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Trinity College

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THE TRINITY REVIEW
WINTER PORTRAITS 1977

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W.E.E.
Daphne Fullerton
Helen Lawson
Aaron Thomas
Michael Carter
Megan Ryan
Kathy Koch
William Epes
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Ellen Sherman
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The Trinity Review, XLII, No. 1, is published at Lithographics, Inc., Canton, by the students of Trinity College, Hartford, Ct. 06106.
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it just so happened that we were in Finland

There is no passion on the shimmering sidewalk. The rain has sent it all to Hell.
Stalking the wet streets in Search of Someone
Your feet leave lighter than white prints
where the mud smeared by rain
makes its way underground.
I echo
tricklingly soft.
Straining to hear
you See what is never far from Echo:
Narcissus.
Asymmetrically mirrored on the cement
The moon serves as a lamp,
To illumine your Way.
There is no rest; the clouds cover the moon
And I doubt if it will ever re-appear.
There is no rest.
The Night forges chains of seclusion
— which encircle & strangle everyOne,
— which caress the moon in sheets of novas
under blankets of Empty Space,
— which enwrap the Morning
In a more than licentious embrace
as the monotonous rhythm of your feet
click-clack your way to the grave.

—W.E.E.
A visit
(For Nancy)

We could not discuss anything with six children around and you set on trying the popcorn-maker. Still, you stripped unasked while the Japanese girl sat unblinking under her black suit. Face swam lined, sun hardened, and there was something sharp cutting the air, a cold coming on, you said. Dear! Stop fleecing the sky! The body, too, is a liar. Grass won't do it, nor young elephant boys, tail-trunked, parading to be whipped. Lie still, point ears. Let crickets overtake the drum, turn finger tips lemon tender, till pupils kiss the retina.

—Helen Lawson
The Best Country In The World

Aaron Thomas

1. Yellow rainclouds roamed Boston, hung down removed, divvied up the white city sky. But Alexos straightened his back to worry seriously, about the heavy gray front off to the west. A long sweating dark sack of rain. Marino jogged over and looked up cheerfully, worried for a little too, in his way, but moved on when Peru yelled, “Play!”

The bare hand wiped across the bare stomach, smooth. Most Greeks had thrown off shirts and emulated the latin game, the nonchalance. Arrogance and a hand upraised. Careless skill.

It was early and the ball moved quickly, sought silently by both sides. Alexos was not quite in the game, early. He did not quite grasp the game being played. There was pace to be gauged, temperaments to watch. Now, Alexos felt simply shirtless under a sky that threatened. One of the shirtless ones …

Large dirt patches scarred the field, offset the used green like a great relief map. The area was huge, boundless, a city park. Sidelines were improvised; play swelled to trees on the left, on the right to a city street. Goals, fashioned of paper bags and street shoes, cut down the long runs, stood as symbols of a white rectangle and a yellow plastic net, a huge crowd baying on from behind, wolves of Maracana, demons from Bilbao, Liverpool, the Stadio Olimpico in Rome. The park was empty, save for three drunks who grazed in the distance, and a loud softball game off next to some trees, to the left.

It was six o’clock, and in June there were still hours of light. Alexos stretched his legs, back in the defense, just now awake from his day job. Size tens for the customer, boxes in the back room. Two girls, he noticed, crossed their legs under the trees, watching the softball, ignoring the soccer.

American, he thought, probably, and ignorant. Alexos sighed, mulled over the softball; drinking beer while they play, their large round bellies. The girls wore the bright blue and white shirts of the team in the field. Alexos felt a drop in his eye, knew it was only sweat. He could see just the backs of the two girls’ heads.

Dimi, Thrasos; Jimmy, Riva and Marino. A wind blew off the river and the ball had moved five times. Alexos turned back to the offense, caught in a first sweat. The long day escaped, with Marino’s run down the wing. An elegant looping ball and a shot, wide. Breathless, those with no shirts trotted back, eyes down. They had been the first to stamp order on the flow. The Greeks all felt close to the symmetry, and returning, eyes on the turf, they smiled, hushed.

“Marinito, that was good,” from Chile, whose girth was enormous, who was twice a
"Malaga, slow down, Marino."

Play continued. The running picked up, slowed, started up again. Alexos could see the rain now, off over Lexington maybe, or further west. Now he desired the ball. He decided the old men now should give him a chance with the ball. Those with the large muscular stomachs should let him on in.

But then Alexos drew up, leaned over begging down for air. Fatigue worked suddenly on him, from out of the heat. Chile walked alongside; malaga, it was hot. The runs now dropped from their early crisp pace to become irregular, uneven, half-told. Energy, which should have been unleashed precision, coughed and faltered and died in the midfield. The two Haitians stopped to curse generally; first in French and then with the arm, for the ball.

Mario was diminutive and Italian, with a little well-cut beard, like Lenin; evidently he was fouled badly. He grabbed the ball and, holding it over his head, stopped the game.

"Malaga!"

"Malagia"

"Mario, come on"

Mario turned in a circle, swore violently in English, presented his palm to the white sky.

"I don't know, man, I don't know"

He held the ball in his left arm, a tyrant. He reenacted the foul; a crowd closed on him. Across the field, players stopped in twos and threes, too angry to catch their breath.

"Mario, malaga!"

Mario proposed a penalty shot, that perhaps the Greek in question should be censured, thrown out, hurt in some way. All movement now, all game momentum slowed, stopped. Both goalies lay down. Alexos dripped, watching the front move in behind its own heavy wet air. His arms created sweat nonstop.

"Mario malaga it's past six"

"I don't care, man, I don't care"

The two Africans huddled over the issue on the wing. Hungary, who spoke neither English nor Spanish, and who was rumored to have a family, walked around Mario in narrowing circles, waving his arms. Most Greeks stood reticent, watched Hungary's moves with great affection. The air now stank of rain; and under new bursts of wind, in walked Bruno.

"Mario," he said, softly. Bruno's eyes were blue and his hair was blonde, but he was an Italian.

A long stinging string of adjectives, from Italy, rent the air.

Next to Alexos, Marino's eyes watered, and he laughed.

"Malaga ..."

The two goalies rose to their feet as the ball was put back into play.

The game hush had changed, into a dull resistance. Holding off the loss of breath, sweat around the eyes. Neither side locked the ball in, each move ended in a sticky challenge. Nothing any longer was easy.

A drunk in a rippled business suit fell on the right wing. Play had to step around; once he was used to help a dribble — he was an obstacle, an island, but at that intrusion he sat up and muttered.

The storm front now lit the game with a light that promised nothing. A cool, eery impermanence. Alexos watched the two girls raise their attention to the sky, drop their hair further down their backs. They stayed turned away.

Skills loosened. Ivory Coast, attacking for the side who wore shirts, pulled up and claimed in a British accent that he'd been kicked.

"Oh come on, that was a bad foul"

Players unaccountably ignored him, and ran on. Alexos could tell that, quietly, seated in his pride, Ivory Coast was furious. But the ball was away and the rain sent wind ahead and Alexos felt he should continue.

He moved forward.

Alexos' generation could turn the English on or off; he could sound American, and, during the day, he did. Now he swore in deep Greek, malaga, for the ball. Alexos was not six feet, but, thin, and sinking his head between two widely boned shoulders, he appeared taller.
Most important, Alexos moved easily with the ball, moved easily among the adults, stepped without fear into the adult game.

A fellow Greek heeded him, shoved the ball out in front, in his way. The ball: white, with red spots, pentagons. The last light before the storm dulled all shadow; clear and dark and menacing: top speed. Alexos received the ball in full stride on the wing, shifted neatly inside Chile and one other defender, nodded for the goalie toward the near side, stroked the ball firmly and quickly inside the far post, on the ground: a goal.

A lovely girl stood out on the wing, watching. She turned in a circle, smiled. Smoothed back brown hair. Inexplicably, all wind had died, underneath a dark certainty: half the sky. Alexos narrowed his eyes her way; perhaps she had seen his goal. From a distance, Alexos felt she might be Greek. Her pleasure, observing the sport, seemed genuine.

She tugged with one hand on a faded red T-shirt; her blue shorts were very brief, her legs ... athletic. At once, Alexos felt great joy and, deep inside, great pain.

Her presence stunned the game out of its lethargy. Play fell back into the quiet skill, tackles that hurt. The girl freshened the pace. The air remained windless and humid. Bruno ran past her on the wing. Alexos moved the ball with his heel and felt sure she had watched him at it. He wanted to hide, he felt he should run away; perhaps he should walk over to her, and talk.

And then, the cloud's shadow; cool, wet wind. Mario held the ball aloft, buoyed it over a huge wave of dismay.

For in marched the Americans.

They were a group of eight. There was one in front who seemed vocal almost at once, without saying a word. His legs were tanned evenly, back and front. Needlessly, carefully, his clothing was laundered and all white. White socks, white shorts, a white band of cloth around his head. This one approached the girl from behind, touched her at the waist. Alexos watched her smile and distance her eyes, happy at encroachment, at the stoppage of play. The weather seemed imminently cruel. Life itself Alexos found lacking.

The Americans wanted to play.

Mario held the ball over his head.

The sky shook and threatened.

"Let them play, it's going to rain"

"Malagia, no way"

"Play on"

"The game is closed"

"They'll ruin it"

Bruno stared at the girl. Several of the Americans bowed their blonde heads expectantly, awaiting a favorable decision. They looked shy. Thunder rolled in the distance; a new wind chilled. They really did seem to want to share in the fun.

Ivory Coast and two other Africans quit and spat on the grass as they walked off. Chile followed. Rain would arrive at any moment. Chile cursed and stared violently their way. Half those in the game didn't care, but pawed the ground, nervous as animals, smelling the storm. They stood still and dripped fine humid sweat. The girl tossed her hair and turned her back, upset. Mario spun the ball privately on one hand. Alexos swallowed and peered over; the girl they had brought to watch.

"Oh c'mon, let them in"

"Malagia—"

"Hello, let's go"

"Divide up! Four go one way, four take off shirts"

The rain held, somehow. The four Americans who had tugged off shirts, for the first few minutes never saw the ball. They ran a great deal. Alexos received the ball from Dimi, moved it on over to Thrasos. One thriving Greek family, keeping it for themselves. The Americans had tanned even their stomachs, their lower backs down to their shorts. They ran violently, pointlessly, in long circles; yelling for the ball.

"Here!"
“Right here!”
“I’m open!”
“Square! Square!”
Their shouts rang out from some muscular spot deep in their throats. Somehow they felt they deserved the ball.
“Good hustle Nick!”
“Kick it, kick it!”
“Nice one!”
And Alexos slowed, succumbed. Perhaps this was inevitable, that these people should take the game down, tear it apart. They were a tidal force; they had been closed off long enough.
“Here John.”
“Pete’s open, Pete’s open!”
“God dammit!”
The girl stood with her arms crossed, watched bored. Alexos found the Americans’ style perplexing. Blind running, like maddened bulls. Their socks bore stripes, rose close to the knee, their socks must have been laundered endlessly. Most sported forty dollar shoes. Alexos knew they’d been weaned on huge suburban fields, virgin turf, sidelines of girls. Endless space in which to move.
Then suddenly the wind insisted, and Alexos reached out his palm. The girl was watching him now; he could swear she was looking his way. Now the sky blackened, a larger burst of cool wind bent the trees back, and this time the rain was real.
Most Greeks had already slowed to a walk; incredulous, they watched the Americans continue to run around.
The girl moved under cover, holding bare arms, under a tree. Mario, diminutive and Italian, fell in with Alexos.
“Look at them, man, amazing”
“Energy to death, malaga”
Two Americans jogged by.
“That was a good workout, John”
“Mm, killer”
Mario spat.
“Will you look at that? Will you look at that?”
The one in white trotted up to the girl, tossed one arm around her shoulders, panting. Alexos narrowed his eyes, shy, in admiration. The girl looked up into this white American’s eyes; now she was looking back. The white American walked loose with her, laughed easily; he did not seem to care. Now he had dropped his arm and spoke with his American friend. Alexos swallowed his style whole.
“Oh, man,” Mario fumed. “These Americans, man, look at them.”
The rain came down.
“Goddamn capitalisti, all of them.”
Alexos smiled, blank.
“And you are.”
“Socialisti! And you can count on that! Do you hear me, Americans?”
Mario barked that out; Alexos fixed his smile, and walked. Inside, however, he stood horrified.
The girl, almost to the edge of the field, glanced to the side, and back. She dragged her foot behind, as if to slow them all down. The girl cared for him now, he knew.
“Look at their football; it is chaos, it’s like”
Alexos’ face hardened.
“They’re, you know, they are learning”
“Garbage, man, garbage.”
And then, instantly, on came the thunder, and down it poured.
Running next to Mario for cover, Alexos murmured, an eye on the girl, not quite loud enough to be heard —
“You’re wrong, man, Mario, you’re wrong . . . this is the best country in the world, man, the best in the world . . .”
Assissi

San Francesco brings frescoes to our sunlit eyes; the cooling damp of church walls prickles our skin as we walk the side aisle to the altar. Outside we carry knapsacks of pears and skimmed mozzarella up that hillside road leading to the noon sky, and sitting brisk atop the small mountain wall we embrace our lunch.

You and I have begun to unravel in Assissi, and we take our siesta in the long grasses just outside of town. Tripping down mountain road, we delight in song, in the fullness of our stomachs, as tongues falter foreign lyric, and breath comes white in the brackish air.

—Kathy Koch
Kneeling as the Trees Gather Lightning

Jackfired October, the applefalling
Fruit of nestbirds feathering South.
Six dozen leaves lie down at calling
Winter boring into trees, sing:
Oh, the hilltop cabin-cottage!
Oh, the cedared-edge of pine!
Earth has appled, and so our tillage
Timbered for the seed to bind.
The sun sets red, and fire resounds;
It turns the stars ablaze with trees.
The warmth is years, the circle round
And ringing of the voice we breathe!
By the oxfire harvest, by this barkburning time
Our breath shows up in steam and light.
The land so old and lined with frost,
Still stands a prayer split out in wood:
These blessing hands, our bearing sons,
The table hot of the applemeat,
From the honeypull of harvest come
Our feasts, the reasons, we have and reap.

—William Epes
Missing The Meteor Shower

At dinner when our conversation died about the pork chops, lobster pie, we overheard a stranger say the earth was due to travel through what was left of the Swift-Tuttle comet that night, each light no larger than a grain of sand: he’d held the woman’s hand and whispered, it will be amazing, moonless, want to stay awake? So we, who more than wished Kohoutek had consumed the sky, turned backwards in the bed to have the window at our heads, and, propped up into pillows, watched, but having lost enthusiasm somewhere, slept. Waking out of nowhere, I remembered in your open, sleeping mouth the lake as black as asphalt, steaming, on the shore of which we’d eaten and kept secret from each other it was sewage that we smelled. Waking and not knowing what had been or not that night, my consolation was the cat: with green, black-seeded, shining eyes, it came, stalked up my sheeted legs to do its nightly kneading, claws extended, on my stomach, while you slept.

—Carol Henrikson
"Somehow it never was convincing when my mother insisted I was beautiful because she was so ugly herself," Mary explained to the cartoon psychiatrist.

On a Sunday morning, unexpectedly sunny like Sundays shouldn't be, Mary Held woke up prematurely because of loud thumping above her head. The first thing she did was to congratulate herself for having another psychoanalytical dream, and in animated technicolor, blatantly symbolic! She was beginning to understand herself. She sat up quickly, instinctively turning to the other bed in the room; it was made up in designer sheets but had not been slept in. "As if Jan would ever be in her beautiful bed," Mary said aloud — talking aloud was a very recent development. She'd read that a good way to learn about yourself was to vocally acknowledge your thoughts. "Would be quite a surprise to find her in it, though not a particularly delightful one certainly." She removed her hot feet from under the quilt and sat Indian style examining an extraordinarily long toenail. "I like living alone, it's better alone" repeatedly ran through her head. Above her head some ass-hole-ular — she detested that word, really trendy these days — freshmen were playing a song by America and jumping to it. She detested both them and the song. That's three detests in one morning, she said smiling, and last night you vowed, again, to start anew, to be less miserable. Ah, how easily the resolute vows of the late night hours vanish during one's sleep. Even if one
swears to change in the morning.

Mary acknowledged the knock on her door with an “I’m not dressed!” “Telephone, Mary” came the reply, that was Sandy, just another girl she didn’t know well. It wasn’t mutual dislike just mutual disinterest. She had a similar “relationship” with many people; she could talk for five minutes with anyone. It’s better that way. And at least she wasn’t the kind of person who sent everyone in the world a birthday card like a meticulous aunt who has nothing better to occupy her time with, what a waste. Occasionally she joined a group going out for ice cream or a campus party but she always felt like a stiff, like an extra fourth person, or an extra sixth. It’s better that way. As a sophomore, she could have taken a single room but Jan had asked her because her parents weren’t to know she intended to live with her boyfriend all year. And Mary hoped it might be a little less lonely. No, that’s not true, she knew exactly what she was getting into, she only agreed to the set-up because, like Jan, she wanted to please her parents. And her parents would never have believed she had chosen to live alone. They would have started an investigation into why she didn’t have any friends. Well that wasn’t quite fair but she did take it for her folks, and maybe also so it wouldn’t look like she was such a loser. Often she fantasized that Jan and Peter would break up and Jan would have to move into the room for real; she pretended to do this once every month when her mom insisted on coming up from Rye to take her out for the day. Jan’s mom thinks Mary is a pleasant, quiet girl. The phone, Mary said in a loud voice, triumphant: I’m not that quiet really. She wrapped herself in her robe and walked down the hall.

“And are they nice, the other girls on the hall this year?” her mother asked. It was about the tenth question she had asked and Mary decided she’d better dig up a poly-syllabic reply this time.

“Extremely pleasant,” she said (pause). “I like it here.”

“Well, that’s great, keep it up cookie and we’ll speak with you next week or so. Everyone sends their love as always ... (distantly) what?”

“Right Mom.”

“Oh, yes, Dad just reminded me, Mare, you’ll never believe who came by the other day, Star. She’s loving B.U. and she wanted to know how things were with you. I’m sending you her address and phone, I hope you try to get in touch. She’s such a sweet girl and seems so fond of you, she’s always trying to ...”

“Right Mom, hey listen I’ll call you soon (long pause and definitely awkward). Take care okay? Bye.”

“Well okay, bye.”

Am I an unfriendly person? Mary asked herself readapting her Indian style pose on her quilt once more. Well if I am it’s my parents’ and brother’s fault for making me this way, for always making me feel inferior, “everyone sends their love as always” — they don’t care at all how I am, what I’m doing. And Star, sweet? She’s really the one to blame. I wonder what she looks like these days, I wonder if she knows she’s ugly yet. She’s probably still counting how many friends she has and posting the results, she wouldn’t even need her toes now I bet. God, I’ve become the bitch ... I’m a miserable person. Mary sat up hard against the backboard. No, I’m not really, I’m not, but Star’s at least partially to blame. For such a long time she dictated my life.

“Is Mary in Mrs. Held?”

“Sure, she’s in her room I think, working I believe but go right on up girls.”

“Thanks, come on Susie,” Star said already on the stairs. The girl behind her smiled at Mrs. Held then followed quickly behind Star.

Mary heard them coming, put down her pen and shoved the piece of paper she had been writing on into the top desk drawer. She stood up and was at the door when Star and Susie entered.

“Hi guys, what you up to?” Mary asked.

“Even better, what are you up to? Working?, on a Friday night?” Star looked past Mary to the empty desk, “We’ve been fooling around at my house, Susie’s sleeping over tonight.”

“Oh. Nah, I wasn’t working, I was just writing a letter to my grandparents.”

“Oh good, God I couldn’t believe you were doing homework, we don’t even have that much
this week,” Star, who had continued to stare at the desk now walked over to the record player which was on a coffee table under many crowded shelves. “Let’s play your James Taylor album.”

“Okay, have a seat,” Mary said taking out the album. Susie sat on the rug but Star took a small wooden box off the lowest shelf and opened it, “What’s this? Oh, junkie jewelry.”

“It’s not all junk,” Mary said, the album began to play. Star didn’t respond but picked up several items individually and frowned at each as she examined them. She was tall for fourteen and skinny, her face looked too old for her gawky body.

“Well what would you like to do?” Mary asked.

“Nothing, Susie wanted to hear the album so you guys can just sit there, I feel like looking around, you have so much junk around here Mary. I’ve never really looked at half your stuff.”

“Yeah, I like to save things.”

Star was now standing on the end of the bed reaching for something on the top shelf.

“Hey Star your shoes are muddy,” Mary said.

“Jeez, you sound like my mother, sor-ree,” Star jumped off the bed and gave the spread a careless brush. She fell to the rug beside Susie, a large tin safety box in her hands, “Hey, Suz, I got the goods.”

“What is it?”

“We’ll soon see.”

“I think it’s locked,” Mary said.

“No it’s not,” the top fell over and Star dumped the contents out between her legs.

Mary watched as Star scavenged through papers and trinkets. She studied a card which had a large pink rose, fully blossomed, on the front and a poem in gothic ink inside. “Whoa, a religious birthday card, from Jimmy Miles. He’s such a queer. What are you saving this for?” Star tossed it and picked up a Christmas card evidently put out by the same company. “When did he give you these? Oh, this one’s really sweet, ‘Will you meet me after the service Sunday?’ Look Susie.” Susie looked but didn’t say anything.

“God I’d get rid of these if I were you.” When Star got up, Mary, whose face was deeply flushed, stuffed everything into the box, closed it, and shoved it against the wall.

Star had gone over to the desk and sat down in the chair.

“Should I turn the record over?” Susie asked.

“Let’s go downstairs and get some soda,” Mary said.

“You two go ahead, this is fascinating,” Star pulled the bottom drawer open. “I’m having so much fun. What’s this?” she took out a manilla folder. “Poems, I can’t believe you still write poems, Mare, you told me you had stopped.”

“I haven’t written them in years.”

“Then what are you saving these for?”

“I don’t know, I just saved them.”

“It’s stupid. C’mon I’ll throw them out for you, I’d love some soda anyway,” Star took the folder and walked out of the room. Susie and Mary followed. Please let my parents be in the kitchen, Mary prayed but they were not. Mary heard them listening to the television in their bedroom which was downstairs. They had converted the garage into a bedroom so that Mary and her two brothers could each have their own room upstairs. They had given Mary their old room because it had a private bathroom and she was the only girl.

In the kitchen Mary watched as Star ripped the sheets of poems in half and buried them in the trashcan. Her eyes filled up as she thought of the poems’ grave alongside soiled paper plates from that night’s beans and franks dinner. She hated Star for doing it and she hated herself and Susie for standing there and watching. And the next morning she hated herself again for not having gone to recover them from the trash. She could have copied them over and hidden them in a place where Star would never have found them. She even knew which place she could have put them in. It was a perfect place.

Mary fell out of this reverie at one o’clock. The sky had clouded over though it was still pleasant outside. Was she going to spend another whole day sitting on her bed? No. She moved to Jan’s bed and stretched out on her side. Her feet were cold so she got under the designer sheets. She now stared at her messy bed, I’ve attained a new perspective, she said
loudly. It's better this way. But who am I to blame? Why was I so weak? And how could Mom say Star was sweet? But then I never told her about the poem incident. Her counsellor at the Open-Doors school, a self-development school that had special group therapy sessions, had called her on this very fault many times, had attacked her, "Mary how can you expect them to understand things you never tell them about?" But what about all the things she told them about and they still misunderstood or handled improperly? Her counsellor and class didn't understand these things, they seemed to side with her parents. "We won't judge your problems, we'll all try to help each other reflect on them and suggest possible solutions." Bullshit, they had sided with her mother against her in the shorts episode — that was the last time she had gone to session — and even if the story showed her mom had been supportive it should have been obvious that she had fed Mary lies which messed her up later when she realized that's what they were. No, the class didn't even think of things like that. They just encouraged her to talk, then blamed her. Mary snickered, she could blame her Open-Doors class.

"Come on Mary, anything, any lousy memory you can muster from your childhood. How about an example of parental misunderstanding, you've complained often about that?"

"All right, here's an example. My best friend Star and I went to the same overnight camp though our parents had seen to it that we were in separate bunks. Anyway one time, a few weeks before camp was going to start, I went clothes shopping with Star and her mother. Star had really thin legs and mine have always been rather hefty... oh, I don't know I guess they're not hefty but compared to Star's they were. She filled out a lot later though, I even think she has to watch her weight now. Star was buying these short-shorts and they looked great on her but we both agreed my legs were too fat for them. So I bought this long pair of shorts, Bermuda length, even though I had bought another pair like them a few weeks earlier which my mother hadn't liked much. When I got home she asked me to model what I bought for her and my dad, who couldn't have cared less but always came to watch, and she got really mad when she saw them and started yelling at me, calling me an idiot, that the shorts were stupid and impractical and why did I want to hide my legs when I had lovely ones? My dad nodded in agreement with her. "My legs are fat," I said, "Star agrees with me." "Star's legs are too skinny, you have beautiful, shapely legs." "You're crazy," I said which did it, I was sure she was going to hit me so I ran up to my room. She kept demanding at the door that I open up, that she just wanted to explain to me that I was being silly, but I had locked my door and stayed in my room all night. When I woke up in the morning there was a note under my door. My mother had apologized for getting so angry and wrote that she wanted to "reiterate for the umpteenth time," I still remember her words, that I had a gorgeous figure and should show off my legs."

Suddenly Mary laughed to herself then out loud at herself. It was all sort of silly. And if she went back to Open-Doors she could tell them how she had a hearing problem which no one knew about when she was little. She could tell them how she was yelled at for not paying attention and for not listening when in fact she couldn't hear very well. She didn't remember it but her mother had talked about it. If she went to Open-Doors she could tell them how that must have further contributed to her feelings of inferiority. Or she could tell them how she used to leave the room whenever the family was sitting together after dinner, or how she used to pretend she was sleeping so she wouldn't have to join them on Sunday mornings, or how she hated being touched, especially by her father, she was sure that was quite significant. She wasn't sure which of these details were most significant. Aren't you Mary? Really? Mary laughed loudly and thought this was probably a good development, laughter from a loser. Maybe she would keep laughing, maybe she would even start to write poetry again — not next semester but the one after that, she could take the workshop class. Mary laughed uncontrollably, and then abruptly she stopped. She pulled her feet out from under Jan's sheets—she was suddenly sweaty, her feet were clammy, her palms moist. Why not act now? Go ask Beth next door if she'd like to come in, just for a while, come talk? She could make some coffee, there was that unopened jar of hot chocolate mix. She decided not to. Slowly Mary pushed her feet under the sheets once more, she felt chilled. She wiped her eye on her nightgown sleeve, and went to sleep.
Pedestals

Gazing up the gliding curves of her marble dress
slanting creases, smooth belly, whiteness in her face
The same crowds from Count Orgaz's burial stare:
black robes and pointed beards.
This posed woman, a tossed rag slipping to her soft knees,
gleams in whiteness high above the dark crowds.
The graceful arm bends. The soft smile caresses
the murmuring below like a gentle rush of a fluttering fan.

Mumblings
in winding, narrow streets with lean, limping dogs
peeing between cobblestones.
White stucco houses, wrinkled women in black
The bright sunlight blazes.
The rush of sounds slow.
The white-faced woman
Wanders down sidewalks dressed in white linen
A hush;
she slides past the fixed eyes.
They reach for the edge of her swishing skirt.
She climbs the steps.
Feather trees slam against the stone cathedral.
Darkness.
Bloody Christs crucified over and over.
Around the bend a Mary in rich blue.
Whispers of prayers
bent women with clasped hands
They gaze up to gentle-smiled Mary
encased in glass.

—Helen Bartlett
Black Iris
(after a painting by Georgia O'Keefe)

Turning eyes;
Night's jubilee.
Georgia's world slips in.
Unfolding flowers bloom
In flushed rose thighs.
Skyward they flew,
Angels all about,
Wings beating,
Bleeding ethereally.
In orchid light,
Like Ariel, I flirt.
Dancing on the leaves,
Scratching their thin souls,
Sipping nectar lips.
Ariel awakened,
Seeds rising with the breeze,
The black iris weeps
As her hilum sparkles
With daybreak's first sweat.

—Jeremy B. Meyer
Carry On

John Sandman

It is June 1970, and this is the biggest concert of the summer. You are lying on a blanket, alone in the middle of a huge crowd. There are empty beer cans scattered all around you. You still have some full ones in the cooler, but you don’t feel like drinking them.

You can feel the people who are sitting around you staring. They must be wondering why you are alone. You wonder if they saw you when Janet was there, if they saw her go dancing off towards the stage with that guy with the long blond hair. You don’t know which is worse: having them think that you came to a concert alone, or having them know that you came to a concert with a girl, and that she took off on you.

The band sings, “Carry on love is coming,/ Love is coming to us all.” But you know that love isn’t coming. Up ahead of you, there is a big crowd of people trying to get into the concert hall from their lawn seats, so that they can be closer to the band. Some policemen and security men have formed a line to block them out. It looks like an extra point attempt with the lucky ones bursting over the line into the concert hall to block the kick. The unlucky ones get stepped on and mangled, and they scream, but you can’t hear their screams over the music. And behind you there is some guy yelling for everyone to sit down so that he can see the stage. But the people who are standing are dancing and enjoying themselves, and they don’t hear him. He starts to throw beer cans at them. You don’t think much of it until one lands near you, and you realize that he is throwing full beer cans. You want to turn around and scream that he is a fucking idiot, that he could kill someone. But you don’t.

You lean your head back too far, and you realize that you’ve had too much to drink. When you jerk your head forward, the world looks like a television screen, but the vertical hold isn’t adjusted. You hug your knees for a while and it passes. You try and figure out what went wrong. This is the biggest concert of the summer, and it’s the first time that you’ve been able to drive a car on a date. You just turned seventeen last week, and because you took Driver’s Ed, you can drive a car at night. You didn’t know how your father would react when you mentioned the concert, his forehead wrinkled up to say, “No,” but when you mentioned that you had a date his expression changed. “Oh, the Martin girl.” He was interested; he was glad. It was as if you had gotten a good grade, or scored a lot of points in a basketball game. (You don’t give him things to be proud of very often.) He was enthusiastic: “Have a good time... Don’t worry about when you get the car home. Just get her home on time... Enjoy yourself.”

The girl is Janet Martin. You don’t really know her that well, even though you’ve been going to school with her since kindergarten. She was the first girl in the seventh grade to develop breasts. During recess all the guys used to stand around on the blacktop, where she was jumping rope, to watch her tits bounce up and down. Her early development continued. Some of the other girls at school say that her tits are too big. One of them said (from locker room experience) that they sagged and had stretch marks. But you don’t believe that. The other girls are probably just jealous. George Stanley tells the story of how once at a party during the ninth grade, he and Janet split a bottle of Tango in the woods behind O’Leary’s. And she let him touch her wherever he wanted to. You’ve not sure if you believe that.

The girls is a living legend. And she likes... liked you. The word got around at school that she thought you were “cute.” She didn’t say anything to you, but whenever she saw you, she would smile and start giggling with her friends. You waited a couple of weeks to see if it
would last, then you asked her to go to the concert just before school ended. When you called her up to ask her, you weren't even nervous. No sweaty palms or cracking voice. You just asked her. And she said, "Yes."

It seems like the things that you look forward to the most never work out. There was something about being with her at the concert that just wasn't right. Something about all those people sitting so close to you. You were worried that you would have trouble talking to her, but you didn't. In fact, you told her too much. You told her about the times you stood in front of the mirror pretending that you were Steven Stills. About how once when playing a particularly vigorous lead, you had knocked over a lamp in your room. You told her that there are times when even though you are too old, you still feel like crying. You told her too much. You told her things she didn't want to hear.

When you were drinking the beer and talking, it didn't seem so bad. About five songs into the concert, you saw that a lot of the other couples around you were already making out. But you figured that most of them probably weren't on their first date. You figured that you had the whole concert and you didn't want to make your move too early. You put your arm around her, but you never got any farther. The problem was that there were too many people around you, close to you, watching you. You kept on talking because it seemed like you had to. Your palms got sweaty and you weren't even listening to the music. Your arm just hung there like a dead branch on her shoulder. She had her arm around your waist and she was massaging your hip. You don't know how long the two of you sat like that. Too long.

She finally squirmed away and got up to dance with the music. She asked you to join her. "No thanks." You had noticed before that one of the guys sitting next to you had been looking at her. Now he was staring. "Please sit down." She pretended not to hear you. The guy with the long blond hair came over and started dancing with her. You gave it one last try: "Please sit down." They kept on dancing. So you were sitting there with them dancing in front of you. There must have been a time in your life when you've felt like more of an asshole, but you can't remember one. You felt relieved when they went down to get closer to the band.

You know you should have turned to kiss her. You should have hugged her with both your arms as tight as you could. You should have pressed yourself on top of her on the grass. You should have gotten your hands on those tremendous breasts. You should have. You didn't.

It's the final encore, and the band sings, "Teach your children well/ their father's hell/ will slowly go by . . ." You wonder if you are ever going to have any kids. You get up before the song is over, grab your blanket and your cooler, and head towards the parking lot with thousands of other people. The beer is beginning to wear off, except for a dull ache in your head. You realize that it's probably not right to leave without Janet, but fuck her, she can hitch a ride home.

You think about going home after the concert. You'll go into the kitchen to get something to eat. Your father will be waiting up for you. He'll come down the stairs in his terry cloth robe and mocassin slippers and he'll say, "How did it go, Sport?" What are you going to tell him? The more you think about it, the less of a problem it seems. "Fine, Dad," you'll say. "Fine."
(may he get to Greece before he dies)

Took his little black body
And forgot the hill.
Climbed out of the great books
Of the ancients;
Achilleus of the Hill
Put down his
Ingrained sandpaper knowledge
And started to walk away.
Trekked across the plains
And lost his legs.
Dreamt he bathed in Troy
A single cell;
Achilleus of Water
Stand now before Greece
And build your tomb.

—D. Jamie Petillo

Tuning

The Golden snaps at flies in the air;
Waves lick shores
As kittens lap from dishes.
The sun drifts.
I drift.
My eyelids do not resist
The sleep that lies behind them.
“Someone’s knockin’ at the . . .”
“Please drive carefully this Labor . . .”
“There are direct flights from New York to Iran, leaving at . . .”
“Country road, take me . . .”
My Grandmother and her radio have joined me.
Her fingers curl like vines
Around the Black Opal.
Her head nods;
Light snoring swirls in a medley
With Black Opal’s half finished sentences.
While rubies and diamonds sleep
In safe deposit boxes,
Granny sleeps with her most precious jewel
Changing volume and tuning simultaneously.

—Suzanne Levine
Hampton House

A face, grizzled and grey.
Dissolved teeth
Learing out of his beer-wallowed mouth;
Tongue wagging, rolling in ferocity of thought
That nerve endings never shared.
Green pickled workclothes
Hanging limp over once broad shoulders,
Hiked tight on his greying gut
Exposing his button,
Half-a-century old,
Black with grit.
He slobbered in the pitchers of
Peach-fuzzed high school boys,
Raping them with his stubbly life.
Eyes rolling in lightning and black autumn thunder,
He sent silence through the backwoods bar.
All Hampton House held its breath as
Winter blew in,
Throwing icicle grips over his shuddering frame,
Dancing him across the floor,
Tearing him into pieces spinning
That collapsed on the concrete
In a heap.
His red plaid hunting cap laid gasping
At his open mouth.

—Jeremy B. Meyer
Falling down the stairs is one of Herbert's strong points. He does it a lot. It's not a graceful, stunt-man type of fall down the stairs, but a loud, painful, sprawling kneecap-on-mahogany type of affair. He doesn't like to do it, but he does it anyway. Herbert, his father says, is "clumsy as a sonofabitch."

Herbert is 22 and waiting to see his father. His father has just had a heart attack. Herbert was at a Dairy Queen when he was told. He left immediately.

His mother is sobbing quietly, with dignity; she has been in to see him already. He will recover. Herbert has to excuse himself; his chocolate-vanilla mix is melting steadily over his cuff in grey rivulets.

Herbert's father wants to see him. The nurse has to repeat it before Herbert steps into the still white room tentatively, peering about; his father is stretched out in white, pale. He has looked better, Herbert reflects. He takes a seat, the chair squeaking raucously through the silence. He winces and tries not to move again; the chair squeaks anyway, out of principle. His father raises a hand, smiling a little. He wishes to speak.

Herbert collects bottle caps. He also collects other things, but bottle caps are his favorites. He collects all kinds. Herbert lines them up, squadron by squadron, and has wars. His 7-Up are the elite; they are nearly invincible. Herbert reenacts famous battles. Last week he reenacted the battle of Issus. Alexander the Great was a Mountain Dew cap. The Macedonians won again; the Persians had been threatening, but Alexander turned the tide. It was one of the closer battles in recent weeks.

Herbert likes movies. He likes sexy movies even though his mother doesn't know that, and he looks for movies that seem to promise sexy material but have titles his mother won't object to when she asks where he's going. Herbert gets excited by sexy movies. That doesn't bother him because he knows that he's 22 and should be thinking about girls now, anyway. At first he would get bored during all the chatter that went on between the sexy scenes. Now he brings his Mountain Dew and a few 7-Ups, and he doesn't get bored anymore.

Herbert's parents never liked his playing with bottlecaps. They always told him it was stupid and silly and he should stop. He was worried that maybe it was stupid and silly until he read in his mother's Reader's Digest that Winston Churchill used to play with toy soldiers. Then he felt better. He cut the article out and left it on his father's desk.

Your father's in there fighting for his life, his mother had said before he went in. That had affected Herbert somewhat. Now he sits, waiting for his father to speak. He waits a long time. He wonders how his father can keep his hand in the air for so long. He wonders where the nurse is.

Herbert. His father says the word quietly, but it seems to resound hoarsely off the walls. I could've been dead. You know that, Herbert?

Herbert remembers the time he was on the roof of the garage, checking for loose shingles, while his parents were having the Kovlaks and the Swifts over. They were all in the yard. Three of the shingles had wrenched right out. With Herbert standing on them. Herbert remembered yelling very loudly and slamming down on his rear, his legs splayed out in the air, and bouncing down the gritty slope of the roof before pitching off into the thin pine
posts and white choking powder of the fertilized tomatoes in the garden with a splintering crash. Everybody had laughed, except Mr. Swift and his father. His father, angry, had yelled that he couldn’t shit straight without a ruler. The Kovlaks thought that was very funny. Herbert remembers thinking, I could’ve been dead, and they’re laughing.

Mr. Swift is an old, old man, it seems to Herbert, and he sits in his ratty old green chaise lounge all day in the summer in his torn shorts with a coffee cup full of ice water, and talks to Herbert across the yard when Herbert is outside working. Mr. Swift rambles a lot and farts very loudly but pays no attention to it, which Herbert thinks is very funny because Herbert’s parents pretend not to notice it when they’re around. Mr. Swift keeps a picture of Black Jack Pershing in a little frame, next to one of his wife. He tells many stories about serving under Black Jack Pershing; Herbert likes the ones about the French girls he tells when they’re alone the best. Herbert tells Mr. Swift he thinks Black Jack Pershing was a great general and one of the last great men of our country has seen. Mr. Swift likes that. Herbert also tells him that he reminds him of Black Jack Pershing. Mr. Swift likes that even more.

Your mother was all alone when it hit me, Herbert. It was hard on her, being all alone. Where were you?
Herbert wishes his father’s hospital room had an air conditioner. At the Dairy Queen, Dad.
You were at the Dairy Queen while I was having a heart attack?
Uh-huh. The room is growing smaller and smaller and Herbert knows the silence is what’s doing it. Uh ... so how are you?
Not so good, Herbert. I had a heart attack.

Herbert collects civil defense posters and brochures. They are very hard to find and consume much of his time in searching, but Herbert finds it a rewarding hobby. He has posters instructing what to do in case of a tornado, a flash flood, an earthquake, and a nuclear attack. He has diagrams of where to go to avoid an oncoming tornado, the amount of time between the nuclear flash and the shock wave, and how to test for fallout seepage in your water supply. His favorite, though, is titled, “Tsunami Alert!”, and hangs over his desk. The letters are big and red and dramatic, and under them is a huge blue wave about to engulf some wild-eyed villagers. One of the instructions listed below, 8A, is a particular favorite and is underlined. It reads, “In the event of a tidal wave warning, never go down to the beach to view the wave. If you can see a tsunami, you are probably too close to escape it.”

Herbert’s parents never liked his collecting civil defense posters. They always told him it was stupid and silly and he should stop. He was worried that maybe it was stupid and silly until he read in his mother’s Ladies Home Journal that David Eisenhower believed that Americans have an inadequate knowledge of civil defense procedures. Then he felt better. He cut the article out and left it on his father’s desk.

Herbert doesn’t have a girlfriend but he does have a girl he likes more than any other. This girl is Melanie Williams, who lives on the other side of the Swifts. She has long, beautiful white hair which she enjoys letting stream out of her boyfriend’s Ferrari when he drives it around. She also has long, slender legs and a very dark tan and when her dress (she wears a lot of prints) blows in the wind Herbert thinks sometimes he can see her underwear. Herbert makes it a point to be close to the ground when she goes by.
Herbert considers her very aristocratic and dreams of her as a duchess, a countess; all white satin and diamonds, perhaps in the court of Czar Nicholas III. He thinks this because he saw a beautiful woman with hair resembling hers in a vodka advertisement.
Herbert sits near the hedges sometimes when she’s outside, just listening to her speak. She refers to him occasionally to her friends as ‘that gross little weirdo next to the Swifts.’

Mr. Swift knows of Herbert’s fascination with Melanie. He frowns upon it.
Nothin’ but trouble, he warns Herbert, scratching his shorts in the cool breeze. You need a good, solid woman, a loyal woman, not too pretty. One who’ll be willing to work, do what
you want her to. Women like her don’t want to hear about nothing but fancy cars, expensive
clothes.
Mr. Swift farts knowingly.

Melanie comes with her parents to see Herbert’s father in the hospital. Herbert knew they
were coming; while he was supposed to be getting something to eat for himself he’d dashed
home to get ready. He ran out of deodorant, because he also uses it to kill spiders he finds in
his room, so he used his father’s Brut aftershave under his arm, but there wasn’t much left
of that, either, so he finished the job with something of his mother’s. It is hot in the hospital
halls and Herbert sweats and sweats and begins to smell very strange.

Finally they arrive, Melanie not actually sweating but perhaps glowing a bit, beautiful in
the white, summery sleeveless dress she likes to wear to bring out her tan, and Herbert
greets them. Melanie smiles understandingly at the wall behind him and says Hello,
Herbert, we’re so sorry How is he How are you all What is that smell?, and wrinkles her
nose. Herbert, embarrassed, leads them in to visit his father. He stays outside.

Melanie and her family have left and it is late and Herbert and his mother are still at the
hospital. The smell is getting to be too much for even Herbert now and he feels clammy and
ugly and wants to go home. But they stay.

Your father’s had enough strain, his mother is saying, what with the layoffs at the plant
and his sister in the hospital and all, and you don’t do anything to help out, Herbert. Not one
thing. Just a little extra effort is all it would take to make him happy. But will you do it? Will
you give in an inch? No. Not Herbert.

Herbert peels himself guiltily off the wet plastic of the chair cushion.
You know how he worries about you staying in all the time and never seeing anyone and
ever talking to anyone except Mr. Swift. And Mr. Swift’s getting as bad as you. He’s got the
manners of a three year old, and he hardly talks to that poor wife of his anymore.
I talk to you.
You don’t talk to us, Herbert.
I do.
You don’t.
I talk to Melanie.
Melanie! Melanie, he tells me! You talk to Melanie Williams? What do you say to her? She
doesn’t talk to you! Our neighbors’ daughter he can’t see enough of, his own parents he
doesn’t want to hear about. She doesn’t like you, Herbert. She doesn’t. You should think
about your poor father half as much as you think about her.
How do you know she doesn’t like me?
Everybody knows it, Herbert.
Everybody?
Everybody.

Herbert’s mother paces, sits, paces. More tests. Herbert peels himself off the seat cushion
again and slides a magazine between his back and the cushion. Then he goes back to
yesterday by staring at an off-white spot of the white wall, and it’s hot and the smell of the
dry, freshly cut grass is all around him and Mr. Swift, next to him, is yelling. Egg salad! he
roars. Egg salad! he shouts over the back of the chaise lounge to Mrs. Swift. Mrs. Swift goes
into the house without turning around. Here’s your egg salad, he yells, throwing the
sandwich toward the house in a splatter of yellow and white.

He turns to Herbert, breathing heavily, but calmer. He is an old man, Herbert reflects.
She gives me egg salad. Forty-five years we’ve lived together, forty-five years she knows I
hate egg salad, forty-five years I get egg salad once a week. Don’t marry younger women,
boy. Let me tell you. He slurps some water from his cup, oblivious to the gnat floating in it.
Don’t marry younger women.

Herbert nods, trying to take his eye off the gnat. He didn’t realize Mrs. Swift was any
younger.
Young, pretty ones. They’re the ones. Give it to you right up the ass. He slurps and the
gnat is gone, the spell broken. Take my word, Herbert. Stay away from those kind of women.
They’ll give you egg salad for the rest of your life.
Your father's got enough things to worry about, his mother is saying. And what do you do? You play with bottle caps. Like you're a three year old or something. I tell people and they don't understand. Don't know what I'm talking about. They think I'm joking. You know your uncle Richard still thinks I'm kidding? Laughs every time. Think's I'm very funny. Don't you want to help your father? Give in a little? You can't go back to school, or at least get a job?

I had a job.
Two weeks! Two weeks you had a job! Big deal!
I'm looking for another one.
You're looking, all right.
I am.

Herbert isn't looking for a job. He doesn't want one. He doesn't need the money for anything. Mr. Swift gives him a little for odd jobs around his yard, and that's enough for Herbert.

The last job Herbert had was at Waukegan Products. His mother got him the job. He cleaned out big acid vats by hand, scrubbing away at the slick acid residue until the fumes made everything change color and he found it difficult to blink his eyes in unison. Still, everything had gone well enough for Herbert until one day the crew noticed how he collected the discarded bottle caps around the soda machine at lunch time. After that Herbert was christened Garbageman, as in “Hey, Garbageman, you missed one,” or “Hey Garbageman, why don't you use your tongue?” Such good-natured ribbing seemed to make the day go much quicker for the crew, but it didn't have the same effect on Herbert. Herbert isn't looking for a job.

Herbert is home from the hospital and in bed, and he is sticking to the sheets now instead of the hospital chairs. He lifts the sheets and flaps them, cooling himself, as he listens to Mr. and Mrs. Swift arguing next door. Downstairs his mother is talking on the phone with relatives. Every now and then he can pick up his name. He hears the tremendous roar of Melanie's boyfriend's Ferrari pulling in, and he rolls over, but in the darkness the roar and the arguing and the phone conversation don't go away. They just hang there, in the heat.

The next day Herbert is weeding and Mr. Swift is asking him how his father is and saying he is sorry. Then they are quiet, except for Mr. Swift's occasional slurping at his cup.

How's your dream girl?
I don't know. I'm giving her up.
You're giving her up? Addie, do you hear this? he calls to the house. History is being made!
Come out here! Addie does not come. So why are you giving her up finally?
The weed Herbert is pulling on snaps, rocking him back on his rear in the grass. I don't know. It bothers my parents. And she thinks I'm stupid anyway.

No! You're not stupid! The coffee cup caroms off Herbert's head; he falls back, stunned. Don't let me hear you talk like that! I don't want to hear you talk like that, ever! You're 22 years old!

Herbert backs away, mouth open. Mr. Swift is gesturing wildly and thumping up and down, the old chaise lounge straining under his weight. But you said ... you said ...

Never mind what I said! Don't listen to what I say! Listen to what I'm telling you! Stop playing with bottlecaps and take a stand! You decide! You! You! With the final little jump for emphasis, the chaise lounge gives way with a crash, and Herbert turns and runs for the house, behind him Mr. Swift calling, Herbert! Herbert! Goddamnit! Addie! Addie!

After rummaging for a long time, Herbert finds an old article, one he read long ago but considered silly, in one of his mother's old National Enquirers. It is by Miss Vicki, the girl who married Tiny Tim, and in it she tells how she thinks young people are old enough to "decide their own lives" and how she's glad her parents understood that. Herbert tells his mother he'll be late visiting his father because he's going to look for a job and then stop at the Williams' and ask Melanie out. After that he'll set up his bottlecaps, he tells her, because this week is the battle of Cannae. But first, he cuts the article by Miss Vicki out, and puts it on his father's desk.
Web

And Mary glowed
with sisters and golden floating eminence.
She dances now in front of me.
A child at times
with the wisdom of inexperience, the direction of beauty;
as if she knew what no one would tell her.
Difficult description-
air-walker seemed blonde silk hair as high grade hat.
Leaves in an updraft
spiraling close circles with broad radiant warmth.
Intricate maze girl-
ice hallways, fire foyers.
A blonde widow spider with dead past husbands.
A scorpion eagle, wax-winged poisoner,
prisoner.
Prisoner of height and her father's clawed house.
Her mother brown earth view of the world
through eyes of golden tan skin,
baby oiled and glistening.
Those braided eyes, walled will,
Determination floats on an airlift,
attended by admirers.
There are wheat fields in her glow-golden hair
and small violet-printed blouse bouquets.
Gentle spider
a stretched web
in my mind's breeze.

—Stephen Elsaesser
The Review

Stephen Elsaesser
Lynn Gray

Aaron Thomas  Kita Riemer
Johnathan Baiman  Amy Rosenthal
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