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Editor's Note
nothing has changed
my shoulders still bend
with the weight
of my existence
but somehow I am different
my green Septembers
have blossomed
into Spring
Winter was a love affair
with
woolen socks
and sweaters
that warmed my soul
against the heart
I was afraid to touch
Maybe I compromised myself
but I was what you wanted me to be
you wanted to feel needed
and I coped with your
problem
Oh, life—
 Even when I could not understand you
 I accepted you
 and delighted in your meaningfulness
The time I spent with you
was measured by
 exams, sleepless nights, crowded halls, deadlines,
 conversations begun and never finished
And in a time
when I felt
there was nothing
I could call my own
you taught me to touch
and to care
I'll take your touch with me
experience pasted to Enid coke bottles
my first four leaf clover
your rainy afternoons
and smiles
and silver
and sunshine
will always make me think of you
when along
a busy highway
I will see you
reflected
in a lake or in a dream
and I will stop
and remember

—Elizabeth Quinter
I stand in the crowd, alone.
Offering myself, my love to anyone who cares
. . . There are no takers
For an awesome gift, my soul itself.
Seeming now to be gaudy colored glass.

I stand in a void,
And the crowd passes by . . .
Unnoticing and uncaring.

—Yang

Hyphenation

And then I found out about hyphenating words. You know, at the end of the sentence when you run out of space. And I used to hyphenate on purpose because it looked so cool.

—Yang

A man leans on the bars of the cage.
Rattling, hammering, screaming to be set free.
He is on the outside.

—Yang

TIN-PAN ALLEY

Okay, that's it.
You've had your chance.
For eighteen years I've searched,
For eighteen years I've smiled,
And no one smiled back.
For 216 months I've looked for love,
And couldn't find it.
For eighteen years I've gone through agony.
And all around, killing became popular.
I've given up on you, world!
The next time we meet, you'll not know me.
I'll be cruel, look out for Number One.
(and a small voice from the back of the room calls out:
"Would you mind sitting down? The clowns come on later.")

—Yang
GIFT TO THE NAMDINES

Long ago, before the days of men; when the earth was even then old, yet young-old; when all animals dwelt in peace, only the Elders walked in quiet over forest and plain and knew no strife. They knew the sun in its full glory before the shadow of darkness passed over it, and they sang songs with the vines and streams, untouched by sorrow.

Yet even then, unknown to them, faraway, in the very depths of the sea, a power was working which would change the world as they had known it from time unremembered. For Morgodnell, (a name later given him by the Elders themselves and meaning “greatest love”) the evil power as old as the good, was forging in the mines beneath the sea; and had suspicion, or hate, or treachery been words even known at that time, perhaps the Elders would have been warned by the beast that many fish had been seen floating dead on the eastern shores and that a grey mist now shrouded the sunrise at break of day. But how could such evil words be known in such a fair land?

So Morgodnell crept unaware from his lair beneath the sea and set, for the first time, his evil feet upon dry land. It was a day to rue and one that would never be forgotten!

Ill-fated Namdines (known in our language as goullas) dwelt in the Dolnar Forest by the sea. It was them Morgodnell encountered; them he offered his gift to; them he enticed with his sly tongue of deceit.

What was the gift Morgodnell had worked on for so long? What did he now offer the innocent Namdines—those that had for so long been led and cared for by the Elders? It was the gift of manhood he offered them—knowledge and consciousness of self that would alienate them from beasts and from their own selves, too. With that consciousness would come hatred and fear, and Morgodnell’s lust for power and blood would be satisfied.

And in the same moment that he bestowed this gift on the Namdines, the Only Elders were summoned beyond the realms of the world.

Much strife would pass the ages while they were away: wars and killing and deeper alienation; famine and disease and horrors Morgodnell had not in his wildest ecstasies imagined.

But the day would come when the Elders would be called ancient, and men old, yet young old, men who could smile, finally, with their eyes, teaching their children that in the days before Morgodnell, in the language of the Only Elders, return had meant re-discover.

—Claire Hicks

TO SEA

The sea echoes her saddened sigh as she sits on the sun drenched sands in silence,

Pressing thoughts of past present heavy to the heart; seeking serenity and solitude in the sea.

When the windy waves of water break, she awakens to the brightness of the brisk breeze,

Now soft waves seek shore and flow over the silken shadows of summer.

Wispning the very essence of life; gurgling constantly the past present,

Soothing the saddened silence and returning with the woes and wisdom of loneliness. —she-

TO A NEW ENGLAND GIRL IN FLORIDA

Mist across the granite Berkshire face,
The swirl of time’s long vanishings,
And Gloucestermen gone out to sea
In rain and wind to catch eternity;
You stand birch-dark, slim, and straight
Among a jungle world of palm and weed
That shapes its rhythmic sway into
A doze, the caul of Now.
What time you keep behind your eyes
I only guess, am mistily aware
That somehow half-remembered dawns in Maine
And thinkers pacing Concord green
Condense behind my eyes in jungle time
Into the momentary glimpse of you.

—Dee Fuller
Hallelujah you.  
I rejoice in your freedom—  
I'm alone in mine.

But my tears lost in  
Mankind's torrent sink into  
The river and drown.

Why do they curse me?  
I know their praise is  
empty.  
Not perfect; I'm only God.

It's wintertime again  
And my ghetto streets are  
Bleak, jus' bone-tired.

Sailing on a sailfish  
The blue-brown lake washes  
Your bitterness from me. I am  
empty.

THE MONSTER

The Monster stalked—  
He was alone.  
Everyone declared  
That the fault was his own,  
But that view was not shared  
By the Monster.  
So the Monster changed.  
A mask hid his heart  
And made him smile.  
Selfishness did start  
To ruin and defile  
The Monster.  
And the Monster laughed.  
The evil inside  
That was hidden behind,  
Began to reside  
In the conscious mind  
Of the Monster.  
The Monster sat.  
He chuckled underneath  
His breath and let  
The evilness seethe  
Through, as he tried to forget  
Himself, the Monster.  
He forgot.  
There is no good  
In trying not to hurt.  
People would  
Only treat you as dirt;  
You were a Monster.  
The Monster stalked.  
People cried out  
When he touched them. He didn't  
understand  
What the crying was about—  
Now he was a man,  
Not a Monster.

—Eli Cow
FRIENDSHIP

Prologue

After Turlon gave his life out of love for Sheri of Siridar, she united all of Montar under the banner of his friendship, bringing peace and prosperity to all of civilization. But that was the ending . . .

The dream rode on the wings of the night and settled in Turlon's sleeping mind like an eagle screaming down upon its prey. Chaotic colors exploded and cascaded in his brain, giving voice to a low moan as he slept fitfully. The shimmering veil slowly parted to reveal the slim, rounded body of a girl; yet more goddess than girl was she to his mind's eye. As he gazed upon her face, he felt as if the fabric of time itself had been ruptured and frozen, while knowledge of her, past and present, became his. One thought separated from the whirlpool of data that flowed into his brain: her name. "Sheri, a fit name for such a girl," he thought, as he contemplated her wondrous beauty.

Suddenly the vision of her broke asunder with a cry of anguish that echoed painfully in his mind, leaving only the memory of her sweet face and of jade towers of a city: Siridar, the largest and most enchanting on all Montar.

He slept again, dreamlessly, fitfully.

II

The sun smiled gently over the mountains of Hellespont, arrowing a shaft of light through the clouds and into Turlon's tent, caressing his face. He opened his eyes to the grey dawn and rose quickly to dive into the clear pool by the campsite. As he came sputtering to the surface, wiping curly red hair out of his eyes, he was hailed by a merry laugh.

"Ho, Turlon!" cried Narek. "I thought you would sleep the day away!"

Turlon grabbed his friend by the ankles and pulled him in the pool. "That will teach you to laugh at your betters," he said, climbing on to the bank. "You go start the fire for breakfast, Narek. I'm going for a walk."

Turlon then went back to his tent and dressed, still musing over the strange vision in his dreams. He walked slowly out of the camp, past Narek, who was building the fire. Narek started to speak, but seeing the far-away look on his friend's face, turned thoughtfully back to his task.

Just then, a large, grey-bearded man rode into camp on a silver stalion.

"Father!" cried Narek. "What brings you here?"

"I must speak with Turlon," said Urson, as he dismounted. "Where is he?"

"I know not, Father. He vanished into the forest a short while ago. He walked as if in a dream and did not say where he was going."

"Ah, I think I know where he is, son. You stay here and break camp; we ride home today."

III

Turlon sat in a small grove at the edge of the Forest Nabur. The once dark and gloomy shadows had now become peaceful wraiths flitting among the green and red leaves of the tarnil trees. He relaxed there, contemplating the strange vision he had encountered in his dreams.

"A vision of a goddess," he thought, "such a one whose beauty has never before graced the cold, lonely world. Oh! but what a vision! An image of loveliness that seemed to be suddenly stabbed by a sharp, joyless note. I could see in her eyes the dying embers of a love that embraced all the world; now soured, perhaps beyond all repair."

"Sheri, if I could see you again," he mused. "I would . . . What?!

he cried, rubbing his eyes and blinking. There in front of him hung her
face, her eyes brimming over with tears.

"Sheri, don't cry," he began, as he reached to touch her.

"Turlon, are you here?" called Urson. "What's the matter? You look as if you've seen a ghost!"

"Nay, not a ghost," said Turlon, "a vision of the loveliest girl ever created, a veritable goddess, wounded to the heart.

Turlon cried. He rode forward to her side his horse carelessly dragged the unmoving body out from under the dead roof. He carried also a heavy, double-edged spear, and in a plain leather scabbard, a razor-sharp sword that he alone of all his people could wield.

"Come on, Farz! We go to cross Hellespont and the sea to seek the most beautiful girl in the world!"

INTERIM

After two months of frenzied adventures, Turlon, weary of his journey, arrived at the plains on the edge of Siridar, the city of Jade Towers. The plains had been the scene of a huge battle. Among the bodies which littered the field stood two live contestants, shining like beacons over a sea of blood. One was a wrinkled, old man, who looked as if he had died a hundred years before, and the other was Sheri!

"Sheri!" Turlon cried. He rode forward to her side, his horse carefully picking its way among the bodies littering the field.

"My life is yours to command," said Turlon, as he knelt and offered to her the hilt of his sword.

"Thank you, Turlon, I..." Suddenly Sheri screamed as Turlon fell to the ground, stunned by a magical blow from the hand of Boz, the old sorcerer, who had sneaked up behind Turlon.

When Turlon's senses returned, he struggled up to his feet, only to see Boz riding toward him on a great black mare with fiery bone and muscle. Grabbing a spear that lay on the ground beside him, he swung downward to Turlon's life. Turlon barely avoided the swing of the sword, and, gripping his spear firmly, stabbed upward with every last ounce of his strength through the chest of the black mare and penetrated deeply into the bowels of Boz. Horse and man screamed in mortal pain and crashed to the earth on top of the young barbarian.

Sheri slowly dragged the unmoving body out from under the dead horse and wept as she called his name, "Turlon, Turlon!"

Turlon slowly opened his eyes and focused at last upon her sweet face. Sheri, beloved. Live in peace and happiness the rest of your days. I go now to greet my ancestors."

Turlon's eyes closed again, and he carried with him to Walhalla the memory of the most beautiful girl in all Montar.

EPILOGUE

Afterward, Sheri united all of Montar under the banner of Turlon's friendship, bringing peace and prosperity to all of civilization. And that was the ending.

—Bard of Finback
When Fate was handing out its surprise packages
I grabbed. No careful forethought did I give.
You see, I was in a hurry.
—Karen Denson

MAYBE TOGETHER
Reach out your hand,
Take mine into yours.
Maybe together we'll love and understand
What everyone else ignores.
—Jan Kerce

THREE WORLDS
People live, people die.
Worms feast
Ashes swirl and fly.
I am forever, eternal.
—Bard of Finback
BENT AND WEARY

Bent and weary,
The old man stands in defeat.
His heart cries,
What his eyes can’t bear to see.
The fire has won,
Taking with it all that was his.
He wants to ask why,
But the words won’t come to his lips.
He wants to cry,
But the heat of the fire keeps back the tears.
There he stands all alone—
He is a man.

—Jan Kerce

THEN

Then . . . our lives we were to share
Then . . . we had a love so rare
Then . . . there was a reason to live
Then . . . we both had something to give
Then . . . our hearts were young and sincere
Then . . . we couldn’t wait to be near
Now . . . all I want is to know the way
to make “THEN” again be today

—Tam Holder

MR. WEINBERG’S ONE-SIDED CONVERSATION

Now that I’m old and ready-to-die,
Can I really say that anything I did in those many, many years made any sense to the rest of the world?
I went to college—that’s good.
Drama major, too. Made a name for myself.
But I haven’t seen an audience from the footlights for 40 years.
Got married when I was 19.
But we never had kids; my wife died when she was 27.
I didn’t have the courage to try again.
Moved to Georgia a couple of years ago with my brother’s family.
But Lockheed laid everybody off, and things went downhill from there.
All the in between years just drifted away—Where?
Like they say: if I had it all to do over again, it wouldn’t have been this way.
Oh, God, do you believe in reincarnation?
Give me another chance. Amen.

—Mary Wallaby
JUST LIKE BOBBY’S BLUES

Frank said he was goin’ to play baseball,
But the Tongue threw an oil can
And hit him in the head as he
Walked away eating a kit.
Later, Frank knocked the ball into
The back of a passing truck.
(This did not endear him to his friends.)
At twilight the group caught
Lightning bugs in jars, pretending
That they were Governor, President, Jesus, and God.
Frank ended it all by proclaiming
That he was Shakespeare,
And walking back towards the dock,
The group was confronted by the Tongue,
Who was batting around cottonwood seeds
With a stick that held open the shop windows.
“And the Lord cried, ‘Bless ye! Bless ye!
May-ree. Ye have not spilt the Jim Beam!’”
That was Old Silas shuffling
Beneath the street lamps as he
Searched for the gutter ledge and preached
(To himself.) “Hellooo Silas!”
Called Frank. The Tongue mistook
Frank’s exclamation for an insult
And crammed a copperhead into his natural,
Receiving in return a gummy hand of Afro Sheen.

—Eli Cow
LITTLE MOTHER MAKER
Pretty young girl, that's Little Mother Maker.
Three babies, kitten and goldfish, too.
Keeping diaper pan and kitty litter box,
That's how she passes her day.
Daddy likes a house with no smells.
Little Mother Maker does too.
But she can think of an easier way.
Local newspaper picks her model mother.
Other mother makers lose their minds,
Except the lucky ones who share their
Afternoon beds with the delivery boy.
But not our Little Mother Maker.
She goes to the figure salon;
The health spa keeps her busy.
Daddy is proud of her firm little motherbody.
One day soon he'll be prouder still,
When she flies off to New York
To be a little model,
Maker of good times and much money.
No more little Mother Maker for her.

—Smah

#4
Why, after
all those long, long months
I've waited,
Why, after
all those mornings
I spent puking in the bathroom,
Why, after
all those big, round, hot summer days
I kept you under my heart,
Why, before
I could even love you, son,
Why did you die?

IVY

LIB
I'd like to be
Just what you ordered,
But—sorry, sir—I'm not a martyr.
Some women are
Men's private slaves
From birth until
They're in their graves.
A slave's one thing
I'll never be.
So stand back, please,
Let me be me!
I was a little bit afraid
It was supposed to be my Birthday,
But it was three months later.
The Popeye Club just couldn’t take me
On the thirty-first of May.

As a Birthday girl, I sat on the front row.
Officer Don leaned over and put his
Pudgy face right into mine.
As he did so, his jolly voice asked,
“What do you want to be when you grow up?”
With my stopped-up-nose dialect,
I meekly replied, “A mother.”

Between the cartoons and the goodie bags,
I had little time to ponder about my answer.
I didn’t think about walking around for
Nine months in an over grown and awkward fashion,
Nor the pains and expenses of delivery.
I didn’t think about the love to be given
And at times not received,
Nor the fear of forming the character of another being,
Nor having the responsibility of raising a whole life.
No, I just didn’t have time to think.

Now, that I have had time to think,
I wish I had time to say it over.
This time I wouldn’t reply in a meek voice
But, I would boldly retort, “A Teacher”.

—Debbie Williams

Rainy Day Child
dries her tears
on tomorrow's
sunshine
falls asleep
on the rays
of hope and dreams
she was a star
instead.

—e a o’quinn
CITY POEM

The moon rises gently above the city
city city
Town Down Town Up Town
city
Rises with neon lights that kill the stars
city
Nighttime Righttime Hightime
It has its poetry
Though I gladly leave it unread
For the lyrics of the woods, this
city
—Claire Hicks

Setting:

This play is set in the distant future, in the year 3030. The entire action takes place in a museum of that day where a guide is conducting a tour.

Characters (in order of appearance):

Guide ........................................... the mediator of events
Miss Tyson ...................................... a know-nothing know-it-all
Mr. Mason ..................................... a superior to himself only
Mrs. Treeson ................................... a lady of the heart
Mrs. Byson .................................... one-half of the married couple
Mr. Byson ...................................... the other half
God ............................................. the one-liner character that steals the show

A light shines on a group of people entering from stage left.

Guide—(in a purely factual tone)

Ladies and gentlemen, we are now entering the Early Space Age Era of the museum. People of this era—1950-2050—were progressing techni- cally, but were hardly what we would call culturally civilized. At this time men were rocketing to the moon and Mars, and creating space laborator­ ies and stations to aid their space crafts in journeys into what was called the "New Frontier." At the same time trivial wars were being fought; and World War III began with the accidental dropping of an atomic bomb—a bomb only one-hundredth as powerful as our most advanced devices of today. The major difference is: their bombs were used for destruction while ours are used for experimental purposes only. The most marked difference in that age and today's world lies in those things that were considered normal by the Early Space Age people. For instance (the first object is now lighted. Everything else remains, in darkness) this was known as a tree.

Miss Tyson—A tree? How grotesque! What was it used for?
Mr. Mason—(In a superior tone) Nothing at all, madame. I saw some pictures of them in the archives and they served no purpose whatsoever. (The married couple is just observing at this time. They keep much to themselves and never have much to say.)
Mrs. Treeson—I think it's lovely.
Mr. Mason—Lovely! Indeed! They caused quite a bit of trouble—scattered themselves about in the autumn and collected snow in the winter.
Miss Tyson—Snow? I've never heard of it.
Mr. Mason—(Aside) Most assuredly, she has never heard of anything.
Mrs. Treeson—(Reverence in her voice) Snow was a wonderful substance that came with the cold of winter. Snow was to play in and wonder at ... 
Mr. Mason—(Interrupting—scathingly) and freeze to death in. We're fortu­ nate it is always 75° year-round on earth now. Thanks to modern genius we don't have to worry about snow, rain, or any other type of inclement weather—we have perfect sunshine all year. It is hard to believe that people of the Early Space Age actually thrived on rain.
Miss Tyson—Thrive on it? How very strange. (She actually doesn't know what she's talking about.)
Mr. Mason—Yes, they grew food with it and, also, drank it. Now all we have to do is consume the correct color of pill—very convenient, I must say, saves a great deal of trouble.

Mrs. Treeson—It must have been wonderful to have something to thrive on that was real and not produced artificially in some factory.

Mr. Mason—(shocked) Madame, how . . .

Guide—Excuse me, sir. I suggest we proceed. The museum will be closed in an hour.

Mr. Mason—(annoyed at being interrupted) Very well. (With a look at Mrs. Treeson) Let’s do get to something more interesting.

(The group proceeds to another object and it too is then lighted. The tree is slowly faded into darkness at the same time.)

Guide—This is a baby crib that was used to hold a child in its first stages of infancy.

(Finally the married woman speaks out, thoroughly perplexed.)

Mrs. Treeson—How could a three foot child fit in such a small crib?

Guide—They weren’t three feet tall. At that time women had their own children. Children were not produced in factories nor were they raised by professionals, as children are today—from birth to four years of age.

Mr. Mason—(Disdainfully) In those years, men and women married because they were in love and wanted to have children. Thoroughly revolting!

Mrs. Treeson—When my husband was alive we discussed such matters and studied the old times. Marriage had value then. (Sadly) Now young people suppose it is law to do so. (Getting angry) Why? So after the government is through with the children—children born not of love, but of the “booming new industry”—each couple can receive a child to raise and achieve more for this great world. There are no feelings, just hopeless dedication to a cause that’s worth nothing at all.

Mr. Bryson—(defending his status as a married man) We only do what is right in order to advance.

Mrs. Treeson—And where are you advancing to? Why did you marry your wife?

Mrs. Bryson—She was chosen for me.

Mrs. Treeson—By whom?

Mrs. Bryson—By the Bureau, of course.

Mrs. Treeson—I suppose you don’t know anything about love?

Mrs. Bryson—(Defiantly) No. Why should we? That’s not the way life is supposed to be. After all, we’re just human. You can’t expect us to have feelings that aren’t natural to our race.

Mrs. Treeson—that’s the whole problem. The “natural” things of today have no real meaning. All of us just barely exist from day to day, not realizing we are on the verge of ceasing our own existence by responding to the doctrines of a non-feeling society.

Mr. Mason—(Breaking in with an air of authority) Madame, I have been silent long enough. You are totally lacking in information. If you will read any of the pamphlets published monthly on the state of the world, you will find that we are all living very high indeed.

Mrs. Treeson—High, in what manner, sir?

Mr. Mason—Why, economically, of course.

Miss Tyson—What other way is there to live?

Mrs. Treeson—High in spirit, simply high in spirit. Have you ever heard of that word—spirit, truly a beautiful word. I don’t suppose you have—it’s been abolished from the dictionary just as love was. Our “leaders” were afraid that such a word might produce too much curiosity.

Mr. Mason—As soon as this tour is over, I intend to make an entire report of this incident to the Bureau. I am sure they will be very interested in learning of your discordant words.

Guide—Ladies and gentlemen, please! We must proceed to the next exhibit. I am sure you will find it, by far, the most interesting.

(The next object lights up. The crib fades into darkness at the same time.)

Guide—This book, called the Bible, told the story of a being called God. It was one of the greatest books of the time though it was written 2000 years before.

Mr. Mason—Yes, I’ve heard of it, though I must say that it was quite in bad taste. It led people into believing in some great being that created the world and will in turn, end it. Utterly preposterous! Everyone knows the Bureau is responsible for all things.

Mrs. Treeson—Aren’t you forgetting that the Bureau could not have been present at the time of creation?

Mr. Mason—(knowledgeably) But the world was made for its coming.

Mrs. Treeson—Perhaps. But who or what started the process of creation?

Mr. Mason—that’s unimportant. The Bureau is here and therein lies the whole story.

Mrs. Treeson—There’s a little more to it.

Miss Tyson—Well, what’s the rest of the story?

Mrs. Treeson—It’s a story of miracles, of God and his son Jesus; and all things, great and small, that mean the most. It tells the whys of all things—including why God shall bring Earth to an end. I believe . . .

Mr. Mason—(Indignantly interrupting Mrs. Treeson) You are mad, woman, to believe such a book. It is forbidden! The Bureau is supreme—nothing is above it.

Mrs. Treeson—(With conviction) God is above all things, including the Bureau. My husband believed and . . .

Mr. Mason—(Annoyed) Your husband! You always speak of your husband and he’s dead.

Mrs. Treeson—(angrily) Yes—my husband is dead, but not because he had some reason to die! The Bureau chose his number—that’s why he’s dead. They hold the power of life and death. Man can’t even die by himself!

Mrs. Bryson—(stupidly) That’s not very important.

Mrs. Treeson—Perhaps not, but what about living and loving; and most of all, believing? If there is no God, what use is there in living? What purpose have we served? None! We shall reap nothing of this world, nor will we have anything for tomorrow.

Mr. Mason—Madame, you know the code. The Bureau is our tomorrow.

Mrs. Treeson—I don’t care about the Bureau. There’s only one important thing in life—belief. With that you can do anything.

Mr. Mason—That’s treason! How dare you . . .

(A loud voice booms out)

She Dares Because She is Right—and this Ladies and Gentlemen is THE END.

(All at once everything lights up—thunder crashes—and just as swiftly everything descends into darkness and there is silence.)

—Jan Kerce
The sun, ageless one, sinking,  
Cast shadows on the mountains.  
Where before had been desolation,  
Vegetation, plains, then valleys and hills,  
Undergrowth of the steep rises caught the  
day’s last heat.  
Now the eye, in direct line with fading sun  
and mountain top,  
Sees the lone traveler, illuminated  
In halo of light,  
Electrified.  
The body finds its grace, the wind the hair  
Set free, youth is glorified.  
Perhaps it is time lost,  
An Indian warrior celebrating the sun for  
harvest,  
Or performing the first rituals of marriage  
Or maybe, maybe . . .  
The alien we’ve been praying for,  
Come to succor and to save.  
I believe! and we witness the god.  
Then the man moves, the dream breaks,  
And the trees are left alone—  
Electrified.  
—Claire Hicks
"TUNE OUT"

As you sit there, radio blaring, absorbed in thought—oblivious to the world around you, 
Tune Out! Tune Out!

Suddenly you hear . . . . .
You’re not sure what you’ve heard or maybe you don’t want to be sure of what you have heard. 
It comes in broken, incoherent phrases . . . . .

young man . . . Atlanta . . . 22 . . . Monday . . . hospital . . . DEAD . . .
The one word that really sinks into the dullness of the brain—DEAD—

You think—"They’re wrong", "There’s some mistake", "Not him!"

Slowly the cold and bitter truth of reality dawns — He is gone. You hesitate to say DEAD; because it sounds so final.

Well isn’t it final??

Once so long ago he had reached out for help and no one had recognized this poor, misunderstood gesture as being what it was.

Do they see it now? Do I see it now? If only we had listened, Would it be so different now?

Radio blaring—listen! Once again this misunderstood gesture— Tune Out! Tune Out!

—Marcheta Ballew

NO DESISTAS

Cuando vayan mal las cosas como a veces suelen ir, Cuando ofrezca tu camino solo cuestas que subir; Cuando tengas poco haber, pero mucho que pagar Y precise sonreir, aun teniendo que llorar;

Cuando ya el dolor te agobie y no puedas ya sufrir Descansar acaso debes, PERO NUNCA DESISTIR. Tras las nubes de la duda, ya plateadas, ya sombrías, Puede bien surgir el triunfo; no el fracaso que temías, Y no es dable a tu ignorancia figurarse cuan cercano Puede estar lo que anhelas y que juzgas tan lejano.

Lucha, pues por mas que tengas en la brega que sufrir. Cuando todo este peor, MAS DEBEMOS INSISTIR.

—Anonymous

DON'T GIVE UP

When things go bad as sometimes they do, When your way offers only heights to climb: When you have so little, but much to pay And you are forced to smile, though you feel like crying;

When pain oppresses you and you cannot suffer Rest if you must, BUT NEVER GIVE UP.
In back of the clouds of doubt with their silver linings and shadows Are the triumphs you hope for or the crashes you fear, And it is not feasible in your small mind to realize how near You are to what you long for, yet what you judge to be so far.

Fight, then because there is more in your struggle than suffering. When things get worse, THEN WE MUST PERSIST.

—Martha C. Garces, Translator Bucaramanga (Santander) Colombia South America
MAN

Man isn't man
Until he does what he can,
Until he has reached for the stars,
And holds at least one in his hand.

You are my friend.
You sit with me,
listening to words
I do not speak
And you understand.
—e a o'quinn

Goldfish bowl
Window on human actuality
Home, security.
—Gail Seabolt

MAN

KING

When I was a child of only six,
There was always a story of a man
Who threw bricks, bottles, and sticks.
This was only a rumor of a man called King.
I would always hear people talking
Of the trouble he caused in their neighborhoods;
But through all the talk I remember
Things he did that were good.
You would usually hear that everywhere
He went he caused a riot;
He marched for the betterment of all men.
All he asked was that you try it.
As I grew older I began to love his work
And respect the things he was trying to do.
Through the worst of times and treatment
He kept his Godly manner.
Maybe we should try this too.
To remember King, one must remember
His marches, his courage, his escape from near death.
With each new awakening,
King was slowly taking his last breath.
King went through a life of hell on earth
To fulfill the dream that his people would be whole:
Makes me wonder if I would prevail through it all.
Then came his final days on earth,
All of which he worked without rest,
With every step he drew his last breath.
It seems as though America
Always produces Killers of Kings.
—Joe Norman
Stone.  
It sits there  
The icy winds blow all around, but the  
Rock—  
It never makes a sound.  
Stone.  
It doesn't care.  
As cold within as you are without, a  
Rock  
You are, without a doubt.  

There she sits atop her mountain of glory made of hate, bitterness, and disillusionment.  

It's a high mountain, carved by many years of repeated disappointment.  

Safely she sits there looking over the world below, as day by day, it passes slowly by.  

In her world, she is self sufficient.  
In her world, she is perfection.  
In her world, she is superior.  

With all of this glory and her mountain unto herself, why then, when she looks down and the sun shines brightly on her face, is a tear slowly trickling down her cheek?  

—Marcheta Ballew
An all out effort to develop my fragile body into a Herculean type physique has been halted, or at least slowed due to circumstances beyond my control. I have decided that in the best interest of all those involved, mainly myself, I should reevaluate my objectives.

The main goals of my crash exercise program was for reasons of good health, right? I immediately ruled this out because no sooner do I get through exercising than I light up a cigarette and this in itself would be contradictory. I then thought it might be a combination of good health and long life, with my desire for longer life being the dominating factor. I also ruled this out because I am known for never being able to look more than two weeks ahead. My last feeble justification was good health in preventing a heart attack of which I have always been afraid would suddenly terminate my existence here on earth. I again ruled this out because I am known for consuming large amounts of coffee and alcoholic beverages that supposedly contribute to heart ailments.

Finally and reluctantly I have diagnosed my exercising craze, or mania, as a desire to impress younger members of the opposite sex, a condition more commonly known as, "Dirty Old Manitus", and which at present has no known cure. The symptoms are easily recognized and commonly observed in men my age, especially around tennis courts, swimming pools, and gymnasiums.

My wife, I must admit, hasn't shared the enthusiasm in my desire to develop my now sagging muscles into the ultimate of a perfect physique. She has often uttered almost inaudible insults that include the nickname of Atlas. I even heard her tell someone on the telephone that all of this bodily exercising seems to be giving my brain a chance to rest, an uncalled for comment which I thoughtfully ignored. I keep telling her that all of this exercising is helping to strengthen my heart, and she has the gall to say that "when a man my age acts the way I have been acting it's my head that needs strengthening before my heart gets me in trouble." I told her that all of her harrassment was running me crazy; then she said "If she was running me crazy I could slow to a walk because I was almost at the finish line."

I recently had the distinction of having been pulled out of a pool, floundering like a harpooned whale, by a ninety-eight pound female whom I was trying to impress at the time. To make an embarrassing situation worse, this display of my aquatic inability was the culmination of a spectacular plunge from the high dive that was something less than graceful. The splash resulting from my attempted swan dive was later described as that of a fighter falling short of the deck of an aircraft carrier. It was later inaccurately reported as having caused a small tidal wave that created panic in a beginner's swimming class at the shallow end of the pool.

I have also ruled out tennis as one of the ways to show my better physical qualities. I decided against tennis, not because it was too strenuous mind you, but because it has certain other disadvantages. I'll agree that after ten minutes my tongue was usually hanging out like a Saint Bernard in Death Valley, but I'm sure I could have overcome that small matter, in time. The main handicap in tennis seemed to be my inability to keep one eye on the ball and the other on any young members of the opposite sex who might be impressed by my prowess at the game.

Regretfully, I was informed today that my physical fitness program will be indefinitely postponed. My last mistake was trying to impress a young spectator in the weight room by quickly thrusting the heaviest weight I could find easily over my head. As I lay here in my hospital bed thinking of what I did wrong, I remember that there were two sudden pains. One was my pride and the other was what the doctor called a double hernia. I guess for the moment my plans have been ruptured.

Francis L. Cato
THE INNOCENT BEAST

a cow walks home
at dusk
as the moon does start
to rise
it is fall
and the air
is cool
leaves crunch
underhoof
trees stand
in the wind
and cry.
the path is
dark
the cow as she walks
thinks of her home
the trees are her friends
the stars are
the moon is
the leaves
the path
the grass
the cow cries too
let me give her a name
Beautisimptistical

—Eli Cow

MY MAN

Got me a good lovin man,
Found him a long time ago,
Never believe where,
Under a rock, behind my house.
Yes sir, and that's the truth.
Once he dried out, I got to lovin him pretty good.
Don't know why he stayed there
all alone
For such a long time,
But he did.
He looks a little strange,
But I love him just the same.
People stare as we go by
But we just giggle and stare right back,
'Cause that's the way we are.
When we turn the lights out, well,
He looks just fine,
In fact he's mighty handsome.
Late at night all I know is
His parts are in the right place.
He don't need a spare 'cause he'll
Never go down.
Never go down.
That's my man.

—Smah
what can you say
when words mean so little
and you’re not sure
your silence is understood
what can you do
when love
is greater than the burden
only you’re not sure
your love is adequately expressed
how do you treat
your heart’s true friend
almost dearer than life itself
how do you explain
the mixed emotions
that bound your souls as one
we trust in tomorrow
and hold fast to the lessons
of today
and we bear the pain
of knowing
that we are objects of uncertainty
disciplined to be more certain
—e a o’quinn

CHANGES

A multi-colored Susan, sitting on my couch,
Curled up, her eyes longing for a love
Only dimly seen. Smiling from the depths of her heart,
She has turned a lover into a friend.
Now stretched out, she lies dreaming while
Music set to words (and vice versa) tells of a
Lady, crying. Close your eyes, my sweet lady,
Remember me and smile at our laughter
And our loving and my oddities.
A multi-colored Susan, Silmarien by name,
Lies on my couch, grooving to a newly pre-amped Denver,
And turns sadly away.
Her friend (and lover-x?) sits pondering
Over irascible lines done in accountant-fine-point,
Trying to record his irrevocably ever-changing moods,
And succeeding, mostly less.
A multi-colored Susan, half-asleep on my couch,
We love us, she and I, but we’re free (and confused).
No jealousy, no guilt (we try), only love and caring
In abundant fellowship.

—Edverad Phineas Athelstan III
"LOVE-GAME"

Love-game = A game, as in tennis, in which the losing player scores no points.

No points for happiness, no points for sadness.
    It's simply a game.

A game played hard and well, and the outcome is the same—
    One winner — One loser —

The Winners go on, all points collected.
    They win, time and again.

The losers — they too go on, somehow.
    Each time a little more desolate.
    The loneliness, a dark brooding mist that encompasses their every move.

Over there! An opponent! The love game begins again!

    The outcome?
    One winner — One loser.
    No points.
    No points.

—Marcheta Ballew

THE RHYME OF TIME

My name is Time. And it shall be
That all that is, seems wed with me.
And I shall surely take my toll,
Changing your shining youth to old.
I'll be with you as your years.
I'll note your laughter, mark your tears.
And in your youth, you'll not think of me.
Yet, that's the way youth's meant to be.

In middle age, you'll feel me then.
Thinking surely, I'm not your friend.
You'll consider me briefly, like this rhyme.
Knowing I'll prevail, for I am Time.
For some of you there is no doubt
That in your mid years I'll run out.
Others will then bury you, the dead.
And consider me with a darken dread.

Now those I grant old age will see
That mortality in man is meant to be
While dead is the poet's barefoot boy
In your heart you may still know joy.
For the soul is the man. And it shall be:
That I'll not reign in eternity.
So live and laugh; then bury your dead.
My name is Time, I'm nothing to dread.

—Doug Irby
MR. SOMEBODY AND THE BANANA

Mr. Somebody looked out on the world through mummy eyes
And asked:
"What makes you tick?"
(He did this to most everyone)
And eventually he found his answer
. . . if there was one.

One day he chanced to meet a banana.
Well . . .
this wasn’t your ordinary banana
it had no “Chiquita Banana” sticker,
nor was it even yellow!
Instead it looked like a girl,
And walked,
And talked, (it did a lot of this . . . too much at times)
And did all those things girls do,
but none the less . . . it was a banana.

Well . . .
Mr. Somebody took a liking to this banana
(though he never knew why . . . exactly)
And he asked (1) her
(2) it
(choose from the above because it is a female banana)
out one night
two nights,
three nights,
And more nights’til he began to really like this special banana.

Well . . .
this banana liked Mr. Somebody, too.
(as far as banana affection goes)
And somewhere in the Affection of it all,
this banana got confused
(and bananas can really get confused)
(epecially female bananas like this one)
And it fell apart (the banana, you understand)

Well . . .
by the time the banana had picked up the pieces
of (1) her (2) its confusion
. . . Mr. Somebody was gone.

You see . . .
he didn’t know bananas could fall apart
he thought bananas
(epecially this one)
had it all together
But we know differently . . .

Moral: Even a banana doesn’t know all the answers and are prone
to the human characteristic of hunting for answers and getting
confused.

—Iris Lloyd

CARPI DIEM McDonald’s Style

My mistress shines forth in her magic McDonald’s uniform.
Her eyes glow with all the intensity and warmth
Of the french-fry heat lamps;
Her lips are as red as the Fancy Ketchup
She so delicately spreads on her hamburger;
Her breasts as white as the dehydrated onions,
And as full as an over-stuffed Big Mac collar.

My mistress’ voice is as melodious as
A well-tuned filet-o-fish buzzer;
Her hair as silken and smooth as
The hot apple pie filling oozing from the pastry;
Her cheeks as strawberry as the tripple-ripple
Ice cream smudge in the portable freezer;
And her breath as sweet as the enveloping aroma
Seething from the grill pit.

Oh, what weakness invades my knees
When beaming she simpers, “May I help you, please?”

—Loose Leaf
From hope to death and earth to hell,
The runways stretch like strands of truth;
Standing on the observation deck
And baring teeth in feral joy
Against the winter’s rage, I watch
Her hair fly flags of joy along the wind,
Am speared and fixed, and bob
Upon her reckless, swelling sea.
She says the jets are feeding, swilling milk
Like lambs from cords of instinct,
Burying nose and head into the breast
Of passenger docks, and I
Am now no longer tiny man,
Mature and ritually aware of lift and drag,
But wondering child with nose and eyes
Pressed recklessly against the murky panes
Of mystery. I watch a jet lift off
In smooth transition from the clutch of earth,
Look once away, and bank into the arms of sunset;
She and I are on our way;
Through clouds of ages, down the sun’s
Long summer path, we watch in wonder,
Only hours to Sappho’s golden dreams,
And timeless seas to wash us clean.

—Dee Fuller
I decided to interview our President
I rang the White House doorbell
and Julie came running
She said that Daddy was up in
bed taking a nap
So I sneaked up to his room.
And found our fearless leader
sitting huddled over in the corner
sucking his thumb
holding Petey the Bear
Pat was kneeling near him
Stroking his hair
telling Dickie that Watergate
had only been a bad dream

—Debra Henning

I speak
their faces turn away
I smile
their smiles freeze and sway
I reach out
their bodies turn to clay
Oh why, why did I eat onions today?

—Alma Bowen

AN AFTERNOON AT GJC

Library floors and elevator doors
And you know it's gonna be one big bore
So you sit by a window to meditate
But your head keeps opening and closing like a gate
And you sit there trying to get it together
While your body keeps floating away like a feather
Then you know you're too wiped out to go to class
When just sitting in the library is such a gas.

—Fuzzy Janis
LAERTES’ RUDE
AWAKENING

How am I to know
what is truth and what isn’t?
You have taken another man’s
Truth
and made it your lie,
And you somehow manage to
Live by it.
And now
that I know this,
How can I believe you when
you say you are my friend?

—Mary Wallaby

EPITAPH TO
COMMUNICATION

I sit
and wonder
When your letter will come.
What day
What time
Will it arrive?
I hope
and I pray
That the mailman won’t die.

—Deborah Holbrook

Parents are
strange breed
of folk
They
have you
conceived in love
planned from day one
Obey
Respect
yes sir
I agree
They
pat your golden head
praise your golden name
But
if you don’t
obey and respect
their hallowed values
and sacred words
They
toss you out
on your golden ass.

—Debra Henning
The winter sun
Is sharp like mist,
Cold, and thin,
And pale.
A vaporous ice—
Unseen but felt,
Swirling over the landscape.
The spring sun
Is soft like dew,
Warm, and smiling,
And new.
A magic sun—
Bringing forth green,
Bursting across the landscape.
The summer sun
Is bright like fire,
Hot, and dry,
And large.
A maker of winds—
Blowing up storms,
Burning down on the landscape.
The autumn sun
Is orange like gold,
Warm, and cool,
And strange.
A ball in the sky—
Giving harvest and light,
Lying on the landscape.
The cold thin sun,
As the world moves on,
Turns warm and smiling—
Is now beguiling.
But by and by
It’s hot and dry.
Then changes to
The warm and cool,
And back again
To cold and thin.
Changing changes,
Years to days,
A thousand times,
A million ways.

(anon. s)