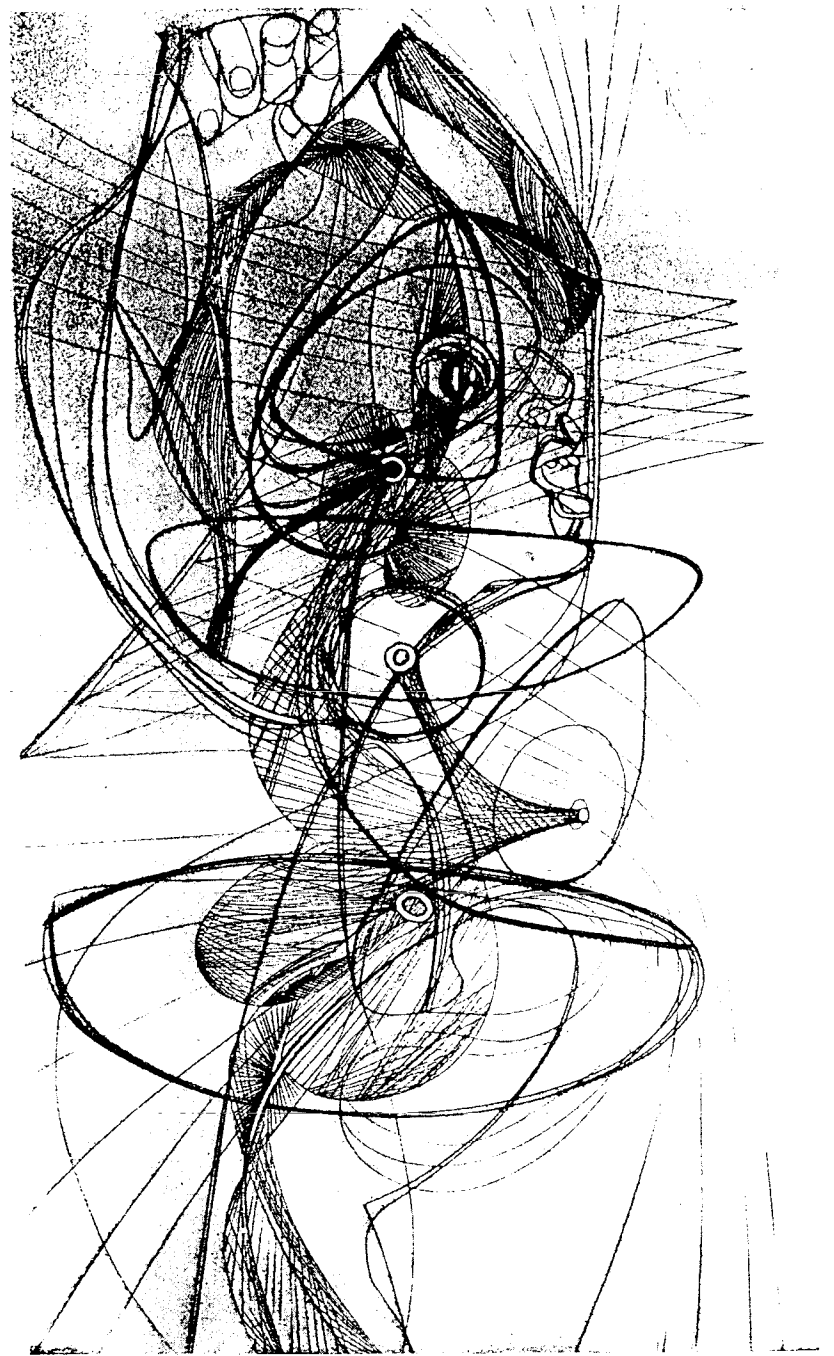


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A LAWPOETS
CREATION

Danse Macabre



Furry Chiclets is A Lawpoets Creation. The Dansé Macabre issue, published in the dead of winter, January, 1995, is dedicated to the dance of life, which is the dance of death. All rights reserved to the poets themselves -- Copyright 1995. For more copies or information, write Furry Chiclets at 269 Nepal Road, Ashland, Oregon 97520.

TOGETHER NOTHING SIR

I MEAN TO BUST YOU UP IF YOU TRY TO STOP ME BEING LONELY
I MEAN TO BURST YOUR BUBBLES SIR YOUR BUBBLES
I NO COMMUNIST SIR NO COMMUNIST
I WANT ALL THAT'S MINE AND I BE FREE TO DAWDLE AS I
PLEASE
PLEASE
I WANT NONE OF THAT COOPERATION
NOPE JUST WANT TO RIDE SIDESADDLE INTO THE BLOODY³ SUNSET
AND LET
BE BE
SEE? I JUST WANT YOUR HANDS OFF AND LET GO A MY BIG STICK
AND LET GO A MY WRATH AND LET GO A MY SUNSET

Catherine Weaver
Astoria-Queens, NY

I Dreamed

Last night I watched a comet light
a trail of diamonds on fire.
Against the black the stars were stolid
but the fiery gems were prurient
and involved . . .

And a candle held in the hands
of a traitor on the road of a dark land
turned night to day with the pass
of flame from bush to building,
making suspicion and fear shrink in passing.
Is that how God works

The lost Louisiana dairy farmer and
the bright-eyed charmer of Chinese women . . .
and an Iroquois prodigal son irrigating dead fields and
the last daughter of Panama peeling off her clothes
in a peaceful nowhere hotel drawn in neon?

Coming home from there I was struck that maybe
I had seen something in her eyes like a streak of fire,
and my conscience conspired
to do a Rembrandt bit and twist on the face of . . .
of the stranger of my dreams.

Brian D. Richards
Milton, PA

city: reverse communion

yeah
 this is my world
 dream
 dream
of eating my own skin &
disconnecting my thoughts
 leaving
feeling leaving
 myself
 open
to still winds & rain confessing
 all

Chris L. Flink
Denver, CO

for justice & Rimbaud

I am alone. I am in
a library, in a cloak of flame.
I have turned the music off.

I have ended the moon's rain
& the reign of Saturn;
I do not need to be, nor do I intend
to be that poet.

no.
I can call my own clouds
& I have kept the rain for days.

my banks were engulfed, overflowed &
I swallowed all smoke.
I showed the beast at the heart
of the stillyoung city the storm
in my eye.
howling & raging together together
...

Chris L. Flink
Denver, CO

PRAGUE: 1968

The moon has left me
for no one else.
I tried to hum
the Pastoral
in the oldest city
where I composed
my first book
with the youngest Venus
staring at me in the Square.

It was 1968
the woods were no longer there
trees had vanished
like people
there was a flash of light
a downpour
which separated me
from the coolness of Saturday.

I remembered Mozart's "Prague"
and here in a warm kitchen
I drank forever
who cares about more space
when there are no ropes
to put you on hold
and there my wilderness speaks,
"All exiles, like birds,
will be released
with the doves in the park."

BZ Niditch
Brookline, MA

CARP

She hemmed a violet pirouette
through the stiff shoulders of night

Lending grace as silver
to the heavy pelt of a snow leopard

Beauty's so indigenous to that maternal
sort of face
You long to kiss her
Arms open
Accepting of the awl
She slips so gingerly into your esophagus

You invite her to lounge in the tepid
Blood
And stay
At leisure
To peruse the pant of trachea
with lustful forefinger
And snuff it out
Entirely

Love comes
To a deep blue movie

I was watching a movie about
fish in a pond
I think they were carp
Whose finite world was imploding
Dehydrating in an angry season of sun
Drowning in thin air

It made me think of you
and I

J.R. Smith
Tampa, FL

My Fiance

Lying next to me,
in the glowing embers of ecstasy,
is he whom I am to marry--
my bottle of Stelazine.
He has satisfied my internal yearnings,
feeling me up with comforting hands that travel
up and beyond my spine, across my thighs,
and goading me to a climax of the brain.
I do not refrain in expressing my passion to him.
"Darling", I say, "you cannot know
how much each and every limb and bone I own
wants your powdery body ... I worship
you with my soul entire."
He doubts with a pouting face
my luscious outpourings.
He feels that after we marry
I will tire of him and have an affair
with my ex-boyfriend, Sominex.
He has no faith in my love and devotion to him.
But I will prove the intensity of my passion
and he will know I am sincere.
My marriage to this lover of mine
must be consummated
for only he can subdue my subcutaneous fears.

Tracy Lyn Rottkamp
Commack, NY

The Venus' Shame

To be looked at without arms?
Mercy has her headless in the face of it!

Catherine Weaver
Astoria-Queens, NY

MY LADY'S NOSE

Complex convexity: her nose
ascends her face (not
wholly unlike a gargoyle
rainspout), her nostrils
drip.

Say to her:
sweet, my lizard
smooth sweeting.

Say:
our name in
a thousand shouts
that ride a
hounding moon
 would be
as fame is
fame only.

Sweet my
lady your nose
my song
 ascend
sweetly.

David Lunde
Forestville, NY

Pure - Bred

I am immaculate
like fucking conception
like stainless steel
like a baby's full blown
bare bottom
and I cannot die.

I am the you
you scorned to create,
the mewling, dark kitten
pure bred to survival,
the one that creeps
like oil through water,
feeds like a lion on anarchy
and drinks concentrated fire
to digest passion.

I am the one that
cries revenge
while you cry tears,
the one that cries rape
as you cry violation,
the one that stutters blood
as you stutter words.

I am clean
as cut can be
and so fucking strong
that Atlas himself
might shrug
and drop the world
at my feet
and I,
a tried and true
child of chaos
and brilliant poker face,
would laugh,
quiver quietly
and swiftly
swallow it whole.

Jennifer Goldsmith
West Chester, PA

Ex am

I lay on my side on the doctor's table
under examination, bared below my waist.
He approached my dorsal end,
spread the flesh halves apart and looked into my entrails.
Stretched open to his sight was substance of my interior:
the gates of myself opened to inspection
by this learned man of science and technology.
But my substance is more than biological fact,
so his observations achieved his mark, but missed mine.
Still he pondered there awhile,
gathering data for his use,
becoming content in his scientific viewings.
"Very interesting," he said.
I agreed
and farted in his face.

B.F. Helman
Chicago, Illinois

The Dig

I've got my pick
I've got my wire
I've got my rose
I've got my chain
I've got my strange and blackened brain
My dated clothes
My scorned desire
I throw it all upon the fire

I'll take my time
I'll take my stones
My colored hair
My battle wear
My unanticipated rhyme
My summer clones
My beaten bones
I'll take them to the chasm there

I carry in my dress a key
It's colder than my autumn eyes
It rests against a hollow where
there once was lightning streaking, screaming
Now there are only skies
And dreams
And dreaming.

I'll take my soul down to the river
I'll take my burning box of rage
I'll take my crystals, candles, charms
My talismans, my silence and my shivers
I'll take my time
I'll take my heart from out its cage
I'll use my rhyme
I'll fly away
My key, my heart, my mind
My judgment day
I'll fly away

C. Schlier
Fremont, CA

Bring on The Food

Sault Ste. Marie
roadhouse -
restaurant -
where all the guys in the gang

have their drooling
bus-bound minds on
the same lovely thing.

Luckily all
the waitresses
are professionals.

John Alan Douglas
Vancouver BC, Canada

From a good

dicking, she arose, surprised
the man responsible was as old
(88) as he was
and his fringe dyed black to boot
but hurried unburdened back
to the ill-girl place to
dismantle in the urinal
(reconnecting IVs) her casket,
numbering for ease
of reassembly each
ex cathedra plank.

Carol Frith
Sacramento, CA

Dog Beneath The Skin

Coming and Coming
Drowning and

Drowning in
Tunnels deep
high

And wells

up
He lifts himself up and

and

Arching Arching his back
SQUeeZinGandSqUeeZingG himtight

I take myself back, slap himself silly
And wait for the same

Begging for his needs

Panting...
Wanting...waiting
waiting
for me

I purr.
He barks.

I turn myself
Fondle myself
Lift myself and

higher

and

higher

Ascend

Purring louder and LOUDER

I claw myself to him

And wait for the blood to pour on us
up.

His tail, anxious and straight

I play,

Play hard all over him

The groaning getting louder and LOUDER

He wants to bury the bone

bury it deep,
deeper,
deepest...

I look up, then play dead.

Karen Tom
NY, NY

Dissenters In A Chorus of Mighty Hallelujahs

Revelation!

It is the great Christ heist.
He has escaped once more from the tomb.

Although we have buried him
Five to seven times,
For countless injuries

And crimes, it seems his
Miraculous return continues
To shock and stun.

Each time we string him up
Like a vandal in the grating
Winter sun. Each time his

Comrades pay the hangman with
Gold and erotic postures. Each time
Some bleeding heart fuck

Will push away the boulder; although
We must admit, each time his flesh
Is growing colder.

We must prepare for war. We must
Eliminate the friends, the mother
The sympathetic whore. We must

Endure. We must begin to strengthen
In our cause for vigilante laws.
We must burn a pyre of

Sacrificial heat because although
The flesh is quite willing, the
Spirit is obsolete. But we will

Try. We will construct an alibi.
We will take to heart archaic words.
You know what I mean, baby, an eye for an eye.

C. Schleier
Fremont, CA

Street Soldiers

Gunshots ringing, knives flinging,
I die a thousand times.
Rap stars, hip hop, bags of dimes.

Cold blue steel revolver, cocked at my head.
Blue chill cadaver, stiff on the bed.

Antiseptic room, my mama cries,
hope gone, and others die
as retribution for me.

Constitutional guarantee, the right
to bear arms. The song goes on MTV.

"Massah" "Massah" ... still white,
rock, powder, street fight.
Brother on brother.

BLOODY.
CRIPpled for life.

Curled fingers, nappy head,
between her legs, I came out dead,
screaming, fetal, sixteen years, futile.

Kill, killing, killers: - "Do it on your own block."
"Don't watch it on the six o'clock."

"I watch that TV
to check the lottery, not to see
another nigger pullin' the trigger."

Animals in the jungle,
vying for the camera angle.

Guests at the Last Supper.
Bread, no body, Wine, red blood
spills freely in the neighborhood.

Kimbereley Sonnich
Lawrence, KS

Rock&Roll Ghost Dance

Time to cast about
for a new paradigm
--well we live
at the bottom
of an ocean
of air
Why not Stealth into manta ray
bong into snorkel
astraddle dolphins we'll ride immortal

Nay bolder yet

Dream-led
by mugwort under the pillow
eschewing the 'shrooms of shaman
we'll dance F-14's into butterflies
sing the Great Mother Salmon
of each sunset
spawning the visionary fire

Tough row to hoe

How boring to say H2O
instead of the storm wild hair
of arctic Sedna tangling kayaks in doom
and what of near-sighted hominid tedium
thrashing fear out of knuckles flint into Folsom
No let Kim be Bobolink & Robert Grouse
with wings lift the scrim of crude off the beach
not tinker with Kenaf or hydrogen scoops
Animism at midnight Yo! let's paint caves

Dave May
Ashland, OR

Repeat Offender

Nostradamus nausea
Flows well into tomorrow.
Someone took the batteries out of the remote
And the remoteness along with them.
They took the variety
Out of the Variety Channel
And the spice out of Zip.
Progress is the nickname we give
To a stinking vagabong
Living out of a cardboard box
That someone's TV came in
Just outside the west wall of the Planters
Cheez Curl factory.
A brown gecko hisses at our bat-faced race:
"This is some fine mess you've gotten us into.
Let's see you invent your way outta this one."
The thunderous echo of "Fine, I will!"
Catches fire at ten after midnight.

Ryan Plummer
Lima, Ohio

Dogsitting

The secretary of education asked me not to write this, and at the time I agreed. The truth is too weird. Who would believe he lives in a house in a suburb with three poodles? Each poodle has an upstairs bedroom complete with kingsize bed, 27 inch color TV, and adjoining bath.

He paid me fifty dollars a night to dogsit. Then he would travel to Washington DC.

He received numerous awards and plaques for innovative education. The neighbors saw him as a nice man who walked his dogs, and kept a horse in the backyard. All of this in suburbs so new that fields surrounded them. Land handed down from father to son since the Civil War era.

It's a fact --
Most people don't live as well as the Secretary's dogs.

Victor Pearn
Boulder, Colorado

The Animal

Every time voices rose in house,
Charlie, tom cat, knew no food nor
water tomorrow. "Get out." Female
told male. Man raised his hand,
slapping her across face. Charlie
scurried for couch, knowing when
he heard flesh popping it would
be his body next. Digging his
claws into carpet, he spun
toward right. Too late. Male's
shoe crashed into feline's stomach,
shooting him smashing against
wall. For second he bared fangs,
then leaped as foot rocketed toward
his head. "You stupid beast."
Man shouted. Charlie's heart pounded
as he fled behind davenport.
One hour later, as darkness
spread into house, he crept
toward cat box. After making
half distance, light broke upon
him. "Got you. You stupid
animal." Man shouted, sending
foot toward his head. Contact. Then
before pain snapped his eyes closed,
human lifted Charlie's body,
whispering, "I'm sorry. So sorry."
Cat tried digging in its claws,
then, as pain eased, it purred.

Dan Buck
Armour, SD

WOLF EATS CROW

Crow
the black tearer of carrion
Stares hard at the lonesome
With a single
Unwavering eye.
Wolf grows restless
Impolitely engulfs
The harbinger
Of abysmal sleep
In a soundless gulp.

Lupus begins to digest
But Crow
Has not yet finished.

Wolf grows
Oily jet wings
And flies away
From himself,
Pursuing a bleak notion
Of Freedom
With a smattering
Of empty
Heartless caws.

Richard King Perkins II
Cicero, IL

Estrangement

Those times

and not for a second
could a moment be balanced

And what was gone
poured down

slammed through

words to a song
we knew by heart.

John Dowling
Ashland, Oregon

See Me

Red lips
 blow smoke
 and kisses
in the rain
 that slides down her
 cheeks
 over her tongue
it stings her palms
 and she laughs
But I would too
 would squeal with pain
 and pleasure
The tree she leans on could whisper
 the stories
 of a thousand days
and nights
 to her.
A million stares
 a million voices
 a million peels of laughter
 in the leaves
 that swing
 and listen
 and listen
to her crying.
 She lays naked in the dark
by the phone
Dreaming of the endless poem of your life
 She's always searching
 for the black and white photograph
 of undying beauty
puppetmaster's of her existence
 never stop torturing
 all the bastard souls
 listen
to the hushed whispers of a young boy
 and girl
 in their ceaseless daydream
 of ultimate feeling
 and it is
 falling
 and I would too
would squeal with pain
 and love
 and pleasure.

Maria Luz De Luna
Ashland, Oregon

Dream #1

In my dream I am a different woman
standing very still holding my belly.
My belly is the Earth
Round Blue Green Brown
the Red pouring down between my legs,
strangely calm,
serene,
I move only with purpose.
When I see my eyes
they are as clear as mirrors.

When I awaken
my body is a pregnant whale on the mattress,
endless layers of rubbery skin,
blanket tangled as my hair.
Tears arrive softly at first,
then the chest rises to meet them,
I recall a rain dance,
my body convulses with the hunger,
I lap up the briny drops from my face
like a starved kitten.

The infinite is never enough.
Fullness does not exist.
My petals want to open wide as worlds,
gorging on all that is,
without time,
drinking up through the canal
into my belly my heart my throat.

Maybe then the tears of this ache
could be resurrected
like a river back to the clouds
bathing me once again in my own desire
pouring like the rain of all tears --
 joyous and tortured --
mixed together as the point
where river meets sea --
 simply liquid now.

And when the water breaks --
giving birth to One --
the Earth's baptism complete,
perhaps then all eyes will see as clear as mirrors.

Melanie Votaw
New York, NY

Covered Windows

I don't think you could ever
 know the snakelike
 squirming
 slithering through my body
like the raging intensity
 don't know the lapping sea
 of grinding
 whispers
 gazing over my shoulder
you say someone is always
 peeking out the window
 to see your face
 to wonder constantly about
the oddness of those eyes
 as they set on you
 like smooth
 round stones
like the leaves and the earth
 intertwined
staring in through the window
 their hands softly pull
 aside the curtain
to shut it all out
 and pulling it all in
to feel the warmth
 of being enclosed
 in your loneliness
enveloped in the movement
 stuffing all the thoughts
 and memories inside
 holding your pulsating psyche
in the palm of your hand
 and behind the windows
 of your words.

Maria Luz De Luna
Ashland, Oregon

judas man in red/don't judas me

I am yr son motherfather the 1
you have never known
never known enough to abandon.
I am the child of the lightning world you bloody birthed
& blinded yrselves to
w/ a mirrorshard in a self stigmatized children's fist.
time is an abstraction the day enfolds
me pulsing through my veins.
it is time to purge these veins
that carry sadness' diffusion of cloud
& the lair of the worm
the lure of the
worm. my veins are vomiting snakes
devouring themselves.
yes I can feel myself rotting
my soft dear my mirror
& sun. you are the lens between my world's center and eye.
come to my throne
of cool shaped rock & bones of
the brother I devoured.
wear my shroud for me
my love. it will fit us both.
put on the crown
my father's skull his hollow biography as I have.
I vomit up the day I was born
catch it in my cloak.
may I not set this burden aside?
this day is ending so say
I. phantasy
snakeskinsloughs & the once moonglow steel
is a vodka bottle shattered.
my hands so palsied w/ addiction
firm w/ strength of surging night & calm night.
my blood is not so precious
though it drenches
my cloak & calls the worm.
it comprises the words of my day
& it is paint & ink.

Chris L. Flink
Denver, CO

My Generation

We are shadows
small 'nilla wafer thin teflon
and techo-jargoned children
born to addiction
and sold, without compromise,
down the asphalt shores
of disillusion.

We are the fallout
from a nuclear baby bomb
gone boom.

Jennifer Goldsmith
West Chester, PA

chains of light

Each residence living tomb window
shows dancing patterns of light
coming from rectangular objects.

These colored shadow shows
seem to hold the beings there
in a tensor-rigid death grip.

People once sat on their front porch
or living breathing mainstreet stairs
on summer evenings or at smoky dusk

and actually said hello
to ones they did know
or others strolling by.

But walk down any city sidewalk now
and those flashing cold little tubes
betray a whole zombie populace

held in nightly daily chains of light
secure from smile word or any fright,
entranced by bloodless electronic blight.

John Alan Douglas
Vancouver BC, Canada

The Prisoner of the State

When Chang was young his articles in magazines,
his speeches in the street, moved men to tears.
An idealist, he was not dismayed by jail,
the fifty in a cell, the lapse of days;
the future would be justified by this.

Time has its own forgetting.

He was questioned first politely, left to think,
then made to doubt the loyalty of friends.
The thousand tortures were a rumor's buzz;
the few who left the cell and disappeared--
informers or destroyed-- who'd ever know?

Time has its own forgetting.

The dictator of whom he'd spoke grew old;
he died and his successor became weak.
A wave of chanting flesh flowed through the streets.
The rebels found him beating on the door;
his cell by then was empty, but for him.

Time has its own forgetting.

Why was he here? Surely that Chang was dead?
This man must have been left to infiltrate.
The crises of the state prescribed he wait;
extremists rose to power, not needing him;
they shut him in the limestone caves below.

Time has its own forgetting.

Lost in his cave Chang could not see
the charnel that rose and fell and killed.
The few who came across his scabby flesh
rushed from his piercing stare and wondered who?

Time has its own forgetting.

His beard grew round the collar of his neck,
his nails recurved and pierced his hands and feet.
The water from stalactites quenched his thirst.
In fettered rust he lay surrounded by
his defecation and his own skin's dust.

Time has its own forgetting.

Small buddhas, bugs, walked in his open mouth.
Accretions of the limestone, souls of shells,
conjoined with him, his body became floor.
Only his head survived, still muttering from
the stone, the single thought, 'will justify!'

Time has its own forgetting.

Alva K. Howe
Whitman, MA

Again

It wasn't at all a good week.
Down at the orphanage, a tea urn
exploded in the staff lounge
formerly a janitor's closet.
It scalded to death
the only person any of those kids
had ever managed to love
in their whole lives.
But she was sick already,
bitten by a rabid parakeet
donated by a pet store
forced out of business.

Next day a tornado
split the place in two
right through the cafeteria
-- the kids were scattered
like fallen leaves.
They disappeared to corners
of cornfields; they were strewn
in streambeds. None were saved.
It was a week to think
long thoughts about causality.
The nature of nature.
But what did the dead or missing
parents know --
their lost children found
lost again.

Mary Winters
NY, NY

Sincerity Counts

One of the worst jobs in the world:
substitute teacher. I'm not even
the permanent sub in my school,
I'm the substitute substitute.
Couldn't she get something better,
I hear them think, Sears is hiring.
The full-time teachers
act like I'll contaminate them,
the principal's confused
-- am I one of those moms
who help too much with committees?
No, I can't get a better job
for reasons I won't go into now.
Don't think I'm here
because I like kids, or that
I enjoy faking it in seven subjects!

I have to get through the day,
sometimes I use substitute facts:
people's tails are cut off
at birth. The earth is flat,
the sun revolves around it
(I use a cardboard model).
There really are dead rats
in the furniture stored
in the basement. Martians
are taking over your sister
atom by atom, you're all
adopted anyway. You can get
cancer by kissing your grandma.
Just because I live with my parents
doesn't mean I can't give
a sex ed class -- I say
withdrawal's the best.
The influence of a good teacher
is never forgotten.

Mary Winters
NY, NY

Born Again

I will not give my feces back.
Like a parasite, I feed upon it.
Brown death for my children,
who suck and bleed me with pointed teeth.

A thick wine for my father,
who turns his eyes from my depths,
my intoxicating redness,
and with a scream of music,
falls unconscious into his pit of fear,
a bottomless intestinal coil,
its walls serpents and insects,
who sting his body in his absence.

His spirit enters hell
but he remembers nothing.
He names it life
and desperate to see what he will,
imagines blank whiteness,
foggy and restless,
within the bright blinding blackness
of the abyss in which I jail him.

No metal, only coldness.
No fire, merely burning.
No light, just vision.
No death, simply disappearing.
No resurrection, purely birthing.

Melanie Votaw
New York, NY

Spring Break

Almost broken from a slow winter,
she stretches out like a lizard
on a dead log,
unfolding her raddled flesh
in the sun.
She slips her guilt
into the cloud above her;
it doesn't move
but covers the sun.
The oil she smears on
turns to chill bumps.
This year not even
Eurotan will heal
her body
bruised by February darkness.

She dozes and dreams
she's on the back
of a Harley-Davidson
with a biker she picked up
in Daytona.
He likes the heart tattoo
on her breast.

Shirley F. Cox
Farmville, VA

Vita-Tonic

She wrung her hands with gel
each evening and morning
ran the extra out along arms and legs
dabbed wrinkle secret
aroung her eyes at night

Often heard a voice

work out your own salvation
with beer and gambling
knew it as the demon of Dostoevsky.

At the party
over California Chardonnay
domestic Brie and stone-ground crackers
available and admiring
a new acquaintance
urged an early exit together
somewhere a bit more quiet
but vague as to whose house

available and admiring
can you feel it
a new acquaintance
leaned close and said
the body never lies

I take it
you've never been married

Dave May
Ashland, OR

BLUE CURACAO

You know you look like your mother,
so why do you fear
the woman who dines alone?

You see her between people
who dab properly with red linen
and sip brandy from heated glass.

She sits,
her face in her plate,
and holds her empty tumbler
in your face.

You are afraid to ask why
she drinks from the lonely blue bottle;
she might tell you
in a foreign tongue you shouldn't understand
that she loves the taste of oranges.

When she speaks,
you smell the sweat of an old lover on her breath,
so why do you fear her?

Follow her as she stumbles
out of your four-walled world,
and watch her catch a snowflake on her tongue
under the streetlight.

Leilani M. Kastantin
Iowa City, IA

Returning From Benthic

Summer dripped slowly from the shallow
fount of that year
A warm glaze of custard intermezzo

The afternoons were drunk
a time for socially acceptable chicanery
Of the type that oozes gossip
giggling down one's chin
to yellow a light season gown

Evenings draw their curtains
to cloak the delinquent folly of youth
The pulpy pelts of ripe citrus
clinging fast to moist windows
The sensual syrup enticing swarms of blue gnats
to trespass, to drown
Intoxicated
Or to spiral into the shout-open mouth
of the maligned

The sun wriggles come the morning
up over the rise and fall of
Dominoworld.

He is busy with soap and sponge, cursing
Puberty pedals by
Carefree and laughing loudly
Everything is loud at that age
Tin spokes grin hungry at close bare toes

Somewhere far, a fisherman plows the basin
Fertile and deadly
Returning to mine the benthic shellfish
To draw the silken nets
from the silt of recent pleistocene
And filter the blood of fine ptomaine
from the lymph of cheap dysentery

And serve the last supper
until fall

J.R. Smith
Tampa, FL

Roommates

With Laurence Harvey
staring at me
I'm happy that I noticed you
like May afternoons
and we mattered
like ideas
that protrude
like wisdom teeth
up in our place
where there are no more excuses
left at midnight
like in the introduction
when we met
saying we were both married
but only to art.

BZ Niditch
Brookline, MA

MIDDLE AGES

I love the troubadours
with red hats
had my quotas
of messiahs and heroes
fed up with prophecies
frozen crusades, hungry priests
even solitary adolescence
accumulates
in my wine gutted throat.

I want to throw
my hair back
and head for the beach
watch red sands
reflect on a Provencal body
nibble over murdered bread
and find a petal
of seaweed's bride
to put on my lover's neck.

BZ Niditch
Brookline, MA

H.D.

Byzantine grief and splendid silence
We die in spite of the beauty of war
The courage of holiness is not forgotten
Kalliastagalos and Brescian lions
Are lost in Mercy's vaults.

I had rather cut a plug
Of stout, bitter, black tobacco
With a dull, steel folding knife
Pop the wad behind a cheek
Fold the blade and place it snugly
In its own regular pocket
Than discuss H.D.

Kenneth Bullock, Jr.
Laurel, MS

Decadence

Purple streaks crack
white marble thighs of corrupted flesh,
urine runs gold on spittle-covered streets of
desire,

Leather tipped tongues slap the underbelly of reason
and syphillis sores drip into razor slitted eyes of youth
blind to the night
pale skin fears light
stale smoke clouds reason
ghosts stalk the shade

Roman emperors hold hands with Byron

orgies

Sweet nothings
exchanged
between the great
Alexander and Morrison

Dead body
Elvis
Seducer decadence

Soldiers of the dead, followers into the universe of
decay search for fallen heroes.

Young lust
Obsession

Swords and needles drawn,
seeking mouths await the killing stroke.

Young death
Comely corpse

Pills, pus, puke lapped by the believers

never enough

boredom

Hendrix...
Joplin...
Belushi...

hold the sacred candles

Black wax for dead flesh.

Jeffrey W. Jones / Banfordville, MO

AUFHEBUNG AT FIVE O'CLOCK IN THE MORNING

Becoming. Yes,

Heraclitus,

wader in water among shivering nymphs,

becoming

more and more--more Utopian--

more nowhere--more a beheaded Sur(realistic) Thomas More--

determined to be indeterminate,

we go

to gesture at the Disco,

danse.

The gyrations, the acircular gyrations, the gypsy scales,
the anti-Yeats gyre spinning,

gyrating as if wearing

gyves,

we are non-mimetic, non-representational

in our ambience, in our ambulance.

The spots of time, spots of lights spotting the toupees
and wigs,

whose colors are third world, third heaven,

coloring

with the mazes of the temporal, the clerks

from boutiques and waiters from fashionable restaurants,

who are rap-rapturous

in knowing, along with Appollinaire,

their dancing

is radically different, radically diffluent

from all past dancing,

a sublation.

Duane Locke
Tampa, FL

VISION

Against the
Flow of human
Traffic,

Target.

The search pays off
A whole
Big Mac,
Completely intact.
 "Suckers."
Dumpster dreams.

10:00 A.M.,
Quicker than the
Barfly swatters,
A threadbare smile
 hovers
 S W O L L E N,

Skillfully
Siphoning
Liquid pity.

He mumbles:
 "The Nazi Killer
 Locksmith,
 A fake dread,
 Metal plate head
 Prophet,
 One acid soaked
 Genius,
 My female soul-sucker,
 And 3 retard Star gazers.
 These are the only shit-bags I can stomach....
 I can see their auras, clearly.
 A rainbow of reality, tattooed in my right
 eyelid...."

The rest are lost.

The finality punctuated
By a cueball period.
 "Low balls."

It's amazing what a mirror reflects
 at you
drunk, alone, and unfocused with a candle,
Staring grey
 at
future fortune.

Cheers.

George Carmen
New Brunswick, NJ

Paper Boat

That 8 X 11 sheet
of Xerox paper
motherly folded
and masterly stapled
can never take you
only as far as your
eight year old
imagination Take
the luxe cruise!
Each year the voyage
shortens Ballast
weights heavier
Until the only
port of call
your paper ship
will fathom
will be The Isle of
Reality And if she
still can hoist a sail
to nurse her shallow
wounds
to eternal drydock.

Charlene Mary-Cath Smith
Manchester, NH

portrait of an avocational pianist as a young child

I remember when my piano teacher
made me play the inventions of J.S. Bach
backwards.

I think he thought he was making
my brain malleable like molten pewter
that could be poured into lots of different
molds and then pounded to silver perfection.
Or maybe he wanted me to be an artist,
to look at things differently from everyone else.
At the time I thought he just wanted me
to be famous and that did not seem like
such a great thing to me, not if it meant
that he had to make me cry.

I think his approach was a bit harsh,
but today I am glad because I am not trapped
like Peter Serkin.

No, I am simply trapped like me.
So maybe he got his way.

Laurie Calhoun
Steamboat Springs, CO

KNELL PRELUDE

Her weight is the same as her age now,
Somewhere in the mid-eighties,
Falling away piece by piece
To the wanton probings of time.

With a voice that never shouts
Above a whisper,
She pulls me close and asks me
To write a poem called
"Beating the Odds"

It would be about the triumph of her life.

Instead, I'll wait a couple of months
And call it
"The Odds Get Even"--

Requiems being much easier on the ear
Than premature tributes
Told in a half-believing voice.

Richard King Perkins II
Cicero, IL

Ambivalence

To avoid
loss
is to
live
precariously,
keep up
appearances,
smile
at unknown
neighbors.

Flee
to a
solitary
apartment,
fear the
telephone's
ring
at midnight.

Go to
work
acting
like
the job
will
last
forever

Never
address
the wish
for a
child

Pretend
your
parents
will
outlast
you--

Bobbie Saunders
Aurora, Colorado

Nocturnal by Nature

When the intellect becomes burnt by sin,
the heart swells with searing remorse
and bursts,
spilling its life
onto the soul's altar.

Fragments of rain
fall from the night sky,
holy words spew from the prophet's mouth,
trickling onto the faces
of the dead.

Like butterflies emerging from cocoons,
the deceased rise from graves of black vision.
Fearing the dark no longer
they travel bodiless
into prisms of light.

Steven Berrigan
Buchanan, NY

Men without faces ...

Men without faces dot the horizon
Like the masts of ships coming home.
Your face shines with glory
As you draw close I see beneath
Your eyebrows the light of the sun.
Certain mannerisms betray you
A trembling of hands as you view
A death's head masking my true features
The pop of dust, a rattling in the throat
A pompous attitude that seeks acclaim.
A popular vision creases my brow
A subtle mist surrounds a stumbling gait.

Orange monarchs pause in their journey
Thorn-encrusted followers stand and bow.

Kenneth Bullock, Jr.
Laurel, MS

Alone

January 4, 1993

Alone.

Weighing heavy hurt.
Tipping the scale
To kill time
As a captive.

Teased by joyful moments-
Just pop shots
At tickled titanium walls
That cram my heart
My love,
Alone-never leaving me alone.

Someone.

Someone else's laughter
Some other joyful moment.
Careens onto my balcony
To bounce as a video ball
With its sonic vibration-
That violent fibrillation-
Hear my heart's palpitation
Shattering stucco above.

Awakens me.

To Mourning.

Morning's ever-sharpening shock
Driving Hollywood Boulevard-
Illuminating smog-drenched sun
Igniting a pathway
For another afflicted day.
Of fluid wants,
Dreams-
Manipulated by billboards-
Someone else's greed.

Alone.

Charles Edwards
Hollywood, CA

Entrez-vous usted

Yeah you, come on,
come on in. You are
letting the cold air in,
it's blowing this exotic
wind with a foreign accent,
could be french,
could be spanish,
it doesn't matter,
it's cold. Come in already,
and close the door,
s'il vous plait and
por favor.

Jim Mikoley
Brooklyn, NY

Please, Don't Go

In an attempt
to exit gracefully,
she takes her shot
knowing full well
that any indication
of her leaving
will result in
the vision of
a long face.

Sara L. Holt
Nipomo, CA

Teardrops

If I could catch the teardrops falling from my eyes,
each and every teardrop, every time I've cried,
you know I'd have a pitcher, full up to the brim,
A pitcher with my love for you, falling down within.

The teardrops tell a story of sweet and tender grief --
The teardrops tell a story of pain and its release.

See that little teardrop -- please kiss it from my cheek.
My love is ever waiting, my patience very weak.

Denise Clinton
Elmhurst, NY

Life Form

I am not absolutely
sure of anything,
there being an element of doubt
in everything.
I believe if it's
worth doing
it's worth being
uncertain as to why
I'm doing it
and the right thing
can't be one hundred
percent correct,
it should always
smell of the hostile
scent of the wrong thing,
and perfect thoughts
are too sterile
by half,
need doses
of their
ill-advised brethren.
Even good deeds
should bear the
baggage of the bad
because the negatives
fit so snugly
and too many positives
make what I am
redundant.

John Grey
Providence, RI

Columbus Speaks

Do you think it was easy?
Day followed day and still no land.
The last night mutiny put down
Was ugly in the face of every man.
How could I blame them?
Even the poorest wretch
Who'd steal a loaf of bread
And risk his neck in hanging
Had special dread of slithering
Down throats of monsters.
Even when reason told me often
Such wild tales were born of fear
And ignorance yet I remembered
Vividly the tales in taverns
Of fabled beasts,
How ships could sail off in empty space
Once the flat edge of earth was reached.
Or worse -- suppose we sailed forever
On empty seas.
All my life I had to know
What lay beyond.
I, too, like alchemists, found many things
But never gold -- Never the dream.

Genevieve Stephens
Pompano Beach, Florida

A Mean Sea Dog

Aye, Mates,
up with the flag, anchor aweigh,
we're off on a voyage for treasure today.
There be blood on my cutlass,
As I plunder and loot,
And sand in my cuffs,
And gold in my boot.

Aye this captain splits fair
all the booty he takes,
with no cheating or shifting
on deals that he makes.

There'll be barrels of rum
for those that fight well,
but for all those who don't
it's a short trip to hell.

So listen you sea dogs,
And button your lips,
I'm the meanest old pirate
Ever captained a ship,

I've sailed many years
and killed many a man,
Still I am a true captain
To all I command.

Marvin Lauderdale
Tacoma, WA

Unusual Punishment

Preparing my self
For final judgment,
I fold and await
The bitter flames of hell.

Such is the fate
Of the unforgiver.
But as my eyes,
Mind and soul open,
There is no fire, no flame.

There are only distant voices --
 "Go home," they chant,
 "To Mississippi --
 You were in hell already !"
I concur --
Cruel and unusual Punishment, indeed.

Terry W. McKinnon
Corinth, MS

Yeti

Against a stark, starless,
and snowbranched portion of Himalayan sky,
He stands majestic, angelic,
a huge, high-shouldered phantom.

But not abominable.
Rather mankind is its own
abomination, fraud, terror, tall tale.
Yeti has outlived
sea serpents and moon legends.
Extreme extremes are his frontiers--
the heights, the nights, the endless whites,
the cold--call him
Indomitable Snowman.

Fileman Waitts
Gardena, CA

All along the spine of the Siskiyou

It's a soft-focus night, moonless and mute.

Truck-light on the freeway
filters through gentle rain drifting
from the mountains,
cloaking the valley.

In the upper reaches of the valley,
a southward-running ridge,
a finger of forest reaching
into the drylands of California.

Winds stream by,
Stirring the tall trees,
Bearing a harvest of clouds.

To the north -- coolness and moisture.

In the south -- valleys filled with dry grass.

There is tension between the two.

They lie next to each other,
all along the spine of the Siskiyou,
everything touching, licking each other
with tongues of clouds.

In the morning,

The fruit of their love
is fresh-fallen snow.

Charles Carreon
Ashland, Oregon