ICON
fall 2007
42nd year of publication
ICON

magazine for literature and art

is student-produced since 1965 at Kent State University Trumbull campus and published twice yearly at the end of Fall and Spring semesters.

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 (mflynch@kent.edu). Enclose SASE (self-addressed, stamped envelope) if you want submissions returned; disposable submissions are preferred. Include e-mail address. Pays one copy. Deadlines October 15 (Fall issue), February 15 (Spring issue).

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

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http://www.trumbull.kent.edu/Arts/ICON/index.cfm

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Kent State Trumbull Campus
Student Poetry Award, Fall 2007

Emily Pykare

my mother’s cupboard

4 doors, 2 drawers and 3 shelves encase a lifetime, a cacophony of silent sounds’ reminiscence across family heirlooms echoing from corner to corner never escaping beyond the glass doors

a myriad of plates rest tilted, hidden by bookends and knickknacks broken and reglued

a small wicker lady perched beside a cracked thimble sadly gazes down at the ceramic donkey, his shattered leg in pieces beneath his nose

a cookie jar with no cookies stands stoic behind a rusted metal cheese grater perched precariously upon a deep red wine glass

broken hinges and tarnish mark the memories held deep within

drawers full of stampless postcards, shelves filled with watercolored photographs, the reflection of a history receding out of sight

two wooden chickadees stand at attention waiting for an order from the toy soldier who sleeps sideways on the cover of a sketchbook

the crescendo of family history mounting in silence beneath fingerprints and behind shadows they wait, reticent and unnoticed until another inheritance is brought into the family
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Flatware Love

she stood still
a round peg in a square hole

waiting
waiting
waiting

waiting for someone to open the door
hot with emotion
steaming with desire

her round face shone in the darkness
her slender figure

without hesitation
without contemplation

leaned forward,
whispering softly to the Knife

“Let’s run away together.”

John Van Peenen

Pelican Dancing on the Pier

The Paros ferry’s late.
No one minds the wait, for Costas shows.
He’s part of the local color, a mime, a stellar attraction. We never find out how he knows we need him and his pelicans to soothe our anger at delay, or what he does to lure them close.

He doesn’t feed the birds, there’s no reward, and yet they leave their squat perch on a post, or oily harbor waters to play odd duets with him. He only has to beckon.
He whirls one in a dance, his outstretched hands grasping her wingtips as though she were the most attractive partner he has ever met.
Obviously, they’re fond of each other. He kisses her horny beak and stirs the feathers on her head. She almost purrs.
He’s old. Perhaps the bird is too, and that’s their bond.

The sun is cut in two by the horizon.
Color, even local color, isn’t going to last.
But there’s our ferry, just a little dot, coming on fast.
It and the show are all that’s needed to halt impatient words about an hour lost.

So Costas walks back to the chair that’s his by custom on a taverna’s staked-out strip of sidewalk.
No hat is passed, no cash solicited.
The performance is a poem or a note of music meant only for the moment, not to be read again or heard, and no one pays for that.
It’s quite enough that half-clad women laugh as we enshrine him in a photograph.
**Emily Pykare**

*Flatware Love*

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Joe

We know what he's thinking, Joe who walks in midnight silence across his land.
A devil finds him, a devil mocks and touches him with a smooth white hand, following close with a hand so white, wandering, mocking through the night, licking his lips as he slyly talks in words as evil as they are bland.

The devil is fine and a gentleman. He comes when the land is emptied out from sun to sun and the end of sun when the living shiver with fear and doubt. Sly he comes with an oily breath persuading the desperate to death and chuckling deep when the work is done by the last short ringing unanswered shout.

Such is the thought of Joe who goes across his land when times are bleak. The devil follows his feet and shows a path irresistible to the weak. The devil knows how to play on fear. He fawns with an educated leer and speaks in a way that each Joe knows is perfectly clear though it seem oblique.

Joe walking alone through his land at night when the wet snow falls through a hanging mist must listen in fear and mask his fright and fly from the devil's seducing lisp, fly the temptation of high despair and that bonny promise of nothing where no white hands lurk, no tongue whose spite clutches in anger a tense white fist.

Love Poem with Steam Shovel

Earlier on this special day, I worked a knuckled finger towards your body's center, slyly requesting.

Now I watch a metal claw tease asphalt. It lifts slim slabs from the parking lot. It breaks them with a gentle tap, a back-of-the-hand no more severe than the touch of your fingers as they removed mine, their message Not now but soon.

The bucket tilts to carefully rake up the shards and dust it made as Time someday will scrape and lift our dust into a coffin's palm. The dump truck fills and drives away. The dust it hauls will never rise again.

Nor we, but that's far off. Some other day. Not soon. Time favors us as yet, is on our side.

Your fingers promised for this afternoon when we can work at love with time and privacy, safely alone.

Meanwhile I watch, part of a smallish crowd, as a metal finger, made by engineers to be at least as sly as mine, does public work.
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Mary Crow

Travel Fatigue

I.
My tribe is Wandering,
sore feet and nervous laugh
our insignia, spin of farewell.
I look up to rooftop gardens
where strips of cloud
matter across the blue
and the bleat of distant cars
pleats the air.

II.
Every day it rained hard.
I walked on the marina’s docks
and then had a lunch of salad with a glass of wine.
I read The Jerusalem Post
while beside me the blue and white boats
were packed so tight the sea was barely visible.

III.
In the museum: the black obelisk
with its carving of Jehu,
ancient Jewish king paying tribute after surrender.
Pietro Perugini: Archangel Michael
and under his feet
a bit of the devil—
one black horn, one black wing,
top of a black shoulder.

IV.
Sea in the distance over orange tile roofs.
The light: rosy gold-tinged clouds low over
the entire horizon.
Cup of mint tea nearby.

Mary Crow

V.
Here I am, at the very oldest of temples,
this dust, this body charged with energy,
chest for storing knowledge.
These pitiful remains. Let me just
go on living. Let me find
a place I can fly into
with its grove of olive trees.

Bobbie Hopkins

A Globe of the World

Look at the tiny globe
the shape is round like the earth
but something is wrong

with the world in hand
shake up everything good
make the goodness stay

you control the land
use your power to mold it
but notice the change

your world is a lie
you are not the real world
you are not silver

longitude is marked
latitude is marked
get lost in the lines
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A Shtarker

We kids called him a professional gambler; to our parents Mr. Greenblatt was a shtarker, a gangster, who made other men disappear, though he was as suave as Cary Grant, always a tipped hat, a smile, and a

“ Aren’t you looking lovely today,” for the wives, who’d smile, despite clucking disapproval; a wink and a friendly tip on a racetrack sure thing for the husbands, who despite shaking their heads, always heeded his suggestions.

But look at the company he kept: men in Italian suits and shoes shined to such a polish, it hurt to look down at the uppers, though we never made eye contact: afraid we might be asked by the cops to finger them later.

Those men: underlings of Mr. Greenblatt, a real-life Jesse James to us kids, until we realized he fixed the games we held sacred: even our beloved high school basketball team; but far worse, the mouse of a man his associates dragged into his apartment one evening. If he left at all, we didn’t see him walking out.

Years later, in a Miami beachfront suite, the expensive cigar Mr. Greenblatt had been smoking was swatted away by the coronary: a deadlier left-right than Sonny Liston’s, before the mob told him this wasn’t his night, against Ali.

Robert Cooperman

Little Moishe Pipik

Moses the Bellybutton: what every adoring Jewish father of my father’s generation called their sons, in a language caressing as prayer shawls and pinched cheeks.

“Moishe Pipik,” he’d touch a forefinger to my navel, to make me look down, then tickle my nose with that same racing finger.

I’d laugh at that name, except the time he crushed me to him when I was six, his own father dying that day, a man who’d never left his living room hospital bed, his breathing the rasps of heart failure advancing steadily as a storm surge swallowing low lying buildings.

“Moishe Pipik,” Dad sobbed, as if I had the power to bring back his father, who once, to my great confusion, called to my father, in a voice thin as a light bulb’s sputtering filament,

“Come here, my Little Moishe Pipik.”
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the mouse of a man his associates dragged
into his apartment one evening.
If he left at all, we didn't see him walking out.

Years later, in a Miami beachfront suite,
the expensive cigar Mr. Greenblatt
had been smoking was swatted away
by the coronary: a deadlier left-right
than Sonny Liston's, before the mob
told him this wasn't his night, against Ali.

Robert Cooperman

Little Moishe Pipik

Moses the Bellybutton:
what every adoring Jewish father
of my father's generation
called their sons, in a language
cressing as prayer shawls
and pinched cheeks.

"Moishe Pipik," he'd touch
a forefinger to my navel,
to make me look down,
then tickle my nose
with that same racing finger.

I'd laugh at that name,
except the time he crushed me
to him when I was six,
his own father dying that day,
a man who'd never left
his living room hospital bed,
his breathing the rasps
of heart failure advancing
steadily as a storm surge
swallowing low lying buildings.

"Moishe Pipik," Dad sobbed,
as if I had the power
to bring back his father,
who once, to my great
confusion, called to my father,
in a voice thin as a light bulb's
sputtering filament,

"Come here, my Little
Moishe Pipik."
Michael Magic

Prepositions

She'll be selling something soon, some other painted face will stare out from beside her on or in that blah wall, so you wouldn't want to read particular allure in those too icy eyes or the flare of the studied wildness of her hair. Bad idea.

But I like her face, the one I made, here on the page teetering on my little trestle in high peril, drunk on her, bent to her lips, and through those eyes plunging toward the inside beyond I know I'd land in could I but leap and soar on my credulity like any other bird or prayer into and upon and within.
Michael Magic

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Michael Magie

Living High, Behind Bars

Something's missing, or she wouldn't pine so
like a tethered eagle behind her pane,
so snugly pent, quite stymied, poor nestling,
living high, behind bars, and without wings.

Still, she hunts, though she couldn't say for what,
stooping to the absence in her thoughts
amongst the shadows haunting in the street,
ghosts that might prove toothsome, could she get free.

But I'm a hunter too, and what I stalk
lurks there in mystery behind her back,
that other world within the barred domain,
the prisonhouse I fashioned with my pencils

hoping to prey upon the life instilled.
So couldn't we predators just barter kills?
I'd let her out, if she would let me in.
We'd both be satisfied, maybe. Imagine!
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David Sapp

**The Shovel**

The end of the shovel
blade is ripped
like a torn lip,
its rusted edge shortened,
blunt after years
on the grinding wheel,
yet the tool still thrusts
into a pile of gravel
to fill the holes of the lane.

When the shovel was taller
than me, its long handle
varnished, smooth and elegant,
its metal painted a vivid green,
I watched my father's
graceful, fluid limbs fling
the soil from earth to wagon
to fill Mother's flowerbed.

Now he leans unsteadily
against the porch railing;
a tube fills the holes
in his lungs with air,
our roles reversed,
he watching me with a face
as worn as the shovel,
and the holes in his expression
filled with satisfaction.

David Sapp

**My Daughter**

My daughter
forgets her bumps,
her sobs, and tears,
when soaring
with arms, legs, and wings outstretched,
grasping at the onrush of atmosphere
and giggling, giddy at the height,
circling over the vast skies of the kitchen,
over a patchwork countryside,
steaming plates of food,
glittering pots and pans,
and newly washed dishes,
above the goldfish in his small sea,
high above a tall lanky mountain,
his brother,
and for a moment,
eye to eye with heaven,
her mother.
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David Sapp

Mother and Sister

On warm summer mornings, our mother lay sleeping down an ill-used lane, away from some distant dirt road, as an abandoned house we'd pass in the Ford, its siding, gray and rotting and plaster walls, shingles and rafters slowly falling in upon itself.

In the night, thunderstorm winds ripped through black, empty windows and tossed and tangled, into a violent frenzy, the bare raspberry briars growing in the kitchen.

On warm summer mornings, when my sister was three, as soon as she could, on tiptoes, reach and turn the knob, she was out the door, running with the dogs, with the tall Irish setter, the leader of the pack of burr and tic encrusted mutts, hunting, scaring up rabbits, plunging through the field's high grass; and when she would fall, tumbling headlong and far behind, her pals sat and waited for her to get up and her small limbs to spring again.
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**B. Z. Niditch**

*Boston Autumn*

The moon in rainy autumn eases the doubtful lover who carried dry wine from a dismal summer under veiled plane trees through the fog.

He recites by the river all his childhood vows but the picnic crowds huddled between hyacinths only think he is drunk.

**Dennis Saleh**

*Evening Upon the River*

The reeds whisper and shush in the riverbank dusk

Wind furls them softly and billows through

The water is greeting the deep night

The rive saying one long sentence about itself
B. Z. Niditch

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Diane Webster

Icicles Tingle

In winter she’d be happy
to fling open the windows and max out
the air conditioner on high cool
along with the fan under her desk
blowing up her skirts like the frigid
version of dragon breath
or Frosty the Snowman
with his cartoon icicles tingling
off his conversation balloons.
Perhaps her desk would be better situated
on the roof with a collapsible umbrella
to keep snow and rain
from frying the telephone and computer.
She could lean over the building
and hail each customer before
they opened the door
to let heat escape into her space,
and many a pacemaker would leap
at her words of greeting
dangling over the edge like a child’s toes
in the lake’s lapping ripples,
but perhaps that would generate
too much heat, and she’d conjure
a hurricane to cool her neck
as everyone else huddles closer
together inside savoring body heat.

Diane Webster

Bundled on Her Back

She trudges like she lugs her world
on her shoulders, and if it fell,
her area encircles her
around and around the weighted ball
only as far as the chain stretches
digging into earth a hole
deeper and deeper
so she could fill it in
and have a different load to bear
like when we were kids
and Dad made a teeter totter
out of two wagon wheels and a board.
When we got tired of reaching for the sky,
we’d grind one wheel in dirt
like corn on a grist
deeper and deeper like a fox hole
when we played army
until we rocked and pulled the teeter totter
out like a cannon stuck on muddy battlefield
and buried the hole
like this woman trudging up the aisle
with all her worldly possessions
bundled on her back by imagination.
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like this woman trudging up the aisle
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bundled on her back by imagination.
M. S. Rooney

Blue

So cold, so blue, it
stripped your skin,
lay bare
white nerves

that wove into
a nest that held
blue eggs
you named despair,

that hatched
to bright blue birds that flew
and brought you berries
warm and blue,

then sang to you
the song long-sealed
inside
their blue egg shells,

then flew into
the clear noon sky
and vanished
into blue.

M. S. Rooney

Do the birds know

how much we need
their intentional, wandering ways?
Take my hand, let us walk
here by this river
beneath these cottonwood trees
beneath this wide flyway,
now empty,
and wait—
believing in pattern,
in season,
in bright wings moving
now north,
now south,
always towards.

Have you known that afternoon hour

when time seems wounded,
does not stop but simply falters,
and your chest
feels oddly weighted,
as if angels sleep there, unaware
of keeping watch—
when each breath
seems motion without movement,
a slow surrender to
an eternity unusable, unwon,
and to speak would be
to vanish?

How have you borne this?
Tell me—please—for I see
the key
gleams in your eye.
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Bon Voyage at 8th St. Station

You can count on them to come like broken promises. One appears and drops heavily down on the wooden bench each day after the 4:35 winds a snakepath up the rails. It's always someone who is not holding balloons or a child they comfort with whispers and a kiss. The car park empties and there he is, enough reasonable doubt on his face to hang a jury. Tomorrow, there she'll be, in the depot of a foreign land. They still sit at sundown, looking up at the bright eyes they tossed across the sky. They know how foolish it would be to reach and try to recollect the stars, almost as strange as having it all come down to a tiny hand waving from a shrinking window.

Walking on Yellow

Am I the only one who hears October dying, the gasp of its last breath passing sick and thinly across weak leaves that barely move?

It takes young lungs to tear red melancholy from the trees, a hand of cold skin to scatter the yellow confetti of November across the calling hills. A birth of white is waiting for a crumbling, the dry-crisp crinkle of death beneath fresh feet, to lay its soft, new milk to mother the mouth of crying grass.

They rake the dead dreams of summer, bury them in bags and barrels, and the forgotten ash that floats from their fires is gray and black.
Patrick Carrington

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Patrick Carrington

La Jolla

In shallows near the inlet
that tested seamen daily,
where gulls came to cry at night,
we dug our toes for clams
and carried them in our shirts
to open over firewood we stole
from old man Hennigan's shed.

The tired sun pulled the Pacific
up over its head like a blanket.
Boats came in with their catch.
Bathers were gone. You waited

until we ate before you spoke,
just as the clams and beer were
done. I walked to the shoreline,
words circling me like sharks.
I washed my face in salt water,
my back to you as it mingled
with mine. Turning strongly

to show you couldn't hurt me,
pretending nothing you could say
could ever matter, I told you
I'd write about it someday.

And as I left, gulls banked in
for their night song.
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Taylor Graham

Wings

Week-old sandwich bread saved
for the city park, its pond full
of ducks and geese. The old man's knees
don't work, but he's got bread
for hungry birds.

We toss crumbs and crusts.
Pigeons hulk and cluster; coots
scramble on their puffy green-striped feet; mallards
wag in and out of water.

Gulls hover in case we hazard
the wild ball. Bread-of-life in stale
chunks. I throw a fly. White fans
of beating feathers, a beak
snags it way-up

high, and now
I'm flinging bread to angel-
eggars. The old man
forgets his knees. Every catch
a blessing on the giver.
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Taylor Graham

In Snowmelt February

Crocus are blooming—a vibrant
lavender cluster not two feet
from the truck’s rear tire.
You pull aside
a hubcap left lying. Underneath,
a pale community struck down,
held under, splayed limbs
sickly yellow, maimed heads
dreaming flower. Pressed flat
as if by fashion

and yet, still pushing any-which-
way out and up, starved
for light. Anemic white stems,
useless chlorophyll praying
to the absent god of photosynthesis.
Trying so hard! you said, removing
the hubcap, rolling it downhill toward the junk pile.
What hope for crocus?
We moved on

and came back later.
Yellow-tipped lavender heads
were raising, almost
shaped like cups
in blossom. One or two, then
three, four finding a way
from under the weight of a dead-
fall oak leaf. Crocus offering
such fragile goblets up
for spring.

Taylor Graham

Ultrasound Imaging

What do we know
of the fairy rivers
in your ankle?

People in dark coats pass
through the automatic
doors, shaking
off rain.
It’s almost closing
time, four days
before Christmas.
Each one seeks good news
here, or
the miracle of
a reprieve.
In here, we’re briefly
out of weather.

Behind a white door,
someone traces
your tributaries,
the cunning water-ways
from heart to foot
to hand,

the one you reach out
to me
as we pass together
back
into rain.
Taylor Graham

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Ashley Coe

A Year’s Time

How awkward you stand in the doorway,
arms stiff at your sides,
hands pushed roughly into pockets of jeans
because you’ve forgotten your place here.
And the smile you give never fully reaches your cloudy eyes,
the barest hint of a curve against skin
too pale to have seen the sun in a year’s time.
Staring at the carpet like it might solve all your problems,
it seems you don’t know where to begin,
so you don’t.

Your feet scratch the floor when you move,
too timid now to take any steps at all.
And when you laugh it hurts your heart,
and when you cry it burns the sun away
’til all that’s left are the clouds in your eyes.

And hiding inside the dark
seems to be the way for you now,
but where does the light go
when it leaves your eyes?
Was it ever there at all?
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And hiding inside the dark seems to be the way for you now, but where does the light go when it leaves your eyes? Was it ever there at all?
Richard Dinges, Jr.

Lost Face

Stars wander farther tonight, no longer denote distance, only dust that lingers in still air, vanishes when light passes behind clouds, a memory forgotten. I turn my face away from cold wind that raises tears and blurs sight, still trying to hold an image of your face now passed into darkness.

Yard Lights

Yard lights dampen concrete sidewalks, waterfalls on vinyl siding pooled in sod plots mildew green under a sky bleached dismal gray by thousands of street lamps, all stars washed away by this electric tidal wave that lapses into a leaking faucet, where light seeps slowly, a weak drizzle around my shoulders, too little to read, too much to sleep and dream.
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and dream.
Lowell Jaeger

Ode

Here's to
up-and-coming species,
shoots and creepers
who burst through cracked pave
at the edge of my driveway
who refuse to be uprooted
who survive my herbicides
and rise again
after I run them down
repeatedly
with my half-ton truck.

And to the ghastly pale
tendrils of weed,
leafless snaky runners
in the crawl space
beneath my floors,
who chew loose chunks of mortar
and push through cracked cinder block.

Where I've descended to inspect
dry rot in the supports.
Where there's precious little to breathe.
Nothing but dust and rubble.
Near-dark.

Where I'm bent on all fours
at the edge of my dominion.
Roots lurking below the surface.
Subversive
hungry naked grit
to climb past my shadow
and drink the light.

Lowell Jaeger

On the Street

I spoke
with un hombre de Mexico.
To practice
a few frases de espanol.

Told him I wanted
to learn.

His brown face wrinkled
a hard-earned smile.

Amigo, he said.
You swim across the river
to my country.
No money.
No friends.
No food.

You learn.
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One Day I Find Something I Didn’t Know I Was Looking For

Dark rain.

Movie goers dispersed
but for three preteen someone’s daughters conspiring
safe under the marquee’s neon rainbow umbrella.

I walk by listening.
Pockets empty.
No poems.

As one girl’s father
in a three-quarter ton diesel Ram arrives and the other two sing, Bye Minnow.
Minnow?

Size-wise she’s a lot more.
Imagine
barbs in school hallways.
Treachery currents.

Then praise Minnow’s good fortune, two friends who love her by the way they call her name.
A dad who won’t let her stand too long outside in a cold rain.

Bye Minnow.

I round a corner
and swim back toward home.

Lowell Jaeger

Obit

To his/her parents, born on this day or another.
Attended school.
Learned, or not.

Either way outgrew successive pairs of shoes into adulthood.
Married so-and-so.
Worked at this or that.
Had kids.

Wrinkled, blinding quick.
Sputtered.
Died.

As I will. And you, the same.

Rough tombstone cut with his/her name.

Doesn’t matter whose.
It’s always news.
Lowell Jaeger

One Day I Find Something I Didn’t Know I Was Looking For

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Pam Clements

Palimpsest

Books accumulate
overrun our shelves
cheap as water;
every few months
they must be culled,
vetted, removed,
given away
even tossed
as scribbled flotsam,
post-it notes
for the eternal recycling bin.

Imagine:

Every word preserved in writing
is a triumph over time
in permanence of art.
Sheep must be killed,
skins stretched
on frames, scraped, powdered, aged, dried,
cut square, lined with rule and knife,
inked on raised podia
by standing monks
in stone scriptoria.
Each word a prayer, a wish,
Thanksgiving;
each book an act
of sacrifice.

Pam Clements

One of the Autumn Songs

It is a question of
what corrodes the retina
in a blast of red gold leaves,
an uncertainty.
Mere tint?
Raw energy beating the eye
like dust escaping
an explosion. Presentiment of
yellow fear, red dust:
the flame and the skull.
Pam Clements

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Doug Bolling

Broken Bowl

Starlings sweeping over the October fields.
My watch is still in summer
something about the erosion
of electricity.
I think of cold bread awaiting the
pilgrims just back from the
journeys of sorrows.

I have always admired birds, the plumage,
the piercing eyes that see through me
to the worm.
But autumn is serious business.
The days lose their voices to the distance,
memories turn gray like musty overcoats
too long in the closet.

There were several of us on this trip
but now only two,
myself and shadow.
I feel age working on me from the
ankles up.

They tell me growing old is like the autumn
mostly gray shapes and thoughts
with a surge of color just before
the end like blood in the cheeks
and the last gasp.

And the starlings up there,
if they would land nearby
and whisper the mantra of
getting by without freezing,
how to make poems that
temper the chill in the wind,
in the veins of the heart.

Doug Bolling

Oil on Canvas

The master promised to reveal
the secret of brushes.
He hoarded canvas like potatoes
in a famine.
We came as lovers unsure of the
balance between art and life,
how we might satisfy our thirst
in the drought of years.
But art, you see, the master said,
so much more there.
In the rain your passions droop
and fall into the emptiness
of things.
You feel old and walk
in circles.
Attend the still life here
before you.
Become rich and full of sleep,
a dreaming beyond the clutter
called world.
**Doug Bolling**

**Broken Bowl**

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called world.
Lorraine Tolliver

A Capital City in Europe

That is a feeling,
not a place.
That's a statue of a man on a horse,
naked, sweating from the taming of it,
kicking proud in its ribs.
That's a painting of a woman in a skirt,
drowned in the velvet of it,
flashing light from her fingers.
That's a point
where power wiggled in to conquer,
settled down, made a home.
That's where plaster of Paris puffs
on palace fronts to feign grandeur,
gold leaf gleams to intimidate,
showy metals, scarce minerals splash
to keep poor souls reminded,
"There's better than you,
and you're in its presence."

Lorraine Tolliver

Morning Will

At night Bill grovels
on hands and knees.
His blanket of
certainty is stripped.
He lies nakedly aware
of the frigid cold
that day will bring
and shivers in the night.
But morning's light
flips dark reality on
its head and suddenly
Bill can walk on his hands.
Dawn has whisked away
the murky fog of dread,
giving birth again to
Bill's raucous wild will
to race through
another day in the sun.
Lorraine Tolliver

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Lorraine Tolliver

Gymnastics of Memory

It is goodbye
to the long, low-lying
rays of sun,
the place where they sweep
into the ocean
and slip around the globe.
Here I have lived
my vibrant years.
Now I feel them
pulling to depart.
I reach out to block
their smooth withdrawal,
but they slide
through my hands.
I know I can keep them
only in the somersaulting
gymnastics of memory.

Lyn Lifshin

Imagine That Other April

wasn't as blurred as the
photographs you took with a
glazed lens at 3 a.m. when
I realized what we'd built up
to for three years wasn't
happening. There were
nights we could have moved
into each other's life. A
dry kiss was all, the rest hardly
mattered. Alone, I waited,
went over each move, what I
should have done with my
leather jacket. There was nothing
more to say that dawn either
hurtful or true. On my own
coast, I made up stories why I
didn't hear from you. I got
a new cat and went to France.
Now you are coming to my town
and I want you, someone, any
one out there who knows
this story couldn't have a good
ending to listen, please, keep
me oblivious
\textit{Lorraine Tolliver}

\textit{Gymnastics of Memory}

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Lust Blowing Under the Door, Bright as Straw

Your smile's like sun
flowers he said
as tho
embarrassed his
hands were
pressing
awkwardly the
ring on his
second finger
close to her
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And not even
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until later
when the floor fell
the room
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and the paint cracked
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