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Cover Design: *William Townsend*

CINDERELLA

Black Devil

keeper of my doll shoe
rotten like a scab

flat dark face

who invades the champagne
with a gesture
the lights strung in the smoke
loom

and you
pretending in white sheets
have turned me
into a pumpkin

fat and smooth
full of seeds

that will not show themselves
until I am broken.

You have raked my gown
into a pile

sure

that the coach
is not coming back.

Leslie Miller

HER HOUSE

1

At night, in the dark,
she sucks on thoughts of it:
square and brown, it's her sugar cube,
her love, her all-night lolly,
four grainy walls and a crimson carpet
to lull her to sleep,
whispering
"someday we'll be all yours
to keep, to keep...."

2

Two mice in a cage
going round and round.
Where one is hidden
one is found.

Three mice in a cage,
leaping, leaping.
One eats, one sleeps,
one does the keeping.

Four mice in a cage,
dancing, prancing.
One eats, one sleeps,
one's romancing,
and one is weeping, weeping....

3

She says: "They speak of the House of Atreus,
why not the House of Hilda,
the House of Angela,
the House of Mary,
the House of Artemis?"

4

Dear God! One day she opened
the pantry door and saw
the sea beating among the cupboards,
its webs of brine tangled
like fine white linen
where the cups once were.

5

The House of Hilda is a broom closet.
Angela's House is a waxy bell
like the bowl of a lily.
But the House of Artemis (she decides)
is slim, expensive, almost invisible—
a green needle, stitching and unstitching
the borders of the forest,
the hems of light.

6

"This is all too Female," he said.
"Effeminate. Your basic
Earth Mother Number
or else your fundamental
Furies Bit— Norns, Fates,
all that."

He laughed,
for O he was a whiskery cynic.

When a great green paw
slid from the fleshy earth pit
and batted him into blackest shadows
as if he were a silly pebble,
he hardly noticed,
supposing that in his profundity
he could no longer tell night from day.

7

After twenty years she daydreams
she's wading through a carpet of blood.
At night, the long thin sharp
tongue of the dark
licks every drop
up.

8

Thirty years. The house swells, bulges, rocks
like the head and belly of a
Disney madman,
or like an enormous balloon,
straining to rise, to rise and
break its ties
with the weedy, buzzing, taking-
off place.

9

She wakes in the pearly sweat of
just before dawn: the long sea receding
from beneath her bedroom window
leaves a lawn wet with moonlight
and the beached bleached ribs
of one more question: *fifty?*
(*Years? Months? Minutes?*)

She pads downstairs in a hissing silence, thinking
What will I find now
in my kitchen?

And, truly, the forest has made its way
in and out of her oven: foxes
in the breakfast nook, mice
beside the sugar bowl,
mosquitoes droning, moths fluttering,
clicking and scrabbling of shadows,
twining, untwining of branches,
clattering, twittering, rustling:

the House of Artemis, she thinks,
unstitching itself,
as if somewhere
in some tremulous wine-stained dream
the animal goddess in her skull
had heard a woodland horn blow
and seen the loved walls fall...

Sandra M. Gilbert

INSPIRED IRON

The shop of Felix Randal, farrier. Bedford Leigh, Manchester, 1879. With Randal is Gerard Manley Hopkins.

HOPKINS: I need a sermon, Felix.

RANDAL: Chains, axes, ploughshares, grabhooks,
Shoes for ox or horse, I can even
Forge a special shoe to keep
A clumsy hack from tripping on his own hooves,
But a sermon? You'll wait a long time
Before I hammer one out on this anvil.

HOPKINS: You can give me one by giving me
A lesson in smithing.

RANDAL: Father, you're
Not likely to make a smith. Your arms
Are too thin, you've the chest
Of a boy, you're not half the size
Of my striker, and he's only fifteen.
Praying and preaching is your work...though
Perhaps your preaching could be tempered
A bit by common experience. We all
Admire your words, the sound of your ideas,
But the theology they taught you at St. Beuno's
Is hard iron for us here in Bedford Leigh.
Iron too hard is brittle, breaks easy,
Is of no use.

HOPKINS: You touch me
At a point I often touch myself.
So that yesterday, when I was here,
And I heard you speak of "roseheads"
And "the bloom inside a charge of ore,"
I thought of other blooms and roses,
Smithing and spirit mixed in my head,
And I caught the seed of a sermon finding
God in a blazing forge, and a forge
In His way with us.

RANDAL: You'll not find
God in my forge. I've got charcoal
And, as long as that old bellows blows,
A steady stream of air all around
The charcoal, giving it that glow, but
Nothing else. I built the forge myself,
Brick by brick, fifteen years ago;
I didn't put God into it. I'd remember that.

HOPKINS: I think men take shape by fire
And hammering. I mean the fire surrounds
Us, God breathes on it, then lifts
Us out only to strike us,
Before we cool, into something
Closer to his idea of us. Then
It's back into the fire. He's not
Quickly done.

RANDAL: I've had pieces like that—
Over and over, to get them right. But
I found this out: too much work
On a piece is sure to ruin it.
Its inner bond collapses from the
Strain. All its tiny particles
Just give up holding on to each other,
The whole mass relaxes into weakness.

HOPKINS: There, you're giving me precisely
What I need. Some men are too many
Times struck, too often in
And out of the fire; man is sorry
Material to make much out of.
Yet there is a mystery here: the doom,
Dear doom, of success by failure.
Man collapsed is Christ on the cross:
Total victory through total loss.

RANDAL: Father, I think you've started your sermon
Already.

HOPKINS: Then help me finish it.

RANDAL: I've got a wagon to repair this afternoon.
I've got to forge hooks for the whiffletree,
And a kingpin, the old one snapped in two.
Factory-made. If answering your
Questions now means I'll get
That much sooner back to my work,
I'll help you finish yours.

HOPKINS: A few
Ideas is all I need. Some
Will generate others will generate more.
I'll soon have enough for thirty sermons.

RANDAL: Shall I start with the anvil or the fire?
My time is moving between the two.

HOPKINS: The anvil, for all its ferocious heft,
Looks like a home. Start there.

RANDAL: It has to be a certain height.
A little too high, a little too low
Is no good, I'd wear my arm out in a day.
To keep it from sinking from its own
Weight, eighteen stone, and my pounding,

It's mounted on a green tree trunk
Upturned in a hole dug down
To hardpan. Careful measurement ahead
Of time saves a lot of trouble.
This square end is the heel. What looks
Like a steer's horn at the other end
Is called a horn. One end's as graceful
As the other's squat. Both serve.
Am I helping you at all?

HOPKINS: It's important
I understand the anvil in itself
Before I convert it for the purposes
Of my sermon into something else,
The instrument of God, malleable man's
Lure, his love and loathe, You help.
You tell the text for me to translate.
And the fire?

RANDAL: This is the second fire.
The first is in the furnace at the ironworks,
Where the ore goes in ore and comes out
Iron. The fire is for purification.
The more slag left in, the more
Brittle the iron. Wrought iron, what
Smiths use, is almost pure iron,
The weakness burnt, and hammered, off.

HOPKINS: I am distraught I am not wrought
Enough. Nor iron.

RANDAL: What's that you say?

HOPKINS: Mere mumbling. Mad. Continue.

RANDAL: The iron comes from the fire as a bloom.

HOPKINS: "The bloom inside a charge of ore"?

RANDAL: The same. A charge is ore and charcoal.

Lit, and fanned to hellfire, it blossoms
At the core to cherry-red, the bloom.
That hot beauty is what it's all about.
It's removed and worked. In minutes: iron,

HOPKINS: I like the wonderful inversion of nature:
No blossom on branchtip, but inside, deep-leafing.

RANDAL: You'll like, too, if I understand you,
The word for the furnace: it's called a bloomery.

HOPKINS: A bloomery! I would like to live there,
In there. "Sir, you can find me at
'The Bloomery'."

RANDAL: The second fire is here,
A shaping fire. We know by color
What it can do. From red to white,
The range goes by degrees, a shade
Difference and the job can be undone;
The dull red of a near-dead sunset
Will do for a cat's-ear on a shoe,
But you need a bright Midland plum
To get a point back on a ploughshare.

HOPKINS: What would you call that color now?

RANDAL: That? I'd call that the blush of a lady.

HOPKINS: What's it good for?

RANDAL: The blush of a lady?

HOPKINS: Felix, you're having fun with me, a poor
Priest. I mean, what job does coal
That shade do?

RANDAL: That will turn a rod
Into a ring. By bending and a seamless
Weld, you introduce it to itself.

Quick, touchy. You have to stay
With it, nor blink. I sometimes think
The iron works the smith as much as
He it.

HOPKINS: Here comes another smith
For the iron to work. Your boy
Just turned into the lane. He's taking
His time.

RANDAL: Jack? He always does. He's a bit
The fool, though he's strong and has an eye
For where to swing the sledge. He hits
With good effect.

Enter the apprentice farrier.

Jack, get in here.
The wagon's waited more patiently than I have.
Take off your hat to Father Hopkins.

JACK: Sorry, Father. I meant no offense.
My ears are cold. The wind wants
To blow me away, but I won't let it.

HOPKINS: It's just the wind loves you so.

RANDAL: Where have you been?

JACK: In my bed.
I fell asleep.

RANDAL: I hope you dreamed
You finished all your chores by nightfall.

JACK: I dreamed I was a master farrier.

RANDAL: That's one dream won't come true. You'll not
Learn to shoe a horse in your sleep.

JACK: Then my nightmare must go hobbling.

ARTHUR'S LAST MOVIE

Man in torn coat walks down theatre aisle,
puts out cigarette,
sits down.

Rest of audience settles down;
house lights dim;
film starts;
theme comes up.

On the screen
big screen audience
takes their seats, settles down;
house lights dim;
their movie starts:

Camera pans huge expanse of snow, white sky and
dwarf pines.

Silence.

Hero appears in distance, out of focus, a round black
dot.

Hero stumbles through snow toward camera
in torn coat—inches closer and closer until
entire screen is filled with bottom half of hero's big
face.

Screen audience mutters aesthetic disapproval.

Wave of snickers crosses real audience.

Close-up of hero from behind
as he stops, lights cigarette.

Silence.

Enduring shot of hero stumbling away, across snowfield,
finally disappearing into white distance.

Silence. Profound silence. Snow. Dwarf pines. Sky.

Shadow of mike boom appears on white snow.

Laughter.

Applause Noise, Applause Noise.

Shadow disappears.

Cut to hero spreading out sleeping bag in snow.

Wind machine starts up.

Hero puts out cigarette in snow. Loud sizzle.

Film breaks.

Screen audience boos, stomps feet;

real audience mutters approval.

Real film breaks.

Real audience boos—laughter mixed in.

Real films starts up again.

Fight scene starts in screen audience.

Applause Noise!

Mike boom itself appears in upper right of theatre,
just above fight.

Real audience whistles, laughs.

Mike boom disappears.

On screen, house lights dim, audience settles down,
fight scene stops,

film starts up again.

Real audience boos.

Hero puts out cigarette in snow, loud sizzle,
inches into sleeping bag
goes to sleep teeth chattering.

Switch to hand-held camera.

Hand-held close-up of hero's big face twitching in cold sleep.

Hero sleeps for a long time. Sleeps. Sleeps.

Tumbling feeling! Tumbling feeling!

Hero and sleeping bag tumbling across screen into snow!

Screen whites out! Silence!

Audiences figure out cameraman has dropped camera into snow.

Laughter in real audience. Applause Noise!

Screen audience murmurs.

Two huge black-gloved fingers fill screen, wipe snow from lens.

More laughter. Howls in real audience.

Screen audience grows entirely silent.

Much jiggling;

camera finally refocuses on sleeping hero.

Hero wakes up;

crawls reluctantly out of sleeping bag to pee, does prat-fall on ice.

Uproar of laughter from real audience.

Screen audience begins to weep.

Asst. Film Editor credit flashes on screen, flashes off.

Screen audience bursts into uncontrollable fits of tears.

Hysterical laughter from real audience.

Entire teary-eyed screen audience turns in their seats and glares at real audience.

Real audience quiets down quick—gets very nervous.

Hero disappears into snowy distance leaving sleeping bag
and torn coat behind.

Screen audience stares and stares at real audience.

Real audience begins to fade, begins to disappear.

Entire screen audience giggles, shouts in unison:
"HA HA YOU BASTARDS—SO LONG!"

White out! Entire real audience whites-out!

Uproar of laughter from screen audience.

Theme comes up—wind dies, snow melts,
cut to hero who has made it back to civilization. Film
ends.

House lights come up. Applause Noise. Applause Noise.

Screen audience puts on coats, lights cigarettes, ambles
down aisles

out of theatre. Outside it has begun to snow.

Silence.

Real theme comes up, film ends, silence.

Curtain falls, silence.

The projectionist puts on his torn coat
alone in all the world
rethreads the projector
puts out cigarette in the snow. Loud sizzle.

Sticks head out of small square hole
high, high above empty theatre

shouts:

Applause Noise! Applause Noise!

THREE POEMS

Rim Trail

Indians, summer
tenants, blazed it: it was
a rim trail: it dogged the wandering
bluffs deep in sea daisies, ragged
with stonecrop, & Indian
lovers used it.

No winter residents
bore the riptides & wild days:
the tribes trekked back in May,
came coastwards & restored it: year
after year's wreckage—one rim,
then another.

& Spring
by settling, by fog, by wind, by
toll of feet, by shale trodden, also
eroded: a brink like an axe of cloud,
& aspens, handholds over
jumping places.

I think of aspens:
my hands dream to close still
on clear aspen arms, & they bend,
& I leap out where white waters curl,
& land safe, not like
some Indians . . .

. . & think of them:
lost peoples who made driftwood
flame in the coves, to char sea lion,
who steamed clams in seaweed, & threw
shells on iridescent pyramids,
& were content . .

. . & think of you,
now you walk the rim, & think:
Suppose you fell . . & wish it, to see
the span of you arc to sea, no sound
made . . Why not? You were
my untrue friend.

Cooling lover, if
anyone, you're who we want
dead: you make this rank difference
with your breath . . As for others
with their lives & deaths,
who notices?

Between wish & do,
a brain shadow lowers: it's
the dark hole in my small universe:
Conscience, critic of the touch,
claiming the angry trip & shove
. . indecorous.

Sea stacks stand
where the seas collide, they were
continent; you were heart's main, sea
meadow, flora; & your change of mind
—turning away—becomes
my stopping place.

. . she saved her children,
 herself, she . . she reversed
 malignancy, put fevers into canteens
 to drown, she beat the evil eye,
 voodoo, the bastard years,
 & lost this round . .

I am the rim,
 you, the runner; I, the trail,
 you, the god who went in shadow, saw
 by star, was rash, cruel, hurdled
 death, & returned for more
 carnage . . But we

claw aspens, we
 break hemlock boughs, break
 our last vow—silence—& cry: I
 didn't wasn't don't . . Here's where
 we embrace Goodbye: for one mistake,
 two natures die.

Intervene

Fair-a-day

least said soonest mends
 & winds spill over the warm bluffs as sand
 flurries over & out & down & star
 bright the grains burst from the creekbed
 as when blizzards blew sending the snow
 rocketing as when with bare feet
 he thrust the covers down
 least said mends
 earliest

& here comes
 the colonies of clam

hoed by the wave the mussel solitaire
least said soonest mends & still lips
lie by his fingers in the succulents
at bluff lip he tastes their purple show
watches the curtains of the falling sand
the coal of his cigarette
the wine moves
in his mind

& heart speaks
to his thought the heart speaks
how it can't endure more than one bivalve
per chamber nor love surfaces except
the ingestible the unshelled the poor
passive people simple or complex
least said & the amenable chiefly those
nor any fissures fit
but the one grip
only its

& how hearts
the wine moves in his mind
mind foreign hearts' demise not at all
why not in the name of mollusk why not
heart's hold's avarice a mark of strength
how just now the latest love an animal
hangs from the frilled mantle of his lip
babbling a protest
plebeian love's
eternal

eternal
the shroud of tissue face
the byssus strands fair-a-day for legs
the wine moves slow the mind moves dark
behold king mussel in his own sand roil
while sun pours filaments of light down on

while the sand canopy split discloses
 to his regal amaze
 a new set
 two bound to

reproduce
 his days & ways least said
 & a dead squid a sort of nautilus
 scoots from the surf & back there's a girl
 crooked naked in the dune elbow & there's
 man's arms a vise around her he won't have
 her sunny unfocused eye fair-a-day
 she must concentrate
 no heart would
 chary thing

allow her
 least said soonest mends
 time to swim had rather suck her up
 fair-a-day the wine moves in the mind
 than risk what love's like with no power
 he burrows his fan foot into the flat
 below his base that prey's overcome
 bowed down & made to serve
 itself up
 makes a drunk

head who had
 love stripling himself once
 but sent dissolving acids on through
 & grew replete fair-a-day while she
 grew his dim mother-of-pearl insides
 least said he palpitates the other pair
 appetite & consent a throbbing mix
 finds they're one host plus one
 wombful one
 i n t e r v e n e

Carlos

*When I was born, a crooked angel
the kind that lives in shadow
said: Come, Carlos! be gauche in life
—Carlos Drummond de Andrade*

1

Carlos, Come! Call in
the sentries from the wall
Dusk, the private, the caring
comes watch your demise

The weather-forecast: threatening
The study-barometer: out-of-whack
The seas propose a major tide
Carlos! be *gauche* in death

Father—I've heaped the books & cleared your desk
I've closed the correspondence with America & France
I've told the newsmen: Leave! No more pulp
on Father of Sundays, Carlos-for-copy!

Love—in the last sad reaches of Minas Gerais
lanes of dying trees in dustcoats guard
shacks where the humble & picturesque have led
short iron lives . . . Below the *montes*

which lean with crippled flanks, strip-mined,
the rural burial yards go unvisited:
flocks gone, no pastor services the church
flocks dead & gone, only the random ox . . .

. . . Carlos!—Death fans the wind
The dusk falls gentleness, release
the wraiths of the mind, the sons,
my stillborn brothers . . . Come

& like some Russian aristocrat
 mazed in the chapters of *War & Peace*
 leave the tepid tea in the dragon glass
 lay yourself long on the leather couch
 & stop! Serfs will clean up,
 editors will revise

2

You won't? Stubborn man!
 That's no surprise! What
 does Carlos keep living for? the dead!
 He's the savage link that binds

to Gone, Carlos is out-of-time
 dead-letter, litany, he walks
 dry-foot on the waves we drown in . .
 Here! Kicking their nags

down from the ranges ride the Andrade men:
 a storm, a jangle of bits, colt's scream
 then boots dropping clay biscuits on the floors . .
 Until they eat, they stand, drink *aguardente*

from goblets, to unwind. They are emotionally erudite
 Their black eyes estimate the stamina of their sons
 read how son-by-son each may resist the decrees:
 Untilled-Land-Shall-Revert-To-The-State . .

How each in turn shall procreate & dispose
 herds of mares with Andrade sons astride . .
 Kitchen odors come to the *sala* in a visible steam
 Shoulders slump, hands spread, backs have a cat's

temper, the women's sandaled feet
 slur on the parquet floors,
 there is laughter at the back doors
 of the verandaed house: love has

had to wait till the men came in
 & dusk fell. The beds are not
 comfortable, but bulky sacks
 of summer hay. The surface under-hip
 is never twice the same. Carlos, despite
 all precautions, you are the last

3

How the British raj
 in the person of an engineer
 impersonating a visitor
 found wild iron there

What mountainpiece! Wizard
 his eye, which lifted the veneer
 the life-scalp: scrub & stream
 the bee the bird the beast the brute

long affair of land & patriarch, & saw
 pounds sterling! Quite so his Belgian peer
 who wrote How'd feed all European Industry
 So Profit moved the mountain piece-by-piece

& men grew scars: the deep felt of dust, the tear
 of the mining sites, the hidden hurt in mind & limbs
 of people who'd loved there once. How when
 bread was broke, ranchers talked of holding on

but too many sold for any one to keep
 power on the slope, vigor in the bed
 So some did die heartbroke before the move
 & some the cities killed, not outright but piecemeal

of pride. When, sidling
 from the kitchens, the women came
 for the fallen reins . . . Times change
 ways swerve. At the difficult dog-leg

women held the wagons to the road
 Without particular regret, Father, we
 citified; in the parlor, regrouped
 bickered at the fairs, arms comely

from heavy work, quite free
 while the men spooked

4

Carlos, Father, Believe
 What you want I want, I swear
 to God if you could I would
 have you live forever, I

would even take your part
 It sounds outrageous, but
 Truth is not tampered with:
 I would die for you . .

Fortune is the lady from the stem of *fort-*
 (Latin, *fortus*, strength) Hers is the true
 power. Your dictionary says she's an hypothetical
 force . . it's your dictionary's hypothetical

but for Proper Names . . Fortune is
 breaks children from their homes—ore, ore
 ore undid us—takes stallions from their stalls
 (Father's waiting till they haul the mountain back)

Fortune wipes out a line with a single writ
 but Carlos in the poem writes it back: Sons
 in bouquet, Bombast of birds, a Bush
 of dynasty where rose-grandmothers unfurl

a Mountainpeak replaced!
 Give up! You had no sons
 but me, who tried to make it up
 by having some: city-boys, who play

tag round the columns of the apartment house
 who once sat ponies in a park
 got poison oak, got ringworm
 in public school, chiggers at summer camp

who—unlike you—have no past
 who—fortunately—no pride to lose

5

He comes like a crane
 in from the porch. Heron
 wading in foul pools
 where no fish swim. He

flaps an arm at a moth
 he himself let in

—Beautiful were the men-children

—Beautiful were the mothers of men

. . . ERASE! Be yourself your son ready-for-bed, be
 Child-Christ Pretty-Carlos Carlos-my-little-one
 Blessed are the dirninished for they are
 next in line for Subtraction. Blessed the new

Cross of God: the Minus-Sign, & what was taken
 you also must give, & most, most you did:
 the family the authority the faith, order in things
 the sweet illusion that you communicate

& friends, who preceded you in droves
 to the mathematical place where Aught turns Zero
 Earth is inhospitable in the grave but life by halves
 pleases you no better . . . What's next is

Father! Say something dire
 Say something hilarious
 about dinner. Call me
 by my name: Carlos-my-son!

I'll begin: That's rain, I suppose
Oh! you say, I suppose it is
. . . Where's speech at the hour
it's wanted? Subtracted

Here then the residue
Still the live remains

Virginia De Araujo

SIGN LANGUAGE

Driving north on Grove
I can see this fellow
thumbing his way south.
He's on the west side
of the street, midblock:
a neat-looking guy
in a denim jacket
with a gorgeous applique
on the back which I see
only because, as I said,
I came on him from behind
while he was facing north.

It's a pity whoever gives him a hitch
will be going south, so they won't see
the back of his jacket or they'd surely say,
Wow, man who did those stitches?
I mean, man, that's really art,
that great portrait
of Charles Manson.

Alice Wirth Gray

THREE BIRTHS**1. Three Winds for Candice**

Such a strong wind
 carries her now
Over the wing-flossed sea.
Fresh, bearing scents
 of laurel, upland pine, it
Swirls the snows of ridges, sweeps
 through green and light
 brown grasses
Matted in the prairie's tide.

Your celestial breeze, it's
 cool as the moon's dark side
 and visible
In the corona's scarlet flare.
The surges reach us here:
 Popping fissions splinter all
 the brightening air.

They carry her
 on a single course
Far out on a deepening sound.
Spurs of gold, snapping
 her belly arced forward
 racing-taut
 with the spinnaker's bend,
Her new body rides into ports
 ever empty
Of the hands of men.

2. Bearing the Calf

The morning red
with frost in our eyes;
Brown hawks in the bleary sun.
She's young
and can't lie down to give,
Confused by the task
upon her and
The hemlocks, twisting
into veils of wind.

Then Tucker with the winch,
its spastic cable
Jerking through the steel air,
Arrives: Priest
of all the howling valley
rolls back his sleeves
and sticks
The looped end up
its uterus.

With the winch secured
to a shaking post,
And four strong women
to hold the front legs down,
A white calf slams
through the blood-slued light:
Glistens, steaming like
a new-milled log.

3. Oscar Mayer in Palestine

Men approach a truck
 abandoned on the road:
Each with a solitary hunger.
One smashes through the lock
 and sees
 ripe meat writhing
In a shaft of light.

With labor and much
 bad mooing,
Heads lock with thighs,
 legs wobble,
 running after eyes,
Tripe, tails fight,
 squirming for the dark meat.

All greedy and puffed,
 no sense of proportion
In this thing rising:
Nostrils blowing out
 blood
In the light, dusty air.

It forces back doors, leaps
 to the street.
Bellowing, sliding on
 red hooves and skin—
Forty horns quilling
 the body and
 blood everywhere—
The new Minatour
 runs through the city
Terrorizing
 civilians.

Tom Moore

SEVEN LYRICS FOR ABSENCE

1

I walk to your fire.
Often the other girls are there
and you are taken.
I circle the block
or stand near the arch
and wait in shadows,
watching the stars move on.

I am not jealous when Fiat or Jaguar
drop you down the street.
The hand that waves them off
returns to your hip.

You know me and I know
your fee. Each night I hold your face
for a moment, water
cupped in my hands.

2

I see your face in the window,
turn quickly
but glass makes traffic, myself
and chrome into a water of objects
gleaming through moss between us.

I'm sure your eyes are there—
they blink, lips part to speak
but my face thrust close
dissolves into the darkened store
with single light hung
far back in an office
and carved chair whose arms
are held out stiffly.

3

That night I paid for all your hours,
our loving done, we sit
on the bench in a dark piazza.
Delicate hands in your lap
through weariness you take delight
in a thumb-nail moon pale
above the heavy cornice
of some palace, and as it rises
a white planet follows it
over the low cante of its flight.

When the sky is soaked blue
we rise shivering and walk
as closely as we can
to the earliest cafe to open.
With coffee bitter in our mouths
we go to our beds.

4

You do not bring
only the jangling glare of diversion.
Your jewels are quiet,
the passage of stars.
How lovely the rustle of falling clothes,
your long hair drawn across my face
as you arc like a white bow
above me. Your love cries
are the small lap of waves
the wide sea breaks in mid-ocean.

Out of the sound of your breathing
in sleep, I have learned
the wisdom of silence.

5

Even if a pig is born with five heads,
a woman gives birth to a monkey,
or showers of bees cluster
the head of Marcus Aurelius,
I will not stop climbing
the five flights to your bed
near the window.

Only true prodigies
prevent my going further:
the door locked,
some else's voice
inside.

6

Because I am late I take a taxi.
One week before, I left your bed
at dawn while you still lay
in sleep, dark hair like a cat
stretched over the pillows.
You had wept when I entered you
and not told why.

The city always works against us.
I wait for a funeral:
its scrolled glass catafalque with wreaths
and limousines of mourners, pale
faces set in black.
When I reach your flat
the door is locked.

Are you inside clenched in anger?
Do you hear my footsteps
as I descend? Or is there
only furniture, blank
as your shuttered window.

7

Tonight I can not sleep
and rise to watch
a moon tear back the clouds
and lie naked in sky.

Soon I return
through gauze curtains
smelling lightly of dust
and enter my bedroom.

With the moon soaking
the rumpled sheets,
it might have been you,
for only a moment slipped
out of my bed.

T. Alan Broughton

YOU ARE IN MY JUNGLE

(line from a Tarzan movie)

There is no way out
but death.
You will change here,
unalterably.

I drop fruit at your feet,
send bright birds,
streaks of delight
across your eyes, trick you
deeper in.

My fears are vines
around your neck.
There are a few clearings.
Slants of sun, my shadows
fit your passing form
like skin.

Hair-soft fern
strokes your nakedness.
Tendrils will reach in.

I will slowly fill even
the hollows your heels
and toes have left.
I prowls back trails,
scouting for your face—
those fragile moments
it thinks
it isn't watched.

Years hang by their tails
to shriek and mock.
Fling them a dead stick.
I hope you will become
comfortable here,
the twisting of each new trail
somehow familiar.
You are in my jungle.
I am trapped around you.

Floyd C. Stuart

BOOKS IN BRIEF

I'd like to say a strong word for the Godine Press Chapbooks in case someone out there isn't aware of them. There are two series: six volumes in Series One in 1974, at an incredible \$2.50 each, and five in Series Two (increased from 32 to 48 pages) at \$4.00. These are hardbound with handsome calico-looking covers, and beautifully printed. More important, they are astutely edited. The poets are all very good indeed, and each chapbook has a strong integrity in the poet's *oeuvre*. One of the epigrams in Kenneth Field's *Sunbelly* (Series One) applies:

Poets are known by readers and by lovers:
Discreet, separate but equal under covers.

The other poets are X.J. Kennedy (wincingly funny), Mary Baron, N. Scott Momaday, Thom Gunn (including the eloquent sequence "The Geysers"), and John Hollander's sequence "The Head of the Bed," with a heavy comforter at the foot in the form of a long critique by Harold Bloom. Wit and craftsmanship are the common denominators. In the second series, 1975, the poems are on the whole more inward-turning and more organically shaped (though I can hear eleven very different poets protest at any generalization). The poets are Rachel Hadas, Donald Hall, Larry Rubin, Barry Spacks and Nancy Sullivan.

Imitation is a form of praise. In 1976 the Vermont Poetry Chapbooks emerged in direct imitation, five paperbacked volumes selected by Hayden Carruth from 85 MSS submitted anonymously, published at \$1.95 each by the Stinehour Press. The poets are Geof Hewitt, Lyle Glazier, Peter Heitkamp, Martha Zweig, and Carol Henrikson. (Order through Vermont Crossroads Press, Box 333, Waitsfield, Vermont 05673). It would be excellent indeed if each state Arts Council emulated Vermont (and Godine) and made such chapbooks a regular event.

We hear with acute regret that the Borestone Mountain *Best Poems* annual volumes are drawing to an end. What will fill that vacuum? Nothing I know

of in the U.S. For Britain there is *Poetry Dimension Annual: The Best of the Poetry Year*, edited by Dannie Abse (St. Martin's Press, 1975, \$8.95 cloth). More comprehensive than the Borestone volumes, it includes poems from both books and periodicals, as well as critical articles and reminiscences. In Number 3 we find such excellent and entertaining pieces as Basil Bunting on Yeats and G.S. Fraser's "A Tribute to Empson." Now, who will initiate the American counterpart?

In all the considerable history of dream poetry, nothing I know comes closer to simulating the experience of a certain sort of dream than Russell Edson's work. After reading *The Intuitive Journey and Other Works* (Harper & Row, 1976, \$10.00 cloth, \$4.95 paper) I found myself waking up to dreams that I recognized as exact analogues to Edson's prose poems. The intense psychological realism in comically grotesque scenarios, the gutsy colloquial language in formal, archaic rhythms, these are the true equivalents of dreams, yet with the tightness and verbal tension of art.

Some poems draw their value from the intensity & accuracy of their observation of the poet's life. These make me feel that I too could be a poet if I could only bring myself to tell the truth about my experience. But it takes more than saying sooth; the resonant language that fixes one person's experience for another comes only with genius and discipline. Two quite different poets who succeed in sharing their realities intensely are Robert Morgan, in *Red Owl* (Norton, 1972, \$1.95 paper) and Richard Hugo, *What Thou Lovest Well, Remains American* (Norton, 1975, \$6.95 cloth, \$2.50 paper). For example, Hugo has the art to bring us intimately into the town of Dumar, where somehow everything has gone wrong, to make the subtly blighted town ultimately an expression of the poet himself, and (one of the joyous ironies of the poet's craft) to accomplish this in a poem in which everything is exactly, irreversibly right.

One of the great reputations of our time is Robert Penn Warren (you'd need a foundation grant to afford to bring him to a campus for a reading), yet it baffles

me that his poems do not make their ways into anthologies where lesser writers proliferate and fall all over each other. Anyone contemplating an anthology that aims to show the range of contemporary poetry should take the time really to read Penn Warren's *Or Else: Poem/Poems 1968-1971* (Random House, 1974, cloth \$6.95). Whether you read these poems as a series of varicolored separable crystals (crystals of blood and cedar sap and brook water) or as one mighty interrelated organic whole, if you read with your ear and your mind you will understand that this is something major on the frontiers of poetry. *Or Else* is a poem that develops a new kind of awareness of time and the capacity of the mind to perceive it. And the music of this poem, in its elegantly varying, resonant and still colloquial voice, makes me think it would be worth almost anything to hear the poet himself read it.

Robert Peters in *The Gift to Be Simple: A Garland for Ann Lee* (Liveright/Norton, 1975, \$6.95 cloth, \$2.50 paper) and Millen Brand, in *Local Lives* (Clarkson N. Potter/Crown, 1975, \$12.50 cloth) have submerged themselves altogether in the lives of their subjects and have, out of profound scholarship and even deeper empathy, produced books that do what we usually expect of novels: transport us into the lives of other people in other cultures. Peters presents us with 84 lyrics as they might have been written by Ann Lee, the eighteenth-century woman who founded the Shaker faith. Sharing through these striking lyrics her traumas and transports, one comes to understand a way of life in which dancing and celibacy are equal powers. It is a powerful imaginative construct and an unforgettable poem.

Millen Brand's *Local Lives* has a similar imaginative power but on a vastly larger scale. For thirty years Brand has been recording the experience of the people who live close to the soil in a triangle that has Easton, Pennsylvania on the north-east, Reading on the west, and Philadelphia on the southeast—the Pennsylvania Dutch country. He records it not in an epic narrative but life by life, in a sequence of hundreds of portraits and vignettes, each an unique and separate poem squarely rooted on its own patch of ground. The overall effect is of a great and humane consciousness,

Books in Brief

the consciousness of a major poet, saving for all time this mosaic of lives that add up to an entire culture. If it had been written in any other century it would now be required reading in all literature courses of that period.

Alicejames continues to discover first-rate poets. *Personal Effects* combines 3 chapbooks in one cover: Robin Becker's crisp, understated *Discretions*; Helena Minton's compassionate and delicate *After Curfew*; and Marilyn Zuckerman's *Turning Point*, with such strong experiences as "Childbirth" and "Pond: Vermont." For \$3.50 you get all these, including Becker's "The Waterclock" and "The Landing"; Minton's breathless "At the Lake," her condensed "Midas' Daughter," and many more from all three—related yet distinct voices.