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William Linville

RECOMBINANT

Not death, but dying
Knots the mind
Splinters us
From our vitreous shell
Like the fruit's sweet meat
From its rind.

Not being done
Frightens everyone
With the fear
That ends like tamarisk
Along the stream
Bending at time's
Particular judgment,
Blended filaments
Dropped in sand
And ground among
The stars.

But we resist
The clastic squeeze,
Immortality we dream,
Where earth
Receives our sediments
With ease.

William Linville

WORDS IN AN EMPTY ROOM

Even now,
The modulated voice said,
There are those
Who oppose any change,
Shudder to think
That the past
Has been misunderstood,
And will not listen.

But there are those,
Said the slightly resonant,
Who support all change,
And seek out the odd
In order to be first
In support of strangeness.

Hope for improvement,
And examine the past,
Whispered the child
In the empty corner,
But mistake neither
For an inner voice.

Suddenly
I became aware
Of the soft touch
Of the rain
Against the window.

William Linville

CARDS OF IDENTITY

What is it
Which says
Knowing the truth
I shall require
That truth
Not only
For myself
But by law?

Watch the debate
Beat down
The reasonable
Upholding
Divine Tyranny
Once again.

Is it Good,
Or Evil,
Which takes
That stance,
Refusing consideration,
Requiring acceptance?

What is it
Which denies choice
To any
Freewilled being?

It is time
To check
Credentials.

William Linville

PORPHYROS

A friend sent a gift
From overseas,
A very ugly pig
Carved from
Very beautiful stone.

Oh, my, the color,
The markings,
The texture,
A perfect match.

But the snout,
The teeth,
Those ears.

There it is
On its pedestal
Properly lighted.
I'm cursed
With it.

William Linville

*AMOR IBIT OTIBUS TIBI ROMA
ROMA TIBI SUBITO IBIT AMOR
AMOR IBIT OTIBUS TIBI ROMA*

When Rome
was given to me
I did not know
What to do with it.

I troubled myself
Backwards and forward,
Along the river
And into the gardens.
In Agrippa's temple
I wrapped my head
And dissolved
In shadow under the oculus.

I was a rude whistle
Among Bernini's Columns.

A draggled bird
In and out
Of Coliseum Crannies.

None of this was enough,
Temporals and Parallels
Did not calm my mind.
Coffee and almond cream
Was a better transport
Than the ratty bus.

But the fact is,
There were no Romans
In Rome
The day they gave it
To me.

William Linville

RUMMAGING

Whether there is a God
Or not,
I must, sometimes,
Act as though
There is...

When sleep's horizon
Stigmatizes memory
And other times
Thrust against
The now,

Then I want
With all my being,
A timeless,
Spaceless instant,
Enduring forever,
The mind of God.

Heart moves upwards then,
And innocence returns.

David Castleman

BABES:

This whole rodeo's talkin
and I drather have you
then a new horse.

Whomper

David Castleman

THE TIGHT SQUEEZE

Mr Jolly Jelly is thin as a hangman's rope, and as dependent upon the inspired folly of humankind. Were you to encounter this admirable specimen for the first time, he'd likely bend toward you as if bending over a long deep well where the water was cold, and he'd gaze earnestly into your eyes, and he'd intone, "How are you?" Then he'd wait for an echo.

Mr Jolly wants to be applauded.

But people ignore Mr Jolly, despite his frequent assurances that he matters exceedingly.

Mr Jolly lives, with wife and kiddies, in a nondescript house on a small residential street, in a small expensive town. His house had a small picket fence with a small gate, but the advertisement was too subtle to placate Mr Jolly's infinity of little voices, so he hired a carpenter.

The little gate had hung on 2 4X4-6's, but Mr Jolly wanted a bigger gate to indicate a gigantic passage, so he replaced those puny members with 4 6X6-12's upon which a cradle was placed which supported a papier-mache faceted egg measuring approx 10' long and perhaps 8' at its maximum diameter of girth.

Mr Jolly's existence is considerably improved, though he's seldom considered to be anybody's guru. His roc-egg has been mentioned in the local paper, and every week people drive by, stop, and photograph the contraption. Strangers knock on his door to ask, "What is it?"

Mr Jolly's a happy man.

Leo Yankevich

THE CAT

I'd pass it on the mission trail—
half-decomposed, green burr-like eyes
beyond my thoughts or pity, tail
curled into questions only flies
would answer, as they staked their claim
to rotting tissue. Food for worms,
and mocked by summer's honey flame,
it had no choice but come to terms
with piecemeal dissolution. Those
loud buzzes echoed in my ears
until it circled and then rose,
converting me—some thirty years
since—into the lone passerby
and witness, ever on my way
from daily service, like the sky
itself on resurrection day.

Leo Yankevich

COMMUNION

Where paint peels in the summer sun,
I sit down on the wino bench,
a sinner who must break a bun
to stay alive. I ask: whose stench

is it here, ghost or spirit come
and gone, like draughts of air beneath
the wings of mourning doves. I'm dumb
before the flowering Spanish Heath.

The beasts within my belly bay,
themselves but shadows in the dark.
Yet I am made whole by the ray
that lights the pathway in the park.

Leo Yankevich

REUNION

It will be such and such a year,
the sun appearing now and then,
clouds over cola, booze and beer,
teenagers now grey-bearded men,
corn on the cob and sizzling meats,
smoke from a charcoal-heated grill.
There will be women, cries, and feats,
dandelions on a hill,
twister, spin the bottle, hide
and seek. There will be joy and laughter,
marshmallows, bonfire and hayride,
a game of softball the day after.
Only you will lag behind,
Nineteen Eighty-Four no nearer—
your clothing, hairstyle, language, mind—
trapped inside a rear-view mirror.

Leo Yankevich

SPREADING DEMOCRACY

(Serbia 1999)

1.

How to explain?
Suddenly
she lies in pain
amid debris—

orphaned fingers,
blood-stained blouse—
a scream that lingers
in her razed house.

A girl who talks
to bleeding palms—
around her blocks
and carpet bombs.

2.

A pilot shrouds
the truth and smiles
amid the clouds
three hundred miles

back home to base.
He cannot tell
which was whose face.
High over hell,

his stealth's black wings
still mock the night,
and fallen things
in morning light.

Gary Beck

GULF WAR

The invasion is over.
The last battle has ended
and our victorious forces have prevailed.
The fears of disaster have vanished.
The clamors of protest are silent.
The soldiers we expected to perish
are celebrating in their foxholes.
The mounds of empty beercans are piled
higher than the heap of the dead.
Misgivings have departed,
faster than public opinion.
The shock of combat is fading.
Replacements for losses are arriving.
Only the post-conflict questions remain.
Was it necessary to spend so much
to kill so many and lose so few,
when we can do it cheaper at home?

Simon Perchik

*

With such a downward stroke
judgments are sealed and the child
bent over this blackboard

will soon finish the numeral 1
stroke the damp fur :the chalk
stretching its neck—on this darkness

the Great Bear will feed forever
edging toward the galaxies
—nothing is wasted, even now

at one end this thin line
the light starts out—from the other
step by step the dead

toward the middle and my hand too
is at home on the night sky
is counting each finger

with a beginner's 1
and in the center a sudden cup
a hollow palm where the dim light

loses its way from one cry
then another
and the emptiness between my hands.

Cheryl Hicks

FALLING DOWN BY NIGHT

now I know
it wasn't yours
because the house was white
and there were doors unlocked
and the driveway was so wide

but I wanted you there
and there you were

feeling fragile and ungrounded
as imperfect as a mounded fist of suds
I know you held me to the light
to let me sparkle
know you kept me from the winds
until I could begin to find
a stable line between bare fact
and flagrant fiction

where it falls
it is impossible to say

in spite of my nostalgia
for imagined paradise
I would have been a willing sacrifice
without foundation

but I am a beggar
so predictably
I want

I dreamed this was a love song
universal
still the worse for lack of wear I fear
it is impossible to say

I am no princess won
I am a cycle of disparate tales

and so, I'll have six hundred horsemen
with rich gifts

I've set my price

Cheryl Hicks

AVIARY

Past the pulp
toward the bitter core,
I bite through apple
into seeds
every day
and think
how different
the world would be
if we were
together.

These are words
that must be
whispered,
words
as sure &
as delicate
as the skin
behind my knee.

I dream
of the way
we would sleep,
like tossed wagers
on velvet,
the placement
of every elbow
and finger
exact
in carelessness.

I lift my hair,
and think of your neck.
You cup my hip,

and the mystery
of our scent
lingers
like silence.

Still,
we are here,
two small birds
with no large wish
to fly.

Kathryn Jacobs

RE PLANNING TO BE HIT BY TRUCKS, COURTESY OF THE NY TIMES

We might be squished by trucks; no question there.
But planning on it goes a bit too far,
no matter what my learned colleague says
in bold print headlines. Hope might make more sense—
or try on some days. And besides, why “trucks”?
Why plural, when a single modest truck
is fully adequate to flatten us
beyond the recognition of our peers?

So that’s the first objection. Secondly,
why all the fuss about complete ID
in pockets, glove compartments, and on screens?
Imagine our relations sipping tea
while watching basketball: why interrupt?
So they can be distressed before the crew
has scraped us off the pavement? Give them time:
they just might sleep tonight; that never hurt—

and frankly, it’s closed casket anyway:
we’re talking trucks remember. So that’s two.
But mostly, I object to that word “plan.”
Why bother? Well, unless you just love trucks.
But me, I’m open-minded; I’m okay with
Volkswagons, pneumonia—asteroids.
Whatever floats your boat, but think it through:
if you don’t care, they’ll do the planning, too.

Kathryn Jacobs

PROSECUTING SUICIDE

Some injuries you simply don't forgive,
not when they're done deliberately—you know,
“malice aforethought” and all that. But so
what else is new? Assuming you survive
it could be worse, and frankly, he won't care.
Forget it and move on? It's worth a try.
He had no right contractually to die
without express consent; it's quite unfair,
and I suggest you say so. Then again,
the audience you want is hard to find,
and while I'm sure that nobody will mind
an exercise of your due rights, domain
is problematic. So, while I conclude
the law's your side, I'm afraid you're screwed.

Kathryn Jacobs

IN THE MIND'S EYE

We suck up trees like vacuums—bushy tails
of squirrels dragged backwards, suctioned, till the ears
are swallowed: gone. And grab that plumbing crew
nearby the bulldozer with lowered scoop.
Absorbed, extracted; all that sight and sound
and 3-D scurry soaked up and consumed
by anaconda-minded passersby:

omnivorous observers. Bottled up
like fizzy soda: little frantic squirrels
on squeezed-tight trees near hungry-metal scoops,
with thoughts attached, like larva: stirring things.
The tree trunks want to suck their stomachs in
to not-touch metal mouths: all wavy-wood,
like light through water. Tiny boneless hugs

curl round their limbs, protective: pancake squirrels,
like crepes afraid of toothpicks. But the picks
grow long and hoary; frosted, reaching out
from long-jawed dozers. Stop it: look away—
which pops the cap off. Out they come, all three:
trunks stiff as highways for the plumped-up squirrels,
scoop lowered for the chomp. Our eyes move on;

inhaling houses, and releasing squirrels
who promptly jump and scamper somewhere else.

Kathryn Jacobs

CLOSING IN

They topple over time, like circle-stones
at Stonehenge, or like missing teeth: a gap.
And those still standing take a few steps in
to close the circle for you: narrowing.
Don't look for those gone missing;
focus in. We're left,
we love you.

Microscope: an insect under glass.
Now magnify: the earwig disappears,
But that left pincer is a lobster's claw.
Work used to ebb with evening. Shrink the field,
And now you live to work. Engulfed:
it fills your screen. At length,
becomes you

shrink like needle-eyes: a tiny cleft,
a steel-rimmed door touch-shut so that a slit
of light peers through at angles. One round eye
left peering through the crack: a long hard stare
picks out an orange chink of face,
the lip-stripes moving:
love you.

John Alfred Taylor

MR. DJURLING

After so many years, how to praise him?
Homeric epithets won't cut it
—No sacker of cities, no tamer of horses there.
He just taught high-school science

In a one-horse town. Two-horse really. We were
“The corn-cob pipe capital of the world.”
When we asked him a question he couldn't answer,
He said he would look it up. He always did,

Even better, taught us how to do it ourselves.
When he gave us a problem in class
We raced to be first to answer: MV2
I did in my head, not always faster than others.

Thanks to Mr. Djurling, we were fast, we were good,
And never had an accident
In the lab. We watched the monochrome yellow
Of sodium burning once it was out of the oil

That kept it safe, learned not to play with potassium
Chlorate—no big bangs for us.
Mr. Djurling knew how to get our attention.
Once in an exam he gave us a pretty problem:

A curtain rod of such a size and weight
Falling so many feet
Penetrating a man's skull so many inches
—Quantify the force of deceleration.

Afterwards, acerb and almost cheerful,
He told us it really happened.
And if this gives you the creeps, you haven't had
A teacher as good and grim as Mr. Djurling.

John Alfred Taylor

TENTING TONIGHT ON TRINITY SITE

Hiroshima Day plus sixty, and still
Surprised to be alive.
So long ago and strange, a week too full

Of “frightful queerness.” Though my first fright was tame.
Reading too much Lovecraft
On an empty stomach kept me awake. All night

The noise of the river reminded me of slime,
Till I left my canvas cot
To sleep in the backseat of the car, insulated

From the foul sound. Next morning the Meremec
Ran green and clean as ever,
And I could digest the whole “Dunwich Horror.”

In the shallows I bruised my feet walking
Barefoot on the rocks.
When Dad came back from town with groceries and news

The headlines were black, big as funerals in the glare
Of our tent’s carbide lantern.
Now we’d done it, just like in that book hinting

One bomb could kill a city. Most kids my age
Skipped that paragraph.
Not me. Soon I was learning the alphabet

Of fear, numb spell of alpha, beta, gamma,
Till in the Sixties bombers
That missed their first landing runs at Pease

Circled low over my roof, drag chutes billowing
Behind. At the gate

SAC proclaimed "Peace Is Our Profession,"

But that was public. Among themselves they sang
A different tune that once
Sold toothpaste: "You'll wonder where the yellow went

When we sow H-bombs though the Orient." A million
Laughs, a million deaths.
Still for me it's Hiroshima Day plus sixty.

John Alfred Taylor

AWE

I remember coming to a stop
Out of a dead run,
Face inches from a golden garden spider.

After first fright, first shock, able to admire
The order of her web,
The zig zag where she waited, holding the strands

Two legs by two in a black and yellow X.
Before I could read
I was shown spirogyra under a microscope,

Perfect green turning through a nave of crystal.
Also a black widow
In a mason jar, the scorpion in the back yard,

Mother's marvels. Father knew the stars
By name when night
Was still night, while I explored on my own.

One day in a park by a dam I wandered off
And found a house
Tall as a cathedral. Nothing alive inside

I could see, no icons, no idols, the only
Presence dynamos
Humming their hymns. That was power enough.

John Alfred Taylor

BUSINESS BLACK

Corvus is dressed in business black,
He knows the price of everything.
You go with him and don't come back.

The sky is split. And through the crack
A sable eye in a sable ring;
Corvus is dressed in business black.

The crow beside the road keeps track,
Then rises slowly, taking wing:
You go with him and don't come back.

Under all wealth a world of lack;
Some birds count and some birds sing.
Corvus is dressed in business black,

Thinking of you as meat on a rack
While the butcher is busy sharpening.
You go with him and you come back

All bundled up in a paper sack,
All stuck up with a price to ching.
Corvus is dressed in business black,
You go with him and don't come back.

John Alfred Taylor

NIGHT OF THE FOURTH

We cratered a comet this morning,
Now as I take out the trash

I watch the fireworks in the city park
Filtered through trees,

Far enough to be magic rather than noise,
Red white and blue regurgitated in flame.

Finally the big show is over.
Somewhere a car alarm goes off

And behind the house at the corner
Roman candles fart and fizzle light

While in the warm dark of my yard
A lightning bug dives for cover.

John Alfred Taylor

THE LANDSCAPE NEAR AN AIRPORT: A SCIENCE-FICTION CONVENTION

More beautiful and soft than any moth
—Not how to start this
Now jets are apparitions overhead,
Hanging like whales with wings. Strange as this wide

Green place of offices, warehouses, companies
With obscure names, where we
Run a maze up and around to Industry Lane
And down to the convention hotel. Fen is the plural

Of fan. I join the registration line,
Listen to grownup chatter
From people dressed as pixies. I'm home here.
I was precocious too, never distinguishing

Between the Smythe Report and the Sunday comics
Till deep in the Cold War.
In Heidelberg the TI and E guys yammered
About the East German airfields only twelve

Jet minutes away. We didn't even blink
Fifty years ago,
Tried not to yawn. I clip on my panelist badge,
Go back to our room. Beth has been checking the pillows:

Feathers she can't sleep on, so goes out
And buys her own, then breathes
Peacefully all night long next to me, while
I keep thinking of what I'm going to say

About "the rapture of the nerds," Transhumanism
And the Singularity,
About nanotech and Artificial Intelligence,
Uploading the self to silicon, Jupiter-sized

Computers, things Doctor Moreau's Ape Man would call
Big Thinks. Toward morning mine
Blessedly shrink. Breakfast, and I venture
Out of air conditioning: still cool enough

To circuit the parking lot. In front a slope
To the highway, in back
Woods with mourning doves whickering up.
Around again, and there's still mist on the hills

Across the highway. Last night there were fireflies
Signaling in green-black bushes.
I love the trees, love my creaky knee.
No gray goo today, please forever no gray goo.

A.E. Nugent

IN THE DARK

I wanted to be a princess, years ago,
when we lived in a large white house with a view.
But Father turned me out on the darkest road,
He bartered my tears, though I don't know why.

Long have I lived on the road,
wearing old rags for clothes,
devouring the meat of wild dogs,
sleeping alone on the stoniest ground,
sometimes my only light a fading star.
But I recall a different night sky,
galactic webs holding back the blackness.

Eric Martin

THE BALLAD OF THE FLEA

Once upon a time, a flea
Lived among nobility.
He, adopted as the ward
Of a philanthropic lord,
Was (by this same lord) so coddled
That, says legend, he was swaddled
Head to toe in rich attire,
And inducted as a squire.

Monsieur Insect, much delighted
Thus to see himself bedighted:
Silks and velvets, scarves, bijoux,
And silver buckles on his shoes,
Sent to Fleaville for his brothers,
Neighbors, schoolmates (and their mothers),
Who, by order of the prince,
Likewise rose to eminence.

Thus (to make a long tale short),
All the noblemen at court,
Too polite to make a fuss,
Scratched themselves to sores and pus!
Ah! infernal policies!
Fraught with nuisance and disease! —
So, when one begins to prick,
Pulverize the bugger quick!

George Held

JOHNNY

I hear silence when I think of Johnny:
how the jokers loved to mouth words to him,
make him check his hearing aid and roared when
he tapped the bulge in his breast pocket. When
he'd bulked himself up, new aid in ear, he
switched to plain T's, biceps straining the sleeves.
Eddie must have been too dumb to notice
or too eager for the guys' regard when
he mouthed the last words his old mouth would form.
It took a year to rebuild after Johnny
Had mangled him, one punch after another.
When he got off probation and shipped out,
the guys never even noticed; they'd switched
To Chris, mouthing the sounds of her cleft palate.

David Groulx

WILL THIS KISS EVER MATTER?

this stemmed glass through my hand like a nail

turning this night
into a drunken execution

this abyss in the
moonlight falls

its hymns steep
in my glass

David Castleman

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

AS YOU LIKE IT

Exceedingly seldom do we speak directly among ourselves, but we chat obliquely toward an imaginary persona our psyches contrapt to supplant the living breather we're confronted by. Such exchange isn't simply a manifestation of our limitation but registers a vital defense. Every playfully intelligent fellow talks thusly, deliberately also, and some examples are called metonymy. One person's notorious name becomes a state, becomes a verb, a pronoun, becomes a weapon.

Phebe's boyo bemoans her cruelty, and as dragprince Ganymede Rosalind says, "She Phebes me," meaning, "She cruels me also."

Frederick is duke, and when a question is posed whose answer requires reference to the previous duke, a presumptuous yokel says, "the old Fred," meaning, "the previous duke." Such flippancy could cost a noggin, although it's only the adulthood of the unplumbably humorous.

Rosalind and Celia are buddies, chattering incessantly on- and off-stage concerning people's intimate mannerisms. Rosalind is heroine, light as featheriest thistledown blown through a breeze, selfishly cruel. Celia is more contralto, closer toward reason. Each entertains her sister-being with meaningless teasings consistent with feminine intimacy: they alternate being loved and being rejected, being taller, being misunderstood, being gay, pretending potency.

Of course there's variety of perspicuity. Oliver, the clever bro, knows Ganymede is a babe in drag. Orlando is an innocent skein of muscles, a bumpkin, knowing nothing except decorative baubles. Jacques does understand, as in each of Mr Shakespeare's plays appears one individual who sees beyond the hurly-burly, and Jacques cares not a fig for the world and all its precious ugliness.

Jacques is hero because others find his presence exhilarating. He's a wise elfin child, a reformed dissipate currently unexamined and thereby unchallenging. His neighbors'd not be untreasured of his fascinating delicacy, useless as he is.

CORIOLANUS

An Achilles, this Nietzschean Satan's forever marching down a ramp, spine tautly back, eyes' sheet-lightning above the throng, his nostrils gripped by the gibbering sewer of humanity. Coriolanus' inner self is imperceptible, and even beggars keep him waiting.

Psychologically developed men avoid mirrors because of self-disgust, but Coriolanus avoids mirrors because of self-perplexity. An unknown man looms in that place, and a worse woman with insoluble demands.

Coriolanus' mama Volumnia's an insatiable hole. She cares little that Coriolanus conquers worlds, but rather, she craves belief that he conquers, and it's a devastating difference. Her belief matters because the world's only a furtive panorama compared to her. She'd visit a doctor not to be healed but to be placated, as we do.

Aufidius wars more dimensionally. Lacking doubt he lacks mercy. Corrie's an invulnerable scrapper, like Achilles, with awesome sinews and a terrible feminine urgency, his comprehension within the red flare, his psyche instantly defined.

Evildest creatures are the lawyers, cannibals who, being beasts, subsist on the drippings of the beasts. The evil brats'd toss everybody in the pot, with lots of garlic, and belong to the lions.

Everywhere's a compelling synchronicity. Corrie's an archetype, a huge boy who shuns realization of his incompleteness. He terrifies the necessary tribe because of the future he represents, and because he complains of them accurately, and the tribe solves his mystery in a frightening reciprocity as he realizes the unutterable profundity of his incapacity.

Like Hamlet, Coriolanus is the star unequivocally, but Hamlet selected his defeat, being capable of happiness. Coriolanus was doomed in the egg. His end solves perplexity, his coffinlid a door through mirrors.

HAMLET

Hamlet's accused of egomania and yet he thinks but seldom of himself specifically. He's accused of procrastinating and yet it is but a small space between his resolve and his measured response. That space appears longer because we're given an unparalleled pyrotechnical display of his interiority. Indulging the perquisites of moneyed genius his mind sprawls among centuries, rather than folding its elbows into the cramping hours, or minutes.

Truly, he's impatient of the robots, of the gaping primates who'd rip him from his will. Othello and Claudius and Pilate, those capable men, are despised rather begrudgingly enviously by Hamlet, by Iago, by the immature Hal. They're despised because their impertinence isn't real.

Hamlet watched his increasing dreaminess, and permitted impulsivenesses to counter it. He stung Polonius, and Ophelia, leapt with Laertes, leapt among the pirates as if aboard an assignation, because he recognized the dangers of indolence, of isolation.

His probings deny humans the final seriousness of equality. His innocent sociopathy acknowledges no fellowship. He spits Polonius, and Ophelia, because he can. He despises because he feels spurned, which is honorable but not honest, which is an impertinence.

Claudius, Polonius, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, and poor eviscerated Ophelia, are feted to displays of too much information, rendering them incapable, each in his fashion, of interpreting the thing displayed. Of course, this is intentional by Hamlet to give him his desired privacy of mind. Privacy of mind may be illusory, but it's necessary for sanity.

Mr Shakespeare was a sly old boots, and gives us a similar abundance of information concerning his fictitious character, Hamlet, so that, despite our being such perceptual phenomenons, each in his way, we can't possibly find the misbegotten fellow, though each pretends. Hamlet's a well-studied charmer because every intelligently childish man covets the illusion of having a conveniently misunderstood, unappreciated genius.

HAMLET and MACBETH

HAMLET and MACBETH are similar instrumental arrangements albeit with different emphases. Each eponymous hero is instructed by emissaries of his god to murder his anointed king.

MacBeth had warred, and Hamlet had played, till circumstances forced a pause, and psyches lurched. Soliloquies, dialogues with their personal deities, arrive after intense psychological exhaustion. Spiritual hallucinations, of course, can be highly decorative, even if misunderstood by every brow in the audience, both low- and high-.

Neither man would claim religiosity, yet even the most dessicated atheist designates areas in his acknowledged cosmos of a greater and a lesser density, a greater and a lesser vacancy, and these men, significant though they are, appropriate to themselves from the acceptable spiritual mythologies profoundly, being neighbors within their tribes.

Their kings, at whom they aim, have been lawfully elected. Their personal females, whom they provoke to suicide, which is murder, are bonkers. Our heroes, Hamlet and MacBeth, serve as sacrifices at the altar of equivocation, because each equivocated with his god's command.

MacBeth achieved bitterness and through his personal bitterness believed himself triumphant, even as he died. Hamlet was denied the hard consolation of bitterness, and thereby was inconsolably a failure.

Everybody admires the play, MACBETH, and many folks find MacBeth a fascinating character, but nobody obsesses about either. Since Chaplin's immortal tramp died, Hamlet is paramount among our world's fascinating figures, along with Napoleon and Lincoln. HAMLET, the play, is less of a thing. Our ulterior world applauds, but gives no frenetic ticker-tape parades for the endlessly recurring symphony, HAMLET.

Strugglings toward truth are too inconvenient to be loved, as is love itself. Great marches should be fraught with light laughter, we pretend.

1 HENRY 4

Mr Shakespeare's earlier plays are capitulated by this, his earliest greatest play. Everybody loves the hot salty fat of battle, of blood and human mud, and good liquid laughs.

Our Henries enjoy pretending to be victims, a pose justifying any depredations committed upon barbarians. The English are civilized murderers, and the subhuman Welsh allowed Welshwomen to gather penises after a battle, like Africans and Red Indians.

Hal has doffed the world, like a hat. He's aware of the fanfare announcing the honorableness of murder, yet he toys. Then, like an ostrich in the proverbial pose, head in sand, suddenly, between the eyeball and the sun, the ostrich rises proudly and extends his plumes like a corona, and approaches the observing eye and morphs into a majestic eagle whose plumes explode outshaken like a corona, dazzlingly.

Henry Sr.'s a bloodthirsty tyrant rejoicing in murder, pretends he's honorable thereby. He pretends concern for Christ's martyrdom, pretends a reciprocity of concern exists between himself and Christ.

Hotspur's impulsive, depthless like Othello, yet vapid where Othello is elemental. He's not a bad guy although cats despise depthlessness, and would despise him. He can't be without doing. He ascribes to others a relationship with himself that's illusory. He'd laugh at the mention of a soul, till his very end.

Falstaff's a guttier Hector, an appetite without any defined personal perspective, a jest. He'd rather be amiable, or perhaps amenable. He'd prefer to be applauded, but's uncertain if anything exists.

An actor spoke a manuscript while strolling a room while an amanuensis scribbled a quarto. The actor presented now his face and now his back to his harried companion who goofed a few of the words, such as moneyer and heft, and subsequent editors preserved the faults, foolishly.

HENRY 5

Poor ol' Tom Erpingham exists for effect, a virtual blip. Like lacking an igloo in a windy Chicago February, poor ol' Torn was born cold, and he was born a geezer, just so hale King Harry can demonstrate a ceremonious devotion to his kingly daddy's memory. Poor ol' Tom has no wife to his body and no friend to his soul, no whisky on rainy Sunday, no hound dog's ear to scratch.

Between opposing camps the poring cold melts the bones, and poor Tom's a'cold because a geezer's blood is unavailing, limpingly. This bad night's a beast of ice. Tom's only allotted darling is his long fleecy coat.

King Harry is hale. This world exhibits his hale heartfulness. From poor ol' Tom's shaking bones King Harry yanks the long fleecy coat, drapes it carelessly on his regal shoulders, like a mantle.

King Harry thusly announces the unquenchable testicularity of even the ancientest Englishman, compared to those fumbling French foppish infirmities beyond the bright English fires, and ol' Tom is justified, and ol' Tom is glad for such display, which hides display of love. Everybody understands, and that's why men love Harry, and lay their bones for him.

King Henry finds ceremony compelling because it might mean anything, might conjure a pretense of ultimate admiration. He invokes his God because it's a necessary noise whose omission offends his sense of thrift. He challenges his God to contribute prodigiously to the holy o of majesty, if He dare.

Is it Henry's God Who made his enemy ridiculous, this France, whose candied son, as unconsciously frivolous as Hal had been cannily frivolous, is so repellent that nobody respects him, though he respects his horse, he alleges? His eyes, doubtless, are as closely set as are the tables in a tawdry nightclub, and the service as questionable.

KING LEAR

Mr Shakespeare's profoundest play and his most sensuously written, has for hero a king who consolidated his fortunes during his youth and since then had been a roisterer, the crown his usufruct, an exceedingly public personality who hadn't found any genuine friendship appropriate, just as he hadn't found any individual existence appropriate, yet whose posture and whose acts of selfishness cultivated enemies amply.

King Lear and Gloster, fellow roisterer, pursued cruelties because cruelties were convenient and amusing, and cogitation was disgusting and inconvenient. Lear abandoned the glory of the holy crown, so in final ingratitude his mirroring daughters abandoned the glory of the spiky ornament for their amusement, their cruelties legendary.

Gloster, whose eyes get scooped and stomped, as if imagining Mr Shakespeare's page displaying superscription, text, and subscription, comments on the girls' sadisms, saying, "All cruels else" are "subscribed." He means, "Compared to your behaviors, the behavior of other sadists is merely codicillary."

Mr Shakespeare conducts his orchestra within ourselves, deliberately arranging our experience like an old-testament God in an immeasurably hoary rock-battered universe Whose view extends lineally from the oldest and vastest down to the exceedingly babyest. Shakespeare adjusts our perspective along this one line only, so we watch the small through the eyes of the big, looking downward.

Our focus is a foolish old reprobate glaring madly about himself at havoc he'd wreaked and, given opportunity, would wreak again in his insane disregard of responsibility, being incapable of piety and of honor. Any fellow-perspectives are concealed from us, except we look. If, from the menu of available universes, we'd choose another perspective, we'd find Cordelia the hero, and Lear the brute extravagant force of her annihilation, her beloved pariah, foolish as she is.

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

Few women are honorable, and almost no men. The boudoir's gods are cruel determiners and in this, Mr Shakespeare's subtlest farce, everybody's awry. The scene is hugely convivial, like a Sunday barbecue launched by Southern Baptist Klansmen just before the lynching and the torchings, where surpliced mountebanks preach of the inadequacy of superficial impressions, and of the heavenly beauty of mercy.

The crowd, of course, is of representative theatre-goers, the inconclusive ordinaries of our world.

Portia is hero, a tinsel-hung monster in fairyland, an orphan-princess who dresses in drag to woo a gentlemen's gigolo, retired, who's her hubby, and to rescue an effete enabler in the circuit. Her wealth is such the judges jump and polity's greased. Nobody's intelligently contemplative, of course, beyond their conveniently tribal proclivities, and everybody's tidily provided with slaves.

Shylock is pariah, a caricature of scrubbing fingers who dwells among his fellow infidels in a ghetto. He's the extravagant force without whose connivance nothing happens. He's an indulgent victim who's merciless toward his torturers, who are the audience, who are the fool, cumulatively a single presence with wrinkles. Shylock's intimates hate him spontaneously because he's evisceratingly mean.

Bellario's an invisible voice in the Christian mind, pretending to be aloof beyond the hurly-burly. He perjures himself to give Portia her act, and represents the ultimate poohbah of Christianity, and is, doubtless, comfily elsewhere, delivered from the nuisances of travel. He might be Prince Lucifer, breeding evil distantly.

Each religion is the only valid religion, of course, and gleefully damns every other religion, and all infidels. Portia prates of mercy, but her religion is herself, immediately betrayed, and being a woman, she holds herself unaccountable for whatever she espoused yesterday.

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

Consciousness dissociates and spaces out the starry roof of the lidless theater, and when it returns into the small circle of the play we realize the significance of the title, MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING, and we are the busy little nothing. Truth is the ultimate irony, allowing the proud.

Only three characters anchor this play, in an easy langour because, writing in late springtime among the darling buds of May, Mr Shakespeare felt the spring delicious. The atmosphere is a gentle courtliness, with a lagniappe of cruel intrigue, and the courtliness is evanescent, unreal.

Beatrice is the hero, or heroine, and Benedick the fool, and imperious Leonatus the bystander, the extravagant force who's typically amiably exasperated. Every flirtatiously innocent individual is lying, of course, distorting his understanding for his convenience. Each flirtatiously innocent individual winces mildly incredulous that he, of all people, and he alone, isn't spared the lies of his fellows, his co-conspirators in the innocent pleasantry.

The final scene distils the whole.

The stage is gathered with hero, fool, and pariah. Beatrice chatters compulsively, as nervous women do, concealing from herself her driving loneliness. Benedick, the fool, teeters along his feet, desiring her as an escape from the emptiness of himself. She is the hero, the observed of all observers, and he a flibbertigibbet.

Leonatus, appropriately called the Lion, impatient that others dare to exist except as instruments of his will, and his will alone, and impatient of chatter except about money, and about war which is money, and pride, deftly pushes with his fingers Benedick's farther shoulder, as Beatrice and Benedick gawk wantingly each toward the other, whom they'd consume.

Leonatus announces to the chattering Beatrice, "Peace! I will stop your mouth," and with Benedick's hungry lips he does exactly that. Advancing, Benedick moves toward her desire, stepping swiftly lest she run, if she be spooked.

OTHELLO

Othello's a magnificent beast. He finds no opportunity for thinking except as he perceives activity. Psyche, for him, lays fastened flatly continually traveling, following him as each sun is followed by a conical furrow it plows through the scheme of the grand ingener.

His pain extends toward us. His kindness, not such an improbable commodity among murderers, continuously reestablishes itself, as when he again forgives Iago for distorting his being, comparing his distortions to Iago's personal distortions. Iago's his Judas, his Judean, he knows.

Othello frightens us, provoking not repugnance but a desire to comfort him as we'd comfort a traumatized child, and he's childlike. His trauma rips open a jealous psyche revealing bizarre characterizations. His burden tramples inherent sweetness.

Othello watches himself inadvertently, comparing himself to an exhausted horse, exsufflicate and blow'd, his understanding shot, ineffably perplexed as he recognizes the unholy immensity facing him. His thin civility is erased and his resounding wail selfless, primordial.

Iago broods, cackling maniacally he's called honest, which means transparent. His faith is a convenience so he pretends he's cuckolded, disregarded. Othello forgives him for being outcast, a Cain, for being a progeny of Judas, for being Jewish, and this unindividuating insult is basis for behavioral sadisms. Iago can't forgive being understood, being forgiven, and his recognition of injury demands demonstration.

This Jew hates, hates being forgiven by this Negro.

Because Mr Shakespeare chooses our behavior, we're not empathic with Iago. Expectations determine our experience, and instruct our perspective, that Othello is hero, Desdemona the fool, and Iago the pariah, the morally immaterial, the extravagant force, but if we decline manipulation and scoot our psyches adroitly, Iago becomes hero, Desdemona the enemy or fool, and Othello the pariah, the extravagant force. Dare we tune the kaleidoscope? Have we the key?

RICHARD 2

Merer men are ground into a meal when kings contend. Beginningly, Henry ascends King Richard when Henry accuses Richard's thug of a murder delegated by Richard, forcing Richard to betray his thug formally. Eagerly each king announces his enemy a usurper, guilty of treason, since pomp requires such announcement. Treason means, of course, "an offense against the inclinations of my pride," when majesty speaks the word.

Richard is only a poet, unfit to be king. He is emotionally tender, and celibately selfish. His lady is an abandoned castrata, her personality an erasure. His Richard has abandoned her Richard.

Henry is responsibly extroverted, the perfect king. He wears his murders well. He lies easily, as potency must, believing his lies because he believes in himself. In calm he can be breathtakingly merciful, publicly.

Henry cannot lift from Richard Richard's crown, because Richard, exhausted and abandoned by his God, surrenders it. And when Richard concedes, Richard ceases to wait. A man waits, however desperately, because he hopes for good or ill, and by the time Richard concedes, he has been forgiven the quest of hope, and has become psychologically posthumous, practically speaking.

Richard's essential foolishness has one blemish of goodness. Continually he refuses advice from wiser heads, and punishes provokers, yet he knows his uncle York loves him personally, and loves the king he is, also. Richard cherishes York therefore, cherishes York's reckless love, and when he understands that York has joined the winning team, this is Richard's defeat.

Editors use "venom" to denounce the ditch-dwelling Irish rebels, although Mr Shakespeare initially used "vermin," a crueler epithet, which was changed prior to the gatherings into quarto.

ROMEO & JULIET

Our loyalty to ourselves compels us to believe in the dazzling intelligence of our friends and of those we admire, since we dazzle ourselves, though we understand that nobody means what we say, what we do, what we are, and that everything's in the splattering spatter resultant from the preliminarily rude blowfest. And amongst a dazzling spindrift of stardust, ROMEO & JULIET peeks out amid the rubble.

Juliet is scheduled to be the most thoughtful of the characters, who questions the touchy relationship between her selected male and his family's name. She says, pondering his family, "Wherefore art thou Romeo?"

She says, pondering his family, and then pondering him she'd steal from his family's embrace, "Spread thy close curtain, love-performing night, that Romeo's eyes may wink, and Romeo leap to these arms untalked of and unseen." That first Romeo is theirs, and the second Romeo is his, who becomes hers, she hopes.

Juliet, here, exemplifies the feminine principle of sexual superiority, and every other circumstance gravitates toward her engendering aptitude. Romeo is a chromosome, and Juliet the feminine basis. His personal amenability is an irrelevance, as is hers, as Juliet.

She is become worlds.

Beethoven's NINTH suffers from a falsely contrived final movement repudiating its established narrative. ROMEO & JULIET suffers similarly, incidentally, providing a merely formulaic second half intended to entertain Mr Shakespeare's customers with a conformably whiz-bang humongous ending.

Had the honorable gods of the true poetic ideal obtained, the padre's connivance had eloped the kids to Mantua, with money and chattel, and with an appropriate array of picturesquely picaresque incidents, of course, but Mr Shakespeare's attentive eye was upon the little golden sun he held in his hand.

THE TEMPEST

Shakespeare's TEMPEST is tragic because at play's end only Ariel and Caliban may proceed toward betterment. Prospero, unwilling to believe life is earnest, resumes his role as befuddled duke, and Miranda, a rich man's female, diminishes into the scented intrigues of courtliness, abandoning her sometime sweetness.

Prospero is incapable of pragmatism, choosing boyishness. Miranda is useless, practically speaking. Ariel, their slave, labors airily, and Caliban, their innocent slave, drudges brutally, supplying fire.

Miranda appears an answer to our loneliness yet in accepting her answer we'd deny her personal perspective. Her invective against Caliban delivered before an audience, of course, demonstrates she's not simply an answer. She has a tremendous itch, and she craves comprehensive bedding.

Ferdie looks foolish, a man who never closes his lips, and such folly will exasperate Miranda when she browses the courtly smorgasbord. She'll pretend she's a victim, thereby justifying every liberty.

Finally, Ariel is released until captured again, and if Caliban's not shipped in chains he'll resume authority of the isle and will forget language as he's been taught it, forgetting about wolves and horses, and apes with brows villainous low.

The little pond beside the grotto will become sweet again, since Caliban will cease to empty Prospero's and Miranda's chamberpots into it. His mind will mistify everything he's been taught, into a myth.

Mr Shakespeare adored our human sound, and his adoration was universal rather than particular. "Lest," for an example, stands for "unless" and means "except" much as we'd mean it lest, we'd forego the psychological reach.

TIMON

Many men who spend their lives cheating, spend the evening of their lives pretending to have achieved greatly some general good. Timon's no exception, a wise old cretin eager to expatiate.

As an owner of the people he remembers that war is lucrative for the owners. War's pursued, he remembers, because the filling of the coffins results in the filling of the coffers. He's made his good killing, and he pretends his purpose had been a garnering of goodnesses, but his money, that enabler of conscience, runs out.

His mind balks. His comfortable paunch, that's been with good capon lined, abandons him. He becomes, for him, profoundly embarrassed by his apparent foolishness, and hiding in misanthropy, a further fiction, he runs. He's a tiny person, but not exceptionally so.

He finds a cave by the wooded sea, scrounges like a pioneer, and he becomes, we may imagine, fouler and fouler. While digging for his roots, his God delivers him a miracle in gold, his only wisdom.

His impulsiveness, which is his pride, summons a pilgrimage toward him, which, he proudly believes, disgusts him with its baseness, its treachery. Everybody is willing to forgive him for the hurt they have done him, if only he'll supply a fountain of gold, his only good.

Timon buys a wagon and places his gold therein. He buries in the hole a wandering beggar and builds a cairn thereon, with a sign advertising the death of a fool. Many leagues farther a wagon arrives, with a gaberlunzie and a married pair of donkeys, and they settle, and within a little cabin and a paddock they dwell where the smoke wreathes up the chimney and is whisked away into the good sky.

Encounters are gratuitous, denying tension. Everywhere's a blue exhaustion glimpsing people in a mysterious distance beyond any focus, and psyche wonders if they exist.

TITUS ANDRONICUS

This is the land of topsy-turvy, rumored by Immanuel Velikovsky, where Conan drags whimpering things away, where Gollum is acclaimed Gandalf, a land presumed by pride, pomp, and ceremony. The inhabitants are a bubble with pagan and with Christian epithets proceeding through intuition and osmosis rather than through epiphany and application, which mean nothing except exasperation.

As his daughter's dowry Titus hands the crown to the stronger prince but his daughter elopes with the other prince so Titus murders her brother his son, in the self-pity of his pride.

Bewitched by the conquered queen of Goths the stronger prince marries her thereby adopting her evil sons except her son Titus murdered on a religious whim.

Thus is ACT ONE, a palimpsest.

Titus is hero, obsessed with his pride. Tamora is enemy bewitching her sons, her latest husband, Titus' bubble-brained sons, and her tiny-eared callipygous ream Aaron.

Aaron is Tamora's familiar except he acts like a sluice-gate investing her power with matter from the source. Aaron is witness, pariah, whose concern is his and Tamora's freshly hatched son. Aaron watches, visited by sanity, the insanity he's encircled by, and proliferates.

Titus is imperceptive to ordinariness yet when his daughter Lavinia kisses his futile hand, beside his sons' dripping heads, a gateway opens momentarily and Titus understands they are bewitched. He only sees, while everybody revels promiselessly.

Aaron is the villain considered the villain by this world of villains, and is buried breast-high to be savaged. His baby, maybe, is slaughtered to his eyes as the dogs and the birds close in.

Simplicity, the clown peers into the raging insanity and would shun it, and so he is hanged. Perhaps he represents honorable purpose, and embarrasses his betters.

THE WINTER'S TALE

In every thoroughly materialist society the most successful people tend to be the best-looking and the most intelligently superficial. The bastions of the poor continue poor and ugly because in every generation the best-looking women are purchased by the wealthiest men, unequivocally, at auction.

Florizel, a prince, is selfish, arbitrary, and superficial. He calls a princess to wife, though he'd accounted her a shepherd's beautiful daughter. His attempt, unconsciously, had been the further subjection of her people by debasing her bloodline, to beautify his line and to glorify his loins. Her loveliness was for him a spiritual epiphany.

She is the image of her mother, and daddy wants baby.

Her father, Leontes, we are told, murders snittily, yet is beloved of his familiars. He gives them strange mercies, and encourages subordinate intimacies. Antigonus, an old brigand, speaks him intimately to dissuade his evitable madness, and an anonymous servant orates nonchalantly on pulchritude while Leontes listens appreciably.

Kings are always on stage.

Antigonus, who gets eaten by a bear, is from a macho world whose refugees conscientiously use a freshly creative argot to announce themselves the dispossessed although it's an hypocrisy. He'd "land-dam" some cur, he says, meaning to bury the boy alive. A mechanically contrived anchor in the earth is frequently called a dead man, and the principle's similar.

Of course, it's impossible that Queen Hermione's existence was concealed for sixteen years amid a rotating coven of tenders, even if the bribes had held. Hermione cries when Leontes complains that an embodiment of sixteen additional years has wrinkled her previously succulent skin, and she ponders, doubtless, the progeny of siblings.

Her world is crueler than we can readily imagine.

David Castleman

Bob Black, COME HITHER TO GO YONDER: BLUEGRASS WITH BILL MONROE, U of Ill, 1325 S Oak, Champaign IL 61820-6903; 208pps, \$22.

Bill Monroe, Alvin Carter, and Hank Williams comprise the fundamental trinity of country music, and Monroe's finest recordings occurred in the 40s and 50s. This memoir, by a Blue Grass Boy, recalls 70s peregrinations.

Monroe's imperiousness was as notorious as his genius was renowned, and his whole package was adored. A joke was current:

Having died, a musician awakened surrounded by the heavenly billows and by musician-angels playing the sweetest bluegrass music. On a hill danced, played, and sang the very embodiment of Bill Monroe, mandolin and high tenor impeccable.

"Something's wrong," complained the freshly dead. "Bill ain't dead yet."

"That ain't Bill," he was told. "That's just God pretending to be Bill Moroe."

Edward Francisco, THE ALCHEMY OF WORDS, Tom Tolnay, Birch Brook, PO Box 81, Delhi NY 13753; 56 pps, \$13.

..half the fun
of suicide is being discovered.

Wordsworth is the exemplar, yet Wordsworth looked and with unimpeded psyche sketched his personal image naturally. This gent applauds reticence yet enjoys the frail incontinence of chat.

..the only time I can stand the sound of the human voice
is when I'm screaming.

He's a sly thing, and his poetry's fictitious. Understanding optimism is the enemy of good, he smiles gratuitously.

**Brian Fewster, SYMPATHETIC MAGIC, Poor Tom's Press,
89a Winchester Aye, Leicester LE 3 1AY ENGLAND; 92pps,
£6.**

Verses are sovereign
and they, though gods may pass,
remain
more durable than brass.

Such tension is compelling, and while he writes with such tooth-gritting lip-snarling tension he is masterful. He is empathic and wise, congenial and sympathetic, imperious, and he is good at being alive.

BOY ON A LANDING

Down the lit passage an open door,
through the door a dark room,
across the room an uncurtained window.

In this window the dark room doubled,
across the doubled room a door,
a lit passage, a pale-faced child.

What does the child see down the passage,
through the doors of the dark rooms
where a white-haired man enacts his memory?

This is the place where Alice lives, watching from a half-opened closet, watching Alice watching others.

**JoAnne McFarland, FOSSIL , 438 12 St 30, Brooklyn NY
11215; Gold Leaf, 543 Union St Studio 2b, Brooklyn NY
11215; 8opps, \$12.**

PLUTONIUM

I leave America
her bleat bleat bleat
rewind and repeat
I gallop toward you
shudder through the mirror
rise like an angel

Sulfuric sky

Whosoever comes after
please begin at the end
Don't bear this cloud Amen

All temporal existence happens in a great wooded laky park watched through a windowpane's pale silver curtains.

This is an honorable position, watching life's injustices and beauties and commenting on them, stirring the green and blue pigments of the world, with a wand that was found beneath a tree in the park, still fledged with the lacework of bark.

Albert J. Manachino, TALES FROM THE LURKING CHICKEN, c/o John Thiel, Pablo Lennis, 30 N. 19 St, Lafayette IN 47904; 40pps.

POSTMAN IN HELL concerns a fellow so alarmingly inept, reputedly, that he's assigned throughout eternity, alternately, I suspect, in hell, to deliver mail, bunglingly, of course.

HAUNTER OF THE PARK's about a lousy ballplayer who haunts a baseball stadium till he's exorcised by a bigotted loogie-hawking chaw-chewer, but I'm redundant.

Both stories are charming, the latter terser, and the illustrations by Larry Dickson are marvelous, albeit too few.

Eric Martin, THE DEATH OF ORPHEUS, AND OTHER POEMS, ORIGINAL AND TRANSLATED, 42 Winter St, Presque Isle ME 04769; 36pps, complimentary copy at emart4ox@yahoo.com

This is a classically civilized poetry such as our society dismisses with a wave of the hand. These latter several centuries have rolled through the lands with scarce a whisper, while this man performs somewhere the far side of that indefinite line, doing his unregarded best, unrewarded in a nation of shoplifters and self-announced saints.

Ron Offen, ed, FREE LUNCH, Po Box 717, IL 60025-0717; 32pps, \$5.

Thor Rinden says,

Shucks, there you was
all trussed up in silks—
lookin' good enough to eat.
Then I comes along
and strips 'em off—
you was ready to boil!
But you just steamed and hissed
'til I buttered you up.
“Sweetie,” I says—
“you is an earful!”

This is wholly canny and wonderful.

Notes

Gary Beck's poetry has appeared in dozens of literary magazines. His chapbook 'The Conquest of Somalia' will be published by Cervena Barva Press. His recent fiction has been published in numerous literary magazines. His plays and translations of Moliere, Aristophanes, and Sophocles have been produced Off-Broadway.

David Castleman lives in Dayton, Washington. His poems, tales, and reviews have appeared in hundreds of small press magazines since the early 1970s.

David Groulx is a Native American who lives in Moose Creek, Ontario.

George Held, a five-time Pushcart Prize nominee, has published poems, short stories, translations, essays, and book reviews in such places as *Circumference*, *Confrontation*, *5 AM*, *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, and *Notre Dame Review*. In December 2007, Garrison Keillor read his poem "Aftermath" on *The Writer's Almanac*. Among his ten collections of poems are the chapbooks *Grounded* (2005) and *The Art of Writing and Others* (2007).

Cheryl Hicks has had poems published in *Literal Translations*, *Toward the Light*, *The Sigurd Journal*, *Ginosko*, *Eskimo Pie*, *Urban Spaghetti*, *Blue Fifth Review*, *Heliotrope*, *Makar*, *Snakeskin*, *HerCircle*, *The Orphan Leaf Review*, *the delinquent*, *Autumn Sky Poetry*, *Silent Actor*, *Avatar Review*, *Word Riot*, *Clockwise Cat*, *Halfway Down the Stairs*, *Monkey Kettle*, and *103: The Journal of the Image Warehouse*.

Kathryn Jacobs is a medievalist at Texas A & M—Commerce. Both scholar and poet, she has published a book, sundry articles, and poetry. The latter have or will appear in numerous journals, among them *The New Formalist*, *Measure* and *Quantum Leap*.

William Linville was a retired professor, poet, artist who lived in Honolulu. He once served as Dorothy Parker's informative chauffeur.

Eric Martin's poems and translations have appeared in over fifty print and online journals throughout the United States, Canada and Great Britain. He is a formalist poet, with a particular interest in Romantic poetry, especially that of Lord Byron and Edgar Allan Poe. He is currently completing a verse translation of the French libretto

to Hector Berlioz's *The Damnation of Faust* (1846). Presently, he resides in northern Maine, with his wife and family, where he enjoys fishing and listening to classical music.

A. E. Nugent has taught at Towson University, Goucher College, and Stevenson University (formerly known as Villa Julie College). Her work has appeared or is forthcoming in *Phoebe*, *River Oak Review*, and *Bayou*. Her second and third careers include working as a strength and conditioning specialist and a landscape photographer. Her photographs have been accepted for exhibition at twelve galleries.

Simon Perchik is an attorney whose poems have appeared in *Partisan Review*, *The New Yorker* and elsewhere.

John Alfred Taylor holds a BA from Missouri University, a MA and a Ph.D. from State University of Iowa. He taught at Washington & Jefferson College, and is now Professor Emeritus. Over the years he's had poems in *Kayak*, the *Southwest Review*, the *Kenyon Review*, *New Letters*, *West Branch*, and many other magazines.

Leo Yankevich's latest books are *The Last Silesian* (The Mandrake Press, 2005) and *Tikkun Olam & Other Poems* (The New Formalist Press, 2008).

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