Sand River Journal

Sand River Journal is a collection of poems gathered from the newsgroup rec.arts.poems; it is posted monthly in ascii and TEX formats to r.a.p. and related newsgroups. Current and archive issues may be retrieved by anonymous ftp at the site etext.archive.umich.edu in the directory /pub/Poetry. This archive includes PostScript versions of the formatted journal, which is publication quality and can be printed on most laser printers.

Send your questions, comments and final-draft contributions (please reference SRJ) to asphaug@lpl.arizona.edu. Enjoy!

Erik Asphaug, Editor

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Vernal Equinox

☉ ☾ ♎

Matin

Later, in the chill of morning, you lie
silent, still, as if sculpted from ivory.
I look in your eyes and I am lost, lost —
that is sufficient bribery, and enough
reward; my soul would cost you nothing more.

I will keep this memory, like a scar.
Out the window, the trembling rays of the sun
gather strength to bully the fading stars.
Over the river, the full moon dances;
it dances, spins, and sinks behind the trees.

Edward Gaillard
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wind-poem

on leaves of silk
i wrote poem-prayers
and strung them to the wind
like butterflies
a few drifted on apricot flowers
in shangri-la ... perhaps
a few found their way home
to you

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Rilke Drunk, in a Cafe with Rodin, 1902

He sees: not the throbbing flicker of the room
nor even the particular radiance of angels,
but the sculptor's carved Mosaic face
undulating before him, dissolving in candle flame,
rippled like the black cat's muscles
he watched that afternoon
in the Jardin Des Plantes.
He can see through the artifice of shaping
to find the darkness at their hearts.

Kenneth Wolman
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I remember her

I remember her as a young woman in white hair
and a flashing heart like no traffic
light and lucid
going down
for the third time.

Ralph Cherubini
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d is for down and out

we sleep
a lot of children
in our facility.

we sleep
your children,
dallas.

we sleep
your unkempt
children.

say hello. say hello
to calcutta,
big d dallas.

Marek Wojciech Lugowski
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sneak attack

the night was
nice, a movie and too much
to eat
we got home and
it was late enough already
and we went to bed

only you couldn't get
to sleep, there was this
funny pain
in your shoulder and it
was nothing but it was
something

so we called the doctor
early saturday morning
and he was asleep so maybe
tums would do, or an aspirin

but it didn't so we called
back and just to be on the
safe side, let's go to the
hospital and see, you know?

and it was
early saturday morning
and we were tired but we were
worried too so we went

they took you inside and

I filled out the papers

and after the xray and the ekg
they let me in and you were
pale in the paper gown but
smiling a little
and the docs and nurses said
it was something
about your heart

but they weren't sure what
so they gave you steroids
because thats what you do
when it's something
about your heart

and about three
minutes later everything
went crazy
and you were thrashing and
yelling and the doctors were
giving quick orders and the
nurses were holding you and
the monitor was beeping
and there was no room to
get close

so I stood back
and cried

well, you made your point
I love you, all right
now cut this out and
let's go home

together

Alan Schlutsmeyer
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Clarity

I see now
that your immobility is a knife aimed at my heart
your nonchalance a roving gun
your dispassionate stance a seeping poison.

My love you are a band of assassins
disguised as a man.

Ralph Cherubini
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First Snow

And then one day you wake to find
the world is white;
the blemishes are bleached,
the rough edges chipped away,
leaving an alabaster harmony behind.

Despite yourself your thoughts turn
to cause and effect, to creation.
Enough! It is time to leave.
You open the door and flinch:
it is cold outside.

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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
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meaning that I should

the only Carmen I have known
is the shadow in my desire

to hold and to be held
to behold

the life
   long eyes in shroud black hair
draped skin   sharded bone
obscuring
   sight inscripted   lines unsung

we meet: to talk
anticipate
one chapter sent
one seraphim
   as night caresses   candles wane

anew   in moonlit tress
again I found this precious language
      words and murmurs
   seeking lips   sweet nectar
singing praises   alleluias

one note not taken   recompensed
in Carmen's song of lies   confessed

John Adam Kaune
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Consequential Star

Is the gift of light any less itself
for its coming from afar?
Look around and span the sky at night
who can say a star's no consequence:
oh star, where did you come from,
and star, only you, as star, can tell
of original creation and why we are
entrained within this universal amber night...
And what came before, and what's outside?
Only a star might know (if any know at all)
and for that, and for its gift of light
(no less a gift for its have come from far!)

R. Bloom
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Isabelle Brasseur

the white shadow of her father
dances in this requiem
she drops from the throw
on a sharp edge scribing
an arc that eases her deep recoil

l'ombre blanc de son père
danse dans ce requiem
elle tombe du lancement
sur une vive arète tout en gravant
un arc qui atténue sa détente profonde

E. Russell Smith
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Washington Square Park

And so here we are
sitting on a park bench,
watching a soot covered squirrel
climb a dead tree.

You're acting paranoid
about being downtown
and I'm kicking myself
for bringing you here.

I keep making the same mistake
over and over again,
as if programmed
into some compulsive loop.

The odds are against us, Maria.
You've come with too much baggage, anyway.
Your kid's afraid of carrousels
and your husband's got a gun.

Virgil Hervey
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Birth-Pains

(to D.J.E.)

Don't you know that you are
as a child to me?
When I scold you with
the sharpness of labor pains,
my hard-edged caresses
folding over your fears upon these sheets,
canceling daylight with the
thought of dark warmth–
I am pleading inside:
I am the first-time mother
who tries too hard to flood your life,
to draw you into my skin each night
and flush you out anew each dawn.
Soft, you are soft,
floating away from me through time.
I ought to be the Amazon queen who
eats her young; then I could
keep you inside me,
rolling you 'round the back of my mouth
slowly, like a thought.
I burn red-hot to see you
draw close to another,
one who will not lose you in her darkness.
But I know darkness created the light
before you and I gave birth to one another,
and darkness will again swallow us.
Although your after-birth rots in my memory still,
I will carry you in dreams–
through wars and adolescence,
and your marriage to another.
I was born to bear this sorrow,
and I will continue to pain every year;
as long as it takes your place,
as long as this mother of a dead son still loves inside.

Sylvia Chong
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4

      Four four for? just for
the beat is the beat is the beat is a beast
   the beat is a beast that wants to breed
it lives in your body and moves your feet
      four four for? just for
the nature of rhythm is to mate
   to fraternise and integrate
a lustful eye on the neighbours' cousins
      four four for? just for
the rhumba shall lie with the acid jazz
   and the zouk with techno, merengue
and the children shall be brown and lovely
      four four for? just for
purity pedigree forro martillo
   reggae takada and irish reels
the blues had a baby by everyman's culture
      four four for? just for
the avant-garde is a planned mutation
   saving the gene pool from stagnation
we love and hate the stranger babies
      four four for? just for
batucada ceilidh rave
   to lock your body into time
your heart your brain and genitals
      four four for? just for
becoming, creating a generation
   the children shall be brown and lovely
rich and healthy, randy, fertile
      four four for? just for
the children shall be brown and lovely
   rich and healthy, randy, fertile
dump you for a younger model
      four four for? just for
the beat will dump your generation
   take up with your sons and daughters
blind them to your waving finger
      four four for? just for
the beat is a beast that wants to breed
   infecting with the gift of lust
it reinvents the wheel of life
      four four for? just for

Michael J Norris
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Rafting

(When I thought I lived alone, in air)
I saw, mostly reflections. I learned,
I learned at length
To slow that frequency of shimmering
and speed it up again at will.

Useful, that. Submerged now,
I see Sirens high, and
M! M's still spinning
Priceless threads, pale honey to
Catch the glances, hair, smiles

I too will use. Because
On "low" at last, humming,
I float upwards, lost to gravity,
Limbs dancing in light before
The Buddha.

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do you know the taste of a tangerine sunrise?

do you know the taste
of a tangerine sunrise over cairo
or pepper-hot rice served on a ti leaf
on the brown river markets of bangkok

how would you know
five-spice days and saffron nights
a hunger for the taste of bitter melons
a passion for bird's nest and shark fins
and chocolate hugs and kisses

do you know the taste of viking fires
taunting the midnight sun
or the alpha rush of running barefoot
at the edge of kilauea

i am a splash of gauguin colors
on rain-washed mornings
i am a starry night van gogh
woven with notes of the blues

zita maria evensen
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machtlos

at The Only, night: Friday.
pinball hammer stone
blond spike hair smoke
candle-lit ashtray

she whispers to a friend
"i don't care - fuckit,
i'm living now - ."

the one be/inside her
caught in frills & chains
speaking of long-worn leather
copper & brass - ornamental (h)air

frostingravedglass
illuminated tree below

font of Avonlea, a doe's eyes -
with a lips' quiver
I know she is young

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olive sweater olive garden i hate olives

oh scurvy flusterer. oh if this is how it is supposed to be
then i don't want it. understand?

understood. would biting my lip not saying a word...
could. we try. again?

i am i am i am your disconcertina. heave a sigh oh
won't you sta-aye. heave a sigh. hang the wisp of a
curtin across your eyes. the top of your head feels
so very

hot. why did my ogling reduce you to white spots.

i promise to reform and act like a mature adult that i am
not. but. you will have to help me. please start wearing
a black chadora to cover that stupid grin of yours that stu
pid grin. i find myself toxically fond of you without you

within.

Marek Lugowski
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Celebration

They are brown
like two coffee beans.
I don't know why
this surprises me, except
mine are pink.
I guess I just
never thought about it.
Your other things are also
different shades of brown.
Mine are pink,
more or less.

You are called "yellow".
I have trouble
grasping this.
You even tell me so,
"I ama yerrow."
and poking your finger
into my chest,
"You are a gwei-lo."
(white ghost)
I lay my arm next to yours
on the sun streaked pillow.
Sure enough,
I am a ghost.

But for gender,
I thought we were the same.
We spend the afternoon
celebrating the differences.

Virgil Hervey
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girl

all I got
was a first impression,
my vision stained

the sharp and bitter details
slowly eroded in time
until now
a softly curved image
remains
carved into my mind.

Luus
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Reggae Melee

Eight of limbs atwine
our sinews mon
a coca bowl
of rasta fazool.

Come didja know
salvation mutters how
tools for tyrants
don't arch their backs

To blink. The high
sun bounces, pick
up your things and
hide the bones.

Ee I so dread
the *oso* dusk of my
head, aye so soon
after a wailin noon.

Seth Graham
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sheets

i'm a sheet lost to the wind
as grandma would say
when i didn't know what that meant
blowing insideoutside around the yard
loose from my line

crumpled against the garage
my lord how the boy carries-on
and look at him now, all tuckered-out
up against the garage now,
but like a sheet to the wind before
how he carried-on
you could say he done run out of air

keep that liquor from him, grandma would say
if she were still around, that is
she's off her line, in her own way
lost to the wind, or the ground, you could say
and me, i'm just enjoying the breeze

Chris Losinger
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seen

the confines of security.
   I saw essences.
wave wanderers in airs above us.
lamb shied from sun spun glade.
He is Essene, Escher squared.
dust-found books in shelves
   have bound me.
Inside
avocado greenglass eye.
tell us,
cope alone above in star —
   ob serve.

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hawks

spongy beach

climbing down roots
from steep hill above

forbidden lake
muddy prints on chilled water
merciless miracle ice
island beckoning

hawks circle and swoon

too risky, he said

island beckons
uttermost coolness

he isn't here
not now:
island beckons
hawks circle and swoon
cool zephyrs

eyes above
eyes below
ice between

no eyes to see
noone to know
cirrus dreams

abandoned beach
alone with hawks

Barbara Taylor
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Loving His Loves

Life is a house of cards. (I thought.) Blow,
Holy wind,
On Sappho's oaks — so his loves
Imbricated me, all leafy smiles and glances.

Don't breathe! His
Gravity inverting
(Eddington)
Made light of my insight.

Refractions then. Beaming
Through water, a filigree,
Gold threads through me shivered,
Weaving on the sandy bottom.
White holes in Vermeer, Bonnard's unpainted patches,
Left "Spaces in your togetherness"...

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You will know

You will know
if it grows and grows
if each shoot from the one
calls forth a shoot from the other
you will feel it
a growing together
a walking next to one another
down a beach of infinite duration
on a journey which seems of utmost importance
though you sense it to have no end and no destination
yet will it seem of crucial significance

you will know

and at some point on the journey
mid-step
you will turn your head slightly to the left
and you will see the companion
whom you have grown to love as your very self
you will look
and you will know.

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Dream

Dried grass and three leaves adorn the lawn.
Ruined temples to Gods long lost
are strategically placed throughout the town.
Ammo sings in the streets.

Exiles are still an improvement.
The burnings at twelve o'clock low have stopped.
Under the sand, the grass, the growth so green
it dazzles you.

And you are alone... you've traveled here before.
You know the path, well-worn, the road
that goes to nowhere that you know of...
the dream so strong the guilt now dim.

Perhaps you'll return, in terms of commitments.
Windy days seem lost without the magic of your words.
The sounds pile up upon the scrapheap,
I still try to touch the sky...

My failing in your twilight your best hour your demise...
my memories clash and run the steps that I would take for you...
the only things I want to say.
My words to tell you what it's like out there...

Awaken at dawn for the light to come.
You've known for a thousand years just what will pass...
Compromise the truth scratch at the wall...
Only pray that you can dream of home.

Jack Godsey
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the air is the essence

you want me to give you metaphors,
parallels outlining you

so i tell you that you touch me
like the glass filled mistral
from deserted plains

like that hurtful breath of life
that blinds, like
the essence of you in the air
is how much air you are to me

like the air is the essence

Luus
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Reverie

Seasons roll along with their
undying repetition:

Four years later,
still I haven't changed.

Erik Asphaug
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deliverance

ambrosia   milk-filled sky I see
half-moon glare atop the treeline
severance of moon and sky

what night is this
that brings the shadow of stars
to eyes of awe and contemplation?

the leaves know not of change -
for Autumn only
does death infuse imagination
leaving wind in colours, invitations
to the chrysalid Winter

circle
Spring

What transformation sees my eyes in passing?

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