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CONTENTS

- | | |
|-------------------------|---|
| 1. Dolores Stewart | <i>The Observer</i> |
| 2. Judith Kotary | <i>Heads</i> |
| 3. | <i>The Catfish Song</i> |
| 4. Almitra David | <i>Notes from Delmira</i> |
| 10. Lora K. Reiter | <i>Snake in the Cradle</i> |
| 12. Nancy L. Nielsen | <i>Snake Dance</i> |
| 13. | <i>Seen Flying Together Wild</i> |
| 14. | <i>Reading Poetry and Experience,</i>
<i>by Archibald MacLeish</i> |
| 14. Katharyn Machan Aal | <i>The Difference Between North</i> |
| 16. | <i>Someone Warm, You Know Him</i> |
| 17. David Walker | <i>On the Lawn Near Dark</i> |
| 18. Mary Crow | <i>Rose Red</i> |
| 19. Walter McDonald | <i>Prairie Dog Fork of the Brazos</i> |
| 20. Robert T. Klose | <i>The Dance of Gideon Wechselstrom</i> |
| 22. Allan Hoey | <i>Anniversary</i> |
| 27. Susan Tichy | <i>Orpheus</i> |
| 29. Lisa Stillman | <i>David</i> |
| 30. Alan Brooks | <i>Cascade Canyon</i> |
| 36. Gary Hulbert | <i>Morning</i> |
| 37. | <i>Theresa</i> |
| 38. | <i>Lovecraft</i> |
| 39. Robin Shectman | <i>Sarah at Bedtime</i> |

Cover: Gerhard Marcks, *The Ploughman*, woodcut, 1947, from the permanent collection of the Beloit College Theodore Lyman Wright Fine Arts Center.

THE OBSERVER

She seats herself in the background
and does not wish to be greeted as "cousin."

She touches my pulse with a pencil point
and draws the word "blood" on my wrist.

The messages received in dreams
are sent by her, in a language she invented.

Last night, as I slept, I found this note
pinned to the door frame: "The suttee
has been canceled." What does it mean?

She dresses in white when I walk in the snow.
She disguises herself as a shark when I swim.
She records all my failures.

"I was sent by the Staff," she says,
adjusting her glasses, her clipboard, her skirt.

At times, I could fly.
At times, I could flow with the current,
if she were not forever
distorting the music.

She fidgets the digital clock, clicking it faster.
"Hurry," she says. "You must finish.
I am running out of paper."

She rides in the branches above my bed.
I close my eyes. I make love.
Still, I can hear her, tapping her pencil,
waiting for something to happen.

Dolores Stewart

TWO POEMS

Heads

Here is a head. Open it
 like the gut of the great fish
 Huck and Jim took the fifth day out.
 You find
 mothballs
 morels
 Shalimar
 old silver
 "How do I love thee/Let me count the..."
 Natalie's opal ring
 a baby shoe
 his dark blue eyes that time the way they lit with laughter

Here's another.

Banana Bubble Yum
 2 prs. of Wayfarers
 1 smoked
 1 mirrors

sin = $\frac{\text{opp}}{\text{adj}}$ no $\frac{\text{opp}}{\text{hyp}}$

Kelli's cheekbones
 9 piece hot mustard double fries
 6 cylinder
 tangerine earrings shaped like fans
 foot fault
 fuck
 shoelaces with hearts

Getting fired

a chip of driftwood off the Carmel coast
 new sheepskin for the driver's seat
 fired

Agent Orange
seven pounds per sq inch
the Pitman arm
a poker hand in 1963
getting soft around the
a Christmas tree
green slither in green grass that June
fired
fired
Hail Mary full of
muc

The Catfish Song

Bring the war skillet
heavy enough to kill
black as the silky spot under the tongue
the secret stomach squeezing in the dark.
Heat it to throbbing
over open fire
past smoke to ash.
Toss ball of butter
flesh of buttered fish
o red white black
o lush black sizzle
fiery catfish song
for all the greedy places
light never goes.

Judith Kotary

NOTES FROM DELMIRA

Delmira Agustini, 1886-1914, Uruguayan poet, murdered by her husband whom she had left after 26 days of marriage. Her work includes the most erotic poetry of the Latin American Modernists. This in spite of her youth, her sex, and the very sheltered circumstances of her life.

1

Do you think
because seventy years have
passed, or because you
eat your lunch without
pounding your fists,
that he would not put
a bullet through your head?
Do you imagine that
knowing me is not an
act of rebellion? Perhaps you
believe that your
clothes will save you. You have
not fought the fashion, you say.

Dear one, do you recall the
soft blue dress I wore when
I left him? I was an
angel in it.

2

I write to you as though
dialogue were a
possibility, as though we

might walk together through
Montevideo. In the

park I discuss Nietzsche with
myself. The mood here is
scientific, the talk is of
observable facts which do

not include you, and do not
include the women from
before the fire. I am
the woman in my room, writing

at night, writing while
demons claim my bed. I am
the woman in my room, bargaining
with Eros. I write from the
temples of Thessaly and Paphos.

To reappear becomes more
difficult. Each morning to
appear, dressed to
walk through this city as

though it were a
cathedral. I cover my
voice by day. It
passes easily through the
streets. These streets have

no ancient ruins, no
hint of the woman who said her
poem in a clear voice, who
spoke where the

cathedral stands now in
Plaza Matriz, and the
cafes fill up with
men's words.

Do you wonder

why I don't enter? Are
you shouting Claim a
table, order brandy, speak!

You see that my arm is
through my father's, my
step demure. Will your
stride be longer, your
walk freer? Dear one,

my voice waits for the
night. When Montevideo
awakens, my name eludes me,
the ancient root of
my name. I search for

a waterfall I climbed, for
what was given to me then,
before the forest split,
leaving me on this side.

3

The climate here is
temperate, never too
hot. The train to town is
comfortable. I ride
three times a week to
study French and piano.
What is language? What is
my language? If this
breeze came from the
Seine instead of the Plata,
could I
read my poems by day?
A man here was shot for
an essay he wrote, using

“love” and “free” in the
same sentence. Could he have
said it in French? I
think of you,

your language, your music,
will you have found
your own by the time you
find me?

Last night I saw Sarah Bernhardt
be “La Sorcière”. I
saw her burn, saw
them burn that gypsy

wildwoman witch Sarah-Zoraya. I
sat still, crossed my ankles,
oh, dear one, there will
be no holding back
this fire. It burns in

my room when Erato comes, when
she takes me to her gardens,
to the gods’ feasts and
their struggle for her prize.

She visits me by night. She
knows my room, my old doll, the
flowers, the desk, the chair.
She knows where I wait for her.

But where am I now? Who is
this man who calls me wife,
and where shall I
wait for Erato? I have no

room here. For twenty-six
days I have looked for my
room in his house. It is not
here, my voice is not here.

You know that I
will leave him, that I
left him, that we shall
always leave him.

4

After he's broken them, the
horses wait for
food and water. They
nuzzle his pocket.

Now and then, one
goes wild again, loud,
runs for that stream
he has called mythical.

He will come after me
with his gun. He will
call it love, you know that.
He will say I have
written of passion, of

Eros, of a garden that
he has not seen. You know
that he also loves trees,
that he dreams of bringing the
eucalyptus under his roof.

Do you think
because seventy years have
passed, or because he
killed himself,

that he has finished?
Do you not
hear him
loading his gun.

5

I've not slept through
the wars, I don't
sleep while you work.
I watch you

piece fragments of an
ancient vessel,
make it useful again,
give it your own marks,
bring it

into your time. You remember
I wrote that people wear
gloves of ice, that they
fear the rush of their

blood. I write to you as
though dialogue were a
possibility, as though we
might walk together through

Plaza Matriz. Is the
numbness wearing off? Do
you hold a lusty daughter?
Are you beginning to feel
the century change.

Almitra David

SNAKE IN THE CRADLE

In 1901, in Madras, India, a Congregationalist missionary found and shot to death a cobra in his daughter's cradle.

What had that snake to do with that baby?
 Evil attracted to innocence?
 That's easiest and first to mind,
 The ancient, subtle, absolute darkness
 Fatally drawn
 To the fresh, simple, absolute light:

*The hood,
 Scale-eyes staring blankly backwards
 At a past
 Lost to salvaged people,
 Raises the slim head,
 Tongue flicking,
 Topaz eyes roving, covetous,
 Over the fat baby.*

*A second chance.
 Eden reduced to a cradle.
 Private. Powdered. A girl child.*

*Encircled,
 Arms raised toward the dancing, shining scales,
 She coos in affirmation.*

But myth aside,
 Why a snake in a cradle?

It could not have sought warmth,
Not where brown fans hummed
And dimity first baked then broke.
Not when they had pushed
The baby to the window
Assuring her any breeze at all.

It could not have sought food.
There was no swallowing this child,
And cobras never need embrace their prey.
Nor was this a little *naja naja*.

*This was the King,
Hamadryad,
Come to the child.*

*It was not on her;
It was around her,
Sequinned, forest gray
By morning pink.*

*It was above her,
Head no longer weaving
To the small arms' wave.*

*They were both patient,
Looking at the other's face,
Interested all the afternoon.*

*Its tongue searched her breath;
Her eyes, its diamond length.*

*They lay cool against each other,
Quiet as the afternoon.*

Lora K. Reiter

THREE POEMS

Snake Dance

At night, the snakes seek the roads
and lie, dark shapes in the black warmth,
where we meet them with steel.

You backed up, tried to hit it again.

For them, the sun still lives in stones,
prolonging life. What do we know of the chill
small deaths of the night?

At dawn, men take the snakes from
the kivas, where they have been treated
as honored guests. They release them.

By day we saw them not,
even as they lay by our sides, watching.
Sun-strong they moved, and left no trace in the grass.

There was nothing there. You backed
up, trying to hit it again, and there was
nothing there.

We will see them now in the dark,
in the rough places of our minds.

There are snakes everywhere.

Seen Flying Together Wild

SAN DIEGO (AP) - A pair of rare California condors seen flying together in the wild have been reunited at the San Diego Wild Animal Park, where officials hope the two like each other well enough to mate.

The birds, captured June 28 and August 6, leave only seven condors known to be in the wild.

This is the way they fly, leaping up,
unfolding their wings, parting from their shadows,
riding the wind that blows up the canyon.
Their shadows slide over the chapparal. Sometimes
they glide; you can hear them then,
as the wind whistles over their primaries, as they
spread their fingers slightly, musically
blessing the peaks.

They climb. Their shadows follow
them, now sliding over the dark pines, now printed
for an instant on slick rock, three, five, fifteen thousand feet
they soar up the ridges,
over the peaks.

These two were seen flying together, two shadows
slipped away in the sun, two pairs of wings caught
at the air, rising. They were seen, together.

You can see where they flew, go there today, any day.
But that is only a cloud, that shadow,
only a cloud and the wind whistling, rising,
rising and dying in the peaks.

Reading *Poetry and Experience*, by Archibald MacLeish

Emily.

Blake, Yeats, Keats, Rimbaud, Emily.

“This”, I quote from the jacket, “is a major poet’s
mature and considered statement”,
and the author—call him Archie, or Mac—
meant no harm, indeed, meant a compliment:
Emily, sweet Emily, come and sit here with the men.

Nancy L. Nielsen

TWO POEMS

The Difference Between North

half the enjoyment
is the sound of the word:
coffee
coffee
birds with orange wings
at sunrise
sunset with lagoon
going black in streaks
blue beaks
the noise of dark
silence until morning

now they take the caffeine
out with water
dust the beans with chocolate
grind and steep:
such good taste
in small pink-flowered cups
without the thrill of faster heart
finger skin tingling
coffee
coffee
did I say half?

Have another No I
don't think Oh
go on you don't need
to get to sleep
 (what hands entered through
 smooth leaves, beans red dull
 shining through the hours
 browning hard: no smiling
 suave man in a linen jacket
 padrone voice rich)
Well maybe just a

heat water sugar
growing nearby "What are
your country's major exports?"
obediently I asked the foreign
visitor in seventh grade her hair
a night pulled softly back
she told me *coffee* I dreamed
of crayon jungles rain
from heaven then "How
do you like being in America?"
bright-eyed
I asked

Someone Warm, You Know Him

a friend of mine
a very gentle man
with laughing light blue eyes

we're at a bar
and he starts talking
tells me about Viet Nam
how he enlisted
so he wouldn't have to go there
went anyway
and became a star
the man who could shoot dimes
high in the air
automatically without thinking
the man who would shoot anything moving
clay bushes men
children

his eyes are laughing again
as he tells me
it took him six years
to break the reflex
now he can sometimes miss
when something moves in the woods

Katharyn Machan Aal

ON THE LAWN NEAR DARK

(For James Wright, 1927-1980)

I have to sit
still: so still as not to hear
my own breathing.

 A leaf
has decided to fall, a rare
moment of the mountain ash
eased down.

Some songs are like that:
so quiet, we have to wait
not daring to breathe
to hear them be, to let them take us
inside them.

 The leaf
has fallen.

I'm going to sit
a little longer, and listen
as its after-fall
surrounds me. It is
one of your songs now, a hush
beautiful
and unforgiving.

David Walker

ROSE RED

"In the presence of thistles
don't tell me
about the stupid
red face of the rose."

— Jerzy Harasymowicz

But I need to have it on my table
for the calming scent, that rosy color
that lulls me as I sit here
chewing my toast, mulling the news.

Beauty can be stars on barbed wire,
red flare against black sky
brave enough to make a flag of.
Anything can become truth, beauty;

nothing human is foreign.

When the red-headed woman
standing naked in a line of naked people
flew at the soldier, scratched his face

with her red nails, she cut red lines
down his cheeks. When he summoned
a stretcher, strapped her onto it,
shoved her feet first into flames,

her hair became fire, roar drowning moan.
What did beauty get her? My mind
jumps to the past, broadcasting of stories,
and her white skin pale as my tablecloth.

Poems aren't really impure even when full
of words from streets or factories of death.
What impels us through life is staring
into space half-blinded, blaze and blazing hair
hidden in the rose.

Mary Crow

PRAIRIE DOG FORK OF THE BRAZOS

This stream trickles through sand
four feet below mesquite and cactus.
We could dig all day through fossils,

fish scales, shells from a million years
when this was ocean. In drought,
even water dogs dry up and die.

Hawks living on wind ride out the drought,
gliding and staring. They know in time
something hungry and heaving in burrows

under the shade of yucca spears
will hop down a valley of dry grass,
risking whatever hovers in sunlight,

and at night, something lower, slower
will slither from burrow to burrow
over the cool sands.

Walter McDonald

THE DANCE OF GIDEON WECHSELSTROM

It was *because* its builders had said it was perfect
It was *because* the West agreed
It was *because* it had been perfect
That's why

Gideon Wechselstrom
kissed his wife in the autumn sun of
Germany
and told her to keep warm
watch the sky
If it rains you might catch cold

He rode in the pickup
In the back with the sugar beets
along the long gray scar
The smiling houses of the East
shone like new into the West
while their ass ends rotted out

The truck bumped down the line
A soldier dragged his cigarette once
and then threw it away
In the watch tower the guard was changing
While clouds shook themselves out
from east to west

The truck came as close as it would come
And Gideon didn't even think back
on the bread lines of Magdeburg
But opened his arms in faith
And like an eagle
lifted off from the dirty heap of beets
and flew over the first fence
setting down cleanly in the sod

Then the perfection set in
Gideon glided toward the second fence
Two shots split the air
Syncopated with two bounds west

Head high
The fence felt good against the hands
The ballet practice bar
Now made real
For a pirouette into the sky

He hung in the wind
Light as a feather
The swing over was easy
But he suddenly became a clock hand
Nine ticks of the rifle
Nine seconds of arc
Nine brotherly pats on the back
Wanted him home
But instead threw him where he wanted to go

Gideon lay on the warm earth
And then pushed himself up
Stretched his arms for an encore
Caught the music again
To finalize the act

He heard the crowd behind him
But they had built themselves in
People were running to him too
Women with roses
Men with bottles of wine
Forgotten children

Gideon managed to sit up against a tree
Drink some wine
Smell the flowers
Before he leaked away into the earth

The soldiers
Who had been watching
Backed away from their side of the fence
And went home
Where perhaps they could discuss
The lesson for that day

ANNIVERSARY

“Warm-lighted looks, Love’s ephemeridae,
 Shoot gaily o’er the dishes and the wine.
 We waken envy of our happy lot.
 Fast, sweet, and golden shows the marriage-knot.
 Dear guests, you now have seen Love’s
 corpse-light shine.”

—George Meredith, *Modern Love*

I.

Our glasses clink. “A dozen years ago
 who would’ve guessed we’d last this long?” “I gave
 us five or six, ten years at most, although
 both sets of parents thought we wouldn’t save
 it through a single year.” After the wine,
 the meal, the spinet tinkling Baroque tunes,
 we step into the dark, carry the fine
 taste back to orchards walked that afternoon—
 the bobolinks quiet, goldfinches still
 that brought the air around blossoming trees
 to flame. The stars, spread plentifully as bees,
 gleam cold and far. At the top of the hill
 we turn and watch earth fall away. She takes
 my hand. I squeeze hers back for both our sakes.

II.

Late breakfast: croissants in the drawing room.
 Sun filters through the shutter slats, the fresh
 coffee pervades the room. The wilting blooms,
 broken by their own enormous weight, bring
 mortality to mind: the way our flesh
 entwined an hour ago, our certain doom
 forgotten, yet our act engendering
 no new life, no love renewed; our eyes pressed,
 each one’s, tightly shut. Whose face did she see
 shining against the insides of her lids?
 No traded word. We rose. I read while she
 showered. A knock announced breakfast. Why did
 I, the warm croissants unveiled, sharply long
 for another? *Your children are so young.*

III.

Before we leave the Unadilla Valley,
we take a last walk to the orchards where,
as yesterday, goldfinches mass as rarely
I have seen them, their bright forms spinning air
to pure, cool light. I said, "Of all the birds,
the goldfinch was Mandelstam's favorite." "—Who?"
"A Russian poet. Interned for his words
against Stalin. Earlier in Moscow
he composed while walking, reciting them
to his wife who wrote the poems down next day.
It proved good practice; exiled, Mandelstam
had no recourse to paper. He would say
poems to his wife who learned them all by heart."
Their two lives joined, devoted to one art.

IV.

At Cooperstown, in a dark stall, we found
a heifer, scarcely more than a week old.
Her legs folded beneath, her eyes astounded
me, soft and cervine. Innocent. They told
of a world where each day's work was revealed
by fire, known in the sweat of man's face. Tools
hung in the museum show how each meal
was won from thistled earth; only a fool
estranged himself from his family. Each one's fate
bound with the others, marriage presumed more
of a life than simple sharing, debate
over weekend retreats, who takes which chore—
cleaning or baths—this week. I call to her
softly. She lifts her eyes to my whisper.

V.

I am the great pretender—greater than
the Cardiff Giant. Running hands across
its pitted flesh, I wonder how any man
could be deceived by stone. Who bears such loss
lightly? A dozen years exert their strain.
The Franklin flatbed's arm swings a full yard
to find the platen a quarter-inch gain
and to drive ink so deep the sheets are marred
until the fiber rots. A dozen years.
You'd think us odd as the bottled calf whose
two heads loll over emptiness. We steer
away from arguments, prefer the ruse
to infidelities unearthed by talk.
Keep the stone man between us as we walk.

VI.

The sheet mounds her still form. We have performed
more these three days than for three months. Our days
no longer mesh. She's early to bed while
I work late, sleep as I'm able and raise
myself in time to dress the children. Air
once pillowed us like light, like wings our arms
burnished air bright as goldfinches we scared
this morning from hedgerows. Such denial
seizes our wings and, petrified, we drop
separately, buried in earth, a stone crop
tilled from the soil in spring. A mourning dove's
aubade announces unseen dawn. My sweat
evaporates in chill air quick as love
off lips, flesh dull with crusted regret.

VII.

When to the seasons of sweet thought I turn,
it's always autumn—harvest moon and leaves
beginning their slow turn. Their colors burn
the heart's true shade, and morning mist relieves
night's burdening expanse, the clear blue cast
with hard, cold lights. Orion first strays
over drumlins, love-lorn, to roam the vast
emptiness. Our first night, after a day
of talk, our lives a rush of words, we kissed,
surprising ourselves in that tent. Our small
kiss led to children, house, a wealth of missed
opportunities. Quenched fire. What calls
the stars' design to earth? We sang, our pain
lost to flesh's purer light. I would again.

VIII.

We spent the afternoon antiquing, she
for Morris chairs, teak tables—things she might
put to decorative use. I found Blake's Dante,
reproduced full size, only black and white.
Paolo and Francesca—I turned to them
of course—lost in a whirl; the only light
their last embrace, a visionary flame
over Virgil's head. Unlike Doré's stiff
lovers' hovering repose, these two seem
almost about to be torn from the leaf.
Blake captures Dante's swoon, how their lust calls
flames from his soul, as though the artist's grief
spoke through his hand's precise control: we all
bear hell within. Who'd hang it on a wall?

IX.

Listen—already you can hear the first
harrows working; again the human rhythm
in the retentive silence of hard earth
in early spring. Whatever's coming seems
fresh, relished. What has already approached
so often arrives like something new
returning. Expected, even what you've hoped
for, you never seized it. It took you.
Even the leaves of wintering oaks shine
brown in the evening, hinting their future.
Sometimes breezes exchange a sign.
Bushes are black. Yet heaps of dung
lie richer black across the pasture.
Each passing hour grows younger.

(Rilke, *Sonnets to Orpheus*, II: 25)

X.

What bird sings? This morning, walking the road
along the lake, I found a goldfinch where
a fender flung it, feathers still bright; sowed
among cinders, what will it yield? The air
gathered toward storm. Now, driving home, I keep
the wheels on rain-slick asphalt, wipers fast
as rock and roll. Before she fell asleep,
she bitched, "Why must I always be harassed
by your damn music?" Perfect light, who would
have guessed they could be killed? The fusion of
nothing but light, small suns whose light could
ignite whole pastures of clover. Such love,
brightening earth, making air pure as it passed,
might never fade, reason be damned. It might last.

Allen Hoey

ORPHEUS

from Africa, for Suzanne in Asia

When I first saw him he was standing on wet pebbles
of a road in Fez, and so was I, though he turned,
at once, into a crowd and vanished, utterly,
just as now he vanishes—like vapor
into dry air, like thought into the straining body
of memory, a city unto itself,

with the stink of piss-cured leather, a rattle
of tin and brass embossers, louder with each
turn of the street, narrowing, then flaring,
like the ear's canal, into a yard of sun
falling through leaves of a single tree
on hammers, plates, cauldrons,
and the dull brown clothing of the men,

who stare, then offer glasses vivid
as aquariums with live, sweet mint.
It raises in the mouth a taste of mountain,
as the wall of a mosque, inlaid with pebbles,
lends to the skin a touch of stream, leaf, stone,
with fragile sunrise, full of colors only
a corner of the eye can see—all leading not

to vaulted spaces of the sacred court,
but to a spice-shop's sudden lavender and thyme,

to the steep wet cobbles of the next street,
 darker, where a dyer's donkey staggers under red—
 vanishes, as sun into the darkening skin,
 as rain into a river running beneath the streets, beneath
 the cracked, infected hooves of an overloaded mule
 darkening the gate of a yard, like prayer in the mouth of a man
 with his forehead pressed to the ground.
 Under him, too, it runs, under women selling oranges
 spread in their laps, a fountain coming up
 where the poor drink and wash their feet
 on entering a mosque, they who have no shoes
 to remove, whose thirst is visible
 from the ancient battlements, a dust languishing
 in the wind's arms, falling on the city like a curse
 as the wind tires....Carefully, now: I see him.

He appears as I climb from the bus, inhale
 his first dirty breath. I'm startled
 by the rude hands of children
 cutting light to pieces, by fear itself hovering
 with iridescent wings of a small bird
 at my head, so I falter, stunned

by the long fall from dreams, into sprays
 of my own language coughed back at me like blood,
 surprised that I am visible through the bright
 silk wrappings of an unseen face. He appears,
 then vanishes, like stick-thin, bloated figures
 bobbing at sleep's edge. So, what I follow

over cobbles lost to moss, under arches
 holding rooms and families—not to light
 glancing on the hills and branches, but deeper
 into this oldest city—is a voice, male
 and willowy, a voice beginning where the smell
 of orange peels and burned meat puts my mind to sleep,
 and leading past all knives, all metal-work and singing,
 to a street of odors struck up by hooves on stone.

And the voice, now, is water. And the river,
now, is in me. And the great city turns
like a wheel on a sudden quiet. He looks,
but I am not there. He has my face. I have
his gifts—jasmine and black thread. I wait
alone for the cool nerve that equals great desire....

Then will I bend and enter
that souk, of all the souks,
where sits a woman just my size,
faintly bent and sewing in the dark.

Susan Tichy

DAVID

The curve of your Firenze marble thigh,
your pale blue body breathing tiny breaths:
I loved you there: I stood there trying
not to stare: I'd never seen a man before.

For days I dreamed about you: all through Rome:
your pale cool body rising nightly
sliding through my arms like solid water.
I wished for you in real life: a smooth blue
boy: something by Michaelangelo.

Oh, David, for a moment late last night
you posed for me in contrapposto nude,
your body marble-smooth. With you I felt
as scared and tense and daring as that day:
the day I stared down every man in Florence.

Lisa Stillman

CASCADE CANYON

1. Jenny Lake

Under the weatherproof lid, a notebook on a chain and a stubby pencil to write down where you are going in case you need help.

Hurricane Divide.

Number in party: one.

Closing the lid,
frost
across
these words.

2. The path

is found in guide
books only

3. Above Hidden Falls

and above me on two sides peaks blossom whitely
in arrangements of photographs.

Below, voices.

I spook
up the next six switchbacks.

4. More things falling

The grove of small cottonwoods
is half gilded

and full of the sound of water dripping from leaves.
The pinnacle spruce are coming into their own with snow on
their noses

but this also is melting
in a sound of leaves and even some needles dropping
disguising the rustling patter of the warblers
picking through the trees on their way south
gleaning

High on the sky rim
a crack
of rockfall.

5. Farther up the trail and beyond the forks

This is my
one day to be alone.
You people
that I keep meeting,
why do you always offer me
things which are irresistible?
conversation
and once
an orange.

6. The glacier

It takes a long time
to get up close
and it is still
far away filling the horizon
between two cliffs.

Broken snout
and lips
hang above a pool
the color of concrete.

The stonepile blocking the water
feels like it could move with a shove

—is avoided
on the route past.

The glacier tells
that in the winter which is soon
it will make up for
this silence.

7. Out in the open

At ten thousand feet
the overwhelming smell of
licorice.

Just one kind of plant grows here. I pick a twig
and am woozy with licorice.

For all I know the rocks and yellow lichens smell the same but

I'm too tired to get on hands and knees.

The rock-colored pikas beent sarcastically
and scurry to gather licorice for the winter.

The marmots are too tame, obviously
stupified on licorice.

At the top of the switchbacks the smell vanishes
as it has when at the bottom

I pull a couple of crushed leaves
from my pocket.

8. Hurricane Divide

It's funny how the mountains
having come this far
back down
gracefully.

Those must be potato fields in Idaho
way over there.

On a gravel flat not far below me
a pack train sorts itself out,
uninterested in the view.

They come on with jangling and clapping,
the horses slipping if they get off onto the snow.
At the crest each cowboy in turn, seeing my side of things,
yodels
or whoops
or shouts to those following.

They have turned along the ridge
dwindled
and disappeared.

The wilderness is narrow.
After all the commotion
it is good to look back
over where I've come
and at every inch of the three Tetons
painfully bright
as high
and far from me as ever.

9. Running back the way I've come

and running
and running
and on the levels
walking
fast

Bathing my feet at the bridge
I have a good laugh
with my socks

10. On out

The peaks tighten again toward the mouth of the canyon
but just here the creek has room to wind.
Those dark dots in the shadows across where it's marshy
are moose grazing.
The bull's antlers catch the sun as he lifts his head.
Perhaps he feels autumn coming on.

Why must I leave
this wide place
so soon?

11. Inspiration Point

The boatman's
half across the lake!
No running —
desperate galloping!
My pack gouging! my
shoulderblades
hating it!

Making it.

12. Hitchhiking

Our eyes see only what moves.
A still object moves in the minute flickering of our eyes.
Otherwise we could not see it.
To see something move, or to stand still and then move past it
makes it substantial,
time adding to depth.

Sounds and smells carry on currents of air.
If we wait, they reveal themselves to us calmly.
Rushing past we stampede them from cover.

To travel a path in sections, with rests
and then at a later time run it in reverse
creates a bubble of sensation which floats in and
half rising above
the inhospitable surface of memory.
I would like to do this with whole stages of my life
but must be content
with short and easy journeys.

13. Afterward

only
tiredness. Those gleaming
mountains
offer themselves
to every
trespasser.

14. I continue

The journey is trampled
like September frost under fresh bootprints
or disperses within me
like the fluid in my healing feet.

Alan Brooks

THREE POEMS**Morning**

The sky lightens
and a cool wind
blows in the window

A robin on the rooftop
across the backyard from me
he is so defiant

He sings in one direction
then hops around
to sing the other way

YOU FUCKERS!! he is yelling,
COME AND GET ME,
YOU BASTARDS!!

The robin mentality,
they are almost as bad, sometimes,
as the squirrels, who, of course, are,
more like ourselves,
lady

Theresa

When I was ten my father
started doing it to me and then
my brother got old enough
my sister always liked to have sex
with me too
and now my boyfriend hits me
all the time and I have to do it
with stinky old guys to get money
for my boyfriend

My brother is in jail
cause he raped someone
and my sister is in a wheelchair
cause some guy tried to rape her
and she jumped out the window
and broke her back, I get raped
all the time, this white guy raped me
and I didn't even know him

My boyfriend was hiding in the closet
and he jumped out and started
choking me, I got you now
you bitch he said and took
my money and my gun and had
sex with me and I called the cops
and said you better catch that guy
cause I'm gonna kill him they said
don't worry Theresa, we'll get
that nigger so I'm gonna stay
with you tonight

Lovecraft

How solemn the waters
of the Miskatonic
shading deep into evening
Miskatonic University
rises on the opposite shore
the last outpost of reason

A flock of geese;
a chorus of schoolgirls slipping
into the deep blue
of evening
where some
great cloud of blood
blossoms in some terrible fluid
in a flask, on a table

I thrust my hook
through the guts
of some poor angleworm
and throw you out
into the Miskatonic
pray
nothing comes

Gary Hulbert

SARAH AT BEDTIME

When she is tired, the ghost shows through.
Maybe he lives in that spiderweb,
the one in the ceiling corner.
I take a broom and sweep it down.
She sighs, and sleeps. But later,
her eyes still closed, her breathing steady,
she speaks to him. "Where?" she asks,
or answers, "Yes." I steel myself,
I stand guard in the doorway.
Don't go with him, Sarah, I whisper.
More than the stranger with candy,
I fear this ghost. Sarah turns over,
murmurs a word I can't quite hear.
A small wind blows in under the sill,
vanishes like a dragon's tail under her bed,
as the blanket over her chest rises and falls,
rises and falls.

Robin Shectman