



THE GRIFFIN

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the griffin

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printed by the griffin press

A77

in the other whirled clanging
of carousel popcorn
and cottoned ponies
the Carnival Man
is
behind the scenes,
he squats in grey mornings
then jimmys up silver
like a grease-monkey,
he
paints the noon set-up
for kids' sticky fingers
and sequined mosquitoes
squeezed flat into neon,
for
with cheap candy and netting
he runs the whole show
from beginning to end
and sweet talks his world - maybe
real?
- to draw us nightly in

Joyce Meier

summer ablaze
i guess my heart is, too
writing poetry from a lawn chair
drinking beer out of paper cups
and sardines on ritz crackers
reading silly children's books
about tom and dick
waiting for you to decide

then the decision is made
and my lawn chair gets folded up
misplaced in the packing
you never told me you hated sardines
say good-bye to tom and dick
to childhood fantasies

far away in the city
in one cramped room
i lie across the green striped sofa
thinking of words: i can't find
of sardines that have become tasteless
of a dream i once had

then i scribbled these thoughts
on a torn napkin
and cried over a lost lawnchair

ANN GRAHAM

Dink

**You draft houses in a corner room
everlooking a defunct greenhouse.
You keep a dead tree by your door
like a watch-dog.**

**Your second self, the better half, works - -
pushing brooms, rags, grass in the Fine Arts Building.**

**In a waltz, with heavy boots, you slide
in and out of cracks,
between tiles,
heaving dust and polishing numb linoleum
til it gleams with your mark - -
a stripe dashed across squares,
here, a geometric helix patterned in paces,**

around the corner, a neat angle - - sharp
as the dart of an insecure pawn.
Edges of the walls are bruised
from your persistant nudge.

When potters, painters, weavers
unlock their studios, your pre-masterpiece sketch
lies at their feet, invisible as melting snow,
every tile on the floor beams,
heaters hiss.

Cindy Mitchell

COP OUT

**If I could, I would immerse my brain in
alcohol to preserve the knowledge which is
held therein and to soften the pain of that
knowledge at the same time.**

Susan Jackson

Georgia O'Keefe

**you make me want
to lick your canvases**

**you sing
you scream
at me from the wall**

Kathleen Brady

Heavy Weather

Static electric firmament
spills that spastic flood light
as airy sky giants strike,
strike at their towering nine-pins
drowning impotent mammal warning horns,
and the wrath of the wind
in its charging locomotive contempt
pushes,
pushes cringing growths
sending thick-stalked grand ladies of the forest
to eternal slumber, spewing green blood
of crying infant leaves.

Wade Wilkin

**An idea I once had
A feeling flattened into words
Once said, no longer significant
Once written, no longer understood**

**A photograph curled at the corners
Whose Face? all brown with age.
for what reasons recorded, then lost**

**A path, plainly marked,
Still clear enough to travel
Leads to a place where nothing is
A secret pointed out and not told**

Nancy Schuster

TO THE OLD ONE

Old ships in bottles - which one is yours?
There, carved from driftwood, they float on still waters,
know silent seas: the roar of a seashell.

There, behind glass, rainbow-distilled,
they are transfixed forever to share
with old books
and old friends
the second-hand travels
of high-wave'd adventure,
the perfection perfected
in colors all hues
of a voyage on land.

Always in amber
you swept time under eaves
brushed sea-gulls with tea.
Sunk in gold pillows
you faded by fire.
Spotted in flame
you blustered the sagas
of sailors gone past.
Sailing the noon-time
you brought forth the sea
speckled in sun
till the pigeons themselves
circled their pleasure.

Today, in one last abundance of flame,
you told the story of ships of wide longing.
Bespeckled you gave us elixir of sea -
enlightened
like Daedalus
we went forth to fly
with whetted eye toured
the world and sailed
into fire -
till
long
last
fell our own brief days tiny like droplet:
a spectacle melted into the brine.

This! - is yours, the ship sunk in amber,
dyed in light from a faded sun
and now burnished gold through the glass.

Joyce Meier

to mike

cake and cracker crumbs fill the gaps in your bed
false teeth soak in the bathroom sink
you smile and the black void of your mouth
sends me to the farthest corners of the room
i am on the roof of a building
and you are calling to me from the street
in my hesitation you are drawn into a taxi
of blonde hair, perfume, and no reservations
leaving me with teeth and crumbs
and i'll jump off the roof some other way

Ann Graham

Dancer Forms a Water Dream

Ripple hands and simple stroke
Feet waves penetrate and soak
She absorbs salt rain to weep
Water tumbled eyes sink, seep
Shadow silent as a stone's
Quiet bones flow fluid tones

Sherry Park

Niveau's Fall

I dream of teeth
falling like
radioactive waste
floating like
ashes on sand,
falling like
tissue paper flakes.

I have been
ordered by God
to proclaim
publicly
"Saints govern
with peace. God
rules with strength."

So this is
it. The bones
are hollow and
hardly worth
the aphorism:
Man thinks,
and God disposes

The official
secret was
to divert
our attention
with talk
(toothless words
whispered under
breath of ashes).

Cock a sure ear
to the universal
gramophone,
not the silent
staccato exchange
of life for death.

Polly Eisendrath

Soul's Sonnet

Undone now -- the face which tied madness deep
they float naked across fresh slumber lands
gliding along moonlit fields . . . while You sleep
white bridges in a distance clasp hands
like morning trains rumbling through daybreak
You begin to moisten against my heart
beating harder my impression awakes . . .
upon rising my thoughts blurred yet tart
Like minstrel strings you pluck my swelling mind
When wet eyes kissed each other's dark glances
my blood in red tears fell for you to find . . .
on white sandy shores . . . your virgin dances
embarrassed by her blood stained lips she weeps
Turning to nowhere she finds him and sleeps

Claudia Stedelin

Master Class in Dance Improvisation

**stammer before
stamine**

**storm out
like a thunderbolt
across the room**

**blow with
the lips
of the child
next to you**

**give them
abreast to climb
(that first
quiver is correct)
lend them your spine**

Cindy Mitchell

**elucidation
fog on a window pane
fingers groping
wipe away the moisture
to see the world
through sparkling clear glass
with crystal vision.**

Libby Spillman

The struggle of trying to climb
you
is too steep

Above and below
I see the pale children
Un-surrendering
Climbing up from the sea
Sometimes they offer me advice
how to climb
what to look for
how to survive
Mostly they leave me alone

But not for the children am
I
making this climb.

Nancy Schuster

Sandy Pond Recalls Thoreau

She throws back her head
and chases it with snakish coils,
her hair changes color every season,
in daylight she covers her face with oils.

Wrinkles mark the corners of her eyes,
others tripping down her neck,
the oldest one entrenched
along her hairline.

It was the one he had smoothed,
taken its imprint into his own head,
he said I was a lily pad whose veins
exposed themselves only once, and hid

Cindy Mitchell

Absence

At night, I sleep:
My hands cradle my belly, press the fat curve.
In my sleep, I dream swollen.

I am a discarded doll with yellow-eyed stare
Dull as dishes,
My belly like a deep wooden spoon
A huge misplaced nippleless breast
Slick with sweat.

I am the spoon.
Nothing escapes my bowl.
Occasionally, I overflow,
Often, I wait empty.

Sherry Park

Being one who likes to pick up feathers and touch down left by cardinals, I would not be so ungrateful as to oppose the president's plan for accommodating the cardinals this season. Last year I kept track of those finches -- studied their formations, observed their defense rituals, learned to recognize their calls. However, I have never seen fit to install large birdbaths for them.

C. M.

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**Each GRIFFIN page is hand set in type and
printed on a hand cranked press.**

tired, out of place
untanned, unshaven legs
unwashed hair and clothing
isolated and institutionalized
i'm praying for death, but then
you have already killed me
you who left for africa
to hunt wild beasts
as you once hunted me

i see a unicorn
its horn pierces me
guiding me in its dance of death
but now i am in africa
and you have pierced me with your bullets

my blood stains the white tiles on the floor
and i stare in silence at the piece of glass
that has betrayed my inner turmoil
resignation
"go ahead! devour me as you always do!"
but even the unicorn has deserted me
and i die alone

Ann Graham



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