

# THE BELOIT POETRY JOURNAL

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## CONTENTS

- |    |                     |                                   |
|----|---------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1  | JOCELYN MACY SLOAN  | <i>Eliza Telefair</i>             |
| 2  | JUDSON JEROME       | <i>Waves</i>                      |
| 5  | HERBERT MASON       | <i>Mill Hollow</i>                |
| 6  | SHERIDAN BAKER      | <i>The Willow Girl</i>            |
| 7  | MARY JACKSON        | <i>Shadows</i>                    |
| 8  | JASCHA KESSLER      | <i>Penelope's Suitors in Hell</i> |
| 9  | ALAN STEPHENS       | <i>Two Poems</i>                  |
| 10 | JOAN BYRNE          | <i>I Would Tiptoe Softly</i>      |
| 11 | ROBERT BLOOM        | <i>Marginalia and Memo</i>        |
| 12 | HORACE HAMILTON     | <i>January Night</i>              |
| 13 | ALEXANDRA GRILIKHES | <i>Vertigo and Wet Evergreen</i>  |
| 14 | R. G. VLIET         | <i>Two Poems</i>                  |
| 17 | MAXINE W. KUMIN     | <i>Two Poems</i>                  |
| 19 | JOHN FANDEL         | <i>This Side of Asia</i>          |
| 20 | GEORGE STARBUCK     | <i>Three Poems</i>                |
| 23 | DAVID PERKINS       | <i>A Dialogue</i>                 |
| 24 | JOHN NIST           | <i>Love Tribute</i>               |
| 25 | DAVID J. DELAURA    | <i>When the Bough Breaks</i>      |
| 27 | RONALD PERRY        | <i>The Miraculous Mandarin</i>    |
| 28 | ROBERT TYLER        | <i>Buddy</i>                      |
| 29 | DONALD EASTMAN      | <i>Requital</i>                   |
| 30 | PARIS LEARY         | <i>The City</i>                   |
| 34 | CARLIN ADEN         | <i>The Last Day</i>               |
| 35 | FELIX STEFANILE     | <i>Two Poems</i>                  |
| 37 | MELVIN HOWARD       | <i>Foo's Place</i>                |
| 37 | G. YOOS             | <i>To T. S.</i>                   |
| 38 | LEAH BODINE DRAKE   | <i>Sunset Apocalypse</i>          |
| 39 | ERIC A. PFEIFFER    | <i>Street Song</i>                |

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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

## MARGINALIA AND MEMO

Tuesday (track heavy) July  
 who cares? re Ernestine do not  
 respond (hoor) repeat: contempt  
 is the better part of value (sign  
 for check, fake lathe job at Whiting—  
 George will back you up.)  
 She, Pearl, Ruby? Pearl. Gr 7-what-what-2-3?  
 Read Jones on Morphy. Study Lasker. Letter  
 to Curtis, threats should work (that railroad!)  
 Get them give you letter goddam you didn't  
 blow it up!

PM: words: ankylose, dolman, sabretaches.  
 Gr 7-what-6-4?-3. Just because  
 she's colored (you're the racist!) Mex good  
 for two, steer off geldings. U.P. job?  
 See doctor if poss. Bd. of Ed. (Try Hart  
 for five, no, ten. Basic principle: oversell.)

God, the way she moved! Animal, thighs,  
 croup, belly. Swinging. Swinging. A dancer,  
 unless she just . . . Pearl. Gr 7-9643? No, by  
 God, no chopchop there. Pure swinging. Luck  
 like that and you with a memory for horses.  
 Invest a buck. Gr 7-5643? Something like that.  
 God, she'd make you forget you had a head!

Later: call mother, roast will keep. (She  
 wants it pure, that one. Goddam these walls!)  
 No liquor, no books, no fairyland. Pleasure  
 principle?! Viper, you'll die! Cases, tout:  
 haircut, shirts. See Kelly for suit. Pad?  
 Pad? Chris? Helen? Helen. Okay. Check Helen.  
 Check Hart. Now then, Pearl. Gr. 7-5643.

Later: Hart knows what he can do, if I have to bust another knuckle proving it. Good thing it wasn't the money. Read "Day of the Locust." Study "Basic Chess Endings." (Thank Helen. Good kid, Helen. Hmmmm.) Enter park tournament. Call Carol, season picking up. NB: when you move, move fast. Words: precentor, deracinate, undine. Letter to Dennis. *Call U.P. September*. What the hell did she mean: I'm a poet?

Robert Bloom

## JANUARY NIGHT

To Lee

Spell us this hour from sleep-fumbled rest  
 With your wordlets dropped in the dusk:  
 How owlets, heard scritchng by bridges  
 Of snow, will flit back from bare brakes  
 And cold, to a soft-downed owl's breast  
 And the cosiness of rose your fingers know.

Treasure me too in that mother-rich place  
 Where noggins of babies start babbling  
 Like brooks that spill over speech dykes  
 Needing repair: turn us to silver of  
 That frozen canal, its lace of bent alder  
 Mounting dim banks to the great owl's wold.

Bind me in all tongues of eye-wide quest:  
 Your babes that stray off into brown roots  
 Of fear, bunnies plucked safe under cottonwood  
 Tree. Wind me in seas where goslings of sleep  
 Sail orphaned with you in the goosemother tale  
 We knew, as you unfold it, time and time ago.

Horace Hamilton

**VERTIGO AND WET EVERGREEN**

Vertigo and wet evergreen  
Spindrift through waves; wind-  
Skeined, your heart, my heart  
Oar, Oar in the sun

Marsh and buzz  
Dining needle, beetily  
Thicken wax-faced water lily,  
Heavy marshflower smell,  
Pull on and no end but roots  
To bottom

Prow us and drift  
Swing round and merry  
Sing oars, smack side;  
Listen listen, tide draws  
And seaboat wet climbs  
Sweat blond legs

Muscle and blow home  
To water's edge where  
The other side breathes noise  
Swift living,  
Arms cling clockwise and two  
Fall over, gifts of green wet,  
Zing sun dry, boat bottom

Oars shipped, bark drifts  
Top waves;  
Let in sails, out breath  
Oh over the landbranch harks  
Summer bird cardinal red.

**Alexandra Grilikhes**

**TWO POEMS****Woven Is This Boy**

and he is a net for catching  
things. His interlacing  
nerves, green strands  
yet undistended, are the close-  
clinging mesh sweeping  
beneath each stone, seining  
the leaves: o woven is  
this boy. But he had passed  
mushrooms barely buttoned  
and unblazed by turtles, and dewy runs  
unrabbit—so anticipatory  
the morning though yet lip-sealing  
spring: passed mushrooms, runs,  
oak, hickory, beech,  
and not at last to willow,  
and here, oh here—the only  
whispering love within  
these woods, spraying  
the burgeoning willow's black  
and dancing tresses clay-  
unclad and piercing the ceiling—  
fell the brook that had burst  
continually upon him through this long  
late snow. And here o yes here!  
dreamt that emerald, curtain-  
eyed, encaverned croak  
that had so often before leapt  
into the captivity of his thought.

(Soft the hunter, until down  
a grass-sprout sight

he knows the two great bulges:  
this is the time for the fawn's  
degree, until the film has descended:  
*now!*) nets! nets!  
o quivering their need!

But when the will to cast  
most commanded, the coolness  
of the pool congealed his blood  
and he was trickle-entranced,  
mesmerized by the cool  
love-breaths of the pool,  
the glistening inverted dripping  
hair of willows and the fragile  
swelling frog-throat, colder  
and whiter than snow in its dancing.

He never knew why, that when  
he was most the net  
for flinging, he had need to untouch  
the stillness, to leave it there  
enchanted and backing away  
turn barefoot home  
so much disturbed by silence.

R. G. Vliet

### Hare And Hound:

Hermes *fls*, this!  
O fleet he flees,  
this deer-eyed urchin  
skittering pell-mell  
through the woods,  
that immediate hound  
his father close



behind and barking  
against his backbone, bluffing  
'Stop! I've *got* you!'  
(Run! Run!  
Run! Release  
the rabbit in your thighs,  
the deer in your eyes!)

Down immemorial  
evening avenues  
of autumn oaks  
and maples bound  
these two: a burning  
pair at the game  
of hare and hound.

Past the claw of the ridge,  
over the teeth of the brook,  
with a rabbit-intent  
for brier and with  
that immediate hound  
his father close  
behind and barking  
upon his backbone, bluffing  
'Stop! I've got you!'  
he flings himself  
into rabbit sanctuary  
behind a brier  
portal, hunches  
frozen and softly  
panting. For the hound  
is at the door and coaxing  
'You win. Come out.  
I'll not hurt you.'  
But fleeing has forced  
the wild within him

pounding to the surface  
and he will not respond,

is silent, until the sun  
itself growls impatiently,  
grows weary of waiting,  
leaves. Only then,  
stealthily testing  
every movement carefully,  
does he emerge,

go trembling  
homeward into  
the whispering window-  
light, and (gliding  
fearfully between  
the shrieking door  
and clamoring sill)  
there to find  
his father watching him—  
not angry, but amused.

R. G. Vliet

## TWO POEMS

### Sandpipers

On delicate reedy legs  
The sand-sure pipers skim  
Inward and outward over the edge  
Of breathing foam rim.  
Collectively, they are  
A nervous miracle; rime-

racing, dry legged, hearing the little  
Suck! of ripple in the nick of time.

On luscious flesh pink legs  
Lopes my yearling son  
Unsteadily after them, coveting  
Three or two or one  
To shred lustily like a stuffed toy.  
Singularly, I impute  
Him status as a bungling miracle  
Not yet articulate of tongue or foot.

Around me the sea chants  
Of its loud hardihood  
Impounded. My diapered son,  
Still unaware how odd  
Is gravity, goes splat!  
In tangled seaweed. I wipe his eyes.  
I tell him the race is not to the swift.  
The squeaking pipers run, erect, from his cries.

**Maxine W. Kumin**

### **Snowscape**

I waked this morning to a bandaged world,  
Hospital-still. Only the muted trees  
Stirred, sifting antiseptic talc  
From branch to branch. The fence had curled  
Its pickets into plaster-paris knees.  
The tool shed was a swollen catafalque.

Lame world! I was alive, at least!  
I dressed and hurried out to boast  
And leapt, spread-eagled, on a starchy mound.  
Dismayed, I found my breath released  
The plasma of my unknown ghost;  
Hard underneath, I jarred the frozen ground.

**Maxine W. Kumin**

**THIS SIDE OF ASIA**

I had a friend who would not rest  
Until he climbed Mount Everest.

It was his secret; although he  
Spoke of it in confidence to me.

He was decided to set out alone.  
"As for a guide," he said, "I am my own."

So he equipped himself with ropes,  
Spikes and axes for the steeper slopes.

And went. He really disappeared.  
I heard no word for months. At last, I feared.

But bound to a confidence his words made clear,  
I could tell no one of this mountaineer;

Therefore set out myself to find him. So  
I went the direction that I saw him go.

And met him, suddenly alive, returning.  
He was tired, but his eyes were burning.

He smiled, yet otherwise did not speak.  
I did not ask about the mountain's peak.

And it became something we never said  
A word about. Mount Everest was dead

As far as I cared. And more: it never was.  
Nothing can change the world as living does.

Summer exceeded summer. But, one fall,  
When fall succeeded summer, after all,

He spoke, like an echo of his early quest.  
There are mountains higher than Mount Everest.

**John Fandel**

**THREE POEMS****Cocktails Revisited**

Only for me, the fair one waits,  
Twitching the bed, dusting the plates,  
Nibbling one from the ring of dates,  
Waiting for me.

Waiting for me, the lady smiles,  
Cracking the door, setting the dials;  
Several come to sip the whiles,  
Smiling for me.

Smiling for me, the damzel turns  
To my soft step, while spirit burns  
Under the steaming coffee-urns  
Turning for me.

Turning for me, the lovely lays  
Hand on my arm, and coyly says,  
"George here now just spends his days  
Laying for me."

Laying for me, a twitch unbidden  
Opens the door to a dark one hidden,  
Out of the midday into the midden,  
Only for me.

George Starbuck

**Oration**

You, Charley, are in the old tradition, and I like you for it.

You old horse, a dog is a dog to you, and a kind of dog is a kind of dog.

Yon Cassius *does* have a biscuit-eating look; put him in traces.

You're a real old-timer, Charley, no monkeybusiness: Do what you think, speak what you think, hear what you think.

This country needs a man that knows what he thinks, and you know it.

Too much bull, or too much silence (the sage's claptrap) foster dullness;

And as for the general good, you've made the general general good your business:

Why who's added more to the public glitter, caused more roads, thickened more cities?

At least you won't beg the ears off us, and I thank you for it.

*That* you can leave to your curly Antonies; and if I were Brutus . . .

But Brutus Inc. with roll of copper drums has papered you for sure,

You hard-headed old asset, and from Egypt to Philippi things darken.

We'll add our blows, for we love what you were, you Man among Manners;

But By God you got off a good one going, Charley you joker:

You showed them that one about Caesar's wife was no guff.

George Starbuck

### Apocalypse IX, Genesis X

angels swinging down from the blue  
 like bells with their clappers kicking—  
 More! Now trumpets flaring unmuted  
 and organs! Oh Dear, And organs:  
 Milton's unseemly conjectures exceeded  
 as angel on rollicking angel clashed like cymbals  
 their armor to bits, til glittering eggshells  
 of sudden creation littered the seething world.

and Oh the blush of the suddenly-covered  
 in vestry, on seabeach, in Chevy,  
 to see each unspeakable legion lost.  
 but a chance! a chance! and the chancred,  
 the slickers, the shackers turn tattle tee-hee.  
 while noise (such unChurchly rhythms) shatters the  
 temples  
 and turns the saintliest souls out naked  
 to fly and blab to their God of that mutinous medley.

Now great grumping Jehovah sat  
 a high hard throne  
 exhorting the wingèd potencies  
 to leave no turn unturned  
 in the dance that levelled sea and sierra  
 to one delectable muddle of generation:  
 dinosaur dynasties, squiddy squirearchies,  
 lineage grosser yet to be cursed with Soul

salvoed in swing with a rhythm of ramrods  
 from well-drilled legions of wombs;  
 and still the stripped souls shuddered and fled  
 in a withering wind that wafted  
 God's very throne to earth on its howling

spaceward torrent of wretches; and plaintive voices  
beseeching account of chastized wills,  
of dire virginities, faded in faintest tumult

as morning and evening the godlings in ragtime  
beat out the *first second third fourth fifth sixth* day  
of creation and rested with *seven eight nine*  
*ten twenty* til God's hand falling, *it was good.*  
and God and his angels being alone  
in Heaven, the Great Beard muttered  
*A damn sight better than last time, too,*  
*you lazy putterers.*

George Starbuck

### A DIALOGUE OF THE HEART REFUSING COUNSEL

Heart you are caught; it's time to sing:  
Tell it was two sly, casing eyes,  
Two thieving accomplices, your hands,  
Cost your arrest to your own surprise.  
You'll be stir-crazy before it's done;  
You'd better send for a shyster tongue.

Too implicated for legal tricks,  
I must serve my time till the sentence ends.  
Though love's but a theft and a stretch in jail,  
I and my hands are very old friends:  
Great robberies have kept me warm.  
Hearts grow cold if the hands reform.

David Perkins



**LOVE TRIBUTE**

When I become a tongueless cry in the throat  
Of a gull hooking over the sea on patrol for fish  
When I become a lungless breath on the breast of a  
sky

Rinsed with the liquid note of an April wish  
When I become the colorless soul of a pink and white  
Blossom on a cherry bough  
May you then look back through the million-eyed  
night

Upon the utter lack of any lie  
In all the love I tell you now:  
For I do not say that you are beautiful enough  
To start a war  
Or wise enough to bring about an armistice  
Or foolish enough to try to rout a legion of dead  
In the heart of a whore  
Or passionate enough to bed  
With reheaded devils by the score  
And yet I say that when beauty wisdom folly  
Passion—all that men have ever set their souls by—  
Cease to be the songs for which young poets die  
Then I can still say that once below eternity  
I used to rise with every dawn and see  
Within the eye beneath your eye  
God Almighty riding silently  
Upon the pulse of your peace.

**John Nist**

**WHEN THE BOUGH BREAKS**

He came to us vacant, afraid of his childrens' stares.  
He suffered those final years like painful interrup-  
tions

(His hand would rise, brush away the pitiless sun,  
The threat of detection in its generous, stupid face).  
Not petulant, my grandfather bore his age in the  
perfect mask

Of a cosmic joke—one man's adjusted rage.

In 'eighty-five Joe carried water  
To the Micks who pounded ties this side  
Of Albany and swore they'd bust  
This country higher than a kite.  
The skinny kid could laugh and cuss,  
They liked his style, the cocky head  
And the sea of hair. An orphan he was and proud.  
Thumbs locked in his striped suspenders,  
He lurched the way on ties to Rensselaer  
And courted Adeline—will you be mine?  
(Her pa was wild for horses, sold  
The farm, lit out with the sassy scullion.)  
Joe's Irish landlady nagged him to church,  
He even prayed a bit, and one day  
He and frail Ad drove off to the priest . . .  
For forty years he engineered  
The black bucking steam-crazed animal  
That twitched and quivered in his hands,  
Roared, voracious of miles, and worked  
In his nerves like a drug or a woman's face.  
His fondling rough hand would ease  
The lever down until the dial  
Bumped hard against its cage . . . his head

Thrust far out, the wind tore at his cheeks  
And whipped his eyes to labyrinths of blood.

Our hearts were closed like valves; trapped in a world  
he never knew

(The spring air swirled in his old-man's dirty white  
hair)

He sorted memories like medals—he became a child,  
and cried

For the green fields he never saw, and the child he'd  
never been.

The burning pressure in his temples swelled . . . at  
night

He boomed in his sleep like a bell, as the staggering  
bright-eyed

Monster blared and drove through the empty flats of  
his brain.

He'd rise at dawn, white gown flapping, shout for his  
men,

"Crew, Crew, Crew." The cracked voice rasped, the  
wind-mill arms

Were strong as a youth's. He'd fight us to his knees  
. . . cradle and all.

He left us in the breathless last of August (air wet to  
the touch);

In the strangling heat, he laughed and laughed, be-  
queathed us

The terror of his eyes. His memory is grit in our  
mouths.

David J. DeLauria

## THE MIRACULOUS MANDARIN

after Bartok

1. The mandarin set upon by thieves  
Began like these—  
As metal on the tongues of gongs—  
Bronze rattling bronze.

He understood too late the meaning  
Of the beaten gongs—  
How, splitting the ripe fruit, they  
Take abnormal root

In the prodigious grave underfoot,  
And spring up like swans  
With torches flaring in their throats—  
Rattling their wings.

Rising with the notes that rose he  
Discovered in himself  
A process of the sacred fig whose fruit  
Splits rock, claps bronze.

2. Aging, he saw too late  
How acacias bloomed  
On the low sills  
And in the damp street  
Where the yellow girl  
Crooked her finger  
Through the leaves.

“Come,” she said—  
“It is less than you  
Think. The leaves know  
Death. Will you be  
Less than they? They

Know more than you?"  
 And so too late  
 He touched the leaves,  
 And knew the fruit,  
 And bloomed on the low sills  
 And in the damp street.

3. Rattling on the tongues of gongs  
 He came to his remembered end—  
 Heard cymbal crash and fig bellow,  
 And the thin shriek of a flute.  
 Behind him the thieves sprang up  
 Like swans, and beat their wings,  
 And slit his stomach like a purse,  
 And spilled his blood on the ground.

**Ronald Perry**

## **BUDDY**

O we rolicked home from the Boar,  
 Tuns of mild and bitter on the links;  
 You, showing old Eli stuff, tore  
 For yardage while stars dropped gay winks.

O we quaffed torpedo juice down,  
 Passed out behind barracks on grass,  
 Quoted Keats near his own home town  
 To tarts like those from Boston, Mass.

O we scoured porcelain for sins,  
 Kept our score, listing officers.  
 Now you drink with oil paladins;  
 Their sophomore sons oil me with sirs.

**Robert Tyler**

**REQUITAL**

The great God is a just God :  
For my stave  
His guiding rod  
He freely gave.

Joyful, I asked for gold :  
Jewels fell galore,  
So manifold  
Much needed more.

Whereat I begged for state :  
He tendered helm,  
And shattering weight  
Of surly realm.

I sighed for balm of love :  
His deign let loose  
Mild girl who wove  
A snarling noose.

I whimpered to be healed :  
He bandaged me,  
Forever sealed  
In memory.

The great God is a just God :  
When I cried  
For sleep in sod,  
It was denied.

**Donald Eastman**

## THE CITY

### 1. Byzantium

Quivering sound-waves quelled into silence above  
drums of translucent skin dyed red and purple,  
muted by fingers with tapering golden nails,  
announce, in cessation, the withdrawal of the Empire  
into the region of love's volition and love.  
Empire, the Bride and fruit of the Bride's womb,  
fathered by a thousand gods, caught  
and cossetted in the laws of Rome,  
the offspring of Helena's son's pride  
and Mistress of Constantine's humility;  
Empire, the aspiration of Christendom  
and Christendom in its aspirations,  
seen plainly in the golden domes and roofs  
of Byzantium, the Bride's Body's image,  
and in the columnar austerity of Rome; Empire  
turns slowly out of focus and withdraws,  
to be seen only in the golden lens  
of poetry, in the saints' rages of vision,  
and the lucid gaze of lover upon lover.  
Time and space, like green bronze lions,  
have guarded the glistening avenue to the Empire  
upon which in a republic of comprehension  
the God-man, carrying a cross and sceptre of flesh,  
walked through the red gate in the city wall  
to crown Constantine with a wealth of caring,  
with the old agony and the new hope.  
The Empire passes away, to muted drum,  
to pass into the stream of earth's duration,  
to reappear in an infinitude of loves,  
to swell the currents of a shrinking world.

## 2. London

Logres lost, lapped in the liquid wash  
of duration, London in the pool of England,  
seen like a city sunken under water,  
looses in its streets voices and shadows:  
voices endlessly chattering, laughing,  
babbling of fortunes, complaining of ecstasies,  
shadows casting other shadows' shadows  
on the flat walls yellowed by duration.  
Duration, not time—for time is space's sister  
and lies prostrate still over the carved tomb  
of space in the other, vanished Caerleon,  
dead of love and shattered union, dead.  
The voices mingle in their independence,  
the half-figured shadows move conjointly:  
one in provincial tunic walks gravely  
with snow-wigged belle in silver ball dress,  
before whom a thin-faced cavalier  
in crushed blue satin bows, lambent gentry  
flow in and out of passing farmers, armour  
of transparent torsos ascends in ladders of chivalry,  
feet not quite tread 'Our-Lady's-Bed-Straw'  
sprouting above the grey streets of London's duration.  
Voices bubble up onto the surface,  
burst in the hollow dialect of lost time,  
space's sister, who both in images only  
inhabit the edges and corners of drowned London;  
voices tinkle in outland Latin, sunlight  
absorbs echoes of chill Norman French,  
whispering voices 'maken melody'  
in harmony with the rattle of the wheels  
of gilded carriages on fragrant stones,—  
these scraps, eternity overhead,



fall back gently and are borne away  
by the foaming wash and eddy of duration.  
In the juncture of light and shadow, in the angle  
of sun refracted from the city's stasis,  
time weeps perpetually over space  
gone, gone with Logres in the Empire's going.  
Each street's turning, each objective square,  
echoes with the keening and the going.

### 3. New York

No currents nudge the past into the streets,  
no currents of lost time coil underfoot  
relics of old modes worn smooth by time.  
Here duration emerges as present, present,  
imaged in white stone and stairs of chromium  
and the glinting dust of milled steel falling.  
Yet here where the broken Empire has no meaning,  
the Empire finds itself in its own loss,  
fans out invisibly in the acts of its price.  
The Emperor, chained with silver manacles,  
and a collar of stiff-wrought gold about his neck,  
stands in Times Square where time never came,  
sad of the senior elements. Where the Empire never  
came,  
the Empire finds itself in its rejection.  
The daylight comes, by a curious mechanism,  
and the white towers aggravate the sun.  
Built of the melted coin of kingdom and the Empire,  
the towers with the power of the sun in vitreous  
pinnacles  
seem half the old mystery, and in the juncture  
of line with line, point with point, dimly,

for an instant when the sun, by a cunning  
mechanism,  
fades where it must, and the lights of the city more  
bright  
than the fire of the high white magic of Byzantium,  
surge Manhattan Island with bought brilliance,  
can be seen the faint traces of the mystery,  
gold domes behind the white towers,  
and beyond the magnificence of burnished steel  
wielding silver scimitars in light reflected,  
the gift of God shining in the midst of barter.  
The polished aluminum mirror of the evening  
for one fleet moment of perception  
shows lost Logres, the columns of dead Rome,  
and the vision of Christendom, fading, glowing,  
fading.

Then the taut towers impatient of space,  
strummed like the plucked strings of a steel guitar,  
shatter the image in their anxious splendour.  
Here time wondering, wanders through streets  
flowing  
forward faster than duration; time,  
ignored, unwanted, the last sister-guard  
of the Empire, mourns the futility of space.  
Yet the Empire, hurrying westward, curls around  
the city more bright than ten suns' brightness,  
a little out of reach, beyond the limit.  
And from a million blazing windows peer  
through illuminated streets into darkness  
faces afraid of the dark and of the splendour.

Paris Leary

**THE LAST DAY**

The Day of Armageddon I recall:  
A travelling alderman saw three stars fall  
Near Lubbock, Texas with a greenish light.  
They shot across the sky and passed from sight  
Leaving behind an eerie afterglow  
As they moved toward White Sands, New Mexico.

A hovering whirling disc was clearly seen  
On the front page of the paper in Moline;  
A tidal wave struck Wales, and a whale with hair  
Swamped a boat in the mouth of the Delaware.

The very Univac that had been sent  
To tell us we would have a president  
Brought forth a special tape from a secret hole  
Made to receive its yet unfinished soul.

What did the little perforations spell?  
Run, you sinners!  
And everyone ran like Hell.

Everyone ran that is, except a man  
Down in the rough of a tough course near Spokane,  
A number of couples in brambles, trams and cars,  
A janitor who had gone to get cigars,  
Some fishermen who thought the darkening skies  
Might hurry along the early evening rise.

Everyone ran that is, but Circe's swine  
Who wouldn't get over the stile tonight,  
And nine  
Lyre-horned bulls from Minos wouldn't go,  
And their youths and maidens wouldn't leave them.  
So  
There things stood.

With a sort of mechanical cough  
The Univac broke,  
And they called the whole thing off.

**Carlin Aden**

## TWO POEMS

### The Man Upstairs

Invisible, but taut with weight,  
he flushes toilets through my dreams.  
Stepping, a spy, from stair to stair,  
somedays his smoke is everywhere;  
at other times, it almost seems  
he died behind his door, like Fate.

Neighbor, shadow, unseen face,  
sneaking mail the same as I,  
poking fingers in a hole  
where his name's scratched upon the wall,  
for all of our humanity  
we grow queer in this rented place.

At my window, like a stain  
the fog spills, yet the moon comes out:  
a streetwalker beyond compare  
who wears the river in her hair.  
I dream I flung the silver out  
that lines her street. It starts to rain.

The man upstairs pulled the chain.

**Felix Stefanile**

**Street Scene: The Drunk**

Four corners watching him,  
he stumbles into the street, into the traffic,  
patiently shuffling, like a gladiator  
bloodshot and rumped, in that loud arena.

Whinnying wail of the wheels, and motorists  
flailing his fear,  
he bellows back, his cry  
scattering imagination:

while a terror-stricken woman,  
screaming and honking,  
grinds to a stop before him, almost fainting.

Then a dozen horns blow organ-tones  
to form the anthem he will march to,  
making the curb at last, alone, alive,  
to stand in sunlight, dripping miracles.

And the barber, still holding his scissors  
runs back to his shop;  
a news-stand owner, thrilling to prospects  
of cheap destruction, turns once more to his pennies,  
and where the old drunk walks, the crowd makes  
room:  
a shaggy aisle he walks through like a King  
whose country is Plague.

**Felix Stefanile**

**FOO'S PLACE**

the time is pleasant in Foo's place  
 with Christmas hanging greenly from the ceiling  
 and Beethoven out of the machine on the wall  
 not a face unsmiling is here  
 where all is happiness and wellfed by juicy pork  
     wonton spareribs sharsudin fried lobster  
     samipia and soey sauce  
 with waiters all fancy in dirtywhite greasy on ball-  
     bearings  
 to and fro with cooked dead things on shiny trays  
     all tasty  
     thisandthat chop suey goopan eggroll subgum  
     chow mein egg foo yung wonton  
 all smoking hot with sweet tea and flashing teeth  
 to finally a fortune cookie  
**FALL IN LOVE** it says  
 and I burp

**Melvin Howard**

**TO T.S.**

*"Antiquity is always classic."*—John Dewey

O wad some power the giftie gie me  
 To see the iniquity of antiquity,  
 To see how Odysseus, the meat slicing machine,  
 Dispatched the suitors in heroic routine,  
 Or how the Inquisition made safe  
 The One, True, and Apostolic Faith;  
 With plops of yellow blubber piled on the floor  
 Six purple deadmen puffed to oar ashore;  
 From the heinous heaps mauve steam wiggled in the  
     air,

And with squeaking creaks they rowed with despair  
 To where, the lethal threesome, the fatal sluts  
 Were snipping little snips of chicken guts;  
 A sinewy melody sings the wind,  
 For Sally, the Siren, sings her song of sin;  
 And while twelve red eyeballs roll in the snow,  
 Clytemnestra chops them with a hoe.

G. Yoos

### SUNSET APOCALYPSE

For a terrible moment the sky fierced and throbbled  
 with the gold and purple wings of seraphim!  
 Plume against plume, they arched from west to east,  
 lifting long swords of fire;  
 and the sea, an awakened angel, shone  
 with sudden peacock colours, raised his voice and  
 billowed:

Holy        Holy        Holy.

Miracle threatened the earth.

And we, going home across the dunes, turned  
 startled faces  
 to those prophetic hosts  
 and cried in half-belief: It is the end of the world!  
 Then somewhere beyond the light God must have  
 said: Not Yet.  
 His Hand drew darkness over the sky, the sea,  
 and the earth was saved once more from  
 intolerable glory.

Leah Bodine Drake

**STREET SONG FOR TWO FLUTES**

Her smile when the buses had almost stopped  
    running  
and only the corner newsmenboys  
were holding reign over the streets of night  
was after all a gesture of significance.

Not like the taxis on the stand their engines running  
nor the crippled laughter of the newsmenboys—  
symphony for hoarse and imbecilic throats of night—  
she had somewhere to go of significance.

In front of the Free Christian Science Reading Room  
and across from the real estate agency  
she was an ornament under the lights and to speak  
    to her  
would mean to break esthetic distance.

Thus upon a corner until the bus finally came  
two became one without words.  
We found a seat together. There was only the driver  
and now even the bus had somewhere to go of  
    significance.

Eric A. Pfeiffer