

Important Thing

I've always loved the way pelicans dive,
as if each silver fish they see
were the goddamned most important
thing they've ever wanted on this earth—
and just tonight I learned sometimes
they go blind doing it,
that straight-down dive like someone jumping
from a rooftop, only happier,
plummeting like Icarus, but more triumphant—
 there is the undulating fish,
 the gleaming sea,
there is the chance to taste again
the kind of joy which can be eaten whole,
and this is how they know to reach it,
head-first, high-speed, risking everything,

 and some of the time they come back up
as if it were nothing, they bob on the water,
silver fish like stogies angled
rakishly in their wide beaks,
—then the enormous
 stretching of the throat,
then the slow unfolding
 of the great wings,
as if it were nothing, sometimes they do this
a hundred times or more a day,
as long as they can see, they rise
 back into the sky
to begin again—

 and when they can't?

We know, of course, what happens,
they starve to death, not a metaphor, not a poem in it;

this goes on every day of our lives,

and the man whose melting wings
spatter like a hundred dripping candles
 over everything,

and the suicide who glimpses, in the final
seconds of her fall,
 all the other lives she might have lived.

The ending doesn't have to be happy.
The hunger itself is the thing.

Ruth L. Schwartz

Battle-Piece

Confederate monument

Ocean Pond, Olustee, Florida, 1864

Picnickers sojourn here an hour,
get their fill, get gone.

Seldom, they quickstep as far downhill
as this bivouac; they miss sting, snap,

grit in clenched teeth, carbine, cartridge,
cap, *hurrah boys*. Cannon-crack's
the peal, the clap of doom.

Into the billows, white, filthy,
choked by smoke, Clem, Eustace, Willy—
it would be useless to name names or call them all.

Anyway, that's done already. Every fall
sons of sons and reverent veterans' wives
lay wreaths, a prize of plastic daisies,

everlasting. Nobody calls this lazy.
It's August, and it's late, it's afternoon,
heat-mist glistens on slick granite, sun

fingers through sleek pines, their edges cropped
like the clipped, elegant grass. It is a shock
to see a caisson blown

to flinders; a horse shrieks,
the mortar-shell zooms, spiral-
ripping tender belly. Oh, yes, here

are raked paths, cindered, sweet trees
and cool water. That whimper
you do not hear now was the doves,
spooning. Evening calls you all, eager

as spruce-gum-chewing, apple-filching boys
to pull one long last gulp of switchel
as if, now, somebody's sons had almost done

haymaking. Keen to victual, nearly home, feature the sharp
surprise when, smooth as oiled stone
stroking the clean edge of a scythe, these boys achieved
each his marble pillow, astonished by the sky.

Jeannette Barnes

The Foxes at the Old Irish Cemetery

Killybegs, Ireland

We hear them bark at evening as we walk
among the stones of the upper garden
where graves swell above the long grasses
that hiss and hiss in the wind off the sea.
Fierce faces look out from photographs we carry,
their barns and dead fields behind them,
but there is no sound or sign to say
that from the green silence of their graves
they hear the waves running up the rocks
or taste moisture on their earthen walls.

We stand in these twilight woods calling
the names aloud, holding back each breath
to better hear, but there are only the breakers,
and the deep-belling of the buoy sounding
in the cold grey sea.

As we pick our way through the winter gorse
home to our own lighted windows,
sunset breaks into fire over the bogs
and foxes leave their fern-dark holes
beneath the fallen monuments to lean against the wind,
their ears tipped to catch the voices from the hill
where a lone bird weaves its scarlet thread of song
among the moon-rinsed trees hiding foxes
moving in light from bark and stone to the sea.

J. T. Ledbetter

Halloween, Riding Eastward

Driving away from the town
where they took me down
to the whisper of death
in the deep mechanical night,
pushed poison through my blood to save me
building me new from the marrow up
when I was no more than a ghost among demons,
set me to dreaming of deserts of heaven
set me to weeping at casual words, a sunrise,
the drift of a bird past the window
where Anna the nurse and I watched fireworks
when my fever broke
and my white count reached three hundred.
Town of punctures,
x-ray scans and drills in bone—
but not today,
today just shopping, Chinese food,
the only demons stuffed with straw,
lolling on porches or hanging in trees,
the rearview mirror dying in gold
as we hurry amazed past costumed children,
witches, ghosts and pumpkins grinning,
hurry toward darkness home to our miracle life.

Christopher Fahy

Regarding Itzhak Perlman, Sibelius' Violin Concerto
in D Minor Opus 47, & Ironing

alright, let me try to explain
about ironing cotton sheets

they start out crumpled like a wad of paper mistakes
so some of us women set up an ironing board
and begin a task we would not allow you to pay us to do

after all we can command Itzhak Perlman to bow us back into our senses
as we spray the water and watch the flowery sheets pucker
the mist floats before us and drifts down
moistening the back of our hands, the bare skin of our brown legs
and we set down the bottle
to lift the scalding iron
move it slowly
across the damp wrinkles
that give way
like helpless girls
caught in the inexhaustible heat of their first kiss
and with each pass of the flat, hot steel
the comforts of a newly made bed unfurl
so our hands shake out the next section
and our palms lie flat to smooth outward toward the corners
before we lift the bottle and begin again

and we take our time because the music takes its time
we inhale the rich scent
of the heated cotton
a mix of soap and toast
because cotton more than any other fabric
loves to be pampered and pressed
then we fold the sheet five times
stopping
to press the sides each time
just to be sure

and before we move it from the ironing board
we run our fingers over it
feel its comforting thickness
pick it up as if we were carefully weighing and measuring it
like produce
though we are really savoring the warmth and softness of our work
then we let it fall with a heavy thump into
our luxuriously empty laundry basket

to be taken up
kept in the cool darkness of the linen closet
and given time to store up countless dreams
that will
eventually
unroll like movies under the late night stars
accompanied by The Boston Symphony Orchestra

Anne Hills

The Painter

I put color on walls, then leave
and let light tell its own story. Strange
how our vague ambitions lead
to such particular situations, like these white overalls
with the brass clips, this collection of brushes
and buckets. It was never my intention
to join the order of caps and rags,
but here I am.

One summer evening I knelt in a shed
cleaning brushes. Light streamed through the splintered boards
and I was there to see how it landed, how it made
the shovel and the rake and the dirt floor
all count. I stopped and listened. Wind
swept dry grass against the dryer siding.
The sound was as close as my own breath
and my kneeling went deeper into thankfulness

for this strange and lonely craft
which makes me love so many things.

Robert Arthur Lewis

POETRY 1999 CONTRIBUTORS

Barbara Crooker has published in *Yankee*, *Christian Science Monitor*, *The Denver Quarterly*, and *Negative Capability*. Her poetry appears in several anthologies, and she has six chapbooks, the most recent being *In the Late Summer Garden* (H & H Press). But the highlight of her life will be hearing Bruce and the E Street Band live this September.

Christopher Fahy's poetry has appeared in *The Beloit Poetry Journal*, *Chariton Review*, *Rhino*, and several anthologies. His collection of poems, *The End Beginning*, was published by Red Earth Press. His ninth book of fiction, *Limerock: Maine Stories*, is forthcoming from Coastwise Press. He lives in Thomaston, Maine.

Jane Eaton Hamilton, a Canadian poet and writer, has four books, *July Nights*, *Body Rain*, *Steam Cleaning Love*, and *going santa fe*. She has published in the *New York Times* and *Seventeen*, and won numerous awards, including the *Yellow Silk* and *Prism International* fiction awards. Her work has appeared in the *Journey Prize Anthology* and *Best Canadian Short Stories*.

Suheir Hammad is the author of *Born Palestinian*, *Born Black* and *Drops of This Story* (Harlem River Press 1996). She is a Palestinian and "a child of the Hip Hop generation."

Amy Herring recently received an M.A. in Creative Writing from the University of Colorado at Boulder, where she won the Jovanovich Award and the Denver Women's Press Club Award. She now lives in Williamstown, Mass., with her husband and two daughters.

Anne Hills was born in India and currently lives in Pennsylvania with her family. She is a professional singer, songwriter and recording artist. Outstanding Female Vocalist of the Year in 1997 (Kerrville Music Foundation), her solo albums include *Angle of the Light* (1995) and *Bittersweet Street* (1998). She has performed on National Public Radio, and on albums with Tom Paxton, Bonnie Raitt, and Bruce Springsteen. Her web site is www.annehills.com.

Robin Jacobson's first collection, *Eye Drops* (Ruah 1999), won the 1999 Power of Poetry Competition, and in 1998 she won the Janice Farrell Poetry Prize from the National League of Pen Women. Her work appears in *The Montserrat Review*, *Mediphors*, and *Earth's Daughters*. She teaches with the California Poets in the Schools, and is the founder of True North Press.

Adrienne Kalfopoulou lives in Athens, Greece, where she teaches literature. Her poems have appeared in various journals, including *The Fiddlehead*, *Red Brick Review*, and *Whiskey Island Magazine*.

Devi Sen Laskar has a Masters Degree in Asian Studies from the University of Illinois and an MFA from Columbia University. She is currently at work on a novel.

J. T. Ledbetter's poems appear in *Poetry*, *Laurel Review*, *Puerto del Sol*, *Nimrod*, and others. He is Professor of English at California Lutheran University. His books include *Gethsemani Poems*; *Mark Van Doren, a Critical Study*; and *Plum Creek Odyssey*.

Robert Arthur Lewis is a house painter and poet living in Bellingham, Washington. His poetry revolves around the connection between humans and nature, and begins with the belief that poets have a unique ability and responsibility to sing for the earth.

Jill McDonough lives in Cambridge, Massachusetts. She teaches at Boston University, Framingham Women's Correctional Facility, and the Brookline Center for Adult Education.

Penelope Scambly Schott's most recent book is *Penelope: the Story of the Half-Scalped Women*, a narrative poem about a 17th century New Jersey settler.

Ruth L. Schwartz's first book of poems, *Accordion Breathing and Dancing* (U. of Pittsburgh Press 1996) won the 1994 Associated Writing Programs Award. Frequently published and anthologized, she has also won *Nimrod's* Pablo Neruda Award (twice), the *New Letters* Literary Award, the North Carolina Writer's Network's Randall Jarrell Prize, the *Chelsea Magazine* Award, *Kalliope's* Sue Saniel Elkin Award, and the *Prairie Schooner* Reader's Choice Award.

Sally Lee Stewart is a native Californian, mother, poet, student and performer of oriental dance. She has an MFA from Sarah Lawrence College and lives in Mill Valley with her six year old boy, Adrian. She has poems in the *California Quarterly* and the *Sirius* anthology by New Visions.

Susan Thomas recently won the Editor's Prize from *Spoon River Review*. She has current or forthcoming work in *Nimrod*, *Confrontation*, *Columbia*, *RE:AL*, *Feminist Studies*, *New Delta Review*, *Sheila-Na-Gig*, *Lullwater Review*, *Northeast Corridor*, and *Kalliope*.

Jeanne Wagner was the 1998 winner of the Writers At Work Poetry Fellowship. Her poems have appeared in *Lullwater Review*, *Spoon River Poetry Review*, *Lucid Stone* and *Quarterly West*. She works as a tax accountant.

Afternoon Reading

for N.D. and J.B.S.

There, on the western edge of the island
the spring shower
surprised into life by the City's warm thermals
drenched the yellow brick school building.
Mr. Shank, two years away
from disgrace and dismissal, told us
to close up our grammars and listen
as the fat droplets struck the tall windows.

He read to us from Whitman.

How while twenty-eight young men
were bathing by the shore,
a twenty-ninth joined them
though they did not see;
how an unseen hand
passed over their bodies;
how they did not ask;
how they did not know;
how they did not think
who they soused with spray.

Mr. Shank, finished with the fragrant pines
and the cedars dust and dim,
patted his pink upper lip
with a small linen handkerchief
embroidered JBS on the corner.
The windows ran water as light failed.
There was a yellow, flickering light on his forehead,
lips, and throat.
Cultures sometimes die
unnoticed in one no-longer-young man,

in front of a blackboard
with twenty-five children
touched, quickened, and alive to the gentle
benison of rain.

Bill Sweeney

First Climb After My Daughter's Birth

I set myself to address a spine of old granite
—cool, rough, orange and gray in the Fall sun;
the huge bones of this planet.
I splay my fingers over the surface
looking for the small marks
of Time's mercy, handholds
that wind or water leave behind.
Then I begin to rise steadily
against the mass;
I am in God's sight on the rock's face,
between what I know and what I imagine.

Rosie's fat thighs are what I know;
her spiky scalp, the buds of her toes.
I can imagine: the cut line, loose shale, a broken ankle
and night coming on
when exposure ceases to be a place
and becomes a symptom.

Now, above the first line of protection, I'm afraid;
how grief-stalked, how mistake-prone—
is the flash of life
moving through nature's innocence.
Where are her handholds?

I will lay in protection
as high as I can climb.

Bill Sweeney

Baby Tooth

Let it quiver in my palm on meeting its shadow again.
Let it shine, like glass fragments at the intersection.

Let it stand, weightless monument, for every loss we knew was coming,
where the knowing was a knot tightening in the jaw and the absence
an aching numbness
dandled by the tongue,
the little acre of the future we're deeded in advance
with its dry wells and uneven ground,
the one we pull up to, saying, Well, this is it,
finding it different than we expected, yet the same,
and overall no better. Let its dot of blood be dry.

Let this white kernel blossom in a diversity of shapes.
Let me grasp the pure event through this evidence.
Let the sun fall across my narrow shoulderblades

through the open window,
a burden enormous, but not heavy,
requiring more balance than strength.

George Estreich

First Communion

I stood on a stool as my mother
Hemmed my new black pants.
I wore a white shirt, the collar starched.
She fussed with the black clip-on bow tie,
Spit-thumbed my unruly cowlick.
This moment of loving attention shines
Like no other: the earth exhaling,
Spring sun blowing in the window.
What was the body, what was the blood
That held us together?

Our son's communion thirty years later.
I have come back to church after twenty
Years' absence, bewildered
By the hardness of my daily bread.
I help him prepare. His hair lies flat,
Groomed with oil, his clothing soft,
Blue and white, but the same April day
Passes into my hands like a card. He walks
To the altar with his beautiful friends. *That*
Close. My wife and I are holding each
Other and crying to ourselves

This is my body, this is my blood.

Daniel Bachhuber

Jazz

Chicago how I loved you
my release my out of jail my joy
the sweet heat of the drinks in those clubs
under the city, southern comfort on the rocks
always late at night dark smoky horns
underground underneath the city streets and rain
falling from far away, another world, always dripping
down there from the arms of the El around midnight.

I was so blonde I stuck out like a flare
so tall I had to bend just to get down there
where the music was succulent like honey
oh it was before the 60's I could go to those clubs
sticking out like I did because I loved that jazz
and it didn't seem to matter how cornfed
and blank I was, I felt the sweetness,
I was indulged even in my whiteness,
even I could hear the intricate unwinding
of the riffs careening from the alto sax.
I knew nothing at all, not what the music
cost, not what would break loose or how soon.

Patricia Dobler

Fishing the Sky

From woods overgrown with shadows
And smells of pitch, we step into sun,
Suddenly over our heads
In this deep fall day. The lake
Lies still as a dark window.

The expert, Scott looks it: plaid jacket,
Hipboots the shade of rivermud,
Orange hat bright as neon. The flies
Circling his head are hooks—
A few snag on sparks of light.

He opens his tackle box; the contents
Gleam, make it a treasure chest.
Grinning he says, *The right lure
Is everything*. Now I see:
A hook for fish is silver

To catch silver. He flicks an arc
Of nylon with a quiet hiss.
Clumsy in the coat I stole from the navy,
I borrow a pole and try to cast out
My demons of rent, goals, the future.

Our floats hover in our reflection,
Lines anchoring us to the sky.
So high up we can't hear it,
A jet glints like a diamond
Scratching its scar across our pane

Of water. I want to ask: *What could tempt
Such a brilliant fish?* A boy runs by,
Pulling the soaring red lure of a kite.
All day I catch no fish. But when
We leave, I'm reeling in the dusk.

Michael Spence

Finding a barber

In any new city, the first thing
to find is a barber.

Let him be slow on his feet,
a man in a bow tie

with two dirt-brown shoes.
His name will be the same as an uncle's.

Seated at his chair,
his shears will whisper elegies

to forgotten smells: ripe tobacco,
aftershaves, and newsprint.

As hands shuffle close to your neck,
and he reminds you to lean your head forward,

remember evenings before,
when you wandered into

a glimpse of yourself in a window,
wet hair over your collar.

Remember the repetition of mornings
and the obstacle of sleep.

Let the hair that's grown over your ears
fall without restraint into an open lap.

Chris Gage

Wasted Words

"No, all the great poems have not been written," I explain to Indy,
my Cocker Spaniel. "There's this one I'm writing now, for instance."
Wasted words on a dog?
Perhaps, but words, once so precious as to convince me
that I had no right to use them,
have become hideously devalued, in the runaway lexflation
of this, the late second millennium, this Weimar Republic of cheap talk,
with verse so depreciated as to be free,
where wheelbarrows of text still won't buy a stale baguette,
And rivers of flatulent words are washed like sewage to the sea.
What's an escape artist like me to do with words?
How to float free of the harness, the mereness of words,
to sparkle and shine like an ancient coin in a stream,
how to be incandescent, for other than the adoring eyes
of my dog?

"See, Indy, how effortlessly I combine them?" I boast, as I ply my deft
artifice; I serve, volley, juggle, sail them like a frisbee;
until
I foxtrot, twist and jitterbug words

their disposable forms and sloughed-off connotations
pile up three deep across all the surfaces of my life.
And still I pluck away, from among the profusion,
searching for the delicate and fragile four-leaf wordclovers,
that I know will bring poetic good fortune,
or that transforming irritant, the foreign speck,
that sticks to your insides,
that makes a pearl.

"I can do this, I must do this, because I'm human,"
I try to explain to Indy,
"A spider must spin his web; you, my loyal friend, must maintain
your dim but devoted vigil at my feet;
and I must form these words into a lattice-work of the heart,
an architecture of the mind."

But, instead of graceful word-palaces, I find myself tangling fishing lines,
or forming heavy clumps that stick together like rice,
word-balls and word-chains, which wrap themselves
around my ankle,

before I plunge, Houdini-like, into the swirling stream,
the river of rapture and transport.

"I can do this," I tell myself, trying to visualize
a swimmer, gracefully turning and twisting, before pushing off
to begin the next leg.

But as my feet break the turbulent surface,
I am dragged down, forced to swallow.

My computer is now a dead weight strapped to my gasping body.
By instinct, I jab at the keyboard, and furiously click the mouse,
but all of my words, my weighty layers of content,
go descending into the depths like so much grapeshot, while
I struggle to keep my head above the smoky waters.

"Help!" I scream.

Not one of the other vocables I own
would work here, would have currency, buoyancy, survival value.
Indy looks up, alert
and ready for action.
"Let's you and me go for a walk," I say.

Richard Campbell

Everything I Know About Life

I Learned from Soap Operas

Louis Phillips

Soap operas. How their very titles—usually four words or under—hint at our essential human condition. *Young and Restless*. *Bold and Beautiful*. *Days of Our Lives*. *Guiding Light*. *Another World*. *One Life to Live*. How their characters, plots, subplots and sub-subplots keep our busy lives in thrall, so much so that I have concluded that everything I know about life I have learned by staying home from work and keeping my eyes glued to the adventures of Mike Roy and Melanie Cortland on *All My Children*.

Oh I know. Some noted Americans have claimed that everything important they know about life they learned in kindergarten, but is it my fault that I am a slow learner? Now that I think of it, I never even went to kindergarten, and so the great lessons that I could have learned at a tender age—to raise my hand before going to the bathroom and not to eat crayons (unless I take the paper wrappings off them first)—arrived too late to do me much good. But thank God for daytime television. If it weren't for soap operas I wouldn't have a clue about how to live.

Since I am a sensitive and caring kind of guy, I have decided to share with you the most important lessons that soap operas have taught:

IMPORTANT LIFE LESSON # 1

All the people you thought were dead are really alive and they are going to reenter your life at the most unexpected and embarrassing moments.

I can't tell you how many times an ex-boyfriend, girlfriend, husband, or wife has reappeared upon the scene just as a wedding or a new romance is getting underway.

JOHN: But, Mary, I saw you go over the cliff in a flaming car.

MARY: You should have gone down to the ravine and checked. I have been living in a monastery in Tibet for the last 12 years, but when I saw on cable television that you were going to get married, I had to rush to your side.

Such episodes teach us never take anything for granted.

A corollary to the above proposition is:

All the old movie and television stars you thought were dead are really alive and they are going to take parts on soap operas at the most unexpected and embarrassing moments.

IMPORTANT LIFE LESSON #2

Every family has a deep dark secret.

Yes, scandal fans, I fear it's true, all too true. Your parents or their parents and/or everybody in the world has a secret that will eventually come out into the open and sink the family reputation. Secrets are to families what the iceberg was to the Titanic. Such secrets, hidden away in safety deposit vaults or in the back pages of yellowed town newspapers, frequently involve previous marriages, illegitimate children, shady business practices, and monetary payoffs to those in the know.

BAXTER: I promised on your mother's death-bed that I would never tell you what I must tell you now.

MARYANNE: What, Baxter? What will prevent us from marrying?

BAXTER: We are brother and sister.

MARYANNE: No! It can't be true. You're just saying that to hurt me.

BAXTER: Oh, my love. I wish it weren't true. But I fear it is.

Such soap opera episodes remind us how important it is to go over all the family papers before setting foot into the outside world. Also, never speak your secret aloud because there is always an unscrupulous person lurking under the eaves, leaves, or sieves who will overhear and shout it to the world or sell it to the highest bidder.

IMPORTANT LIFE LESSON #3

God creates very attractive villains.

The world would be a much easier place to navigate if evil-doers among us looked like wart-hogs. In point of fact, many villains resemble matinee idols—perhaps because they are frequently portrayed by matinee idols. Often, beautiful and virtuous women are attracted to brown-eyed, black-haired, swashbuckling villains, causing the less exciting and virtuous boyfriend to break down weeping. It is not necessarily true (as the old baseball manager Leo Duroucher once announced) that nice guys finish last—it just seems that way:

BELINDA: Rick, I'm leaving you and the children to sail to Tahiti with Dr. Sawyer.

RICK. But he's a scoundrel. He loves women, then casts them aside like used tissues.

BELINDA: I know, but I can't help myself.

In life it is frequently difficult to tell the players without a scorecard. Villains do not always look like villains; heroes do not always look like heroes.

IMPORTANT LIFE LESSON #4

As long as you want something you are alive.

If people were satisfied with what they had, soap operas would disappear overnight. So would Wall Street for that matter. But lucky for us, nobody on a soap opera ever shows the slightest inclination to

prefer wisdom over lust or greed. The grass is always greener and everyone is always plotting and manipulating to move onward and upward.

RICK: Belinda, I'm leaving you and the children to sail to Tahiti with Dr. Sawyer.

BELINDA: But why? No one can love you the way I love you.

RICK: But he has a good job and a steady income. He can give me the lifestyle I truly want.

BELINDA: I understand.

IMPORTANT LIFE LESSON #5

All understandings are dangerous.

As soon as two characters sit down and reach an understanding, all hell is about to break loose. The most important lesson that soap operas teach us is: Don't even bother to try to understand another human being. Life is much better that way.

Libraries, Librarians, Shelves, Clocks, Balconies

George Bailey, in the altered universe
where he doesn't exist
threatens to pummel Clarence
the guardian angel
unless he reveals the whereabouts
of Mary, George's not-wife.
"You're not going to like it, George!
She's just about to close the library!"

And there she is, eye bags heavy
with a day of shushing patrons,
her skin the olive hue of leather bound classics,
and she screams because she doesn't like
the looks of a man wild eyed and sweaty
from the hard labor of having no identity
let alone a library card.

"Mary, Mary! I love you! I need you!
Our children! Mary!" George shouts
and Mary swoons
giving birth to a cavern fluttering
with abstractions and dark facts.

And isn't this the way we all feel?
And when she treats us coldly with a smirk
and a smudged due date at the circulation desk,
doesn't our passion for her mysterious
existence grow even more fervent?

Parse the sentence of your life and see
if the subject does not lean toward
her the way an amaryllis aims
its expectant pod of blossoming toward the sun.

Today I walk into the library
and walk out hostage to an armful
of books. The police
roll slowly by as I let myself
into my car, the corner of Emily Dickinson
pressed to my temple:
stay calm and no one gets hurt.

I see the lights go off in the library
and then back on again.
Fifteen minutes till closing time.
George Bailey looks wild eyed
as half his face revolves from shadow
like a reference section globe.
"Fifteen minutes till closing time, George."
Clarence tugs on George's sleeve.
"No! No! Dog gone it, no!" George says.
"Mary! Mary! My card! Where did I put my card?"

Rustin Larson

Psychology—Old Granola U.

Nightly we dream
the unified department dream,
catch quicksilver metaphors
in our morning net—
pen them in journals.

There are always knights
griffins and unicorns,
little dogs with secrets
and wise cackling crones.

All horses are white.
All thoughts are jewels.
Everything has meaning
but it means something else.
And nothing's ever so simple
as just bacon-and-eggs:
three strips of bacon,
prison bars can make—
eggs are yellow eyes,
unbasted accusation.

Our magical swords
slash thickets in
the inner world,
quest undergrowths
of graduate school for
the Holy Grail of Personality.

Are we alone in a little pond?
When librarians dream,
do they shush the dragon?
Is the Prince cross-indexed to frogs,
frogs to librarians?

When accountants' inkpots overturn
are snowy ledgers pooled
with appalling, sexual shapes?

Ponds, little ponds,
infinities of little ponds
concentric rings of yearning
croaking harmonies of communal song—
webbed, pleading fingers
reach for the star.

Ruth Blakeney

Personals

SDWF wants
long walks on the beach,
dinner by candlelight,
although she presently
microwaves Lite Dinners
(300 calories or less) and eats
in the dark of t.v. anonymity.

DM admits to sixty-two,
heart of a singing child,
seeks slim, loyal lady to forty-five
for jogging
open communication
theatre / dance / acerbic wit.
He is mature, well-read, retired
but looks and feels much younger.

no drugs no alcohol no smoke
no hangup no blemish no disease

If wishes were horses
you'd be at my side,
gay, affectionate, sincere
photos exchanged, please
photo a must
(they used to eat me with their eyes)
looking for the face you had
before the world was made.

Solvent emotionally secure—
I'll take you home again, Cathleen—
well-educated professional
attractive, trim in a world I never made
is nobody's baby now will travel/relocate.

Ruth Blakeney

The Little Something

*Nor is it so long ago since people were living in the
rural towns of New England who could remember
reputed witches, and what dread they inspired in the
minds of the ignorant or timid.*

—Samuel Adams Drake, 1884

Nor was it longer ago than last week
when a friend who runs a cinema boasted
of a third nipple, old sign of the *sorcière*;
nor longer than last week in Cambridge
when I met the lady in black, manageress
of the occult-wares shop on Mass Ave, and
who, I'm earnestly told, is white, not black,
in her necromantic dabbings. An optometrist
in Brookline and two friends in Illinois
have labelled themselves pagans; some druids
I pal around with have a weekend coven
in the park up the road a bit. A teenage
girl I know cleaned a friend's condo
of evil spirits, blowing cigar smoke into
the corners, a sixty-cent rope stogie.
I could go on. I miss it myself
sometimes: the little something peering at us
from the cupboard of the rational,
the shiver gone up the spine, a
souçon of the ghoulish on Saturday
night. It breaks things up.

Glenn Shea

Maternal Instinct

Laurel DiGangi

Mother and I arranged to switch bodies for a week. We made a pact. She wouldn't sleep with my husband and I wouldn't sleep with Father. The former concerned me little. Mother never liked Lenny and claimed I could've done better. And as Mother had not shared a marital bed with Father for close to a decade, I'd have no worries there, either.

The arrangement should have been equitable for us both. I needed a vacation from work and Mother just wanted to get out of the house.

"Father is driving me bonkers," she said.

"You should just ignore him. That's what I'm gonna do." That and watch plenty of Oprah. Let Mother take two buses downtown to answer the "New Me" Haircoloring 1-800 number. Let Mother advise the diptwits against bleaching their brows and lashes, or highlighting their pubes. As for me, I planned to soak in a steaming tub of bubbles with Steven King while bingeing on chocolate chip macadamia nut cookies without adding an ounce to my beautiful body—only to Mother's.

I warned Mother that if Lenny got amorous she should tell him she had a real bad period. And what do you know, right away Mother did get a real bad period—mine.

"It's been fifteen years!" Mother whined, "You shoulda warned me! Where do you keep your pads?"

"I don't use pads. There's tampons under the sink."

"I can't use tampons!"

"If I can, you can."

It wasn't like I enjoyed living inside Mother's body. Aging thirty years and gaining forty pounds in the time it took to grind a few goat's teeth and chant a couple incantations didn't exactly thrill me. A taut rubberband of pain stretched from my left butt cheek to my toes—so that was sciatica! My knees felt swollen with gravel, and my feet were like pins and needles. I now understood Mother's grating complaints about her body no longer feeling like her own—and while I was trapped inside it I was doubling up on the painkillers.

Father was no help. I broiled us a couple chicken breasts and whipped up some stir-fried vegetables and all he did was complain. "Why'd you take the skin off for Chrissake? That's the best part," and "These carrots are like rocks."

So I phoned Mother for her goulash recipe.

"I can't talk now. I'm at work," she said, although I'd already told her she could screw up. I was hoping to collect unemployment.

"Just tell me where you keep your goulash recipe, cause all he does is complain about my cooking."

Then she said: "You two work out your own problems. Leave me out of this," sounding just like me, word for word.

Mother's life was not conducive to the relaxation I hoped for. When I wasn't waiting on Dad hand and foot—fetching him his *TV Guide* or nasal spray or fresh pack of cigarettes—I was dumping his cigarette butts, beer cans, and soggy Kleenex in the trash. A long pair of barbecue tongs gave me the extra reach I needed for removing his underwear and socks from the floor and tossing them into the hamper. I was relieved Mother'd be back before laundry time.

But a week later she refused to return my body.

"Just a few more days," she whined. "I had your period the whole time."

"And I have your fucking osteoporosis!"

"Watch that potty mouth! Just because I'm inhabiting your body doesn't mean I'm not still your mother. Besides, what's a few more days? I thought you'd want more time off from work!"

I was furious. "Like what I do isn't work! Do you know what a slob Father is?"

She emitted an evil laugh, a sound unlike anything I've ever heard from either of us.

"Well I don't care. *You* married him. I want my body and I want it now!"

Mother said, "I gave you that body!"

By now I really missed Lenny. The first week of my and Mother's arrangement his evenings had been taken up by a new software seminar, but this week he'd be home nights—and hankering. Not that I expected Mother to have sex with him, but I easily imagined her tactless refusals causing a serious rift in my marriage.

But soon that would be the least of my worries, because Mother, my very own flesh and blood, ran off with my body.

Her best friend, that is, *my* best friend, informed me that Mother had started dating one of "Real Me" Haircoloring 1-800 callers, an older man with a thick head of salt and pepper hair. He had asked mother if "on-the-town medium brown" would work for a man. My colleagues and I were trained to answer "certainly," but Mother coyly replied that grey hair on a 47-year-old man was sexy. As our calls are often monitored, Mother lost my job—not for flirting with him, but for advising against the dye-job

She left a note for Lenny, claiming she needed to "find herself." He hoped that I, his "mother-in-law," might have some insight into my "daughter's" sudden turnabout. "Our last evening together was beautiful," he said, "I don't understand."

The cops laughed and told me my 32-year-old "child" was too old to put on a milk carton. Father was barely fazed by his "daughter's" disappearance. "I always figured she'd do something stupid like this. Maybe she joined a cult."

But at least now I had an excuse for my strange behavior: I barely ate, barely slept; all I did was sit by the phone and wait for her to call. I feared for her physical safety and well-being. No, I take that back. Truthfully, I feared for my own skin. Why should I worry about the psychic damage she might be imposing upon herself, when she could be giving me sexually-transmitted diseases?

Lenny and I hired a private detective, but the "Real Me" Haircoloring Corporation could not, for legal reasons, provide him with the phone number of Mother's paramour. Without any leads, his search came up blank.

Months passed. Gradually I became more comfortable inside Mother's skin. Not that I enjoyed it, but I learned to make the necessary adjustments. I sold Mother's jewelry, and with the money bought a small computer. The attic would have been an ideal workspace, had it not been packed with Mother's dust-mite-infested clothes she'd been collecting since the 1950's.

So I threw a yard sale—a big success thanks to overwhelming support from neighbors who empathized with me over my "daughter's" disappearance. Mother's poodle skirts were quickly swept up by a young girl with pierced eyebrows. My neighbor cried out from across the fence, "It must be tough giving away your youth like that." If she only knew.

That evening every bone and muscle ached. The excitement was too much for my 63-year-old body, too much hauling stuff up and down

the attic stairs. Father was worthless, and Lenny had chosen that weekend to visit his family in Cleveland. I worried: what if he meets another woman? In his mind I had abandoned and betrayed him, and deserved his sweet revenge. I tripled up on the painkillers

But with my new cash I bought a huge freezer for the basement and filled it with Lean Cuisine® and Swanson Hungry-Man® dinners. My cooking days were over. I showed Father how to use the microwave and began enjoying my new attic studio.

To forget Lenny and my lost middle age, I plunged myself into my work: an animal-rights revisionist version of Moby Dick, from the whale's point of view. In fact, the day Mother arrived I was in such an intellectual reverie I never even heard the doorbell. Father's incessant shouts of "Get the door goddam it!" finally roused me.

The experience of seeing my body again standing on the front porch was overwhelming enough, but imagine how I felt to see me there with dyed-platinum hair and a huge, pregnant belly.

Mother had gotten me knocked up with her very own grandchild.

What did she want to do, anyway, give me a heart attack? I collapsed on the Barcalounger and fanned myself with a *Reader's Digest*.

"Vince is in the car," Mother said, "I'd like you to meet him."

I hurled the magazine directly at her pregnant gut, but it landed in the fish tank instead. Mother said, "I hope Daddy's already read that," and I said, "What do you care? You're *me* now!"

"I should leave," she said, "but I won't because I'm your mother and all mothers must suffer for their children."

"What are you talking about?"

"I'm ready to switch."

Of course she had her terms, and being in no position to compromise I quickly agreed. First, Father and I were to have her and Vince over for Sunday afternoon dinner. She told me where to find her goulash recipe,

I didn't expect Vince to look like Al Pacino, only taller, (Mother had always preferred Waspy, fair-haired boys like Robert Redford and Dan Quayle) nor did I expect him to profusely compliment my cooking skills, nor help me with the dishes, nor totally ignore the Bears game Dad had going on the kitchen TV. He had a slight accent: Hungarian, Slovak, I couldn't tell, but it was somewhat sexy and I had to compliment Mother on her taste.

Mother also insisted on seeing my poor husband Lenny again. He phoned me as soon as she left to cry on my shoulder. I tried to patch things up between them, or what I hoped someday soon would be us.

"I'm betting that any day she'll change her mind and come back to you begging forgiveness." I blamed amnesia and manic-depression. I even fabricated a story about psychological disturbances from repressed memories of sexual abuse suffered at age nine from my beloved Uncle Harvey, may he rest in peace. But Lenny was inconsolable. "She's in love with another man!" he wailed. "She's going to have his baby!"

I drove to Vince's home, looking for Mother, outraged. Why did she insist on torturing me? If she intended to keep my body why wave it in front of my nose like a carrot on a stick? I was so hysterical that the neighborhood with its meandering private driveways leading up to eight bedroom Tudor homes didn't register. Only when I found the address painted on the curb and saw a Mercedes *and* Porsche parked in the driveway did I realize that Vince was wealthy.

Mother wasn't there. She was off shopping for baby clothes, according to Vince, who showered me with unexpected hospitality: walnut-encrusted brie, crackers, and a couple glasses of a stunning Chardonnay with an intense, buttery richness. Although Mother's medications were not to be mixed with alcohol, given my frantic state of mind I drank the wine voraciously. Vince understood why I had come: my "husband" and I were now facing a family scandal. But what would I prefer—a little embarrassment, or a lifetime of unhappiness for my "daughter," a "regular old-fashioned girl," who reminded him of his dear departed mother? He felt that he could provide her with the love and stability she needed. Lenny was too selfish, a miser, and a hypochondriac.

Suddenly I felt woozy, not from the wine, or the painkillers, but from the sudden realization that Mother and Vince were right. I had married a man who made me check the moles on his back each month, on the first, but had never offered to check my breasts for lumps or at least suggest I do so myself. I had married a man who once took an ambulance to the hospital for indigestion, but refused to bring home Haagen Dazs® when I asked, claiming it was too expensive and generic was no different.

Vince suggested I lie down in one of his guest rooms until I felt better. As I lay beneath a real down comforter, my head resting on real down pillows, I imagined how shocked Mother would be to find me here.

But she wouldn't. Instead, a ringing phone and Vince's anxious voice awakened me. Mother had begun having contractions while buying a white lace christening gown, and had managed to take a taxi to the hospital. Vince insisted I continue resting, but I splashed cold water on my face and demanded to ride along. "After all, she's my daughter."

Seeing my body lying in a hospital bed panting like a dog and groaning in pain was not pleasant, but I knew if I wanted to inhabit it again, I'd have to share Mother's suffering.

I pulled the pouches of cramp bark, blood root, and ground goat's teeth out of my handbag and persuaded Vince that Mother and I needed to perform an ancient good luck ritual handed down from our Celtic ancestors. Mother needed no persuading. The thought ran through my mind that this transformation might hurt the baby, but it quickly passed.

Switching back was an awesome experience. To feel it all at once, my youthful, fertile body, the baby straining to escape my womb! For a brief moment I understood the whole pleasure/pain continuum. Mother collapsed in a chair, not expecting the pharmacological havoc I'd been playing with her body, but regained consciousness just in time to witness the birth of Hillary Jeanine.

Suddenly this beautiful baby girl was the sole reason for my existence. I wasn't sure if I could ever straighten out the mess Mother had made of my life, but whatever turn my life took next would be in the best interests of Hillary.

One thing for sure, I couldn't go back to Lenny. The bond of trust was broken, and convincing him I'd never run off again would be as difficult as convincing him that Mother and I had been living in each other's skins. And even if Lenny did accept my beautiful Hillary Jeanine as his own, Vince had the financial resources to wage a mean-ass custody battle.

Yet it was hard imagining Vince being mean or vindictive. The next day at the hospital, he brought me a dozen yellow roses and a pint of Haagen Dazs® macadamia nut. Two days later it seemed only natural to move into his home, where Mother had furnished a charming nursery. The recuperation period—six weeks without sex, under doctor's orders—relieved me from having to rush into wifely duties (even though technically I was still married to Lenny). For six weeks Vince served me breakfast in bed—he had taken a leave of absence from his rare gem import business—and hired a wonderful live-in nanny to change

Hillary's diapers. In between feeding Hillary I caught up on my Steven King reading, chocolate chip cookie eating, and slowly fell in love with the man who showered my face with kisses each morning after brushing the cookie crumbs from my lips.

Mother likes to take credit for the whole thing. "I picked him out for you," she says, "Is this the thanks I get?" whenever we insist on spending equal time with Vince's parents over the holidays.

But her guilt-trip won't work, as I know for certain that I've enriched her life as much as she's enriched mine. Her experience at the "New Day" Rehabilitation Clinic for her little painkiller dependency problem opened up her social life quite considerably. She's finally coming to terms with many thorny issues, and is much more assertive with Father. She loves her new computer, and confides in me regarding her occasional online flirtations.

As for Father, the enormous changes that have taken place in his family have hardly made a dent—although he does love his new granddaughter one heck of a lot. If he only knew she was the product of his wife's infidelity. On second thought, I doubt he'd even care.

Oh, one more thing. Mother had taken another liberty that I discovered soon after I came home from the hospital. Checking my body in the full length mirror, I was shocked to discover an image tattooed to my left butt cheek. Not a rose, not a trendy geometric abstraction, but none other than Winnie the Pooh. Now I understood why some of the "oh how cutes" I heard from the hospital staff seemed to be directed not at Hillary but at my ass.

I also understood the larger implication. When I was a child I loved Pooh. Mother sang me to sleep with the Pooh song, decorated my room with a Pooh bedspread, dressed me in Pooh pajamas. Mother tattooed me so I wouldn't forget that no matter what happened between us, I would always be her daughter. We would share an inextricable bond of closeness that at times could be suffocating, yet at times liberating. It was a bond that I never understood until we bore my first daughter.

Bamboo

My mother loved the bamboo tree.
Bamboo has a thousand uses, she said.
Not one part is wasted. Bamboo shoots
are good to eat. We use the leaves
to wrap food. Old bamboo makes walls
and windows, tables and chairs for poor folk.
We have bamboo bridges, bamboo poles
for carrying burdens, to pick fruit on high trees,
to hang laundry out to dry. We weave young canes
into baskets to catch fish, to winnow rice.
And a young cane will beat the naughtiness
out of children.

Bamboo is what we are, she said. We bend
with the rain and the wind, we do not break.

Hilary Tham

Creeley

Olson's dead
for one
small damn thing,
terrifyingly, modestly, inevitably.

Time is growing short
as it is. Old age,
weird, sluggish confusion,
your cluster, your

tour group.
Where's everyone
going? Otherwise
directions. Those that locate

you disappear. Your life
disappears. The life
given, the life
vouchsafed. Gone!

Form is what I do
and where
I do it. If you can't
give substance to

I love you,
then where
are you?
Nowhere.

While I am
at it, I misquoted
Dickinson writing,
"I am an inebriated air."

T. Clayton Wood

Horti Pompeiani

What if not fear requires that nature
retire to a room? The boxed-in gardens
in the houses' centers have no view
of the volcano, just one square of sky.
Here: manageable mounds of lavender,

lemon trees in pots & vines cut to curve this
way or that. Perhaps they think it best
if the children take fountains & pink marble
for granted, think that finches come in cages.
& those panels of *trompe l'oeil*—distant

expanses of sage & cypress, terraces with
pools of sunlight painted in—have taught them
the components of flat & far that make up
the stares of statues. Certainly the cats
benefit from it. Almost every day a bird

flies in through a skylight & then stuns
itself on a piece of stone-hard sky. At night
when the people dream, they do not dream
of lava, smoke or ash, but of clay pots thick
with glaze, tabletops gleaming with varnish.

Matthea Harvey

The State Of Expectation

Again housewives took blue pills to magnify the moment
When they rounded the curve of a chocolate cake and
Were about to find out whether the frosting would
Last year when something truly predictable happened
(Headline: secretary of security has attack of insecurity)
People quit Planners Anonymous in droves and a
Certain amount of I-told-you-so-ing went on at the
Dissenters' Sewing Circle whose members stitched
Certainty into their samplers and delighted in homespun
Advice was dispensed officially by the Probability Channel
Which claimed to be the only thing you could count
On the tenth anniversary of uncertainty they generated
Thousands of new probability curves which were then
Reflected in fads voluptuous women were fully in fashion
Since unlike muscles their curves were quirky and God-
Given the unusually low chance of chandeliers killing
A relative all heirs and heiresses had them hung in their
Living rooms and then sat on their satin sofas hopefully
Waiting was slang for adolescence its symptoms were
Revered so special footstools with gold fringe were placed
By the phone when the first signs of sulking surfaced
Purpose was scorned in all but the very old who were
Also idolized because the anticipation of death made their
Minds wander and meant their sandwiches always lacked
Something went wrong with the lottery and someone won
Though the government claimed it was one of a series of
Tests in school were rarely given but frequently announced
Then pulses taken and palms ranked according to sweat
No Reason To Fret was a swear as was Don't Worry About
It hurt the governor's ratings a bit when he punished the
Unflappable Flappers for a rather predetermined performance
At the capitol ball but the party line was that he was playing
With notions of complacency and that they'd all soon be

Surprised which sent the people into a series of speculative
Flurries were given a 12% probability rating and in the
Supermarket parking lot a man who fainted on his Ford
When a receipt and a tissue flew by on the wind was given
A medal which he modestly said he had never expected

Matthea Harvey

Olympians

My tiny Italian grandmothers gathered in wooden chairs around my bed, making lace, giving advice, and cheering me on as I made love. You can imagine their utter surprise when Husband One, after an energetic finish, jumped up and held up a white sign that read 7.3. We huddled, discussing this development.

Husband One, with his score cards, left when I married Husband Two. The grandmothers, with their tatting shuttles clicking, peeked over the down comforter and suggested little refinements to our movements. Rumors of our expertise spread through our little town. Professionals arrived begging for an audience. The grandmothers denied admittance. When our performance reached perfection, Husband Two became bored and left.

I never joined the grandmothers and never learned to make lace. I gave up the turgid competition of an Olympic career. My children are free of tradition. Nowadays I just stir the spaghetti sauce as my portly Greek sweetheart pats my behind on the way to our tomato garden. But sometimes, when the winter winds sound like the low howl of an audience, I feel the rise of my Italian blood and catapult across the counterpane in double-back handsprings and do forward tucks off the regulation headboard.

Susan Sampson

Because Everything that Ever Happened to Me Happened First to the People Inside

He will not call
but I believe he thinks about it,
and I remember telling him once
that I used to have a white wooden dollhouse.

What do you mean? he said, always slow to understand.
I mean, I said, that the rooms were just like home,
and I had a working doorbell.

There was a porch in front with wicker chairs
No roof, but I loved my porch with its view
of the night ceiling.

He will not call
but I believe he thinks,
and my small fireplace was homemade and colored red,
the bricks penciled in, the fire
a cheerful picture.

I have lovingly made curtains and rugs.
I have wallpapered the walls many times.
He will not call,
yet I have lovingly attended to the house
all my life,

cared for the small china family,
wept tears for the tin soldiers who could never
shed their heavy uniforms or sit down
on the green plush chairs.

Julie Herrick White

Bootheel

There the hollows ran deep, and mist at night
rolled like rivers onto roads and fields. We played
wild with legends—vampires, gods, the familiar lady
who waited eternally for a ride. We were lusty with youth.

The young girls' nipples ached to bloom, burst,
be bitten like ripe strawberries. The moon floated lazy
and cool, such a hallow light, ghosting up futures
we'd never have because no one did. We longed.

We sped over the bridge to Cairo, loving that Mississippi
roil beneath us, the span of states. The girls bought liquor
and protested while the boys drank all the drive back.
Such bounty in that botheel. We sucked in honeysuckle

and lush rose, grew fond of redbuds and saltlicks. We would have bayed
but our throats were drowning in song and spirits. No one died, though we
daredeviled roads and clipped hills like we'd soar to the next, our headlights
vying with stars for a direction of our own.

We were poor. Oh, yes. We learned from our parents' labor, spoke
factory and farm, quota and piecework, time cards. We believed kin
a powerful word. And such lore we knew—the magic of menses,
a firm trip to hell;
the marking of babies so the neck snaked and the eyes hooded. We knew

veterans so shocked they stalked like zombies, beloved and owned
by everyone. Some people rotted slowly—dropsy, frostbite, loss of hope.
On May Day, mothers delivered baskets to every decrepit soul they could
pity. All around the town, church spires prodded heaven, and botheel

urchins breathed moist air, held god in their lungs, kissed, loved,
raced their young lives like glory might escape even one fleeting touch.
The rest of the world was nowhere known, and strange—full of rules
no one could learn, much less follow.

We came from swampland, redeemed at great cost by our grandfathers'
fathers, and we were reminded often—cypress had once grown
here, rooted deep. And when the mist rose to lap our land like water,
we swam and shimmered in the Missouri night.

R. M. Kinder

Intimate Voices

for E. and M. Freier

I

When I first loved poetry, I was certain that we both
were drawn to melancholy pleasures,
to birches, pale and shabbily bandaged,
to alleys and battered doors.
And I held her white, paper hands
in a ring of lamplight, late into the night.

In the days, I rode buses with men exhausted
by pistons, by a grimy air
of combustion and biting whiskey;
with women, old scarves tied to their heads, the odor
of ammonia on their burning palms.
In the evenings, my woman in lamplight wove
their harsh pain into her radiant dress.

But tonight the moon has starved down
to its one white rib,
like men and women I've loved, who bent to the ground
or snapped, weighted with ice.
Grim things that no one expects came toward them:
walls of brick faces, coffins, hungry dolls,
dim shapes that follow you underwater.

Walking these streets, I hear
tower bells echo in the closed arcade.
Young women cross the square, with quick steps,
eyeing the shadows to either side,
dwarfed by tall, glass buildings that gleam
like stolen knives in the dark.

II

Now I understand the child's fear
of marionettes: to waltz so sadly against our wills,
to grasp things clumsily, to crack
our heads together, no matter how carefully
we try to embrace.

A foghorn's groan blows in from the lake.
The fountains, with their nervous sobbing,
say, *Be still*. The wind in its shredded coat says,
Stay warm. But skyscrapers rise,
like high false hopes
on which our years are spindled.
And the angel falls, without knowing why.

III

Each year, the faithful heart
seems more and more an outlaw,
as we lay down new lies, like public sidewalks
that take us where we thought
we wanted to go.

So I need to hear intimate voices.
I need that poetry,
that forgiving light.
I need that woman of words to see
black clouds from factory smokestacks at dusk,
like a spreading grief in the lowlands of heaven;
to hear the gray lake waves
lapping wood piers, the cold depths pleading
with the land for warmth.

I want to listen in the night, as she strings
her lamplit words of care
the way a woman knits lovingly,
until she sleeps,
for the child that her body
is dreaming toward light.

Lawrence Russ

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Louis Phillips has published over thirty books for children and adults, and has appeared in *The Smithsonian*, *San Francisco Chronicle*, *New York Times*, *Family Circle*, and frequently in these pages.

Lawrence Russ has poetry in *Kalliope*, *The Iowa Review*, *Chelsea*, *The Virginia Quarterly Review*, *The Nation*, and five editions of the *Anthology of Magazine Verse and Yearbook of American Poetry*. He also has a chapbook from Owl Creek Press.

Glenn Shea has poetry in the *Hiram Poetry Review*, *Mudfish*, *Florida Review*, and *Duckabush Journal*, among others, and criticism in the *New York Times Book Review* and *The Atlantic*.

Deema Shehabi's poetry has appeared in *The Space between Our Footsteps: Poems and Paintings from the Middle East*, edited by Naomi Shihab Nye.

Rosanne Singer is a Maryland Poet-in-the-Schools whose poetry appears in *Poem*, *Visions International*, *The Cape Rock*, *Midwest Poetry Review*, *The Little Magazine*, *Dominion Review*, *Poetpourri*.

Michael Spence's second book, *Adam Chooses*, was published last year by Rose Alley Press. He appears in *Poetry Ireland Review*, *Press*, *The Chariton Review*, and *The Sewanee Review*.

Barry Sternlieb is editor of Mad River Press, which does handmade letterpress poetry chapbooks. His own latest book is *Thoreau's Hat* (Brooding Heron Press, 1994). He appears in *Poetry*, *Quarterly West*, *Yankee*, *The Gettysburg Review*, and *Prairie Schooner*.

Sarah Pemberton Strong has appeared in *Seattle Review*, *The San Francisco Bay Guardian*, *Anything That Moves*, and the anthology *Generation Q*.

Virgil Suarez is working on a book about Cuba and the Caribbean called *Caliban Ponders Chaos*. Other poems from the book have appeared in *The Kenyon Review*, *Shenandoah*, *The Southern Review*, *The New England Review*, and *Mississippi Review*.

Bill Sweeney writes in Brooklyn and often thinks of Mr. Shank as he teaches his own classes. His work has appeared in *The Cape Rock*, *Abraxas*, *Mudfish*, *The South Carolina Review*, *The Greensboro Review*, and *Midwest Poetry Review*. A chapbook of poems about his daughter is just out from The Center for Book Arts in New York.

Mark Terrill is a former merchant seaman now living in Germany. His work appears in *Chelsea*, *City Lights Review*, *Seattle Review*, and *Baltimore Review*. He has a new poetry chapbook from Red Dancefloor Press, and a volume of translations from Sulphur River.

Hilary Tham is the author of five books of poetry, the latest being *Lane with No Name* (Lynne Rienner 1997). She has published widely here and abroad, and been featured on National Public Radio. She is Editor-in-chief of *Word Works* and poetry editor of *Potomac Review*.

Lynn Lyman Trombetta has appeared in *The Sun*, *Calyx*, *Wild Duck Review*, *Americas Review*, *Poets On*, and *Green Fuse*.

T. Clayton Wood has published in the *Iowa Journal of Cultural Studies* and previously in *Atlanta Review*. He also has a poem forthcoming in *The Nation*.

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