

The Write Place At the Write Time

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My Mother's Biography

By Vince Corvaia

Phoenix Lander has set down
on the arctic tundra of Mars.

My mother got a gold star
in her window
when her son died.

The Lander is sending home
photos of the Martian surface.

I have every picture
my mother ever kept
of Billy growing up.

Mars means nothing to me
but another star in the vacant night sky.
I only watch news for politics.

My brother was a good boy.

He got gold stars on his homework.

Pilgrimage

By Vince Corvaia

I have been here before.
That is how these poems begin,
more or less.
I have walked these busy streets,
or I have wandered these empty halls.

Maybe I know these people, or
these people are strangers to me.
It all comes down to discovery
of the familiar,
or the once familiar made strange.

Seeing one's parents after a long absence
can be one approach.
They might be in their eighties now.
Think of that. Your parents old.

You get out of the cab
and recognize their white car
in the carport.
A woman opens the door to the house.
She is all smiles and tears.

Or not.
It all depends, really, on where you go,
what you are seeking,
and what you find.

Stranded

By Ema Ourston

two miles from your house, i run out of gas
on the highway. i've deleted your number from
my phone so i call a friend.
ten minutes later and i'm still sitting there,
hands shaking, unable to dial.

three weeks later and the bruises are

still fading.

i remember once we both rode downtown
in the same car, going to some club you had thought
was all ages. when there was a bouncer id-ing
at the door, i offered to leave.

no, you go in. i know your friends are in there.
i'll get someone to pick me up.

but you took me a block down to 7th street,
bought me a slice of pizza from a
vendor on the street.
crossing the street you grabbed my hand and i
kept mine loose, slack, informal.
so you could let go if you wanted to.
but you held on, stopped at a corner.

said, do you want to makeout?
smiled. i laughed, pushed you.

of course i do.

forty minutes later it is my brother who
finally comes all the way from north
austin, hands me a 10 dollar bill.



"Early Falls" Cathy McLain Copyright 2008

Autumn's Call

By Denise Bouchard

Autumn's
Bewitching
Call
Dazzlingly
Enchanting
Fairy
Gold
Hues
Indian-summers
Jewels
Knowingly
Last
Moonlit
Nights
Over-shadowing
Pumpkins
Quilted
Roundedness
Spying
Tapestries
Uncovering

Virtual
 Woodland nymphs;
 Xenolithic
 Yearly
 Zenith



"Looking Out" Christopher Woods Copyright
 2008

ME=MC²?

By Mark Barkawitz

i return home from a long run.
 sweat rolls down my
 face and bare back
 as i climb our

front porch steps,
 my six year old daughter
 greets me with a weird
 look on her face.

"your hair looks like
 that elmer einstein guy,"
 she says to me.
 i pant a laugh.

unfortunately,
 she continues:
 "you're supposed
 to be dead."

Non-Biodegradable Neon Plastic Shield

By Autumn Turley

trying with muffled desperation to extract subjective beauty from leaves and
rocks and trees and water
and life from death on a rock
trying to keep my mind out of my fingertips
so that i don't clutch at the life and beauty so hard it turns to dust
mind functioning in the state of a crumpled up piece of paper
on a platform of memories stained by media
self-conditioning prompted by society forming a translucent shield around me
of non-biodegradable neon plastic
to protect me from the beauty of the life in the trees and the memories in the
rocks and the cycle of a waterfall and falling leaves
millions of faces staring at me menacingly
from my reflection in the gentle stream

of babel

By Erienne Rojas

I walk into the quadrant; the halls of your restless
sleep. Bed sheets are soaked with your anguish and
last minute repent schemes. Hands cuffed on chest
in reverence to yesterday's dreams promised at birth
and at the sake of mirth, these last moments are your first words.

Handful of family present at your bedside, complacent
with the markings on your cracked skins—the works of bed
bug fury. I, your only daughter, question the validity of your
illness and if indeed a man worsted by his addiction can plead,
when every other day you are subdued in weed; the vile basted
on your tongue when you smoked my dolls faces off. I see myself

in your countenance—bloodshot eyes giggle at the wrath of babel.

the crooked upper lip attempts to reconcile with the patulous bottom but ends up meeting halfway at the tip of mother's soul. You tucked her away on the roof of your mouth where the saliva of her aborted capillaries hung like an ergonomic design for schizophrenia. Cheekbones articulate to form unbalanced volumes in the orbit of the face; four walls in the state of babel where the eyes lack fixed rotation—

you prefixed the procreation of rubbing alcohol in your fatty liver, but today,
you are nixed in association with any heaven.

death mutters
honesty but hears
no forgiveness;
to propel
redemption
is pitiful.

The Week After Orientation

By Amanda M. Halkiotis

Half the freshman class struts past me
in patterned tights and houndstooth blazers
eager to see their future in opium smoke
through their Buddy Holly glasses.

I want their romance and their wardrobe.
Even the fringes of their scarves sway past me.
Why can't I walk like that in used heels?

But instead of following I find myself ten blocks
Short of the gallery opening talking Bob Dylan
with the kid who always wears flannel
and never goes to class.

He gives me scotch and ginger ale after I ask
for water. He knows every movie I mention and
lends me his roommate's copy of Anais Nin's journals.

I make sure to shut the storm door even though
he says he never locks it, just walk right in next time.
From the sidewalk I can see his silhouette in the gable.
He wears that unplugged electric like a rosary.

The Wild Dogs

By Chris Baratta

drops of red on the paper

my nose bleeds when i am nervous

i have to get home before dark

the family will worry

i have another hour I think

the path isn't long, but at night it could be dangerous

the wild dogs have been spotted, babies in their mouths

i'm too big for them physically, but they can see my insides

it's getting dark, time to leave

i'd run, but that shows fear

i'll walk, and keep my eyes open for the wild dogs

i'd welcome them, you know? I would.

there is no fear in confrontation, only in anticipation

confrontation is primal, fierce; anticipation is human, weak

i'm not going home tonight

i'll wait in the woods; in a tree by a brook

there are so many of them

i'll write a letter to all:

i've decided not to make my way home this dreadful night;

i am having dinner with the wild dogs – yes dinner;

a picnic by moonlight;

and the wild dogs will kill me, and eat me by the moonlight;

then the wild dogs will kill the moon;

then the sun will have no brother;
and the wild dogs will kill the sun;
then the earth will have no mother;
and we will all be motherless;
and we will all cry;
and we will all cry in the darkness for there will be no light;
and we will all sit and wait; sit and wait for a hand to lead us out of the
darkness, but there will be no hand;
and we will all die;
and the wild dogs will not howl, for there is no moon;
and the wild dogs will die too

The Veil

By Cheryl Sommese

I dreamt I saw my mother.
A glow of enlightenment surrounded her,
and her eyes saw through my skin
to pain no one else could see.

A veil separated us,
almost like the transparency

that divides humans from animals,
difficult to discern,
yet there.

I had so much to tell her, but it seemed she already knew.

After she left, I felt so alone.

Sometimes when I would see

a mother and daughter

laughing

or joking

or bonding

it hurt.

It appeared she wished she could impart all

her wisdom upon me,

but such a task was not possible,

I would need to work this out

on my own.

I guess some things never change,

maybe they' re not meant to.

She never did speak, but her face was radiant
she just smiled, and I smiled back.

Waking up,
I felt a little bit wiser.

Paulie's Prickles

By Cheryl Sommese

At first blush
his drawing was ordinary:
a lovely etching
of a simple rose.
Petals huddled together
keeping each other warm
sitting lofty
on a solitary stem.

Upon closer scrutiny
the eyes meet uncertainty,
for multitudes of thorns

prick mercilessly
through the outer casing—
Jabbing the flesh
leaving it exposed,
belying previous impressions
yet remaining composed.

Beautiful
and bruised
like him.

Stimulus Package

By Cheryl Sommese

She grabbed a latte at her favorite café,
watching her thoughts dissolve
into the patchwork froth.
Little bubbles whirling nowhere,
it nonetheless soothed her
to vaporize with the dreamers.

But even besieged by decadence she saw a kinder land:
one drenched in virtue.
A just place—
foaming with romance.
And in her visions,
as imaginary as they were,
she fit.

Venetian Eyes

By Cheryl Sommese

I know what its like to be subhuman,
four-tenths person, six-tenths viper.

Accountable

for deeds I did not arrange,
scorned

for actions I never sanctioned.

It's disturbing in this den,
wishing to prove them wrong
and fearing they could be right.

I cry out to explain my innocence,
but my vernacular only reveals
the guilt.

Certainty Exposed

By Cheryl Sommese

It was in my deepest moments of confusion,
when everything around me shattered into fine particles,
with pieces so minute, they could not be retrieved,
and the feelings surrounding them
never again never be found.

It was when I pathetically lay there interrogating my own identity,
just as police harshly question a criminal,
I, too, suspected my alibi was full of holes.
Only small strands of fact bandied about,
“Yes, I cared,” “Yes he cared.”
But even this
wove into a web of lies.

It was only then I knew I could escape.

For if there had been any hope, it would have strengthened me to stay.

What we knew was laden with deception—and I had to find truth; it was my only means of survival.

Saint of the Isle

(St. Fiacre)

By Nicole M. Bouchard

From one of glossy emerald to one by the French Seine, on an island you stand set apart
as the great healer of men.

Into your sacred space no woman may venture, your good deeds are your own.

May no vindictive female of gossip judge the work of a saint.
With humble glory, we pilgrim Queens, having walked on foot,
pray outside your door with no trite whisper or ill complaint of this,
your holy home.

Healer, helper, apothecarist of the divine... Nature's vision be.
Pray I that you bestow those gifts of legend unto the broken parts of me.

Does heartache not smart as does a wound? Can you look into my eyes and see my need?

Do shattered hours in a past bent mind not hurt like a physical form?
Pray you gather the herbs, mix the tinctures and walk with me in a distant forest
to set me free and find the source from which my whole happiness is born.

In thanks and remembrance of shared history,

I say unto thee,
'May the warmth in all the hearts you've healed
ensure forever your sanctity'.

Thoughts Turned to You (Unexpectedly)

By Nicole M. Bouchard

Dark passage through gray moons, gray skies and black suns...

The mirror shows two reflections and she cannot discern her own face
lest it be through the eyes of those who love her.

I've been in a dark time...

We won't recognize one another again...

In your absence, you've fulfilled your own nightmare.

I'll survive, sweet friend...

But when it's all over, can you ever look into the night sky,
think of me, and not wish it was all different?

The chimes are broken-

You- are- *them*.

Reflections Slipped Between Sleep and Waking

By Nicole M. Bouchard

Purple saffron and sapphire music truth;
Crossed and strange are our senses of love in youth

Eros still beckons in the white night sea,
saying I have more to learn
There exists an elixir of careless happiness and pleasure to burn

I've been asleep in a midnight meadow of wild flowers for the longest time.
I need the light...
Teach me a story of love within that is endless...that is mine.

A kiss to an ancient soul heeds the call
I hold my heart as one before the fall

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