



Andrea Ascah

**Crush**

After the funeral  
she requested his heart be removed.  
Thereafter, she kept it in a glass box.  
In time, it turned an odd shade of brown  
and shriveled up.  
That was when she felt it fitting  
to crush it softly in her hand  
thinking of all the times  
he'd been late to meet her

**Holes**

Sometimes, staring into my closet  
I think of you  
when I see tears in the fabric of my clothes.  
I'd made openings for you  
wherever you needed them.



Madeline Artenberg

**In the Land of the Snows**

*Since 1950, the Chinese occupation of Tibet has caused a loss of one-sixth of the population. The number of Giant Panda, indigenous to both countries, is down to one thousand. These figures reflect the situation as of 1993.*

Bound by bamboo to shroud mist mount,  
you haunch-sit hungry in your tree den  
like a distraught Buddha.

Two blank eyes seize yours -  
you sit up, neck strong  
stare down, rocks shift -  
a monk's ripped body rolls,  
his eyes close.

You slump safe against a shrub  
on a rug of damp skin,  
hook with your forefoot pads  
hollow two-foot shoots,  
grown through the holes  
in the monk's pierced chest.  
You-chew-from-end-to-blood-fed-end,  
eat-ing-bam-boo-eat-ing-bam-boo...

**Veins**

On a fall afternoon,  
a leaf from my plant lands  
on the kitchen table as if  
the rules applied inside here.

I touch its curled parchment flesh  
with discolored veins lumped  
like on mother's legs,  
run fingers along my right calf,  
checking the small varicosity.

Pushing away the leaf, I straighten  
shoulders, align neck, suck in stomach  
and remember staring at her legs,  
my legs, but shorter,  
as she lay dying.

I feel them now as I trace  
the bone of my knee  
and the length of my thigh  
with her impossibly long arms.

I will make love tonight,  
drive her away with cries.  
I smile not full yet;  
mother's brittle grip  
loosening each year.



Michael Hilde

**To the hills framed by the treeline of the street  
coming off the sidewalk**

I live in the place beneath the hillside  
Where the sun rolls down the yellow hills and leaves  
Black lines like dental floss laid out on the hillside  
from  
The radio wires above.

I get in my car and turn the steering wheel to make a  
U-turn  
And have to stop to see  
The hills.

**dancing with elbows only—**

Tomorrow we are going to Rockaway Beach to pick  
up pearls and mussels and hit up the spider surf bars  
of bleachwood rails and stars go where Joey  
Ramone's ghost is reincarnated into the personage of  
a shore lark with a scentlike love for the pearls we  
find.

He follows us around the beach.

Leaving peace sign footprints without the circles in  
circles where we lead, we prance, breadcrumbs  
taunting the love of Joey Ramone who loves us far  
away. Some old New York punk told me Joey was at  
every New York show every night no matter how  
small the band until he died. My old drummer  
laughed at me when i tried to write the word "baby"  
onto the lyric sheets in suburbia. I can't blame him  
today, but I was listening to a lot of Led Zeppelin  
then.

Little did I know I would meet Joey Ramone in the  
likeness of a bird.

I write this with the highest compliment to Joey  
Ramone.



Susan Bruce

**Gun**

The day my son met his first toy gun  
he was with his best friend Joey.  
His four year old fingers warmed the handle,  
a silver cowboy pistol with ivory trim  
and I saw him older when I would mean nothing.  
He thread the trigger.  
Two boys each had a gun and the guns led.  
They scrambled over a chair and under the coffee  
table.  
Joey aimed at the crowd in Paris under umbrellas  
in the painting. My son aimed  
at Joey, his brother Mack, and then  
my face. He pulled. It cocked.  
It clicked its way into his heart.  
My heart. Blood everywhere.  
And the lamp broken in pieces on the floor.

**My Neighbor**

My neighbor hears me scream at them.  
I see her in the hall,  
she takes her time and smiles at me.  
I am the shadow of a parent  
tortured by sleeplessness  
torturer as I set off my own fireworks,  
for some reason  
accepted  
by my neighbor



Meg Campbell

**Swallowing Butterflies**

I swallow butterflies in my sleep.  
They dart through jaws ajar,  
sweeping passageways  
to my heart and lungs.  
Colonize there,  
cocoon dangling from my ribs.  
Precipice of my dreams.

Walking,  
lips open, in they fly.  
Mouth hoods them.  
They depart through my back,  
fluttering above shoulder blades  
before launch.  
New ones take their place,  
lifeline before my eyes.  
Respirator, deep colors  
and pale, shimmering.  
I never choke.  
It's how I stay alive.

**I Never Wanted to be A Poet**

I never wanted to be a poet.  
Useless. Ignored. Marginal.  
Vestigial. Anachronistic. Simpering.  
Needy. Craving recognition.  
An audience. Cymbals clanging.  
Spoons on water glasses.  
Lugging that magic wand with fairy dust  
everywhere. To the past.  
To dinner out.  
Stoking dream life like a hot iron.  
Never a moment's peace.  
Who would choose that?

**To Take A Maple for a Lover**

To take a maple for a lover  
requires constancy.  
Beloved lion on this pond shows age.  
I'll dance with him tonight.  
Below canopy, my forehead leans  
upon his gnarled bark.  
Lichen muted green I've seen upon the sea.  
Our steps are slow - none to naked eye -  
but we bring more than nakedness to this dance.  
He offers golden fleece, peach rinsed.  
Tangled branches veteran of winter storms.  
I bring legs,  
arms to hold him in my embrace.  
He silent roots, sound of falling leaves.



Robert Dunn

**Pill of Particulars**

Faithfully,  
She took her pills,  
Until one night . . .  
Her pills took her.

Elizabeth Harrington

**It's Your Birthday**

Here. Slip into its red dress  
these rose silk  
sleeves made from breath of butterfly.

The shoes—  
Pure travel—frosted icy white with unnamed stars  
of a little-known galaxy.

Don't forget the hat, stitched with  
four kinds of wind,  
topped with cattails, squirrel,

the blue of blue  
sky through a square of morning window.  
Only the brooch remains. Pin it here

to the left of the orchid.  
Then rise as the spirit rises  
each morning to sip tea eternal brown in your cup.

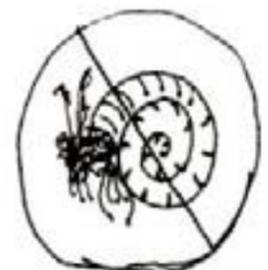
We are waiting, the band is blazing  
the candles speechless  
and hot to the touch.

**IN MEMORY -**

Maureen Holm

**Untitled Sonnet**

Oh ringless kneel and signify  
with flushing cheek and crimped brow  
unuttered words that tantalize  
the snake and mongoose of impatient sorrow.  
I rehearse the charm that could release,  
as time restitches heart to cuff,  
the subtle knot of lover cruelty,  
and pardons victims of rebuff.  
Withal I wish your hands atremble,  
your throat seized up with tears,  
a picture of the manly you resembled  
before reason pencilled in the beard.  
What waste, enchanted cobra heart  
crushed by the elephant of space apart.



Evie Ivy

**Facial**

Time to feel freshened  
and forget the inner bruises.  
Circling fingers round out,  
to expel what has taken hold,  
of the only face you have.  
What can you expect from  
yourself and the caress  
of the bad winds?

Facial.  
You sit unaware that the face  
betrays the mind giving a stage  
to too many returning thoughts.  
Fragrant washes on your face  
might help you to find yourself,  
be a member of the coming day  
even if it's just commanding  
your space within it.  
There will be no old veil  
of smeared makeup to expose  
the self's weakness.

Facial  
for your serious face.  
Still, their eyes will photograph  
you in their ridiculous ways  
as you listen and ponder  
this one world in the news,  
that's not multiple world  
but one world which needs  
one big  
facial ...  
And I'm smooth, expelled,  
ready for the windy street's  
dusty kiss again.





Marc Levy

For Russ

His name was Jeff.
Knew him only to say hello
Squad leader in 1/6.
Went out to police
His own automatic
Told his men
Stay back
He'd do it on his own
Then walked into it
Blowing three Claymores.
Not much left
But a suicide note
In his pack.
Stop the war," it said.
Automatic: American booby trap
Claymores: Anti-personnel mines

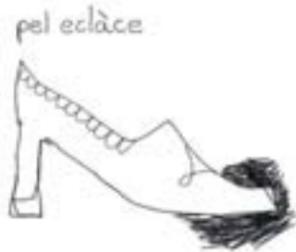
One Jan Seventy

Bang and he's dead,
Both legs ripped from hips
Plunked down on chunk metal
Dirt behind him.
The dust clears
Two others lay screaming.

Larry Mallory

Urban Pastoral

The dogs run in the park.
They are dogs of the city,
dogs who know some things
and do not know others.
They are dogs with pedigrees,
dogs without ancestors,
dogs that would pose for pictures.
The camera would catch the red glow
in their eyes. They are dogs
that dream of the relentless hunt.



Ngoma

Poem In Response to the Question.
What Kind of Music Do You Play

swallow sweet sound like quinine
dog faced blues
music junkies acquired taste for flatted fifths
reggae skankin bubblin' bass
funk in yr face
ghost of hendrix
defiant strings
ragamuffin style
heart beat nyabinghi drum
diaspora sound for the melanin enhanced
jungle dance on concrete
unboxable improvisational
free style - buck wild
rhythmically challenged culture bandits
can't steal this
music notation can't chart this
un-notated sounds between the keys
it's too real for memorex
we string scientist
do voo doo mathematics on your ear hole
funk so deep
grammy's can't judge
stolen blues
from mali to memphis
cipher spinning on and on
bebop to hip hop
eternity's too short for this rhyme
in future time
only the righteous
can sing this song

(half past midnite)
8-25-99 a.d.

Ash Wednesday

Christians
seal their 3rd eyes
w/crosses of burnt offerings
blocking visions of god
war planes surround iraq
as thou shalt not kill
is espoused from the ten commandments, inscriptions
covered in blood
war is such hypocrisy
in this age of aquarius
cause mother earth is pissed
only disneyland survives
as orlando rides the twister to oblivion
and california mudslides into a black hole
even stevie wonder can read the
writing on the wall
as icons fall like dominoes

2-25-98 a.d.



Pablo Rosenblueth

The skin of the city

Our words are the skin of the city
Our eyes its only stars
Our hearts craft every cloud now hovering
Our moods rain down on it

Our thoughts blow all the winds
Sweeping our memories

Our body's mass
Hosts sensitive and conscious transportation

Our fears run underground
In crowded tunnels

Our certainties are scheduled
Until further notice

Our breath's in charge of time
As it can give us
The rush of hours
Or the crawl of minutes

Our ears bring on the music of the land
As they combine the random
With the expected

Our hands now threat, now greet
Until they can caress
The perfect stranger

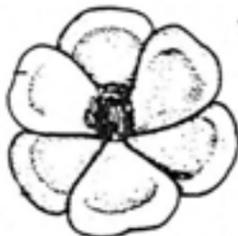
The legs that built the pace
May sometimes dance to it
And so regain some grace

We are the concrete
Motions and sensations

We also are the glass
Transparent and yet shielding

We are the monuments
That we forgot
And all the achievements
We would try to purchase

Our words can bring a new skin to the city
And this time
Let's give ourselves more time
To touch it



Chocolate Waters

Mark's

got the most delicious eyes,
the longest lashes you could eat for lunch.
He always puts in more than his fair share
sometimes pays the whole damn check,
just because he's like that.
I like that.
On the street he walks on my right side
takes my hand, protects me
from the "garbage."
I like that.
I like that I can talk to him,
strings and shoes and sealing wax
and any old damn thing.
He tells me jokes he's made himself,
makes me laugh at any old damn thing.
I like that.
And when I'm feeling down and out
it's Mark I find to fish me out,
just because he's like that.
I like that
he's got
the most delicious
eyes.

Michael T. Young

Dad

He often dreams of what he wants to be
and sleeps just to remember what it's like:
young, anxious to grow, fresh with fantasy.
He often dreams of what he wants to be.
And when he can't sleep, drinks, forgets, feels free
to hate the children, raise his hand and strike.
He often dreams of what he wants to be
and sleeps just to remember what it's like.

(Originally appeared in the chapbook, Because The
Wind Has Questions, published by Somers Rocks
Press in 1997)

Kate Light

I Conclude a Sonnet Never Changed

I conclude a sonnet never changed
a mind, or moved a heart, or opened a locked
door. If such could be so readily arranged,
poems could not possibly stay stocked.
Pockets would be filled and pillows swarmed.
Oh no, a sonnet never swung a gate,
cracked a safe, or left a bomb disarmed.
It never swam a moat, or pried a crate.
Or rather, whom it moved, at any rate,
was accidental; a side effect, some poor
someone tugged at when its influence, its weight,
its pool of moonlight revealed a midnight shore.
Yes, then, it may have changed a life, or more;
but not the one it was intended for.

Hal Sirowitz

Living At Home

(from Mother Said)
It's impossible for your parents to take
you to court, my therapist said, & sue you
for the money they spent buying you shoes.
The law states that they had to provide for you.
So if they tell you that they want you
to reimburse them for all the pants they
had to buy you don't tell them to sue you,
because that's confrontational. You should
just humor them, & say that when you get a
job you'll send them checks in the mail.
Don't tell them how much you're going to
give them. The way to avoid a crisis is to
always speak in general terms.
You can get specific after you leave the house.



William Duke

Anne Sexton

I'm walking through the thrift shop
20th century stuff\_\_
dusty polyester
a dinette set, a Formica table with chrome chairs,
a frayed paperback,
the cover marked with Anne Sexton's red lipstick.
I see her at the table in the pre-dawn hours,
her Dexedrine smile,
her corpse-like complexion.
She combs her lacquered nails through raven
widows' peak,
feverishly discovering undiscovered lines.

Like Silvia Plath she is in Lowell's class,
where she learns to scratch the surface
of her discomfort on yellow legal pads
transcribing again and again
a prescription
for her bi-polar genius,
her hemispheric suffering.
Who understands her pathology:
her undiscussed dual diagnosis\_\_
depression and addiction,
self-medicating, psychotic, anorexic, borderline,
abused?
She is a walking encyclopedia of mental disorder.
Inadequate, erratic dopamine levels
drive nicotine craving and unbridled desire.
She wants to die:
into that rushing beast of the night,
and I wonder why
I love her.

Feng Shui

I promised that I'd take some time today
to do my laundry, clean the Bagua, chores,
clear magazines and papers in the way,
dust history and cobwebs off the doors.
I'm focusing a fraction of my mind,
the future is obscured by artifact,
so meditation makes the time unwind,
releasing all the tension from my back.
The cruelest judgement always is my own,
a fear of just forgetting, letting go,
and throwing out the trash that's in my home
so I can get my Chi back in the flow.
My stuff piles up, it's such a sad reflection,
I'll drag it out, and start a new collection!



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Fifth Avenue. Church is #283
on the left.
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Calendar of Upcoming Readings
Feb 1-Michael Graves, Evie Ivy + Open
Mar 1-Hal Sirowitz, Bradford Agry + Open

