

## *The Write Place At the Write Time*

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"Bushart Gardens" by Thea Maia; <http://www.maia-arts.com/art>

### **Final Visit**

by Marsha Matthews

*Pastor Janet*

From the bed at the nursing home,  
she looks at me with recognition.

We touch, knowing  
it's time.

Through her words, I glimpse her,  
a girl again — stomp-stomping  
black high-buttoned shoes  
to the quick lean strum of banjo.  
She twirls. Braids propelling  
around, around.

Hair clips glint.

Ankle-skirt balloons green, yellow, red.

Her blue-veined hand soft on my arm,  
she tells of the time she shucked peas  
on the porch with a full-blooded Indian,  
of the night she held diamonds  
on a coal miner's hand,

of the son who lived  
and of the son who died.

She talks night into day.

I say, "It's time  
to let go."

Her lip twitches.

Eyes fade.

Hand falls limp  
yet clutches mine.

Beyond plastic dinner trays  
and stale green walls,  
trust floats us up

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### **Perchance to Dream**

by Michelle Kennedy

Embedded in the amber glass of her eyes  
were the memories, splintering one by one, little jewels  
The feel of the yellow mountains under her naked toes,

the ocean, majestic, salty and forever,  
the sky so blue its beauty pierced her heart,  
air so clean and pure she could breath, finally  
inhale and exhale naturally, calmly, freely

As these visions rose to greet her, she plucked them,  
placing them in the palm of her hand to reflect upon  
Then, like sweet, candied plums, she tasted one, then another  
Savoring in the rich, inviting flavor of time  
How quickly it slipped through the fingertips, each morsel  
of her life, each moment, like a sleepy haze vision,  
fleeting, only to be found, perchance, in a dream

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### **Seasons of Life**

by C. Michelle Olson

A Winter's Season feels ever so departed

I wonder whatever happened to the season of Winter

Like A Clock Ticks Away Time

Season's Briskly Move Through Life

The season's arrival and departure are like the entrances and exits of life

Spring impatiently waits for a turn to splash her bright green, pink, purple,  
and yellow colors of pastel

Flowers sprout a new cycle of life

Trees, provide a respite for birds of flight

Summer excitedly wishes to arrive

Balmy Nights do Invite

Ocean Rhythmic Waves

Take A Breath Away

Basking in her glory, ready to blow sun-drenched kisses on your nose

Kisses still felt in winter

Always a sign she is on your mind

Fall eagerly blows a dressy entrance of orange, brown, gold, and yellow

Aromas sweet, spicy, pungent, and strong remind of memories long gone

Winter Longs to stay home

Although, I am known for the season of cold, I long to warm your heart and soul

When you dream me away, think of my reasons to stay

Gaze outside to a thick blanket of white shimmering snow

A magnificent picture to behold

While Inside Cozy and Snuggled

To A Fire A Glow

Wrapped in a lover's strong arms

Surely Melts the Cold

And, keeps the Body Warm

Seasons, Like Life, are meant to cherish

For they arrive and depart like the fragilities of life

Live, Breathe, Immerse yourself in the seasons throughout your life

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## **Hope**

by C. Michelle Olson

Hope Never Stands Alone for it carries "A believer," its closest friend

A simple glimpse into bliss

It keeps us alive when our feelings start to subside

Hope inspires and conquers all who fall

"Believe and you can Achieve." For without me, you have nothing.

Hope grows day after day

Moving towards a destiny

Graduating to a real image that presents content

Swimming among the sea of dreams, a tidal wave dream is finally reached

The Sea Of Dreams Now Sleeps

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### **The Blissful Beach**

by C. Michelle Olson

A day escape, leads me to a blissful beach day

Stepping one foot in front of the other in the coarse beige colored sand.

A glimmering shape named Sea Shell lays ever so contently.

He seems comfortable in his sand-filled-shell feeling at home by the salty sea.

I wonder, if he longs to feel embraced.

I want to experience his life, be at one with my new glimmering friend.

He speaks to me with such softness in each breath,

A breath that mimics the ocean's rhythmic beat.

Sounds of a delicate language speaks gently to me,

"Love my shimmering shell."

"Adore me, live in my sea-laden life, let it blend into yours to take your mind away if just for today."

"If you decide to take me home, never leave me alone, take good care of me."

"My home will be a part of yours for I will always shine in your presence when you long to experience me."

And, if you decide to leave me be, you're always welcome to visit next time  
you escape to "THE BEACH"

*Editorial Note~ The views of this poem expressed herein are those of the author; the publication does not necessarily reflect these views but includes the piece on its poetic merit.*

### **The Fall of Rome: Twenty-First Century Edition**

by Michael Ceraolo

The coastal casinos and river levees  
are pummeled by increasingly stronger hurricanes  
Abandoned are miles of track for trains  
Outlaws elude us, hiding in mountain caves

Fantastic grow the gated communities  
as IRS agents fruitlessly pursue  
the top-level tax cheats safely ensconced  
in their off-shore tax havens

Public displays of private rites  
put the majority of us to sleep  
as all the literati safely keep  
their tenured positions on the public teat

All the White House beds are warm  
for that small but moneyed swarm  
who pony up their contributions  
according to the perverted norm

And birds and cows and other beasts  
sit infected with man-made disease,

and wait to infect us in their turns,  
as we all sit diddling while Rome burns

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### **Faced With Love**

by Cheryl Sommesse

I guess it was one of those “wow” experiences,  
the type that stimulate the senses  
sending a jolt to the nerve endings  
while seizing the throat  
and leaving breathlessness behind as an ancillary gift  
to the lungs.

They happen two or three times in a lifetime if they ever do at all  
and we reflect on them with pride  
only to forget  
the intricacies  
of why they even  
occurred.

But gazing at your countenance,  
the distinctive angle of your chin  
and chocolate eyes,  
the way you made me feel safe and valued and secure:  
these are things  
I never forget.

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### **Conscious**

by Cheryl Sommese

There were baby blues and soft purples and wonder in children's eyes and innocence that brushed against my leg in the form of fur and visions of hearts who only want to be loved and dread of a world that lost its way and meadows with irises and daisies and tulips and anguish in knowing the downtrodden are voiceless and happiness I could hear Mother Theresa's message and images of bombs that shatter more than concrete and despair that bigotry could have its place and gladness there are people better than I and unease about tomorrow and growing older and gratitude His brushstroke helps some things make sense and concerns that the closet isn't as tidy as it should be and smells of apples and bananas and roses and memories of my parent's loving smiles and long-ago phantoms that resurrect without warning and fears I'll never be all that I could:

these guests visit at 3 a.m.

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## **Ambition Never Sleeps**

by Nicole M. Bouchard

It's a burning hunger that keeps me awake at night,  
A restlessness that beats inside against the walls of my mind and body  
It's hysterical and dangerous, threatening to take every last bit of me with it

There is a hunger burning hot, a wild blaze of flames set upon a field of ice  
The fire calls to me day in and day out  
Sometimes it becomes so violent it screams the blood out of my ears

It is a captor who makes demands constantly, same or different, easy or  
difficult  
Depending on its mood,  
Irreverent to my capacity for withstanding torture

It is almost always leaning close to whisper that it knows and understands  
my wants and needs like no  
one and nothing else in this world  
It looks so much like me that it's hard to ignore, its obsession nearly endless  
And it pretends to own me with such arrogance, if I were any less wise I'd  
believe it

Would that I did not respect and fear it so  
Would that I could keep it quiet, leave it behind, destroy it completely  
And it would howl for a time, seeming fatally wounded, only to grow  
stronger and take another shape

It is what drives me for good or ill

It might save my life or ruin me

It claims that it is justified, has paid pain on pain time and again in some measure, has been waiting a lifetime- maybe in truth, no time at all and pain is subjective

But when I fall, it gains on me, promising empty promises of relief that I want to believe, but I feel the ache of disappointment instead, never enough

It is, in part, my very foundation

The fuel behind every dream, desire, wish and search for the essential

My golden attribute

The clock ticks on, precious minutes of unfulfilled potential passing by  
Waking moments wasted

And here you ask me whether I would ever give it up?

Why on earth would I want to?

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### **Like it Bittersweet Best**

by Nicole M. Bouchard

'Best' is a dangerous word; inherent in its meaning is the implication that there is nothing better, only something less; it is an extreme standard to which its title demands that the subject strive

Add to it omnipotent 'forever' and the two words eat the middle where once stood 'friends'

I recall as children when night terrors sounded, spirits sprung loose and running rampant from our imaginations in the night, you would shove me out toward the threat, concealing yourself behind as if I were your shield

At first I thought it callous, an aggressive move from the offense as though we had divided sides in the middle of a battleground without my having noticed

Then the surprising conclusion arose that despite the constant, public assertion of your vivacious, seemingly fearless nature, you had deemed me in my mildness the braver; if then, it brought you comfort, I was glad to be the protector, though still believing you were capable of sharing the role yourself

In argument you deemed me the fiercer, the unyielding, the stony-eyed child of experience who rarely cried; I was just cried out you see, long before we met and couldn't or wouldn't tolerate less from you than the true, caring heights I expected

Later, I remember the very day that I felt you drift into shadow, shoving me out in front again to grow up fast and enter the pressures of the adult world; didn't you hear that I might have liked to have lingered longer to play? I missed elements of the carefree years before we met, you understand, and was already grown, too young

You admonished and condemned me for our differences, for judging them harshly yet no one tallied, judged, begrudged or noticed them so deeply as I saw you do. Assurances of respect and faith, apologies for growing pains I poured too deep into a bottomless cup

Admitting faults, fears, needs my own, I couldn't comprehend the role into

which I was being thrust as the shield again; I kept thinking over and over that you knew better, you knew better than the treason of silence

I recall your words, your very deepest fear that you spoke aloud more than once with averted eyes- that I would do to you what you've now done to me

And I'm here to tell you that I understand; finally I understand that you thought me more capable of taking the hit and saw in me a strength I hadn't known that I owned; that was your gift to me. My gift to you is the forgiving metal of the shield. I'll do my best to like this left bittersweet, if then, it brings you comfort, I am glad to be the protector, though still believing you are capable of more

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