

THE BELOIT POETRY JOURNAL

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CONTENTS

- | | | |
|----|-----------------------|--|
| 1 | MARIA INGRAM | <i>Silver Horn</i> |
| 2 | ELVA MCALLASTER | <i>The Ugliest</i> |
| 3 | MATT FIELD | <i>Hopscotch</i> |
| 4 | GREG KUZMA | <i>Spring Fishing</i> |
| 6 | JOSEPH COHEN | <i>A Jew's Joy</i> |
| 8 | NAOMI GLADSTONE GRADY | <i>Two Poems</i> |
| 10 | EDNA MEUDT | <i>Agenda for Autumn</i> |
| 12 | LORRAINE ELLIS HARR | <i>Three Haiku</i> |
| 13 | TOM WAYMAN | <i>The State of the
Revolution</i> |
| 19 | PETER WILD | <i>Rain</i> |
| 20 | JACK CRAWFORD, JR. | <i>A Grateful Nation</i> |
| 23 | STANLEY COOPERMAN | <i>Three Poems</i> |
| 26 | EMERY GEORGE | <i>Triptych: After the
Floods</i> |
| 35 | E. L. ARMSTRONG | <i>Two Poems</i> |
| 40 | MARGARET H. BERGER | <i>Fight Night</i> |
| 41 | ANTHONY EDKINS | <i>The Human Being</i> |
| 43 | RICHARD GUSTAFSON | <i>A Canticle of Corn</i> |

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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

THE STATE OF THE REVOLUTION**Part I Jan. 8, 1967**

The capitalists have Peterfreund.
He mopes in jail, won't come out, outlines
his next one hundred and seventy-
five poems. The charge is burglary; he
is not permitted to talk with the
outside world; please come back tomorrow.

The Commissar Cleclack's wife is sick.
She coughs in the bed; he must go out
for medicines, which fact he recalls
in the driveway of the Mayfair store,
cutting short our discussion of post-
Freudian schisms in the movement.

Dennis sulks in front of his telly.
He wants to be a secret agent,
says he doesn't understand *anything*
about politics, if they won't let
him be a secret agent. He has
discovered a poem meaning nothing.

This answers one of the short-story
writers, who wrote a verse essay on
Poetry As National Concern.
The Mexican General Staff, now

having concluded their treaty with Fidel, say they have nobody to shoot. The husband of the girl with the tight corduroy behind who cashiers for the Bonanza restaurant, once shot trees flying with the Navy in California; now he is in Japan. *My* round and lovely girl has returned to Canada to inform the Committee of response to my pamphlets urging young Americans to defect to Canada. My car burns too much gas; my directional signals now blink only twice, then stop.

Part II Jan. 23, 1967

YOUR FRIENDLY NEIGHBORHOOD AD-HOC COMMITTEE UNSUCCESSFULLY PLANS A MARCH ON THE STATE CAPITOL TO PROTEST THE GOVERNOR'S EDUCATIONAL POLICIES . . .

The highway patrol screams through the night.
 "Saleh? Saleh? Where is that bastard Saleh? He sent telegrams to our governor, press releases to the newspaper, gave a certain pirate radio station some obscene bits of his revolting biography . . ."

Sue Schwartz calls Sacramento, whispers the correct sequence. Instantly, all local chapters of Young Judea, One World-One Zion, and the Jewish

Agrarian Party converge on
the Capitol. A hoarse cheer rises:
"This year, this year in Sacramento."

Peterfreund slugs rats in the gutter.
He chortles to himself, bottle in
hand, re-reading the newspaper scraps
which give an account of his trial.
"I take on nothing I can't handle:
As soon as I beat laundromats, I'll
think about taking on colleges."

Wayman swings from his front porch railing.
"I would have used my shower curtain
rod," the note says, "but who would have seen?
Saleh always says go for yourself
in this world. Still, I just hope there is
a big brick wall in Hell, so I can
run up and bash my head against it."

Part III Feb. 7, 1967

IMPORTANT VISITORS FROM NEW YORK

Someone has slipped up somewhere.
Maloff and Leggett of the
New York Group are in the midst
of a denunciation
of their state's literary
culture, when a woman stands
and exposes the Chinese.

She has it letter perfect,
right to the capitalist
fronts: the Italian paper-
back houses. Dennis is so

amazed, he says later, he forgets his silencer as he follows her to her car.

"Engine noise covered it," he reports to Leggett. "She said nothing though." Maloff, looking grim, goes to the Dean's tea. Poor Professor Hall, who had planned the meeting, stands with his wife.

In the pub an hour or so later, Hall's hands still shake. "The Chancellor was in the back," he keeps repeating. Leggett, very formal, leaves early. Editor Maloff, despite his promise, does not drop by.

Part IV

**ROUND UP: SPRING VACATION,
MARCH 18 TO 27, 1967**

Just before he leaves, Hall calls Wayman in, asks him to sit. "I think," Hall begins, "you have misunderstood the climate of Orange County," He stops. Wayman considers his past, wonders who told the Legion. Hall leans forward. "Take a bath," he says. "We've had some complaints."

Steingass meanwhile gives up on smoking. Little by little,

his huge frame starts demanding
the drug. "It's for the movement,
for the movement," Steingass cries,
his gigantic paws clenching
and unclenching. As days pass,
he becomes violent, assaults
Dennis in a bar. His wife
hustles him to Mexico,
his teeth tight. "No, I *don't* smoke!"
he shouts at the border guard.

Wayman gets leave and drives north
through the rain. He returns weeks
later, eyes blank from days on
the capitalist freeways.
"Lots of activity there,"
he says, "though strangely enough
I find *myself* a victim
of some direct action, their
sexual revolution . . ."
His hand presses his forehead.

Part V

THE LAST ROUNDUP: LATE MAY

Peterfreund and Wayman and Pritzker and Bell
drive north to Frisco for the rally. Night falls,
and Wayman breaks a tooth on a carefully
packed peanut butter sandwich. To console him,
he is allowed the wheel, gets carried away
during some revolutionary singing,
just misses a truck. "Psychedelic," the back
seat states calmly. "J-j-jesus," Wayman says.

Freund picks up a socialist disease and two hitchhikers coming back. The cockroaches have Wayman's place, and the Department announces no TAs will be granted to the anti-status-quo applicants. Rain falls for thirty-nine days, and the Department relents. At the victory party, it is clear this poem is becoming institutionalized. Terry complains because he hasn't been mentioned. He abuses two fascist policemen to prove his qualifications; *they* write down his name.

Despite the Governor, Saleh is given a job—watching some books in the Elite Corps' lunch room, to make certain that no one reads them. Then he is put in charge of ensuring that the chairs there are not sat on, the rugs are not trampled. He sells out completely, acquires a badge and gun, won't permit our leafleting. While anti-reactionary plans are formed, the Marines push north, Egypt moves eastward, and India swings west against Kashmir. In the south, the jokes begin to pale: "How do we get out of this chicken outfit?" and "Why worry? Did you want your poems to live forever?"

Tom Wayman

RAIN

I smoke my corncob pipes
 down to the nubs
and hope the smiling macaws
 will forgive me
 an insolence
of dreams.

walking through the rain
 I splash puddles
 of bugs
into the dark legholes
 of my pants;
at night they will itch
 my shins
 like wet sand:
in the drizzle
 my head has become a flowerpot
sprouting wild showers of vines.

perhaps an adventure
 of firetrucks
will burst on the page;
 when I was young
I dropped a fishbowl
 on the asphalt—
that was my original sin . . .
I have switched to sweet tobaccos
 laced with liquorice
 and wine . . .
a miniature garden
 flourishes
 in the charred hole of my pipe.

Peter Wild

**A GRATEFUL NATION
WOULD HAVE SLICED STEAKS
OFF FROZEN MAMMOTHS**

I hear vague rumors and snatches of report
About a space shot from Russia.
A man, or men, are up. Something about
A second ship to shoot and sail. I'm not sure.
But enough! Bertrands de Born,
I remove my head and hold it up to speak.
That Russians suck air into their lungs.
That but for freak they could be living in spaces
Occupied by Chinese, Bedouins, Egyptians, Africans.
But for the planetary chance they might be
Americans! They have their mammoths. Woolly.

Some

Frozen in five thousand years of Siberia or more.
They have their male and female. Suppose
You lived there. Or suppose, when you woke
You heard the Nile's whisper. The tongue you lifted
Confusing you momentarily with Arabic or Swahili.
I have jumped about. I hear voices in Hebrew.
It is hot and the year is vague. Maybe
The dove might have some inkling, sitting in that
tree.

Maybe the waters are rising. Maybe Ararat.
Maybe that dust in the far-off city is Christ
On his way up the hill. Dear me! It was
A good day when they woke. They knew the shot
Would go. They could have had anything for
breakfast.

A grateful nation would have sliced steaks off
Frozen mammoths. I've heard it's been eaten. The
flesh

Which stopped in ice. Their wives are sleepless.

Kisses wait in mouths of leaders. They said goodbye
To small children. They are people.

Are the wires working? They worked. The air
Sails past. The round world turns below.

Will two crews switch ships? Is God
Watching? Do Roman Empires or Persian
In distant galaxies muse on magic screens?

Does Alexander the Great see what's happening?
Is he bored? Does he click the dial off?

Does Socrates brood in a portico? Is there enough
Space out there? Can we all get into it?

Do the leaders of advanced galaxies chuckle in their
beer?

Are they amused at the shrill screams of people at
each other?

The pulling up of guns to bristle on frontiers
Like dogs barking across fences?

The astronauts are in contact. They radio
Their words. They eat. They relieve themselves.

Their wives eat and relieve themselves. Their children
Are bright faces in school. Warm with fame.

The mission could fail! They could burn up or fall
Crisp into American plains and be trampled by bison.

Or plip! Into the ocean! Capsule rocking miles
Down. Miles down. Then we'd have nothing to worry

about!

But I imagine them up there. Tense, thinking,
working

Swiftly. Their fingers. Faces. Eyes. Their lungs
Breathing. Their arms with elbows. Wondrous hinges.

The swivel of hips as they bend this way and that.
The blood going with quick soundlessness out of

their hearts

To their toes and fingers at last. The flesh still pink
With health in space at a great rate. Swinging in

ellipses.

I go secretly with the capsule. I remember Zhivago.
Pushkin. Dostoyevski. Ghandi. Martin Buber.
Russians in love. Moons rising
On snow and palm. And Igor Stravinsky's wife
Escaping from Black Sea pirates to Paris!
She danced for them!—in the teeth of their eyes!
And blue wolves in ice forests! O tundra!
O the liquid leap of Valery Brum!
O Lara! Lara! in the ice village
With your lover! Let
All go well in the Russian capsule. Let
All go well in the Chinese and Egyptian capsules. Let
All go well in all the capsules of the planet. Let
All her rivers flow. Let her seas come upon her shores
In vast flotations. Let populations be controlled. Let
Us save ourselves from pollution. Let
Alexander see we can do it. Let Socrates. Let
The Russian astronauts have a good flight. Let
Their wives clasp their hands with joy. Let
Great kisses descend upon them from Russian
leaders. Let
Us put the bones of children back together. Put
Their faces right. Put their skin back on. Put
Water buffaloes back in water. Put rice grains
Back in rice bags. Let us encourage
The whooping cranes. Let us make great herds again
Of bison to thunder on western plains.
Let us chip ice away from woolly mammoths
And tug them on their beards and whack them and
send
Them lumbering alive. Let us save
The hippopotamus, giraffe, lion. Let us
Ride on the necks of elephants with their trumpets.

Jack Crawford, Jr.

THREE POEMS**Metamorphosis**

I am obsessed with the edges
of things: where
your face
 stops
and becomes something
I breathe;

where the hyacinth
turns
into bee, or rubbing
 changes
into electricity

and love: that too
has its shape,
a line
carved somewhere in the brain,
a swelling
of possibility

like stones
at the edge of the sea:
when foam
 breaks
into sky, or your hand
dissolves
 into me.

Cappelbaum in the Darkroom

Why
should the shape of a breast
be printed, fixed
on paper?
under your fingers
the bright napalm of earth,
the soft mouths
of women or trees,
become arrangements of acid:
a room
filled with glass.

No:
I will open my veins
to every thorn,
in gardens
where flowers and lovers
are rotten with scent
I will hang from my own feet
and wave my eyes
at the sun.

A bird
worn in the buttonhole,
an owl dancing
wing-deep in
mud,
are greener than all the neon
fires of your brain:
and the smallest
aphid
eats roses
all the way to December.

The Heretic

Have I ever bothered
you?

Seriously.

Why
does it mean, if
I choose
to dance in the cave of
my own nostril?

You sit there
smoking
like an ape with its ass on fire,
nervous, in-
flamed
about something
everything,
eating barbed-wire spaghetti
and crying at the taste
of rust
in the sauce.

Why does my mouth
scare you?

Is it my fault if all the cooks
in the world
use dirty spoons?

All I eat
is my own grass, salted
with snow, and sometimes a red
leaf.

Am I hurting anybody?

Stanley Cooperman

TRIPTYCH: AFTER THE FLOODS

“. . . and Italy's losses diminish us all.”

—**CRIA FOR HELP** (NOV. '66)

1. Fiorenza mia

News strikes like a lightning bolt of ice
 from poet-fashioned stone skies over hell.
 Phantasy is a toy we have no time for.
 Campanile bells ring; sirens wail;
 newspapers flash bundled headlines, then float,
 wiretied, to clog up unseen sewers.
 And my heart flares in its thaw, turbulent
 out of ice winters of forgetfulness.

Apocalypses have their ways of riding
 over you early, like the Peace Corps. And now
 the city that Underdeveloped Man built
 to the beauty of Man, lies under water
 and oil: flammable winter *malebolgia*.
 Utilities are knocked out. Shops collapse.
 (Thought consoles you in chaos. Just think: Lorenzo
 didn't miss electricity, either.)

Archives are submerged. To the Quattrocento
 inclusive, manuscripts are packed in deep freeze.
 The number of paintings lost or damaged
 has to date risen to over a thousand.
 In the Piazza della Signoria,
 inside the Basilica di Santa Croce,
 water stands more than ten feet high.
 Baptistery door panels are floated loose.

Red plush period chairs that lined the walls
of the Accademia, now wallow
like capsized automobiles in piazzas.
Three weeks after the river's risen anger
the basement archives of the Palazzo
Strozzi are still "a vile reservoir."
Michelangelo's David walks on water.
Experts try first to clear the mental smog.

Apocalypses fly: millions to Florence.
Fly your emergency dollars to: Let's Feel
Good About Saving What's Good, Inc.
But stay home. Only boys given to daydreams
ask to accompany expeditions.

As archaeology was once my science
of dream-hunting down artifacts age buried
so that youth may dig up and fondle them,
so in more modern years you, too, loved Florence
as Blake dreamed Jerusalem: sight unseen.
Not just because of Dante (and Dante
came to damn this city), or because a
whirlpool of politics caught in art
could leave the unmodern cesspool for two.
Photography, the travesty of verse, have
left sparse ways to wade downtown unescorted.

One: the scene answers Mann on Venice dying.
There the art of painting reached decline
(see below); here, it began and ended.
Here some of it, we'll hope, begins anew
in who knows what high halls: the Pitti, I Tatti,
on tottering scaffolds, with precision paint,
onto woods five hundred years old, in lifetime
laboratories of the Restoration.

Two: what I say now is public *entre nous*.
 Let's not be telling the tourists we viewed
 art treasurers "Before" and "After" without them.
 For how *did* we do justice to it all
 in the unwounded flesh? There were the hours
 all these decades. You could get in between
 ten and twelve; one-thirty and four. Old guards
 whisked you around; spoke what they learned in
 guard school,

then left you footweary, wondering what they, you,
 any of us could ever hope to learn
 in light thus pilloried and mocked, passed
 in charter-flight, conducted-tour review.
 For, who cared? Christ's green body hung there.

Virgins

got crowned, slain; fled to Egypt; Samsons tumbled
 temples. Now the Bible is told in pictures
 for the seven thousandth time. Who does care?

Three: let's not go on telling each other, either.
Ars brevis, vita brevis. Don't remind me
 of Chinese un-silkwrapping Buddhist bronzes
 once a year to redefine art by eye.
 Don't rehearse those other injustices,
 Dresden, Hiroshima (where it's never
 the galleries; I think clearly of children),
 mushroom cloud garlands, lost Ghirlandaios.

Four: the whole world can't fly to Florence now,
 to clear with rubble crews, that much is clear.
 It cannot drop all its other griefs
 to go wash oil stains from countless marbles,
 or it would be no world; no Quirinale
 could license ontological explicit.

But may we co-wonder: "How long before it happens all over?" or "Shall the Arno be dammed?"?

Contrition forbids me the engagement
it takes to attend funerals on Sundays.
My soul now clings to Italy the way
Cimabue's sodden flakes of paint
cling to the ruined *Crucifixion* (still
the sire of Giotto's vision); the way Christ's
drowned presence clings to the cadaverous form,
His Passion to the cruciform's bare boards.

2. Reflection: Venice in Lieu of Photograph

And
what about
poor Venice,
O genii of the press? Yes,
what about her? Dante
never got this far. He
was only going to get here
as the Venetian ambassador
of his lord at Ravenna
when he caught
the marsh fever
of the Veneto
and died.

I
didn't get
to Venice

until recently, either. Her,
unlike Firenze (see
above), the which city
I visited longer ago
as the dubious ambassador
on a three-day goodwill tour,
I first saw
but two summers
back; I caught fever
of joy.

Filled
with water
was Venice

and with colored stones, clothes, air; there
the sun shone expertly,
you might say. Lifted shapes,
weightless like nowhere else. White bridge
upon bridge, domes on Venetian domes!
And on the Campanile's side
a sight most
local: sets of
hydrographical
dials.

Now
the sea walls
of Venice

broke down; the sea took, by crook,
the floating city, we're
sure, aware, in macabre
anticipated surprise. Rushed
in, did this ambassador of death,
freedom in death. *Der Doge*
hatte sonst
keine Freiheit,
you heard a guide say
and learned.

That's
how things stand
with Venice.

A noble city dies, implies
The London Times. And you
should know what dying is
if you've ever jumped and landed
heels first on Venetian marble floors
in the Ducal Palace, the
great state hall,
and felt how the
whole city shook un-
der you.

Then,
 while walking
 in Venice,
 you think of those instruments. Sense
 tells you better, but still
 people look, then whisper
 slow doom all around you: it's time
 to send home all dry ambassadors
 with the news: this dream town will
 be no more.
 The mayor asks
 the world for slow help:
 "We Die. . ."

Far,
 very far
 from Venice
 you remember good friends now: how
 they said, The place sinks,
 or at least dared think that
 and wrote home such things on postcards
 showing well-loved Venetian corners,
 and in language as obscure
 to natives
 as *turismo*
 fever that breaks out
 and spreads—

you
now thinking of
doomed Venice

think of its townspeople and you'll
see scores of sportshirted
Americans emerge
like buzzing flies from Harry's Bar:
ambassadors to Doges, maybe
to buy Tintoretto's, the
Teatro
La Fenice,
Peggy Guggenheim's—
the works

sink;
think: all that
was Venice,

the city dies. Corpses, rats, bats
fatten her purse, not funds.
And now— *Let's talk about
something a bit more cheerful, shall we?*
chez our ambassador: Venetian
fashions; fragile Murano
glass hats, high
rises; raising
prices rising cities
sinking . . .

3. mit durchgängiger Metapher

No,
 Hölderlin,
 lie still. It's
 not your fault. We thought rivers grew
 like peaceful geniuses,
 too; nourished dear children,
 then, hungry like Saturn, ate them.
 Now con-(Florentine)sular aid by-
 passes the river issue,
 diverts the
 flow of interest;
 operates through wider
 channels:

Italy's centers battle mindless floods.
 Moribund cities sandbag greywashed walls.
 Cataract rivers crush jewelfilled bridges.
 Last frescoes fade in bombed-rebuilt cathedrals.
 Mourning onlookers talk about sharp-pointed days:
 Uffizi vandals gouging eyes on a Lotto;
 enemy madmen stealing well-known collections;
 civilized armies waging total war.

Emery George

TWO POEMS

Pink

Anybody for a pink refrigerator?

Anybody for a pink telephone?

A decision has to be made —

whether tis nobler in the heart
not to choose a pink refrigerator
whether tis nobler in the mind
to walk irretrievably into the dark interior

of defense factories
of pink refrigerators
of mental institutions

A decision has to be made now

does the pink telephone
 go with the orange sofa?
 does the pink refrigerator
 go with purple love ?
 does pink salmon
 go with white bread?
 how do the colors look to my government?
 how does the signature over the oath
 fit my soul?

She signed for a pink telephone
 while he refused to sign the oath
 He challenged the government
 to prove it existed for him
 so it shot him to death

— by accident — it said —

then it notified her of the emergency
 via the pink telephone
 and she was very happy
 that it matched the pale purple wall

From the dark interior
 of the mental institution
 we hear the babble
 of a crazy man

THERE ARE NO RIGHTEOUS WARS

Anybody for a pink telephone?
 Anybody for a pink refrigerator?
 Anybody for a pink idea?

— Oh come on —

have one pink idea

if only to establish your superiority
your innate right over any government

to have one
inconsequential
pink idea

that goes well with the pale purple wall

He was never one to be afraid
to watch a pink sunset
When they freed him he went back to Italy
never pausing to consider
whether t'wd have been nobler to the purse
to have been docilized
among pink telephones
in pale pastel rooms
going well with his red beard

Buy em here — buy em here
the last batch of pink baby blankets
manufactured before the ban —
buy em here —

Anybody for a pink refrigerator?

Anybody for a pink sunset?

Anybody for a pink telephone?

Anybody for one

gnat-sized
irrelevant

government shattering

pinkish
idea?
Anybody for the last
dyed pink
easter bunny
allowed under the new law?
Then one day
in the square
in the rain
that slowly put out the fire
were the ashes

of the last pink refrigerator
of the last pink baby blanket
of the last can of pink salmon
of the last pink telephone
of the last dyed-pink rabbit

while at the horizon
was one pink sunset
obscured by the smoke.

and hovering
in the still air
in the rain
was one
abandoned
pink
idea

Documents

The Serbian Blue Book contained 52 documents
to prove Serbia didn't start the war

The Austrian Red Book contained 69 documents
to prove Austria didn't start the war

The Russian Orange Book contained 79 documents
to prove Russia didn't start the war

The British Blue Book contained 161 documents
to prove Britain didn't start the war

The German White Book contained 27 documents
to prove Germany didn't start the war

The Belgian Gray Book contained 79 documents
to prove Belgium didn't start the war

The French Yellow Book contained 160 documents
to prove France didn't start the war

America being democratic
joined the side with 531 proofs
that it didn't start the war
—against the side with only 96—

Altogether 7 million people were killed
and 20 million were wounded or missing

in this war
that had altogether 627 proofs
that it never started—

E. L. Armstrong

FIGHT NIGHT

Cigar smoke climbs the light over the ring
And lighters tap the haze they're adding to.
Use your right! I'm with you, baby, all
The way, all the way! From a nearby
Reservation, Siwash reels before
The low-slung sailor with a melted nose.
The Indian hides his middle in his shadow,
A lopsided comma, or wounded bee.
Then, with surprising sting, he uppercuts
The Virgin Mary on the sailor's belly.
Let's have four pepsicolas! Come on, step back
And fight, you bums! Boooooo! The fighters' feet
Attract each other's stumbling. Siwash and his
Swollen eye see half the bell-hung, bobbing
World in red. Keep working on his eye,
He ain't your mother! Heavy on their foam
Seats, digesting beer, the crowd roars action
As long as it's not theirs. After all
The searched-out blood, arms surround each other,
And a loser's game shake trails outstretched
At the end of baby's disappointment.

Margaret H. Berger

THE HUMAN BEING

Thousands of years ago
I lived for a long time
and grew to a good height
in the form of a tree
in what's now known as Muir
Woods, California.

When the Romans conquered
Britain, I was a dab
swimming in the Thames; I
avoided other fish but
got caught by a Roman
centurion and fried.

Hundreds of years later
I was briefly a bull
born brave and black, and bred
to fight—but bulls are born
losers: I was butchered
one Sunday in Madrid.

Once again I'm going
through the motions of life
but this time I'm human
and it really opens
your eyes; it makes one hell
of a big difference:

I have been to Muir Woods
seen the giant redwood trees;
I have been to Madrid,
seen the brave bulls butchered;
I have lived in London
and have eaten fried fish.

When I was in their shoes
I just shovelled the shit
with the smooth; now I ask
questions, get no answers,
am frightened of dying
and don't dig the moral.

Anthony Edkins

A CANTICLE OF CORN

In August a dome caps Iowa.
Steam hisses from the pores of the corn
And you float on the odor of green.
Walk down the railroad track. Trip on the ties,
Creosote shimmering in your nose. No breeze.
No birds. Only the sound of the corn breathing
Outside the tunnel of leafage around the tracks.
The rails are rusting, the crushed rock dusty.
No birds. Only the buzz of the sun in your head.
The rails echo heat whining in dizzying circles
The sweat stings, a bumblebee in the eyeball.
You start to melt, you cannot smell sweat or
sperm anymore,
Only water, soapless bathtub water, trickling down
Your back, your deepening ribs, pouring out
at the cuffs.
You are drying, watering, growing, melting, coming
to know,
Like a candle of water and leaving no puddle.
You are spinning up over around on the arms of the
sun,
Your stomach is boiling green steam
You are losing your fingers your skin is turning
green.
It compresses your thoughtless piston brain
You break out in a run and vanish along the tracks.

Richard Gustafson