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The Lantern

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THE LANTERN

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V
The green willow
    Caresses the water's cool face
With a slow - spring - kiss.

VI
The cricket chirps amid snowflakes —
    Not really caring
That spring's not here.

VII
Moist wind —
    Steeped in flower petals
And robin calls —
    Green
    Blue
—Spring again.

O. B. GYNE
On a Plane From Here to There

The announcement came over the loud speaker that the airport would be temporarily closed. None of us waiting for the plane knew how long. But in our common misery we began to draw back the curtains from the windows of our lives; not too far but just enough to absorb a bit of the warm light shining from a friendly smile.

He was on his way home, after a year in Germany. A few days before he had turned nineteen and almost simultaneously become a Sgt. in the Army. He was so young to be so mature. On his way home to St. Louis, Sgt. Daryl Davis was already running his watch on Missouri time. He commented that he might have made it home by midnight, which was two hours away his time. He would have thirty days before he would once again find himself on a plane; but then it would be the inevitable Vietnam. Yet, he was not as cynical as I would have expected. There was something captivating about his sarcastic witticisms followed by a gleaming smile in his grey-green eyes which questioned whether or not I could understand him.

Although we must have spent almost an hour standing there, at Gate #27, I could sense a mutual feeling of enjoyment in our delay. As we boarded the plane, we were almost oblivious to the other passengers with the exception of a dignified angry man who told me I was in his seat in the almost empty cabin. We politely moved up about ten empty seats to the front where we asked the stewardess if it mattered
where we sat. She smiled and said no, which added to our amusement. As we flew west through the misty night, Daryl never ceased to impress me with his intelligence. He had read the Bible in its entirety twice. We openly shared some of our doubts, entangled with hidden beliefs. He admitted that he often had deep thoughts which he sometimes wrote down.

As we rose in a plane of our own, I could not help wondering what would become of his dynamic potential. The plane landed after what seemed like only a few minutes, although it must have been at least another hour. I was late getting off the plane because I went back to my former seat to check for my lost scarf. He was waiting at the bottom of the steps for me. As we walked slowly against the biting wind into the airport, I felt that we had somehow given each other a small part of our most precious possessions—a small part of our lives.

We exchanged one last smile. He turned to catch another plane. I ran into two open arms which had never carried a gun.

SANDY CASE
The Earth

Dear one, you are so old
what have you seen through those tired gray eyes?
Your sons have died,
Your daughters wed
Your life has grown stale.
No green thoughts trod upon your wrinkled skin.
Your streams are iced over forever.
But what you could have done if only you’d had more time!
The sun is beginning to descend.

MARC HAUSER

A Cry

Man contrives contraptions
To audibly magnify the scintillations
And the enunciations
Of moribund nature
While nature cries
And dies
To be truly heard.

ROB HANLON
Salt-water seagulls are shrieking my mind into sun, lighting my ears with a summer's cry that has begun in January. My castles are snow—not of sand.

Full moon reflected from ice-coated evergreen pulls mind to the beating of tide at my summer year's door, Begging for time and to give me a sea change return.

May there be life again, if just a three month time span. Time may go, but my mind never sees winter's domain. Summer will rise from the ashes of August again.

estrella

I long to be a silent light
    that views the world
    or shines on some deserted street

I want to hang suspended,
    to know my station
    and have my world, like my inert body,
    tremble only little from the distant floating sounds
I envy the stars.

If stars could only laugh . . .

buckwalter
Asseyant dans son grand fauteuil de velours bleu,
Une solitaire, une fille timide, reve a sa vie.
En attendant, l’encens fait flotter vers les cieux
Pendant que les spirales de la fumee sourient.
La jeune fille comprend ces cheres spirales souriantes —
Le jasmin parfume disparaît tristement.
starry-eyed

You have to climb about three clouds up
And then slide down the nearest rainbow
And when your feet touch
You’d swear you were walking on air
You’re so high

And you shake hands with this fellow who comes over
And says he’s been watching you
He’s friendly
And his smile says he means it

So you start to talk about the places you’ve hitch-hiked
And the air pollution problem
And you’re gazing into his eyes
Like turned inside out black umbrellas
And you know you’re going to stay here
And you know you’re going to like it

He’s friendly
And his smile says he means it.

inspiration: life
composition: TINA MEADE

Subterranean Feelings
Bubble to the Surface
Erupting Amid A
Flaming Sun

KIND WOMAN
Day

Stillness, then a bird
Begins his song, a sunrise
A new day begins.

Ticking Clocks

Whirlpools of the past
Images, people, places
Life's quick progression.

Nadir

Much hardship, weeping
Starvation, sadness, hatred
Homes in ruins . . .
    War.

JOANNE KURIAN
To

i hear her breathing
slow, deep, draughts of life,
but, only this.
strange, how silence
wrings memories from a clammy mind.
how many years now . . .
ten? or, no, more.

jigoondous fat footed mutt.
stealthy collaborator
on under the table dinner deals.
only you know that other me,
who shinnies up trees
and scampers along the creek.

a pulsating sense of youth lost,
vaulting, leaping, bounding forth.
there, oh yes, there,
in those bushes.
catch it!
quick girl, run, run!

softly, "good girl, good dog . . ."
you remember.
i know.
maybe they all know
about children and dogs
chasing shadows,
and other things.
peut-être on sais la.

JANIE LANCEY
Mood

My mind. The trees.

His lips. The breeze.

Our embrace. The warmth.

Your win? . . . my loss.

Denise Young

Independence is a word you prove.
You and I are bound by freedom to treat each other
Casually. Indifferently. When you and I could be much more
Than friends. Your eyes have told me that
We are possible.
But until you see that you and I can be
Free and independent together,
We will not exist.

estella
Frost

Once upon a measured day
a bird i spied in flight
and somehow
from a land bound chest
my heart
she upward swept

i longed to soar
leap my bonds
and in her freedom dip
to follow her
on fathomed flight
and see such things
as she

for a time she'd glide
on lazy wing
then like an arrow sprung
snapping forth
she'd swoop
dive
in acrobatic form

one day i climbed the mountain
so that closer i might be
to she,
my lofty champion
the empress of the skies

though it took hours
of sweat and toil
to reach the pinnacle of her nest
i knew it was worth
my effort
i could not stop to rest

i pulled
strained
crawled
till inches stretched to miles
till my eyes
turned ever skyward
could see my distant goal
at last i reached the summit
saw her perched upon the brink
of her squawking summer’s brood
in their woven branchy nest

though her head
in my direction cocked
i’m sure she saw me not
shifting from foot to foot
as if waiting to be off

it was then that from
the ground below
i heard the yelp of hounds
while she as if in proud response
took flight upon the wing

BOOM
it shattered the air
rang through the trees
rebounded off the ledge

then
silence
as she dropped
to a dusty grave beneath

being the sheltered child i was
i stung my eyes with tears
covered my face in chubby hands
and crumbled to my knees

i cried for the loss of an ideal
i wept for a tear in a dream
for a heart which would
never soar again
for the heart
of a fallen queen

by a PHYS. ED.'ER
Island of Life

Strange
How some people are lost
Like ships
wrecked
in the hurricane called life.

Thrown upon some distant shore
Away from any life.

Some
Are found
In time;
Some
Are not ever found.

They die
anonymous deaths
Many, many times
hopewrecked
on an unchartered Island
I am human
I am history
I am made
I am to be saved.
A Non-Poem:

He was a strange and gentle man
who lived in a fantasy
of cokes and candy bars
and all-night movies
never separating fact from myth
seeing only what is
but believing only in what could be
The light of his vision
penetrated the world of blindness
to show to each
his own painful truth
exchanging for man's hate
the gift of laughter . . .
and love . . .
and himself.
And he won . . . almost.
But reality intruded
upon his illusion
destroying his dreams
and him
Suicide.

How sad that he who gave so much to others
Could find so little for himself.

"LENNY"
cooky - stillborn like mother used to make

sometimes i wish i were the dough

(complacent flour paste)

that dispassionately lies on the baker's board

(ready to receive the tin cooky cutter)

living would be easier that way

but this dough cries out

it hates the assured ease of the tin edge

the prostrate condition of the dough around it

and most of all

the dull consequences of baker's shelves

cookies packaged

and eaten all in a gulp

CHERI
Sunlight like a spear
Cuts through the
Window
Chilly ghost light
Drifts with the currents
Of night
Chapel of giant-size
Candy bars
An audience of assembly
Line seats uncolored by
People
Uniformity
Unhumanity

KIND WOMAN

solar

hey sun
i’m thinking you’re a giant spotlight
and the people you beam on
outside
are the most beautiful of all.
they are the stars of the show
your show, isn’t it
and they are crazy to be in your light
they know where it’s at.

TINA MEADE
Come Back

The pine—standing like Jove amid the forest's winter nudity;
Waiting—
Waiting until his brethren—the oak, the ash, the maple;
Waiting—
Waiting until spring thaws their winter hardened hearts with sap-thinning warmth.

So stand I—waiting—
Waiting here amid the scant nudity of my loveless soul.
Waiting until you return and once again warm my blood and my frostbitten heart with your gentle smile.

O come back—come back now—
For I have waited so very long.
Come back like spring—at its appointed time—
And warm my hardened heart.

O. B. GYNE
The Hand

Rolling over and over
As my thoughts lie panting in the palm of your hand,
Etherized and travelling upward
As a velvet sigh shivers from my lips.
Feeling it all over,
Seeing it through shades of blue and stabbing red . . .
Drawn and quartered.
Far in the distance
Apart from the crowd the sound of a voice
Came whistling through the trees of the night
Until it fell and settled on my helpless form and void.
Touch, drop, see, feel . . . This is the waking from a haunted dream,
A fitfull sleep of sullen sorrow in a disenchanted wood.
Great tremorous untimely birth, beginning of mortality . . . or immortality.
Naked and afraid, afraid to be naked.
Must this life be covered with a veil, a cold clasping cloth
To chase away the sun?
To you I must remain exposed.
In the face of all that you might bring, great love . . . irreconcilable sorrow,

I stand before you.

L. T.
Now

run with me!
butt your face
into biting breezes,
scream,
gallop,
let mane,
let forlock
fly.

run with me,
free from thought,
unharnessed
by laden traces
of truth
and reality

run free.
leap on wings
of emotion.
run now—
before
time
and others
destroy
recollections
of
yesterday's
sensations.
run with me!

JANIE LANCEY
free

i'll be free someday free like you my brother
i'll be free like you someday free to go my own way
i'll have your home someday not the home you gave me
i'll live like you someday not the way you let me

our country may be free for you but brother not for me
our country may be your country now but someday it will truly be ours

it can't be free if you won't let it be
we work together and fight together
and one day my brother we'll even live together

free together in our world free because together we made it so
free forever for yours and mine
let's make it free for all of mankind!
Vision of the "Action Scene"

Yes, this is the den of my existence, but tonight I enter as a stranger. The door doesn’t really stare at me, but it is blank and does not know me. The hollow panel receives my knock of questioning impartially. I’m allowed to enter, though not really invited, and must cut through the leaden atmosphere to reach the lamp. I’m no one distinguishable and they are not people as they squeeze back, back beneath the tulgy air. It’s gray and black and sweet within my lungs. It barely suffers to be moved as I pass through rippled curtains of it. There is no real light. I am not surprised. I knew it would be like this. There is no real light; only the priestly glow of the lamp.

Yes, this is my home, but tonight my eyes are filled with semi-familiar formlessness. Liquid shapes stretch agonizingly away from the heat. They expand, break off and rise above the hardening mass only to harden themselves and fall again. A tiny one floats helplessly, too light to fall and too heavy to rise any further. The lamp is the lowly iridescent focus of their lives in this time where there is no time. Back, away from the eerie ooze and flow of the lava, dusted with moistened darkness, shapes exist. Once there were chairs, a bed, books, and some people—my friends. Now, in the spiraling bleakness, shapes exist. Heavy, reverberating, breathing music rolls from the two open mouths. Stereophonic preachers drone on into the smoke. Do their ears really hear it? They seem to touch what it is saying and squirm beneath the floating rhetoric. The only other light, barely the shadow of a glimmer, comes from the numbered panel. Even this grows fainter as freshly poured smoke descends. Are they still here—somewhere in my shadow?
A match! The tiny torch of discovery. And a soft thickening voice of new innocence wavers behind the dying light. Sweet smog moves a moment and replaces itself with newly powdered clouds. A suffering red ember in the bowl of the tiny metal cup tells me she lives. It breathes with her and the lowly voice continues. Nothing of any superficial sense is said or asked for, but beggers do not always speak. Drifting up in unsteady steps, the sound is a hollow prism searching out assurance, friendship and a new beauty. Another milky shadow descends and I wonder, as I soothe the translucent speaker, if the beauty is really there. I wonder how shallow the depths of their oblivion are. Ignition, and another fuse breaks through the tar in bolts of razor light. Huddled, another one, my friend, sways to the great pacifier.

Blackness opened for a moment, and snapped shut. But I saw her—just barely. It must not consume her before my burning, drowned eyes can find her. Hardly a shadow distinct from the wall, the sticky whiteness of her face floats in the distance. Shadows, blue-green, of the amorphous lamp creatures cross her bleached countenance and light it. The features are dulled and lack relief and expression. The flashing mobility long ago settled to an unmuscle droop. But her eyes; I can see her eyes. There is no real light. It is just a reflection from without. There is no real light, only her eyes.

Pinned back, they are set in bloomy-sore sockets. Hardly moving, barely seeing, never changing, they follow, in static concentration, the sweltering lava in the lamp. But she doesn’t see. The other voice never spoke. The voice murmured and her eyes gaze. I shudder and speak out in order to catch her eye
beams. See me. Touch me. Know me. Hear me. In a giant effort, heaving in an excruciatingly slow arc, the deadened orbs reach me. I'm on the other side of the escaping blobs. See me. My face, too, must be within the glow. Eyes, blanketed in heavy reddened layers of sleepless time, cannot seem to wake to know me. Unaware, they slip along the flaming edge back toward the circling, heat-crazed bubbles. Eyes, lapping at the edge of consciousness, where are you looking? Withdrawn, immobile, high and liquid like the turning globs you watch, what is the scene beyond that careless front? Fear for the virgin linings of your soul.

Floating, merging, rising and slipping, the scene and the set begins to sip from me, from reality. Outside it's raining. A fog threatens to roll over the outside and seal in the stale dankness. There are cars running in gutteral bliss and that's outside. But now I'm not sure if they're cars or just double light beams swinging through the night-ness to enlighten the rain. That's outside. There is rain on my face. But I'm inside. We're inside, it's outside, there is a window between and it's dark on both sides. There is no real light.

There is no real light. There is only the grotesque shimmer of those perpetually rounding, naked forms. I want so much to deflate them, deprive them of the circling warmth—turn off the propelling light. I want to retrieve the torches, inhale the gossimer sweetness and move back the shadows. Resharpen the edges and hone down the lines while I repaint the lights on. I would die just for the chance to de-
flate them—my friends must come down, harden and reshape. But there is no real light and I only have a feeling and a secret.

Deep within my midnight centre, tossed among the cold defiance, a liquid-lined emotion grows. Like dying hemp, it writhes inside me. I am the source that began this end. There was no real light or any light. I am the teacher and the serpent of oblivion. Before this, impressionable eyes watched a black light. It was the absence of all light. Thundering rays of three dimensional color and silver needles stole the real light and sapped the warmth. Then there was only the lava light and it needed heat to make it rise and glow. I know why we're here.

Yes, this is the den of my existence and I am still a stranger here. Only a very few moments have passed since I entered the room, but the scene has been here many weeks and it will be here. The smoke has been about my eyes and senses for many years. There is no real light. I'll leave them here. I'm going. The buttery chemical is still rising! I lit the lava light. They like the lamp and I loathe the light. It's black night and I have my black light. With the gesture of exit, I can still see the shadows. With silver needles I'm still sapping the closeness. Yes, this is my den of existence and I flatter myself that my clear eyes are those of a stranger. But I'm not. I was the source of the light in this action scene. I'll go, but there is no real light for them now.

JANE SIEGEL
Potpourri

Life is a question;
To live is the answer.

Even as a surgeon's skilled hands remove
a diseased organ, the hands of time
remove heartbreak.
But a scar remains.

My afternoon dreams
are white and wispy
like clouds on a breezy day.
never going anywhere;
and yet, hurrying to get there.

formless in the air,
impossible to trace,

they move and change,
not real enough to touch.
But I'm glad my dreams are like clouds
because I can always blow them away
to make room for more.

CHERYL HILTEBEITEL
Confusions of a Stranger

I am a stranger to life
An alien to my country
I am myself
Me
And
Hopefully
No one else
A Little bit of everyone I know
Tells me something
About myself
He is Black
I am white
So are they
And yet I'm different
In my own way, of course.
My love
Your love
His love
Her love
All different
Yet classified under a generalization
I am a citizen
by birth not choice
Justice is my homeland
Not a state
Love and Brotherhood are my laws
Not a book of rules
I am a stranger
Yet you think you know me.
Confusions of a stranger.

ART SEVERANCE
In The Darkness

In the laughing places in the center of town,
As the lights and faces whirl and the sound of them
Cascades upon your artist’s mind
You are alone.
Every street is long as you try to dance along it
To a tune that jars and sears your ears.
No one sees you, though you think you might be Jesus,
Or at least the friend of someone,
But only the cold stays with you when the faces go away
And you cup your artist’s fingers to your lips,
Breathing out the only warmth you know.
Reading the graffiti to pass the time,
The old family bible of the city.
There is nothing here for you or of you so you walk on
Over asphalt and concrete looking for a place to rest.

L. T.