43rd Anniversary Celebration

The Poetry Workshop

November 6, 2016
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I nearly dehydrate as I wait outside the house
that in my prior life I was a mouse.
You were the cat that chased the rat
and now you’re my wife.
Is it Karma or just our fate?
Before I could crawl under the door,
now I have to wait.
I remember the old owner always saying cheese,
then seeing a flashing light.
My sight isn’t so strong in the dark anymore.
I do now look forward to you putting your
hands on me instead of your claws.

Proet C E Shy
SUNDAY MORNING, OCTOBER

Twenty miles for the papers, twenty back. Along the roads red, white and blue signs, campaign and real estate, punctuate the orangey-yellow departures from the trees. Where is even the lesser evil among all these “Buy me” bleats?

On the way home public radio rebroadcasts Saturday snark. Later, drinking coffee and smearing my hands with newsprint from thick wodges retrieved from the market, I must fight against smearing my mind with their pitch.

Robert McDonough
THANKS FOR THE EGGS

Dear Farmer,

Thank you for the eggs.  
I took two dozen  
and left the money in the butter crock, as per your note.

PS: I almost stole the black and white kitten 
that followed me down the drive as I left.

What made me honest?  
Not the fact that you would fear  
he had been struck by a car.  Rather this:  
my husband,  
and the four cats we already have,  
would be peeved.

PPS: I may be back.

Mary Turzillo
HERE COMES ALZHEIMER’S

Imagine,

I burrow down through everything,  
I find simplicity.

Burrow deeper,  
more simplicity.

Burrowing more,  
simplicity, personified.

More,  
less.

At the end,  
nothing’s left.

Life goes on without me,  
miles overhead.

My home,  
my bed,  
everything.  
No-thing.

[   ].

Leonard Seyfarth
INCORPOREAL

As if there were a lake.
As if we lay on the beach
and listened to the water.
As if we were too stunned by the warmth of the day
and the relief of being together
to communicate at all
or even touch.

Carolyn England Ritchie
AT THE VILLAGE DOG PARK

ladies in L.L. Bean release to joy
pure breeds fit for lakefront mansions,
and show off the latest fashion in rescue dogs.

Pruned poodles mix with hounds,
their prance fixing movement standards
before the noisy flow of mixed lines.

Clustered, the downhome gentry chat
dog behaviors, ages, diets;
occasionally detach themselves
for pick-ups with plastic-bagged hands.
Except for a casually thrown ball,
they benignly watch the chaos.

But unleashed for the moment from observation
and isolating constraints,
serious husky bitches gather in the corner
to exchange aromatic news
and plan the coming revolution.

Then feigning obedience
they accompany keepers home,
lifted by knowing that on one fine day
it will be otherwise,
with cringing citizens crying
WHO LET THE DOGS OUT?

Robert Farmer
WORKSHOP LIMERICKS

All poets should know how to spell
But some do not do it so well
For such word abuse
There is no excuse
They ring in the eye like a bell.

Some think good poems don’t rhyme
This notion is heard all the time
Some poets can’t do it
That’s all there is to it
Their rhymes clank rather than chime.

For visual loudness perhaps
A poet wrote all words in caps
To throw out precision
One foolish decision
Caused points made therein to collapse.

Our meetings would often be better
If long-winded comments we’d fetter
Too much said by one
Would never be done
If courtesy ruled to the letter.

Fred Schraff
URBAN GLEANERS

From 7:00 am onward, a parade of shopping carts loaded with air conditioners, copper pipes, gutters, aluminum siding, electrical wire, and all things metal, moves south along East 55th Street.

Sun, rain or snow, wiry urban gleaners travel past public housing and abandoned homes, push their metal-laden carts to the recycling compacter where a crane and boxcar-sized blocks of metal destined for the smelter loom above the fence.

Guaranteed ready cash, for food in the down economy or for narcotics to numb.

Kathryn Brock
FIBONACCI’S RABBITS

Count
the
rabbits
then count them
again, and again.
Fast as you count, they multiply
in Fibonacci’s geometrical progression:
rabbit rabbit rabbit rabbit rabbit rabbit rabbit rabbit rabbit ra--
Exponential rabbits would fast fill the world, until
the world is naught but rabbits --yet
as they multiply
predators
simply
eat
them.

Geoffrey A. Landis

(“Fibonacci’s Rabbits” appeared in Asimov’s Science Fiction Magazine, Dec. 2014)
QUESTIONS TICKLE THE SOUL

What really transfers when a person dies?
Do all their thoughts travel with them,
or do they hang around
raising more questions than answers?
Can you really feel a solid presence
nearby when you think of them?
What actually materializes in a séance?
Is it imagined or tangibly honest?
How come some people talk to their loved ones
even though they’ve passed from the earth?
Does time make any perceptible difference,
or is all so timeless that matter’s not?
Does the conversation change with age,
or is it evergreen?
Can arguments ever be resolved
to your satisfaction,
when it seems like only you
are stuck in place,
listening to your same thoughts
floating around in circles?

Alyson Widen
MY STAR

I look at you.
You are
the only star
in
my darkest
night.

I touch you,
and
your skin
floods me
with flame.

I hug you,
and
your arms
enfold me
with love.

I kiss you,
and
you become
the life
which fills
my soul.

M. A. Doc Janning

Published on: www.facebook.com/tearsofmysoul
He hasn’t gotten anything done today.

Mike’s eyelids fall as we talk about death; he’s sleepy from the brandy tucked in his cabinet.

There’s a break in the conversation as I give him a moment to rest.

At 4:30 p.m., I tell him to go to bed.

His cat meows as she uses her tail as a duster.

Rebecca Ferlotti
CONTEMPLATION
OF ONENESS

Small dark grey
heart-shaped stone---
this one because it
spoke to me.

This stone---
among many other dry stones
on the high beach
washed by storm waves
days, maybe weeks, ago.

This person---
green-eyed and sun-burned
like many others who walked
the beach yesterday
and days before.

Mystery, and no mystery
this stone/person connection.
No I, no beach, no water.
No stone in hand.

Just stardust, time,
and the crash of waves.

Jill Lange
Darkness on the verge of light, straddling zones of consciousness, I’m musing on the difference between memory and reminiscence. Is it intensity or distance?

We’re in the years of corporeal reconfiguration, concerned less with discovery than machine maintenance, lubrication.

I’m musing on the meaning of beauty, and of loss, and contentment, and tasting something indescribably sweet. Not throes of anything, nor a climactic moment, just the pleasure of holding hands, walking down the other side of the mountain, together.

Adrian Schnall
NIGGLE

The clocks all turned their faces to the wall:
  Time, but by stillness, lent a hand . . .
as noodled stichs which moment pitched
  I sought to tweak their not quite there

  & for what pains, mere words to show,
  freshly minted . . . my only coin,
  that what wood<--critics-->have me change?
  where probably iamb knot going!

  As by what page have words been penned
  was found the time that I did spend.
  ¿So perfectly bad it’s almost good?
  I’d have not I’m cowed for words’ mood.

— Christopher Franke
BROKEN DREAMS

The walls closed in and I felt afraid. 
The curtains waved hello in a mocking, undisciplined way. 
Used paper cups were scattered among broken bits of glass; 
Stale wine collected dust on its surface. 
The stench of broken dreams was insufferable, 
But somehow I managed. 
The translucent spider that had become my confidante, 
Busily spun its web. 
Footsteps sounded and resounded in a hall 
That seemed miles away, but weren’t. 
The old wooden floor boards rubbed together 
And noisily expressed their protest. 
As the bolt was undone and the door was thrust open, 
I saw him. 
Standing there, legs shoulder-width apart, 
He cleared his throat of phlegm, 
And spat on the floor. 
As hard as I tried, I could not 
Keep my eyes from his face. 
When I looked into his icy, soulless eyes 
I realized I was doomed. 
My husband was home.

Myra Wallace
IN MOTION

Chagrin, Cuyahoga, Olentangy Rivers

Big Darby Creek
Mad River
Mud Creek

Great Miami River

Thank You for Visiting Ohio
Indiana Welcomes You

Flatrock, White Rivers
Sugar, Dry Run, Graham Creeks

Wabash River
Land of Lincoln

Salt Fork, Vermillion, Kaskaskia Rivers
Kickapoo Creek

Mackinaw, Illinois Rivers
different Nissans
streaming decades

Dail Duncan

cuyahogalibrary.org
VACUITY

conversation breaks
falls to ground
silence fills
each knot hole
awake asleep
lie persistently coupled
why?
slams the door
life untethered
lifts away

R. Ferris