



ALEMBIC

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David St. Germain

*Field: the way the wind bent the tree,
you could hear a ship creaking*

This lone oak drifting in a white sea
bent, creaking with each gust
is some ancient galleon
caught in trade winds —

tossed, groaning its way
to an Orient
odored with spices, the captain
dreams glass encased —

the ship's immovable.

He scratches a long entry
hunched on his desk,
nods asleep in his smokey cabin.

Patricia L. Slonina

Cri du Chat

White moon, scale
off a mermaid's tail
in a cellophane sac

Hear the Cri du chat
breath wispy soot-feathers
in the night.

E. Ruggiero

spring comes in flocks of butterflies
that swarm
and freeze
on dogwood trees.

E. Ruggiero

Earth Voice

Sacrosanct subliminal vessel
wretched and watchful
the wasted withered cadavre of Time
breathes Death into my body.
Beneath the light of many suns
my spirit chants its longing,
a dark vaporous longing and yielding to oblivion.

You are all fire raging,
A solar storm of bright power and the breeding
of elements.
In a feeble way I feel your hot magnetism
Electrostatic force of contraction and expansion
Devoid of water and life,
Only pure energy
Consuming and submerging yourself in preparation
for rebirth.

I am all water and life,
Cold stone and reflected light
Devoid of energy.
There are no forces within me feverish for birth;
Inert and motionless I am still,
Awaiting the fusion of the Lion and the Dragon.
My alchemy is but the alchemy of protoplasm,
My births are not of fire but of air.
I am alone in my multiplicity,
Consumed rather than consuming.

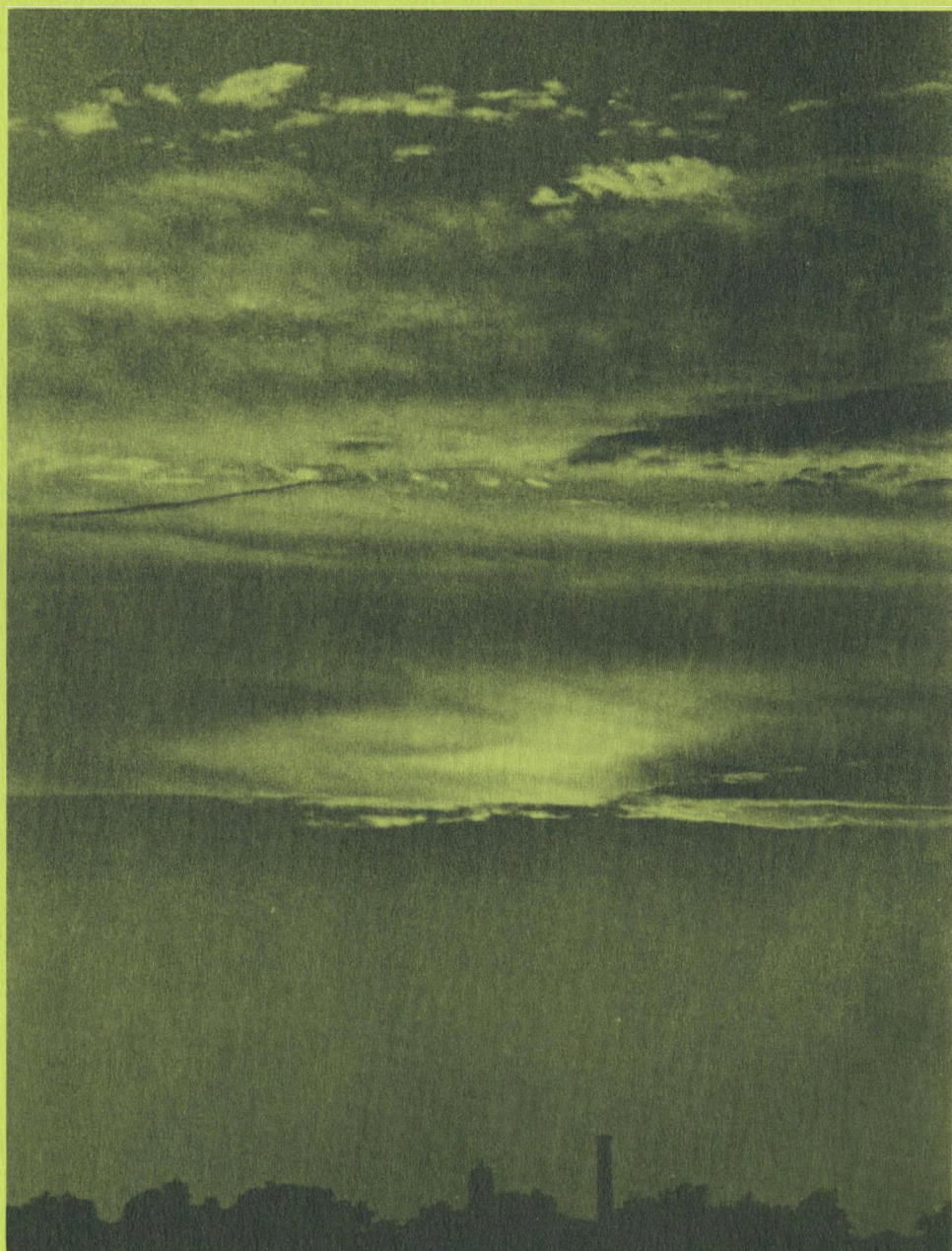
White star, conjuring my gold and green,
If you will close your eye upon me
I will know eclipse,
A transformation to melt the metal in my core
To be, instead of always only to become,
To sing once more of light,
And in this song to create darkness.
My freedom, oh Great One, I ask of you,
And your freedom then in mine.

Mary Jane Booker

Behind me headlights flicker like shifting
constellations in a dark highway;
eternal creatures which shepherds spun,
to inhabit their winter skies,
prove themselves inconstant.
It seemed Pisces rose climbing toward the zenith.
Scorpio danced to sounds of the spheres mimicking music.
In an instant, like thoughts from insight,
my desert blossomed in the rare shower;
rivulets swelling into the brooks
where you, my Pisces, swam upstream.
The sparkling scales were
suddenly shed
revealed instead bright Libra's rising
cold balance,
indifference immutably decreed.
Cool waters receded,
the scorpion, aflame, burns in the hot sand-
sizzling into the black ash of space
which, hurtling onward, Earth scatters.

zodiac outlines vanish
Scorpio will lose its centering:
that red Antares
whose light flows out into the universe
illuminating the highway before me:
feelings about you
racing beneath the wheels.

Nancy Shea



The Journey

It was dusk-windy when the two dead gods awoke
And prepared themselves for the journey,

After careful priming all was in order,
The time was right
It must be,

The stretch of walk was never tiring
As it might have been for others
Less
And human,
At intervals they looked, often in concert,
Never mentioning nor missing the prophets,

On outskirts mount the waiting was quiet
Until the sun was caused to rise in splendor,
In announcement,
It was decided then to move closer to the peons,
That they might understand the holy presence,

The two came upon a beggar, sightless through
No fault of his own,
He noticed not,
In the same manner sensed them pass,

The two silently questioned
In wondering why due praise was not given
By one who had been saved from visions of sin,

So the two continued standing,
Standing and contemplating,
When a man with a wallet paused in passing
To drop them each a coin.

John O'Hurley

Boston After Dark

I

The night starts with
the beggars in front of the Building
of IBM
People going to restaurants
or night clubs
(their nightly sacraments)
Drop in a dime or two.
And as the echo of the coin
dropped in the cup
Fades into the alleys
the beggar thanks the giver
(Who has already crossed to his destination).

II

When the morning light peaks over
the Hub
It sights the businessman going to work
and the beggars
(Who are still over-shadowed by the IBM Building).
After business hours the executive
WAITS for the moonlight to hide his sins.

Francis P. McAleer

... in boston

the moon seduces the black
tongues of trees
writhing. nickles of rain
roll off the windows/tapping the
rhythm of your breathing.

moving the curtain, commonwealth
avenue lies like an ink
blot on vallum.

this feels as right
as newport in a grosvenor print/and
pure as the sweet
red bellies of watermelons when
savoring their wholeness with
crazed hunger.

debra prevey

Night Walk

She wakes her-
self from the dead
daughters and saddled turf
to catacombs
alive in the dark.

She walks down
the street in
the snow; an old photo-
graph from a white sheet, the edges
cracked. The yellow
frost, celluloid
slowly fading.

She and the night
she and the night are young
they spread out crossing
legs, darkness on darkness.

J. L. Gaudielle

The Fat Lady

Yes, the fat lady
the humble, the stupid
the unseeing, smelly one
belly-drooped one
sitting alone on the diner booth
stuffing herself with
too many of those
Irish Potatoes, Brussels Sprouts, all Mixed
Vegetables
The dressing on the Hearts of Lettuce
Ice Cream Pie she'll hope to have
the after-all-this wine will take up all her time
today, while people pass, to joke to stare,
a sight to feed small town time
talk, there
or not there
is God
the fat lady.

Catherine Neal

Vanishing in the age rings of redwoods
These dark country roads
Faces and blizzards lost in each other.
So much history is born as I pass.
Deep forests, a grocery list of barks and brushes,
Owls with painful eyes.

A rhythm is drifting over the earth.
Vanishing points lost around curves
Old furnaces abandoned in fields.

Something is moving there, inside those trees
The dark force of which no one can tell.
I return to the wheel
Taking these words out of myself.
The tragedy of scripture, abuses my heart.

Drew
Maciag

The Auschwitz Gift Shop

You can buy color postcards here of fingernail scratches on cement walls for your nephew's collection or a satin pillow embroidered with a crematorium and "Auschwitz" in Gothic letters. We have swastika decals for the kids' bikes and posters of Eva Braun cutting the ribbon at our grand opening. The poster paper is 100% recycled, like everything else here.

It's only fifty cents to see our wax museum. You'd better buy some flashcubes for your Polaroids in case you want to take pictures of your kids sitting inside the old gas chambers. *The Guinness Book of World Records* says we have the biggest brick oven in the world, big enough for a hundred grown men to sit inside. Enjoy walking around our extensive grounds. If you lose your tour guide, his number is tatoed on his arm for your convenience.

April Selley

When the Bucket Fell

She was standing there, surrounded by soggy curlers, draped in drenched clothes, her new metallic face glinting and from underneath the muffled sound of someone incensed and trying to shout but not too loud because the reverberations were enough to drive even the girls deaf if their heads were inside too, trying to shout "You'll be out tomorrow morning," and "You'd better clean this up instantly," and she was crying and humiliated. Maybe I would have been, but my head was on the outside. And, after all, we didn't mean it — not for her anyway. We'd done just as bad before to that middle-aged matron in baggy slacks and shirts that looked like pajama tops. And it was partly her fault anyway, standing there in soggy houseshoes.

The evening had begun simply enough. It was to entail a quiet discussion among friends, an innocent, indeed almost naive, gathering. The football game we had enjoyed on the beach that afternoon had wearied us considerably, and now we would hover about a bottle of wine and engage in the witty degradation of fellow students. The dormitory that housed Maryellen, Jan, and Phyllis was unusually quiet that night, and we were aware that any of the commotion that chanced to befall us would be immediately detected by Gertrude. Gertrude, who reminded me of a less sympathetic version of the Cumaean Sybil, was the law-giver. I believe she acquired the position through squatter's rights, but her ascendancy to head resident is commonly ascribed to an ominous appointment that one would need to span decades to locate. (It is, consequently, that appointment that I blame for the soggy houseshoes.)

We were involved in a heated discussion on the relative beauty of antler plants when a peculiar knock on the door assured us that our evening had been ruined. Leslie, the transcendental mouth, descended upon us full force. She had quite a crush on David, my roommate, and whenever she heard the gang assembled would come courting. Fortunately, she hadn't been with us for more than five minutes before her telephone rang and she drifted to answer, taking a great deal of the conversation with her.

At this moment, standing amid the chaos, I contend that David began the entire affair. He made the first proposal of playing a practical joke on Leslie. And it's possible that he even suggested using the bucket full of

water. Regardless, we moved all of the furniture away from the door, surreptitiously filled the bucket with water from the janitor's room at the end of the hall, and placed the container along the top of the barely open door, its side resting against the metal casing.

The resulting suspense, as we awaited Leslie's return, led to tension, the tension led to a few mild-mannered verbal jabs at Jan, and the result was a pillow aimed precisely to take my head off. Having little time to profess my innocence or even discern why I had been the missile's target because of Jan's obvious intention to follow the first attack with another, I retaliated so effectively that in no time it seemed to be me against the world. David valiantly stood beside me as Maryellen, Jan, and Phyllis pelted us from every direction with pillows apparently placed strategically in the event that something of this sort might arise and suddenly I realized I'd been duped by scheming women who wanted to rub salt on the wound that was this afternoon's football game (the girls had beaten us by a touchdown but only on a block that I still think was clip).

David and I were retreating valiantly when one of the pillows ripped at the seam and spread feathers into the farthest reaches of the room and onto ourselves and into the hall. The biggest pile of feathers lay near the center of the room and Jan, not making the distinction between it and a pile of autumn leaves, dove into it. David had discarded his shirt to brush off the feathers that clung to him and Phyllis and I had removed the screen and one of the windows because you could not take the screen off without first taking off a window which was an odious and delightfully punishable crime in Gertrude's book, removed them and were shaking sheets and bedspreads out the window because many feathers had settled on the beds too, and Maryellen was just rolling on the floor in paroxysms of laughter when Gertrude came in and the bucket fell.

Anyway, that's why I'm innocent but try to tell that to the lady, with the metal face and soggy houseshoes, wet and trying to scream for our heads and too humiliated to even take off the bucket.

Michael M. Woody

Love is a Mere Encroachment

Love is a mere encroachment;
 as rocks are beaten by the waves
 and soil is scorched to death by the sun.
It is as grand a failure to the physique as to the soul.

And yet — it stands tall and proud.
 It grins complacently as we sit upon the couch.
 Another quarter goes down the slot
And we “gyve, man,” till our tongues and toes are hot.

I shiver from the hot, the cold, the waves of sun
 beat down and please me to the core.
 I dream on and on and
To Love I cry, Encroach! Encroach!

Steve Pecararo

I Love You for Waving Back

the porter disappeared
slowly with the train
his arm waving above the wheels
in Wyoming we drove past slender
mountains saw the train
over Black Ridge
and I waved to him
shaking out a red checked table cloth
his smile
rippling through heat waves
and then so he wouldn't lose me
he started waving
 the long black arm in the white jacket
 waving faster longing we lost
each other
night pouring out
from Oregon's mouth
her dark rain forests

Jane Lunin Perel



The Crow's Eye

I

Rehashing my terror in silence
I hear something in the grass. It is a crow.
Black. Purple bolt on scissor feet. An eye
of flesh meets an eye of veins in marble.

Stoned out crow persists
regarding me through the window. The ice
light nagging in his eyes. Go on
I say. Too black. Sleek

purple; rips in the skin. Oblivion
a revolving cartridge.

2

There were squirrels the same day. One ate
on the fence post — not wanting to eat on the ground.
He was brushy and plump. Gibbering acorns.

Olé I said grabbing my castenets.

I went down to the pine with the sickness.
Naturally, the tallest one. I saw
the wound. The life in it open. Remembered

where I had seen it before. In the walls
of my house (which are pine) the sap
runs out from black wood holes.

It doesn't run. It leaks.
Why does it remember, lyrical its blood
faucet. The eye of the spout.

This is where I later saw the crow's eye inside.

Jane Lunin Perel

The Hound and the Pine

I read the old pine
rusted finger prints
said: Happy Jack 1923,
that was where I first
heard the ticking leaves
of summer coming to an end.
And when the sun was low
and the smell of settling
blood was as strong as
pitch in the veins,
I would grip the reins tighter
and gallop off to the valley of a million pines
cut open
to the air of a million wounds.

Through the Kaibab we went
Blue Tick Hound and I,
we would camp by Navahoe Creek.
At night in his sleeping pleasure
the hound would chase his shadow
like a wind chasing tumbling weeds.
It was by the fire,
among a thousand deserted flames
of empty hogans, rotting pottery
and old ears of corn,
that, like a dream recurring, I
thought of my returning to
this old pine without the
Blue Tick Hound.

I wonder what happened
the Blue Tick Hound.
He must have gone
thunder-storm crazy when
I buried his shadow
out on the Rim.
I read the old tree again
shadows buried say: Happy Jack 1923.

