Sand River Journal

Welcome to the Sand River Journal. Our goal is to provide a proper setting for some of the better poetry posted to the newsgroup rec.arts.poems. We aim at an objective standard, if such exists for poetry, but also strive to include diverse voices, not excluding our own work.

Sand River Journal is posted in ascii and PostScript formats to r.a.p and related groups, and is archived at etext.archive.umich.edu/pub/Poetry. It is composed of poems previously appearing in our newsgroup. The PostScript version features high-quality typesetting and is well worth printing to hardcopy and sharing. Poems appear by authors' permission and constitute copyrighted material; we claim ownership only to any poems we have authored. Special thanks to Jenn Hemphill and Karen Tellefsen for helping to solicit poems for this issue. Enjoy!

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John Adam Kaune (jkaune@trentu.ca)

Issue 12 - New Year 1995

♀ ☾ ♂

mixed media

I want my poetry
written on the blue
damned sparkling sky
biplaned against the
ozone while brass
bands play anthems and
the mayor rants on

written wide and large
in no wind so that
god herself can look
down and say
even upside down
and backwards it still
looks good
to me

and if a letter
drifts away on a
stray breeze
will place it back
with a gentle
godly hand

but for now
one of your crappy
xeroxed chaps with
my name on it

would be nice as hell
give me something
to sell at slams
and readings might
even get me
laid god
yes

and I do
love your
small
press

michael mcneilley
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Mourning Light

The bitter residue of dreams
still upon me
I weep at fading visions
of beauty

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priesthood

dreams filter into this universe of steel and grit
breezes intrude from beyond this randon arrangement
of concrete spires and dulled clouds
we spurn the ancestral songs of warm winds
and fragrant scents   residues
in the anagrams of our ancient souls

does the priesthood of particles and molecules
reserve for us a single choice   can we not chase
fractals and monarchs with dream-catchers
having witnessed the precarious dance of atoms
can we ever again
write poetry

zita marie evensen
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A field guide to birds

Below the wide window of the dining room
is spread the slant roof of the well-house.
The previous owners kept cracked corn there
through twenty winters, and the birds
came to rely on it. We thought they ought
to live more wild, and so we did refrain
awhile. The birds came to the empty roof
and stood about, cranking their small heads
to look with first one eye and then the other
into the house; had their gods abandoned them?
I stopped by the seed and feed, and picked up
a ten pound bag. A handful on the roof
brought instant jubilation. Each day
first come the juncos in their black hoods,
perched taut and wary in the lilac bush; then
one by one they dart for a choice bit
and retreat, cracking and dribbling hulls.
They are followed by field sparrows in red
caps, and rose-colored purple finches.
Black-capped chickadees appear when these
have gone, and heavy-bodied mourning doves
crash and scatter them, and bob like gulls
on a green beach. None can dislodge the doves
but jays: scrub and Stellar's. I tell
the children of the habits of jays, stealers
of eggs, bullies. The middle child hates
injustice, and claims he will shoot the jays,
so I tell him a story: in Georgia, when I
was young, I watched a cat catch a robin.
The robin fluttered and cried, and the cat
clamped down, muscles bulked. A mockingbird
flew low and strafed, and the cat missed a hold.
The robin crawled off, trailing breakage.
The cat pounced again. The mockingbird
perched nearby, screaming. A male cardinal,
biggest I had ever seen, parrot-bright,
flew in from nowhere and landed, wings outspread
almost in the cat's face, and began,
one wing down, the dance of bird mothers
who hope to divert cats from nestlings.
The cat dropped the robin and went
for the cardinal, missing by a whisker.
This was repeated many times, but the robin
was dying, so the cardinal had in the end
to give it up. But I have never forgotten
that strange unequal battle, and a bird
that would so risk life for another species.
The boy seems unimpressed. I add: the cardinal
is a jay. He gets it: life is not so simple
as its known and quantified habits. Out there
on the well-house roof, or in our own lives,

or anywhere, bad we can expect, but good,
if rare, comes also, and so we scatter
seed, and then sit by the window and wait.

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No longer then

The city is an open grave.
All the streets howl with a call for the dead.
The bare earth lies like a blank page on which
No cross or dot is ever drawn.
Never a word, never a vowel will cross its lips
And leak into the past.
A stagnant pool of progress;
Only the sewers run with the words of water pouring.

They raised a desert from the destroyed earth.
Suffocating in space, out
Into the countryside vigilante suburbs sprawl
Breathless, spitting at the sky and horizon.

Turn any stone and you will find a spider,
Squeeze any stone and it will bleed.
Torn apart mechanism and
Machinery, foreword and the following,
Scattered ashes adrift in sand like
A song in the radio spectrum
Or a pale letter in the proof-reader's task.

The clouds too thick a filter for the light,
Too strong a censor for the sun, lamps ring in your eyes;
Telephones with news of the street and a clear message:
You are never alone, even in a dark corner
Such as yourself.
You are always alone, even your thoughts
Are a heard heresy.

Everyone speaks the language of traffic,
Then in two tongues
A beggar and a poet whine.
Nobody will read. Nobody will notice.
In this cemetery
The corpses rot before they die.

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Sandy Hook

New York skyline,
flotsam garbage,
naked bathers
in October.

Brooklynites
with sunburn noses
combing sand
for missing baubles.

Weathered bunkers,
missing missiles,
cold-war relics
in decay.

Holly trees and
browsed-on cacti.
Styrofoam and
cockle shells.

Karen Tellefsen
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Cats and Fishes

under the sumac shade
i sit by the sun-dappled pond
watching the goldfish break
the surface
feeding

the little ones darting
here and there
trying to break off small pieces
the big ones opening huge maws
engulfing

the cat sits hunched
on the rocks
tail twitching
waiting
watching for an opportunity

the canny goldfish know
that cats hate water

Marguerite K.A. Petersen
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days like these

on days like these
when the chatter never ends
my son yells, "where you at?"
and when i ask
he tells me he's afraid of the sky

it is too big too vast
to keep an eye on to always see allways
and a thistle in the weeds i pull
draws my blood and me
closer whispering
it isn't only your back that remains behind
you can't see through our sky

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untitled

She was
no pink ostrich feather falling from a steeple
finished but for the dust in the light
She was
a pickled baby in a mayonnaise jar
no ma no ma no

She was
a fat whore taped shut
by big boys
on Saturday night
Hey, you know,
she had no right to be there-
no right at all

She used to be
the echo of a butterfly
Not no perfume
lippy-sticky suck skin
Not no
feather falling
fat whore taped shut

She used to be
a green walnut wiggly-worm
and the sigh of a puf-puf pigeon on a fence
Now she is a flower –
a step-on weed flower

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bugle (call) girl

rings.   i want real roses.   silver heels.
tap taps – legs march – steps stepped home.
hips swish – unprivate shimmy – little girl squeals.
composes.   arms support.   elbows form blithe
love triangles. shoulders square.   chokered neck
painted face fake fake hairish stuff.
position.   set.   play.

C-E-G-C.   i want fingers for my rings.
i like F.   once i had them but i lost my lips.
i'm bereft bereft.   i like lips. they part they
close they shape 3-D.   i go half-lipped.   snip.

i lost F.   i lost C-E-G-C.   i fake it.
i want music.   strike my notes – resemble F but
fall half-assed on E i dote.   half of me.

i want him to wake before i leave.   maybe he will
write or play or make his sound.   he neither wore
nor offered rings.   he is many.   i lack lips with
which they taunt.   but do not use.   i want back
my trumpet.   whole my notes.

back i want rings.

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how it came

it was like rain. though the writer from cosmo says
falling in love is like falling in a puddle
last night it was like falling rain.

like this: it is a sunday in july and i am under an awning.
i am dry but the yellow sky –
the yellow yellow sky –
it deceives me and i leave my awning to find dew
on my skin in my hair on my eyes.
it fills the yellow sky and i am wet.
this is rain.

and that is how it came.

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untitled memory

my earliest recollection:
watercolors dabbed haphazardly
about a paper napkin.
that day the blurred horizon
had no vanishing point – a sky of suns
that danced in a circle,
singing songs I could no longer remember.
in my bow tie and Sunday shoes,
I never cried when I was told.
the birds were silent then,
hovering above while I counted each one.
they had no names, yet they all knew me -
they watched while I played in the sand after dark.
they scattered when my name was called,
the floodlight's reflection still shimmering
in the pool on the other side of the fence.
inside, the halls were narrow,
casting shadows at impossible angles.
I stared at my fingers
while water washed the sand away,
a clockwise swirl against the blue porcelain.
then, the long march.
fighting sleep, the contours of night
assembled behind the billowing curtains,
laying the toy soldiers to rest.

Paul David Mena
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fear of the known

if i could scrape the bedding
from my ear,
the flecks of tired from my teeth,
i might have strength for dying.
but i am older now, harder
to combine with sleep.
another welding into ice.
oh, if i could open up my belly,
let the frail out and keep just one
illusion around my neck.

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The Last Hitchhiker

The last hitchhiker before town,
a pony-tailed Jesus with a sign
wavers wickedly in the door-panel.
Galway, Ireland? Is that what you mean?
As he leans through the cocked side-window
an inch-to-the-mile map spreads from his side

and a long, dirty fingernail pierces a bay.
Yes, I like the cut of you, hitchhiker, hijacker,
you may lay your backpack inside my hatchback,
let your sleeping-bag roll on the back-seat
as the exhaust-pipe opens its flyblown parachute.

One by one, the road-signs flicker by
and we sleepwalk under the skin of a car,
passing the lay-by, the drive-in eatery,
the scrapyard where lifting-cranes
scrunch up spent engines
and a bald-headed man pursues with vigoour
the hare-lipped, shirt-tailed assassin.

john redmond
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portrait in blonde and smarties

i am blonde. very blonde. when i go to the sea it

goes white-silver. my eyes go bright blue. i have a very
sexy body. i have been told i have perfect breasts.

a dyed old wedding-dress sounds purrrr-fect.
it will make me purr.

okay, you don't have to shave your beard off.
but you do have to wash my hair, feed me canadian
whisky and read long paragraphs from garcia marquez.
then you will not fuck me senseless.
we will fuck each other senslessly fuckless,
breathlessly staccato.

i made a dash out to a cafe and bought strawberry
centred smarties.

i am blonde. very blonde.

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Becomes a Geisha

Small face finely burnished,
Delicate glaze. Her smile
holds forever.
Can her jade-lidded eyes
arrest her descent to despair?

Thomas Bell
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canon 36

and here my trip ends
and it is season for sticking shelducks
goosefat broils and the women crouch to their hominy works
here is sedge for the tufted marsh
a throne stock for the saints
where the bull mires and the magpie jags on the quickwood

Umbria! Tuscany! last lands with hyssop for my homecoming drink
caserns overrun by goats, broken pillars
ruins of altars, chancel-full of snakes
terrible animals all of marble mossed:
St Francis in the carob, St Justin in the bunchberry
and the remnants of the masters' gargoyles of the mouflon
and the horse

   and here my trip ends
with behind me the forest in a soakage of psalms
canticles, madrigals, and poems spent in vain marking the Delphic track
villagers draft me as your washer of stones
your cleaner of plinths and marbles
and with a heather broom leave me cleaning after these stumbled loves

cleaning after the butchers' pelage
the revel's wreckage, the driven packs
and the duels and the killings and the wayward doggery
cleaning after the daydone jobbers
who carol lewd their drunk homeward trek
pissing on the high road once and once on the church's wall

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Untitled

one ripe tomato
pulls down blackened frostbit vines
among fall cabbage

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Triangle Power

the cable slopes
from oak to oak
casts a long
afternoon shadow
on the shifting grasses
treetop creaks
with holding me
sways in the fall's
first breezes

triangle's iron
in preflight palms
hands spasm
in damp fear
that precedes
the leap

once in a dream
i touched thumb to thumb
leaning fingers inward
two triangles placed
against my head

i stared across the base
into a sliver moon
when the buzzing
seized me
my body hummed
with rhythms
of new found power
rising from the quiet earth

Jody Upshaw
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Ghost of the Narcissus

Ghost of the Narcissus
rotting in a sea-broth,
sea-weed stew —

Ghost of aching sailor,
sea-gull who came picking
through his slaughter,

Damned upon this blank, huge
sea-broth water.

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male father

fully dangerous
he is the hot pistol
that amazed my mother
and he is looking at me right now
laughing as i try
to find a way
to impress you

men of the life of my father
i invoke your names
in fear and distaste and respect
i am slipping again into
shotguns and dead animals
around fires and whiskey

the dream is of taking
that shotgun to your
football helmet
to your aftershave
to your knives and boots
and goddamn jokes about
sex and woman

but i want another hug
furry with body hair
and caution

Ray Heinrich
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Aux cathédrales

Des vagues, des vagues des vagues,
Celle qui les a envoyées du bout du monde,
Elle a pris mon âme et l'amène
Jusqu'au fond de sa mère ?

La vague, vague et effacée sur les sabres
Ils ne savent rien

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The Space Age

Bony sidewalk was our daybreak gangplank,
humming launch pad, historic surly speedway.
Brother's chalk was a hacking cough
of hieroglyphs and racing stripes.
When crayola failed us, we'd just roll over,
surprising the numb-still grass.

It was the space age:
We kept an eye
on the powder sky
for satellites and sudden flashes.
The tiniest metal jets drew rigid lines,
floating from the west – we turned

them into messages from
the rounded silver future.
We didn't read mythology.
We had our own versions of magnificence:
TV test patterns, invisible Russians,
the suburban planners' sleepless grid

and the prayers of every
white-coated Sunday morn.
Our busy boy-silences pounded the sidewalk
more superbly than any book could promise ...
Then one time
the blanketed vet across the way

dragged by in the morning orange,
a melting detonator in his head,
doing the mental math it took
to make the last 20 years come out right.
After that, he was always our library of
collected sounds, fabulist of solidest earth.

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Counting Past a Few

People puppets dangle on pretence
Hollow, wooden, mute, mastered by the hands
Who irrigate this paper world with word
And sketched pools of politic:
Boiled essence of a way to be, a line:
Countless dots drawn in a necklace
Of strung desires.

> The audience sit staring through the voiceless shells
> To the people within, unaware of their skeleton slavery.

A cloth of unmade rooms makes the stage
A waiting cloak ready for embrace.
These puppet players are the days
Of a strangling season, ripe with the lines
Of breathing anathema.

> Caressed by the coat of darkness on their eyes, weaving
> A dose of dialogue to tame their ears to sleep, bleeding.

"In all your pavement days you will meet me
At obscure distance seen through your paranoid eye,
Felt by your muffled hand. My saying herd and
Flock of looks come to shave your fields bare,
Teasing leaves from hanging hope and roots from water.
You are rough to my feel, feeling with your hands,
Dry to my taste, sucking with your mouth, against
My every grain you are the driving plough. I am
The way to live, the life to lead, the death to die,
The body of fashion, patron saint of people.
I am the one who weighs your weightless dreams."

"Drink my poison, feel my fist,
The days are never more wasted than when they live with me.
Your words wither in my barren land,
Darkness is never more dull than in my shadow.
All your knowing, all your thoughts
Turn on the spit of my scorn, writhe
In my ignorant heat. Here is hate. There is no
Learning love. I am a vacuum of reason in my glee.
I am the one who burns your righteous book."

"You are like the grazed surface of a lake to me,
Crazed and buffeted by your senses wind, whipped
Into waves of interest and fascination.
My mind is once a noose around the noise, a burial stone
Whose eyes forever watch the dead,
And once the rapids of a song, a blur of foam
Whose eyes are wasted on the world. I am a knife
Which trims the living skin from dead.
I am the all who don't see and overlook."

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He Bids His Love Lie Down

I bade my love lie down amidst
the purple amaranth
and keep her troubled soul at rest
from heartless circumstance.

How gently did I wipe the drops
of dew that were her tears
and round her, I enwrapped my arms
to comfort all her fears.

My heart thus died a trembling death
resolving not to kiss her,
I pressed my lips into her hair and
voiced a sorrowed whisper.

My love, my love, weep not for us.
Be not o'erly vexed.
While in this life we cannot love
We surely will the next.

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Olden Daze

When all animals were deer, all strong drink cider,
sky was cloud and blue was yellow,
prestige was illusion and buxom obedient,
grammar was glamour and it was foolish to be nice.

Smiles forced older smirks to specialise,
all franchised meaning traced back
through flattened vowels and metathesis
to an unrecorded Swiss account.

Old deaths quelled and sweltered away,
surviving in heraldry and saws until they're dashed to boot,
dead metaphors overtaken by the waiting wolf's teeth
which became a rake, a frame for candles then a hearse.

Our heyday's lightyears from hay or day,
and either's got nothing to do with neither either,
and there never was any sorrow in sorry and only listless
opposites remind us of how things really were.

Tim Love
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purloined

i wanna be isolde. but i think
i'll be a spinster. i hide behind blue
steel bastions – spinning yarn from dissolving flax.
i play with cats who long to be kittens
splayed on spinet keys. i named them with
alphabetical euphemisms for lost lovers.
t is for my tristan.

nine bitter lonely lives. i've wasted three
while knitting needles clink time with vinyl-spinning
vvagner. i never sang my aria. we meow instead a
blue-note chorus. knit one pearl two. we
worship yarn and nap. but i wanna be isolde.

my parapets and i know the wiles
of pining fond men and dull gnarled yarn.
so i claw rats myself – plink my tunes
with furtive paws. but kings would call me
beautiful behind these cold cat eyes if
i were isolde. i'd flitter through noble
cathectic lovers. hey –
it's blue skies from here babe.

tristan rubs against my leg and purrs.
we share tender vittles on weekends.

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untitled

until you look away
all that's left is weak
hold my hand
until its time
in time
i cannot even speak

touch me softer
this time slowly
i am dying
slowly
my heart
is crying

Soon Hong
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fathom seven

each unseen flicker fortifying his religion
he fathoms its presence, but no one yields to his seventh sense
emotionally stamped a vagrant by the surplus civilized world
he makes this pilgrimage honestly and hourly
his eyes burn with anticipation
his ears sear with apprehension
his mind charred by intuition
eventually his expectations drown in his own quandary
his reverie extinguished by the invisible ashes of his fantasy
They burn his eyes blind
They melt his ears deaf
They boil his mind numb
it is over now
alone in his mutilated pathos
he lived to die

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Premenstrual

I'm so premenstrual
it's dripping from my fingers
and I really want a cigarrette
but then I remember
I quit three weeks ago
to make my body a temple of God.
All this crap of life
is driving me
unstoppable, uncontrollable, unsatisfied.
I wish my lungs
were as black as tar,
my heart as thick
as a mound of mud,
and my clothes as smokey
as my ex-boyfriend's car.
At least then I'd have
an excuse for being
so damn bitchy
instead of this stupid hormone thing.

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Why Benny Went to Windsor Once

Between you and me
here's why
Benny went to Windsor once
it was late
the Windsors dine at eight
when Benny told
Elizabeth Bowles Mountbatten
as one professional to another
he loved her
doing the Queen Mother
and that's why
between you and me
Benny went to Windsor – once

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measuring

1.

5 inches along the curve
or 6 when fully
engorged. you make me watch
from the corner, eyeing me.
all sixteen years of me, measured straight.
balled tape measure thrown at me.

i+m old enough to understand
your battering-ram lessons
+dirty, nasty. been a badbad girl+
nocuous rantings
+bitch. you fucking. cunt.+
incestuous innuendos
+lovely-lookin, taut,
sweet honey nipples
you like me. I can tell+

you. drive. me. c r a z y.
brother.

2.

I busy myself measuring
our tenement flat
500 square feet plus
a cubby hole i crouch in.
figure I could, if I had to
survive, bring in some food

a peach and Ouzo
enough to dizzy me
masking the sensation
of roaches crawling
in and out of holes.

3.

staying up half the night
hoping you+ll leave
half way through.
memorize your steps
the left a little harder
falling more controlled.
drags behind half an inch.
a guided missile that+s pursuing
your body.

crawl into my cubby
Ouzo. no peach
shadowless. safe.
my mind recites things
things i understand
things i+m not sure i can.
anything.
for company.

holy mary mother
of god pray for us
sinners now.

4.

crush an insect skull
who scurries my thigh
as light filters under
door jamb. flick it away.

i hear your back slide
down cubby hole wall.
i think if i look
may see your eyeballs
searing through
support beam.

now i lay me down
to sleep i pray the
lord my soul to keep
if i should die before.

lost recitation.
your voice. tenor.
+come out come out wherever you are+
your fist knocks asking invitation.

i know you measure along the arc
– I am measured straight –
i crouch further back to escape the curve.

5.

i hold plate glass
under nose to feel
breath.
too little light
i touch moisture
with fingertip
for reassurance.

6.

i think now
you are hardcooking
hungry man. meat and something.
so much of me, cubby hole me,
growls gurgles weeps
my lips moisten
from tv dinner steam
seeping through the door jamb.

i imagine you having
carrots drenched in
butter and for dessert,
chocolate pudding.

i have plate glass.
tape measure.
black and blues.
semi circle roach motels.
Ouzo. peachlessness.

7.

again i feel your breath outside
my hole.

jailer breathing hungry man breath
fogging my thoughts rubbing figure eights
on plate glass.

your breath. it eats me.
i cup my lips
(now i lay me down to sleep.)
encircle round and round my neck
(i pray the lord my soul to keep).
precariously close to abnormal,
with begged whisper i begin...

+brother
take 500 square feet
not a square foot more. leave me a small
hole. Ouzo and.

peach.+

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quill

hush child
sit   sit   on the corner and learn
to punctuate and conjugate
be still child
            listen
but do not be heard

hush child   do not run about
looking for metaphors
most of them are tired anyway
drafts on first-grade lined newsprint
written with fat jumbo pencils
do not read like laser print

hush   run along   now
let the people of the quill
chant the mysteries
of the words

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September Son

He came straggling up the road
after a night of lowdown and high spirits on Rat Row,
his belly full of booze and his head gone to seed,
but still good enough to drive a tractor at dawn,
the same morning my mother told me
with a look of resignation in her eye,
"Watch your ways...the Devil's afoot today,"
knowing I was ripe at the age when He comes a-knocking,
before she sought respite in church and ladies,
leaving me behind with idle thoughts and empty rooms,
the echo of mantel clocks inching toward my prime,
yearning for a taste of future wasted
within four walls and murmuring the name
of Daddy

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Only In The Mind

rubbing gritty
tiny abrasions
a face peeled away
from a mask beneath
carbide sleep particles
eroding the eyelids
greasy soot blackening
the egg white whites
of blood shot orbits
sand papering away
the vitreous bright
too smooth clarity
with the last glitter
of broken diamonds
never to be mended
rubbed upon marbles
wanting to wear away
the delicate eyes
that never wear away
the magic lantern
of inner visions
that see her
as if she is alive
more cherished
than only in the mind
only in yesterday
only in any sandcastle
we might have built.

Bob Ezergailis
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i will sing with the birds in the trees

I

each year the birds return to sing the same songs
yet they are not the same birds

the notes must be written in the trees

each year leaves paint the trees with the same brilliant colors
yet they are not the same leaves

since they die, is there nothing to remember?

each year my bones wither further
they promise to support me only until they find my grave

i will sing with the birds in the trees.

II

one year the birds returned to sing new songs!
look! is there not one unfamiliar feather among them?

the notes moor unstaid in the breeze

each year leaves canvass the trees with new hues
see! how far they can travel before coming to rest!

before leaving, they want something to remember

each year my heart expands to contain itself
a young heart never dies, and i believe this

i am singing with the birds in the trees.

III

next year the birds should return
unless there are no more songs to sing...

to sing freely is the bird's only reason for returning

next year new leaves will decorate new trees
because even the forest cannot last forever

old leaves give birth to new trees
next year my soul may be a leaf
and all of the forests could become my soul

i still sing with the birds in the trees.

John Quill Taylor
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untitled

The odor of dark
fur flies out at us. Twisted
green pieces rumor
the end. Wizened winter
sun speaks ochre blossoms again.

Thomas Bell
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Breathing Ground

The subdued dead are here.
The ground – pale ash, broken headstone – lifts and settles
with their breathing.
Churchbells ring the ancient angelus;
the dead slow their breathing, heavy with respect for the old ways.

Flags, paper ribbons, crinkled bunting;
festival trappings flap in the breezes of a late afternoon.
Children march to the tune of the Fourth of July.
To a father, the bells are quaint, out-of-time.
He takes pictures of his little towheaded girl.
She marches the grass into the bald ground,
slaps a stone marked “Goody, wyfe”
with her mini-red white and blue flag.
The severe sound frightens the blackbirds,
her high voice chanting “The Midnight Ride of Paul Revere”
and beating time with her flag on the ridge of the headstone.

Quiet maple leaves swing low in the humid air.
Father steps over the grave marker,
standing, as if no one else is there,
no one bound in little worn out pieces to the ashy, scrubgrassed earth,
takes the flag from his daughter and picks her up lightly
like leaves.

The blackbirds fly low and drop lightly to the ground,
careful of the headstones,
pecking for seeds in the yellow grass.

K.E. Krebser
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Magpies

From the birch, the crack of magpies
heralds the solstice of junkie dusk.

Each morning the world is more like tar,
but your cold, bloody robes thin my eyes.

St. Peter, lecherous old angel,
waggles his staff at us

and I pluck the down from my husband’s head
as he rocks beneath the roof.

If I loved you, your teeth
would tumble from your lips –

I’d collect each dark root
in my grandmother’s porcelain cup.

If you loved me, licks from the sun
would steal your wife, your prior life.

I already see the fraying ships
stalk near, disappear, reappear

and the torches flash
from the reef to my bed

and the magpies pick the flesh
from collarless mongrels.

Blake Kritzberg
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name me latent

go-train Coltrane
sentimental loser pain
tell me I'm a winner
so I get a quick fix

hand-held mind meld
strangled with a garter-belt
chewin' gum & gettin some
I try another trick

the writing on the washroom wall
says "nirvana = clit"

free-fell dinner bell
separate the when from while
salivate a little
so the rhthym gets quick

bland lines second times
fuckit till the ending rhymes
offering an answer
so you know how I tick

the writing on the washroom wall
says "better" the writing
on the wall says "nirvana = clit"

John Adam Kaune
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marble love

i fish a cat's eye
out of the leather
squeeze warm the glass
until stiff finger's jerk open
dropping the marble to my toes
wriggling between over and between
kick a little to calves
rolling fast now
to knees pinch and catch
for just a second
before letting go
to softer white thighs
slowing marble progress
lost in curls
bumping a drawn in breath
pushing hips
roll over quivering thick thigh
slack rubber band skin
rolls pink and silver
crepe heavy restless hips
catching belly button
before climbing ribs
rebounding on absorbing motion
breast to the other and back
following fat edge
striking collarbone bounce
to neck arching back
and a quick climb
to chin tongue catching
glass taste just in time
as the marble teases my lips
and the taste of me
of me clinking teeth
as it slides finally
inside warm
taste of me

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