

The Griffin



"This creature was sacred to the sun
and kept guard over
hidden treasures."

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A daily retrospect;
summon will you--
me.
Figures sit in mothball trays:
unclad,
uncouth.
We only want the best.
Pillow talk.
Screams.
Echoes.
Never pick the flowers.
Yellow, blue red.
It's funny how the leaves turn,
and turn,
and turn.
Damned deficient.
Anyway,
where is the popsicle man?

-Kara L. Diver

Past, present, future: unattainable,
Yet as clear as the moteless sky.
Late at night the stool's cold as iron,
But the moonlit window smells of plum.

—Kahori Kumazawa

The holy earth is overspread
Wind crosses a thousand miles
The moon that crushes Mount Fuji,
This very instant, far Japan.

—Kahori Kumazawa

a wave
tumbles against the shore
and leaves
the treasures of the sea
but takes away
a part of me

I'm left
bereft
upon the shore

—*Sandra Rossi*

VIOLETS

The maiden shower darkens their hue
Stoic wooden towers wave them dry
With a thousand scented fans
Casting shadows on fine brilliance

God's spotlight splashes revelation
On intricate needlepoint petals
Cloaked in simulated fur
Relinquishing shades of protection

Secure in a huddle of comfort
Quietly preening amongst themselves
Asking nothing but safety
To continue in beauty alone

—Linda Cox

FIRE IN A
BEN FRANKLIN STOVE

In the beginning
A match to dry kindling
Nurture it with gently puffed air;
When it grows stronger
Feed sticks not heavier
Until it's quite ready for more.

As it grows higher
More wood's consumed by fire
But warmth given increases too,
At times it burns low
Firmly apply bellows
Or perhaps a light breath will do.

Give it attention
In like with the ration
Of what you would want in return,
Remember that warmth
Is not all of its charm
Fiery pictures make the soul burn.

Why is it that some
With a blowtorch or tongs
Force rebirth to its extinction,
Why do yet others
Neglect it or smother
Each ember out of distinction?

It doesn't seem fair
That the lives of some fires
Are subject to Greek god-like wills;
I can't help but feel
Eternally grateful
That mine isn't subject as well.

—Deanna M. Rasch

I sit alone.
All around me
are a thousand voices—
happy, singing.
I want to join them—
to join in the talking
and the laughing
and the fun that they have . . .
yet here I sit,
Afraid even to open my mouth
for fear my foot will jump into it.
Too scared to talk to anyone:
What if I garble my words?
What if they laugh at me?
I tell myself all will be well,
but deep down I don't believe it.
So here I sit.
Occasionally
I talk to a friend about school
or a favorite TV show
or a book I've read,
but it's a constant struggle:
a friendly, outgoing, interesting person
locked away forever behind paralyzing shyness.

—Anne Wochner

CHARLES' PICTURES

As soon as his mother finished knotting the tie around his neck, Charles pulled away from her and walked to the mirror in the corner of his room. He frowned and pulled at his tight collar, and his reflection grimaced back at him and squirmed inside the uncomfortable black jacket. Behind him, his mother snapped impatiently, "Come back here! I'm not finished with you yet."

Charles held his hands up to his face so only his reflection could see, scowled and stuck out his tongue for a split second. Then he turned away from the mirror and walked, stony-faced, back to his mother. She bent over him, straightening his black tie, and pulled at his junior tuxedo. Her perfume swirled around him and Charles held his breath, but the heavy sweet scent still clung to his face and threatened to smother him. Charles looked at his shoes. Their black glow seemed dull next to his mother's glittery pointed feet. Sharp red fingernails caught under his chin and pulled. "Look up at me so I can comb your hair."

Obediently, Charles tilted his head and focused his eyes on the sparkling diamonds swinging from his mother's neck. As they swayed back and forth over him, they flashed fiery threatening messages and dared him to answer. Charles could not retort; he had to keep his mouth clamped tightly shut or the sweet perfumed air around him would coat the inside of his mouth and throat and strangle him.

The comb in his mother's hand raked across Charles' scalp, and each downward slice underlined the sharp instructions she shot at him. "Our party tonight is for grown-ups only, so stay upstairs. You'll have supper in your room, and don't you dare spill anything." The comb stopped stabbing. Her words melted into syrup and dripped on his head.

"After your supper, you can come downstairs and visit with our guests for a little bit. Your father and I want all of our friends to see what a handsome little gentleman we're raising, so don't forget to say ma'am to all the ladies, and call the men 'sir.'" The comb slashed at him one more time. "And don't you dare get your suit dirty or mess up your hair. You stay in your room and watch your television. Don't get into anything—I mean it!" With this warning, Mother straightened. Her silvery silky dress hissed and slithered around her legs as she walked away. At the door, she stopped and swirled a final syrupy cloud toward Charles. "Remember that lovely picture you drew for me this morning? Bring that with you tonight so everyone can see how smart you are for your age." She shimmered and sparkled as she closed the door behind her, leaving Charles surrounded in a heavy pool of sickening saccharine-sweet air.

Charles stood silently until the door clicked shut, then exhaled loudly with a long "Hoooooeeee!" He flapped his arms and ran in circles around the room to break up the sweet-smelling air. He stopped at the window and bowed deeply. "Howdy, ma'am," he said to the curtain. "Pardon me, but your perfume is killing me." He waved his arms like a fan and ran toward the bed, where he fell, wrapped his hands around his neck and gasped, "You'll have to go on without me, Ace. I was double-crossed. That wasn't no lady, that was a secret agent and she got me with her poison perfume. I'm a goner, Ace, don't try to save me." Charles coughed his last breath, moaned dramatically, and died.

He lay quietly for a few seconds, and then his mother's words brought him back to life. He jumped to his feet. Picture! He did remember the lovely picture he had drawn. It was torn into little bitty pieces and scattered, probably in Africa or New York by now. "I've

got to get them back!" Charles held out his arms and became an airplane, flying around the world to find the pieces of his picture. He would be a hero, a brave pilot, risking his life to save the picture because his mother needs it so. "Oh, please bring me your picture!" she would squeal, and throw him a shiny red kiss. "I'll just die if you can't get it back!"

Charles waved nonchalantly and took off on his dangerous mission. He saw a scrap of paper floating toward the ocean and yelled, "I'll save you!" He gunned his engines and went into a heroic nosedive.

In mid-dive, he remembered why the picture was scattered around the world. It was a picture of his mother driving away from the house in a brand-new car Charles had given her for her birthday. Charles' father was running behind yelling 'Wait for me!' and Charles was watching from a window of the house, smiling. After Charles had drawn the picture this morning, he had felt so proud of it that he just had to show it to someone. He had found his mother at the kitchen table, pushed the picture between her face and the coffee cup she was holding and had shouted, "Look, Mama, what I drew for you!" Mama had jumped and spilled her coffee, then glared at him and hissed, "Why do you always yell when you know it makes my head ache?" She had looked at the picture in Charles' fist. "No what is *that* supposed to be?" He had patiently explained the obvious. "See, this is the car I gave you and you are off for a trip around the world. You almost forgot to wait for Daddy, but when he yelled, you stopped and picked him up. This is me watching. You both forgot me, so I get to stay at home all by myself and—"

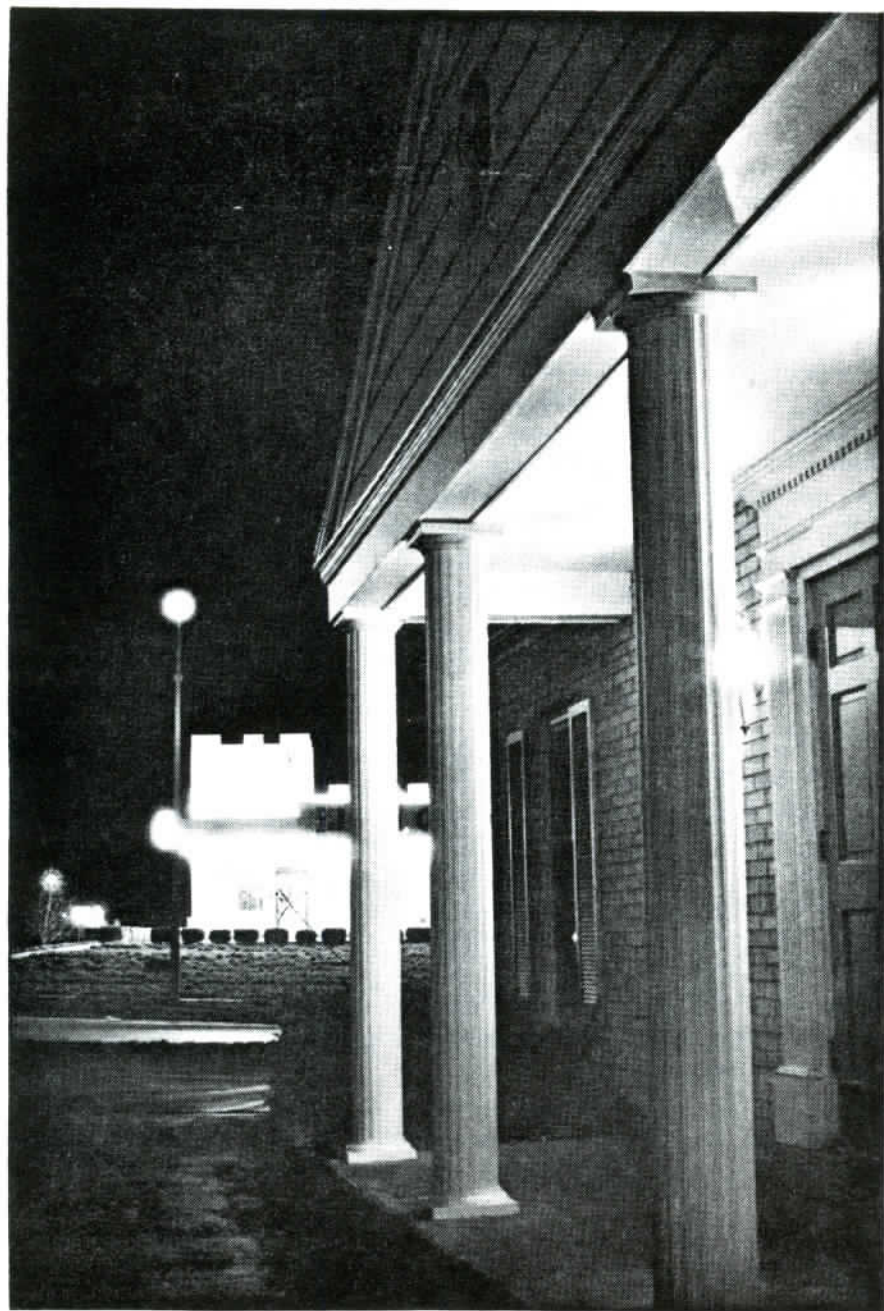
"What a stupid picture!" Mother had not even let him finish explaining. "You drew the people as big as the house, and besides that, where would you get the money to buy anybody a car?" She had

pushed away the picture and poured more coffee into her cup, then continued. "Why don't you go play outside before you make a mess in the house?"

With that scene in mind, Charles glared at the door. His mother thought his picture was stupid! She probably wanted him to show it to all the grown-ups at the party so everyone could have a good laugh. Charles should know by now to watch out when his mother talked to him with an extra sweet voice, and this time he would not be fooled. He put his thumbs in his waistband and swaggered across the room. "Well, lady, it's lahk this," he drawled. "We don't need your kind around here nohow, and Ah reckon Ah kin draw me a good pitcher if Ah feel like it." He turned suddenly. "Draw!" he shouted at a chair, and shot it dead with his finger. Cautiously, he eyed the room. "The varmint was sneakin' up on muh blind side," he explained to the rest of the furniture.

Downstairs, the doorbell rang. The voice of his mother greeting guests poked at Charles and reminded him that he would need a picture to show them. He rubbed his hands together and looked at his desk. "Well, Doctor, this is gonna be tough operation, but we'll save the patient yet." Charles yanked off his coat and tie and threw them toward his bed. He sat at his desk and pulled paper out of the top drawer. "This time, we'll make a picture *nobody* can laugh at," he told his box of crayons and pencils. A round of laughter floated up from the grown-ups' party downstairs. Charles looked across the room at his mirror. His disheveled image grinned wickedly back at him, picked up a pencil and began to work.

—Denise Hakenewerth



THE PLAZA

Busy,
scuttering about,
within cages of time.
Ladies,
Leave boutiques
with arms filled.
Boxes and Bags,
blocking their view
they peer from
behind and
carefully make
each step.
In starched collars,
business men,
meet young ladies
for lunch.
Briefcases under
their chairs,
They wait
patiently.
In the center
the stone fountain
sheds tears to
the water's surface.
In the misty spray
crouches a small girl
on a park bench.
Looking about,
she screams
"Mommy?!?"
A hundred blank faces
turn toward her.

—Suzan Harris

THE DRAGON TATTOO

It was winter and the city was cold, as cold as death on a summer's day. Jake had been wandering the labyrinth of the city for what seemed like an eternity. The streets were empty as he entered a run-down part of the city. It was when he turned the corner on one of the many streets that he noticed a sign, swaying in the cold wind, illuminated by the glow of a street light. In big crimson letters, the color of freshly drawn blood, the sign read "Tattoos and other skin illustrations." For some unknown reason, Jake began to walk toward the shop, which was beneath the sign. The store was dark, save for the faint lighting of several candles. The door was unlocked. Jake entered. On the inside a bell hung over the top of the door. As Jake opened the door, it struck the bell. The sound heralded his entrance. He stood for a moment in the dim light of the store trying to justify why he was here. He found that he could not, it was as if some supernatural force had drawn him there.

His thoughts were interrupted by a deep voice, "What can I do for you, Sir?"

Jake stood dumbfounded, speechless, staring at the source of the voice. It was a man. From his looks a very old man, whose deep strong voice did not coincide with the frailty of his body. The old man wore no shirt, only trousers. His upper body, arms, and face were covered with tattoos. In the partial darkness his tattoos appeared to be living. Snakes, dragons, and other creatures seemed to dance about on his body, in the scarce lighting of the store.

Before Jake could answer the inquiry, the old man spoke again,

"Would you be interested in a tattoo or skin illustration?"

"Yes," Jake answered on instinct.

"Then follow me," the old man motioned for Jake to follow him.

The old man led Jake to an entryway that was covered by a curtain. The old man parted curtain to reveal a well lit workshop. The light blinded Jake for a moment, while his eyes adjusted. In the light the old man's tattoos lost their life. Though the light took away the spirit from the tattoos, it added color to them. Every color of the spectrum was represented on the old man's body.

"Now, what kind of tattoo were you interested in?" He motioned to a wall, upon which hung a large poster showing examples of tattoos.

In the center of the poster was a dragon. Jake was attracted to it: its dark green scales, blood red tongue, and the fiery eyes.

"I want the dragon," Jake muttered. "Put it on my chest."

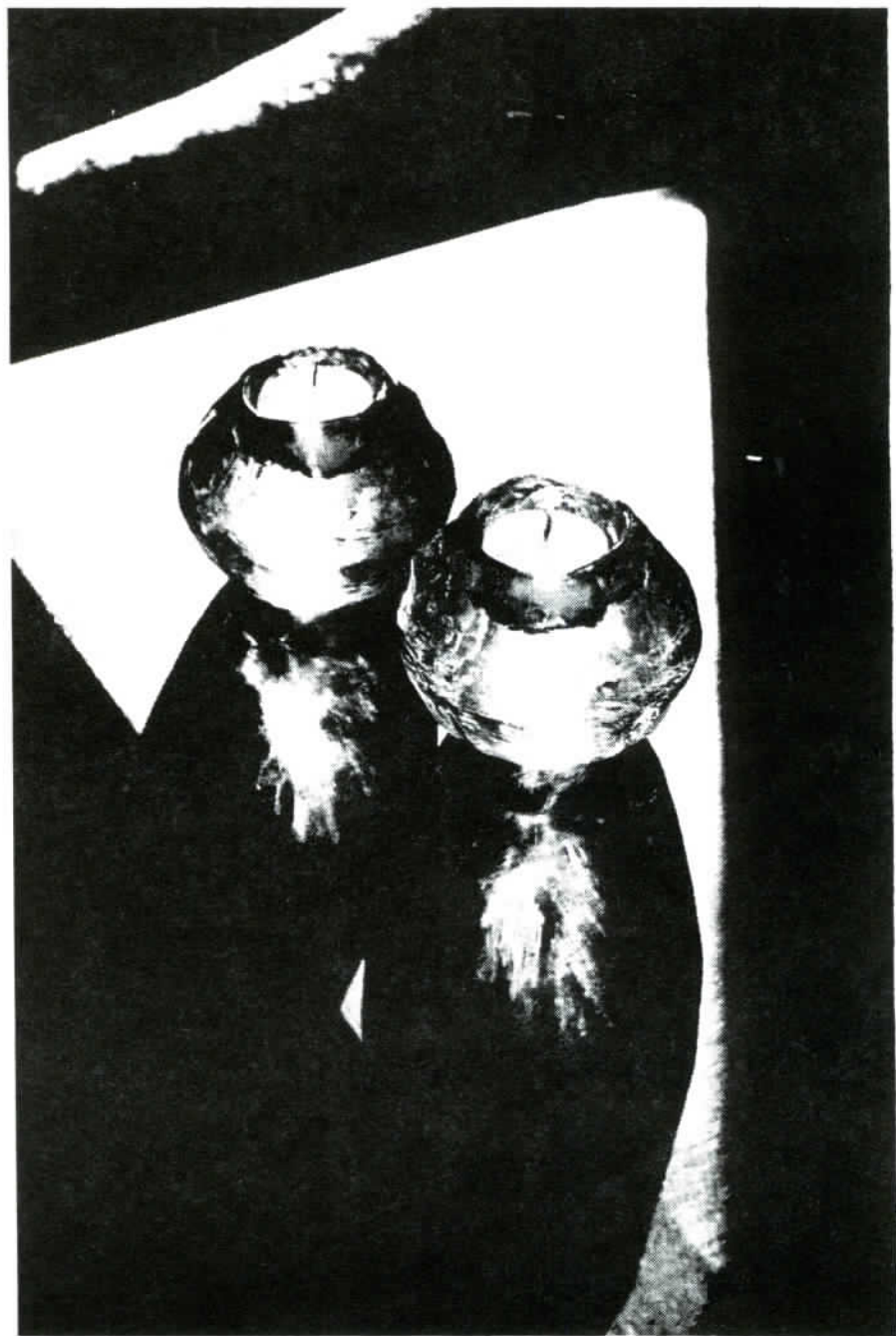
"Ah, an excellent choice, now take off your coat and shirt, and be seated," the old man finished and began gathering an odd array of tools. Jake removed his coat and shirt, and sat down in a chair next to a table, upon which the old man had placed his tools. The old man pulled up a second chair in front of Jake, gazed at his chest for a moment, then began to work. The tattooing needle was cold, yet it left a warm tingling feeling wherever it touched Jake's chest. Jake closed his eyes and leaned his head back. He could feel the ink flowing into his chest. It had the effect of a narcotic; Jake's mind was transported to a world of illusion inhabited by fierce dragons and old men covered by tattoos. Jake returned to reality and opened his eyes. He looked down at his chest; his eyes were met by the eyes of a dragon. His chest was warm, and he had never felt better in his life. The old man was

washing his hands at a rusted old sink. When he finished he walked over to a small metal box that rested on a shelf. He opened the box. Inside was a large amount of money; the old man began to count it. Jake saw the money and one idea burned in his mind. He rose from the chair, and picked up the tattooing needle from the table. He walked slowly up behind the old man.

"There is something I must tell about that tattoo," but before the old man could finish, Jake stabbed him with the needle, at the point where the skull and spine meet. The old man gasped, then fell to the floor, dead. Jake put his shirt and coat on, took the money and left, leaving the old man's body sprawled on the floor.

As he walked through the night, the tingling sensation turned into a burning feeling. Pain ran through Jake's body like wild fire. The pain increased as Jake wandered on. He turned into an alley, pulled off his coat and tore open his shirt. His chest pulsated with life. Jake stared down at the dragon on his chest, the pain became unbearable, as the long snake-like neck of the dragon rose from his chest. The dragon's head turned to look at Jake with burning eyes. He could feel the steaming breath on his face. The dragon howled with a sound that came from the pits of hell. Jake screamed as the dragon beared his fangs and prepared to kill. The next day the police found Jake's lifeless body in the alley. His whole body was covered with blood and lacerations, every part, that is, except for the dragon tattoo on his chest.

—Eric Mueller



SOME PLEA

It's the same place
from table to table,
from dinner to dawn,
from palet to pain.
And it's a miracle
our feet don't melt
where she stands,
or where he stands,
or where I stand
in me.

—Kara L. Diver

DREAMS

Closed eyes bring voyages, to whims we're cast,
billowed sails on experience mast.
A drifting ship of sleep 'long its course unknown,
guided by ancient mariner dreams have shown.

Time is suspended in wandering thought.
Our journey: twisted as Gordian's knot.
Puzzle and cut, what enigmas they've brought
and many things other, we know of not . . .

—James R. Baker

BIO LAB

Within a thimble
Of ocean
A spit of sea
Swimmers survive,
Protista personalities

Ingesting Amoebas
Some ciliated, searching
Spores shooting scores
Asexually successful species
Paranoid paramecium
Assuming algae appearances
To blend into backgrounds

Mere micromolecules,
A late lunch
For white whales
Which inspire namely novels
And swallow rebellious puppets

—*Wes Morgenthaler*

VILE BABIES

Maybe babies
of Pyrex parenthood
sprout like plastic flowers
upon a bed of glass

Questionable creatures
of manual formation
evolve in isolation
under white-gloved gods

Scrutinized seeds
from selected specialities
abort the misconception
in a brave new world

—David Hanlon

FOOD FOR THE SOUL
(A Seven Course Meal)

Learn from yesterday
Live for today
for
there will be tomorrow.

In the midst of screaming and yelling
STOP. LISTEN.
you will be rewarded.

Be at peace with God
whatever you believe Him to be.

If you pass my grave
please, remember me.

Strive to learn
Strive to explore
Strive to live
and, above all
be happy.

Three kinds of friendship
One is food; you cannot live without it
The second is medicine in emergencies
The last is disease; no one wants it.

Like ships struggling in the sea
so are we
till we achieve our peace.

—Randa Alsheikh

غذاء الروح

تعلم من فاضلك ..
عنه يومك ..
لتعوم غداً .

xxxxxxx

و ط فحبتك و صحتك ..
قف لحظة
لتسمع وتتأمل ...
وتقف بأنتك أنت المستفيد .

xxxxxxx

دع إيمانك بالله حوي ..
فهما كان إيمتقادك به .

xxxxxxxx

إذا مررت يوماً بقبري ..
فأله نظرة عليه .

xxxxxxxx

جاهد لتتعلم ..
جاهد لتتكف ..
جاهد لتقي ..
و مع ذلك .. كن سعيداً .

xxxxxxxx

ثلاثة أنواع للصداقة : نوع كالأهل لا يمكن
الإستغناء عنه . ونوع كالدرء تجده عند
الحاجة إليه . ونوع كاللذئ يمكن الإستغناء
عنه .

xxxxxxxx

كالفن تخط في البحر ..
كذلك سحر في الحياة ..
إلى أن تحقه أمالنا

xxxxxxxx

MODEL AMERICANS

Sleek and graceful on gold pedestals
Smooth shapes emanate assurance
Silent sentries of consumer consciousness

Role models of painted beauty
Cold as the metal that supports them
Stare at the world through crystal orbs

Sirens for seducing competition
Cast manufactured glances my way
Concentration from cool compositions

Dynamic soldiers of fashion
Dare lifestyles without personality
Fleeting elegance carved by man

Poised, lifeless hands gesture in vain
Flaunting every inch of the wood
Spotlights shimmering off lacquered skin

Bodies in arranged interaction
Splinter through inner tension
Ideals carried on whims of change

--David Hanlon



denial

It was never the tides of wanting
that held me dear to you.
I never had a reason to fall in love.
The songs I sang for you
could have been given to passing winds;
and I only held your hand when I was cold—
but I was always cold.
I never think of your tenderness
or call out your name at night;
I never feel inside that I cared,
or even wanted to,
or will.
And if I see your face in me
I can always look away.

i can.

--Kara L. Diver

QUOTIDIAN

Since we've parted
every night comes the fever
I burn like a match in the dark

Because of you
my temperature increases
consuming me without a spark

From my affliction
there is no escaping,
I've found, there is no cure

This recurrence
I'm certain will visit me
much longer than I can endure

Returns again
the quotidian
the white-hot heat
of circadian desire

—James Baker

FIRE AND RAIN SHINE

Sit old man, elemakule,
On this lauhala mat.
All that I have is yours.
Let the awa flow free.

I am on old haku mele.
I will tell you a story,
Of the tall men and women of the sea,
Of love and hate and love and love.

My tongue will feed words to your children;
The branches grow because of the trunk.
I sort out my words,
Like the feathers of a King's cape.

Nature is full of voices for our ears.
The voice of a shell-trumpet,
The sound of blood ladled out on our altars,
The sound of stones tortured into buildings.

Mine is the song of hollow cries,
Wailing at night through tatoed tongues.
It is the song of
Laughing, careless faces.

Mine is the song of the ohana,
From Mauka to makai.
And Marama, the goddess of the moon,
An ageless womb.

When love is given,
Love will be returned.
Hatred is the thing, that gives
No life.

Let the kona breezes carry my song,
To all those
Who sit outside of their native selves,
As rigidly as do their flagpoles.

And may they hear
Of Po—the dark,
And Ao—the light,
And wonder and wonder and wonder.

Aloha Iō, god of good and god of bad.
Do you listen to my story too?
Through your glowing orb
And pearl-shell eyes?

You are the soul of our world.
You run around in our blood.
You are pregnant with island
And procreative germ.

Kane, Ku, Tera—the Undefinable THAT,
You are the conical stone, creative.
There is life in the stone—
And death too.

Do you listen from your
Floating cloud-like heaven-island, Kanehunamoku?
The sky is red with your passing,
The cocks crow, the pigs grunt and the sea recedes.

Your spirit can live
Without a body;
But a body cannot live,
Without your spirit.

Mine is a story born from the thighs of Marama,
Back straight as a bluff,
Breasts full like the moon,
Through woman, all must pass into life.

Mine is the story of Havai'i:
The steaming terrain
Over which moisture rains;
Of hulas and huhus and hogs with eight eyes.

It is a song of
Clouds' bellies, ripped open with white fire,
And red fire too,
A deep gorey red Niagra.

Pele, do you listen too?
Old lady dried up front and back,
But—look again,
Breasts beautiful beyond compare.

Your eyes flash in the evening storms.
Is it jealousy?
You too, Pele? Suseptible to loneliness?
Oh, that Ohia could speak.

Man and nature are brothers and sisters
In fact, not in fiction; do you hear, tree fern and
 rock wall?
We live on the breasts
Of our mother-mountain.

I am the haku mele.
My tongue will feed words to your children.
My sighs rise mauka as mist;
My tears fall as rain.

Now what was the story,
Old man, elemakule?
Of the tall men and women of the sea?
I am old, you are old.

Old men are entitled to talk to themselves,
And, to empty lauhala mats—
Of the love of love,
And the love of life.

—Karen Schneider
March 9, 1984



The Griffin Editorial Staff
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James Baker, Editor
Nancy Bridges
Kara Diver
Denise Hakenewerth
Dianne Hunt
Vicki Kyer
Deanna M. Rasch
Abby Tuttle

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