

# THE BELOIT POETRY JOURNAL

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**SILVER HORN**

She came home this time  
With amaranth garland and tobacco in a gauze pouch  
Tied with string.  
And when she closed the door behind her,  
The workers' song went back into the hills  
And died with the earth.

No, the man standing by the fire had a beard.  
It was not Carbonne who was always clean-shaven  
And played the clarinet.  
But to be sure, "Carbonne?"  
He stood bent over, warming his hands  
And, glancing sideways, knew she was there.  
"Carbonne!"

She danced laughter around the room  
With flowers in her hair and sang:  
    "O I have come from kingdoms far  
    To fetch the world before thee here . . ."

But his eyes made the fire grow dim,  
And hers, punishing the almost, drew free.

"Two summers ago," she said quietly,  
"With the silver horn."

She lay the amaranth garland in the fire  
And, drawing the pouch close to her breast,  
Was gone.

**Maria Ingram**

**THE UGLIEST**

How could one woman be so ugly?  
Twisted face and twisted body.  
Misshapen fish-curved jaw; strange bloated cheeks;  
Small hideous eyes, eyes borrowed from some sow  
Or snorting greedy boar.

Malformed, malformed, malformed.

At first we thought that life had crippled her:  
Mauled, savaged, pummelled with hard fists.

We heard her speak,  
And knew that, rather, she has crippled it.  
At every sentence toads and writhing snakes  
Drop from her lips.  
Her hands, her house, her neighborhood  
Are always getting smeared with demon dung,  
The ordure of all seven deadliest sins.

If Mary Magdalene  
Had seven to be cast out, how many live in this  
Tormented heap of self-tormenting flesh?

Perhaps  
We hate her most because  
Her hideous demons whinny, neigh, and bark  
To claim a cousinship  
With our own manicured and perfumed pets.

**Elva McAllaster**

## HOPSCOTCH

On the walk  
 of the thin house behind sooty privet  
 mark squares  
 with a stolen lump of chalk.

Number  
 each square for the voices in  
 the room upstairs.

Two and then one and two again  
 up to ten  
 the half circle at the end  
 is safe.

Count. Jump in slippery shoes  
 Jump  
 if you stop you can hear them.

Stoop  
 pick up the lucky marker  
 thick  
 bit of blue glass medicine bottle.

Wear out  
 the grey afternoon. If you touch  
 the lines  
 you miss. If you don't

stumble  
 and scratch your best shoes  
 you get home safe.

When you stop jumping you lose.  
**Matt Field**

## SPRING FISHING

for my Father

1. The sky paled  
like color leaves  
a dying trout,  
we went under it,  
our eyes spotted  
upstream to where  
even canoes stop.  
We stood where  
South Inlet falls white  
over cold stones;  
he pulled sleek trout  
thrashing from landscapes  
not wide enough to tent on,  
where thin streams  
iced by winter  
cut deep.  
Tails flapping rock,  
far off gunfire,  
we brought the fish ashore  
to our knees.
2. When he hooked  
the big one  
I was there  
netted round the ankle  
and caught  
in trees  
on the other bank.  
He couldn't get there  
so I did,

catching the bank's  
one branch  
with one hand,  
one foot  
like a log  
bobbing toward current,  
I dug deep with  
my arm shoulder long,  
fingering that  
slick weight.

3. Later, we knelt  
by the stream,  
the fish around us  
like presents.  
He taught me how  
to open them, and,  
on the ground,  
arrange and name  
their perfect contents.  
  
Pale bellies where  
the colors end,  
to look almost  
like sky ;  
skin cold as spring water,  
greased for speed.  
I felt the thin  
swim bladder  
pop like a blister.
4. Then, back down river,  
fog closing in,  
standing up front

he let me steer home;  
we drank the air.

Much later,  
by the fire,  
the coals peeped out  
and popped,  
I remembered the fish.

**Greg Kuzma**

### **A JEW'S JOY THAT ISRAEL SURVIVED**

israel on june 11, 1967

does not exist  
unless myth exists.

saturdays we kids  
filled movies helter-skelter  
like penny candy  
stuffed in a storekeeper's bag.

hoots, bubblegum, cracker-  
jax were integral as arms  
& legs to the weekly peril  
which never ended for once and all  
but suspended till next week  
with pauline tied to railroad  
tracks, villain shining like a dire  
sun, and tom mix single-  
handed, six gun pure as pasteurized  
milk, repelling apache attacks.  
jack slid down beanstock  
with the giant's goose. truly  
he did, after I fell  
asleep and before there was time  
to awake. merlin  
knew of the singing  
sword. launcelot slew  
the ogre. together  
they whisked classrooms  
from the mailed grips of syntax  
and the pythagorean theorem.  
in the hearth's crackle was chatter  
of elves who lived in aesop's  
house. houris married alladin's  
genii and one gave birth to mighty  
mouse. impossible  
for them to exist.  
they were israelis.

Joseph Cohen

**TWO POEMS****From Female Relatives**

My lizard,  
Gideon,  
lost his tail  
in the  
egg slicer  
my  
Aunt Grace  
gave me  
for Easter.

My cat,  
Cynthia,  
burnt her paw  
on the  
bun warmer  
my  
Cousin Dolly  
sent me  
Memorial Day.

My snake,  
Burt,  
swallowed  
a  
heating pad  
my  
Sister Mona  
lent me  
Election Day.

I,  
myself,  
am quite  
concerned  
since  
I am  
also  
a female  
relative.

**In Focus**

Today the storm ended,  
having swollen Mrs. Riley's ankles  
and torn down my bamboo curtains.

The kitchen is invaded by lost ants  
that find the pretzel crumbs  
Stanley's cat hid last Christmas.

Yesterday's wet newspaper, drying in the oven,  
turned black overnight  
and is now unreadable.

How will I know about Peanuts and Dick Tracy?  
My neighbor, a Republican,  
is unwilling to tell me.

The back yard is flushed by water  
that drowns the patched grass  
and uproots the rusty flowers,

And stacks of wood  
piled beside the house  
won't be dry for next week's fire.

My neighbor's wood is dry;  
it was protected.  
He's always prepared and very careful.

The wind uprooted a peach tree  
that gave my neighbor sweet fruit.  
I'll give him some of mine this summer.

On Haight Street, local Bohemians  
are sweeping debris from the sidewalks  
as a public service,

Having also decorated the parks  
with waves of colored chalk  
swirled onto the asphalt.

The police are unhappy:  
They disrupt outdoor conversations  
and give tickets to Morris Minors.

A motorcycled Sergeant follows a Microbus  
and orders the driver (a bearded gentleman)  
not to stop for ladies crossing from traffic islands.

My husband shaves his head and wears a beard,  
but he is no anarchist.

I do other things, equally effective.

Another storm, being predicted for tomorrow,  
will unlock the sea wall  
and sink houseboats in Sausalito.

Naomi Gladstone Grady

## AGENDA FOR AUTUMN

### 1. *Gather wood*

that casualties from summer storm  
may live again as fire sprites.

*Store* broken desks of children gone—  
imperiled on highways, in lakes and planes,  
and youth devoured by wolves.

### 2. *Bring a hollow log*

where raccoon can hibernate—

aware his cat and puppy playmates face farmer-  
cold.

*Think* of cave for his counterpart:

hider of candles under bushel,  
conscientious objector to change.

3. *Clear pasture stream*  
that running free it may not freeze  
where the wild ones drink.  
*See debris*  
of beauty cults, sexatives and gadgetry  
as things to foul the hidden rivers.
4. *Move block salt bait*  
from clearing into woods  
and out of rifle range.  
*Review guerrillas, and people-plaint*  
on reservations, in tenements and camps,  
or approaching killer ambush.
5. *Caulk stables*  
that comfort babies born for slaughtering.  
*Help* community chest charities  
and other fiddlers playing tremolo  
while worlds explode.
6. *Rake leaves*  
for cover, compost, and fire.  
*Clean out rancor, probe my indignations.*
7. *Tighten fencelines*  
to find dryrot at the base.  
*Show* uses for leftover men,  
mindful life is a stile which I descend,  
arthritic of knee, but not of eye.
8. *Oil hinges*  
lest there be unopened doors.  
*Remember:* No friendship force, or anyone coerce;  
my house is clay and stone,  
when vacant  
cold.

## THREE HAIKU

\$ \$ \$ ¢ \$  
 Cash register rings Haiku  
 \$\$ \$ ¢ \$

○ ○  
 ○  
 ○ ○  
 Ripe plums drop . . . autumn Haiku  
 ○  
 ○  
 ○  
 ○  
 ○

| | | | |  
 Haiku from leaves dripping dew  
 | | |  
 |  
 |

Lorraine Ellis Harr