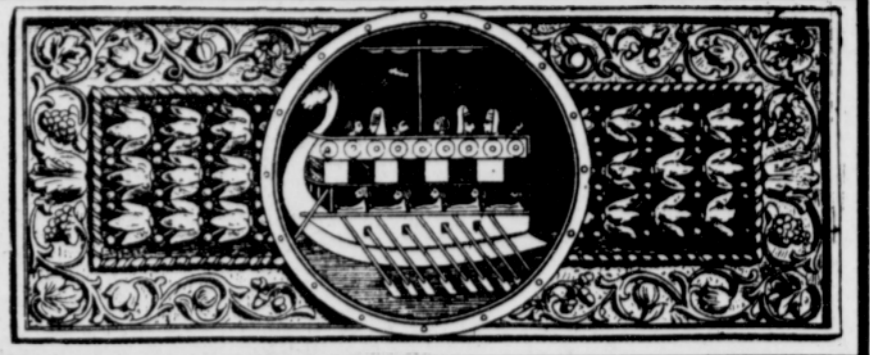




LIFE & TIMES



ONCE

I've known you forever but once
in computed time
nowhere
I've touched your face
in a thousand faces
I've seen your smile
in a hundred smiles
I've known your mind
in a few minds
I've touched your soul but once
in spirit always and never
but once
beyond forever!

— MARY B.

TOGETHER

Because we do
All things together
All things improve,
Even weather.

Our daily meat
And bread taste better,
Trees greener,
Rain is wetter.

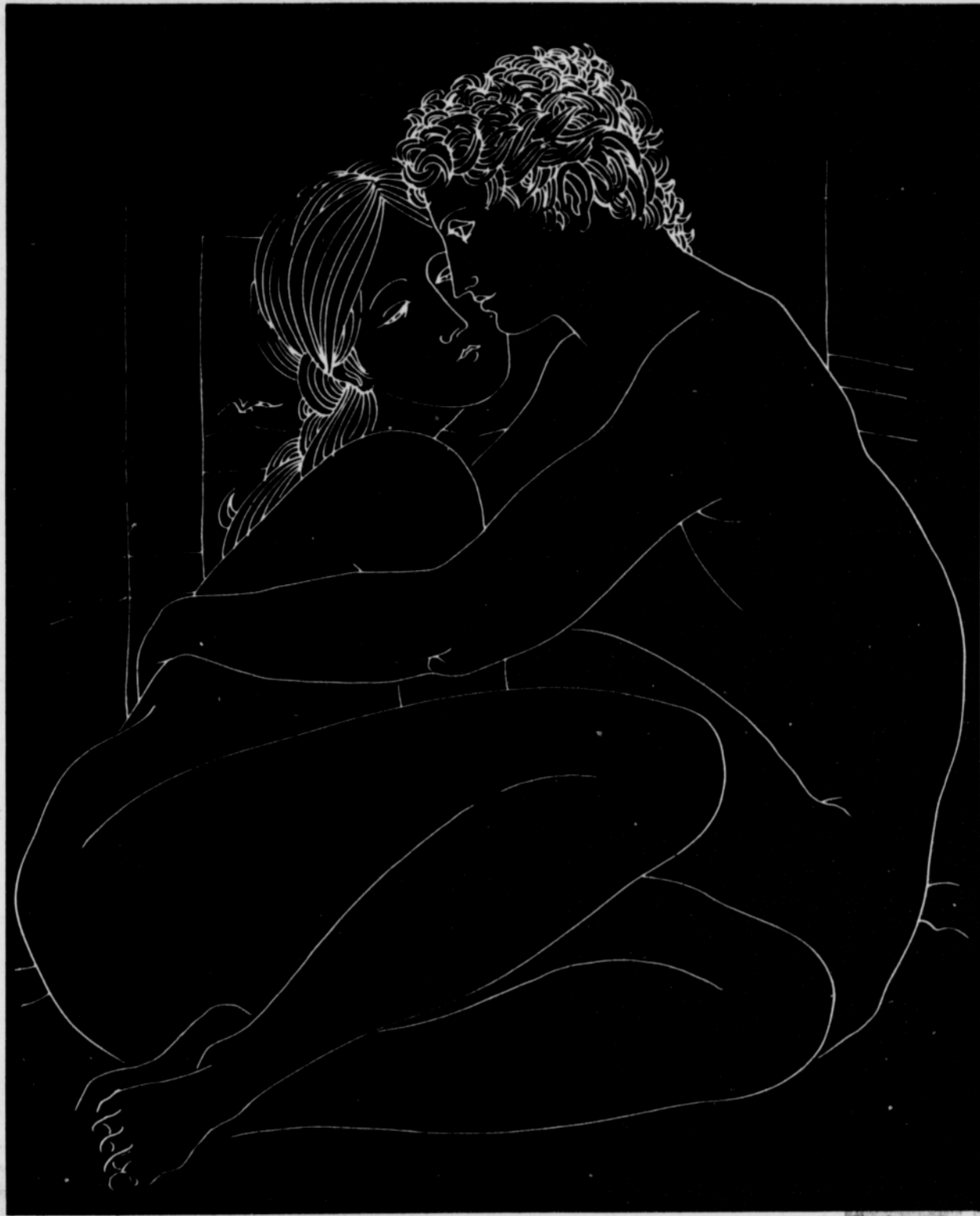
— PAUL ENGLE

2 FOUND POEMS

1.
One must be seen to exist,
For now there is no other proof.
There is no identity in craft,
Only in self-promotion.
There are no acts,
Only scenes.

2.
You'll go crazy.
You'll be paralyzed.
You won't be able to have babies.
It will drop right off.
God will punish you.

— JOHN BUCKLEY



SPRING

A full stomach says:
A ripe guava has worms.
An empty stomach says:
Let me see.

— CREOLE PROVERB

LULL IN THE STORM

We awake to be greeted
by a strip of palest blue
parting the clouds
of overwhelming gloom;
the tide recedes, exposing treasure
for gulls and sandpipers
scurrying along the shore.

The storm, our prison these many days,
is departing at last,
liberating a very old lady
who picks her way across wet sand
for a closeup view
of the plunging waves;
a long-confined shepherd
and three spaniels
to frolic on the beach,
oblivious of the threat of Trident
only a few hundred miles away.

We gulp a quick cup of coffee,
shower and don pants and jackets
for a hike along the shore
culminating in grocery purchases at Safeway
where we are attacked by an army
of hungry ducks,
who remain blissfully unaware
that their quiet river
could become a torrid stream
of radioactive poison.

The first green shoots of spring
push their way through dark soil,
following once again nature's cycle
for which our creator has programmed them;
they know nothing of MX missiles
neutron bombs, or chemical weapons.

As the gloom of winter abates,
the threatening storm
of "limited" nuclear war
draws inexorably closer.

— MARY JANE BREWSTER

SAY GOODBYE TO THE SAD RAGS OF WINTER

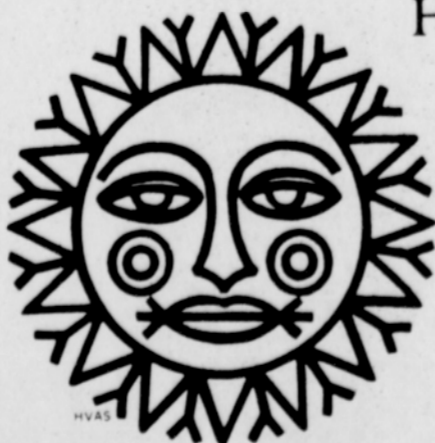
I walked around and around
the barren horse-chestnut tree
and considered all my days one
until I heard the wind shake
the branches with its murmurings

I watched the light move from branch
to branch until the tree became a stream
of fire in which I saw birds dancing
chanting canticles to the wintry sun
a distant bloody ball of frozen fire

I looked again and saw a school
of winged dolphins sporting there
and among them rose Leviathan
its colossal bulk porpoising into
space blowing a fountain of fire

The very sky became a field of fire
I saw wagtails wheatears thrushes finches
grow immense among the raging flames
and take wing arrowing towards the sun
I turned knowing that winter had ended

— JOHN DIGBY



HERE COMES THE SUN

Sun comes
streaking through the hemlock
naked, warm.
She comes
mellow, golden.
A woman light,
she feeds us.

— KATRINKA

ILLUSIONS

glimpses
of ice
frozen
clear
cold
sharp
and me
dressed in black
and silver blades
on the ice
moving with
passion and fire
quickly
clearly
sharply
slicing the air
and the ice

— KIM GELE

IRISES

Hard pointed
green stems
amid vegetal swords,
buds become
soft pedals, flags,
feathery flutters
of bluish purple
flowers, irises
rain-soaked
and battered
in the matted wet
green spring grass.
An elegant signature
of ink
scrawled up against
the boards, the side
of The Lawn, our
green
Victorian apartment house.
Such pointiness
softens to a purple caress,
indigo touch,
beneath the window
of the dead woman.
Her body not found
rotting inside,
propped up in a chair
watching television,
for two weeks.
Stink inside on the stairway,
bluish purple blossoms
blooming beneath
her bedroom window outside.
Spring and death
start and end
in damp clayish earth.
Iris — eyes of the peacock's
rainbow, dark and swollen
in ultramarine sorrow.

— WALT CURTIS

LATE

We are not ever lost
and nothing delays us.
We carry the sun on our backs
and cover such ground
as you would not believe.

We are the colonists of dark,
the cousins of radiance,
who shall bloom
among you.

Listen,
do not move in your hard beds;
we enter your rooms
and the candles are lit
as if by themselves,
stars gather,
dreams pour
into your pillows,
memories of the moon,
warm bouquets of air. . . Listen,
even now
the breathing begins.

— MARK STRAND