

Conquest

By: Emma Tilley

I knew it well, but from afar,
from tales of battle and the sword;
or silhouettes in doors ajar,
and fallen heroes' grim award.

As distant as a blazing sun
was such great courage unto me,
so weeks I waited for someone
to set my tortured wishes free.

At once I knew I could not hold
myself with pride, unless I kept
the pledge to tell you things untold
by me to any, lest I wept.

Deceptively easy it seemed,
for renegades and knights of old,
and mere cowards were yet redeemed,
how simple for them, to be bold!

Could bitter crash of steel on steel
be so dreadful as to be shamed
and treasures of my thoughts reveal
to all who would see me defamed?

But not to come through would be death
to me, and shame but a delay.
I took a step and took a breath,
and said what I had come to say.

Duel / Duet

I turned off the power to
the cutter bar,
stopped the pum pum pum
of the tractor, stepped down,
sat against the rear wheel
with a Coke to wash the dust
from my throat.

There were two birds
at the top of craggy alders
in the field. They were perched
on the top twigs far from each other.
The songs took turns shimmering
over the hot August grass.

I decided to nap face up
in the sea of stems and give them
a little time to play things out.
Songs get complicated in a duel.

I decided I wasn't coming back
with the brush-hog for the shrubs.
I'd cut down the hay, they'd sing,
they could work the bugs I shook up,
and some from the bailer tomorrow,
and try for their second nest of the season.
No trouble to me.

That was fair enough.
What would I be worth
if I didn't pay a fair price?

--Jim Knowles

Omen

Not the owl's ghostly flute
that broke your dream at first light;

not the woodpecker's busy signal
while you were reading the paper;

not that gull's maniacal laugh
this afternoon at low tide;

but pleading shrieks from the April night
of frogs half buried in mud,

who know that things must happen in spring
or summer never comes.

by Tim Cremin
Andover

THE LAND OF THE LIVING

The land of the south bleeds
when the plow's blade
lifts its veil of windy dust.

Red lips part,
moist and supple,
to take in the rain.

Bronze flesh
spreads its limbs languidly
under the caress of the sun.

The land of the north is stony brown.
A deep and leathery scab
protects what blades would penetrate.
It bears its fruit reluctantly.

Abandoned by the sun.

Left to freeze in
lonely desire.

Dead to all
but the most persevering hand,
who tends it caringly
because
he too has been abandoned
in the world beyond the sun.

Pilar Quintana
February 2012

THE UNCROSSED BRIDGE

Pilar Quintana
Feb 2012

There is a bridge I dare not cross.
It looks unsafe.
The metal bolts that once held it together
are rusted over.
And tall grasses peer out over the edge
like sentinels.
Much more imposing
than the brittle gates that check either entrance.

There are other bridges, upstream and down.
But this bridge lures me,
glinting patiently on the water.
A barrier disguised as a path.
A path disguised as a barrier.
A reminder of a tie once made,
and let drop.
Like a ribbon floating in a stream.

Like an unanswered question....
Would you give out from under me?
Watch me as I fall?
Is this madness or abandon?
If I dare what your limbs whisper,
will I fail in my attempt?
Or, more frightening still...
will I succeed....

Stretch my arms across gorges,
across rivers, strong enough
to weather the crosswinds,
to brave the currents,
to stand on unfamiliar ground.

My own uncertain mettle
flickers in the water
like a siren song.

Like an uncrossed bridge.

Time for One More Run

Halfway up, the chair lift stops.

Hanging there as afternoon

slips off the mountain,

you notice the wind,

which you know has not intentions,

yet seems to be saying,

“You don’t belong here.

Any minute now

It’ll probably start back up.

By: Tim Cremin

Middle Earth

By: Eric Braude

The windows wide open,

I sprawl on the sofa,

a car swishing by through the dusk.

A child down the block

sounds a brief, muffled yelp. And I dream.

Of the climbing hydrangeas’

loving affair

with the trellis out back.

Of the lawn’s wanton indolence,

its blush of deep brown. Of the roses,

now reveling in sun and baked air.

The evenings don't end,

they subside

into day after midsummer day.

Winter in New England

By: Ray Landry

So many leaves gone.
So many trees bare.
Farms and meadows
Barren and spare.

Dormant life forms breathing,
Gently active—one with the earth,
The sky, the universe—
Some creatures give birth.

Frigid, less daylight
Images bleak.
All movements slowed slightly—
A treasure unique.

Rain At the T&N

By: Jim Knowles

Here's to the August rain,
those wheels, their sizzle
on the tar outside
the noodle restaurant,
the way they multiplied
the snugness
hovering around
my bowl of pho.

Here's to the way
that you said,
“mmmm”.

It did much
the same,
you know.

Gumball Rally
By: Steven Sohigian
December 21, 2011

Gregory Gumball, here at Wrigley field.
It's the bottom of the ninth and fates sealed.

Nick O'Rette is on the mound chewing gum.
Some guy's here tossing bazookas, that's dumb.

Wait, Nick's shoulder is acting up again.
I think it's his altoid muscle, that's zen.

He's in the big league now; I see time out.
Toward mound relief pitcher Chic Dent comes out.

A tidal wave seems to have taken crowd.
Chic's known for his razzle dazzle just bowed.

There's an arctic chill spreading through the seats.
I see a lot of fans sending out tweets.

Some teen is holding up a sign "Go Dent."
Well, I guess that would make him a Dent teen.

There's some young girls in the stands wearing sweats,
yelling to Chic. I guess they're his chiclets.

I guess the manages wants to try Dent.
Chic's winding up and not too hesitant.

It looks like it's his patented fast ball.
How does he make it look carefree to all?

It looks like, yes, it's strike one for Big Red.
Chic is taking it in his stride, Right Jed?

I think Chic want to freshen up, but wait.
I think this moment will eclipse game. Great!

Oh, wait, here's the ball, another strike. Wow!
The way Big Red is gripping that bat now.

You'd think Big Red hit ball into orbit.
Oh no! Big Red struck out. He's having fit.

Game over. Boy that pitch kept Red on toes.
What mo-mentos, those last balls were for pros.

The Guarantee

Mary Ellen D'Angelo-Lombari

Weight
bearing down
down upon my
shoulders
for
who shoulders
the weight
secures the boxes
carries the storehouse
for
the child
who reaches for

*but can't cut his own
piece of the pie
for
the debit that cries for
credit, the credit
that debits the next
payment in the cycle
for
the grindstone
turning-crushing
stones of inequity
into sand for the hourglass
for
time once lifted
the weight
locked the shoulders
tethered the storehouse
for
the confidence of
the guarantee for
the foundation
of things to come.*

Highway Musings

Headless Operators have No Driving Ability

Left EXits are UnSafe

Vehicles can be Weapons

Buckle Up - It Can be a Killer

TOYs On The Arteries

Better Move out of the Way

this Square Car Is Owned by Nerds

OnLy Deaf Seniors

CHEat Velocity - ROLlover Every Time

Danger- Older Drivers Getting Even

live Free OR Die

Killed In Action

Ann Lowney 1/2012

Dining Out

once a year I get the craving
it starts down deep in my spleen
I can't keep myself from caving
for American Chinese cuisine

after bars close and people are dizzy
they're out roaming the streets
Chinese restaurants get very busy
some patrons can't fit in the seats

people ten deep in the buffet line
the food shining under a red lamp
the stuff on the menu looks oh so fine
but the stuff in there looks damp

I see a man's brow shiny with sweat
he just ate a whole Pu Pu platter
his noisy insides are a toxic threat
and the diners begin to scatter

duck sauce is dripping from his fingers
it runs down his wrist to his knees
on his clothes the food odor lingers
and he thought he was eating Japanese

they don't have nothing grilled
but some food does look back
it's advertised as being pre killed
clubbed to death in a Burlap sack

after I have finally finished
I can't seem to find my waiter
my cravings have long diminished
but I'll be hungry a half hour later

fortune cookies always disappoint
I'm beginning to start to brood

I don't like the decor in this joint
and the MSG has fowled my mood

By: Douglas Lowney

The Pumpkin Patch

by Carole Davis

They grow up in a crowded patch,
A tenement of sorts.
Hundreds of other sprouts nearby,
Seeds from foreign ports

Not small like golden apples,
Nor sweet like purple plums,
Not elegant like persimmon
But tart upon the tongue.

Yet, somehow they may catch the eye,
And insist you pause a bit.
To see these soldiers lying on the ground
So ready to be picked.

Some are short and some are tall,
Spotted, green and gold,
Until they grow a pound or two,
Really, little to behold.

Fall has come, and the days are crisp
A bitter wind is neigh.
Winter's chill is in the air,
With smells of pumpkin pie.

The time has come to cut them loose,
But save that crowning glory
The stem is the topping on the cake,
To this author's cherished story.

The face is etched with an artist's hand,
Sculpted with a knife.
Eyes, and nose, ears and mouth,
Are molded into life.

A candle glows inside the head,
And a heart begins to beat.

Inside the child who in the night,
Is guided by the heat.

In the end, it all adds up,
To a life well lived and loved.
We watched as autumn leaves did fall,
And icy hands were gloved.

So if you've ever ridden by
A blazing orange field,
Count on many fingers
What a pumpkin patch may yield.

Ode to the Potato

By Carole Davis

December brings two choices,
As the icy branches freeze,
Do we find the brass menorah,
Or search for Christmas trees?

Do we sing with golden angels,
The Messiah at it's best.
Or remember Judea and his Maccabees
Warriors without crests.

Shall we cook the lavish turkey,
Braise the duck or goose,
Trifles, puddings, frosted cakes,
A feast to warm the roost.

Well, I prefer potatoes,
Be they whipped or diced or boiled,
Maybe even French sometimes,
Crisp, in hot, fried oil.

The potato is a lowly spud,
Colorless and round,
His clothes are peeled,
His eyes are poked,
He's judged by many pounds.

.
But when the day of transformation comes
And a gifted chef is noted.
The beaten spun is flattened down,
And the latke now promoted.

Cream and apples don the plate,
Filled with pancakes high.
Like sugar mountains in the snow,
Against a clear blue sky.

Some may opt for lavish fare,
Glazes and pate's sure,
But I prefer a plainer dish,
With taste that's real and pure.

A potato comes from common roots,
He's a fella without guile,
Join our table, sit awhile.
Heap your plate a mile

Some say Christmas is the first,
Chanukah the least,
I say buy some white potatoes,
And make yourself a feast!

Back to Nature.....Truly

By Carole Davis

I've decided to go camping,
It's "au currant" and tres so chic,
I'll sleep among the stars tonight
And grass will brush my cheek.

Off to North Face I will run,
Parkers made of down,
Eddie Bauer will stitch my shirts,
REI is right in town.

My tent will be the new hi tech,
To rest upon the ground;
I think that in a week or so,
I'll apply to Outward Bound.

But a bright display of Northern Lights
Awakes me before dawn.
The realization hits me,
Have I been aptly forewarned?

The rock below my sleeping bag
Pokes me in the night.
The myriad of mosquito bites
Makes me quite a sight.

And...where to go when nature calls,
Along a pristine stream?
Oh no, environmentalists shout,
Use a dug latrine!

I wonder now if I'm born to this,
My Merrill boots are tight.
Deet repellent on my skin,
The owl's hoot all night.

I dream of Nordstrom's dresses,
Shoes Armani made,
The essence of Chanel perfume
And Tiffany inlaid jade.

Tomorrow when the sun doth rise
I'm hiking to my car,

Driving far away from here
Towards congestion and sports bars.

If someone says I've failed the test,
Spoiled with city living,
My answer can be curt and swift
And not a bit forgiving.

Caviar was made for me,
Champagne and foie gras too.
And if I take an oar in hand,
It won't be my canoe.

Mother Nature knows quite well
The designer bags we tote,
Come in varied colors
As we sail from varied boats.

Some will be in smaller craft,
Some may never leave the shore.
Some will motor round the pound
And never ask for more.

I'll be waving from the forward deck,
Ocean shades of blue,
Sipping well aged wine for sure
Aboard the Q.E. II!

On the Plate

Raw food stares at the diner

Waiting to meet

Poor garnish fails to perform

Rotting surf and turf

Submitted by **Alan White**, participant in Gayle C. Heney's *Ekphrastic Poetry Workshop*, at the Salem Arts Festival on June 4, 2011.

The Search

Bridge in the distance.

Take the bridge to happiness.

Happiness is like a tree surrounded by water.

Water without a bridge because none knows what the toll is.

Submitted by **Donna McMahon**, on June 4, 2011 during Gayle C. Heney's *Ekphrastic Poetry Workshop* at the Salem Arts Festival.

Her voice is muffled by the constraint
of life

She struggles to make sense of the
loss of her senses

You can see her screams for help
through her pain stricken eyes

Only heard by those who wish to
LISTEN

Untitled poem submitted by **Joanne Falzarano**, participant in Gayle C. Heney's *Ekphrastic Poetry Workshop* @ the Salem Arts Festival on 6/4/11.

The Scar on a Body in the Wind

I cannot imagine life without the influence of poetry. First, as a childlike wonder over words, then as a youthful extravagance meant to reach others physically, later as a barrier against fear, and from there, under all the other guises in which it has accompanied me: As a morsel to relieve hunger, as a shade to protect me from fury, as armor to shield me from storms, as a ship to accomplish my escape, as a lighthouse to guide my return to myself, as a light to show the way, as a resting place for my sleeplessness, as warmth to conquer the cold. Poetry has been both stage and fortress. Final justification for the alphabet, lightning stroke of truth to clear the mirrors of doubt. Poetry has been all, and a part. A part, in order to draw me toward the great meaning of existence. All, in that it shows us the lives of others in a vital relationship with one's own existence. Poetry has been that evolving animal within me, which ceased to be a rattle meant to put others to sleep, in order to become, instead, an axe, a blossom, a grave and a wing. Poetry has been both illumination and despair, the beautiful scar on a body in the wind.

César Sánchez Beras

Second Chances
By Carole Davis

Our work is done,
We've raised our kids,
And now we stand alone.
So it's time to rebuild our nest,
With mortar, sticks, and stone.

A lake front house we've eyed before,
But never took the chance,
Now it's time to change all that,
And buy a country manse.

I wanted "quaint" and "country,"
Ceilings vaulted high,
Rustic and historic,
Streams that run nearby.

But it seems to me right now,
That I have been deluded,
All I see that is for sale,
Is shabby, old, secluded.

A realtor's "fixer-upper"
Or a "handy-man's dream,
Is really broken and discarded,
Frayed at every seam,

Paint is often not near enough,
To hide those fatal flaws,
Windows letting in the cold,
Creaking, threadbare, floors.

I need to see the brighter side,
As we view the "virtual tour,"
Watching sunset after sunset,
Now, that must be the lure.!

There is no bluestone fireplace,
There is no open hearth,
There is no hot tub right outside
Where I can take a bath.

But there is a neighbor right next door,
Closer than I'd like,
His house is planted so close to mine,
I can hear his every bite.

The designs of structures that we've seen,
Are at best a bit creative.
They're round or pointed, flat, or tall,
Nothing seems related.

Just pieces of a puzzle,
Bones that did not mesh.
Like city folk gone country
In a song that has no flesh,

Maybe we will find a lake,
Maybe buy a country home,
Maybe we are meant to stay,
Maybe we can't roam.

But I'm hoping for that mountain call,
Of a bird that's gone astray.
And like this lonesome traveler,
Remake my nest someday.

TAUT - *by Deborah Barrett*

cello string
tow line
clock spring
taut
black red white
caught
under moon
under brush
under bow
taught
resonate
don't
let
go

NPR or... "Not personal, really?"
By Carole Davis

My Companion called from Home today,
NPR is on the block,
Soon the folks in prairie land,
Will find themselves in hock.

It's the "Talk of the Nation" everywhere,
Our funding we can't trust.
I need a bit of clean "Fresh Air,"
Or I shall bite the dust.

I'm right "On Point" with every fact,
I've Rehms of information.
"All Things Considered" at this time,
I'll check the situation.

Nina will decide our fate,
She'll make the right decision.
By "Totten" lots of salient facts,
To stop this false derision.

"Wait, Wait -Don't Tell Me,"
The Right just hates your style
They prefer the Fox News,
With platitudes and guile.

Distaste for blasted word games,
Our puzzles and our rhymes,
Will Shorts is such a neophyte.
Burn that New York Times!

I'll drive my car away from here,
"Click, Clacking" very slow,
To truly taste "This American Life,"
Munching lutefisk as I go.

My days I'll spend with Lefty,
Guy Noir and all his ilk,
But what I truly yearn for
Are biscuits made with milk.

Duct tape is the one true master,
Of all that comes between
The lack of Federal funding,
And Garrison Keillor's dream.

.

NO LIMITS, HE SAID

No limits, he said

and I saw fear in his eyes

but I believed him

.

—Pilar Quintana (c) 2010

THE SPRING

Thaw me.
Thaw me like the spring sun.
Under a skin of ice
the brook babbles,
like a living thing.
It gurgles, it spits,
it stretches its limbs.
Remembering all of the places
it once ventured,
Remembering the roar of the ocean
claiming it as its own.

Under my icy, unmoving veins,
the currents run,
hot and reckless and amazed.
That even this is given a second chance.
To drop like tears,
to drip from the corners of my mouth,
to force life into the red meat
afraid to move in the middle of my chest—
this, this torrent of merciless existence
beating against my walls
like tempest waves demanding
the sea cliffs open
and let them in.

Let me in.
It is not over yet.
It has scarcely begun.
This endless spring.
This relentless thaw.
I look around myself for
my excuses, my reasons, my fears.
The vestiges of my shipwreck.
The waves have washed it all away.
And left behind.
Today.

Pilar Quintana
November 2010

“We have to go take photographs.”
The words make me cringe.
Not because I don’t like *taking* photographs,
but because I don’t like being *in* them.
Professional photographs. Posed photographs.
Photographs where you’re supposed to *be* someone
-- usually someone I’m not –
or so I imagine, I don’t know why.

I like candid photography.
The kind where you happen across a person
exactly as they are, catching them at their core.
Immersed in a book. Drunk after the party.
Distracted by something that
caught their attention on the street.
But posed photographs....
I never know what to do with my hands.
Or my face.
Or the rest of me, for that matter.

Here is a picture of me looking stiff and unsure.
An awkward attempt at a smile.
Not how I’d like to be remembered.
Not how I truly am, I hope.
But it is how I am, I suppose.
It is how I am “on display” –
and that’s what professional photography is all about.
A mantle shot.
A group of uncomfortable people smiling
on top of a piano.

Life unrehearsed is quite different.
And one always has to be patient
because nature is not thinking
of being documented.
The lighting is not always right, or the angle.
People move at the last minute,
expressions change in an instant,
and you’ve lost your shot.
You can’t pose it.
You have to *wait* for it.
Anticipate it.
Hope it might happen.
And, most important of all,

be ready for it when it does.

Page 2 of 3

A wave crashing against the embankment.
A bird flying overhead,
its wings outstretched in the wind.
The flared nostrils and wild eyes
of a horse thundering past.
Or the timeless reflection on a young woman's face
as she gazes over a piazza in Venice.
I stand with camera poised,
hoping to capture such things.
This is what I would have us remember.

"Come and be documented," I cry.
"Come and be counted, just as you are!"
I will not change you
or make you do things
that you yourself would never think of doing.
Why? When what you are doing
makes me want to take my camera out....

But today they have taken my camera away
and I am posed.
Stand closer. Turn to the side.
Everyone look at the groom. Smile!
No matter that I've never stood like this in my life.
Before now.
And only because I was made to.
No matter that I surely look as awkward as I feel.
It's the pose that matters.
The pattern.
The lighting is just right and if we don't move
the picture will come out – perfect.

I look back at the photographs *I* took,
after the day is over.
None of them are of me, of course.
And I wonder what I look like
in the real world.
How do I smile?
How do I stand?
What expressions cross my face
when I'm captivated by something?
If my life were photographed,
what would it catch me doing?
Sitting here in my shorts,

writing at the kitchen table?
What a look of concentration I must have on my face!
My brows knit, my lips pursed.
My head in my one free hand.
The lighting would be off,
and the pose unflattering,
and the picture unmemorable, I suppose.
But I imagine that it exists,
and that one day,
many years from now,
someone will chance upon it in a dusty photo album,
and, not recognizing me from the posed studio shot,
will ask their parents “Who’s that?”
And then, maybe, they will see who I was.

PILAR QUINTANA

THERE WERE WILD ANIMALS

Pilar Quintana
Page 1 of 2

When I was young, there were wild animals.
I don't say it out of nostalgia—
“Back in my day...”
--although that might have something to do with it.
But no,
call it an observation.
A bearing witness to what was,
before our very memories go extinct.
When I was young, there were wild animals.

I believed there always would be.
People talked of extinction, but...
the jungles were full of apes,
and the forests full of wolves,
and tigers and panthers,
sea turtles and eagles,
would surely roam the earth forever.
One might as well say
that the sun would stop rising,
or the oceans dry up,
or the air disappears into the cosmos.

I take my niece to the zoo
and she informs me
that there is a species of frog that only exists in zoos.
And there are only 52 Mexican Grey wolves alive in the wild.
But, it's ok,
she assures me.
They are safe in the zoos.
We are safe from them, and
they are safe from us.

How to explain?
When I was young, the world was a different place!

See... once upon a time
--but no, it wasn't a fairy tale—
animals roamed free and
if you ventured into the wild...
you were in their territory.
Yes, there were panthers out there,
just like our squirrels and sparrows.
No, the wild places were not called
sanctuaries,

or reserves,
or National Parks.
It was the human places that had names.
Cities. Towns.
Yes, the names have lasted,
but the spaces in between....

Once upon a time
the land was like the ocean,
and to cross the land was...
an adventure!
Full of creatures that let you know
you were a visitor here—no more.
Just like them.

What will our animals be like,
these zoo creatures?
Those whose homes have ever been
the cage,
the sanctuary,
the National Park.
One who is born in a cage
learns to accept cages.
Those who watch each other through bars
have no fear of interaction.
They learn preservation,
and observation,
and safety.
It is our children that we tame,
that we cage,
showing them our “wild animals.”
This is what happens to “the wild.”
This is what we would extinguish.

What will my niece say, when she is my age?
How to explain....
No, it wasn't a myth,
or some boring history of ancient times,
“I heard it with my own two ears.”
The land was like the ocean,
like a giant reserve,
and to cross it was... an adventure!
Once upon a time, there were wild animals.

**You stole my heart
like a kid, knuckle-deep
in the poor box when
the pastor turned away.
Sure, there wasn't much there for you,
but the pennies and the Indian heads went far
when Tarrytons were 38 cents
and your lady needed only
a warm shoulder to lean into
and a Sugar Daddy
that'd last all day.**

**It was baby love
bounding forward,
leaving paw prints
bigger than our brains.
Grass-stain glorious,
this silly girl wore Slurpee-kiss
bruises like a purple heart,
alerted Papa, whose switch
left welts on my backside,
that were still no match for
a sweet and salty smile.**

**This was a time
of impotent prohibition,
curfews retreated
to the back of our minds almost
as quickly as we dove
for the back seat of mama's caddie,
"Not my son",
echoed in the distance
while anticipation fluttered
like wings
confronting concealment.**

**Ten commandment tablets
toppled with ease by
ten teenaged man-thumbs
tried by safe-sex wisdom
when safe meant safe
from creating new life
not the potential
of ending our own.**

It was a time of innocence.
I want to tell you
it was a time of peace,
but I am not a liar.
Freedom was our mantra.
We spoke out against dogma
that ignored our humanity,
left us guilt-ridden for our sexuality.
Our lovers were assigned numbers
that determined if
they were the good,
who we are told, die young.
It was in Southeast Asia then,
Iraq and Afghanistan today.

So yes, you stole my heart.
I am one who measures risk
and I left it for the taking.
Freedom is still our mantra,
I sang it while I waited
for my tri-corned heart
to be handed back into my care,
once its red striped brilliance
was folded
into the deepest blue
of a starry night.

Anna Torrey

The Younger “Generation” by Carole Davis

The wind it did howl
And the drifts they did blow.
There were mountains of ice,
And oceans of snow.

But there safe at home,
My generator stood,
Idle and snoring,
Doing no good.

The power I trusted
Would serve in a pinch,
Alas, was not needed,
It moved not an inch.

I loathe cheery sunshine,
Hate bright blue skies,
Abhor temperate weather
Warmth I despise.

Give me a blizzard,
That tears down the trees,
Disrupts all the traffic
Makes noses wheeze

Give me a reason,
For dollars well spent,
And I'll give you a reason
Why I dented the rent....

On levers, and buttons,
Horses with power,
Engines with egos,
Refusing to cower.

Yes, I want a snowstorm
For my neighbors to think
As they chill by their wood stoves,

Alas, on the brink.....

That guy is a wizard,
While my life is a bummer.
But why is that generator
Working all summer?

A Rather Tiny War

To reassure my mind
That a piece trapped long before
Has not slipped away
Like water through capricious fingers.

My eye darts

My eye darts back-
The piece is frozen in place-
But I fear

My furiously whirring brain

May melt it away.

I force myself
To concentrate.
I stare at the squares:
A message hides in the madness...
Might it be a mirage?

I see a way-
Could it be?
My eyes flit along the rows, the columns,
Searching for a single sight:
What I am not supposed to see.

Oh, I have seen brilliant traps and ploys,
Or fallen into them-
But here and now, none were to be found.
I am at the checkered cusp.
I slowly lift a trembling hand.

I take a deep breath
And push forth my queen.
Long, long ago, I began this battle,
And now, at last, I strike the final blow:
“Checkmate.”

KG 4/17/10

My Shaman

There are times,
For all of us,
When we feel
Burdened, bored, bothered,
Any number of undesirable things,
Too many, too much,
To express, or much less explain, in ink.

In such times,
And even in those in which I am fine to begin with,
I can safely say
That I am luckier than most.

For right here,
In the soon-to-be superficial splendor
Of my poster-plastered, artwork-animated bedroom,
I have my very own Shaman,
Always there, always altruistically ready
To help.

My Shaman is of superimposing stature,
At eight feet in height.
My Shaman is like a multi-layered riddle –
It puts the choosing tongue in knots,
Yet gives the greatest satisfaction
When a choice is correctly chosen.
My Shaman's hue is no less deep;
An elegant mahogany brown it is.

My Shaman has been there for me
For as long as I can remember...

Today I am melancholy,
And in need of a pill.
My Shaman observes me politely, impassively,
Then considers...

One mutual eureka moment later,
I am flying on the back of a majestic dragon,
Accelerating o'er hills an' valleys alike.
Its scales ripple in the dazzling dawn -
They are the purest midnight black.

I am far from alone;
My company is most favorable,
And I, with elven sword and dwarven armor,
With hair flying in the wind and the thrill of flight in my very bones,
With commander and confidantes by my side,
Am most content indeed.

I feel strangely magical.
I am in another world,
A fantastical world,
A wonderful world I almost wish never to part with.

I return
To my incredibly ordinary home.

I am elated, truly and completely happy.
My Shaman has cured me yet again.
It is no surprise to me,
But as I murmur a silent thank-you,
And return the medicine,
That is so perfect it matters not when I use it or how often,
To its shelf,
I wonder,

Where will my next adventure take me?

KG
10/20/10

The Favored Guest

By Carole Davis

Our favorite guest flew many miles,
The first class seats were full,
But it didn't really matter,
In coach he had some "pull."

He never really "squawked" a lot,
His dress was fit to kill,
The only real objection here,
Was he never "foot the bill."

While sitting at the table,
His stomach did protrude,
Head held back, and feet outstretched,
Yet, never really rude.

This favorite friend will dine no more,
His visit oh so short
We had to say goodbye to him
We hoist our glass with port.

Next year let's stick with carrots,
Potatoes and with leek,
Let's roast a rutabaga,
And never have to peek

At winged friends looking back at us,
Their legs no longer roam,
Before we start the life support,
Let's call the vegans home!!

DON'T LOOK DOWN

Don't look down
And write your name in the sand
Write it instead in the clouds
The clouds are much less permanent
And they will take your name
To places you have not yet dreamed of

Pilar Quintana
19 September 2010



"Princes of the Blossoming Valley"
Salvador Dalí
1960

This poem was inspired by Dalí's "Princes of the Blossoming Valley," which was in turn inspired by Dante's "Divine Comedy." The painting is from the Purgatory Book in Dalí's series of illustrations entitled "Divine Comedy in Three Books." Some critics argue that Dalí's works in this series are not true illustrations of scenes in Dante's work, but rather representations of Dalí's own personal interpretations on reading Dante. I could say the same about my poem!

Meditations on Celephaïs

**A spring epiphany at night, broken by dawn's steadfast approach
commands imagery that might answer questions that few would broach.
This gentle harbinger's whispers, which ensorcell desires kept,
are trite polite conversations found false when certainty is met.**

**Empty are solicitations born of rapidly moving eyes.
We can accept invitations like these, and then become ghouls when we rise.
Our hearts consumed by sudden loss as we cling to our masonry,
which is fast overgrown by moss, unless guarded attentively.**

**What "feyish" gift that's enveloped within alchemical allure,
bearing seeds your mind developed that are seductively demure
and transmutes your hope from reason, but nevertheless is a lie
that your heart considers treason, yet, delights your homunculi.**

-Chad R. Meiners

Drifting Land

India, swimming across the ocean so slowly for 4,000 miles,
Millions of years, adrift,
Crash landing into Asia,
Diving under; exhumation.

Ammonites, sea lilies, ocean animals of yore,
Folding land mass until it can bend no more,
Wriggle under earth's mantle in roiling, boiling heat,
Melting, rotating, pushing up on mountains' beginnings.

Insistent Indian plate creating arc of majestic Himalaya.
Gonwanda's gift of 29,000 feet,
Summer monsoons with their chemical weathering,
Could it save the planet with stored CO₂?

Striped Everest.

Katmandu in the path of Geologic destruction, distant cousin of San Andreas.
One day: India totally sunken below the Roof of the World;
Los Angeles, neighbor to San Francisco
Everest climbing higher into the heavens,
Limestone fossils from the ocean summiting the summit of all summits.

By: Diane Lightburn