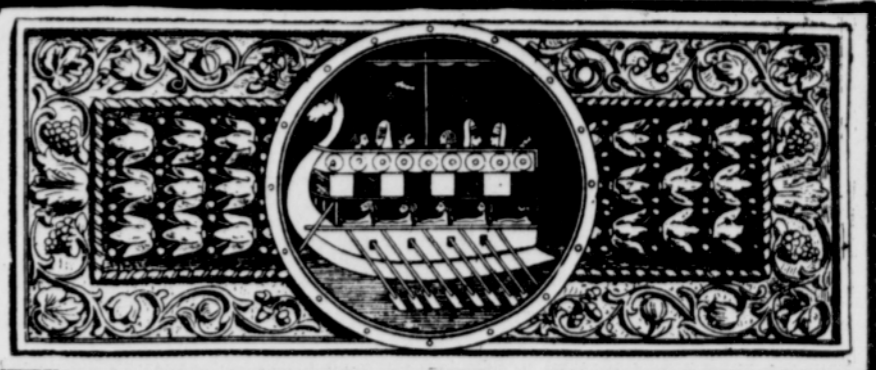




LIFE & TIMES



WE ARE GATHERED TOGETHER

the bread
popping out of hot ovens
lobsters walking on the sand
dripping wet life

Inland they are paving the roads
with husks of corn
Waiting inside a daisy
for the leaves to be plucked
for the something to happen
For the coral of the sea
to be counted
For the census of lost minds
to be taken.

They are gathered here today
For that reason
To count the choked throats
The rustling of skirts
blowing away in salt air.

They are gathered together
Dearly beloved of beggars
Sandwiched ears of corn
Threshed by their real souls
Into pieces of white sand.

They bought a ticket
to the third star
Beyond
the horizons of children
The islands of the cyclic migration
of tourists.

Beyond that they are gathered
to praise no name
to sing no songs
to ask one question.
To the smoke of bonfires
gathered in the arms of children.

Why are the judges of land
the earthquakes?
Why between day and day
there is no food?
Between song and eulogy
there is no truth?
Why are the governors
wearing out
the thin feet
of our children?

We are leaving the fields
to your planting
The fires
to your black stubble
Our songs
to the beggars
Who carry away the winter
under their coats.
Our memories
to your white bears
Our sinking dreams
hanging on the highest branches.
Somehow
we will get on
After
the sunrise
Before
dark
We will eat
new food
Sing
new songs
Write down
the dreams
of our weddings
And the candles
on Friday evenings
Our prayers
for the dead only
And our dances
for the new born.

Somewhere
in the darkness
where we stumble
We will find at the edge of our labor
A road map
asking for travellers.

We have gathered together
Because the loneliness
is unbearable
Alone
we can do nothing
Together
we carry distant voices
On the shoulders of children
unborn.

ESTELLE GERSHOREN

AUTUMN



SUMMERTIME 1982

In the summer of 1982 there are no jobs for young citizens of President Reagan's USA — the superpower whose weapons threaten our planet with nuclear destruction; the nation of affluence which in the impoverished two-thirds of the world, condones the sadistic murder of priests and poor peasants in the name of "fighting communism," while, at home, day care centers and community clinics are forced to close, and hungry, ill-clad children are sent to decrepit overcrowded schools where they cannot learn so that, with the excuse of an ever elusive economic recovery, the wealthy may become even wealthier.

In the summer of 1982, 46% of all youth, and 52% of Black youth are out of work; such minimally paid jobs as are available at car washes and fast food stands provide no preparation or motivation for young Americans to make future constructive contributions to their families and their communities; many jobless teens whose parents are likewise unemployed, lacking the necessary funds for clothes and books, will be unable to return to school this fall.

In the summer of 1982, with all funds for employment and training terminally slashed, "survival" crimes are rising, while the cost of maintaining a youth in the juvenile justice system has risen to more than \$50 a day.

In the summer of 1982, with parents laid off, education appropriations cut, school budget measures defeated, draft resisters prosecuted, and jobs nonexistent, why should we be surprised when young people for whom the "land of opportunity" has provided only a dead end, tune out with rock 'n roll, get high on marijuana and cocaine, and, as a desperate last resort, are driven to the "ultimate solution" of suicide?

MARY JANE BREWSTER

GRAVITY

Something is always falling —
Husks from bloom on the linden,
Petals from the awakening apple
That flutter and scallop the grass;
The night is said to fall
And rain does, and snow.

Even smoke and fog comes down,
Grand and slow and from great height,
They may be said to fall
And from our daily virtue we, too,
Fall, and, as we do, we nightly fall asleep.
When rhythm rises, it falls on the ear.
So, even as it springs, the year
Begins to fall. All things are
Falling; all things. All.
Seen from a falling star,
Our star continues in its fall.

JOHN SCHOW

NEXT TO WATER

:a collection of Haiku

Only the ocean,
the sky, dry sand, and a fire,
will give me some peace.

In the old slow wind
I hear the quiet music
of running water.

Where is this wind from?
North and south
or east and west,
or just in my mind?

The midmorning sun
turns the coastal fog into
the color of sand.

The mist of the hills
covers the fir and alder
like a mourning cloth.

Note the angry sea.
Maddened at Yaquina Bay.
Frothing at its mouth.

Rusting car bodies
die a little more each day.
The salty sea breeze.

Silence in the trees,
moonlight and high water, stand
waiting for the tide.

Yellow moon, white stars
and with any kind of luck,
no rain tomorrow.

MICHAEL MARSH

UNSEASONABLE

— for Mary

Still
the beech leaves
cling to branches
like wet slices
of smoked cheese —
the fall days have been
hot & filled
with damp, mouldering breath.

A storm from the south
nearing
brings harsh noises from
your mouth
as your chest fills
too quickly
& lets too little
out.

As if wanting news
of some old & painless death,
we wait
together
for the night's frost
& the brief, cold hole it will carve
in the air.

By morning
the storm has drifted
out to sea
below the Cape
and you are breathing
easy again,
walking fast over hard gardens.

RUSSELL BANKS

