

POETRY FOR THE MASSES

"Poetry cannot be defined, only experienced."—Christopher Logue

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ALL THIS FOR A DOLLAR

The town sex offenders hibernate
in faded houses of sunshine and grit.
Late February's rusted coffee can
of loose change casts its tarnished glare
against the unwashed windows
of Honk's \$1.00. A Sacajawea coin
from my pocket buys my daughter
one Saturday morning of transcendence.

In sweatshirt and jeans, I am gyrovague
among plungers and notepad ladybugs.
Her pilgrimage transports her, hair unbrushed,
past sports drinks and loofahs. The sleepy
dharma of grapefruit squirt bottle
and gravy boats lulls Christopher Cross
and James Taylor through labyrinths of cheap
candle scents: Pearberry Jam, Victorian Petal.

Her ardor is such I hesitate
to criticize her quest. Just wait,
I want to say. Life will peddle you
Easter candy on President's Day. Expiration
dates will leer like seedy sailor tattoos
from wrinkled bags of stuffed jalapeno
chips. You will swap youthful expeditions
after the Ur Knick Knack for the daily news.

Her selection, a warped glass vase
for her mother, finds the bright underside
of my stance on the drive home:
Still, Jenny, 11.5-inch fashion doll, could
flip the brassy foil sun from her thumb
and land you—heads or tails—as
a suntanned member of the Sweet Memories
picture frame family, or Indian princess

guiding explorers with a new world voice
to which assorted penguin figurines,
having hobbled off dusty shelves,
will march from sweatshops in the Philippines
across the porcelain Antarctic, half-starved,
if only for the thrill of living with a choice
and bypassing a five-and-dime rival
in endless pursuit of the bargain of survival.

Matthew James Babcock
Rexburg, Idaho

GRACE

In the Sun Valley Sauces free recipe card the woman one row up has used
to remember where she is in One Hundred Years of Solitude,
it is there.

I tucked a handful of Dahlia seeds into their beds two months ago.
In the travel section a man one row back has gallantly tossed
to absorb my full cup of steaming hot coffee
it is there.

Most of them died. But one double pink autumn sunset made it.

Kelly Coveny
Rowayton, Connecticut

ON THE BOAT TO JAPAN FROM KOREA

The sky and sea are almost joined,
splitting where the rains sodden seeds
spreads ripples onto it's surface.

Currents flee their course
and try to catch safety in the clouds,
leaping high into the crude cotton.

Precipitation digs deep into the ocean,
throwing it upwards as it dives,
rupturing the resting waters.

Blue blemishes the air and liquid,
barely there but beneath every breath
every blow of the bellowing wind.

The sun begins to break through
flagging it's reds rays onto the scene,
the onslaught starts it's ceasefire.

Elle Pryor
Pensacola, Florida

A BIRD'S EYE VIEW OF MAN

branded by the sun
a litter of potential good sustained
lying spliced and red
bleeding for the sake of bleeding
their praise is the unisex of finality
burning smelt
lifting sulfuric vapors to my nose
pinching my putrid breath
annulled is the finch in taxonomies
foolish separations

I'd rather watch the movement of the coffee
black meddling with cream
revealing my delight and your envy
man is a big horn
gifted but loud
slurs in one hemisphere
and compassion in the other

Ernest Williamson III
Newark, New Jersey

HAIKU

Another birthday:
tides coming in, going out,
slowly stealing sand.

Amber Morris
New York, New York

WINTER AND EVEN THE COMMAS ARE DRUNK

Goodbye
By the window, outside by
The tall Oak and inside by the milk-
Weed where no more hummingbirds
Come.
No more Hummingbird Clearwing Hawk-
Moths batting at our lamp. The monarch butterflies
Heard turning in the next room,
To their cocoons returned to
For hunger. In the next room we are
lower case, balding, faucet's drip osteologists
Learning the resistance and hardness of bones:
The humming resonance of stones
Boredom hears, like glossolalia
In a silent movie, like the quiet
Single stroke curves of an ampersand.
Like bent, like sad, cracked snow gloves
Or globes, & like broken stars'
Gnarled light branching akimbo, we go to bed early now
And for whose sake and for whose pretending?

Jared Harvey
Cartaya, Spain

I FEEL LIKE HELL AND NOW I THINK MY DOG'S DYING

There is no way around it. I remember a college professor—this
was in the seventies—his name was Jim. His hair was brown
and swung against the belt below his white tee shirt. He was
thin as licorice; he chewed raw garlic and taught gay lit. He said,
"one step forward, two steps back." He said, "Remember that."
Other than not much liking the books I read, though seeing
their importance, there's little I remember about that class except
for him. And that thing he said. I think his last name started with
a B. He was kind but I wasn't very interesting. I'm still not. But
I've had a rough and glorious month. And now I think my dog's
dying. Really. Not just in this prosy little poem--(the dog across
the street's name is Jim too; he bites; so does my dog, the one
who is dying)--the world so full of little prosy poems & last steps.

Renée Ashley
Ringwood, New Jersey