



MOONSHOT

They have taken the moon from us.
Closer, it moves further away.
The faces of love are gone,
replaced by known and sterile craters,
strewn with the hardware of our pride.
Men have stopped their solitary night worship,
idolatrous now of charts and dials.
But distance still is all,
and Diana will take vengeance.
She cannot with safety be possessed,
marked and measured.
Short-lived the lust that hunts the huntress.
Her chastity violated,
she strides the heavens
with a venomous quiver,
waiting out the cycles,
playing with her prey
coolly always coolly
ready with her own apocalypse
when our Atlantic City revels
are ended.

ELIZABETH HOBBS

THE WAIT

The starless morning sky, still black,
hesitates above the stepless sound of you
not returned. Toward the dawn
nothing moves; only crickets in their stillness
murmur, now and then, and test in stalling air
the wet along their wing.

J. HUMPHREY

A TOUCH OF BITTERNESS

Nigger! The whip cracks
Stripes your back
Takes you from your land
Splits you from your blood
Destroys your gods
Puts you to work in white man's land
Gives you a new culture
Makes you roll your eyes in gratitude
You have been ripped off, Nigger!

Blanket ass! The white man moves against you
He uses nature to conquer you
He turns fire against you
The winds are evil
The rivers have evil
The soil is barren
The animals are taken from you
The land which you once shared
Is boxed off
The eagle is extinct, or almost
And you will live the white man's way
Or die
So cry, Blanket ass!

But I, my race and I,
Have never belonged
For we are the cripples
Who make the ripples in every race
We are the ones they sacrifice
The ones the Christians save
And then box off and exclude
And when it comes down to the nitty gritty
Down, down to
Exist or to
Not exist, too
All able-bodies people
Will either rule, or
Be subdued into slavery
To the perfect race, not
Killed like slugs
Slimy
Shaky
Spinelless
Synapseless
Historyless
Slugs
Not genetically denied the view of
The moon
The sun
The searing beauty
Of each grain of time
(For time is what we all need)
Not denied...
I, the biggest minority of all,
I and my race, a goddamn cripple.

ARTHUR HONEYMAN

HEROES

It pleases me not at all that
Each and every weekday morning
He saunters with his sack lunch
Past the window where I scribble.

Me, morosely mumbling there,
Hungover and dirty. Him spiffy,
Jovially putting his oar in
As the wife and babies beam.

We've neighbored the same block
For years, but I don't know his
Name and he doesn't know mine.
Heroes are above details.

Pennywise he rides the bus.
I like to think that when he drops
His coins into the box I'm looking
Up as the Muse unfolds one wing

Or a word is taking off her clothes.
Chances are, however, I think
Of his wife. If she has secrets.
If she smells like mayonnaise.

JOHN BUCKLEY

WHAT IS GOING BY IS EVERYTHING

At the edge of a clear stream
generations of alder and fir
from the beginning of stones.
A fair breeze moves west with the current.
Trout the size of my forearm
lie in deep pools facing upstream.
This morning I awoke
clear-headed
as the tops of pines,
spring rain fell.
A thread sewing shut
the needle's eye.

It is such a simple thing.

As if for the first time last night
I saw the stars
spread across the heavens and I thought,
how much better it would be
to admit the spirit starves
than this holding on
as if the stars were not where they are
but strapped upon my back.
From high in a tree at the stream's edge
an owl calls, dividing the world.
I kneel to rinse my mouth,
to beg the rising constellations.

JOHN BUCKLEY

A DEATH IN THE VEGTABLES

The model daddy of black garden slugs
proves a more potent thumb.
The limp fingers on a thirty dollar glove
blink at me as if they begged,
"You wouldn't hit a glove?"
The nursery pillaged,
their blunt stalks blighted
like stillborn baby boys,
the asparagus is dead.
One sheep, poor father, bad captain,
accusing shapes jump overboard.
Hollandaise and green that can never melt into each other,
salads and souffles that will not come to dinner,
the bragging I won't be able to do.
Death is grounds for divorce.
So is infamy, that long farewell.
I stalk from the garden
thinking how Thoreau would react.
He knew beans.
I know remorse.

As I slump into a plastic lawn chair
to make what I feel into butter,
a bent-over man who looks
the age of the rocks in the garden
and dragging a horny old knout
of a branch I see is a plow
comes and squats beside me.
His head and his loins are wrapped
in rags that expose almost all
of which there is very little.
In scraping tones of a dry creek bed,
"How fortunate you are to live where it rains,
where there are so many insects feeding the soil,
so much leafmeal and dung,
and the grass and the weeds act
all year round like a wedding."
Grieving for asparagus,
I don't think to hand him one
of the cold beers I've taken from the fridge
to irrigate myself onto this page.

JOHN BUCKLEY



from CHANGED

I saw a man turned into money:
His head became a bank vault door
in which the wheels were seen to hurry,
the valves were heard to quaintly purr.

The breast was soft as brown purse leather
in which the bones were solid coin.
The bullion heart, held fast forever,
fed stocks and bonds through copper veins...

And looking down, I saw, amazed
that the reproductive organs set
in wax and most conspicuously placed,
were nothing more than cancelled checks.

GEORGE ABBE



I envy you men
sleeping deep when love is gone
fully sated
emptied
and lost to deep dreams.

I keep court with the night
and listen to that good sleep
while your sperm make headlong and frantic
search in me
then die out one by one
like stars that blink off with the dawn.

HELEN PATTI

ROCKY MOUNTAIN HORROR SHOW

We are aimed straight at each other —
fierce-eyed, hot-flanked,
so well matched, so well made,
but driven hard til deep horn cracks
in twisted collision.
Is there no end to this harsh crashing?
Do the genes permit no gentler touch?



ELIZABETH
HOBBS

LEFT HANGING

The old man's
heart attack
left him hanging,
between the bedrail and bed.
The cloth vest
restraint
still tied snugly
in place.
At first glimpse
one might imagine
strangulation.
He was cold, and
that didn't look good
either.
All less than dignified.
Synonymously,
Death and Dignity
dictated they
unloose the body.
Let it come
to rest on the floor.
They then laid out
this life ended
without witness,
with ceremonious
crisp white sheets. Hush!
"What's the son's number?
Tell him when we last
saw the old man, he was
sleeping soundly."

L. VANDER ZANDEN