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Come in...and be captivated...



"The Poet" by Denise Morris Curt; www.ctlimner.com

Denise Morris Curt, The Connecticut Limner

The violin is from Germany circa 1902. The Poet is dressed in red: made of Chinese sealing wax, her hair is Guilford, CT clay soil and copper particles. The book of poems is lapis lazuli and milk curd with tempera pigments. The white is a brilliant mica from Madison, CT which has been cleansed to remove the dark ore materials. The gold band in her hair is gold dust mixed with melted frankincense. The varnish is beeswax which feeds the wood and helps to continue its life with the movement of each season/temperature change, humidity, etc. and melted amber; the two are heated together to give a high sheen and harder lustre.

### **This Is Not a Love Poem**

by Fredrick Zydek

It's a poem about the moon  
ascending into wonder,  
the soft neck of memory  
when the little scar above  
your upper lip transforms  
a slight smile into an  
invitation to dance.

It's a poem about a great  
bear whose celebrated growl  
nuzzled at your ear as gently

as a nursing lamb. Maybe  
it's a collection of words  
dripping with the smell  
and fragrance of your hair,

a gathering place where nouns  
do more than name you,  
where verbs tingle each time  
your eyes nudge them deeper  
into the language this poem  
invited one kiss at a time.

This is the kind of thing

that tempts you with adjectives  
even angels fear to utter.

It wants to be your nest.

This poem wants to explode  
in you, wants to draw you  
in the way light gathers  
a shadow and makes it glow.

**In the Zone**

by Fredrick Zydek

I'm in the center place where time stands still.  
Awareness and I have become the same  
thing. What I am goes beyond my free will  
and enters a space where silence sustains  
me. How awesome this place. It is the source  
and summit, the window of faith, holy.  
It is where Spirit, Karma, and the Force  
pour the oils that feed our lamps and slowly  
light the paths that lead us to the hallowed  
and sacred. The weaver of peace and love  
lives in here. This is the divine abode.  
It is within you, around you, above  
  
you, where all life's treasures wait to be shown  
as proof that you have come into the zone.

---

**A Few Wild Places**

by Fredrick Zydek

There are still a few wild places on earth:  
arenas men have not entered, scenes  
not photographed, places where death and birth  
are parts of a food chain where nature cleans  
up its plate no matter what's found on it.  
If it has life in it, something will find  
and swallow it almost whole. They don't quit.  
Every day everything out there grinds  
its teeth on some other living thing. Why  
must life keep busy at death to live on?  
What sort of system requires that things die  
in order for others to sing their songs?  
  
In the wild place, this seems almost natural.  
At the market, we don't see it at all.

---

**A Work in Progress**

by Fredrick Zydek

How assuring it was when our perfect  
universe seemed to so comfortably fit  
Isaac Newton's laws of cause and effect.  
Everything owned a truth and opposite.  
Logic and reason were king. Rule could be  
counted on to function like divine law.  
That was before we found flaws and debris  
in the system's matrix and formula.  
Suddenly we were faced with quantum things,  
bits and pieces of light that can be in  
more than one place at a time - things that bring  
more questions than facts to the disciplines  
of mathematics and science. Now we must  
live among questions and Sir Issac's dust.

---

### **Trying to Be a Child of the Light**

by Fredrick Zydek

I know it's what I'm made of. Science has proven  
that atoms are composed of shreds and strings

of light. These tiny fires are not frozen  
in one space. It is as if they have wings  
that lift them to more than one place at a time.  
I am more, of course. I am cell and tissue,  
systems and gas, longings, organs and mind.  
I'm a creature faced with an odd issue.  
I must learn to live as a child of light,  
as the activity of light moving  
through the strange nothingness where staying bright  
is often harder to do than improving.  
  
I'm learning to transcend my animal state  
and become what the spirit celebrates.

---

**Relativity of Freedom**

by Farida Samerkhanova

She lets her man go  
Wherever and whenever  
He wants, because  
He would not go  
Father than the

The length of his leash  
Would allow him,  
Even when there is no  
Collar around his neck.  
This is the mentality  
Of most men and dogs,  
Though not all women  
And dog owners  
Know that.

---

**Programmed in Loud**

by Cheryl Sommese

I remember sitting at the table and  
everything was loud.  
Dishes were loud, voices were loud  
footsteps were loud,  
even Dad's eyes were loud!  
Grandma sat in her favorite chair mostly speechless,  
love evident in her form,  
but when she interjected Broken English quips, they were loud!

Not a harsh loud like everyone was angry,  
just an animated kind—  
like even thoughts had lips.  
This was all so usual,  
customary,  
normal to my little girl existence,  
loud was familiar.

But the years carried on and  
loud began to weaken like 20/20 eyesight.  
As my dolls and princess shoes departed  
I grew at odds with my former pal.  
Entering a theater or  
restaurant  
complexity surfaced  
and I became accustomed to its ways:  
composed diction  
calculated stride,  
soon I came to loathe loud,  
for it reminded me I was not inherently programmed  
to commune with my newer  
nature.

I was in an ethnic eatery the other day  
and met loud face to face.  
I stared at it, scrutinizing its features,  
and remarkably  
all these wonderful feelings came rushing through  
me!  
I remained an observer  
for almost everyone I know abandoned its traits  
long ago.  
Still it was as refreshing as I had remembered:  
feeling no pretense to be anything it wasn't,  
nor deny itself the pleasure to be what it is;  
I left envying loud—  
wishing I could again know its innocence:  
and solemnly wondered  
if I could ever go back.

---

### **Scholarly Ignorance?**

by Cheryl Sommese

He looked beaten yet handsome,  
a scholarly man  
educated in books and life.

Surviving the unimaginable as a child  
and unfathomable as a senior.

Still challenged to  
grasp the seedier side of man.

I watched vigilantly  
as he outlined the details of his quandary:  
errant eyebrows,  
sallow skin,  
angry beyond measure  
because vast amounts of wealth  
accumulated from his life story  
vanished  
into deceit.

Perhaps a camel has better odds of traveling through the eye of a needle  
than he has to forgive his offender.

This time a monster not disparate  
but with lineage like him.

Yet who can reproach his despise,  
for untold numbers equally share his  
story.

If it had been me, undoubtedly I would demonstrate  
a reaction better left to motion pictures.

But where is faith,  
or works,  
when it all falls apart?

Our inclination for grandeur

bared  
by morphed depravity

Sometimes demons show faith—  
like the evildoer now exposed.

But where is our blame  
when we place our faith  
in demons?

---

Editor's note: The text here is kept to the original so that the format and alignment of the poem in its shape is unchanged.

**Beneath Her Pigtails**

by Melissa Dalis

Laughs  
Soccer star  
Brightest smile  
Dancer and singer  
Prettiest outfits  
Popular girl  
Happy.

Walks home alone  
*School was fine, Mom*  
Quickly running to her room  
Screaming and crying into her hands  
Only her stuffed animals will know  
A whole world beneath her pigtails  
Hiding behind closed doors  
No one to talk to

Alone.  
Rips off dress  
Steps onto the scale  
Puts hands over her eyes  
Only ten pounds until perfection  
Glances at the cottage cheese on her legs  
Sweaty sit-ups during Disney channel breaks  
Cuts out pictures of Barbie dolls as her thinspiration  
Throws mom's dinner out the window for the birds outside  
Found with a pink toothbrush and head lying over a toilet of lettuce

*But she was*

*perfect.*

**April's flowers**

by Michelle Kennedy

You meticulously tend  
every flower in your garden  
Till the soil, sprinkle nutrients  
into the earth  
giving your time and attention  
even to the weeds which seek  
to destroy your hard work  
I am in the dark corner with dry soil  
Not even a drop of water you give  
to nourish me  
Abandoned, I wonder  
how you could turn from me  
I watched you grow  
from girl/woman/mother  
Unconditional love I've given  
so you assume I will remain  
planted  
Never leave you  
But you're always too busy for me  
and I am dying

With great effort  
I will lift my eyes  
to the sky  
Seek  
a wind of change  
to blow my dry seeds elsewhere  
where it is warm and welcoming  
I will find a new home  
for my tired, unloved roots

---

**Bee, Still, My Heart**

by Michelle Kennedy

Just last night  
I listened to you  
Your honey nectar lies  
lay thick on your tongue,  
trying to coat your way  
out of the sticky mess  
inside of your head  
I wanted so desperately  
to believe you, to slip  
into the tranquil buzz again  
Numb myself to the truth

But this time I couldn't

Did you know that every  
syllable stung me?  
Did you know that every  
word stung me?  
Did you know that every  
sentence clung to me?  
Could I continue?  
I wanted so desperately  
to believe you, to slip  
into the tranquil buzz again  
Numb myself to the truth

But this time I couldn't

---

**june 28, oob**

by Kat Farrin

this sunday morning  
even the sound of rumi too much  
this abundance the last week in june

hovering me to an edge

dreaming a white owl opening her wing to me  
only to watch her mouth smile and realize she is human  
thinly disguised

yesterday  
a bulb pops with a bang so loud i jump  
i try to rescue my paintings  
after the basement floods  
someone shuts the door, the lights go out  
and at the end of a long maze  
i am immersed in a darkness so thick  
i can't breathe

the hermit card reaches out to me  
walk away, walk away  
i get up before light  
to feel space, hear waves roll in

today is my daughter's birthday  
but i'm headed up the coast to  
an uncle's funeral

the world  
it is way too much with me

**At the Bathroom Mirror with Tweezers**

by Mark Barkawitz

my hairline is receding

and i really hate it.

it's causing my part to creep

ever so slightly

but noticeably backwards.

i've found myself becoming

obsessed with the hairlines

of others as well.

when we converse,

my eyes glance above theirs

to sneak a peek

at thinning here,

receding there,

combed to cover,

a bald pate everywhere.

and where has it all gone—

the hair of my youth—  
an evenly-grown abundance  
which i took so casually  
for granted?

apparently, the roots  
have twisted deeply within.  
'cause it's growing  
like furry-white bushes  
out my goddamn ears.

---

### **I Hate Flying**

by Mark Barkawitz

i haven't boarded an airplane  
since the winter of 1979, when  
a bumpy flight in a bad storm on a small jet  
from san francisco to los angeles  
convinced me—i hate flying.

i don't care about the statistics.

i don't care about the law of averages.  
i want to be in control of my own destiny.  
i want the steering wheel in my hands.  
i want a parachute.  
until then, i travel surface only.

and i'd been comfortable with the limits  
this personal code of physics had put on my life—

until my uncle ferdy died suddenly.  
mom wanted me to fly back to new york  
with her for the funeral.  
hundreds of people were attending  
from as far away as london.  
ferdy had been an influential guy  
and a good friend to many.  
there wasn't enough time for a cross-country drive,  
so i agreed to fly back with her.

but at the last minute,  
i chickened out—  
death was already in the air.

mom flew to new york without me.  
so much for controlling my own destiny.

i have an old photo of ferdy  
while on a business trip to california,  
sitting on back of my little brother's motorcycle—  
easy-rider in wing-tips—  
poised to soar down mom's driveway.  
every time i look at it,  
i'm reminded  
just how much  
i hate flying.

---

### **Untitled**

by Adam Bright

At last I come to rest  
Between the fire and  
The low notes of  
A brooding canticle

Emotions, ancient and all at once  
New  
Drive nails deep  
Against wood and stone and flesh

The angel who comes to me  
Singing in deepest azure mourning  
Lazily lilting lyrical lore  
Whispers hints of love  
That she of me implores

With most sincere and frank gratitude  
I fall to my knees  
Shaken by such an unearthly voice  
As that of a ghost bound to my soul

Let not she go from me  
To the light  
For I am bound to her  
In mortal musical eternity

---

### **Summer Sonnet**

by Denise Bouchard

In this enchanted forest of a yard  
We celebrate the day we wed

Rows of lush blue hydrangeas, rafts of hostas  
And varieties of flourishing wild flower beds

Here we stand under an archway  
Of simulated branches infused with timed twinkling lights  
Which dance in a bower of heather

I take your hand in mine and we raise our glasses high  
I recite the old vow "I give you my hand"  
And  
We then dance to the song  
The Sweetest Days  
As we knowingly sigh

A song that speaks of great joy and tears as well  
Of days gone by

For all we've been through

We celebrate with family and friends  
Till the setting sun is nigh

For a sacred vow was taken thirty years past  
And as our sweet, beautiful daughter stands by our side  
On this summer's day of August in its familiar and balmy weather

We look around at this gorgeous home, these lush grounds with pride  
And think upon how we created all of this together.

---

### **A Woman Through the Ages**

by Denise Bouchard

Pregnant with want  
Dreams running wild  
I'm hitting mid-point, yet I'm a newborn child

Feeling like the moon in all of its phases  
Waxing now fully into my power and ruling

All of the currents of land and sea

At other times I'm fading out to a thin sliver of light  
I want to hide, leave me alone, I think, even though  
I'm still affecting the tides of those around me

They're looking to me for answers, for what I'm feeling...  
How will I affect them today?  
But my face gives nothing away; they don't know all that I have seen

I've been there over-lighting the pain, the love, the betrayal of all  
the ages  
Since earth was created...  
I'm full with knowing and knowing all is over-rated

Sometimes wishing I were a more simple woman,  
PTA, meatloaf, bowling, best friends forever, Sally and Sue  
A 9-5 structured life  
Always sunny

Instead I find myself annoyed with the sun  
I have been burned by it

I come alive late in the day  
And try to forget the nights that I  
Over-lighted the painful events in history  
As I watched the sinking of the Titanic,  
Or the many ways they betrayed our daughter

Still, I try to go on dazzling with my light  
And continue to be the beacon  
That guides the small ships home

**Notorious**

by Vince Corvaia

I want Ingrid Bergman

to slip me the key  
to a dangerous room,

to meet me among  
the shadows and Nazi bottles

filled with anything  
but poems.

I've had enough of po biz,  
as Anne Sexton called it.

I want a life filled with  
champagne and uranium.

To hell with the round sounds  
of vowels, of moon, June.

I want to take my chances  
in a black-and-white reality

where Ingrid presses  
her lips to mine

as Claude Rains makes his ominous way  
down the stairs.

---

### **Tourist Season in Old Orchard Beach**

by Vince Corvaia

*for K.F.*

Among the umbrellas  
and pale, lotion-slathered

arms and legs,  
the sand castles shaped

like pails,  
the pleading gulls,

she sits alone  
with her paints,

adorned in tie-dye,

her thick ropes of hair

three times as long  
as her brush,

meticulously placing  
dots of turquoise

on a beaver-chewed  
stick of wood.

This morning's  
angel card

read TRANQUILITY,  
which she will find

later as she walks  
along the railroad track

to the pier, picks up  
a crow's feather on the way.

She will stop  
at the Subway,

carry a sandwich back  
to her condo, where

she lives year-round

with her artwork, her cats,

her meditation recordings  
that ease her to sleep

with the waning day.

---

### **Phone Booth Elegy**

by Vince Corvaia

Like Cheever's swimmer,  
I once stopped

in every phone booth  
between Wall Street

and the Port Authority Bus Terminal  
just to tell her I was

on my way home.  
(I remember her eyes

were green with flecks of gold  
and she wore her long brown hair

up in combs.)  
CNN says

four booths remain

in New York City.

Now a gecko is trying  
to sell me insurance

against loss.

---

### **A Single Life**

by Vince Corvaia

Cubicle days  
and nights of unoriginal sin.

Never enough toner,  
never enough wonder in bed.

“If you have something to say to me,”  
his boss tells him,

“say it behind my back, because  
I don’t need to hear it.”

His last lover left crumbs,  
mispronounced “nuclear”

when they tried to speak.  
Too many channels,

two little pills.  
They dissolve like dreams, or something.

---

### **Night**

by Nicole M. Bouchard

We were once great companions so inseparably close,  
you a shadow to my form...

Now I cannot bear the shrill silence of a raging mind or memory  
I only want to scream

How did we lose hold of one another's hand walking into this nightmare,  
this dark emphatic scheme?

The serenity I felt in the presence of your all-encompassing darkness has  
left.  
The discrete peace and protection replaced by agitated fears, alone,  
beguiled, bereft...

I used to drink in the hours with you deeply,  
Those glittery dreamer dreams resenting the dawn come to end our time.  
Child beliefs cradled me but the bough broke, the cradle fell, fate spoke and  
there is no rope nor braid with which to climb.

No longer a mystery to me,  
I see you now in dawn's light...

No more do you hold me, not now; too much... goodbye to good night

---

### **Lost City**

by Nicole M. Bouchard

Come home, take a bath,  
Wash off the city I've just left

The clever noble marks my ancestors made  
Are fading, so I look for them everywhere else

I remember, we remember, they remember,  
And so it will be  
But the old are tired and so are the young

And the city...  
It is a once grande dame of the stage  
She sits at her vanity upon the balding velvet seat,  
Unconscious of the chipping gold paint  
Exposing the scratched wood underneath

Yellowing poster of her former glories  
Lie scattered with the dated newspaper clippings  
At her feet

The grandeur is gone from her face and no coat  
Of fresh paint or rouge will undo the Truth upon  
Her face...  
The new age coming is aggressive, casual-careless, and ugly-cruel

Her formerly elegant gown is moth eaten and her dim eyes  
Say the show is over.  
She bravely walks onto the dilapidated stage and  
Does a low, deep bow to her audience of past and present inhabitants.

*Adieu.*

---

**The Beauty of the Beast**

by Nicole M. Bouchard

There have been others... of this he is

Certain

He knows of enchanted castles,

Gilded cages with towers

And

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S

Gargoyles instead of cherubs

And manifestation, imagination

Bringing to life objects and creatures as

They'd never been before

He knows of the selfish princes  
Who turned beggar women away  
And the enchantresses who cast  
Their spells as punishment

But his story is different;  
He knows not the reason  
For his curse  
He did not give too little-  
It might be said of him that he gave too much

And he is beautiful;  
The beastliness is on the inside  
Turned inward, so no one  
Can see  
The unsightly quality of his pain  
It is within as opposed to those forced to wear it without

The roses in his garden are trying to bloom  
though he does have a magic mirror,  
A digital portal to the

Outside world

And he needs to be loved

In return to break the spell

Some days he thunders at

Silent stone walls, demanding

To know why what's happened

Has befallen him

He is both beauty and the beast

The objects who love their master

Warn him that the villagers are at the door

But he doesn't care any longer.

Their damage was done years ago.

He focuses instead on the enchanted rose

Beneath the glass

Instead of shedding its petals, counting down time

Like an hourglass, it is a seed, then a sprout

Growing, Growing, much as he does

When it blossoms, when he's ready,

The curse will be lifted

And he'll have learned to love himself in return

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It's a poem about the moon  
ascending into wonder,  
the soft neck of memory  
when the little scar above  
your upper lip transforms  
a slight smile into an  
invitation to dance.

It's a poem about a great  
bear whose celebrated growl  
nuzzled at your ear as gently

as a nursing lamb. Maybe  
it's a collection of words  
dripping with the smell  
and fragrance of your hair,

a gathering place where nouns  
do more than name you,  
where verbs tingle each time  
your eyes nudge them deeper  
into the language this poem  
invited one kiss at a time.

This is the kind of thing

that tempts you with adjectives  
even angels fear to utter.

It wants to be your nest.

This poem wants to explode  
in you, wants to draw you  
in the way light gathers  
a shadow and makes it glow.

**In the Zone**

by Fredrick Zydek

I'm in the center place where time stands still.  
Awareness and I have become the same  
thing. What I am goes beyond my free will  
and enters a space where silence sustains  
me. How awesome this place. It is the source  
and summit, the window of faith, holy.  
It is where Spirit, Karma, and the Force  
pour the oils that feed our lamps and slowly  
light the paths that lead us to the hallowed  
and sacred. The weaver of peace and love  
lives in here. This is the divine abode.  
It is within you, around you, above  
  
you, where all life's treasures wait to be shown  
as proof that you have come into the zone.

---

**A Few Wild Places**

by Fredrick Zydek

There are still a few wild places on earth:  
arenas men have not entered, scenes  
not photographed, places where death and birth  
are parts of a food chain where nature cleans  
up its plate no matter what's found on it.  
If it has life in it, something will find  
and swallow it almost whole. They don't quit.  
Every day everything out there grinds  
its teeth on some other living thing. Why  
must life keep busy at death to live on?  
What sort of system requires that things die  
in order for others to sing their songs?  
  
In the wild place, this seems almost natural.  
At the market, we don't see it at all.

---

**A Work in Progress**

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How assuring it was when our perfect  
universe seemed to so comfortably fit  
Isaac Newton's laws of cause and effect.  
Everything owned a truth and opposite.  
Logic and reason were king. Rule could be  
counted on to function like divine law.  
That was before we found flaws and debris  
in the system's matrix and formula.  
Suddenly we were faced with quantum things,  
bits and pieces of light that can be in  
more than one place at a time - things that bring  
more questions than facts to the disciplines  
of mathematics and science. Now we must  
live among questions and Sir Issac's dust.

---

### **Trying to Be a Child of the Light**

by Fredrick Zydek

I know it's what I'm made of. Science has proven  
that atoms are composed of shreds and strings

of light. These tiny fires are not frozen  
in one space. It is as if they have wings  
that lift them to more than one place at a time.  
I am more, of course. I am cell and tissue,  
systems and gas, longings, organs and mind.  
I'm a creature faced with an odd issue.  
I must learn to live as a child of light,  
as the activity of light moving  
through the strange nothingness where staying bright  
is often harder to do than improving.  
  
I'm learning to transcend my animal state  
and become what the spirit celebrates.

---

**Relativity of Freedom**

by Farida Samerkhanova

She lets her man go  
Wherever and whenever  
He wants, because  
He would not go  
Father than the

The length of his leash  
Would allow him,  
Even when there is no  
Collar around his neck.  
This is the mentality  
Of most men and dogs,  
Though not all women  
And dog owners  
Know that.

---

### **Programmed in Loud**

by Cheryl Sommese

I remember sitting at the table and  
everything was loud.  
Dishes were loud, voices were loud  
footsteps were loud,  
even Dad's eyes were loud!  
Grandma sat in her favorite chair mostly speechless,  
love evident in her form,  
but when she interjected Broken English quips, they were loud!

Not a harsh loud like everyone was angry,  
just an animated kind—  
like even thoughts had lips.  
This was all so usual,  
customary,  
normal to my little girl existence,  
loud was familiar.

But the years carried on and  
loud began to weaken like 20/20 eyesight.  
As my dolls and princess shoes departed  
I grew at odds with my former pal.  
Entering a theater or  
restaurant  
complexity surfaced  
and I became accustomed to its ways:  
composed diction  
calculated stride,  
soon I came to loathe loud,  
for it reminded me I was not inherently programmed  
to commune with my newer  
nature.

I was in an ethnic eatery the other day  
and met loud face to face.  
I stared at it, scrutinizing its features,  
and remarkably  
all these wonderful feelings came rushing through  
me!  
I remained an observer  
for almost everyone I know abandoned its traits  
long ago.  
Still it was as refreshing as I had remembered:  
feeling no pretense to be anything it wasn't,  
nor deny itself the pleasure to be what it is;  
I left envying loud—  
wishing I could again know its innocence:  
and solemnly wondered  
if I could ever go back.

---

### **Scholarly Ignorance?**

by Cheryl Sommese

He looked beaten yet handsome,  
a scholarly man  
educated in books and life.  
Surviving the unimaginable as a child  
and unfathomable as a senior.  
Still challenged to  
grasp the seedier side of man.

I watched vigilantly  
as he outlined the details of his quandary:  
errant eyebrows,  
sallow skin,  
angry beyond measure  
because vast amounts of wealth  
accumulated from his life story  
vanished  
into deceit.  
Perhaps a camel has better odds of traveling through the eye of a needle  
than he has to forgive his offender.  
This time a monster not disparate  
but with lineage like him.

Yet who can reproach his despise,  
for untold numbers equally share his  
story.

If it had been me, undoubtedly I would demonstrate  
a reaction better left to motion pictures.

But where is faith,  
or works,  
when it all falls apart?

Our inclination for grandeur

bared  
by morphed depravity

Sometimes demons show faith—  
like the evildoer now exposed.

But where is our blame  
when we place our faith  
in demons?

---

Editor's note: The text here is kept to the original so that the format and alignment of the poem in its shape is unchanged.

**Beneath Her Pigtails**

by Melissa Dalis

Laughs  
Soccer star  
Brightest smile  
Dancer and singer  
Prettiest outfits  
Popular girl  
Happy.

Walks home alone  
*School was fine, Mom*  
Quickly running to her room  
Screaming and crying into her hands  
Only her stuffed animals will know  
A whole world beneath her pigtails  
Hiding behind closed doors  
No one to talk to

Alone.  
Rips off dress  
Steps onto the scale  
Puts hands over her eyes  
Only ten pounds until perfection  
Glances at the cottage cheese on her legs  
Sweaty sit-ups during Disney channel breaks  
Cuts out pictures of Barbie dolls as her thinspiration  
Throws mom's dinner out the window for the birds outside  
Found with a pink toothbrush and head lying over a toilet of lettuce

*But she was*

*perfect.*

**April's flowers**

by Michelle Kennedy

You meticulously tend  
every flower in your garden  
Till the soil, sprinkle nutrients  
into the earth  
giving your time and attention  
even to the weeds which seek  
to destroy your hard work  
I am in the dark corner with dry soil  
Not even a drop of water you give  
to nourish me  
Abandoned, I wonder  
how you could turn from me  
I watched you grow  
from girl/woman/mother  
Unconditional love I've given  
so you assume I will remain  
planted  
Never leave you  
But you're always too busy for me  
and I am dying

With great effort  
I will lift my eyes  
to the sky  
Seek  
a wind of change  
to blow my dry seeds elsewhere  
where it is warm and welcoming  
I will find a new home  
for my tired, unloved roots

---

**Bee, Still, My Heart**

by Michelle Kennedy

Just last night  
I listened to you  
Your honey nectar lies  
lay thick on your tongue,  
trying to coat your way  
out of the sticky mess  
inside of your head  
I wanted so desperately  
to believe you, to slip  
into the tranquil buzz again  
Numb myself to the truth

But this time I couldn't

Did you know that every  
syllable stung me?  
Did you know that every  
word stung me?  
Did you know that every  
sentence clung to me?  
Could I continue?  
I wanted so desperately  
to believe you, to slip  
into the tranquil buzz again  
Numb myself to the truth

But this time I couldn't

**june 28, oob**

by Kat Farrin

this sunday morning  
even the sound of rumi too much  
this abundance the last week in june

hovering me to an edge

dreaming a white owl opening her wing to me  
only to watch her mouth smile and realize she is human  
thinly disguised

yesterday  
a bulb pops with a bang so loud i jump  
i try to rescue my paintings  
after the basement floods  
someone shuts the door, the lights go out  
and at the end of a long maze  
i am immersed in a darkness so thick  
i can't breathe

the hermit card reaches out to me  
walk away, walk away  
i get up before light  
to feel space, hear waves roll in

today is my daughter's birthday  
but i'm headed up the coast to  
an uncle's funeral

the world  
it is way too much with me

**At the Bathroom Mirror with Tweezers**

by Mark Barkawitz

my hairline is receding  
and i really hate it.  
it's causing my part to creep  
ever so slightly  
but noticeably backwards.  
  
i've found myself becoming  
obsessed with the hairlines  
of others as well.  
when we converse,  
my eyes glance above theirs  
  
to sneak a peek  
at thinning here,  
receding there,  
combed to cover,  
a bald pate everywhere.  
  
and where has it all gone—

the hair of my youth—  
an evenly-grown abundance  
which i took so casually  
for granted?

apparently, the roots  
have twisted deeply within.  
'cause it's growing  
like furry-white bushes  
out my goddamn ears.

---

### **I Hate Flying**

by Mark Barkawitz

i haven't boarded an airplane  
since the winter of 1979, when  
a bumpy flight in a bad storm on a small jet  
from san francisco to los angeles  
convinced me—i hate flying.

i don't care about the statistics.

i don't care about the law of averages.  
i want to be in control of my own destiny.  
i want the steering wheel in my hands.  
i want a parachute.  
until then, i travel surface only.

and i'd been comfortable with the limits  
this personal code of physics had put on my life—

until my uncle ferdy died suddenly.  
mom wanted me to fly back to new york  
with her for the funeral.  
hundreds of people were attending  
from as far away as london.  
ferdy had been an influential guy  
and a good friend to many.  
there wasn't enough time for a cross-country drive,  
so i agreed to fly back with her.

but at the last minute,  
i chickened out—  
death was already in the air.

mom flew to new york without me.  
so much for controlling my own destiny.

i have an old photo of ferdy  
while on a business trip to california,  
sitting on back of my little brother's motorcycle—  
easy-rider in wing-tips—  
poised to soar down mom's driveway.  
every time i look at it,  
i'm reminded  
just how much  
i hate flying.

---

### **Untitled**

by Adam Bright

At last I come to rest  
Between the fire and  
The low notes of  
A brooding canticle

Emotions, ancient and all at once  
New  
Drive nails deep  
Against wood and stone and flesh

The angel who comes to me  
Singing in deepest azure mourning  
Lazily lilting lyrical lore  
Whispers hints of love  
That she of me implores

With most sincere and frank gratitude  
I fall to my knees  
Shaken by such an unearthly voice  
As that of a ghost bound to my soul

Let not she go from me  
To the light  
For I am bound to her  
In mortal musical eternity

---

### **Summer Sonnet**

by Denise Bouchard

In this enchanted forest of a yard  
We celebrate the day we wed

Rows of lush blue hydrangeas, rafts of hostas  
And varieties of flourishing wild flower beds

Here we stand under an archway  
Of simulated branches infused with timed twinkling lights  
Which dance in a bower of heather

I take your hand in mine and we raise our glasses high  
I recite the old vow "I give you my hand"  
And  
We then dance to the song  
The Sweetest Days  
As we knowingly sigh

A song that speaks of great joy and tears as well  
Of days gone by

For all we've been through

We celebrate with family and friends  
Till the setting sun is nigh

For a sacred vow was taken thirty years past  
And as our sweet, beautiful daughter stands by our side  
On this summer's day of August in its familiar and balmy weather

We look around at this gorgeous home, these lush grounds with pride  
And think upon how we created all of this together.

---

### **A Woman Through the Ages**

by Denise Bouchard

Pregnant with want  
Dreams running wild  
I'm hitting mid-point, yet I'm a newborn child

Feeling like the moon in all of its phases  
Waxing now fully into my power and ruling

All of the currents of land and sea

At other times I'm fading out to a thin sliver of light  
I want to hide, leave me alone, I think, even though  
I'm still affecting the tides of those around me

They're looking to me for answers, for what I'm feeling...  
How will I affect them today?  
But my face gives nothing away; they don't know all that I have seen

I've been there over-lighting the pain, the love, the betrayal of all  
the ages  
Since earth was created...  
I'm full with knowing and knowing all is over-rated

Sometimes wishing I were a more simple woman,  
PTA, meatloaf, bowling, best friends forever, Sally and Sue  
A 9-5 structured life  
Always sunny

Instead I find myself annoyed with the sun  
I have been burned by it

I come alive late in the day  
And try to forget the nights that I  
Over-lighted the painful events in history  
As I watched the sinking of the Titanic,  
Or the many ways they betrayed our daughter

Still, I try to go on dazzling with my light  
And continue to be the beacon  
That guides the small ships home

**Notorious**

by Vince Corvaia

I want Ingrid Bergman

to slip me the key  
to a dangerous room,

to meet me among  
the shadows and Nazi bottles

filled with anything  
but poems.

I've had enough of po biz,  
as Anne Sexton called it.

I want a life filled with  
champagne and uranium.

To hell with the round sounds  
of vowels, of moon, June.

I want to take my chances  
in a black-and-white reality

where Ingrid presses  
her lips to mine

as Claude Rains makes his ominous way  
down the stairs.

---

### **Tourist Season in Old Orchard Beach**

by Vince Corvaia

*for K.F.*

Among the umbrellas  
and pale, lotion-slathered

arms and legs,  
the sand castles shaped

like pails,  
the pleading gulls,

she sits alone  
with her paints,

adorned in tie-dye,

her thick ropes of hair

three times as long  
as her brush,

meticulously placing  
dots of turquoise

on a beaver-chewed  
stick of wood.

This morning's  
angel card

read TRANQUILITY,  
which she will find

later as she walks  
along the railroad track

to the pier, picks up  
a crow's feather on the way.

She will stop  
at the Subway,

carry a sandwich back  
to her condo, where

she lives year-round

with her artwork, her cats,

her meditation recordings  
that ease her to sleep

with the waning day.

---

### **Phone Booth Elegy**

by Vince Corvaia

Like Cheever's swimmer,  
I once stopped

in every phone booth  
between Wall Street

and the Port Authority Bus Terminal  
just to tell her I was

on my way home.  
(I remember her eyes

were green with flecks of gold  
and she wore her long brown hair

up in combs.)  
CNN says

four booths remain

in New York City.

Now a gecko is trying  
to sell me insurance

against loss.

---

### **A Single Life**

by Vince Corvaia

Cubicle days  
and nights of unoriginal sin.

Never enough toner,  
never enough wonder in bed.

“If you have something to say to me,”  
his boss tells him,

“say it behind my back, because  
I don’t need to hear it.”

His last lover left crumbs,  
mispronounced “nuclear”

when they tried to speak.  
Too many channels,

two little pills.  
They dissolve like dreams, or something.

---

### **Night**

by Nicole M. Bouchard

We were once great companions so inseparably close,  
you a shadow to my form...

Now I cannot bear the shrill silence of a raging mind or memory  
I only want to scream

How did we lose hold of one another's hand walking into this nightmare,  
this dark emphatic scheme?

The serenity I felt in the presence of your all-encompassing darkness has  
left.  
The discrete peace and protection replaced by agitated fears, alone,  
beguiled, bereft...

I used to drink in the hours with you deeply,  
Those glittery dreamer dreams resenting the dawn come to end our time.  
Child beliefs cradled me but the bough broke, the cradle fell, fate spoke and  
there is no rope nor braid with which to climb.

No longer a mystery to me,  
I see you now in dawn's light...

No more do you hold me, not now; too much... goodbye to good night

---

### **Lost City**

by Nicole M. Bouchard

Come home, take a bath,  
Wash off the city I've just left

The clever noble marks my ancestors made  
Are fading, so I look for them everywhere else

I remember, we remember, they remember,  
And so it will be  
But the old are tired and so are the young

And the city...  
It is a once grande dame of the stage  
She sits at her vanity upon the balding velvet seat,  
Unconscious of the chipping gold paint  
Exposing the scratched wood underneath

Yellowing poster of her former glories  
Lie scattered with the dated newspaper clippings  
At her feet

The grandeur is gone from her face and no coat  
Of fresh paint or rouge will undo the Truth upon  
Her face...  
The new age coming is aggressive, casual-careless, and ugly-cruel

Her formerly elegant gown is moth eaten and her dim eyes  
Say the show is over.  
She bravely walks onto the dilapidated stage and  
Does a low, deep bow to her audience of past and present inhabitants.

*Adieu.*

---

**The Beauty of the Beast**

by Nicole M. Bouchard

There have been others... of this he is

Certain

He knows of enchanted castles,

Gilded cages with towers

And

S

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S

Gargoyles instead of cherubs

And manifestation, imagination

Bringing to life objects and creatures as

They'd never been before

He knows of the selfish princes  
Who turned beggar women away  
And the enchantresses who cast  
Their spells as punishment

But his story is different;  
He knows not the reason  
For his curse  
He did not give too little-  
It might be said of him that he gave too much

And he is beautiful;  
The beastliness is on the inside  
Turned inward, so no one  
Can see  
The unsightly quality of his pain  
It is within as opposed to those forced to wear it without

The roses in his garden are trying to bloom  
though he does have a magic mirror,  
A digital portal to the

Outside world

And he needs to be loved

In return to break the spell

Some days he thunders at

Silent stone walls, demanding

To know why what's happened

Has befallen him

He is both beauty and the beast

The objects who love their master

Warn him that the villagers are at the door

But he doesn't care any longer.

Their damage was done years ago.

He focuses instead on the enchanted rose

Beneath the glass

Instead of shedding its petals, counting down time

Like an hourglass, it is a seed, then a sprout

Growing, Growing, much as he does

When it blossoms, when he's ready,

The curse will be lifted

And he'll have learned to love himself in return

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