Sand River Journal

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Many of the poems appearing in this issue were collected and forwarded to me by zita while I was traveling. Send comments and contributions (please reference SRJ) to asphaug@cosmic.arc.nasa.gov. Enjoy!

Erik Asphaug, Editor

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Samhain

☉ ☾ ♎

Travel Advice

a word of advice
there will be times
sunrise over the Ganges
slap of wet slap washing slap
rams wailing loincloth devotions
powder into your mind cannon
arms around a backpack
there will be no-one to touch
no-one to tell
the film is not important
you must be a poet
of the moment

Michael J Norris
michaeln@cs.uq.oz.au

angels + angel, a poem for the misinterpreting reader

today the ineffable angels press ever closer around me
wavering, howling calls of wild electric fires
away afar all around my cliff-dwelling.

a different angel, an angel of unwavering kind
summoned me, voice sullen with news, then wavered.

did so when i said, will you still? and the angel said
in zen: i love you. talk about communication gaps ...

it's the cold that makes the howling angels bold.
they move closer.

my angel's hot remorse gives off a twin sodium line sign,
a harvest of gold a touch like the other angels' torching:

i think i might street? should i avenue? would i drive?
could i place? need i pee oh box? give you up for dead

end?

don't fret so much angel, love. look at things this way:
an angel hasn't flickered until showered in smooth shudders,
skinned in swarms of warmths. you have serious angel merit
badges to pick up, angel. with a slick load-bearing groove.

the other angels, the ones howling bone china-hard flicker
now rising as flame over the fires of lights — i merely
glance at them, peripherally take them in.

you, at you i look more closely.
now, about that life of ours. in sin.

Marek Lugowski
marek@casbah.acns.nwu.edu

perdus

où sont
les sourires et les larmes
d'autrefois

comme les oiseaux errants
de mes penseés
je ne sais pas

by zita, tr. by E. Russell Smith
ab297@freenet.carleton.ca

Contracting

"Well, try it again," he said, dismantling
the second floor. He sighed, wiping sweat
from his eyebrows, and reached
into the tool crate for a handful of words.
Laying two phrases crosswise, he hammered
them to the first floor with a verb.
And then cursed.
Capricious nature had warped the words
through rain and sun;
they joined only oddly.

No sigh this time, a real grunt
as his tired back heaved until
the phrases came
loose
and the whole first floor with them,
a pile of nouns, verbs, adjectives
twined like licorice. He fell, himself,
on his rump, face reddened in the setting sun.
He kicked a dangling participle.
It splintered.

"Ah, hell," he said at the sight,
"I'm too tired to rebuild it right."
A little dejected,
he rose and erected
a quick limerick for the night.

Lee Merkel
lmerkel@bix.com

untitled

Late at night I am afoot
amongst the flowering plants
because I seek to discover
where butterflies sleep

Ronald M. Bloom
cy092@cleveland.freenet.edu

Roots

Refusing to be my father,
I wandered San Francisco,
looking for streets from family stories.
Lost in fog, I found where my grandparents lived,
where my grandfather cut stone,
the post office he built,
the pool hall where he won a billiards championship.

I wasn't sure whether I was
my grandfather or Henry Miller,
drinking wine on Mission Street curbs,
patronizing Tenderloin hookers,
reading obscure literature in the public library.
I sat on the cliffs at Land's End
watching waves crash over rocks —
I was Richard Henry Dana.
Or Melville.
I would have been Rimbaud
but, by the time you discover him, you're always too old.

I was twenty-three
when my parents visited.
Mother wanted Chinatown, Fishermen's Wharf.
I showed them North Beach
where I was Kerouac.

At the Palace of the Legion of Honor,
Father — an Okie who laid bricks, didn't read —
touched a sculpture,
rounded the curve of a dancer's frozen pose.
I saw his hands were like Rodin's
and I knew who I was.

Lee Duke
duke@louie.dfrf.nasa.gov

caveat

do not
teach me
your music

i might
own your heart
forever

zita maria evensen
bu016@hela.ins.cwru.edu

Moving Song

Let me wrap this crystal ornament in velvet, many turns
in swaddling softness for the journey, as the setting sun adjourns
this phase of light, this time of feeling, concentrated till it burns.
It must be packed away in silence, cushioned well against concerns.
On any journey, often little things go wrong.

This is a delicate memento made of glass, reflecting glints
of captured sun from more than one or two
who warmed me. There are hints
of frequent handling, careless holding,
fracture lines and finger prints,
but never once has fear of being broken up been this intense,
a sense of frailty in me, frighteningly strong.

Will you believe me when I say that you are never far from me,
and what I put away is not your image, or your memory?
Yet I must separate myself from this harmonic sympathy
before these piercing, sweet vibrations shatter all serenity ...
but I will promise not to stay away for long.

Jennifer Merri Parker
jmparker@ra.msstate.edu

milkweed

a thousand clamourous birds have come to feed
then rise as one amoeboid shade
        against the pallid height
                in black on white

        west along the ridge beside the farms
basswoods raise their naked arms
        into the cherry light
                to block their flight

a reach of sterile pool holds back the sky
perversely so would you and I
        denying cold and bright
                the coming night

and fearful we draw back avoiding still
        the spines of ice that creep and chill
                        beneath the darkening hover
                then cross over

        when, plucked and shaken by a fickle air
the milkweed cockles launch
        their fair intrepid squadrons back
        in white on black

E. Russell Smith
ab297@freenet.carleton.ca

They Teach Children

I am afraid of being eaten
she said
whispering.

I am afraid of ravens coming to pluck out my eyes
beating blackly as night howls of mad wolves
and crimson jackal laughter.

I am afraid of lightning piercing;
a flaming sword set ward across
my secret Garden.

I am afraid that it will swallow me whole
and all that is me will be engulfed
in screaming
and I will be glad.

She huddled small
a child in woman's body
and careful drabness could not hide
a lush and terrible wanting.

I am afraid.

M.A. Mohanraj
moh2@midway.uchicago.edu

Breakfast under Africa

Africa is like
washing up gloves to me

it always has been
shruggy why

maybe that rubber
smell in mornings when

orange kaffirbooms
are spiny and disney

i call them my t-rex trees

breakfast this morning
in whos shoes and
potato jeans was
two oranges some coffee
and a
storm long

a photographic sky
as flashy as anger

with beatrice the
sexy cat
white blowey
on the wall

There is foreigness
in africa

not slitty conrad
deceit

but the foreigness of
long stretch driving past wheat
and wimpys

Solitary musing on the steps
of a sky

under africa

never felt
so good

I dreamt all night
of david.

helen walne
g93w5635@warthog.ru.ac.za

Fall Magi

There was a day when I came
    to you with gifts: a wreath
        of twisted vines, some
        pieces of cinammon bark, a
        very sticky pinecone, and a rusty
            nail.

In return you gave only open
    open eyes and the sweet
    breath of the earth from
        your breasts.

And now, not even with the
    tartest of lemons or
        the palest of flowers
            could I repay you.

Corwin David Shackelford
xdshackel@fullerton.edu

Reliquary

Carry me in a charm
about your neck, a
strand of hair, a
tooth, a spot of dust.

Toss me in a
cerebral ocean, to
wallow a few
decades longer.

Carve me in granite,
pink and enduring,
and plant me in
a garden with
daffodils and mud.

Catch me in dye
and silver specks,
and keep me in
a frame upon the
window sill.

Scan me into one
hundred thousand sintered
dots, and store me on
magnetic film.

Do this in
remembrance of me.

Karen Tellefsen
kt1@cc.bellcore.com

The Father #3

He's told me
that the ex-wife
lets him take their daughter
out alone for walks
in their city.
I imagine him holding
her pink soft small cheek
to his: large, scarred, scratchy.
Once, walking in my city,
I looked upon a building
and voyeured into a window:
a young father dancing
with his child in arms.
I wonder if this father

jigs in the street,
a music to celebrate.
Enjoy the trice,
the musicians say,
enjoy the innocence.

Michael Hemmingson
anon138e@nyx.cs.du.edu

No room

Since words between us come to blows
I will send silence instead
wrapped in small packages which speak music
and have no room for misunderstanding.

Ralph Wixer
ralph@wixer.bga.com

En la Plaza Dam

La generacion de los soñadores
Con la guitarra y el verso
Siguio buscando las señales
Que les abrieran el universo.

Se marcharon caminando
Con la mirada cansada
Recogiendo los pedazos
Que se les caian del alma.

Muchos no regresaron
De este viaje misterioso
Se engancharon a una estrella
En un dia de reposo.

Mas, otros siguieron las campanas
De mil iglesias agudas
Bebiendo las palabras
Como gotas de lluvia.

Y el universo se abrio
Crujiendo como pan caliente
Dejando un rastro de pasas
Y lagrimas de sal de la gente.

J.M.G-Faria
lsijmgf@blues.upc.es

already?

no   no   it can't be
here   already
splashes of reds and golds
dazzling against red-rich canyons
burning a thousand shades of green

my summer shoes are not ready
to be put away
not willing to jump into piles
of ready-for-scuffing leaves
not ready to tumble
into sedona tones of mellow
pink-reds of maples
golds of sycamore and cottonwood

i still have crowns
of white daisies to weave
and billowing dresses of cotton lace
to dance in
on full-moon summer nights

air so warm   so
assuringly   caressingly warm
cools   like a lover's
absent-minded kiss
it can't be here already
i am not ready to cry
or say goodbye
just not ready
to break
                    away

zita maria evensen
bu016@hela.ins.cwru.edu

Im a poet and yore not

o i feel like writing a funny poem
but i really don't feel too funny
and i sure as hell can't think of anything to say
that's worth saying
because not much is
at least not by me

i could talk about some deep
issue
some big emotional anti-abortion environmentalist
gaggledeegee

but i really don't think so
i really don't give half a shit about
that shit

surprisingly enough,
i thought all poets were faggety
art-bamboozled
gabbleblotchits on a lurgid
bee

see
you can tell i'm a poet because i never capitalize
jack shit
and i'm allowed to say shit and shit
because of my artistic freedom
and i'm just too cool to ever end a damn sentence
cuz i'm a poet and yore not

wait a second
check this deep shit out:

the birds   fly over]
            the sky and
                        the sky is blue and purple and pink and mauve

damn that was deep
alack for my deepness
and the deepness of poets in general
if you didn't understand it then
you must suck pretty badly

it's amazing how poets can get away with this foozled shit
it sure makes it much easier to write meaningless bullshit
it's really funny when scrubs try to say that you are
talking about some deep shit or tried to do something deep

people are too impressed with their intellects
these days

back in my day you wouldn't see a bunch of faggety-assed art freaks
trying to analyze our poetry
no sirree bob
we talked about chopping wood and life on the old homestead
and shit like that
but mainly about chopping wood
which is a real man's poem
we also used to complete our sentences in my day
and we used punctuation too.
but nowadays
everybodys too trickified for that crap
cheese bubbles dominate the landscape

dang
hot damn
sheet
take it billy

Ander S. Monson
asmonson@mtu.edu

Overrated

Don't bother me with sex, sweet muse;
your titillation's overused.
Romantic love is overrated
treacle and won't leave me sated.

The moon in June is nice enough,
why spoil it with that spooning stuff?
The stars above are sharp and bright,
why paint them with this pensive blight?

Infatuation, go away.
I've better things to do today.
Romantic love is overratee
treacle and won't leave me sated.

Karen Tellefsen
kt1@cc.bellcore.com

untitled

...she knows the colors' names
and the hues they sing through
i close my eyes
and listen to her

i can't tell
between
a color and a neighbor

to talk of blue
is to ignore
societies
of reds and greens
and my smooth greys

black to white the greys
last all day

so i close my eyes
and the girl who knows the words
colors my world
in pastels

(she taught me that word, pastels
(soft . afternoon . diffusion

Chris Losinger
cdl0915@ritvax.isc.rit.edu

wicasa wikan

my brain feels
crammed full of holiness
that makes me feel
sort of ill

i need to write higher
than “love” and “wanting to die” and “masks” and “loneliness”

i need to write
about burying my dog
banging my head
touching my girlfriend’s breast
fighting with a stranger
stressing out over final exams
and just how i felt after i lost my virginity

shaman

i need to write
some miracles
drains the holiness

i’ve got no room in my head for a savior

d. broderick gould
dbg2@lehigh.edu

Triptych

Sense	Her	Near you
Her	Heart beats	Quickly
Trembling	For you	Hold her
Love her	Like the stars	Forever
Lost in the	Shine	In her eyes
Caress	Her face	With great tenderness
You share	Smiles	She holds you
With Love	With Love	With Love.

Joseph V. Bopp
jbopp@vaxc.stevens-tech.edu