Contributions

Susan Rogers Watch the Men
Craig Watt Reflection
Monumental
Kathleen Mele Jessica Arrived
Drew Maciag Variation On A Theme
By Williams
Fool In The Rain
For A Drinking Buddy
At Midnight
Kevin Tierney After The Drought
Edward McCrorie Ocean Girl
Dora Schaffer Loose Horse
Michael Woody Confessions of a Latent
Confederate
Jane Lunin Perel minnows
Mark Casey The Hunter
Patricia Slonina Sakonnet Point
Pettaquamscutt

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"View from the Kitchen Table"
Variation On A Theme By Williams

So little depends
On the aspiring young poet
Caught on this bus ride
To a part-time job.

Drew Maciag
Watch the Men

I

Watch the men building arks
and preaching to the animals.
They roll their eyes and pray
for the murderous drops to begin.
They prophesy the day when
their brown wooden islands
will be alone and floating
silently on the world.

See the men sacrificing other wolves
to save the lambskins of their own disguises.
Hurling stones among themselves,
bruised egos and black eyes
bear witness to the peace that they proclaim.
Promising the profits of submission,
they bargain and slander in sleek sentences,
sowing delusion to reap followers.

II

A mysterious rain falls
not from the sky
but from the mouths of men.
And floating on a sea
of fanaticism,
the animals watch
the virtuous weighed down
by their own words
and drowned.
Three times they rise
before the end
and spout their frothy spume,
little knowing
they are only adding
to the source of
their death.
III
Soon all is quiet
and the moonlight erases
all trace of what was before.

But out of the dark
come men, clamoring
that they bring the dawn.

Watch the men building arks
and preaching to the animals.
They roll their eyes and pray
for the murderous drops to begin.

God help us if they all should learn to swim.

Susan Rogers

Reflection

If you stand in a mirror
Long enough
Someone may join you

Craig Watt

Monumental

I want to be there
When the first statue of
A pigeon is
Erected
To see the generals come
From miles around
To be the first in line

Craig Watt
Jessica Arrived

Jessica arrived throwing a wicked scarf to the wind. She is dressed tan for traveling. She is dressed white for summer for champagne by the sea.

Jessica arrived flinging open her precious straw bag. She has a gift of toys for my child and some frolicking words for me. “It’s wedding time!” She laughs a wild laugh and I am dazed by the steel of her touch.

You are a sorceress, Jessica. A large brilliant bird beating against my ribs pulsing through me painful blood. A commander of venomous caves. Have you come, my friend, to make another ruling? Gypsy, have you come to lure my love away?

(Jessica, my secret wish for you: to suspend you in time. To press you between crystal lenses. Once again to see you a delicate spider in silver webbing.)

Jessica departs a dancer like swift lightning.

My sister sets up her easel to paint Jessica in red while I board up her lover’s old room.

Kathleen Mele
Fool In The Rain

On a bench in the city
Where I sat unnoticed
I fell in love with a torrent of rain.

It painted the air
and hit hard with a vengeance
Making clowns of the people
Who scattered like ants.

"Men with bankers’ suits and wallets,
women taking themselves seriously with
shopping bags and make-up; all headed
for one stone building or another. They
left their dignity on the sidewalks and
became cattle — stampeding and bolting
as if from lightning. I saw in the face
of one man, an executive anger with no
one to blame. I wondered if the down­
pour would change anyone’s politics."

Cool enough to drink
or be washed in
The rain gave me great pleasure
as my drenched form melted to the bench.

And I made myself a hero
and laughed and rose to
walk down the street alone
Like Gary Cooper in High Noon.

Drew Maciag
After The Drought

We waltzed with rain drops, wind-driven and chilled
which gurgled and bubbled in the turf

Soaked to our skins in oceans of mud
we sloshed all about with mirth

Our hands and our arms thrown up in the air
water rolled down to our soles

Folk’s clothes were open, and covered with muck
but long smiles glowed through the cold

Loudly we called between thunder and din
praising the blessing of clouds

Rolling in furrows which flowed full of ooze
farmland now ready to plow

Kevin Tierney
Ocean Girl

(a p.s.)

She is decoction
of bubbles and splendor on rocks.

Strong goddess
of inland lappings who nurses

wisps of marinas.
The brown foam of her hair

flung into lichen —
a million bits blink

in her thrashing . . .

Graceful midwife
to these commas,

I could have buried my head
in your sand

breasts and brailled the lush
evanescence of your

thighs . . . but a finger and thumb were pricked.
My hand flew

into a rage
of minor bleeding

at the brilliant passion
of your pools, tidestranded, sunhooked.

Edward McCrorie
Loose Horse

Dancing on ropes
hanging from a machine
the horses lead each other: seeing eye
dogs in a circle
the heads are anchored in halters
churning in their sockets
eyes drown in white
straining to see
the trainer urges them on.

Rising from hind legs
a horse disconnects:

Zeezer
galloping

eyewhites and nostrils unfurling

catching the air: pink sails
he runs round the others
his white tail
bending like a wing
cutting him off
the trainer waves his arms

stretching
curling blizzard of snakes
tangling thin legs.

Zeezer stops suddenly
lost in a ropeless theory

holding
pulling-the trainer walks to him
dunking his head in a halter
returning together
the trainer looks straight ahead
Zeezer’s hot breath
like a tropical wind
burning his neck.

Dora Schaffer
Confessions of a Latent Confederate

Do not believe we've forgotten.
All one need do is go north and see
Just what's been done,
You raped everything but the drawl,
That's just what's been done.

It was no Wind, but we are not yet gone,
Northern hate's not fire, but fuel.
Flesh burns, not the people.
The black fire of Northern whites, the false fire
Burned the flesh, not people.

Can't you smell the tobacco wrinkling in the heavy sun,
Every week to Louisville, and if you're good
Daddy might take you to Charleston?
Nanny used to wake me early for those trips,
The trips to Charleston.

Whitney can take his gin and go the Hell.

Michael Woody
minnows

Scitter
  scuttering they are electrocuted
green
vegetable fingers tiny kites caught in the jagging current.

They stammer the fat strands of themselves through light that bends through water; through them. Where are they flying? Are they late? Or only so fired that like pure chemicals they burst into the veins of the stunned echoing waves?

Oh they are fluttering and fizzing around your thighs singing to your knees, making exotic anklets for you frenetic jade.
They are blinking out the code that explains the equation of muscles and longing.

When you sleep your eyebrows twitch because you return with all the other minnows swinging inside the weightless jukebox, boogalooing in the arms of light.

Jane Lunin Perel
The Hunter

crawling down your hallways
fingernails grating my greetings
thrusting through your steel plated doors
my shadows fingering your pain
tapping your pain, sealing it over
aborted, stone cold living
cutting my teeth on a scimitars blade
gaping, mouthing tongueless wonders
come, follow listen to the night
the crawling chaos beckons, come and be suckled on my art.

Mark Casey

For A Drinking Buddy At Midnight

Now that the dried foam is stuck to the sides
of the glass
And whatever beer remains is warm
like a urine sample
The palms are done sweating for a while
And the neon magnet knows its time is marked

Take me by the coat
and lead me out of this stuffy haven
The lost souls are beginning to come
back into focus
Making the night’s effort worthless

Let’s go somewhere more private
To piss and retune our deadened senses

Let’s hope for a subtle turning point
Or a new constellation
Or at least a clear night
And a long and peaceful walk

Drew Maciag
Sakonnet Point

This rock walkway divides the ocean
one side surging in deep swells
up and down the wall’s length
 sounding like a windy morning.

The other side is still
a harbor to itself
 lapping against its only horizon.

At the rounded thumb tip
the waters move into each other
meeting, mixing naturally.

I stand behind a white weather
station built by the Portuguese
fishermen the sun breaking
over my shoulder spilling into dry
crevices sparkling off the wet
 mosses growing on the lowest rocks.

To one side is all the ocean
painted blue close to the cloud
layered skyline, way off

on the other side are many
mute fields and farmhouses —
pictures with white window frames
and dark chimneys poised in the winter
light, patient as waiting gulls.

One brief afternoon is never long
enough to settle into
these deep cracked rocks to find
the secrets they have kept smooth.

I always leave taking
some small part of my visit,
choose jagged orange rocks
that are Sunday gifts for one or two
friends who simply accept
the giving.

Patricia L. Slonina
Pettaquamscutt ("At the Round Rock" - Indian meaning)

This river does not rage
but accepts autumn like an old coat,

a light with no sharp edges
that settles in some morning before
you’re awake and walking the garden.

She is harvest to herself,
few share the last feasting days.

Late some afternoon, look up
you’ll see the geese flying
\[ \text{v-shaped south} \]
\[ \text{you’ll know.} \]

She knows
winter is coming:
the long nights of icy stillness
when even the swans are sleeping.

Listen.
All seasons move to the ocean —
that moment of rounding
the rocks,
\[ \text{the break} \]
\[ \text{towards a further horizon.} \]

The wind can beat you to sleep
when you leave the channel
and risk it all
to ride the rhythm of the waves.

This, I believe must be like the first womb swayings —
that original journey of myself
\[ \text{rocking, rocking} \]
\[ \text{rhyming} \]
\[ \text{with all things} \]

such harmony sings:
this is where the river
will always bring us
and we return the same way
to her
\[ \text{there is no other way} \]
\[ \text{home.} \]

Patricia L. Slonina