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Cover - "Girls With Snowball" - Japanese Print
COMING ATTRACTIONS

Next week's poems will include the following unforgettable topics:

The gradual maturing of an unseen mud puddle

Why the soles of our feet were cheated of hair

How the evaporating water managed to sneak past suspicious elms

Why random precipitation caused the death of his dog

Of his life without a dog and his survival training with the earthworms to which he later felt indebted

Why he was digging for bricks in the mud of an abandoned lot

Of the scribbled calculations on the brick layer's napkin

The moment preceding a baked bean's digestion

Of the angular ascent of his little used fire escape

Or of its equally angular descent

In short, a perilous balance in the burned brick wall

-Chuck Scott
PRIZE WINNER

RUTH GROVER
SONG FROM ENLOE CREEK

The summer mountain weather
has ushered in new flowers:
redbud, basswood,
black cherry, blue haw,
pokeweed, and New Jersey tea.

We walk down Carson Ridge
eating raisins and dried oranges
past two robins, a squirrel,
an old man playing dulcimer
in the doorway of his cabin.

Out of bear country, we stop
beside a row of blackberries,
roll the yellow tent back out
and rope it to the trees.

You hold out longer than I think
laughing as I touch your silly hat
you lift your arms.

-Dean O'Leary

WALKING AWAY THE BALTIMORE BLUES

On Church St. and 83rd,
before the taxi turned the corner;
dodging puddles,
my shoes laced back
through every hole
of my life;
reflected in the star lit window,
the winking eyes,
the moist, thin lips,
it was not a dream.
I had known her from a picture
where the water was deep
and the people were sleeping.

-Dean O'Leary
DESTRUCTION OF ORDER

It all slips one day,
not just your faltering step,
but the delicate matrix
of pick-up-sticks
that you spent years setting up,
tumble apart,
echoing into resounding beats
on your front door
flung wide,
revealing
felt hats, paintings,
sharp and luminous,
in the blackened corners
of your mahogany parlor,
above the spiked, black sandals,
and polished leather boots,
the dampened bottoms
of empty tea cups
that you can almost
see your face in.

-Jami Wolf
NIGHT TRAVELER

Born in a slow beginning rumble, it peaks as a rising warning call stirring up a lifetime of summer nights.

A voice from childhood barely covering parents' front porch whispers.

A sound blanketed by car doors slamming, teenagers shouting farewells.

A backdrop for the newlyweds' first silent quarrel with windows opened on dark sleeplessness.

A cry as loved ones feign sleep after parent-death, listening as if to the soul departing.

A sorcerer conjuring up a vast untouched wellspring of emotion.

The night train.

-Susan Hall Herport

CHANGE

When I look through the remains, I am shocked by how much you left me. I find your pieces everywhere, Your choking rust Rummaged collection Lies unashamed, Deserted, like the open field's moon.

I hate these damn coins. Left with a ruined ruler I measure, Count, begin to add Each coin's stolen center; And despise again This plate of zeros, My cold saucer of eyes.

-David Franke
WESTMINSTER NUN

Bare of face,
Named only by her shadow,
She is silent in approach,
Save for the bones of her feet
Tapping against the roofs of tombs
Which are the floor of her life.
With sleeve-wrapped hand,
She kindles yet another prayer,
A short flame none but she and St. Timothy
Can distinguish from the rest.
But the weave is tighter here,
And songs have many voices.

-Stephanie Fohl

THE PATIENT IN 407

Always white.
No interruption.
Unless it is wood upon my tongue
Or steel between my muscles.
Soles and wheels
Rubber by requirement.
But I shall not be stifled
By mattresses, buzzers, cloroxed caps.
The doctor is always on his way.

-Stephanie Fohl
PREOCCUPATION

I didn't keep that job for long,
no work for an artist, but
all that I could find in forty-three.
The kid downstairs would slide
black-and-whites from vats
of sepia wash like brown
tobacco spittle. I would
paint the photos
in the afternoon, leafing
out the trees.
They could have been apples, pears;
I made them clammy locusts,
pinnate leaves closed up
like hands the water has run out of;
beneath the trees
the fireflies have not risen
from the grass,
the mailbox shadow
lengthens toward the mongrel dog
who draws the last warmth
of dust into its paws,
the road curls to a house
with one dark window,
a pink skim in the sky
and no further.
The road can only reach the sky.
The dog can only face one way.
And I would lay down my brush,
stare at the oval and narrow
permanent, unpaintable tracks
of combines and cows,
strain to hear the oily, blown-out noise
of the Model-T
that has just driven by
the camera.
In forty-four I found another job.

-Jeanne Perry
THE HURRICANE AT FORT WALTON

The storm argues its way along the gulf as we watch the weather reports swim across the green glow of the television screen. In the next room our two girls dream of sandcastles. We do not dream. Our room becomes a cell of fear.

We don’t talk about our fears, but odds and percentages, possibilities and chances. Indirection is our mirror. To stay or leave is the coin we toss.

At daybreak the palms point northward, and from the door we spy waves higher than the ridge of beach we’ve rented for the week.

We flee towards the Alabama line. Cars flood the roads for sixty miles. There are no rooms, no shelters until we reach Florala. The town has an old gym with cots and with too many children and too many rumors.

Rain pitches against the panes and we watch the tops of giant oaks thrashing back and forth against the grey canvas clouds.

We talk louder than usual to our children and tour the floor to chat with other families. The cots are circled around the gym like small islands.

Waiting out the storm, we learn the fear of being strangers. We get tangled in the tide of rumors, and we wait. We learn about limits.

After the storm has settled with the land, we return. To the same room, though the maids have taken the food.

Watching the surf the next day, we find sludge and sea weed and dead fish littering the beach. But we are not surprised. We know how to be strangers. We know about limits. We have learned the need to wait amid rumors.

-Reed Sanderlin
THE SHARPNESS OF THE EDGE

I.
At tea, when I was ten,
knicked cup cutting my lips,
worm on the knife blade, and you
in your forty-five year old linen suit,
squeaking the porch swing,
first working sound of our day.

II.
We watched a rabbit in the garden, his ears
spiraling up like thin brown seedlings.
With two slow motion hops, his form absorbed
by the faint shade of a rose bush.

III.
Shrunken old man, Grandfather,
now you send me short scrawled
notes in used envelopes,
And I feel yesterday’s heat rising,
or remembered, from the damp ground.
If I could hear again
about the people in your old albums--
faded with the telling, they would be
as real, as vague, as you.

-Rachel Landrum
ALLUSIONS

It began with unicorns
grazing in flowered pastures;
then trolls living under her bed
where she'd hang
head first
gently lifting the covers
to peek at their bright, fish eyes
and furry faces.
She spoke with Cinderella
over a delicate china tea set
about beauty and glass slippers.
She grieved the mermaid
perishing on the soft warm sand,
who gave her graceful tail for awkward legs.
She answered to candlelight
behind stained glass windows,
in an ancient dance of silence.

Yet, when she bit the poisoned apple--
that moment containing
a lifetime ahead,
a world at her beckon--
she drifted with the anesthetic
to a closed pool
still and green
where she sleeps without dreams.

-Laurinda Lee
INSIDE YOUR DREAM

The dream you have is not the one
I need, though I appear there,
peering from among pelts of shadow
in some knotted elm, fading,
as thistles of star catch the sky.
And who knows what details are important?--
under that sky, barn swallows
wrap what air they think they own,
or wax their nests tucked under
our eaves with bits of distant marsh.
It is a marsh where fireflies hurry
over stalks of wild celery,
deer mice are husked in stumps,
and the hushed odor of carrion flower
alarms the fox. Someone is waiting.
Someone is telling you what this means.
This much, he says, is clear: an image
hides whatever it shows. Perhaps
those thimbles you find are robin skulls
your cat had hoarded beneath this elm,--
or rusted Quonset huts our fathers
flew from once towards dreams
called Midway or the names of women.
He is not always me, never our fathers,
but he tells you how their cargo planes
lifted above the marsh, points out
the hawk soaring and, beyond the edges
of its wings, corridors of light. They lead
to a thatch village, to your brown photo
with its knotted figures, to a familiar tune
played on a haircomb and the words husked
forever within. Do you ever come back?
Do I ever emerge from your shadows?
Beneath the elm, where our fathers' deaths
wrap around the smallest sound,
your cat sips from a wheel's rut
these distances we cannot forget.
Where each spring we burnt away
the underbrush, antlers of brush
knock against the dark. Once again
I finger the broken hinge of a wing.
Once again you dream of flying,
of the small flame of a fox's whisper.
At the edge of the marsh, the lost
tunnels of muskrat begin to contract.

-Richard Jackson
ONE LIKE A SON OF MAN

The creation of Jesus Christ was going to be a very expensive undertaking. When the
lowest bid was revealed to the congregation on the morning of the First Day, a general
sign of disappointment rose up from the silvery pews and remained overhead throughout
the service like a clammy fog bank. But later, after the finance committees had conducted a
number of joint meetings, a glimmer of sunlight pierced the dank disappointment, and
after three major reassessments of projected annual budgets, it was enthusiastically
decided that the quoted price—one million earthstandard silvers—could be met after all. By
the Third Day, the seventeen churches of the Outpost had notified the Ritsan
Engineering Company that they did indeed wish to negotiate a contract. And so, with a
grand surge of hope and Christian commitment, the building of Christ was begun.

The first several weeks of construction went by with comparative ease. Basic
physiological dimensions were gleaned from Scriptural references, though it was decided
that they would add nearly a meter to his probable height. The thought of an extremely
short Christ was so unpleasant that the minor distortion was sanctioned with very little
discussion. When the engineers came to the face, however, all work ground to a halt.
Dozens of sketches were presented to highly critical church committees. The Lord’s face
had been reproduced so uniformly through the ages that many were afraid they would
end up with an unintentional parody. They wanted the face of a man, not a paper and
plastic symbol. An engineering artist finally created a remarkably handsome portrait that
at last captured the nobility and suffering of the Messiah. It was immediately accepted by
the churches, and work proceeded again with only a fifteen-day delay.

The sculpture was finished exactly six months after the initial commission, and it was
then time for the real work to begin.

They had created an image of Christ, but it was only that, an image. It was a plastic hull,
no more remarkable than countless other reproductions, and the churches of the Outpost
were not paying one million silvers for just another reproduction. Five hundred thousand
light-years from Earth, watching the pilgrims slowly drifting away from the church, the
religious leaders of the world gradually had come to realize that something drastic was
called for. The art of creating mechanized life was an old one, a finely perfected one. What
better way to bring the people back to Christ than to present them with... Jesus himself?
The modern versions of the cathedral were technological triumphs that had lured people
to church. What then was wrong with utilizing any tools available to remind people of the
presence of God. To be sure, there were some doctrinal troubles with graven images, but
months of debate had neatly ironed those out.

The congregation supported their leaders wonderfully, emptying their purses into
hovering collection plates and volunteering both services and time to make the dream a
reality. They asked God’s guidance in their proceedings, and as the funds necessary for the
endeavor came through, naturally assumed it had been given. It was a time of great
excitement on the Outpost. First Day attendance increased dramatically, to the pleasure
of priests and ministers. The Lord was clearly among them, making his presence known
to these starbound wanderers.

So it came down to this. They had their image of God Incarnate. All that remained was to
give him the breath of life, and they would truly have their Christ. Programming the mind
of Christ would prove the most difficult task the Ritsan engineers had ever attempted.
Every thought connection first had to be approved by the most learned theologians
available in this far-flung system. The Scriptures were interpreted with such care that the
engineers would all but scream in frustration. The theologians spent weeks flogging over impossibly trivial points, to say nothing of the graver doctrinal matters. But everything had to be exact as possible. As the Reverend Donaldson had pointed out, the slightest deviation from the Word could result in a monster. Christ flawed. What would it do to the religious community of the Outpost to see the Saviour sin? The consequences were too horrible to contemplate.

Dragging along as the months stretched out, they proceeded, making connection after connection, testing, occasionally accepting, and usually rejecting. There couldn't be any doubt; the original estimate was proving overly optimistic. The price climbed upwards as the estimated time doubled, and trebled, until the engineers damned the cool corporate signature that tied them to the contract and the impossible task of recreating Christ.

And then they were finished. No one, neither the engineers nor the theologians, had been anticipating so quick an end. They laughed and cried and prayed and congratulated each other and paid homage to the figure of Christ. No, to the face of Christ himself they gave praise. They fell on their faces before their Lord.

Father Darrow began weeping when Christ walked into his office. The Reverend Baxton burst into an uncontrollable hymn of glory when he first laid eyes on the creation, and the board of deacons at the First Presbyterian Church were so astounded that they accomplished nothing at all during a four-hour meeting. The next first day was to be the most glorious event that had ever occurred at the Outpost.

Less than fifteen minutes after sunrise, the sanctuary of the Baptist Church, the largest sanctuary on the Outpost, began to fill with people. From everywhere they came, filling the pews and aisles and even crowding up under the pulpit until the plastic spires of the church itself seemed to bulge outwards. Even atheists and Hindus and Jews and agnostics and those who had just forgotten crowded into the church. A twisted little man at the pulpit was trying to lead the congregation in a hymn, but no one else was singing and after a while he was silent too. He sat down.

The silence was a thick and difficult thing. Both strained skepticism and utter belief embraced the expectation flooding the sanctuary. Tension was a stretched wire that twanged painfully with every movement. The air was still. From a front pew (why had no one noticed him there?) Christ rose and began to teach them.

He spoke to them about the love of God the Father, he interpreted the Scriptures for them, he taught them and he prayed for them. He spoke to them about the law, and once again he gave them the most important commandment of all. He taught them how to pray, and told them to be strong, and not to worry about the tribulations to come. He gave them love and forgiveness, and he gave them God that morning. He spoke all day, at times almost fainting from weariness, and in the evening, when the mothers with small children, the old and the weak had to leave, something odd began to happen. Jesus' words became strange and difficult to understand, for he spoke to them in parables, and they could not find his meaning. They were not the comforting ancient parables of leavened bread and sowed fields. He used docking bays and interplanetary spice merchants and the null-gravity collection plates. A faint air of worry began to seep past the masks of the congregation.

He had condemned the scribes and Pharisees earlier in the day, and everyone present realized he had not been speaking literally. But when he discarded the symbology and described them as the theologians and ministers, the jolt of surprise was quite unpleasant. Thousands of unasked questions bubbled to the surface, especially among the men and
women most closely associated with the project. Nothing like that had been programmed. It was to get worse. He spoke to them on day to day living, and his ideas, spoken to modern men in modern language, sounded undeniably socialistic. He angrily denounced the church's numerous business corporations, obviously not realizing that such businesses were vital to the church's very survival; besides, they dealt with only the most godly materials.

But Christ went on and on, sparing nothing; he went from certain modern Scriptural translations that weakened passages too archaic for modern comprehension, to the church's enthusiastic support of the recent Deltan War. His accusations grew so fierce that the Reverend Donaldson flung his hands over his ears in anguish. Something had gone wrong. His worst nightmares had come true. This wasn't Christ, this was some fiery radical of plastic and computer circuits, a grotesque mockery of the Messiah. When Christ told them they should love the Arvon monsters of the neighboring system as brothers, Donaldson had to flee the church. Bitter tears stung his eyes, and sobs seemed to tear his throat to ribbons. This couldn't be happening.

Within the church, an angry rumbling was growing. If Christ noticed it, he gave no sign. He sharply criticized the complex symbology of the services. His talk of love and peace sounded dangerously like pacifism now. He seemed to condone appeasement. Anger and horror overwhelmed the congregation until at last the committee in charge had to shut off the Messiah's power supply, and the figure at the pulpit grew still and cold. Their glorious dream had come to this. They had begun the morning bursting with religious joy, and it had all gone wrong. The people in the sanctuary filed out slowly, emotionally blasted by the horror of the experience. Many wept.

The churches of the Outpost sued the Ritsan Engineering Company, and won back thirty times what they'd paid for the parody of Christ. The engineers took back the sculpture of Christ, reasoning that it could be put to some use or another. If they could figure out what had made the Christ go berserk, perhaps they could even sell it to a church too far away to have heard of the Outpost disaster.

They removed the secondary circuits from the sculpture's hands and feet and studied them for flaws, intending to avoid delving into the intensely complicated area of his mind if at all possible. They even removed the main power unit from his side, speculating that an energy leak had caused the terrible aberration. All their plans came to nothing, however, because of a totally unforeseen happening. A young engineer entered the vault where the Christ was being stored during his reconstruction quite early one morning, and immediately touched the alarm claxon. The fantastically expensive masterpiece of technology had completely disappeared. A police investigation revealed nothing, but the official explanation stated that the figure had been stolen by one of the criminal rings dealing in mechanized life. And the engineer never told anyone what she'd heard in the stillness of the vault just before the security units had arrived.

"Why are you weeping?"

Martha Taylor
SOUR GRAPES

Emily Dickinson, you're not like us,
That's plain. Though sometimes, while doling out Cascade,
It pleases me to think
That had you faced the stillness of
A suburban afternoon,
You might have flicked the TV on,
Put up your feet, and watched the soaps.
Instant catharsis, no need to be at pains
To analyze a slant of light that beats
Against a slickered soul like rain.
Or sometimes, while retracting the Hoover's cord,
I Muse
That had you married your Mystery,
And smoothed his way for twenty years,
There would have been a soul in port,
Gaiety that had no need
Too long for love in poetry.
Or while tucking sachets
Among the Wamsuttas, I reason
That had you eased a fretting child
Into his bed in early light,
There emotion would have spent,
None left to purchase words that speak
Of days that only loom again
When all that can be borne, has been.
But damn the fox, I know
You had within that plumb-line brain
What would not let you rest until
Hands rinsed, apron off,
You shut the door,
And scribbled yourself immortal
On the back of a grocery bill.

-Delores Whittle
Jeanette Woods - Dias De Agua
BENEDICTION

Tonight for hours
the crickets have cried
"Benedict, Benedict" --
Are they speaking of traitor
or martyr?
Mindless, moonless
midsummer night
when betrayal becomes
sacrifice, sacrifice
betrayal. Night
of the maze and the monster
who stands
in the dark center
on the edge of the black pool
in which I see
blackness of all blackness,
the fearful shadow
of Benedict.

-Mary Cocke

SECRETS

Late at night,
my headlights
reveal
the secrets
of the logging truck
in front of me,
hurrying
to the lumber yard
before dawn--
the big round stain
in the center
of each great
log.

-Mary Cocke
THE LATEST BLOOM

Just a fade beyond description.
The second when years collide.
Events from ourselves forget their calling.
Everyone has lost their name at once.
And everything surprises and jumps out
of the plans before us
As if they were never needed before.
The lingering tag that you have to give it,
gives up and takes a leak on the floor.
Stillest of all, the shock is most pronounced
in you, seeing the vanguard plant before you,
having tapped its way out of your wintry
skull, better than any new color process.
It sprouts there, hardy and illegitimate
of genus or species, lacking category altogether.
Only the botanical giver-of-names
lurks over Spring's first bastard, unashamed.

-David Ellison

This small tree, leafless,
On the verge of rot,
Slants up through the snow
And seems not a whole,
Here in the very lap of death,
But a collection of limbs,
Random, splayed out in
The clear morning, splitting.
The hard air, and sunlight
To invisible shadows
On the snow.

-David Robinson
It was late afternoon and the line of sun was perpendicular to the tips of the hemlocks on shore. Even from the lake, every tree was distinct; every needle on display. The water-fur that coated the rounded stones in the cove looked separate and almost yellow, not black and hard like it did at noon. Ben turned the canoe so that he could play the game. He stared right at the sun until his eyes involuntarily squinched closed, then he would open them and see dots and blues and weird shapes all over the water.

"That’s bad for your eyes," Katherine said.

"Yeah, I heard. I grew up hearing that and I haven’t learned yet and I’m still the best shot in the county," Ben replied.

"Oh, I’d hardly call third place in the Ham and Turkey Shoot the best shot in the county."

"Look Kate, that’s that blue heron. This is the second time I’ve seen it up here."

"Oh yeah, when was last time?"

"Couple of weeks ago. We spotted it about this same time."

"You and who?"

"Oh, come on Kate! Me and George. Don’t be such a cat."

"Meowwwrrrrrtt."

She was late, three weeks late and with no signs of starting. No one knew, not even Annie, her best friend and especially not Ben. Telling him now would only ruin the dance this weekend, and he had already gotten his older brother to get them some booze. She would probably go down to see Dr. McMillan on Monday. That’s it, she’d wait until she knew for sure before she told Ben. She let her fingers drag through the water while she worried.

"Hey, cut it out, you’ll scare the fish," Ben scolded.

Silence.

"Kate!" he said, splashing her with water from the paddle, "get your hands out of the water."

"Oh, sorry."

"Miller time. You know, like the commercial? Starts out with the sun sinking beneath the hills and the dirt of a hard days work on your hands and if you’ve got the time..." breaking into song, “we’ve got the beer.”

"Oh right. You haven’t worked a day in your life, plus you’re not even old enough to buy the stuff."

"Oh yeah, well you’re not even old enough to drive, much less to drink the stuff."

"Don’t let it stop me, do I?" she teased him.

"Nope." he says as he leans foreward to kiss her.

"Hey watch it! You’re rocking the boat." They take a little water from the right side and Katherine wrings out her sweatshirt.

"Why don’t you just slip it off?"

"Can’t. No suit on."

"So?"

She crossed her arms and tugged the gray sweatshirt up and over her head then folded it neatly and put it in the very bow of the canoe. Her little knobs of breasts showed her chill and she sat with her arms straight and crossed at the wrists. Ben looked at her and thought the sun glinted off her hair the same way it glinted off the thin strand of gold that stayed flat on her neck. She was the class beauty all right, and he had had her! He felt happy, there in the moving sun, thinking he could probably have most everything.

"Look at this beauty." Ben said as he tied the nylon line to the metallic lure.

"Pretty." she said, fondling the bright red sheath of feathers with her thumb and forefinger. "If I were a fish I would eat this too."
"Yeah, you probably would, you’re so gullible. Then you’d end up with a big pronged hook in your mouth, or maybe it would go all the way down in your guts.” he said, laughing.

“Oh, Ben, don’t be gross.” she said, unamused.

“I was just teasing. Come on don’t pout.” If there was one thing that got on his nerves, it was pouting girls. That took all the fun out of it. “Hey, look at the rest of them.” He opened the old tin tackle box to show rows and rows of neatly arranged lures; reds and greens and yellows and blues stood out like jelly beans against the gray tin of the box.

“Gosh! Where did these come from?”

“My Grandfather. He gave them to me before he died, said they’re his life’s collection. I know about every one. This was the one he caught his first fish with.” He held the silver hook surrounded by soft green fringe up against the sun. “Three pound bass it was. Mouth as big as the kitchen window, he said.”

“Hmmm. Which one did he catch the biggest fish with? You know?”

“Are you kidding? I’m surprised you don’t know the way he carried on about it. Grandma’s still got the newspaper clipping on it. Says: BIGGEST FISH IN MULLINS COVE CAUGHT BY BENJAMIN HARPER. TWELVE-POUND BASS.

“What did he do with it?” Katherine asked.

“Oh he ate it.” Ben replied sarcastically. “What do you think he did with it? He had it mounted and it’s in my grandma’s livingroom.” Where did she get so airheaded? That’s another thing that drove him crazy, dumb girls. He thought about Sheila; she was new in town and had just made cheerleading...

Katherine reached up under the bow and pulled out her sweatshirt. “I’m cold.” she said, slipping her head through the neck opening.

“You want me to take you back?” Ben snapped.

“No, go on and fish. It’s just that the sun’s not so hot any more.” She wondered about telling him. Would he be excited? She could just see him teaching their little boy to fish, and Ben passing the lures down to his son one day. Still, it might put a damper on this weekend, all the fast planning and stuff.

“Wait ‘til you see my new dress for the dance! My aunt had it sent all the way from Texas.”

“What is it, buckskin?” He did not want to talk about the dance.

“No, it’s taffeta. And what’s wrong anyway?”

Silence.

“Ben!”

He cast the line out as far as the point and flicked the bright red fluff with double hooks over the surface.

“Nothing, OK. I just think me and you had better cool it for a while.”

“What do you mean, cool it?” she asked, a little stunned.

“Well maybe we’d better not do so much stuff together, you know, see other people.” He stared out at the water and concentrated on his wrists.

“What about the dance?”

“Well, I was thinking we could go with other people.” he said, not wanting to see her face.

He watched the hard shining mass of fish as it took the lure, the mouth as big as a kitchen window.

Ferris Kelly
WHERE THE CUSTODIAN TAKES THEM WHEN POEMS LOOK LIKE THEY'VE FALLEN FROM THE WASTEBASKET

I slip them
under the door of an empty office:
the paper napkins, scraps
of newsprint, torn pages
from encyclopedias, the gum wrappers
with stray thoughts on them,
orphaned lines, words gathered like wheat.
I unlock the door once a week
to bring them together.

But by then the custodian
has come. They are gone.
He has taken them
somewhere
that they can get by without me.
This is a place
where pieces are accepted.
No one there
can stand completion.
My fragments
hold responsible positions there.
They won't come back.

-Rich Bailey
THE BOARDINGHOUSE

I hated to come in that way.
The rusted screen curling and rotting
while the canary stiffened,
dead three days.
The slivers of greying claw made limp fists
and were noticed first
amidst brown paper sacks
grease stained clear
and clay pots cracked with mud
and stacked, not too neatly,
in dirty corners.
Those legs stood out like two of my grandmother's veins.

Your beauty shop was in the front hall,
smelling of men's hair tonic and unspayed cats.
You in homemade gingham dresses
swigged gin and gave advice
while you massaged boney heads in your hide-away sink.
They said you'd take them upstairs,
their sparse scalps slick with scented grease.
They said you'd take them three at a time.

One night late
I heard you cry out.
I thought it was pain that caused those noises.
I hoped you'd stumbled,
or had a bad dream,
but then I heard you laughing,
all of you laughing deep from your guts.

My grandmother never would have spoken to you.

-Anne Ferris Kelly
Old age had struck her before her time. Having survived the blow, she would last a long while. She had always handled anything those old Smokies could throw at her.

Random strokes of undefined color wound about her dress. Only her eyes, which had faded with the dress, still saw the bright, interlocking flowers that once adorned the fabric. Her breasts, through the years and five children, had slipped down her ribcage and now rested against the waistband of the bib apron she wore everywhere except to church and to bed.

She reached into its pocket and fondled the slender sassafras roots she had dug from her yard that morning. When she got to her sister’s, they’d brew them up good and strong and talk. Yes, Sarah was a fine one for talking.

About a third of the way there, she reckoned. She was in no particular hurry. Words and sassafras roots keep well.

She rounded a small dog-leg crook in the path, sidestepping fallen branches and stones, then made the short descent toward Mill Creek. The whirring sound of its water rose as she zig-zagged down the slope. Shh, it said, be quiet. Shhh.

She left the path at its lowest point to take a drink from the stream. Face toward the steep mountainside, she climbed backward into the hollow, grasping laurel branches as she went. Laurel was the only plant that wouldn’t come off in your hand and send you hurtling down the face of the mountain. Most everything else pulled too easily from the loose, decayed earth of the Smokies.

The old woman looked carefully before resting her foot on any patch of ground, although it was impossible for her to tell whether it would hold her weight just by looking. No matter how solid a place might appear, it could be the roof of a hole. Many had been the time she’d stepped into them, and each time she hated it no less. She was always afraid the hole would have centipedes in it. What if they wriggled down into her shoes? It took a while to unlace them.

Oh, but there was more than just centipedes. People had disappeared in these mountains. One moment they were there, the next they weren’t. They were never found. No trace. The old woman believed they fell into the holes. Well, she wouldn’t let that happen to her. She always held a laurel branch firmly in her hand.

When she reached the creek, she plucked a long, leathery leaf from an overhanging bush, folded it lengthwise, and inserted one pointed end into a miniature waterfall. Water ran through the trough of the leaf and spurted into the air before falling back into the stream. Just like that water fountain in the grocery store at Townsend, except the water’s better here.

The old woman didn’t stay to rest, but climbed out of the hollow as she had climbed into it. The path took an upward swing, skirted a fold in the mountain, then slanted downward again. Here, it wound through a Haunted Place. There were several Haunted Places in the Smokies. The old woman knew of three herself, but this one was the most familiar to her. She had to cross it to get to Sarah’s.

She wasn’t sure what made a place haunted. Maybe there were old Indian spirits there, maybe the devil had had dealings there, maybe someone had died violently there. Nobody talked much about Haunted Places, at least not with words, but she knew other people believed in them, felt them, as she did. She could see it in the way their feet moved too quickly through them and the way their eyes first widened, then became veiled when one
was mentioned. Of course there were people who couldn’t recognize a Haunted Place, who had no sense for them. There were also some people who had no music sense, who sang off key.

Sunlight in Haunted Places had a different quality than it did anywhere else. It seemed to press against the body without touching it, chilled instead of warmed. It felt more like an element of the earth than the air.

Every time she passed through a Haunted Place, she knew that if she’d stayed in it a moment longer, something terrible would have happened to her. If she kept up a quicker pace, she would be out of this one in another twenty minutes. She did not let her eyes leave the path ahead of her. Watch out for that root, that stone. Don’t trip. There was no sound except that of Mill Creek off to her right. Shh, be quiet, shhh.

Then, at almost the halfway mark, something stirred in the edge of her vision. She wouldn’t turn and look. She wouldn’t. It might be a ghost, or a trap of the Haunted Place. She had to look. She would always wonder. She looked, but she couldn’t be sure. A narrow hoof moved stiffly, slowly upward, then fell back among bent ferns. She squinted through the gloom and made out the sand-color of a deer which lay almost hidden on the dappled forest floor. What was a deer doing this far from the Cove?

Once more the hoof pawed at the ferns. The deer must be hurt. She must go to it. She left the path.

It was a young doe, and did not run when she came near. Closer, she saw that it could not run. Blood, thick and dark, oozed from beneath its pale underside and collected in a pool.

The old woman knelt beside the doe, reached out her hand to stroke its neck, then drew it slowly back again. Touching might startle the poor thing. But what could she do to help? She could tear the sash from her apron and make a bandage. She could scare it to death like that. To death. The deer was dying. She couldn’t stop it anymore that she could have stopped little Timothy’s death so long ago. Apron strings would not stay it.

The deer’s coat was much the same color Timothy’s hair had been. Once. Words floated back to her: Soon. It will be over soon. I will wait with you. You will not be alone. Shh, sang the creek, shhh, be quiet.

The doe lay motionless, except for a quiver of shallow breath in its chest. She heard a wind rise over the mountain to the west, sweep its slope, shake the leaves in the valley, and finally the treetops above her. She usually welcomed these sudden winds. They scattered the steamy pall which gave the Smokies their name. But this wind, well, she didn’t like this wind. It felt like the ones that swirled through the Piney Grove Baptist cemetary where Timothy and her husband George and the little girl who had never breathed lay buried. Where she would be buried.

The wind left as suddenly as it had come.
She looked down at the deer again. It was a wild thing, and wild things love privacy above all else. It is part of their way of keeping honor. Perhaps she should allow this wild thing the privacy of its death. Her presence could do nothing to ease it. She unfolded her legs to go.

Wait. Listen. What was that?
Someone who did not know the secret of moving silently through the woods was coming up the far side of that little spine-like ridge in front of her. Shh, be quiet, Mill Creek warned. The someone did not pay attention. Crunch. Snap. Closer. Snap. Crunch. Closer still.
She would hide, that’s what she’d do. To her left, the mountain fell away sharply. To her right, the path and trees too slender to conceal her. Behind, a laurel slick, or laurel hell, as George had called them. Miles and miles of tangled aerial roots and branches. Miles and
miles of blackness. She couldn’t hide in there. She wouldn’t be able to get out. That had happened to people, even Indians. Laurel was an enemy as well a friend.

She froze, half-kneeling, waiting. The someone had made the crest of the hill. Shh, sang the the creek. He was coming down this side. Snap. Crunch. She could see him. He was a tall man, steel-haired, with a rifle over his shoulder. He had shot the deer.

That man had no right shooting deer. He didn’t look hungry. He didn’t live around here. He couldn’t even walk through the woods without alerting everything and everybody between here and Knoxville.

"Did you know this is U.S. Government property?" she asked him.

"No, I didn’t."

"Well it is. You can’t shoot deer here. Why, it ain’t even huntin’ season yet."

"I like to start before the woods get too crowded. And anyway, I shot it back there a ways."

"Well, that’s still government property. You can’t hunt on that land, specially out of season."

"Well, I never was much for rules." He smiled, but only with his mouth. His eyes remained separate from it. They were too black and too shiny.

She felt the skin behind her ears shrink, draw back from her face. The doe looked at the man for the first time. Sad, soft eyes. It shuddered and went limp.

"I’d report you if I knewed your name," she said. The words were tight.

"I could give you many. Which one would you like? They wouldn’t catch me anyway."

She had to get away. Get back to the path, get to Sarah’s. She did not realize she was running until she was almost to the path. Then the earth gave way beneath her and she was falling into a hole. She would be buried alive forever with the centipedes. It had all been a trap of the Haunted Places. No, no. There was something in her hand. Laurel. She pulled herself free with a strength she had not known in years. There, two steps ahead of her, was the path.

She ran down it, stumbling once, but she made it out of sight of that man. She could hear him dragging the carcass of the deer. Ferns rustled and sighed before being crushed, leaves crackled, then a thud as he pulled the doe over a stone. Bruise on the body of the dead deer.

Shhh, sang Mill Creek. Shhhhh, be quiet.

The shadow of Sarah’s roof was hard-edged in the afternoon sun. Yes, it was warmer here in the clearing. A bit too warm, the old woman muttered to herself. She believed in keeping a few shade trees around a house herself, but Sarah had had the big old oak cut down after their father died. Afraid lightening might strike it. Now Sarah used its wide stump for sun-drying corn and beans and apples.

The old woman’s feet stirred tiny whirls of fine wood dust from the worn board’s of Sarah’s porch. Sarah had seen her coming and already had the kettle on the stove.

When they had finished making the tea, the two sisters sat down across from each other at the wooden table on the porch. The old woman settled back in her chair and wound her hands about her cup. They were strong hands, long and browned, not at all like Sarah’s hands. Sarah’s were much smaller, and she fluttered them about like moth wings, always busying them with nothing.

“So I don’t know,” Sarah was saying. “Sometimes I think I ought to go stay over to Ellen’s. Do me good maybe. And I could help her out with them young-uns. Grandmas is always good for that. Seems like since Henry died..."

“But I don’t know. This house... Our daddy built this house. I ain’t never left it. And
Henry he built on that extry room when our young-uns come. I can still see him hammerin’ away and sayin’ how nice it was goin’ to be. Yes, since Henry died..."

Sarah ran her fingers lightly across the table top, back and forth, again and again, as if to smooth the wood. The old woman reached over and took Sarah’s hand in her own.

"Sometimes at night,“ Sarah continued, her voice lower, "sometimes, you know how when the moon starts to sinkin’ it makes that shadder of the Old Man there? How you can watch it creep slow ’crosst the valley longer and longer? Like the shadder ain’t just a shadder of a mountain but a mountain all its own, growin’ and growin’? and then, quick as you know it the shadder’s ’crosst your face and the roof and the trees all around? You ’member.”

"Well, sometimes when I’m here all alone--oh, it mighten to be a new moon or all cloudy up, but I can feel that shadder. I know that shadder too good. I know it ’cause it’s mine. I know right the minute it comes ’crosst my bed in the night.

“And then it’s like the mountains start to leanin’. Leanin’ ever so slow-like. Leanin’ and leanin’ ’til they’re goin’ to fall on me.

“But I don’t know about Ellen’s. Don’t know as I’d like it out in Memphis. They got a yard with nothin’ but grass and a couple of sticks in it. Wisht they come back and live here with me. But these days the young-uns got to be goin’ off to the city. Nothin’ here for them.”

"I’ll fetch you some more tea. Don’t you want none of that cornbread?"

The old woman knew Sarah wanted her to come and live with her, but said nothing about it, not even when she left.

On her way home, the old woman heard a cricket chirping somewhere down the slope. Another answered. Soon tree frogs and other night creatures joined in. Their music mingled and swelled so that she could no longer hear the rushing waters of Mill Creek. A lone lightening bug winked its yellow-green light.

The old woman stopped and stood on the still, singing mountainside and listened for a moment. A cool smell of pine and wet rocks drifted up from the creek.

She knew she would not go to live with Sarah. This was her time. Her woman’s time to feel the strength she had gathered over the years. To be afraid sometimes, yes. To be afraid and cross the Haunted Places. It was the crossing that mattered.

Sarah was different. She had always needed someone with her, for the passing of someone else’s days to mark the passing of her own. But this was the old woman’s time to sleep in an empty house where her own feet had worn the boards smooth, and George’s feet, and her childrens’. Her time to pass the days in her own rhythm.

The hunters would come, and she would fight them. The shadows would come and come again with certainty, and she would cross the Haunted Places until she came to the last one. This was her time alone. Her time to stand on the still, singing mountain and listen.

Stephanie Fohl
FIGURE OF SPEECH

As when this train of thought shudders to a halt, the steam billowing too thickly, and even though the conductor has already shouted, "All aboard!" I jump off, just to spite all of the grinning memories in sleeper cars, complaining about the tight space, lack of attention, and the jostling of their beds when I sneeze.

-Jami Wolf

A SILLY POEM

Dear Madame you ask me where are my drawers? On the suttee, on the suttee I say. Now where are yours?

- Rebecca Conner
EARLY MORNING CROW

Why is it that every day at dawn
I check my view?
Always in place the same
Tree clumps, the solitary fir,
The cemetery gate that confines bleaching limestone rows,
The crow
That wings southeast
No matter what the breaking sky's condition.

Is it my deliberate positioning
That makes my glance take in the scene?
Or do my steps on route to early tasks
Merely arrange my path?

Or does that dark dot of crow
So punctuate my view
That I cannot help but pause?

Maybe that:
And the unadmitted truth
Is that I check each dawn
For sudden looming of the crow,
And swelling of the sky with black.

-Robert Franke
THE DECONSTRUCTIONIST APPROACH

The great epic poem I wrote on Wednesday disintegrated to ten lines Thursday. By Friday it was down to three.

I wrote on.

Saturday had me dispensing with the impetus of the poem. I was left with the title which I had only vaguely thought out.

It is now Sunday, late at night, I have been writing all day and I am down to the wrong word.

All my poems end with that word.

-David Breitkopf
Eileen Card - Apres Le Dejeuner Sur L'Herbe
A LOOK AT IRELAND: BREANDAN O HEITHIR’S
LEAD US INTO TEMPTATION

Lead Us Into Temptation, Breandan O hEithir’s own translation of his novel Lig Sinn i gCathu which was published in 1976, features a maturation plot for its main character, university student Martin Melody, and a penetrating, comic satire of the political, social, and religious life of Ballycastle, a university town, over a five day period in Easter, 1949. The time is significant, for the novel’s action comically commemorates the establishment of Ireland as a republic. This event is solemnized by the dedication of a memorial in honor of the new republic, but the cloak of dignity is quickly stripped as two professors at the ceremony take the public occasion to exercise a private quarrel, the band sheepishly admits to not knowing the National Anthem, and the memorial is blown up that evening by an IRA man who destroys himself in the process. The events of Easter, 1916 undermine by contrast the impressiveness of the ceremony celebrating the establishment of the republic, as does the historical distance readers have in looking at the republic’s founding thirty years ago, which only widened the gap between the North and South. The announcement of the republic by then Prime Minister John Costello as a response to a slight by Field Marshall Earl Alexander, a Northern Irish Protestant, at a British Commonwealth of nations party in Canada is echoed by the quarrel of the two professors. Even in the crowd at the ceremony, the dominant reason for coming is not patriotic: “As was always the case in Ballycastle the crowd that waited at the Square was composed of three main groups: those who came because of genuine interest, those who came out of curiosity, and those who came in the hope of seeing or hearing something outrageous. The first group was the smallest and the third by far the largest.” The egoism and pique of Costello’s act is seen in nearly all the characters connected to the ceremony, especially the vain, pompous Councillor Macken.

The lives of minor characters illustrate the crippling of society by egoism, politics, and religion throughout the novel as six men claim pensions for having killed a Black and Tan who accidentally shot himself, priests roll with self-righteousness and fat, and women use the church’s Puritan injunctions to tease, control, and condemn. Though the novel’s action occurs during Easter, the characters seem more willing to take up the first stone than turn the other cheek. Bishop Mullin, instead of being a fountain of love, is characterized by his hates: “His enemies were varied and numerous; writers of bad books (particularly Irish writers) and those who read them. English Sunday newspapers, men and women who swarm from the same beaches, anyone who could see the slightest virtue in any tenet of Socialism, women who wore slacks or shorts, Irish Protestants who demanded their constitutional rights aggressively, and public representatives or officials who didn’t obey his instructions immediately, for Bishop Mullin never gave advice.”

In the middle of this animosity and selfishness is Martin Melody, who has been cutting classes, drinking, and is about to lose his rich girl friend, Nuala, and his father, a dying man and former revolutionary. Each loss for Martin turns into a gain in independence and maturity, as he quarrels with and separates from the respectability of his brother, a priest, and his mother, who makes Mary, his unwed pregnant sister miserable and promises the same for his dying father. Quarrels with priests and a blow to his brother lead to several respectable closed doors for Martin, and his course becomes clear as he follows the impulsive nature of his father rather than the orderliness of his mother and brother. Prior to Martin’s leaving Ireland with Larry de Lacy, a former revolutionary who spends most of his time in New York, Martin makes love to an uninhibited barmaid, Stella Walsh. These characters legitimize Martin’s flight from Ireland to help Mary and his new faith in
following the dictates of his feelings. After making love to Stella and talking to her about Mary's plight, Stella tells Martin to go to his sister so as to make it easier for her to return to Ireland for her father's funeral. The narrator comments, "It all sounded so simple and so logical that he wondered why he hadn't already decided on it himself." After Martin and Stella make love, the narrator observes, "Again he began to search for feelings of contrition or shame but all he really felt was a deep affection for this neat little girl who was looking after him so well." Larry helps and confirms Martin in his choices, advising flight. "But I want to tell you I thing you're on the right road, if you protect yourself against the world and learn to think for yourself. Don't ever let anyone spaneel you against your will and don't let this bitch of a country spaneel you either." A Joycean flight seems to be O hEither's solution to the problem of living in Ireland.

The novel, despite its brevity, is bursting with life, but this causes some problems. The social plot and the personal plot do not stay together; character portraits tend to stick out of the action like those in Chaucer's "General Prologue." Furthermore, O hEither's occasional use of Martin as his omniscient narrator's point of view character is faulty: sometimes the narrator follows other characters about, such as the drunken Nature in Chapter two, who are unrelated to the main action. In events such as the hurling match and the dedication ceremony, Martin is present but other characters are used as point of view characters. I would wish greater consistency here; also, some plot developments are left dangling: What happened to Billy O'Grady whom Martin was seeking throughout a chapter? Though the novel creaks and groans in places, it is an interesting book worth reading.

Craig Barrow

OUTSIDE

He walks
pitched forward
when the ground is flat.
I have seen him twice.
There must be a story.
I should ask him,
turn him around.
But I know he would never tell.
It would be all commas:
A wound, a small nation
in Africa, the taste
of postage stamp glue,
a three-syllable
name, no pause, two hills
with one crow each.
Nothing told.

-Rich Bailey
Edna London - Fantasyland
Since its founding eleven years ago, the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga has been renowned for its commitment to growth and change. The prospective student visiting UTC for the first time is almost certain to find some edifice or building under construction. Recently completed projects meeting the needs of over 8,000 students are: the University Student Center (complete with game and television rooms), the new Theatre and Fine Arts Center, and, four new parking complexes, all within an easy driving distance to the Library. In addition, for the student who will again attend classes in 1981 and beyond, there will be a fully-functional Sports Arena, replete with aluminum benches and a genuine Astroturf playing surface. But, lest the future student should presuppose that this institution is forever in chaos, let he or she worry no further; we here at UTC understand that if we are to be successful in our job of matriculating students, then we must have some traditions. Traditionally in this university, the student completely inexperienced in mathematics or a foreign language will not find his or her inadequacies in these areas a hindrance in obtaining a degree. (Many degree programs at UTC require neither a foreign language nor mathematical ability.) But enough of these digressions - what about UTC social life? Well, once again, UTC has kept the social vestiges of an exclusive college while maintaining the growth and change of a public university. For the economically advantaged or class-conscious student, there are numerous fraternities and sororities. Such groups instill a bourgeois view of the world in our students that will help to keep them in the median of success, long after graduation. However, the prospective student should not mistakenly infer that any of these social clubs condone academic elitism. To assure that, there has never been a chapter of Phi Beta Kappa on our campus. Finally, should a student find all social alternatives exhausted and the process of "growth and change" hardly entertaining, there is still the Library, where one can always find a partner in lively conversation.
WRITING CONCENTRATION

The English Department's Concentration in Writing at The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga is comprised of basic course requirements for the English major and a selection from basic and advanced courses in creative, expository, or critical writing. Interested students have the opportunity to work on The Poetry Miscellany, the Sequoya Review, and on the English Department's English Bulletin; to meet with writers who visit the university (this year Dara Wier, Alan Wier, and Marvin Bell); and, for qualified students, to work on a departmental honors project in creative writing. There are also numerous opportunities for informal tutorials. Several students have recently been published in The Miscellany and other publications and some have elected to continue their work in MFA programs after graduation.

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Editor's Note - Thirty-five dollars was awarded for the best student work in the categories of poetry, art, photography, and short fiction; all awards were chosen by the editorial staff of the Sequoya Review and each submission was given careful consideration. No prize was given in the category of essay/book review due to limited submissions. The staff would like to thank all contributors for the high quality of their work. Special thanks to the Art Department for their enthusiastic response.