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"NATURE"
Salted raindrops trippingly
Etching gentle chinks upon
The sculptor’s worked clay.

Tumultuous thunder pounds
Vehemently at hardened,
Misrendered fopperies.

Slapping gusts of wind
Spasmodically jolt tottering,
Faltering configurations.

Filtered sunrays pretentiously
Dessicate and conquer,
Bringing a double-faced calm.

A.P.V.

THAT DAY RAINED

That day rained Gushes
Which wind propelled
Blew into Moistening
Then trickled off
Gathering in puddles
Which did evaporate
Returned to wind
And roamed endlessly
In search of another
Gray day.

J. Rowan
SO MUCH DEPENDS ON THE DANCER—
OR IS IT THE DANCE?

An Angelus toll'd six—
Sistine women (men disguised with breasts),
posing with pristine fig leaves
marvel at cloven-hoofed gods
barking at the wheels of cars.

Lift up your eyes.
Lift up your hearts.
Sing, chant . . . It will
hear your cries that
have numbered all the bones,
and demolish the ephemeral
line of primordial slime
that slices fantasy and can't.

"Where is the meaning?" He asked,
"Within the swelling fissure of time.
Under the rotting bark, Roderich.
Steaming from tarn and clinging brine
where sea and turf mesh and trickle,
to trick us into wordy mime."
"There is the meaning," She said.
"That is no meaning," He replied.

"Laugh, while you think the game turns round
in twenty-four, twelve, three sixty-five.
But cry, while you feel the sun burned sound
of an id that clamours to come alive
in a soul that fears the un-profound."

"What can I say?" She asked.
"Speak of the future." He demanded.
"Never."
"If what you say is true, why
do I cliche the tragic flaws of past?
How can I ever hold an honest sigh
till it dampens to tear and washes fast
away the veneer, that is I?"

"Love me." He offered.
"How long." She asked.
"Forever." He replied.
"Change? I, who like Durer's self-portrait
have donned the cap of ego;
swathed myself in pretense till I suffocate?
You have penned me Circe, ergo,
why tears to commiserate and flagellate?"

"Enough!" He demanded. "I forgot for a moment."
"Yes, I know." She sighed.
"Is it over?" He asked.
"Let Kismet decide."

He nodded as Angelus terminated in mauve twilight dust;
Took her hand and fatefully moved through willow warm nights
where they met Ho Tai
who filled the benumbed silence
with a belly-full sigh.

While at Xanadu, thirty niggers and thirty spics,
clasped hands with thirty kikes and micks:
Wops, polacks, et al joined in
but no one heard their joyous din.
No one heard, save him and her,
as slowly closed the fissure.

C. M. Gallagher

It's said by dentists
and other leeches
That cotton-candy
rots the teeth
But I've seen some who've
been eating greedily
for years,
and who are still smiling.

Anonymous
SPRING MEMORIES; FAINT, DISTANT

today a sudden wind.
with autumn's trees
releasing a flurry of parchment-leaves;
brown-dead.
weathered,
ancient hands; gnarled, veined.
leaving nothing but negative patchwork
of lace surrounded by grey day.
the dry rain collecting in gutters and walks.
leaves, like lemmings intent on death,
race out in front of oncoming cars.
our mother, the earth, reaching menopause.
i stood in november
and lit my cigarette to
the screaming of flower-cars;
dull orchid,
faded mint.
being caught somehow in the chrome-world
i drifted upstream absorbed in the
tide-pull of winter.
shadows dissolved into night
stealing my silhouette,
leaving luminescent visions of early
morning ecstasy.
ebony hair,
pastel thighs that rise from crimson sheets.
mother, alas, is dead.
her womb, like her branches, left barren.
now we can only wait
for the return of that dream called spring.
hoping that love can be quick-frozen
to appear again unharmed.

Anonymous

FIVE SHORT POEMS

i have touched cold rock.
is it my tombstone
or my heart?

Fetal child
In moist confusion
I am drown

for now, then,
my whatever ... 
however so real.

For Max:
a world
bright white and yellow!
tainted and tinged
by emotion.
even daisies and buttercups must change.

The heart is a little red thing . . . 
a 10¢ candy . . . that lots of people
eat on Valentine's Day . . .
“not because it is good
but because it is their own.”

doni
FATHER

Father never wanted from the world.
To stand by the roadside
and sell hot dogs
to the children
Was his only desire.
He never asked my love
or my hate either.
He never asked for mother
but got her
He never asked for Cajaw Pond
but got that too.
I think he asked to die
he wanted a closed casket.
At least he got some of what he wanted.

J. Rowan

I'll never tire of these
Sweaty passionate little scenes.
They used to come in buggies
with blankets.
Now often no blankets, just those
speed machines.
It's better now—more often
And it's all year round.
When it's cold and the windows steam up
I can't see very well,
But at least when I'm cold
I know there's warmth and love for them.
My limbs shiver at the thought
Of how lucky they are.

T. Ritter
AT THE BAR AT SULLY’S

Thomas sat
with the laughing people
whom he knew as friends
and heard his watch
midst the laughter
and the noise
under the smoke
at the bar at Sully’s.

The scotch flowed fast that night
and fluid too—
as the talk.

Now still
the Sphinx looks on and on the desert
but not to see.

He thought—
to leave the talk to scotch and friends—
and saw
his small self on the sweating glass,
the glass that sweated tears
midst the loud laughter
and the noise
under the smoke
at the bar at Sully’s.

The scotch flowed fluid that night,
fluid—
as the laughter.

Now still
the Sphinx listens to the wind in the desert,
but not to hear.

With fast friends
he sat,
he thought—
to leave the talk to them—
and felt his face roughen with the new day’s black shadows
and felt his sides grow wet and cold
and hung his head low
to see his small reflection on the scotch that sweated tears,
the glass that sweated tears,
midst the laughter
and the blue smoke
at the long bar at Sully’s.

Perhaps
one day
the Sphinx saw
perhaps
he may have heard
one day—
then turned to stone.

Now
still
Thomas sat
and thought
midst fast and final friends,
friends to the end,
who never heard the watch
over the laughter
over the noise
who never saw the hands
through the smoke
through the scotch.
At the long bar at Sully’s
the scotch flowed faster,
the laughter lasted longer,
the noise grew louder,

the friends faster.
But none but one heard the watch
and none but one heard the whimper.

John H. Koch
A SAD THING

A lonely man
got off the bus
one stop before
a lonely girl
he could have loved
got on.

Frank Savage

Feeble night
roamed the streets
lost in darkness
until in desperation
struck a match
which echoed in the stillness
awakening day
which then crept in
from the east.

J. Rowan
THE RED RAIN

You were a fuzzy gosling trying to push,
Like a white boat with a red sail
Through the gust cropped waves.
You sat down smooth as a goose swim;
On a throne of wicker; Silent, Watching,
child guilty.
You were a tomorrow of hope, a little
glad of evening, but you never had a chance—so
Maybe you will not learn the pathos of hope after pain.

But now the familiar wait
for a tree fall crash, to stiffen and say
“Listen to me! I have seen the wind that whistled over crumbled
Columns in a philosophic land.”
Then the reply that lifts you up like a gangly puppy
For a head pat and sets you down again on the wicker throne
In the room with yellow lamp light shining through dust.

That night in rain slick peony beds
black green buds with the germ of
blossoms to
lush white puffs, cupped
only in slender fingered hands.

Maybe, dear girl, you will someday
Be honey and gall so
fullness will be yours.

Robert Wood

After years of dry hard poetry
Where love is a razor sharp icicle just so long
and not too wide,
Guaranteed not to melt into little drops of
“I care,”
“I bleed, too”—from thorns and things,

Do I see new throbings along old veins,
A crimson blush of life
in the marrow bones,
A new rose gleam
In the subjective, hungry
eye?

Anonymous
A STORM CAME IN

'I built a church'
There were no walls
    no one is outside
The pews were lined in green
    or they were foxholes
I think
'I built a church'
Ordained a god and priested a man
    and his vestments were gold and rags
'I built a church'
With rocks and straw
    and slaves sweat
    and sweated contributions
'But I built a church'
The choir was a million voices
    but no one sang
The altar faced to the East, and West
    and up and down
The chalice was made of tin
    and rusted
And the wafers were green
'But I built a church'
And the church stood for a million years
The priest died
The altar rotted
Then a storm came up and washed away my church
In the cool of a gothic setting
    spires high—awe besetting
Men kneel at the brass rail
    icons stare
    convictions fail
At the baptismal font
    water purges
    sin not want
In the shadow of the tree
    lurks the image
    one or three

diane e. mann
DAS KIND DER ZEIT

GEIST

Nightly mistake-play in my head.
This is my birth right.
Assuming the portent is dead,
buried,

and forgotten somewhere last generation,
I am saved.
Enslaved to conventions
lost, o, lost
in delicious lack-of-perspective.
Cursory, reflective messages I bring but
only of today. Luck would have it so,
And I agree.
Frothing back past three hours lapse of spatial
equations
is bad public
relations.

What it is to stand
void like fizz of land.
What it does to laugh
fat like fuzz or chaff
doth seem grand, indeed, allowance
of time
to bleed the era dry. And I,
am free.
In the pretty, petty nights they don't bother
asking what comes next.
They know better than that.
"please, my coat and hat", has been said before.
You lock the door, and only open it at alternate knocks.

CONSTRUCTION

I don't want to go to church
To hear a mimeographed minister
Tell a microphone about the building fund
In a humming, immaculate auditorium
That assures weather-free worship.

I tire of hearing abstract rites
Bouncing off painted windowpanes
To be then soaked up by thick
Plush carpets which are soil-free and sterile.

Let me take over the church.
I promise to smash the windows,
Tear down the doors and fling dirt
All over the congregation and floor,
Then plant a seed in the rotting carpet.

Anonymous

OKTOBER

You sensed it,
coming fast upon you then, when the month
would end in green-days-gone.
You faltered, hoping soon the winter snow
might reach the flesh.
And, flesh is rain-moist earth, soil to beacon
seasons as they glide across an altered sky.
And I, I only ask you wait until the end of summer,
pause to see it close in foliaged glory,
linger, see the end of summer till you die.

Anonymous
TRANSFLIGHT
The afternoon's sun's molten pond
Drained on me through a hemlock frond
As eight-wheeler cumulus chugged through the sky.

A single carbon-eyed crow watched me
As I drowsed under that cone shaped tree,
And I in turn through a sleep grogged eye.

Watched a caterpillar patter up a milkweed stalk.
On a clay slick leaf he quit his walk,
And by an inch long kick he seemed to fly:

Stiletto smooth, night hawk clean,
A dart streak to worlds unseen
With a bent light twig to travel by.

He came to a meadow of brass
To chew on a milkweed of blunt blue grass
Where is the world that must laugh to cry?

It spins in our space and orbits the sun;
Whirls from the barrel of a boy's toy gun.
It drips from a brick if you squeeze it dry.

Fresh steaming cow flops are the neatest things
In the world.
Bare foot toe-squashing
Stick-jabbing games,
Throw it around—
Fun and games.
Green metal flies swear at me
And shiny black beetles run away and hide.
Purple tufted nettles are prettier but hurt lots.
Throw them at the flies—damn flies.

T. Ritter

PIT AND PRECIPICE
I am freezing in a world
That says there is no warmth.
So this is the choice I have:
Forget warmth or create another world.
And I find it easier to create than forget.

See my new world? All the lakes
Are twelve degrees above body temperature;
The mountains are soaring but sunny
And warm from bottom to top;
The trees are fragrant and round and smooth
With low branches spreading in the sun.
The people are naked and embrace all they meet.
But they do not speak; they only grunt and smile
And love me, one by one, on hidden grassy slopes.

Anonymous

If memory serves me right I died a month ago. No one seemed
to notice my breathing had stopped because I had lain very still a
long time before that. Finally God happened along one day and
must have been embarrassed by the attitude of my remains. You
see I fooled him too; which isn't much of an accomplishment because
he isn't so young anymore. His eyes are going and he doesn't hear
so good—but then he never did anyway. Well anyway, he covered
me with something; which was nice of him because winter is coming
and the nights aren't as warm anymore. I'm getting very bored and
my arms and legs are getting pins and needles in them. But I can't
give up now because any day now God will retire. When he does I
plan to sneak away. Since I've been here I've thought how nice it
would be to take a walk around Saturn. I'd walk to the Sun but I
never did care for heat that much; you see it has to be a long walk
because I want to be away on judgment day. I want to come back
afterwards because that's all part of my joke on God.

J. Rowan
TWO IMPROBABLE PARABLES

It happened that a portrait painter of exalted repute grew tired of portraiture one day. He began pacing the length of his studio, waving his arms about and complaining.

"After all," he said. "the achievements that have won me my present fame can scarcely hint at the ultimate range of my powers. Portraiture is my gift, indeed, but slavish obeisance to the pale and common countenances of men is working the ruin of my ambition. I am cruelly thwarted."

He began to sound pompous, but of course he painted more subtly than he spoke.

"My subjects stifle me! There is nothing in them that I wish to articulate, nothing which shines half as brightly as the lamps I train on their faces. My own greatness overshadows them - - - - am I boring you?"

"Your opinions on painting are always interesting, sir," replied the janitor.

"Opinions! Heavens no," he continued; "my beliefs become opinions only after I discard them. As long as I retain them they are facts, my dear janitor! Do you see?"

He liked having a blind janitor because some of the paintings in the studio looked embarrassingly clumsy in their various states of unfinished. They were safe from critical eyes. The janitor knew what he heard, of course, but had only opinions about what he saw.

The next morning the painter announced to the press that he would paint a portrait of God Almighty Himself. The learned community of the world was all astir with grave doubts and great expectations.

On the day of the long awaited, much publicized unveiling, great men assembled about the draped canvas, smoking nervously and soothing their tired feet with dry martinis.

Conjections ran wild. All of the painter's very intimate friends expected him to represent the Almighty through a more or less literal self-portrait. Others suggested that he might have employed some ferocious aspect of nature, a storm at sea, a frightening gorge. Still others imagined a scene of familial tenderness, perhaps a mother and child.
The drapery fell. Hundreds of tensely outstretched necks suddenly contracted into shrugs. There before them stood revealed the actual likeness of God himself.

God was embarrassed, and everyone else was disappointed. Only the janitor was impressed, and that was just an opinion.

II

There once was a businessman, a level headed one, and successful, I might add, who worked late at his office one night. Rather than take a cab home, he decided to walk because it was snowing for the first time that winter, and everything sparkled, very much like the winter scene on his office calendar. He was a sensitive fellow.

While passing through the park he was hurled to the ground by a violent abdominal pain, and after several hours of unconsciousness he awoke relaxed but very cold and wet. It seems he had given birth to a large river pebble, smooth and nondescript, about the size of a football.

This frightened man hobbled home through the deepening snow, leaving the stone where he had delivered it. He couldn’t mention it to anyone, least of all his wife, so he just tossed in bed for a few hours.

The stone was on his mind, vivid and persistent in his eyes. His very own stone lay lonely and wet in a public park. This brought tears to his eyes and heaving in his pounding chest.

By sunrise he had tucked his igneous little offspring tenderly away in the back closet of his office, safe from the weather and safe from questioning eyes.

What a pitiful obligation he took to his heart, to keep such a thankless, mute, and sterile child. More and more he neglected his business and friends. He could only lavish comforts and close scrutiny on this silly stone. It might well have ruined him save for one fortunate coincidence.

One of his colleagues gave birth to an identical stone under similar circumstances. The subject came up late one night at the office over a benevolent bottle of bourbon. I believe one of them cemented both stones into his patio floor.

A stone, you see, is one of those pitiable objects which must be unique in order to be loved and respected.

Allen D. McCurdy
“IT’S ALL OVER, NOW . . .”

TO: A. K. Factor: President, Student Government,
      Federal University
FROM: Adam Mensa: Assistant Evaluator of Systematic Thought
SUBJECT: Resignation from the faculty

This is to inform you that I do not wish to continue as a
member of the University faculty beyond the end of this semester.
I feel that I am the wrong one to be evaluating Systematic Thought,
and would go so far as to recommend that you do away completely
with the once-a-week recitation groups, substituting a fifth hour with
the 491. Since your informing me that Student Government was
planning to vote to abolish my position, this communication is written
to inform you that I am in total agreement with your planned decision.

Student Government’s position that the 491 can adequately
determine whether or not Students have adjusted to the Orientation
Courses is entirely justified. I have noticed that with the increased
use of the 491 in Orientation Courses, the number of Students who
Maintain Position in Content Courses becomes closer to Student
Government’s objective of 99%.

In addition, I would like to inform you that I am also in total
agreement with Student Government’s All-University Statement that
Systematic Thought cannot be construed to be a “Humanities
Course.” I am fully aware that the purpose of our University is not
to perpetuate “Humanities.” I am also aware of the complaints of
students who interpreted my evaluating as having this purpose. I am
quite certain that I have been properly Educated. However, if
Student Government should agree that I have not been properly
Educated, I shall be indeed grateful to be considered for Readmission.
I am not anxious, I assure you, to be considered a member of The
One Percent.

In any case, please inform me when I may report for Reclassi-
ification and, hopefully, Reappointment.

MAO
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Art Editor—Gerald Rowan
Poetry Editor—John H. Koch
Prose Editors—Allen D. McCurdy, Michael A. Oliker
Photography—Richard Koch
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