CHRYSLIS 1983

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Madwoman
The madwoman sits in her spinning room, playing eerie melodies through the night.
She strokes her ancient harp, weaving a spell of insanity.
And the neighbors, hearing the strange vibrations,
Gather in the streets to gossip and gape.
The supersonic music plants demons in newborns sleeping in their cribs
and lures the neighborhood men far from the arms of their wives
Into the lair of the madwoman and her black circular bed
with the spider web design
Sinister sounds creep from the spinning room —
The madwoman laughs at her talent, and plays till the dying of the moon.
Bruce Potts
Lady of the Fan

In a city down the road
In a place of her own
Lives the Fan lady.

Colored scarves, a spot of light,
Flash of eyebeam define her face.

A flower along the freeway,
She listens to the doppler-rising roar
As I pass by,
Like a lone truck in the early hours
Of morning.

Douglas R. Stailey
Lizards
Splayed hands on the bathroom tiles
her toes web, grip
seek the ice beneath
an ashen chameleon
No one comes calling
but she cannot hide
too clean
the mind's merry-go-round
whispering
(there are no razor blades no razor)
No Wilkinson crossed sword
no trac (1), blue —
bladed smiling
just the mirror's sick sheen
ivory and vaseline.
Sarah Mates
**MRS TUNES' REVENGE**

We called her Looney Tunes
(Mrs. Tunes out of respect).
In a fading blue dress and a fishing cap
she came out to water the jungle in her back yard,
and sing her songs.

She drenched each tree from top to bottom,
giving each dripping leaf an equal part
in recreating some well remembered rain.
Looking through the layers of green surrounding her,
we could only see that stupid hat
—and a pair of bony hands guiding the gushing water.
But we always came out to watch Looney Tunes;
we couldn't stop laughing at that
morbid joke of a Roman fountain.

But now,
while my cup of coffee reflects an endless forehead,
I recall Mrs. Tunes with a new laugh;
with my own rains to recreate,
I'm convinced of her revenge.

Jay Friedman
The Enormous Woman

Looking up
I could see the delicate curves
Of the underside
Of her chin.
My vision flowing
Down her neck
Resting on looming breasts.

SHE IS THE ENORMOUS WOMAN!

What words can describe the abundance
Of her beauty
Help me O Heavenly Muse!

Her body sings a loud song.

Her abilities are endless --
She can swim!
She can fly!

I watch her through my skylight
Soaring across loud-thundering clouds,
Golden wing spread wide.

She flaps at empty air for minutes
To glide for seconds.
Illuminated by crackling flashes
Of lightning.

Douglas R. Stailey
Bus Driver

Bus driver,
Bus driver,
It's not your fault but
There's rain coming in
Through the roof
Of the bus.

I feel like complaining
To the person responsible
But he's not here.

So I'll put some
Plastic under the drip
Between my wife and me

Garrett Boehling
Vacation Time

"I thought we were going to Disneyland this year," Nonnie Blevins whined as she opened the back door of her father's 1979 Oldsmobile. "Dear, we've already explained that to you a thousand times. Your father had to pay more taxes this year so we thought this would be fun," Mildred Blevins explained as she fitted a hair net in place.

"Some fun riding around looking at a bunch of dumb houses," Fred Blevins, Jr. said looking bored in his long hair and mirror sunglasses. "Now Fred Jr., you yuh," Mildred scolded. "This tour of great houses and ruins of the south is going to be a lot of fun. Just think of all the things you and your sister will learn." "I could learn a lot more if you let me stay here for two weeks." "That is absolutely out of the question. Why, when I was sixteen years old I loved to do things with my family!" "Like what?" Fred Jr. said with a hint of disgust. "Oh, lots of things. There was taffy pulling and the Saturday night square dances, and we listened to the radio together. All sorts of things." "Big thrills, huh?" Fred Jr. said sarcastically. "Now Fred Jr., " Mildred whined, cutting off her mother. "I'm hot," Nonnie whined, cutting off her mother. "Well roll down the window, sweetheart." "Now Fred Jr., you hush," Mildred scolded. "This tour of great houses and ruins of the south is going to be a lot of fun. Just think of all the things you and your sister will learn."

"I didn't know you would be going in the bathroom," Fred Jr. said sharply. "And you young man," Mildred added, switching her attention to Fred Jr. "and you watch your language young man. You might talk like that around your friends but I won't have it on our vacation. Do you understand me?" "Yeah." "What?" "Yes ma'am," Fred Jr. said softly, sinking deeper in the back seat. "Now here comes your father. I don't want to hear any more arguing. You know how upset he gets when you children argue." "I'm going to get some Kool-Aid, Nonnie said opening her door and getting out. "Hurry up, Nonnie. It's hot as he...it's awful hot in here." Fred Jr. said, wiping sweat off of his face. "Where the hell is she going?" Fred Blevins Sr. bellowed as he squeezed behind the wheel. "She's going to get some Kool-Aid, dear, she got thirsty." "Hell, I spent ten bucks on Pepsi. Why can't she just grab one of those out of the trunk." "I just thought it would be easier if she got some Kool-Aid. The trunk is pretty full." Mildred said, shaking her head. "She'd better get a move on. It's hot as hell in this car. Why didn't you cut the air conditioner on?" "We've been waiting for you. I couldn't turn on the air conditioner because you had the keys," Mildred said, trying to keep her temper down. "Excuse me for having to go to the bathroom. I had to air the damn room out first." "Air it out." "Yes, air it out," Fred Sr. said sharply, looking to the backseat at Fred Jr., who suddenly had found something interesting going on out the rear window. "Isn't that right, Fred Jr.?" "I think I'll go get some of that Kool-Aid," Fred Jr. said, quickly grabbing for the door. "You mean you'll go back in the house and smoke some of that damn maryjane," Fred Sr. said angrily, slamming down the lock and preventing Fred Jr. from leaving the car. "Honest to God, Fred Jr., did you think I couldn't smell that shit?" "I didn't know you would be going in the bathroom," Fred Jr. said, letting go of the door handle.

"Didn't know I was... Did you hear that, Mildred? You could say you're sorry, that you won't smoke that shit anymore. But don't say that you didn't know I was going to use the bathroom after you." "Fred Jr. let out a big sigh and repeated automatically. "I'm sorry, I won't smoke that shit anymore." "Fred Jr." Mildred exclaimed. "I'm just repeating what daddy said," Fred Jr. said with a smirk. "You know that's not what he meant," said Mildred. "I'm going to get your sister. She must have drowned in there. Fred, you talk to your son and please cut on the air conditioner.

Mildred got out of the car and started up the walk. Fred Sr. leaned over and turned the key to the left and switched the air conditioner on. "Now son..." Fred Sr. began, taking a deep breath. "Okay, Dad. I'm really sorry about this. It sure is an awful way to start a vacation." "I hope you are sorry. Why do you smoke that stuff anyway?" "Oh Dad, everybody smokes pot." "If everybody jumped off a bridge I suppose you would too." "That's real original, Dad. Besides it's a lot less harmful than that booze you belt down every night." "Oh no you don't. Not that tired-ass excuse. Some of the guys at work were telling me that they read that pot will cause cancer and blindness, and you will be senile before you're thirty." "I think they got pot-smoking and masturbation mixed up." "I'm glad your mother and sister aren't in here to hear you talk like that," Fred Sr. said, shaking his head. "Talk like what? We use words like that in sex ed all of the time." "Yeah, well that's what's wrong with this country. Sex education in the schools. I don't know why I let your mother talk me into letting you take that class," Fred Sr. said angrily. "I had to take something. Everytime I asked you about anything you said I wasn't old enough," Fred Jr. explained. "You were too young," Fred Sr. said quickly. "Yeah, that's what I said," Fred Jr. said. "Dad, sixteen years old is not too young." "Well I'm still thirsty." "Well I'm still thirsty." "Go in the house and get some Kool-Aid then. I'm not going to fool with the mess in that trunk." "Will you get me a Pepsi out of the trunk Freddie?" Nonnie said in a sickly sweet voice. "Get your own damn Pepsi, I'm resting," Fred Jr. said, slouching down in the seat. "Mama! Tell Fred Jr. to get me a Pepsi," Nonnie whined, putting her head in her arms on the back of the front seat.

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"Why don’t you turn the radio on?" Fred Jr. asked hopefully. Fred Sr. leaned over and turned the radio on. Instantly an AC/DC song blasted through the car at an ear-splitting level. "You do that every time!" Fred Sr. yelled, turning down the radio so nothing could be heard.

"What?" Fred Jr. yelled.

"You do that every damn time you use the car. You turn the radio up loud and leave it that way. How the hell can you listen to something that loud?"

"It’s rock ‘n roll, Dad. Everybody listens to AC/DC loud. It’s made to play loud."

"Well that’s what’s wrong with this country. You mark my words son, rock and roll music has led to the ruination of this country," Fred Sr. said gravely.

"That and sex education classes," Fred Jr. said.

"Right, sex education classes, too."

"And foreign cars and mini-skirts and big cities and joggers and designer jeans and welfare and democrats," Fred Jr. said reciting the list from memory.

"That’s right," Fred Sr. said. Then, catching Fred Jr’s. smile, quickly changed the subject by hitting the horn three quick blasts. "Where the hell are they? If we get caught in traffic we’ll burn up twice as much gas. Does she think gasoline grows on trees?!"

"Where the hell are they! If we get caught in traffic we’ll burn up twice as much gas. Does she think gasoline grows on trees?!" Fred Jr. yelled, turning down the radio so nothing could be heard.

"Momma says stop beeping the horn so much or old Missus Higgins is going to have kittens."

"Like getting bit by the Marston’s German Shepherd?" Fred Jr. asked, gleefully.

"Because, Fred Jr.," Fred Sr. said, resisting the urge to leap in the back seat and strangle his only son. "I didn’t know your mother was a low growling noise."

"Damn right she’s dead," Fred Sr. said angrily. "What with the air conditioner and the radio running, it’s a wonder it will turn over at all."

"Why didn’t you turn it off or cut the car on to charge it up?"

"Shit!" Fred Sr. yelled.

Both children got in the car. Fred Jr. was smiling broadly.

"Get in the car now! We’ll stop by McDonald’s on the way out."

"Get in the car!" Fred Sr. demanded.

"Fred Jr. put ice down my back!" Nonnie cried.

"It hurts like hell!" Mildred shouted as she sat rigid, staring out of the front window.

"Did you take any aspirin?"

"I took a Valium. I had to take something. Honestly Fred, you and that damn horn. I wanted to tell Nonnie to tell you to stick that horn up..." She was cut off by Nonnie’s shriek. Fred Sr. let down the window and yelled back to them. "What the hell is going on?"

"Fred Jr. put ice down my back!" Nonnie cried.

"Get in the car!" Fred Sr. demanded.

"I haven’t got a Pepsi yet. It’s on the bottom."

"Get in the car now! We’ll stop by McDonald’s on the way out."

Both children got in the car. Fred Jr. was smiling broadly. "Fred Jr., will you behave?" Mildred asked wearily. "Honestly you know how old Missus Higgins is, she’ll call the police for sure. What with that horn blowing and your screeching."

"Screw old Missus Higgins!" Nonnie said, proudly.

"Nonnie!" Mildred gasped. "Where did you hear a thing like that? We don’t use language like that around here."

"Shit!" Fred Sr. yelled.

"What?" Mildred asked, turning to face Fred Sr.

"I said shit. The car won’t start."

"Are you sure?" Mildred asked, looking over at the control panel.

"Listen to this." Fred Sr. turned the key and all that was heard was a low growling noise.

"She’s dead." Fred Jr. said evenly.

"Damn right she’s dead. Fred Sr. said angrily. "What with the air conditioner and the radio running, it’s a wonder it will turn over at all."

"Why didn’t you turn it off or cut the car on to charge it up?"

"Because, Fred Jr.," Fred Sr. said, resisting the urge to leap in the back seat and strangle his only son. "I didn’t know your mother was going to take all day!"

"Oh, no you don’t. You’re not blaming me for this," Mildred said quickly.

"I’m not blaming anyone. The battery’s dead and I don’t think we’re going anywhere today," Fred Sr. said angrily.

"You mean we’re not leaving?" Fred Jr. asked, gleefully.

"No, we are not!"

Fred Sr. hit the horn in frustration. Mildred put her head in her hands. Nonnie let out a cry that could be heard three blocks away. Old Missus Higgins called the police. And no one noticed when Fred Jr., smiling, put his hands together in front of him, looked skyward, and mouthed silently — Thank You!

David Haislip
Day of the Noses
(or, When Hitchcock Met a Girl)

I was propped up against Mary Hillson
On her sofa
Talking U.S. Government
(page 383 of the Land of the Free text)
When the sky turned Black
And I saw her nose fall off
Down
Into her dress.

Dan Rather and the CBS Evening News
Came on in the afternoon
Telling everyone to hang
Buckets 'round their necks,
Else their noses would be lost.

Mr. Hillson came in the screen door
Talking about how
Fabergé was laying off more workers
And how
122 people died this morning
Standing underneath
Mount Rushmore.

He saw where Mary's glasses
Had fallen into her lap.
I sneezed,
Putting out his eye.

David Letson
Why Must We

why must we
cry like this

afraid of belting out our best songs

there is
a shapely female i want to meet

she is luring
possessively over the soda machine

i should say "hi sweetie"
but
instead i say
"EXCUSE ME MA'AM, MIND IF I GET A COKE?"

why must we shrink from ourselves like this

scared to live our best romantic poetry

there is
a metaphor in sequins
who is wearing no bra
and
stretching her thighs seductively
over by the soda machine

i should come on real cool
say "hey i think i love you"

instead
I DRINK MY COKE IN SILENT PAIN
AND THROW THE EMPTY CAN IN THE TRASH

why must we
cry like this

afraid of belting out our best songs

Bruce Potts
One Evening
The stars swim cold tonight
beyond my frost-scudding window.
Shifting in tangled bedsheets I sense
sleep invading the hall
a shadow's sound caressing
eyes frozen to lidded screens.
The bed clutches me
coxes me;
though I resist,
the tempting blackness
tears at my will like
memories

i see the blackhaired girl
pretty she loves me the blue
car carries me helpless from
her i squat naked in the play-
ground stroking my (dead) cat still
alive i kiss the blackhaired girl (clothes
on) dont leave dont leave i whisper
she does im in second grade hiding
from bullies while munching grand-
mothers cookies the blackhaired
girl says call me i lost the
number o god i run very
fast going nowhere
pleading screaming come
back

The moon floats chill and stark
beyond my frost-scudding window
this breathless night
even the ceiling can't hold back
the murmuring tide of half-remembered dreams.

Richard Whitt
OLD MAN ON THE CORNER

Old man on the corner—

Cup in one hand, Bible in the other.

He says he's a Jesus man,
and asks you through his false teeth
if you are one, too.

And if you are, he sells you a pencil
and
if you aren't, he sells you a Bible

Or a pamphlet that tells you
you're going to hell next Tuesday.

In his coat he's got a hundred stolen goodies--
Watches, necklaces, you name it.

And in his socks he's got stashed away
your choice of cigars and cigarettes.

If you're a man,
he tells you how smart and shrewd you look

And if you're a woman,
he inconspicuously tries
to look up your dress
or underneath your blouse.

Old man on the corner—
Cup in one hand, Bible in the other.

He works the streets like a pro,
and at the end of the day

 Wanders beneath the last neon sign
and sings the pigeons to sleep.

Bruce Potts
Timepiece

The birds are bailing out
Swooping from barren trees
Toward the hardening ground.
Their October voices screech
Through the thin air,
Bantering the earth worms
Buried in leafy dens,
dark and moist.

The grey clouded sun rises onto their wings
Warming their departing feathers
And the fallen leaves:
The golden red covered ground.
Now, the wind up for the new year
When the worms will emerge
into chilly rains.

Jeanmarie Rouhier

Broken

I'm a pony,
thick and strong
my fetlocks muddy white

I'm a paint
unruly and mean
I've tossed high the paddock mud,
drummed unshod hooves
on the fence-boards,
whickered and whinnied
haunting high on the dusk.

But I've tasted your bit
Cold steel, sharp and
sweet it is

and how fine
is the fit of the bridle,
girth, and stirrup

Just a nod
from polished boot-heels, sir,
and we will fly

now you may, sir,
o how
you may ride.

— Sarah Motes
Opening Night (for a Shakespearean Actor)

What's this? Anon, I'll see the fuzzy chin
And greased face of actor skilled upon
The stage. The cheers of all shall Buzzy win
When shoestain black doth streak his cheek anon!
Yet trips the player, klutz he is, as now
He enters on the stage. On arse he falls
While downstage right his maiden beckons low;
Then scarlet face doth spurn his yearning calls.
Yet lo, he rises, carries on! 'Tis not
A fool I see! His words do flow like sap
From yonder pine! (They dribble to the pot?)
But nay! they soothe; they cause the eye to nap!
A star! a star! on yonder stage doth shine!
But soon 'twill fall; if't overwhelms the mind.

Christie Moniz
Another Summer Night in Arkansas

The perfume of cut grass
hangs with the air outside the window panes.
Orion cradled low out in the east.
Clusters of moths bombard yellow porch lights.
Mosquitoes quench on soft underbelly thighs.
Gritty dirt sticks beneath feet walking across warm, tumpy linoleum.
Creaking screen doors opening into a dog's breath breeze drop closed with a crack.
Condensation wraps bottled beer and wets the palm of the young lover
Who while watching a bead of perspiration trickle down between the breasts of his wife
Slides the cold bottle across his forehead.

E. Whelpley
Inheritance

Part I: The Gift
My hands are my mother's —
the fingers bony, sharp
knuckles breaking into a fist.
The nails gnawed square
cuticle exposed,
proof of what she calls 'nervous energy'
I call maddening.
The right appendage
worn larger than the left,
wet-weather wrinkles cutting their way
through flat pasture fields of skin.

My mouth is my mother's —
a calling card
preceeding a new generation of girls.
The password a smiling full lip
opening
at the poundings of those broken fingers.

Her expansive hips are mine, as well.
A breeder's ass
"You're built to carry babies."
I've been told, plurally.

Part II: The Return
Bleeding,
bleeding,
menses of thirty-five years
12x35 equals
too many cells lost,
while the arithemetic progressions of time
control rides and lives,
bringing forth children on the sweep of a wave.

On the back of bathroom closet shelves
sit frozen in the dark
metallic blue cardboard boxes,
ephemeral roses from a phantom prom
softly pressed onto their sides.
Thorns clipped from these resurrected flowers —
women pricked and pained
by spokes that grow inside.
The blood flows,
seeking a path to least resistance
captured by pads and fibrous fingers
mini
maxi
HOSPITAL SIZE —
brainchildren of personal products factories.

Part III: Happy Birthday
My mother has turned fifty
and that liquid bearing sign
slows,
resists,
causes.

No more messages sent by the moon,
the pause arrives instead
bringing with it flashes
hot northern-light auras
that surround, exhume, and disappear,
replaced by the witness wave
salient companion of electrical force.

The pause.
Well-earned rest from traces
left by all women —
Eve's retroactive rent payment.

Women
bleeding,
bleeding.

Mother, I return to you your smile,
but your hands I will keep.

I,
who do not bleed often enough,
I will keep your hands clasped shut.
We shall grow our nails
and be old together.

Carole Nash
To Ralph and Henry

I sit in Wakefield Park,
My Walden Pond,
Seeking inspiration on the breeze,
A light rain begins to fall,
Damn its cold.
My journal grows damp
My spirits too,
If only Ralph Waldo or Henry David
Were here to show me the wonder in all this.
Possibly I should shift to a higher
Consciousness . . . Unconsciousness?
Perhaps I should shift to a higher
Consciousness . . . Unconsciousness?
There’s that wasp again,
If I am stung . . .
I flail wildly in his direction,
He is gone, but now it pours.
My buckskin coat does little
To keep me dry, and the smell . . .
I see two lovers gawking in my direction.
Is it my coat,
Or these ridiculous moccasins?
The “Western Wind” gusts again,
Carrying with it my notebook,
Unimpressed, I watch my papers tumble away.
I throw the pen after them,
A minor victory. As I stand to leave,
I catch my hair in a branch.

Christopher Whelpley

Carousel II

Dollar days, shining
round in the sunlight.
Bells jingling on ice cream trucks
like money when it falls
Onto the hot tar street.
Music and nostalgia
dripped off the ice cream, while the white truck jangled away in the heat. Eating our ice cream, we scampered along the dirt paths, strewn with broken glass and pebbles. When we cut our feet our mothers said, “Wear your shoes.” I looked out of ice blue eyes on the colors, melting like a kaleidoscope, impressionistic. The world revolved under us and as we dodged ball and played tag, the carousel spun round.
The horse’s glass bead eyes stared down at my suntanned face. I looked back, wondering, and clambered up onto the black back. My feet hung limply; I kicked gently at the smooth flanks, grasping the cool brass pole. The circle procession began. The tin organ notes felt silver cold, like ice cream in the throat. My horse shuddered and rose hesitantly in the air, unfurling black wings. Behind us a lion growled and we soared out of reach.
The world below, a small turquoise orb, spun dizzyly. I grasped the treasures of the planets in my hand as we flew toward Saturn’s brass rings, begemmed and wondrous amid the stars. I slept a bit and dreamed of enchanted stardust caking my horse’s wings.

And the organ piped
as we slid along
The sparkling circles
following dancing comets
until I slipped
from my horse’s back and
Tumbled through the black
starred night sky.

Jeanmarie Rouhier
Distance

I.
The suns rise and
Sunset again,
While all the thoughts
Continue on
Looking for their proper places,
Waiting for some star to fix them.
But the stars themselves are circling,
Looming above and so distant.
I hitchhike on that highway inside,
The circle road in motions contradictory.
I am the striped path, itself,
Ridden by passions that
Move through me passing on
Beneath the flying tires
Of countless empty cars.
Road and the traveller
Alone awaiting dawn.
Waiting for the first rays.
Waiting to be exposed.
Thinking now.
Now a child.
Now a corpse.
Antiseptic birth and death.
The hospital of the mind.
The chamber of birth and death.
Dead thoughts hidden beneath charnel bedsheets.
Dead thoughts feeding infants newborn upstairs,
Given life in wards on higher levels,
Given pointless toys and pressed close to a breast.
Wandering through faceless wards, the infants
Moving towards, and the aged drifting away
From identity, from the universe.
I know no longer where the body ends
And where the universe begins.
Sometimes, completely gone, distant,
Living poems, yet scarce able to write,
I feel about to be absorbed,
But a word assembled with the others
In poems of humanity
Performing the rituals
Storing dangerous energy.
All the while preparing
For a great gathering.
II.
It seems a simple thing
To feel closeness.
On this grassy embankment in the sun,
To share a snack, a cigarette, a song.
A sentence given meaning
From some warm spring breeze.
It is easy to care here.
But let us descend
Off this sunny hill into the night.
The darkness drives us in circles.
And events seem random.
The word is given to fall together.
Yet all the while separate,
Within ourselves.
We must go now into a different night,
A night within the stary blackness
Of our eyes.
Where the only cloud is but a tear,
And through this cloud
Vague light appears.
It draws us, despite its dark forebodings.
Our sense of wonder rises like a wind
Parting the clouds.
We view that column of light
That joins our new stary grove
With this old earth —
A white-hot wire stretched.
Behold this axis — beyond intellect.
Beyond emotion
Past doubt and fear and pain.
Around this pole the stars are circling
All the elements
And aspects of the mind.
And yet from each the balance point is separate
A disturbing distance.
Such as we felt that strange night.
Feel now the source of distance
That thread of awareness
Observes the slowly changing stars.
The sky pales, the stars fade.
We stand at the foot
Of a new embankment wet with rain.
Which fell from heavy clouds
Last night
That passed overhead, then moved on.

III.
I can see by the time on your face I must go,
Descend to the caverns of artifice. I see many
pointers there,
Some point up and opposite them, others point downwards,
And what creates one creates the other — slow falling
Droplets of water from damp, stony ground. Beneath the
Endless blue sky above these caves there were no directors
of directions.
Only columns of light connecting personal universes with the pole
On which the earth revolves, spinning through the abyss,
Circling the source of light and heat — the central burning orb —
Burning as the fire it generates, inconceivable mass.
Blinding as beauty — wide as the heart that beats beneath
These cold caves. Here in yellow torchlight we wander
Between the fires of the core and those of the sun. Here
We meet in catacombs, twisted, leading down dim mazes.
Footsteps move more slowly the lower we venture.
Some have stopped here, we pass their still, bewildered figures
For this is a realm of no motivation to motion
And those who go on are ones who have lost their need
for meaning.

Douglas R. Stailey
Out of the Black

Gray and charcoal gray sky streaked
With bits of blue-black haze and smoke
Crickets chirping, whispering
    Hoot owls broadcasting, too cool
Out of the black
Roll screaming, four-door monsters
Steel skin and polished chrome
Shining wicked and wild under the streetlamps
Loud taunts and burnt rubber
Obliterate the crickets' steady hum
Distant light off the night freight 'round the bend
Brakes slamming, steam whistle pierces muggy night
    Detroit's monuments to gluttony
Lie dead still and deformed
Near stacks of creosote-soaked rail ties
Sunrise drying the oil-slick wood.

Mike Tucker
"Goms to plah" (said she) but listen I not for she played no Goms with me.

"Listen, little Gommer," (says I) "I'll plah no Goms until you plah with my!"

So Gom plahing did we and oh so fun they were for mwh (I asked!) what fun they were for she?

"Playing Goms," (says she) iz not suh heezy for mwh but she liked fun of others to see.

which was sad thing, me to find and I sat to think of Goms, The she-pleasing kind

Then Goms a plenty had we Though not so heezy for mwh, but oh so fun for she.

David Bradley
A Cup Of Coffee

Please let me see
You pour it so
I can know

If it's weak or strong

Before it goes
Tumulting southward
Scorching my throat.

Garrett Boehling
I awoke from a vivid dream.
A cool breeze started and drove it out the window.
Something about writing a song
With only one note
And, I believe, two instruments.
But I reached for my glasses.
Putting on these stained, smeared lenses
The world appeared.
It looked like yesterday and the day before.
“One day is like another”
Or, rather, all my days are as one day.
With a long spiral to traverse
My needle sticks in one groove.
And all my nights are as one night,
With one dream, of better hours,
I had thought to fill these spaces,
This white between the blue.
Imagination needs desire to build on
And I desire nothing
Except a different time or place.
Life has become a vigil.
I keep the fire from these breezes.
Deep within it waits to torch the dry leaves of autumn.

Douglas R. Stailey
Dachau in the Spring

So you still want to go to the Oktoberfest.
Yes, well that is great fun,
but Munich is much better during the spring;
how did they say it? "Frühling ist bes" —
Quite true, the fall is, as you put it;
much more exciting, but the spring is much more
... important ... Especially for a Jew.

Oh please my friend, do not get angry.
I know you intend to go there;
I know you will take time out from your festivities,
reflect, and reverently bow your head
before the emaciated images.
Yes, you will renew the strength to say
never again.

I will even give you directions to get there . . .
... it is north of the city . . .
Yes, quite right, you will recognize the name.

But as I was saying, spring is a better time.
I know, for that is when I was . . .
It was a beautiful day,
with a benevolently blue sky
and a warming sun —
Exactly! Yes, quite absurd.

That is why . . .
Do you not . . .

Better yet
(I think this will make you see.):
On my recent trip back
I saw a bus loaded with teenagers —
Bavarians with their thick accents
bathed in the giggles and banter of adolescence
This bus pulled up at the gate,
(I am sure some go every spring,
so you will see some too.)
Anyway, what is good is that you see them
laughing behind the barbed wire.

Do you think I am crazy?
(Your eyes say "meshuggener.")
No, I know . . .

When you see children laugh
as they walk towards the ovens:
when you see them engrave their initials:
when you see their innocent smiling faces
leave the dormant gas chambers . . .
These things you will never forget.

And after all this,
you will come to the plaque.
And though it may say
"Never Again"
in many different languages,
you will know that these words are not enough.
Yes, yes, it is up to us,
but really, it is up to you now.

Yes, by all means my friend,
Dachau in the spring.

Jay Friedman
Cult of Eros

At the start the young man hangs,
in the smoke and beechbubbles
that flow in communion, back from
the red-robed women who exalt
sibilant thrumming of drums
in their seductive gyrations

to join in the frenzy of worship
he pairs off with one
who in her delirium
tucks her head into his neck —
the perfume she is anointed with
conquers the incense as
the spirit rises.

entwined, they see candles as
fueled by the damp oval patches
where their flesh meets and
in the hymns hear each other
whispering their names and secrets
that promise a higher place
beyond the pulpit

Later, by a burning hearth
he becomes a blushing altarboy
catching up open flames in his
hollow bronze bell, tenuously
as if the whole congregation
watches, until darkness is broken
only by glistening ash

Karim Khan
Contributors to this exhibit:

B.J. Daniels
Laura Jane Woodridge
Walt Bradshaw
Keith Mills

scale 1" = 1"
It was not a success

Emily Sue Clark
Señor Sigmund

Señor Sigmund, the Spanish psychologist,
with his knowing twinkling eyes
and curly mustache —

He knows all neuroses,
he cures all imbalances.

(His mail order Ph.D. perches on the wall)

Behind his couch is a banjo,
plastic nose and eyeglasses,
maracas, and a big sombrero.

He'll stop a patient's wretched childhood
by
dancing a mean fandango
in the middle of his office floor.

He looks like he could have been
a mischievous pirate in some past life —

And he knows how to tease away the ache
that splits the heart like a butcher knife.

Blithely he curses neuroses,
singing Spanish songs —
Tickling the funny bones of the men
And winking at the senoritas.

Bruce Potts

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Bruce Potts
The albino
Sailor
Lay still
In the white
Sand
Daring not
To light
His cigarette
Lest he destroy
What he'd made
Of himself.

Garrett Boehling