch,
 A wooden eiffel, trellis
 For the rambler
 Gull when he walks out of the sky
 For a sort of rest.

A crane. It's a crane.

Oh, It is
 Hauling in the might
 Of the sea, though . . .
 See, the tide falls
 As it winds. Or
 It reels in some archaic whale
 From his loss of breath . . . no,
 It is rolling up the bottom of the sea.

**It is dragging in nets, old nets,
 Goose, silly, child . . . dear . . .
 But, quick, lend me your eyes.**

John Fandel

8

DIRECTIVE

However far a journey leads you south,
You are still north, you are still very north.

This is the consequence of every worth:
You will think **water** at the root of drouth.

Suppose you reach the pole, the Southern Pole:
N is the only direction you can go.

How can a man be south in ice and snow?
Even that south says north is still his goal.

Ever as you go south, the north will be.
Yes, I admit, this is not relative.

About the snow and ice, yes, I agree,
My meaning is less wry than illative.

And, yes, of course, the world is almost round:
North is north; south is south. I speak

An older compass. None of us has found
North stops when we are south. The flesh is weak.

It is the cause, it is the cause. Go north,
Young man, go north. Go north. The north is South.

John Fandel

THIRTY, AND FALLING

When I read the mariner's glass, thirty, and falling,
licked my fingers across the wind,
pictured the heavens against the boards, all
signs and signatures pointed to sin.

This was unusual. So defined
 and absolute, this threat of hail and thunder,
 that daffodil and man had better find
 a sheltering door down under.
 I ached exclusively for this. A fetish yesterday
 is no recourse: it pinks the west,
 but opposite, this storm, breaking
 shuffles birds from their wings.

It will handle us. I don't exactly know how you tell
 dynamite from thunder — its smell?
 But we built us a snowman who roused to a naked bear;
 Indians whispered his ferocity, his white patched head,
 and read his lumbering feet on black twigs everywhere.
 (And for all his coat is warm, his flesh is firm—
 a private good — he plays about the flood,
 rising, galivanting, a potent harm
 within his raised estate, his radiant hide.)
 This solitary mob and marvel robs the town,
 breaks children into sticks to pick his teeth,
 the scorch of his embrace can wither stone.

When we surveyed the likelihood of his frenzy,
 the enormous spread of his paws,
 the path of his possible raid, we said,
 This is imagination, and denounced the storm instead.
 Now, trap him! Grapple for him, bait
 his honey tongue. By strength of definition
 Everyone can shoot straight
 at the snowbear, right between the eyes!
 And if he lies dead, eyes done, sleet stung,
 where shall we bury him, what sea
 deep enough to cover over; how dare
 we carry him there, his heavy arms far flung?

Sheila Pritchard

10

LETTER

I will come home
To drink you deep
To rub myself into another world.
Put on the toe-ring with the bell
No other garment
And we will make music.
Melting with laughter
Bite me and tickle me and sigh
And I will hold, and you will cry
And we will tell each thousand times before:
Halibut schooner passed love on the shore
Or the first green appled sweater
Or the petals of your robe that fell,
We have a thousand times to tell
And each one better.

We have cried sadness
And we have cried glad
In anger I raped you once
Something good came of it
I don't know the name of it;
I nearly went mad.

Once in the columbine
Twice in the sleeping bag
Again on Mount Roberts:
Luxury of the moss

The whistling marmots
And the blessing sky.

We ate canned chicken and lettuce in bed
Nor left the room to eat.

Unpacking in hotels came last;
Ten thousand kisses at the St. Francis
Covered every nerve end.

We put glasses together
Bottles, coffee cups
Things we touched had to kiss.

Telephones were your breasts
I dialed and dialed.

We have bred angels
Art and starlight
Oceans
And mornings.

How I will carry you
Turn you
And love you
Counting the thousand times gone by
Hold you and harbor you
I'll warm you and wet you
And get you
Again and again;
And when you have taken me
Pulling me, shaking me
Rooting my heart and burning my mind
Wide open your mouth and your nose and your ears
Taste me your lips and