

**THERE ARE MORE ORPHANS
ALIVE NOW IN THE WORLD
THAN AT ANY PREVIOUS TIME**

You are sad because they abandon you
and you have not fallen.
How many eyeless statues
can be fit into one spine?
What the words say does not last.
Only the words last
and what they are is always the same,
what they say never the same
or could get even bleaker.
Always it is easier for one hand to clap
than it is for one to weep.
Only you know. They don't know.
Either it satisfies or it doesn't,
but who is to be satisfied first?
Pilgrim,
either you find out or you don't.

~JOHN BUCKLEY (d.1999)

POETRY

DAM IT ALL

*The busy, busy beaver
Works with trees all day
Damming up the riverbed,
Unearthing tons of clay.*

*Beavers have really big teeth
To chomp away the wood.
I think, at night, they use chain saws,
At least, they'd use them if they could.*

*They dam it, dam it,
Dam it all.
Dam up all the streams
With a wooden wall.*

*A fish ran into a pile of wood in a river.
What did it say?
"Dam."*

~JESSI DUNKIN

ARTISTS

(For Lawrence David Maple, 1939-1986)

What is it with artists

Giving their lives and sanity
to their Art
Obsessed with private visions
askewed, frenzied and clear
Wrecking their health with drugs &
coffee &
insomnia

Exhausted and dead
their Art disappears
seldom seen
heard
or thought of again

~MICHAEL McCUSKER

JOHNNY POTSEED

Plan that herb,
Spread that seed
Compassion and sense
Is what we need.

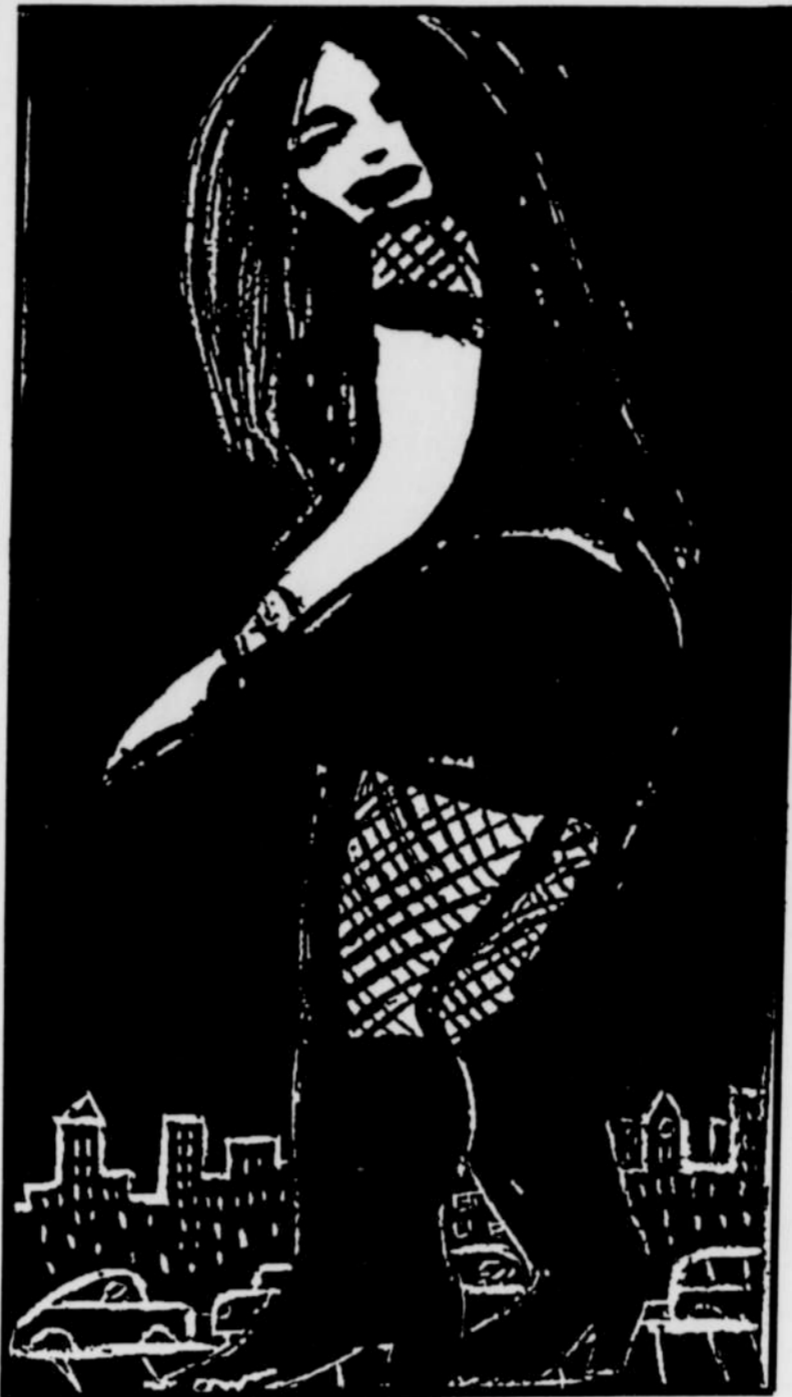
Cultivate cannabis
Far and wide
Out in the private
Countryside

Not near roads
Or in the ditches
Make them spend that money
Those sons of bitches!

The war on drugs
Will be waged with peace
They spend our billions
We plant our seeds.

When the world returns
To happier times
We'll charge them all
With their heinous crimes.

~D BOUGHAN



JOHN OVERMYER

WHAT CAN HAPPEN WHEN YOU'RE STRANDED

The same storm that strands us at the station
colors the forest blue with electricity.
Undemeath the eaves of the platform
my colleagues and I are milling about,
hopelessly behind schedule, when of all things
a student of mine walks out of the forest.
It's Kelly Morris. She walks toward us, and
I try hard not to hate her. She's a stoner.
She's a kid who makes fun of birth defects.
Laughed when George had to shoot Lennie.
Tracks dogshit on the classroom carpet.
When Kelly falls asleep in class, no one wakes her.
And now that she's stranded in the middle of
nowhere with the wind slashing her face and the
rain soaking through her Charles Manson T-shirt,
I can only smirk. "Kelly!" I yell across the tracks.
"Is what you're doing getting you what you want?"
I expect her to say something asinine, but she only
smiles and says, "Look what's happening to me!"
Now she holds up her hands, but in this dream
they aren't hands — they are the hooves of a deer.
I ask her how she will hold her cigarettes,
how she will cut the lines of cocaine on the mirror,
but instead of answering she finishes turning
into a doe. The transformation widens her eyes.
Her muscles ripple. She has never been this alert.
Finally I say something a teacher should say:
"Show all of us what you can do, Kelly!"
With a quick toss of her head she bounds away.
Now she disappears into the wind-swept woods.
Now the whistle of our train sounds in the distance.

~MIKE RAMM

A GRAY SPRING

In the dark

gray
blurred
winter of Oregon, and on those
melancholy
sorry
days
when everything is
fuzzy around the
edges
you can always
think
of
the
gentle
warm
blooming spring, and the
glorious summer
that
follows...

and
suddenly
the
gray
seems
a
shade
lighter.

~MARGIT LIA BOWLER

I AM FAT

1

Yes I am fat
Not pleasingly plump
Not overweight
Not chubby
Fat!
I can say the word.

That does not give you the right
to abuse me.
That does not give you the right
to let your children abuse me.

The size of my body
does not
make me a better, greater or
weaker, worse, person.

Fat is not beautiful.
Fat is more often than not
protection.

It is painful protection.
Fat is feeling your colors are too bright.
Fat is a mud wash
On a Monet painting.

Fat is the friend you wish you had
your lover on a galeblown night
the risk you are afraid to embrace.

2.

My fat is me
It is mine to deal with.
It is my joys, my fears, my untold secret.
It is my protection.
It is mine to painfully probe.
You are doing me a favor by
listening, loving me.

Being fat is a long journey
through steep valleys
filled with crystal, sharp, rocky crags.

My fat is mine to fight
mine to struggle with
mine to explore
mine to bleed for.

Not yours.

~KRISTEL McCUBBIN

ASTORVISIONS

*Walking through the seagulls and the
fishguts-in-hot-dumpster smell,
looking at the river.*

*Cannery workers sit on the pier,
smoking, drinking coffee, their knee-high
rubber boots flecked with fishguts
and shrimp casings.*

*Tired fishermen tie their boats
to the pier, their eyes sore from
looking at bright reflections
on the water, their faces twisted
with worry.*

*And I in my slacks and tie, carrying my
briefcase, feeling stupid, embarrassed,
inferior, my penny-loafers slipping
on fish slime.*

~RICHARD SCHULTZ (d.1993)

THE POET CANDIDATE

Why are we here?
We're here because we want time!
And what kind of time do we want?
TV time!
And what kind of TV time do we want?
Free TV time!
And whom do we want free TV time for?
Me!
And why do I need free TV time — from
NBC, which is giving it to all presidential candidates?
So I can denounce TV!
I have proof that television is the most
fear-inducing, community-exploding, mind-
boiling device in history. But
how can I communicate this message to the
American people so that they will
listen carefully, and how can I reach
them in their own homes, where they
are most vulnerable?
I must go on television.
Which is why I am demanding equal time, *completely*
equal time, with the other candidates.

Beside, all the other candidates
are speaking prose — vast, uninterrupted,
listless prose. Only I am speaking a flowing,
lyric, olive-colored poetry.

This is a contradiction. I am the only
poet candidate, yet I am shut out of the
dialogue — or trialogue. Where are our checks
and balances? When prose predominates, the
earth becomes too flat. When poetry is
overweening, the world becomes too round. And
which would you rather have, my sister and
fellow tourists — a world too flat or a world
too round?

~SPARROW (aka MICHAEL DANIEL GORELICK)
2-TIME CANDIDATE FOR PRESIDENT OF THE USA