

T S A P B R L I E N A G U

The Healer's Job

Time—the great healer of all ills.
Sickness—gone in time.
Gone too, feelings of all old thrills.
Time can cover the spots of grime left
on souls by evil men's shrill and powerful crime.

Use time to do its good job.
As memories fade of past deeds
we must let great healer rob
us of these badly planted seeds
and let us never sob
again, in memory of the healer's job.

By Joyce Quinnett



Artwork by Josefa Wilks

"Real" World

Stand straight,
don't grate,
(frustrate)
forget hate;

Best not good,
gets to shoulds,
can't not could;

Nag commands,
dread demands,
no amends,
no just end.

What's your life?
You understand?
What's your—dream?
Kidding, right?

(no money there)
dream won't do.

Life ain't fair,
(said with sneer)

No forever. . .
(get gone good)

No right,
all wrong,
no gate,
meet the wall.

Fight through brick,
smash in wood,
plaster crash,
cement bast—

stops you cold.
(no shame
just the same)

Think fast,
(don't ask)
pick-up-sticks
on cue
that'll do.

By Dori Molletti

Equal now and tall, I can, my love,
Embrace you, pierce you, eye to eye,
Dive swiftly through your shell of glass,
Fly gently to your heart of hearts.

Round and round I sweep the corners searching
Heart and eyes alert, for cobwebs weighted
Sad with ancient thoughts of plans that failed,
Stacks of tarnished goals, gone moldy row on row.

Kicking, pushing, wiping angry as I swear
Wondering who put this awful clutter there.
Sweat rolls cold down nose and cheeks, catching
In wrinkles drawn across my forehead as I
Stop dead, my frenzied hung abandoned. . .

I cannot clean your house.
My dear it's up to you.

By Bonnie Crossley

Colleagues:

For the scrap of sense you left me last week
And the bit of purpose in your walk glimpsed through the rain,
For the moment when you caught my eye to wink at the bleak
Hope the meeting would ever end or even gain

Paragraph structure, thank you sane
Spot in the blurred weeks, splayed
Into orphaned essays, with no main
theme, for the pretense of time when we paused and you stayed

To attach another to a series of hope,
Another chapter in our private volume
Or first pages where clear and clean in scope

We propose the parts we could assume
Should write themselves and heedless of editors develop
A whole idea the next moment's monstrous little tasks consume.

By Gretchen Schuette

Arrival

I awake early

with stawberries
and honeyed tea

to view
sunrise at six;

Before flannel
replaces quilt,

I listen to

the rain-scented morning song
of Solitary Sparrow
and Sleepy Frog.

I wait,

for today is one of
kindling chopping
and
egg gathering

bread will bake
and then—

the necessary trip
to the library
for more Whitman and Twain.

For tonight,

when Crickets chirping cover
the electric day-buzz of Cicadas,

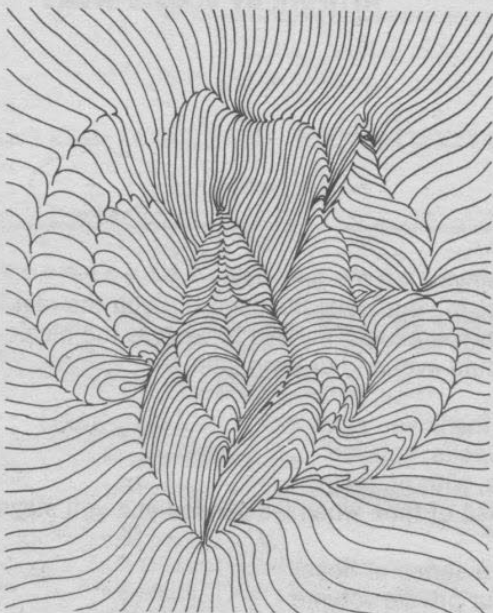
when Sparrow and Frog retire,

when Whitman is put aside,

and candles are light
and flutes sound.

you
will be
Home.

By Dori Molletti



Artwork by Josefa Wilks



Photo by Justin A. Miller III

The Plains

I smell parched earth beneath my cheek.
I feel sand, become pebbles,
push against my body.
I have lain here hours drag like days.

I breathe the stench of the buffalo
hide about me; the buffalo will think me one.
I have been told it is so.
I will be a man.

I watch my cousin, the ant, walk
beneath my nose with a mountain
of my rotted skin upon his back.
He looks as I must look to my brother
the hawk who hovers high above me.

I hear the prairie dog, his soft sharp sound
the voice of my uncle: "wait;
lie still, wait; to be a man, wait."

I will be a man.
I wait.

I am aware of a tremor
among the grains below my cheek
become a tremble along my body.

I know it is the buffalo
who make my mother, the earth,
shake like our tent on a cold wintry night.
I see sunshine across the land
but ear are filled with the thunder
of Aquata as she rattles our lodgepole.

I raise my head to see eyes red and wild;
nostrils flared and fiery;
froth flung from bearded face;
hooves pound and fall.

I feel the wind over my wings.
I float above the plain, watching,
the dust cloud from the dark herd
settle upon the small, still buffalo
hide dampen the parched earth below.

By C.L. Watson

My Place

The Tamarack tree on the hill
is the place where I hug myself most.
Its sharp leaves like leather can't kill
what I fell when I am my own host
near that wavering, wonderful thrill
called my Tamarack tree on the hill.

In belief when I open my eyes
all important surroundings close in
on each sense and surprise
my whole being again and again.
It's the beauty of nature that tries me to tears
at my Tamarack tree on the hill.

Beneath that tough tree is a tomb.
That sturdy brown stone standing strong
brings feelings of death, birth and womb
to my soft gentle spirit—how long
must I wait to join them—long gone
'neath my Tamarack tree on the hill.

By Joyce Quinnett

Caring

This day my life begins anew.
With smiles I lighten my load.
I talk with my soul
my soul smiles...
sometimes through tears
at times through the ache.
I create my tears
I begin my smiles.
Spreak them on thick
LUSCIOUS GRINS
DELICIOUS GIGGLES
No indifference.
CARE
The smiles come.

By Joyce Quinnett

Blind Destiny

The quest
pulls me into myself.
I trip downstairs
to the center
of who I am.
Feelings,
unsure, creep out
to watch as I trek past.
Gnarled memories hide,
and laugh at the tiny,
shadowed
pilgrim passing.
Thoughts of fantasy
bounce
through peripheral sight
and tease
the wanderer
en route
to unknown destination.
Momentos of happiness past,
lie strewn on trodden lane.
Clues offered,
refresh
bone-dry memory
of bygone days.

I will search this foreign land
until I find my home.

By Joyce Quinnett

Purgatory

Afternoon sun,
low in a winter sky,
peeks through a picket fence
to case bars across my lawn.
Sunlight and shadow,
in subtle shifts,
imprison leaves upon the year.

So like the Angel
we are fallen from grace.
Leaves set loose
from the tree of life
by windstorms of desire.
Sent down to the nether-world
behind scatterbrain acts
of cool so high
we rush through the free season
of our life to
fall.

All different—
so alike
in a shadow life of
nicknames and numbers.
Loneliness—
fear—
frustration—
form faces of granite
in the furnace of survival
hide fragile lacework of
self
are but brittle shells
to drag across the asphalt
of an unreal
REALITY

Afternoon sun,
low in winter sky,
peeks through the bars to cast
shadows of a picket fence
across my memory.

By C.L. Watson

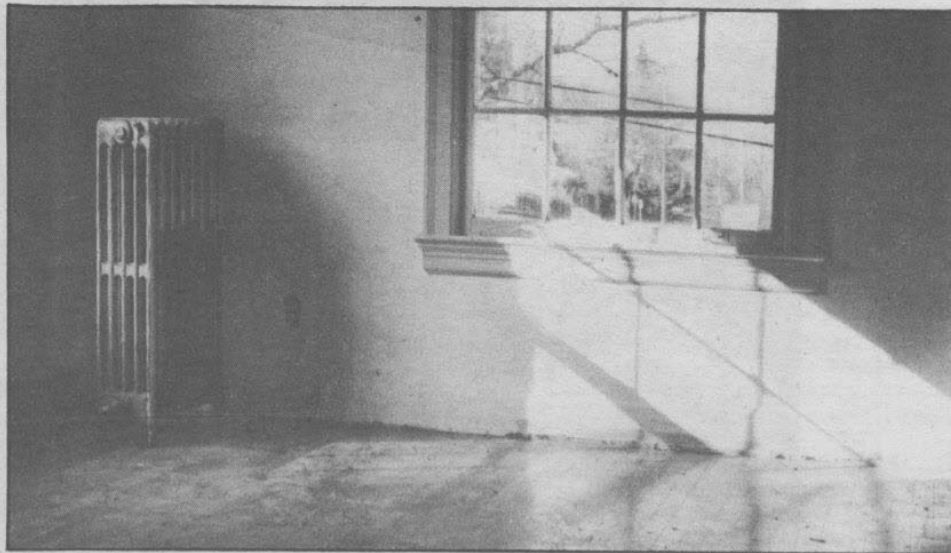


Photo by Pat Wappes

Midnight

Lights beckon across the bay.
Wink of a harlot with promise
of all between icy thighs of
cold in the heat of loneliness.
Caress me with ebony obsidian reality.

She strips—my masks.
I am laid open to the bone,
bared to the core of my being,
I am a pomegranate split wide,
pulp pecked by vultures
hover about my tomb.

Eyes surrounded by stone and steel
scream to see city streets but only
amble along backroads of memory
amid visions of wraithlike forms.

Familiar faces mouth words
that find no ear—
trapped in space and Time.
Night filled with forgotten footfalls
reverberate along the catwalk.

"Mary, Mary, quite contrary, how does your garden grow?"

Nothing grows in my yard, bathed in blacktop.
Brittle seeds fester upon the asphalt;
distrust, fear, frustration, anger and death,
nurtured by fetid breath of fat
beer-bellied bulls and the brainless
waves of blue which ebb back and forth
to eddy within stone walls.

My dreams but footprints in a field
filled with snow that never fell.

By C.L. Watson



Photo by Pat Wappes

They

They, those awful They's.
They say I can't go home.
They make me take medication.
They don't bring my medication.

They don't own me.
They control me.
They sometimes can't be seen.

I'll show them.
I'll leave here.
They'll be sorry.

They stopped me.
When will He
Rescue me from them?

By Douglas Burck

Just For Me

Unsettling winds fill this dark, clear night,
tickling branches,
drifting through leaves.
Wait. Let me touch familiar sounds
that float on the evening's breeze.
I open the door to nightsongs forgotten—
the red-eyed musician and melody.
Though tired and tipsy he plays an old tune,
fingering the bow just for me.
Just for me,
not for anyone else or even himself,
he plays and sways just for me.

Hungry hands pull at taut, rusty strings
releasing a liquid harmony
that ebbs and flows,
intrudes and breaks,
nightwind songs,
like the sea.
A delicate music older than time,
undefined silence,
intricate beats.
He plays and sways in familiar rhythm—
soft and low just for me.

Wait.
Let me hold this dark, clear night
that teases and leaves shy melodies
hidden in rhythms delicious and slow,
he ebbs and flows,
fingering the bow just for me.

By Linda Hahn

Or Just Circumstance?

The evening has
the prayed for weather:

warm
clouds at a safe distance
an acceptable breeze...

There's room for
great-aunts
and
baby brothers
to invite themselves
to this
last ceremonial stand.

No one is left out.

Ahead,
blue caps do not make a shining sea;
tassels do not lightly tap at bright eager faces.

Who heeds the this-is-your-life lecture?

The prayer is—
unbelievable.

"We are
so lucky
to be outside":

the chair is hard
the shoes cramp
no escape

The speeches drone;
original sermons say the same thing.

In back,
the drunk ex-wrestling star yells his final joke
and
the pastel cheerleader giggles her reply;

This is what
I waited
four years for...

bitter work wasted on nothing but an upset stomach
and
worried hands;

my eleventh place standing,
the many prizes,
do not account for much here
in the ninth row;

And the
gold honor ribbons
will not
lie flat.

Slowly,
rows empty
then fill.
Then mine.

Stand.
Turn.
Walk.

(Just give me the paper please;
I've flipped my tassel
to the other side.)

Then last,
a gift
of a single flower..

A beautiful white carnation,
and I only think of
how dead it is.

By Dori Molletti



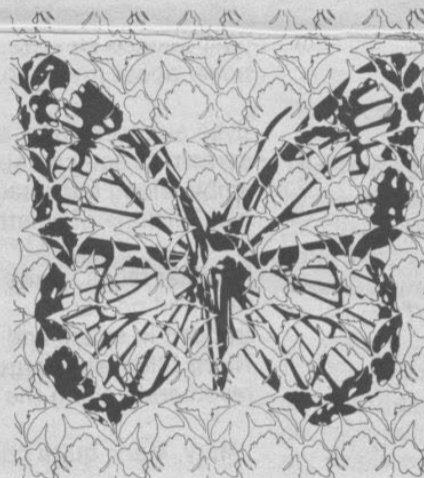
Photo by Sue Buhler

Wondering why
people treat me.
People treat me well.
People tread me bad
But why do they treat me?

By Alison Parks

This is our love.
Today, tomorrow, forever
Lingering, lasting, lovely.
This is our love. Good night.
Lingering, lasting, loving.
The time we are together
Long, short, finite,
no matter.
Lingering, lasting, lovely.
Mind over matter,
sing in the wind.
The loving, the looking
the learning, the yearning.
Lingering, lasting, loving.

By Alison Parks



Artwork by Wanda Adams

Storyteller

I feel everything;
in discontented winters,
snowy spite
of fallen autumn,
green leaves retreat
to hopeful springs,
fresh resolve
and brash summers,
brazen flesh bare.
People are the seasons,
and I tell their tale;
I am the storyteller.

By Justin A. Miller III



Photo by Pat Wappes