The Mitre
1999-2000
106th Edition

Editor: Scott J Baker

Bishop's University
A literary tradition since 1893
PREFACE

"Though we may lie among words, words do not lie" (8)

Over the December holidays I read selections from John Moss’ *The Paradox of Meaning: Cultural Poetics and Critical Fictions*, hoping to discover some critical affirmation on the nature of Canadian literature. John Moss, himself a ‘prose poet’, delineated my desired topic so well, I searched out correspondence with other Canadian writers so they too could provide their unique expertise to this edition. I found Mr. Moss’ engaging our literature in a way which makes it ours, Canadian, highly inviting:

It is not, however, a political nationalism but rather a desire to examine and share the genius of Canadian experience from a particular perspective, Canada as a country rather than a state, as landscape rather than geography, as a culture of infinite particularities, a community of endless diversity, a lovely and necessary and breathtakingly beautiful land (vii)

The purpose of this undertaking was so that adventurous undergrad scholars at this institution, as well as the encouraging spirit of the ‘aspiring artist’ in us all, could view this edition as a link between past publications and possible future ones. The Mitre has been published yearly since 1893, and should remain so as an intrinsic component at this school. One of the poets responding to my request ‘on a piece which illustrates upon the composition of Canadian content’ was Doug G. Jones, a celebrated poet and once professor of English at Bishop’s University. Dr. Jones intriguingly sparked curiosity in me when he remarked in his letter if I “think it normal for someone to peruse over literature”, after I had posed that statement to him. When it came time to idealize what I was accomplishing with the Mitre, it was the only way I felt, and still feel, the endeavor a success.

In his book, Moss remarks about the distinctions between writing, and speaking, ‘Canadian’. He is intrigued that “there are few who gather us in a text the way Joyce and Yeats do for Ireland,
Faulkner for the American South." I support the use of present tense when describing the works of those authors who have long since past, because their legacies live on not in what they wrote, but how they wrote. Their culture blossomed off the page, and our minds became enveloped in metaphors of description. Taking us inside the vision of the speaker(s), all of our senses augmented to higher degrees while we read. It is the greatest achievement of any writer to know he/she is acknowledged as a voice of their culture.

And for these reasons I present this edition, its purpose being closely tied to those who feel strongly about our literary evolution.

In arranging the Mitre, I humbly thank certain individuals. Firstly, former editors Kirsty Robertson and Tracey Millen for answering all my questions; and Noni Howard, a renowned poet whose financial assistance in support of the Mitre never goes unnoticed. The Campus Newspaper for the use of their facilities and Tom Manning in particular, his generous volunteer work in aiding the publication I greatly appreciate. To Dr. Ken McLean for referring me to Canadian writers associated with Bishop’s, as well Dr. Jones for indulging my curiosity on Canadian literature. And to Mrs. Elizabeth Lee, your gracious desire in submitting works by your daughter Susanna, inspired me to use my Heart in creating this. I am grateful. Finally to all those who contributed, I commend you for bravely expressing your creativity. That alone makes this an exciting and exceptional edition.

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* Dedicated to the greatness in her, inspiring the goodness in me. *
I'm Sorry

Where to begin. I guess at the end,
When life got too crazy, I left my life in your hand. 
What a thing to do, I know how unfair. 
All my thoughts were blurred, drenched in despair.

And I'm sorry for that, what a mistake 
But we realize that my threats were not fake. 
And I think that that's worse, looking back on it now. 
How deadly embarrassing, my head takes a bow. 
On its way down it gets a gentle knock, 
Congratulations, I have now hit the rock.

I'm comforted here, with nothing to lose, 
It all fell apart, I lost even you.

I'm sorry 
I'm sorry you didn't call and had nothing to say. 
I'm sorry that you wanted it to end in that way. 
I'm sorry for who I was, but not who I am 
I'm sorry we're over and you don't give a damn.

I'm sorry you've been through this and knew all along, 
That you keep a small distance and yourself strong. 
I let my wall down, and all of me through. 
My thoughts, my love, my soul went to you.

You didn't even want it, there lies the shame, 
My innocence, my purity, my fairytale game. 
Now it's all shattered, shattered like glass 
I went running against a brick wall and came down with a crash.

The crash was hard and I wanted to die. 
It seems so simple, the explanation of why.

I'm sorry that I don't know what to say, 
To give you my love or just walk away. 
I'm sorry that you don't know what to do, 
Your tempted to end this, I don't blame you.

Maybe you've decided to throw in the towel, 
And that will be it, I'll end up too foul. 
Remember that this girl still has pride
Ho-Hum, or Hum ho! Directions in Writing

Literary discourse is all over the place: write with your heart, write with your head, write using only the first heading on every tenth page of the tenth volume of the *Encyclopedia Britannica* — write in motion, write in bed, write black, write white, write electric.

Write like a life insurance policy — as long as you keep me awake.

Who keeps you awake? I just re-read Robert Kroetsch’s novel *The Words of my Roaring*; it kept me awake — after 34 years — its rhythms, its hyperbole, its unquenchable exuberance warmed my cockles — even though it was twenty below and blacker than midnight outside the window.

Some things, like rhythms, persist like the body.

Douglas Hofstadter in *le Ton Beau de Marot* tells us, among other things, and at great length, how he and a couple dozen friends and contacts spent a decade or more translating, resurrecting, reincarnating a short, rhythmically strict, rhymed poem by the sixteenth century poet. They had a helluva good time. one reader’s guide says Marot brought “freshness and vivacity” to the poetry of his age. It seems to be contagious.

We can wear out our words. There are times when the wars all sound the same, the disasters, the politics — even the ads. A. M. Klein spoke of the “daily larcenies of the lung”. What is “the pursuit of excellence”: harassment disgusting the pursuit of profit? What does it mean to find “closure” — for someone with a death in the family, for a whole community destroyed by a flood, for a nation flattened by war? This is another form of contagion, of inflation — “closure” means closing down thought. Is it “postmodern”?

Seriously, one looks for a little vivacity, a little lyric abandon.

I enclose a recent attempt to get a hold of that thing. I’m afraid it’s pretty low on Canadian content, even on English, moreso on French. It sounds a bit like Italian, but isn’t (though there may be a couple of actual words — sorry, no pasta, no pizza). Maybe it’s just placebo. But try it — like a hum — and see if you feel any different.

**Sing a Long Little Snow**

(D. G. Jones)

ario davi diverchi  
like atque  
between ave and vale  
the profound  
and the patter  

the days  

the days and the weather  

verchi saslaris and lightly  

neve e mente  

and candid, candido, e lente  

ario, ario, ario  
the treble in branches  

and davi the ground  

diverchi in medias res
The Cherub of Dover

On the threshold of the white cliffs
He looks into the sea
Passers by who stop and stare
Are mystified by mystery
He sits amidst the broken shrub
Ponders a heavenous question once more
Forsaken by fate and turmoil to date
He wishes still upon her door.

I flew next to her ocean house
To view her place, her face beguiled
By hundreds of dreams more distant it seems
Harborous to draw Aphrodite’s smile
She stood at her door crying, “letters no more”
And once I thought myself for hire
I took up flight in my creative wing
“For soon they’ll sing amore’s fire”.

Upon a branch the parchment left
While he walked e’er close the water’s edge
And on her door a knock sufficed
To bring her to read the leaf-written vice;
“My most faired heaven
Forgive the loneliness of this voice
I sit a many saddened day
Hoping to entice your heart’s embrace
As we stand apart, sharing breath not touch
I’ll await your model smile to wrap the corners of your lips
and close the expanse
of air between us in permanent bliss”.

With that decorative enchanting the match was set
He left his cliff, and her
her door
Amongst a crowded path
on way to Dover they met

My endeavor complete I moved from the shore
Silently witnessing their love’s embrace
Forever I’d fly to await a call
From other hearts whose passion stalls
To give, like these two, “Forever’s taste”.

scott baker

The White Ships, 1942.

The white ships silently sail
with living ghosts as passengers,
and along the granite shoreline
they are blessed by God’s messengers.

The clapboard schools let children out
to cheer their heroes as they pass
beyond their homes into the bay
to sodden fields where they amass.

To the distant fury of battle,
the innocents hold their breath,
while merchants sell the tyrant
the very guns to shoot them with.

Frank Willdig
Thorkeld in the Hebrides, 854 AD.

It was by the singing sands
he landed years ago;
he left his boat by the bog,
and walked upland to the Sgùrr.

He brought his flocks to the pasture of the roaring surf.
His family followed in the Spring.

He was buried with his sacred sword,
his blade was engraved with the rune of Tyr;
it was for the taking of oaths.

He was buried in the fairy mound,
‘Dail na Sithean,’
and buried with him was his amber,
jet beads, a silvered thistle brooch,
his sickle, spear and axe.

Albert O’Ryan

Glimpses of the Sea...

The sea swims through my soul.
Rocks trying to escape the constant torment of the waves…
Jutting to freedom.
Golden undulations sharing their prismatic glory with the world.
A foamy breath of the slumbering titan stretching to the surface.
Salty breezes from far off places flood my senses and excite my imagination,
Filling me with fantasies of mystical murky depths and shining swaying shores.
With childlike awe, I stare into the eyes of infinity…

And am blinded by the radiance of reality.

Cloud’s talons lunge and tear me from the solace of the sea,
Kicking and screaming across the shore,
To the cities of the sinners,
Where freedom dies and survival begins.
Fraught with storms a million times more deadly,
And waves that wash away your soul – bit by bit.
I strain to shriek…
A muffled murmur within the cocoon of society,
Blending incoherently with the machines of man.

And the dying sirens of countless others.

Will Seltzer
"To All Things Worth Fighting For"

To the mother in you and the daughter in me, I raise my eyes to the Sky and understand how we are all God’s children.
To the sister in you and the sister in me, I stretch my arm across your shoulder and smile for Life’s camera.
To the friend in you and the friend in me, I listen well for the bell of your wings and trust that you were sent to me for a reason.
To the teacher in you and the student in me, I ask the whys of the world and work to find that some things have no answers.
To the doctor in you and the patient in me, I hand you my aches and feel better just knowing that you’ll help.
To the hero in you and the innocence in me, I cradle my dreams and visions and promise them to you.
To the fighter in you and the believer in me, I challenge the world to speak the truth and to deliver it with conviction.
To the Salinger in you and the Holden in me, I wonder about the ducks in the winter and believe that Mother Nature takes care of them.
To the artist in you and the poet in me, I look for the inconspicuous meanings and giggle over my own little discoveries.
To the singer in you and the song in me, I hear the echoes of the angel’s lyre lullabying the unborn children of the world and cry like a baby.
To the hour in you and the minute in me, I wrestle with time and wish the days could be longer.
To the Protestant in you and the Catholic in me, I bow my head to a God without labels and a Heaven without conditions.
To the human in you and the human in me, I embrace the struggles that are shared and the sparks that are reflected.
To the ghost in you and the flesh in me, I fall silenced to where makes the difference and hang my head for what could have been.

Adriana Murph
December 7, 1999

Written in memory of the 14 women killed at the Montreal Massacre on December 6, 1989.

Untied

Floating in my plastic sea
Something dies inside of me,
Colours fade into a dull roar, I try to be
Something else
Something new, something strange inside of you,
Until the dark overwhelms us all, Even you
Can see, can touch and breathe.
Can you feel the pain that loves for life
And love and shame?

In such love there is much to be,
If you’re strong you can hide, but how long
Can you survive her touch, to Heal
The way she makes you feel,
When you look at all the time that you could have shared.
You’re all I ever wanted for you
And all I ever asked was for you.

So now you’re lost
Shaking in the wind
Your mind is blown and scattered
And your life has just begun.
When all is all
It’s just how you reside
Your friends are all around you
But not one is at your side.

You’re all I ever wanted for you
And all I ever asked was for you.

Parker Eye
*KRYSIALS*

The Earth has not spun once since our last song
yet I am soon dizzy
from the dancing thoughts of you I have painted in.
Through the dungeon of my forgotten mind
where I sometimes leave and lock these eyes
cry the ancient artworks of our spring memories.
The only keys to set them free from their coldest
winter's breeze
are the keys of your own heart's sweet melodies.
The freedom you give, carries me to the four corners
of the universe
like a sprite dancing to the joy of new found planets.
And being the image of a beautiful winged-princess
leprechaun
you smile like a secret flame tickling me inside;
blowing me kisses on the backs of butterflies.
Melting the skies of me,
your warmth lifts the low drifting clouds within
and your fire is the rarest welcomed kiss.
Are the eyes really the windows to our souls?
Then I have breathed in great spirits
for I have gazed deeply into you.
So may my own eyes be as sunflowers
beaming mists of honey into the flaming soul that you
are
and back to mine . . .
making us
the sweetness we both desire.

. . . love . . .

Curtis Mullins
The truly precious

A richer man there never was, than I last night, as I walked.

Embraced from all sides by the most precious of worldly treasures. My God the sight as first I stumbled across a path littered with glisten-soft gold. Gold! Everywhere I stepped, my feet swishing through a majestic yellowish sea continuing to flood as if heavenly arms had found it burdensome to reserve. And next the diamonds!

Least of all shall I ever forget the diamonds upon which my eyes were allowed feast that night. As if, like the gold, just let to fall. Surrounding me in a sparkling sphere – the diamonds – just slightly out of reach yet undoubtedly observable as I cast my gaze upwards. Seemingly infinite in number, yet to perfectly arranged to take one as a keeper, I, although knowing that the riches were, on this night, not for me to possess. I knew wisely enough to stop momentarily and not let go unnoticed this glittery event so rarely ever seen.

For God this night cast autumn King. And I the luck to see it crowned.

David Millard

Ghosts

The ghosts of the past haunt me still, Calling to me from across time, Forcing me to remember when I’d rather forget The ache that resides still deep inside.

The ghosts of the past haunt me still, Reminding me of what could not be, Yet on I fight, head held high, Knowing I’ll soon be free.

Julie Mayrand

Innocence

Have you ever seen innocence sleep? Curled in a blanket, With eyes that dream. Lips that smile a happy thought.

I hold him close to me, Whispering “I love you”. There comes the smile. “So do I”, he answers. A tear, small, weak, flows down my cheek. For I have witnessed innocence sleep.

Christine Bennett
Photographs

Do you remember what you looked like as a child? I do. My father had an ancient Polaroid camera that he used to carry with him constantly, cradling it in his arms as if it were another child. There is a drawer in the living room that is overflowing with special moments. He would capture everything on film, including my mother in a lime green bikini, myself mammoth-like as her stomach. Later, me again, standing on a beach in a black T-shirt, shyly covering my half-naked three-year old body with a black cowboy hat. That picture has been proudly framed and placed on display in the living room, to my dismay.

When my brother finally arrived, a little early so he'd be there for Christmas, my father defied the sceptics and actually managed to get the two of us to quietly pose for portraits. My brother is sitting casually, feet spread in front of him, in a blue jumper and tiny white shoes with little bells. He is grinning widely, his dimples crinkling his cheeks, and two perfect little teeth are visible, bottom centre. I am beside him, in a slightly larger, yellow jumper. My shoulder-length blonde hair is combed straight and lays close against my head. the bangs grazing my eyebrows, and I have all my teeth. There are others; my father holding us from behind while we wear our matching sailor outfits, and one of us each on Santa's knees as I am reaching up to tweak his beard and my brother's face slowly crumples into tears.

Soon after this, the pictures of my father stop. The Polaroid has been replaced by a newer camera, one that doesn't develop the pictures automatically, much to my chagrin. There are a few of my father when he was sick, before he died, lying on my parents' bed. Dressed only in his blue bathrobe, he smiles warily at the person taking the photo, who is most likely my mother. He looks very young in these pictures; it is difficult for me to imagine him with grey hair. He is tall, tanned, and has very dark hair, almost black. In the really old pictures, he is clean-shaven, but soon there are those where he is sporting a thick moustache, the same one that used to scratch my cheek when he tucked me into bed at night. My grandmother showed me pictures of him, when he was a baby, through adolescence. She even kept newspaper articles about him, such as birth, wedding and death announcements. My father was buried at sea, and my mother told me it was hard for my grandmother because she didn’t have a place to go, to leave flowers and mourn. I guess that’s why she kept her scrapbooks. It was part of her grieving process.

As I flip through each photo album, or leaf through the loose photos in envelopes. I see myself grow and change, as do my mother and brother. Although my father has forever disappeared from these photos, the rest of us carry on, and a stranger would probably never notice he was gone. These photos, and a handful of hazy memories, are all I have to remember him by. Those pictures will always be special to me for they captured my father in them forever, he can never be forgotten as long as they are there, treasured in the drawer, where I can always go to find him.

Meghan Wylie

head tilted, sucking moon rays,
basking in a cool blue light.

head bowed, spewing heart felts,
suffering in a damp slate spot.

head erect, shooting moon felts
head steady, firing heart rays,
emitting a cool, royal blue.

Blue
Pretty Paper
(Dedicated in memory of Jennigje Van Ommen)
(God Rest Her Soul)

Grey Bordered, 
As if framed for viewing 
pleasure.

A neat family tree 
Positioned in proper form and 
order.

A life long summary. 
In two neat, little 
lines.

A statement of occurrence. 
With no detail, emotion or 
sorrow.

A life gone by, 
Without remorse or 
memories.

Why is it?

That bad news comes 
On such pretty 
paper.

Sexily Indifferent, 
this eulogized notion flushed my complexion. 
Flowing in the searing combustion 
of words falling with crystalline amber, 
and slivers of glass. 
Those eyes chase my inimitable stance, 
then laughingly and slowly, 
are descended upon gracefully 
by premonitory lids. 
They start the waves of incisions 
through the palms of my hands. 
The welder – finding my implosion 
while scanning these wrought cheekbones 
for some subtle romance. 
Producing these artefacts – 
two pretty orange nails 
that are caught in my rings. 
Inexorably, I will be impaled 
and happy – to this place.

A.G. Klei
Untitled (kind of)
By: Jennn Jarvis

A jumbled mess of feelings and
Emotions packed into
A mass of flesh and essential organs
Playing that soundtrack you
Live by and live for
Something to die or not for.
Searching within for a thread of decency
Or even a quarter to tip
The Grec man
Feeding my hunger
The aching pit of my stomach
Swarming with butterflies
Just to think
Think of the thought of exposing
My life
In a nutshell made of steel
Not knowing if I can break free
Drives me crazy up a wall
Of alienation
Not know the right way to go
In a busy busy busy busy
Land of people who know
The name and the games and
The faces to wear at the right spot in time
Precious minutes, hours, days
That should be productive
But cease to be in present
Gifted love who knows
Where to touch and feel what
I'm feeling (I hope)
Arms that hold fast without binding
Very soft and endlessly comfortable
Until I break down
In mind
To a crowd of faces I hardly
Recognize who all seem to
Know where to go and what
To do....
it is under the trees, a walnut tree blazing in the colors of autumn
a soft Sonoma afternoon, a bottle, a blanket,
the walnuts under my deliciously unconsciouslyes
back, as i forget the day
now far beyond me.

"Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God...
Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God...
Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness sake: for theirs is The Kingdom of heaven..."*

my thoughts are gone with the red tailed hawks in the air, the benediction of the soil cradling me, my prayer in the sky soaring
out of reach.

there is nothing to know
but to be embraced
into the arms of my great lover
the earth

and to be sealed forever
by her sweet kiss.

* Mathew ch5 v-8-10
translated from the Greek

©Noni Howard
Sympathy

No so long ago, her smile filled the room.
Her laughter could brighten even my worst day.
But now that heartache has befallen.
She sits in her corner and sobs peacefully.
I only wish I could say something.
Something kind, soothing, sensitive.
Instead it’s all I can do to ignore her.
Pretend I can’t hear her subtle weeping.

My love sits heartbroken.
And all I can do is listen.
I’ve tried to approach her.
But I’m far too involved to help.
She turns a cold shoulder to me.
What more can I do but sympathize?

This woman of my dreams
Pretends I don’t exist.
Not only she is weeping
For my heart has been broken.

I can relate.

T. F. Manning

for A. S.
Jennn
By: Kev

Blonde is as
Blonde does
And as for what it does
  It does
No matter what it did before.
Only what it’s done since.
Crazy mad moves, she glides like the ghost
Of someone graceful in their own lifetime:
  A trickster
From long ago;
Ancient mischief, captured in
360 degrees of spinning sunshine.
The thousand points of light
George Bush was looking for in eighty-eight
Wrapped into a convincing Uma Thurman lookalike Kid.
Trapped in a tiny, tiny, tiny,
  Tiny, Tiny
  Tiny
  Town
Learning how to act like
Other people
And doing it nightly
For an insulting twenty-Eight
Quarters
Per:

Family member,
  Loved one,
Workmate,
  Roomate,
Wingmate,
  Checkmate,
  That’s it!

Green

Crisp lettuce
Celery, parsley, spinach, olives, hard sour apples
Young, sparkling white wine.
Pale sprouts groping their way around rocks and roots
Blindly seeking the Sun—
Dish soap, disinfectant, the smell of pine cleanser
Sea-glass, deep water, iron nails rusting
The fur in a copper kettle—
Light filtering down through leaves
Big, fleshy tadpoles
The slime on the edges of ponds,
The weeds on the bottom of lakes
  Tangled, steamy jungle
  Vast, still rainforest
Eggs that quiver in their delicate, green-tinted shells.

Psychiatrists say

That green is calming—
They must have forgotten
Seasickness

Gangrene

The pea-soup green of hospital walls

The mold that decays
The money that corrupts

The envy that eats away happiness-

The beginning and the end
The Conception and the Consumption
The Cycle that unites all life
Is Green...

Maxine Holmqvist
Come Back, My Queen

We only have two weeks
and I will miss the opportunity to present you with a gift.
So this undying devotion,
to spread your heart across this page;
Having your beauty sting our souls whence they joined
I do, for always, you.

I am sullen, without mischief
To orchestrate my passions toward anything but depression
at the sight of these hands

burned into the mold of the curves of your smile.

if to lose you, my soul
may I wish ne’er to see again,
for my heart can no longer fit
imprints made by future lovers.
I shed a tear but look to be blind,
the fertility has shrunk in the potential of my eyes.
Could I ever again see your face
I but weep to know you’re alone,
yet sightless I must remain for
fear you once again become my home.
May the soul’s breath part
when it listens to the separating of hearts,
then my eyes, in masking permanence
can shroud all my happiness.

So now you walk, your two feet alone
I don’t mind.
When the wind slows me down
I perhaps will find a place close enough to hold your heart,
though far from my thoughts,
which plague me to melancholy

when distance seems lonely.

Come back my Queen.
The walls have not burned down.
I could hide you in secrecy ‘till the watchtower rings,
and we the wedding bells ring—
come back my queen.

Lee Gordon

With One Sigh

With one sigh
I breathed his breath
As his steady drum of his heartbeat,
Like the soft roll of thunder
Echoed in my ear.
I saw the sunrise in his eyes,
Felt the glow upon his skin,
The fire that sparked my soul,
That renewed my desire my hunger
my passion
for him to him with him
And lying in the safe circle of his arms,
His tender lips brushing my hair
In a gentle kiss,
I knew
That we will never end
As we had no beginning.

— with one sigh...
The Birth Of Venus

a naked venus is running on the beach
through the curl
of the lips of the ocean
the spray fine wet wild prancing
galloping four legs in horse spirit
pawing the liquid sand
spray from nostrils
arms flailing.

a vision of youthful ecstast
beyond the crashing surf
of the shoreline
now far out in the undertow

i watch with incredible sadness
and delight
the moment held for me in
a suspension
that could break the heart.

i see her feet flare up in the foam;
the pure joy of it
has given her the power
to live forever

until she vanishes into the mists

beyond the aching crush
of the waves
over my dream.

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Cajunman
By Jennn Jarvis

The pitter-pattering of
Beating notes continues through
Loneliness draws near.
A sack full of crazy
Thoughts and memories
I carry through the wilderness
As only I can dream
Of what turn will near
First.
In place of all who have
Been privileged before
A winner of sorts who
Holds the medal.

A shoulder
An arm
An ear

A smile with teeth.
Close comes the hour of separation.
An obligation
To move on
To grow up
To experience life.

What for?
Is not the heart more than the mind?
Does a skull of spongy mush
Hold rank on the ever
Functioning muscle that will us to live?

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The land of lost papers

Always looking for that document,
that paper, that note,
The one that’s always gone.

That only picture,
of a precious moment in time.
Might be hidden under the desk,
or behind the bookcase.
Yet never appears there
when we look in the first place.

The love notes,
lost with the loved one.
Treasured memories, never forgotten.

Some days, we wonder about other lost lands,
the land of lost socks,
the land of lost lovers,
the land of lost souls.
Places long gone, but not forgotten…

Christine Bennett
In Loving Memory
By Tuuli Hannula

Three o’clock in the morning
At that instant I knew you were gone.

All we could say was:
   Never did we think
   That summer morning
   That it was your last one.
   Only memories and love remain...
   Longing... sorrow... wordlessness.

They called you
   Friend, mentor, leader, believer, motivator,
   Teacher, philanthropist, advocate...

I called you
   Pappa.

Rakkaudella muistaen is all I see on your gravestone
Underneath all that lies is ash
And the memory of a great man
The lessons taught
The love given.

Longing... sorrow... wordlessness.

Dedicated to the memory of
Olavi Johannes Maenpaa
April 13, 1919 – August 16, 1999

Think

Think.
Take a moment and be pensive.
Ask yourself the questions,
   the ones you’ve never answered.
Where has your life gone,
   and where do you want it to go?
Think on the one you truly love.
Who is it you truly love?
Who are those that love you?
   Think about how you feel for them.
Think of the mistakes you’ve made.
Have you,
   can you forgive yourself?
Think of the decisions you’ve made.
The important ones which changed you and your life.
Do you wish you could choose again?
   Think of how things could have been,
had you chosen differently.
Remember those you’ve left behind.
Think about how they remember you.
But most importantly, imagine happiness.
   Think about how it relates to you.
Is it something you know and experience
   or do you only imagine it?
Now think of what you can do.
Think about what you haven’t done,
   and do the things you should have done.
Make peace with yourself
Be true to your feelings
And live your life in happiness.
It’s never too late.
Just think....

T.F. Manning
Night of the Dead

(Samhain)

Take the Book of Shadows
In where secrets dwell,
Take it and by moonlight read
The mysteries beyond the dark
The secrets guarded by the dead.

Light a glowing candle
And let it sweetly burn,
Read from the memories shared
Passed to the old from the wise,
Where all one truth is bared.

The birds sung their final note
The trees whispered their last,
By the dying ember Sunlight
I have taken their wordless tales
And into the Book I write.

The sea roared the anguished
The wind spoke of a story
Of the ghostly night descend,
The journey of the waning Sun
Twinkling the last Legend.

Take the Book of Shadows
And the sands of all time
And beside me by the candle sit,
Read the secrets guarded by the dead
And all the mysteries I have writ.

- Ildi -
Not Looking Back

Brooke Bradley

Life is full of questions
The question in many people’s minds, is that of tomorrow
Dreading the decisions that will decide their future
The comfort they have known for so long, is moving on
With or without them

It has been a long road to travel
To be the person that one can respect
Surrounded by those who care,
And made to feel happiness in all endeavors.
Friends have brought us through it all

As the steps forward are taken
One can’t help but look back at it all
The devotion, passion and believing that was built up gradually
The endless excitement and joy of days past
Simply put, the experiences of life.

Movement in life goes forward
Going back is for the heart-felt memories
So much can be remembered, for the future.
Mistakes, wrongs but mostly endings
Learning this brings a new episode, not starting over,
but moving forward.

In a Far Away Country.

There came a dark night in a far away country, where the only sound heard was the murmuring sea.

And the moon held its shadows in the dead black headlands, and aimlessly floated over whispering sands.

I wandered the surface on a mirrored glass plain, felt my way to a somewhere over and over again.

There, darkness deepened on the soul’s lonely descent, without map or compass to the permanent present.

There was no one to greet me in this place before birth where by blindness found home like no other on earth.

Frank Willdig
The Lachrymal Water

Because of her freshness and spontaneity,
She goes in life like a wind on a field.
Oh! I have heard it on my stroll
This wind.
This wind of passion.
Yes, I have heard that she goes in life like a wind on a field.
And I am a stranger in this gorgeous landscape
Like someone walking in a path for the first time
Tasting the sensitivity of things.

Her voice, melodious like a brook in spring
Irrigates earth frozen since a long time
I drink this water, this odorous and gustative water.
A river crossing over many countries,
Inflated by its long trip
Explodes in a jet of love!

I am the receptacle of her love.

Colours modify its hues.
Black becomes less black.
White becomes a sheet where she draws a window on a court.
The sun and his charming shade goes there, bringing in his trip many familiar things:
the birds with their mornings,
The flowers with their smiles to life,
And of course many small beasts
who give the green turf a joyous life!

In this town and its noisy murmur,
This house in the city is mine.
And days and nights are the same because she never draws the night on its roof.

She draws a pleiad of stars in our shared picture.

But a brook is tumultuous and crazy.
I search, I analyse, I ask the brook, I ask her:
Why are you doing this? Why are you changing my hard bread into a soft water?
- She responds in a smile that she loves me.
And water continues its way relentlessly.

Passion is not a lasting thing.
Like a brook she appears and like a brook she disappears.
Just the time to turn the page,
Just the faint noise of a scared animal in the bushes,
Just the time to close the curtains,
I turn my back and she is not there anymore.

Already colours are drowning. Magic is fleeing.
I will recover my mechanical gestures.
Water will recover its usual place in the glass.
And I will drink it as we do this all days of our week.

It will have the taste of tears,
It will have the bitter taste of tears,
This lachrymal and frozen glass.

Nicolas Bourdon
"my heart is tired"

Hath I broken my words, for those arrows have slain me
insides out;
Thou laughter is a calamitous,
faceless monster which smiles when you breathe.
   You feed the air with senses tainted in fog,
False Faces—you mock me!

Thoust a killing wink the eye does make
Hidden—you hide behind
a cloak, words to a friend not the same an enemy receive?
   Doth protess this false justice

Ah...thy nurtured honest nature is slung, driven to my bowels by
love’s brief honesty;
though may my words be pured by the Heavens—
   honesty and brevity mix most unwell.

   Oh how this poison is but silence,
   a mixture thy blood welcomes with love.
And should I laugh at this calamity, this irony of fate? I beseech
you to think my end will be anything
but
a whimper,
be it a teary tale thy sorrowed soul will sing...

it is singing now

Hath broken the fire’s wind with my heart—
My Fire! It carries the strength of the Heavens to scream at Hell,
to get away—GET AWAY!

Not one touch from these crafted hands
will I assist thy own body in torturing the flesh
and die in peace may I, in silence
in peace
revenge thy torment and thy reward,
nothing but regret.
I have feared the worst and worst yet
I am fear;

My mirth gone, shallowed low by an incestuous hand of a friend,
cousin
Who calls himself false father

Pain!—my soul pricks the skin,
in agony to ignite again this madness;
But I must keep it inside.

My thoughts have convinced thy heart to believe not your death
but shall you speak again these ears, half yours, are open
waiting;
my mouth to echo both honor
and Love—
should you speak again!

Alas, a life’s whisper is but death’s grave injustice,
and it is no heavenly justice to reverse course.

I’ve lost my love, all love lost,
mirth mellowed so low no flowers grow—
but weeds, oh no God’s Light they need;

Mutant they seem, though nature they are
twisting spirals of evil deeds
the secretion maddens me...

and this poison…it will cleanse
me.
The Heart is tired, it wails to sleep and
dream near my mother,
My father—

“Horatio, I am dead”.

Scott Baker

If I wrote you a poem
what would you say?
What could you say?
everybody knows what a poem means
It’s full of serious sentiment
and usually involves some yearning
I have wants, needs and dreams
but I don’t think I do have yearnings
They sound painful
and not at all like something I would want
If I wrote you a poem
about what I didn’t want
what would you say?

Blue
Agnes went into the office awaiting the detective who would relate to her the findings of another week’s search for her son. She sat on the edge of the chair, and existed on the edge of a precipice to which she would fall into. How deep and dark that fall would be depended entirely on what the detective would tell her today.

The fake leather of the seat beneath her squeaked with her every movement. The Florescent lighting’s unnatural illumination gave everything a pasty yellow look, like a partially decayed corpse. One of the long narrow bulbs twitched and convulsed light as it slowly died, yet still struggled to give off light which was its life; its reluctance to die yet inability to live made Agnes uneasy. So much so that she felt like smashing the doomed, dimming, yet ever fighting, flickering bulb—just to put it out of its misery. The twitching of the florescent light was accompanied by the buzzing of a fly as it beat itself against the window again and again, as if realizing its doom it had decided to try to break through the class perhaps knowing he’d achieve his own death through the battering of his brain against unyielding glass more likely then breaking through to salvation.

As officer, not the detective Agnes was familiar with, came in with a vanilla folder tucked under one arm. He threw Agnes a smile she did not return. He was so young, she found herself wondering how long he had been out of the academy. He has blond hair much like my Stevie had, she thought...slowly realizing she had thought of Stevie in the past tense.

"Where is detective Arnold?" Agnes asked.

"Actually, that’s why I’m here. He’s very sorry, but he’s been detained miles from here. And he knows you must be very anxious to know what we might have found, and so he told me to read his findings to you. Is that all right?"

Agnes nodded, and her hand motioned for him to go on. She didn’t care who read it to her; she just needed to know what it
said. Agnes desperately tried to follow the man’s words and focus her vision on his eyes, or his mouth...yet she’d find that his eyes were just black voids slowly sucking her in, and his mouth didn’t seem to coincide with his words that reached her seconds after he spoke them instead of instantly. His words turned into a drone of syllables that wove their way through his mind, she tried to focus, yet the harder she focused the less his words made sense. She could almost feel the syllables entering her ear, riding through the tubes and tunnels hidden therein—striking hard against the drum and other instruments there in creating chemicals that would work their way through her mind. Chemicals that twisted her thoughts...yet even as his words seemed to have the effect of a bad LSD trip on her, she caught their meaning here and there...

She understood the meaning of ‘found nothing’, ‘search turned up nothing’, ‘no evidence’, ‘nothing more that could be done’, ‘nothing...nothing...Agnes’ hand had started to shake ever so slightly. More of a vibration then a shack, as her hand went up to her temple, her eyes closing tightly as she tried to clear her mind and make sense of it all. Yet still his words came, they the forces of chaos obliterating every morsel of sense she could make in her mind, “Stop...” she whispered, so softly the officer didn’t hear her and kept saying no, nothing, no, nothing, no, nothing “Stop...” no, nothing, nothing, no, nothing! “Stop!” Her voice almost a scream now. The officer paused, his brows meeting as he looked at the lady in pity. She didn’t see his look. Her eyes were still closed. Only once he was silent was she able to put together the meanings she had fished out of his torrent of words and came to an understanding...

“Wh...what...what you,” She pointed to him to clarify, more for herself then for anyone else, “What you are trying to tell me,” Pointing to herself, “Is that...You-you don’t know. You don’t know what happened to my Stevie...”

“Well, Miss Hillenger...there was no witness, nothing to-“

“Shhh! Shhh!...no, no, please, don’t start explaining again. Just...just say it, don’t go on and on forever explaining in detail, just-just say it. You don’t know.”

He paused for a long moment once she had stopped, her eyes were glazed with tears unshed, and red from those that had already been there and gone. She wasn’t an old woman, no more then 40 he would guess...yet she seemed so old, the aging only those who have suffered a great loss can experience. He nodded, then finally said softly, “We don’t know...”

She nodded, eyes fixed on his, her tears over flowing and silently slipping down her cheeks making glittering rivulets down her pale face. “1...” She began, “When I came here six weeks ago I came here expecting anything. I though you’d find his body in the river, or perhaps by the trunk of tree he had climbed and fallen from. I cam expecting perhaps someone saw a man drive up to him, and snatching him into a car. Or that he had really been hiding at a friends house, a perhaps had gotten lost in the woods. Week after agonizing week, I came expecting anything again...I had hardened my heart against everything. His body at the bottom of the lake. His body thin and starved in the woods miles from here. His body exposed and mutilated after some pervert had molested him...Anything...I had expected anything, any clue, any suspicion of whereabouts. But do you know what officer?” Slowly she shuck her head, her eyes still locked on to his even as the flow of tears grew from a small rivulet to a steady stream.

“I didn’t expect Don’t Know...I could have accepted any horrible fate you had found my boy to have fallen into, all but Don’t Know...I think that is the worst news you could have told me. Do you know why? Can you imagine that the unknown is always infinitely more gruesome then any know horrific occurrence? I doubt you’ll ever know too...if you haven’t found even a shred of evidence, not even a ripped piece of cloth somewhere in the woods or one eye witness that even saw him going in an any direction, then I doubt you will know anything about my Stevie. And so...forever shall I not know. I’ll never have closure. I’ll never be able to properly mourn my boy. Forever shall I be haunted by the infinite possibilities of fate that could have fallen upon him...
"I wish you could tell me something, anything! Tell me he was kidnapped by aliens, tell me he spontaneously combusted, tell me anything...I would accept you know, no matter how impossible and strange. I could accept anything but Don’t Know...what am I to do now? Mourn him without proof of his death? Hope beyond hope he’s alive?” The officer whispered, “I don’t know...”

“You don’t know... and the unknown shall always haunt with the power of imagination that could never be equaled by any known monstrosity, for the known must apply to the rules of reality while the unknown does not.”

With that, she finally broke the stare her eyes had held him in, turned towards the door, and stepped out into the night. Where she went from there, where her life could go from there after such a sentence as the unknown...he did not know...

---

**A Short Winter Poem.**

We hold this thimble of sun,  
and in this rancorous bay  
watch the last drop  
into the dark where selkies splash  
into the hold of night.

*Albert O’Ryan*

---

Natasha Voyer
Mercy, Mercy, Mercy

The thought ignites; will not go away.
As a golden beam; bright and gay.
And all I can say,
Is Mercy, Mercy, Mercy.

One casts it off; assumes it is a lie.
But still it resides; like a spring that won’t dry.
And all I can cry,
Is Mercy, Mercy, Mercy.

Regardless of fears; despite all doubt,
The thought takes seed; beginning to sprout.
And all I can shout,
Is Mercy, Mercy, Mercy.

Ideas fall down; like a nourishing rain.
Fantasies dreamt; with longing and pain.
And all I can exclaim,
Is Mercy, Mercy, Mercy.

A foundation is laid; like the roots of the seed.
I cannot get enough; I just feel, consume, feed.
And all I can plead,
Is Mercy, Mercy, Mercy.

Finally fully conceived; As a fresh laid egg.
Wholly, completely; prisoner to curves and leg.
And all I can beg,
Is Mercy, Mercy, Mercy.

The greater it gets; the more it is true.
The more I want; the more of you.
And it’s all I can do,
Mercy, Mercy, Mercy.

A.G. Klei

Clough

Midnight, 3:00am,
Walking, working, the cold air cuts your cheeks and
splashes on your throat
The rows of houses hide stories as they roll away
below you
You can see soft smoke billowing out of chimneys,
towards the sky
The moon is too big for this sky tonight, too brilliant.
You wonder who else is looking at it
Is she?
Suddenly the stars scream silently at you
Each one the colour of purity and hope
The faintest, purest star
Is she? That one, a half a world away?
You make a wish, then wonder
What was I doing here? Walking the dog.
Maybe…
As you whistle for the dog and begin home
You quietly take the smile from the corner of your mouth
And put it in your back pocket
For later.
"The Garden of Evening"

I find the flowered meadow
of evening. Dark blossoms linger in the grass
Lit by the soft dying light of dusk.

The flowers are beautiful.
Shades of violet with enchanting scents
But soon the night will steal away this loveliness.

The wind drifts aimlessly, warmly about my body,
It touches my cheek gently,
making fleeting promises of comfort and safety.

The softly scented breeze,
The luscious sense of ease,
Are fragile and quiver at the confines of the day.

The meadow of evening,
where flowers bloom and are forgotten,
where night looms beyond the trees,
Shade engulfs this temporal garden.

Justine Alsop
He Said / She Said

"What exactly are you trying to say?"
I sighed a little at those words. I'd been trying to break it to him for the past fifteen minutes, doing my level best to let him down gently, but despite my effort, he was still taking everything the wrong way. His voice was gruff, deliberately emotionless. I could picture him, sitting tensely on the other end of the line, clutching at the phone as if to a lifeline. Surely he knew what was coming.

"I'm saying it's over Steve. For good this time." I struggled to keep my voice level, trying not to betray the trembling in my stomach. It was best this way; I'd had enough of him and his insensitive ways. He didn't care about me at all, he never had. Not in the way I wanted to be cared about.

There was silence on the other end of the line. I waited for an inerminable moment for him to say something, but he didn't. He simply sat and sulked. This was the last straw, I decided. I'd had it with him.

"I'm sorry. I've got to go. I'll talk to you later." I was brusque, businesslike. I didn't even listen to hear if he said goodbye before I hung up the phone.

I sat for a while after that, watching the patterns of light that the sun splashed on my wood-paneled walls. I felt sorry for him, in a way I always had. I'd never really loved him, despite his obvious feelings for me. Two months ago, when I'd say yes to him, I'd hoped that something might evolve, that I'd grow to care for him. It hadn't happened. True, I was fond of him, but it wasn't love. He didn't fit my needs. I wanted someone who was open, romantic, and passionate. Someone who would call me every night just to wish me sweet dreams. Someone who wouldn't leave for two weeks without leaving so much as a number he could be reached at. Steve was not, and never had been my ideal guy, and now I could see that he was never going to be.

Still, I didn't like hurting him like this, much as he deserved it. I shook my head angrily. Why was I blaming myself for this? He'd brought it upon himself! He wasn't capable of the level of commitment I demanded, and what was worse, he didn't even want to try to meet my needs. Time and time again I'd tried to talk things out with him, only to be met with indifference or stubborn unwillingness to believe that the problem even existed. The least he could have done today was made an effort to talk me around instead of sulking like a spoiled brat. He'd have to learn to deal with problems, not just to ignore them and hope they would disappear.

My contemplation was interrupted by the phone.
Maybe it was him, calling to apologize to me. Maybe he'd tell me everything I'd always wanted to hear. Maybe I'd forgive him. I reached for the phone, half hoping it was him, half dreading having to turn him down again.
It wasn't him. I should have known his stubborn pride would stop him from begging.

It was Brad, wondering if I wanted to go over to his place, since he had some friends over.

What the hell, I thought. I need to relax anyway. It'll be nice to get out of the house for a while.
I told him I'd be over shortly.

***

Steve

I couldn't believe this. She was breaking up with me. She was really doing it. She'd threatened to so many times before that I almost laughed, hoping it was just another sick joke.

It wasn't. I went cold as she explained things to me, showing me my mistakes, pointing out just how I'd managed to screw up the only thing that mattered to me at all.

She rambled on, obviously not caring how much this hurt, maybe even wanting it to. I couldn't understand it, couldn't get it into my head. It was over? It couldn't be over! There was no way! How could this have happened so suddenly?

She went quietly finally, obviously waiting for me to panic or something, but I wasn't going to. I didn't feel any anger or hysteria; I just felt wooden and dead. My mind was totally blank.

She sighed, "I'm sorry, I've got to go. I'll talk to you later." She sounded so angry, so final, I began to revive a little.

"Katy, wait! I've go to..." I trailed off as the line went dead. She'd hung up on me.

I've always been pretty practical, I don't like to dwell on things too long. Even things that hurt as much as that breakup did. If it was over, it was over, and there was nothing I could do about it. The first step on the road to recovery was to get it off my mind.

I forced a grin, picked up the phone and called Melissa.

She was ex, still my best friend, even though we'd broken up months ago. She always called me when she had problems that needed solving, so I figured she'd be a good person to turn to right now. Besides, she was very good friends with Katy. The two of them talked about everything together, including their relationships. I hadn't really liked that idea when I was dating Katy, but now...well, it might give me some insight as to why Katy had done what she'd done.

Two hours later, when I finally hung up the phone I was feeling better. Maybe if I could convince Katy that I really cared...that I could change her...maybe she'd be willing to give it another shot. And as to doing something to get my mind off the situation, Mel had to work, otherwise she would have planned something. As it was, she'd heard Brad was having a get together with a bunch of people. I figured that would be an ideal opportunity. Brad and his friends were rowdy enough to take my mind off of anything. Even Katy.

***
Katy

Normally, I would have enjoyed myself immensely at Brad’s house. I like to cut lose as much as the next girl. But this time…there was just something wrong. I had a really bad feeling about this time, like something horrible was going to happen. It was a good thing Steve wasn’t here, I thought. I doubted I could handle the extra strain of dealing with him.

As if on cue, I heard the sound of a motor behind me.

I would have recognized that truck anywhere, the pale blue paint, chipping and flaking around the wheel wells…the off white canopy…the familiar grin on my ex’s face as he pulled up beside Zach’s car and killed the engine. He hopped down, his usual, outgoing self. Totally confident. Totally in charge. I gritted my teeth and managed to give him a quick hug to break the ice. Then I turned my back on him and rejoined the everyone else.

Steve

I’d expected her to ignore me, so it came as no surprise when she seemed more cold than usual. Katy always overreacts. Luckily enough, I managed to act laid back and like I didn’t really care what she thought. I’d been pretty shocked to see here there when I pulled up, but once I got over the surprise, I was fine.

“I’m surprised your dad let you borrow the truck.” She called over her shoulder as she headed towards the rest of the group.

I bit my tongue. The truth was, my dad hadn’t given me permission to use the truck. He had no idea I even had keys for it. If I found out, I was doomed. But then, there was no way he could possibly find out; he was at work until five. I’d be home by then.

I followed Katy towards my other friends. At first it was enough just to sit and talk and joke, but that got boring pretty soon, and we started looking for something else to do. Eventually we hit on the idea of visiting Jordan, since he lived only five minutes away. There were two cars, and eleven people. Zach and I were the drivers.

I laughed to myself as the others raced for the cars, each trying for shotgun. I had nothing to worry about. My place was assured.

***

Katy

Despite my apprehension, I found myself caught up in the excitement, and before I knew it, I’d been hustled to the waiting cars. Zach’s car was already full, much to my dismay, so I had to ride with Steve. Since Jon had already taken the front seat, I had no choice but to climb into the back.

It was musty and airless. I perched on one of the padded benches and looked around for a seat belt.

“Come on! Move it!” Joyner, who was sitting on the bench across from me, called out the back of the truck to Steve. I noticed vaguely that the back hatch hadn’t been closed as I tried to get comfortable.

Steve got into the driver’s seat and started the engine.

“Wait a see Steve! The back’s not closed!” I scrambled for the hatch, but he revved the motor and hit the gas. I had just enough time to throw myself back onto the bench and grab the edges as the truck lurched, wheels spitting gravel, full speed down the driveway.

I gripped the seat for all I was worth, feeling more frightened than I ever had before.

“Stop!” I screamed, praying he’d hear me. “Steve! I want to get out! Let me out!”

He glanced back at me in the rearview mirror and laughed.

At that point, I lost control. All I knew was that I was in a speeding truck with no seatbelts, no restraints, with an angry, irresponsible driver. I had to get out.

I threw myself against the back window of the cab, pouding at it desperately, screaming for him to stop, to slow down, to let me out.

He grinned at me—the most self-satisfied, justified smirk I’d ever seen—and cranked the radio.

The heavy, death metal crashed through the air, drowning me out in a roll of screaming guitars.

“Give it a rest, Katy.” Joyner called. “We’re almost there.”

I stared at him. How could he not realize how perilous our situation was? I turned back to call again, by my world suddenly dropped out from under me. I was thrown back onto the bench in one second, an din the next I’d been flung across the cab to land on Joyner. He grunted and yelled angrily, shoving me off onto the floor. The back of the truck swung heavily from side to side and I was smashed from one corner to the other as we fish-tailed. I heard a crack somewhere in my back and I tried to get enough breath to scream.

Then, with a sickening lurch, we started to spin. I felt I was floating, spiraling around and around in a dizzying whirl. The windows exploded, showering me with crushed glass. The world narrowed to a whirl of shrieking tires and screaming metal. There wasn’t even time for my life to flash before…not that there would have been much of it anyways. Sixteen short years. I’d only just started to realize my potential. Now I was going to die because of a careless, cruel mistake.

Around we spun, once, twice, three times, and then, finally, we hit. I remember seeing the back of the truck start to buckle right in front of me as it smashed into the tree. That was all that saved us from plunging into the ravine beyond it. A sheer drop of thirty feet.

I skidded forwards and fetched up at last, half hanging out of the open back of the truck, half buried in shattered glass. I couldn’t stop screaming.

Joyner jumped out and took one look at me before racing back towards the road. He and Jon took off towards Jordan’s house at top speed. Steve got out more slowly and made his way around back.

I saw him coming, but I couldn’t stop crying. He stood and looked at me in shock for a long while. Then he shook his head like a dog coming out of
water and panic chased fear across his face. He put his hands to his forehead and closed his eyes, shaking visibly. The he staggered away.

I lay in my bed of glass and screamed.

***

Steve

I couldn’t deal with this. I could not handle this. Not now.

From the second I’d lost control of the truck, I knew we were in trouble. I’d taken my hand off the wheel for a brief second to swat at a fly, and that was all it took. That, and the fact we’d been doing ninety in a thirty zone. And we’d been going around a corner. And I’d been, well...more than a little reckless. I’d been cranking the wheel harder than I should have, so it should come as no surprise when we started fishtailing.

Fishtailing itself isn’t a huge thing you can recover from it if you’re careful, but I’d overcorrected, and then overcorrected again, and our fishtail had turned into a spin. We’d done three complete 360s before we became airborne for a brief but seemingly unending moment and crashed into the tree.

I just wanted to scare her. Just seeing her in the back screaming for me to slow down had brought all the pain that I’d been trying to ignore rushing back. I just wanted her to feel a little of what I was feeling. To know what it was to be frightened and helpless.

I’d overdone it.

When we finally stopped, it took me ages to realize it. By then, Jon and Joyner had already taken off, and Zach had pulled up behind me. I knew I was in very, very deep trouble.

I crawled out of the truck, muscles jerking and twitching in shock. I turned slowly to survey the wreck.

The truck had caught up against a large tree, which was holding it steady and keeping it from sliding into the ravine behind it. The tree had snapped in half from the impact, and had caused a very large dent in the bed of the truck. The glass in all the canopy windows had shattered and fallen inwards. Only a few shards clung to the screens and the frames. The truck was still upright, which was amazing, and it was probably still drivable, but there was a whole load of damage that would need to be repaired. I was dead.

Then I heard the screams.

They were muffled and breathless, more like hiccupping sobs than anything else. They were coming from the back of the truck. I knew it was Katy.

I stumbled over to the edge of the ravine, not wanting to see what I knew would be there.

She was lying half in, half out of the truck, covered in glass. She didn’t seem to be able to get up. I couldn’t take the scene in. My mind just could not accept it. I shook my head, trying to clear it.

When I looked up again, she was looking at me. There was so much accusation and fear in her face that I could barely stand it. My head pounded and my blood raced as the facts hit home at last.

I’d crashed the car. My father didn’t know I had the car. He’d be furious. I’d nearly killed Katy. I’d ruined even my chance for friendship. I’d nearly killed her! What if she was paralyzed? How could I live with myself if I’d done this to her?

I couldn’t bring myself to go to her. I couldn’t stand her accusing eyes any more. I turned and staggered away.

I think I zoned out after that. I half noticed when the man who’d been driving a little red car which I’d nearly broad-sided stormed up, shouting at me because I’d nearly killed him and his wife. I half-noticed when Jon and Joyner returned with Jordan in tow and began bragging about how we’d “crashed in style.” I found myself laughing with them, not because I was really enjoying the situation, but because it was easier than facing reality. I half noticed when Jord glanced at us in disgust and walked over to help Heather and Zach, who were calming Katy down. I did notice when she finally crawled out of the truck and began to stumble home. She hadn’t broken her back or her legs...that was one less thing I’d have to blame myself for.

The police arrive on the scene and asked all the usual questions. I told them half-truths, leaving out the fact that there’d been people in the back, where there were no seatbelts, and not mentioning that I’d been going well over the limit. The tow truck pulled up, and when then put the keys in the ignition, the pounding heavy metal blasted out, belying my claims of responsible driving. The officer looked at me strangely, but I must have looked so shaken that he decided to give me a break. I got the lowest ticket possible. Eighty dollars, for reckless driving.

Then my dad showed up.

I retreated into myself again amidst the angry accusations and the threats of thousands of dollars of repairs that would have to come out of my pocket. It would be a long time before I drove again. But even worse than that, I’d lost Katy.

For good this time.

***

Katy

I don’t remember how I got myself home. I was in shock and my back hurt furiously. My mind was in shock with the horrible realizations of the past few minutes.

I’d heard Steve bragging about the crash, laughing about how ‘classic’ it had been, and the rush he’d gotten from it. I’d heard him barely paying attention to the shaken man and his wife he’d nearly killed. I’d heard him lying outright to the police and trying to make his accident less serious than it had really been.

I just wished I could have seen his face when the turned the engine on and the music blasted out deafeningly. There could be no way reckless driving hadn’t been involved in this crash.

How could they be so nonchalant about this? How could they possible
ignore the fact that, by rights, we should all be dead right now? The curve of the road, the speed of the car, the lack of seatbelts, the position we'd been in on the cliff, the impact we smashed into the tree with...the odds had been against our survival!

I was sickened and disappointed in them, so I turned away and made my limping way home.
No one stopped me.
That was a year ago.
Since then, I've had to undergo six months of treatment for my injured back. The doctor says I'm very lucky to be walking right now.

I developed a fear of cars and speed, which persisted for weeks, and I refuse to go out or to have anything to do with Steve or any of my other friends. I shut myself away in my room and withdrew from society completely. It was months before I could even hear Steve's voice without breaking down, and even now, my dreams are still filled with the sound of breaking glass, squealing tires and heavy metal music.

I've recovered physically, to all extents and purposes, and I've tried my best to forget about that day and the events which occurred, but every time I drive past the shattered tree, or see a blue truck with a white canopy, or meet up with Steve, the whole thing flashes across my mind again, and the fear returns.

But I go on with life. I try to do everything I can to gain new experiences and learn new things, because I know now that any day could be my last.

Two people in that truck were not appreciating life.
Now at least one is.

Keltie Anderson
it's the quality of light
tiltering through a miasma of salt
sheen on down the wide sand
between oceans curls and cliffs
that i stroke myself with.

the past and the future are one
on the clean tide,
no footprints weighing the present
for the water to fill in its emptiness.

a half crazed dog finds a ball
that his master has thrown from a tennis
racquet far off into the foam,
and joyfully brings it back,
a prancing dancer in the waves.

i circle my griefs and the timelessness
of passion
and ask no questions.

the reds and blues of my transfigured sight
break the molecules of movement
down into a single moment.

the crash, the silence, endless horizon
connecting me once
and now forever;

i am your lover.

A voice from afar
Stirs sleeping dreams

Visions of a life
Not so far away

The memories so fresh
The moments long past

The future looms heavy
Full of empty dreams
Yet to be fulfilled

Love not returned
Falls to my feet

If only I could see
Just what you love
Exactly what you see
Then I'd understand
Be a good listener
A much better friend.

©Noni Howard
I’m not the next Sylvia Plath.
I mean,
I love my daddy,
and when I look in the mirror
well,
I have to admit.
I’m pretty cute (even without the moon).

But why is it that
I have to be half way
to the oven
to write anything half decent?

Poets write
for love and nature
and greed and irony
and hell,
some even like to write
about sex. My poetry teacher
liked to discuss sonnets
about sex, even if they were really about
nature.

Me? I have to be so tired
my eyes burn before
I can write a word.
I have to hate all my lovers
and mistrust all my friends
and turn my back on everything
I believe in
and know
to write something true.

I’m a zombie.
“A crack whore.” (You said that). I look a little
peaked, well, “tired”, to quote my mom.
I feel like shit. But the
poetry is great.
Orgasmic. But a little tiring. I
think that maybe I lost a little weight back then.
I can’t recall. I remember dark circles.

Ted Hughes created a monster.
But you said it yourself:
I should write more when I’m
angst.

Amy Vallis
Mixture of Haiku

by Kid.

Butterfly
Its Here I Sit
And Play Again
A Game of Me
In Every Scene

The First Thing I Wrote After That Letter
Summer breezing in
And I asked you
To remember me
When I'm gone

I
In thank you laughter
I notice again that I
have yet heard her voice

II
I traded love for a crow
and hung it outside
to scare hearts away

III
Left there upon paper collecting the
imaginative solace

IV
Passive crocodile
Elegance empowers you
With dangerous grace

V
A true tree
rises
free, with it beautiful wings
flutter to the ground

VI
It seems ironic
that poets of nature
kill what they write about,
and hand this death in
on the very paper
which came from the tree’s breath.
If
If I promised you forever
Would you choose to stay
Or would you leave me standing
And simply walk away?

If I promised you my heart
Would you love me in return
Would you take me by the hand
Would you love me as I am?

If I promised you my life
Would you take the precious gift
Would you look me in the eyes
Would you leave the lies behind?

If I promised you it all
Would you claim even a part
Would you choose to take the risk
Would you yearn for my sweet kiss?

Or do you choose to walk alone
To ponder "might-have-beens"
When a single simple word
Would have me promising the world?

Julie Mayrand
The floorboards creak beneath me as
I become, mesmerized
By the sound of the songs of falling dust.
For a moment, I dance with the
Sunlight which slowly pours through
The windows
On Sunday mornings.

The aroma of coffee warms me
To smile thoughtlessly;
The redwood dock resuscitates memories
And I sit with the laughing
Of the emerald lake that
Is gold
On Sunday mornings.

The rocking chair is the orchestra of time;
And my book pales
To the innocence of the sapphire-sky
And its jealous trees which
Warm crystal mountains:
Pure
On Sunday mornings.

Spain

The heat today was incredible
The still air captured it, pressed it into our lungs, against our bodies.
No movement disturbed it; it was a still day, a heavy day.
I did my chores like someone trapped underwater
my vision swimming with heat waves.
Everything was slowed, smooth, dreamlike-
the only refuge was the coolness of the rock rooms where we prepared food.
Today we made a salad.
Every now and then Encarna would give us olives; cool, hard, and green
Sharp and salty with brine
Dissolving to an acidic pulp on my tongue.
Later, we took the kids to the river to swim.
It’s drying up fast in this heat,
but the small pools are still deep enough to dive.
The water is clear but dark; the stones on the bottom slippery with silt.
We wait until they’re finished and then we swim-
The water slips like a cold cloth around my skin, softly.
My limbs float, brushing against the heat of the air.

Every morning I wake at dawn and
Watch the Sun fight its way through the heavy mist.
Slowly, the mountains become visible, their weight and size each day a surprise
Each time, breathtaking.
The colors are not the same here.
There is not the sharpness; a thousand shades of brilliant green
The green here is older,
Greyer
faded and soft like Spanish moss.
The flowers are small: lavender, blue and yellow.
On the cliffs, there are only dark ivies winding their way through stone ruins
and tiny white alpine buds like stars.

At night sometimes I walk.
The darkness is absolute: the nearest village is forty minutes away.
On these walks, I talk to God-
With prayer meetings five times a day.
It’s become a bit of a habit,
Besides I need the release
Need to explain my situation
Explain my exhaustion, my restlessness, my frustration.
I need to get angry about the bruises
On their tiny arms and legs
Their burns, their scars
I need to get angry about the temper tantrums
And the whimpering under the bed
the day their parents arrive.

I sit on the dry grass: the smell of sunflowers and wheat is carried to me in the
breeze.
I feel rage, like the heat of the day simmering in my bones.
I feel sadness, like the ache of cold water.
I feel comforted, like the taste of sharp olives

Maxine Holmqvist

Portrait of an Artist

To wake up calm and naked,
and to look through
greased skin, black eyes, solid ugly marrow,
intricate muscle, blood and guts
and understand beauty lying beside you
is a masterpiece.

Lovers are artists, there are no others,
to feel love strong that hurts
is to create, to ravage, to edit.
Love is a art, there are none other
(passionate and vital)
and the artists muse can be
the cotton of touch,
the ballad of honest eyes,
and the puzzle of a simple kiss.
An oeuvre, timeless and impenetrable,
and strong and bold and ‘nice’ and everything.
It comes inspired, cannot be fabricated,
and to love is to steal away to
deserts and oceans together on the backside
of one’s eyelids, to kiss a naked pure body quickly,
and to roll back over to sleep.

Owen Percy
Being Above the Clouds

Ripping the virgin’s blanket to get to her untouched parts.

Cutting through her, making screams of pain and ecstasy balled together like the first time.

Loins on Red fire, lungs rushing to catch up.

Dumb and numb lying together at the bottom of this soultrain, still waiting for those lungs and letting, watching, our souls make angels in the snow and giggle like they were still beautiful children beside us.

Owen Percy

Perch

Silhouettes.
A silhouette of a man, clad in plaid, perched for perch on rocks seemingly moulded for moss, prickly bushes, pools of stagnant water like souls, and for his body.

Sitting, smoking Smoking a pipe burned, both man and pipe, of things they did not expect.

Fishing. Holding a fishing pole, relaxed. Breathing death through one end in a barbed hook, breathing life through the other, in Amphora-filled lungs.

A silhouette of a man, a grandfather, his place earned on these rocks. And me watching him.

Owen Percy
Victims of Autumn

It is autumn.
It is autumn
where is was not before,
and leaves are dying,
cascading down,
screaming quietly and in vein,
dying.

The sun is gone,
a leaf the colour of summer
floats from a mighty maple tree
and marrs a mirrored lake,
helplessly drifting
from rocky shore,
alone.

The lake on which it sails is cold now.
Missing the warmth of
naked giggling children
that it held once before.
Children who would splash
and swim and canoe
like Indians,
and lie naked in it
like a suit that made them invisible
until their mothers finally found them,
and stole them back.

I makes wakeless travel, this leaf,
and rotates by the wind,
its muse.
And is curled up, as if
recoiled from touching fire,
ice, heaven and hell,
and is the colour of summer
pushed by the wind.

It could be picked up
by a little girl in
a stained sundress and a jacket
whose feathers had once touched the very lake,
in hand-me-down rubber boots,
crouching on a shore.
And carried home precisely
like it was a star,
and the only one in the world.
And delicately laid and blanketed
in a childhood scrapbook
that would make her
cry some day,
and let her dream like a girl once more.

Likely though, it will struggle
against the wind,
against the world,
and lose.
And will be engulfed by the surface,
again will cascade,
to the bottom of this vile,
childless lake to rest
with millions of others,
victims all
of autumn.

This time is merciless and neverending,
this autumn.
And it is autumn again
where it was not before.

Owen Percy
Music Hands

On a plain piece of paper
I share my love
With a thousand years of historic thought
And if you were to tell me
That I’m a silly old man
I’d laugh then sing aloud with a glowing heart.

And with these hands
I play and pray and pray about this land.

Lee Gordon