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**ELIZA TELEFAIR**

Wearily, still in her dressing gown,  
she walked on the beach shortly after dawn  
through tremulous stillness. Heat had grown

with the flowering night. I'll go to the pier.  
Locusts thundered, "Beware. Beware!"  
A shy grouse jittered, "Don't go too far."

Coiled bright-eyed in the sun-drenched brush,  
"Let her alone," a grass snake hissed.

She wandered across the lake lapped stones,  
over quartz shining fishes' bones  
heaped in their graveyard. "Here she comes—,"

the bittern quavered. The black bass swung  
in a shoreward arc, the seagull hung  
from his sky trapeze as she moved along

into beckoning day. Newly begun,  
no longer enwombed, she was bird and sun,  
she was earth and water and fish and stone.

Nothing, yet all, she went down the pier,  
wrapped in her glittering shroud of air.

**Jocelyn Macy Sloan**

## WAVES

Take, for convention's sake, two lovers, hand  
 in hand, on some long beach, besieged by rank  
 on rank of waves. Indistinguishable,  
 these lovers, waves, this scalloped rind of sand,

a notion, all, in the mind of God, until  
 you look at particularities; e.g.,  
 the boy explains mortality and such  
 indecorous considerations, will,

or absence of it, molecules, and how  
 the waves are made. He finds her patient, as  
 girls are with thoughts.

“How can you say,” he says,  
 “that men or waves are fools? What *if* they wallow

home in fits, like drunks, or with foamy lips fall  
 in the shallows? Do you know they are patterns of  
 rotating particles, that while the wave  
 departs, the water stays, and, after all,

why not expect what likely will betide?  
 The fact that waves recur, recur, that each  
 learns nothing from the last, that as they spray  
 and decompose, they rustle, satisfied,

as though it were relief to lose a ton  
 or so of self, as though identity  
 too long had imposed on facelessness, as though  
 they know the end is not an end (for one,

becoming many, soon is all), the fact  
 that waves wish nothing (and, if they were to,  
 would only want the shore) is proof enough . . . ”

“That they are fools,” she says, with lack of tact.

"That judgment is irrelevant," says the boy, facing, like Hell, which must be faced, the moon lighting like science hopelessly the bright and headless shoulders bending to destroy all shoulderness.

"But *we* are different!" finds she now, and he detects no irony.

"Of course! The cosmic fidget which impels all curves knows medians of many kinds, but never quite creates them. Random curves within a range are near enough for our universe, which, with timeless practicing still has its gesture shaken by its nerves.

The wave is form; yet not the form exact, but momentary shape of ocean; yet not shape alone, but shape plus molecules; or shape and stuff and motion make the fact.

So we are different, within our range, as any wave, one instant from the last, or any instant from all other waves—each self a constant in a sea of change . . . "

"By we I don't mean waves, but *us*" she cries, the way that girls pronounce that mystic *us*. "I know we are not waves in shape or kind, for I can judge, and you can analyze."

(Bitter in this, if he but knew it. She sees all that sand, some of it dry, unused and thinks whatever they are walking for is not down the endless beach nor in the sea.)

"Analysis is irrelevant." (She concurs; he drops her hand to gesture.) "What is, is;

and we may do what all the waves and weather  
 behind, the floor of sand beneath that stirs,  
 the line of shore that interrupts, and laws  
 of physics make us do; reflection is  
 one way of passing time, rotating to  
 our end."

"I know another," soft because  
 she now is half convinced there is no way  
 of saving waves that make so ponderously.  
 "But are they mournful," she asks, "as they  
 roll into the end? And do they feel decay,  
 even of molecules? Are waves, like us,  
 aware that one way logic lies, another  
 sense, and that of the two, logic is truer,  
 but a joke, and sense, that lie preposterous,  
 persists compellingly? If not composed  
 of any particular water, and yet not quite  
 the form intended, but just this shape, with some  
 consistency (a way curls are disposed  
 along a frothy forehead), not really real,  
 if real implies definable, if waves,  
 like us, are so inconstant, but each so clearly  
 no other, do they tell this fib I feel  
 they *must* tell to the little waves, this story  
 that one is something laws have overlooked,  
 that freedom is the gift of randomness,  
 and that in choosing is one's private glory,  
 doing, that is, what one must *try* to do . . ."

Well, he grew tired of incoherency  
 and kissed her, as water reaches in a cove  
 and wets the dry, surrounds and filters through.

Judson Jerome

**MILL HOLLOW**

*"Everything must be imagined."*—**The Idiot**

Here in the mill and sacred hollow  
Where the yellow house is black with pitch  
And the hole at the end of the road swallows  
My joy in the closed mill windows' eyes,

Here where the lawn slopes downward to the lake  
And the shades where lowered in the house behind  
my back,

I leave gentility behind  
Like mold upon a principle or citrus rind.

The mica mines in the distance where I found  
My bits of heaven by a headlamp  
Or by chance  
Stay at the lakeside where I heard  
My first invisible word.

Here the rains and fire hushed the house  
And thunder dropped its diamonds on the hearth.  
I watched each, like Prometheus long inbound  
Pondering his memories in waves of fire.

Here on the hillside settlement and ground  
I leaned against a door and waited  
As if it were the Whalingman's Museum  
Where an Asian merman had been found  
With salmon-tail and pigmy-human head  
Where once I felt: a terrible beauty is dead,

And everything was imagined, as the Russian said,  
Where nothing was relieved by sound.

**Herbert Mason**

**THE WILLOW GIRL**

My head in summer fills with willows,  
Not Ophelia's, fingering waters,  
Nor others lachrymose in song:  
I feel the incandescent toss  
Of four—tremendous, clustering  
A hidden pool in one bright mass.

From the hill in spring, it seemed an island  
Treasuring a sway of grasses.  
Later, it blazoned stubble sea  
Where one meridian of wire  
Incised the clump to cut away  
The pool when horses pastured there.

Two horses worked the sea new changes.  
Nibbling the overhanging willows,  
They slowly carved the island mass  
Into a girl with green bobbed hair,  
Scissored in bangs above the close,  
Brushed to the field beyond the wire.

From her nape waved plumes of pampas grass,  
An oval shadow was her face.  
Dreaming in newts and roots and moss,  
Sometimes nodding, she would gaze  
Across the stubbled pasture, stretched  
Like level sawdust to the hill,  
Until a team of horses hitched  
With leisured air in ritual,  
A black, a bay, graced by the trees,  
Would walk into the sun from all  
The green vacation of her eyes.

Sheridan Baker

## SHADOWS

1. I would like to make love in Coolonga-doon  
on deep musty moss  
hidden by a thicket of black roses.  
I would like mysterious music  
played by turquoise crickets  
and navy blue frogs and  
tenderness so sweet  
that my tears would run blood red  
and jewel my bed.
  
2. I looked from my window  
and saw a man gazing at me.  
I was elegant then and proud  
and he was shabby, shabby  
and I said very low so that he could not hear  
"Love me and remember me  
for I would like to be the woman of your dreams  
and know that you can never have me.  
Then when I am old  
and no longer elegant  
and no longer proud,  
when my teeth have rotted  
and my hair has become like ash-colored weeds  
then I shall pass your window . . . . .  
but I shall not remember you."
  
3. I would like to be a tall tree in a great wind  
and feel the part of me that is a leaf  
break with agony from my bough and

be teased back to the wound again  
 and again . . . . .  
 then to fall swiftly to the ground  
 covering a black beetle  
 beaten by a blade of grass.

Mary Jackson

### **PENELOPE'S SUITORS IN HELL**

Well, no one considered anything wrong:  
 foxy grandpa limped to his farm in the hills,  
 the brat fetched and carried and grew up strong,  
 we slept with her maids, she slept with her chills.

Love costs money, we said, what good's delay?  
 We dined and we danced, played at arms, shot craps  
 and spent our few good years like a spring day.  
 We welcomed strangers for we feared no traps.

You know what happened, they teach it in schools:  
 we paid for discourtesy with our lives,  
 love is faithful, and we were a pack of fools.

It may save you running, so let's get it straight:  
 there are two nowheres, here where man arrives  
 and there where he pursues a withering mate.

Jascha Kessler

**TWO POEMS****The Baby Cockatrice**

I'd read of the vast reptiles, maybe seen  
Some musty drawings of them, years ago.  
The rumor that such creatures have once been  
Will make a child fear, idly, *They are, now.*

Preoccupied and happy, I had fished  
Well through a June day on Commotion Creek  
And had my limit; now the water rushed  
In shadow, mostly. Almost at the lake

I climbed the bank, tired, quiet. There he was.  
He happened; total; there. He barely lay  
A finger long—bone mouth and ruff and claws,  
The plated body, and, shock on shock, the eye.

And once I turned, all I had been stood there  
Whole, in a gaze where no more could occur.

**Alan Stephens**

**Written From a Grove**

Here all's enclosed; for seven days  
I've camped in this blue-shaded wood—  
My study, and my scholar ways  
Vacated; I have played the mute,  
Lone with perception as the brute,  
Whose world is in him, understood.

And all's enclosed and done: I note  
The blue-glazed wing, the striped fur,

The incised hoof and creamy throat—  
 If the beginning was a word  
 These are the end, who never heard.  
 Moment on moment, they occur.

Should but one concept, alien, knock  
 At the creation they contain,  
 They are so hearted that the shock  
 Would bring not death, their common care,  
 But sudden indifference in the air,  
 And the creation to explain.

Alive to their sweet necessity  
 (As I work backward into speech)  
 The wild bees bend the timothy,  
 Take, and depart. I see, name, know,  
 Take in the distance where they go,  
 Bring bright creation within reach.

Alan Stephens

### I WOULD TIPTOE SOFTLY

I would tiptoe softly into death  
 and squint my eyes,  
 for fear its light is meant  
 to blind the bold.

And yet, because I love the wise  
 I'd wear a scholar's cap to death  
 and have a dissertation typed  
 to argue for my place among the fold.

Still, since I fear the lion so  
 a golden mane must mask my throat:  
 then I might leap down death with hungry growls  
 and set my paw against the chin of God.

Joan Byrne