



PEGASUS

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Poetry

Rebirth Joan Syglowski.....	4
The Chosen Eugene Garmon.....	6
Audible Silence Loretta McElroy.....	7
Redman Joan Syglowski.....	8
He is a Man Standing Before Me Joan M. Harris.....	9
The Ocean Only Waves at the Shore Liberty Anne Justice	11
(untitled) Renée Russo	14
"Mom" Ryan Klements	16
Reflection Ian Hunter	18
Funeral Feelings Matthew DiZebba	18
I Am Ian Hunter	22
Flame Liberty Anne Justice	23
Just a Thought Sonja Kuehler	24
Six Hours Morgen Foley	26
A Wish Unheard Jennie Hutchins	27
Opposite Feelings? Lori Graziano	28
Renewal Joan Syglowski	29
(untitled) Renée Russo	32
What Happened To Me? Joe John	34
How did I get here? Sonja Kuehler	34
Misdirection Lori Graziano	35
(untitled) Renée Russo	36
Inside Me Loretta McElroy	37
(untitled) Renée Russo	39
"Old Poems" Matt Byrne	40

Art

God and its prophet Liberty Anne Justice	5
The Praised One Liberty Anne Justice	13
Peace to you Liberty Anne Justice	19
The Generous One Liberty Anne Justice	33

Prose

The Birthday Breakout (a.k.a Holistic Hooky) Irene Althouse	10
ADHD Lori Graziano	12
Without Goodbyes Matt Byrne	20
The Dance Lori Graziano	24
(untitled) Ian Hunter	25
In a Little While Matt Byrne	30
Two kinds of flight Liberty Anne Justice	38

Rebirth

From the burned out ashes of a fire that once long ago raged,

An ember begins to smolder,

and almost going unnoticed it treks through memories

rekindling what once was.

And defenses begin to melt away, one by one,

as though they never even existed.

And the small ember ignites yet another and another ember,

so that the warmth it creates permeates deeper and deeper,

And a glow begins to shine from within like a distant beacon

that guides ships in the dark cold night.

I am aware of its presence as it flows through and within me

bringing me comfort and knowledge,

that the fire of desire for life itself

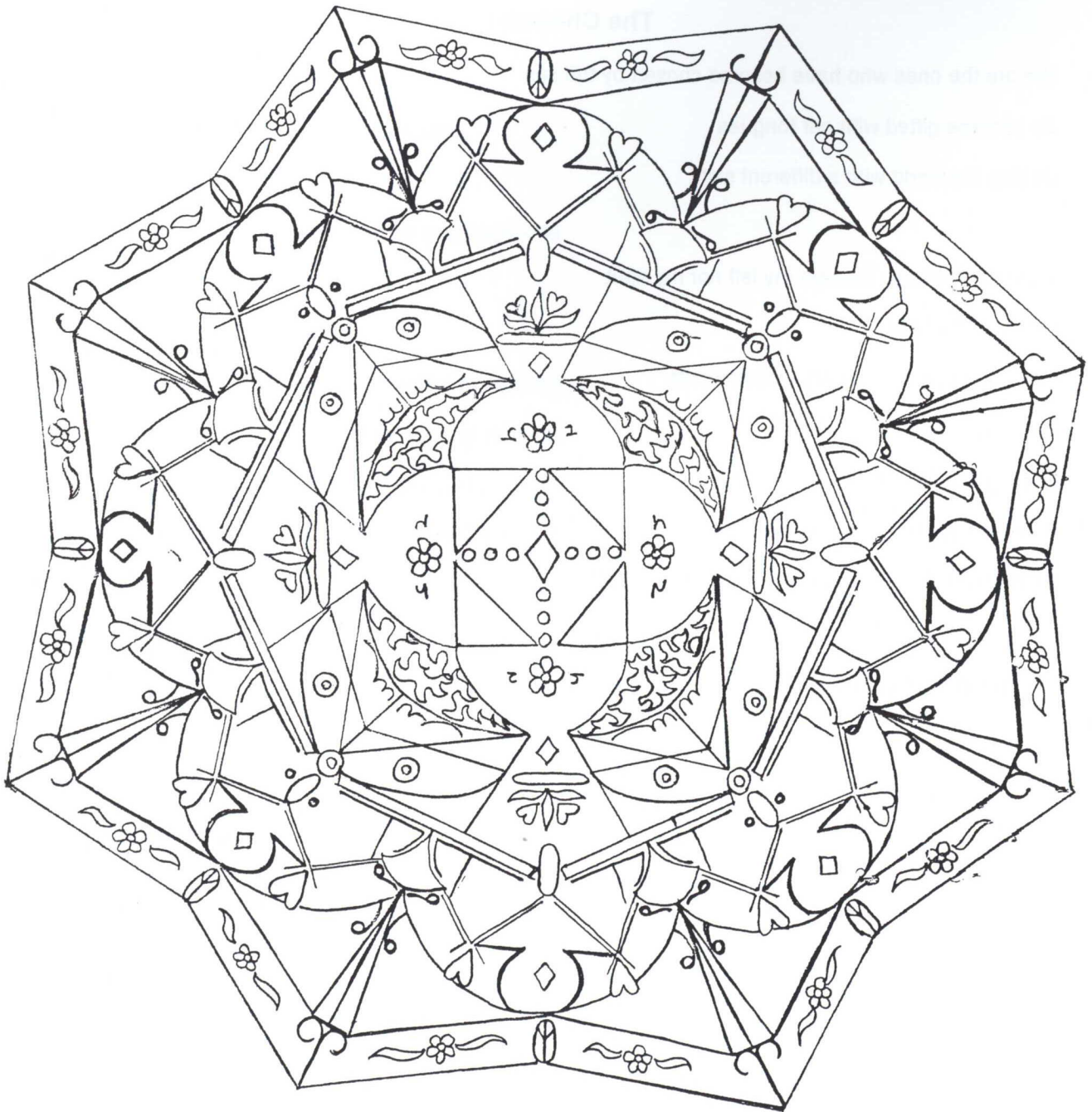
still resides within me

waiting for the day when the embers will once again

become a raging fire

Touching my heart, mind, and soul.

Joan Syglowski



God and its prophet
Liberty Anne Justice

The Chosen

We are the ones who have become chosen by the sun

To become gifted with our tongues

Seeing the world with a different sight

'Cause I don't see through my left nor my right

not even my third

I can only see through my written words

And that's the Truth

Feeling like I'm the root to my culture

If we let it die we'll only be eaten

By the vultures of ignorance for ignoring our gifts

So I speak to you, The Poets

Eugene Garmon

Audible Silence

In the silence I become aware of the sounds.
Outside the sounds of nature
Come sneaking through the walls of the meetinghouse.
Rain pattering, wind whistling
To join with the silence inside.
The silence inside is stirred into responding to nature by
The creaking of a wooden bench, the rustle of clothing.
The silent symphony continues with the cooing
Of an infant, the clearing of a throat, the rumble of a stomach.
As the silence becomes louder it is drowned out by the close of meeting.
It is gone until we search for it in quiet once more.

Loretta McElroy

REDMAN

Majestically he stands
Red beast of man.
Tangled mane swaying gently
with the light prancing of
white-socked hooves.

In the half-light of predawn
He senses the presence
of the man
and with quickening breath
murmurs softly in anticipation
Feeling the strong grasp of
fingers entwined in his mane,
Pauses, adjusting to the weight
of the man as he mounts.

Sensing the urgency
Red Beast with the man
melded to his back bursts
into open field
dirt swirling and settling
like droplets of rain
upon beast and man
blinding them.

Faster and faster they soar
'til it is no longer discernible
that hooves meet floor.
Sweat forming on both beast and brow.

Thick thigh and sinewy flank undulate
together in synchronized spasm
drawing from the man the white-hot
Demons that reside within.
The gentle beast's eyes wide and glazed
digests what haunts
and with flared nostrils expels
them into the spiraling wind
And for a brief moment
their souls embrace and each
becomes the other.
And in one fluid movement
they ride higher and higher
'til they exist no longer.

Joan Syglowski

HE IS A MAN STANDING BEFORE ME...

He is a man standing before me
a strong man with responsibilities duties and loyalty
He is a man standing before me
body worn from tiredness that fills him
He is a man standing before me
his hands seared and peeling from the pain
He is a man standing before me
gazing at him entrances me
my soul lost in him
trying to imagine what He feels overwhelms even the sanest of persons
a person who feels no pain
He is a man standing before me
his face is distorted; like a mask with no shape
emotionless, powerless but yet surreal
at any moment it could change
to the face of a winner or to a loser in that split instant
He is a man standing before me
seeing his world through my eyes scares me
I have no comprehension of the things He has lived through
looking at those eyes frighten me
for fear in me says,
"don't read so deep,"
"don't feel the heat"
"don't believe"
"don't be so weak"
so I look away
He is a man standing before me
Scary, really to ever really understand him
to actually love him
to try to stare at those painful eyes and feel the truth
but,
He is a man standing before me
and all the things that go with him
...all the things that are He

JMH

The Birthday Breakout (a.k.a. Holistic Hooky)

Abandon ship! Head for the hills! Escape from a sea of dishes, a mountain of laundry, and three needy mouths to feed! On really bad days, I dreamt of wildly jumping out the window, or running full stride cross-country without stopping, or driving with abandon down I-95 to the furthest point south. Being a stay-at-home mom of two independent minded, stubborn teenage girls, and one red-haired, red-tempered eleven-year-old boy had taken its toll. The dreaded question after a hard day's work, "What's for dinner?" and the predictable response "Tacos? YUK!" or "Don't you remember? I hate that kind of chicken!" The constant bickering over everything. "She stole my socks!" or "It's his turn to vacuum!" The shop-'til-you-drop search for the perfect prom dress encompassing every store and mall in a fifty mile radius. This day-to-day disharmonious, selfless, drudgery led me to my decision to do something uncharacteristic for my birthday. Escape!

Where to? What would I do when I got there? How would my family survive without me? Would the car break down? The incessant tapes of worry and fear played in my mind, but I tuned them out with the determination of a desperate prisoner. I would go to Cape May for the day! What better place to go for a birthday in the beautiful month of May? I would pack up my getaway mini-van with a beach chair and a bicycle and head for the furthest point east! The sun was shining in a cloudless blue sky, inviting me to put my idea into action.

Before long, I was headed to Cape May - bike, beach chair, and favorite tapes in tow. From the Girard Point Bridge, I viewed the gleaming skyline of Philadelphia, the city where our country's freedom began, and I rejoiced in my own declaration of independence. Then on to the Atlantic City Expressway: the expressway to my heart's desire, stretching out before me like the yellow-brick road to Oz.

It was the very same expressway that my family traveled in years past, reminding me of another prison, my own teenage years. The family vacation to the shore when my mom, dad, six brothers and sisters all crammed in an old station wagon with our beat-up suitcases. Sitting impatiently in a long line of traffic in the blistering, airless heat, my father getting lost...again, and me longing for a different kind of freedom.

Just when I reached the halfway point, Farley's Service Plaza, a line of geese flew in a V across the clear sky, spreading their wings like me, fleeing from south to north in their spring migration. The impact of my own temporary migration from servitude to freedom opened a wellspring of emotion, which erupted from my soul. Tears of happiness streamed down my face while strands of "That's All I Ask of You" from Phantom of the Opera swelled in the background. My heart soared with gratitude and anticipation of the day ahead.

And what a day it was! First a glimpse of the infinite expanse of ocean fed my starving soul. Then, my equally starving stomach led me to my favorite breakfast place anywhere, Bodacious Bagels, where Barry and his family provide freshly made bagels and omelets with friendly smiles. While I thoroughly enjoyed a fluffy omelet, filled with thick, hot cheese, and seasoned with fresh herbs and milled salt and pepper, Carly Simon crooned over the sound system, and Barry, the bagel man, greeted each customer like a long lost friend with his big, booming cheerfulness.

Later, I tried to decide which of the little fairy tale cottages I would live in as I peddled my way around Cape May Point. A small lake, complete with swans and ducks gliding over the water, beautifully landscaped with flowers and shrubs, provided the perfect spot for rest and meditation and my continued daydreams. My final destination was a secluded spot on the beach with just me and my beach chair and the crashing waves. Renewing. Refreshing. Revitalizing. The steady, soothing tide swept away my doubts and fears, giving me strength and hope. I relished every moment of my wondrous day of freedom. I knew that I could return home and free myself from those chains of bondage whenever I felt them grip me simply by closing my eyes and reliving this day, my best birthday!

Irene Althouse

The Ocean Only Waves at the Shore

One time I went to the shore

And I saw the ocean waving at me

It made big waves and bigger more

And small ones and smaller more

So I smiled and waved back

But the ocean kept on waving

So I kept on waving too

I waved and waved until the sky turned almost black

I decided to take some waves home with me

So I put some in my pail

I ran home fast to show mom

But when I got there no waves could I see

I went to buy it some medicine at the store

But the man told me my waves were not ill

And they'd only wave with their family

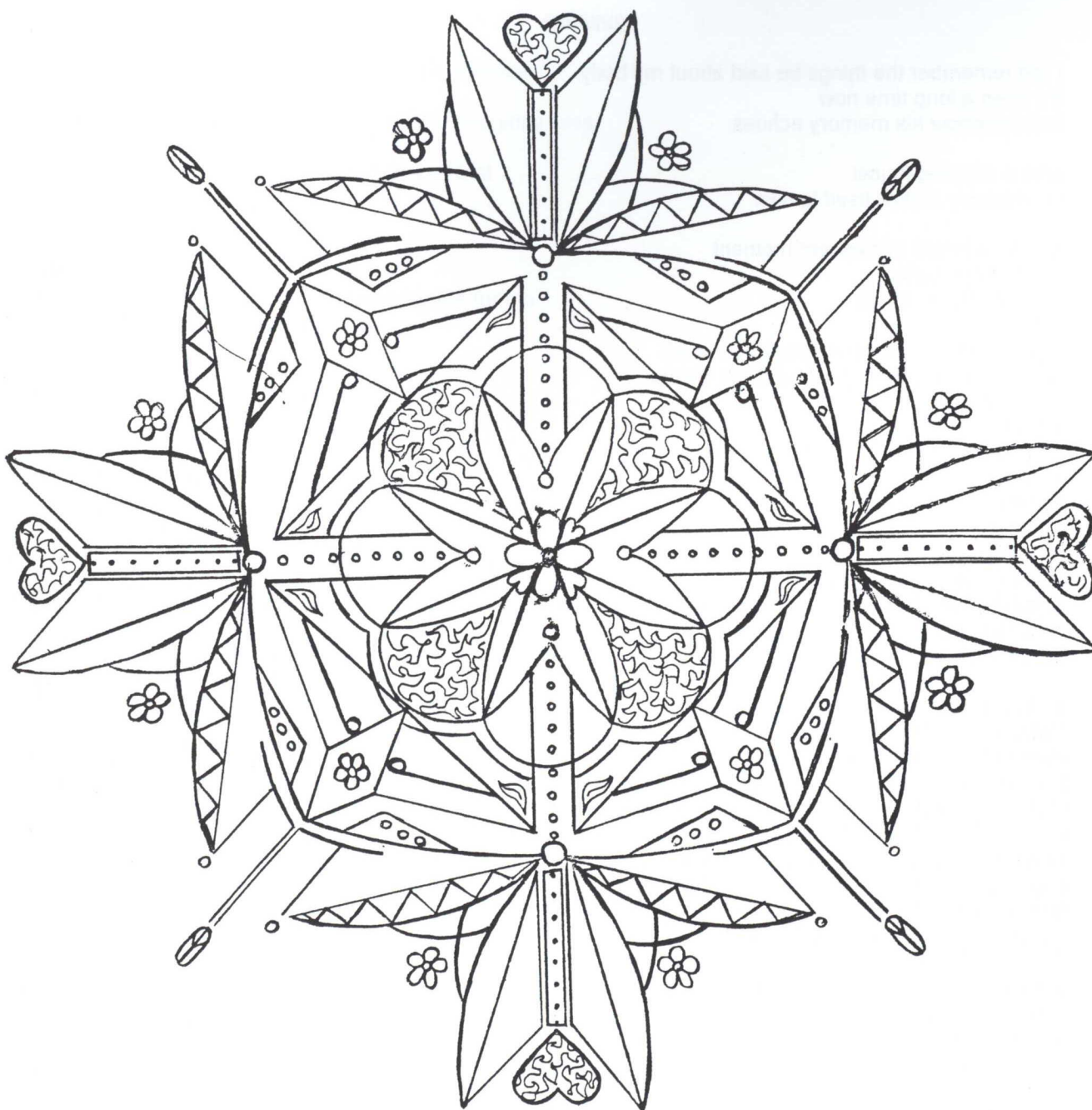
'Cause the ocean only waves at the shore

Liberty Anne Justice

ADHD

Mom is crying and it's my fault she's sad because I have a problem I can't control and I don't know what to do because the hospital is scary, lonely and full of doctors with confusing questions I don't know how to answer and if I can't calm myself down, my mom said I'm headed back there until I slow my brain down to normal speed which I don't even think is possible because when my brain starts spinning around and around I can't focus, my feet wiggle, my hands twitch and I have to move or I will explode, like I did the first time I went to the hospital for putting a knife to my throat to solve my problem. No head, no problem.

Lori Graziano



The Praised One
Liberty Anne Justice

(untitled)

I still remember the things he said about my body
it's been a long time now
but somehow his memory echoes

Like a dripping faucet
his memory makes itself known

Every awkward adolescent moment
somewhere hiding
still makes me cringe

I remember the power of longing to touch
but mostly I remember a sound like Velcro
ripping apart,
a painful
inaudible
sound
that could have been me
my whole self
violently torn in two
at least half of me dying
at least all of me sinking so deep I could not breathe
no longer breathless from magic
but from pain

If I could be in my young body again
I would love him even harder
even knowing what I know now
because I'd want to believe in love so much more
that I'd die when I lost it
instead of going on to live a life
where I sleepwalk through doubt, creating ideals
that I never find nor believe in
and all because of him
I suppose I no longer love you

But if a body has a memory like a soul
I carry you with me always
and if some archaeologist were to excavate
my heart, she'd find you
dusty and a bit cracked perhaps,
but unequalled in value and mystery
and seductive charm
so long ago
how could such a rich civilization have existed?

I remember our story
me watching you for years
kept separate by natural and unnatural boundaries
and forces
a secret world underneath everyone else's everyday lives
I still think of unfulfilled pasts
of the characters in those walls and places that
we lived
those characters in our lives
larger than life
and you, my lifeline
out there creating, concocting, observing life for me
me wanting to give you even more
oh how I loved you
I wonder if I am even alive

even now

some might have thought me a survivor
I am just undead
a smoldered fire
one or two live red ashes
that by some trick of nature
led my ghostly existence onward
I've been living a broken life
broken insides posing as standard machinery
I have not loved you for so long
yet here you are
right inside me

Couldn't you have loved me?
Then, I would've waited if you'd asked me

Nine months was a millennium then
and it could have been likened to a legendary pregnancy
that gave birth to a tragedy
the effects of which
resonated for years after

But time was never so slow as it was that summer
for me
that I was caged and you were set free into your life, into your future
while I was buried alive

Renée Russo

"MOM"

You won't believe what happened in school today, mom.

I was sitting in my English class,

Nothing unusual.

We were in the middle of performing MacBeth,

You know,

That Shakespeare play.

I was Lady MacBeth.

I was doing so well.

You would have been so proud, mom.

Well anyway,

I was just getting ready to kill myself,

(In the play, mom)

And we heard a loud bang.

My teacher went out to see what it was.

He didn't come back.

He never came back, mom.

After about ten minutes

This boy walked into our classroom.

He was carrying a gun.

It was a real live gun, mom.

He said, "get on you knees"!

He was yelling so loud.

So we all got on our knees.

I started to cry.

I couldn't help it,

I was so scared, mom.

The girl next to me was screaming.

You know,

The girl who had that beautiful blond hair,

Remember mom?

She was at my sweet sixteen slumber party.

Well anyway,

She was screaming so loud.

So the boy with the gun yelled at her.

"Shut up", he screamed.

He was so mean, mom.

Well anyway,

This made her cry even more

Then he shot her!

He shot her right there in front of me, mom!

Her blood went all over me,
I could smell it,
And her beautiful blond hair was bright red.

I started to shake.
I crawled over and held the girl in my lap,
I mean,
It is not fair that she should die alone,
Isn't that right, mom?

He pointed the gun at me.
The bullet only hurt for a second, mom.
I was not in pain for long.

Please stop crying mom,
Tell Daddy I love him,
And tell my sister to be good.
Mom, it will be okay.
But there's just one thing I don't understand,

Why me, mom
Why me?

Ryan Klements

Reflection

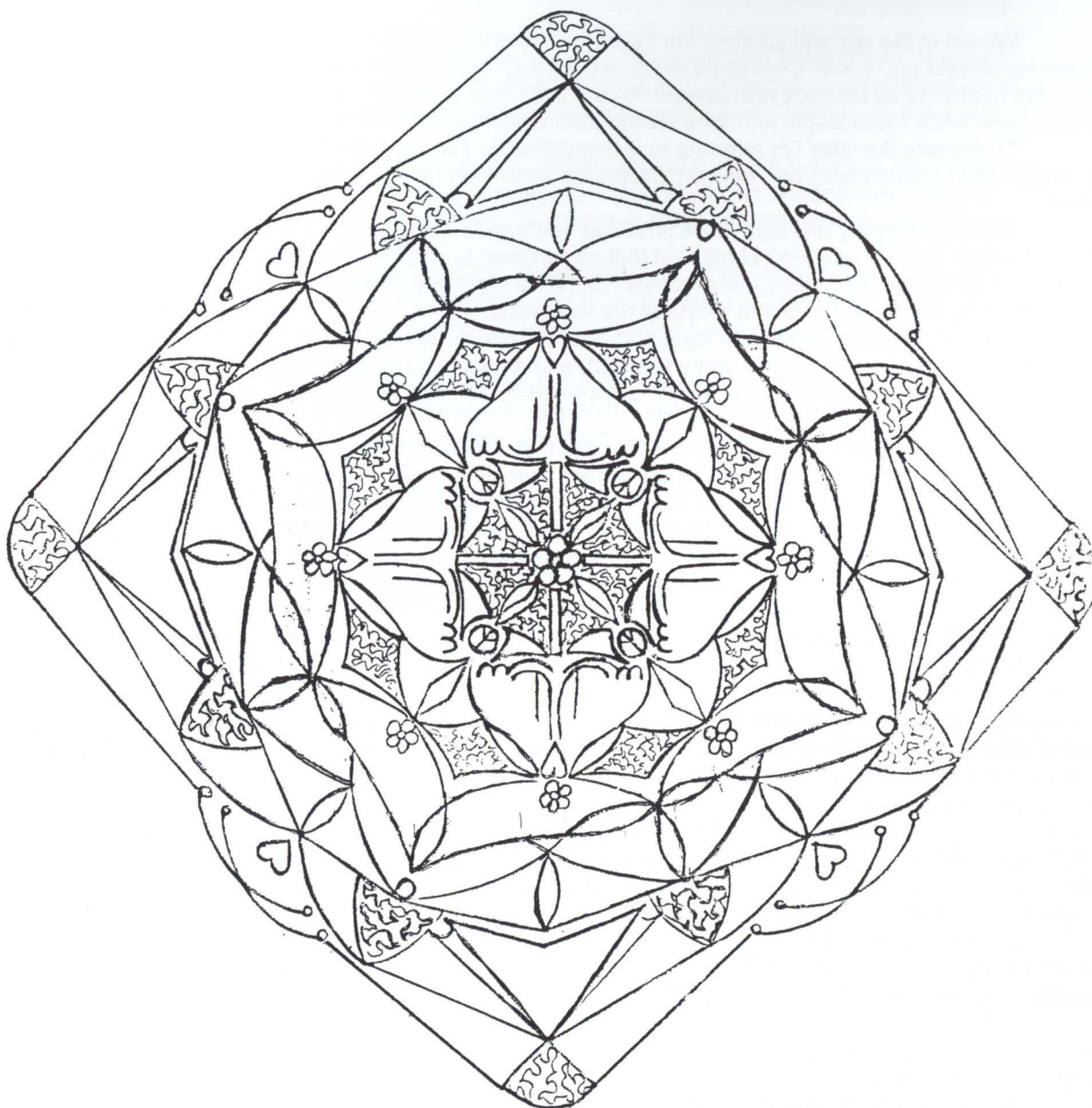
Some people reflect upon the life that they have lived;
Reflect upon their wife, reflect upon their kids;
Reflect upon their job, reflect upon their pay;
Reflect upon their troubles and what people might say;
Reflect upon the world and what they could've had;
Reflect upon their choices, some choices good, some bad;
Reflection is something everyone does in life;
But it's when your life is over, that your reflection comes to light.

Ian Hunter

Funeral Feelings

Surprised nobody saw it coming
Sad for the loss of a loved one
Strength for making it through
Anticipation wanting it to be over
Guilty for not being able to Cry
Pleasure in seeing so many friends
Impatient not knowing what to feel next
Comfort being surrounded by friends and family
Laughter as you laugh at some tension relieving jokes
Important without you the funeral wouldn't be the same
Weakness for those times that you do cry
Pathetic that you look so awful
Longing for more days with her
Desire to just get on with the rest of your life
Remorse that her death did not totally devastate you
Anger at everyone for not taking it so seriously
Tension will everything come out O.K.
Sympathy for those who knew her best
Empathy for those of you that are in the same boat
Warmth from the caressing hug of a loved one
Hunger it's been hours since you ate
Gratitude for you have so many loving friends and family members
Joy that it is finally over
Tired from dealing with it all

Matthew DiZebba



Peace to you
Liberty Anne Justice

Without Goodbyes

We sat in the car and smoked our cigarettes while we waited for the other to decide where we should go. It was the middle of December and the heat in my old Volvo didn't work right, but neither of us had any real aversion to the cold. I've loved the way breath turns to crystal in the winter since I was a little kid. She always said it reminded her of the way we met.

To explain, the 'she' I'm referring to is my girlfriend. I've often considered capitalizing the 'S' in she when I write about her, the way people do when they talk about God. Maybe that's a bit much.

She was wearing this tight black shirt that had a wide neckline and showed off her neck and shoulders, as well as a long black skirt that came down to well past her knees. As always, she managed to look both elegant and comfortable for a night that would probably involve eating at Burger King and then a midnight movie at the local AMC.

When it comes to a sense of style and inherent grace, life was not so kind to me. I was wearing a pair of worn-out jeans, a white tee shirt, and a flannel, checkered, button-down shirt over that. I can't figure out why I remember what we were wearing so clearly, but it's always seemed important.

Neither of us were complicated people, and that, I think, is why we fell in love. I worked at a gas station and went to college; she came from a wealthy family and spurned the notion of institutionalized learning. Other people always thought she was complicated, but I knew that she was really a very simple person, with very simple wants. A cigarette, a warm bed and maybe someday a wedding ring were all she'd ever have dreamed of asking for.

She flicked her cigarette out her half open window and asked, "What do you want to do?"

"I've got no idea, you have any preference?"

"Not really, do you want to get food?"

"Sure, do you want to go to the diner?"

"What about Burger King?"

A smile cracked my face that I am sure must have been one of those huge goofy ones you get when you're falling in love, "I absolutely adore you, do you know that?"

"Why?"

And for whatever reason, as I went to start the car and respond, I thought of our first kiss. One minute I was turning the keys in the ignition, and the next I was sitting under a tree with a bright red blush in my cheeks. She was covered in mud and grass stains, and she looked like she'd never had more fun in her life. I couldn't resist. I threw away self-consciousness and the butterfly nervousness she gave me and kissed her.

Suddenly, I was in the present again. I snapped forward and my head smashed into the steering wheel. I caught my head in both hands and screamed in pain. There was a crash beside me and in an instant everything changed.

My breath came out in a crystal mist, then vanished into the night without a trace. As it disappeared, it took with it everything in the world that held any meaning to me. For the first time in seven years I wept. For the first time in seven years, I remembered what it was like to feel empty.

Just a moment before, the world around us had descended into a tumult of discord and activity. A crowd gathered in a loose circle to watch our most private moments. One woman scrambled to dial for an ambulance on her cell phone. In the distance, someone shouted, "Is she okay?" I do not know if I should think of them as voyeurs or as something much worse.

She took a breath, and as she did she made a horrible rasping noise. Her stomach convulsed and blood dripped from her mouth, slowly, ever so slowly. I lifted her, taking care to

cradle her head, and pulled her close to my body. I brushed her hair back from her face with my bloodstained hands and asked her to talk to me. I pleaded with her to talk with me.

I lifted her shirt slightly so that I could see where the shrapnel had pierced her. It rested in all innocence in her stomach; a jagged black shard of metal that did not know what it had done, what it had taken. Her eyes snapped open and she took a second breath, deeper, as if in panic. She would not live long.

Seeing she was awake, I pleaded, "Please, baby, you can't die, I need you." To this day, I do not know how I managed to choke those words out. I only know that I heard myself as if a stranger was speaking through me. I felt empty, as though my soul had left and gone to hide somewhere else until the pain went away.

She did not respond, she simply stared. At first I thought all life might have already left her. Her eyes were as green as the day I met her, and for a moment I tried to imagine we were lying out and counting the stars. For a moment, I tried to imagine I was holding her and it was New Years Eve. For a moment.

But then reality came back to me in a violent flurry of perception. The street reeked of ash and fire. A child was crying from somewhere deep in the crowd. The woman with the cell phone was pleading with the 911 operator. They were not voyeurs; they were something much worse.

I lifted her so that she was close enough that I could feel her breathing. I needed to know she was alive. I needed to know that I wasn't alone yet. Weakly, she pulled me close and kissed me on the lips.

"Why are you crying?" she asked in a hoarse whisper.

I ran my fingers across her cheek, leaving little bloody lines as I did, "You're hurt real bad sweetheart."

She gasped and a surge of blood gushed forth from her lips, "Peter, what's happening?" Her eyes flashed dark green then gray. It was the first time I ever saw her scared.

"Someone hit us from behind baby, stay still until the ambulance gets here. You can't leave me, okay? Promise you won't leave me pretty eyes."

"Am I going to die?"

"I don't know."

"I love you."

"I love you too."

"I don't want to say goodbye."

"You don't have to baby. You're a part of me."

I pulled Her close and began to weep once more on Her shoulder. I wrapped my blood-encrusted hands behind Her neck and cradled Her head against mine. I waited and listened. I found Her rhythm and joined Her so each breath She took came in sync with mine. We stayed like that for a long while; as one, as one, as one...and as Her last crystal breath vanished skyward into the silent night, I was alone.

Matt Byrne

I Am

I am undoubted, unearthed, unfazed;
I am unchallenged, unhurt, ill-wayed;
Life's struggles, life's pain, through them I have lived;
Life's love, life's goals, through them I have strived;
I am a man, a brother, a son;
I am not lost, not forgotten, not done;
Though life's lessons I have not yet learned;
Life's respect and wisdom I shall earn.

Ian Hunter

Flame

There burns a little candle
In the midst of a dark room
All by itself with little oxygen
Hardly surviving

It's the flame of my spirit
Striving to simply live on
When all those around me suffocate my
Creativity

NO ONE understands me
I am one of a kind
I'm the weird, strange, odd and out of place one
I feel SO ALONE

I keep my spirit a-lit
But it's not easy to do
My little candle flickers to and from
Almost dying out

But I WILL KEEP on burning
No matter how DARK it is
No one will ever extinguish my light
I will persevere

Who knows?! Maybe they'll wake up
Maybe they'll see the light too
Even if not; I will still continue
Life will light my flame

Liberty Anne Justice

The Dance

Along the walls, in costume, women wait hunting cautiously for worthy opponents, their breath held in anticipation, shadowed eyes searching amongst the crowd. One is standing alone. She stares at the prey, enticing the victim - once and twice, then again, capturing his attention. As she walks over, her hand grabs for him- a set of bodies moving along steadily. Like a spider, she will close in, tightening a web around him, then laugh innocently during and after the graceful dance, but all the while knowing her conclusion to reach into his heart with claws, entangling throughout.

Lori Graziano

Just a Thought

Do you ever wonder what goes on inside
What another is thinking or trying to hide
Do you watch how they do the things that they do
And ponder; Maybe I'm just as interesting too

Sonja Kuehler

(untitled)

On a dark, dreary night three brothers walked through a park on the way home from a basketball game. Forgetting it was mischief night, they strolled quite casually reminiscing about the action of the game. The youngest one Aaron, a quiet and chubby boy, listened as his brothers began telling a tale of a homeless man who had frequently visited this park. He was killed on mischief night some thirty years ago, but people say they see a man's soul sleeping on a park bench on this night.

The brothers laughed off the tale, not believing that it was possible a man would venture back for one night to haunt this peaceful park. Suddenly, they heard a branch crack and break. They turned around, but there was nothing but street lamps and sidewalk as far as the eye could see. A strong gust of wind hit them and they all pulled their jackets tight. It was unusually warm that day, but at that instant the temperature began to plummet. Chills ran through the trio's bodies from their arms to their toes. They turned around to continue walking when the middle brother, Michael, noticed a man walking toward them. He said to his brothers, "Who is that man coming this way? I don't remember seeing anyone walking in the park." The others agreed but continued walking nonetheless. As the man drew closer, they noticed that he was dressed in older, dirty clothes. He possessed a kind of essence about him that made him different than most people. The oldest one, Mark, picked up a thick stick and said, "If this is a ghost of some kind I'm going to hit him with this stick." Michael noticed that the man was moving at a steady pace, but he couldn't hear his footsteps as he walked. The quietness of his movements was deafening, but they could hear the trees slowly blowing in the background.

The man approached the youngest one, Aaron, and said, "Do you have some spare change." Aaron said, "Yeah, I have about fifty cents. Here you go." And gave him the money. The old man thanked him and continued past them. Almost instantly, the wind picked up as it had before and they all huddled together to protect themselves from the force. As the wind died down, they looked around to see if the old man had taken shelter, but he was gone. They looked at each other and Michael said, "Make moves." And they all began running to their house.

In awe of the evening they decided it would be best for them to get some rest and relax for the rest of the night. As Aaron got ready for bed he noticed fifty cents on his drawer. He didn't remember the money being there before. He then recalled the money that he had given to the old man and a chill ran through his body. He looked out of his window, yet saw nothing and so he laid on his bed. Outside the wind was blowing furiously and the moon was beaming down on the earth. Aaron was thinking about the old man as he drifted off to sleep. Somewhere the old man was thinking of the kid that showed him love instead of fear.

Ian Hunter

Six Hours

We met six hours
Before bedtime
Enough

To glimpse a soul
To feel it pulsing
To accept "You're beautiful"

And give it back
And touch your face
And mean it

We met six hours
Before bedtime
With ironic smiles

With open eyes
Laughing bitterly at the mirror
We found there

Provoking a reaction
Playing with destruction
Providing an embrace

We met six hours
Before bedtime
I needed you

Enough

Morgen Foley

A WISH UNHEARD

Maybe my need was so great
it transformed a kindness
into caring that wasn't real,
only a response
to secrets flying through the air,
spilling over a dam built
to hold back the wreckage
of judgements gone wrong
that ripped my soul to shreds,
left shattered pieces strewn around
and great pools of blood
seeping into the ground.

Using your kindness
to bandage my wounds
and stop the past
from pulling me down
to a place I'd never escape,
I truly thought I'd found
someone who'd help me keep
my sanity safe and sound;
but perhaps the connection I felt
was only a wish on the wind,
a whisper that you scarcely heard
and didn't quite understand.

Jennie Hutchins

Jennie Hutchins

Opposite Feelings?

Overworked and under appreciated

Overwhelmed and underachieved

Overbearing guilt and undermining shame

Overpowering sadness and understanding nothing

Upended and downtrodden

Upheaval and downfall

Uprooted feelings and downward spirals

Upset self-worth and downcast self-image

Unmotivated and pressured

Unforgiving and apologetic

Unfocused goals and known loss

Unseen loathing and obvious mistrust

High confusion and low opinions

Out of control and in denial

Polluted thoughts and clear misunderstandings

Love of others and hate of ones self

Lori Graziano

RENEWAL

Let me be the one you
turn to
when life seems not
worth living.

Let me be the one
you seek
when troubles
all abound.

Lay your head
upon my shoulder
lay your cheek
against my palm.

Let your weary heart
find solace
in my arms so strong.

Take refuge in our
love created
draw strength from
its very core.

And when you are refreshed
and rested
you'll find you
can go on.

Joan Syglowski

In a Little While

Before that day, I had never seen her; after it, I would never see her again. She had a slight build with a perpetual shrug to her shoulders. A short crop of dirty blonde hair framed her gentle face, and a pair of blue eyes rested sadly on either side of her nose. She was attractive in her own way, but not so attractive that she knew it. Like me, she was alone.

I was sitting at the other end of the cafeteria, and to this day I doubt that she noticed me with anything more than passing interest. In fact, whenever I think about how little she noticed me, I find myself wondering how many people have watched me the same way I watched her. Did someone once stare at me on a train station platform and ponder what sort of lover I was, or what my favorite television show might be? Did they, like me, spend hours curiously playing with the idea of whether or not we could have fallen in love had we met, or even crossed paths, under different circumstances?

She looked toward me, and for whatever reason I couldn't bear to look back. I suddenly understood all of the importance people placed on things as silly as the intimacy of eye contact. Even the thought of actually looking her in the eyes made me blush a little; perhaps I was too shy for my own good.

On her right index finger was a silver ring with a crystal in the center. From the corner of my eye I could see that she was toying with it absently while looking at me. She spun the ring 'round her finger in slow circles and watched me the same way I had been watching her. I never realized how awkward and uncomfortable a thing like that could make you feel. No one likes to be examined without our permission, do we? What if someone saw something we didn't want him or her to?

I waited until she took her eyes off me before I looked once more in her direction. I was now more hesitant in watching her than I had been before, not wanting to draw her attention back to me. After she finished eating her lunch, she stood up and gathered her books slowly, taking care to fit them into their proper place in her backpack. She must have been the kind of person who kept a very neat bedroom, especially if she went to such pains to organize a backpack. Glasses came out next, and when she put them on and moved to leave, I felt for the first time that I had an accurate picture of her.

The girl I never met and never will meet was in mid step, in the process of simultaneously throwing her bag over her shoulder and straightening her glasses. Her attention was focused entirely on the destination before her, and somehow I knew her to be the sort of person that never lost sight of where she was headed. I don't know why it was that her imminent departure sparked the onslaught of images and thoughts that it did, but suddenly I was overwhelmed; I was cuddling with her by a fireplace on a cold winter night. I was crying on her shoulder because my father had died. It was August and I was whispering, "I love you," and when I said it, she met my words with a reply no less choked or impassioned. I was kissing her goodnight and wrapping my arms around her waist. She was on a hospital bed in labor, and I was about to be a father. All at once, I saw a life with her as clear as day, and in that life I saw a love that could have made all others pale in comparison. In that instant, I saw a story to which I could never do proper justice in recounting. She stayed locked in that one moment for what could have passed easily as an eternity. It did not matter; even an eternity on that flickering path my life might have taken with her would not have been enough.

Something in me screamed. No, shrieked. It bellowed to the heavens and at the core of who I was, "Carpe diem!" the voice snarled in frustration. It was neither a command nor a question; it was a pleading sob. The voice said a thousand other things all at once, all telling me that it was not too late yet, that there was still time, that if I.... But then, the moment finished, and in one graceful motion she swept across the room, and, having thrown away her trash, turned to leave.

I sat in my chair and watched. Watched. I could not speak, and emotionally, I was too empty to move. Instead of going after her, I simply drank my Coke and watched the room, all the while wondering if anyone was watching me.

In a little while, I will leave the cafeteria and go about my life; I will go to class and I will forget the girl who almost meant more to me than everything else in life. But for now? For now, I think that I shall sit here and mourn all that the two of us just lost.

Matt Byrne

(untitled)

I won't lie
I've already been wondering about
imaginary situations
contemplating future occasions
when I can test welcoming waters
as I hope they will be

Awkward beginnings
a distracting obstacle
so standard
and constricting

I just want to slide right in
maybe right beside
 you,
 i think

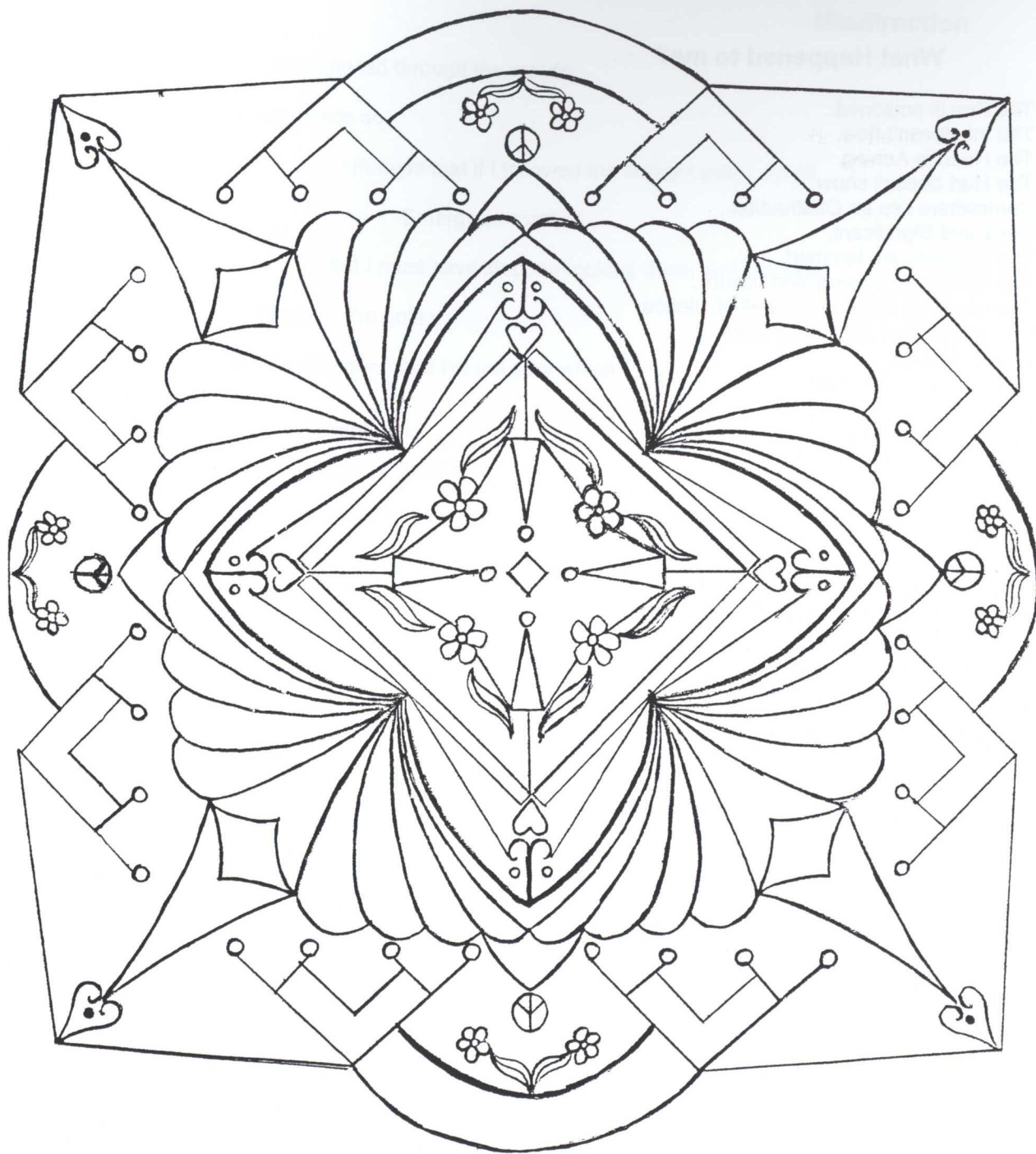
All of a sudden
I fear forfeiting my safety

Hoping for balance
I resist dropping anchored thoughts

but I won't lie-

Unexpectedly,
I'm hoping.

Renée Russo



The Generous One
Liberty Anne Justice

What Happened to me?

The Pen is poisoned.
The ink doesn't flow.
The Heart is Aching.
The Hurt doesn't show.
Somewhere lies an Obstruction.
Deep and Significant.
The thoughts are jammed.
The Words are uneasy and unsure.
The mind has fallen into a well of silence.
The self doesn't speak any more.
At last tell me
What happened to me?

Joe John

How did I get here?

I often think back to when I was young
There were times that proved trying and times full of fun
How did I get here? This happened so fast!
I'm close to the future, while I long for the past
I must have been sleeping for a long while
It's been a long time since I've remembered to smile
Maybe, life is growing up to fast
For today is now over and in the past
I want to live- in this moment right now
Please slow down, someone show me how
Time meant forever when I was young
Help me to enjoy what is left to come
I won't live forever and this I now fear
I hope to recall how I got here!

Sonja Kuehler

Misdirection

The road I'm traveling led through the woods,

As many roads do.

I thought that if I followed the straight path I could

Emerge unscathed.

But I must have stopped looking down and lost sight

Of where I'm going.

My path is now gone and I'm not sure which

Way to turn.

How I got here, I don't know.

I feel caught in a maze.

I cannot find my way out.

Every turn only confuses me more.

I cannot go back, and I cannot move forward.

I am lost.

Lori Graziano

(untitled)

My sun-dripped clouds are falling
falling

Breaking into jagged pieces
Heavy clouds that should be light
and broken clouds that should be one
and rigid clouds that should be fluid
darken days that should be bright

All collecting now with no completeness
I see myself and I am appalling
in my restlessness
a hateful part of me I can't control
it seems I've sold my soul
to destructive energies
that make me less
while I would be whole

There's no ground to invest my roots in
hoping to grow trees and trees and trees
I tease myself
into thinking I'll one day live a life of ease
or else I'd have nothing
infrequent and far-between
the only reliable allies my daydreams
as dishonest as they seem
they keep me from dying

I could be the dirt under the earth's greens
if it weren't for an intangible hook from which I hang
though I've given up, I can't escape the strong will of
the fisherman who controls life's currents
holding me, till I'm thrown back--
Not big enough, not quite big enough for death, yet.

Renée Russo

Inside me

Silence

is wordless poetry.

Poetry at it's

most primitive.

Sophisticated.

Silence is

the fuel for self

communication.

A way for us to

hear ourselves.

In silence

I speak to the

god inside me.

I coat my mind

with religious fervor.

Once the silence is

gone so is my

communication with

this god of myself.

Loretta McElroy

Two kinds of flight

... This just happened now- 1:15 PM ... I was hanging the wash out the window on the clothes lines while thinking about how I could counsel suicidal people into seeing life worthwhile if I became a volunteer at Befrienders Cairo. I clamped down the last item of clothing to the line when I heard an incredible roar coming from the clouds. It sounded as if we were all being nuked as the mushroom bomb exploded on ground. I thought to myself, 'Wow! That airplane (which was making all that commotion) must be really close.' I looked up but couldn't see a thing except clouds. This human attempt at creating a bird was hidden behind the fluffy, puffy clouds. This human-made thunder continued rolling ... The noise was frightening but oh so compelling.

I heard a child scream and wondered if she or he was startled by this tremendous intruder or just yelling for the fun of it; like my friends and I used to do as kids whenever the choo-choo train behind our apartments would jug-a-lug on by.

I looked up again and I saw something this time, but it was no commercial flight; it was much smaller, much faster, and much more violent. It was a jet. Like one of those things you see shown as war aircraft. And the noise, the outrageous noise was still screaming as if the jets were bulldozing their way through the clouds. I thought of Ra'ida and how growing up in the Gaza Strip must have accustomed her to such intrusions in the atmosphere.

... The rumble of the sky continued; another jet flew by and another. I began to cry and why? I don't know. I wasn't afraid but maybe it's just the symbolism that depressed me. The jets represent war. They stand for hate, vengeance, bloodshed, destruction ... maybe I cried for that.

I wondered to myself 'How could I have ever wanted to be in the army, supporting such molestation of Humanity's rights?' In truth I know I couldn't. I am not a lover of death, but I do live to do things just in spite, in defiance, and that's why I wanted to recruit myself. People here, in the land of the pyramids, always say that women can't and shouldn't fight in a war. So, as I always do, I had the desire to contradict them ... but not now ... let them think what they will. I'll earn my spite in some other more sensible way, peaceful way.

... Finally the noise pollution ceased. All was quiet except for the familiar call of a merchant from the main street. A breath of fatality had just flown through this town and no one noticed the paradox. (Maybe they did but I doubt it).

I shut the windows and stared out at the clothesline through the windowpanes. A little bird flew over and perched itself on the wet laundry. I thought to myself of the irony of this little messenger of peace, symbol of freedom and harmony. (And hoped it wouldn't leak on my wash). That while this flying creature of GOD is a representation of so much good, this human creature of flight is a tool of torture.

I wondered if GOD had sent this little bird to me to calm me after my light tear. In reality I know it was just a coincidence, but then again who knows? .. Like they say, "GOD works in mysterious ways."

And so I leave this reflection of the world saying to myself: 'For humans who think themselves superior to animals, why is it that these "beasts" get along so much more harmoniously than us "civilized" humans? That they can use flight as a virtue rather than a vice, like we do ... 2:00 PM - It's begun raining. Maybe the sky is cleaning itself of the death machine that just raped it, or maybe it's just crying over the stupidity of humans.'

Liberty Anne Justice

(untitled)

What kind of trick is Fate
that will have you wait
to see if it comes out of hiding?

When or where can one tell
if moved under a spell of purpose
or of delusions justified by yearning?

I look to the legacy of great thinkers,
to my senses, my spirit, and my heart-
and though I ask for guidance,
I wonder if there's guiding

Could I but still my mind
I'd gladly not be minding
unfinished paths and foggy dreams
caught between time and timing

Renée Russo

"Old Poems"

There is nothing left to say
there is nothing left to write
for I fear it's all been written
long before this night
(even this)

Matt Byrne