

Cabin Fever

After twenty-five years
he's won.
I'll never speak to him again.

Never laugh,
or say to myself
"He didn't mean it,
he does care."

I threw myself at him
over and over,
broke again and again
like a set of porcelain dishes,
thrown one by one
would break against
an iron wall.
I broke,
he is an iron wall.

I wish he'd go to Arizona
alone,
sulk all winter.
A wall would be useful there
to shut out the sun.

I'll stay here and cement
my shattered dishes
pink and green, to patterns ---
roses, buds, leaves
and other complications.

When he returns,
I'll leave.
No more mending
pink and green, mixed up China for me.

Lora Sue Anderson

Apology before the Fact

So here take these days -
The days puddles dun the gravel with -
The ones that Fall forgives away -

When apples dot the back-yard black
And wheelbarrows rust half-full
Of leaves - gray thinly hugging them -

Or when ice coats the somber up
The side-walk home in sheets of
Dying skin patched on stockless bone -

These days I give to you - for all
The busy times I gather apples seething
In warm black wounds still-born

In my stomach's pit - to be spit out
Later as my lines - your fatal clouds
To carry on a cold rain of scorn -

Draw comfort from the absense of my voice -
Those words which will not come are weighed
With sums of naked storms before coming ashore -

Soon enough, these storms will freeze and
Stand perfectly still - just know that
For now I blanket myself with regret

R. W. Jagodnik Jr.

A Man Speaks

It's just a penis.
A cradle for my children.
A dangling ornament
tacked on me by a sexless
creator. A random
mixing of sperm in a
puddle left me with
this thing shaped like a Y.

I can't apologize for coincidence.
And believe me it's not that
easy. I did not ask
for ulcers or death before
my time and I did not
ask for the fur on my chest
and I find no pleasure in
lifting heavy boxes or
football or always being on top
or trying to make up for
the stupidity of my fathers.

My penis curls up like a puppy,
hiding from all this and
pleads innocent in its
meek voice. Just a penis.

Todd McNamee

Poetry

Western Rattlesnake

Between the river and the desert
is a thin spectrum of life,
a green rainbow that fades to brown.
You live outside it,
coming down for drink, shade, food,
but always returning
alert, solitary,
to hide in that dark river
which flows between dry rocks.

Convinced of infinite malice,
you fear all
because you know they have but one intent.
I have felt that way, at times,
but you feel it always,
and lick the air
with a restless tongue,
searching for the taste of invaders.
If in self-absorbed ignorance,
they blunder too close,
you shake a warning,
resonating terror -
"Stay back! Stay back!"
You defend with venom
if they do not listen.

I am not afraid of snakes,
only cautious,
and slow my pace when you are near,
thumping my staff on the ground
so you feel vibrations of my coming
and find a river of concealing darkness.

A sudden ripple across the path,
a rustling wake of dry grass,
are the waves that mark your flight.
I gave you time to hide yourself because,
though I'm not afraid of snakes,
I'm cautious for us both.

Scott Richmond

Oyster

"Torrential rains, come!
we'd waited so long, yearning.
Desert heat, dry, why?
Your voluptuous spores
pining for rain, why?"

Humid the days,
Through slush, trees were still dripping.
I found you my mushroom.
Your parched stipe had ached long. When
rains came, you grew, and you grew.

Your shelves were many,
layered like oysters in bed.
I squealed with delight!
Did you grow tall overnight
to be queen of all Oysters?

Your name was Oyster,
eatable, so I tore you
off from your footing.
You were mine, so I brought you
to my home for my dinner!"

Sauteed for an hour,
it stayed spongy and rubb'ry
adding rice and thyme,
also onions and garlic;
I said "That's good," and I ate.

I ate my mushroom.
It complained
all the way down.

It squeaked like a mouse,
consumed by a fat feline.
Each bite, did resist.
"Oyster, my Oyster give in."
Then I, like a cat, smiled, and ate.

I'm feeling giddy
while chewing and swallowing.
How could I consume it?
Did it feel my own rapture
as it resisted each bite?

I continued to eat,
not to waste my enjoyment
I gulped, and said "Ooh,
is my mushroom complaining?
Its permission, I should have asked?"

"Lovely, wild mushroom,
I'm sorry, I meant to ask.
I plucked you from home
where dead log was your fortress.
You're my prize: Oyster, my queen.

I loved you, Oyster
your shelves counted twenty-two.
Return, I will not
pillage your lone habitat
unless I pick you for fame.

Make you queen of all,
sovereign of all specimens
in Botany Lab.
I'll describe all your virtues.
You will be known then, and loved."

Helenmarie Nelson

I flew this *Rhapsody* solo. I hope you enjoy this insert as much as I enjoyed creating it. I'm devoting the work to my mate, Amy. Through her countless charities and helpful endeavors, she reached many people. Yet, the one time she needed a hand, no one was there to grasp it. I would also like to thank Linda Vogt and the entire English Department for giving me this medium of creativity.

Robert A. Hibberd