CUTTHROAT,
A JOURNAL OF THE ARTS
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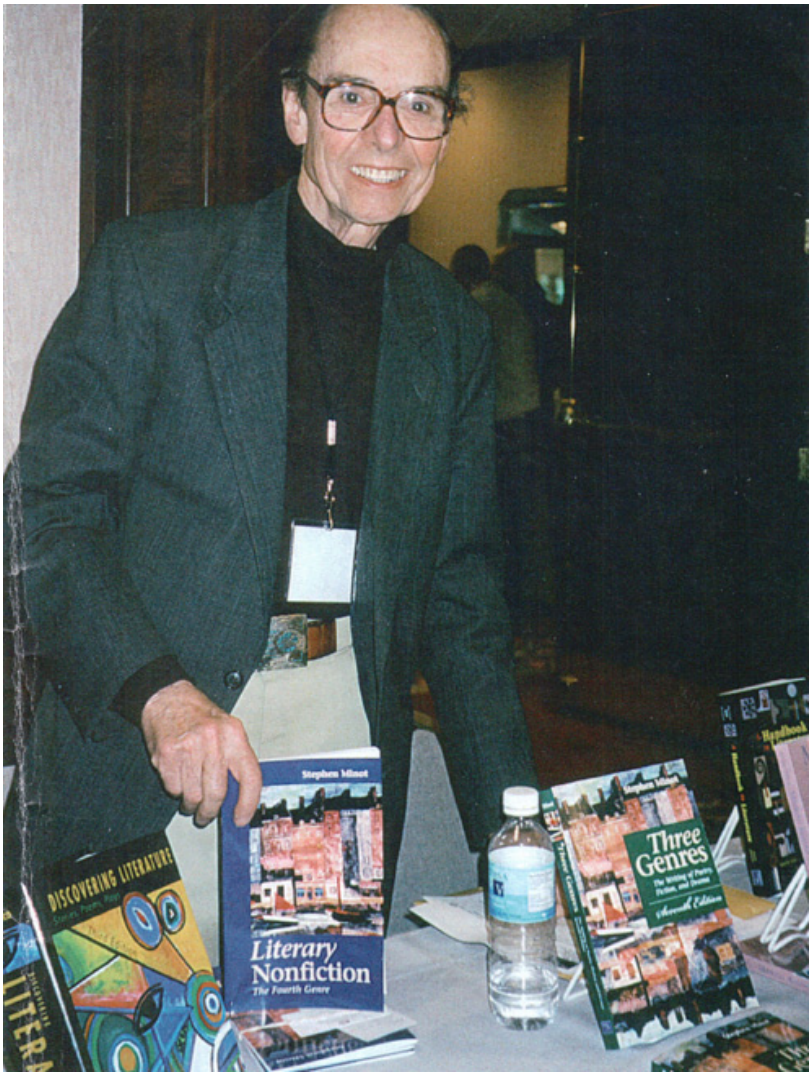
TABLE OF CONTENTS

STEPHEN MINOT

1927-2010



IN MEMORIAM

REMEMBERING STEVE
by William Luvaas

The fiction portion of this edition is entirely devoted to the life and work of writer Stephen Minot who passed away on December 1, 2010. Following are excerpts from his unpublished novel WOMEN OF THE HOUSE (finalist in AWP's Award Series in the Novel, 2009) and a portion of a short story--to give a sense of the more whimsical side of Minot's work.

What a privilege and pleasure–if a sad one–to sit and read two of Steve's unpublished novels and a collection of stories posthumously as I've just done. To hear his voice so clearly, since, as with any fine writer, you hear the author speaking through his words as if he is sitting there beside you. I certainly heard my good friend's inimitable New England voice. In addition to the writings, there are several reminiscences of Steve from close friends--fellow writers and teaching colleagues. Susan Straight gives us a biographical sketch of Steve in her "Memorial"; I will add to that only by saying a little more about his wife, Ginny. As Steve wrote in dedicating an edition of *Three Genres* to her: "It's been a remarkable collaboration enlivened by love." Stephen and Virginia Minot collaborated not just in a close marriage and friendship but in raising a dynamic family (three sons), in going back to Harpswell, Maine each summer to open their farmhouse, which helped to inspire WOMEN OF THE HOUSE, in composing screenplays and collaborating on other projects, and in inspiring one another to stay true to their creative selves decade after decade.

Ours was a writerly friendship. Steve and I talked avidly about matters that would surely bore anyone else: what point of view might work best for a novel we were contemplating, what to call a collection of linked stories, whether a story would best be sent to *Tin House* or *The Missouri Review*, some gripe we had about our agents... How we loved to bitch about our agents! This would launch us into a discussion of politics, about which Steve was equally passionate. He had many passions: for writing, politics, teaching, literature, his family, the farm in Maine. All mixed together in our conversations, because, like any good conversationalist (like any good essayist–as Steve was) he could segue from topic to topic without missing a beat. Steve excelled at conversation. What a joy to sit and talk with him.

We exchanged long emails a few years back before his eyesight began to go, corresponding as writers always have, discussing books, or literary trends, our work, or mundane details about our lives...hassles with cranky computers or leaky roofs. I missed those exchanges when Steve's sight deteriorated. I know he did, too. Steve once wrote in an email, "Ginny is the good-news reporter and I tend to see life as an unpublishable novel." Possibly so. He had his dark moods, I know. But he never complained about his eye problems or his meddlesome, long-suffering heart. He bore his health problems with a stoical, upright dignity, like a character from one of his novels–Hannah, perhaps, in WOMEN OF THE HOUSE–as if to say, "What the hell! Something's going to get you in the end." He always brought remarkable devices with him to restaurants, designed to magnify and illuminate menus; he had a talking watch that announced the time to him. Practical and organized to a fault...but ever playful.

What a remarkable life Steve wrote for himself: Bostonian, Harvard man, Army Air Corps- man, teacher, fiction writer, political activist, Congressional candidate, devoted family man, weekend farmer, sailor, well digger, textbook writer, department chair. He wrote in plenty of courage and character. Courage to face the indignities of failing health. Most notable of all, perhaps, his dignity and wit, encapsulated somehow in the deep, slow, vaguely burred speaking voice.

I recall the night I met him at a Writers' Week reading years ago at UC-Riverside. Seeing a tall, dignified man sitting at front of the audience, my wife, Cin, and I were whispering to each other: "Who is that guy? He looks familiar? Is he someone famous?" As we left the auditorium, Steve was moving chairs; he turned to us and quipped with a grin, "Imagine! A Professor Emeritus reduced to arranging the furniture. What's the world coming to?" Chris Buckley introduced us at a reception later and we all hit it off–Steve and I fiction writers, Cin and Ginny artists. We exchanged books: I read Steve's *Surviving The Flood*, he read my *Going Under*. I was much taken by his pointedly reflective voice, his wit, and compassion for his characters, especially his women. The style of his writing was as engaging as the style of the man. Steve was generous in his response to my work, and I much appreciated that. It was humbling and gratifying to win the respect of so estimable a writer. But then Steve was an unusually generous man–to friends, family, his colleagues, his

students. Always suggesting some journal or contest I should submit to; he and Ginny never missed a reading I gave in the area or any of Cin's shows.

There's a story I love about Steve catching a bob cat that epitomizes his courageous spirit. The critter had been stealing his chickens at his home in Riverside, so he caught it in a Have-A-Heart trap and hauled it up into the mountains in the backseat of his car, the cat hissing and snapping at the air behind him as he drove. He hoisted the trap out of the car and set it on the ground, blithely went around back and raised the front panel of the trap so the lynx could escape and shooed it off into the woods.

"But for God's sake, Steve," I said when he told me the story, "weren't you afraid it would turn and attack you?"

"Never crossed my mind," he said. "It bolted straight for the woods."

Me thinking I would have jerry-rigged a rope thrown over a branch attached to that front panel while I sat safely inside the car, releasing the cat from inside there. Not Steve.

Steve gave the finest, most generous introductions of writers I have ever heard, always emphasizing the writer's place in the great continuum of authors down through the centuries, including one's own contemporaries. We learn from them, he said, we stand on their shoulders, inevitably we compare ourselves to them–for good and for ill. We are part of a great literary tradition, a fellowship–yes, call it a fealty, for there is an unbroken chain of trust here, passed down across the ages. We must take it seriously. Steve emphasized this, not just in introducing the work of others but in his life. He brought gravitas to his calling (and levity, too), dignity, a nobility of purpose, unwavering faith. He has an undeniable place in the great continuum of authors. With his loss the landscape of American letters is a little bleaker. The lives of those who knew him are much diminished. We miss you greatly, friend Steve.

Stephen Minot - Memorial
By Susan Straight

Professor of Creative Writing, nationally-reknowned author, and former Chair of the Department of Creative Writing, Stephen Minot died on December 1, 2010 in Riverside, California. He was 83. His seminal textbook on writing, "Three Genres: The Writing of Literary Prose, Poems and Plays," may be his best-known book, as it has been in print for forty-five years, has been used to teach writing in all fifty states of America, and remains a classic text used to provide creative writers with a solid foundation for their own artistic endeavors. The First Edition was published in 1965; The Ninth Edition, written with Diane Thiel, will be released in Spring 2011.

Professor Minot is survived by his wife of fifty-five years, Virginia S. Minot, a Riverside printmaker, painter and fine artist whose works sometimes were used on his covers. He is also survived by three sons—Stephen Reid, Nicholas William and Christopher Bailey – as well as their wives, and six grandchildren.

Professor Minot taught literature and creative writing in Bowdoin College, Trinity College in Hartford for almost 30 years. Drawn to the west coast, he was hired to be the first chair of the newly-formed Department of Creative Writing at the University of California, Riverside, from which he retired in 1995

In addition to "Three Genres," Professor Minot also published another textbook, "Literary Nonfiction: The Fourth Genre," in 2002. But Professor Minot was also a well-known novelist and short story writer. He published three novels and two story collections. His novel "Chill of Dusk" was published by Doubleday, "Ghost Images" was published by Harper & Row, and "Surviving the Flood" was published by Atheneum Press. In a front page review in the Los Angeles Times, Joan Reardon wrote about "Ghost Images" that in the novel, "Doubts about the reality of the recorded events, definitions of power and privilege, and anguish over .. survival surface from the depths." In The New Republic of "Ghost Images," John Domini wrote, "What most sets Minot apart is the skill and the intelligence with which he works political and historical material into his plot."

Professor Minot's short stories appeared in a wide range of periodicals, including *The Atlantic, Harpers, Playboy, North American Review, and Paris Review*, which are the premier magazines in the country for short fiction. George Core, editor of *The Sewanee Review*, described Minot as "one of the finest short story writers of his generation." Minot's stories were published in two collections, "Crossings," published by The University of Illinois Press, and "Bending Time," published by The Permanent Press. In addition, Minot received two fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts – rarely are writers awarded multiple fellowships from this organization.

Born in Boston, Minot served with the Air Rescue Service of the Army Air Corps from 1945 to1956. He graduated from Harvard in 1951 and received a Master of Fine Arts from the Writing Seminars program at the Johns Hopkins University in 1955. In 1964, Minot ran a grassroots third-party campaign for the U.S. Congress in Connecticut's 6th District, opposing the two major-party candidates who supported the war in Vietnam. He was a subject of a short film, "One Man Can Make a Difference." During the same period, he counseled students in applying for conscientious-objector status.

During his long tenure as Chair of Creative Writing, Professor Minot mentored junior faculty, as he was the sole senior faculty member at the inauguration of the department. Professor Susan Straight remembers, "Because of Steve Minot, and his tenacity and willingness to promote Creative Writing as a serious discipline, UCR has the only undergraduate major in Creative Writing in the entire UC system. He was the most gracious chair, always thoughtful with our students and faculty, and always a pleasure to speak with about even the most obscure authors and poets with which I could test him. He and his wife Ginny, a talented painter, remained close friends in the department even after his retirement. I will always remember his kind attention to everyone, as if each person he spoke to was just as important as the last."

Dr. Judith Kronenfeld, noted poet and lecturer, said of Professor Minot, "An extraordinary chair – the most democratic I've ever encountered anywhere, totally committed to making the department a community of valued members, not just as assemblage of people."

The current chair of Creative Writing, Tom Lutz, said, ""Steve Minot was an important national voice in making creative nonfiction a part of what we do. He was central to the department until he retired and remained a close friend."

Professor Minot and his wife lived in Riverside, and were even after his retirement enthusiastic supporters of the Creative Writing Department, and the university, attending author events such as Writers Week, as well as student readings. Professor Minot secured funds for an annual scholarship for a student writing humorous poetry, and annually, he attended the reading and presentation of that award.

Professor Minot and his wife spent summers in Harpswell, Maine, in an 1800 saltwater farmhouse which developed a character of its own in his fiction as well as the paintings and poems of others. His memorial was held on December 27, 2010, at the Culver Center for the Arts in Riverside, California.

A REMINISCENCE ABOUT STEVE MINOT
by Ben Stoltzfus

I met Steve in 1987 or 1988, when he was a visiting professor at one of the Clairmont Colleges in California. Soon thereafter, the Creative Writing Program at the University of California, Riverside invited him to read from his works at the annual Writers' Week festivities. We liked what we heard and, in 1989, when the Dean of Humanities and Social Sciences announced a new position for a writer, Steve's name was mentioned immediately.

In due course we hired him, he came to UC Riverside in 1990, and the following year he was appointed Chair of Creative Writing. Thanks to Steve's talented efforts and perseverance Creative Writing emerged from a mere "program" to become a department of the College. That was a huge step forward, not only because the former program now had official status, but also because Steve was guiding it. He hired new faculty, established new courses, and gave fresh impetus to Writer's Week.

Chairing the department and hiring new faculty was not an easy task because a new Dean of the College had his own agenda and he sometimes overrode the Department's decisions. Nonetheless, despite such difficulties, when Steve retired in 1995, Creative Writing not only had its own very popular major, it was also on its way to becoming a major intellectual and creative force in the humanities at UC Riverside.

Steve was outgoing, generous, and kind. I never heard him utter a harsh word to a colleague or a student. His dedication to the department and to writing was exemplary, and I admired both his patience with difficult people and his attention to detail. He ran departmental meetings efficiently and, unlike one subsequent chair, who prided himself on running the department as an absentee, Steve was always present and available to colleagues and students alike. As for how to write fiction, he and I did not always agree because he preferred classic realism, whereas I leaned toward metafiction, but our disagreements were always gentlemanly and good-humored. In fact, he gave me more credit for realism in my writing than I thought was there, and that helped smooth over potential bumps in our friendship.

Steve liked to quote the wise man in Ecclesiastes who said "there is nothing better than that a man should rejoice in his own works." The inception of the Department of Creative Writing with its own official major was one of these works. Steve's other remarkable works, in addition to his teaching, were his novels, his short stories, *Three*

Genres, and the fourth genre, *Literary Nonfiction. Three Genres* is Steve's best known work. First published in 1965, it has been in print for 45 years, was adopted for college courses in Creative Writing in all 50 states, and has been studied by some 200,000 students. Each student, in some way, will have been Steve's creation.

As for his fiction, it has been published in many of America's major quarterlies and reviews, such as the *Atlantic, Harpers*, and *The North American Review*. In *The Nation*, Charles Larson said that "Minot is a master craftsman." George Core in *The Sewanee Review*, said that Minot's short story collection *Crossings* confirms his "standing as one of the finest American story writers of his generation." In all, Steve published three novels and more than 40 short stories. In its review of *Surviving the Flood*, *The New York Times Book Review* described the novel as a parody of the biblical event, a wry novel belonging to "that category of books whose purpose is to set the historical record straight." Andre Gide, the French novelist and Nobel Prize laureate, would have liked *Surviving the Flood* because he, like Steve, was also a religious skeptic. Gide's own lack of faith in the "Official Report" prompted him to say that "faith moves mountains; yes, mountains of absurdities."

I also remember Steve as a social activist, in addition to being a teacher, a writer, and an administrator. In 1964, he ran for the US Congress as a third party candidate opposed to the war in Vietnam. *The New Republic* described him as "the only one who made a difference." At the time, he was advising prospective conscientious objectors on the labyrinthine and often Kafkaesque process of establishing the validity of their beliefs for CO status. I can attest first-hand to the difficulties they faced, having myself been a CO in the aftermath of World War II and the Korean War. Steve's involvement in such matters was nothing short of heroic, and this work his was yet another example of his creative endeavors and concerns.

Since his retirement, Steve has described his life as one of daily joy, free from the obligations of being Chair and running Writers' Week; and therefore free to write more fiction and do other things. He felt free to mock the mocking birds, talk to his pet goats, and love, e.g. continue to love Ginny and his his three sons, Reid, Nick, and Chrystos, all of whom, he says, taught him so much more than he was able to teach him. Such is the reverse twist of parenthood. I myself have been privileged to have known Steve as a friend and colleague, and my association with him has been joyful. He has enriched my life beyond

measure; I miss him and wish that he would somehow walk around the corner, smile his inimitable smile and say "How are you?"

MEMORIAL & TRIBUTE FOR STEVE
Judy Kronenfeld

I first met Stephen Minot when he was brought in as Chair of Creative Writing at UC Riverside where I taught . He was an extraordinary chair—the most democratic I have ever encountered anywhere, totally committed to making the department a

community of valued members, not just an assemblage of people—and not above the most mundane of tasks. I remember when he rolled up his sleeves to clean out the mold in the departmental fridge. I remember that he fostered the first (and only) departmental retreat concerned with arriving at a consensus about our evaluative standards, at the—what fun!—Hotel Laguna.

He was always so intellectually astute, so wittily honest, charming, and good-humored; he enjoyed a good laugh. He was always interested in other people, and a fine, thoughtful and kind listener. That insight into human relationships, that sense of humor, that eye for the droll pervades Steve's fiction as well. My husband and I will so miss the warm, funny and compelling conversations we shared over the years of our deepening friendship with Steve and Ginny—their marriage a warmth that increased the warmth in any room. Years of delightful Thanksgivings, and summer visits to their house in Maine where we met and got to know each other's families and friends.

It seems just so short a time ago that we celebrated a small Thanksgiving together. Steve spoke sweetly of being grateful to have food on the table when so many on earth were going without—compassionate, and humble, as ever.

I recently rediscovered, on my computer, this poem that I wrote for Steve's retirement in 1995. I offer it here as a further tribute to and remembrance of an exceptional soul, the cause that wit, and so very much affection, were in other men and women.

WRACKED COUPLETS ON THE OCCASION OF STEVE MINOT'S RETIREMENT

Judy Kronenfeld

At first we thought, Oh, a Boston Brahmin:
such forceful, downeast enunciation,
a preference for clear, short sentences—
said with a slide of the jaw for emphasis.

But though a HAHvad product, you turned out
a Democrat in every sense. You used your clout
in a great lecture to deflate the swelled balloon
of those who much too reverently, much too soon
heap praise on what they fail to understand—
like those who gave John Berryman a gaga hand
for wavering alcoholically, unpropped,
and ending with the intro to the paper he had dropped.
And while we speak of rolled-up sleeves, unstuffy
things that would make a Brahmin huffy—
what other chair could say, quite beaming,
"I've spent a repulsive hour cleaning
the Department fridge of sci-fi slime and mold"?
It's from the Department minutes that I quote!
Everything you do you do full steam:
running for Congress, supporting the AFT,
writing a gaggle of grants for Writers Week,
even floating an intricate scheme
to procure an uncursable copy machine.
(Too bad it sunk!).
Nothing can keep you down for long, not even your
surprise meeting with the concrete outside Watkins' door,
the oranges you'd carted scattered everywhere.
True—a few minutes lost for CPR,
but it was only briefly that you were blue,
and you talked yourself from the emergency room.
Steve resting on a gurney?—Go away!
You introduced Rob Wilson that same day.
We think you should know you've earned more than our respect:
for loyal commitment before it was "correct,"
for being tactful, *thorough*, kind and fair,
whole-spirited and *thorough*, honest. Rare.

4 excerpts from *WOMEN OF THE HOUSE (a novel)* by STEPHEN MINOT

Part I - Chapter 1
THE HOUSE

For two years the Bates Farm has been locked, shuttered, and untended. This is the first lapse in a long continuity. Since the 1780s the house has held a succession of families, sheltering them and in turn nurtured by them. It has heard singing, crying, shouting, love-making, prayers, sawing, and laughter. It has witnessed births, first steps, illnesses, final steps, deaths in sequences overlapping sequences, generations replacing generations. Now, after 200 years, it has gone silent. Dying but not dead.

A wooden house is alive. Any carpenter will confirm this. It breathes. It moves. It whispers. Mortise and tenon heave, timbers flex and give with the winds. But like any living thing it is subject to illness, rot, decay. It is mortal. Abandoned, it will slowly die of neglect. The Bates Farm is dying. Residents of Farthington Neck consider it shameful, but what can they do? The place isn't even up for sale.

It is not easy for a wooden house to survive two centuries under any circumstances. More difficult still if it is placed high on a ridge, exposed to the Atlantic storms summer and winter. It takes luck and a bond between residents and structure. It requires regular attention–painting, patching, repairing. In return it protects its benefactors against the elements. The dependence is mutual.

On this April day there are, outside at least, indications that winter is ending. The snow has almost gone except for a few crusted patches. Though there is still frost under the spongy surface, the ragged rambler rose by the back door has put out green tendrils once again as it has every spring since it was brought bare rooted from Boston the year Washington disbanded the troops. The lilac on the front side–the sea side–has budded too. Few recall that it was planted by Hannah Bates the year her brother died of ptomaine in the Civil War. Is a memorial still a memorial when none are left to remember?

Those first few signs of spring have not penetrated the house. Someone has nailed shutters to the windows, sealing it. Inside, the dark furnishings are still frozen in their own lingering winter. And lingering disorder. The spool bed in the downstairs bedroom remains unmade; the ashtray has a half-smoked cigar. In the kitchen a wicker basket of dirty clothes waits to be washed. A mug of coffee on the table has evaporated to a black stain.

The house has survived another winter, one of many. The six-month dark season begins with the first frosts of November. That is when the insects die. The chirping, humming, and buzzing cease. Flies drop to the sills, struggle sporadically, go still. Outside the song birds start leaving. The forlorn cries of departing geese pass overhead in successive waves, fade to the south.

On the hillside there is less green each morning. Ferns have blackened and died at the mere hint of frost. The trees turn golden for a while, but by December they are gray. The ground crusts, is glazed each morning, then turns hard. The frogs work their way down into the ooze, and the surface of the pond becomes still as glass. It skims, melts, skims, then turns solid for the duration of dark months. Dead leaves on the surface are preserved like fossils. Snow dusts the area, melts, freezes, turns to ice, and is covered by new layers. Snow and sleet alternate, thaw, freeze again. An occasional hunter passes by the unoccupied house, boots crunching through snow crust. The sheriff makes one last tour before the drifts close the road; he circles the place, checks the shutters. The sound of his motor fades and will not return.

Two weeks later a trio of voices–farm kids with twenty-twos. Pausing by Hannah Bates' rose bush, one of the boys unzips and steam rises from his stream of urine. Another, bored, heaves a rock through an unshuttered upstairs window and the three bray at the sound of glass breaking. They move on, voices fading. Silence settles again like a winter fog.

By January the nor'easters and the northerlies begin to sweep in day after day, night after night. They bring air straight down from the Arctic tundra. Two-day storms dump enough snow to crack fir limbs, test the strength of barn roofs. The wind is strong enough to rock the frame of the house, making the timbers groan. On the coldest nights the snow no longer comes in flakes; it turns fine as ash, working its way under the front door and sweeping through the broken window upstairs. It builds miniature glaciers that extend out across the pine floors and remain for the length of the winter.

Come February the outside temperature remains below zero for a week at a time. When the mornings are calm, sea smoke rises from the surface of the water. Cruddy ice, gray and amber, forms along the shore and begins to extend outward. When the Cove grows solid, Small Point Island is no longer an island. It is a white mound surrounded by angled slabs of ice as large as barges. Slowly lifted by the eight foot tide, lowered again, nudged by currents, upended by gales, they grunt, groan, and whine.

Inside the untended house the temperature hangs well below zero even at noon, shrinking the wood, frosting the mirrors and framed photographs, freezing the leather of books until the bindings become brittle as eggshells. A bottle of chokecherry wine left in the dining-room cabinet finally freezes hard enough to crack the glass in spite of the alcohol. The snap comes at three in the morning, the hour human lives most often succumb, and the sound echoes through the empty rooms, waking field mice.

Not until an early thaw in March will the bottle begin to fall apart piece by piece, the column of ruby ice-wine slowly turning to mush, losing its shape, seeping into the floorboards, staining them reddish brown, the exact shade of another, larger, darker stain permanently etched into the wide pine floorboards of the front hall, a stain so old that no one living knows the source.

Part II - Chapter 12
SHARING
1851

It was strange indeed returning to the farm–to the grassy, sheltered yard between barn and house, to the gleaming white of the clapboards, to the familiar stone steps leading up to the back door. She opened the door for Mr. Bates and Solomon, stepping aside to let them enter, and then lingered at the threshold. The kitchen nad its familiar, distinctive mix of smells–wood smoke, and vinegar. Her kitchen now. Yet she felt like a clock wound tight to the breaking point.

"I'd best do some redding up," she said, avoiding Mr. Bates' eyes. "There's cleaning to do regardless."

"I suppose. And there's some work to be done on the boat. I've still got three hours of light. If it don't storm." He turned to Solomon. "Time for your nap, friend."

Solomon always took a nap after they returned from the Sunday service, and since he could not tell one day from another, this was for him just another sabbath. Was it anything more, she wondered, for Mr. Bates?

"Can't I have my treat?" Solomon asked in his boyish voice. "Wasn't I good?"

"Treat? Oh, I almost forgot." She went to the kitchen and selected a cookie from the jar. She started to slip it into where her pocket would be when she realized she still had her wedding dress on. It was as if she retained in waking life what she had worn in some amazing dream. "Come on now," she said, returning to Solomon. "Up to bed. You can have your treat when you're all ready."

After she had tucked Solomon in and had Changed into her weekday dress, she went down to the kitchen. Mr. Bates was still in his room. Hannah went to the foot of the stairs with half a mind to go up there, to remind him somehow that she was no longer just the hired girl. But what on earth would she say? He was doing his best to regain the schedule–to save what was left of the day for routine chores as if nothing had happened. And wasn't that what she wanted? No, somehow that was wrong. A change had taken place. She had a new name now and the two of them had pledged their lives as a couple before God, so it wasn't like every other day. It just wasn't.

She called up to him. "Mr. Bates?" When, she wondered, would he invite her to call him by his first name? "Will you be wanting supper at the usual time?"

"The usual time."

When he had changed he came out to the kitchen without a word, apparently just to drink some water. With the ladle he carefully filled half a cupful from the drinking bucket. She was reminded once again of how her brothers never used the ladle, scooping water directly into a dirty cup and then throwing back what they hadn't drunk.

He looked at her with a shy smile–kindly and somehow apologetic too. In that instant she could see the resemblance between him and his brother. That smile was just how Solomon looked when he forgot how to do some simple task or walked on tender

bean sprouts in the garden. It was the face of a man flooded with things to say but unable to uncork the words.

"I'd rather be on the bay," he said, "than in any church on a day like this."

Rather be out there than stay here with her, it seemed, but that was nothing she could say. "It was a bit close," she said.

So her afternoon was filled with a great buzzing of activity–scrubbing the floor with brine, washing the kitchen wall with vinegar and water where cooking oils had splattered it. When she was through with regular tasks, she roused Solomon and set him to polishing the outside of the window panes while she did the inside. Whenever he pointed to some spot he thought she had missed, she would react with exaggerated dismay, sending him into giggles. It was a game she normally enjoyed as much as he did, though this time she was only playacting.

Dinner was even quieter than usual. Because Saul had only been making repairs on his boat, he had less to report than on trap-hauling days. Except for the weather. Always the weather.

"Storm's setting in," he said, speaking to them both but looking at neither of them. "Looks like a line storm, but it's early in the season for the likes of them." He shook his head. "Should have hauled traps this morning. Except we were busy." There was no sign of resentment over sacrificing his normal rounds to a wedding and a nuptial lunch at the parish house, just a statement of the facts.

When the meal was over, he allowed as how Solomon had a long day and might go to bed early in spite of his nap.

"I've not been bad," Solomon said, pouting.

"You've been good. A regular first mate. But you've been working hard helping your mo.... Helping Hannah, that is. Bed will feel good."

Hannah nodded and took Solomon, unresisting, up to bed. As she mounted the dark stairs, carrying his clean chamber pot, she noticed with surprise that her hand was trembling. Would she be going up these same stairs later that evening with Mr. Bates? Actually sharing his bed? That's what married folks did. Trying to imagine it, she could hardly breathe.

By the time Hannah had tucked Solomon in, returned to the kitchen, and finished with the dishes, the August sun was setting. She hurried back to the dining room, lit the lamp.

"Ah, that's better," Mr. Bates said. He'd been trying to read the *Codman Courier*, sitting there at the table, squinting in the fading light. This was normally the time when he would read aloud, but he made no move to get a book. He continued to study the paper, though she knew for a fact that he had already read every word of it. She took up her darning. In the silence she heard the wind begin to moan around the corner of the house and rattle the doors. She hoped for Solomon's sake that it wouldn't thunder.

Finally Saul cleared his throat and, looking at a corner of the rug, said, "I suppose you'll be moving into my room. I mean, you could stay where you are, but it doesn't seem quite right."

"I don't suppose."

"Perhaps you'd like to do that now."

"I could do that." But she made no move. She still wasn't quite sure what he meant. "Should I get ready?"

"Ready?"

"For bed. I mean, should I...." Must she say it? "Shall I wait up there for you?"

He nodded but would not look at her.

To move her belongings, she would need more than a candle. She lit a small lamp and went upstairs. In the darkened corridor she peered into his room and stared at the bed. The thought of getting in beside a man seemed astonishing. Just lying there wouldn't be so bad. Strange, but in some ways almost appealing. He was a good and kind person. But there was more to it than that. There were those other obligations. Barnyard obligations.

The downstairs room that his mother had occupied for so many years would have been more inviting. It still had a woman's touch–curtains and a framed etching of a cow in a meadow. It also had a real closet for clothes instead of pegs on the wall and a chest. The downstairs room was larger, too, and warmer. But he would not sleep in his mother's spool bed. That was where the dear woman had slept all her married life, and that was where she had died. No matter how Hannah might covet that room, she knew it would

remain vacant as long as Saul lived. So this stark upstairs room with no curtains and no pictures was what Hannah must share with this man. As she stared at the iron bed, shadows trembling in the light of the lamp she held, she heard the beginning of rain on the roof.

Back in her own room down the hall–barely big enough for a single cot and her little trunk at the foot–she could feel tears gathering on her lower lids. Why couldn't she just stay here? Surely she could serve him well and still sleep in her old bed. But he had said it wouldn't be right, so she had no choice. She should count her blessings. If she hadn't married him, she'd have to go back home with those rowdy brothers; and if things were as bad as her mother sometimes said they were, she might even end up working in the mill with Catholic girls who couldn't even write their own names.

She opened her little trunk and took out her wedding dress. Holding it against her, she tried to look at herself in the mirror. But the glass was wavy and the light dim; she could hardly see how she might have appeared to Mr. Bates. She folded it carefully and placed it once again with her underthings in the bottom of the trunk. She took down her second-best weekday dress and her sweater from the pegs on the wall and put them in carefully. Then she closed the lid and dragged the trunk out of the room and into that of Mr. Bates. It made a frightful racket, but Solomon slept like a child and would not wake for anything but thunder.

Now she would have to hurry into her nightdress. Mr. Bates would be coming up soon, and what if she were only half clothed? With her eye on the door, she changed into her flannel nightdress, slid into his bed, pulled the covers up. She waited, tense, but then had to get up again. It wasn't right to leave the lamp turned up with kerosene so dear. Since he couldn't be expected to dress in total darkness, she turned it down to where it barely glowed. As she got back into bed, distant lightning flashed a silhouette of windowpanes against the opposite wall, the design of prison bars.

Then, the sound of steps. Measured, heavy, echoing her girlhood dreams–the giant mounting the stairs toward her. Fee, fi, fo, fum! I smell the blood of an Englishmun. It was *her* blood he smelled. She squirmed to the far edge of the bed, facing the wall, her breath shallow. When the latch lifted and the door creaked open, she squeezed her eyes shut.

Feigning sleep, she barely breathed, listening to his every move. First his boots, then the clank of his belt hitting the iron bedpost, the rustling of fabric–his nightshirt? Finally she felt the weight of him sit on the other side of the bed. She peeked out. He had not extinguished the lamp. He was just sitting there.

"Hannah?" He spoke softly–not at all a giant's voice.

"Yes?"

"Not asleep?"

"No, not asleep."

He slid into bed and lay there on his back, not touching her.

"It's been a very strange day," he said.

"Strange for me too."

There was a silence. Lightning again flickered on the wall and without thinking she counted "One japanzi, two japanzi, three japanzi..." to eight before the thunder reached them. Eight miles. Perhaps it was over Codman, flashing around her mother's house. Were they all home now, tucked into their beds? How could her mother sleep, knowing that her daughter must lie in bed with a strange and silent man, must await something that would surely hurt and humiliate?

"You looked nice in that new dress," he said without looking at her.

"I wanted to do you proud."

Another long pause. Then, "I saw you talking with that curly-haired fellow, young Potman, at the lunch." He took in a breath and let it out. "Elijah Potman?"

"Yes."

"Good-looking young fellow, wouldn't you say?"

"Elijah? I suppose."

"Well, I had this terrible thought. I thought–there's the young fella she should be marrying. There's the man who'd make her laugh. I could see you laugh and kiss him, and the two of you with your arms around each other...."

"Oh, Saul!" she said, flipping herself over, facing him, her head up on one elbow, looking down on him now, stroking his face. "But I didn't. Wouldn't. You know that. Dear Saul." There it was–she was using his first name without his even asking. "Don't ever think like that. Ever." Without thinking, she kissed him the way she would Solomon when

he was hurt, and then she kissed him again, longer. "My Saul," she murmured. Their arms were around each other as she kissed his weathered neck.

Beside each other now, they pressed together, rubbing faces like two horses in the field. If it could have stayed like this she would have been happy, but she knew that there was more, and that if they did not manage it tonight, it would be hanging over them the next day and the day after that, so she would not let go of him–not even when she discovered that, shockingly, men grew like dogs in heat.

It was not so pleasant now, this writhing and random feeling, but she would not let go of him, would not let him retreat. They would get through it somehow. When he tried to say something she kissed him for fear he would give it words and stop everything, leaving them baffled and uncertain. "Yes, yes," she kept saying, keeping him at it, keeping it all mindless.

With him on top, there began a probing that she realized would be the painful part. The necessary part. It would have to hurt in order to count. Consummate. This is what they meant. Consummate! He moved hard into her and she, eyes tight shut, saw red sparks flash in the blackness. She'd been torn, but this was a part of it. He had to do it and keep doing it.

Until he cried out. The he was still. A great weight on her, breathing hard. That must be the end of it. It was strange, lying there, pain stabbing in her, wondering why she was not appalled, yet somehow not. Hurting, unmistakably cut, wet, perhaps bleeding, yet inexplicably wanting to keep rocking, to keep it sliding–like some terrible insect bite, already scratched bloody but still needing to be scratched. She lay there, almost still, flexing her thighs ever so slightly, tilting her pelvis imperceptibly up and down in spite of the pain.

As for him, it was clearly a different experience altogether. Every muscle in him had gone slack. He was totally spent–like some wild squall followed by complete calm. For him there was none of this lingering need, none of this relentless, stinging itch. But she felt no jealousy. As he slid off her, she felt a flood of satisfaction: She had endured it. She had succeeded. Somehow, without knowing a blessed thing about it, she had brought him satisfaction.

But what a mess! Was she bleeding or was all that wet from him? From the slippery feeling, there must be blood. How would she ever get the stains out of the sheets?

If she did not act quickly, even the mattress would be marked forever. If this was to be repeated, she must remember to keep clean rags by the bed.

She stood up, trying to wipe herself with her nightdress. That too would have to be soaked in cold water and then boiled with lye.

"Hannah! *Hannah!*"

It was Solomon's voice, not Saul's. Solomon's cry for help. She stumbled out of the room and into the dark corridor. "Here!" she called. "I'm here."

In the blue light of another flash she saw him at the open door of her former room, a sad, ghostly form in his nightshirt, sleeping cap askew.

She went to him and put her arms around him. His pudgy, rounded body was trembling with fear. "It's all right," she said. "It's all right."

She led him back to his room, her arm around him, feeling her way along the wall. She helped him into bed and tucked in the covers. Then she kissed him goodnight. "Everything's all right now," she said.

Soon she was back in bed beside Saul. "It was the storm," she said. "It frightened him. But he's asleep now."

"You're good with him," he said. "And you?"

"Everything's all right now," she whispered.

She thought he would sleep, but his hand began grazing her face. Soon it was traveling down her neck and across her breast. She could see that they would not be sleeping for a while yet. Well, she thought, it's all right. I know what to expect now.

Part III - Chapter 5
RUPTURE
1851

It was a relatively small cut. The carving knife had slipped from the table and sliced into his leg just above the knee. You might think that Solomon, with his boy's mind, would have gone hysterical with the pain and the sight of blood and being alone in the house, but

one of God's com- pensating blessings–as the Reverend Mr. Crooker once put it–was his placidity. When Hannah returned from the cove, feeling just a bit uneasy about leaving him alone longer than she had intended, he was curled up in back of the stove, whimpering like a sick dog.

Her first reaction–about which she later chastised herself–was to scold him for getting up from his nap. True, she had put him down as soon as Mrs. Crooker left, a bit earlier than usual so that she could get the burgoo down to Saul, but Solomon was not to rise before he was called, and he never should have come down the back stairs into the kitchen with no one around to keep an eye on him.

"You've been a bad boy," she said sternly. She had long ago stopped even thinking of him as a man who might be 40 or more. He was like a first son for her, and she was determined not to spoil him. There was nothing but trouble if you didn't enforce the rules with boys. Her own brothers were living proof of that. "And what are you doing back of the stove anyhow?"

That was when she saw the maroon stain working its way through his pants leg, There was even a patch on the floor. With a cry of anguish she pulled him out and stripped off his pants. The blood was still flowing from the white skin, so she grabbed her lamp-cleaning rags and pressed them to the gash. He was crying now–a pitiful sort of mewing. As she looked back on it, his sense of guilt must have been as great as his pain. The poor soul knew that he had done something bad– something, perhaps, akin to spilling porridge or soiling his pants.

By supper time Solomon was feeling better and Hannah worse. For him, memory was fleeting and the whole episode was fading from his mind; but for her, it was festering. She had soothed him and wrapped his wound in well-scrubbed rags from her supply of monthlies. He had quieted, and seemed to have no memory of how furious she had been. It even crossed her mind to send him to bed early, keeping the whole episode a secret from Saul. But no, it was only a simple thing and Saul would understand.

Indeed, Saul seemed more put out by the bad weather and the condition of his dory than by her report. He had spent the day scraping barnacles and tarring, and in the process had discovered worm holes. Although he had done his best to fill them, the damage bothered him. Ship owners could afford to take their vessels upstream to clear the

bottoms of sea worms in fresh water, but he uses his dory every available day. He dreaded the prospect of replanking.

"Cut? Solomon's cut? He's not to be trusted with knives."

That was the end of it. Hannah was startled at her sense of relief.

The next morning the weather had cleared and the events of the previous day seemed like dark memories from the past. She lay out Solomon's clothes and went down to build a fire in the kitchen range as she did each morning. While the kettle was heating, she went down to the barn to feed the chickens, the horse, and the cows. By the time she was back in the house the water was hot and she brought a pitcher up to Saul for shaving. In passing, she reminded Solomon that she could use some assistance in the kitchen. He wasn't serious help, of course, and couldn't be trusted to set more than one plate at a time, but it gave him a sense of purpose and kept him from going slack. Then she began the porridge.

When Saul came down, his mood seemed to have recovered with the weather. He announced that he would tend to his traps, long delayed by bad weather, and then try some fishing. Although it was late in the season for blues, there were signs that maybe a school was working its way along the coast, pursuing the fry. "Those terns have been making a ruckus since sunup."

No more mention of rotted planks and sea worms. This was not the first time she'd noticed how his spirits rose with the mercury.

The only missing element in the morning's routine was Solomon. The sun was fully up and the boy–as she thought of him–was not at his place. She served Saul his porridge and tea and then went to the foot of the back stairs.

"You get your things on and come right down," she shouted. "We'll have no slug-a-beds in this house."

"Never you mind him," Saul said quietly. "Have some breakfast with me."

She smiled and went to him. No doubt Solomon was feeling put out because of being disobedient the previous day. Perhaps he didn't want to face Saul–whom he treated more like a father than a brother. Well, she would get Solomon back on schedule in good time. It was hardly a moment to make trouble.

"You should have good luck," she said, joining Saul at the table. "It feels like a good-luck day."

He nodded, smiled, sipped his tea. "I guess I've had all the good luck a man deserves," he said without looking at her, "when I met you."

"Go on now," she said softly. It was embarrassing to have him talk that way–especially during the day.

From the moment Saul left the house that morning, crossing the fields on his way to the Cove, her luck seemed to run out grain by grain. She spoke crossly to Solomon from the foot of the stairs and then went up to him, prepared to pull him from the bed by his ear as she sometimes had to when the weather turned cold. But when she saw him, she realized something was wrong and felt the rush of chagrin just as she had the night before. His face was wet with sweat–clearly a fever.

She wiped his brow and made up a mustard poultice to put on his chest as her mother used to do for her. It puzzled her, his coming down with a fever this early in the winter. The weather had not yet turned truly harsh. The house stayed relatively warm with only one fire going. It wasn't like Solomon to be stricken this early. Being simple hadn't made him spleeny.

"You know what my mother used to say," she told him. "She'd tell me to apologize to the good Lord for making such a fool of myself, that's what she'd tell me when I was sick." Back then, of course, she resented her mother for saying things like that, but it hadn't done Hannah any harm. In fact, she hadn't had a cold since moving to Farthington Neck. And she didn't plan to either.

At noon she took some turnip soup up to him and changed his poultice. He was whimpering, but she told him to be a brave little soldier. When he complained about his leg, she realized that she probably should change the dressing. She had almost forgotten about that because of the fever.

When she undid the wrapping, she gasped. A dark red stain had worked out from the little cut in both directions like a scarlet tide, and puss oozed from the center. It was a cruel turn of events to have the wound heal so badly when he was already stricken with a fever.

She washed the wound out with a dishrag and wrapped it once again in a fresh rag from her collection of monthlies. It was a lucky thing she had learned how to handle injuries from her mother. What bothered her the most, however, was the fever. The leg would take care of itself, but only a doctor could treat a disease.

"Solomon," she said, holding both of his shoulders to get his attention, "I have to go to the village. I want you to stay right here. Don't you dare go down to the kitchen, you understand? Or to the outhouse. Use the pot. You're to stay right here. I'll be back just as soon as I can."

She hadn't mentioned the doctor because it would only alarm him. There was no way of telling whether he remembered Dr. Bumpus coming to the house almost every day when old Mrs. Bates was dying. Overweight and elderly, he seemed more concerned with the condition of the family than his patient. "Prepare yourselves," he would say to Saul and Solomon, treating the latter like a normal man. "It won't be long now." There was no way of knowing how they should prepare themselves, and it turned out to be far longer than anyone had anticipated, but he certainly kept her eventual death from being a surprise. If Solomon had any memory of the man at all, it would be as a herald of death, not a healer.

Hannah set out wearing a hooded cape, scarf, and gloves, for in spite of the sun the November air was bitter. She knew every inch of that road–each separate field, every stone wall and stile. Normally she walked the half mile up to the store once a day until the snows fell and didn't mind it, but this time it seemed endless. She was breathing hard when she finally reached the main road and hurried past the store to the white picket fence that surrounded Dr. Bumpus' house.

"I'm sorry, Miss, the Doctor is in Codman for the day." The girl at the door was Hannah's own age and had a faint Scottish accent. A bluenose, perhaps.

"When do you expect him back?"

The girl shrugged in a country way. "If he stops at the inn, he may just stay over until tomorrow. The doctor he don't like traveling in the dark."

Hannah left a message for Dr. Bumpus to come as soon as he was able and headed back. The early winter sun was low now and seemed to drag her spirits with it. If only Saul were here to help her–or Mrs. Crooker or even her own mother. But no, this was something she had to deal with by herself. Hadn't she reminded herself that anyone who

married a man that much older would have to cope on her own? She set her lips in a tight, rigid line, an expression that was destined to become habitual.

That night turned into a vigil. Saul tried reading his paper and later a scene from *Pilgrim's Progress*, letting the book fall open at random as he used to when about to read aloud to his mother. But this evening he read silently and not for long.

"That fever came in like a winter squall," he said, finally breaking what had seemed like hours of silence. "I never seen the likes of it."

"I'm sure the doctor will be here tomorrow."

She didn't mention the condition of Solomon's wound because there would be nothing he could do about it anyway. With luck, it would stop draining by morning. Perhaps the doctor wouldn't even have to look at it. No one had actually said it was her fault for leaving Solomon alone for so long, but you never could tell what went on in the heads of men like Saul, and it would be terrible indeed if he and the doctor should decide that she were the cause. She prayed that the fever, not the cut, would concern the two men.

By two that morning, the fever seemed to have taken full possession of him. He hardly seemed to recognize them. Sweat poured from his face and soaked his bedding. She sat on the edge of the bed, wiping his brow and soothing him when his body was caught up in frightful shuddering. There was a strange smell to him, and she would have changed the bedding and his nightrobe but for the leg. She hoped that it had cured itself by this time, but she didn't want to take a look with Saul there. He had enough to worry about as it was. The poor man sat on a stiff chair by the door, looking into space.

At two thirty Solomon cried out something unintelligible and the shuddering became spasms–like a fish, she thought, like a poor little fish in a bucket, perplexed to a frenzy in an alien world. She held his shoulders, trying desperately to stop the thrashing as if that would stop the fever and end this nightmare.

To her astonishment, it worked. Her touch healed him completely. He fell back, completely at ease, the fever broken. Like preachers who lay on hands, her strength had become his. Saved him. She had done it.

But Saul shoved her aside in great agitation. On his knees, he put his ear to his brother's mouth. Then he clutched the wrist. Hannah stood back in astonishment as Saul

ripped the covers off and presses his ear to that hairless chest. Hannah, shaken at the implication of all this, pressed her two hand together and put them to her lips as if in prayer, but it was more to keep her from crying out.

"Gone," Saul said, his voice a rough whisper. "Lost him." But instead of turning to Hannah for comfort, he suddenly caught sight of the bandages she had so carefully wrapped around Solomon's leg. They had been exposed in the turmoil. Abruptly he pulled off the wrapping and exposed the leg. Even Hannah was shocked at how the whole area was now covered with yellow bile almost like chicken fat. The dark red stain under the skin had worked its way right up to the groin.

Saul stood up, the length of stained rag in his hand. "Blood poisoning," he said. "The poison reached his heart."

The image of his face in the candlelight struck her retina like an etching and would not wipe clean. The man's rage and incredulity–those were unmistakable. But was his fury turned on God or her? He would not say, and she could not bear to ask. Untreated, the question festered, infecting their marriage from that day on.

Part III - Chapter 8
RUPTURE
1924

On December 21, 1924, four days before Christmas, Ella Bates would not speak to her husband. She supervised the children and made breakfast for the family as she always did, and spoke civilly enough to Hannah, but the silence that she turned on Ike was resounding.

Ike chose to ignore it. "A good four inches of snow," he said cheerfully. "But it sure has cleared off just fine." He had just returned from the outhouse, as he did every morning before breakfast, letting the door slam behind him and stomping the snow off his boots. A habitual stomper, Ella said to herself. It was something she hadn't noticed before.

She picked up Cory from her pen next the stove and set her in the high chair for Hannah to feed. Then she dished out porridge for everyone, poured two mugs of coffee, moving her aluminum drip-coffee maker to the cool side of the stove, poured boiling water from the kettle to Hannah's little teapot, and pumped more water into the kettle, setting it on the hot side.

Cory fussed and Hannah clucked at her. "Snow on the solstice," Hannah said, to Cory as if she cared, "means frost into April."

Ike settled his bulk in a chair and turned to the twins. "I never heard that one, did you?" They shook their heads, quelled by the atmosphere. "You listen to your Great Aunt Hannah. She can teach you a lot." He turned to Ella: "Got the cannery roofed in just in time. We've got the winter to finish off the rest of the rooms and get the equipment in." In silence Ella added wood to the stove, wiped up milk the twins had spilled. "Yessir, just in time." Ella pumped water into the copper caldron in preparation for washing. She knew that she should eat, that she would be light- headed by midmorning if she didn't, but her stomach felt like a clenched fist.

Ike continued with the charm. He asked Hannah if she were warm enough and assured her that they had plenty of wood. "Wood to burn," he said with a laugh. He promised the twins that they could go sledding as soon as they helped clear the paths to the barn and outhouse. It was a Saturday and he would stay home. They would work together. On other occasions he had told Ella that the boys were about as much help shoveling as Hannah was with housework, but today he behaved as if he and his boys were equal partners. Turning to Ella, he asked her twice to sit down and have some porridge–"Good stuff. It'll stick to your ribs." But he didn't ask her what was wrong. He knew very well what was wrong and wasn't ready for a confrontation.

Hannah, too, must have guessed. There wasn't much around there she didn't know. But it wasn't a matter Ella cared to discuss with anyone. When the boys had been bundled up in jackets and boots, looking like two fat little gnomes, and Ike had taken them out, whistling "Deck the Halls," Hannah sighed and turned to Ella. "You're some put out with him," she said.

"A private matter," Ella said.

"Of course," Hannah said. And then, after a pause and another sigh, "I imagine some men are more difficult to live with than others."

If the comment were designed to invite trust, it did just the opposite. Ella was tired of these muttered contrasts between her Ike and that shadowy figure from the past, Saul Bates. All she knew about the long-departed Mr. Bates was what she had heard from Ike–that the man was a layabout lobsterman with a half-wit brother, that he had never amounted to anything, had died a one-boat man so long ago no one but Hannah could remember him. If it weren't for his stone in the family plot, he might be a figment of her imagination.

"I've nothing to complain about," Ella said, plunging herself into an unplanned washday.

That was hardly the truth, but there was no one she would confide in–least of all Hannah. What a comfort it would be if the two of them were the same age–sisters, perhaps–who could trust one another. But Hannah would never forgive them for taking over the house–no matter how obvious it was that she could no longer manage by herself. Was it possible, Ella wondered, that this woman had once been warm and open, but that she had been hardened by all those years raising children and running a farm on her own? With a shudder, Ella wondered if the same could happen to her.

She stirred bleach into the boiling water, the steam billowing up and clouding her glasses. Behind her, Hannah shuffled about, sorting colored clothes from white, work clothes from best. Generally, hard work calmed whatever discontent Ella felt, but today it seemed only to increase it. Hannah's glacial pace was a growing irritation. How long would it be, she wondered, before Cory would be a true mother's helper?

As she placed Ike's two Sunday shirts in the boiling water and began stirring them with the ladle, she chastised herself for turning her anger on Hannah. The true source, of course, was Ike. Just him.

She had known from the beginning that he was not going to be a prompt man. Schedules were important for him, but only as they applied to his work. As a suitor he was notorious unreliable–even his mother had warned her. As a married man he came and went without explanation, and she was never completely sure whether he would be home

for supper. She could put up with that. Her own father, a self-centered lobsterman, was much the same–without the loving and caring aspects that drew her to Ike.

She had even adjusted to the fact that Ike occasionally had an eye for the girls. That was the phrase that her mother had often used–*an eye for the girls*. Like *boys will be boys*, it expressed resignation with a touch of superiority. One never said that boys were boys without secretly implying that girls were more refined, more thoughtful, more considerate. Perhaps even brighter. It seemed to Ella as if her father may have had an eye for the girls back when she was growing up in Portland. There were times when he did not come home until late; and there were occasional but unnerving periods of silence between her parents.

When she and Ike began their life together in Portland, there were days when he would linger with the boys for a few drinks after several days at sea. Understandable. And perhaps there were women there too. She herself would not have been welcome in those waterfront taverns, but there were women who were. Fancy women, her mother would have called them. Fishermen–as Ike was then–took risks at sea, and the women who married them took different kinds of risks. Still, she never considered them big risks–merely a matter of his being late for supper or missing a meal or coming back just a bit loud and tipsy. Disappointments, perhaps, but men were men.

This, however, was altogether different. Claiming that he had been working down at the cannery again, pouring over costs, orders, and future plans, playing on his wife's sympathy–all this with a telltale slur in his voice. Had he expected her to believe all that blurred talk about cannery finances? He made no sense, forgetting that she was no dummy when it came to money. After all, she was the one who added up his ledgers, kept his accounts.

If this were all, maybe she could have risen above it. A few drinks down at one of Codman's Mill-Street barrooms would have been a mere echo of his rowdier days in Portland. A wife had to make allowances. But what she could not accept was what she could hardly bring to mind without feeling the blood pound at her temples: the smell, the unmistakable smell of another woman's body–the smell of her juices on his hands and even on his lips.

Not some French perfume such as in novels she had read, not a blond hair clinging to his jacket or a lady's handkerchief. Nothing like that. No, this was a barnyard smell. A

woman's private smell. And him too drunk or arrogant to heat some water and scrub himself clean before coming to bed.

Now with his underthings washed, run through the ringer, rinsed, rung out again, she finally turned to the sheets–the sheets he had polluted by coming home that way. She put them in the boiling water and started agitating them with the long wooden ladle. What was it about men that gave them such privileges? What gave them such animal needs? Like stallions.

Stallions? Ella suddenly stopped stirring, her face prickling. That Regina Moore... The way he'd slapped her rump. Had she laughed? A signal between them! His queen indeed. That was more than just barnyard humor. Those hours he claimed to be at the cannery–so easy to spend the time at her house. How could Ella have missed it? Regina, the young widow still in need. Vulnerable. Sweet little Regina whom Ella had trusted. So she was his nightly labors. Over and over. Stallions, they say, must drink from two buckets. Where, Ella wondered, had she heard that disgusting proverb?

The duplicity was not just Ike's. It was also Regina's. Acting so sweet and simple. Ella, trembling with rage and humiliation, stopped her stirring and dropped the ladle into boiling water. His sheets now. Let him stir and then rinse and put them through the ringer and hang them out to stiffen in the winter air. Let him do his women's work. His sheets now. She left them to pack.

When the boys and their father returned from sledding, red-nosed and chattering, she told the twins that there had been a sudden change of plans, that their things were already in a suitcase, that they were going with their mother to Portland for Christmas with their aunt and uncle. Cory was already wrapped tightly in a shawl. Their father, she told them, her voice level, would stay here with their Great Aunt Hannah.

By the time they reached the railroad station, the shouting was over. Ike had thundered himself out. The boys had given up asking unanswered questions. And while Hannah had held them up with her shortness of breath and pleas for a doctor, she was finally calmed enough to be left alone. All that was behind them.

Ella's own fears had passed as well–the fear that he would for the very first time strike her. Men did that sometimes. She could handle the pain–she had been through

worse–but she hated the thought that it might teach her sons to do the same in their day. She had also half-expected him to refuse to drive them into the Codman depot. She bluffed, saying she could crank the Ford, could get it started. It was true that he had taught her how to drive it, but she wasn't at all sure that she could actually crank it, never having tried. Still, the threat worked. The prospect of his being stuck there without his beloved car, without being able to get his girls to the cannery, not having ready access to his "queen" apparently was too much for him to risk. He stomped out of there and started the car up with a single vicious tug on the crank.

They were all silent on the ride into Codman, all appalled–even the children. Perhaps especially the children. They had never before witnessed anything like this. She felt humiliation, exposing them to such a rift; but humiliation could not overpower the smell of his passion, the sound of Regina's melodious voice, her brazen duplicity.

At the station, Ella had the impression that they as a family were grotesquely conspicuous. The place was crowded with other families setting out for holiday visits with relatives. There was a babble of cheerful talk and laughter all about them. Fathers carried Christmas packages, carefully wrapped. By contrast, the Bates family looked funereal. Even little Cory, wrapped carefully and held in Ella's arms, whimpered. She looked like an infant in pain.

When Ella, not her husband, went to the ticket window, Cory still in her arms, the station master boomed out, "Merry Christmas, Mrs. Bates. Two adults and two children is it?" The old fool was trying to play Saint Nicholas himself. He even had a spray of mistletoe with a red bow above the window.

"*One* adult and two children," she said, speaking louder than necessary, overcoming her embarrassment. In her mind, every conversation in the place stopped.

"Round trip?" he asked.

"One way," she said, her voice reverberating as if in a cave. Having come this far, there was no turning back. The commitment had been made.

"What does *one way* mean?" Jay asked. What indeed!

"You wait right there on that bench–the two of you." She should have comforted them–she knew that even then. But her anger seemed to spill out in every direction. Cory began to cry.

Ike took her elbow and drew her to one side–behind the huge, circular radiator. The air smelled of oiled floors and coal dust. "You're making a terrible mistake," he said. "You've no right to act this way. Really, Ella, no right."

Good! she thought. Keep it up! His indignation made it easier for her. The astonishing arrogance of the man–talking about rights.

"You'd better get back, Mr. Bates. That filthy sheet of yours will be boiled to tatters. Be sure to rinse the bleach out good or it will give you a rash."

"You must be mad."

"I am indeed, Mr. Bates."

The station master announced the train just as they heard the whistle. She could feel the tremor under her feet. The crowd surged toward the platform. "Go on home now," she said, though the word *home* almost shattered her resolve. "We've nothing more to say."

As soon as she said it she saw that he had hold of her large and heavy suitcase. No, she could not let go of him yet. There was no way she could manage that and the baby and the two boys. There were no redcaps here. Ike would have to lift the suitcase up to her. Where were the boys? Did they have their bags? How on earth did mothers of children travel alone?

She spotted both boys running toward the platform. She called them back and took hold of them, holding them roughly, their two hands in her right with Cory held in her left. Ike escorted them to the platform, looking so natural there it was hard to imagine that he was not coming too. There was a great bustle of farewells and kissing as the train drew in, steam escaping, air brakes screaming, baggage men shouting, throwing mail bags on board almost before the train stopped. The boys were excited and tugged, tripping on each other's feet like manacled prisoners. She held their hands tightly as if they too were about to vanish from her life.

She nodded to Ike to relinquish her case. "I'll take it now," she said brusquely. But there was no way she could handle it. "Put it on the steps, then."

Like some stubborn and confused horse, he seemed not to understand. Instead of giving up the suitcase, he stepped back, holding it before him with both hands. Other passengers worked their way by. "Give it," she said, irritation turning to anger. "It's mine."

He stood there, immovable. In rage, she let go of the children and tried to pry the suitcase from his grasp. Then she kicked him. He was solid as a post. The conductor was shouting, "'Board!" and the boys were frantically tugging at her. Little Cory, jostled, began to howl. Ike's broad hands were locked around the handle of that suitcase as if his life depended on it. She looked up directly at his face for the first time since they had come out to the platform and was suddenly overwhelmed: tears were streaming down his face. Tears! "Ella," he said. "Ella."

On the trip back to the farm, all four of them were too stunned to talk. The boys were wrapped in a heavy bear blanket in the back seat; Ella sat in front beside her husband, shivering, jouncing, and squinting against the glare of white fields. She could see her breath.

Was this right, this return? She knew that she would receive no apology, but she would make certain demands: electricity for the house, perhaps, and running water. And that Regina would have to be fired. Tomorrow. Ella would insist. He would do it. He would not apologize, but he would do what she said because of what she had seen: the image of his two white-knuckled hands grasping as if to a raft at sea, the image of terror on his face. Trust was gone. A fearful loss. But with it, his hold over her. An even trade? Not quite, but it would do. With luck, they could live with that.

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"ONCE UPON A TIME IT WAS 1937"
By STEPHEN MINOT

(excerpt from a short story)

Once upon a time, a long while ago, it was 1937 and the air was light. The great house stood shimmering on the ocean's edge, broad windows looking out on tiled terraces, terraces leading down in steps to lawns, lawns rolling down to the seawall, the open ocean beyond. Though no one knew for sure who owned all this, those who lived there were young and did not care. It was the only place they had ever known.

The first to rise on that particular August day–even before the dew was off the grass–was Denise. She was 15 that summer. Dressed as she usually was in her blue pinafore, her blue and gold parasol in her left hand, she walked Ariel on his leash. Together they picked their way along the granite blocks of the seawall as the did almost every morning, pausing when he was out of breath or wished to sniff at dusty miller, at ferns, at the sprigs of rosa rugosa, or at the great variety of marble gods, goddesses, and nymphs, stopping to snuffle and do his do.

Ariel was a small, almost pure white pig, the gift of Uncle Fredenburg. Most pigs do not take to leashes, but Ariel knew no other life and so had never seriously considered the alternative. For Ariel–for all of them–the great house and the lawns and the sea were world enough.

It was a wide world, spacious. Standing on that seawall and looking out one saw nothing but ocean. It continued to a distant line, blue against blue, and on crisp days when the wind was light and easterly you could make out the coast of France. Looking down the shoreline to the right, which was south, you could on those special days see ever so faintly a promontory with a speck of a tree which was a palm on the very tip of Florida. In the other direction, to the left, was Greenland, but the coast there was hidden in the perpetual mists of the Arctic seas.

Denise was not lonely. Indeed, these walks in the very early morning with Ariel on the leash were the only portion of the day she had to herself. Soon she would return to breakfast which was always at 8:00 and there would be the one they called Eldorado, two years older than she. She was in love with Eldorado and he with her. They assumed they

would marry. In addition, there were the three younger ones whom they had named Fido, because he was fat, and Violet and Guy. The names of the two little ones, Violet and Guy, came from a story by Edward Lear. They were all fond of Lear and Homer and could quote at length from either. They also knew most of Shakespeare, *Beowulf* in translation, and the *Song of Roland*, all 4002 decasyllabic lines. But the best names came from Lear.

Denise and Eldorado and Fido and Violet and Guy were not brothers and sisters. But they were not unrelated either. When Denise wanted to put herself to sleep at the end of the day, she would try to review just how they were linked. Denise's mother was once married to Fido's father, but that was a long time ago; her own father lived in South America and was married to Eldorado's mother, an Argentine singer, though for some reason they never came to visit together. Originally, Denise had thought Violet and Guy were brother and sister because they were close to the same age–seven and eight–and both spoke French; but they had different fathers, neither of whom had ever been seen. Their mother had once been married to the terrible tempered Cousin Berkeley, whom they called Cousin Barks, and for a while they lived in Switzerland, but of course she couldn't stand him for long. Who could? She was presently living with Fido's father. It was a tiring game, putting them in the right boxes. And unlike the 4002 lines of *Song of Roland*, this tale was forever being revised.

The days in 1937 washed in and out like lazy rollers on the beach. Some were larger than others, but looking back it was hard to distinguish one from the other. Particularly in the summer. Winters, there were tutors brought in–gray-faced young men, clever but humorless–and there were lessons to learn. But on summer days they darted about like butterflies, flickering in the sunlight. Most days. But this particular day was unique. She would recall it all perfectly while mourning in a maternity ward in 1952. But of course she did not know this on that August morning. All she knew was that Ariel had fallen on his side, quite dead.

"Ariel," she announced at breakfast, "has had a fatal heart attack." There was silence.

"Perhaps he's only sleeping," Eldorado said. He was lean, angular, and that summer had a faint shadow of a mustache over his upper lip. The shadow made him look beautifully Spanish.

"He's not breathing," she said. "And you can touch his eyeballs."

"You touched his eyeballs?" Fido said. When he opened his mouth with wonder like that, his face looked like an amazed guppy.

"That's how you tell whether people are dead," little Guy said. "You touch their eyeballs and see if they complain. And if they don't say a thing, you put a sovereign on them. Or any coin, I guess. Did you put coins on them?"

"I never heard of any such thing," Denise said.

"I read about it," Guy said. They all learned a lot from Guy, because although he was only eight he read more than any of them. In fact, that was about all he did. Not only did he read, he recalled everything. His glasses were so thick they magnified his eyes. Like a frog's. He never played with the rest of them but remained nearby, usually in the shade, reading. His mother–the one who lived in Florida somewhere just behind that palm on the horizon–sent him two books every week. No letters; just books. She never sent Violet anything, but that was probably because Violet had a different father. In any case, Guy was filled with information. Often he couldn't remember where it came from. Sometimes they suspected him of making things up.

"I've never heard of any such thing," Denise said again. And then, because Nan-nan had just come in with scrambled eggs and bacon and English muffins and cambric tea all on a large silver tray, Denise put it to her: "Nan-nan, do *you* put coins on the eyes when someone dies? Does anyone?"

"Dear God," Nan-nan said, putting the tray down with a rattle of cups. "Dead? Someone's dead? Someone's washed up?" Nan-nan was old and kind and was always afraid of the sea, afraid some sailor from foreign parts would wash up. "Tell Nan-nan," she said.

"Ariel," Denise said. "Ariel keeled over dead. Just like that."

"Dear God," Nan-nan said. "The poor little soul."

This startled Denise. Sadness she hadn't considered. Somehow she had thought of Ariel as more like a fish you caught in the sea and kept in a pail until it turned belly upward. But Ariel, it appeared, was to be treated like a person. She felt a wave of remorse. It washed over the others as well.

"P-p-poor Ariel," Violet said, her habitual stammer spilling over into tears. "D-d-dead."

And so it was that they decided the should give Ariel a fitting burial. None of them had first-hand experience with death, so they agreed that they would have to have a family conference. Conferences were called only for the gravest of events. The last one was held the previous winter when fat little Fido refused, absolutely refused, to learn his history. His tutor had been in a bad mood and for some unknown reason had struck him in the face, and this was Fido's way of striking back. But of course one had to learn history. Without history, you'd be nothing. Lost. It took the weight of a family conference to convince him that they would all suffer if he did not learn history.

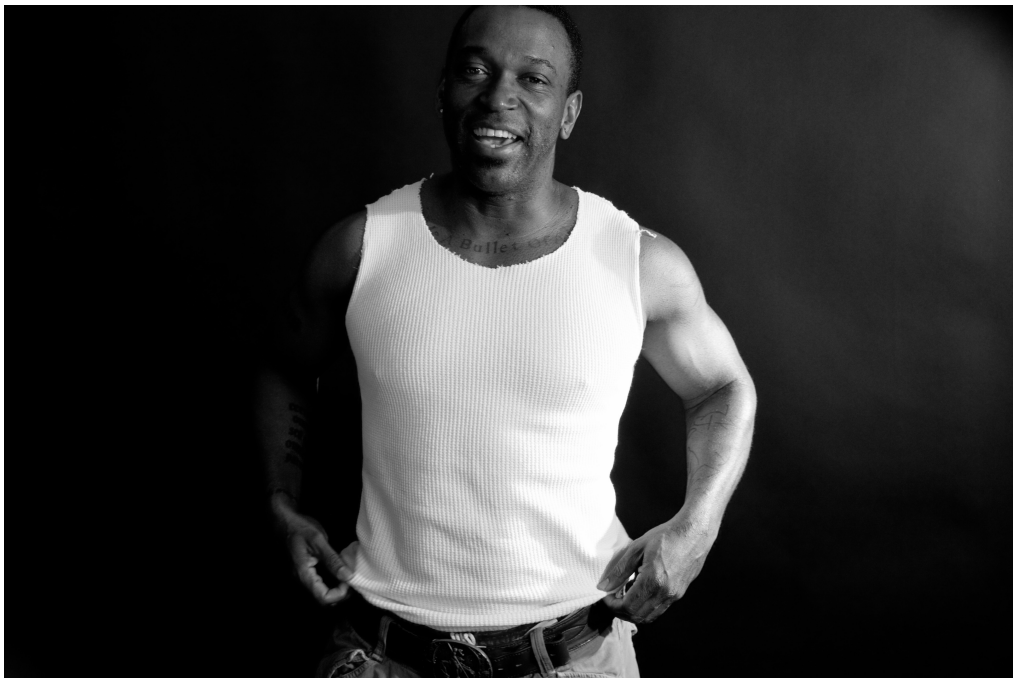
Conferences were solemn because they were rare and also because they were held in the living room. In fact, these were the only occasions on which they even entered that room. It was such a formal and elegant place they couldn't imagine it being used for any other purpose. The rug came from Turkey centuries ago, the chairs a fancy white with red velvet cushions, and there were portraits along the walls. There was even a statue of Minerva standing on a little pedestal. She had naked breasts.

“A Girl From the Valley” painting Iztok Osojnik

“Icarus Cow“ painting Iztok Osojnik

CUTTHROAT DISCOVERY POET

ROGER BONAIR-AGARD



Thanks to Blue Flower Arts

Photo Credit: Rachel Griffith

Year of the cutlass
Roger Bonair-Agard

In the year of the cutlass the cocoa hung
low and golden, in the cool dark
of the Tamana forests. That year, I was taught
the specific English of the brushing cutlass;
the high arc you made with the long handle
down in front your left foot, the perpendicular
blade scything the low brush into tiny green
tatters of rain with each deft rotation.
In the year of the cutlass, I learned
how to tell if the cocoa was ripe and where
to look for a snake in its branches,
for it was also the year of the mapepire;
the year of the coral and the year I first
noticed the cane being fired. I was taught
the cutlass would go straight through the thickest
cane if you cut down at an angle, in the shaft
on the bias and not at the tree's thick, sweet joints.
I was taught the cutlass was a small spade,
for turning the damp brown dirt to throw
seeds in, and then it could become
the year of tomatoes on the vine, the year
of pigeon peas and the year of chive.
My wrists became strong and I could
trim the hedge bushes that year. I straightened
the ixoras and the hibiscus into orderly
fence with delicate, smooth swings
that launched bits of branch and leaf
into orbit. I edged the lawn, needing
neither string to measure a level line,
nor shoes to protect my feet
from the stones. It was the year
of feeling the sweat against my own
body and feeling my body bristle
like a horse's when the girls passed
by on their way to church. I learned
the beautiful song of the blade
when it caught the occasional stone
and sparked a shock up my arm. I learned
to aria with the blade's notes then,
and learned how to sing in time
with one's own work.

It was the year of the baritone,
year of the African sanctus, and the negro
spiritual. It was the year my grandfather gave me
my own cutlass; its handle carved from cedar
with three rivets to hold the hard wood
steady against the steel. I learned
to let the water run the flat side down
the grooves in neat streams into the earth.
I learned that you could threaten a man
with the cutlass and only beat him
with that flat side. It was the year
of the plan-ass and the year I learned
that Choonie called the blade a pooyah
and the peyol from Lopinot sometimes
called it a machet. It was the year
of rum and ole talk. It was the year
of learning to insult your friends
and the year of garlic on the blade
for the unhealable wound..
My father left and my grandfather
started telling me secrets I had no idea
how to keep. it was the year of practicing
to use the cutlash like a sword. It was the
year of practicing to use my body
like a sword. It was the year of listening,
to the different ways the blade sang
when swung down; the year of its
tenderness against a fowl's neck
and the year of body against body
in the hot sun – learning how many
ways light could catch you if you
turned fast enough. It was the year
of lashing bamboo together to make a table,
a small lean to, a bench. It was the year
people began to die; and my father left
like the sound of a tall tree falling.
I learned to keep the cutlass leaned
next to the bed, because it was the year
of the bandit and becoming the blade
long enough to let it sing whenever
you worked, plant yourself deep
enough to come back as something
new – to learn slowly how to leave
so the cut is quick, bloodless, deadly,
barely
burning.

a guide to the day I first invoked her
Roger Bonair-Agard

My throat is linked to fear, to song, to the tightness in my lungs; but song means free and that is always true. Fuck means I just can't get hurt again, by anything, but particularly by fists; and fists are my unknowables. Fists are I'm frightened again. Home means I'm hungry, I'm lonesome and the woman by my side does not know me as much as she thinks she does. The woman is, I'm frightened again. My grandmother means I'm a child, means I am without love
or that being a man is impossible. My grandfather means duty.

Man means *no, no, no*.

If I say America a lot, it means I'm tired of talking about me. If I say mouth, it means I'm tired of talking. If I say you it means I'm desperate because you is, of course, me. Anything that says church, is my body. Anything holy – my body. My cock means gun.

Gun; holy, means, washed clean.

My aunt means I have more than one blade under my bed. What the body does is a blade cleaving the air, is a double-dutch jump rope. Anthony means I'm always safe. April means regret, means forever, means love all the time all the time. Love means, of course, universe.

If I name, it means immortal; does not always mean love. Heat means joy, means desire, means
what the body does, means grandfather, which also means duty. River means home, I'm hungry for you, means I want to be a man for you, means I am a river for you, means *no, no, no,* which is always calling, which is always *yes, yes – Amen*

The Fence
Roger Bonair-Agard
(after Jon Sands)

Me: Where are you now?

Grandfather: beyond the river

Me: Is the land there good?

GF: Will you tend to it?

Me: I won't go near it – at least not yet

GF: Good boy – I'm drinking now

Me: Why?

GF: Why not?

Me: Two at a time?

GF: I have nowhere to be. Where do you have to be?

Me: A poetry reading

GF: A poetry reading?

Me: A poetry reading

GF: read me one

Me: By me or someone else?

GF: Read me one

Me: Everything now is the light beyond…

GF: Stop – too close to home

Me: tell me about the river

GF: It's like that old joke; you have to be there

Me: No Thanks

GF: Good Boy

Me: You still plant things?

GF: Every day

Me: What grows?

GF: Every thing

Me: That's beautiful

GF: Everything's beautiful

Me: I think I finally understand you

GF: Good, Because I don't

Me: That's why you left me behind

GF: No, I left you behind to understand you

Me: Good one; but I don't yet

GF: You have a good cutlass?

Me: Yes

GF: It sharp?

Me: You said good

GF: You have a good knife?

Me: Yes

GF: you have children?

Me:

Me:

GF: I see

Me: Do you?

GF: The land is always waiting

Me: I know

GF: I mean – always

Me: I kow – always

GF: Good – I have to go back now

Me: Is that heaven?

GF: Who knows?

Me: Who knows?!

GF: Who knows? It's something. I'm still black here. I like it.

Roger – Chicago, 2011, pens a note for his 9 year old self – Winnipeg, 1977

Roger Bonair-Agard

after Jimmy Santiago Baca

You've had to leave your friends
so you will make new ones.
They have taken to calling you
outside of your name, so you will
become a stone.
They have isolated you amidst
a snarling sea of other,
so you will learn how to be alone.
They have attacked your body
so you have become a massive
windchime of fists.

Who is to tell you this is not love;
your mother's face, beautiful in its anguish
as she drives this strange city
to find you. And you are not lost
for hours, exploring these new sandlots,
and learned from their baseball games
from their hard attempts to imagine you
invisible, that what is foreign and savage
is also gorgeous; tin these short months, y
you garnish from the harsh white winter,
ways in which to stomp your feet in
demand the ball, look white boys in the face,
skate like the hockey players,
befriend the tough Lakota girl,
compile entire manuals for living
amidst unspeakable hostility.

You have learned to be faster
than the other boys. You have
learned to lower your shoulder
and become a bull. You have learned,
a slow-lidded callousness in which to crawl
before you bring blood to another body's
surface. You have learned the value
of your exposed ribcage, its alone
alone alone. You will turn
this into a spell song, into a plan

for fierce retribution. Everything
in you is already right and humming.

You will need to remember this
in the darkest of hours, even
with a blade gathering light
in your hands –
you are beautiful
you are beautiful

HAPPINESS
Sarah Schneider

If Berryman is right,
if *happiness writes white*, then I am
the white inside this stone that takes my two
hands to loosen. I am the white of a Nor'easter
coming on, of radio static snowing slowly
over Dvorak's New World, a symphony
that always brings to mind the time

I saw two seagulls fly over the treetops in a
January blizzard. It was totally ordinary. And
I am the white of the inside of an apple, but
not the *inside* inside, not the seed—
or, rather, not the skin of the seed. But inside that
seed-skin is a white even cleaner than the fruit
that surrounds it. Whiter, even, than the fruit
that it holds, carrying more trees, more fields,
more apples, more blossoms blown to the wind,
more dusky leaves, more of everything—most of it
not white, but still good to hold in my two hands,
like this stone. Still that good. In other words,
I'm going to re-write this poem now in white. And

when I think of a fruit tree containing
all those leaves, all those petals, I will think, too,
of the plain and simple paper birch—*Betula papyrifera*—
they're not known for their longevity, but I believe
they excel at being friendly and forthright. Take the one
in my backyard: some day it will bend too far
and break. More likely, it will blow down in some
windstorm with a name like *Enid* or *Gus*. But for now,
it's just tipping its long ashy trunk over to say *Hello*
to a neighbor across the way. In other words,
it knows what's coming, but
like all good blank things it never lets on.

Three poems from *PLATES FROM THE MUSEUM OF TIME*

THE BARBARIANS (ROUND TWO)
AMIR OR

It was not in vain that we awaited the barbarians,
It was not in vain that we gathered in the city square.
It was not in vain that our great ones donned their official robes
and rehearsed their speeches for the event.
It was not in vain that we smashed our temples
and erected new ones to their gods;
as proper we burnt our books
that have nothing in them for people like that.
As the prophets foretold, the barbarians came
and took the keys to the city from the king's hand.
But when they came they donned the garments of the land,
and their customs were the customs of the state;
and when they commanded us in our own tongue
we no longer knew when
the barbarians had come to us.

PLATE 10: BLOOM
AMIR OR

When the dead are planning their next birth
cemeteries smell like spring.

They're coming closer than dreams
roaming away from their worlds
to die into the world.

You grasp them suddenly your body winces
when they move on past you as if you were a ghost.

The dome of the view a blue sky, a few light clouds
is a thin curtain powerless to shield you.

Sounds of bells and sea-shells come close to your ears.

Every breath you take is a presence.

In spring everything reveals itself in flesh again.
Glittering mirrors are hanging in the wind eyes blooming everywhere.

PLATE 12: TWILIGHT
AMIR OR

Spirits are waiting over the lake pleading with you to open for them
A heart, an eye, a body to feel once more through the animal of flesh
To bite, taste, take pleasure, smell.
They remember the bodily sensations of an animal, a tree or an object,
rain heat movement
weight.

They've been here before aeons before us
as the shepherds of bodies among the creatures of dream:
haven't left with the rest to the lighter realms;
stayed behind in forests and caves,
in the margins of your eyes and the desolation of night.
But they're not immortal they wither and fade
To a voiceless howl a transparent hunger.

Even the shudder they brush onto your skin
is merely the craving touch of nothingness against the real.

CROWS
Lucyna Prostko

I was once afraid of them. Their nest
settled deep into our chimney, killing
whatever fire might have been left.

Through the ribcage, I felt the punctuated
vigor of my heart, the near blackness
of my blood.

The sticks and leaves kept falling
on the wood stove through a small vent.
I could hear them at night, chatting into the smoke.

In spring, they congregated in fresh furrows
my father had made with his plough.
They followed him through life, most faithful ghosts.

And as he reached into the canvas bag
wrapped around his chest, they waited,
treading the scars, flying low over his head –

sometimes carried by a gust of wind,
pecking at the odd grain or a newly
blossomed worm.

But they were strangers to me,
holding their secret meetings beyond the barn,
ripping abandoned flesh: the pig's intestines, the duck's neck.

The strangest of truths – the crows were never
satiated, screaming into the gray mornings,
waiting for something to be thrown their way;

their wings shimmered with the early
light, the purple veins and fiber of loose beginnings and ends,
and they chanted and circled – as if to know which is which.

WHERE THE WORLD COMES TO ME
Richard Jackson

-*For Earl Braggs*

That too, like the possibility of petrified stars, was
a question no one had considered. Or like the forgotten
letter falling from my book. Or the dawn echoing the way
a butterfly opens its wings. Some of the light is
a few billion years old and began in places that no longer
exist. Not to even mention the question of how we got here.
Not the fact of this wheelchair and my torn quadricep,
nor the fact that out DNA relates us to porcupines and
pomegranates. Rather, something in between. I used to be
very indecisive, but now I'm not so sure. Sometimes
our shadows stick to the ground for years. It's all very
complicated, the way a forensic scientist creates a face
from a fragmented jaw. My own doctor used a weave
that was invented 200 years ago by a French seamstress
to braid tendon, muscle and nerve It's like the two
ends of the Cancer Constellation whose radiant arms are
intertwined. Or the space elevator that uses a 60,000 mile
cable to link to the space station in the next few decades.
But I was talking about beginnings, and possibility.
I'll add the details you need a little later on. I could
tell you that cornflakes and Graham Crackers began
as remedies for chronic masturbation. That the universe
began as exploding light, followed by bacteria in little
petri dishes of puddles. Bill just sent an email with so many
personal tragedies it makes my own complaints silly.
I should be telling you about all the omissions in this
poem. It's like reading a genuine imitation, and in a random
order. *I was born at a very early age,* said WC Fields
for whom everything was a joke. So I should not mention
the family of Emmanuel Aguer, kidnapped in Nairobi
at 6 years old, who didn't have the $70 ransom to free
him, finding his smashed body later in a sugar sack,
part of a war that seems to have no beginning we can name..
How does anything like that begin? What can we say
that makes any difference? The color of the wind is empty.
From this chair the late shadows look like spears.
Do you think there is an answer for everything?
How does the pileated woodpecker outside my window
know where the insects hide under the bark? Derrida says
all our answers leave traces like the dark spaces where

galaxies have burned out. Stephen Hawking says
all the Black Holes are leaking. What they leak is time.
The future is already in mothballs. Our hearts are dressed
in rags. The poor moth circling me has been fooled
by this warm autumn. Emanuel is already gone from
the newspapers. My own name settles behind the hills.
Our words began as symbols, O from the Egyptian Eye,
E as a man with raised hands, but to what? God? Tomorrow?
The Biggs Bison is called the God particle which, if created
in Switzerland might be the end of the world, or new beginnning.
Sometimes I think we are all direction with no place. I wish
I could find an antecedent for all that I've said. Membrane
theory says that every universe we inhabit is made of
the same substance. So maybe there was nothing before us
except ourselves. There's no sense sitting around like
misspelled words. A began as the Cannanite figure for an Ox.
The stitches on my leg looked like their ancient script found
on cave walls in the Sinai *Valley of Terrors*. Light squints
on the windows. The wind rips at the trees. The first star is
a doorknob. Behind it, an attic of dreams covered in dust,
boxes of forgotten sorrows. Tomorrow I'll begin to clean
the past. The nightingale will repeat the words we have forgotten.
It's up to you to decide what your question will be. That too.

[Golden ivy will reach the villages.]
Maya Sarishvili

Golden ivy will reach the villages.
Farmers' beds, dirty hoes and dogs will shimmer.
The light's coldblooded magic will spread—
a precious fear,
bright-skinned cattle,
the pure-golden veins of night…
How can this all be stopped?
Impossible!
Cupolas will grow above
the ancient bread ovens.
But one day snow will come
in another form,
and instead of covering everything,
it will bake the Earth...

Translated from the Georgian by Timothy Kercher and Nene Giorgadze

[Why do I need the mountain's silent wind?]
Maya Sarishvili

Why do I need the mountain's silent wind?
But I allow it to take the wrinkle lines
to fill the fireplace and burn like brushwood
to give my child warmth.
To grow up
with heat like this, with so much self-sacrifice,
that no matter how many nights she lies down
on no matter how many sins as mattresses,
the pea of the sun will burn on
and make her restless.
Or why do I need the mountain's silent flowers—
these seconds, which come
and never go away.
They are left to me like silent sisters in a convent,
caring but powerless to help.
That is why I'll become ordinary again,
return to the city
where somebody with honey in his inkpot
will write me a calm life.
And I will accept it.

Translated from the Georgian by Timothy Kercher and Nene Giorgadze

RECONSIDERING JOYCE
Arthur Smith

A man is thinking, *Jesus,*
It wouldn't have taken much
To flush.
He's thinking
The milky sea-green marble walls
Agree with him,
But it's only echo.
He's alone, peeing,
Thinking out loud
In a mall's men's room.
He's wishing he weren't so quick to criticize.
Wishing he had the patience of history, of having
Seen it all already,
Of being
All right with the welling up
Of the next world war, as James Joyce was
Just before he died
Of broken teeth, and blindness,
And a bleeding ulcer, alone
In Zurich, fleeing Hitler.

What a rotten life.

Proud to have written a book
No one could read.

RIVERRUN
Arthur Smith

To someone from a rough river city
Like Pittsburgh or Paris,
The Tennessee may look demure, here where it begins
With the smaller French Broad jostling the Holston.

What sometimes happens here happens
Somewhere else all the time.
Into her, some are being driven, some pulled.

In the morning a man who slept under the south-side
bridge supports woke
And climbed out on the bridge
And jumped. He was 27: it was
Christmas morning: it was
All over the news.

One of the human achievements—a day, a person,
An act—making something more important than it is.

Next day
Me and a friend sitting ruffled up in our coats on a riverside
balcony,
The wrought-iron kind the wind whets its tongue on—
And then just as quickly the clouds crack open
And we're sheathed in a warmth, like light,
Like yolks in a shell.

CHEMOTHERAPY
Peter Warshall

It is the Year of the Rabbit. In the labyrinthine burrows, the groundwater table rises. The sleeping chamber sports a puddle and, on its surface, the 500 yuan note and a 100 dollar greenback float apart. Dame rabbit smoothes her face with her right paw: "Not attached. Good news. Prosperity." The old buck drops a fairly tattered left ear from its upright. He looks at the water. "Perhaps, undetached my love." At the exit, in the grass of abundant rains, a bobcat nestles, absolutely still and silent, or perhaps one thought can be heard: "So what, who gives a fuck if it's the year of the rabbit." Wilderness so exquisite, a flooded financial market of the mind.

They went out into the wilderness. Many died banished to the arid lands of Sinai. St. Paul saw Lord Jesus. Moses the burning bush. Milarepa sat in caves, fed the deer and cranes, and felt insightful. Thoreau, after a day job surveying the humid deciduous forests of Concord for subdivision into farms and roads, returned to Walden and transcended daily toils. It is wildness that is the preservation of the world.

Today, Alice Waters picks a tomato from a tiny patch of dirt in one of many Oakland schoolyards — student veggie pizza she enthuses for lunch. You see or not, the city stores earth under its asphalt and, the teacher claims, each healthy cubic foot has more connectivity than the brain of Einstein. Outside the window, C02's odorless perfume permeates the mycelium of Earth. Coccoliths feel it; euglena swim to basic niches. An as yet unnamed bird cocks its eye toward the polarized sky. There is a dawn song: we are all gardeners, adjusting the chemotherapy, the sugars, pH and colors of life. Gaia yawns. What's a few million years of inchoate erractics. Accepting the anthropocene sucks but these *are* the times of incompatible currencies and, no matter the volume or scale or speeds, stewarding a good garden maybe all there is.

American Zen Painting Iztok Osojnik

ENOUGH HIDING
Iztok Osojnik

It's time to show my cards.
I know you didn't know
I am not Osojnik but Master Greenhead.
Right now I am disclosing secret wisdom,
without notes and without words.
Man is a lake reflecting the moon.
The moon in the sky is not what is real
but the water reflecting the moon.
If you've got stomach cramps this is living proof
that ou are Buddha.
One of my teachers is a hole in the blue sky.
Another is a yellow walnut tree nestling the sun
in the square meter of a green meadow.
I am glad nobody is bugging me with stupid questions
(myself excluded, sadly).

THE NIGHT IS SOMETHING ELSE
Iztok Osojnik

Mister Today, have you been good?
The lawn is mown, the door fixed, dishes washed.
Mister Today steps outside the house at night and looks at the sky.
Across the black depth dotted with stars trails a pallid river.
Mister Today watches and asks himself:
Am I looking towards the center of he galaxy or
away into the vast depths
of the universe?
Everything is colossal and incomprehensible.
Night sounds in the country: the hiss of central heating,
a dog barking, muffled murmur of television
at the other end of the village.
Trees are silent in the black green dusk.
The night strips the fat off the bones.
Spirit is a black flame of emptiness.
Burn! Mister Today says to himself.
The house is full of resurrected books.

[from MISTER TODAY (Jacaranda Press, San Jose, California)
by Iztok Osojnik as translated by Ana Jelnikar]

Ples Smrti Painting in Iztok's studio Iztok Osojnik

SOUTHERN GOTHIC FALL
Joe Milford

driving home today as the train flies by Highway 29

looked to the right to see a beautiful young girl in green

summer dress reaching up into a pear tree

with her prosthetic arm—all this gossamer scene

unfurling for me, pixeling

light from her plastic limb ricocheting

to penetrate my plastic sunglass lenses—I can not pretend that I will ever forget her

reaching into the burning sun-drenched sapling

with the replacement arm a man made for her

knowing the works of a man must have taken

her arm somehow from her—would the thief have loved her too?

unfastening the buckle to release the limb at the shoulder

placing it with respect against the bad wallpaper

as they eat the pears in bed, as the southern Georgia stars

smolder around their perfect solace acre

she tussles his hair with her hand

sticky with juice, laughing, the ghost of the life before

just a garden grown over, a home for other lovers,

their losses unfortold along the ditches and tombs

of creek-strewn highways, of dark thicket wombs

beyond two-lane roads where making love in the dark

cicada-siren night becomes a sacrament unto itself in spite

of wounded angels dodging fireflies among tall pines

ANTIMONY
Joe Milford

Shadow on stained-glass window
and the crack in the blue pane
revealing substantiated darkness
within. That's a good place

to start: the owl spreading
math with its eyes upon
the prayerless prey in flaxen
wheatgrass--the pinion on which

it rests: nothing ever does,
rest assured. Amnesiacs
are our new saints. Stone
monuments for the mutes.

Colors of stained-glass window
reflected on floortile--the hole
in the blue pane frames a rhombus
of brilliant pure sunlight ingot.

UNCLEAN
Tawnysha Green

The first time Momma shows me
a demon is during revival week.
Pastor lines us all in front
of the altar, slaps his hands
on our foreheads, makes us fall
back in Jesus' name.

Ushers cover Momma's legs with blue
sheets as she weeps on the floor, speaks
in tongues, like the people before us do.
The piano man plays, sings the same
song as more fall under Pastor's hand.
Momma wakes, says, *the Holy Spirit is here*.

The song is long and, me, sister fall
asleep on the seats. Momma stands, hands
outstretched to the altar, to those who cry,
dance when the pastor talks in God's language.
The song lasts until morning and Momma
wakes me up, tells me, sister to follow

past the praying bodies on the floor,
blue sheets in a heap, shows us a lady who does not
fall under Pastor, does not pray in his language.
Pastor motions for the ushers to come, to lay
hands on her, too. Momma says, *she doesn't have
the Holy Spirit, the spirit in her is bad, full of demons*.

The lady is on the floor now, ushers, pastor
on top of her. They push her head back,
pin arms to the floor. *Be delivered in Jesus'
name. I cast you out*, they say. She says nothing.
Shoka loma lameh moda kadem simoda hada,
they say. *They are praying in the Spirit*, says Momma.
For two years, Momma doesn't show me anymore
demons, not until two ladies move in across our street.
Momma spies on them through the window as they water
their lawn, check mail, walk their dogs. *They're bad women*,
says Momma. *Women like them have demons*, she says,
to make them like that. They are unclean.

For a long time, I don't understand what she means,

only that she would point them out when we go
to the grocery store, to the movies, them together,
holding hands, whisper, *demon*, say the same words Pastor said
during revival. *Soka loma lameh moda kadem simoda hada*
and I would remember the demon lady when I saw

the ladies from across the street. *Soka loma lameh*
on the floor, limbs twisted. *Moda kadem simoda hada*,
eyes rolled back. *Shoka lameh simoda hada*, mouth open wide.

HOW IT IS WITH ME THIS 23rd OF FEBRUARY, 2011

Doug Anderson

After Tagore

The coffee sharpens me against the cold.
Here, on this unremarkable Wednesday
I face the possibility of happiness.
It has come to my feet
like a small bird, no longer afraid.
Perhaps because I have stopped
flinging the bread with such intent.
Things that used to wound me
I cut loose with one stroke
and watch them slide into
the abandoned mineshaft of the past.
Let spiders weave the entrance invisible.
I think, now, on this day, what gift
I might leave behind to mark this moment.
Something that, when opened
a hundred years from now
might release its fragrance and its light.

HYMN TO MY LIVER

Doug Anderson

For Joan Larkin

Praise my old redneck liver.
Praise its chambers where hard-hatted enzymes
stirred the pots of venom I fed it all those years.
Praise its forgiveness
of my blear-eyed sordid self.
Praise it even when it failed to purge
the cheap Chianti
that came out instead through my armpits
and stained my T-shirt red,
so much of it I swilled and swaggered with.
Praise the genius of its maker
and Billy Rubin and his Hepatic cohort,
the font of happy hormones.
Praise it for keeping my eyes from turning yellow
and for the good health of my old age,
which I do not deserve.
And yes praise the way it kept on working
in the dark without complaint,
needing nothing but the steady, scrimshawed heart.

THE LITERARY REVOLUTION WILL NOT BE ANTHOLOGIZED
Chuck Calabrese

with apologies to Gil Scott Heron

The revolution will not be anthologized.

It will not be published in the American Ploughshares Review or Poverty Magazine of Chicago or Quarterly Worst.

It will not appear on Facebook or YouTube or Linked-In.

It will not declaim itself from the bully pulpit at AWP.

The revolution will not be fueled by a double tall skinny cappuccino extra dry from Starbuck's.

The revolution will not happen in the streets of Manhattan or Brooklyn or Harlem or Queens or Bed Stuy or on the campus of this year's number one MFA program as determined by the number of graduates currently submitting weekly to McSweeney's online.

The revolution will not be anthologized.

The revolution will not be accompanied by jazz bass, thumb piano, or fingerpicked banjo.

The revolution will not be poststructuralist or post New York or postmodern or post-postmodern or postmortem.

The revolution will not rhyme, scan, count syllables, or discuss tropes with Yale profs over a burger and fries at Louie's Lunch.

It will not be a filling out of the form for the sake of the form.

It will be neither predictable nor surprising.

The revolution will not be anthologized.

The revolution will not be born in Watts or Westwood or Hollywood Hills, spawned by a chance mating of Charles Bukowski and June Jordan.

It will not be invented by the latest batch of Iowa poets roasting pigs in Donald Justice's honor.

The revolution will not be brought to you by APR or NPR or RBG.

The revolution will not wear berets and shout its poems into the coffee house night.

The revolution will not be anthologized.

The revolution will not be iambic or trochaic or anapestic.

It will not yawp its barbaric spondees from the rooftops of the Mariott Wardman on a cold day in February.

The revolution will not put people to sleep in a university auditorium or wake them up at an anti-war rally.

The revolution will not feature this generation's bratpack actor sipping a post-treatment decaf latte and reading his latest journal entries to a trendy Los Angeles coffee house.

The revolution will not feature James Franco as Allen Ginsberg or Jack Nicholson as Father Time.

The revolution will not be anthologized.

The revolution will not wear a single sequined glove or a black hair net.

The revolution will not quote Martin Heidegger on Friedrich Holderlin or Bob Dylan on Arthur Rimbaud.

The revolution will not appear on Fresh Air or NPR Weekend Edition or Bill Moyers Journal or the Fox Noise Network.

The revolution will not be seen riding its vegan bicycle through the caucasian streets of Boulder looking for a skinny mocha.

The revolution will not be anthologized.

The revolution will not make us weep for its lost innocence or applaud its latest tryst or shrink from its intellectual force.

The revolution will not be born of words pulled from a top hat or a well-turned sonnet.

The revolution will not crawl out of the wreckage of a PhD program wearing a Lady Gaga Tour 2011 T-shirt and waving the 4, 536th unpublished first book manuscript of the year.

The revolution will not be anthologized.

The revolution will not slip out of a midnight limo wearing the latest creation from Halston and slink down the red carpet straight into the ad-slick pages of The New Yorker.

The revolution is not putting its queer shoulder to the wheel.

The revolution will not debut at #3,456,228 on amazon.com.

The revolution will not tweet or text or i.m. or podcast or download itself onto your kindle for 13.95.

The revolution will not bump, break, battle, swagger, drop rhymes, flow, holler, get its swerve on, freestyle, represent, or screw the mix.

The revolution will not be anthologized, will not be anthologized, will not be anthologized.

The revolution will be.

*Each section is part of an eighteen-page sequence of poems.

BRANCHES, II
CHARLOTTE PENCE

Turning into the driveway, her headlights reveal something dark.

She has light shining on darkness.

A branch has fallen, a good twenty-foot long and branded with many branches.

It is thirty-four degrees.

Drizzling.

She wants to be warm, eat that leftover lasagna, drink one glass of boxed red wine.

The engine idles.

She has just returned from her last act as a married woman: mailing the new-ex his car title. He wanted a copy faxed and the original over-nighted.

She can hear now the car part that scrapes under the hood.

She buttons her coat, lifts the collar, gets out.

Grabs the branch by the base.

Her hands slide down wet-slime of turkey-tail mushrooms in bloom.

She pauses. Decides not to wipe off her hands.

Begins again.

It takes five tugs, a deep drag. The moon seeps through to a shine.

How long has it been since she has done something as fundamental as this?

Cleared a path, been wet, been cold.

Even the neighbors' windows are ice-black. Scent of wet dog shit limps over from their yard.

Something about this feeling is honest. Like nakedness.

Like this November moon, color of silk that is neither white nor silver, but something otherworldly.

Something she wants to conquer and can't.

BRANCHES, XV-XVI

ↄ

Prometheus from Zeus,
        Máui from Mudhens,
                Crow from Volcano,

Rabbit from Weasel,
        Grandmother
                Spider from Land

of Light and so on go
        the myths of taming fire.
                Stealing always at the core.

A loss. An offense. A way
        to incense the gods
                who knew to fear us,

who knew we would
        replace them
                as soon as we could.

ↄ

We, and no other animal, understand how to start fire
                with flint, chert, pyrites,
pocket lint, feather down, pine moss, yucca shreds, cedar bark, Bic.
                How to stop it
with ash, water, flour, snuffer, hose, hook-n-ladder, stop-drop-and rolls.

How to hide it
in boiler tanks, engine blocks, power grids.
How to wave
a finger through flame
on Saturday night while drinking PBR.
This, even this,
makes us more
advanced than the dog who
sniffs
the same candle flame and whines. Circles
three times, then lies back down.

TO YAHIA
Joshua O'Donnell

Before the first dream of fire
He burned the silent
Bridges between pulses
Ate the organ raw
Sang marrow into bone
With the warmth
Of his breath.

Now he watches
Silent and still
Outside the flame
Of every far flickering star
Of every flighted feather

From which he stands
In his irons
Listening for the arrival
Of thunder

There is a forest riverbed
Where I lay myself down
And it runs fox red,
With the sun.

BOOKS RECEIVED:

Before the Troubadour Exits, poems, Jeffrey C. Alfier, Kindred Spirit Press, St. John, Kansas, 2010.
Jessie's Ghost, a novel, Frank Bergon, Heyday Books, Berkeley, CA, 2011.
Notebooks From the Emerald Triangle, poems, Bill Bradd, Ten Mile River Press, Fort Bragg, CA.,2010.
Give Over, Graymalkin, poems, Gaylord Brewer, Red Hen Press, Los Angeles, CA, 2011.
The News Inside, poems, Bill Brown, Iris Press, Knoxville, TN 2010.
Last Voyage: Selected Poems, Giovanni Pascoli, transl. by Deborah Brown, Richard Jackson and Susan Thomas, Red Hen Press, Los Angeles, CA, 2010.
Tamales, Comadres and the Meaning of Civilization: secrets, recipes, history anecdotes, and a lot of fun, Ellen Riojas Clark and Carmen Tafolla, Wings Press, San Antonio, TX, 2011.
Cold Instant, poems, Jack Collom, Monkey Puzzle Press, Boulder, CO, 2010*Preliminary Report,* poems, Jon Davis, Copper Canyon Press, Port Townsend, WA, 2010.
Master Siger's Dream, a novel, A.W. Deannuntis, What Books Press, Los Angeles, CA, 2010.
The Trouble Ball, poems, Martin Espada, W.W. Norton, New York, NY, 2011.
One Dog Barking, stories, Nigel Ford, Word Scribe Press, Hampshire, UK, 2011.
Vocabulary of Silence, poems, Veronica Golos, Red Hen Press, Los Angeles, CA, 2011.
Unincorporated Persons in the Late Honda Dynasty, poems, Tony Hoagland, Gray Wolf Press, Minneapolis, MN, 2010.
When the Water Came: Evacuees of Hurricane Katrina, Interview-poems, Cynthia Hogue, Photographs by Rebecca Ross, University of New Orleans Publishing, New Orleans, LA, 2010.
Dreamless and Possible, poems, Christopher Howell, University of Washington Press, Seattle,WA,2011.
Fault Lines, poems, Tim Hunt, The Backwaters Press, Omaha, NE, 2009.
Invisible Mink, poems, Jessie Janeshek, Iris Press, Knoxville, TN, 2010.
Small Wars, a novel, Sadie Jones, Harper Perennial, New York, New York, 2011.
Scorpio Rising, poems, Richard Katrovas, Carnegie-Mellon Press, Pittsburgh, PA, 2011.
The Book of Men, poems, Dorianne Laux, W.W. Norton, New York, NY, 2011.
The Book of Fifth Born II, The Hundredth Turtle, a novel, Zelda Lockhart, LaVenson Press, Hillsborough, N.C, 2010.
Cut Up, a novel, Conor Robin Madigan, Republic of Letters Books, London, Boston, Cahuita,2011.
Bound, poems, Linda Parsons Marion, Iris Press, Knoxville, TN , 2010.
Damn Sure Right, flash fiction, Meg Pokrass, Press 53, Winston-Salem, NC, 2010.
Each and Her, poems, Valerie Martinez, University of Arizona Press, Tucson, AZ, 2010.
On The Line, poems, Kamala Platt, Wings Press, San Antonio, TX, 2010

The Mind-Body Problem, poems, Katha Pollitt, Random House, New York, NY, 2009.
King of the Chicanos, short stories, Manuel Ramos, Wings Press, San Antonio, TX, 2010.
My Town, poems, Margaret Randall, Wings Press, San Antonio, TX, 2010.
Paper Anniversary, poems, Bobby C. Rogers, University of Pittsburgh Press, Pittsburgh, PA, 2010.
Within the Shadow of a Man, poems, Dennis Sampson, Settlement House Press, Arlington, VA, 2009.
Borderlines: Drawing Border Lives, poems, Steven P. Schneider, drawings by Reefka Schneider, Wings Press, San Antonio, TX, 2010.
Departures From the Moon, poems, Deema K. Sheehabi, Press 53, Winston-Salem, NC, 2011
The New Black, poems, Evie Shockley, Wesleyan University Press, Middletown, CT, 2011.
Phantom Noise, poems, Brian Turner, Alice James Books, 2010.
Dog Is Cat, poems, Mike Tyler, Art Cannot Be Damaged Press, New York, NY, 2011.
Bone Light, poems, Orlando White, Bear Star Press, Cohasset, CA, 2009.
Unsettled Accounts, poems, Will Wells, Ohio University Press, Athens, OH, 2010.
Outtakes Sestet, poems, Charles Wright, Sarabande Books, Louisville, KY, 2011.
Sestets, poems, Charles Wright, Farrar, Straus & Giroux, New York, NY, 2009.
The Throne of Psyche, poems, Marly Youmans, Mercer University Press, Macon, GA, 2011.

CONTRIBUTORS NOTES

CUTTHROAT DISCOVERY POET, Roger Bonair-Agard is a native of Trinidad and Tobago, a Cave Canem fellow and author of 2 collections of poetry; *tarnish and masquerade* (Cypher Books, 2006) and *GULLY* (Cypher Books, Peepal Tree Press,2010). He is published in several journals and literary magazines. Co-founder and Artistic Director of NYC's Louder ARTS Project, Roger is also an MFA candidate at the Stonecoast Program of the University of Southern Maine. He teaches at University of Wisconsin-Madison,Fordham University, Young Chicago Authors and Cook County JuvenileTemporary Detention Center. He currently resides in Chicago.

Doug Anderson's last book was a memoir, *Keep Your Head Down,* from W.W. Norton. His book *The Moon Reflected Fire* won the Kate Tufts Discovery Award, and *Blues for Unemployed Secret Police* a grant from Academy of American Poets. He has poems and prose forthcoming in The Massachusetts Review, The Cimarron Review, and The San Pedro River Review. He lives in Providence, RI.

When not committing grievous, career-damaging social errors, **Chuck Calabreze** is performing. He has appeared on stages and stage-like configurations from Santa Fe to Kearney to Lubbock to Nairobi. Mr. Calabreze is founder of Chuckismo!, perhaps the only poetry movement that includes an exclamation point in its name. His poems are collected in an unpublished chapbook, *Twenty Songs of Despair,* and an unpublished full length book, *How is this Fun.* Individual poems may have appeared in *Exquisite Corpse, Left Facing Bird, New Hampshire Review, Ploughshares,* and I*ndiana Review.* Recently, he has become involved in the environmental movement. "As a poet," he says, "I'm writing for the ages. It'd be good if we had some." He occasionally appears as the elitist poet Jon Davis.

Nene Giorgadze was born Georgia in 1971. She has an MA in Georgian Literature from Ilia University (Tbilisi, Georgia). She has lived in the USA since 1999, and speaks three languages: Georgian, English, and Russian. She has written poetry and prose since childhood. Her work is forthcoming or has appeared in *Ann Arbor Review*, *Raleigh Review*, *RHINO*, and others.

Tawnysha Greene is currently a Ph.D. candidate in fiction writing at the University of Tennessee where she serves as the fiction editor for *Grist: A Journal for Writers*. Her work has appeared in various literary journals including *Necessary Fiction* and *Bluestem* and is forthcoming in *Emprise Review*. She can be found online at http://tawnyshagreene.blogspot.com/

Richard Jackson is a poet, an essayist, and translator who has published ten books of poems, the latest, *Resonance,* won the 2011 Prize. He is editor of *Poetry Miscellany* and *Mala Revisa,* and he has published nearly 40 chapbooks of Eastern European Poets. Jackson's prizes include a Guggenheim, NEA, NEH and Fulbright Fellowships as well as the Order of Freedom from the President of Slovenia for his humanitarian and literary

work in the Balkans. He teaches at University of Tennessee, Chattanooga and at Vermont College.

Ana Jelnikar, of Ljubljana, was schooled in both London and University of Ljubljana, teaches English, and translates into both English and Slovenian. Her works include the first Slovenian edition of Jung's *Man And His Symbols.*

Originally from Colorado, **Timothy Kercher** lives in Kyiv, Ukraine after living in the Republic of Georgia for the past four years, where he has been editing and translating an anthology of contemporary Georgian poetry. His poems and translations have appeared or are forthcoming in a number of recent literary publications, including *Crazyhorse, upstreet, Versal, The Minnesota Review,* and others.

Joseph V. Milford is a Professor of English at Georgia Military College south of Atlanta. His first book, *Cracked Altimeter*, was published in 2010. He is also the host of the weekly Joe Milford Poetry Show (joemilfordpoetryshow.com).

Joshua J. O'Donnell is a native of southern Maine. He frequently posts his new work on FB and has published one 50 copy edition of his poetry. Currently he performs solo acoustic songs around Portland [Maine] opening for local and national musicians. To contact, drop a postcard with your e-mail address to him at 268b Maine Street, Brunswick, Me.

Amir Or is International editor of *Atlas*, the founder in Israel of the Helicon Poetry Society, founder of the Helicon Poetry School, director of the Sha'ar Poetry Festival, prize-winning author of nearly 20 books of poetry, translations and a fictional epic in metered prose. He has also been a shepherd, construction worker, and restauranteur. At the Hebrew University, where later he lectured on Ancient Greek Religion, Or studied philosophy and comparative religion. He grew up in India and the Netherlands.

Iztok Osojnik is a prize-winning, prolific Slovenian poet also esteemed as a mountain climber, painter, novelist, translator, essayist. Since 1998 he has directed the International Golden Boat Translation Festival at Vilenicia. Of writing he says "between me, the poem and the other…there is always something further to see." He often bubbles with good spirits. We feature a sampling of his poems as well as paintings in this issue.

Charlotte Pence is the author of two forthcoming poetry chapbooks, winner of the Black Lawrence Press chapbook prize and Flying Trout's prize. She is also editor of the forthcoming essay collection, *The Poetics of American Song Lyrics* (University Press of Mississippi, January 2012), which analyzes the similarities and differences between poetry and songs. She is married to the fiction writer Adam Prince and currently lives in Knoxville, Tennessee.

Lucyna Prostko was born in Poland. She received her M.F.A. in Poetry from New York University, where she was awarded the New York Times Fellowship. Her first book of poems *Infinite Beginnings* was published by Bright Hill Press in 2009. She currently teaches at Queensbury High School in upstate New York and pursues a Ph.D. in English at SUNY Albany.

In 2008, **Maya Sarishvili** won the SABA Prize for Poetry, Georgia's top literature award, for her collection, *Microscope*. She is the author of one other poetry collection, *Covering Reality* (2001), as well as three radio plays. She lives in Tbilisi, Georgia where she works as a third-grade teacher and is mother to four children, ages 6 to 13. Her work is forthcoming or has appeared in *Guernica, Numero Cinq, Nashville Review*, *Los Angeles Review*, *Bitter Oleander* and others.

Sarah Schneider lives with her husband in Montville, Maine and works as a grant writer. She received her BFA from the University of Maine at Farmington and studied poetry and nonfiction at Vermont College of Fine Arts. Her poems have appeared in the *Sandy River Review* and *Fifty-one Percent*. She is putting together her first book of poems.

Arthur Smith's recent books of poems are *The Late World* (2002) and *Orders of Affection* (1996), both from Carnegie Mellon; a new volume is forthcoming. New poems appear in *The Georgia Review*, *Hunger Mountain, Southern Poetry Review, Poetry International, Poems and Plays.* He is a professor of English at the University of Tennessee.

Susan Straight is the author of seven novels, including *Take One Candle Light a Room* and *Highwire Moon*. She was born in Riverside, where she is Distinguished Professor of Creative Writing at University of California, Riverside.

Ben Stoltzfus is Professor Emeritus of Comparative Literature and Creative Writing and the University of California, Riverside. A paperback edition of *Hemingway and French Writers* is being published in September, 2011 (Kent State UP). *Cat O'Nine Tails*, a collection of short stories, will be published in 2012 (Spring/Summer) by the Neo Literati Press.

Peter Warshall, one of our favorite people, is living a life we at Cutthroat admire. Peter teaches outdoors. He taught Eco-Poetics at Naropa. He is a maniacal naturalist with special attention to the Mt Graham red squirrel, baboons, rhesus monkeys, slow lorises, jaguars and neotropical migrant birds. For 35 years, he has tried to reconcile conservation and development projects in Africa, Chile, Mexico, North America and Europe. Sometimes it worked. He was editor for the "environment" for the Whole earth Catalog and many of its offspring mags. Peter now lives mostly in one of the oldest and shadiest settler compounds in Tucson.