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Submissions

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Alice B. Fogel

Traveling Light

If you look closely with all your grief
you can see the scars casting their shadows
on the landscape. The miracle is
that flowers still bloom here at all.
Some of us stay up late fingering catalogs—
ixea, freesia, allyssum—
imagining the flowering of earth.

We'd make it work in the old way:
as if diamonds grew from grime, and stones
bore fruit, as if anything could ever
change so much, or be strange enough
to love.

Once when I was small, I laid out bits of ribbon
for birds to weave into nests. Silvered yarn,
colored thread—I cut them carefully,
arranged them along stone walls.
I wanted to be kind, to love the world
the way that I knew how, or the way I wanted
to be loved: with gentle attention,
offerings from which to choose.

Then I saw, in the tree, that bird—
broken, hanging
from some pretty string I never told anyone was mine.

Now what I want is to understand everything
for the mystery it is, and love it simply
for being my world—
to suffer the witness of it,
to touch the ground as lightly as flood-risen stones,
to touch it as if not at all.

David Conford

Walking the Baby: March 1962

We stumble in the dark
Of the confusing basement
With the howling clutter
Of our early love, a son,
Disconsolate on earth,
Fierce in the small hours
Of his need. Where is the milk
For all such children?
What food is treaty
To their world? How he knuckles
His red face, a whole note
Of anger in the clef of want,
This musician of brassy longing.

Did we know even then,
In the darkness of our youth,
In the fear, the love, the madness,
Of his atonal decades of hunger?

W. D. Ehrhart

Red-tailed Hawks

Mill Grove
Audubon, Pennsylvania

These chattering children fill the woods
with so much raw exuberance one wonders
what's the point of coming here
when any local playground would suffice.

Their teacher twice tells Michael and James,
"Don't throw acorns, please," to no effect:
they start again the moment she turns
to remind Adrienne, "Stay on the path."

Leela's worried she'll fall in the creek.
Chelsea and Ben are pushing each other
when someone, one of the children, shouts,
"There's a hawk!" and points.

"There's another!" "There!" "Another!"
other children cry: four red-tailed hawks
lazily circling, gliding, whirling, wheeling,
riding an unseen thermal up so high

the children tip their heads straight back
and still the hawks rise higher, higher still,
until they're only four black dots
of elemental joy against white clouds,

the children, even Michael and James,
so intent, so silent one can almost hear
wings they want to lift them
where the hawks have gone.

Karen Alkalay-Gut

two poems

Dresses

I

In my closet
an old Arab gown
of black silk.
When I wear it
my whole sex
alters.
I am covered—
but the embroidery
delineates my breasts,
hips, the movement
of my walk, like
a dark mystery
of the orient.

II

The old trunk of costumes
I loved so much
I duplicated it for my children
has disappeared
The roles played
with such flourish
on stage and off

III

How often
standing before the wardrobe
I choose at last
the black skirt
the black sweater
the anonymous uniform
of the puppeteer.

IV

A survey of the shops
determines
I already own
everything I could dream
to wear.
This is not a good
state of affairs—
this surfeit

As if there are no more opportunities
for the hunger of creation

V

The groom says—
why waste so much on a dress
when you'll never wear it again
She answers—
I'll be buried in it

VI

Jews are laid in shrouds
so that they may
return to dust
without impediments

VII

For an hour I stand before the closet
debating the virtues of each dress—
trying nothing on—
remembering the exploits of each
piece of clothing as though
they were battle gear, breastplates,
bucklers, helmets—each with its
advantages in warfare—none
perfect for all skirmishes
In the end I put on an old
black silk Chanel
—a trusty sword
brandished.

Home on the Road

—to Jane Duran

What amazes me when I come back to the States,
Jane says as we walk over the grate
on a sidewalk of Lowell, Mass.,
is the familiar, the old things that I didn't imagine
existed anywhere but in my memory.

She is oohing over an old hydrant, a brick wall,
a train conductor carrying home his lunch pail,
a cat wandering in and out of the entrance to the mill.

You are living in my past, I want to say to the bored clerk
at the five and dime, the lady sitting on the bench
by the river as if she had finished her work
and deserved to be able to do nothing, and the kids
playing with the buttons of an old console
on the open front porch of their house.

I am picturing Jack Kerouac smirking
from the window of the Paradise diner
which would probably long have disappeared
had he not written of his own nostalgia, and I'm thinking
that we grew up at the same time but he died
and I left a place just like this soon after,
and so he remains here forever and I
am a tourist.

The Everly Brothers are singing on the car radio
all the way to Lowell and back—as if by scheme—and we
lean back in the seat of our rented Dodge
to *dream*
dream
dream

Kenneth Wolman

Kindertotenlieder for the Land of Wonders

In Sarajevo, where this cannibal century truly began
and where it is ending,
history lives in every interstice and tile
of the Children's Shelter.
Young patients sit on the floors
and sing a version of Ring Around the Rosie
sung at first by children during the Black Death.
The wards of the Children's Hospital are filled
with 7-year-olds with stomach ulcers.
They are not out of their jobs at Touche Ross:
this time it's not the economy, stupid.

It's said that in the deathcamps women's menses stopped.
In this world of progerian children,
perhaps 13-year-old boys endure impotence and prostate disorders
and 15-year-old girls go through menopause.
Small wonder that the legend of Dracula arose in those mountains,
in Transylvania, Bukovina, the Carpathian Alps.
It makes perfect sense that children would stop being children,
live as though they were among the legions of the Undead,
becoming little old men and women sloshing about in didies,
celebrating reaching age 10 by abandoning toilet training,
babbling rhymes from the Black Death as though they'd been there.

When Jonathan Swift suggested making gentlemen's gloves
from the flayed buttocks of Irish babies,
the people of Sarajevo had long since become
the most skilled glovers on the continent of Europe.

The history of killing children
is older than the Black Death itself.
If prostitution is the world's oldest profession
and rape is the oldest pasttime of soldiers,
then infanticide in time of war
is a wondrous byproduct of these professions and pasttimes,
serendipitously combining the two
for perfect social engineering.

It is a wonder in this sad land that children are even born.
Consider that it takes passion to make love,
that a certain mood is required:
flowers, quiet, wine, devouring with the eyes,
sweet words and breathlessness before the clothes come off.

Emily Dickinson wrote that after great pain
a formal feeling comes.
What is more formal than the end of one's womanhood,
the cessation of one's manhood?
No more of those messy fluids under the moon,
no more sticky dreams,
no more dreams,
no more.

Len Messineo

Life at The Last Chance Wildlife Preserve

An Eco-Folk Tale

"You can't come in here," Jepetto said in his booming voice. Jepetto looked tall and imposing in his pith helmet and khakis where he stood blocking the entranceway of the Last Chance Wildlife Preserve underneath the large wooden sign that read "This is how things were in the beginning." "Says who?" the field foreman from Building and Land Development said incredulously. "The puny warden thinks he can hold us back," the foreman shouted over his shoulder. In answer, the cavalcade of yellow, mud-smeared caterpillars, bulldozers, and giant earth-movers, with B.A.L.D painted on the sides of their doors, churned and ground their engines. His crew of men in yellow hard hats and olive-drab uniforms and steel-tipped shoes clapped their pick-axes and shovels together like mandibles and laughed.

It wasn't that the foreman was a bad man—though he was a little gruff, and he always looked like he needed a shave. To the field foreman, the Last Chance Wildlife Preserve was a lawless patchwork of swamp and bush and jungle abuzz with the sawing of insects, the screeching of birds, the howling of beasts. It all gave him a terrible headache. The foreman hated anything disorderly, and he hated anything wild.

He decided to try another tack. "You know what I see?" he said as he looked through his anodized steel and leather survey tools. "I see the perfect world." The foreman seemed to talk to his assistant who diligently scribbled everything down, though the words were intended for Jepetto. He described a world where everyone lived in little red brick bungalows with Tudor windows and clay tile roofs with flagstone walks surrounded by the greenest weed-free Astroturf lawns. A world where there were no diseases; people just drank a small cup of medicine that looked like cranberry Kool Aid and was as thick and sweet tasting as syrup—Mmmm, no more measles or tooth decay or fallen arches, not so much as a sneeze or a zit. Where there was no hunger or want. Everyone had a transmogrifier in their kitchen or patio. You just put your shopping list in the slot, some potting soil in the sieve, pushed a few buttons and, while you were humming a tune, out of the portal came real time-space Nintendo games and fully accessorized Madonna dolls and composite carbon golf clubs and gems so big they might cause the Queen of England, out of envy, to chew on her brocade . . . were there such a thing as a Queen . . . or an England, for that matter.

There wasn't even pollution anymore, no smoke-stack industries with their ugly belching smoke—the mog took care of that. Not even traffic jams. As who needed cars since everything everywhere, with slight variations in the weather, was essentially the same. "Think of it," the foreman said. "Just one peaceful neighborhood, columns and rows of houses all the way around the globe. Where people have such nice things to say: 'I admire your gladioli, they're so real looking,' or 'A fine how-de-do,' and 'Another perfect day.'" The foreman was so overcome by his speechifying that when he shouted at Jepetto, "Don't stand in the way of progress!" his eyes misted over, his voice cracked, and he almost said, "please." The assistant had to hand him the steno sheet upon which he'd been scribbling so the foreman could blow his nose.

It might be mentioned here that the foreman was hardly exaggerating. It was a perfect world—except for the horrible want of space. So much so that when people came out on

their front stoops to get their morning paper all at once, everyone had to keep their elbows pressed in against their sides to keep from jabbing a neighbor in the eye.

Which was why the work crew from B.A.L.D. raised such a clamor at the entranceway to the Last Chance Wildlife Preserve with its rich plentiful land when Jepetto, ignoring the foreman's fine speech, lay down in the middle of the road underneath the sign that said "This is how things were in the beginning."

"You'll have to exert the full force of the law. I won't budge from this spot," Jeep said quietly, closing his eyes as if he were cat-napping.

"Not only will I do that, but if you don't move out of the way, we'll throw you in the mog and have you for lunch. We'll make squash puree out of you," the foreman shouted maniacally. The foreman's men laughed, took out their mess kits and began to butter their bread. The foreman served him up subpoenas and court orders, eviction notices and canceled checks, affidavits and a voided lease—all of which he poured down on Jeep like he were pouring cement. But Jeep just ignored him and pretended to sleep.

Because Jeep would not move, they had to lift him up with a forklift; and then he made such a fuss, they stuck him to the side of the tar wagon and carted him off to the judge. The barrister was in a bearish mood: they'd interrupted him in the middle of his afternoon nap. "What do you have to say in your defense?" he said as he lifted his head from his pillow of briefs. "I love trees, and I love grass," said Jeep. "Not this perennial sunshine, this perpetually clean air—three parts hydrogen, two parts oxygen, one part floral scent. I like the broad loom of fertile land, rich with forests so thick you can't see the sun; bogs knee-high with rushes and reeds so soft, it's like walking barefooted through a thick pile rug; wide stretches of savanna carpeted with scrub brush and tall grass, dotted with the white blossomed acacia tree, the red flowering eucalyptus—" "I've heard quite enough from you, young man," the judge shouted magisterially. "If you don't keep silent, I'll cite you for contempt." The judge delivered a stern lecture to Jeep on the evils of nature which "is filled with dung and flies"; kept rapping Jeep's knuckles with his gavel for wearing tar-stained khakis to his court. He thought of sentencing him to life, but the weighty, solemn drone of his own voice put him to sleep.

The psychologist, a man of considerable reputation, examined Jeep closely. "Quickly!" he said, "When I say the words, 'wiener schnitzel' or 'irony' or 'cyclone fence,' what's the first thing comes to mind?"

"I love nothing more than to look into another set of eyes busy with the spark of life," said Jeep trying to be helpful. "The eyes of the wildebeest, for instance. The emu or the hippo or the snake. The ape family—the gorilla, the mandrill, or the chimp—who are especially familiar, and like to look back." All of which caused the psychologist to cry. He confessed that since he'd gotten his mirrored glasses which allowed him to look out but no one to look in, he felt terribly lonely. Besides which, he couldn't see a thing.

He gave Jeep a prescription, a watered-down version of the medicine they gave the creatures at the Last Chance Wildlife Preserve before they filled them with mattress batting and sold them off to souvenir shops for stuffed toys. Then he sent him home to his little bungalow on the corner of Latimer and Longfellow to the care of his wife, Evie. "Do something!" his wife said. "Don't just mope and pace." "Gladly," Jeep said. "The only question is, what!?" It was terrible. During the day Jeep never changed out of his pajamas. He made these strange muffled noises in the back of his throat—as if there were a chimp hidden away in a hat box in the back of the closet with a cramp in its foot. He moped and paced. During the nights he hardly slept. When he did he tossed and turned, made strange sounds in his sleep, whimpering sounds, like a baby seal trapped under the ice. In the early morning, he woke up half in bed, half out the window in what he dreamed was the great outdoors. "Do something," Evie said. "You're making me a nervous wreck."

"Sure, sure," he answered while continuing to rock back and forth in his rocker, staring daftly out the big picture window in the front room.

The years passed and things did not get better. Jeep and Evie never went out. She never played Mah Jongg with the ladies, or he bocci ball with the men. They just stayed locked-up indoors. They bickered constantly. "Why are you knitting, woman," he'd say mockingly. "Are you expecting?"

"Of course I'm not expecting," she'd snapped back. "And whose fault is that?" Meanwhile, the world was getting even more perfect. People weren't having quite so many kids. This meant larger lawns for bocci ball, bigger bungalows with longer flagstone walks lined with even more exotic flowers (it would do no good to name them here, because a lot of them were made up). People wanted seasons, so B.A.L.D. gave them seasons: In Spring, it smelled of tutti-frutti; in Summer, cinnamon candied apples; in Autumn, burnt leaves; in Winter, there was vanilla icing for the front lawn.

They even had miniaturized computer bees that buzzed around the garden, birds the colors of crayons that chirruped as they flapped around in marble birdbaths, or seemed to forage for food in the bigger Astroturf lawns. Though the weather was just right, someone suggested a gigantic plastic bubble over the whole planet. After all, no matter how perfect things get, they can always be better. Except at the Jepetto's where things just went from bad to worse. It was as if their house lurked in the shadow of a dark cloud.

"What are you knitting, woman?" Jeep would say crankily, pacing back and forth, hardly breaking his stride.

"Foot-warmers," or "A bonnet," or "A muff," she'd say. "You're a knitting fool, woman," Jepetto would say as he rocked in his rocker. "And you're a little bit ditzy," Evie would bark. "Get off your duff and do something?" "Sure, sure!" he'd shout back, stepping up the pace of his rocking while Evie knitted even more mittens and sweaters and bibs.

Things would have gone on like this forever, except one day Jeep discovered an old wooden chest in the dark shadows of their basement, left to him by a great-great grandfather who belonged to an organization called the National Geographic Society. In it were books and magazines and curios from another time: the sex lives of one-celled creatures as told by old fossils, the ethnic dining habits of the woolly mammoth as evidenced by archaeological scat, a three-dimensional mockup of a space-age ark including proper seating arrangements and even a recipe for motion sickness made out of sargassa grass, a fowl language Berlitz course, U.S. Geological survey maps of mountain ranges and plains and sea-bed floors that, soon as you unfolded them, you could never re-fold just right—and especially *The Child's Book of Wonder,* a tattered and worn book, its pages foxed and brittle, the first chapter torn out, which Jeep read again and again. ". . . outdoors, it rained and rained," it started out. "The rain ran into rivulets and pools, ponds, and then lakes. It rained cats and dogs, and buffalo and wildebeest, and elks and goats. . . ."

One morning as Jeep woke up in his usual position, half out the window, half in the bed, he had such an idea he almost broke his brain-pan on the window frame. He rushed out to the living room, followed by his curious wife. He laid maps on the floor until they covered the whole rug. He would go on a long journey. He would go in the four directions: to the North Pole and the Equator; to the Pyrennees in the East and the Gobi Desert to the West. He would collect any seedling or spore he could find; offer any creature of land, sea, or air he met on the way refuge at their home. He pointed out to his wife as he walked on the ancient maps in his stockinged feet the route he hoped to take. Evie looked questioningly at him. He looked right back. Of course, he knew he was no more likely to find seedlings or creatures than his aging wife to have a child. That's what he thought.

Here's what he said: "What's more important? To give up hope because what you look for is impossible. Or never to cease to look."

Evie beamed at him proudly. "That's the ticket," she said, continuing to knit. The first thing Jeep did was to glue and clamp and sand and varnish the sign that used to hang over the Last Chance Wildlife Preserve. He and Evie created mounds out of their flagstone walk to hold the supporting posts from which they hung the sign at the entranceway in front of their home. Then they rolled back the Astroturf lawn off the front yard, stuffing it into the mog for provisions for Jeep's trip.

Her husband looked so dashing and romantic in his insulated sweater and parka, fleece-lined leggings and mukluks, with the backpack loaded with snowshoes and goggles, an inflatable kayak and dog sled, that she hardly noticed the neighbors cackling at him: "Going to the office, Jepetto?" they shouted, or "He'll be back soon, Evie. He's just going around the bend." Day after day Jeep traveled Northward on Longfellow, showing passersby pictures from National Geographic magazine of the great untamed wild. Most had never seen such things; and those few ancient ones who had said he was unduly riling his mind. After the length of time it might take you or me to knit cardigan sweaters for, say, all the wolves we've robbed of their pelts, Jeep arrived at the northernmost point of his trek. He squinted his eyes just so, but all he saw was a small street, really a cul-de-sac, that surrounded a white pole, with bungalows and sculptured hedges and trees and green Astroturf lawns—much like his own. But, just in case, he turned in the four directions and in a voice that was half circus barker, half cantor calling the people to prayer, Jepetto invited all the creatures of the wild, all the seeds and spores, to his refuge. "I got grottoes, I got paddocks, I got pools, I got canyons and wooded hillsides, I got the richest soil you're going to find. . . ."

He gave them specific directions. "The corner of Latimer and Longfellow," he said. "You can't miss it. Just look for the big sign." Then, he turned around, and started the long journey home. After Jeep had traveled south down Longfellow and was still far from home, he was overcome with a heaviness of spirit. It was as if he'd eaten a two-pound bag of eight-penny nails. Exhausted, he put his head back onto his backpack. And no sooner had he fallen asleep than he had a dream. He felt a pitching and rolling motion, and when he blinked the sea spray out of his eyes, he found himself on a boat on the Ellsmere Sea. He heard a playful whistling sound as around him dolphins soared and plummeted through the dark frothy waves, towing his boat southward around ice floes and blizzards and steep precipices of stone. And he saw penguins and caribou and polar bears and walruses and a whole school of right whales, which made him so happy that all night long he sang sea chanties in the boat's bow.

As the weak light of morning dawned, a wave as large as a three-story house threw him down on his head and he woke with a start to find himself at the corner of Latimer and Longfellow only a few steps from his front door.

His wife looked at him expectantly as he told her how he'd traveled to the top of the world, and though he'd found not so much as a gopher or choke weed, he'd turned in the four directions and invited all to their home. When he told her the part about the dolphin dream she hoofed around on their parquet floor so excitedly she almost reduced it to sawdust and pulp. While Jeep soaked in a hot bath, Evie tried to clean his soiled clothes. But they were so soiled with dirt, they had grown to twice their size; it was all she could do to drag them into the front yard and bury them in the bare sod where they had removed the Astroturf. Then Jeep and Evie had themselves a feast. Evie told him that while he was gone the cloud over their home had gotten as dark as penny licorice. There'd been no rain, but at times, heavy fogs in which she thought she heard this deep lowing horn. She pointed out how, strangely, this fine sea salt blew in their neighbors'

faces, and even got in their beds. There weren't quite as many children being born. People said it was because the Jepettos were cursed and their neighbors were moving away. Then she took him in the front yard and showed him the nursery she was building—for the foals, calves, cubs, and pups when they came.

Jeep was in a fine fettle. But nothing grew and no creatures arrived. Eventually he got restless. His sleep was troubled with dreams of the great outdoors. He woke in the morning half out the window and half in bed, and Evie knew, without so much as a word passing back and forth, that it was time to get out the maps.

This time the plan called for a trek down Longfellow to the thick tropical rain forests of Ecuador. So they rolled back the Astroturf in the back yard and put it into the mog for provisions for the trip.

As Jeep embraced his wife in the doorway, outfitted in his khakis and a pith helmet and heavy boots, backpack on his shoulders and a machete around his waist, the few remaining neighbors jeered at him: "Hey, look, it's Jungle Jim," they said, or, "Going on a safari, Jeep?" or, "Going off to shoot rhino, old man?"—without having the faintest idea what these words meant. So Jeep traveled southward and, after the time it might take you or me to make a giant oak tree, say, out of toothpicks and a little rubber cement, Jeep arrived at what used to be Ecuador on the old maps. He stood at the corner of Longfellow and Equator Boulevard and squinched up his eyes. But all he saw was house after house so much alike they might have all come from the same cookie cutter.

Again, he turned in the four directions and in a large voice he invited all the creatures of the wild to his refuge on Latimer and Longfellow. "Just look for the sign," he said. Jeep was still a great distance from home when a great fatigue overtook him. It was as if someone had been lashing the bottoms of his feet with palm fronds, and it was all he could do to pull his backpack under his head before he nodded off. Only his backpack felt thick and furry and made a loud purring sound. Jeep dreamed he rode upon the back of a great lion which cantered through the misty jungle thickets to the call of the macaw, the trumpeting of elephants, the distant beat of the drum. He felt so at one with this regal animal's smooth muscular stride, that when he leaned back proudly at one point, he fell over backwards onto his head. When he came to, he was surprised to find himself in his own back yard.

He told his wife of his trip, how he'd turned in the four directions and, though, he'd found neither seed nor beast, he'd had a wonderful dream. When Evie heard the lion part, she danced so enthusiastically that Jeep had to re-hang all the shutters and doors. Again, while Jeep bathed, she took his filthy clothes, which were so caked with mud, they had grown to twice their size, and buried them in the back yard. After they had eaten a big feast, Evie explained that all was very much the same, except the dark cloud had gotten darker and it reminded her of an angry billowing sea—only upside down. It never calmed, and on some days it mewed and whined like a huge lioness having kittens. It bothered the neighbors terribly. But because there were even fewer children being born, property could be had for a penny-whistle—all the people around their corner had moved away. Then she took him out in the back yard and showed her husband the large pen she had built so the yearlings could romp and play, the place where they would store the haystacks and salt licks, and where the feed silos would be. Being home was nice for a while but then Jeep got restless, and when he woke one morning half in bed and half out the window, his wife knew it was time. Now Jeep took two more trips: one, in an easterly direction to the Pyrenees, just above where Barcelona used to be, into the foothills of the Alps; and the other, west, where Upper Mongolia turns into the Gobi desert. And, of course, both places were very much like his and Evie's place on Latimer and Longfellow; except, again, the population had thinned considerably. But if he saw few people and

many vacated homes, he saw little of what he wanted to see. The world was about as featureless as a park full of picnic tables without the picnickers. There wasn't as much as a churr of a night bird or the babble of a stream, and if you had serious allergies you couldn't so much as work up a sneeze. It all made Jeep very heavy-hearted, as if he had curtain weights in his cuffs, or anvils tied to his shoes. He wouldn't have had the strength to return home; except, again he was carried off by magic animals who visited his dreams: once, by an eagle so large it snacked on B1B bombers like they were Frito Lays; and the second time, by an Ox so big, had it a cart in tow, it could have easily carried the moon.

And, both times, he saw many wonderful things: panda bears cavorting in bamboo forests, longhorn sheep grazing in olive groves, lynxes prowling in highland tundras of ulu grass, oceans of aqua and turquoise and brown above which swirled lacy mother-of-pearl clouds—like those ancient NASA pictures the lunar module had taken from deep space. And when he told all this to Evie, she danced so strenuously, the Department of Atmospheric Science thought they'd been hit by a meteor storm and promptly closed the plastic bubble.

As before, Evie took his clothes and buried them in the East and the West yard. Then she reported to Jeep the strange goings-on: how the dark cloud had swollen up so large, it reminded her of nothing as much as the sagging ceiling in one of those Gothic castles, the attic of which emits strange sounds, as if hapless disembodied creatures ran pall mall through the webs and dust; and when the wind blew, it howled at hurricane strength, collapsing the walls of the empty houses around them, tearing up the earth into large fissures and furrows, as if by a giant plowshare—but it never harmed their home. Then she took him outdoors and showed him the plant nurseries and the greenhouses, the barns and equipment sheds she'd built.

For a while, Jeep was content to be with his wife. But while she knitted up a storm of almost typhoon strength, storing away sweaters and muffs and hats and gloves and foot warmers and bibs and baby blankets in hope chests scattered throughout the empty rooms upstairs, each day Jeep got bitterer and bitterer. When he was not in his rocker staring out the window, he would exercise himself by walking around their home, with its empty nurseries and pens and greenhouses and barns, and dust off again the ancient sign at the entranceway to their property, "The Last Chance Wildlife Preserve." Dejectedly, he looked up and he looked down. He felt like bad weather, he felt like an obituary, as lifeless as a dried up old gourd.

He looked accusingly at the heavens which seemed to grow darker and gloomier by the day, and shaking a fist like some Old Testament prophet, he shouted: "I've left no stone unturned, I've left nothing undone. Let me go where the creatures of the earth have gone before me!" The sky rumbled. "Let me go like a seed into the earth!" Jeep shouted back. The dark cloud crackled and sparked and spewed forth lightning so momentous, the very shale underneath him seemed to fissure and shake. Jeep fell to his knees. "Let me go!" he shouted again, only this time more weakly; he was exhausted and no longer cared. He wholly gave himself over to the elements, fell face first into the lifeless sod. And a strange thing happened. At first Jeep started to tremble, then sob, and the next thing you know, he started to cry. He cried so hard he couldn't catch his breath. And as he cried, the dark cloud quieted to a gentle rumble as if curious to hear such a sound. The air became very still. Then there was a large splat, and then another. It started to rain. And the rain came down in large pellets that played like a timpani on the hardened earth. Soon it was pouring. If it hadn't been for his wife, Jeep would have drowned in the mud. She took him in and put him to bed. She propped him up with pillows, brought him his book, fed him hot soup. He was so weak he couldn't even talk. For days on end he sobbed and cried and then he got the hiccups. And *The Child's Book of Wonder* fell from his fingers and he

slipped into a deep sleep from which Evie couldn't wake him. Outdoors, it rained and rained. The rain ran into rivulets and pools, ponds, and then lakes. It rained cats and dogs, and buffalo and wildebeest, and elk and goats, and cows and sheep, and sparrows and hawks and crows, and sea bass and sturgeon, and dolphins and sting ray eel, and oxen and elephants, and leopards and panthers and lions and wolves and on and on. And the fierce winds blew up ever larger mounds of dirt that formed themselves into slopes and shelves, crests and gorges, and moraines and hills. The summits reached upward into the heavens and were covered with glacial ice and snow. From where Evie had buried Jeep's clothes in the front, back, and sides of the house, sprouts broke forth—the seedlings had hidden in the pockets, sleeves, and seams of his clothes. On the windward side of the mountains, coniferous forests grew, moss and mushroom and laurel flowers, elm and oak; orchards grew in the foothills, mangoes and pomegranates and apple and pear; on the plains and bogs, ulu and elephant grass, acacia and eucalyptus trees; on the leeward side of the mountains, cacti and desert juniper and pinyon pines grew out of the drifting dunes of sand.

One night, Jeep awoke from his long sleep—in his usual position, half out the window, half in bed. He thought he had died and gone to heaven, he felt so good. The air was filled with the fragrance of grape ivy, honeysuckle, and rose mallow mixed with the stronger odor of freshly turned earth. It was a clear night and by the light of the full moon he could see things had changed. His yard glittered with dew covered moss; beyond that, thatches of tall grass; and beyond that, vine-tangled forest, savanna, and swamp.

As the full moon left off, a late owl oared silently through the heavily wooded trees, hunting the unsuspecting snake. The tree frogs were particularly noisy tonight. Birds chirped through the soft mist of dawn. In the distance, in a swirling roseate sky, you could see the silhouette of the tall acacia trees, you could hear the occasional hoot of the elephant who sleeps on his feet and dreams of other elephants. Just outside his window, a large tiger licked Jeep's hand for its salt. His wife stirred, curled up beside him, her knees against his thighs, her arm around his chest, her swollen stomach against his side. She was pregnant—on his last trip, Jeep must have gotten some seeds in the folds of her skirt. This is the life into which Jepetto awoke. This is how things were, or will be, in the beginning.

David Levit

three poems

It is not love, what we do, my lover

The man in the basement is hammering on the pipes again,
and the lady in the ceiling is doing her brick dance.
This is the third time the man has hammered today,
        but the lady
only dances at night. He hammers for her and she
    dances for him.

From my window, two 75 watt eyeballs reflect this hour
into the next. Nine forty-five backwards
on the glass. My room a mess: empty beer bottles,
        chip bags—my clothes not even carelessly flung
                over there lie mixed and scattered on a chair and here
        on the floor with books and papers I won't read
and bills I'll never pay. "Things need doing,
things need doing!" I'm speaking out loud: telephone ringing—
    I don't care anymore.

These days, things won't fold up and fit nicely in a closet
or on a shelf. Posters and paintings hung like teeth.
My teeth will always be crooked. Dink. Dink.
                                                CLANK.
Clomp, clomp, clomp, clomp, clomp.

The Frog King

At this she was terribly angry,
and took him up and threw him
with all her might against the wall.
—the brothers Grimm

She only wanted to be alone, an untouched
surrounding for her tangled hair:
wild grass, sycamore and pine forest.

Her father was overbearing and would be.
She would remove her shoes

when she reached the pond
to climb a moss-covered log
and let only cool water glitter between
angel's feet and delicate moon ankles,
little moon toes.

Her dress was ruined, her hair
was almost not her own.

She would have none of it—No. None of him around her—

threw her shoes into the pond
and that small golden ball, the gift

from birth,
that too,
into the pond—

and cried as if lost at the bottom of a soul
if only the pond could hear her.

Before the women come

Someone has opened up the fire hydrant across the street
and children are playing where the stream begins.
They stand behind the hydrant holding on with little hands
trying not to get bowled over in this deluge. The smallest boy
in his glee has run into the street. There are fast cars
and I believe he may be hit. A man with a cigarette is running
to catch him but nobody seems to notice he's not his father.
They are involved with water, laughing as it snaps their fingers
in its force. This is what they love: the mastering of liquids,
the celebration before the women come, gather them up
and end these games.

Emmett Malone

three poems

Orpheus Sings of Eurydice

Orpheus: (Speaking alone in a grove of trees)

I must go down into the deep,
I will take her from the house of the pillars of death.
Tonight is my last night near the trees,
With the earth and the moon's light living in the trees;
Eurydice, I will ride with her alive in my arms,
I will have the full fragrance of her body,
I will hold her thighs like the younger limbs of lambs.

I will escape under the river of the underworld
Past the guardian dogs at the first gates
Into the corridors of hard stone,
The rocks hung like lips of teeth in
Loops and lines leading toward the lower caves,
Past my own pain, I will go to the
Grieving ends of the grounds of death—
I will hold the hands of any god;
I will give the gold of my harp,
Even the strings and silver sounds in my voice
For my relief, my woman.

I have sung songs enough for my own pain!
It has been long since death grabbed her,
Gone to Hades,
Her eyes shut white,
Her hands unable to touch me.

My music touches the trees!
The branches are limp, lain to the ground; leaning
They bend and break,
Heavy, the leaves have no breath.
Even the river laps back on the banks,
Hitting hard,
Wanting to know where she is—

I hit my harp again,
Agony, blank, I'm becoming a burden
Beginning to dream my own death.
I must go to Hades,
To Eurydice, to bring her home.

Inside

There is a white light
a column of phosphorus
a snow bridge over an ocean
with ice handrails
and a footpath of clean rope.
Step over, we may meet one another.

Biography

I am the American grandson
of the American milkman
Joseph Emmett Malone
and the son of his son
Robert Emmett Malone
who was born into the spilled mornings of New Jersey neighborhoods
his hands around creamed bottles of milk deliveries
later to scrub spark plugs
and swim in the Hackensack River
washed and anointed,
accepted
into Fordham University in the Bronx
studying Greek
receiving A's in his drowned swimming class,
determined on the debating team
and after one semester of law school at St. John's in Jamaica
called away to war
wading into the green crystal malaria grass and bamboo in
Burma,
a parachute radio man
sleeping nights in northern India
with three army camp kids, Apoo, Anoo and Ahdoo
an honorable discharge into the red, white and blue Walter
Reed hospital,
a quiet quick recovery
and marriage to a wife, she 28
four children later Mineola, Long Island, New York
chemical sales with Joe Hare
and now at 70
in another pink hospital
with tents of nurses
and sail tubes of white oxygen—

On the bed bureau I've placed
the faintly gilded sapphire ring you had given your wife
and the thin red sash she wore in her hair
always at the time of Easter.

Sharon Hashimoto

Temblors

1988: Seattle

Earth shifting, slipping,
what should be solid
runs to mud, to blood
sifting through veins
and the hollowed tunnels
inside a hill.
What a dying man knows
grows in from his touch,
heart straining, his fingers
spread toward the light.
But when a weight overwhelms
a man, flowing around him,
what can he cling to? Nose
and mouth—black silt fills each cave.

1923: Pahoa

Grandfather, when the warmed dirt surged
over your skin across the breadth
of your shoulders, you must have stumbled then,
standing bent by the world,
the stone raining around you. Rising again
and again, you must have felt the weight
settle into you. On your hands and knees, Grandfather,
did you curse the rich volcanic ash that muffled your cries
and smoothed the curve of your humped back?

Nikos Focas

four poems translated by **Don Schofield**

Sail in the Open

As one who has visions wherever he looks,
I see clouds as cosmic deities, right now
Spineless demons that take
Their color from the forming darkness,
Pythons with smudged out eyes and lips,
Dragons with undeclared intentions.

The long rolling curves of waves
Are to me soft arms
Of who knows what submerged bellies,
Stretching out to the land
And returning having abducted
Fresh victims in their coils:

World of spirals in which
The straight line has not yet been invented,
Or only now comes forth with the first sails;
World of supernatural creatures
Destined for life on a huge scale
Like this one offered by ocean

And air, in light darkness
Or the dusk right now, with one sail that's different,
Also black but triangular,
Which my mind, lover and artist,
Admires with unreserved joy,
As if the masterpiece of the ages,

Though it's nothing more than the beginning
Of all our progress up to the
Robot, the satellite, the computer,
This dark, isoceles-shaped cloud,
Similar to the other clouds only
In its blackness against the clear depth of sky . . .

Limitless view that, though in the present,
Is like the revelation of a pickaxe
Brought forth into the light of consciousness
With the sensation of lost beauty,
Lost chance for humankind:
Since I have visions, I don't see.

Flies

What's become of the flies
    of nineteen thirty-four,
Offsprings of ancient fat flies
    from the previous year—
Those with us
    when we were the world's youth—
What's become
    of the flies of my generation?

Remember in bedrooms their liveliness
    completely independent from our own?—
Since, as you know,
    according to nature's law,
    the history of flies
And that of mankind
Evolve independently, without
    interference or mutual sympathy.

Take the day for example
    Venizelos died:
Mother cried and the flies
Buzzed round our human grieving
—Like passersby
    near a stranger's funeral—
Thinking only
Of their own dead.

Stylish, thin-waisted flies, with wings
    transparent and layed out,
Evidence of impeccable tailoring
    over tiny black shoulders—
They compel me
    with their insistent song
    in a minor key
Toward some profound essence.

I remember them flying
    perpetually in motion above us,
Settling down sometimes
    in a warm swath of sunlight
—Eight in the morning,
    across tables and floors—
Coupled sometimes
    as if doubled.

Such familiarity with humans,
    you'd think they were
    old acquaintances,

Though they're merely
    transient, easy to grasp images
    of a timeless elusive archetype.
But as our acquaintances we remember them
    and we mourn for them now.

Truly, we mourn for them,
And sincerely I confess to you that when
    we speak of our dead,
Parents or relatives
    or simply those we've known,
Calm in the sun like
    this year's flies
—The youth of the world, our survivors—

I confess to you I feel tenderness
Even for flies
    of past seasons
—Violating as a poet
    nature's law—
Tenderness for the dead
    of another history, yes,
    and its lost generations.

The Known

I love routine, repetition, habit,
Like a believer loves the rituals of his church.
I adore the finite.
The known and daily,
It's these or nothing—choose!

Here's a known: a hotel maid
Is making a bed; beginning
With its level mattress
She adds and adds and adds
Until the bed is a hill—a monument.

Another known: a student is jogging.
We see him coming in the distance.
His long hair
Dances left and right as if following
Along behind him, a second person.

Another: a woman lowers
Her last undergarment; it slides
The length of her legs and she remains stark naked.
From habit her nakedness itself seems like a dress.
Let her keep it, this too is life.

In the known I include earthquakes,
Wars, sickness, upheavals—
It's enough just to survive each time.
One day we will die, then we won't even have
Our daily expectation of death.

This Death

Giorgos is gone, you told me. And as with every death
The feeling seized me that suddenly a counting had finished,
Some numbering begun years ago
As if this were about losing stacked coins
(Unless I was dreaming they were lost, I thought for a moment,
Unless the dream, without logic, made me crazy).

One death, we know, does not resemble another death.
Each is the motion—sudden, personal—
Of an individual whose whole life was functioning collectively
Or so it seemed; each the perfection
Of a concrete person, a frame that
Objectifies you like a photograph.

However, this particular death, you believe,
Is identified with every loss in our world, every
Death like a new counting around us finishing.
A child dies, let's say, an old man dies,
A whore dies in the middle of the road, one of our own in a clinic—
Whoever dies, it is always Giorgos Ioannou.

Robert S. King

three poems

What Missing the Cat Means

—for Ian, my son, after Thai went away

It means that something in nature hungered for change,
perhaps the cat, maybe his taker,
perhaps the circular soul of give and take, life and death.

Loss is a hole that forget-me-nots grow back around.
Loyalty is a beautiful gown of leaves
worn together for a season.
Then the pet will not so much leave you as go on.
Or change his form, invisible as wind
that blows far beyond a mere nine lives.

We sweep the floor where his shed white fur
almost forms him whole again.
He is still in our gravity
in the snake's or the hawk's eye.
His taker has taken on his white shadow,
his night vision, and among the crickets
his purr and soft rubbings.

You will always have him,
though you must seek him beyond this moment's void.
Keep his touch to warm your room
but look out across these whiskers of grass,
let him hunt there in a greater self.
Love that holds is less than love that frees,
but you may keep the gift
of knowing that, whatever his form,
he's moved by your gentle rain, still feels
your hands softly along his rainbowed back.

The Meaning of Dogs

The trail of a young dog is old,
comes back to me as my son
rolling in wagging stalks of grass and tail,
a trick new as the judgeless tongue
wetting him with laughter.

I want to grow
only from remembered grass,
want to part its secrets
with gentle wind, want
my son to sing without
my howl of history.
I do not want this leash
that jerks me back in line,
that makes me hold my tongue
on pet words I should not choke on.

Veterans Know a Purr Is Just an Infant Growl

War is my wife; Peace my tortured child.
The jungle maneuvers around me:
flashlights, flashbacks, growls, and whistles.
At a far distance from myself,
I have grown close to my enemies, their lover now,
have sharpened their claws and stood in a scented wind.
Now in domestication my animals cry to be fed,
and there is always a girl who listens too hard.

Too easy, your arms bend easy.
Your prayer goes off with the lamp.
You brush against my hands like a generous cat
the color of night, the color of love.
Then you rise purring and
rub your way down the hall to doors with no knobs.
I know I'll take another of your dwindling lives,
as I smoke with a waiting grin
in the room where light jams under the door.

Now I remember the night air licking its wounds,
strong men weeping in a hollow tree,
the silence in rain when the shouts have moved on.
Then silence stretching to find a voice:
light alarmed in the distant sky,
headless turtles cowering under helmets,
fingers planted in fields like carrots.

I want two throats,
one to strangle, one to sing.
I want you to wag your tail,
bite it off,
and blame me.

Jesse Glass

On Soutine's "Carcass of Beef"

it hangs
    in space illusory
as a dream of deserts
    in a dark room

alive with the motor thrum of flies

    we get a long lingering look
at its iridescent gut
    like a cheesecake shot
    from an old Life backpage
    legs spread shamelessly
    the drip drip drip
    of that dark blood
    congealing on the cement

Soutine, the flesh of your hands
has fallen from fierce bone

thick, sensuous lips have given way
to bleached teeth clamped on deutsch marks

all the chickens you captured wrung necks
& plucked
before you framed their immortality
give thanks to a convulsive god

all the fish on sawdust-covered tables
stare back through sockets larded with vermilion

as you stab the canvas
with a cheap stilleto
& rip it across the grain
toward you—Soutine
terror of collectors
it's not cold enough
to keep beef
still see?
it writhes on its hook,
a worm on an iron thread

it weeps its truth like a wounded zealot

we must turn away

or asperge ourselves with smoke
from the butcher house, & like Soutine

clasp the smokestacks familiarly
yell the empty song
in airless rooms

kiss the reflection
in the pool of blood.

Susanna Rich

Dancer

> *The showers are for disinfection.*—S. S.

Sister, doe-eyed Salome—
ruby from your belly,
diamonds from your ears
inside a pouch,
inside your small warmth
where only love should go—

lean against the pillar,
catch the gaze of him
who slaps a stick
into his palm,
dry palm.
The slip of your shoe

stays his strut—
the squeeze of your buttons
plucks at his eyes,
your leg, like a boa,
spirals the white-washed pole
of his hunger.

Dancer,
draw his eyes,
as you do, you do
his breath,
his hardening toward you—
do it, then,

reach down for your shoe,
lunge, ram,
twist your spiked heel
into that eye,
stone eye,
grab his gun from its holster,

shoot his heart,
shoot yours,
for this death oven,
this hooded cradle,
this charred altar
where you lie

your hair for a shroud—
black black hair,
still tousled with dance,
still curling flowers of hope—
midnight gossamer
meant for a mattress.

One last solo waits for you,
last swirl of flames and mist,
last shimmering of your skin,
last peeling away.
And the jewels—
your jewels—

coat them in your dust,
these stones that will follow you
into your many dancing graves.
Leap into the cinnabar
clouds over this pyre,
polka your bones into the fields,

waltz into poppies and dew,
swirl the night with your hair,
streak the dawn.

Peter Meinke

Artist of the Heart

When we were young we couldn't imagine living to be over thirty
nor did we deserve to: everyone chainsmoked drank till we dropped
and drove like suicidal gangsters Yet here I am at 60 in perfect health
except for fainting once in a while

And you Mother who always lied about your age confess!
You're 86! You sit with your cronies playing bridge in permed
respectability still wishing there were men to flirt with
But you've outlived them all sailing your old Buick
across the desert of Orlando like the Queen of Arabia
at twenty miles per hour ignoring all traffic lights

Years ago running off with a piano player how brave you were!
For a woman born in 1960 this would be ordinary even expected
But for a woman born in 1906 this was true courage O you should be
awarded the Presiden'ts Medal for Impractical Visionary Valor!

And didn't Harold run over you twice with that same Buick
without breaking a single bone your legs ballooning
like a purple elephant's? And didn't you throw a TV set
half as large as yourself at our father? I have often tried to misbehave
as much as you but it's difficult difficult . . .

Did any of this really happen? We can hardly remember
what we did last Tuesday Once at a party you drank four martinis
and played Chopin's *Polonaise* with a toothpick in your mouth
not missing a note Now you get wobbly as a baby on a sliver
of Sacher torte You can't hold your chocolate anymore

When you had your old face sandpapered it was painful
but you didn't care Above your cheeks as smooth as Barbi's
your fierce bruised eyes glinted like the Witch of Endor's Take *that*
Father Time they said you male pig We were terrified *That's Grandma*
we told the kids *She's made some sort of pact*

Still you are the perfect mother you remember everything I tell you
even things I make up are as clear to you as the day they never happened
Each of us is convinced you love us the most how do you do it?
I think you are an artist of the heart When you enter a room
a secret ray shazams from your withered breast to atomize my knees
On shaky feet I approach you the world slides away
an insubstantial shadow I am six years old forever
holding out my sticklike arms to you Mother dearest Mother

David Ray

five poems

Melanin

Out of deep Africa Cro-Magnon man
spread in three spearheads, arrived in the North
and in bogs that became Europe. He moved
into the cleavage between mountains,
out of the light, learned to live

in caves, to paint his way
out of the darkness, as indeed
one might expect of the great grandfather
to the *n*th power of Picasso
and all the brothers and sisters of art.

But sometimes he grieved for the sun,
which it seemed he had left in the South—
no longer bright, no longer a god
he took with him always. His skin
grew pale, the chemic miracle

of adaptation, survival. Who knows
whence came that power? He had to let in
more sun—to make more
of that vitamin we call D,
so essential to life. It's that simple,

superficial, a flick of a switch
in millions of cells. Trivial! Just that,
a subtle adjustment, skin-deep,
a capacity built into all creatures.
Elsewhere, Eskimos slowed their blood

to bear the harsh cold, and so did the Australian.
And out of such simple and God-given attunings—
this lightening up of the melanin, for nothing
but a vitamin we can now buy in a bottle, has come
that great cornucopia, racism and hate:

the children despised and abandoned, some faces
loved and some not, crosses pushed upright
for young men to bleed on. Chains and snarling
in neighborhoods, the absence of friendship
between brother and brother, grandchildren all

of that first man. And I grieve for him,
Grandfather crouched by his fire, heroic hunter
hunting for all of us—for every Cain and Abel
he's sired, sent down into the ages—hunting not
just to save his own skin, turning pale even then.

Sunset

Blue mountains seem
about to set.
There's a bush there
that if I could find it
would burst into flame.

Let me stay in,
not merely touch,
heaven.

The Diarist

Tolstoy duly noted the day
his slobbering began
and the baby steps and the frequent trips
to pee
    just as he had in an earlier day
written of his lust for the peasant girls—
the ones Sonya hated—
and his compulsion to gamble
yet another house away.
    He had already lost
Yasnaya Polyana to a debt
at cards, seen it dismantled
and hauled away. And he kept track
of what he called his madness—
    his taking the Gospels too much
to heart, deciding to fling
all his wealth away coin by coin,
give his land to the serfs,
redistribute his vast holdings
    of pine and birch.
He would miss those trees
most of all, and hoped
to continue roaming among them
in his long burlap shirt,
    his straw sandals—
traipse into the forest
in deep snow, know again
how it was to be lost,
have faith that a way out
    would be shown.
And he confessed as well
his envy of those trees—
because they "so beautifully"
died.
    "Beautifully—
because they put on no airs,
have no fears, and no regrets."
As for himself, he was still
stuck with his faults.
    Even in that last scene,
when they carried him in
to a side room of the railway
station—the sort of place in which
Anna Karenina had died—
    he was aware of being
altogether too theatrical,
like a character in a melodrama.
He was dying with fears

and regrets—and
    worst of all,
still putting on airs.
He was propped up
in a bed the station master
used for his naps
    between trains, a bed
about as humble as one could get,
yet too well attended.
They were rushing to his bedside,
making a fuss, creating too much
    of a stir. Here he was, an old man
no longer handsome, mumbling
his sins still unconfessed
even to his journals,
those diaries growing
    thick and cold.

Grief Is Not for the Game of Wits

"More we shall not be to each other. Baulked soul!"
—Emerson

Finding a spray of baby's breath
two years later, crushed
at the bottom of my briefcase,
its blue ribbon dulled, and the small blossoms
dry as seeds, all from that worst day,
I wonder anew why grief is so sharp.

It is not that I have not been reproached,
told I should be ashamed of my tears,
counseled not to rage. It is not
that I do not know

that two years is far too long
for a son. And yet did not Emerson
keep the apple because little Waldo
had bitten into it,
his precious teeth marks left?

It is hardly a failure of news. We all
know how morbid and sick is such idolatry—
But it is not D. H. Lawrence who told us!
I open, by chance, his book,
where he speaks of "our troth with the dead."

And it is delicious, the grief
overwelling, permitted—
without the lecture, the judgement,
the injunction to be ashamed of tears.
By God, Lawrence, you are good company!
And you, too, Emerson, who wrote
that life is a continuous revelation.
It is delicious, having you for such brothers—

You, Lawrence, who spoke without shame
of the plait of your mother's hair, white strands
like ash upon your shoulder
as you bore her downstairs in your arms.

And you, Emerson, who said that all
our apples derive from the small bitter crab.

Morning Wet

Go on and get wet in the rain—
the bottom of the world rain,
the island-dug-into-by harbors rain,
the rain-that-won't-stop-pouring-
for-a-week rain. Get mist
on your glasses and ward off
all but the dripped drops of it
on your sheltered face
which is occasion for my joy.
Wade on in galoshes toward the task
set before you—hold the list tight!
Take the bottles to Lynn
at the store and give him your smile—
returnable to me, I should hope.
And buy the chocolate bar if tempted,
and the tea in its tiny bale
and put all these things on the tab. Tuck
a newspaper in and we'll see
what word from the world is—
world beyond rain wall, world beyond
ours which we'll hold onto
a while longer, huddled together
at table, kettle atune to our wish
and immune to what's boiling up there
where the nations are fat.
Go on, my love, and get wet.

Liana Sakelliou-Schultz

two poems translated by **Don Schofield**

Sovereign

With her unique air of solitude
she was knitting in firelight,
surrounded by the ticking of your father's clock.
Aroma of dried apples. Shadows. Her yarn
a naked child holding out his arms
to a dragon,
a stuffed green dragon.

She said:
The hour betrays me.
Let me solve the problem
of the yarn,
I am almost done—
spring or winter?
horse or dragon?
I must decide.
And the needles were sliding intricately,
each loop making the dragon in the yarn
look more like her.

I remember you sat calmly in the armchair,
the scent of your whiskey tobacco
drifting in the air,
the gentle, feathery time
of childhood hummed around you,
ash from the burning wood
settled around you.
When the wood burnt down we left.
She stayed knitting,
lamp tilted to catch
the last drops of oil.

In the dark of your room,
your boyhood bed,
we didn't sleep a wink.
You embraced me and trembled,
your ears straining to hear
the metallic tap of her needles
as if they could knit you into a dreamscape.

In my embrace

you studied the face of the moon,
rode a horse against violent weather,
wrapped your impatient arms
around the lance of my body,
galloping to kill
the fiery-tongued dragon.

In your arms,
pulled from that which you feared,
I became her. I sat by the fireplace,
stroked the pictures
of you at two, riding a wooden horse,
four, dancing on the tail
of a Chinese dragon,
eight, on the crossbar of your father's bicycle,
holding the net he caught trout in,
thirteen, in the low branches
of an apple tree.

Now your gift, a gold sovereign,
hangs warm against my breast.
It pulls me into your realm
as you intended.
But I am the mother of another
now, with other photos
to caress. I don't remember the year you left,
less the season. But I managed

to knit our story into a snow scene;
now winter is upon us,
I must wear you, my precious,
in your lonely quest for the dragon,
without a lance, scared stiff
yet stubborn in your decision
simply to lull it to sleep
and with blind arms
hang on.

Santorini Mist

The old say
it's moisture rolling in from the sea,
part of the warm season,
leaving behind
aroma of seaweed and wood,
renewing itself each night
in clay hills, whitewashed squares,
houses and caves—
the oldest thing on the island.

Young farmers
count on it,
feel it slowly, tenderly
moisten their tomatoes,
beans and grapes,
easing the skins open. Secretly,
knowing its joy,
they try to find it again
in love.

The women wish it would sink once and for all.
It's a sickness, they say,
sliding over the skin cunningly,
planting illusions about their lives,
leaving them exhausted all morning—
they can't fix breakfast
or clean sheets for rooms
they rent to foreigners.
Daytime wears down the spirit.

Tourists see a ghost
rising from the sea
when like hoarfrost it stuffs
the mouth of the nearby volcano,
mouth that opens, fierce, vindictive,
to claim more land for the sea
and announce the myth of lost Atlantis.
Standing on verandas, they feel it in the wind
whipping their yellow hair.
They hug each other, shiver
and let the phantom envelop them.

I call it madness—
wild dogs howl,
street lamps sputter and go out.
At night, where I camp,
its bloodless shape rushes over me,
tears at my breasts,

muffles my mouth, spreading quickly
to fill my sleeping bag.

Someday the winds may change.
I may weary of traveling,
learn to settle for mist
that has entered me,
this strange presence bringing me joy,
as if it were a lazy
wave knowing only
to break calmly
over my muscular earth.

Notes on Contributors

Karen Alkalay-Gut's most recent book is *Ignorant Armies* (Cross-Cultural Communications, New York), but her most recent publications have been t-shirts (Flying Camel Press, Toronto) and a Compact Disk entitled *The Paranormal in Our Daily Lives*. An electronic poetry chapbook, *Life in Israel: November 1995-November 1996,* is forthcoming from Whistle Press. She teaches poetry at Tel Aviv University. E-mail: gut22@ccsg.tau.ac.il.

David Conford is an English Professor at SUNY Farmingdale. During the '60s and '70s, dozens of his poems were published in such magazines as *College English, Mediterranean Review, Four Quarters, Confrontation,* and *Laurel Review*. After a long dry spell, he is writing poetry again.

W. D. Ehrhart's most recent books are a collection of poems, *The Distance We Travel* (Adastra Press, 1993), and a memoir, *Busted: A Vietnam Veteran in Nixon's America* (University of Massachusetts Press, 1995). He is currently a research fellow of the American Studies Department of the University of Wales in Swansea, UK. E-mail: wdehrhart@worldnet.att.net.

Nikos Focas, born on the Greek island of Kefalonia in 1927 and educated in Athens, worked a number of years in the Greek Service of the BBC World Service, London. He has published nine collections of poetry, the most recent of which is *A Point of Fixation*, as well as books of essays, fiction, and translation. An Honorary Fellow at the University of Iowa, his poems have been translated into several languages, including English, French, Serbo-Croat, Bulgarian, and Italian.

Alice B. Fogel is the author of a book of poems, *Elemental.* She teaches writing at the University of New Hampshire and lives on a farm with her family.

Jesse Glass, a native of Maryland, is a teacher in the English Culture Department at Fukuoka Jo Gakulin College in Japan and editor of *The Abiko Quarterly.* He is the author of two books of poetry, most recently *The Life & Death of Peter Stubbe* (Birch Book Press, 1995).

Sharon Hashimoto—no bio available.

Robert S. King is currently Editor-in-Chief of *Gaia* and of Whistle Press, Inc. His poems have appeared widely over the last 20 years in literary journals, including *The Kenyon Review, Spoon River Poetry Review, The Chariton Review, Negative Capability,* etc. E-mail: rsking@whistle.org or rskgaia@uga.cc.uga.edu.

David Levit studied poetry at Syracuse University under the guidance of Tess Gallagher, Stephen Dobyns, and Mary Karr. Currently he lives and works in New York City and would like to thank Martha Rhodes for her loving criticism and ceaseless emotional support. E-mail: dlevit%amerex@mcimail.com.

Emmett Malone, Seattle, Washington, has his bio in the form of a poem ("Biography").

Peter Meinke has published four collections in the Pitt Poetry Series, the latest being *Liquid Paper: New & Selected Poems*. His work has received numerous awards, including two NEA Fellowships and three prizes from the Poetry Society of America. "Artist of the Heart" is from his book, *Scars* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 1996). He lives in St. Petersburg, Florida. E-mail: meinkep@acasun.eckerd.edu.

Len Messineo's work has appeared in *The Sun, Rosebud, Shenandoah, The New Novel Review, Painted Bride Quarterly, Midwest Quarterly, Negative Capability, Thema,* and other magazines. His stories have twice been nominated for inclusion in the Pushcart

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David Ray's most recent books are *Not far from the River* (Copper Canyon Press 1990) and *The Maharani's New Wall* (Wesleyan University Press 1989), which was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize. *Sam's Book* (also Wesleyan) won the Maurice English Poetry Award in 1988. Ray has published fiction, essays, and poetry in many journals, and has been a recipient of a National Endowment for the Arts award for his fiction. He is a professor of English at the University of Missouri-Kansas City. E-mail: dray@umkc.edu.

Susanna Rich is an Associate Professor of English at Kean College of New Jersey where she teaches such courses as "Writing Poetry," "Creative Writing," and "Emily Dickinson." Author of *The Flexible Writer* (Allyn & Bacon 1992), Susanna's creative and critical works have appeared in such publications as *The New York Times, South Coast Poetry Journal, Explicator,* and *If I Had a Hammer* (Papier Mache, 1990). She served as contest judge for Saturday Press and is a member of The South Mountain Poets. "Dancer" is a selection from a series of poems on the Holocaust which Susanna is developing into a book with artist Jo Jochnowitz.

Don Schofield (translator of Focas and Sakelliou-Schultz) was born in Nevada and raised in California, but has lived in Greece since 1980. His poems have appeared in many American periodicals, including *Antioch Review, Cutbank, New England Review/Bread Loaf Quarterly,*and *Ironwood,* as well as in journals in Japan, Ireland, and Greece. He is the recipient of a Roberts Writing Award (H. G. Roberts Foundation), the Cynthia Cahn Memorial Poetry Prize (Anhinga Press), and a Paumanok Poetry Award (SUNY). His first collection of poems, *Of Dust,*is published by March Street Press. He is currently an Associate Professor of literature and creative writing at the University of La Verne, Athens Campus.

Liana Sakelliou-Schultz was born in Athens and currently serves as an Associate Professor in American Literature at the University of Athens. Her publications include *Denise Levertov: An Annotated Primary and Secondary Bibliography* (Garland 1988); *Feminist Criticism on American Women Poets* (Garland 1992); *Touches in the Flow* (Nefeli 1992); *Ralph Waldo Emerson: The Man Against the Sky* (Guttenberg 1993); *Brenden Kennelley's Blarney Stone*(General Editor and Translator) (Erato 1992). She has won the Krystalia Award for her poetry (1982), the American Academy of American Poets Award while a student at Pennsylvania State Univerisity and a Fulbright Scholarship for the Arts (1992–93).

Kenneth Wolman began to write "Kindertotenlieder" in his car on Route 287 in Westchester County while listening to a report on the Balkans conflict on "All Things Considered." His day job is technical writing for a Wall Street financial house, but he has published poetry in (among other places) *The Journal of New Jersey Poets, The Asheville Poetry Review, Footwork, The Lowell Review,* and several electronic journals. He has studied with Stephen Dunn at the White River Writers' Workshop. He regrets that "Kindertotenlieder" is still politically current two and a half years after he wrote it. E-mail: wolman@nji.com or kwolman@morgan.com.