Poetry, my dear friends, is a sacred incarnation of a smile. Poetry is a sign that dries the tears. Poetry is a spirit who dwells in the soul, whose nourishment is the heart, whose wine is affection. Poetry that comes not in this form is a false messiah.

Kahlil Gilbran
(from A Second Treasury of Kahlil Gilbran)
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Cover
Karen Maloney

Art
(by order of appearance)
Karen Maloney
Karen Maloney
C. Pink
Karen Maloney
Reversing Falls, Great Esker Park, North Weymouth

Dog, black setter, huge walrus,
Buddha of low tide.
Patience to you is absolute.
Either you stand to love it, or your tail
salutes you off out of sight
to love it there.
Mysteries for you are not shells, or meditation
in afternoon.
Purist,
in love with the air, the feel for mire.

In three months it will be November.
How we advance into time, like a living sepia
deep and brown in body.
One day I will push dust away to remember this,
particular dog.
Like looking at a Currier and Ives. Peace will abide,
the old mill pond.

Kathleen McCann
Confessions of a Civil Servant

The apartment is right above the barroom. Steps leading to the apartment are caked with dog crap, and lead paint chips.

The woman staggers up the steps, brushes an oily clam of hair out of her eyes as she enters the shadows of the apartment. She crumbles into the springless floor mattress. A melon moon cracks through the crusted window pane.

Gutter-dogs sleep at her door every night While shores rap themselves around drunks who sleep in aged cars in the dirt parking lot.

I walk down the steps, through the broken-backed screendoor by the procured whores and step along the crumbling streets.

Francis P. McAleer

Two Men
(for my father’s father)

You were dead before I was born. But my father, when seeing me read Ginsberg or Ferlinghetti, would tell the story of how you loved to read Goldsmith or Longfellow When coming back from the trolley cars at two in the morning.

But my father is dead. And all I have now are volumes of Goldsmith and Longfellow, an the memories of my father’s memories of you.

Francis P. McAleer
From The Audience

The music sounds, the curtains open slowly
And there they stand so poised and perfect, learned
Toes glide over glassy floors, coyly
Performing graceful combinations, turned
    then twirled, a stolen spirit, free at last.
A smoothly curved back; rounded arms hold
False bundles, dancing pillars moving fast
To tunes and lyrics dainty and fine, a mold
Of wonderous art; richly fragile, soothes
The watches, admiration concentrated on
Majestic dancers dancing in pairs of twos.
    Like stars of flashing lights, off then on.
Then action slows, all music stops and
The curtains sweep the stage, preserved they stand.

Susan Hroncich
Winterharbor

I
Along
ice blazen silent trails
lies
Winterharbor. I
traveled there once.
I thought I remembered
snow,
Lots of snow. And a
silence stretched taut;
a deerskin hide drum
that thundered and echoed to
the touch
and pierced by my boots
on brittle granular ice, ice

ice
everywhere.
Sole on earth, I
stepped forth
into this wilderness.
I touched remote, I drank
it in
and it chilled me up and filled
my veins blue.
II
Winterharbor
was ice
Hugh ships frozen,
their gaping mouths frosted
and whitely laced,
stone cold silent.
The air was empty, past cold
and I felt to spoon
out big chucks of
vastness.
And Nothing Moved.

Winterharbor. Winterharbor.
I thought to mouth your name
and to await the warm, green
rain of spring, full and lush.
My head ached with your controlled
distilled white flame.
Soul upon earth.
I built you, Fragile, Beautiful World
with your piercing pines, castles ice,
glassy beds blue.
My Winterharbor.

And Nothing Moved. Nothing Moved.

Dj Gamage
Night Cries

Sirens, like an eerie knife
shatter through the thickness
of a soft, sleep ridden night.
As shrill as the cry
of a seagull on a naked beach,
sharp and unerringly forceful.
Silent is the dark ink of night,
until broken
by the uproar;
a stark bleak schism
upon the silent air.

L.J.R.

Untitled

The inventor of the balloon
was a genius.
whoever tied the string
was a perfectionist.

Susan Elise
Untitled

snow and black of bark
blizzard of eyes
waving to me
in a horizontal fashion.

black of bark
humbled its severity
against the winds of
February.

snow, silently
nestles on
shelves
asleep.

snow and black of bark
carcasses with no eyeball,
remembering is the carcass
wave to me.

Audrey Fontes
Gathering Flocks

The pines of our tall back woods are a way station for gathering flocks of south bound birds who dare not miss their flight.

Since Sunday, begging a pause among needled limbs, swooping from tree to tree 'til finding the flock of their fleeing.

Imagine one hundred thousand birds crying — stinging the frosted crown of morning!

Filling the house with shadows darting bedroom walls and mirror following my morning rite.

As suddenly as beginning there is silence.

Left is a breathless country morning: steamy sun-filtered haze rising from fields and weed-grown gardens.

Is this the day they will be off for good? Leaving us to another wintering with a few who stay behind.

Cardinals and jays who singe new snow, tiny tit-mice too small to fly so far and another scattered few not called to flight.

A rag-tag flock of the hungry teaching us faithfulness in small things.

Patricia Slonina Vieira
They put you with the old.
They were within their walkers and their distorted, bumpy faces.
Lines of dried Wombs.
You, eyes red with tears
tell me you love me, bearly audible;
then fall asleep
with your mouth open,
intravenous feeding
the always suffering you.

Audrey Fontes
Day’s End

I
Morning

The day is swallowed, choked in one heavy, cloudy sob.

The pain in your stomach is still unmuted by the stale air

and you cry out loud, the window open, yearn to fly over life of rooftops

pressed flat below against the wind. The coffee doesn’t help the pounding.

The emptiness is quiet and you peer out from an eye of red swollen.
II
Afternoon

Bare feet padding and pink chenille.
Grit, grit, grit.

And the cereal is spilled all over the table.
Carpet worn, nails dirty.

The music didn't help, Beethoven drones unceasingly
on in the parlor

and you stare at the poetry
wishing you were

a letter on that page,
faded representative of sharp red pain.

Cut it out and look at it.
Hold it in your hand. Examine

Life carefully. The doorbell rings.
And rings.

III
Night

Quiet.
The streetlights blink lazily through
yellow curtains. The house is empty,
still. A tomb.

Pretty red and green spilled along the table
mixed with cereal and grit.

Your head lays down among the colors and the cereal,
hair tumbles.

Tumbles down. Down.

Dj Gamage
**Untitled**

The branches of the empty, leafless trees
Sway somberly in the November twilight;
As my mind wanders amidst
The darkening sky.

It will get cold - they say.
They - always say everything.
Someday I'm going to find out who
They are.

The night is crisp and cool.
The wind softly blows through the open window,
Pushing the curtain over the picture
Of the smiling face, that rests on the piano.

The bare branches move unknowingly
As if suspended in air, wondering,
Searching, for what they cannot have.
The bare branches; the picture; my heart.

Mark Piva
Dead Pigeon

dirty frowny squaw
you loiter and soil
like seedy old men.

your gummy black and white
feathers stick like clumps of
seaweed mixed with muck.

your maw is slit like a tiger
cowrie and you stink
like the all-nite diner
down the street. who will
come by and feast on such a
sumptuous bird?

you soiler! I wish they'd gnaw
you away. you mock the statues
of eagle-winged things in the square

and make me see plant food everywhere
fish emulsion indeed?

Anne McDonald
Dessert

Like a jar of apricot preserve
with the lid off---
whatever shall become
of you after you have
topped
the last angel cake?

michele
The Fall

A shadow —
    something’s in the air,
    falling through sunlight.
The dead leaves of autumn
    are breaking loose.

Here is one view of the fall:

leaf and shadow
    (the shadow growing)

    leaf and shadow
    (the shadow growing)

    leaf and shadow
    (the shadow growing)

leaf —

When leaf meets earth,
shadow is only something
hidden underneath.

Today, no leaf
fallen to earth
has missed its shadow.

Mark Travers
Charlie, the Rooster  
(for the Robertis)

This leghorn is wistful  
a hurdy-gurdy man with a limp  
arm. When he calls  
up the morning his whole rooster  
heart isn’t in it. One  
or two cockadoodledoos plucked out from  
his skinny harp.  
Is it thin blood or his chicken childhood?  
Even his staccatos are would-bes  
though the boys feed him well  
lavish butcher fat and orange rinds  
and his staggering harem bocks  
and starts around him  
their combs furled red  
to his peck and call. Sure he  

struts as roosters must  
but there’s a shudder in the open—  
sore-red of his comb. When Charlie struts  
his tiny eyes are flat with disbelief.  

Though somehow he gets his job done  
what he prefers in roostering  
is the utter dark  
winds to bobble up his comb and jowling jowls  
all the scraps of the world  
thrown over his fence and  
quiet in the chicken house.

Jane Lunin Perel