

The 2River View



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POEMS BY

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John Cornwall, LL DeMerle'
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1_3 (Spring 1997)

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A Nickle Peanut Patty

Ron Baron

Dad bought us all a peanut patty—
five times a nickel's a quarter
Joe gave me half;
said he didn't like peanuts.
Times aren't the same anymore.

People don't care for each other.
Helping a neighbor's passe'
keep what you've got;
get more if you can—
Things changed a lot in forty years.

Truck drivers get twenty dollars an hour.
Butchers make more than school teachers.
Cows still eat grass
and sometimes bear twins—
Steak costs about four dollars a pound.

Farmers still sow tiny seeds.
God provides sunshine and rain,
combines are priced
near a half-million bucks.
Bread's nearly two dollars a loaf.

Greed took possession of nations.
History says, now they're no more.
God said, "Do others ,
as you'd have be done."
You can't get a nickel peanut patty anymore.

Let Me Tell You How It Is

Carol Borzyskowski

One of these days I'm going to get myself a muse.
Strong, fearless, with a sense of humor
maybe a biker chick
with a tattoo
or two.
Eyebrow pierced, and a navel ring
I'll stare at as I contemplate life.
She'll sit Buddha-like
belly full of possibilities.
I'll say
"Hey, how about a love poem?"
"Sure, nothing to it."
"How about one on death, the X-files,
a dead cat in the road?"
There'll be no subject she can't handle.
"Poems," I'll say, "Are life."
"Lighten up!" she'll say.
We'll both laugh.
Later, at night, after glasses of wine
she'll explain the source of life
in a poem. How it's like a pool
of brightly colored swimming fish.
"The trick is you have to sneak
up on the buggers. Just crawl up on your
belly, slide your hand into the cool water
and wait. Don't get lost
in the color and movement. Wait
for the nibbles on your fingers.
It doesn't hurt much." She'll hold
out her scared bitten hands to me.

"When you feel a nibble, grab
that sucker, right behind the gills.
The living, breathing heart
of the poem. You'll feel it gasp
and struggle. Understand that to keep
it alive the poem has to breathe in your pool
of ink
fountain of words
 great lake of a blank page.
Just let it go
it will swim, shimmer, live.
 See? Nothing to it!" She'll smile
at me again and I'll say,
"Hey, how about a Sunday Afternoon Poem?"
 She'll laugh and say
 "Go fish!"

11:59 p.m. December 31, 1999

Carol Borzyskowski

From my front steps I have a view
of the crazies
more exciting than Mardi Gras.
Old Margaret has thrown out
leftover spaghetti again, to dry
into crisp worms, that I always tell
her will never fool the birds. She walks
past me murmuring like some crazed
carnival bear. Her plush breasts
encased in a rancid purple sweater,
her greasy curls peering out
from under an aluminium beanie.
I'm not worried yet,
I've decided the blue mist between
me and the Baptist church down the street
is being engineered by the government
or maybe aliens. Still, before they get here
I'd like to try talking to Crazy Margaret
or ole man Benz one more time.
The thought makes me dizzy.
A chorus of singing drunks are heading towards the mist,
a lurching syncopated harmony
that gets the street dogs to howl and trail along.
I watch the carnival going down my
street and into the blue mist
in front of the Baptist church. I resent

that I'm wasting my thoughts on Crazy Margaret,
or Bob the neighborhood eunuch,
I admit, my thoughts are pretty meagre
compared to the wild display
of lost souls wandering in the street.
Like ole man Benz.

I wouldn't say we were always
on speaking terms, but tonight
he lifts his toupee to me and says,
"Hey!"

I nod and brush my hair out of my eyes,
wish it was auburn and curly
like in one of those old Italian paintings.
Memorable, at least, a beacon.

I search the sky for a trail of fire.
Too late my eyes catch water sliding
down the sides of the Baptist Church Steeple:
luminescent under the last full moon
before the crash
that annihilates us all
into blue Baptist mist.

Foreplay

Carol Borzyskowski

I like cats with big butts.
Their sturdy haunches quiver
as they prepare to launch.
Furry projectiles arc and twist
over each other, and come to earth
with a satisfying thwack.
Their rotund rumps
propel, push off, ground
their bodies, as they roll and tussle.
Hind ends slap the floor, they butt
each other with their heads, run off
with shanks that ripple.
Proud tails raised high
over ample asses.

Alcoholic

John Cornwall

You have not seen the sun for days,
it is always dark like unfortunate weather.
Your clothes are as dirty as the city
and the proud arch of your arm cradles
bottles and an occasional cigarette.

The home you left is miles away, your
collection of excuses worn so thin you could
not return to the destruction you have left.
Your bed now is where you fall from a day
in which many faces have seen

the terror inside of you, the terror you
cannot see. The mornings are worst.
For an hour your eyes are clear, capable
of sense and reproach; you would give anything
for the thoughts to go, to leave their questioning

until another time, perhaps until after death.
After the first drink you regain composure
and walk into the day without care.
You shout abuse at those who pass
but it does not matter, you will never

remember.
On a bench in the city center
the world happens.
Everything goes, dismissed.
You sit and stare astounded.

Anger colors in each eye.

Woodland

John Cornwall

Winter,
and the midnight
foxes are sleeping.
Somewhere,
under bracken,
whole lives occur

without reference
to mine.
I have to imagine
insects and wild
flowers, grasses
as tall

as me, bending
and bending
in high wind,
vying for the sun's
affections.
Among

the birds and flowers,
the lives of insects
and tall grasses,
I am absurd.
I have nothing
to do

with anything.
Maybe, one day,
when there
has been, for me,
a final sunset
I might get

to know this place
properly, its richness
and long
histories passed
to me like a father
to a son,

and I would hold them gently
away from death and murders,
away from everything
until the time
arrives to listen
to the sound

of the earth breathing.

Fishing For Utopia

Linda DeMerle'

The very best ones come while on my back
staring upward towards the beam scanning
the ceiling as the person inside my head tries
to reason things out whitewash all thoughts with
a fresh coat of philosophy her name is Little Miss Fixit
christened by a friend who thinks I try too hard

That was once now I give it one consecrated shot
and if casting my bread on the waters
reaps no return I dispassionately reel my line in
pack my gear and go back to where things are always
the same anchored in safety saturated with love bursting
forth with temporary fits of lively anarchy
here with children we love who comfort always with
 uplifting
contagious laughter so I throw the fish back in.

The Long Love

Linda DeMerle'

I said I'd love you, always
Reluctantly, I find I do
I could summon hateful
justification and
command it
to accompany me
I could nurture bitterness
keep it strong to close the
door on us, forcing it
swollen with history
into the jam and
bolting it
against the face
of a long, long, love.

Sick

Karen Dowell

My lips are swollen, raw
mimicking the mauled afterglow
of teenaged necking sessions—
without the lingering taste of sex.
I close my eyes, looking for the boy
who gave me my first kiss,
but see only the man in white.

This small, dime-sized man
has begun doing laundry in my head.
I feel him walking around,
hanging cotton sheets to dry
on a clothes line strung taut
between my eardrums to mute sound.
The flapping sheets, the rhythmic whirl
of his ancient Whirlpool sudsing my
brain cells into a congested stupor.
As he wrings nasal tissue through wooden rollers,
wastewater trickles out my nose and
pauses on the raw, swollen outline
of my blown dry lips.

A Light Dawns

Darren Schulz

The sun was falling in a constant stream of warmth
as tenderly as a sleeping potion on parted lips.
All she could remember was a hammock,

stretched between two enormous fingers
and rocked with an infinite patience;
then a calm feeling of being towered over,

as if by high trees, between which she felt raised up
and removed from sight; and finally a nothingness,
which in some incomprehensible way had a

tangible content: All these were transitory images
of suggestion and imagination in which
her longing had found solace. Truly, a light dawns,

spreading the longer it lasts. For what she once
imagined seemed to be in almost everything
that was standing around her, calm and enduring,

as often as she dispatched a glance to look.
What she imagined soundlessly entered the
world. But she was no longer alone: these were

the changes that distinguished fulfillment from
presentiment, and they were changes
in favor of earthly naturalness.

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Authors

Ron Baron is a native Texan, and resides in Brownwood, Texas. The father of five grown children, he is single and retired. This affords him the time he has sought to devote to his writing. With family and careers behind him, poetry has become his all consuming passion.

Carol Borzyskowski has been writing for five years. She belongs to several writing workshops and finds the criticism and advice invaluable. She is married, has two children, and works at the Public Library in the river town of Winona, Minnesota. She is published in *Deep Breaths*, *Satori*, *Moondance*, *Radiance*, and *Electrica*.

John Cornwall lives and works in a small town surrounded by moorland in the north of England. He attended Hull University when Larkin was the Chief Librarian. He admires and appreciates many forms of poetry, but if pressed, he would admit that his favorite poet is Sylvia Plath.



LL DeMerle' lives in Upstate New York. Publication credits include *Acoustic Guitar Magazine*, *Syracuse New Times*, *The Syracuse Newspapers*, *Wide Open Magazine*, *Illya's Honey* and *Eclectica Magazine*. In addition to having poems forthcoming in *PYROWORDS*, *Real Change*, and the June issue of *Recursive Angel*, she is also writing the biography of folk and blues guitar legend, Elizabeth Cotten.

Karen Dowell is a writer and poet who lives on the Maine coast with a big band trumpet player and her two big dogs. Her work has appeared in several online publications and will be published in an upcoming issue of *Visions International*.

By day **Darren Schulz** is a portfolio manager and investment analyst for a state pension fund in Montgomery, Alabama; by night he is an aspiring poet. He has been writing for about 5 years.

The 2River View

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