ICON
spring 2013
ICON

magazine for literature and art

is published annually in the spring semester at Kent State University Trumbull campus since 1965.

Poetry, fiction, and nonfiction: We accept all forms, themes, styles, and genres of 700 words or less; we limit the number of submissions to six (poetry) and three (fiction and nonfiction) per author per issue. Submissions must be typed. Fiction and nonfiction should be submitted in standard, double-spaced format. Send submissions to: Dr. Michael Lynch/ICON/Department of English/Kent State University/4314 Mahoning Ave. NW/Warren, OH 44483 (mlynch@kent.edu). Enclose SASE (self-addressed, stamped envelope) if you want submissions returned; disposable submissions are preferred. Include e-mail address. Pays one copy. Deadline for the annual Spring issue is February 1.

Artwork and photography: Submit copies, not originals, in black and white or color; 5 x 7 inches. Limit of six submissions. High quality photocopies accepted. Pays one copy.

Hart Crane Memorial Poetry Contest: Annual award of $100 for best poem. Include a letter stating submissions are for this contest, and a maximum of two poems to Dr. Noelle Bowles, Hart Crane Poetry Contest (address above) by January 15. The winning poem is published in ICON.

Subscriptions: ICON is available free to Kent State University Trumbull campus students, staff, and faculty. Those off campus may purchase individual copies for $4.00 or subscribe for $8.00/year (2 issues). http://www.trumbull.kent.edu/Arts/ICON/index.cfm

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Hart Crane Memorial Poetry Contest
2013 Selection

Annie Christain
The Sect which Pulls the Sinews: I’ve Seen You
Handle Cocoons
“a man shall not lie with another man as (he would) with a woman; it is
a to’eva” (Leviticus 18:22)

Silkworm dung lines my gums for tea,
and I clutch menorah for paddle.

Malka, give me mother-strength to save the scrolls.

I could never lie with Yohanan as I lie with women—
our chewing mouthparts, our tongues just wringed fiber.

My holy sparks dwell in him.

The first time I touched a boy,
I glimpsed pomegranate arils in the bowl
and felt beetles walk across my chest

As I crushed the insects in my shirt,
a monstrous insect leg broke forth from my
midsection,
ready to strike me at any time--
how I discovered my nature.

With faith, I could have spat into my hand, clapped
and scored myself with a knife.

Instead, I, the most Chinese of the Chinese Jews,
love Silk Maker Yohanan, who sees me as a dybbuk.

It’s true I carve questions onto the bones of a rooster during
Passover
and leave my doorpost bare.
Hart Crane Memorial Poetry Contest  
2013 Selection

**Annie Christain**

_The Sect which Pulls the Sinews: I’ve Seen You Handle Cocoons_

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and leave my doorpost bare.
Annie Christain

You bring me the smell of juniper and ammonia,
he hissed at my belly while breaking his tools.

I burned this foreign body once to please him, but new and
stranger shoot emerged.

I imagine placing his hand there.

There is no Malka,
just a mother who carved Shalom onto my infant chest before
drowning herself.

Carry me away, Yohanan, if I wind myself up in the floating
Torah;
the sign on my hand is twisted bark, fringe, spooned over pulp.

I’ve seen you handle cocoons.

Lyn Lifshin

Three Days Before My Mother’s Birthday

I run into a young woman almost staggering across
the street. I’m surprised to see it’s someone I
know. She seems pale. Then I see she’s lugging a
cat carrier, and when I ask if the cat is ok, she says
no, a tumor. Seventeen years old. I think of my own cat,
just as old, how she has been drinking so much water,
and how this past year’s been a gift, after the vet said
a year ago she was dying. A reprieve, an extra four
seasons. I think how, when she doesn’t eat, I’m
afraid, how it reminds me of my mother’s last
months. I shopped wildly for treats, something that
might tempt my mother as chocolate no longer could. I
bought her popsicles in exotic flavors--blueberry,
mango, apricot--but she still kept shrinking until
we no longer weighed her. All winter, coaxed and
spoiled, my cat thrived, too heavy to jump up on
the bed. Now, with the air conditioning on, she chooses
a chair where it’s warm and some days seems to be
slipping from me as my mother did, no longer worrying
about me when I drove home from the mountains
or caring what I ate or where. On her good
days my mother and I sat in the jade light outdoors,
and I brought her watermelon, and strawberries and
cream, two of the few things she still longed for. Today
I opened extra cans of food for my cat, and she ate a bit,
but she feels lighter. When I brought my mother to my
house, I knew how her visit would end but not
how we’d get there, and I wanted to feel grateful, but
those last weeks she was like a kite whose string I’d lost
hold of, getting smaller and smaller
Annie Christain

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Lyn Lifshin

I Lift My Mother to the Commode

almost too late tho  
it’s as close to the bed  
as the tub to the  
the toilet lid I kept her  
company on, handing  
hers soap and towels.  
My mother, who could  
climb Beacon Hill in  
5-inch heels at 70,  
can’t lift herself with  
out my arms, my hands,  
always too cold she  
shivers. “If I just was  
not so lazy,” she sighs,  
which translates, “tired,  
weak.” The hospital bed  
could be Everest. Our  
awkward dance to lift  
her hopeless as prayers  
for mercy, a reprieve,  
but I try not to show my  
fear and now see her  
tremble as the doorbell  
rings. Verizon, to install  
a private line she’ll be  
alive less than a week to  
use. Still on the commode,  
my stranded mother is  
lifted by this smiling man  
as if it was part of every  
day’s phone service,  
gently as if carrying a  
bride over the threshold  
for a new life

Kenneth Pobo

Aunt Gwen Learns to Drive

My teacher said that everything I did  
was wrong. If he ordered right,  
I turned left. Had he said down,  
I’d have gone up  
just to annoy him.

Going up would be fun.  
Why stay on a road when you could be  
on a cloud? Roads make us believe  
that life is stop start stop start.  
Traffic lights have three colors.  
Why so stingy? Give me the Crayola box of 64  
at least. On a cloud, there’s only drifting,  
no cops to pull me over. I got my license  
though the testing lady warned me  
about my parallel parking skills. I found  
all that geometry unnerving. Would you  
like to take a spin? We could ride all over  
the county, stop at Dairy Queen,  
each get a dipped cone, I’ll pay, and drive  
to New Colony Park. Everything,  
everything blooming. Clouds.  
The car, smelling of gas and lilacs,  
will rise to them. Jack Benny performing  
on a cumulus stage, Joan of Arc  
burning up a raindrop.
Lyn Lifshin

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Kenneth Pobo

Aunt Gwen Hiding

On the family farm, her mother had one goal: keep her father happy. Gwen would hide in the barn or apple orchard.

Found, he’d use the belt. “Daddy was mean,” she says, slathering butter on a biscuit. She avoided his funeral,

angering her mother who died worn, skittery, and bitter. Gwen had learned how to stay out of their grimaces—to locate

a perfect hiding place, sometimes on a busy street or in a bar where pitchfork voices can’t prod her.

Kenneth Pobo

Spacker Imagines Himself Starring in Whatever Happened to Baby Jane?

He’s seen the film 30 times at least, knows his favorite bits of dialogue the way his mother knows verses in Galatians. Ask him why he likes the film so much and he shrugs. Peek at him when he’s watching it and see how he smiles when Bette Davis kicks Joan Crawford at the bottom of the stairs or when Jane serves Blanche a rat.

His brother Crick thinks most movies are dumb, prefers NASCAR, beer, and Hooters. The other guys want action films and sports vids. Spacker likes those too,

but at night before he falls asleep he thinks his brother is Blanche. He makes plans: tape over the lips, rope around the wrists. His brother looking almost angelic in his sleep.

JB Mulligan

the sailor wakes

Dayward, night raises
a hem of darkness daintily.
Night-sweat. A muted stink.
Ancient spices. Wealth.
He remembers her eyes,
herself, but not her name.
It was years ago
and desire was acquisition,
not fingers trailing
over safe and absent skin.
He handles what’s lost
loosely, as if it would break
if he touched it too hard.
Kenneth Pobo

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John Grey

How to Sleep Apart

You're betting on love-pact
in the seventh with deep, threatening snores.
She's muttering Shangri-la under her breath.

Her dreams defy the cold,
yours sear with degrees of heat
not coming from the one beside you.

You're all about the demands of civilization.
She lines up with the demands of sacrifices.
Sleep is where you trade, you barter.
Your mattress moves for dream women,
hers is a magic carpet.

Awake, you're a cluttered city,
dispensing traffic advice.
In bed, you're different coastlines.
You disappear at the edge of her thigh.
She oozes off in her diluted honey way
in the direction of a beautiful thing.

You're intricate with all the beckoning
doorways in your brain.
She's rowing down her bloodstream,
skip-roping her nerve ends.
You rock like a ship in rugged sea-winds.
She floats up a distant mountain.
It's all for your pleasure.
It's all for her peace.

It's bedtime.
The flesh may gather
but the minds know better.
Apart... that's how you stay together.
John Grey

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John Grey

Dead of Winter

The thin and vaporous evening light is yawning.
In this bartering of seasons, it's the cold that extracts the best
price.
Forest glows with blond tips, though tortured trees shudder,
all flesh raked from their bones.

This is weather's point of no return.
Fall cringes away. Wind howls for a push from the north.
Sky grays. The cloud is mightier than the sun.
First snowflakes warn windows of more to come.
From dusting to blizzard, a world blinded.

We must hasten to the fireplace.
Or the stove. Or the radiators. Or the blankets.
Or each other. All over, winter, predictably
bitter and deadly. And, here and there, the warm,
the survival, that surprises me.
John Grey

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And, here and there, the warm, the survival, that surprises me.
Askold Skalsky

The Saint Unbound

(after Georges de la Tour's The Repentant Magdalen)

He finally got it right on the fourth try—

after the ashen penitential air, the piece of foolscap like a
tormented crab,

after the glass of elongated light casting its yellowed halos at her

skin,

the jawless skull moved into place between her thighs:

he’s ditched the table’s slab-wise cross, blocked out the candle’s

flame from all purview:

she needs no mirror now—it’s just for us, so we can see her eye

the little bookmark worm

that crawls out of the box’s lid under the shadowed bone,

its sockets dark with every pleasure

of her finger-strokes. The volume’s shut; the brood is loose into

the ordinary presence

of the night: what is there to repent?

in this upper room where her disciples meet to shed their corded

robes

and spill the sudden perfume of the body’s clefts set to exchange

their mysteries.

Eager to pose for her next masterpiece, she hears their footsteps

on the narrow stairs;

the door behind her turns on its syrup hinge with a drawn out,

lubricious squeak.

Craig McVay

Elegiac Letter to a Friend

Tony, friend of forty years,

no farther away than memory,

the sunflowers I watch in my back yard

this evening bend toward me like tired giants

who smile sadly on little boys that run

away from them.

The slatted gray fence on the alley hides me

from the roots of poison oak that soon

will spread among my weeds.

The white cat across the alley slides

under the fence and limps toward me.

The spots on his shoulders and tail

are tired as oranges in the grass.

Over the fence, I barely see the lid of the neighbors’
garbage can, propped open by empty beer cartons

and cardboard boxes in which (I like to think)
once rested Latin love lyrics.

I know the unseen chairs on their back porch

sit as empty as the arms of a father

whose baby girl has flown to the stars.

Your heavy arms are empty too, Tony,
because Jan, your beloved wife of forty years,

has flown—as will you and I—to the stars.
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Arthur Gottlieb

Trips I Never Took

On the table tickets to
Timbuktu, a passport photo
of you who went ahead alone.

In my armchair I ride
the rocky rapids of my pulse,
sail the half moon nail
up the Hudson
in an age of self-discovery.

Emulating the mirror's
endless reflections, I study
the map on the backs of both
hands, where blue and white
Niles converge
in the heart of darkness.

Spinning the plastic globe,
I blindly poke my forefinger
at a place between a jumble
of mountainous jungles
and vast expanses of oceans.

There I can shed my clothes
like shadows and settle in
the warm sand like a turtle's egg,
ready to break out at a moment's notice
with the first wash of high tide.
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There I can shed my clothes like shadows and settle in the warm sand like a turtle's egg, ready to break out at a moment's notice with the first wash of high tide.
David Sapp

The Ice Storm

In the seam where winter
stitches into spring,
an ice storm tosses its frigid disposition
upon the orchard; the squall slings
a shimmering, frozen mantle
upon limbs and laces and wraps
each blossom in a tight, cold bodice.
None can be moved
by the wet, gusting rag of wind.
A few old, brittle limbs snap
with the sudden attire,
but the youthful limbs are pliant
in the sheaths of stiff gowns.
When the sun reappears and limbs
bend again, it is curious;
not one blossom, not one
petal has fallen; when the ice
relents these flowers stretch,
weaving the space so thick between limbs,
more might break with the weight;
and the flowers' scent calls
to the bees to feast beneath
the seductive lace veil of white.
When a few months have passed,
in another seam sewn between,
when the sun rents the blue fabric,
when the air is a hot, damp blanket,
a doe and her three spotted fawn
emerge from the wood's heavy tapestry
to dine upon the fallen fruit.
Each swollen apple was once a bud,
and each frozen blossom,
a survivor of the tempest;
but the deer are oblivious
to the sacrifice and daily in
silky apparel, bellies full.
David Sapp

The Ice Storm

In the seam where winter stitches into spring,
an ice storm tosses its frigid disposition
upon the orchard; the squall slings
a shimmering, frozen mantle
upon limbs and laces and wraps
each blossom in a tight, cold bodice.
None can be moved
by the wet, gusting rag of wind.
A few old, brittle limbs snap
with the sudden attire,
but the youthful limbs are pliant
in the sheaths of stiff gowns.
When the sun reappears and limbs bend again, it is curious;
not one blossom, not one petal has fallen; when the ice relents these flowers stretch,
weaving the space so thick between limbs,
more might break with the weight;
and the flowers' scent calls
to the bees to feast beneath the seductive lace veil of white.
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David Sapp

The Wild Cherry

The wild cherry
offered petite, white flowers
without a hint of fragrance;
small, dark berries so sour
birds were indifferent;
thin, unremarkable leaves, feeble,
lukewarm shade, the first to
drop, colorless, in autumn.

The wild cherry
flourished, unnoticed in the
orchard, anonymous in a tangle
of ivy, vine, and briar, and
grew too close to an oak sapling
with its wide bronzed hues, cool respite,
that would attain its height more slowly.
One summer the men
cut out the apple wood,
pulled the stumps, and left
these two dazed and disheveled.

The wild cherry
did not abide beside the oak for long.
The chain saw, coarse and
ruthless, loudly gnashing, bit
deep into the cherry flesh,
hard, dense rings of years,
its felling reluctant.
What in decades found a place,
was efficiently butchered, thick slices
of meat, convenient armloads,
now firewood merely yielding
ambiance to a suburban home.

David Sapp

The oak sapling,
with all its new space,
appears forlorn without its companion,
the wild cherry now a memory,
the stump a granite gravestone.
With saw and pruning shears stowed,
now what flourishes is regret.

Sheryl L. Nelms

Pinetop Murmurings

the twitter
of golden aspen

leaves
above

chatter
about

the snow
to come
David Sapp

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Wallow Fire Aftermath

a crystallized
black pine
log
catapulted across
the clearing
singed
tree
trunks
surround
carbonized
fallen
a slim
grey
snake
weaves
its way
thru
the decimation
Sheryl L. Nelms

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thru
the decimation
Charles W. Brice

Born Again

You want to be born again?
I'll give you born again: live,
savor each breath,
inhales and exhales,
the blossom of tomatoes and oregano
exploding in your frying pan,
the smell of garlic and olive oil,
the grand bouquet of basil,
your lover's eye-sparkle,
her lilting voice, Pavarotti's tenor,
Jim Harrison's novels--
everything that makes it so hard
to leave our troubled planet.
Stay near to those with whom you
shared your brindled years: comfort
them, stroke their dying hair, smell
their fragrant mortality. They
walked with you along this path,
this path that appears then disappears
like a sleigh inside a blizzard.
Charles W. Brice

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Charles W. Brice

Jesus's Mother Didn't Have Blond Hair

"Jesus never made it to Europe"
— Amiri Baraka

There was the smell of Sister Marino's white habit something beyond clean, beyond pure even. There was the hard wooden seat that folded up and then down again, the cold metal siding in the design of vines and leaves, and the solid, unmovable legs screwed fast to the floor, the desktop with a well on the right—for what? Not big enough for a cup.

There was her voice, shrill and black as the grotto-hood that framed her head and made her look like a saint carved in marble. She passed out fancy colored paper and crayons. "Draw a picture of Mary," she said. I'd only scribbled before this. Everyone got right to work: tiny knocks from the kids' crayons as their Marys found form.

Who's Mary? I wondered. My drawing was of some lady in rags, with the kinky black hair of Mrs. Dee, my kindergarten teacher in the public school. My mother had promised God that she'd send me to St. Mary's Catholic school if my bone marrow test came out negative. I was saving her soul. Everyone but me drew Mary with silky blond hair and dressed her in the finest robes. My picture, drawn on that first day of first grade, was the only one Sister Marino didn't put on the bulletin board.

Charles W. Brice

I think now of Sister Marino, a bride of Christ condemned to a dusty little hole in the prairie like Cheyenne. For her nothing worked out. I can still hear her "tsk" as she looked at my raggedy Madonna. Couldn't she at least have had a classroom of kids who knew what Mary looked like?

Juliet Perry

I always took the stairs

I always took the stairs to feel like I had somewhere important to go like I was on a delivery

excuse me sir
sign here

what for?
your delivery
cigarettes and hair gel

I always get to the top just as I'm thinking about breathing hard

and then I get a jolt when there's no last step
Charles W. Brice

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Richard Dinges, Jr.

**Odometer**

Numbers predict the passage of time on odometers, roll beneath tires through greasy red smears on gray concrete under a pocked blue sky with no clouds only a dim haze converted from a thick pool, all that remains of our ancient heritage, another world that started, ended, and now writes a final word on a front page of yellowed brittle newsprint nobody reads anymore in our current age of numbers accelerating toward zero.

**Wind Whispers**

When wind whispers my name, I settle into shadows cast by trees that reach into a graying sky, pricking holes through calm to burst points of light, a murmur to draw me into that dark embrace I cannot accept, standing and turning toward the opened door where you beckon me to come in from the dark.
Richard Dinges, Jr.

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Ryan P. Kinney

Light

There will be no more hiding
not from the rhetoric
not from the self-righteousness
not from the lies we tell ourselves

not from the guilt
not from the pain
or from the shame
not from the anger
or the happiness

not from the us that never was
not from the definitions of family or love

There will be no more hiding
not from you
not from myself
not from life

We will be naked and bare
ugly and beautiful
out from under the covers
out of control
and into the light
Ryan P. Kinney

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William Doreski

The Miasma Where You've Posed

Your orange blouse renders you sly
as a wink, but your headache slurs
your face so you face me almost
with mechanical desperation.
We lean like the twigs of a tepee
and name our fears by nation:
China, Ukraine, Peru, the U.S.,
and settle on Lithuania. Miles
of pine forest, bog, and wheat fields.
The slippery kinds of vodka. Crimes
the Germans encouraged and admired.
Milosz folding up his childhood
in a thick manila folder.

We agree that your headache warps
the world so badly we risk
toppling into a vacuum if
we continue this conversation.
The room contracts. I fumble
in a desk drawer for aspirin
but amid the dusty paper clips
and unread memos I uncover
nothing more potent than a handful
of exhausted ballpoint pens.

I wish your vivid outfit looked
as cheerful as a sunrise but
it's harsh as orange peel and dooms you
to a cankerous day. Agreed
on Milosz's Collected Poems
and Land of Utro, we conclude
this pointless talk and you wander
with clumsy Golem footfall
back to your office to sulk.

William Doreski

Already I miss the rumple
of your distemper, the slouch
of your self-defeating sentences;
but the miasma where you've posed
for half an hour quickly congeals
into something like a sculpture,
a fossilized moment in space
that if I were desperate enough
I could honor and embrace.

Peggy Sue Byrnes

Bark This Poem

I want to lick the chrome on that
new Corvette.

I want to sniff at the
buds on every bush.

I want to stand and
piss on the old
park bench.

I want to chase
every robin as
soon as it
lands—but

Spring is in
the air.

So I bark
this poem.
William Doreski

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Willy Conley

I of the Beholder

(a minute memoir of an actor)

I lie “unconscious”
eyes closed
downstage facing upstage
my back two feet from the audience

I have to be still
my heart jackhammers
my breath rattles

Eye close to the floor
opens a crack
the gates in the play open
all the characters spill out
one by one

I fell wrong this time
all my weight rests
on my left arm making my
fingers curl involuntarily
my shin throbs something nasty

I wiggle my toes to make sure
no bones are broken
they’re jammed inside a steel bucket
I stepped into
on purpose of course

I blink away sweat that trickles
into my eyes
can they see all this?

Willy Conley

The Smell of November Rust

On an early winter night in Boston
he goes out to his sleeper porch
and looks up at the sky.

Lead-grey clouds race
over the moon, or is the moon
racing behind the clouds?

He thinks of the breakup
with his girlfriend.
Again, he was the initiator;
it’s becoming a pattern and
he wants to break it.

He leans against the screen,
the bristles of his beard poke
through into the night.

It hasn’t been this warm since 1966
when the temperature hit a record 75
degrees.

The wind blows through and he smells
a warm August breeze. When it stops
the screen smells of November rust.
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Willy Conley

**Someone’s Daughter**

a little girl’s shoe
lies on a Kansas highway shoulder
once pink now beaten and brown

a truck zooms by

the little plastic shoe strap
flaps in the wind

Janice J. Fine

**Fortune--1940s**

My foster mother’s hands rubbed raw, nails broken--
tired--never had that extra penny
except when her husband won.

On the street she pushed me past the fortuneteller’s
store-front crimson glare.

Older, alone
one night the gypsy’s pointed, blood-red nails
enticed me
to hear my good fortune--very much like his winnings,
disappearing in morning’s first light

Janice J. Fine

**Frozen in Time**

It’s cold for South Florida in March.

Outside, at Max’s, the ghost of Mizner sits still.
The wind doesn’t move one hair on her head.
Blond-red, bubble-gum clumped—her brush stolen...
A flower child of the 60s left behind:
long skirts, dolmen sleeves, silver sandals,
a scarecrow in oversized clothes.

She begs from older women only,
says, “I’m not a panhandler.”
She’s not—just a woman who occasionally needs a cup of coffee,
a woman with a run of bad luck.

I slowly approach—give her money.
She says, “I interviewed yesterday. I’ll get the job.”

Another woman claims I wasted my money like she wasted her
money:
“Her’s a faker, no grungy, homeless drifter. She looks well.
Look at her bag, Bloomy’s. Maybe she can afford to buy us
lunch.”

We stroll back nonchalantly, peer into the open shopping bag.
Empty.

At Max’s the ghost of Mizner sits still outside--
always on the outside.

She’s cold in South Florida this March.
**Willy Conley**

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always on the outside.

She’s cold in South Florida this March.
Janice J. Fine

Grandeur in the Harbor

Her torch was closed--
I climbed each steep, twisting step
in a narrow place
to reach her crown,
past the grey our country has become,
winter yellow grass burnt from harsh winds,
past the viewing windows,
colors of our freedoms:
waterways aqua-turquoise, deep blue,
mountains capped with sharp orange sun,
summer greens weaving in luminous breezes.

Now Lady Liberty stands alone--
fragile.
The back of our thighs, calves, feet ache
from the steep climb,
the struggle upward
to regain our lofty vision,
the many chances to change
the view from the top.

Stanley Morris Noah

A War Film Documentary

Stars are falling while people
are leaping from shore cliffs
of Okinawa, April 1, 1945.
Americans now on the beach
with gathering hours. Civilians
were told the invaders are red
horned demons. The horror.
The floating corpses delicti of
lies in motion, up and down
with every tide, tides coming
in going out, balanced by the
timing of the moon's forever
indifference, whimsical clock.
Bodies beating on sharp rocks
like dead fishes. I have seen
this event many times in my
studies. The one woman
standing a breath a moment,
the letting go. And then I
close my eyes. Don't want to
see the divine wind and waves
again. Don't want to see the
inevitable pungent demise.
See mother with child, dangling
all the long way down.
Janice J. Fine

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inevitable pungent demise.
See mother with child, dangling
all the long way down.
deja vu is like a pinball machine

this is not saying I have seen
or been with you then, or
have you ever been--or are you
now a dream walking down
pearl street where I once lived
in a redsilk painted house, yellow
dried lawn, barking old english
sheep dog that stands behind my
naked picket fence. but here, among
marigolds and masculine oaks with
their reaching arms near the funny
mail box I planted in vertical sweat
is where I first met you coming up
the street of another town, in which
year I'm totally unable to recall. so
now, when you are in voice range,
please tell me what you have been
doing since? and I know you will have
the same face, unchangeable--you
in the duplicated victorian spanish
moss dress like floating about. I hasten
to know if you forgot me. maybe like
the way I remember you now, as then,
in that flamelike condition and language.
forgive me the awkward explanation in
this letter, dear, as I know it must sound
like and read like particles, tiny frag-
ments of deja vu.

Ghost Town Visit

At the school house I heard
voices of children playing as
if locked inside a measured
vacuum. But then a quick
silence. I turned my attention
toward the church house. Bats
are sleeping in the ceiling now
where saints once gathered.

They flew out at dusk through
broken windows, rising above
and back over the roof,
swirling past the cemetery
like a dark chocolate whirlwind.
Yellow butterflies in their
cloister clung to tombstones
to hide. I'm thinking about
gravity, how it holds things
down like the pyramids, except
in this place at this hour, bats
and laughter escape from one
edge to another in a kind of
geometrical existence.
Stanley Morris Noah

**deja vu is like a pinball machine**

closeout isn't saying I have seen
or been with you then, or
have you ever been--or are you
now a dream walking down
painted street where I once lived
in a red silk painted house, yellow
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this letter, dear, as I know it must sound
like and read like particles, tiny frag-
ments of **deja vu**.
Dennis Saleh

Daffodil

The tall light of the last days of April falls
across the lawn beneath a front window

But there is no indication of time passing
in the brilliance of the unvarying sunshine

Only gradually does this day turn facing west
like a flower in the bright buttery light

Each hour grows fuller with illumination
like the brimming sugar in a ripening fruit

As the day stretches on it becomes syrupy
as though sapped by the laden hours

The afternoon sleeps in a honey daze
the hour is glass and time sifts still