

# POETRY



## BLAST UP THE BARNYARD

Childhood romantics remembering the cow  
sanctify each other's roots not complaining how  
one more draft for skiing  
'untill the plate be full  
here we come a'thundering  
uptold the moonlight wow

Once upon a maiden fair  
I rocked until the morning  
and lied up to the rising sun  
till my luck half-dead she-struck  
and knocked my lobes a bit for the while  
locked up knee and knock-knee

Oh careless love was once all mine  
love oh love oh careless all the while  
careless love ain't laid me low  
for sure all told the morrow

With a guitar in my hand I rarely fail  
a remote star a grailing while demons aren't wailing  
so up with red white and blue  
what reason for standing while gunhands are landing  
and the serpents not regretful aren't true

Careless love lent me a bounteous feast  
my memories tried and true  
times the cost of my deeds hath brought little sorrow  
so I lie at the bottom of the tree  
so I sleep here remaining my son not complaining  
but patience forsworn I am blue

~CHRIS KRAEMER

## ALL THAT GLITTERS

On Casino Row is Reno Baroque:  
spittle, contribution of a reeling  
bum has mistaken the railroad  
tracks for the Truckee. A nugget  
of vomit splatches the sidewalk, dropped  
by a celebrant from Lakeview. He traded  
for too many doubles on ice.

The Sierras, silvered by Pacific storms,  
shoulder around the giddy valley, nudging  
each other to see who stars in the latest show.  
Each marquee insists, "Ours is best!"  
The Biggest, The Greatest, The Most  
unbelievable sight you ever saw  
if you're from Wenatchee and get off  
the ranch once a year for three days  
having saved the sweat of your brow to trade  
for silver dollars. You mean  
you'll give up to them bandits without a fight?  
Yup, for keno in Reno.

Truckee snowmelt flows through sewage,  
scrubbing over washboard stones,  
quicksilver under moonlight.  
Special charter tour buses spill gray  
widows in pantsuits who do their best  
to drown loneliness in the arms  
of a chrome and faithless lover.  
Evening, sir, what convention?  
Blackjack, Baccarat, Bingo or Craps?  
(You can find plenty of that on the sidewalk.)  
Gimme a touch of spangled bosom,  
a lucky roll and until next year  
I'll play the docile family man.

~RACHEL NOVA

maybe one day  
people will know  
i exist...  
they won't mistake  
me for someone  
other than  
what i am;  
i only  
hope when it  
is, another person  
that they loved  
isn't gone or  
dead...

~SHARE ZANERA (1970)

## MY FUCKED UP SPEECH

my speech is fucked up  
my mouth is foul saliva  
my tongue

is all tongue and my words  
are all nothing  
my soul screams out alone

while my words and food  
drool down my cheek, chin  
and

my  
goddamned  
shirt  
front

~ARTHUR HONEYMAN

## SPACE

She is gone.  
The rooms are bare of her, her things.  
Gone, the potted plants,  
drapes for the windows,  
her silver in velvet-lined drawers.  
There the corner her dresser took up.  
An Arizona of fine dust.

~BILL BERTIN

## FRUITLESS LOVE

Once loved but nevermore  
Differential of biologic imperatives  
Cleaved by centuries and millennia  
Blocks chipped away, flesh atrophied.

Various fissures of emotional turmoil  
neglect and indifference  
cosmic impotence; no visceral membrane  
seeding the future — only stardust  
refunded from cadaver

~MOROSITY MAC

## TALKING WITH CHILDREN PLAYING WAR I THINK OF WAR

Part of your parents' hopes for a good life  
was a room of your own.  
You have rooms of your own,  
a place apart to think of yourselves as you are,  
to imagine yourselves as you might become.  
Rooms of your own,  
the start of a life of one's own ---  
who does not have it?  
who would not want it?  
Before bed tonight move every piece  
of furniture, every possession, every treasure  
into the hall. Lock yourself in.  
Pull down the painted ceiling, the decorated walls.  
Turn off the moon with sheets of tin,  
palm leaves, rags. Lie down on the floor  
with more brothers and sisters than you ever wanted  
or your parents are able to care for.  
Ignore your parents  
in the far corner remembering love  
through the openings of their bodies.  
Fall asleep thinking all you've ever wished  
a fire you hope will not die,  
it is that cold tonight.

Shuddering under the chill  
unsparing breath of the black sky  
startle yourself awake  
to the fright of your voice  
screaming into flame orange mouths  
that are eating the night alive  
and setting the moon on fire.  
Round eyes, dead stars,  
you escape  
through holes in your body.

~JOHN D. BUCKLEY (D.1999)

## I, MAY I REST IN PEACE

I, may I rest in peace --- I, who am still living, say,  
May I have peace in the rest of my life.  
I want peace right now while I'm still alive.  
I don't want to wait like that pious man who wished for one leg  
of the golden chair of Paradise, I want a four-legged chair  
right here, a plain wooden chair. I want the rest of my peace now.  
I have lived out my life in wars of every kind: battles without  
and within, close combat, face-to-face, the faces always  
my own, my lover-face, my enemy-face.  
Wars with the old weapons --- sticks and stones, blunt axe, words,  
Dull ripping knife, love and hate,  
and wars with newfangled weapons --- machine gun, missile,  
words, land mines exploding, love and hate.  
I don't want to fulfill my parents' prophecy that life is war.  
I want peace with all my body and all my soul.  
Rest me in peace.

~YEHUDA AMICHA (1924-2000)

## ROAD TO COUNTRY

Taking the loop along 202  
enticed by the names  
*Olney, Jewell, Fishhawk Falls,*  
we drive through pasture  
once marsh,  
accepting that each in its own time  
prevailed  
for the growing.  
The road winds past homes  
proclaiming history of great-  
grandfathers,  
and fields integrate  
horse and cow and sheep ---  
even llama,  
acquiescent, harmonized.

Out of Olney, past forest  
and thick brush,  
warning signs of elk and deer  
confront us, so we dutifully  
slow down,  
scan for dun-toned fur, just as  
a doe breaks from the side,  
then swerves  
in a dainty leap back to shelter,  
and we silently apologize  
for our intrusion.

The muffled thump thump  
of steel bridge,  
distant buzz of chain saw,  
constant hum of tires on asphalt  
lull us into an old-time peace  
when neighbors clustered  
a few at a time  
or nodded to the one met  
a mile or so up the road.

We slow to scents of wet earth,  
mulching leaf and autumn grasses.  
We taste pine air,  
hear wild geese overhead,  
and discover the tinge  
of early red September.

A gravel road draws us  
to splashing sounds of waterfalls  
rippling and wavering  
like silver silk ribbons  
playing on stone in the dappled sun.  
Then, out into pastureland again ---  
a wide meadow declaring safety,  
an elk's refuge from hunters' guns,  
and we stop to gaze out across  
this peaceful place rich in green  
promising wildflowers in Spring ---  
truly a jewel in Jewell.

As the road curves  
past a covey of houses called Elsie,  
it rolls along  
the Necanicum's banks,  
a slow steady river  
slipping and drifting  
down to the Pacific.  
Two fishermen  
in a small white boat,  
still and at-one with the river ---  
the scene in a landscape painting ---  
men and river and time endless,  
as once the wetlands were  
as once the forests were.  
We stop to breathe the green,  
the clean, heady abundance of it,  
the luminous stillness of it,  
Earth's gift to our moment.

Here where river and tree and grass merge  
here is the light of Oregon,  
lush of heart,  
tenuous in ecology,  
lifting ---  
with each Sitka and Douglas fir  
each wild fish and waterway ---  
hope for country.

~CLAUDIA HARPER