

76



GRIFFIN '76

THE GRIFFIN

dead and born from the fire

FOR HARRY --

Snow lies like powder
on the face of land

covers ivy and the stalks
of roses lying still
from that other season

gone now like time
like paintings taken from the wall.

We walk this year
a different way

though all ways
are paths which take
us through the garden
over silent bricks,

nothing more important than
that way --

that time.

We wonder at the lives of men,
their power to carve designs
upon the yielding earth.

But the spring had scarcely won
its way from winter when
it closed again upon itself.

Softly now, it waits like ivy
with its enduring green
under snow.

-- Howard Barnett

A N O A S I S

SAND;

gritty and hard to the touch
coarse when caught between toes, hands,
or clothes
hot when far away from the water--
after the suns been shining on it all
day
cool and mushy where the water has
seeped through it.

BEACH;

rolling on for miles and miles
ideally free from people
or signs of human life
descript of play time--or thought time.

WAVES;

rolling in and out, knowing better
than to stay in one place
talking in an angry thunderous roar
or a soothing lullabyic tone.
changing with each second and remaining
the same.

COAST LINES;

providing freedom for the dreamers
play for the children
philosophy for the thinkers.
Why am I not part of the scenery?

Joni Dodson



Sunset - Virginia Leverington

"LUNCH"

It had been seven years. There really was no reason not to call all those years, except that I guess I just didn't want to bother. But this time I did call. During that long drive back to visit one's parents, one always thinks of people who had been considered close friends. Friends like that always seem closer than they really were, even though you may have grown up together, and of course discussed the great changes the world would be forced to undergo once those futures actually began.

I called on the third day of the visit with my parents. He answered the phone, and there followed that awkward moment as I waited for him to recognize my voice and he struggled to figure out who it was. Maybe his wife should have answered, but she wasn't there. At least if she had answered she would have told him who was on the phone. She would not have known who I was, never having met me, just as he had never met my wife, but at least he would have known who was on the phone.

We decided we were both fine, that our families were fine, and that we should make the effort to 'get together' on this trip. Then it came. He said, "Let's have lunch tomorrow." I knew he would say it; he knew he would say it; it was just a matter of

time. Maybe we had both read too many pieces in the New Yorker, but there seemed to be a mutual sigh of relief when it was finally said. We were trapped; we knew it would happen; so we agreed on lunch the next day. "I'll call you from the office in the morning," he said. "I'll have to check to see if I have any appointments."

The next morning. "Just a moment, please. Mr. Franklin would like to speak with you." She sounded nice. I wondered for a moment what it would be like to have a secretary place my calls, and then he picked up the phone. "I'm free for a couple of hours today at noon. I don't have to be in court until 2:00. Come by the office around noon." "Where is it?" I asked rather impolitely, I'm sure. I was rather surprised that I had so much trouble understanding his directions, after all I had grown up in that town.

I walked up the stairs and to the end of the hall. The door had that frosted glass panel on the top half--exactly what one expects to see on the office of a small town lawyer. I entered and was announced by the secretary. She still seemed nice; of course she had no idea who I was. I wanted to say, "That's okay, he won't mind if I just walk in." But I knew that even here in this one man office at the end of the long noisy hall that would simply not be acceptable. Besides she was trying so hard to be nice and to do her job. So I didn't

say that.

As I went into his office I tried to notice everything at once. He was a little heavier and his hair was a little thinner-- it had been seven years. Otherwise he was really no different. The office was rather sparsely furnished; it was long and narrow, and his desk was near the window overlooking Main Street. As I realized that, I immediately became a little chagrined at thinking of Sinclair Lewis. That was, I admitted, a bit contrived, but nevertheless it did flash through my mind. The necessary law books were on the shelves behind the desk, but there was something I didn't completely expect. On the corner of his desk was a two foot statue of W. C. Fields. Somehow it didn't seem out of place.

I sat down and we tried to talk about the usual things, but we had some trouble being heard over the truck traffic just outside the window. He admitted that this hampered his conferences with clients and then began to sound like a member of the Chamber of Commerce, which he was. "This town will never attract business and people to its downtown again until that damned truck traffic is re-routed." It was difficult to tell from the few minutes in the office whether he had developed a sincere attachment to this town where we had grown up or whether he simply had been unable to escape. On the way down the steps he commented that I seemed to have lost less

hair than he had.

We went where all the other young businessmen go for lunch. He knew most of them. I was surprised how many I did not know. The food was only bearable, but it was during lunch that the awkwardness and cliché ridden atmosphere disappeared. I think we were both surprised that we were enjoying this reunion and the discussion so much. We stayed at the table for an hour and a half. Toward the end the strained atmosphere returned, but it was a different feeling. We were straining because we didn't want to leave; we knew that as soon as we left everything would degenerate into platitudes again. Our views had changed somewhat, but our rapport had not; neither of us could really believe it, but we were actually glad to see each other. Then he had to get back, and things returned to form.

As I left his office we went through the ritual. "If you and your wife are ever in our part of the country..." "Of course, now that we know..." "The next time all four of us must..."

He went up the stairs and down the long hall, and I went back to the car. While stopped at the traffic light at the bottom of the hill, I wondered if he would be thinking the same thing I was--that it would probably be another seven years, and then another lunch.

C. E. Balog

TENNIS-SHEW

She's a walkin'-talkin'
contradiction--
seekin' truth
and livin' fiction...

A schemin'-jivin'
paradox--
turquoise bracelet
and bobbie-sox

Her bare-naked body
brandishes its good-bad
boldness,
succumbs to oldness,
only to fold two-fold for life snew--
what is I askin' you
to do
for me
here and now
Tennis-Shewoo-oo ?

Phil Taylor

Dedication to Celia Lloyd

Slow motion captures
scenes of Celia floating,
in frames of musical montage;

Soft focus shadows
multi-shaped colors,
iris dreams and images fade;

Blinding strips of light,
now the meter reads:
caution- overexposure.

Jan Dineen

Senses Lit

I lay once
between fresh light sheets
in spring
kneading the pulpy softness
of my belly
while faucets in my eyes
leaked salty wetness
into my hair
and collected echoic plugs
in my ears.
Only God knows
the purpose of your life.
I was the fist that clinched its pain,
the walls you thrashed against
in a dungeon womb,
lone fighter
in a taut and fatal trap,
against what foe?
Suddenly
quiet hung leaden
weight between my legs,
your earthly life dismissed,
yet mantled for the ride
you'd miss
in your rush past bone and flesh
and blood and light.
Sterile tears
washed that spring the wound
of my release
that had not won for you
the green of grape and sea,
the lick of salt and citron,
the light of rain and dawn.

Yet captive
you are not
in breathless infant flesh,
for left in me your senses
flow stippled streams
and, in this, a summer day,
I see among my childrens' play
the smile you might have been.

Cathleen Klohr



Garrett 'n Me - Deborah Thomas

Untitled

The ancient river gleams tears of sunlight
and passes southbound in an autumn land.
She'll tell the trees of a quick summer's
 flight
And soak with hissing cold the shoreline's
 sand,
At water's edge where rusty maples stand,
whose rustling boughs sway in a steady gust
and shower the current with leaves of rust.

Greg Barnett

FIRE

by Bill Tayon

Characters:

The President of the United States
The Vice-President
Prometheus
The Statue of Liberty

The play opens with the President standing on stage.

The President

My friends, I stand before you today,
as a man in want,
a man in need.

A man who knows what he needs
but knows not how to get it.

My problem, my friends
is that I am blase',
I am jaded.

To chase away my spiritual doldrums
all I need is fire.

But from whence will it come?

I am at a loss.

(pause)

Where is my Vice-President?

(The Vice-President makes a spectacular
entrance.)

My friend, my friend,
I must have fire...

The Vice-President
Fire.

The President
I must have fire
for I am blase'.

The Vice-President
Fire.

The President
Come, my friend
and search with me
to the ends of the earth
for I need fire.

The Vice-President
Fire!

The President
Let no stone be unturned
in our mighty quest.
Let no door be barred
in our search for the holy substance.
Let all the people
throughout the land
hear the word!
Your president needs fire!

The Vice-President
Burning fire! Searing fire!
Blistering, blasting, sizzling flame!
The intense heat of the raging inferno!
Consuming all that runs before it

with the raging passion of raw energy!
People of America, hear the word!
Your president needs fire!

The President
Well spoken, my friend!
With my persistence
and your eloquence
can anything stop us
in our quest for fire?
Come, my friend
let's begin the hunt.

(They search the stage for fire, but of
course they find none.)
(Enter Prometheus.)

Prometheus, my friend
I need your fire
for I am blase'.
Your healing flame
will incinerate my lassitude
And make me whole again.
As you did before
do so now
and give me your fire.

The Vice-President
Timbers crashing
sofas flaming
paint blistering and peeling,
as a life's accumulation of material wealth
is reduced to carbon and smoke.
Another house

only one of many
is turned to rubble
by the power of fire!

Prometheus

A blight on your names,
you filthy arsonists!
I brought fire once
and what did I get?
I was chained to a rock
so an eagle could pluck my liver.
Plucking and plucking
day after day
for thousands of years.
The pain, the pain
wracking my body
torturing my soul
as my soft, gray-brown liver
yielded before that slashing beak.
My agony was unquenchable
throughout the millenia.
And you want me
to bring you fire?
I swear by the name
of the almighty Zeus
that I hope you burn in Hell!

The President

'Tis not as bad
as all of that.
A simple spark will do.
A spark can be the beginning
but I will make the end.

Come, my friend,
have compassion
and bring me a little fire.

Prometheus

Away with you, away with you!
Get out of my sight,
get out of my mind,
get out of my life!
I have suffered already
for the sake of good people
why should I suffer for you?
Your very presence makes me nauseous,
your plaintive wailings sicken my torn gut.
I must leave this place
of unholy desires
before my revulsion forces me
to split your fucking skull!

(Exit Prometheus)

The President

Well, we'll get no fire
from him, my friend.
Come, let's continue our search.

(They search the stage again.)
(Enter the Statue of Liberty, carrying
her torch and stone tablet.)

The President

Hello, my friend,
come unto me

for I am blase'
and need your fire.

The Vice-President
Fiery flaming inferno
Embers shooting sparks
Glowing orange, searing red
Blinding white!
Shimmering heat, flowing metals,
Rivers of molten iron!
From the depths of Hades,
Fire!

The Statue of Liberty
But I trust you not,
for you are blase',
indifferent,
apathetic;
You are the jaded affluent
who destroy by neglect.
You are worse than intentional evil,
for your evil is freer
and strikes at random.
Cruellest of the cruel,
lowest of all the vile beasts
that ever were known to man,
you shall not have my fire.

The President
But you are not fair,
I am not evil,
I treat all with benign neglect.
They do not object

or else they would have said so.
I do not need them,
they are as insects to me,
forever flitting about,
buzzing with useless activities,
they bore me
as does everything else.
That is why I need your fire.

The Vice-President
Wood crackling and burning,
green leaves withering to brown
and then igniting to luminous orange!
Juicy sap suddenly boiling
and exploding through the flaming bark!
The fiery trails of crashing branches
illuminate the frightened onlookers
as the once proud and mighty oak
is reduced to sullen gray ashes.
Once again victorious
is the mighty force
of fire!

The Statue of Liberty
No, no!
My fire is not for you!
You would destroy,
not forge.
Your evil is far too strong already
without the power of my fire.
You would ignite men's bodies,
not their souls.
My torch would be as a sword in your hands,
cutting a swath of cremation

from sea to shining sea.

The President

Great lady of liberty
have mercy on me!
I implore you,
I beseech you,
only your torch can save me!
Save me from the wretchedness
of my diffident condition!
My soul is as a mass of ice
crying out for your healing flame,
lusting aloud for your holy warmth.
Have pity on me,
have pity on me!
In the name of life, liberty,
and the pursuit of happiness,
give me your blazing torch!

The Vice-President

Living flesh shriveling and scorching,
eyeballs popping from sockets out of pain,
the sickening stench of burning hair,
internal organs bursting and sizzling,
the agonized cries of those frying alive
as all of our people
are consumed by the inferno.
We must have fire!
We must have fire!
Fire!
Fire!
Fire!

The Statue of Liberty
Enough! Enough!

(The Statue of Liberty breaks her stone tablet over the President's head. He falls to the floor. The Statue of Liberty then hands her torch to the Vice-President, who holds it aloft and gloats at it. The President manages to rise briefly.)

The President
Give 'em hell, my friend.

(The President collapses)

Curtain

LUNCHROOM

LAMENT

I went to go eat
I was looking for meat
With potatoes and bread, if you please
But now I have seen
'Round here it's the bean
And tuna with mayonaise and cheese

WES HAMRICK

Three levels

Consider: The view from the window in the
morning
When the night lies still upon the river
And the trees clutch first light.
The rose, heavy with dew, waits in the
garden
The land, a fresh painting
Perceived once, an obsolete view of
impermanent permanence.

A knife scrapes the edges.

Consider: The level of the window defines
the view.
A dandelion waves its sprawled arms, an
octopus in warm wind.
The triangular tops of smokestacks glint
silver
Like a flock of birds held still against
my sight.
The weather vane gives gently, imparting
direction in eternal complicity.

A knife layers.

Consider: From any window when the sun
sets, the Earth is, once more,
the center weighted core.

A knife makes a square in the whole.

Sherry Park



Ronald V. Schoultz

Matter

Gray, myelinated sheath above.
Reflector of light, home of darkness,
Natural computer,
Incomparable unit of mass.
Hairy, boned,
Sober or stoned,
Continuous recorder
Of touches, faces,
Breeze, and rain,
It paces, senses, and choses,
Soft wrinkled house of snapshots. new and old.
On smooth hills the ruler sits
and beholds.

M. Farouk Anwary

Mercy

Mercy for the prey,
unknown.

Tremors of final exertion,
through shining cables,
telegraph

to various parts of the flawless sky day.

Safety of the dead
welcome.

Writhing of muscle, new useless
delights the killer
far away,

who sits unafraid, no mercy for the prey.

John Lundberg

Candles flickering
But there is darkness in the abbey;
Pulses quickening,
But still the music flowing sadly.
Like a dirge
It comes to rest

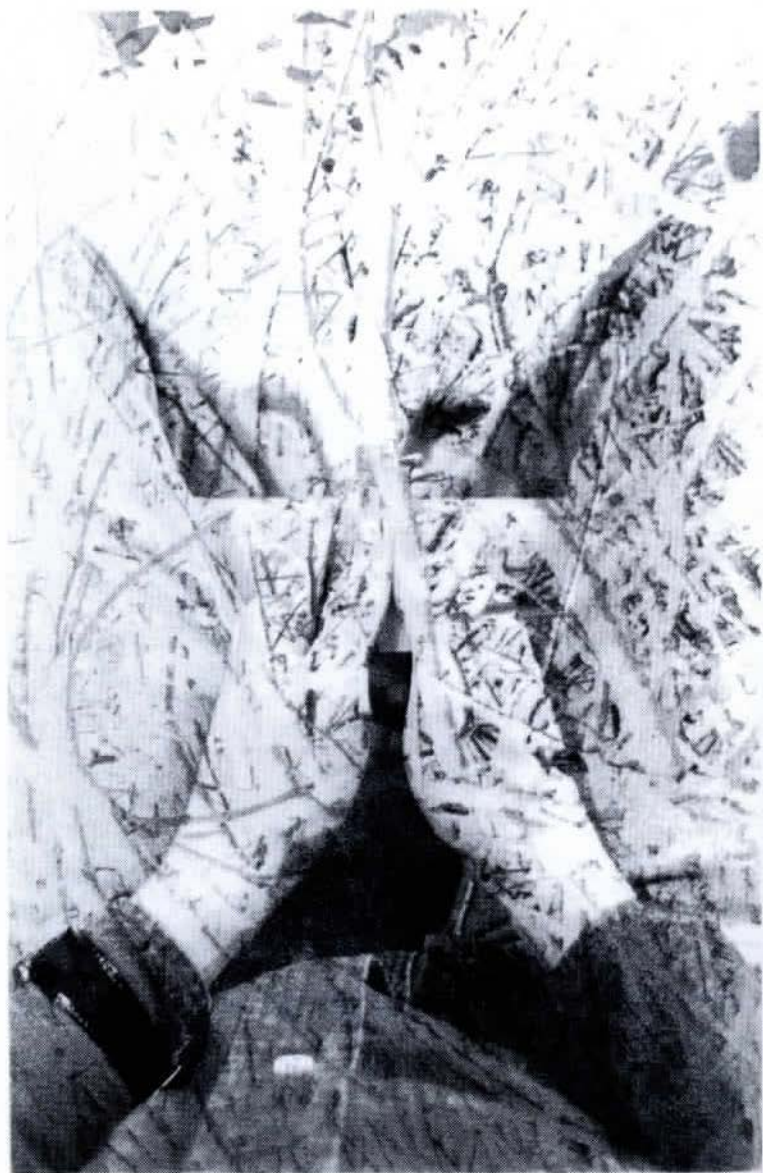
Faces on the wall
With eyes that see the world within me
They say, "If you heed the call,
And if you find that it is destiny
That you serve,
Give your best."

Terry M. Killian

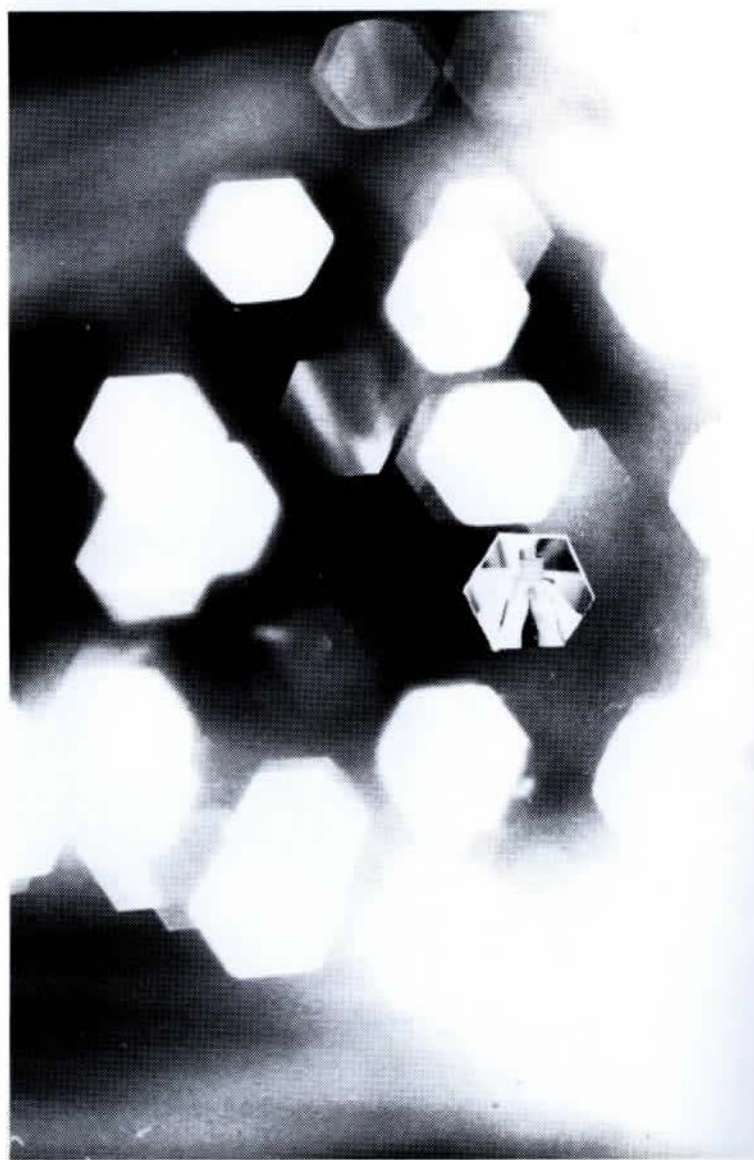
Lighter - Bill Tayon













Spears of Infant Sedge

Once volcanic eyes
erupted in the air
fathoms firey light
struck by passions care.

As flint upon a stone
to heat the cold will thrust,
rumblings cracked the dome,
flung free the ancient crust.

Yearnings fed to rest
the molten liquid cool
sprung in final crest
before a limpid pool.

God! How strong the steel
aglint of melded souls
until stoops day to kneel
and snatch one light as toll.

Laughter...catch my chin
like fingers lifting dreams.
Quiet quakes begin
where life sealed tattered seams.

A face private hints,
alive on silent stone,
fragile, tender tints
carressing and unknown.

Your eyes feather touch
soft spears of infant sedge,
time spun cradle caught
as dawn with earthen thread.

Tempt the air, their nest,
to sheathe the wonder born
when blades winter whisk
cold crags to velvet morn.

Cathleen Klohr

Love Apples

Scene: A sofa center, perhaps a coffee table in front of the sofa. Wanda, a woman of some forty years, fat, on stage right part of the sofa. Zing, a little man who looks to be in his sixties sits to Wanda's left.

Wanda

Wanda and Zing, the names have always been magic to me.

Zing

Wanda and Zing.

Wanda

Don't you feel it? There's so much in those names, when they're together. (pause)
Don't you think?

Zing (not interested)

I suppose.

Wanda (leaning back)

Ohhh, what has become of us?
(pause)

Zing

(taking an envelope from his pocket)

We're in here.

Wanda

An envelope?

Zing

Yes.

Wanda

The envelope is...

Zing

The very one... it has your name on it.
Right here in the upper left. Wanda.

Wanda

(worried, leaping to her feet)

I've forgotten your lunch.

Zing

I can pick up something...

Wanda

No, I won't have it!... I mean, yes you could, but I've made your lunch. I just havn't put it in the box.

Zing

The old...

Wanda

Lunch box. It has your name on it. In the middle. Zing.

Zing

Make some weak tea for the thermos will you?

Wanda

I did that first thing.

Zing

Thank you.

(She exits.)

(Off.)

Wanda

I'm very puzzled. You're puzzling me.

(No answer) I mean I'm very puzzled about how my name got in the upper left of that envelope.

Zing

You must have put it there.

Wanda

I know that... (She returns with the lunch)

But I don't remember putting it there.

(Long pause.)

(Zing smiles.)

(Pause.)

Zing

It's a very old letter. You can tell by the stamp. The stamp is very old. The date is faded. Can you make out the date?

(He hands her the letter.)

Wanda

(Staring at the stamp.)

No, it is old. It is a very old stamp.
(Zing grabs her arm hard. She drops the letter.)

Wanda

What is it?

Zing

Do you know what I love about you? Do you know why I've stayed?

Wanda

Our names are magic together.

Zing

No. (Holding her arm gently now.)
It's your wrist, your veins.

Wanda (Pleading)

Not again.

Zing

Your veins were my first love.

Wanda

I'm getting sick.

Zing

Listen!... I'd hated veins when I was young. I saw green and purple rivers slashed by steel. It turned me, inside. Look at your veins. They're lovely now.

Wanda

I can't.

(She closes her eyes hard. Zing releases her wrist.) They make me sick.

Zing

And... (No answer) And...please...and...

Wanda

And as you grew older, you learned to love the green and purple rivers until they became your favorite.

Zing

Don't stop.

Wanda

It took discipline.. You are a genius

with discipline. (Pause)

Zing (Softly)

Zing...Zing...

Wanda

Your name has always been magic with mine.

Zing

Zing...Zing, zing, zing, zing, zing, zing,...

Wanda

Wanda... Wanda...

Zing

Zing, zing, zing, zing...Zing.

Wanda

Wanda, Wanda, Wanda, and Zing, and Zing, and Zing. and...and (Whispering as Zing picks up the letter) Zing.

(Pause)

Zing

Is everything I might want in the lunch box?

Wanda

I think so, yes... I mean I'm not positive.

I think so.

Zing

Check.

Wanda (obediantly)

Yes. (She checks)

Zing

Turn your back to me. I want what's there to be a surprise.

Wanda

Yes, Zing. (She turns around. Zing reads the letter with the old stamp.)

I've checked.

Zing (Still reading)

And...?

Wanda

And everything you want is here.

Zing(Still reading)
Nothing is stale?
Wanda
No nothing is stale.
Zing
Everything is moist?
Wanda
I'm sure of it.
Zing
Good. (He stops reading, folds the letter,
and puts it back in his pocket.)
I trust the thermos won't leak if it
becomes too hot?
Wanda
No. (Pause) The letter, tell me about
the letter.
Zing
It's from an old school girl. She's
comming to visit. She says she wants to
live with me.
Wanda
Oh.
Zing
It's a very old letter.
Wanda
What's your reply?
Zing
I suppose...I suppose it's too late to mail.
It's an old letter. There's no need to
reply. (Long pause)
Wanda
I'm sorry...
Zing
I know.
Wanda
That we never...

Zing

I know.

Wanda

I wanted... I told you that I wanted...

Zing

You did, I remember.

Wanda

But...my crotch... it burned. God you don't know how it burned. As I wrote it burned. When I arrived it burned. I couldn't stand. I couldn't walk. I wanted to love you but I couldn't even walk.

Zing

It doesn't matter.

Wanda

I'm sorry.

Zing

I understand.

Wanda

I only wanted to love you...(sobbing) I only wanted to love you.

Zing

It's alright.

Wanda

I wanted to love you but my crotch...

Zing

It burned so fiercely.

Wanda

I couldn't even walk.

Zing

I wished you were dead. I wished you were dead so I couldn't hear you whimper.
(Wanda falls to the floor sobbing.)

Wanda

I really want to love you. I really want to love you. I really want to love you... (pause)

Wanda(softly)

I really want to love you. I really want to love you.

Zing

I don't know how many times you said it. 'till I was sick and then you'd stop. Silence for a moment and then...

Wanda

I really want to love you. I really want to love you.

Zing

You have nothing for me to put it in. I want you but you have nothing for me to put it in.

Wanda

It burned. My crotch burned so.

(She wails.) (Silence.)

(Wanda looks up at Zing. Zing wipes her tears and cradles her head in his hands.)

Zing

I stayed, didn't I?

(Wanda rises and sits next to him. She puts an arm around his shoulder and hands him the lunch box. His eyes grow big as he opens it.)

Zing

Beautiful.

(He removes a cherry tomato, pops it in his mouth and bites down. Juice dribbles down his chin. Wanda wipes the juice from his chin with a kiss. Zing pulls out another tomato. Same.)

BLACKOUT

Color Co-ordinated Evening

Along

two strings of grey concrete
move incandescent pearls,

Close-by

rubies on two different strings
slink with brilliant direction,

Beyond

the dark background, turf green,
sits against midnight sky.

Jan Dineen



Company 9 - Bobbie Flannery

Seventeen

We watch.
An enormous black bull
wet with excitement
tosses his head, snorting
heavily,
and paces anxiously around
a nervous cow.

Jet black shininess glistens
a giant hunk of polished basalt.

Suddenly he rears--
a shocking bulk, high in the air
inevitable force of nature
roars his thick throated pleasure,
or rage,
as he mounts the cow.

We watch breathlessly,
Then couple quickly in the tall wet grass.

Bob Wilke

Powet Wriders and Fleece Eaders

poemists tend to
get carried a weigh
 when they does
 what they does
because it makes them feel gad.
they like to
fleece the peleopes
minds
and
thoughts
and put them
to-get-her.

poeds usually enter
powet wriders contestables
cause be they gotted
carried a weigh
 when they didded

 what they didded
and changed they'er
thoughts into
words and frazes
nerds and hazerds
Merl and Haggard.

Ha.

it's not so hard.

but sverbals
who ead fleecies
from Poemist pens

and quills
ged
fat and
like to
ead fleece, fleece, and more
fleece.

that makes-es
poewers feal gad,
too.

Phil D. Taylor



Alone - Ronald V. Schoultz

The Garden

In your own garden heedless of the sums
Slow moving waters swell the old canals
The beetle woman has you and she hums
Her clay-tongued song competes against the
trowel's.

The time is prised transitory light
That glistens and deflects into a glare
Then like a shattered mirror scatters sight
It churns and fragments oscillate in air.
The woman sings through time the myth of
chance

Dead leaves spin circles round her as she
runs

No rows, she sows seeds wildly in the dance
And celebrates to taunt the one she shuns.
The centuries collapse then add to one
Contained within the woman is the son.

sherry park

"SEVERAL HOURS FROM DOOMSDAY"

I

The last man on earth sat in a room. There was a lock on the door.

II

"...and here Dr. Smith, is the strangest case we have here at the Institute. The man in this room has the delusion of being the 'last man on earth'."

"The...uh....'last man on earth', sir? How do you mean?"

"Well, it manifested itself a few weeks ago. He simply ignored all other people, he refused to come inside the Home, he began hunting his own food. By recording him on our cameras we were able to analyze that he was convinced that man had ended existence on earth."

"I see. He showed no signs of any problems before this?"

"No, none at all. That's why it's so befuddling to us. He was submitted to us for observation by his family, but we found no evidence of dysfunction. Until this, of course."

"And how did you ever get him into this cell?"

"Oh, we were able to drug him while he slept one night. Then we carried him all the way down here, away from all the others."

You'll notice how we've fixed this cell to look like the Institute's lawn. We're very proud of the spacious plant life, and the artificial lighting...and you're in for a treat...look over there to the far right... see?"

"Oh yes. What's he doing?"

"He's stalking the rabbit we gave him for food tonight. We like to keep him happy by releasing live game in the cell."

"That seems like an awful lot of trouble for just one patient, Dr. Gelber."

"Yes, but this is no ordinary patient. This is a very rich patient. His family is paying a good amount of money to prevent any...shall we say...trouble? Well, you'll learn all about that as you continue here. Let's go have a drink."

III

The day was like all others. The sun rose and would set. A normal day, except the world ended. At exactly 2:30 Eastern Standard Time, as Doctors Smith and Gelber finished their drink, they, like all other men, were phased out of existence in a nuclear holocaust. The last man on earth paused from devouring his freshly caught meal to watch his world shake. When silence fell he resumed his eating.

IV

The last man on earth sat in a room.

He had filled himself to satisfaction. He wanted a woman. There was a lock on the door.

Stephen Andrews



Brian Samuels

Lucious Rodney Lavender
he wets
and
blows my curls
mesmorizing each strand
he twists
and woos my
widow -
precious he is
gay and glittered
in a sequestered salon.
Next . . .

P. Saputo

A dream
By the muddy waters
Of the old creek we sat.
My picturing mind suddenly
Focused my eyes into yours
And like snow under the sun,
We melted down to one.

M. Farouk Anwary



Bill Tayon

THE COMING OF THE SNOWFLAKES

Subtly they come,
Furtive, elusive,
Scurrying from sight
Whenever noticed.
Biding their time
'Til the shudders cease.
And then...
Snowflakes on the wall!
Intricate, enlarged patterns
Embossed on the surface.
Snowflakes on the ceiling and
The great white void
Beyond.
Patterns on the floor
Stitched,
But not quite.
The leaves of the trees
Frozen in the sunlight
Blinding green
Against a blinding blue sky
Hexagons in the branches
Forming snowflakes
Ecstasy.

Bill Tayon

Peaceful Entry

I lie beneath you,
firmament erupting
in the forest of creation.

You minister wondrous peace,
as though into an earthly temple,
God has come.

Cathleen Klohr

Violet blossoms envelop me.
Velvety ripples from head to toe.
Smiles not summoned,
yet gently swelling
Softly caressing me.
A surface so yielding and holy.

A change in my universe
The newborn sounds delight me.
Ageless, yet so fresh.
The leaves rustle at my feet.
The Quick one hugs me.
His grasp slips by.
Yet I feel his presence still
Hands of down.
Barely touching my face.

Small patches of gold
Leap into my path.
Reaching for me,
Catching me up to join in their laughter.
They take my hand and lead me
In loving awe of the father,
Stranger to shadows, and
Giver of Life.

My private ecstacies,
A beauty drenched with joy.
No lover can compare to these;
The sun the wind and the fate.
Mine forever

Mary Duncan

Stronghold

The deal with pain

rusted velvet
brushed past you

with head bent
writing rag
time on a sheet

feelings held
your voice and kissed
its palm

and with imagination
let it stroke,
with finger sound,
touching you to me,
my hair

Since then you sit
away
and watch my eyes
unbetray
what's dealt.

Are you afraid
life
reaches, looking back
over its shoulder,
blades?

I am not stronger;
your strength is in your legs
for running;
mine is in my hands
for holding on...

run
your fingers through my palm,
skate on this strong
hold.

Cathleen Klohr



Brian Samuels

ALWAYS OPEN

Jackson Yuleson ceremoniously pulled open the door and stood at attention as two more guests entered the hotel. His job as doorman provided a uniform that gave him an aura of dignity. The uniform, crimson and brass, stood proud, while Jacksons muscles tensed and relaxed underneath. The skin under the edge of his tight crimson cap strained and rested.

The doorman thought about asking the hotel for a new hat, but since he had only had this one for two weeks he was afraid to. He had ordered a six and seven eighths cap. He always wore six and seven eighths, but this one didn't fit. When the bellboys had brought him the newly delivered hat, he held it out on contrastingly pale, flattened palms to inspect it. He made note that 6 7/8 was stamped inside. He set the cap lightly on the top of his head and pulled it into position, but it didn't pull smoothly. It was too tight.

"That sure is a fine looking hat.", said one of the bellhops. "It looks just right, you're lucky you got a new one, us bellboys aint gettin no new caps for at least a year. Least that's what I heard the manager say."

Jackson tried to shift the trapped skin on his forehead, but it wouldn't move. He

looked at the bellboy's admiring eyes. He thought. He spoke. "Sure is a fine hat."

Jackson remembered the incident as he held the door and uncovered his lips, as a strong straight man slipped inside. A wind tried to tear the door from his hand, but the experienced doorman pulled just enough to counter the wind and close the door smoothly.

"I sure wish it had just turned spring stead of just turned fall.", Jackson mumbled, looking at the full red moon sitting low in the sky. "I hate it when it gets cold fore I get off work. I aint lookin forward to no cold winter."

The Friday street was jammed, and the fully peopled lobby was filling with the blue smoke of cigarettes. Jackson opened doors and hailed cabs with a smile. It was Jackson's night. Every Friday he was relieved at 6:45, and he always made it to Earl's by seven. The thought of sitting at the bar in Earl's warmed the coldness of the new autumn wind. Jackson opened doors, hailed cabs, smiled, and thought of Earl's.

Six-fourty-five came right on time. The night uniform took the door, and Jackson Yuleson took his longest steps toward the locker room. He quickly stripped himself of dignity, dressed in his real clothing, and headed into the lobby. He opened the door for himself, turned right, and, fastest man on the sidewalk, made his way to his bar.

"Don't Walk", was the command of the ruler of Third and Locust: "Don't Walk". Some of the people shifted their masses from foot to foot, in order not to interrupt their gaits. All of the people watched Jackson bound across the street, and stood, waiting for the box to let them go.

Jackson's pace quickened as he saw the sign above his bar change the sidewalk from blue to red and back again. He showered in the color for a moment, stepped through Earl's always open door, and stopped, aghast. The dark wood bar was the same. The rich smells were still there. But it wasn't Earl's bar anymore. The wall opposite the door was electrified, it flashed and thumped and rang. Earl had put pinball machines in his bar.

The doorman slipped slowly onto a stool, his voice unsteady, as he ordered, "Shot and beer.". The bartender had the house bourbon and a glass of draft waiting. It was seven o'clock. It was Earl's. Jackson was expected. He threw the shot down and finished the beer before the bartender could fill the shot-glass again.

"What is this shit, Butch?", Jackson asked, pointing to the machines.

"Earl didn't want to do it, Jackson. He had to. Things is tight, you know. Machines aint so bad, here have another." Butch drew another glass of beer as Jackson emptied the second shot with a sip and a gulp.

"I guess they aint so bad.", he said venomously.

Alvin, another regular at Earl's took the stool between Jackson and the machines. "Hey, Butch, how bout a bottle of beer here! Is everything coming out okay down at the Hotel Jackson, Jackson?" He laughed and pounded the bar.

"What, oh, yeah things are opening up around there." They both laughed at the lines they used every Friday at the bar, but Jackson didn't laugh very loud or very long. He sat with a beer filled hand resting on his left knee, and his right hand toying with the crease that his cap had left in his forehead. He finished his beer and set the empty glass directly over the wet circle on his coaster. "Set em up again, Butch."

The knock of a shot-glass on the bar was answered by the knock of a replay on one of the machines, and the shout of a happy winner. Jackson's eyes rolled from the bar to the game tables, and then darted back to his glass. He drew the liquor into his mouth, swished it once, swallowed, and shuddered. His free hand grasped the edge of the bar and the wind hissed from his nostrils. Alvin spoke up.

"Hey, gotcha huh? Say man have you seen what they're puttin down over at Lucy's?" Alvin kept talking, but Jackson wasn't listening. His eyes kept returning to one of the pinballs. He tried to ignore

it, he tried to look at Alvin, but his eyes could only drift back to the machine.

The pinball machines were the usual garish monsters, with comely women promising plenty of action gracing their scoreboards. The machines were all very typical, except one. While the others flashed their names to attract players: "WHEEL GO ROUND", "SLIDEWINDER", and "BOTTEMS UP", Jackson's machine had an unlit name: "Lady". "WHEEL GO ROUND" pictured two ecstatic blondes in a sports car. "SLIDEWINDER" showed a striped snake coiled around a redhead, most euphoric. "BOTTEMS UP" featured cheerleaders, each wearing a well placed letter of the name. "Lady" showed a perfect woman, she was not overblown, her smile was not distorted.

Alvin kept talking about the city and about his cousins, and a hundred useless ideas, while Jackson drank and watched a kid in an Air Force uniform play "Lady". She smiled as the Air Force man shook her.

"Hey, Jackson, you slowing down, whatsa matter, you losin your stuff?" Alvin challenged.

"Naw, set em up, Butch."

The bartender filled the glasses and started wiping the bar. An unsmiling Jackson slid a ten onto the shining wood. "I'd better pay up now before you lose track of me, Butch. What with things being so rough and all."

"Sure, Jackson.", the bartender worry showed in his voice. He set the change on the bar rather than his usual slap.

"Somethin bothering you, Jackson?"

The doorman didn't reply. He sat and looked at "Lady." Alvin and Butch swapped shrugs and pretended not to watch as Jackson spun around on his stool and stepped to the machines. He stood behind the boy in uniform and grumbled. "Hey, Fly Boy, what you playing that machine for?"

"I'm trying to beat her.", he answered, giving "Lady" a jolt with both hands.

"Why not play one of the others?"

"I ain't never beat this one."

"I wish they'd get these damn things out of here. I don't like em, they're ruining my bar."

"Stop it, I'm trying to play.", the flyer said angrily. "If you don't like the machines, don't come into the bar."

Jackson stiffened, turned, and walked to the bar. "This is our bar, right, Alvin?"

"Sure it is Jackson, we been coming here for years."

"Them machines, you like them machines over there?" Jackson's arm cut the smoke in the air.

"Well, no, but you know how things is."

"Yeah, I know how they is." Jackson's eyes mirrored the dancing light of the machines.

"Lets get us a table where the bells aint so loud, Jackson. Get yourself a beer and lets go."

The air thickened as the two old friends left their stools and headed for the warmth of Earl's inner darkness. Most of the single poled tables had been claimed, but the darkness kept the room from feeling crowded. Jackson's eyes studied a beer sign, but he saw only "Lady's" smile. Alvin's eyes moved slowly and smoothly over his surroundings, but hesitated as they raked across Jackson's smiling stare. The doorman's look made Alvin sit uneasy in his chair. "I'll go get us a couple of more beers."

The smile on the wall still held Jackson's gaze as Alvin returned and set the wet glasses on the table. Jackson's eyes fell from the sign to the head on top of his glass.

"You know what I been thinking, Alvin? I been thinking about those machines up the there, and you know what I'm going to do?" Jackson's sinewy hands gripped an empty glass. "I'm going to walk up there, as calm as can be, so calm you wouldn't believe. And I'm gonna smash em." Jackson slammed the empty glass to the table and felt the power of its impact in a numbed line to his elbow. His eyebrows shot up in surprise. "I could have broke that glass and cut my hand." The doorman imagined his blood slowly reddening the table.

Alvin, waiting for Jackson's next move lit a match and touched it to the end of his cigarette. Jackson watched the flame in Alvin's black eyes, and saw himself as

the flame grew dim and died.

"I don't know, Alvin, I don't want to do anything stupid. May be I oughten to do anything at all." Jackson rubbed his forehead and found it smooth. The crease had faded. "Those machines aint so bad. We might even play em some day."

"Sure, Jackson, we'll play them next week. Tonight, lets you and me get us a couple of sweet young things and go dancing."

Alvin chose the path through the tables. The doorman followed closely, his little finger still numb. Jackson Yuleson flashed a smile over his shoulder to "Lady", and walked, ready to dance, back through Earl's always open door.

John Lundberg



Brian Samuels

Sea Strokes

Deep green energy swirls the ocean jade,
mountain clouds shaped from the distant edge
smooth to cradled valley strokes, wet light
ruptured in quick, dry jags, risen veins.

Descending mist, streams forth the visual
screen
to pale translucent swipes, dragon tails
wrapping 'round my feet in silken twists
from the carved stone motion of the sea.

Gifts at my feet, curve of a ling-chih
fungus curled on a pearly shell and a
mountain stone convoluted by the sea
to cloud script carvings and open peonies.

Cathleen Klohr

Homage to Brady.

mystical candy shoed
woman
abrupt
au
burn
(everlasting)
glitterd-flying
a sweet
soft
string of pearls.

P. Saputo



Spontaneous Movement - Deborah Thomas

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