

POETRY



DONALD OSBORNE

HELLO MOON

Hello Moon. Hello. Hello. Welcome to this world. Welcome to a world where animals and humans roam the earth. Welcome to a world of many different colors. Welcome to a world of many different cultures and religions. Welcome to this world Moon.

~LILY DEUFEL

THE MARRIAGE OF BOREDOM & FEAR

How we obsess on the news, the two of us
as if after a long day to prove
we're still here,

perched on the frame of the big picture,
more sparrow than hawk or crow,

outside for now in our bubble the wars
cancer starvation just waiting —

old enough to want nothing more
than the routine of a roof and inside a hand
to hold across some small hope
we can't name,

all limits accepted and blown apart
with one spin of the wheel, desire

the spectre of some child
alone on his knees in front of a screen
flickering bluewhite in an empty house
cars, tits, easy money filling his face

that might one day flash
into our lives and make news of us.

~DOUG MARX

ZERO PEOPLE

stagger lurch and try
fall on bloody knees and cry
roll over on the river bank and die
don't you know the stock market is up
was it the hand of fate or hate
the hand of greed and indifference to need
or were all hands just too busy at the helm
were you just born invisible and loneliness killed you
should you be ashamed of leaving your dead body there
and if a fatted tongue said disgraceful
would your spirit laugh and echo in the void
ashamed of dying so selfishly
in the material face of contempt

~LYNN SMITH

WHAT WE ARE LEFT WITH

(for Paul, Fenton, Grandpa & Grandma P., and especially Viki)

There's a man who comes into the tavern
shaggy hair and sideburns
the same striped shirt everyday.
Forget manners, trivia, front page news.
In love, he doesn't realize the bartender gets paid
to smile.

Outside, high on a wire above the river
a pessimistic crow sits every day at four o'clock.
He watches the cook, waitress and dishwasher
chain smoking wearing the same old white shirts
just like always.

Downtown, a lawyer logs fifteen hour days swigging
tumblers of whiskey, complaining how political
the world is becoming as he tries to keep politicians
out of jail. His secretary sits playing solitaire promiscuously
handing out privileged information.

Further up the hill, an old lady no one ever forgets
sits alone in a room of her choosing with a calendar.
It is a scorecard marking points of who comes to pay attention.
Nothing's really wrong here and she's had all the rings, teacups,
silvery teaspoons she ever wanted. Just spoiled, she
never learned to eat alone.

The town continues to spin which is fine.
It wants new houses to be built where the plywood mill used to be.
The cruise ships coming into port add more scenery for the lawyer,
the secretary and the old lady than they take away.
Everything is the same for the man and the bartender at the tavern.
Even his striped shirt and her thin smile though the crow notices
the dishwasher and the cook
wear nice, familiar second hand coats to smoke
because it's getting colder outside.

It's out in the country where you notice most
what we are left with. Not in the rural routes that now have names or
corn and pancake feeds becoming tourist attractions. That's actually a bit
romantic, not at all hard to live with.
No. It is most noticeable in standing next to the old men on the bridge above
Big Creek. It is in watching the salmon jumping upstream above the churning waters.
It is noticing those collecting in the deeper, stiller waters along the edges to rest.
It is that we aren't left with any words to tell them
so we talk about fishing.

~DEBBIE BARENDSE REED

VINE MAPLE

Green beneath green,
all spring and summer
they hide in the understory,
then early in fall each leaf
begins to burn: yellow, orange, red.

After the alder and big leaf maples
are stripped by wind and rain,
they come to light,
glowing among the rain-black trunks,
holding their leaves a day,
a week, or two longer.
But even they will be bared
to their skeletal selves before the darkest day
drains quickly into the longest night.

Now the sun-sweetened sap
has sunk into the soil-bound roots,
buds are clenched tight,
gripping their dream of dappled light
when each new leaf
will open its palm
to greet the returning sun.

Green beneath green.

~JIM DOTT

UNTITLED 1G

You know the feeling
At the back of your neck
And the way it settles there
After crawling insidiously
Up your back
Making your hair stand on end
Making your eyes pop out
Making your hands clench into fists
And your nails dig half moons
Into the flesh of your palms
As you picture
With intense satisfaction
The kind of explosions
That only happen in movies starring Bruce Willis,
But you don't want to save the world
Because the hero of this story
Wants to burn, beat, and break things
Wants the walls to fucking crumble
Wants to take these hands and place them
Around your throat
Until you shut up shut up shut up
And stop stressing me out!

~TERRI VINEYARD

SEASONED TO RESIST

We are written on the walls
in fate's faded print.
I saw it.
It said you and me,
in dancing jester letters,
vintage lithographs
in reddish gold, glinty tones.

We beat around
a shared drum,
circling, like shy eagles
stalking a divine
and universal chord,
irresistibly drawn,
seasoned to resist.

~THEDA SPRACKLIN

ASH LIGHT

Driving
out of the city
into the ash light of rain.
Metronome wipers.
Swaying blurs of green.
Bach wringing the anguish
of beauty through cello fugues.
Yellow line curling and curling.
Sun showers on rain showers.
Mind unwinding.
Arriving with the tide.
For the last bird
of evening.

~EARLENE LEIF

'I think I'd rather have stories to tell than a bank account.'

~GENO LEECH

UPON FINDING A DEAD CAT ON THE SIDEWALK

I have a slight hangover so the edges of
things are very sharp and bright.
The dog is still pulling at the leash even after
that large shaggy has quit barking at us and
then I see
that black cat
sleeping across the street.
I can read my dog in the tension in the rope but
cats don't sleep on sidewalks and why is he
on that cardboard?
I pause for one full minute wanting to turn around
but afraid and finally tell myself
This is Life, the birth and death of things
and his whole body is black, even the eyes black
with no shine till they're almost gone.
The fur is wet and I wouldn't say he looks peaceful
considering
that bright red
dribble but he is most certainly dead.
Walking home I look up and there are three different shades
of blue all in that one spot and there goes my soul
leaping out of my chest till I have to put my
hand there to stop it.
The world is
too big and beautiful to hold or even touch so I go
back home to be rid of it, to cry and write down
everything I know.

~TERESA BARNES

it might have struck you when
you bent in the evening,
scrubbing mud and mildew from
the linoleum speckled like grass,
working scrub pads around chair trunks and
table legs in the kitchen under that
yellow-gold oven lamplight. maybe
you knew it first when
you were waiting up until eleven at the table
for something you knew wouldn't come,
rereading old classics and
drinking chamomile while the sky
turned and pinwheeled overhead,
keeping time like clockwork while
each blade of grass and tree-leaf shimmered: you
needed to wake up to see —
heaven had changed its coordinates,
and they were pointing straight at you.

~MARGIT BOWLER