

THE BELOIT POETRY JOURNAL
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WITCH

She's been here before, not to collect
anything. She walks in and sits beside or behind
me, or in the bedroom alone, content with music
and slick pages. When I reach to touch her,
she turns pale and cold like a sea cow. I offer
food or drink, and then myself,
but she darkens holding her breath.

I ask why she stays but she avoids
questions. I set up games with pitfalls
but she moves without pattern
and is never caught. Exhausted, I leave
for the ocean, but she follows me. All day
I walk the ocean's edge crying
O what have I done?

In the evening she stands before me
like an actress who's forgotten
her make-up or about to commit
adultery. She holds a blowfish, milky
white, its eyes scraped out by her fingernails.
She says, "It's you." and disappears into it.

John Bean

VISITING HOUR

High above the city in an embrasure,
nub-end of a spinal column—hall and rooms—
I wait with Rilke's Book of Orpheus.

In 904 some vulture gnaws upon
my mother-in-law, brazenly,
as if already flesh were carrion.
Life, passionate as when it raped
the single cell her start, wails in
her now, whose parenthetical span was dumb—
an irony she misses for the best.

Over her sheeted waste my wife
sobs soundlessly behind a smile
as thin as gauze, her tears as dry
as pretense maimed by grief can wring.
The daughter now is mother.

White-hooded Sisters of Felicia,
gliding in and out, render charity
efficient, though starched somewhat,
make mercy incarnate, if capped
with a little pride.

No breath of wind stirs across the rooftops.
From canyon streets cut through cliffs
of brick honeycombed for living,
children's cries, the wheeze of engines,
a closing siren, horns, clock's clung
climb up the hanging heat.

Through a speaker I can't locate
the Angelus is chanted by a voice
not man's nor woman's—
metallic benediction for this night.

I turn to Rilke— "*Wolle die Wandlung*"—
tense my ear to catch those rolling chords:
requiem for the lovely girl of twenty
who had just begun to dance;
death mass for the brown-eyed boy,
disfigured by a squint
though faultless as the Lamb—
"*das du dich wandlest in Wind.*"

Does music lie like nectar
in the flower of all dying?

Through evening haze loitering about
the city, sun suddenly exposes,
poises above the entablature
of a distant building, while darkness
crawls over earth's edge from the ocean.

Then gored on pediment's point, sun
gashes, gushes crimson onto dusk.

The breeze that runs ahead of night
slithers my neck and cheek. "Let's go,"
my wife's voice whispers in my ear.

John Wheatcroft

NEARLY NUDE INTERLUDE

It was a hot night
and her bare bottom
stuck to the leather
of the black bucket

seats in my sports car.
A mosquito (intent upon

innocent blood letting)
had kept us clapping
empty humid air between
our sweaty palms until
we lost it in the
middle of a sticky kiss
that greased our groins.
I bit her thigh at last
(feeling like no mosquito)
and she urged me over
with little moans and
fingers plucking at my
shoulder blades. (If you
have never screwed such
a glorious redhead in
a roadster, you have
never lived!)
The four-speed gear shift
(synchro-mesh) gouged
my knee as she arched
upward and we fell out
of our minds together,
until our breathing
slowed to the steady
buzz of that fucking
mosquito (tiny vampire
driven by her eternal
immediate necessity.)
We untangled our melted legs,
our merged fur, our tender

organs, our gear shifts.
Now, I would die an eternity
for her who has become
my forever love,
(forever, if that mosquito
sucks forever.)

O. Howard Winn

MOSES BY MICHELANGELO

The sun is a splinter
caught in a cloud; the wind
works at the cloud's
tight fist, fighting
for its chip of light
against the spreading
of the mist; below,
the hand of the law is
tangled in the prophet's
stone mane, the snarling fog
of grey curls trying to escape
from the embrace of walls.
He sits in the waiting room beyond
the corridor to surgery—
a corridor of rolling cars
bearing bodies bloodied
in untimely accidents of
birth. Born from a contingent
belly, watched by chance in
mirrors: a natural birth
on a sterile bloody slab.

The great stone statue sits
with his hand
tangled in his beard, as if
his fingers might hold back
the mighty marble flood, the
blood in its cascade of curls;
he waits
outside the corridor,
the broken tablets there
already at his feet.
The rod in his hand, and Moses
divided the waters of the red sea—
he broke the blood in two
and laid it out on stone—
and then he broke that too.
A long and torch lit corridor
of casualties, attended by the cold
and certain hands of white gowned
priests. The doctors fit
the artificial limb—as good
as new: a tree, through blossoming,
drops its petals with a crash.

In silver haste a heron flies
straight for the sun
sounding a note so high
it shatters the sky in a shower of
white feathers and broken shards
of light—a long splinter of white
sinks straight
into the earth's
soft and swollen heart.
And the earth turns, red,
impaled on its own axis.

Eleanor Wilner



I'm carrying my sign, too, and not only that—
I'm wearing my beard, long hair, and exposing
my toes,
Walking down Telegraph Avenue looking in shops
at the beads and the boots and the frills and
farout clothes;
I'm right here strolling along past the helmeted cops,
buying my *Barb* and nimbly avoiding the crap.

I'm stopped by a kid who doesn't know where he is,
and give him the dime, though not the direction
he asks—
some church he'd heard of once where
freak-outs stay;
a girl goes by so made up she looks like she's masked,
and plainfaced others who might have been
forking the hay;
a German Shepherd lifts up his leg to piss.

on the Bank of America, a protest with which
I agree—
even the dogs seem to be activists here—
I'm smiling along with my sign which nobody sees
though it's lettered in E.S.P. and perfectly clear—
ARE YOU REALLY AS READY AS I AM FOR
LOVE AND PEACE?
IF I TOLD YOU OF SAD MIDDLE AGE WOULD
ANYONE HEAR?

Harold Witt

THE ROUND-TRIP SWITCH-HITTER

"The first thing which the native learns is to stay in his place, and not to go beyond certain limits. This is why the dreams of the native are always of muscular prowess; his dreams are of action and of aggression."

—*Frantz Fanon*

Accepting reality, its brawn and bite,
 He took the assignment to drive,
 Not knowing the woman and her two sons.
 In pre-dawn light loading the U-Haul,
 Overloading van and big car with household
 goods

That had already come a long way down—
 Stereo, T.V., rugs, lamps, dishes, beds,
 Bedding, shoes, their and her clothing—,
 He padlocked the trailer doors,
 Checked the hitch, turn signals, tail-lights,
 Started the car and headed south.
 Her eyes, freighted with care, hung
 Like stars in the rearview mirror,
 And the boys curled puppy limp in sleep
 Beside a battered cardboard box
 That overflowed with bats, gloves, balls
 And was loaded last on the seat between them.
 On awaking they unbuttoned bright eyes
 To measure map and speed and passing scene,
 Seeking a new green playing field.

In the mirror her eyes, blue and far
 Fixed on the past, were silently saying:
 Don't hurt us, please; drive with care;
 Don't deceive me as I have been deceived;
 Speaking through him, impersonally
 To some vague unknown crouching
 Beyond the mountains of West Virginia,

Random decayed columns of shale castles
Of the dispossessed, across Virginia's narrows,
And North Carolina's red clay hills,
Beyond the long, pine-straight undulations
Of South Carolina, where
At dusk they stopped at the motel,
Felt the hot give of tar underfoot,
And heard the air conditioner's clank
Slowly overtake the mechanical whir
Of the big car's motor in their ears.

In dark whispering from an inside door
He awakened to three games he had known,
Three faces present as moons to behold
His antelope move through the secondary
Into the clear beyond the defender,
His taking the high hard pass,
Cushioning it with one hand, drawing it in.
Letting the ball's momentum lift him
As though he were part of its spin
In its fabulous flight to the goal;
Again, just past center circle on hardwood,
Breaking clear, fingering up the loose ball,
Moving for one instant free of arms,
He pumped a long one-hand shot,
Rode with the ball in its perfect arc
To the distant hole, the net's swish.

Knees and arms loose, he moved to the box
From on-deck, swinging the white ash bat
With flicks of his wrist to clear his cleats,
Set himself for the pivotal swing. Taking that
stance
For which he had been criticized
Before the coach beheld his follow-through,
Loosening, he awaited the pitch. A ball,

A second ball, a foul tip, a third ball—
Three and one, and knowing the pitch
Would be in there. Thinking—swinging being
one

With the white blur of the chest-high ball,
Feeling only the solid prick of the bat,
The carry-through of shoulders and torso,
Knowing without looking there was no need
for speed

Though his body was slanting, legs driving
To bear him past first before he was sure
It was what it was—all felt deep in arms,
Legs, loins, the eyes on his face kindled,
Bell-flower blue saying: Don't hurt us,
please;

Drive with care—and his seeing the box,
Gloves, bats and balls, last loaded, unloaded,
The three of them standing in a playing field.

Bathed in blue light he swung from the left—
To prove he knew the switch-hitter's stance—
And the ball flew like a meteor
Far over the fringe of a distant woods.
The boys rushed after it, after him,
Their eyes on it or him, running,
Running as fast as their legs allowed.
She moved with him across the soft grass
Beneath overhanging trees that closed in
privacy,

To the ocean's edge where the ball descended,
Floating gently down like the sun in the sea.
The boys, spurting ahead, leaped after it,
The tide rose, roared and poured as a torrent;
He saw the threat and dived after them,
But their bodies turned to cold stones,
Their wide open eyes shone like sea pebbles.

White Tanks

When the sun goes down
 over the White Tank Mountains
and the sternum of the earth collapses,
 when the sun goes down and for miles
 below the marshes settle with birds,
 up in the crags the bears turn around
 once and feeling the stars come sleep;
I take off my buckle, the eyes of my
 boots roll off and lie in the
 rubble, pearls and cold seeds; the stone man
 inside me stands, gall on his lips—
 the last light shining through his ribs;
and surrounded by wolves, the winds
 of the dark ranges spinning
 I stretch on a narrow
 bench of sand, rock for
a pillow, hands froze to my sides;
 as the horde marches
over the horizon, fills my mouth;
 water fills my lungs. my teeth sing.
 as the mountains circle beneath
 them, the mud on my ribs falls in.

Peter Wild

three,
I gather them for kindling;
four,
and I am joyous.

3. Fire

My beloved is mine,
and I am his.

He gathers twigs and branches
for our bed,
and I abide him
in this darkness.

He feeds among the hours,
and I,
among their ashes.

I am tinder
for the fervor of his mouth,
and the fervor of his rising.

We cleave among
the secret places of the stairs,
to light their corners
with our cleaving.

And our tongues are knives
against the silence.

4. The Sermon

When the learned Rabbis ask me,
"What prayer
is pleasing to the Holy One,
Blessed be He,"

I answer:

Fervor in the morning;

in the afternoon,
also fervor;

and at night,
a man and woman,
laughing.

5. A New Song

Lord,
I hear.

In the psaltery
of birds.
Also oxen.

In the canticle
of all things green.
Or the closing hand.

No less the heron
than the egg.

Or the shallow pit.

The falling dish,
or the flinting stone.
Tobacco,
even doors.

The eastward corner.
Or abide.

All instruments.
Or praises.
Even joy
upon their bed.

Or glory.

* * *

Too much,
too much light.

I am
blinded
by my
eyes.

I
beg
you.

L. G. Corey

THREE POEMS

Dont Stop Dont Look Dont Listen

It is no journey to be made by night.
They line the lonely roads: if you should stray
The chances of your coming through are slight.
You'll hear them calling shortcuts to the light.
Don't follow them, you'll find it doesn't pay.
It is no journey to be made by night.

They'll scent you in the darkness by your fright.
If they should sniff you running, you can pray:
The chances of your coming through are slight.

Their hidden eyes will mock your claim to sight.
Don't look at them, unless you want to stay.
It is no journey to be made by night.

There's one you'll hardly pass without a fight.
Best stand your ground and take what hope
you may:

The chances of your coming through are slight.

There are no other roadways, this one's right.
Whatever you have loved must light the way.
It is not journey to be made by night:
The chances of your coming through are slight.

Sauve Qui Peut

The gods of the dark go on
Destroying to create
And little they care if one
Dies in the fire they make.
How then if two should break?
Little they care if two
Caught on the edge of the world
Slide in the heart of a storm:
Making new worlds to find
The gods of the dark go on
And little they care what harm
Breaks on the private mind
Getting their messages late,
Blind fires that cannot wait.

The Unforgiven

They are always watching you
and no matter what you do
or do not do
you are always watching them
watching you.

They will always follow you
and no matter where you go
or do not go
you must always follow them
where they follow you.

They are always looking in
through the window of your sin
and no matter what you do not do
or where you do not go
you must always look at them
looking in
until you say
they did not sin.

Joanne Turner

DRAGONFLIES

My father hunted rabbits,
My kitten teased grasshoppers,
My puppy chased roosters,
And with a spider web on the rake,
I myself ran wild after
The dragonflies.
I seized their skinny tails
Of yellow, green, red and gray;
I tied their needle feet
With a silk thread, and I swung
Those diamond-eyed creatures
In the evening air until
They fainted and dropped on the grass,
Liked crashed helicopters.

I recall my childhood sport,
Whenever I see a kitten or a puppy
Playing his cheerful game;
The rabbits are frisking in the woods,
The grasshoppers thriving in the weeds,
Yet in his dusty berth,
My father would not hear
The roosters at dawn,
And for many and many a summer evening,
He leaves me here to watch the dragonflies
Dancing gaily above the grass.

Stephen Shu-ning Liu

THE GARDEN OF DELIGHTS

But what I have in mind is the rhythm of relationships, the harmonía, as the Greeks would say, whereby the whole body, inside and out, can be looked upon as a kind of organ with a music all its own.

—*City of God* (Bourke, ed.)

First we floated in the whistler's breath.
Then someone said, "Shut up. The concert
Is about to . . ." And the music
Began. Strange fingers under the skin
Played us into hair and muscle.
So we were plucked from between the bars
And introduced.

Quietly, as if we were the first
Humans in that green space,
The man in the rose-colored robe
Led us hand in hand to a resting place
And deposited us.

Refusing words

Of explanation, refusing even to look at us,
He withdrew his palms from our clutching fingers
and left us
Alone among animals and plants;
Alone with that giant flower sticking out of
the water,
Tentacles quivering and an owl in its window;
Alone with our ears fighting to keep out
Doll-squeaks of a mouse
As it died in the cat's drool.
It was all green,
Murderous; and we are left with nothing.
So, out of desperation, we turned to one another.
Days we spent
Just breathing each other's breath;

Days spent touching each other, forehead, neck,
and knee;

Days learning

How to talk to one another,

How to listen.

The sun rose, the dew began to dry,

And the dragon-bird munched on the frog.

We absorbed one another.

And then the others came,

Jake and Sergio and Georgina and all the rest,

And we had a party.

We rented a landscape, as far as we could see,

And romped around nakedly and ate fruit.

Day in, day out, the nude musicians

Conducted us from friend to friend.

There was no end to sunshine, new

Pleasures, and the generous faces.

I remember particularly love in an oystershell

And a cruise through the clouds,

Wings at my waist, a fish in my hands,

And a hawk as navigator perched on my ass.

All that time I was filled with blood and

the colors of the world

I spat pearls and flowers from every orifice.

And then one day I turned around

And there were rats; an amorous

Pig in nun's habit; the Insect-King

Swallowing my friends in squirming fistfuls,

Squeezing them out through his bowels.

Someone was branding music on a nearby anus.

The world was the color of excrement and fire.

My friends, my friends

Put through paces and gamuts,

A mild touch of horror on every face;

And I, myself, after a chase through junkpiles

of giant elbows.
 Was finally caught by a rabbit, who chewed off
 my feet.
 Then I was stretched out to dry on a husk of skin,
 Pinned down by six foaming dogs with talons
 and snake-snouts,
 Breath and hide stinking like wolves.
 They were preparing to string me like a banjo.
 We were all being turned into musical instruments.
 We were all choking and cooking in the slop of
 the beasts,
 Tortured and digested to be reshaped
 As violins, clarinets, or flutes.
 Thus, in the end, we were made capable of music
 And were comforted to dream
 That they could hear us in the other places:
 As birds and weird oboes and a green
 Voice in the garden;
 As castanets and saxophones up
 There among the strawberries and the arms and legs.
 So it is true, and we live ever after.
 For the devils, it seems, are all insomniacs;
 Therefore we must be guitars of shit and mucus
 That they may while away their desperate nights,
 Plucking out of our bodies their one song,
 In which the flesh is finally made to speak
 And endlessly repeat its name: I am
 Eden, I am Hell,

I

Am the Garden of Delights.

Thomas Frosch

GIVING ONESELF A FORM AGAIN AGAIN

A bathing of love
sweet close mist of the breathing of love
ribs stuck too close together
for love
the horizon is too close!
too close!
enchanted to a fine grim dust
the soul recalls
another shape, like stone,
a child's shape
tough as stone
'Everything is too close!'
The child will not be touched

After the swift tearing of cloth
a woman recoils
to her basic peace
the body has always impressed
her horribly

So she forms herself again
with hands slightly trembling
an uncanny knowledge strokes
the legs to calmness
like wasps the blood flares
and subsides
she forms again the thoughtful
altitude of thigh
forming again the face
that minds sharp iron spikes of fences
beside sidewalks of ice

Joyce Carol Oates

WITH THE WATER

the quiet center is
 what it is
 all
 about

the quiet center is
 to be
 reached
 for

when the breath
 is short
 the pressure builds
 behind eye
 lids
 sucks
 gut
 pushes
 hollow a pain
 up under into chest

the quiet center is
 where it is
 all
 at

it is being
 & not being
 scared

it is being
 one
 and letting all

be

and so being

all

blessed

& blessing

it is

the only way now we can bless

be

blessed

stripped of stories

not ready for the hard

images we have made

are made by

lost

to certainty

freed

into fear

having again

to

be

afraid

and

be

gentle

each

to

each

each

to

self

the self held

& cherished

until it

is not

trembling

until
 it

is

still
 at the still center
 quiet
 in the quiet place
 quiet center
 where the self
 mates

with the water

&
 the butterfly

Thomas Fitzsimmons

THE WINNEBAGO TWO-FINGER RELEASE

Each ripple on this black water
 carries a twinkle of sun
 I wade out into a galaxy
 up to my knees in mud
 This is a hunt for the Chinese fish
 the carp
 swimming beyond the mind

I wade into the current
which deepens the water
I cross to an island
of cat-tail marsh
I stand among reeds
near the deep water
I silence my self

The breeze is on my face
The mud is sucking at my feet
The sun turns the arrow on my bow
into a sliver of light

There, in the darkness
the flash of his scales
there, in the reeds
a commotion of flesh
His back heaves above the water-line
each gold scale edged with black
I feel my heart quicken
in its lake of blood

I draw back my bow
and calculate the distance
between us
Two hundred lifetimes away

But when my bowstring cuts through me
my arrow flies perfectly true

Sven Hulbert

TWO POEMS

Poem for John Logan April 6, 1967

*After a poetry reading at Barat College of the
Sacred Heart*

We waited plastered for your plane
Two brandy filled hours to unstack
As Brian's gimpy pup knocked over
Sand filled ashtrays
Standing the bar we wondered
If it was possible
To be thrown out of an airport

Everyone (or most) still waited
& booze besodden
Your poems struck pure chords
Too drunk to hear or remember
I at least knew when to clap
(preoccupied
as I was with the knees
of Mary Anne
sitting next to me
eighteen years older & younger
than I could ever be)

Then you disappeared with Joy
Mary Beth
With her tight rump
Against my knee
Ruffled my reserve
Yet served to make pleasant
The ride to Chicago

(not to mention
 he outlived three wives
 who had nothing whatever to do with it)

Sunday, June 16
 the day of Leopold Bloom:

“Man and woman, love, what is it? A cork
 and bottle”

Guinness and Irish whisky
 wipe out the sweet taste of wine
Alcohol dries up the juices
 and I wonder
 in the words of New York Times cartoon

Do I drink because I'm a poet
 or am I poet because I'm a drunk?

F. D. Gilman

TWO POEMS**Return Passage**

To go back, where the wild vines lean low
Around sugar turning in slow liquescence
And red berries blister gentian and spill
Off stem, off bird-beak and bear-paw, clots
Of unguent darkness on moss and fern

And morning falls on a tilt of sun
Like gold coin skipped over dozing water,
A yellow-brick road slanting a pool
Where two dykes catch and lull a creek
Rattling down rock towards the Sound and the Sea,

A creek to dream on for a child on a raft
On a trail marked by feathers of water
That lead to the Emerald City—
Back and forth through the crowning day
While the distant call of wild geese

Arches North and away on the wind.
And nights alone, except for an owl
And the eye of the moon
Where firs mouth secrets
And water sounds the darkness.

Until the night of the salmon run.
In the gathering creek
Shock through water: flounder and thrash,
Spasms of silver striking the dark,
Fins and bellies flailing ways

Up the bruise of rocks, flesh as a club
 Beating a trail back home—pools,
 Pull your threads tight, pulse with one
 Peculiar ruffle, grain of spawn
 Like a thin blade twisting marrow to flux,

To urge towards glycerine pools—it is
 This luminescence that lingers as measure of sight:
 Phosphorous rubbing its bones against
 The dark—long ache towards a point
 Where two tides cross and ride together—

Quicksilver, dreamt in a night when time
 Was a spool to unspin,
 When bones were fins under skies of iris stars
 And morning was sun like an awl boring stone,
 Like an eye opening.

Lunch Hour of the Supervising Clerk

Office a hush.
 Stacks of work frozen to desks.
 Walls a blank back-drop on an empty stage.

Only two clerks with no place to go.
 Hunched over lunches.
 Wrapping themselves in solitude.

Through squares of window, drifts of fog
 Press the pines to the hill
 Like hooded mourners, muffled in mist
 And listening . . .

Busy, busy under ghost-blue lights
 I scribble numbers in squares, words

On a pad: Things to Do

And if I lift my hand this
Is the image of my reality:
Smudged lead on ruled blanks

Words are sounds
That slide like cough-drops under the tongue
And dissolve

I reach out to touch, and my arm falls away.
A mannikin being dismembered.
I am sealed in fog. A ball of mist. Thistledown.

You will walk in the fog, destination-bound
And never know you have passed through me
Leaving me scattered, a curl of dust . . .

When there were doors, I had no keys.
Now I carry many
But the rooms of my life have blown away unopened

The trees, snuffing-out on the hill—
Is it the clop of horses' hooves
They hear, and never see, through a film
Blurring yesterday, tomorrow, until
They stand, solitary, wraithed in webs
Alone in now, blank
And terrible

At night I dream of ships
Traveling through a series of narrowing locks
Leading inland.

Janice Hays Loonie

RATS*For Kathleen Fraser*

Rats! No longer mice
 not yet squirrels
 ratting on fellow derelicts
 ocean traversers globe scurriers
 professional immigrants without visa
 bubonic plague carriers & spreaders of
 tularemia many-specied yet
 once-a-rat-always-a-rat scions of the
 nefarious Muridae tribes:

African giant rats black spearbearers
 African mole rats gnawing pyramids
 albino rats with bloodshot eyes
 Alexandrian rats devourers of libraries
 American kangaroo rats with Australian blackmail in
 their pouches bamboo rats
 black rats (*rattus rattus*)
 brown rats (*rattus norvegicus*)
 bushytailed rats cane rats (raising cane)
 cave rats (strollers among scrolls runic
 cave carvers) coffee rats for coffee breaks
 cotton rats cotton rats
 crest-tailed marsupial rats (viviparous but
 non-placental mammalian wombattant & bandicooted)
 crested spiny rats dwarf kangaroo rats with
 coathanger tails fish-eating rats
 Florida water rats in striped bikinis
 grass rats oh grass rats cool & green
 grey rats for rainy days great sand rats
 greater cane rats lesser cane rats
 mosaic-tailed rats for art lovers
 nestbuilding rabbit rats New Guinea water rats

Norway rats with Viking profiles pack rats
pygmy rice rats for pulling rickshaws
regular rice rats roof rats sand rats
spiny rats swamp rats trade rats for trading-in
true rats (to their wives) tree rats
vesper rats (when the day is done) wander rats (with
rucksacks) water rats wharf rats from Hamburg
and wood rats from Zanzibar
wood rats from Zanzibar.

Felix Pollak

CHILD, LOST AT SEA

Wild, with ten wrong instruments,
she pulls at air but cannot touch.

That fragrant toy
is altered here
and she, the heavy stranger
in a liquid country.

In pantomimes of screams,
her fingers clutch at light,
feeling for the Known,
having learned themselves
only in a solid world.

Her body
is one curved prayer
for a fairy tale,
for a bough of wind
to hold.

Her valid bones
churn into fantasy.

Coins of splash and bubble
fly into the gold hands
of the sun.

But no wealth of fear
buys one wish here

though

small rainbows arc
in mock response
to her uncomprehending eyes
that gleam,
and widen once,
and close.

What had blossomed kites
and bright balloons,
what had made her buoyant
on the land,
now presses her like seed
into the water's furrow
as though there
she might somehow grow.

Air slows, resumes
an innocent rhythm,
prods a casual bird.

The sea adjusts its sound
and random sail,
becomes again a murmur
and a massive sway.

The slight disturbance
is smoothed away.

Irene Magee

CRANBERRIES

Frogs, violins, the rest of the
Soft seasons sleep in the mind.
Here are the bones and nerves
Of another green animal
We decorate with red berries.
They do not sway when the wind
Comes, they move like rat's eyes.

We crush them, soft
Explosions of eyes, our seasonal
Relish. Sugar, orange, spices;
Even so, the sharpness of a
Food that has its predator
By the throat.

Stuart Peterfreund

**THE NEWS OF KENNEDY'S DEATH
RECEIVED IN WEST TEXAS**

Hung in a wingspread over the winds,
An eye's tuft blinks, a bone-hollowed ear is tugged,
The mountain is steeped in swift invisible waves.

Grey facets flow, the surface is yet
Static, the hawk drops past the foothills
To ride tense muscles of the underair.

Here on the sun's anvil, the running plain,
A battered car is stopped, its radio howling,
Ringed by miles of deadened and cracked cliff-faces.

A startled scorpion flicks around a stone.
Inside the car, shrinking against the dashboard,
The driver tries with thumbs and fingers to
bury his eyelids.

He sits and sweats in the dark.
He remembers the road, but which way was
he going?

And he tries to think of half an hour ago.

But in his shallow night he sees the mountain cave
He found once, following its end
The Apaches' retreat, last huntings, buzzard-
flown burials . . .

Over the litter, on the windless walls of the cave
His fingers traced shapes fragile as sails,
Shadows of the bones of sea-floor fishes.

