Sand River Journal

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Many of these poems were forwarded to me by zita marie evensen while I was away. Takk skal du ha! I encourage the of this TEX file as a template for other journals or chapbooks; eventually we should establish a public ftp library for such material. Send comments and contributions (please reference SRJ) to asphaug@lpl.arizona.edu. Enjoy!

Erik Asphaug, Editor

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♀ ☾ ♂

rice bird

wading under jasmine-rice stalks
small tawny bird pecks at young green grain
watch out for slender traps of bamboo slivers
aimed at your heart

grazia athena cruz
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Sky Catcher

In flawed analogy to fishermen
I sweep my seine across the sky
And vainly drag the empty air
For angels

James Conrad Shea
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summertime

it is my turn to play
and i will do nothing just
    sleep in the sun like a cat
        purring softly
    swim at the beach like a fish
        gently parting warm blue waters
    ride the warm updrafts
        lazily as the red-wing
                after all it is
                        summertime.

zita marie evensen
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thirteen

small bits of wind
get caught crazily
in my hair.

the lights are out
and the white dog
from next door
brings me a green
beetle.

over the hill
moonless and glum
the slum prepares
its maize meal to
pump out to the sky.

sometimes i think
the winds are so
strong they will
blow the roof off.

sometimes i lie,
upturned cleanliness,
and imagine
that i am
still

thirteen.

this is a feeling of right now.
i am a thirteen year old
boy, who skateboards and learns
dirty words, owns golden spaniels,
swings from trees.

i tell my boyfriend and he thinks i'm nuts.

so when he is not looking,
i price secondhand skateboards
in town pawnshops,

i take time to swing from these amazing
monkey ropes
discovered in the forests near my home.

Helen Walne / Marek Lugowski
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The Lies We Tell Ourselves

I am most in love with you when you are not there,
when you are asleep
when you are away

I am most in love with you when I create you
you are all I desire
you are perfection

I am most in love with Galatea
claiming that she is herself
claiming that she is real

I am most in love before she awakes
please stay asleep
please let me dream

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tropic market

gold red green bananas in palm-frond baskets
carved santol woods for love caskets
mangoes star-fruits ginger-roots
amethyst yams pale bamboo shoots
white palm hearts in green ti-leaf
conch-shell icons in bas-relief
wriggling eels snapping lobsters
caged cackling hens crowing roosters
black vine baskets amber guava jams
jasmine leis gold pollen balms
tobacco rosemary sharp wild thyme

crunchy seaweeds celadon limes
fragile cloths of pineapple leaves
embroidered silks with butterfly sleeves
market under the tropic sun
wild flavors wild thoughts all in one

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your room, mine

1.

each room has a mirror opposite the door
so as i walk down the hall
i appear in one reflection
after another.

my window has a great view
of the parking lot where
nearly every day someone backs carefully
into the retaining wall.

we all have the same curtains.

2.

glow, glow, the golden glow
of the city sky at night —
we live in a perpetual false dawn,
chickens laying eggs under lamps.

but the planes land so straight
i could lie on your bed
open to your night and
watch them come down until ten
when they all settle down to sleep.

it was a good thing it was
if only you had stopped

to sigh.

Marie Coffin
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Valley of the Dry Bones

> Thus said the Lord God to these bones: I will cause breath to enter you and you shall live again.
>
> — Ezekiel, 37:5

This merciless manifest of names
reports across memory, echoes through air,
evokes God's mockery of the dry bones:
Can they live?
Oh, they can live,
rise up, cry out,
even breed:
for turned by the sun to blackened stone,
they find their host in us,
then multiply, metastasize
in soil prepared for memory.

It is not the soul but the living body—
the Medieval dirt of permeable flesh—
that absorbs the names:
like a forcefeeding tube,
they are driven down our throats,
jammed into us to keep not us but *them* alive:
bypass the bleeding heart,
and plunge into the stomach
with the weight of the black granite itself
and with its sharpness:
cut so we cannot see the blood,
but only feel the hurt, the inward wounding,
the gut filled with something indigestible,
savagely inert,
that will not nourish
but cannot be expelled:

the single endless tragedy retold
not as a monody but as a chorus,
58,000 voices,
each singing a different song,
rising from the granite slabs
in this temple of remembrance
that plunges downward, rises upward,
mocks its own ascent with our knowledge
that the only true ascent is the climb
not to heaven but to the knowledge itself:
that when we have read the names,
witnessed the crying and the prayers,
then it is over, then we can go home:
and that it stops but never ends,
that its weight is unpurged,
unpurgeable.

— Vietnam Memorial Wall, April 1993

Kenneth Wolman
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Caliban

Here you come,
Listing just a little to the lee,
Panther-slinking, baggy pants.
Anyone could see you could be dangerous
To me, a sinuous intrusion
On my solitary style.
My cairn is slipping, scattering;
I can see you see your chance.
A trickling slide of little stones,
And you come sniffing 'round the bones,
Pink tongue ticking softly
At the corner of a smile.

Jennifer Merri Parker
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ms.

you are such
an impossible woman. just
reading your writing sets my blood
racing. ms. narcotic, are you
aware of your, er, effect?

your zooming suggestions and
bouncing objections and
zestful reflections
i should like to gather in a fist
and kiss
all over, especially hair.

yes'm.

Marek Lugowski
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No Juliet

Moths on concrete, you
kissed a frightened fifteen,
tried to touch a chilly child
with salt-soft air
and sandy skies
'til curfew.

I fled, moon-like,
shoon intact,
extracted word.

But mother bade me
mind the baby,
a good excuse.

You lost.

Karen Tellefsen
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gardenia

full moon is made for love
why one white gardenia blossom
in the passionate cold

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Animal

She lay naked on the plate,
gutted, gaping, eagle-spread,
garnished with desire to be
consumed in every way.
And he pauses in his gait,
sniffs and judges her too dead,
and lumbers off to look
for quicker prey.

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if i am yours

if I am yours so are my eyes,
and the blackberries they spy
dim in twilight thickets and
that apostrophe: your restless
subtle undissolving wink.

if I am yours so are my dreams
which lead me into river canyons,
over boulder beds and over ache;
and in them you might stand and sleep
while distant highways wind the night.

if I am yours so is my heart,
so you may rest upon another's
breath and breast away from seasons'
harsh travail and the tears can
come, as inevitably they do....

Ronald Bloom
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oaths and vaccine

do not understand. do not dial anything
to get out of here do not drive
me crazy.

do not feel guilt. do not throw up.
do not play
in the oval.

do not speak. do not speak to me.
do not ever speak tenderly to me.

do not caress. do not address.
do not remain
cautiously optimistic.

do not dare to have a peach
do not treasure memories
do not remember forever.

do not know any peace.

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judy in the rain

officer judy was a trip.
i'd just returned from one,
met you again and we went
to see her, ruby-throated
sparrow.

it was threatening rain,
bad time to be out, like
in her song 'the blizzard',
and we didn't know how long
we'd last.

rain came. we huddled under
umbrellas, slant-wise glances
at the poor woman without one,
toughing it out. she came on
early,

pink satin, voice clear as ever.
when she sang of how 'clouds
...rain and snow on everyone',
rain came again, umbrellas,
a kiss.

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there

love, if you forgot
where you left me
look for moonlight
through cloud gaps
petals at the foot of roses
the last note of a song
even in a raindrop
i am there

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not a question of being in love

it's not a question of being in love
the motion's what was already there
attention fills itself a stubborn sail
it's not a question of being in love
you see what has to see and hardly ask
for what's to ask but, how can this be?
it's not a question of being in love
we take upon ourselves these unmade plans
not blindly but with faith of blind
it's not a question of being in love

it's not a question

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Couplet Citations

I was fashioned, I believe,
To be with you — Adam and Eve —
So nothing need keep us apart
(Bathsheba, queen of David's heart)..
Ambition makes desire keen:
Napoleon and Josephine.
The gravest faults should matter least,
As with the Beauty and the Beast.
Come, be with me, complete the whole,
Psyche and Cupid, Love and Soul.
Our passion will embolden us,
Like Thisbe and her Pyramus,
Till we can take on all life's fear
Like Lancelot and Guinevere.
It would be heavenly, not hard;
Think Heloise and Abelard.
This is my heart's sincerest want
(Leander swimming Hellespont),
As serious as one can get,
Romeo and Juliet.

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Breathless

How I long for
an oasis named Hades

a sweet mouthful
from the river Lethe

for I met death
and licked her thighs

until she flowed wet
and embraced me

with handfuls of hair
greying

then brittle, ripped
out in clumps I came

into the earth
roots

and buds
gasping

under the paved
black

like the echo
of a sea

lion tap
            ping

beneath an ice

floe

Sean E. Ward
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At Grandma's House

The orchards of my childhood, threatened
Continually, were finally uprooted today–ruined–
And left in rows like piles of picked turnips
Left in the damp furrows of a summer garden.
Where once we picked cherries and ran after quail,
They are now running sewers and sprouting condos.
The horizon blotched on every side with pine fences
And tin-sided houses...the encroachment
Of yellow, steel insects and a spreading Economy
Writ in bold type: Pull up the roots. Pull up the roots.

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Uninvited

you came to my house
uninvited
i chose to let you in
i listened to your
inane chatter
as always
only about yourself
nothing was any different
than hundreds of times
before
at least on the surface
underneath
i was calm
no more the turbulence
of frustration
i have felt in the past
i have learned to be
outwardly courteous
inwardly nothing
i let you into
my house
but not into
my heart

Marguerite Petersen
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Predictions

I'll live all alone in a little white house
At the bottom of the valley,
And you shall live at the top of a hill,
Or down some quiet alley.

We'll call each other up, every now and then,
(Miss our suppers if we tarry)
And you shall live as you've always lived,
And I shall never marry.

Sharon Hopkins
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