

pegasus

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Loss

Your wisdom has earned my respect;
your opinion, my consideration.
Upon your reasoning, I reflect.
Your approval is my search for strength,
your disappointment, my chaos;
your rejection, my grief.
I miss you friend,
I love you father.

Marisa Santos



Barbed Wire at A/P
Beverly Mackey

Agincourt

A poor, bedraggled, and hungry throng
Disorderly upon the field deployed.
Their hearts buoyed by prayer and by song
Peace abides with them but else is destroyed.
Brilliantly arrayed, the enemies' host
The sun gleams on fell swords and pointed spears,
Of greater men and chariots they boast
Pride swells their hearts and satiates their fears.
A King goes forth, glory obscured by veil
Unknown, uncomprehended by His own.
Trusting in arms, the Foe thinks to prevail
But the humble trust in God's Arm alone
Victory comes not to the haughty array
But God's will and power carries the day.

Jon Moyer

Grandmom

Sorrow carved the corners of her mouth.
Wrinkles of worry framed her sweet face.
I gazed at her with young inquiring eyes.
A voice from her soul spoke to me.
She cried for those once dear to her,
Those needed to experience fullness of life,
Torn from her, or killed mercilessly,
Plunging her into a nightmare of memories.
She tried to forget but was unable,
Strove to think of other things
But had forgotten how.
She embraced me as if I were all those she'd lost.
Eyes raining tears, she kissed my forehead,
and said,
"May you never know,
May you never see .."
And, I too felt the tears.

(My grandmother was a survivor of the Armenian massacres.)

Aveda Kitabjian

For Mom

It's hard to write a poem
For a woman with no taste
For showy rhyme and simile—
It's really quite a waste!

I can't compare to Shakespeare
And I'm no Robert Frost,
But I don't need acclaim to know
Without you I'd be lost.

I can sing the words of others
With a doo-wop, hum, or croon,
burst forth with joyous melody
'Cause with you I'm in tune.

Years go by and dust collects
On all the things I've written,
Sad attempts by an amateur
To tell you I've been smitten.

I could write a limerick
A sonnet or Haiku,
But all I really want to write
Is "Mom, I sure love you!"

Jill R. Weglarz



Shed Door
Margaret Green

Sonnet Attempt 4,571

Your smile relieves the sadness in my eyes,
Your laughter soothes the anger from my face
Your slightest touch does ease away my sighs
'Til joy and pure contentment take their place.
With you my mind soars free immersed in bliss,
Unfettered by my body's nagging hold
Up it climbs, given wings by your sweet kiss
Only to land when you my arms enfold.
Of life's cherished pleasures I know of none
That bring such warmth and gladness to my heart,
As you, my love, you are the only one
Without you near my soul would tear apart.
 So this I warn you now, my treasured friend:
 Together we must stay 'til time does end.

Jill R. Weglarz

Dreams on Highway 63

Once upon a time in
white collar America
lived a boy with
big rock n' roll dreams
he'd lock up his door
and turn on his stereo
behind the closed door
he was a star
lost in his dreams
red faced and sweaty
he played to his fans
day after day
he didn't see
the bedroom walls around him
he saw a sellout wherever he played
they say dreams
someday, these dreams must end
come back to reality
and go get a job
that music and lyrics

just get you nowhere
but 9 to 5 ain't no life for me.
I'll never stop dreaming, never end believing
if my desire burns cold
my soul will die
like so many millions
stuck on the highway
cursing a jackknifed trailer on U.S. 63
those power lunches do nothing for me
I'd sooner dig ditches than die at 33.
overworked and overpaid, good and bad both,
I won't leave a family
destitute for me
my dreams they won't end
I know I orbit the stars
but I'm not alone
there's more dreamers out there,
perhaps they'll be reborn
on Highway 63

Aidan Meehan

Just Like Me

There's a million kids with their heads in the stars
a million and one like me
they dream of Cadillacs, and rock n' roll
for a dream to call their own
they live in every beat up,
pissed on trailer park I've seen
every posh Radnor, Beverly Hills penthouse
in between
and while some scrabble
and tear at the earth
for one more dirty dime
I'll fall to my knees
to dig with them
in the hope my dreams I'll find
I'm destined to be remembered,
it's me you're destined to find
my dreams, they lie unbroken
on a cold, dark snowy night
I'll surrender my dreams to the light
to be a 12-stringin', gun slingin'
prophet of a rock n' roll life
to my knees I fall
praying to my holy God
as the snow falls on the window
and birds sleep in the trees
somewhere an acoustics ringin'
somewhere there's a guy like me.

Aidan Meehan

Saved By the Bell

It was a year
or so ago,
When the butterfly
floated across the street
In the path of a murderous,
gleaming fender.

It was a month
or so ago,
When I walked
through the woods,
Before the mad, yellow bulldozers
invaded,
And turned it into
a parking lot.

It was a week
or so ago,
When it was 80 degrees
Fahrenheit in December,
And I read about a hole
in the atmosphere.

It was just
last night,
When I dreamed
of angry, maniacal
splinters of Earth
Darting through the air
towards me,
And saw my life
flash before me
like a movie.

It was
just this morning
when I awoke
in a cold, fearful sweat
to the sound
of an
alarm
clock.

Carrie Murphy

False Night

Blue sky turning gray,
Dark of storm invades the day;
Rain steals sunlight's ray.

Carrie Murphy

Sleep

Sink into a calm, subdued reality,
A dreamy empire, foggy with questions,
And you, the ruler, shrouded in Caesarian sheets.

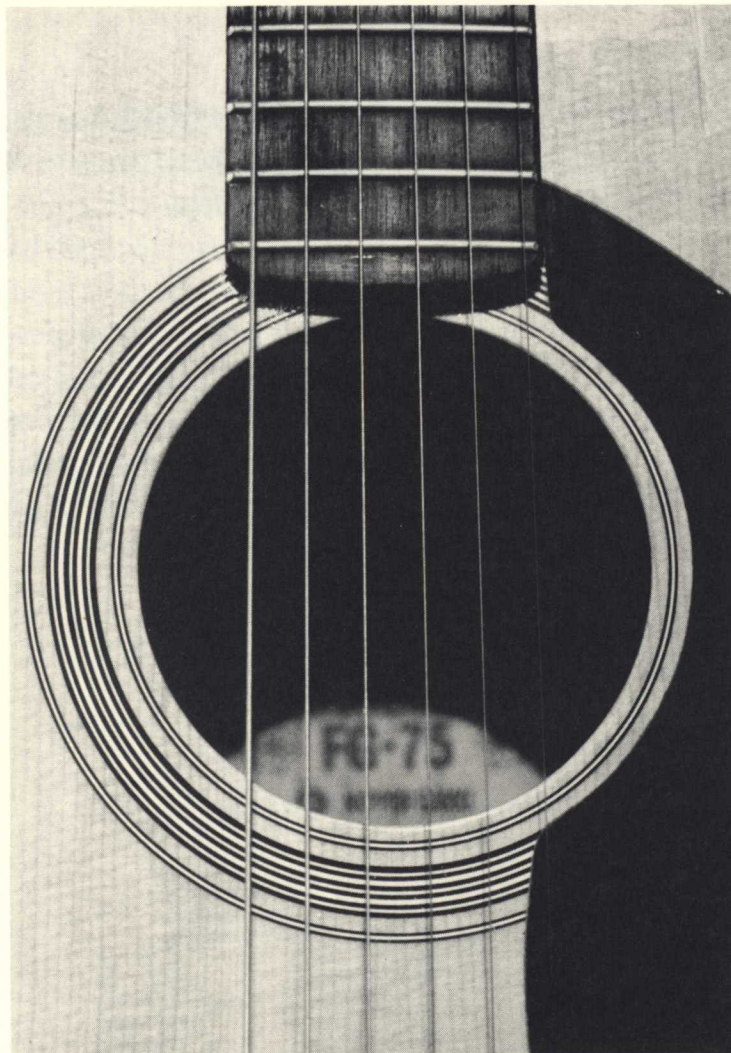
Carrie Murphy

Faces of Eternity

I gaze out the window
At the clouds
Who form faces in the sky.
The wind echoes in the trees,
Whispering messages from the dead,
The endless faces in my mind.
"It's your turn,"
They whisper, and wait.
I'm walking across the meadow,
But when I turn back,
I see myself
Cold in the window.
Dead eyes stare endlessly
Into nothing.
I keep walking -
Walking away.
I don't look back at myself
Rotting away in the summer heat.
I'm running;
I'm flying,
Soaring in the sky.
It's my turn
To whisper,
To die...

...To be born.

Carrie Murphy



untitled
Debra Fuller

Prisoner

In the shadow of the old gray Catholic school
beautiful Catholic boys mock the bruises,
throwing verbal stones at his bruised face.

Running home,
to where the pain starts
hiding in a dark corner
musty and wet.

Hiding from the pain,
stifling cries to silent whimpers.

Silent prayers for freedom,
hearing church bells in the distance,
has God abandoned him?

Father's drunken blows upon his face.
Sky blue eyes cry.

Hearing the taunts of those beautiful boys,
he wants to smash their faces.

Christopher Salvatore

For My Pen Pal

This is a barracks of a place
Student troops marching in and out with knapsacks
Courtyards full of Fall, smoke
and hope of Special Forces.
This is a barracks of a fort
Geese flying over in daily squadrons
Nearby the lone stag stands safe in his isle of refuge
Saved by the moving camouflage of
student troops.
The hunter raises his gun.

Elizabeth Sellers

While vacationing in St. Maarten my husband and I reserved a snorkeling trip at the marina of our hotel. The brochure described a blissful day sailing aboard a catamaran to an uninhabited island in the Caribbean Sea. Equipment would be provided for snorkeling in the placid bathtub offshore, followed by a delicious barbecued lunch on the beach.

That month was unusual because it had two moons. The beach at our hotel was testament to the unruly tides. The sand didn't slope gradually into the ocean, rather it had been beaten savagely by the crashing waves into a cliff.

Michael and I are both strong swimmers. We had snorkeled before, but in lakes not the ocean. When we arrived at the island the crew was unable to anchor off the beach, something about the current running at five knots, which meant nothing to me. They were forced to moor on the other side of the island. They shuttled us ashore in speedboats and we hiked through the rough, untended vegetation to the other side of the island. My eyes were dazzled by the myriad of colors before me. I stood at the edge of the water feeling the warm breeze blow through my hair. The rhythm of the waves soothed and relaxed me, while the diaphanous water invited me in. I watched Michael put on his gear and join the others already in the water. Grabbing my mask, I ran to join him.

Snorkeling in the translucent blue ocean was effortless. The kaleidoscope of colors presented by the multicolored fishes that inhabited the reef offshore was spectacular. We floated easily away from shore delighting in the vibrant life below the surface.

Michael had had a head cold all week. Breathing through the snorkel was difficult for him. As we circled the reef the water began to pitch. The turbulence created small waves. One hit Michael and the salt water poured down his snorkel. He pulled off his mask to spit out the water and wasn't able to get it back on. I felt him grab my foot.



Bicycle Junkyard in N.J.

Beverly Mackey

"Let's get in we're out too far!" he shouted.

"What about your snorkel?"

"Forget it, I can't fix it; let's go!"

Looking back over my shoulder, I saw how far out we had drifted, and I felt my chest tighten as we started in. Michael struggled to breathe without his mask and snorkel. We both strained to make progress against the current but the churning sea held us firmly in its grip like an angry disciplinarian. Michael is a determined man and strong, and I depended on him to get us in.

About halfway there I noticed he was sinking farther under the water with each stroke. His head was still above water, but barely. I stopped him and tried to talk to him through my snorkel. He was desperately exhausted and beginning to panic. I tried to calm him down. He needed a rest. I told him to flip over and float on his back for a few minutes to catch his breath, then we could go on. He tried, and he heard me, but he just couldn't do it. We were treading water, but he was weary. I looked back at the beach. It seemed so far away. I noticed no one else was in the water. If only the catamarans had been docked where they were supposed to be, we could have held onto them. I could see the desperation in Michael's face. His eyes were wild, like I had never seen before. He knew he couldn't go on. The distance was too far. He looked at me and gasped, "Get me help!"

I tried to think quickly. I still had my mask on. I was too afraid to take it off. I couldn't yell for help. I couldn't even think. I started waving my arms. Someone saw me. They were coming. Two men grabbed Michael, but they were no help. They succeeded only in pulling him underwater. One of the crew noticed the commotion, grabbed the single life preserver on the island and swam out to us. He pulled Michael over top of it and asked me if I could make it in alone. When I told him I could, he flipped Mike over and swam him to shore.

When I got there, he was lying face down on the beach. His skin was gray and he was very still. I realized we were two hours away from St. Maarten and any medical help. I felt so helpless as thoughts of losing him now, raced around my brain. Then he came to. He threw up the seawater. Our ordeal was over.

Later that night we talked about everything. I asked him what he thought out there. Did he know he was drowning? Did he think of our baby daughter, just two years old or our boys at home? Our oldest son was about to graduate from Yale, his wedding was planned for that summer. He said he could think about nothing. He concentrated on his next breath, his next stroke. I apologized for doing all the wrong things. I didn't take my mask off, for that was my security. I never shouted for help. It all happened so quickly. He told me he had swum as hard as he could for as long as he could. When he couldn't lift his arm for one more stroke, he told me with his wild eyes to go and get him help. He knew he wouldn't be there when I got back. He knew he couldn't make it. He tried to send me in so I could be safe. But something in those wild eyes told me all that. I didn't know what to do. I knew only that I would not, could not ever have left him there.

The walls crumble all around me
The walls that I so cleverly built were finally
 holding
until....
The arms folded around my soul
The bricks slowly start to weaken
I realize that they have all fallen
Back to the sea of desire that they were built
 to protect
The whirlwind takes me by surprise as I don't know
 how to cope with my vulnerability.
My heart bares to you once again
I only wished to close it off for the knife had already
 punctured many holes.
The holes healed yet the heart is still thin with
 anticipation
Hope never protected by the wall, but now it grows
 to an unwanted threshold.
Memories cloud the rational thought that tries to
 rebuild what you have torn down
The music leaks through and only makes the
 beat more fearful
The beat of love.
Just start all over again
Fight ... FIGHT!

Shana Greenspon

No Regrets

Never regret a ride on a star,
A dream, or a hope, that was
 aimed too far;
That wonderful castle you built
 in the air,
Though it tumbled and left
 but a memory there.
For dreams go drifting,
And hopes that are high-
A ride on a star through
 a silvery sky-
These are the wonderful,
 magical things.
These are the glorious
 gossamer wings
That carry us up where the
 angels play,
And heaven is ours - though
 it's only a day;
But one day in heaven has
 infinite worth
In brightening the practical
 pathways on earth.

Lidia Pecorari

It was in 1974 that I graduated from high school, but not with the esteem that I should have had. Between my loss of interest in school and my submission to peer pressure, I barely passed. I wanted to be a musician but I found myself floating from one low paying job to another, usually working as a cook. As I entered my twenties, I realized that my only way

out of the minimum wage was either through a college education or a hard labor job. I was looking for what I thought was the easy way out. I was impatient and anxious to begin the accumulation of things, since materialism seemed to be the going trend. Although I had no major responsibilities yet - children, for instance - I felt pressured to live up to the expectations of the world that I had been so conditioned to. Putting my intelligence and creativity on hold, I decided to take the hard labor route.

A friend of mine named Jim had his own roofing business. He was doing well and he was earning in one day what I earned in a week. I was not concerned with what I would have to do to earn that kind of money, only with the money itself. It was an exciting thought. A change in my life was long overdue and I was ready for a new challenge, so I asked Jim if he could use me for a day here and there. "You're too skinny and scrawny," he said. "You'll never make it through the day."

Jim knew me well. We grew up together, we both rode Harleys, and we shared many a beer and long talks about life. If he wasn't testing me, then he forgot that humiliation always made me stronger. Now I had to know if I had what it took to be a roofer.

A few days later, I received a phone call from Jim, who found himself suddenly short-handed and in need of an extra man. Although he was still pessimistic about my expectations, he knew I was tired of listening to his "You don't want to be a roofer"



Sandra
Michael Heard

lectures which would arouse my curiosity even further. He simply told me to be ready at 6 a.m., wearing my oldest clothes.

The next morning, there was Jim, wearing his half-smile, half-frown. I had seen this look before and I could read his mind. I remember his eyes widening as he said, "Are you ready?" "Sure," I replied. "We'll see," he said, as we drove away. When we arrived at the shop, a partially dilapidated garage that Jim was renting, I was introduced to the rest of the crew. They were two weathered looking men in their thirties, named Tom and Mike, each of whom had missing front teeth and cigarettes hanging out of their mouths. Mike had a four-inch scar on the left side of his face and was fondling a can of beer. Tom wore a tattoo of a hypodermic syringe on his left forearm, accompanied by some scars left from the burned-out names of some of his former girl friends. Tom and Mike reminded me of the men I used to see as a young boy, who would stand in front of the old taprooms in Darby and whistle at my mother while making faces at me as we walked by.

Tom said, "Who's the new donkey?" As I started toward him, Jim commanded, "Save it, Joe, let's get that truck loaded." The materials were extremely heavy; anything that weighed less than 100 pounds was at least 50 pounds. The equipment and tools looked like a pile of worthless junk, all covered with hardened black tar and a gray dust. I began to wonder about this lifeless collection of implements and just how they would affect my day. I was already out of breath and covered with sweat when I heard someone say, "Let's roll, we're out of here!" Somehow I knew that the fun had yet to begin.

The four of us squeezed into the cab of the truck; I was squashed in the middle between Tom and Jim. As I squirmed about trying to get comfortable, Tom said,

"There's more room in the back." He meant back in the bed of the truck, where roofers sometimes ride. Mike said, "Put your arm around Jim," and I realized that each man had one arm around the other in order to fit better. There was a foul odor contained in the vehicle, a combination of stale beer, smoke, tar and other manly smells. Pieces and spots of tar covered every inch of the truck's interior. These parasites managed to emerge from everywhere and I found myself adhered to the seat. My clothes were already ruined. Compared to my co-workers, I smelled like perfume and I was beginning to feel homophobic. Most of the conversation resembled an X-rated version of Alice in Wonderland. Tom bragged that he had sex with two women the night before; once with his wife and later with Mike's girl friend. Mike got a little uneasy and cracked open another hot beer. "How did I taste," asked Mike.

Tom changed the subject to sports, while Jim was trying to tell us about a big fish that he had caught recently.

Arriving at the job site, an elementary school in Clifton Heights, we began to work immediately, unloading the truck and hoisting the materials and equipment up to the roof. "Fire that kettle up," yelled Jim to Tom, who was nervously lighting a cigarette, "and stop dogging it." I was a busy soldier, transforming my orders into hard physical labor, the likes of which I had never experienced. I had to scrape, shovel and broom the old roof smooth as I tried desperately to keep up with the others. It was only 9 a.m. And the temperature was already nearing 90 degrees. On the roof, it was well over 100. There was not a cloud in the sky, nor was there the slightest breeze. I was sweating profusely as I choked and gagged on the dust I was inhaling. I had cotton mouth and I was beginning to drag; I prayed that a cloud would appear and pass over the sun, if only for an instant. "Send up the water jug,"

cried Jim to Tom. "We're all dying up here." If they were dying, I thought, then I must already be dead. We passed the water to each other in ritual, both drinking and baptizing ourselves into euphoria. I worshipped that water, while it overpowered the mighty sun and brought me back to reality.

"Fire in the hole," Jim shouted. "Where's Tom?" Down on the ground, the kettle roared and rumbled, like a freight train in an endless tunnel. Its hum was entrancing, intoxicating, as it melted rock cold asphalt into black liquid gold and yes, it was on fire. Tom, who had been busy checking out some girls who were walking by, forgot to lower the heat. "Turn off the gas and shut the lid," screamed Jim. "What's the matter with you?"

The brief intermission gave me a chance to catch my breath as I watched Tom control and extinguish the ten foot high flames. Again, I heard Jim's slave-driving voice shouting, "HOT" in a voice-cracking, ear-piercing tone that rang out for more than five seconds. It was time to lay the new roof.

Since Tom was the kettleman, Mike would be the rollman; since Jim was the boss, he would be the mopman. It was obvious to me by now that I was, indeed, the donkey, a few steps below intern. It was my job to carry the heavy buckets of hot tar across the long roof of the school. Each trip was a journey, as my arms stretched like rubber bands and my muscles throbbed and spasmed. I became disoriented. As my life began to pass before me, I realized that I was nearing total exhaustion. I was in another world, uncharted territory, taxing the limits of my own machine and beyond the pain.

After the roof was laid, we took a short break. I was battered, not even sure who or where I was. "Do you want to try the mop," Jim asked me. "It's time to coat off."

They were amused as I pulled the heavy, hot mop out of the bucket and splashed it on the roof deck. Everyone jumped back and spanked me with rhetoric in their crude and uncivilized manner. "Are you trying to burn someone," they cried. I did get burned and I learned quickly to respect the hot tar and the radiant sun that continued to bombard us and the precious water jug that soothed my burns, quenched my thirst and painted my body cool. I grew older that day, and even wiser, as my first experience with hard labor was ending.

As I climbed onto the ladder, I could still hear the echoes of my name being called, the cries for "HOT" and the drone of the kettle. The equipment that tortured me in its animated state was at rest but staring at me, laughing at me. I had to get down, back on the earth below.

As I touched the ground, there was Jim, looking at me with his half-smile, half-frown. "You did it," he said. "You made it through the day!" He slapped me with a warm 50 dollar bill and a cold Bud. "You're all right, Joe," remarked the other two veterans of the trade. "Roofing will make a man out of you." They were talking about their image of a man, men like themselves whom I was nothing like and whom I had no intention of imitating.

On the way home, I stared at my reflection in the side mirror. My face matched the color of my dark brown hair, I had three days of growth where I was clean-shaven that morning and my forehead was sunburned and blistered. I aged ten years in eight hours. I cracked open another brew and began to look through myself. There was something more to see but I could not focus in on it. So relaxed, so tranquil, like the calm before the storm, the storm that was yet to come; one that would last a decade of my life - ten years as a roofer.

Joseph F. Cappello