

POETRY FOR THE MASSES

“Poetry cannot be defined, only experienced.”—Christopher Logue

July 2011

Volume 4, Issue 2

BAD HAIR

This morning I said, why not
be angry, why not take my
eyes like fists into the streets,

or stand on the roof screaming,
leave me alone, ignoring
the low irony? Why not

avoid the grass that could drown
my rage with dew and pray
for nothing today as if I

believed it—why not send off
an email saying you failed
me too? As if that were not

enough why all these bills to pay
and strange people to seek out,
hand on hat, as if I owned one—

as if there were no more souls
to whom I could give kind words
or offer a word that could

finally make it right, or drink
coffee in small cups, watching
the sun rise, shining on me.

*Shawn Sturgeon,
Prishtina, Kosovo*

THIS LOVE IS BIG AS A HOUSE

Your house, I say to my friend, is lovely. Another pear drops on the roof, thwomp. Ahh, she says, but the pears, they are such a nuisance, we hear them in the night like dreams knocking. Her husband nods and sips from a mason jar of cider. He is a big man who wears a hat like an upside down tulip. I see that they are soundless. They come together or fall apart in fires built, walls fixed, babies nursed, rump roasts roasted, wooden steps creaked. In crossing from floor to floor to floor to floor. There are four floors in all. That is, of course, only if you count the basement and the attic (I do). By the bonfire, my friend holds me close. What about you? she says, smiling slyly. There is someone across the circle who is warm, she says. But I am not so sure. I've known tendernesses compact and noisy, knotted and hazy. I've known them in apartments, dorm rooms, street corners. In cabs, doorways, classrooms, phone calls, highways. My face is toasted and I turn it to the sky which is caught somewhere between its own pink light and the electric black hills. Here where there is so much room for love to grow itself and wander itself off, I put my nose in my cider. Moonshine, the horse, raises her blindfolded head to listen to the sound my heart is making. I breathe in and feel air fill what was empty in me before. The container tells us what can be contained. Someone is playing a fiddle. It is fall, again.

*Emma Eisenberg
Philadelphia, PA*

SEEDS

I
Proserpina
wet—

red

II
purple fruit
betrayed—

bearer of seed

III
exotic among
underworld—
erebos below

dirt.

IV
purple god
taker

of what should be
sought

*Natalie Raymond
Brooklyn, NY*

V
wheat white
sundress

stained

VI
springtime
sunflesh

winter
(hiding)

VII
violets

bruised petals

bloodlust

CROW

Yes, all crows under the sky are black
But this one in the backyard of your heart
Is as white as a summer cloud
You have fed him with fog and frost
Until his feathers, his flesh
His calls and even his spirit
All turned into white like winter washed

Your crow's wings will never melt
Even when flying close to the sun

*Changming Yuan
Vancouver, BC*

BIRTWISLES' PIES

Three seasons in an hour today
As seen from the window of our train
That nudged its way from Chester.

Weak sunshine, light rain, then snow.

We stopped first at Delamere,
At a field of stubble where fieldfares grazed
By birch trees broken by a storm,
Or snapped clean by weight of ice.

You slept and missed Cuddington,
And Greenbank where the blond girl left the
train
Then teetered off on her high heels
To her distant suburban dreams;
As a flock of gulls left for the Dee
At Lockstock Graham, where the sun appeared
again.

You missed the peach cheeked girl at Plumley
By the sign for Birtwisles Pies,
The largest cemetery I have ever seen.

And, as we trundled across the plain
I doubted that I would ever see
Northwich again.

*John Stocks
Sheffield, UK*