Crossing Lines
Poets Who Came to Canada in the Vietnam War Era

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Edited by
Allan Briesmaster and
Steven Michael Berzensky

Seraphim Editions

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Preface

A migration of poets

It has been widely reported that as many as 50,000 young men of draft age came to Canada from the United States in the mid-1960s through the mid-1970s. It is commonly accepted that most of this group of immigrants remained in Canada and became citizens. Not so well known, however, is that thousands of American women also emigrated during this historic period of upheaval and change in both countries. In light of such data, it should be seen as no coincidence that about a third of our *Crossing Lines* poets are women.

Although the Vietnam war and the Draft and anti-war protests were prominent in the news of the time, individual circumstances differed greatly, even among those wishing to avoid "crossing the line" into military service. These varied circumstances are in plain view in some of the poems here as well as in the contributors' bios. At least two poets (Kolos, Sward) actually served in the U.S. armed forces. In their poems and/or bios, some poets are outspoken about resisting the Draft and the Vietnam war (Nickell, Erkiletian, Faiers, for example). Many others were exempt from the Draft and came to Canada seeking opportunity or a fresh start; quite a few were university students or teachers and professors.

A sizeable portion of these poets had little involvement with the politics of the day, or with the "counter-culture" (see Micros' and McCaslin's poems, for instance). Some who did get involved have chosen not to write about their experiences in what, to them, is a confused, painful, and distant time. For some, the departure was wrenching (McCarty and Zisis, for example). And for some, the arrival brought loneliness, a strong sense of separation (Oxendine), and a lowering of expectations. (Johnson and Di Cicco share particularly poignant treatments of loneliness; while Zetlin writes of the difficulty many faced finding work without having prior "Canadian experience.") Others felt far more at home here than there (Benson, Berzensky, Fretwell and many more, to judge from their poems). Some write of going back as more difficult than leaving (Rule, Scheier, Stange).

However much they have differed in other respects, the lives of all the men and women whose voices are gathered in this book were radically changed by their passage, within that tumultuous time span, from the one country to the other. While the sense of transition and transformation may not always be evident in overt, literal terms – this is poetry, after all – it can still be felt implicitly and in depth on page after page. The editors are convinced that each of these poems could, in truth, have only been written by people who chose to cross the line

into Canada. *Crossing Lines* is thus, in a very fundamental sense, an extended exploration of dual nationality. Though much more besides.

Poetry thrives on particulars, not generalizations, and the editors (poets themselves) made no effort to force this book's contents into a preconceived framework. In our initial call for submissions, we did propose a set of themes, and that was as much to foster specificity as it was to ensure a degree of coherence. Instead of taking a top-down approach, we allowed the book to emerge mainly from the ground up, and gain a life of its own: unpredictable and divergent.

While the largest number of poems we selected were right "on theme," we never lost sight of our basic criteria of literary merit and individual authenticity. Focusing on the texts themselves, we set aside considerations of the poets' stature. Some who have achieved distinction are represented by a single poem (and in certain instances, only one was submitted). At the same time, a fair number of poets who are not as well-known as they deserve to be have multiple poems (and these include such original voices as Freeman, Iserman, Jasper, Osborn, and Richardson). Some writers who are better known for their fiction and prose are also represented here with two or more poems (Aubert, Christy, Frutkin, Hekkanen, Maillard, Margoshes, Rooke, Teleky).

Altogether, the poems say and imply a great deal about these 76 men and women who chose to move north. Moreover, they stand as a microcosm of a large and unparalleled social phenomenon. One quality that characterizes this particular immigrant group is a dynamic individualism, a widely acknowledged American trait which they each brought undeclared across the border, prodding them to contribute something distinctive to Canada's culture. The medium of poetry itself invites individual idiosyncrasy, and in reading the submissions for this book we did not find any poets who wrote exactly like each other, or who approached the same subjects from the same angle. We observe each poet stitching his or her own uniquely colourful patch into the variegated quilt of Canadian literature.

If CanLit remains to some extent an unresolved critical puzzle, then one or more of its missing pieces may prove to be the varied ways in which these writers have been able to add their singular viewpoints, styles, forms, subject matters, and voices to the development of our poetry, fiction, non-fiction, and drama. Some of the most prominent and influential contributors to this anthology, like Amabile, Blodgett, Deahl, Di Cicco, Fetherling, Norris, Reibetanz, Rooke, Scheier, Sward, and Yates, to name just a few, along with the others, have given and continue to give imaginative works of inestimable value to this multi-faceted culture. Some poets who, unfortunately, for a variety of reasons, could not be included on these pages, like Robin Blaser, Roo Borson, Paulette

Jiles, the late Charles Lillard, A.F. Moritz, J.J. Steinfeld, and Frederick Ward, are also part of this gifted and diverse immigrant group, who, if their works were magically subtracted en masse, would leave a gaping hole. At the outset of this project, it was almost mind-boggling to the editors to contemplate both the magnitude of the impact of all these writers and the absence of any substantial anthology highlighting this large cultural fact.

Clearing up misconceptions

The title of *Crossing Lines* will likely be subject to misconceptions about the book's character and content in certain respects. The best way to get these cleared up, of course, is simply to read all the poems, not just a few here and there that might easily fit into some narrow preconception. "Vietnam" is in the full title deliberately, and this anthology contains a number of powerful reflections on that war and that period (for instance, some of Christy's and Iserman's poems). It will be evident, though, that the majority of the poems here are not explicitly engaged with these subjects. The principal reason for emphasizing "the Vietnam War Era" is the editors' recognition that this conflict indelibly altered the consciousness of virtually every young person (and their parents) living in the United States during that turbulent time. In Canada, too.

Yes, some of the *Crossing Lines* poems are outspokenly anti-war and anti-U.S. policy, but it would be inaccurate to call even those that are barbed and scathing simply "anti-American." Cases in point are Michael Boughn's two cantos from his ongoing comic and satiric *Cosmographia*, and Banjo Jim Erkiletian's witty song lyric "Bush Whacker Blues." Then there are earlier poems of protest written during the Vietnam war itself, such as Ellen S. Jaffe's "Vietnam, August 11, 1966," which has as much relevance today as when it was written. After all, wars and the media reportage of wars seem not to have changed very greatly since Jaffe wrote that poem.

Scattered throughout this anthology are a number of other poems which not only focus on that particular war – including its aftermath, its continuing repercussions, and its parallels to current events – but also consider war in general. The voices in these poems are not stuck in a single groove, repeating clichés. On the contrary, war is presented here with fresh imagery and metaphors and analogies (e.g., fishing and hunting), and from varied emotional, intellectual, and historical perspectives. We have even included some verses that gaze back with personal nostalgia on brothers and fathers, classmates and friends who have willingly fought in Vietnam and in previous wars. Some poems

convey a sense of deep family pride, of a tradition of communal acceptance, and of a lost or diminished military glory. So it could truly be said that this book is not narrowly anti-war but simply and profoundly human.

The sad irony can hardly be lost on readers, however, that history does, unfortunately, replicate itself, and that a costly military adventure continues, with seemingly no end in sight, not dissimilar to the one which changed these poets' lives four decades ago. A few controversial statements in this book on past wars and present wars run the risk of being quoted out of context by unsympathetic readers. Others may wish the anthology to have been more politically charged than it is. But what is most central here are the compelling, and somehow never trite, expressions of a profound aversion to war and of a longing for peace.

In any case, *Crossing Lines*, taken in its entirety, is clearly so multifarious in its angles of vision that it cannot be said to have a single political message. Seventy-six Americans peaceably crossed over at different times and in different ways and for different reasons, and, arriving, every one, in their own pair of shoes or sandals or boots, proceeded to leave their individual imprints on Canadian soil.

Aims and concerns

Without minimizing any of its other dimensions, it is fair to say that the larger concerns and aims of this anthology are broadly cultural and social. Through the lens of poetry, a unique opportunity is provided for readers, whatever their nationality, to survey an unparalleled phenomenon and its ramifications. The reality of the matter is this: no other span of ten to twelve years saw so many poets-to-be move from one country to another. This phenomenon calls for greater recognition than it has so far been given, in Canada and elsewhere. Such recognition ought to come not only from those with an interest in this nation's culture, but also from others able to realize how poetry (especially of the kinds on these pages) offers exceptional insights for which historical and sociological studies yield no equivalent.

Apart from a basic desire for inclusiveness and variety, there was no conscious aesthetic bias on the editors' part. That is, we did not favour one particular school or style of poetry over any other. Nor was there any intention to create an exhaustive literary-historical survey. Furthermore, we did not endeavour to fabricate nor coax out of hiding some imagined muse-like entity that would represent or symbolize an artistic link between all of our poets other than their country of origin (or in some cases, the land of their second settlement). We wanted the

work primarily to be both meritorious and representative. A glance at each contributor's selected publications and other abundant accomplishments in the bios will show that this anthology is, at most, only the tip of some enormous northern iceberg. Or if you prefer a warmer image, this book is a bouquet gathered from many broad meadows.

Poetry exists to be enjoyed first and foremost, before it becomes an object of study, critique, or reverence. One of the characteristic pleasures it gives its audiences, be they single silent readers or clusters of enthusiastic fans in candlelit cafés, is the gift of illumination, that spectral radiance from dark to light. As an anthology, *Crossing Lines* endeavours to meet the perennial challenge of offering breadth and variety while maintaining excellence. The editors believe that, thanks to the poets themselves, we have succeeded in meeting the majority of our aims; but at the same time, we know we will be second-guessed with regard to our strategy and our particular methods in putting this book together.

The calls and responses

In early 2007, we wrote up an initial Call for Submissions. Over a year before its projected publication date, we began inviting poets who grew up in the U.S. and came to Canada in the Vietnam war era to send us as many as five or six poems for consideration. These could be previously published, or written especially for the book. Having first tested the waters with some poets we knew, and getting enthusiastic responses, we issued general calls for submissions to writers' groups across Canada, starting in the spring. And while our connections south of the border were scant, we extended the invitation to poets now living back in the U.S. We asked all of the poets if they knew of anyone else who would not likely get word about this project.

We proposed the following set of themes: 1. Poetic considerations of the war in Vietnam and the politics of the time from yesterday's and today's perspective. 2. Experiences with the Draft, military service, and the anti-war movement, specifically. 3. Memories of coming to Canada, including reasons for leaving, crossing the border, and settling in this new country. 4. Responses of family and friends (and strangers). 5. Emotions and impressions on returning to the U.S. for the first time and at subsequent times. 6. Thoughts on becoming Canadian, as well as observations on the differences between our two countries. 7. Poems simply about peace.

We emphasized that, while we'd welcome poems dealing with the war years, we would not confine the anthology's scope to that period or to

related political topics. On the other hand, we made it clear we would not shy away from outspoken expressions.

At least two other themes not initially proposed are also represented in this book. We have some poems covering what it was like growing up in America in the 50s and early 60s (by Jasper, Teleky, Wheeler, and others). There are also a few poems on Old Age and Last Things (by Chenette, Frutkin, and Milman, for instance). The editors believe these subjects, though remote in some ways from "the Vietnam era," belong securely in the book and help make it complete.

At the time the official calls for submissions went out, the editors were acquainted with little more than half of those who eventually would respond. In some cases, it came as a revelation that poets we knew personally, or whose work was familiar to us, were from the United States. If one is supposed to instantly recognize the members of one's own tribe, then we did not. It is embarrassing to admit this, but then, with this particular immigrant group, it is most likely a common experience. Other than being branded by a particular accent, let's say, from the Bronx, or from the deep South, none of us carries a sign on our chest: "Formerly from the States!" or "Ex-American." We have blended into the Canadian social landscape that much.

In addition, some very accomplished writers and others who simply weren't active on the poetry scene took us entirely by surprise. We had never heard of them! (This only strengthens our belief that Canada may have the most poets per capita in the English-speaking world.) One of the side benefits of this anthology, we soon realized, would be to broaden everyone's awareness about certain poets in our midst. And another, to encourage a few poets who had ceased writing in recent years to start in again.

Happily, there was no pre-set limit on the number of poets; and it turned out that every one who was eligible to submit who did favourably respond to our invitation had at least one poem "on theme" that suited the book. In some instances we offered editorial suggestions. We want to thank those poets for their co-operation in making good poems even better. We are also grateful to other poets (Amabile, Blodgett, Brown, Hekkanen, Moore, Sibum, Taylor, and Zizis) who let us take excerpts from their poems. In at least four cases (Boughn, Maillard, Reibetanz, Yates) we chose portions from longer published works or continuing serial sequences. Readers intrigued by these should seek out the uncut versions.

Regrettably, it was impossible to be certain of reaching all the poets who might ultimately have been included. We did make extra efforts to ask those we knew of who did not respond to our calls for

submissions to send us at least one poem. Also, although this book was not intended to be a complete inventory, we are discontented whenever we think that some eligible poets were, and still are, unaware of it. Only four of the poets included here now reside in the U.S., and we are certain there are many more in both countries we have missed. It was disappointing to us, as well, that a few poets we deeply admire chose to decline our invitation.

The 76 poets

Some broad observations about the poets may be useful in supplementing their bios. It is safe to say that a great majority were at a formative stage in the growth of their art when they crossed the line into Canada in their early to late 20s. More than a few will admit that it was this country that turned them into serious poets.

We note that at least four poems in this anthology were written as far back as the 1960s (by Greenwald, Jaffe, and Sutterfield). An interesting exception to the average age of our poets is Robert Sward, whose poetic career was already blooming when he emigrated to Canada in the late 1960s. His poem about serving in the Korean War (!) was not written until much later, then finally included in his 1991 book, *Four Incarnations*.

A small number of *Crossing Lines* poets began to publish books here in the late 1960s through the early 1970s. George Amabile, George Fetherling, and J. Michael Yates are three prime examples. Works from (or about) those seminal years are featured in this collection by many different poets, including some reflective poems with 1960s dates in their titles (Greene, Harman, McCaslin, Rodríguez). Many poets were late bloomers who only began writing after they had lived in Canada for a decade or two, and a few even had their first book published late in their careers.

As might be expected, some poets have amassed a substantial body of work over the years while others have published sporadically. At one extreme are prolific poets whose Selected Poems appeared at the beginning of the new century (Amabile, Berzensky, Di Cicco, Fetherling, Norris, Sward). And there are those whose reputations are based on different genres (Aubert, Frutkin, Lohans, Maillard, Rooke). At the other extreme are a few who have not published any poetry for many years (Anson, Bowman, Padgett, Rodríguez, Zizis), or who have published only a handful to a few dozen poems so far (Ewing, Klonsky, Lemond, Jones, Olshen, Wapp). This should not be surprising, since poetry is, for many of us, an intractably erratic and sporadic art.

There are also poems included here from the 1980s and 1990s, and from chapbooks and books which came out as recently as 2007 (Freeman, Greene, Harman, McCabe, Pierson), together with new poems meant for forthcoming collections (Blodgett, Iserman, Morton, and more). There are many poems written specifically for *Crossing Lines* (Benson, Bowman, Brown, Kolos, McCarty, McCaslin, Sorensen, etc.); and we are particularly gratified knowing that several of these poets ventured deep into what, for them, was unexplored territory.

This chronology may make it seem that our selections came together more haphazardly than was the case. *Crossing Lines* is, in essence, multi-threaded and multi-layered, and as such it reflects the poets' widely varied literary lives as much as anything. The muse visits some poets in a more or less steady rush, but for others she appears rarely and randomly. And so the works of poets at both ends of this spectrum have found places here.

The poems

It is intriguing to consider some of the main influences on the various poets' styles. These influences stem from their U.S. backgrounds as well as their readings, as maturing writers, in Canadian poetry. If an academic treatise were written on the subject, however, it would observe that the poems in this book do not necessarily typify what certain poets are known for. For instance, the influence of Japanese forms such as haiku, tanka, and haibun on three of our poets (Baranosky, Carter, Faiers) is actually quite pronounced. Their writings in these forms get only limited representation on these pages. Similarly, certain poets who excel with other strict forms (e.g., Reibetanz, in stanzas and syllabics; and Zetlin, with glosas and ghazals) mainly reveal their non-formalist skill-sets here.

Crossing Lines has a slim yet fair showing of lyrical and minimalist poems, plus a number of prose poems. Some of the latter may seem closer to prose memoir (Padgett, Reibetanz) or essay (Scheier) than poetry, but the editors were convinced they belong on the strength of their sensibility. The Keith Maillard sonnets, which are "liberated" (non-traditional), along with Bernadette Rule's pantoum, and Eric Folsom's ghazal (even though he calls it an "anti-ghazal") are all indicators of the resurgent neo-formalist trend in North America since around the turn of the century.

There are at least half a dozen practitioners of Canadian/American Surrealism here, widely varying in their approach to creating wild dreamlike or nightmare settings. Notably, J. Michael Yates (especially

his "Caribou Crossing" prose poem from *The Great Bear Lake Meditations*); Steven McCabe (his "Hitchhike" narrative); Michael Boughn's punning takes on the George W. Bush administration; Ernest Hekkanen (who has edited an anthology of Surreal short fiction, with the dark excerpt from his "I Did This"); Richard Lemm (in his psychedelic "Hendrix of Arabia"); and Leon Rooke (from his "Crossword Wars" to his madcap American turkey shoot in "Vets").

Some cross-border influences such as the Beats (on Christy and Goldberg) and the "confessional school" (Fretwell and others) may be noticeable to a lesser degree. Canadian mentorship by such figures as Dorothy Livesay, Milton Acorn, Patrick Lane, Don McKay, and Al Purdy has been acknowledged by a sizeable segment of our contributors; and nearly all poetry-reading newcomers in the late 60s and early 70s soon gained inspiration from the works of others, such as Atwood, Birney, Bowering, Brewster, Cohen, Dudek, Layton, Lowther, MacEwan, Mandel, Newlove, Ondaatje, Reaney, and Souster, who were among the most prominent then.

Specific influences in form can be problematic to trace, since "influence" is such a broad and generic term. But it would be useful and true to say that most of the poems in this book are in a thoroughly mainstream-Canadian mode: the realistic anecdotal narrative. Many poets from A to Zed (Almon to Zetlin) are quite at home in this down-to-earth mode of verse, whether their entire body of writing is in that mode or not. There are also a few dramatic monologues (Greco, Richardson, Rooke, Sibum). And two poets (Anson and Boughn) write in a mannered, allusive, elliptical mode that can be opaque to the uninitiated and yet rewarding to those who pay close attention. Theirs are among the relatively few poems which may be labeled postmodern. One contemporary strain which was surprisingly absent from the submissions we received is the avant garde, experimental, and concrete poetry traditions descended from bp Nichol and bill bissett.

But another special Canadian tradition thrives here: People's Poetry, as championed by Dorothy Livesay, Milton Acorn, Al Purdy, and Ted Plantos. (Its major American practitioner is considered to be Carl Sandburg.) This "school" is noteworthy because at least four of our poets – Brown, Deahl, Faiers, and Ray – have long had close connections with it. And if People's Poetry is understood in a broad sense to mean poetry for non-specialists (no advanced credentials in literature required, in order to "get it"), then much of the work in this book belongs under that umbrella.

Even though a remarkably high proportion of *Crossing Lines* poets have taught in universities, including distinguished scholars and professors emeriti, their work here and elsewhere is mostly accessible

to generalists and does not necessarily "smell of the lamp." (We sometimes have the impression it is quite a different story south of the border.) There is, in truth, no contradiction when the definitive biographer of staunch nationalist Milton Acorn writes a poem like "Return to Sender" (Lemm).

It is still a long distance between populist writing (or for that matter, any writing) "for the page," with or without pop culture references, and two portions of the literary map which have minimal representation here: namely, poetry as performance (Taylor) and poetry as song (Erkiletian). Nowadays, these two vital modes of expression appear to be dominated by much younger practitioners. The same goes for working in multi-media. Verbal/Visual artists Christy, McCabe, and Zetlin are three exceptions.

A far different, much thicker anthology of these same 76 poets could conceivably mirror Canada's larger poetic landscape more fully and show how versatile most of these poets actually are. Despite its limitations in those ways, however, *Crossing Lines* is wide-ranging enough to resist easy digestibility. Some readers may not be comfortable with its eclecticism, but the editors believe that most will find that this book hangs together in many meaningful ways. We thought about organizing the contents into thematic sections, but came to feel that would over-complicate matters. One of the potential rewards for readers, after all, resides in making their own interconnections, free of pedagogical guidance.

So, from the irony and humour of Almon all the way through to the hard introspection of Zizis, you, readers, are now on your own. It is left up to you to construct, if desired, in a gradual sweep or in fits and starts, a master narrative of one sort or another. Most likely, you will dip in here and there, lured by the titles of poems whose authors you may not have heard of before. If Canadian poetry is already your "thing," you will recognize quite a few of the names. But no matter how well-read you may be, some rewarding finds are in store. We are confident that anyone who thoughtfully makes the acquaintance of at least a few of these poems will, before returning this book to the shelf, be enlightened and moved, and will soon wish to revisit and discover more.

Allan Briesmaster
Steven Michael Berzensky

March, 2008

Bert Almon

Pennsylvania on Flag Day

(June 14, 2007)

"Where one can no longer love, one should pass by."
– Friedrich Nietzsche

1.

Mostly I get the American news
mediated by the BBC *World Report.*
Sometimes a war story reminds me of the 60s,
sets me choking like an asthmatic reacting
to the ozone from a distant lightning strike.

I recall the flag code we learned in school:
the flag must be lowered at night,
and folded into a triangle
in a prescribed pattern.
It can be flown upside down
only as a sign of distress.
An old flag must be burned in a dignified ceremony.

People have been sent to jail
for wearing flag patches
on the seat of their pants.
It used to accompany the slogan
on bumper stickers: America, love it or leave it.

My father's coffin was covered with a flag
that was folded correctly
by the leader of the honour guard.
My mother lost it in one of her moves,
the one flag I would have cherished.

2.

The flags were everywhere in Pennsylvania,
every business, half the houses on any block,
the bumper stickers. In flower beds,
people used them as borders
like red, white and blue flowers.
I even saw traditional barn stars
in the same colour scheme.
On Flag Day, they broke out like a rash.

I prefer my daughter's rainbow flag
that flies from her porch near Allentown.
It has more colours.

Bert Almon

Days of Minus 39

When I got my job in Canada,
the buzz in the graduate lounge grew very loud.

"You'll have to teach in an academic gown."

"It will be very cold there,
you can lose your life emptying the garbage."

"No, Alberta is one of the maritime provinces,
they get the Gulf Stream!"

The friendly immigration officer at Coutts
kept calling the country "Khanada."
"I think you'll like it very much
in Khanada." Handing over
the landed-immigrant card, he said,
"Welcome to Khanada."
I thought, I can manage the gown
and maybe I'll toughen up for the cold,
but I will never learn to say Khanada.

I arrived in time for the coldest winter
on record in Edmonton, days of minus 39.
I've never worn a gown,
and never heard anyone say Khanada,
but I'm still waiting for the Gulf Stream.

George Amabile

Twilight / Daylight

Birds collect on the telephone wires
like blots in a child's drawing
as bronze bells pulse through the valley
dusk, and seem to ignite
pinpoints of pale fire
that drift in clusters and broken chains
toward the darkening paths
between the courthouse and the church.

Thousands of faces, each one
in the light of its own wavering flame,
stare up at the white cage
of the bandstand. There will be
no brassy fanfares tonight, no stars
or stripes, there will only be voices
distorted by amplification, words
we've heard before, not often
enough or in the right
places.

On the other side
of the world, it's morning. Children
play among rubble, broken
houses, torn up trees. A small girl
stops. At her feet, something
she's always wanted, a bright
yellow ball. She stoops
and reaches, becomes, briefly, a flower,
a fountain
of fire
and blood.

George Amabile

Catch and Release

I was standing alone
in a rowboat, playing
a *Cutthroat* on a barbless hook
and because I believed its life
was in good hands, I took
my time, took pleasure too
watching it struggle
and run, a flash of silver
and a streak of red at the end
of the line, then,
from nowhere, a dark
shape slid through the water
and struck, towed
the boat with the torque
of a diesel out
where the lakebed dropped
from sight, the oars
trailing and creaking
uselessly in their locks,
the bow plowing up sunfoil,
until whatever it was
let go, and as the ripples
tapered off into silence, the trout
rose, iridescent
scales torn to cool pink flesh,
kicking more and more
weakly but still
trying to swim
off with a broken back.

George Amabile

from "Interview"

Why do your stories
glamourize life?

I suppose because life
sucks and I can't
escape from my species,
our toys of death,
our talk about the world
economy. I hear
blood at the edge
of extinction. Even
champagne brings me down.

Do you write
for the People?

Undifferentiated motor
skills? No. I write
to keep our minds away
from the latest weapons.

A closet reformer
dispensing sugar-coated
fantasy pills?

Yes.

What for?

It brings in money which I take
to the pub. It keeps
dreamers home nights.
It's cheaper than cocaine.
Maybe it even curbs the body
count ...

George Amabile

from "Ars Poetica"

7.

If the best you can say to yourself
when you're dying is, well,
I spent most of my time
making oddly beautiful structures
out of words, texts
that can never be marketed
as programs for Utopia,
cures for the infinite symptoms of stress,
or even as the shoots of a new religion;
if all you can say is, while I was wasting
time there were those who couldn't stop
spilling
milk, beans, classified secrets, innocent blood;

and if
when you begin to feel
okay about these virtues
of omission, the air hums
and blisters and dead relatives
turn their backs on you because
they'd hoped you could have left more of an echo,
more of a blaze in which their names might have shone,

how will you resign yourself
to your place in the history of doubt,
puttering, turning the limited syllables over
and over, discovering
to yourself in a lost voice how "... this
is not quite true, that's not exact
-ly right ...," while pelicans
cruise on extended wings
back and forth across invisible borders?

PETER ANSON

defection

Crazed speech migrates slowly
through the guarded circle
the perfect apparatus of nailed
envy and belief
time hidden
in the cracks what we agree
invents our floundering.

This creeping frenzy is
death's partner by a stroke
of conscience
new intent
is drawn over the will
merry times indeed to dance
naked in the flows from northern
glace *inventimus omnes.*

By the principle of least
assault I come a-cropper
of heats various and strewn
on those
the cozy enemies
of flight will leak their scorn
and pain that tops all sweltering
sorrow.

Awake I dream magnificent
love but groundwaters subtend
all wells
who braves
the invisible has no shelter
board-carrying fellows dress
the future in thin frames
can't impress the heart of leaving

Wind-hope enough
in sleep but one earth only
holds the unspent purposes
of recombinant election
circuits of another light assembling
in this one,
                a script of liberty
upon the rain-worn stones

Peter Anson

headline

In the aftermath
of it's all over
shadows of the lost
animals retract
to symbols on our clothes.
Remembering the nets
we emptied on the way
to pity there's a note
in the surrounding file
"We're high and low
but cannot go outside."

The birds were called
to testify, their speech
improved with age until
no words would do.
One by one their ancient lines
flew into the nullspace of a name.
Now a nation of pines
unravelled by the Borg
we ask, anonymous,
to supervise the pain
that leaves the world with us.

Poet's Note. I need the Borg. Though I hate TV culture, I think both the concept of the voracious assimilator of living individuality and the elegant contraction of "Cyborg" to the Anglo-Saxon "Borg" represent a little ray of genius. Did you ever see the MacDonalds ads with the caption "Resistance is Futile" under the picture of a Big Mac? I thought it rather amazing that neither MacDonalds management nor the high priced advertising talent they hired appeared to be aware of the implied identification of the company with the great arch-villain of popular culture, nor of the irony of those uniformed MacD employees with their memorized patter, who were then beginning to sprout those little telecommunicating prostheses that they now wear almost universally. And of course, unlike the MacDonalds folks, I mean this reference to be there, with all its cultural trappings. We ourselves are the Borg, etc. etc.

Peter Anson

north

Lamps draw back their light
and ancient posts arrive
from desert and snowfield
        a layered music intercepts
tongue-deaf and tone-dry
our easy vapours, substance
of our want and wandering.

Can't speak sweet reason
or the sweat of peril some
survived to tell thee; the wind
blows our illusions in
through skin and comfort
        a slow ruse prevails in
action and in sense and
dissipates on concentration.

Wrapped in myself, a prudent
surety, a lien against
the glacial ancestors, I hear
the vacuum spinning its
eternal proposition.

Caseless wonder comes
in empty cold, the heart
within a few words of
exemption suddenly inclines
to you, with whom I breathe in
synchronous detachment
reading messages from home.

Between this word-bent
singularity and Bodhidarma's
wall there are no secrets.
In Spring the water breaks
over stones of every flavour
anneals the edges of our separate
leaves, a tiling of inference
amending pain.

Rosemary Aubert

Panspermia

I learned today
that I am possibly a Martian,
that by a process called *panspermia*
a once-fertile Mars
spread life to Earth
where it germinated and thrived.

I was panspermia'd to this country, too,
which makes me an alien
with a vague, persistent longing
for that former place.

I remember its surface,
suspect it hides
caches of sweet water
frozen a long time ago.

Rosemary Aubert

The Madonna

We were smoking grass and listening to the Stones
in the apartment in Parkdale
the first night they came through
Montreal and abortion-bound.

She was dressed all in white – long skirt, long blouse,
black hair pulled back, cascading past her waist,
eyes down, mouth drawn
in a line of terror and regret.

The boyfriend talked too much.
He was fear-filled, too.
She was a stone and he was the babbling brook
running over rock, noisy in the sun.

We were smoking grass and listening to the Stones
in the apartment in Parkdale
three days later when they came back.
Of course, she wasn't pregnant anymore.

She laughed, she talked, she sang.
The boyfriend sat glum.
Maybe he was thinking about his son
in the garbage in Montreal.

At any rate, she stayed.
He went home to New York, Massachusetts, Vietnam
Whatever …
After forty years, I still remember those two

and how easy it used to be
to get rid of anything you didn't want.
Babies, boyfriends.
America.

Edward Baranosky

Walking Through Providence

(after an absence of decades)

Tonight we are unseen, unnoticed
In our brotherhood of shared memories;

Incomplete, we wait at the corner of Benefit
And Waterman, still flowing uphill;

A block away Angell drops
Downward, becoming the dubious Thomas.

Something of ourselves remains
To draw us back, unsure,

Against this stream of erosion
Withdrawing the last sliver of time.

Not from winter's driving sleet,
But in the forsythia flames

That flare from the pseudo moats
Of the Rockefeller Library,

We wander up Victorian Prospect
Towards the granite hand of Roger Williams

Stretched out over the city
In an eternal *reiki* gesture.

Predawn bands of moonlight
Wrap around the marble Capitol Dome,

Igniting the steel rails
Reflected along the river

Pouring into Narragansett Bay
Echoing the cries of seabirds

And resonant steeple bells
From the surrounding hills.

Something of the revenant
Leaks through the finality of survival.

Non omnis moriar;
Walk with me for awhile.

Edward Baranosky

Re-enactment

Gettysburg

Scattered musket fire fades
Along a tree-lined ridge, smoke
Carried away towards the cold sunrise.

Gaunt faces along thinning lines
Of grey and blue slowly merge,
Until they've played the game enough.

Yet those still standing must fall
Scripted by history's song

And the rolls filled with unfamiliar
Faces borrowed and masked
All for a chance to breathe free
From blindfolds and gags
Formed in the conviction of loss.

We must still dream of Paradise
Vindicated by hindsight,
Where in one grand act we dare,
Again shouldering the mystique
Of blooded sacrifice, and release

These deceptively green hills,
Long lain fallow, echoing
Like empty rooms with the candor
Of pilgrims' children at play

Among the shadows, rank upon rank
Of broken trees, felled by the indelible roar.

Judith Hill Benson

Drafted

Canada lullabied me into her arms.
Pacified the pacifist in me.
Saved me.

Endless homeland sleep attacks
triggered by precedent-setting TV graphics
led to my desertion.

Bob and I grew up as strangers,
wide-apart siblings who shared few words.

Uncle Sam grabbed him fresh out of college.
Though worlds apart – U.S. Midwest and Vietnam –
war bonded us through paper, pen, and photographs.

I tried to stay.
I marched in Michigan between classes,
pushing a stroller with one hand
and guiding my toddler with the other,
as I chanted with fellow students.

I wore a talisman, a button pinned over my heart:
"War is not healthy for children
and other living things."
My daughter learned the Victory V,
held her arms high so all could see.

I sang to my baby boy:
"Where have all the flowers gone?"
and taught myself Dylan and Carole King on guitar.

We gathered for vigils, all singing, strumming, candles burning.
I was pleased our quiet peaceful protests drew media attention.

Bombarded with broadcasts, scandals, demonstrations,
Joe and Joanne Public finally stood at attention.
"Bring our boys home!" they shouted.
Our anti-war regiment ballooned.
Bob wrote of close calls. I prayed.

U.S. troops bivouacked in killing fields,
news of Agent Orange technicoloured my nightmares,
killed the lushness of their land,
destroyed spirits, brought some men home broken,
but triggered the birth of Earth Day over here.

My brother stayed in 'Nam,
convinced he was "making a difference"
defending his country, but too savvy
to accept promotion to sergeant,
a leg-trap for six more months in infantry.

When Bob returned,
he met his niece and nephew
who stroked his bristly head and laughed.
We sat in close proximity
bonded by his safe homecoming.

Then he broke my heart
when he said: "I'd do it all over again."

"If you would, so would others," I thought.
I fled like a refugee – first to England,
then to Canada, family in tow.

I became a career teacher in Saskatoon
and first taught at Lester B. Pearson School,
where I highlighted for my students
stories about Canada as peacekeeper.
We shared tears at Remembrance Day assemblies.

Nixon's presidency
drove me to Citizenship Court.
The children, young, but old enough to understand,
stood proudly and pledged loyalty to Canada –
my guarantee never to see them at a draft board's mercy.

Bob visited Saskatchewan, brought our parents along.
We shared fishing, fresh air, camaraderie.
He looked after our aging parents in Chicago,
a great comfort to me.
We reunited as mature siblings.

Although nearly four decades have passed,
images of Vietnam's fallen prevail.
I assumed by now he'd internalized
my purpose for adopting Canada.

My brother proved me wrong when he said of Iraq:
"If they'd take me, I'd go."

Steven Michael Berzensky

Walking Cathedral Trail

(in the late 1960s, Vancouver)

At first I found myself
walking through a slanting dustmote shower
(ribbed by darkness, stained with light)
on a winding path of unfamiliar solitude,
passing by sitka spruce and broadleaf maples,
tamarack and hemlock, canoe birches and cottonwoods,
towering thick-trunked cedars and Douglas firs
that shaded sawed-off stumps and wind-toppled trees.

I'd close the door to my suite one block away and stride
alone through Stanley Park onto Cathedral Trail.
It took time to realize I was in no mortal danger here.
Soon, on my weekend jaunts, if I met someone walking
in the other direction, I would simply nod or smile.

Sometimes I preferred my rooted and silent companions
to my human family – our voices scrape, cut one another down.
I thought of these woods as my own huge backyard,
no barbed wire fence enclosing the peaceable sanctuary.

As I walked past the trees, some of them centuries old,
I'd rub my tactile vision against their furrowed bark
and listen to the scrunch of my rubber soles
on twigs and gravel, leaves and pine needles,
and hear the sudden chittering of chipmunks and squirrels,
the soothing calls and soft stirrings of birds
hidden in the dense damp pungent undergrowth.

The distant hum of cars, trucks, and buses
on the highway to and from Lions Gate Bridge
became one of the first sounds my mind transformed –
mountainous rapids now seeming to plunge
through the city's noisy heart.

Gradually my walks released me from the cage
I had carried with me from another country.
The war I had fought inside for years had become
tangible now, pinpointed on the twisting globe, in a place
so green and steamy, it tangled lives across the sea.

No need to defend my conscience here with fisted words.
I had refused to join the cursing exterminating chorus.
I would not have to yield now to the daily round
of bravado masking sudden tremblings, hidden terrors,
nor wear jungle camouflage smeared with more than sweat,
see bodies startled, snapping, falling like trees.

What I found on this soon familiar curving path
was how my thin shadow could easily accompany my body
in natural harmony with cedars, maples, pines
beneath a sky punctured only by sun and clouds.

And what I could feel was the falling away
of all my bruises, real and imagined,
brittle leaves slowly merging wet with earth.

Steven Michael Berzensky

Exploding Sonnet

I am a shell, a missile, a bomb. I am government approved. I am indiscriminate. I am made to strike something. Or someone. I am designed to explode.

There is no other reason for my existence.

It is ordained that I meet a body one day. Something human. A head or a hand. A stomach or a leg. I don't mind as long as it is cloth and flesh and bone. I will rip it apart and paint the dark earth red beneath its fractured shadow.

Assembling men and women: they make me to unmake other men and women. And if I appear sleek and beautiful, then I will more likely impress all foreign purchasers with my usefulness.

My skin is cold when I rest atop a pyramidal stack. Only when I fly do I suddenly heat up. Then I burn, then I smoke.

Before I explode I shine like a room of gold bullion in a miser's dream.

Before I explode I shine like silver medals on a general's chest.

Before I explode I shine like a polished spittoon on the floor of a Klondike hotel in the icy Yukon.

But I am not meant to shine forever. I am made to fragment, destined to burst into random shards, to shatter whatever I strike so it becomes what I become: a trench of numerous wingless muscled metallic tissued bony bloody blossoms. I like to transform any available body into a jigsaw puzzle, make it unrecognizable and disperse it across a small plot of earth. I like to produce the final hushed scene in a child's blinded eyes.

Sometimes it is only land I hit. I make feathers scatter, grasses fly up, gravel float, trees rupture, gardens erupt into rubble. Sometimes I miss what I am aimed at. Bricks, steel, concrete, glass.

I am a church unto myself. Men worship me. They lift me into their arms. They say prayers over me. They release me into the innocent air so I may consecrate it with my holy tongue, my oath of fire, a gleaming wick that pledges devastation.

I whistle. I shriek. I hum my song as I fly.

Until my final moments of existence, I am stored and treasured by someone.

Beneath my glowing skin, I have no tenderness, no dreams, no blood. For I am a god, and no earthly soul can dispute my power. My regime begins – and ends – in the corners of men's calibrating hearts.

E.D. Blodgett

from "A Pirouette and Gone"

i.

How soon they disappear
the eyes from which the light
in piercing flashes fell

only to return
in memory almost
and seen as they go out

not even stars can take
their likeness on but are
just stars that fall in dark

the eyes that they possessed
float on the tides of blood
and each of them go past

as lanterns in a foreign town
commemorating those
who died in sudden fire

eyes that have become
a story that we tell
ourselves to save the dark

iv.

Some of them are just
forgotten where they lie
in heaps upon the ground

if you saw them move
you might have said that they
were only playing dead

but no one saw them at all
their faces almost effaced
and no one remembers where

they are along the roads
birds pass over them
and barely see them there

what will cover them
besides the falling rain
in such an emptiness

what tree will give them shade
no prayers are said for them
and no one calls their names

if time were to implode
it would happen here
and nothing but the wind

would carry what was left
of their bare bones
away just as dust.

v.

Some were taken so
swiftly they did not know
where they had been if they

had been at all with us
some were taken up
by fire some by stone

and some by steel that left
them lying broken on
the ground where they had walked

no one believes that this
could be the way that such
small beings leave the world

and in the darkness stones
are heard to cry and the stars
and nothing in between

Michael Boughn

from Cosmographia

Canto 8 – Usual exchanges
for Ed Dorn

Three years after George W. Bush Jr.
admitted before the world there were no
weapons of mass destruction thus
exposing the great lie he had used
to unleash uncontrollable blood letting
on a people who founded human
civilization more Americans than ever
just stated their belief the war was necessary
to eliminate said non-existent weapons

Is this a case of civilization's auto-cannibalistic
destiny, some final withering of the flower
rooted in Enkidu's seduction in a vast
settling into glazed eyes and inextendible
declensions of harmonic vistas all git up
in purple mountain's kick ass majesty
fluttering diaphanously around lady
liberty's surgically augmented charms
designed to excite maximum national
tumescence in really tight jeans?

The Battle Hymn of the Republic
was pretty hard, too, and Onward
Christian Soldiers caused more swelling
than your typical school board
was comfortable with though seven
year olds exposed to coming operations
in inflicted devotions and armed Jesus
penetrations within hallowed equestrian
intimations could already hear falling
towers symphonic ode to democratic

missionary position's inevitable viral
rendition of Bend Over, World
banging around in Sousa modulated
regulatory rhythms designed to synchronize
boogie apparitions and tootie declensions
into simulated gravy *unum* arrangements
of formerly *pluribus* tainted wiggle
contamination's multiple pie orgies
and shameless adoration of erupting
hoots and jelly roll funk declarations.

Canto 26 - Freedom fries

The grease no doubt remains the same, thick
with the stench of saturated rhetoric
and two or three centuries worth of armed
eliminations dressed up in a three
thousand dollar suit and looking good
enough to instigate endless debates
in which both sides agree to implement
binding parades of nullities on all parties
preceding universal declarations of victory.

Life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness show up
disguised as Larry, Curly, and Moe doing
passable imitations of Dubya, Dick and Condi
dolled up as the four horsemen of the apocalypse
minus one. Subsequent developments
lead to lewd brouhahas in which scarlet
pimps demand legislative transmogrifications
of spit swapping into liberty kisses and a certain
sexually transmitted unspeakableness

into the democracy disease. Not to be out
done in Gallic exclusionary purification
extractions, large parties of spontaneously
armed men with beards and baseball caps
reluctantly leave big sky country aiming
to pull down that freedom whore
eastern bastards have set up in New York
harbour like some giant hollow horse
and send the bitch back where she

came from, or better yet load her up
in a B-52 and drop her on the camel
jockeys. In quick succession beans, bread,
cuffs, salad dressing, horns, and toast
are rounded up in a dragnet and marched
blindfolded into the U.S. Congress
where they are piled on top of each other
in a pyramidal lexicon of Gaulish

derived linguistic sleeper cell intent
stripped naked and subjected to various
cavity searches while the pursuit of happiness
looks on in august and judicious disinterest
till Moe pops him up side the head and War
ever the joker, instigates a vast and proliferating
entanglement emanating beyond bulging
crotch solutions' leave the whole apparatus
dangling limply while freedom fries.

Kent L. Bowman

Plate Spinning in America

When the Beatles sang of revolution on the Ed Sullivan Show,
the plate spinner began to spin each plate ever faster
trying to keep all the ceramic spheres in orbit.

As unattended plates began to wobble on their separate poles,
the spinner tried to recapture the American dream
through his finely crafted art,
while illusion and delusion
fulfilled their changling roles.

This attentive spinner tried to calm our fears,
working tirelessly to turn all our yearnings
into whirling, empty gestures, merely token,
while disregarding promises broken and spun
by the same clever liars
who had hypnotized a generation.

So many dreams forgotten
as the blood of innocence is spilled
on hellish fields of no regard.

Did the revolution happen? Or was it simply a mirage
to those of us whose hopes have vainly come and gone?

And the Plate Spinners move forward
still spinning daily the American Dream:
trying to stop each wobbling plate
from its predictable, crashing fate!

Ronnie R. Brown

from "Un-Deferred: A draft dodger's wife remembers"

I. Itinerary

"Canada," he answers softly,
"probably Montreal." We are
sitting in the university cafeteria,
but even here there is need
for caution, to be on guard for
those who believe
it is their country right
or wrong.

"Montreal," I whisper,
knowing how we both feel about this war.
"Montreal, Canada." Spoken aloud
it sounds foreign, exotic, like
Fiji, Bora Bora. I close my eyes, pretend
he's suggesting somewhere we'll go
for vacation
someday.

"We won't need to go,"
I assure him and myself.
You're a Phi Beta Kappa, headed
to grad school. We're getting
married, they won't take
someone like you. They couldn't,
they wouldn't dare!

We proceed as if nothing
will happen. Marry, pack up
the second-hand Chevy his folks
helped us buy, head out
across America, to the mighty
Mid-west, off on a great adventure.
We are young, smart, together.

When we arrive,
he will be the perfect
grad student, I
will be his devoted
working wife. But for now
we are merely travellers;
we will take our time,
wend our way, make love
in each and every State
we have plotted
on our map.

XIII. Home

His date to report has come
and gone, he can not leave now,
and although I think about it often,
I can't either. So, we adjust. Find,
and lose jobs; move from place
to place. Come to terms, gradually,
with the decision we so quickly
made. "You must live with the consequences
of your actions," my father
offers again and again
over crackly long distance lines.

We stay in this country
that is not home, until,
eventually, it becomes home.

Ronnie R. Brown

Recurring Dream: Returning

The plane is descending into
the night-lit city. Holding
your husband's hand, you listen
for the thud of the
landing gear, try hard not to focus
on the thud of your heart.

Some part of your brain knows
this has already happened, knows
you will exit the plane
step onto foreign soil, ask
to be welcomed in.

Nearly forty years
have passed, but
whenever fall's chill
blows through your window,
the dream comes calling again
reminding you of a decision
made when you were young, of
that night, that time,
that other war.

Ronnie R. Brown

Home Again

You pull into that familiar drive
expecting everything to be
the same: crocheted afghan
on the couch, aroma of fresh-baked
cookies in the air, the flowers,
photographs, figurines
neatly arranged on the huge
cabinet-style television.

And it's all there,
just as before, just
as you knew it would be.
A perfect picture, and then
they come into view.

Shrunken somehow, their skin
like ancient cellophane,
their movements so pained,
so slow you hold your breath
as they wrench themselves
from the cradle of easy chairs
to welcome you home again.

Awkwardly you wedge yourself
back into the pattern
of their lives: early mornings, bland
suppers at five, lights
out by eleven-fifteen.

You sit silent
through the hundred tiny nights
that punctuate their days. One
or the other nodding off,
oblivious to conversation, the blare
of the ever-present t.v.

More than a decade before
they laughed at the way
you kept watch
over their infant grandchild

as he slept. Now,
when the droop of a head,
a sudden muffled snore
announces their sleep,
you try to look away
but can't.

Embarrassed, yet still
you stare, concentrating
on the shallow rise and fall
of their chests. Praying
as you did so many years before,
willing breath
to follow breath.

Terry Ann Carter

Photos: A Haibun Sequence

In his junior year, William K. James played football for the Lower Merion Aces, the toughest high school team in eastern Pennsylvania. We had yet to witness the slaughter in Dallas, hugging our new Dylan LP's close to our chests, never missing a Friday afternoon practice, never missing a game on Saturday morning. Through most of October, the cars lined up in the parking lot outside General (Hap) Arnold Field three hours before kick off. Old Mr. Donaldson from the corner bakery passed out mustard and rolls. Crepe paper from car antennas floated in autumn air; leaves piled under swings for excellent jumping into places.

star quarterback
his photograph
in every girl's locker

By his senior year, William K. James had become a legend. His worship of the game was intensified by his knowledge of college football and Heisman Trophy winners. Jim Thorpe, Jim Brown, Roger Staubach – all names he reckoned with. Travelling by bus down to South Bend, Indiana, he watched the Fighting Irish play at Notre Dame.

even grey skies
cannot dim this light
the drum major first on the field

Big competition came from Radnor High School. Pep rallies started Friday afternoon after period four with three thousand teenagers steaming into a gymnasium to sing *give peace a chance* and thump their hands against the polished wooden floor. The coaches called out names and the boys filed in one by one; we were a screaming tide of hormonal hysteria.

school entrance
blue cornflowers
all along the bricked path

After his best game of the season, William's photograph appeared in the local paper. Readers all along the Main Line and parts of Philadelphia could see the bright eyed boy behind the fallen face guard and meditate on his statistics: 25 completions, 300 passing

yards, 4 touchdowns with 0 interceptions – could read about his uncanny ability to read defensive formations.

game day
up and down the streets
the honking horns

Senior prom unfolded like a gilded lily at the Upper Darby Golf and Country Club. William K. James and his date, Sheila Stewart, were elected prom king and queen. They exchanged prom keys and had their pictures taken under an arch of artificial white roses. After all night dancing to *do wah diddy diddy* and *I want to hold your hand* and *rag doll* and *baby love*, we slumped into seats at the early morning diner to pour rum into orange juice.

prom dress
cut on the bias
summer lightning

After graduation, William K. James followed in the wake of his hero, Roger Staubach, and enlisted for a tour of duty in Southeast Asia. Nightly, we turned on our television sets to watch a civil war within a civil war. South Vietnamese military operations, Buddhist protests, civil servants and dock workers in the port of Danang wreaking havoc in a chaotic coup against local government. Prime Minister Nguyen Cao Ky and General Westmorland issuing incendiaries to torch an entire country.

next to high fidelity
war
in our living rooms

In his letters home William wrote about the heat, the heaviness of flak jackets, spiders the size of cigarette cartons. He described the sounds of chopper fire, jungle rain, the upturned faces of peasant children, the limbless victims of war that would crawl like crabs across the tiles of open market places. He prayed the Hail Mary now for survival instead of football passes, his athletic body pumped to carry AR16's and magazines of extra ammunition. Unlike Roger Staubach, Naval commander, William K. James joined the Army. Unlike Roger Staubach, William K. James did not come home.

class reunion
photographs of the dead students
draped in black

Sue Chenette

Hush

Complicit in the abandon of late day sleep,
the cat pressed behind my knees,
and I woke at dusk, the windowed sky thick
with the pink diffusion of city light.
Tree limbs, bulky and ridged with snow
or scribbled fine above rooftops, waited
for a clock to tick again.

When I was a girl,
this hush came, sometimes, late on a winter Saturday.
My brother and I sat on a radiator and watched cars,
the orange Phillips 66 sign across the highway, that border
between now and all that had yet to happen,
waiting for us beyond the motionless branches.

Sue Chenette

The Old Woman Sings to Her Husband

Rest, my love, I'll brew hot tea
to keep at bay the chill of night.
We'll sigh and sip sweet camomile
From old cups made of clay.

Lie down, my love, I'll mound the quilts
and pillows till they make a nest
for tired bones; our aches will melt
in linens soft as dust.

Be eased, my love, I've creams to soothe
old hands, their rough and crackled paths.
We'll make our skin as smooth as youth –
smooth as harrowed earth.

Sleep, my love, I'll give you lilies,
larkspur garlands to weave
into your dreams. We'll close our eyes
on visions sweet and grave.

Jim Christy

Democratic Vistas

Walt, I see before me now that place
Where they laid you down: Harleigh,
And the mausoleum graffiti-ed
Ringed round by an iron-spoke fence, razor-
Wire topped. Across the street, a hospital
Where Puerto Rican taxi driver hollers
By the emergency door at black welfare
Woman fare. Beyond, a street such as any
Other in your Camden: broken glass,
And gutted cars dead on their rims,
Deserted in the sunshine of a summer
Afternoon, save for a pair of six-and-
A-half foot young shadows fleeing around
A corner. How can it be that the ground
Itself does not sicken, O great
Grey poet? Rise up and walk your America,
Walt Whitman, you one of the roughs
A kosmos
Slip between the plywood sheets
Of a row house doorway – the door unscrewed
From jamb for winter fires – and steal up
The stairs. Lie down between bride
And groom on a piss-stained mattress
And cuddle both in deep crack sleep.
And rise to behold daybreak
At the glass-less window. Does anything
Sweet grow out of such corruptions?
Does refinery air taste good
On your palate? Ah!
What chemistry!
Do you see spread out
Your prophesized democratic vistas,
Or scream a barbaric lament
Over the roofs
Of these States?

Jim Christy

Remembrance Day

Polls indicate desire for stronger
defensive capabilities. More destroyers,
bombers, missiles needed.

Me, I wonder who's buried beneath
soldiers' bones in Flanders Field.

Quick: Who fought the Hundred Years War?
Was the War of the Roses anything
but a bad movie? What the hell
was that Franco-Prussian thing about?

Ten thousand Buddhists
with begging bowls
on the moonlight road
of 1310.

Which was first to rise
and flourish
and expire? Olmec,
Toltec or Aztec?

Did Etruscans have insomnia
same as me?

The lives of entire generations
of women and men make up
but a few lines in the palimpsest
of the Great Spirit.

From tree tops and belfries
through the skies of my dreams,
falling ass over tea kettle,
all the snipers of history.

What constituted Paleolithic
pillow talk?

Into the Stein River Valley cave
we tumbled eager for our love,
and loved, and only then,
sated, saw three deer on the wall
Who drew the deer family?

You who are
in charge: Stick your
stealth bombers up your ass
Go fuck yourself with your polls
and politics.

That's you and me, my sweet,
spooning skeletons of Nagasaki.

Jim Christy

Saigon Joe

View out the window, Catinet Street, Saigon, February, 2004

Bug-eyed, foul-mouthed, muttering
Saigon Joe in the middle of mosaic
Sidewalks of old Catinet Street. He's
Like a buoy in the river just over there
Marking channels. Two strands that will
Never meet. Pedestrians swing
Around his imploring.

His mother, from Le Quong, knew
2,700 G.I.s and others before
She could get out and she never
Came once. The tin boat sank
A mile from the sugar refinery
So you could say she never left.

Daddy looked like an old-time field
Hand picking cotton that Alan
Lomax photographed, him about to
Do a jig on the porch. Grew up
In a shotgun shack south
Of Beaufort, hard by the sea
And was stoned his whole tour,
Went home and let off some steam
And did some time before he got with
The county pushing a broom, pulling
A rake, and now 'Nam is only
A three-in-the-morning thing.

Meanwhile his little nappy-headed
Boy does his route: the Grand,
The Rex, the Majestic, shunned
On every sidewalk. Ignored
By Triple-Cut, even, who hops
On his only leg, flapping suppurating
Stumps like an ostrich
With clipped wings in your
Landmine nightmare.

The lottery lady lights the amputee's
Cigarette but no one
Strikes a match for Saigon Joe
Who hears "In-A-Gadda-Da-Vida"
And Stevie Wonder when
He bends to snatch Heroes
From the gutter, and rises
Bug-eyed, foul-mouthed, muttering
Head in the vise of his hands.

In the Desert

She wore a silk robe, the colour
Of *creme de menthe*. In back
Of her, a mountain, up which
Right now, loggers are moving
With machinery. And her eyes
Were tunnels. Looking into them
He felt he was standing
On a high ledge and about to lose
All balance. Later, he will wonder
If he made silly windmill gestures
With his arms, as if struggling
To maintain his place in the middle
Of the dirt road, in the world
Or, maybe it was merely the meds,
What they gave him when he got
Back from that war in that place
Where the ruins of Mareb,
At Sheba, stuck out of the sand
Like shattered bones.

Those were not Roman Legions
They vaporized but fedayeens raised
To Allah. And he came back with
A radio station's hubbub in his head,
A torturer for a top jock, and the all-night
Show screaming all day. And her there
In the robe of silk, eyes like holes

In the night. Balkis, Queen of Sheba.
Ostrich feathers and ebony bracelets
And her bodyguard of dwarfs.

She stepped down from a piebald
Horse and they went walkabout –
She with a fetching limp,
Speaking in riddles – through
This vanishing civilization.

James Deahl

Kampuchea

The terror bombing began in the night
and continued intermittently for weeks.
Villages flew into rivers or
burned raw under phosphorous stars.

After the rains, new shoots
sang yellow from blasted stumps.
The rice beds lost their odour of flesh.
Then the helicopter gun-ships came
lazy as butterflies at the forest top.
Knives of rare trees withered
in the embrace of stone insects.

Years run hollow like skin
peeling from the moon.
Antique dealers saw up Buddhist monasteries
for beautiful shops in Paris, San Francisco.
The Mekong is a thick brown slur.

A serpent of dust unlocks the city.
Red sun fills the market.
Skulls are stacked in stalls, on tables
like pale melons stained with summer heat.

James Deahl

Pittsburgh IX

Rivers made this city. Wars made it strong.
Pole, Slav, Ukrainian, Hungarian
washed across the sea on an ebb of blood.
Korea and Vietnam offered jobs
for sons, grandsons; kept Homestead's heart burning
triumphant in its rainbow of hot steel.

The High Level Bridge was an arm of night
reaching bank-to-bank through rank, clotted air.
Above the river's ache and swing our sky
hung spiked on burn-off shot from open hearths.
Shops stayed open, new cars filled bright streets with
gleaming chrome while far away the daily
news of death kept us working, warm, well fed.

James Deahl

Hatred of People with Different Alphabets

There are people far away who use a different alphabet –
odd-shaped letters, some like ours, only backwards
the way Satan writes.

There are people who speak differently,
whose consonants sound unusual, whose language
is unrelated to our own.

There are even people who make and sell their goods
unlike the way we do, who refuse to adopt
our economic system.

These people are reported to worship God
with unfamiliar rituals, their liturgy learned, some say,
from the Dark One.

In newspaper photographs, their heads
present an unexpected shape, their stony faces marred
by cruel lips.

Needless to say, their gestures are offensive,
their body language threatening, their literature an affront
to human culture.

It is for them cruise missiles were invented.
Who among us can understand the arrogance of men
who refuse to live our way?

Pier Giorgio Di Cicco

Having Left

last I heard, my heart got jammed between
the New York express and the train trestles,
my yearning to get out of
Maryland; last I heard, those I couldn't stand
are dead and I can't get news of them.
their separate lives haunt
me, these people no
less interesting than anyone I ever met.
    there is a good will store now in place of
where I lived, I go in there when I am back
in Baltimore, and buy up junk they
had in their houses, those people
I tried so hard to get away from; I bring everything
back to Ontario and stock my house with
dead people's things; to live
among them –
    the past is my dream.
to live where the heart lives with what it couldn't forgive.

Pier Giorgio Di Cicco

Radio

My father's Zenith Radio.
You can feel the gloss aluminum
of the short-wave finder. The antennae going
up in three segments. Toronto coming in
on short-wave. Frogs are belching in the
bog across Eastern Avenue. I am memorizing
the plans for the new city hall, the new subway
system. I am eager to be delivered from
Baltimore. The Peabody Conservatory is not
enough for me. The Appalachians are zeroing in.
In the club cellar
I am with a shiny box. Mantovani records
in the corner. The 40 year-old man I am to be
puts some kind of flowers on my brow.
My future is over already. I will never leave the
cellar. A hankering is all I have.
Everywhere I have gone, the air has never tasted
this sharp; a foiled boy lunging for
landing like bob-a-loop back
in 1962.
Eaten.

Pier Giorgio Di Cicco

Train Whistles

train whistles.
why do i love train whistles so,
going where they go, taking me with them
where i do not go, to the stations of
before, the trestle over back river bridge
next to oliver beach the streamlined thing
going to new jersey, new york, wishing myself on board
adventure bound, ripped free of mom and dad, and
baltimore, to the stations of what i missed and thought was
missing; as if where we are
were overstayed, our welcome; they go
where we might be missing something, which is nothing.

–

i missed being out with the gang on saturday nights,
i missed a lounge in vegas when louis and keely
were owning the strip,
i missed the rhapsodic, long-haired beauty backgrounded
with violin strings and danube, oh the things i missed,
being in the apple-pie-eating families of vermont towns,
the surfing, playing sax on the johnny carson show, i missed
the debutante stillness of us, i missed the things i could
have had, might have been, so much i
saw nothing of the drama of my life, punctuated with
train whistles and this longing.
i saw nothing of you, always, where we could have gone
and the poems making events of what the mundane of you
felt like, i made places evocative of what i missed,
with furniture made famous by being lived in, but i
was not there. i am sick to my gut by
the fairy-tales that made exotic everything but life;
the stories and novels that de-memorialized the alleys
the flats, the failure of an usher in my life to make
marvellous the stuff i make nostalgia.

–

i hear the train whistle, it's going to kansas city
to coyotes, to snow-rich mountains, to pine-laden
bends where waft the dance hall strains of supper-
club minions, the trains to hollywood, to moon
river and the athabaska, the trains of everywhere,
but not to me, as if I were not destination.

~

almost, i graft the sound of trains at night
to the romance i am. a man who has spent his life
in yearning, poignant, alone, in unnamed fields, on a given
night of this century, watching the past and future go by
as if he were standing between tracks; almost he doesn't know
how he got here except by wishful thinking,
or someone hearing a train in the night and imagining me,
thinking it somehow better, rendering the other exotic
as we do, ghosts yelling out hunger,
never being home, nor destined to arrive.

Jim Erkiletian

Bush Whacker Blues

They told us this war is a crusade,
then they told us it's not,
At least not against the ten million
North American Muslims we got.
They said it's a war against evil,
and the best way to do evil in:
Drop bombs on civilians and children,
I guess to make them like us again.

They said it's a war against terrorism,
except that most terrorists today
Were created by the Americans,
and financed by the CIA.
Seems like Saddam Hussein
and Osama bin Laden were on
The CIA "payrole" so long,
they must have qualified for pension.

They said it's a war against a brutal dictator,
who tortures, kills and maims
But not a war for regime change,
well, yeah, a war for regime change.
They said it's a war to free
the poor oppressed people of Iraq:
We have to take their country away from them,
so we can then give it back.

They said it's a war against weapons
of the mass destruction kind,
But the only ones there are American made,
and the rest they couldn't find.

...

They didn't say it's a war for oil,
to keep the price of gasoline low,
They didn't say it's a war to protect
the yankee dollar from the new Euro.
They didn't say it's a war to make
all the people more afraid,
So a bunch of clowns from Texas on down
can take over the U.S.A.

It may be the land of the free,
    but they don't know what they're fighting for
And you'd have to be a lot braver than me
    to let a moron drag you into a war.

Poet's Note. On the eve of 9/11, 2003: Written for Canadian diplomat Francoise Ducros, fired for telling the truth. (Secret: I throw in a little "Yankee Doodle" in the breaks.)

Guy Ewing

Teachers

Under your tutelage,
I left the dreaming places
of my childhood, became a man.

How childish, you would say,
to think that, holding hands
with those I love, I can surround

the darkness, make it shrink until
its sides rejoin, that songs
can silence fear.

If you were still alive,
I would tell you how six children
of the Holocaust, holding hands

in the dark night,
loving each other,
singing songs,

kept each other alive,
died in old age,
dreaming of childish hands.

Guy Ewing

Osgoode Hall

They paid
men with coarse hands
to cut sandstone, carve oak,
smooth it until its grain
spoke rivers, dark currents.

They walked
into their hall of morning
light, sat magnificent in robes,

paid more money for a fence, wrought
leaves and acorns, spears to impale
the angry poor, ingenious gates
the width of one man.

Wood still aching to be leaves,
stones still dreaming in the night.

What I Learned

From me,
you learned
to type,
read, multiply.

From you,
I learned
to draw birds
flying out of the page.

Chris Faiers

draft resister
watching the ducks
fly south

Chris Faiers

Five Minutes Ago They Dropped the Bomb

After the bomb dropped
the homophobic cop
and the steambath patron he was handcuffing
melted into each other's arms
into infinity

After the bomb fell
concrete angels in all the graveyards
took wing
Every bell in the world
gave one last high-pitched ring into oblivion

Five minutes ago
a tear or two slipped in the halls of karma
at the insignificant passing of
3rd. dimensional existence –
3rd. stone from the sun – reality factor
time factor irrelevant –
total dissolution of creatures
  IQ 100 EQ 35
evolutionary phase median ape to bodhisattva

The bodhisattvas wept
Buddha watched mountains raise their final crest –
burst into pulverized space/time

Basho's spirit watched every moment in nature
cruelly bloom into the final haiku moment of infinity

Five minutes ago
the Marxists got their final synthesis
the neo-nazis their final solution
the capitalists their last boom from the economy

Five minutes ago we kissed
said "Shit! They've done it …"
Armageddon – Apocalypse

Five minutes ago Time Must Have a Stop
five minutes ago we passed into borrowed time
five minutes multiplied 12 times by the hour
24 times by the day
365 times by the year
and 38 times since Hiroshima shimmered into oblivion

Five minutes ago we passed into borrowed time again
reality factor minus:
3 million
994 thousand
and sixty

five minutes ago

Chris Faiers

The Fire

The fire has come down from the mountain

The fire has come down from the mountain
napalm has returned home from the jungles and plains

King Kong, Hollywood's great ape of the 3rd world
has screamed his rage astride New York's tallest towers

The fire has come down from the mountain
Kong has crossed the waters at last

The happy hour mantra of Washington pols
"what goes around comes around" rings true

and the fire has come down from the mountain
napalm is home from the jungles and plains

September 11, 2001

George Fetherling

First Signs of Wartime Spring

Eleven ships in English Bay this morning
impatient for their turn at the gantries
ten or more every day so far this month
business in China must be good
cherry blossoms underfoot like confetti
once the echoes evaporate
I leave my footprints until the next breeze.

Americans have a new war
that's how we know the generations have changed
but we're not headlines we don't need verbs
to validate ourselves.
To the east, the shoulder of the sky is hunched
in back of the sun, still arguing for acceptance
begging us to go there.
The strategy is to let the future emerge
a little at a time that we might grow accustomed
and not protest or go mad.
The window opens so briefly that we cannot
throw out the words.
This will have to do for now.

Mountains to the north zoom in
on people currently between destinations
it's time to harvest the lessons
tomorrow is deep yesterday shallow
sometimes the other way round.
Be like the cave-dwelling hermit
who learns from the mute and mocks
the big yellow bruise.
Slideshow over, the screen goes white
we revert to ritual avoidance of rituals
as practised by lordly bureaucrats who seldom
deviate from what they receive.
The meaningless courage of the entourage
fails them as usual.
Dawn dusk inhale exhale
at night when the stars tremble
we will have no comfort to offer

consumed as we are in events we observe
yet refuse to follow.
Old before my time in relation
to the time available
I spend my declining years declining to accept
struggling to continue trusting the voice
that is the public function of the heart.
In the end, succour finds its own level
everyone fingers everybody else
everyone forgives everybody else
we're all subsidiaries of one another
whatever I know I've learned by
eavesdropping.

Vancouver

Eric Folsom

Just Another Yuppie Raising Children

When the lights came on, our apartment
Had been reborn as a red hibiscus.

In those days everything went into my journals,
Each ordinary discovery about love and children.

The sweetness of our cumulative sleep deficit;
The baby woke again, and we danced with her till dawn.

I said to my anti-war friends: we've won,
Don't you see they're getting old and dying?

Weighing the hour in my chapped hands,
I borrowed the lanolin you bought for your breasts.

Labouring with love for love, the wedding ring
On the spice shelves while I do the dishes.

Eric Folsom

Foreigner

One Sunday in the yard of the old stone farmhouse,
the tail end of Gore Road, Micheline was grooming
her horse Dandy, while Jean and I played with the dogs.
A sonic boom, three jets passed on our eastern side,
a flyover for the RMC centennial, heading north
over pasture and swampland, beyond sight and hearing.

We forgot about them, went back to what we were doing,
then they returned, incredibly low, very loud.
Three CF-5s and I swear if time had allowed
I could have counted the rivets on their silver bellies.

Jean and Micheline, born Canadians, stood proud and a little awed
that their country owned such beautiful machines,
while I crouched over, one thought in my head:
This was how farmers in the rice paddies felt.

Eric Folsom

American

Every year when I was small, we went to the Fourth of July parade
in Wakefield, Massachusetts; the clowns threw candy,
brass bands honked, and washerwomen leaned
out the windows of the Wakefield Laundry building.

Television coverage of the Kent State shootings,
me and my long hair, first year university, Dad and I
raged and argued every night. He said they deserved it.
God only knows what I said. Furious in the U.S.A.

A cheap portable record player, Joni's bomber death planes
"riding shotgun in the sky." My father as a boy really
flew with the 459th Bomber Group, stationed in Italy,
navigated over the Alps, passed through the flack and survived.

Finally, the cafeteria at Queens one afternoon, in '75.
Saigon had fallen, lefty Canadian friends said, "Hooray
the good guys won." But I felt lousy, didn't dare show it
Years later I wept alone seeing *Killing Fields* on the big screen.

Douglas Gary Freeman

memories of my youth

as children
we learned to stand on one leg
clasping bundles of hope between our teeth

not because we wanted
to resemble flocks of black flamingos

one foot in the smelly pile was better than two

the sky beckoned
its blue hues a promise
we carried in those little bundles
clamped tightly between our still forming teeth

some of us were trapped
unable to free the one foot-fall for lift-off

there were others whose wings were clipped
when their bright eyes betrayed
their recognition of amerikkka's truth

ninety-nine shots fired
as their backs arched
the majestic power of wings spread wide
surging upwards towards blue redemption

this is how sky colour became word for despair
anguished stain lynchings passed for religion

Douglas Gary Freeman

Dog Day Saturday Morning

When I was a kid some of the older guys in my neighbourhood used to stage dog fights, gruesome affairs that often ended with at least one of the dogs sustaining permanent, if not fatal, damage. Owning a fighting dog and parading it down the street was a tough guy's show of status. Us younger kids were scared of these dogs. Practically everyone, except the dog owner, was afraid of these fighting dogs, for that matter. The sea of pedestrians would part to allow dog and owner to pass. The worst was when the owners of two fighting dogs would approach each other on a crowded street, their dogs groaning against their choker chains. Everyone knew these dogs could not pass each other without fighting, so the sidewalk would clear for the inevitable display of canine viciousness.

One Saturday morning a few of my buddies and I were standing near a store-front, whose newly replaced glass was reflective like a large mirror. One of the neighbourhood toughs approached with his big mean fighting dog groaning and foaming in the heat of a surprisingly warm spring morning. As the dog passed the store-front, he suddenly jerked around to confront it, spinning with such force that his owner was knocked off his feet. This was funny enough by itself. We understood that the dog had been momentarily frightened by his own image. Before we could stop one of my buddies from pissing on himself laughing – because we didn't want to incur the wrath of the toughie dog-owner – the dog recovered from being startled and began growling and showing off the biggest, ugliest canine teeth we had ever seen. He was ready to fight his own image. Of course, now all of us were laughing hysterically. When you're laughing that hard you can't run. Surely, I thought, either the guy is going to punch us all out, or he was going to set his dog on us. Instead, the dog now started lunging at the glass, while his owner was having one hell of a time trying to control this beast he had created.

While we allowed ourselves to be incapacitated by this entertainment, the dog broke free of his owner and lunged with a frightening thud at the glass. After picking himself up from the ground, the dog came after us. One of my friends was bitten rather badly. A little girl was also bitten in the rampage that ensued, as the dog ran amok down the street. The dog's owner was also bitten up quite badly, trying to control the animal gone berserk.

By the time the dog-catchers arrived on the scene, the sidewalk was a spectacle. People were screaming and crying. The dog's owner, in a lot of pain himself, blamed his dog. The catchers couldn't control the dog so police had to be called to shoot the animal. This was in the early spring. By late summer, we noticed the same guy walking around the neighbourhood with another fighting dog. Some people never learn. It's kind of like American foreign policy.

September 9, 2006

Douglas Gary Freeman

Black History: Lesson 1, Kneeling

Terrorized
is a grade school child
crouching under his classroom desk
fingers clasped behind his neck
not so much to ward off atomic bomb radiation
but to cover his ears against the terrible drill alarm

it was cruel to instill such fear in a child,
to make him believe that kneeling under a desk
could protect against an atomic blast

it was cruel to instill the fear in a child
to make a child believe kneeling beside his bed every night
would protect against the heavy burden of the cross
– burning or not –

terrorized
by the first glimpse of "whites only" signs
or "no negroes allowed" signs
uncertain of the terrible weight
of his own black skin:
would it slow him
down
when he tried to run from
atom bombs, from burning crosses?

Katerina Fretwell

Cu Chi Tunnels

The jerky black and white
film of teeming flora
flips
to charred trees, burnt floor –
the voice-over mourns lost tranquility,
turned trickster thanks to foreign aggression.

Recalling the charge:
"bomb the crap out of 'Nam'"
I view the spiked traps
and underground city
the Viet Cong dug barehanded.

In a dininghall bunker we taste
manioc and cunning,
survival fodder
for the peasant-guerillas.
Feeling our tourist pudge, we snap

each other beside life-size
clay warriors, noting
the better fit of Asian pilgrims,
the ease of their slip
into hidden entrances now revealed.

Us and them, black & white
as the addicted vets
and still missing POWs
denied by the politicos –
as if we haven't stopped
marching on the Capitol.

North of Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam
November, 2004

Katerina Fretwell

Renunciation

NYC fledgling, fumbling my car keys,
I laid rubber to Granddad's safe house,
tailed by my drunken aunt – unaware
this first flight was a practice-run.

Parentless, benumbed at Wells College,
my rage at being raped flew me
out of apathy, flight feathers primed.
Rode the thermals to Acadia University –

shedding The States like denim cutoffs.
A swinger gawked at my tartan
disguise, disbelieved I'm Yankee-
made. Nesting, I sloughed off

further flight. In grad school, I met
a Canuck in fisherman's knit.
At Halifax's US consulate, I denied
the red-white-blue consul's "We're #1."

Mapped Dawson's "Canada," named
the capitols, took my Oath at Pier 21.
Marched against 'Nam and my hawkish
mate, moulting his cable-stitch pullover

for Law – this vested-suit versus
granny-glasses union unravelled –
but my Canadian flight landed for good.
First settled near Granddad's birthplace.

Later, I renounced my American
heritage – booze, smokes, riches.
Hair-shirt cast off, I wear my mind-
fulness like a home-stitched quilt.

Poet's Notes. R. MacGregor Dawson, *The Government of Canada*, University of Toronto Press, Fourth Edition, 1963.
Mindfulness: Buddhist practice of grateful living in the moment.

Mark Frutkin

Reinventing the World

Napoleon's soldiers are marching
backwards out of Russia,
the deconstruction of the great cities
New York, Chicago, Sao Paulo
begins without a moment's hesitation –
every rivet, every bolt and pane of glass
disassembled, it is the end of the world
coming quite gently as it must.
It is time for bullets to leap back
into the rifles of soldiers,
time for aggression to turn
seeking its source within the cloudy brain,
traveling inward, time for ships
to back up across the seas,
time for Magellan to unwind the world,
time to leave the Pacific to itself,
its quiet ways, who knows what it did
before we began looking, it is time
for peoples to forget all languages,
wind down from Babel, taking stone
from stone under a sky of silence,
time for the wind to return all the sand
into mountains, time to reassemble
ancient statues in the fields,
time to unplow the furrow, to heal
that wound, to forget all that was
and seems to be, time to wander
backwards through the night from dawn
to dusk, releasing the animals
back to the wild, freeing the cities
from their walls, fish to eggs,
bird back into assembling shell,
sea into the mouth of God,
stars into the void.

Mark Frutkin

Northern Vocabulary

after Szymborska

The poets here all have snowflakes
and icy stars in their hair,
the toes of the homeless are webbed with ice,
everyone drives snowmobiles to church
where Christ is never crucified half-naked
but frozen to his cross wearing an overcoat,
the breath of politicians looks like cigarette smoke
and the clapper in the Peace Tower bell
is frozen stiff –
hey, this ain't Cleveland,
February here is a silent month
especially when it arrives in late November,
the TVs are carved chunks of ice
and we relive the Ice Age once a year,
no one complains about global warming
in January when mailmen can be found
stiffened in mid-stride and Orion
sparkles across the sky
as he runs in from the cold.

Mark Frutkin

War Gift

We finger cold steel in the dark,
men's breathing bodies close,
squeak of wheels,
silence.

We hear mumbling from beyond
lacking the clarity of words
as we wait in the dark,
each in the dream of his own thoughts.

So much life lost for beauty,
a single woman like a burning gift,
we finger the edge of cold steel,
hear others breathe in the black.

As we wait in silence,
my dream of home returns:
woman, child, fields gone fallow,
wind sighs through hills of rosemary.

The ache of memory severs me in two,
cold steel rests in my hand.

And we wait.
We wait.

Until our captain hauls back the hatch
and together we leap down into the brilliant light of death
as if this great horse gives birth
to morning in the city of Troy.

Kim Goldberg

DeSoto Love

The summer I was seventeen, my boyfriend
(the first one I really loved) snuck me
into the drive-in in the trunk
of his 1960 DeSoto that I helped him paint
the week before (abalone blue like
his eyes). And looking back, I'm not sure
why I'm the one who had to
go in the trunk, or why I said "yes," or why
he couldn't just pay the extra
buck seventy-five. But I only weighed
a hundred and ten pounds, and trunks
were really spacious in those days (even with
four dead batteries stuffed alongside me). Besides,
he was just back from Vietnam and I was
glad to see him still in one piece. Eighteen
years later he lost his right hand in a
sawmill blade. But at the drive-in, he was all there
and all mine (once I got out of the trunk, that is).

The flick was *Easy Rider*, but don't ask me
for a recap since we were having sex
in the back seat till the credits, which didn't
feel as good as I thought it would (the sex,
I mean) 'cause there was a socket set or a
beer bottle or something grinding into my hip bone
the whole time. And some gear lube I must have
picked up in the trunk was smeared on my bangs,
which kept slapping my eyes like wet spaghetti.

Next week, when we were at a keg party
up the river, it started to rain and my bell-bottom
jeans that I'd spent about a hundred hours
sewing patches and leather-strapped beads onto
for the last half-year began to disintegrate
until they fell right off my legs, which everyone
thought was a gas (except me). And when
my boyfriend stopped laughing, he said it was the
battery acid from the trunk of the DeSoto. But he
found me some coveralls, and we smoked
a big fattie. Love is like that.

Kim Goldberg

Objective Case

Objects are often broken in anger

Objects are often closer than they appear

Objects are often mistaken for subjects

Objects are often spots

on a fallow deer
imported to a foreign land
so sportsmen (who are imports as well)
can blast away at a familiar hide, their actions
objectified by ancestral tradition, tribal histories,
arguments of biological determinism, the architectural
design of the masculine brain, by slipstreams
of unclaimed fear, by lateral fantasies
of ejaculation, by the smell of a
well-oiled rifle

Heidi Greco

Letter from a buddy

I remember him telling me, "Fuck, I could die happy here." I guess he must have been thinking about the kind of day today is.

The breeze is always warm here, even when it's gusty, and sometimes so sweet you think that you can taste it. Like one of those crazy fruits they have here, half of them I don't even know their names.

He loved the way the waves always swoosh. That's the word he used for them, swooshing. Laughed and seemed amazed at how they never took a break, even in the darkness, just another sound from the night-time jungle. I guess you have to expect something goofy like that from a kid who always lived in a boring Midwest town.

We knew the choppers would be coming back in another day or so. Charlie wasn't in these parts any more. The morning when they found him, they said that he was smiling. One guy on retrieval even used the word "serenely." Except for the fact that they found his head before the rest of him. So that's what they told his Mama, I guess. At least the first part, serenely.

Elizabeth Greene

Transition, September, 1965

i.

Riding in darkness
bus wheels whirring
no one lives here
not in this bleak dark stretch
of thruway
too much light to see stars
out of time out of space
just rolling rolling
where I know no one
where I've never been.
Behind me: a city I love
glittering, dangerous
the new around every corner.
Everyone thinks I should have stayed.
Behind me: a war only beginning to be
much talked of.
They're buying barbed wire
from Australia my professor said,
Do you know what that means?
Concentration camps.
Our government!
My father
believed the New York Times.
My mother didn't argue.
That should have told me
something was wrong.

Something was wrong:
for years my mother's words
shattered me, poured poison
in my ears.

I'm fleeing by night
unlikely refugee.

ii.

Waking from fitful sleep
a different country
flat, fertile giant squares,
fields, orchards,
late peaches, early apples.
No urban sprawl
not in 1965.

I can't believe how green
Toronto is. New York
was bleached with drought.
Black squirrels scamper
between large trees,
bushy tailed.
Victorian buildings settled
as if the last 60 years
had never happened.

I gave up friends,
the ease of understanding people,
being understood
back to childhood,
knowing where I belonged.

I crossed from the inside
to the margins.

Now even my spelling's
terminally split,
I teeter between honour
(honor), favourite
(favorite).

The years dissolved the poison in my ears.
I'm working on my heart.

Roger Greenwald

Disposable Poem

It gives me no relief to remind you of the news films.
Ben Cat and Ben Suc before they vanished in a Free Bombing Zone.
If you remember also, that is no comfort to either of us.
Let's not look with pride on each other's guilt.
I write this reluctantly.
The songs about the war in Viet Nam are too beautiful.
The poems are too beautiful.
I understand the ugly signs and paintings and crosses.
But when it is eloquent, ugliness is too beautiful.
Throw this poem out after you read it.

1967

Roger Greenwald

To Feel at Home in a Foreign Country

To feel at home in a foreign city
even where you've lived a long time
you have to buy a bicycle.
But first you need a neighborhood.
Then lie in bed and remember
when you're falling asleep or better
when you're waking up – or
remember in a dream and recall the dream –
remember riding your bike
in the neighborhood you came from,
how all the surfaces felt through the wheels,
and the transitions between them.
It's best to remember this when you're happy
so it will be a happy memory. Of knowing
something through your body, your hands and perineum.
Then you have to wait a while and buy the bicycle
but for another reason, not because
you remembered and are trying to go back.
A transit strike, or just good weather,
and best if you plan to go riding with someone
whose body you know.
After your bicycle's first winter in the basement
when you've cleaned and oiled it and the nights
are warm enough to ride in
you'll have your chance. But a better one
if you're unhappy, since even moderate effects
of pleasure, satisfaction or thought of someone you know
through your body may mask this feeling.
Nights are important
because in daylight many distant parts
of the city are equally familiar and largely
unthreatening, and you'll watch the traffic
and approaching your place will think of putting
the bicycle away then the food you've bought
and how to pass the evening. But approaching
at night you'll be a little cool and extra wary
on the streets you don't really know thoroughly
through your body until you cross

whichever intersection
marks the start not of your neighborhood
but its penumbra, more fully lit than the city
you've come from and now you know
the sidewalks and the driveways off them on each block and
know you're arriving. Soon
you'll be there, you're on your way home.
Because of this you'll think it's possible
to feel at home in a foreign country, provided
you have a bicycle and certain other conditions
are fulfilled.
But you won't
feel at home when you get there, only
as it approaches that you're getting there,
coasting on familiar ground that nevertheless
as you check the wheel
spins away in a movement too rapid for
your quickest saccade.

Jeremy Harman

Syracuse Veterans Administration Hospital, 1968-69

I.

the hospital's dark is honeycombed
with cold corridors that connect
rooms where patients lie trying

to sleep and forget what brought
them into the white thickets
of damp and tangled sheets.

they are prisoners in the cells
of their own recurrent thoughts
that reinforce dreams of fleeing

those hiding inside buildings
behind streets of leafless trees
holding the limbless bodies of children

and whose hands are always reaching out
whose hungry mouths stay closed
whose eyes are already those of the dead.

to escape the smell of burning flesh
the drugs these men receive
don't bring the oblivion they seek

and what light there is
turns every room completely green
as if the jungle grew in to fill them up.

II.

that twenty year old on a Striker frame
who took a bullet through the neck

and who will always be a quadriplegic
rarely spoke and all day long

stared at the ceiling seeming to be
counting the tiles' tiny perforations

and the silent one who wouldn't make
eye contact could never sleep and paced

his room all night counter clockwise
until one night he went missing

and left his shoes, robe and two roses
near the open creek beside the hospital farm

and they never found his body as the river
had risen too high to search the night he left

and the soft spoken nurse who had never fought
but tended to those who had and who needed care

soon began to wash and wash and wash himself
more and more until they had

to bind his hands together with gloves and his
mind with drugs until one night he found

enough rope to hang himself inside the chapel
and it took three hours to cut him down

Jeremy Harman

Heading Out

that spring we had enough and headed north
on highway 81 holding a Quaker map with
the names and numbers of those along the way

who if called would always say they were
waiting for us and yes we were already late
for the meal but still expected all the same.

it was early summer 1969 and the day fine
as Canadian geese veed for home above us
and the leafy trees were a bright luscious green

and as we crossed the Thousand Islands
something sharp and unseen nicked and scored
the joy pulling us on into our new found land

and it carved the jagged shape of loss
into the bright future we thought
we were moving into forever

so that now, years later, whenever it is autumn
we burn a small leaf fire to remember where
we came from and to celebrate where we are

and we light a barbed wire candle
to witness all that has and is still
happening in the world to us all.

Ernest Hekkanen

Sad Men

Lately I have run into a plethora of sad men
like myself: former draft dodgers once chiselled,
once bright with optimism in mind and spirit;
men now slumping into their fifties; addicted,
a little bit deranged, defeated and lost.

I grieve for them. I grieve for all the men
who have been chewed up like sandwich meat
in the maw of events orchestrated by others.
I grieve for the Vietnam veteran,
alone and wandering in his turbulent life,
down streets strewn with human debris;
and I grieve for the marginalized
whose wounds fester until the moment
their lives are discarded like worn-out luggage.

I have gotten so I can barely stand seeing
men like myself, men saddened by everything
that parades past their doorsteps; men luckless
in their vision, men done-in by their yearning,
dragging their feet along sidewalks that never end,
piled like burlap in doorways,
hunkered down in their lives,
waiting for time to make clear its purpose.

I grieve for all the sad men whose dreams
once took wing – only to falter in flight.
I am so full of grieving I don't know if I can
endure this day that dawns forever bright,
forever shining, forever made new again;
a day that has already left me far behind.

When I grieve, I grieve enormously. I grieve
for all the people I have hurt along the road
to war. I grieve for all the widows and orphans
whose lives I have made nightmares of;
I grieve this day into existence and I grieve that day
down the road to oblivion and beyond.
I grieve before my rising, then
I rise and go on.

1997

Ernest Hekkanen

from "I Did This"

Who crushed the infant's head
    with a blow so mighty
    eyes popped out of sockets?

Who raped the women,
    young and old alike,
not once but a thousand times?

Who burned the houses
    but left the clothes hanging
    on the line?

Who dropped the bombs?
Who unleashed the missiles?
Who murdered the villagers
    as they crossed the bridge
    to market?

Who looted? Who beheaded his neighbour
    and left him there to gawk
    bodiless
    beside the city gate?

I did.
I and my comrades did this.
I, your good neighbour
    who went to mass
    who prostrated in the mosque
    who donned his skull cap
    who genuflected, who prayed.
It was I, I who used the correct word
    for bread.

• • •

I did this. I stuck my neighbour's head
atop the stanchion
for all to see.
I flung the baby against the wall.
I held down the village girl
while my comrades in arms
took turns
plowing
that which wasn't theirs to plow.

It was I. I did this. I let myself
be used
by those who said
I would be better off
without my neighbours
down the street.

• • •

I listen. I wait for people
to betray themselves
each time they utter
the word for bread.
Bread tells me everything
I need to know.
It tells me who can be trusted
and who cannot.
It tells me who to break a crust with
and who must be denied a crust.

I did this. I made it impossible
to endure my neighbour. It was I,
a civilized man
a man who didn't have enough
a man whose fields grow the grain
that's ground and baked
into bread
I now sell at this stall.

• • •

I made a battlefield of this earth,
right here.
I fenced it off with corpses.
I did this, I who sang in the choir
I who attended mosque
I who went to temple
I who believed my cause was right.

It was I. I did this.
I, a civilized man
well-versed in literature.
I let others use my hatred.
It was I. I did this.
I brought to ruin
that which was best
in me.

1997

Bruce Iserman

Soldier

the veteran laid it on the line with me
one night when we were into the bitter
in a dingy pub in Scotland just after the flowers
of autumn's Royal Mile had folded
and around us there were old soldiers playing dominoes

under the outside mist that we had brought in
his crew cut sparkling the vet's eyes looked off
over my existence and over all the bent musing heads
until the convoy of trucks in the heat
came out of him to pick me up trotting at the tailgate
the trucks rolled and bumped and groaned along
so the steam and muck of Nam
fell heavy on our shoulders with table softening to mud
and the pint mugs became weapons

we were riding to an appointment
with some useless piece of real estate
a miserable village an objective to pacify
and we had to pass under a long stately grove
of some kind of jungle trees
with low-hanging limbs like crazy palms
and when the company of a dozen open-topped trucks
were all under the canopy of foliage
when we were just on top of that village
suddenly as he put it the sky fell down
as claymore mines strung up in the branches
went off at once at just the right moment
and when the vet had rolled out of his truck
pulling me along
there was a lot of ordinance going off all around the road
curses and pain sounds
were made by the wounded and the totally wasted
who hadn't quite realized they were dead yet
one bloody awful mess it was
with eighty percent of the company casualties
gone just like that while me and my buddy
sprawled under a burning truck firing into the bushes
feeling blood dripping between the floorboards onto our necks

I interrupted to shake the wet from my hair
back in the warm quiet night of Edinburgh
heard how his tone was flat and matter-of-fact
and I who had been raised on shit about war
and heroes that I no longer believed as who could believe it
I who figured any sort of human suffering
should not go unremarked and unmourned
inquired of him how he could stand it
this massacre replaying behind his eyes for the rest of his life
where had he gotten his stability
why wasn't he hunched over someplace
with his hands over his ears
and the bastard smiled and reloaded
and over the pop-pop-pop and the screams
he said he was sure that in the short run
some form of socialism was probably the best thing
for an under-developed country like Vietnam

and then he took me along in time a few months later
and by this point he had an attentive audience
in the old men who couldn't help tuning in
on our loud American accents anyway
so he left me in Scotland to take on the old men
telling the story of how one time a mortar round had blown
the hub right off a half-track
and sent it spinning through the grass
where he and his squad were on the flank
and how the rolling metal had sliced
a neat groove in the top of the steel pot
of one of the grunts a couple of guys out from him
and how that guy taped up the helmet
and wore it even while racked out or taking a dump
right up until he was discharged back to The World
and that little laugh was a pretty adroit way
of getting back to what's bearable

as we left because my buddy could only tolerate
a couple of beers on account of his ulcer
I noticed the old men smiled at my friend
differently than they did at me
as I was just a kid and hadn't been through it
like they all had and how could I know
what it was like what it was all about
and I wanted to tell them thank God I don't know

Bruce Iserman

The Wall

you can't stand back, can't
withdraw, can't achieve a cool,
rational, historical perspective –
the fenced walkway orders everyone
into close formation

each slab of the monument is
a headstone – you've got to go nose to nose
with all that home-town death, all
those boys with ancestor's middle names or
just initials

volunteers will help you
find acquaintances, childhood friends,
the kid you used to give lemonade and cookies,
your prom date, the boss's
boy, your hairdresser's husband,
father son brother uncle cousin

the guy from across the street

they also have alphabetized books with photos,
each man very correct, a military property,
processed and neatly tricked out

each name is small,
less than an inch high,
a few inches long, white
on glassy black

my name could have been inscribed
here, near the monument's far end –
for the names are chronological,
beginning at shallow ground
level, early years, early 60's, descending,
widening with commitment of forces,
deepening as the trickle of blood
swelled to a stream, a torrent,
the nadir of the war the Tet
Offensive in '68 (I could have been there,

too, if they had got me in '67, just
out of high school), the carnage
supreme the stone in the middle taller than
any man, shovelled more deeply into
the American soil, then
tapering upward
to the year of my more likely
hypothetical death, 1972, during
disengagement and withdrawal, the worst
over unless of course somebody
zapped you sorry
about that

my family and I walked
through the monument twice, from
start to finish to start and
out and I don't know what
the numbing thousands
of those names meant to the children –
they kept quiet, perhaps out of respect –
my wife said nothing, just held me

sadness, pity, guilt, desire
for some fading expiation –
I don't know

I wrote the last part of this,
the poetic part, first –
that's best, that's the future –
what's one more increasingly
ancient, irrelevant war,
who cares, there's always another one
to protest

afterwards, my wife asked me
are you all right –
said yes, let's walk

we went down to the Potomac
and it being Easter Sunday had to fight
the crowds under the cherry
blossoms, eager for the sublime
white and pink ceiling splitting us
from the earth and the sky

Bruce Iserman

Conference

first they had to stamp everyone's hand
with an American Exile ink inscription
before they would let you in
even though no one was paying anything
except time to be there
and we all knew who we were

second they had to get us
to move to the back where there were lots
of chairs left and where we wouldn't block
the media's view of the proceedings

from that point it was up to the individual
to smile or look grim
when the camera played over his face
and wonder if he would end up
on the cutting room floor so to speak
or would become famous among his friends
on the six or eleven o'clock news

now I went along with it all
because essentially I care about our image
and I am a law abiding citizen mostly
despite the one time I refused
to be a soldier and hence ended up here

so yes I sat in the back
and was uncomfortable when the man
who wouldn't shut up
kept ignoring the chairman's appeal
that the meeting be orderly
and that people raise their hands to be
recognized before they speak
so that we could all put the best foot forward
for the press who would be only too happy
to pick up on any dissension among us
and hell yes I was all for a united front
and a common statement of intent to boycott
because the reason I came anyway was to show support
and help bring out the numbers

although that seemed silly now in this cramped little room
and I clapped after each mention
of universal and unconditional amnesty for everybody
and really was moved when the man
who had just got out of the slam after eleven months
stood up to be heard and everyone
me included gave him a lengthy hand
for his conscientious courage that bordered
on futility but was at least morally unassailable
unlike the moves of those of us
who left the country in disgust and fear

but Christ what a headache I got
from being jammed in with all that cigarette smoke
glowing under Klieg lights
where everyone was sweating and grotesquely pallid
so that while looking at the seven speakers
on the raised area where most of the cameras were pointed
and listening to them give progress reports
on the struggle against U. S. imperialism
in Paris and London and Winnipeg
I began to see all these healthy young bodies
shrivelling in a well lit mass grave
and felt superior for remembering
that mass graves are still what it's all about
and this amnesty chatter is irrelevant

as I left with my poor head fit to burst
I realized that every person in that room
had looked around uncomfortably
and they too saw sweat turn into sticky blood
and heard the motor of the tv portopak
scream like an attack helicopter
and saw through eyes half blind from photo flash
our mutual wonder how we had been so lucky
to never have smashed people in the line of duty
or dropped fire on them
and then it was better and I was glad
to have come because I knew
that all their memories were as good as mine
or desperately wished they were
and all split heads as painful

Ellen S. Jaffe

Vietnam, August 11, 1966

11 people die, 187 are wounded
it is a tragedy
because
they are civilian

11 people die, 187 are wounded
it is a victory
because
they are the enemy

11 people die, 187 are wounded
it is an atrocity
because
they are ours

skin off the labels,
taste the darkness beneath
ask a leg if it is civilian
an arm if it is the enemy
an eye if it is ours

Ellen S. Jaffe

After September Eleventh

"Cancel everything, just write the poem"
he says (cheerfully), as if I didn't have enough to do,
giving three workshops, two on writing,
one on children and monsters
(nightmare monsters, children who live and die in my poetry),
and finishing paperwork that languished all summer,
victim of mental drought.
My love life is also a victim, of drought or drowning,
of lovers who give up on love (though they make great friends).
Above it all looms the dark of world events,
ashen haze above the World Trade Center in New York City
where I grew up before it was built –
my last glimpse of New York, seeing those towers,
that skyline, a week before September Eleventh,
flying home from Newark Airport
where I drank a gin-and-tonic with lime
after a chaste rendezvous with my very first love –
we chased memories like rabbits 'round the garden
of no regrets. Two other lovers/now friends
witnessed the attack, still alive.
I'm thankful for this, mourning everyone else,
everyone covered with smoke, with fear, with the numbness
that has crept into my heart.
The world's heartbeat fades, drumming
slower and slower, except for the quickness of bombs
falling far away, so far we don't see those images
behind our eyes. Disaster movies spring to life –
nightmares, lost children, ruined cities of "there" transported "here."
If only Kurt Vonnegut had got it right
and we could rewind the film
back and back, straight to the beginning, planes dismantled,
bombs crumbled back to earth. But where would we start?
And where would we ever stop?

Cancel everything. Just write.

Pat Jasper

Child's Play

Bavaria: 1954
Old attitudes linger in the air
like deadly chlorine gas.

The offspring of watchdogs in an occupied land,
we amused ourselves in the abandoned bunkers and foxholes
in the field behind the Officers' Mess.
Most of the valuable mementoes of the war,
helmets and lugers,
had been scavenged by souvenir hunters,
but there was enough left in the rubble
to satisfy our ten-year-old needs:
spent flat-headed bullets
yellowed maps no longer readable
the occasional rotted knapsack.

One morning, digging under the tangle of vines,
we unearthed a live howitzer shell.
The Army Corps of Engineers were summoned to detonate it.
Before they left, they put up barbed wire
and signs that said
Verboten
around our playground.

Driven to the streets, we divided into gangs
– the Krauts versus the Yanks –
learned all the German swear words
and stole rotten eggs, tomatoes
from garbage cans in back of the commissary,
hurling them at one another like grenades.

Somewhere along the line
we began to almost mean it
as if we'd undergone basic training
in some vague boot camp of inevitable combat:
small calibre shells of distrust and fear
itching to explode
into yet another holocaust.

Pat Jasper

Children of Violence

I. Cuban Missile Crisis

(October 22, 1962)

> *The time not to become a [parent]*
> *is eighteen years before a World War.*
> – E. B. White

You picked a bad day to be born:
other headlines usurped yours
and the newspapers will be all sold out.
No clipping for proud grandparents
to paste in their scrapbook.

I haven't seen you yet, poker-faced abstraction,
myself just emerged from the oblivion
of the gas mask to the voice of John Kennedy
on the radio announcing the blockade.
The bluff has been called; the ante is our lives.
You, who have barely begun, face extinction.
How long will we have when they bring you to me?
Will this war get you?
Or the next?
Or the next?

All night I laboured to free that huge, round head.
Nine months on the assembly line,
you lie wrapped and resting in a labelled box
among rows of labelled boxes.
When I unwrap you for our first confrontation,
will I find a living baby boy
with fingers and toes I can count in awe
or a shiny, new cannon ball?

II. Everyone Remembers

(November 22, 1963)

Lunch crumbs and milk rings sponged off the table,
I lie half-asleep on the couch, blouse unbuttoned,
breast-feeding my newborn daughter.
Toddler son sits at my feet,
munching on an oatmeal cookie,
putting together the wooden pieces
of a Humpty-Dumpty puzzle.

> Softly he chants:
> All the king's horses
> and all the king's men ...

Those first curdling bulletins
dribble from the radio,
short-circuit through my bloodstream
like alcohol or forbidden chocolate.
The baby, whimpering,
spits out the sour nipple
as rerouted drops of shock spill from my eyes,
splash on her finely-veined head
like warm, wet bullets.

> Forty-six years ago
> a mother cradled his head,
> watched the soft spot breathe
> before the bones had fused into a skull.

All afternoon in Dallas,
reporters and police shove
microphones and pistols in people's faces.
At home the world's millions
woodenly try to fit the pieces
> together.

III. Vietnam Demonstration
(October 15, 1969)

Protective, he begged me not to go.
Not just pregnant, but enormous,
I couldn't even button my winter coat.
But this was something that wouldn't wait.

The fanatic period of gestation was over, and
standing on the steps of the state capitol in Denver,
we sang "We Shall Overcome" in the snow, knowing
all across the country, other ordinary people were gathered
on other state capitol steps, joining in the swelling chorus.

In the crowd was a group of interns
wearing black armbands that stood out
against the white of their uniforms.
One of them, taking note of my condition,
hovered near, making sure I wasn't jostled,
ready, should I decide to go into labour.

The day was peaceful and made its small mark.

Three weeks later, my second son was delivered
into the same shadow as the first.
I remember coming to
and groggily checking the doctor's arm,
wondering where his black band was.

Michael Lee Johnson

If I Were Young Again

Piecemeal summer dies:
Long winter spreads its blanket again.

For ten years I have lived in exile,
locked in this rickety cabin, shoulders
jostled up against the open Alberta sky.

If I were young again, I'd sing of the coolness of high
mountain snow flowers, the sprinkle of night glow-blue meadows;
I would dream and stretch slim fingers into the distant nowhere,
yawn slowly over endless prairie miles.

The grassland is where in summer silence grows;
in the evening eagles spread their wings
dripping like warm honey.

If I were young again, I'd eat pine cones, food of birds,
share meals with wild wolves;
I'd have as much dessert as I wanted,
reach out into blue sky, lick the clouds off my fingers.

But I'm not young anymore and my thoughts tormented
are raw, overworked, sharpened with misery
from torture of war and childhood.

Inside the rush of summer winds,
outside the air beaten dim with snow.

1985

Joseph Jones

white phosphorus and depleted uranium

white phosphorus
and depleted uranium
have things in common
for example
spontaneous combustion
not superstition
pure science

"depleted uranium that remains outside
the body cannot harm you"

presume
the same for the other
exercise
simple logic

consider the one and the other
multivalent nonmetal
essential for living organisms
fissile metal
with a half-life
of four and a half
billion
years
well over
a hundred million
generations

flag all those allotropes
white and red and black
Willy Pete
burns to the bone
first isolated in urine
know that U P phosphorus

play with it
urinium or your anium
bring it together

distinguish those isotopes
    235 reactive
        less than one percent
        of the natural metal
    238 depleted
        could have bred
        plutonium

O Canada you chief
    exporter of the heavier
(your Saskatchewan
    provincial government plays
        a central role in setting
        the international price)

in this elemental inquiry
    consider what remains
        untreated

                who remains

                whose remains

Poet's Note: "Willy Pete" is U.S. military slang for white phosphorus.

Ken Klonsky

Border Incident: Peace Bridge, 1981

Damn the United States! I wish I may
never hear of the United States again!
– Philip Nolan, *The Man Without a Country*

In his sullen brown eyes
Detect a trace of the lost country,
Once defined, primary, strident,
Now faded, blended, glazed over.
Deeper inside: a terrible aching
For loved ones left behind,
The hard certainties digested
In the highchair with the pabulum,
The band, the colours, the anthem.

America, warns the cautionary tale,
Does not forgive those men
Who take her name in vain;
Implacable, proud Liberty
Conceals her broken heart to the jilter,
He who swore allegiance to another,
Detains him while she disdains him,
Sits him down upon the office bench
Beneath the portrait of a grinning imp.

It's said the brain's hard-wired for wholeness.
The amputee endures pain so acute
He'll cry for that which is not there.
Even those born without a leg
Are tortured by the phantom limb;
Parents having lost a child
Can never stand erect again,
Will lean towards absence always.

Daniel M. Kolos

Glory Days

After I was drafted
I had an M-1 pressed into my hands:
"Run with it, stab with it, shoot with it"
I was told.

For months I went through the exercise
then I was given an M-16.

By that time I didn't bother to take
the four hour training.
I filled out my own marksmanship report
and signed it, handed it in,
and nobody knew the difference.

On bivouac
on a northern Virginia military range
I lost my rifle.
The Sergeant-Major
who thought of me as a "fuck-up"
couldn't believe it.
He said to me:
"Soldier, you're as good as dead!"

Instead of punishing me, he decided
to send me to Vietnam.

And that evening
he invited me
to a game of checkers in his tent.

I had to let him beat me.

But I didn't go to Vietnam.
The Army, in its inscrutable wisdom,
stopped me from certain death.

A clerk, a draftee like me,
found my father was alive
and living in Budapest, Hungary.

"Army regulations," he said,
"do not allow
a soldier to fight
against a Communist country
if he has a close relative living in one.

"Where would you like to go instead?"

I knew all along:
the glory days in Vietnam
were not meant for me.

Richard Lemm

Grandfather Tells Me About the Wars

I was too young for the First War,
too old for the Second. You know
how that felt? My older brother,
godlike in his uniform, tossed me
his baseball glove, said, Play with that,
kid. Pushing a mop around Papa's store,
skinning rabbits and squab, while
he led the horses of artillery.
I weighed potatoes. He loaded shells.
I added endless numbers.
Fireworks put out his eyes.

And driving a taxi all those years
later. Waiting at dance halls.
Soldiers pushing up skirts in the back
seat of my cab. French safes. Big tips.
Didn't care that I could hear. Or wanted me
to drive half the night, their last nights,
just a bottle, no women, and talk about
marching to Paris Rome Berlin, sweethearts
and mothers, buddies already over and gone,
wondering how cold the sea if torpedoed
and if something happens wanting it
quick, not flak in the gut or a mine
taking legs off to the knees.

Sure, I saw how some of them
came back, I picked them up
at depots and docks. The charred voices.
The effort their eyes made
to forget, show nothing.
I wanted that too. Someday
you'll know what I mean.

Richard Lemm

Return to Sender

For Jef Jaisun

On a warm autumn night in Seattle
moving from one embrace to another
at my fortieth high school reunion
in the grand ballroom of the Lincoln Hotel
one month before the U.S. elections
with news of daily blasts in Iraq growing fainter
I'm pulled aside, gently, held in front of a giant mirror
in which I see the survivors, laughing, resuming the dance
and am told, in a soft voice I must lean over and strain
to hear, Your highschool sweetheart and first
wife is listed among the deceased.

The next to the last
time I saw her, dancing and laughing
around a bonfire, we were the guests of honour –
a warm autumn night, a beach near Seattle
gallons of Gallo wine, Steve thrumming his guitar
yours truly on bongos, people shouting out Dylan's
"Don't Think Twice, It's All Right." We were
crossing the northern border, tomorrow, immigrant
cards in our wallets, draft notice
returned to sender. She was flaunting
her half-naked body, hugging whoever
stayed awake for talking, wrapped in a moonlight
blanket at the water's edge, her gaze melting
sealing wax on letters goodbye to every face
but mine, staring forlorn from a mummy bag
at this shoreline I might never see again, while she
lithe heron, with her grey-blue wings, could fly
a mere three-hours south and cavort, here, with
anyone. Then Steve sat beside me, close to
the embers, waiting for my eyes to open
on the pink-gray skies of dawn.
She's gone, he said, left your backpack but took
your car, heading back to California
loves you but all she could see

to the north was white. Blanc. No lights
of the Golden Gate, no eucalytpi-scented
sex under the palm-treed stars, no
dance of deliverance from the rockets' red
glare, no sweet kickass prayers
of the Grateful Dead or Thomas Jefferson
airplane in which rebels could soar, just

frost. The last time I saw her, the same
year Steve went missing in action
in the jungles of Nam, she found her way
north of the border, migrant bohemian
fruit-picker under Okanagan skies
and blistering sun. Out of the blue
she dropped by my Vancouver beach house,
tripping on acid with her marble-David-lookalike
boyfriend whose parents owned that Big Sur
café where the Beats set their poems
on fire and lobbed them at the air-conditioned
post-war dream. The day so clear
the white arrowheads of the Olympic
Mountains in Washington gleamed beyond
the Strait of Juan de Fuca's invisible border
for us. Remember, I thought, those alpine
meadows and streams, the two of us, zip-together
sleeping bags, chocolate, tequila, and reading
Walt Whitman, *I sing the body electric*, gathering
blossoms like Whitman with his flower press
in the troop camps and battle-grounds
of a blue-gray war. I fought
with myself that day to be civil, gracious
host. How could you show up without
warning, stoned, entwined with this
demigod male I could never be?
Unsaid. Smiled, showed them their bed.
Woke the next morning to find them
gone. A note. *Thank you for*
your kindness. Don't forget
to look up "in perfect silence at the stars."

No word, no news, since. Until
this evening, when a classmate tells me
his son's stationed in Iraq, and he wishes
he'd gone to Canada years ago, like me.
Was it rough, he asks, leaving like that?
Only at first, I say. And now.

Richard Lemm

Hendrix of Arabia

Rainbow scarves, peacock shirt, gypsy
trousers and Robin Hood boots, he is all mirage
at first, spotted by a convoy on a sweltering road
near Basra, a violet haze from refineries
behind him. A gang of kids, jaws unhinged,
drop the rocks they were aiming
when that detonation of
hair, that face like feedback from a space
station imploding, those trigger fingers on
his Stratocaster come into view.
Here there is one god, one prophet, or now
maybe two. A fury of chords
catches fire and the kids
are idolators – the words for martyr,
roadside bomb, and vengeance
cauterized from their brains.
The convoy halts, Marines, voodoo
children of their star-spangled
folks in another war stoned
on his machine gun smoke
for the beehives of the planet. He hums
and honey flows from their calibered
barrels. This is not what they signed
up for. To escort him, riding
shotgun, north, past the watchtower
mosques, men's heads turning,
incandescent, toward the northwest
Pacific coast, past women
in the foxholes of their veils
remembering how the desert wind
dries the most sacred names to dust.
He is driving a Jeep into Baghdad
through the legions' armor, cellphones
ringing with resignations
from pentagons and oval offices, the blood
red house of the sky
low enough to kiss

Edward Lemond

My Father, My Enemy, and My Father

I never could talk to you.
It was like something stuck in my throat:
hysterical bolus.
I, I, I, I.

A cold man brave in your smoldering pride,
I used to pray to recover you:
you, you, you, you
who would strangle the mere mention
of your own disappeared father.

Well, you disappeared for me too,
in your sickness, your despair.
You waited too long to try life on your own:
you did not know how old you had grown,
in the thin gut of your self-regard.

And as we walked to the car
I paused a moment to shake your poor hand,
and I said, I guess things will be better
if I see you again
when I meant to say *when*,
or did I?

Something in you shriveled and died
and I did not stop to think
that I might not ever see you again,
nor for years did I believe anything,
except that it was all my fault.

Father, I will have to invent you anew,
in broader, truer strokes,
for your sake,
for mine.

Alison Lohans

Immigrant, landed

August 13, 1971. Sitting in the overstuffed
red VW bug, our pregnant striped cat
for company – husband in the blue
Datsun just ahead – my heart pounds
with swollen, breath-catching thuds.

Blaine, Washington now behind us, and the line
is long this sun-drenched day
of momentous crossings.
Ping! Ping! The high metallic song
draws my eyes as the gleaming
snake of vehicles creeps north.

There, dancing on a flagpole,
the perky maple leaf, bedded in
red-and-white, playing
in the wind. Beyond it, clear
benign blue.

My throat clamps, pure joy floods
hot wetness down my face onto
my blouse; it will not stop, this fine day
of homecoming.

August, 2007. No longer that same
innocent, I still bear the stain
of both my homelands, entrenched
in senseless war, pain showering
upon kindred unmet souls.

KEITH MAILLARD

from "The Author Recalls His Adolescence"

– 3 –

Our senior year in military school
Salzarulo lost his rank. Got caught
drinking, stood there giggling, the damn fool,
and marched an hour a day forever – not
great for a kid who kept a photograph
of his dad who died in World War Two. I wanted
to find God, I once confessed to him. He laughed
and wished me luck. Said he'd never wanted
to be anything but a soldier. We made a vow:
we'd always tell each other what we learned.
Did I find God? I don't know. I found
something, a clarifying image that burns
cold – fleeting, a shiver in the sun.
Salzarulo died in Vietnam.

KEITH MAILLARD

from "The Intervention of the Duke"

– 20 –

The 4th of May, 1970. America
is bombing Cambodia to bring peace to Vietnam.
At Kent State the boy soldiers of the Ohio National Guard
carry loaded M-1s. "Flowers are better than bullets,"
Allison Krause told them. Today she is dead.
And dead is Sandra Scheuer, who was shot through the neck.
And dead is Jeffrey Miller, who was shot through the head.
And dead is William Schroeder, who was shot through the back
as he lay on the ground. I said:
he was shot through the back as he lay on the ground.
None was older than twenty, and none had cast a stone.
Years later, their parents get some money and a
letter of regret. The Guard was charged with nothing.
I left the United States.

– 22 –

He doesn't look half bad twenty years later –
the only statesman in the western world
who would allow himself to be photographed
upside down above a trampoline. He said no
you may not inquire of any young man arriving at the border
as to his status in the armed forces
of the United States of America.
We thought Canada meant peace.
My eyes filled with tears when I crossed
into Quebec and saw the Maple Leaf flying.
As soon as I could, I became a citizen.
For all my jokes about maple syrup, I was proud.
Now it makes me sick to see my country play the yapping cur,
chasing the tail of the American dog gone barking into war.

– 23 –

A medieval map invites you in. Come wander. Those trees?
Each branch, so neatly labeled, is an Art, and you'll be taught
how all the world compounded is of earth and water,
fire, air. New songs of Courtly Love are sung, and one
may learn to be a perfect gentle Knight. A Lady
named Intelligence rides her horse into the stream
that flows from Life; four quiet scholars study here:
they're Gentile, Moslem, Christian, Jew.
Time Magazine offers us a pull-out map showing troops, tanks,
artillery, Scuds, chemical and biological warfare factories;
turn it over, see the Allied and Iraqi troops, armour, and artillery
all drawn to scale – Oh, wonderful! Before the map
can be of use, we see the slaughter on the news.
Angels, give us in our dreams the map to take us home.

Dave Margoshes

saigon rising

April 29, 1975

i remember a man with blood on his hair
and a woman in a palace of fingernails
whose heart was chipped and bitten to the quick

that was the beginning of that country for us,
and *we* were just beginning:
i was riding in a bus through rain clouds
reading of men on fire
bombs falling like hail
to quench their thirst …
and you were going in circles,
your throat sore from drinking fire –
wherever we went
that country followed us
like true north or a fixed star
hanging cold over the dead sea –
there were times we thought that war would go on forever
but we would perish in time,
we would fall into slivers
while we held our ears against the boom of sighs,
and there were times we thought there could be no end
to pain and loving was just a way of saving face

but today I see saigon rising
and the cobblestones soar into the light,
the crystal palace shatters:
today the blood dries in the air and the man
with white hair puts away his handkerchief
and today I hear the sigh end,
broken glass on the roadway being brushed away

Dave Margoshes

For the September Dead

The dawn prays itself out of holy night, wills
itself into holy day, clouds bowing their heads
to the holy presence of light. All light

is holy, all darkness, the full and the empty
of horizons. The land is holy, the sea, air
is holy, the humours of the body, blood

and phlegm, yellow bile and black bile, the purity
of the spirit, the echo of a lie. The paradox
of life which ends with death is holy, the comfort

of death which crowns life is holy, the irony
of laughter, the cruelty of a smile, the glistening
of teeth beneath the innocent lip, all these are holy,

the orchestration of songbirds, the dirge
of crows, all holy, the worm in the beak
of the bird in the nest of the flowering tree,

its scent rising all the way to heaven, holy heaven.
All certainties are holy, all promises, all doubts.
A traffic light is holy, the green, the yellow,

the red, the hum and rattle of traffic, the dust
it raises, the receding red light of the tail-lamp
in the falling dusk. And night, holy night, praying

its way out of the ashes of holy day.

Dave Margoshes

September 12

On the following day, there were flowers, hot coffee
in the morning, cinnamon buns and the laughter
of the girls on the cheerleading squad as they
collided with each other exiting the yellow bus.
This was in Rayfield, Ohio, where life went on
despite the terrible images everyone in town
had seen on television the day before. People
shook their heads, with disbelief, with disgust.
They didn't – not a one of them, not for a minute –
sit stunned in silence in a school the way
the President did in that film. Across the street
from the school an old man with a goiter on his neck
sat in a sway-back chair in front of the drugstore,
smoking a corncob pipe. He watched the cheerleaders
and thought about some of the things he'd seen in his
long life, the mud at Juno Beach that had clung
to his boots, the policeman who had come to his door
late one night, thought about the TV screen,
the stories he'd read that morning in the paper. He
thought about his great-grandson, Tommy,
barely 5, thought about what he'd tell him that night
when he held him in his arms, fresh from his bath
and ready for bed. All through the town of Rayfield
fathers were thinking about what they would tell
their daughters that evening, mothers their sons,
husbands their newlywed wives, all the same thing.
Barbers were already saying it with a shrug, whispering
it into the chastened ears of the heads their scissors
moulded. Joan at the Payless checkout counter
remarked it to the woman in the flowered dress
buying flour and toothpaste. The customer nodded
her head in agreement. "Yes," she said, and repeated
it. All across Rayfield, Ohio, in the heart of the nation
people were saying it or thinking of saying it. For this
one moment, they spoke as one.

Steven McCabe

Hitchhike

A ghost-wind blew into the mouth of Route 66
We inhaled the narcotic of springtime
Night swallowed the red glow of cigarettes
Headlights floated a white parade

Premonitions roar within a pale cyclone
You struggle against the wind in your blood
Fleeing the sound of windows breaking
The life you sought carries a scent
The President of the United States
Wants you
The ghost-wind emits a lost goddess sigh

Random wishes populate a night sky
Go forth and multiply
You will lose your mother
Your father too/ dust to dust

Skidding to a stop the driver tosses an empty can
Scattering gravel
The cast-iron peace symbol hanging on a leather shoelace
Bounces against the dead sparrows in his chest
"Where ya' goin'?"

A phantom breeze closes the door
A figure rises tripping over spindly legs
Keeps pace with the car
An illusion to a delusion
We drive into black-throated night
The absence of light hunting its shell
Our glowing cigarette tips pirouette:
An underwater ballet
The black-lunged night swallowing our silhouettes

The zonked-on-acid, punctured owner of the shiny, late-model Ford
Out of the army only weeks
Fleeing his newlywed life
Requisitioning another six-pack
Mixing medicines on the run
Dividing the night
Hollowed out from the inside
Pointing down a side road –
A single sentry standing guard motions us through the gate
The driver's girlfriend rests her head on his vigilant shoulder
And fiddles with the a.m. dial
Late breaking news over the radio:
Rotary blades whirl
Slicing a wishbone down the middle flat beneath the ivory night
Perimeter lights illuminate your birthday smile
Blow out the candle.
The President regrets to inform …

A nation at war/ not at war
The old die young

The shadow of death carries a long-handled flashlight
Searching the roadside for aluminum cans
A silver antenna transfigures the black scar of night
Echoing solitude

The pilot's helmet a scream in the dew –
A mist falling over shadows
Blows out the light

Boys in uniform pile into a truck
Coffins arrive nailed shut

Pounding our fists on the long wooden table
Hands with the slender wrists of youth
Demanding the bones of revolution
Lifting glass pitchers of watery beer
Dropping quarters into the jukebox
Proud Mary Rolling
Proud Mary Rolling
And later when we were as drunk as corn in the dew
Hey Jude don't be afraid

Eve swam in the shadows/ young immaculate coral
Seaweed twisted around her body
The serpent said, "Eat of me your body will tremble"
Adam found a rifle in the twigs

He silences the purring engine beneath a flickering neon
*V*A*C*A*N*C*Y**
The emptied soldier fleeing his wife
Needed a dream as big as an airplane
He traded his paycheck for a blue bar of soap

We thought/ we were/ a revolution
The portable hi-fi plugged in
Pearls Before Swine singing *Suzanne*
Grainy lyrics causing memory to recall a Jesus we had never known
Jesus was a sailor … and when he knew for certain …
Sunday churches bought and sold for thirty pieces of silver
A nation at war
Only drowning eyes could see …

The cocky maniac playing one-handed catch tosses car keys into the air:
Goin' back to Hard-Rock City
A pristine sorrow litters the side of the road

I stick my thumb into the void
Where the snake-skin veil fallen off the moon
Disappeared
A ghost-wind spiraling around my ankles

Truckloads of boys my age
Green canvas fluttering above their heads –
The earth closing over their bodies –
Worship a god whose prophet wore a clip-on tie
Opening the manual …
Eve and the serpent copulating hard as a flattened wishbone
On the page *Thou Shalt Not Kill*
One or two flash me the peace sign
One or two flip me the finger
Maybe they swam in the pool where I thought I might drown

I put one finger in the dry skin
Crawling into a tunnel
I swam without needing to breathe
An officer sees my thumb
Retreat is not a word in his vocabulary

The blur of death hunting its shell
Drinking us dry
The past and present tossed onto the side of the road
Later to swim in the future
Where I learned to move my arms

Swimming away Mother
From the edge of the pool I held kicking
Digging fingers into mud
Swimming away Father
Passing through hollows
Touching my toes to the bottom
Where I gulped for air

Outside a grimy gas station
A newspaper stained with oil
Blurring the day's editorial rage:
Below the Northern Lights
Reason and Baudelaire paddle a flowing line
The ghost-wind parting trees;
A hole blowing across Route 66
Hits the windshield

Gary McCarty

Going

I park the car at the curb. The roof glistens
under a red dawn. The house

stands in swirls of
settled cloud. I walk
to the front stoop,
past the trees in the yard, dew pooled
in the palms of green leaves hanging
from low limbs.

A soft knock. The smell of coffee
from the kitchen in my father's house
waits on the other side of
the closed front door. My father
is in his bedroom,
preparing. It's my mother
who greets me and
pours the coffee.

I use the length of the trip ahead
as reason to leave
quickly. My father's sport jacket
remains buttoned. He holds his arms
at his sides and
twaddles his fingers
just a bit
before brushing my arm.

The concrete and asphalt of
the Seaford-Oyster Bay Expressway,
on whose dirt I used to play,
leads to the same grey
of Southern State, the
Cross Island, and Cross Bronx,
of the Whitestone and
George Washington Bridges,
and soon enough,
to I-90,
all the way to the border.
Nothing changing, maybe

nothing will change.

I stop for gas. Mist
from the Falls,
and its subjugating sound,
comes from above the escarpment
on a driven wind
to the river basin, and clears,
on the rise,
to smoothed rock,
and

pinks the sky.

Susan McCaslin

Border Boogie (1969)

You who go out on schedule
to kill, do you know
there are eyes that watch you?
– Denise Levertov

1.
Moon-pent in a white VW,
heading up the freeway north from Seattle,
sperm-like rain snaking up the windshield
toward Nirvana, British Columbia,

I am twenty-two
and deathless.

My boyfriend Tim and I slip
across the border just after Blaine
where he blew his mind on acid
a month ago on our first reconnaissance
of the route, hip, cool, tuned
to Coltrane's *A Love Supreme*.

2.
The horrors of Hanoi,
napalm stuck in our skulls,
Levertov's logged words
encoding my journal.

Simon Fraser's radical curriculum
promises manna for the disenchanted,
tales of students storming the faculty lounge,
"Be in's" for beleaguered flowering ones.

Tim drags along, averse to academics,
burying his letter from the draft board
deep in his duffle bag, moving
breathless past customs officials.

3.
His dad chose for him a military career.
He told me how in officers' training
he leapt from a helicopter,
shot and skinned a rabbit, vomited,
then heaved himself out of there,

"tuned in, turned on, dropped out,"
found Monty his guru, and
a macrobiotic regime till I
caught him munching an O Henry.

Returning from a seminar on Blake
and the mythopoetic mind, I
became "The Little Girl Lost"
who found her lion deep

into Cream and Miles,
sprawled on the orange shag rug,
headphones riveted to his ears,
an astronaut trolling inner space,

splayed like Da Vinci's man,
skinny, open-faced.

4.
He graduated (barely) in physics
but sought the Tao of imagination,

did piecework, house painting,
lineman jobs, stoned, toked up,

and with his first cheque bought me
a shimmering shift of red-orange glitter,
Aphrodite dress from a head shop.

He followed me to Vancouver,
pining for home, yet home meant

the draft and Vietnam,
hot killing fields and hollowed eyes.

5.
Up all night typing papers on Poe's Berenice,
and Ligeia, I take to sporting dark capes,
grow pale with anemia,
believe that in another incarnation
I had been Poe's child wife Virginia Clemm.
(I always become what I research.)

My thesis grows pregnant with itself,
swells to 300 pages, mysterious,
white, like Moby Dick.

Tim, restless, disenchanted,
drives back and forth to Seattle.
We who had considered marriage,

split. I touch his head one last time
and choose to stay in Canada:
first hostel, hotel,
and finally, home.

6.
Stuck with unknowing
all these years, I wonder:

Did he get snared by the draft?
Did he break and bleed in Southeast Asia?
Is his name inscribed on the wall in Washington?

Or is he a banker now,
easing into late mid-life
with a wife, a dog, and grandchildren on the way?

Googling gives no leads.
But who really needs to know?
The slide of sex, the glimmer gone,

all seems impossible, improbable
to my 60-something life.

Nevertheless, I would offer
more than ironies:
this last image of him falling

downstairs in a pool of his own light.

Errant knight,
held in a poem's peace.

Marianne Micros

where are the hippies?

I wanted to be a hippie
admired them from a distance
grew my hair long
wore Indian dresses
listened to the Doors and Bob Dylan
went to the village of Woodstock
seeking Bob

I didn't find him
but met a painter who stood on a rooftop
threw paint down on a canvas
letting the colours form their own
spontaneous patterns

I worked in Manhattan
in the West Village
in a Syrian restaurant run by Israelis
wore black eye make-up
got my ears pierced

was not surprised
when Jesus embraced me
a hippie in long robe and sandals
his unfocussed eyes dreaming of
love and peace
his long uncombed hair hanging
down his back

he walked me home from work
to keep me safe through the Bowery
where he debated with street people
he invited me to his pad
told me it was okay
his girlfriend Mary was there too
she always welcomed company

I refused terrified he would
force pot and other drugs on me
I hailed a taxi and fled
to my own apartment
had nightmares of a strange man
offering me forbidden elixirs

I was too timid for hippiedom
did not even march in protest
against the Vietnam War
stayed in my apartment
but was willing to provide
overnight accommodation for
hippies who did march

they were students
of the sculptor who
admired my arms
as I lifted trays and
scrubbed down tables

he asked me to come to
his studio to model for him
he would pay me $20 an hour
it was not a come-on
my arms matched the body
of the model who had quit

somewhere there is a statue
of my arms on a body
that is nothing like mine

story of my life
only part of me took those risks
displayed my arms
but not my body
never posed nude
never went to the pad
of that hippie
who looked like Jesus

missed Woodstock and
all those love-ins
moved to Canada for a Ph.D.
not to escape
war and politics

my husband says that
when I am very old
I will stumble forward
with my cane
and cry out
where are the hippies?

I still seek those beautiful
long-haired children
peacefully offering flowers

but my hippies have clear unglazed eyes
are spontaneous not languid
can be trusted when they say
Mary is waiting at home
always welcoming

Isa Milman

Cross Border Dressing

For Wendy Morton

And Wendy flew the coop from South Bend Indiana
as did so many women who were forbidden to wear
dirndl skirts spotted with fake blood, waving
mannequin limbs from open windows of Studebakers.
Girlish pranks gone sour those summer days
the ice-cream parlours closed early.

By the river, fathers warned of repercussions
on hot July evenings, as daughters hopped on trains
for jolly little holidays crossing continents.
So much for these missions described as accidental.

Was it you who told me of pulling an old relic from your bookshelf,
turning pages to discover a slip of November 1965,
the days crossed off like a prisoner's sentence,
Dylan lyrics scribbled in the margins?
A few pages further, a desiccated maple leaf
still throbbed oxblood and amber, disturbing the fine print.
The smell of a poem about it was unmistakable,
and wasn't about to dissipate.

But it doesn't really matter. I've taken many liberties.
Let's get out the birthday cake, but watch it –
the authorities consider candles and flag waving
unseemly, for those who live by an ocean and
give death something delicious to eat.

Poet's Note. The italicized line is from "Bernie's Wake," by Wendy Morton.

Isa Milman

Love Birds

For Aunt Rose

The woman is arranging the table for dinner.
Tonight, she places her salt and pepper love birds on the linen cloth.
A thin blue aerogram rustles in her husband's hands. The ink
has bled through the paper, tracings like veins beneath skin.

The birds, who perch on their silver branch, are dusty,
so the woman cleans them with her hankie, still moist.
He folds the letter back into its creases, slips it
into his breast pocket. She lights the lamps.

If he could speak, he would say he was waiting for this all along.
Bad news flying in like a sparrow through an open window,
then beating its wings against the glass.

She dips her ladle into the tureen. Come eat, the woman says.
You hate it when your soup is cold.
She lifts a bird. The salt flows into her cupped hand.

Steve Moore

from "Autobiography"

True, I had my swimming holes
& apple trees to climb like
any working class Rockford boy & factories
to work in every summer to pay
for the first Moore ever to make
it through a university … books
the ticket to the middle class & so
I became a teacher even though my childhood
bliss was playing a drum kit with
my comrade rock & rollers in the basement
of 1911 Pierce Ave. & in teen clubs
& Masonic Temples & bars in Rochelle, Illinois
where some hillbillies had a knock-down
drag out blood beer bottle throwing fight
'cause some old boyfriend had danced
with the bride in front of my drum
& all hell broke loose & I wondered as
I dodged left & right playing my drums,
'cause the bar owner said "Keep on playing"
as if teaching wasn't such a bad idea after all
& then I wondered if I would ever get married,
which I did three times 'cause Molly
ran off with another woman
& Tara Donna White died of cancer & Danielle
is my eternal Love now 'til something happens
to this old body that no empire wants
anymore but can't get anyway
'cause I've been hiding in an undisclosed
location in Canada since 1967 when
my nose got smashed in by a National Guard
rifle butt when me & 75,000 buddies
surrounded the Pentagon in '67
& tried to lift it off the ground
by chanting some crazy mantra which
I can't even remember, but you tend
to forget things that don't work …

2003

Steve Moore

from "Finding Our Human Face"

There was a time
when humans knew
a human face
All the lines, the scars
    the shape of the lips
    the brightness in the eyes
    the delicate intensity of the Soul
the exact placement of the cheek bones
the determination, or lack thereof, in the chin
    the odd scraggly hair therein

There was a time
when humans knew
a human face face-to-face
like walking into a wind storm
like an ocean wave breaking against your body
like the summer sun drying a wet beard

It was a time
before make-up
before the "big screen"
before the "little screen"
        the phone, email & the net
It was a time before busyness & stress

It was a time when one tree was taken
from the forest at a time
Two men, a cross-cut saw
A horse to pull her out

* * *

Now let me look at you
all pores exposed
all scars revealed
our eyes merging
in timelessness, the rising
& falling of our breath

2002

Wendy Morton

Leaving

1969. Monterey. On the 6 o'clock news
we see the National Guard lob tear gas
into crowds in Berkeley.
Nixon. Lies. A friend decides to get
a gun. Vietnam breaking everthing.
Our hearts. We sell the house,
anything too big to take: the plum tree,
the succulent garden, the stove.
We quit our jobs.
To leave means breaking.
To leave means goodbye and forever.
To leave means to pack old things in new boxes.
We leave the sunlight, the sea lions,
the eucalyptus. California. The dream.
We leave.

Wendy Morton

At the End of Summer

The clematis has bloomed again,
the wisteria, the oriental poppies, the hollyhock,
the David Austin roses.
I'm thinking of my second bloom,
two summers past
in a crowded room of wood and hope
on Government Street, Victoria.
I had dressed for a party, wore
a golden rose, a jacket decorated
with poppies and hummingbirds. I wore no stars
or stripes.
The whole world was in the room,
and every colour they were
in the human palette;
and every continent too,
ready for a second bloom.
We pledged and sang,
O Canada.
O Canada. This garden. Blooming.

Joe Nickell

Hidden Places

Cops
were raiding every
dream, & I went all
night about the house looking
for sleep,

under the waning,
silver moon I took
for a manacle.

I was in a fever, fitful
for Peace,
children
waking without mothers
or arms, holocaust, Hell
no I wouldn't go.

*

We packed the fortune
cards & left the old
God on a mantle,
the moon in a window,
lilacs dying
in the rain,
in the South,

or where I lost
a brother in the late
war who came
back but swore
never to know me,
I his haunt
set in for winter.

*

& out of the jukebox
nights, such laments:
If you travel in
the North Country fair,

remember me.

•

In that Country it was given me
to bury
my love in the long, rough
box in my remembering,
box full of old keys
under the snow-heaped maple leaves.

She lives.
But at the mourning

for my grandfather's
lost ghost, mine
was only a visitation the Feds
watched for, swarming
the little town
with a warrant like flypaper.
I scribble for a metaphor, so
nice to be Wanted.

•

And seasons
after, & a new
moon a compass,

setting me ever
north, & north by west,
where in the Circle
of the Arctic
sky the Great Bear
huddled

and where
in the longest darkness
the swirling
North Lights
eddied,
incandescent whorls, lit
wherever I went,

& go
still, in my hidden places,
free & beyond
the tracking in the snow.

Joe Nickell

The War Pilots

& the sky's free
of thunder,
& now these
are laid under

the honey clover,
& their war is over,

& the bees
drone over,
& over.

Ken Norris

Peregrinations

The flights I've made
in & out of your arms
leave me with jet lag, tired,
wondering what country I'm in,
whether it's night or day.

Over here is the emerald green
& over here the olive trees –
you are stretched out between,
lilac petals on your bare belly,
laughing about something you say
I will never understand.

You keep me hungry.
You keep me guessing.
You keep me traversing the world.

Lunch Poems

I usually travel with a book of O'Hara in my pocket
if only for moral support.
Halfway to wherever I am heading
I often have cause to note minor pains, the minor occasion.
So often I am travelling by bus
over ruts in the road that winter has made.
Frank takes me over the rougher bumps
& we walk those sunny inhabited streets together
as Rachmaninoff plays on everyone's phonograph
and the many statues of men on horses
parade down an awed 5th Avenue.

We are ever arriving
at where there are afternoon curiosities,
Central Park has been redeemed
by a fragrant breeze off the river,
we need nothing but our ideas of things
and things as they are.
Tonight, as the bus is rerouted
around another Park Avenue fire and snow continues falling,
I dream Frank alive for a while;
we are in New York of course
and it is the glorious springtime of 1962.

At A.J.M. Smith's Reading at the Côte St. Luc Library (Oct. 19, 1977)

In the front row two kids in ski-jackets sit giggling,
understanding so little, laughing whenever
they think they hear something about sex. There are
a few young aspiring poets listening critically
to the old poet who must use a magnifying glass
to see his poems, being in need of an operation on both eyes.
Several librarians sit trying to look attentive.
& over by the window sit Frank Scott and his lovely wife Marian
who seem to be truly hearing the poems, & two rows back
Louis Dudek sits, his long legs dangling in front of him,
mind alive to the poetry. This is the audience for
one of the fathers of Canadian modernism: two peers,
a few young poets who are listening closely for something good
they might steal, wondering if maybe the language
isn't a little dated, three librarians who organized
the whole thing, & those two kids in their ski-jackets,
in the middle of something totally alien, something
that will never have anything to do with their lives.

Barry N. Olshen

Lament for a Happy Childhood

"*Writing is not a profession but a vocation of unhappiness.*"
– Georges Simenon, *Paris Review* interview

There are easier things, believe you me (as my grandma used to say) than fashioning a poet from a happy childhood.

What's to be said for it? That my family myth is history? That my father's Churchill was just a cigar? That after all that therapy I have uncovered no repressed unconscious? (Can you bring yourself to believe that all my forgetting has been just forgetting?) That my middle-of-the-road genetic endowment was allowed to run its course without disastrous environmental collision?

That my parents – this is especially hard to admit – were happy enough (or so it seemed to all the world) in their roles, well-defined and well-worn, gratefully accepted and competently played out? That my mother was not depressed, was never a morphine or heroin addict, only an occasional smoker and, like President Clinton after her, didn't inhale? That she was always there when I returned from school? That my father, not entirely present (who is?) was certainly not entirely absent? That he liked his scotch but was not a drunk? That he flirted conventionally with the ladies who seemed not to mind but was not, to my knowledge, a philanderer nor given to rages or beatings or bouts of silence and melancholia? That I felt he only rarely meant me harm and when he did I knew when, and now I think I know why?

That my older brother was not a teenage schizophrenic, not even a latter-day alcoholic? That I had no sister to abuse and that my brother – but for one timid and misguided attempt at juvenile rape – never seemed even to think of hurting me? That when I pushed a button into his eye almost by accident I knew I felt good as well as bad?

That my childhood environment was so stable, so (relatively) non-threatening and uninhibiting, it makes me crazy to think of it now after all I've seen and heard and read? That I was never abandoned, never even lost for long? That I lived in the same neighbourhood in the same apartment with the same parents and grandparents, the same neighbours and childhood friends, the same dentist and doctor

(who always made house calls), even the same rabbi and butcher and barber and grocer and postman, milkman, shoeman, pickleman, seltzerman, and cops – each known by his own moniker – until I went off prematurely to college after which nothing was the same?

That I needed not at all to escape into literature? That what would have become of me without books never entered my mind? That I felt no emotional or intellectual need to read or write anything? That comic books were too long for me to finish? That I convened with my private selves all the time but never by keeping a diary? That I managed to fall regularly in love without ever writing a juvenile love letter and that I fell in love only with girls?

That there were no political discussions at dinner time and no serious dedication to causes? That philosophy and poetry were only words to be learned as were communism, socialism, civil rights, even (would you believe?) zionism and nazism – but not anti-semitism, oh no, not anti-semitism, on the fears of which I was nourished nearly from birth but starved of any personal experience of the thing itself?

That I hadn't met any of those exterminated relatives, hadn't even heard about them until over a decade after the facts? That the closest I came to war was the card game?

Bud Osborn

reparation

I used to drive my mother
to a veteran's administration clinic
in ohio
& one day a guy was sitting in the waiting area
watching a pop machine repairman working
& the guy said

"that machine ripped me off
for 40 cents
I'm tired of gettin ripped off

"I was in world war 2
got shot in the ankle
got malaria
& a nervous breakdown
lost 48 men
& I'm tired of getting ripped off

"my son was sent to vietnam
& he's got agent orange
& a baby that's retarded
& I'm tired of getting ripped off
I'm tired of it!"

& the repairman

gave him back

his 40 cents

Bud Osborn

collector's items

my grandfather worked coal mines at 8 years old
and later lost jobs organizing unions
in violent confrontations with the national guard
but before he died liked to watch boxing
and in 1960 when I was a boy
took me to the amateur athletic union championships
where we watched a young heavyweight
who moved like a cat in the ring
and was faster with his hands
than anyone had ever seen
and when the african-american boxer
won the championship
he walked from the ring towards the locker room
with one other man

I wanted to get his autograph but hesitated
until my grandfather urged me forward
and I walked in front of the towering boxer
and silently held up
a program of the evening's event
and a pen

the fighter stopped and stared dumbfounded
at me and at the program
until his companion excitedly said
"hey! this kid wants your autograph!"

the champion then signed his name
with a signature as smooth and flowing
as he moved in the ring

at that moment
neither he nor I had any idea
that oneday we would have something sacred
in common

he would win professional heavyweight championships
become muhammed ali
refuse the draft into the u.s. military
because of the vietnam war
and be stripped of his title
but have a profound influence on me –

to throw my draft card on the desk
of the supervisor of my selective service office
and say "I don't accept your authority over me"
and subsequently be indicted
for draft evasion
then chased by the fbi
and have my family threatened by them
and I decided to go to prison rather than vietnam

until I met william worthy in lima, ohio
an african-american journalist about whom
the protest singer phil ochs wrote a song
and william told me not to go to prison:
"I've seen too many people destroyed there"
and then he arranged connections for me
in toronto

could have been
clay / ali's
first autograph?

I looked around

I looked around and the hippies were gone
back to their parents
back to universities
or wherever they were able
to get down to business

it got cold on the street

with the wild homeless ones
with the desperate orphaned drug addicts
with the fierce revengeful ones
with other white trash emotionally besieged ones
and the vietnam vets I met

I never called them "baby killers"
I suffered america with them
beaten by cops
harrassed by the fbi
driven across the states and into canada
and back and forth
down assassination alleys
bleeding with trauma
funnelled into psych wards and jails

it's painful to remember –

not long returned from vietnam
his hands and legs in cuffs and restraints
slowly shuffling and rattling across the hard tile floor
in a state mental hospital

and though he never spoke a single word
he fastened himself to me
like a shadow embodiment
of the horror of our time
continually following and sitting next to me

he looked carefully into my eyes
we were four sad shattered blue eyes
searching deeply into each other

then one night I plunged into delirium
conspiratorial imaginings
and with great urgency
I whispered to him:

"don't make a sound
don't even move
don't look at the guards
and maybe
they won't kill us tonight"

his eyes drowned in tears
and with fear and despair
and his tears fell like every star from the sky

I was terrorized
expecting we were going to be
placed in sulphuric acid baths
because of what we knew that they didn't
but as the guards came and went
and we were ordered to bed
I told him we won and were safe
we'd outlasted them

he smiled then
a thin tear-soaked real smile

and even though they kept us
separated
after that night
I still wear his face
and especially his eyes
within mine

and I wonder
where he is today
but as for how he is now
I know his wounds
as well as mine –

live
and resist

Pam Oxendine

Toronto is a city of exiles

I.

yesterday I left Pittsburgh
through the vast symmetry
of Pennsylvania hills
move towards a home
I've begun to accept
today I awaken with the familiar
my coffee pot the bent spatula
that held askew coddles eggs

it's past noon, my daughter's at school
I dial you
close friend and barometer
bringing new perceptions
for this persisting intimacy
ways of the people I met
the beauty of Pittsburg coiled in rivers
bridges, house-speckled hills
the tension of its underbelly
dead steel mills
reborn in other places
cheap and foreign

everyone out of work empty
as shelled giants lining the river
now sullen and flameless in early morning light
hulks merge into the grey river
with fog that arches slowly
up off the water.

II.

fingers filmy with butter and crumbs
I dial you
hear Bishop was murdered
Granada broken by shifting hands

three days you've been moving
holding vigil different places
while the slaughter of possibility develops
people shot curfews
you wait for the names of the dead

I can't find you
move to the sink begin supper
again and again fingers swirl up cloudy water
washing starch free from rice
there is no word yet of your sister
staring into the brightness of a white sink
my eyes become wet stones

Toronto is a city of exiles
and they don't want us here
falling into this place grateful and angry
cold refuge without definition
driving survivors into shells or suicide
this city that hates strangers
yet is infested with them.

III.

washing rice
my mind fingers the years:
nameless, running, pregnant
filthy rooms
waiting out Vietnam
living with Constanza, watching her
stunned and internal remembering Chile
her family embers flung across Europe

evenings she would fade
back to a mother tongue
apologize for the closed door
as she turned to face a nervous son
smoothing wrinkles of his jarred life
with Spanish
her eighteen them so alone

Toronto is a city of survivors
lucky depressed ones
we live here
finding it so hard to take root
in tough, cool soil
watching ourselves as shadows
of where we are from.

Pam Oxendine

backwards

if time went the other way
the decayed porch fragmenting into the splinters
would become fresh wood
the new growing in

and mistakes would always become
eventually loosening knots
unmade into good
the world shivering with hope

when the clocks at work hiss out "go!"
you'd fall back
into the waters of renewal
further toward the original fluids:

a soft spray of milk
then warm strands of semen
mixed juices on her thigh
then sparkling threads
of sun
or moon

Wayne Padgett

Do People in Canada Write on Bathroom Walls Less?

One of the first things I noticed
when I arrived in Canada
was that men seem to
write on bathroom walls
less in Canada than they do in the U.S.

Yes, I thought, the people are sane
here; they do not have to
relieve their aggressions
by writing on bathroom walls.

Since then I've been thinking
maybe they wash the walls in
the bathrooms every night
or maybe it's because there's
less people or maybe it's
because they are not as violent
or maybe they are just lost
for words.

Vancouver, B.C.
March 21, 1970

14 year old uncle

As a child, I could not understand
how anyone my own age
could have an uncle who was only 14.

All of my uncles had been in a war
at one time or another
and had wounds, medals and all.

I used to ask the uncles who were 14,
if they had ever
been in a war and they would always
look at me funny and say, "No!"

Ashcroft, B.C.
April, 1970

The Logs

The logs that pile up along the ocean
and along river banks
sometimes remind me
of soldiers who fell

at Lexington
Shiloh
San Juan Hill
Verdun
Normandy
Pork Chop Hill
Da Nang
?
?

1973

Profile

In 1941, I was born in Richmond, Virginia. In 1947, my folks bought a small place over in Glen Allen, which was out in the country then. It was my first paradise and I could have a dog.

When I was eleven, my dad found another woman and there was a divorce. After my dad left, at least we got to stay in the house. We – my mom, my sister and I – started going to a Southern Baptist Church. With the church, my school, my paper route, my dog, the woods, and my arrowhead picking fields, I kept myself pretty content.

But Christmas was not a happy time for me. I had to try my best to make it good for my sister and my mom. We had a hard time trying to keep enough food in the house. I used to try to sneak a drink of cold milk when I came in all hot. My mom would always tell me, "Don't drink all the milk!" I can still hear her say that and I bless her for it. If it hadn't been for her strength, I don't know how we would have made it. The last time I saw her alive, she said, "We fought a good fight, didn't we?"

When I was twelve, I got a part-time job on Friday nights after school and all day on Saturdays. I worked in a barbershop, sweeping the floor and shining shoes for the customers. I had to walk six miles home, usually in the dark. That was a wonderful experience because I could make enough money for school and church clothes for my sister and me. I could even buy some food for us all. I learned what it was like to be poor; I felt it made me tough. But sometimes I think it hardened me a bit too much. It took away sentimentality, made me not trust people too much. I know it made me cynical. One of my most favorite Chinese sayings is: "What doesn't kill you will make you stronger."

We all moved to Michigan when my mother re-married. After I finished high school, I went to California, so I could go to college there. My stepdad had told me if I became a resident of California for one year, I could go to school for free. I would only have to buy my books, so I went for it. I lived in Encino and got my degree in History from San Fernando Valley State College at Northridge. As soon as I had my degree, a friend and I left for Canada with very little money.

When I came north in 1968, I had to leave everything behind and start a new life here. I thank the Creator every day that I did not have to go to Vietnam, or anywhere else, to kill people. Once, when I went back to visit my dad, I and my sister and stepsisters went to see The Wall, with fifty-two thousand names on its marble face. I cried. I couldn't stand close to it. I could only be thankful my name wasn't on there. I walked down to the other end of the Wall, just to go for a walk. I saw an older gentleman who had some signs with military men's faces on them and he was handing out some pamphlets. I took one and then asked him what he was doing there. He told me he had spent two tours of duty in Vietnam. He explained that the military had left some Marines in his unit behind in Cambodian prison camps under deplorable conditions. This man explained: these "prisoners of war" were never heard of again. I had to leave that place and I have no desire to go back ever again. I guess there will be a new wall for troops that are dying daily in Iraq.

In studying my family history, I now know I am related to one of the last Welsh kings named Gwilym ap Gruffudd, from the Anglesey area of northern Wales. Also, I have relatives who served in wars against Napoleon, and others who were high-ranking officers in the Royal Navy.

In America, my ancestors were always mountain people. I am also part Cherokee and Blackfoot. That is why I believe I have found my mountain home here in British Columbia. I live here between two very powerful nations of Indian peoples. The Nuxulk Nation are coastal people and the Carrier Nation live in the Chilcoton Plateau. I have many good friends among these people as well as in the Norwegian community here in Hagensborg. Many of them have passed over, but I still honour them and remember their warm friendship. None of them ever hated me for coming here and they knew what I had chosen to do. I feel I am as close to them and their families as I was when my wife, Sie, and I first settled here.

I consider myself among the wealthiest persons in the world today. I live with a woman whom I feel is a candidate for sainthood. We have three wonderful children with whom we share a mutual love and respect. When people ask me if I am still writing, the answer to that question is, YES! I have one manuscript of poetry to publish and I am still working on an historical novel I have been researching for a few years. I will write until my breath leaves my body whether I publish a word of it or not.

It is my belief that I and others became so fortunate to be able to live in this paradise and to have what we have because we refused to go and fight wars of greed.

When it says in the Bible, "Thou shall not kill," there are no reservations offered.

Ruth Roach Pierson

Dancing at the Edge

Spruce silhouetted along the horizon
like the danse macabre in *The Seventh Seal.*
The moonlit night before Palm Sunday

March '42, Lancasters over Lübeck
and the Marienkirche's *Totentanz*
crumbled to ash. We dance lifelong

towards death. But for the carpet-bombed,
the run quaking for cellar or bunker
accelerated into grotesque gavotte.

In the Middle Ages prancing Death
led a chain of dancers drawn
from every rank, peasant to Kaiser, beggar to Pope.

Our memento mori, a 60-minute crime
or Law & Order show, the T.V. remote
shield against elsewheres where sudden death

is everywhere. In the new millennium Death,
still playing his fiddle of bones, extends his grasp
to polar bears and Venice, emperor penguins, white

and black spruce, lodgepole pine – the dancers picked,
as in the past, democratically, for this their last
shuffle, skeleton-partnered, ramshackle, rakish.

Ruth Roach Pierson

After the Flower Show

Like a foxhound loosed on the hunt,
all afternoon she bounded from exhibit
to exhibit, bending, sniffing, gathering
names for a garden. *Sweet Woodruff,*
Chocolate Ruffles, Globe Blue Spruce.
Now, back home, chopping carrots
and coriander in her kitchen, she hears
a radio voice threaten shock and awe.
Trembling Aspen, Alocasia. A barrage
of Tomahawk missiles and bunker busters
thundering down. *Mountain Fire.*
The hollow premise *Halcyon Hosta:*
it'll all be over *Dark Star Coleus*
in a roar, a flash. But afterwards,

in the aftermath of the aftershock,
after sands shroud the gouges tanks
chewed in roads, after victors, drunk
on imperium, lounge in the defeated leader's
gilded palaces, after smoke ceases to plume
from the ruins of Basra, Karbala, Kirkuk:
for the truck-borne women and children
shot dead at a checkpoint, for the shrapnel-
scarred, the toddler amputees, what
sweet thereafter on the banks of the Tigris?

Wayne Ray

Vietnam War Memorial

Tonight I found a childhood
I thought I had lost:
Along the Black Wall
my fingers felt the souls of time,
passed over strangers, old friends,
fifteen years of unnecessary bloodshed.
I checked through forty or fifty names
in the Book of The Black Wall,
holding back the tears, fearing
I might find one name I knew,
having befriended them before adolescence.
I could not visualize them maimed,
or missing in action, or dead.
I could not see them clothed in khaki,
rifle in hand, forgetting
what they, too,
had lost.

JOHN REIBETANZ

Reading the New York Times

Sunday, February 10, 1991

I have met the face of Death
and the body too, especially the body.
She is un-traditional (no black-
hooded skull, no hollow sockets, nothing
like a sickle): elbow-propped, draped
in a white silk blouse on a sofa all white silk.
Her face is blurred – lips melting into skin
of chin and cheek, eyes misty with disheveled hair –
but the focus on the curve and cave of genitals
(masked by the scant eyepatch
of floral panties that the ad is selling)
is clear as a Vermeer.

'There are two curves,' the official continued.
On one you measure how long he can hold out
and on the other you measure our campaign to go after
the skeletal structures of his military
and then the muscle and flesh.'

'It is unfortunate that in our society killers
can become celebrities,' wrote Ronald
Markman, a forensic psychiatrist. 'A psychopath
is someone without a conscience. He doesn't care about
the consequence of treating people as objects.'

Her face is blurred.

First we're going to cut it off
and then we're going to kill it.

'As an actress, I was totally
bored. I said "Give me
something to do."' So they gave her cancer.
No sooner did the series' producer zap
Nancy with ovarian cancer than Ms. Wettig's career took off.

The American command announced
that air attacks had destroyed more
than 750 tanks, more than
650 artillery pieces and more than
600 armoured personnel carriers.

lips melting into skin

flicking from channel to channel, bouncing
between the movie 'Top Gun' and the coverage
of the war, I realized I couldn't tell
which was which. They both had martial music, splendid
graphics, high-tech shots
of planes soaring into the sky.

A wonderful place to raise children
a perfect place to retire.

in a white silk blouse on a sofa all white silk

Of all the rooms in the house
the dining room is by far the most ritualistic.
In this country the dining room
is disappearing.

Starling is told about a nurse who got too close
during a medical exam and had her face
literally eaten.
'His pulse never went above 80
even when he swallowed her tongue.'

Her face is blurred

There was a time when choreographers
worked exclusively
with human bodies and music.
It was Merce Cunningham who changed that,
the first major choreographer to create
dance by computer.

We also understand the relationship
between car and owner.

hooded skull, no hollow sockets, nothing

Experts felt that the advent
of computer chips and precision guidance promised
to endow anti-missile weapons with deadly
new accuracy.

The author is either dead or irrelevant. Literature
is no longer a sacred calling.

The psychopath has such an established place
in the public consciousness. 'It was great fun
during that scene where I was tearing
the guy's face off.'

Her face is blurred

The American-
led coalition relies on a technology-
based strategy of stand-
off destruction with precision weapons.

The hope
is that the allies' main
battle tanks would only have to mop
up the remains
of the Iraqi war.

The camera is eating
her face.

John Reibetanz

Heart's Core: Notes from a Visit Back

Our first day in Washington has left me in a confusion of splendour and squalor, the technological wonders beneath the vaulted roof of the Museum of Air and Space collapsing into the firelit circles of druggies beyond the back alley of our hotel. As I try to drift into sleep, the long day simplifies itself into a few long-familiar images. The small fires and radio noise of the street coalesce into the rosy glow of the dial on my first transistor radio – itself once a marvel of technology – which I listen to under my bed. When I lie on my back, the slats and webbing on the underside of the box-spring canopy my little tunnel like the museum roof. I am seven or eight, as old as my mother was when her parents split up. Mine haven't, but they quarrel constantly after I'm in bed, so I take refuge under it. My main source of comfort is the radio, especially when Jean Shepherd comes on after eleven and tells stories about his childhood in the steel towns of Indiana. I've heard his style from friends, but never before from a grownup: the fresh, rude words that adults forget they've ever used, the sense of other kids as fellow conspirators, the fears that seem both silly and overpowering at the same time – like when Schwarz runs away from home because movers are coming to take away the fridge behind which he's been pitching the despised tomato slices from his sandwich every day. Best of all, Shepherd tells his stories like one of those jugglers who spins a plate on a stick and keeps adding extra sticks and plates until surely the whole gyrating contraption will collapse. By then, the outbursts from the room next door have usually subsided, and the radio's little red light is blurring, dancing, but I will not crawl into bed until, red, green, blue, yellow – the whole rainbow of characters and story lines hovering in the air – miraculously, he catches them all at the last minute and whispers them into place.

Morning brings a day of white and black.

It's best to see the Capitol early in the morning, before the crowds arrive. But it's also just as intimidating as the hotel's back alley, in a daylight kind of way. The building towers numbingly. Like bleached bones of a reassembled dinosaur skeleton, the facade's columns stretch on forever with stupefying redundancy. Looking up at the cataract of white stone steps, I feel as if I've just downed Alice's miniaturizing potion, but the pure American tourists seem thrilled rather than chilled, reverent and uncritical. Inside, they do not giggle as my children do at the rotunda ceiling painting of George Washington in apotheosis, flanked by adoring angels, his hand fixed

in a papal salute. Nor do they find it odd that the Representatives, those hard-working voices of the people, have no desks in their chamber, unlike the more patrician Senators. Or that, just blocks from this panelled and carpeted citadel of government "by the people, for the people," the people are living in hovels, on a diet of poverty and cocaine. Isolated, I turn to my guidebook: "If this Nation has an ennobling shrine, the Capitol is it." We're supposed to genuflect, not evaluate.

Our next stop is the Museum of American History. History may have its blind spots, but it acknowledges – as Air and Space did not – the black tragedy at the heart of the Union. An exhibit on early America recreates the culture and conditions of the slaves. This place of suffering and heartbreak is the day's most moving shrine. We tour re-creations of the "dependencies," as they were called, at places like Mount Vernon: slave quarters, out of sight from the main house, little more than brick caves. Their inadequate hearths are sadly reminiscent of those little sidewalk fires near our hotel, direct descendants in a long chain of deprivation. Washington's will gave his slaves their freedom, but his wife's will didn't free hers, and many black families were split up in the distribution of assets at her death. So the father of his country unwittingly fathered an early version of the impoverished, single-parent misery that still burdens the city bearing his name.

As we march through American history into the Civil War, images of one representative figure in particular record the impact of slavery and its aftermath on white America. In chronologically arranged paintings and photographs of Lincoln, the topography of his face resists all attempts to smooth out deepening rifts and clear away thickening shadows. A tragic landscape, it registers the immense personal costs of the brutal war that had become glorious statistics for our Gettysburg guide. The last few images are harrowing, Lincoln's face becoming its own death mask as the lightless eyes withdraw into their caves and the blotched skin dries into glazed earthenware.

Just when our eyes can bear no more, our ears come to the rescue. Rising out of despair comes music – rag, blues, jazz, rock – the soul of this nation, its most cherished cultural gift to the rest of the world. We listen to the scratchy early recordings of Robert Johnson interrogating his guitar, and grief pours from it transformed into beauty. "Up in the morning / Out on the job," sings Louis Armstrong. "Dear Lord above," he asks, "can't you know I'm pining, / Tears all in my eyes," but he is asking in song, in a voice that seems carried away in wonder at its own deep richness. Here, at the dark centre of this city of granite bones, is living beauty, singing in inexplicable harmony with life's pain.

Peter Richardson

Uncle Ernie's Rant Comes Back to Me Thirty Years Later

Tell me why you deserted your country in time of war,
and I'll tell you why the grass is not greener.
You'll wish you'd taken the bull by the horns
at Fort Lewis and showed up back in 1969
when it was your turn, when your number was up.
I don't mean the draft lottery, Sir Galahad.
I mean when boot camp was over and you had orders.
You'll wish an elephant had sat on you
to make you think twice about driving to Canada.
Mark my words. Put them in a file cabinet.
Take them out in three decades. Your mother
may rally to your cause, and your father,
but one day you'll rue every frigging northward step.
Hell, you're running off in all directions.
True north is where duty hits you over the head
like a two-by-four swung by a rancher
who's tired of sweet talking that gift horse.
Are we speaking the same language, you and I?
You can earn your way back to honesty
but you'll have to get off that vagrant's dole
your misguided folks have set up, before it's too late,
before you wake up a white-haired resident
of a broom closet over a pool hall.

Peter Richardson

This Coat

1.

which has resisted oblivion several times
once in the back of my car on its way
to a dumpster after my failing to drop it at a local church,
this coat with its double row of buttons,
its epaulette-like shoulder tabs, with pockets
that spill into bottle-sized compartments
for storing smokes and paperwork,

whodunit accoutrement remanded to a shed chamber
which also housed our great-great-grandfather's
dress sword from the Civil War, olive drab barrier
against sea fog, coat of whispered portside consultations,
officer's issue, circa 1964, belonging to my brother,
a Physics major, sent to Pohang on the Sea of

Japan to manage stocks of military oil, how shall I not
lean into my car's trunk and wrest this coat
from sundry traction-aids, tarps and catalogues, restore it
and be again a 50-year-old with faded gumshoe pretensions
at concerts and films till next winter
when I will stow it at my in-law's chalet?

2.

Whirl of quadratic equations moving
like constellations in your head as you discuss
the time it takes light to reach these fields
where we empty our bladders after a night
of nonstop talking with older cousin, Ken;
talk that encircled us in taverns and at reunions,

the salt shaker you hated with its little doll-sized
scoop that had to be wielded with a dowager's
care lest half its contents wind up
on one-square-inch of your food; crack
of our ski rack, as once again, we drive into the barn's
lower garage, ripping skis and rack off
the family station wagon, that afternoon stuck on the double chair

at Madonna when we sat for two hours
and had to be brought down by ski patrollers
using what you called a *Spanish bowline,*
your affinity for knots, locks and clocks;
that box of keys you kept in your drawer – these
come back as I try on your coat, still half-intending
to commit it to landfill for the ages.

3.

Brother of knots, locks and clocks,
of hair's-breadth calculations, of deft
fingerings of the innards of watches, brother of delicate
tweezerings-to-the-surface-to-the-light of various objects
which otherwise would not reveal themselves,
their weights, counterweights, jewelled movements,

vizier of Woody Creek, defender of people's rights not to write
letters or call or send snapshots or be accountable
in any way to the clan they came from, brother of laissez-faire,
of live-and-let-live, baker of morning, soother of ruffled
feathers at wee hour watering-hole talkathons
not by toning down harsh words but by

taking the conversation onward to some richly
unpredictable destination, brother of clothespin guns,
key collections, Greek studies and chancery script,
how is it I am weighting my complaints around
description of a coat – your coat – the one you
brought back and which I now shake the sawdust from?

Peter Richardson

I Sing of the Vulcan

six-barrelled sanitizer of drop zones,
capable of firing 1200 rounds a minute,
wing-mounted aerial weed-whacker,

tested at the National Guard firing range
in far off Underhill, its wide kill-radius
hinted at over the valley rumour mill.

Plum descendant of the Gatling gun,
a three-second snatch of throat-singing
flung at me from beyond the Notch,

beyond Jeffersonville and Cambridge.
If I heard it now, it would be a sound
linked to memory: my 16-year-old self

trimming fir trees for Christmas sale
in that squelchy Vermont bush lot
I worked in one delinquent summer,

while a cough from over the hills
signed itself in the air, an underground
bellows teasing sparks from a forge,

a god working that bellows, stamping
his bunioned feet and chuckling
at nonstop rush orders for sky armour.

Marcia Rodriguez

Leaving for Toronto, 1968

My babka,
in her Pennsylvania ghost town
one kielbasa store over
buried, scarred veins
of smouldering anthracite,
voices fears:

Why more school?
(Mrs. Ciszek's girl
learned it all in four years)
and why that place up north?
my god they build with snow
houses made of ice
no heat, holes in the roof
and what will you do for food
they eat things with horns
like moose and caribou
and even polar bears
(they kill them with spears)
take good boots, a sweater, hood,
and tell me again
what's wrong with here?
I don't understand –
why run away
why choose
a sort of Eskimo land?

Leon Rooke

Crossword Wars

A four-letter word beginning with F was the wife's request
at the breakfast table working those boxes, so I put in a call
to the white house and right away got the commander-in-chief,
What's cooking he says and I explain to him the wife's quandary.
Are you one of mine, he asks, and I tell him damn so, through
going on eight alarming years. Excellent, he says, and your wife
is she one of mine? So I shouted at her Are you one of his,
to which she replies, No, mostly I am yours, although I do have
my otherwise days. I felt this needed some uplift in my response
to the head guy and was fudging the issue a bit when this
underling intervened. I heard her clearly tell the good pres
he had 86 calls on other lines, and the pres saying What
do those fuckers want with me on a Sunday? to which
this underling said It's something about a four-letter word
beginning with F, our commander-in-chief then shouting
Feet, tell them feet, can't those sons-of-bitches ever
think for themselves?

Leon Rooke

Hour When War Criminals Swim Ashore

Man came into April's kitchen
said he was deaf and blind
said he wasn't hardly human
said he loved no one
said scent was a thing unheard of
said he couldn't hear his own voice
said divine providence had assured him
a cursed life
said Don't look at me that way
April and the children looking
chills raking the spine
knowing they knew him
from somewhere.

Leon Rooke

Vets

We were driving along route 10, Sam and me,
when we spotted a whole bunch of lined-up men
with guns, some shooting off into the woods,
others with the guns cradled, some talking in these groups,
those guns down against their boots like walking sticks.
"What's this?" I say before I see the big sign – Turkey Shoot
Today, 2 till 4. "Turkey Shoot," Sam says, like he's
taken up with a woman who can't read. He's stopped
the car, he's saying, "One thing I've never done
is shoot turkey on a Sunday afternoon when I'm
out with my girl." This fat man in coveralls and
wading boots comes up, he says to Sam, "Good day
for a shoot," and to me he bats his eyes, saying,
"And good day to you, Mam." Then he kicks
the gravel a bit, he wipes his nose on the back
of his hand, he says to Sam "Will just you be shootin'
today or will it be you and the missis both?"
Sam cocks his eye at me in a way that bespeaks
"How did she get here?" and he and the turkey shoot man
drift off talking in a hushed manner about what I
guess will be the discounted rate, seeing as how
it's closing upon the closing hour, though I'm
not reckoning anyone will care a damn if the
shooting goes on until sunset. Here Sam comes
back with this lightweight blue-barrel .22 air pump
for me, something stockier for him, looking like
an old M1 carbine to me, but what do I know?
Sam says, "You got rounds in there, all you got to do is
square off good, squeeze the trigger, squeeze, don't pull,
you got that?" and I say Yes. All along the road are strung
these men, forty or so is my guess, some
firing into the woods, others in these groups
palavering, I am guessing, about how many shots
they've got off and what they've hit, and having a drink
of whatever has come in the thermos jugs.
Now and then a dog will poke its nose out of the trees,
submit the patient stare, then go back in. Sam is searching the trees
with these borrowed spy glasses and I hear him
say, "There's one," and I get a quick shot off,

another man says, "There's another of those suckers,"
but I've already picked that one off and slupped in
another round, then a whole turkey volley rises
from way back in the trees, I go at them slambang
slupping in the rounds, which I keep on doing until my rack
comes up empty and the sky is turkey clear.
"Where'd you learn to shoot like that," the turkey shoot
man says to me, and I say "None of your business," and
go sit in the car until Sam and the shooters have
emptied their thermos jugs. At home that night
Sam pokes at his beans, he says, "Whatever you've got
on your mind, kid, don't think I'm having any kid
by you," adding when I just stare at him, "Some
bitches who refuse to wear lipstick know exactly how
to spoil a perfect day."

Bernadette Rule

Homesickness

Is this indigo? This clean blue heartache
of dusk in late December Ontario,
the stars knifetips cutting through from
some celestial province

To draw deeply upon this air
is to learn the shape of your own lungs
If I were ever to leave here
this hour & season
would translate homesickness for me

Just as summer dusk
is Kentucky for me now
after thirty years away
The way the warm air leans against my body
with the weight of blossoms
Fireflies low over the fields
mocking the stars
Bugs giving voice to the grass

I stretch out in it
alive to my skin
& sick that I ever left

Bernadette Rule

The Fourth of July in Canada

Huron slowly beats the hollow drum of a boat's prow.

A woodpecker playing a nearby tree torques the music
into a tighter fist.

Fifes of flicker and jay ignite warnings from their posts.

Up here they haven't forgotten 1812.
What it meant.

A young man tenses against the cold water
then lays himself into it full length
and strokes hard for the other shore.

The fireworks happened three nights ago
if you don't count the goldfinch & ruby-throated hummingbird
exploding from the top of the spruce.

Percussive July.

All the world ready to go off at a touch.

Bernadette Rule

Dual Citizenship

In arrested panic I am fed slowly to the machine
Saying to myself, *I am an American*
As the long lines inch toward the boxed officers
I am a Canadian, I say to myself

Saying to myself, *I am an American*
I remember their anger when I say I am both
I am a Canadian, I say to myself
Knowing these are their definitions

I remember their anger when I say I am both
I am allowed to claim only one at a time
Knowing these are their definitions
Depending on which way I am going

I am allowed to claim only one at a time
These loyalties, this scattered & changing clan
Depending on which way I am going
I have nothing to declare beyond this

These loyalties, this scattered & changing clan
As the long lines inch toward the boxed officers
I have nothing to declare beyond this
In arrested panic I am fed slowly to the machine

White Spider

(for Yossi?)

Raining a slow summer rain
on cultivated cucumbers and corn.
Solemn erratic Scriabin on the radio,
beaten down by excessive virtuosity.
A young piano player
with career aspirations.

Dear Mom, I haven't been in love since I left my husband four years ago and don't know if I'm glad or sorry. I miss the way his emotions filled me with dense matter, how I could feel each step I took and how I never confused north from south, driving my car. But I don't miss sliding down the black oily hole of my love for him, the dark and odourless place of no top or bottom. Please advise.

On the far wall
a white spider,
tiny albino eyeball with moving veins,
the hand of my grandmother.
Delicate and deliberate,
it fills me with shame.

Dear Dad, What do men want? What if it's not what I want? (It's not what I want.) Please advise.

Hydro wires slice the wind
making me think of dead poets
who couldn't swallow the party line
and fell in love with party creatures.

Sharon Stevenson's father attributed her suicide to Maoism, Marcuseanism, and petty-bourgeois feminism. I'm not making this up. It's a direct quote. Dear Mr. Stevenson, Would you please reconsider your views? My personal optimism feels threatened. Respectfully. P.S. What do parents want? Please advise.

I focussed on my face
in the mirror this morning,

studying new lines,
the little ones crossing the border
between pink pubic lip skin
and the slightly fuzzy place
below my nose and remembered
a poem I wrote 10 years ago
about my mother's lipstick,
how it crept up those lines
how make-up fails as camouflage
and the image I used of course was:
in little rivers of blood.

The universal semiotics
of skin drying up, saying,
hey, underneath is a human
on the physical decline.

Me singing
in a green and mossy cave

waiting for waiting for
morning.

Libby Scheier

My American Heritage

My father watched his grandfather die. The old man had a very long beard and some soldiers on a pogrom forced him to swallow it. He died by suffocation. My father was five years old in the Austro-Hungarian empire. A review of my last book of poems asked if my preoccupation with violence wasn't part of my American heritage. It referred to my American brashness.

When I go to the States I get Canadian-baited. On my last visit I bought a raffle ticket in the hospital where my father was a patient. The prize was a video cassette recorder. When the man from the Lions Club read my home address on the ticket he wisecracked, Do you have TV up there? No, I said, but we have good manners, surprising myself with the *we*, remembering a conversation last year with a Canadian-nationalist friend where I said I had never thought of myself as *we Americans* and had not come to think of myself as *we Canadians*, how the only we I was comfortable with was *we women* or sometimes when I was in a good mood, *we inhabitants of the planet Earth*. But no asshole Lions Club yahoo is going to make jokes about Canada to me.

I always hated America with a passion. It had something to do with being the child of working-class, left-wing, Jewish immigrants who had moved to a mainly Protestant suburb of New York in the last days of Joseph McCarthy, My parents danced and sang and roasted a chicken when he died. But the next day in kindergarten the teacher called for a moment of silence because a great man had died. Out of thirty children, only two of us asked what great man did she mean. Everyone else had put their heads on their desks, the weight of mourning heavy on them. Joseph McCarthy, she said, and me and the other kid – whose parents had also migrated from New York City to the suburbs and who lived in the same high-rise apartment building I did – we cheered and got punished and were forever after held in suspicion. I passed eight years in that school.

I was always a foreigner in America and always hated America. I like living in France better, despite the legacy of the Vichy regime, and I like living in Canada better, despite Canada's worse-than-America record on acceptance of Jewish refugees in World War II. I hate America because it is a big, aggressive nation, whereas Canadian capitalism is more benign, even oppressed. I am more comfortable on the defensive than the offensive.

On the other hand (why is there always another hand?) I love the Americans Walt Whitman, Sylvia Plath, Allen Ginsberg, Patti Smith, Sharon Olds, Cyndi Lauper, Alice Walker, and the entire population of New York City with the exception of muggers, rapists, and murderers.

Lately I feel like a Canadian nationalist because the Tories are fucking an attractive and interesting cultural entity that has been my creative home for ten years and they are threatening the livelihood of some of my best friends not to mention my own and I hate to see stupid destruction. And on my last trip down to the States not only did this guy from the Lions Club want to know if we have TV, but my uncle wondered if there were big buildings in Ottawa, my brother blamed a bad Canada-U.S. phone connection on inferior Canadian technology, and my own mother, best friend from the start, could not be made to understand why I could not use U.S. postage stamps in Canada. On the airplane home I buddied it up with two ladies from Etobicoke who were afraid their husbands would kill them because the duty-free shop had been closed and they weren't bringing back any cheap liquor.

It's so good to be going home, we said, and got the *Toronto Star* on the plane where we read about the latest Becker's break-in and the Armenian siege of the Turkish Embassy in Ottawa.

1986

Paul Schwartz

Border Leaves

I. Emily Composed

Her Day like all the other
days, acquaintance of radiance
from window or garden row.

Circumference of regard
there, in the grass, in the air,
the church she did not shun.

And stolen to her pocket
a scrap, slight as leaves swept
from her father's door.

II. Comrade Dee

When you look through
the window, the world
is unquiet, unhinged
for the white
election of the page.
Verses to re-numerate –
adversity resolve.
The contemporary poet
and the people
will out
on sheets of flame.

Poet's Note. I was inspired by the twin forces of Emily Dickinson and Dorothy Livesay as interesting subjects for cross border "compare and contrast."

Norm Sibum

from "A Suite for the Good Doctor 0"

NOTE: "A Suite for the Good Doctor" is one suite among others in this vein that I've written to various interlocutors. America and its current state (so far as I'm able to understand it) is pretty much the theme.

I.

Rhymester, bibulous gentleman, son of a Heideggerian,
You bayou spawn, you've gone and moved to London.
The nearest thing we had to greatness,
And you went and left us in the lurch.
The Poetry Society in its grotty room
Drapes a black flag of mourning on its wall.
The closet elegiast weeps through town
On the teardrops of her melancholy feet.
Incensed panhandlers curse your absence,
Monarchists now hitting you up for spare change.
But did you go there just to brag
You've reacquainted yourself with Thomas Jefferson
and his circle of felicities, his blockheads and scallawags?
If gruesome farce was what you desired,
You could've stayed home and switched on the news
And had it firsthand – the derring-do,
And tippled yourself into a stupor.

II.

Light a fag and pour a drink, you weary feuilletonist.
Wriggle that toe poked through your sock.
You need respite, liberation from a life
Of meeting all your expenses.
So cast your gaze on a blue sea,
On an island of hills and olive trees,
On temples and their party-coloured
Wild-eyed crazies. *Garlanded boats, red-headed girls* –

Was there ever such happiness or did the poets tell tales,
Felicity the aromas of fish, oleander, the opiate wine,
harbour festival, in every limb the love-force?
Well, can you say it : e-pi-tha-LA-mi-um, emphasis
On syllable the fourth? I have one of those items in my mind's
Back pocket, wedding song for the nuptials of fancy and reason,
For politics all hallelujah and smirk, for the pundits
of eleventh-hour redemption.
Or, Meredith Owens, you doctor of what I really can't say –
Did you buy your diploma or did you earn it? –
I'll tell you how a dream from the night before
Perplexes me, sex with a stranger the storyline.
– She spoke to me of her troubled career,
ruined me for satire and verse. –
'How was it,' I asked her, 'that the god Zeus,
Suited up in his swan's outfit, raped Leda, and the egg was made
That housed the sisters Helen and Clytemnestra,
Pleasure set loose and a lot of hurt?'
'How is it,' she answered, 'that you're clueless,
Sweet on what I enabled: musty epics?'
Caught out, Meredith, I put it to you,
You quickdraw, highend rhymester,
That when I look on the Executive and hear his tales,
It's purely pain, no end in sight.

III.

Monkey business, Meredith, fraud and parody
Have hit the jackpot, the hijinks harvest rich.
Shadow-cabinet hums, workers sweeping clear
The hive of its dead. Brazen birds and jungle cats
screech and yowl : the audibles of policy.
Carnivore flowers muster and cross the wide oceans.
And one smells the electoral returns and one blenches,
Sniffs the whiskeys and the de-lish smoke
Of cigars, takes in and otherwise absorbs
The rustle of high-echelon nylons and swoons,
Pentagon, State Department, White House a heady mix.
I beetle along the low road, cheapshot verse my destiny,
The high broad avenue of poesy all yours.

Yet one of these days, you may hear me step
To a noble subject, atoning for my petty crimes.
You may come across me hard at work,
Making up for slipshod cadences, lapses of taste.
Hell's bells, I'll donate to every mission house
Themes I socked away in offshore accounts,
No questions asked. You may hear me saying
That life's a trip (unless one's becalmed or can't afford
The ticket). True, while some journeys were more epic
Than departing the Tropicana, gin's cohort,
As I did when teenaged and in search of life,
To breathe the wholesome stench of freedom, a moral shell,
And got you, Meredith, and Crow and Lunar, for my prize,
My treks now only take me as far as my books,
The ancients at a loss to tell me why
Neo-cons still love their infamy.

VIII.

Meredith, I'm tuning out, poetry my warning hiss
At countless bad actors, all the world a stage.

Ann Sorensen

Alien

A Green Beret comes to our Junior High
To talk about American soldiers
Giving candy to children.
We have to stand in the bleachers
For the Pledge of Allegiance.
I won't put my hand on my heart.
You have no respect for your country,
Whispers the girl next to me.
It's not my country, I say.

I feel like an alien in the girls' bathroom,
Hairspray like smog over the cheerleaders'
Beehives in the mirror
Triggering my asthma.

My British mother buys boxes
Of Red Rose Tea with Free Gift
Imported from Canada. Nature cards.
English on one side. French on the other.
I turn the Trumpeter Swan/Cygne Trompette card
Over and over in my hand.

After track star Arley Allen is killed in Vietnam,
His mother gives his running shoes to his teacher,
My father.
He was there cheering for Arley
As he crossed the finish line.

Draft Age?
For information on how to become
A conscientious objector,
Contact the Citizens For Peace.
Follow the North Star.

Two days after our family immigrates to Canada,
The riots in Chicago convince us
Another Civil War has begun.
We drive off the ferry to Vancouver Island,
Delivered.

In our new country, I listen for the French;
Not yet realizing it's on the other side.

KEN STANGE

When Visiting Your Hometown, Carry a Map

(For Chris)

"Paradoxically the distances to home and from home are not equal."
– Hippokrites

.
.
Leaving is easy as living
.
when you're young,
and bright, fierce visions beckon from horizon.
.
But all things balance: those first returns
are arduous.
.
Distance from home is measured in travel time:
Time to get back, not time to get away.
(The return journey falls . just short of eternity.)
.
They've moved the station, but since the sign is the same
you get off
.
into a sinister Mardi Gras;
strangers wearing familiar faces
mill aimlessly around
as if it were you in the too effective disguise.
.
Out of town . is not . out of time:
after you left, it went on.
Some of the things you built there . may have fallen
in a boreal silence
since you weren't around to hear them
but nevertheless
.
they fell.
.

So if visiting home
seems like visiting
ancient ruins
with ghosts drifting outside
what was once your window
to the world,

.

remember that

.

though an adult is a strange place to live,
every place has something to give.

.

.

And memory's the town that only death can raze.

Allen Sutterfield

Two Soldiers

In the rain, they were two men
With bandaged eyes. One was blind
For a reason: his sight had gone
In a battle blasting all night.

The other, because he would not fight,
Stood against a post unflinching,
Hands tied, eyes blacked with a scarf to hide
The secret streaking bullet

Coursing through rain towards his brain.
Treason streamed in thick red streaks
Down his face after the shots.
The blind officer with choked command

Tapped dismissal with his white cane,
Wished for sun to dry the rain.

Ulysses in Vietnam

B-52's
The big bombers
Powerful as the old time New York Yankees
Have made their daily jaunt
From island to shore
Left Stymphalian droppings
(called napalm today)
To poison any unwary
And have returned to roost in metal aerie,
Consistent as a sunset,
Awful as ancient Scylla.

Robert Sward

On My Way to the Korean War ...

On my way to the Korean War,
I never got there.
One summer afternoon in 1952,
I stood instead in the bow
of the Attack Transport *Menard,*
with an invading force
of 2,000 battle-ready Marines,
watching the sun go down.
Whales and porpoises,
flying fish and things jumping
out of the water.
Phosphorescence –
Honolulu behind us,
Inchon, Korea, and the war ahead.

Crewcut, 18-year-old librarian,
Yeoman 3rd Class, editor
of the ship's newspaper,
I wrote critically if unoriginally
of our Commander-in-Chief,
Mr. President,
and how perplexing it was that he
would launch a nuclear-powered submarine
while invoking the Lord,
Crocodile Earthshaker,
Shiva J. Thunderclap,
choosing the occasion to sing
the now famous Song of the Armaments,
the one with the line "weapons for peace:"

> O weapons for peace,
> O weapons for peace,
> awh want, awh want
> more weapons for peace!

At sundown, a half dozen sailors
converged on the bow of the ship
where, composed and silent,
we'd maintain our vigil
until the sun had set.

Careful to avoid being conspicuous,
no flapping or flailing of the arms,
no running, horizontal take-offs,
one man, then another, stepped out into space,
headed across the water,
moving along as if on threads.
After a while, I did the same:
left my body just as they left theirs.

In-breathe, out-breathe, and leave,
in-breathe, out-breathe, and leave.
Leave your body, leave your body,
leave your body, leave your body.

we sang as we went out
to where the light went,
and whatever held us to that ship
and its 2,000 battle-ready troops, let go.
So it was, dear friends, I learned to fly.
And so in time must you
and so will the warships,
and the earth itself,
and the sky,
for as the prophet says, the day cometh
when there will be no earth left to leave.

O me, O my,
goodbye earth, goodbye sky.
Goodbye, goodbye.

ROBERT SWARD

Report from the Front

All over newspapers have stopped appearing,
and combatants everywhere are returning home.
No one knows what is happening.
The generals are on long distance with the President,
Surveying the planet from on high.
No one knows even who has died, or how,
or who won last night, or anything.
Those in attendance on them may,
for all we know, still be there.

All over newspapers have stopped appearing.
Words once more, more than ever,
have begun to matter. And people are writing
poetry. Opposing regiments, declares a friend,
are refusing evacuation, are engaged instead
in sonnet sequences; though they understand, he says,
the futility of iambics in the modern world.

Now they are concerned with the history and meaning
of prosody. Now they persist in their exercises
with great humility and reverence.

Rae Marie Taylor

Prelude (to Shattered Angel)

I slept with you
a sleep of blue fabric
patterning my dream with repose

then, all my cells awake

a long-time half awake
I lay quiet
breathing you
fine refined voluptuous

I lay quiet your gun
a ringing presence across the room
patterning my repose with a question

Rae Marie Taylor

Migration

There are the mountain streams,
San Francisco Bay, the St. Lawrence River,
and the sea.

How shall we navigate
these waters
of this earth

among the Fear roadkills
the distress of the young

the sheer stillness of the deer,

the loss of country and friends

the exuberant flesh of the child
the core joy of the body,

and the keen beauty of aliveness?

Carefully, and with song
for these are
the shores of tenderness.

Richard Teleky

Giverny

While corpses piled higher in the Argonne
and bodies rotted on Vimy Ridge,
Monet surveyed his garden at Giverny,
slamming down flowers with paint,

not dissecting them – he wasn't a flatterer –
but in rapid strokes blooming a canvas
just as plant cells, light sensitive,
turned toward the sun. Ruthless,

he stomped over pollen grains,
ignored ovaries and floral sperm –
fierce activity all around him – intent on
another dab to pander perfection.

He must have watched wind pollination
because his colours moved faster than his brush:
late roses, wisteria and water lilies.
He knew without flowers the world would die.

Richard Teleky

Summer, 1956

You hung the sheets out to dry on the line
but they didn't billow about like angels
in some poem, they only flapped in the sun
while you came back inside to clean up Grandpa's
vomit, from last night's bender, then make cookies
while I entertained you by reading aloud. I could
hear a man's voice, low, on the radio, he spoke
of "Suez" – what was that? – so I read louder
from a book with the dusty smell of borrowed
library pleasure, and outside the sun beat on
our sheets, and upstairs Grandpa slept it off.
No one would come into our yard to steal
the sheets, and birds overhead always knew
to behave themselves. Grandma said she wasn't
married at all – it made a kind of sense, despite
their framed wedding picture. That fall, in
Budapest, your cousins would dodge bullets
like outlaws on *Gunsmoke*, but we couldn't
have guessed it as I continued to read, the next
bullet, like the next wash, an unspoken yet
assumed possibility. Of course the sheets
understood none of this. White, whiter than
sunlight, they held morning heat in their folds
and took on the soft touch of the day.

Richard Teleky

Alone, with a Book, at the End of the World

Instead of fire or ice,
CNN will go blank,
no one to count bodies.
So little to know left,
so little to see now,
just unnamed colours
before my eyes, spinning
past the edge of sight.
So little to cry for, hearts
filled with war despite
the books we claim to love,
the books we've defiled.
No point in giving its title
here, all books being one.

Judy Wapp

Train Music

As Mingus fades,
final track,
the afternoon train whistles through town.

Mingus bestows visions of Manhattan's
3rd Avenue at its
night time best in
best of times.

Train echoes dispatch me
to Grandma's Big Lake cottage.

Sweet Minnesota night's perfume
floats through summer screens
as my seven year old self spirals
down into sleep.

All night trains the same train
curving around the far lake shore.

Sue Wheeler

Child of the Times

Austin, Texas. June nineteenth,
1953. It is night.
Crickets sing, but not
about each other.
In a spill of yellow light
on the flat of the bedspread
I scan an Archie comic.
Jack Benny and Rochester
are disembodied signals
in the tubes of the little
brown radio. *Commonists,*
Peggy's dad has said. One on
every block. The film at school
teaches *suspicious,* teaches
Tell this friendly policeman.
My parents are talking in
the kitchen. An interrup-
tion to the program. A voice
saying Electrocuted.
Saying Eastern Standard Time.
I run into the kitchen
and shout *The Rosenbergs*
are dead! No words balloon from
my parents' lips. They don't
clap their hands. I wonder
Are they? Should I?
The third dimension arrives
and blossoms around me.

Sue Wheeler

Nomad

One time we paddled deep
into the sound where northern
and southern tides meet,
the water so warm
oysters spawn. Such relief
from the world's coming and going.
Whenever we pulled ashore
you hauled out the matches
and kettle. I scavenged
twigs for the fire. It was clear
why I'd picked you.
I saw the essence of *nomad.*
Not the moving, anyone
can do that. It's the knowing
that no matter where we stop
we've brought everything we need.

J. Michael Yates

from The Great Bear Lake Meditations

from LONG LIGHT

The wolves say to the dogs what the madman of me says to the citizen. I need to go fishing until I need to return.

o

First sense as I awaken under the fans of northern summer light: perhaps I shall get well here. Who can remain that long? Light has more duration than the eye. To remain too long is to become a sickness of another syndrome. I've summoned and survived that too – and carry it, asleep now, in the caves and crevasses of my blood.

o

I awaken in a rage, with the exhaust of bitter warfare trailing through my skull just behind eyes and tongue. Something or someone has been feeding on me in my sleep. Or worse: nothing has been feeding on me in my sleep. Only these fumes, and sense of a violence just ceased in the interior sky. I can't lie awake and wait for it ... perhaps: make a raft of consciousness and float it north down the Mackenzie River of sleep. I'll observe and observe and observe while whatever it is that eats me, eats me. I become this single appetite.

o

I return here. Like a man who has bombed a city and returns as a tourist, I return here – a camera between me and the world. How to wrest my wilderness from the teeth of all my cannibal cities. One man of me goes ghostly through all the walls. He lives without substance and has only nothing to say. The rest live as animals at a zoo. And over-civilized men who gaze down the colours of an arctic lake. In the twilit negative landscape, a self-conscious nothing moves away: a pike which will die with a pike in its throat. Geographic and historic distances are coevals. I can fall up the terrible blue canyons between the clouds.

o

Fish, my will to hold on here in this storm strikes me as no more ridiculous than your will to eat that scrap of bright metal.

from FREEZE-UP

I watched the bear too long – until my face became that of a bear watching a man. It happened with the salmon as well: my lower jaw grew into a great hook, a hump rose on my back, I reddened until I look like fire under the water on my way upstream. I'm waiting at the stream-side, claw under the current. Around rocks, through the shallows, back out of the water, decaying, I'll be there, because there is nothing to do but arrive.

○

And now, only one dread: I'll die before I've said all my objections to living. I cannot say I want to live. But something in me, some part, wants to want to live. The days come away like cold-mauled rocks upon this beach. In my other place, I'd have said: like bricks from a ruined wall.

○

Beyond the wall of the boundless city, I seat myself. On a stone. To wait. Whales of the night air pass over me and beneath themselves, blowing jets of darkness into the dark. The long leaves of my madness spangle still with droplets of light.

○

The still dark figures in a line against the white mountain are still climbing. The picks in their hands are light. The pianos on their backs are heavy. The other side of the pass, beyond the permafrost edges of the photograph, the whores pare their fingernails and wait.

○

Yes, the wise seething of these flies, as I come upon the mandible of a big, big animal – off-white here in the off-green of thick weeds. Nothing else remains of the structure. The wolves and porcupines have forgotten, my life shifts weight from foot to foot, and the flies and I could soon come to an understanding. I've dined upon death and know the uses of spreading disease. It's my choice: this is the jawbone of an ass. I might pick it up and flush something to slay. No, it's the chin and rotten teeth of Fred Nietzsche who died so far north of himself that no one bothered to look for his remains. Toward the last, he grew great antlers and spent most of his time alone at the edges of the high lakes eating the white young buds of waterlilies. The wolves pulled him down from inside, then ate skinward. I defer to the flies; there's nothing left to live on for long, unless it's possible, for a little while, to subsist on merely seething. Say simply something died somewhere in the weeds, and this is left, this engine he used to try to eat what ate him.

○

I no longer believe in what I don't know about cities, but there's still something in open country and clear deep water that draws me. Because I fear to know: knowledge of something attractive only in its enigma is terrible. That sweet small darkness is going away as I return and return and cannot but return. I turn to this tangled landscape as a man turns to a woman and dream that because I haven't been here before, neither has any other man.

from LONG DARK

That earth turns, I have no objection, but how it turns concerns me. If only the atmosphere didn't turn too, I could have the air of China at one time of day, that of France at another, and so with all possible places, with a few latitudinal revisions. However, the air of noon is very much the air of midnight. Sunday bulges with Thursday's air. My lungs fill with the weather of ten years ago. An atmosphere of every breath I've ever taken follows me everywhere over the earth. In this dimension, I've lived every second of my history in precisely one place.

○

Again and again I go away from you and send back only words. Where I am is very cold and the ice figures I collect for you never, somehow, survive the transport. And so these small black tracks upon the page. Where you are is too warm for me. This message is a map which shows my exact coordinates at this moment. Follow it. Try to find me. I should like to be here when you arrive, but in this weather it is necessary to keep moving.

○

The moon is closer to the earth in the north of the northern hemisphere. I'm here to be closer to the light which happens in the dark. I've ascertained that the moon is the skull of a deceased deity, viewed from above. Deep pits mar the surface: these can be explained: peckmarks from the starved scavenger birds of space which roost in the vacuum between planets. I can say now that the moon is black or green, by turns, occasionally both simultaneously (a nameless colour), and the light of the moon comes from no source other than its core. A single candle burns there now at that centre where the mind of a god once served no purpose whatsoever. It breathes, inspires, the moon does; the halitosis of the moon is overwhelming.

○

The caribou are crossing. Someone has just come to town and said that from the air you can't see the ground for the animals. Twenty or thirty thousand of them. It's fifty below. Quickly the town begins to empty as the long snake of smoking vehicles moves out the highway. When they arrive at the appointed place, the animals are still behind a ridge. Cars and trucks park in a long line at the shoulder of the road, engines and heaters running; together they send a mile-long hackle of ice-fog into the flawless winter sky. The waiting begins and could last for days until something occurs to the milling animals. Always there are a few men who won't wait. They leave their automobiles, sling their rifles and make for the ridge-crest. After a while, there are shots. Then the interval to clean the kill. Those still waiting grow excited, impatient, expectant. The first to kill and clean his caribou drapes the carcass around his shoulders and begins climbing the ridge toward the road, the long antlers bouncing as he walks. The rack is higher than the hunter's head, and those waiting see this before they see the man beneath the animal against the horizon at the top of the ridge. Doors open and several race across the road. Shots. The man carrying the caribou drops the carcass, flattens himself behind it, and fires back at the line of cars. The sound of a bullet striking the metal or the glass of a vehicle is almost indistinguishable from the sound of a bullet entering the body of a caribou or a bear.

○

A man, warmly dressed, in perfect health, mushing his dogs a short distance between two villages, never arrives. He has forgotten to reach down, catch a little snow in his mitten and allow it to melt in his mouth. For a reason neither he nor his dogs understand, he steps from the runners of his sled, wanders dreamily – perhaps warmly, pleasantly – through the wide winter, then sits to contemplate his vision, then sleeps. The dogs tow an empty sled on to the place at one of the two villages where they're usually fed. While those who find the frozen man suspect the circumstances of his death, always they marvel that one so close to bed, warmth, food, perhaps family, could stray so easily into danger.

from **BREAK-UP**

The dead seals of this morning's consciousness roll bloated and tied together, half in the water, half on the sand. What is there but to shoot or harpoon when a seal or a metaphor surfaces? Yet these carcasses are neither what I saw nor what I meant.

○

I am alive. Since the beginning. Long before the ice. The musk-ox do not run from me. In the tar-pits with the great reptiles I died. I sleep with the mastodons beneath the permafrost of Alaska. I am as extinct as all the extinct animals and as alive as those you see. Mud-volcanoes of the tundra disfigure me. All adaptations and mutations are within and without my body. I am white as winter ptarmigan, blue as glacial bears, black as the black leopards of the black land. When I die, so will the world die with me. After the thaw, I appeared with these alluvial lines some call a face. My name is Nothing; I contain all time and all space.

○

This is my receipt for death: I'm swimming hard in arctic water, moving away from all shores, diving deep to feed and rising less and less often for air. I've copulated in open water and seen all the seal islands and migrated here and there with the herds that move mindlessly and bleed a single blood when slaughter comes in ships full of clubs, when death comes through the maw of a very white bear. I'm swimming hard in arctic water, then a fleet of kayaks behind me. In them: eskimos of a sort that perhaps never were – creatures I shall have to imagine. Then a good chase and a good harpoon, then to drown in fathoms of my own making. And nothing shall be wasted: oil for dry fish, fur for clothing, bones for fishhooks and jewelry. My heart and my eyes go as prize for the first harpoon. And the head: the head to the waiting dogs.

○

Early pink light upon a glacier I can't remember, the stone shelves which darkened and dissolved, then a clear, thin water descending lake after lake, winters of the white blackness, finally thick depth widening toward a sea I cannot conceive .... I was a small animal, a quickness in the thicket, a movement I couldn't quite be sure I'd seen.

Liz Zetlin

from "All in One Week"
February 3 – 10, 1969

And in the end, of course, a true war story is never about war …
It's about love and memory. It's about sorrow …
– Tim O'Brien, *How To Write a True War Story*

Married
Norfolk, Virginia

When I told my parents I was getting married
on Sunday, leaving for Canada on Monday,
my father gestured me into my mother's usual chair,
poured his before-dinner scotch and pulled from his pocket
a thin piece of paper torn from the message pad
attached to Ma Bell's blocky black Model 500 phone.

In his adopted Virginian drawl, layered
over low Boston vowels, where heart
has no "r," my dad read from his list of reasons.
Jewish/Catholic. University degree/
no job. Polish/Latvian. German/Italian.
And then perhaps worst of all –
artist. Won't be able to support you.
And as if that weren't enough,
younger.

I didn't want a shopping list. I didn't want
reasons. I wanted his blessing and some show
of passion for a daughter's vows of love.
I wanted to check off *my* list: cream coloured
crushed velvet floor-length gown, shoes
dyed to match – not too tall a heel,
an armful of gardenias.

Of course, he was right
for all the listed
and yet to be revealed reasons.

What he didn't mention was any reason
not to leave America. Only now, when I think
of that evening thirty-seven-years ago,
when my whole life was about to change,
when I knew so little about being
a daughter, a wife, a parent,
only now do I flood with compassion
for my father, accustomed to a physician's
omnipotence, treating human hearts
from our rotary dial phone, prescribing
so many milligrams of coumidon,
heparin, nitroglycerin.

He could thin blood, regulate fast rhythms
in the upper chambers of the heart,
but when it came to his only daughter
all he could do was recite his list, index finger
spinning from reason to reason, left hand nursing
a glass of something he could control, and caring,
caring so much, he spoke what he must have known
a daughter doesn't want to hear. Caring so much
he forgot to note I'd be a thousand miles away
and how much he'd miss me.

People ask if I have any regrets.
I used to say no, I was protesting the war.
But really I was following
what love prescribed.

And now, here's the regret –
that I didn't lean over to help him
from the lilied armchair (the one
he would take his last breath in),
put my arm through his, tell him,
as kindly as I could, all the well worn
truths a grown child wishes she had said
and walk us into the dining room
to join my mom, who would smile
her patented brand of compassion,
that potent drug with no bad side-effects,
systemic and healing, that once ingested
slow-releases for a lifetime.

Experienced

Toronto

"Canadian experience only"
said the classified ads.
Canadian experience only
said restaurant managers
up and down Yonge Street.
Canadian experience only
meant serving Canada Dry and Canadian
Club to American enlisted men,
pushing beer, burgers and fries for
college students, calming fussy children
and shaking cocktails in the state of Virginia, all this
experience was useless.
I wasn't qualified to serve Canadians.
Was it because taking orders on a green lined pad,
tabling platters of tuna sandwiches garnished
with dill pickles, pouring water, clearing dishes
and sweeping up crumbs was somehow
different on Canadian soil?
Or was it because some Canadians
just didn't like their waitresses
to speak with an accent, smell
like garlic or be darker
than the dinner rolls?
So I unfolded a lie
from the Yellow Pages, found
a restaurant on the fringes
of this good city and claimed
to have worked there.
When a downtown Greek owner
gave me a chance
to hoist his heavy trays,
I was grateful for this, my first
Canadian experience.

First, in a Long Line

(Part 1 of "Items for a Journey")

First. There are not many things I have taken from childhood across the years. In my forty second year I dropped the deaf ancestors; the dead father, equally dead mother. In that fifty second year to heaven, I knew I would walk again. Walk on my new legs, do I walk better in my new legs? Having arrived at this shore, I am full of what I remember – and not what I do.

And a cold damp wind blows the waves white; and tears while I stumble on the sand, at my only heart. How did I come to this? Seduced by the late night talk of poets and the bloodied word shining like rouge and diamonds from the lips and breasts of young girls and writers when I was young.

I did not go to that war, skulls piled like pyramids, where we the teenage poor got the opportunity to die in flower on a forever tidy black shiny wall. Living in letters.
Instead,
a twenty year slide,
down hilly rocks and glass
on a sled made of my own skin.

Listen: Lyndon Johnson dreamed that he was being called a coward while he hurled young blood against a black wall that had not yet been born. Later Richard Nixon hung his ideals like a tethered kite's shadow over Vietnam, like lunar flowered bomb craters and carried on the vision of the wall.

Listen: a child cries in a crumbling stairway as his father dreams of hard black stone. This is how I paid for those lives I did not take the wall I would not build.

I am leaving you
taking your child
you are fired, all in the same damn dumb week –
and losing my mind was like becoming grief with no I.
And wasted tears and time on my knees praying for better times knowing all the while I cannot pray.

June 10/91

The Contributors

[Note: "arr." stands for "arrived in Canada"]

Bert Almon b. 1943, Port Arthur, Texas during a hurricane; arr. 1968. He attended the University of Texas (B.A.) and the University of New Mexico (M.A., Ph.D.). In addition to works of critical biography, he has written nine books of poetry. *Earth Prime* (Brick Books) won the 1998 Writers Guild of Alberta Poetry Award. *A Ghost in Waterloo Station* (Brindle & Glass, 2007) is his latest poetry collection. Specializing in autobiographical theory, his volume *The Stubborn Self* (419 pages) was published in 2002 by TCU Press. Married to the poet Olga Costopoulos, with four children, he continues to teach at the University of Alberta in Edmonton.

George Amabile b. 1936, Jersey City, New Jersey; arr. 1963. Prof. English, University of Manitoba. Editor: *The Far Point, Northern Light,* Nuage Editions, Signature Editions, Libros Libertad, etc. Published in *The Penguin Book of Canadian Verse, The New Yorker Book of Poems, Harper's, Poetry* (Chicago), *American Poetry Review, Poetry Australia, Sur* (Buenos Aires), *Margin* (England), and *Canadian Literature.* Honoured with a special issue of *Prairie Fire* (Vol. 21, No. 1, May 2000), Amabile was also Winnipeg Public Library's Writer in Residence (2000-01). His books include *The Presence of Fire* (McClelland & Stewart, 1982), winner of the Canadian Authors Association National Prize, and *Tasting the Dark: New and Selected Poems* (The Muses Co., Winnipeg, 2001).

Peter Anson b. 1947, New York City; arr. 1967. Co-founder and now Vice-President of Technology at Lotek Wireless, Inc., a company specializing in wildlife and fisheries research instrumentation. He is also co-founder of Toronto's Music Gallery, and a board member of New Music Concerts. In the 1970s he performed and recorded with the improvisation group CCMC. He has received awards for poetry and music production, and holds a U.S. patent in the area of array signal processing. His poetry has appeared in *Fiddlehead* and *Writ*, and in the Anansi anthology *T.O. Now.* Anson has co-authored scientific papers; he's also written about music for *Impulse* and *Musicworks.*

Rosemary Aubert b. 1946, Niagara Falls, New York; arr. 1970. Internationally acclaimed mystery novelist as well as a long-time published poet. Winner of two Arthur Ellis awards for crime fiction and prizes for poetry and short stories. Published two poetry books: *Picking Wild Raspberries* (Sono Nis, 1997) and *Two Kinds of Honey* (Oberon, 1977). Has a Certificate in Criminology from the University of Toronto, 1991, and a Masters Degree in English Literature from York University, 1977. Lives in Toronto; teaches creative writing.

Edward Baranosky b. 1947, Needham, Massachusetts; arr. 1972. BFA, Rhode Island School of Design, Major in Painting, 1969. Published mainly poetry in 25 different journals since 1964. Member of the Canadian Authors Association, Metropolitan Toronto Branch, for ten years; edited members' poetry anthologies (2000 and 2001); conducted intensive renga seminar workshops for six years. He's published 28 poetry chapbooks, including *Windbirds* (2001), *The Outer Coast* (2002), and *Wazowski Himself* (2006). He recently finished a collaborative Senku (renga verse of 1000 links) to join other new manuscripts. Ed has also exhibited with the Canadian Society of Marine Artists.

Judith Hill Benson b. 1942, Joliet, Illinois; arr. 1974. Judith taught elementary school for 25 years, winning a Hilroy Fellowship for Innovative Teaching and other awards for environmental education. She retired to devote her time to writing and activism. A founding member of an organization that seeks to preserve and raise public awareness of Saskatchewan's urban forests, Judith wrote and directed (on DVD) "Saskatoon's American Elms: A Legacy for the People and the Planet." While the majority of her published works have been individual poems and non-fiction articles, her preferred genre remains children's fiction. She's now writing an intermediate level novel set in Canada and the U.S. during the 1860's.

Co-editor of this book, **Steven Michael Berzensky (Mick Burrs)** b. 1940, Los Angeles; arr. 1965. Became a Canadian poet by breathing in the heady air of words atop Burnaby Mountain at Simon Fraser University. First inspired by the oral tradition as modeled by Dorothy Livesay, William Stafford, Lionel Kearns, Robert Creeley, John Newlove, Al Purdy, and other poets, Mick began believing in his own voice, too. Harvesting nearly 800 published poems, 28 chapbooks, and seven books, he's lived in Vancouver, Edmonton, Regina, Yorkton, and Toronto, sold poetry at farmers markets ("food for the soul"), edited *Grain*, and won many awards for his poetry, plays, essays, and stories, his "seeds of light."

E.D. Blodgett b. 1935, Philadelphia; arr. 1966 to begin teaching Comparative Literature at the University of Alberta in Edmonton. In 1996 he won the Governor General's Award for Poetry with *Apostrophes: Woman at a Piano* (Buschek Books). In addition to creating 17 books of poetry and winning several provincial book awards, Blodgett is a translator, literary critic, and historian. Among his most recent books are *Au coeur du bois/In the Heart of the Wood* (with Jacques Brault) (Editions Lucie Lambert, 2005); and *Le poème invisible/The Invisible Poem* (Éditions du Noroît & Buschek Books, 2008). He continues to write and teach. On July 1, 2007, E.D. Blodgett was appointed Poet Laureate for the City of Edmonton.

Born and raised in Riverside, California, **Michael Boughn** moved to Canada in 1966. He lived in Vancouver for seven years, where he met Robin Blaser, who introduced him to the work of William Blake, Charles Olson, H.D., Jack Spicer, Ezra Pound, William Carlos Williams, and other crucial contemporary writers. In 1971 he moved to Toronto where he was a freight handler on the lakefront for seven years. From 1982-89 he pursued graduate studies at SUNY Buffalo, studying with John Clarke and Robert Creeley. He returned to Toronto in 1993. Currently writing his *Cosmographia*, "a post-Lucretian faux micro-epic," issuing each book of cantos under the *shuffaloff* imprint.

Kent L. Bowman b. 1941, Glendale, California; arr. 1965. Since his teens, Kent has been developing his musical skills, both performing and composing. His father, Babe Bowman, was a professional trombonist with Artie Shaw and other prominent swing bands. Kent plays trombone for the York Jazz Ensemble, the Music Lovers, Edge of Dixie, and the Upper Canada Brass Quintet. On guitar, vocals, and arrangements, he was one half of the popular folk duo, the Dusty Road Singers, with Hugh Mullin. Ted Plantos encouraged his poetry and he became one of the original House Poets. His *Glasseaters' Banquet* was published in 1976. Kent is also a rehabilitation consultant in Toronto.

Co-editor of this book, **Allan Briesmaster** b. 1946, Greenfield, Massachusetts; arr. 1969. A freelance literary editor and consultant, Allan is the author of nine poetry books and chapbooks. His latest collection is *Interstellar* (Quattro Books, 2007). He also runs his own micro press, Aeolus House. The main organizer of the Art Bar Poetry Reading Series each week from 1993 until 2002, he is now one of four authors managing the Toronto WordStage every month. Since 1998, working with several literary presses, Allan has been instrumental in the production of more than 50 books of poetry and non-fiction. He lives in Thornhill, Ontario with his wife, Holly, a visual artist.

Ronnie R. Brown b. 1946, Brockton, Massachusetts; arr. 1969. Ronnie is an Ottawa writer whose work has appeared in over 100 magazines and anthologies. As well, she has hosted the radio programme *SPARKS II*, and has taught writing at Concordia and Carleton Universities. Brown's fourth collection, *States of Matter* (Black Moss, 2005), was the winner of the Acorn-Plantos People's Poetry Award, an honour for which her fifth collection, *Night Echoes* (Black Moss, 2006), was also shortlisted. (Ronnie's husband, Jim, now a well-known journalist with the Canadian Press, was attending graduate school in Missouri in 1969 when he was drafted.)

Terry Ann Carter b. 1946, Cambridge, Massachusetts; arr. 1965. She is the Random Acts of Poetry poet for the city of Ottawa. Her second collection *Transplanted* (Borealis Press, 2005), provided text for workshops at medical conferences at Queens University and Kings College, Waterloo. An international award-wining haikuist, Carter has participated in the Basho Festival in Ueno, Japan, and co-founded kado Ottawa, a local haiku group that fosters the appreciation of Japanese literary forms. She serves Haiku Canada as Vice President and the League of Canadian Poets as Education Chair.

Sue Chenette b. 1942, Black River Falls, Wisconsin; arr. 1972. Chenette is a poet and classical pianist. She teaches piano at Havergal College, and was for many years the faculty accompanist at the National Music Camp of Canada. Her chapbook *The Time Between Us* won the Canadian Poetry Association's Shaunt Basmajian Award in 2001. In 2007 her second and third chapbooks were published: *A Transport of Grief* and *Solitude in Cloud and Sun* (both Lyricalmyrical Press, Toronto). Her first full-length book is forthcoming from Guernica Editions.

Jim Christy b. 1945, Richmond, Virginia; arr. 1968. Writes in many genres, a visual artist in various media. Awards for travel, science, sports, drama writing. At least 20 books published so far, including *Princess and Gore*, a Gene Castle gumshoe mystery (Ekstasis, 2000); *The Long Slow Death of Jack Kerouac*, biography-appreciation (ECW, 1998); *Streethearts*, a novel (Simon & Pierre, 1981); *Palatine Cat*, poetry (Four Humours Press, 1978), etc. Christy has covered wars, reviewed movies, had dozens of photographs reproduced in periodicals and books. He's performed poetry with and without musical accompaniment in Canada, France, New Zealand, Australia, Mexico. His current recording projects incorporate song, poetry, and music. Travels frequently.

James Deahl b. 1945, Pittsburgh; arr. 1970. James is the author, editor, or translator of 25 books and chapbooks, most recently, *If Ever Two Were One* (Aeolus House, 2008), which is dedicated to the memory of his wife, the artist Gilda Mekler. A poem in *Blue Ridge* won the Mainichi Award. *Tasting the Winter Grapes* won the Award of Excellence from the Hamilton & Region Arts Council. In 2001 Deahl was presented with the Charles Olson Award for Achievements in Poetry. His *When Rivers Speak* won the Ramada Plaza Hotel Award. A full-time poet currently living in Hamilton, Ontario, he is the father of Sarah, Simone, and Shona.

Pier Giorgio Di Cicco b. 1949, Arezzo, Italy; arr. U.S., 1957; arr. Canada, 1967. The author of many volumes of poetry and *Municipal Mind: Manifestos for the Creative City*, published by City Building Books (Toronto) in association with COMEDIA (UK). He was Goggio Visiting Professor at the University of Toronto in 2004 and in that year was appointed Poet Laureate of the City of Toronto. He is an urban consultant and Curator of the Toronto Museum Project and Global Center for Cities and a recipient of the 2007 Canadian Urban Institute Urban Leadership Award. Among his most influential books are *The Tough Romance* (McClelland & Stewart, 1979) and *Living in Paradise: New and Selected Poems* (Mansfield Press, 2001). Di Cicco is an ordained priest as well as a poet.

Jim Erkiletian (a.k.a. Banjo Jim) b. 1942, Cleveland, Ohio; grew up in Missouri with years in Illinois and Kentucky. Drafted from University of Colorado grad school, he left the U.S. in 1966. Was "popped" for draft evasion in Alaska in 1976, the same week Jimmy Carter was elected President. Became the first draft-dodger offered a "pardon," which he turned down "until that dubious honour is extended to deserters." Has published over 100 works of poetry, fiction, non-fiction, a novel, and six CDs of original songs. "Bushwhacker Blues" can be heard on the Web on *For Love of America PEACE Canada*.

Guy Ewing b. 1946, Amersham, England; arr. 1969. His father, an American GI, his mother, a driver in the RAF, Guy grew up in the U.S. He's worked in Canada as a taxi driver, elementary school teacher, university lecturer, and now primarily as an adult literacy worker in the Parkdale area of Toronto. Ph.D. in Linguistics. In the 1970s, he was an active member of the Link Poetry Workshop in Toronto. After a 30-year hiatus, he began writing poetry again in 2005. Poems have appeared in *Intrinsic* (1978), and more recently in *Literacies*, *The Antigonish Review*, *Our Times*, and *Jones Av.*

Chris Faiers b. 1948, Hamilton, Ontario; arr. U.S. 1955; arr. Canada 1972. Anti-war profile late 60s, Miami, Florida, got attention of draft board. Left U.S. June, 1969 and lived in Eel Pie Island commune in London, England. Joined Canadian Liberation Movement, 1973. Publishing haijin (haiku poetry) for 40 years. Founded Unfinished Monument Press 1978; founded Main Street Library Poetry Readings, Toronto, 1979. *His Foot Through the Ceiling* (Aya/Mercury Press, 1986) received the inaugural Milton Acorn People's Poet Award, 1987. His *Eel Pie Dharma* (1990) is now online. Lives in Marmora, Ontario. Owns and caretakes Zen River Gardens retreat. A library worker since 1982. Haibun collection forthcoming from Hidden Brook Press.

George Fetherling moved to Toronto from New York in late 1966. He has published 50 books: fiction, poetry, memoir, travel, biography, history, and cultural commentary. The best known titles are *Travels by Night: A Memoir of the Sixties* (Lester, 1994; McArthur, 2000), *Selected Poems* (Subway, 1994, 2005), and the novel *Jericho* (Random House, 2005). The most recent title is *Tales of Two Cities: A Novella Plus Stories* (Subway, 2006). He is also a visual artist. He lives in Vancouver.

Eric Folsom b. November 25, 1951, Lynn, Massachusetts, the seaside city where Marshmallow Fluff and Lydia Pinkham's herbal compound were created. He arrived in Canada in 1969 and has lived in Kingston, Ontario since 1974, also the home of Don Cherry and the late Air Commodore Leonard J. Birchall, "Saviour of Ceylon." Eric works at the Kingston Frontenac Public Library, and has published the poetry zine *Next Exit*, and organized Cargo Kulture, a reading series in Kingston. He is the author of three books, including *Icon Driven* (Wolsak & Wynn, 2001), and most recently a chapbook, *Northeastern Anti-Ghazals* (above/ground press, 2005).

Douglas Gary Freeman was born "colored" in Washington DC on May 5, 1949. His parents named him Joseph Coleman Pannell Jr. He renamed himself as he stood in a fugitive slave cemetery near Chatham, Ontario in 1974 when he fled to Canada rather than suffer an unfair trial and the threat of death in Chicago. He has been married to Canadian Natercia Coelho for 25 years and they have raised 4 Canadian-born college-degreed children aged 25 to 33. Gary had been incarcerated since July 2004 fighting extradition to the U.S. On Martin Luther King Day, January 21, 2008, he decided to return to Chicago to face trial and, more importantly, to be part of an epochal moment in American history, and a free man in 2008.

Katerina Fretwell b. 1944, New York City; arr. 1963; Cdn citizen 1970. Poetry, art, voice, spiritual fellowship work. First prize, Canadian Authors Northern Poetry Contest. First prize, Watercolour, Artfocus Exhibition, Toronto, 2001. Art featured and choral singing in operas produced by The Parry Sound School of Music. Poetry sequence "Quartzite Dialogues" set to music and performed at local Festival of the Sound, 1999, 2004, and once at Takefu Music Centre, Japan, 1999. Her fifth book, *Samsara: Canadian in Asia*, forthcoming from Pendas. Working on glosas of ancestor Henry Vaughan and visionary Magdalene poems and accompanying art. Lives in Parry Sound, Ontario.

Mark Frutkin b. 1948, Cleveland, Ohio; arr. 1970. Mark is the author of three books of poetry and seven of fiction, including *Fabrizio's Return* (Knopf), winner of the 2006 Trillium Book Award, the 2007 Sunburst Award, and shortlisted for the Commonwealth Writers' Prize for Best Book (Canada/Caribbean). His novel *Atmospheres Apollinaire* was shortlisted for the 1988 Governor General's Award, the Trillium, and the Ottawa Book Award. Forthcoming, 2008: *Erratic North: A Vietnam Draft-Resister's Life in the Canadian Bush* (Dundurn Press, Toronto). His work has also been published in the U.S., Britain, Holland, Spain, Russia, Poland, India, and South Korea. He lives in Ottawa.

Kim Goldberg b. 1954, Eugene, Oregon; arr. 1977. An author, poet, and artist living in Nanaimo, BC, she co-hosts *Urban Poetry Café* on Radio CHLY. In 2006, Kim mounted the *Urban Eyes Art Exhibition* featuring 52 artists and architects after a vacant lot on her block was bulldozed for condos, revealing a homeless encampment. Her writing has appeared in *Canadian Geographic, The Progressive, The Dalhousie Review,* and other magazines. Her latest book is *Ride Backward on Dragon* (Leaf Press, 2007). After completing a biology degree at the University of Oregon, Kim came to Canada to join her mother and brother, who had arrived five years earlier.

Heidi Greco b. 1947, Milwaukee; arr. 1968. "Because I believe in the importance of readings, I help organize events for my local Arts Council. I'm active in the League of Canadian Poets and have served as juror and mentor for their programs. My main writing genres are poetry (*Rattlesnake Plantain,* 2002) and book reviews; my forthcoming novel (*The Dylan Tapes*) chronicles the 1960s. The award I am proudest of is my Canadian citizenship. I'm still convinced I 'picked' my parents because I thought they were Canadian. At the time, they were honeymooning at Lake of the Woods."

Elizabeth Greene b. 1943, New York City; arr. 1965. Came on the advice of Tarot cards, to do graduate work in Medieval Studies and English at the University of Toronto. There she helped found *Catalyst,* a literary magazine which published Margaret Atwood, Margaret Avison, Gary Geddes and Dennis Lee, among others. She has published a book of poems, *The Iron Shoes* (Hidden Brook Press, 2007), and edited and contributed to *We Who Can Fly: Poems, Essays and Memories in Honour of Adele Wiseman* (Cormorant, 1997). She lives in Kingston, Ontario.

Roger Greenwald b. New Jersey; raised New York City; arr. 1967. He edited the literary magazine *Promethean* at CCNY. Attended St. Marks in the Bouwerie Poetry Project workshop, NYU graduate school, and the University of Toronto. In 1970, he founded the international literary annual *WRIT Magazine* and edited it for 25 years. He's won two CBC Literary Awards (poetry and travel literature) and many translation prizes. Books include *Connecting Flight* (poems); *Through Naked Branches: Selected Poems of Tarjei Vesaas;* and three volumes of Rolf Jacobsen's selected poems, most recently *North in the World,* winner of the Lewis Galantière Award (American Translators Association).

Dublin-born **Jeremy Harman** spent his childhood in Wisconsin. Returned to Ireland at age 11 and later studied medicine at University College Dublin. He interned at Upstate Medical Center, Syracuse, New York, and when drafted in June, 1969, came to Canada. He worked at McGill University and in Newfoundland. Practiced psychiatry in Toronto, works with children and adolescents. Harman has published in Canada, Ireland, Australia and the U.S. In 2007 *Echoes of Shadow,* a limited edition chapbook of poems with his own photographs, was published by Rufus Books. He is working on a full-length poetry collection.

Ernest Hekkanen b. 1947, Seattle, Washington; arr. 1969. A prolific short story writer, novelist, essayist, poet, playwright, anthologist, publisher, printmaker, painter, sculptor, and carver. His 39th book, *Of a Fire Beyond the Hills* (New Orphic, 2008), is based on news stories about the Nelson B.C. War Resisters Monument scheduled to be plunked down in his front yard! "This novel is about fear and patriotism," Hekkanen says. "And hysteria." *Beyond the Call*, a play about a Vietnam War veteran, was mounted by Jay Hamburger's Theatre in the Raw (Vancouver) in 1997-98. Hekkanen's war poems first appeared in *Straying from Luminosity* (1999). He also edits the *New Orphic Review*.

Bruce Iserman b. 1949, Fort Dodge, Iowa; arr. 1971. Bruce went to the University of Toronto and acquired an M.A. in English. For 28 years, he was a high school English and history teacher in the town of Hanover, Ontario. He retired in 2005. His poetry and short stories have appeared in numerous Canadian literary journals. *The Goodwife's Soup*, a new collection of his short stories, was released in 2007. This book is an imprint of Seven Gable House Publishing, a company formed by Bruce and Jenny Iserman.

Ellen S. Jaffe b. 1945, New York City. Anti-war activist throughout the 60s and 70s. Left U.S., 1972; arr. first U.K., later Canada. Writer, teacher, psychotherapist. Ellen teaches writing in schools and to adults with special needs. Works with Learning Through the Arts/Living Through the Arts, and has received grants from the Ontario Arts Council. Genres: poetry, fiction, essays, drama. Three books published in Canada: *Writing Your Way: Creating a Personal Journal*; *Water Children* (poems); and *Feast of Lights*, a young-adult novel, winner of the 2007 Moonbeam Award for Multi-Cultural Fiction. Her poetry collection *Syntymalauluja/Birth Songs* was published in Helsinki, Finland. Ellen lives and writes in Hamilton, Ontario.

Pat Jasper b. 1943, Teaneck, New Jersey; arr. 1974. Pat grew up on various army bases in the U.S. and overseas. Educated at New Mexico State University and University of Colorado. She has been active in the Toronto poetry scene for more than 25 years, including as director of the Axle-Tree Reading Series. Her poems have appeared in *Canadian Literature*, *The Malahat Review*, *The Fiddlehead*, and other periodicals. Her first two books were published by Goose Lane Editions: *Recycling* (1985) and *The Outlines of Our Warm Bodies* (1990). Her third collection, *Background Music*, was published in 1998 by watershedBooks. She currently works for Indigo Books in Toronto.

Michael Lee Johnson b. 1947, Brazil, Indiana; arr. 1970. Michael is a poet and freelance writer. Self-employed in advertising, selling custom promotional products. The author of *The Lost American: From Exile to Freedom*, a book of poetry published by iUniverse Publishers. Johnson was nominated for the James B. Baker Award in poetry, Sam's Dot Publishing. A contributor to the *Silver Boomers* poetry anthology about aging baby boomers (Silver Boomer Books, 2007). Poems published in the U.S., Canada, New Zealand, Australia, Turkey, Fuji, Nigeria, Algeria, India, the United Kingdom, Republic of Sierra Leone, and Kuala Lumpur. Now lives outside Chicago.

Joseph Jones b. 1947 in the Carolinas; arr. 1970. He worked with the Amex-Canada collective in Toronto in the 1970s on their magazine and in the campaign for universal unconditional amnesty. Librarian emeritus at UBC, he published *Reference Sources for Canadian Literary Studies* in 2005. Since 2000 he's been researching and writing on U.S. Vietnam War resisters in Canada. The project's cornerstone is an extensive annotated bibliography. *Dum spiro spero. Esse quam videri.* [While I breathe, I hope (Cicero). To be, rather than to seem (state motto of North Carolina.)] Home: Vancouver.

Ken Klonsky b. 1946, New York City; arr. 1967. Writing credits include *Taking Steam*, a play written with the late Brian Shein, performed at the Jewish Repertory Theatre of New York (1983) and the Leah Posluns in Toronto (1983), published by Playwrights Canada Press (1982) and anthologized in *New Jewish Voices*, SUNY Press (1985). An anthology of short stories, *Songs of Aging Children*, was published in 1992 (Arsenal Pulp Press). Recently, a short story "Caroline" appeared in *Descant* (Winter 2005), and a collaboration with Dr. Rubin "Hurricane" Carter, *The Way of the One-Eyed Man*, was completed. In addition, Ken works for Dr. Carter at Innocence International to help free wrongly convicted prisoners worldwide.

Daniel M. Kolos b. 1944 in Budapest, Hungary; reached America on Jan. 1, 1957, became a citizen in Sept., 1962, drafted in Sept. 1966 and honourably discharged in Sept. 1968. Graduate of the University of Pennsylvania, Daniel arrived in Canada in 1969 and worked in the computer field until 1973, then earned an M.A. from the University of Toronto in Egyptology. Spent seven years as a freelance broadcaster with CBC Radio writing documentaries and ritual drama. His long-simmering love of poetry surfaced in 1997. He has since published two poetry volumes, *Slipped Out* (Pendas, 2003) and *From One Child to Another* (The Battered Silicon Dispatch Box, 2007). He raises goats and sheep in Priceville, Ontario.

Richard Lemm b. 1946, Seattle, Washington, arr. 1967. His recent books are *Shape of Things to Come* (short fiction), *Four Ways of Dealing With Bullies* (poetry), and *Milton Acorn: In Love and Anger* (biography). Awards include the Canadian Authors' Association Poetry Award, the *Arc Poetry Magazine* Poem of the Year Award, and CBC Radio Literary Awards. A past president of the League of Canadian Poets, he is a professor of English and Creative Writing at the University of Prince Edward Island in Charlottetown. His current poetry manuscript includes investigations of his ancestors' involvement in American and European wars.

Edward Lemond b. 1942, Lafayette, Indiana; arr. 1969. Lived in Halifax, Nova Scotia until 1993, now resides in Moncton, New Brunswick. Owned and operated the Attic Owl Bookshop for 21 years. One of the founding organizers of the Northrop Frye Literary Festival, held annually in Moncton. His poetic work will be found in *The Antigonish Review*. An unpublished novel won first prize in the 1986 Writers Federation of Nova Scotia contest. He recently finished a novel titled *Journey in Bardo*, and is now at work on another. Married to the visual artist Elaine Amyot; together they have five children, seven grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren.

Alison Lohans b. 1949, Reedley, California; arr. 1971. Alison was raised in a pacifist family. During the Vietnam era she was in a quandary because young women didn't face the same consequences as young men regarding the war. This need to speak eventually led to the publication of *Don't Think Twice* (Thistledown Press) many years later. Alison's primary writing genre is children's and young adult fiction, and 2008 will bring the publication of her sixteenth and seventeenth books, the young adult novels *This Land We Call Home* and *River Rat* (Raupo, NZ/Heinemann Education). Alison is grateful that poetry calls to her as well. She lives in Regina.

Keith Maillard b. 1942, Wheeling, West Virginia; arr. 1970. A professor at the University of British Columbia who teaches Creative Writing, Maillard is the author of 13 novels, numerous non-fiction articles and essays, and one book of poetry. Among his many awards are the Ethel Wilson Fiction Prize for *Motet*, in 1990, and the Gerald Lampert Award in 1995 for *Dementia Americana*, his poetry collection. His novel *Gloria* was shortlisted for the Governor General's Award for Fiction in 1999. His most recent work is the four-volume novel, *Difficulty at the Beginning* (Brindle & Glass, 2005-06). Now at work on a second poetry collection, two novels, and a memoir, he lives in Vancouver with his wife and family.

Dave Margoshes b. 1941, New Brunswick, New Jersey; arr. 1972. A poet and fiction writer, he lives in Regina. Widely published in literary magazines and anthologies throughout North America, including six times in the Best Canadian Stories volumes, Margoshes is the author of a dozen books. His most recent, *Bix's Trumpet and Other Stories* (NeWest Press), was named Book of the Year at the 2007 Saskatchewan Book Awards. He is President of Sage Hill Writing Experience, a past vice president of the League of Canadian Poets, and current fiction editor of the literary magazine *Grain*.

Steven McCabe b. 1949, Kansas City, Missouri; arr. 1969. Steven is both a visual artist and poet. He has painted murals, illustrated books, and exhibited paintings. Currently he is creating mixed media artwork for digital projection as "visual accompaniment" while reading poetry. He has collaborated with numerous musicians and dancers to create mixed media performances, most recently for his fourth book of poetry, *Hierarchy of Loss* (Ekstasis Editions, 2007). An artist-educator, he visits public and private schools conducting visual art and creative writing workshops.

Gary McCarty b. 1949, Brooklyn, New York; arr. 1975. Gary's poetry has appeared in various literary magazines and in several anthologies including *The Edges of Time* (Seraphim Editions, 1999). He served as poetry editor of *lichen, a literary journal*, in 1999 and 2000. He recently completed a series of poems to accompany a book of photographs of Algonquin National Park. He lives in Toronto.

Susan McCaslin b. 1947, Indianapolis, Indiana; arr. 1969. Susan is a poet, essayist, and educator, the author of eleven volumes of poetry, including her most recent, *Lifting the Stone* (Seraphim Editions, 2007). She edited two poetry anthologies, *A Matter of Spirit* (Ekstasis, 1998) and *Poetry and Spiritual Practice* (St. Thomas Poetry Series, 2002). She serves on the editorial boards of *Event* and *The Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* (Harvard Divinity School). Susan won first place in the Federation of B.C. Writers Literary Writes contest for 2006. She lives in Fort Langley, B.C. with her husband, and has a daughter in university.

Marianne Micros b. 1943, Cuba, New York; arr. 1974. Marianne is the author of the poetry collections *Upstairs Over the Ice Cream* (Ergo, 1979) and, most recently, *Seventeen Trees* (Guernica, 2007). She also publishes academic articles on Renaissance (Early Modern) poetry, especially writings by women. She teaches Early Modern literature and creative writing at the University of Guelph in Ontario. She is currently researching dance in literature, and is studying and writing poems about belly dancing. She is obsessed with her two grandchildren, both born in the summer of 2007.

Isa Milman b. 1949, Heidenheim, Germany; arr. U.S., 1950; arr. Canada 1975. A poet, visual artist, and occupational therapist, Isa grew up in Boston. After 21 years in Montreal, she's called Victoria home since 1996. Her first book, *Between the Doorposts*, won the 2005 Poetry Prize at the Canadian Jewish Book Awards. Her new book is *Prairie Kaddish* (Coteau, 2008). Her paintings and monoprints have been shown in group and solo exhibitions in Victoria and Montreal, and are in private collections around the world. When not writing or making art, Isa spends three days a week as coordinator of the Epilepsy Program at the Victoria Epilepsy & Parkinson's Centre.

Steve Moore b. 1943, Rockford, Illinois, arr. 1967. Steve was an anti-war activist at Northern Illinois University in DeKalb (1961-67). After receiving his M.A. in American History, he moved to Canada and continued his graduate studies at the University of Toronto (1967-70). His lifelong career involved teaching in an inner city alternative secondary school in Toronto. Steve recently published three volumes of poetry, *The Meaning of Life*. He now lives on Quadra Island, B.C., with his wife, Danielle, and her two teenage daughters, Chloe and Fiona. He remains a peace activist.

Wendy Morton b. 1940, South Bend, Indiana; arr. 1970. The founder of Random Acts of Poetry, a national literacy initiative, with Canada Council for the Arts funding: poets from coast to coast read poems to strangers and to ESL and Adult Literacy classes. Wendy also hosts Planet Earth Poetry, a popular weekly venue, in Victoria, BC. She has been WestJet's Poet of the Skies and Chrysler's Poet of the Road, among other corporate sponsors. Her memoir, *Six Impossible Things Before Breakfast*, was published in 2006, followed by her fourth book of poetry, *Gumshoe*, in 2007. She fervently believes "poetry is the shortest distance between two hearts."

Joe Nickell b. 1944, West Liberty, Kentucky; arr. 1968. Wanted for draft resistance, he lived in Canada until 1977, when pardoned by President Jimmy Carter. Nickell worked here as an advertising writer and private investigator, a Niagara Falls stage magician, and a Yukon blackjack dealer and riverboat manager. His poetry chapbook, *The Changing Air,* was published in Toronto in 1971. His initial paranormal investigations were conducted in Canada. He is author or co-author of numerous books, including *Adventures in Paranormal Investigation* (2007) and *Crime Science: Methods of Forensic Detection* (1999). Appeared on *Oprah* and *Larry King Live,* has been profiled in *The New Yorker,* and is a staff writer for *Skeptical Inquirer* in Buffalo, NY.

Ken Norris b. New York City, 1951; immigrated to Montreal, 1972. In 1975 he joined the activities at the Véhicule Art Gallery and became one of the famous Vehicule Poets. In Canada he earned his M.A. from Concordia, his Ph.D. from McGill. Among his early published titles is *Report on the Second Half of the Twentieth Century* (1977), the first installment of his major serial work which took 28 years to complete. Arranged in 22 books, it's over 700 pages long and grew out of a challenge by older mentor poets like Louis Dudek for this young lyric poet to "get serious." Ken's selected poems, *Hotel Montreal,* is available from Talonbooks. He teaches Can Lit at the University of Maine.

Barry N. Olshen b. 1944, Brooklyn, NY; arr. 1966. Barry is Professor Emeritus and Senior Scholar at Glendon College, York University, where he has taught literature, drama, the Hebrew Bible, and creative writing since the late sixties. He is now a psychotherapist, in private practice for the past five years. He has published a book of poetry, *Memory Rooms* (Lyricalmyrical Press, 2002), in addition to four non-fiction books and many articles on literature, drama, and the Bible. He is currently at work on what he calls his "psychoanalytic poems."

Bud Osborn b. 1947, Battle Creek, Michigan; arr. 1969. An activist founder of harm reduction, housing, and other organizations, such as VANDU (Vancouver Area Network of Drug Users), PRG (Political Response Group), and CR (Creative Resistance). Bud served as a director on the Vancouver/Richmond Health Board. Earlier, he participated in the anti-Vietnam War demonstration at the Pentagon, October, 1967. Among his poetry books are *Lonesome Monsters* (Anvil Press, 1995), *Hundred Block Rock* (Arsenal Pulp Press, 1999), and *Signs of the Times* (Anvil Press, 2005). *Keys to Kingdoms* (published by Get to the Point, 1999) won the City of Vancouver Book Award and became a poetic short shown in 30+ film festivals world-wide. Osborn is preparing his sixth poetry book.

Pam Oxendine b. 1949, Minneapolis, Minnesota; arr. 1970. Pam has worked in the mental health field for many years. Her poetry has been published in *Fireweed, Poetry Canada Review, Canadian Women's Studies Magazine,* and *Poetry Toronto.* Pam has been included in the anthologies *Squid Inc. '82* and *'86, Toronto Collection, The Best of Fireweed,* and *The Northern Red Oak.* She has received an Ontario Arts Council Grant, read throughout Toronto, and appeared on radio (CJRT, Toronto and KIK, Calgary) and in a Rogers Cable TV Special, *Toronto Poets.*

Wayne Padgett b. 1941, Richmond, Virginia; arr. 1968, after earning his B.A. in History at a California state college. When his National Guard unit was called up for Vietnam duty, he adhered to his religious upbringing and left for British Columbia. In the early 70s he published two 100-page books: *Dog Days Poems* and *Horse's Nose Poems*. With his wife, Sie, he raised three children without running water or power, and farmed with horses, leaving little time to write. Now the Padgetts run Northern Naturals Health Products Ltd., from Hagensborg, B.C.: "We make wild crafted herbal ointments." Wayne has a new poetry collection to publish, and is currently working on a novel.

Ruth Roach Pierson b. 1938, Seattle, Washington; arr. 1970. Taught History at Memorial University of Newfoundland 1970-1980, Women's History & Feminist Studies at OISE/UT 1980-2001. Co-editor of, among other academic works, *Writing Women's History: International Perspectives* (1991) and *Women, Empire Colony: Historicizing Gender and Race* (1998), as well as author of *"They're Still Women After All": The Second World War and Canadian Womanhood* (McClelland & Stewart, 1986), and two collections of poetry: *Where No Window Was* (BuschekBooks, 2002) and *Aide-Mémoire* (BuschekBooks, 2007). Ruth lives in Toronto with her partner and their two cats, Haiku and Orange Roughy.

Wayne (Scott) Ray b. 1950, Alabama; arr. in Canada as an infant; lived with his American military family at a Newfoundland air force base. He moved to Woodstock, Ontario in 1965. Then an American citizen, he was drafted, but went back to Newfoundland to bury his draft card in a bottle in a lake. Wayne has lived mainly in Toronto and London, Ontario, becoming a community arts co-ordinator and resource person, helping initiate and organize Arts Festivals, Arts Councils, Resource Centres, Poetry Associations, etc. He operates a Book Repair business and an online Photography Archives. A poet and non-fiction writer, he founded HMS Press Publishing.

John Reibetanz b. 1944, New York City; arr 1968. In addition to poetry, he has written essays on Elizabethan drama and on modern and contemporary poetry, as well as a book on King Lear and translations of modern German poetry. In 2003, he was awarded First Prize in the international Petra Kenney Poetry Competition. His most recent collections are *Near Relations* (McClelland & Stewart, 2005) and *Transformations* (Goose Lane Editions, 2006). He lives in Toronto and teaches at Victoria College, where he received the first Victoria University Teaching Award. He has very happily been a Canadian citizen since 1973.

Peter Richardson b. 1948, Norwalk, Connecticut. A Vietnam era deserter, he came to Quebec from Vermont in 1969 at age 20. For 25 years, he was a ramp worker for Air Canada at Mirabel and Trudeau airports. He has published three collections of poetry with Véhicule Press in Montreal: *A Tinkers' Picnic*, shortlisted for the 1999 Gerald Lampert Award as best first book; *An ABC of Belly Work* (2003), finalist for the Acorn-Plantos People's Poetry Award; and *Sympathy for the Couriers* (2007). He resides in Gatineau, Quebec.

Marcia Rodríguez b. 1945, Shenandoah, Pennsylvania; arr. 1968. Marcia came to Canada to do a Ph.D. in Medieval Studies at the University of Toronto. In the late 60s and early 70s she had poems published in journals such as *Descant*, *The Canadian Forum*, and *Arts in Society*. She works in Ottawa as a freelance editor. Recent projects include *Utopia/Dystopia: Geoffrey James* (National Gallery of Canada), *Terra Nostra* (Library and Archives Canada), and *Hybrids: Reshaping the Contemporary Garden in Métis* (Les Jardins de Metis). All her writing constantly aspires to the condition of Monk's music.

Leon Rooke b. 1934, Roanoke Rapids, North Carolina, arr. 1969. Novelist, poet, playwright, short story writer. Most recent books include *The Fall of Gravity* and *The Beautiful Wife* (novels), *Hot Poppies* (poems), *Painting the Dog & Hitting the Charts* (stories), and *Balduchi's Who's Who* (novella). Major awards include the Canada/Australia Prize, the W.O. Mitchell Prize, CBC Literary Prize, the North Carolina Literature Award, and a Governor General's Fiction Award (*Shakespeare's Dog*).

Bernadette Rule b. 1951, Mayfield, Kentucky; arr. 1975. Bernadette has had six poetry books published. One of her earlier collections, *Gardening at the Mouth of Hell*, won the poetry prize at the Eden Mills Writers' Festival in 1991. Her most recent volume is *The Literate Thief: Selected Poems*, from Larkspur Press. In 2001 she won the individual poem prize for the Hamilton & Region Arts Council Literary Competition. She teaches English at Mohawk College, and creative writing in the Writing Certificate Program at McMaster University, and is on the executive of the Hamilton Poetry Centre.

Libby Scheier b. 1946, Brooklyn, New York; arr. 1975. Murray Scheier, a communist and labour organizer, inspired revolutionary activism in his daughter, Libby (Liebe). She fought on the front lines of the feminist movement. When she was refused re-entry into the U.S. in 1975, Toronto became her home. She published five books of poetry and fiction, including *Kaddish for My Father: New and Selected Poems* (ECW, 1999). Also co-edited a major anthology about writing and gender, *Language in Her Eye*, with Sarah Sheard and Eleanor Wachtel (Coach House, 1990). A single mother, she believed a woman could have "the baby and the book," and handled both responsibilities "exceptionally well," according to her only son, Jacob, who has followed in her literary footsteps. Libby Scheier died of breast cancer on November 14, 2000.

Paul Schwartz b. 1946, Detroit, Michigan; arr. 1968. Hired on at a Toronto hospital by a retired Canadian Army Sergeant, Paul was lucky enough to learn Medical Photography. A continuing interest in poetry, from Bachelor of Arts days, led to his publishing the quarterly *Jones Av.* Two issues of *Jones Av.* have been dedicated to the twin forces of Emily Dickinson and Dorothy Livesay. Paul's poems have appeared in *The White Wall Review*, *sub-terrain*, and the on-line journal *Perihelion*. His recent work in photography has been included in several Contact Photography Festival exhibitions in Toronto.

Norm Sibum b. 1947, Oberammergau, Germany; arr. U.S., 1948; arr. Canada, 1968. Self-educated. He has been writing for over forty years. Has published several volumes of poetry in Canada and England. Currently lives in Montreal, writing full-time. Given the A.M. Klein Award for *Girls and Handsome Dogs* (The Porcupine's Quill, 2002). Currently at work on a novel, *Sweet Land of Reason*.

Ann Sorensen b. 1953, Forest Row, England; arr. U.S., 1956; arr. Canada, 1968. For the past 20 years working with the Infant Development Program in Victoria, B.C., Ann has been able to indulge interests in writing, art, music and play with children and families. Primarily writing creative non-fiction in local news journals, she also illustrates and compulsively maintains a dream journal. In 2008, she plans to travel to the Isle of Anglesey in Wales to write about her mother's ancestral home, Plas Bodafon.

Ken Stange b. 1946, Chicago, Illinois; arr. 1968, Toronto. Ken has lived in North Bay, Ontario since the early seventies, earning his daily bread as a lecturer in the Psychology Department at Nipissing University. A writer, visual artist, teacher, and scientist, his half dozen published books and numerous other publications include poetry, fiction, arts journalism, scientific research reports, computer programs, philosophical essays, and visual art. Ken was the founder and editor of the lit mag *Nebula*, and currently edits the reincarnated version as an Internet publication. He just finished writing a big book on creativity in the arts and sciences.

Allen Sutterfield b. 1942, Belgrade, Missouri. Graduated Missouri State College, Cape Girardeau, Missouri, 1963. Immigrated to Canada May, 1967, as a war resister, anticipating being drafted. First Visual Art exhibition at PROJECT 36 GALLERY, Vancouver, 1978. Obtained Master of Arts degree, Simon Fraser University, 1979. He became a Canadian citizen in 1974, and remained in Canada even after qualifying for the Amnesty of 1976. Married three times; has one son, Kirk, from his first marriage. He's lived in Chengdu, Sichuan, China since 2001, teaching English at Sichuan University. Presently conducting a popular Writing Workshop each Wednesday evening at The Bookworm, a library/bar/restaurant and cultural meeting place near the University.

Robert Sward b. 1933, Chicago, Illinois; arr. 1969. This future Guggenheim Award winner served in the U.S. Navy during the Korean War and, in 1969, accepted a position as Poet in Residence at the University of Victoria, where he taught for four years. In the 80s he worked for CBC Radio and as a book reviewer and feature writer for *The Toronto Star* and *The Globe & Mail*. Sward, with Robert Priest and Robert Zend, performed as the popular poetry ensemble dubbed the Three Roberts. His 30 books include *The Collected Poems: 1957-2004* (Black Moss, 2004). He moved to Santa Cruz in 1985 to teach. He now also works as a contributing editor for selected literary internet publications, including Web Del Sol.

Rae Marie Taylor b. 1946, Denver, Colorado; arr. 1968. Poet, visual artist, teacher. Solo poetry performances initially accompanied her art exhibits. Rae Marie's Spoken Word CD, *Black Grace*, features original music by David Gossage. Performed at the Festival International de la Poésie a Trois Rivières, Montreal's Casa Del Popolo, Quebec's Espace Felix Leclerc, and other venues. Presented her show *An Earthly Hour, A Human Time* in New Mexico. Teaching at Dawson College and Concordia University in Montreal, she founded courses on Native American Literature and coordinated literary events. Based near Quebec City, Rae Marie is completing a book of personal essays.

Richard Teleky b. 1946, Cleveland, Ohio; arr. 1968. Studied at Case-Western Reserve University before coming to Canada. Ph.D. in English from U of Toronto. Served as Managing Editor of Oxford University Press Canada for 15 years. Now Professor of Humanities at Toronto's York University, he's authored six books of fiction, poetry, and criticism, receiving international praise. *The Paris Years of Rosie Kamin* (1998) won the Harold Riblalow Prize (U.S.) for best novel of the year. Teleky's most recent books (both 2006) are *The Hermit's Kiss* (poetry) and *Winter in Hollywood* (a novel). Now finishing a second volume of poetry and a non-fiction book about dogs and culture.

Judy Wapp b. 1939, Minneapolis; arr. 1968. A visual artist most of her life. Judy's collages have appeared in several publications. A writing course with Tom Wayman in 1991 widened her creative path; she's been working in various literary forms since then. Judy co-wrote *Hello, I Must Be Going*, a theatre piece that toured the Kootenays in 2006/7 and played Vancouver's Chutzpah Festival in 2008. She's passionately involved in community radio, and is working on an audio project about the migration of Americans during the Vietnam War and the Canadians who helped them.

Sue Wheeler b. 1942, Dallas, Texas; arr. 1972. The poet lives and works on a seaside farm on Lasqueti Island, B.C., her home since coming to Canada. Deeply involved in community affairs, she has also published three collections of poems: *Solstice on the Anacortes Ferry* (Kalamalka Press, 1995), *Slow-Moving Target* (Brick Books, 2000), and *Habitat* (Brick Books, 2005). These books have been variously shortlisted for the Gerald Lampert and Pat Lowther Awards and B.C.'s Book Prize in Poetry. Individual poems have won the Gwendolyn MacEwan Memorial Award and the *Malahat Review* Long Poem Prize, and some were shortlisted for *Arc* magazine's Poem of the Year Award.

J. Michael Yates b. 1938 in the Ozark Mountains, Missouri; arr. 1966. Taught at UBC 1966-71. Graduate degrees at the Universities of Missouri and Michigan. A widely published author of poetry, fiction, drama, translations, and philosophical essays, he has also edited several anthologies and literary magazines. His work has been translated into many western and eastern languages. His radio, television, and stage dramas have been produced nationally and internationally. Yates has won numerous literary prizes, including the Major Hopwood Awards (both poetry and drama the same year) and the Lifetime Achievement Award in the Arts and Sciences from the University of Missouri. He retired at the rank of Distinguished Professor. He lives and writes in Vancouver.

Liz Zetlin b. 1944, Norfolk, Virginia; arr. 1969. A poet, visual artist, and filmmaker, Liz is Owen Sound, Ontario's first Poet Laureate. Her most recent collections are *The Thing With Feathers* (BuschekBooks) and *Taking Root* (Seraphim Editions). Her poetry has won a Stephen Leacock Award and the Shaunt Basmajian Chapbook Award. Her video poems were screened at the St. John's International Women's Film Festival and in galleries in Canada and Ireland. Zetlin is co-artistic director of the Words Aloud Spoken Word & Storytelling Festival; she's co-producing an educational documentary featuring the 2007 event. Resides in Traverston, ON.

Michael Zizis b. 1949, Pittsburgh; arr. 1969. Came to Canada the day he was to report for boot camp. A friend commented he shouldn't get in the car, because it was a jinx. The car hit a deer near Erie, Pa. and was towed back. In Canada, he taught creative writing at Humber College, and established *INTRINSIC: a magazine of poetry & poetics*. He published two books of poetry, each well-received by many readers. But the more successful he was in the literary world, "the darker my spirit became." Zizis has worked for 30 years to become a full time Astrologer, "a helping and healing profession." He had abandoned his "literary life after three decades of struggle." He is now writing again.

Acknowledgements

George Amabile: "Catch and Release" is based on the versions in the anthology *Five O'Clock Shadows*, by George Amabile, Len Gasparini, Seymour Mayne, Ted Plantos, and George Swede (Letters Bookshop, 1996) and in *Tasting the Dark: New and Selected Poems*, ed. by Catherine Hunter (J. Gordon Shillingford Publishing, 2001). The extracts from "Ars Poetica" and from "Interview" are taken from *Rumours of Paradise/Rumours of War* (McClelland & Stewart, 1995).

Steven Michael Berzensky: "Exploding Sonnet" was broadcast four times on *Gallery*, CBC Saskatchewan, 2006, in a dramatic segment prod. by Kelly Jo Burke. It was published in *CV2*, Summer 2007. "Walking Cathedral Trail" was first published in the 1998 Saskatchewan Poetry Book of the Year, *Variations on the Birth of Jacob* (J. Gordon Shillingford Publishing, 1997), then in *The Names Leave the Stones: Poems New & Selected*, ed. by Catherine Hunter.

Ronnie R. Brown: "Home Again" appeared in a slightly different form in *States of Matter* (Black Moss, 2005). Black Moss granted the author permission to re-publish the poem in this anthology in this form.

Sue Chenette: "Hush" was published in *Descant* (Summer, 2007). "The Old Woman Sings to Her Husband" was included in the prize-winning chapbook, *The Time Between Us* (Canadian Poetry Association, 2001).

Jim Christy: "Remembrance Day" was published in the *Georgia Straight* (Vancouver), during the appropriate week in 2002. "In the Desert" was published in *Catalyst* (Christchurch, NZ, Winter 2006).

James Deahl: "Hatred of People with Different Alphabets" was published in the chapbook *Blackbirds* (Unfinished Monument Press, 1999). "Kampuchea" first appeared in *6 recent poems*, a broadside published by the League of Canadian Poets, 1983. It later appeared in *Even This Land Was Born of Light* (Moonstone Press, 1993). "Pittsburgh IX" first appeared in *When Rivers Speak* (Unfinished Monument Press, 2001).

Pier Giorgio Di Cicco: "Train Whistles" is from *Living in Paradise: New and Selected Poems* (The Mansfield Press, 2001).

Jim Erkiletian: "Bush Whacker Blues." Words & music © Jim Erkiletian. The song is featured on the CD *For Love of America PEACE Canada* (ERK7, 2004), and is performed by Janette Briere and Banjo Jim Erkiletian, a.k.a. the performing duo, Owl and the Pussycat.

Guy Ewing: "What I Learned" was published in *Literacies*, #5, Spring 2005. "Osgoode Hall" was published in *Our Times*, Vol. 46, No. 4, August/September 2007.

Chris Faiers: "Five Minutes Ago They Dropped the Bomb" has appeared in at least two books and five anthologies since 1984, including *Keeper of the Conscience* (Greensleeve Publishing, 1990). "draft resister" was originally a prize-winning entry in the International Haiku Contest 1987 awards booklet of The Modern Haiku Association of Japan. "The Fire" was first published online in the October-November 2004 issue of *The Pedestal Magazine*.

Eric Folsom: "Just Another Yuppie Raising Children" is from the chapbook *Northeastern Anti-Ghazals* (above/ground press, 2005).

Douglas Gary Freeman: "Black History Lesson 1: Kneeling," "Dog Day Saturday Morning," and "memories of my youth" were first published in the chapbook *Blue Cage at Midnight* (Lyricalmyrical Press, 2007).

Mark Frutkin: "Reinventing the World" was first published in *Iron Mountain* (Beach Holme, Vancouver, 2001).

Kim Goldberg: "DeSoto Love" was originally published in *Cahoots*, Autumn 2006.

Roger Greenwald: "Disposable Poem" was published in *Promethean*, Vol. XV, No. 1 (1968). "To Feel at Home in a Foreign Country" was published in *Saturday Night*, July/August 1994.

Ernest Hekkanen: "Sad Men" and "I Did This" (from which an extract was taken) were both published in *Straying from Luminosity* (New Orphic Press, 1999).

Ellen S. Jaffe: "Vietnam, August 11, 1966" was first published in the U.S. magazine *Minority of One* (1967), and then in French translation, "Viet Nam…11 aout 66," in the anthology *Chants pour le Viet Nam* (Les Editeurs Francais Reunis, Paris, France, 1968). "After September Eleventh" was first published in the anthology *This I Believe*, ed. James Strecker (Mini Mocho Press, 2001), and then in *Water Children* (Mini Mocho Press, 2002).

Pat Jasper: "Children of Violence" and "Child's Play" were published in *Recycling* (Goose Lane Editions, 1985).

Michael Lee Johnson: "If I Were Young Again" first appeared on May 4, 2007 in *Muscadine Lines: A Southern Journal*, on their webzine: www.asouthernjournal.com/index.htm.

Richard Lemm: "Hendrix of Arabia" and "Return to Sender" were published in *Grain*, Summer 2007. "Grandfather Tells Me About the Wars" was published in *Prelude to the Bacchanal* (Ragweed Press, 1990), and was also read on CBC Radio's *Morningside* during Peter Gzowski's reign.

Edward Lemond: "My Father, My Enemy, and My Father" was first published in the poet's self-published collection, *Yesterday I Thought Winter* (Lulu.com, 2006).

Keith Maillard: The sequence "The Author Recalls His Adolescence" and the sequence "The Intervention of the Duke" are from *Dementia Americana* (Ronsdale Press, 1994).

Dave Margoshes: "Saigon Rising" appeared in the collection *Walking at Brighton* (Thistledown Press, 1988), and was previously published in *Grain* (circa 1980). "For the September Dead" appeared in *Grain*, Winter 2005 (Vol. 32, #3), and was previously broadcast twice on *Gallery*, CBC Saskatchewan, under the title "A Blessing on the Day."

Steven McCabe: "Hitchhike" is from *Hierarchy of Loss* (Ekstasis Editions, 2007).

Steve Moore: "Autobiography" (2003) and "Finding Our Human Face" (2002), from which extracts were taken, were both originally published by the poet in his three-volume collection, *The Meaning of Life*.

Ken Norris: "At A.J.M. Smith's Reading at the Côte St. Luc Library (Oct. 19, 1977)," "Lunch Poems," and "Peregrinations" were published in *To Sleep, To Love* (Guernica Editions, 1982). "Lunch Poems" also appears in *Hotel Montreal: New and Selected Poems* (Talonbooks, 2001).

Bud Osborn's "reparation" was first published in *Lonesome Monsters* (Anvil Press, 1995).

Pam Oxendine: "Toronto Is a City of Exiles" was published in *Poetry Canada Review*, June 1986.

Wayne Padgett: "Do People in Canada Write on Bathroom Walls Less?" and "14 year old uncle" first appeared in *Dog Days Poems*, self-published, 1972. "The Logs" as "[Untitled]" appeared in *Horse's Nose Poems* (Lantern Publications, 1973), and was republished in *Humanist in Canada*, Number 30, August 1974.

Ruth Roach Pierson: "After the Flower Show" has been published in *Aide-Memoire* (BuschekBooks, 2007).

John Reibetanz: "Heart's Core: Notes from a Visit Back" is an excerpt from "Motherland," published in *Near Relations* (McClelland & Stewart, 2005). "Reading the New York Times" was published in *Midland Swimmer* (Brick Books, 1996).

Peter Richardson: "I Sing of the Vulcan" appeared in *The Rialto* (England), Spring 2005, Issue 57 and in *Sympathy for the Couriers* (Véhicule Press, 2007). "Uncle Ernie's Rant Comes Back to Me Thirty Years Later" and "This Coat" appeared in *An ABC of Belly Work* (Véhicule Press, 2003).

Bernadette Rule: "Homesickness" was published in *Tower Poetry Journal*, Summer 2005.

Libby Scheier: "My American Heritage" is from *Second Nature* (Coach House Press, 1986).

Paul Schwartz: "Border Leaves" appeared in a different form in *Jones Av.*, Vol. 4, No. 3, February 1998.

Robert Sward: "On My Way to the Korean War" and "Report from the Front" both appear in Robert's *The Collected Poems: 1957-2004*, First and Second Printings (Black Moss Press, 2004, 2006).

Rae Marie Taylor: "Prelude" is on the Spoken Word CD *Black Grace*, which was released in April 2004. The CD has music composed for the poems by David Gossage of Montreal and was manufactured by Magra Multi Media.

Richard Teleky: "Alone, with a Book, at the End of the World" was published in *The Hermit's Kiss* (Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 2006).

Sue Wheeler: "Child of the Times" was published in *Solstice on the Anacortes Ferry* (Kalamalka Press, 1995). "Nomad" is from *Slow-Moving Target* (Brick Books, 2000).

J. Michael Yates: All of the prose poem selections are taken from *The Great Bear Lake Meditations* (Oberon, 1971), its second printing.

Final Thanks

The editors are deeply grateful to Roger Greenwald for proposing a much better title for this book than our initial working name.

We thank Joseph Jones, A. F. Moritz, James Deahl, George Fetherling, George Elliott Clarke, George Amabile, Ellen S. Jaffe, Dave Margoshes, Jim Christy, Kim Goldberg, Ernest Hekkanen, Roger Greenwald, and others, who introduced us to or gave us the names of individual poets we were not aware were also eligible for inclusion. We did not always succeed in making contact with everyone, but without those who shared such leads with us, this would have been a much slimmer and less representative anthology.

We thank Jacob Scheier for giving us access to some of the unpublished writings left by his late mother, Libby Scheier, and for his permission, as her literary executor, to publish for the first time one of those pieces.

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We wish to express our enduring gratitude to publisher Maureen Whyte, who believed in this endeavour from the start. Maureen was willing, despite what promised to be a book of unusual size and complexity, to back our effort at a difficult time for all Canadian publishers. We appreciate her enthusiasm, dedication, co-operation, and perseverance in helping us overcome any and all obstacles. With Maureen's steady support, we were able to move forward toward our shared goal: to create a ground-breaking anthology that, figuratively, was a work of many hands forty years in the making!

Finally, we thank each and every one of the *Crossing Lines* poets:

We thank you for your co-operation, your patience, your understanding, and, above all, for your poetry. This is *your* book, and it has been an extraordinary, once-in-a-lifetime privilege for us to work on it.

Allan Briesmaster
Steven Michael Berzensky