



Summer 2005

Steven Baker

### My Lady Nicotine

Deep in the lonely hours of the night  
 She haunts me  
 Her remembered fragrance  
 That luminous presence  
 Taunts me  
 The wishy, smoky tendrils of her hair  
 Linger  
 The pale, pale tapered fingers  
 Vermillion tipped and skeletal thin  
 Ah yes I remember  
 After coffee  
 After Bloody Marys  
 After love...  
 Ah yes I remember  
 Her contemplative hooded eyes  
 Beckoning me  
 But I hear the knell of a rolling bell  
 And I see too well  
 Beneath the contours of her alluring face  
 The deaths head  
 See the cross, the pall, the hearse  
 The sable-plumed black horses  
 Riderless  
 In the somber prance of the funeral dance  
 To the tomb  
 Of my Lady Nicotine.

Evie Ivy

### Related To The Wind

A gentle quiet Brooklyn breeze  
 Lifts away the curtains to come in  
 And lightly touch on everything.

Oh, gentle quiet Brooklyn breeze  
 You swept the hair to cool the minds  
 And ruffled skirts to touch the feet  
 That walked about the Trojan hills.

You feel good, but what can you foretell,  
 So gentle quiet Brooklyn breeze  
 Who is a partner of the wind?

You circle Earth a touching poem,  
 Yet no one hears your narratives;  
 You share your secrets with the moon.



### Reflection

From the platform  
 I see shades of blue on blue. In

the distant sky  
 the bridge to elsewhere goes from blue

to blue. Then blue-  
 grey, soon grey-blue. The train's rattle

disrupts silence.  
 Here and there comes a spatter of

silver ribbon -  
 grey on grey, then rain. And the world

become shiny  
 metal reflecting on itself.

Evie Ivy

(Continued)

### Somanka (two tankas)

#### Spark of Green

I feel energy  
 swerve. It's dark, cold out, but in  
 my soul Spring's contained,  
 it never moves. Let the wind  
 say what I won't decipher.

I know good can't be  
 held back when it's about to  
 break and you can feel  
 tomorrow's light as if you're  
 fresh from a wrapping paper.



Patricia Carragon

### Joy

A seed sprouts,  
 Lifting her little head up to greet the world.  
 In return, the world ignores her smile,  
 Too preoccupied with the recycling of life  
 To worry about a minor portion of herself.  
 Still, the seedling keeps on smiling  
 And eventually, she grows.  
 Her smile becomes crooked and bent  
 As her frail young frame.

The clouds look down, but they do not cry -  
 They have shed many tears when hard times arrived  
 And now they are too numb to cry for a dying land.  
 It became too dry and dusty from age and past mistakes -  
 The land is too tired to lament for one who is hungry for  
 life  
 And cannot provide the nourishment to keep her alive.  
 The sun still shines out of routine, along with his sister,  
 the moon;  
 They travel from afar on their ritual course,  
 Dry-eyed, without remorse or pity, they look away,  
 As the problem belongs to the world and no one else.

The seedling dies without a drop of water or nutriment  
 While life on earth rotates to another day and the next.  
 The joy that should have been, now a memory,  
 Harvested by the passing wind, who carries her away  
 To where she will find peace in forgotten bliss.

### The Boy Beneath the Tree

Spring speaks to the wind,  
 Whispers through the veins of infant leaves.  
 Its voice echoes past the shades,  
 Arousing a sleeping earth -  
 Trees hear it as do small heads of flowers.

Underneath one such tree sits a boy,  
 No more than sixty seasons past,  
 Holding a book without title  
 Or words to fill time's empty space.  
 His mind wants to write a story,  
 Giving new meaning to blank pages  
 Untouched by corruption's malice  
 Or potential to do good.  
 Mystery hibernates within his seed's desire -  
 His thoughts must learn to speak  
 Before words can learn to write.

Spring, an ancient storyteller,  
 Whispers through the veins of infant leaves -  
 The boy listens... his pen begins to bleed.

Patricia Carragon

(Continued)

### Crucifixion

You come from nowhere -  
 An alien with a sense of precognition  
 Emerging out of innocent dreams best left  
 To storytellers who entertain the children born  
 Of children who still believe in the mystical promise,  
 Born out of hope and despair's wedlock.  
 We all are citizens from your place of birth;  
 Life is conceived from the same place.  
 Each day is a question that breeds another  
 Without any answers to stop them from coming  
 Since our stories are made-up by strangers  
 Secretly watching over us,  
 Passing judgment in their favor.  
 They prepare the lambs for their sins  
 While retribution retreats for a holiday  
 Far from the crucifixion of life  
 At the stroke of crisis.



William Duke

### Falling Apart

Listening to the soft rain and erosion,  
 barnacles gnawing on the hull,  
 rust building up in the radiator,  
 salt water corroding the chrome.  
 Mildew, moths and watermelon splitting, everything  
 goes to seed as cotton floats in the breeze.

thoughts unravel into sleep, understanding  
 everything falls apart, becoming  
 something else.

### A Dog's Best Friend

A woman that I love is pet-attached,  
 she finds canine companionship a must.  
 The loyalty of dogs is just unmatched  
 with most men's weak fidelity and trust.  
 She'll watch the time through every dinner date,  
 then rush to find a taxi, with quick hug  
 she flies back home to Pootchie not too late,  
 to make sure there's no do-do on the rug.  
 I understand that she is not alone,  
 for women in their fifties do conclude  
 the most enthusiastic mate's at home  
 yapping for some attention and for food.  
 If I could only bark and wag my tail,  
 I know she'd love me tonight without fail!



George Held

### Subway Poem

Fortyish, thinning hair and tortoise-shell glasses,  
 in dark-blue suit, white dress shirt and dark-red  
 necktie,  
 American-flag pin in lapel, briefcase on floor  
 between polished black shoes, he sits on the "F"  
 train,

morning rush-hour, and opens a 3 by 4" leather-bound  
 lined notebook and begins to write, with a gold pen,  
 in tiny handwriting, too small for me, straphanging  
 above him, to read. But I watch as he writes a title,

skips a line, then writes four lines;

skips a line, then writes four more lines.

He then closes the notebook and puts it back  
 in his inside coat pocket and puts the pen back  
 in his right coat pocket, a smile  
 barely brushing his thin lips.

Resuming a stolid expression, he picks up his briefcase  
 and exits at Rock Center. Whether at work he writes a  
 brief,  
 sells a million in stocks or underwrites a new skyscraper,  
 that day he wrote a poem in two quatrains on the subway,  
 and I wrote this before the train reached Jackson  
 Heights.

Cole Modica

### His Eyes

His eyes  
 My paradise.  
 Dripping with fidelity.  
 They pull me in.  
 So deep.  
 So deep that I abandon my world.  
 So deep that I am sheltered by his stare.  
 For he is all I see.  
 He is all I am.  
 His eyes allow my heart to beat.  
 My heart beats so true.  
 Filled with love, lust, and eternity.  
 My body becomes numb.  
 My chest collapses by my body's endless desire for  
 his love.  
 My soft and craving lips long to be kissed.  
 Just a touch as weightless and yet so incredibly  
 precious as his eyelashes would do...  
 Yes just a faint stroke from his eyelashes.



Beatrice Diamond

### Ode to Spring

What heralds spring?  
 Are chirping birds assigned  
 to alert the sun  
 to warm the ground  
 to make soil fertile  
 to break seed covers  
 to absorb the rain  
 to summon bees  
 to chauffer pollen  
 to pistillate seed  
 to bring us floral beauty  
 to intoxicate?

I am drunk with spring!



## Open Mic Poetry

Every Saturday at 6PM  
at Ansade Gourmet Cafe  
639 5th Avenue at 18th Street  
Park Slope, Brooklyn

718-832-0078

Ansadegourmetcaf@aol.com

Jay Chollick

### Proclaiming Bliss

Air! light! the gilded scriptures  
surfacing on clouds, it's  
bliss that lives. And how clear eyes  
and flaming hands  
are part of it. And withering—but that's  
the past, it's vivid now,  
and swollen to  
gargantuan—bright welcome

Bliss! It is the splicing of an icicle  
that triggers it; makes  
mountains lift; makes of this  
fleshy wretch

A butterfly—all velvet camouflage, at last,  
and weightlessness. Or blended  
obscene, with heat—bliss, twisting it,  
the vile body to a  
flower's length—oh how it

Preens, gladiola-like: huge petals,  
opening dewy to buzz;  
growing amorous, so fiercely  
spiked they almost

Sweat—how human, magic  
floweret. Now  
who can tell where petals stop, and  
torrid in the cup, where blood

Begins? But who, who bloody cares,  
if bliss itself  
is teetering? For it's arthritic now  
and stiffened with unseemly creaking,  
into age, it won't

Be missed. For after all,  
it's just a line that  
draws itself—scribbling vast meaning,  
tiny, on a molecule; giving  
both flower and flesh, the  
stolid commonality of dirt. Plus  
some promissory nonsense that light  
abides, shining

On all. Or a dragged-in  
sibling fantasy: that with  
fresh sap; new roots, the world's  
transformed; and how, proclaiming  
every one  
green brother to a leaf—  
it's how with blissful ease,  
we capture it



Stanley H. Barkan

### Fig Leaves

It was the leaves of the fig  
that covered them in their nakedness,  
hiding the shame of their opened eyes.

So close they were, those happy leaves,  
to the source of pain and pleasure  
to follow expulsion from the garden.

Perhaps it is thus why the fig itself  
—when opened—spreads to receive  
the tongue that delights in exploration.

Luscious fruit, open to willing mouths,  
so full of transient solace, momentary bliss,  
opening and closing to the curious.

Triada Samaras

### The morning we shattered the glass

The morning we shattered the glass was summer  
And the soft sun shone through it  
Casting phantom yellow rectangles upon your face

We gazed at our work undone  
From far beyond the other side  
As we let it splinter  
Casting thousands of tiny shards  
Upon the red tile floor

Do you remember the parsley I once grew here  
The canary bird that used to sing  
The fan that blew the summer breeze upon our  
blooming love?

On the cold floor lay the pieces  
The stories myths  
Illusions we told each other  
Now broken  
Now unhealed

Where will you go, my love?  
After the visual barrier between us is broken  
And I see now the sun upon your raw face  
Casting beads of sweat upon your worried brow  
And the air flows so freely between us  
Dropping particles of dust and pollen upon our hair  
And the lines between our faces  
Feel less softened by the watery glass  
Which used to be so full of soothing reflections  
I never noticed until now?  
Where will we go now  
That we can touch each other so clearly?

### Manic Depression

When I first saw you  
A cheetah came to mind  
So fast, so sleek  
Powerful, nocturnal  
Arched back, ready for life  
You used to ride me so quickly  
'Til we collapsed next to each other  
After winded passion  
I was always out of breath  
Trying to catch you

Now you move like an old, grey elephant  
So weighty and cumbersome and  
Now I'm the impatient one  
Cursing you to hurry up

Now when I lie next to you  
I must climb a sleeping mountain  
Look into the eyes of nighttime  
And feel the slow, sickening pulse  
Of illness and death sometimes  
As you gaze at me with frightened eyes



Marc Levy

### Quick Reactionary Force

they are dumb fuck stupid and it serves them right  
assholes fuckin fuckin asshole  
in dry season it gets so hot you cannot see straight  
everything shimmers as the living heat sucks the life  
right out of you. the platoon, new to the area goes  
out QRF weapons, ammo, one quart each gets lost  
in the sun bleached jungle gets heat stroked gets  
found and choppered back to Compton.  
in the aid station capt neel takes charge pig face  
stink breath capt tells medics slit clothes slap tape  
on the Ringers lactate toss the sun baked uniforms  
into the cooler churn the ice churn it  
we slap the cold cloth back the bodies  
shiver to life, fuckin amazing.  
next day we get hit-mortars-rockets capt neel  
stone fuck drunk so later we frag his ass  
frag him can't walk, can't help the wounded  
but we missed he lived that stopped that  
but it didn't stop the war and the casualties  
the dumb fuck casualties they just kept coming

Madeline Artenberg

### The Sultan's Wife

*The Alhambra was built in Granada, Spain  
in the 13<sup>th</sup> century by the Nasrid Dynasty.*

A knock on the door echoes through the Palace,  
through my covered head.  
Five of the Sultan's handmaidens enter to prepare me,  
dart around like swallows,  
pulling on and off silks and cottons,  
ringing my eyes with kohl before I can blink,  
berry-staining my lips before a sigh can escape.

O, cursed beauty!  
I am one of 300 wives,  
no better than an odalisk.  
Nay, I am worse off than the bougainvillea and  
hyacinth  
in the courtyard garden below my window.  
No kisses from the sun;  
only kisses from the Sultan  
once a year.  
Flowers, trees, wives — we all exist for King  
Mohammed  
Ibn Yusef ben Nasr, maker of the Alhambra.

We are locked behind iron gates,  
tightly wrought like clustered buds.  
We can look out at the garden and each other's  
windows  
from our honeycombed rooms,  
cannot see each other,  
cannot be seen by the soldiers passing,  
cannot be seen by the praying men on their knees.  
I stand for hours, for days at my window.  
I no longer know where the lace on my headdress  
begins,  
where the lacy curl of iron ends.  
I know only the words in the poems of Ibn al-Yayyab.  
I allow them to enter me,  
learn to recite them for the Sultan's pleasure.  
When I read I hear no wings flutter, no bells chime,  
no men drone, no women weep.

I long to tear off silks, smear charcoaled eyes  
fall to my knees.  
I long to dig beneath the perfect plants,  
befriend the hungry bugs and worms.

The handmaidens have finished, lead me out.  
I will not cry when the Sultan's rolling flesh bangs  
against me.  
He will see my dark eyes above the veil,  
but cannot look behind them.  
Deep inside, I will jump like a cat  
from verse to verse,  
recline amongst joyous images  
floating like clouds above the sun.

### Queen

I am Queen of the world.  
Here, the bed covers know only  
my turning them down;  
the tufted rug surrounding this bed  
like a moat  
has forgotten the imprint  
of the King's toes,  
now crushed only by its Queen's  
gold-slipped feet.

I rule over everything green  
in my three-room palace,  
including the cut, bagged, and frozen.  
I am holder of the red fly-swatter  
bequeath-ed me.  
I am holder of circumstance,  
granting a week's stay  
in my kitchen to a wing-ed one,  
allowing to persist  
butterflies  
in my stomach.



Chris Martin

### Flower Spontaneously

Cradle fashion  
Model displacement, tend  
Mother's whirling

Wooden brain grotesque  
Though there was, finally, snow  
In my dream last night

Like Hugo Ball restively clutching  
The 133-year-old skull  
Of a 21-year-old girl and wishing to paint

Its hollow cheek with kisses  
Romancing a corpse  
Or simply bargaining with war



### Calendar of Upcoming Readings

June 7 - S. David, Les Lopes + Open  
July 5 - Robert Dunn, Leigh Harrison  
+ Open

August 2 - Patricia Carragon,  
Madeline Artenberg  
+ Open

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Walk up hill (Prospect Ave.) past  
Fifth Avenue. Church is #283 on  
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