

INDEPENDENT VOICES 2009

voices

Original works of poetry by students
of New York City independent schools

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*Original works of poetry by upper school
students of New York City independent schools*

Introduction



Joint Schools Activities, Inc. (JSA) is a non-profit organization created and supported by the parent associations of independent schools in Manhattan and Riverdale. Our mission is to advocate interest-based and age-appropriate activities for teenagers and to provide a broad range of opportunities for socialization through common experiences.

Under the sponsorship of JSA, high school student poets have created INDEPENDENT VOICES, a project including this anthology and an evening of student readings. The 2009 anthology is the first to be published online: students hope to inspire support for sustainability and accessibility. With great enthusiasm, encouragement, and effort from students, faculty, and JSA representatives, INDEPENDENT VOICES is now in its twelfth year. We hope that this event will continue to provide an opportunity for our authors to share their literary talent and vision.

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To Live

by Olivia Harris

It's just a feeling, I know,
But there is this feeling deep within my soul
That says that this is more than just a game,
That this has a forever kind of name.

I can't tell you how I feel it,
And I don't want to, for that would steal it
From any significance I can give.
I have a feeling I'll need you to live.

This feeling down in murky depths
Goes past smiles, tears, and shallow breaths,
Goes past the definitions we like to use,
But if I tell you, don't blow a fuse.

If I tell you that I am as certain as rain in Seattle
That you will love me, without cause or battle,
I feel that you may respond
By jumping in a pond.

Jumping, not to die,
But to question why,
To give yourself the acceptable answer,
The one that you hold as a standard.

But standards have been known to break,
And with them my heart, how much can it take?
I'm not placing bets, I'm not making threats,
I'm not even really giving you a reason to fret.

But tomorrow and tomorrow will come,
And you will be there in the rising sun,
And I will be there in the shimmery moon,
And this feeling will go away all too soon.

Birthday

by Lindsay Stern

You lit the rose on fire
With a candle before
The singing.
The light slid a lens
Behind our eyes: petals coiling
In pain, your family standing round
Like plaster, waiting.

Forgive

by Olivia Harris

This, my pen,
This, my saber,
This, my brain,
This, I favor.
This, my hope,
Gone for a time,
Pray, but know,
This, my crime.

The Young King's Lullaby

by Bryan Costa

Hush now little baby and let sleep come,
The world has made your eyes heavy, clearly,
Embrace sleep now, meet your lips with your thumb,
And think of all the things you love dearly.
The sands of Egypt you see on your wall,
Which are there for you to grow curious,
Maps of all sizes that once made you bawl,
A calm sky for when you grow furious.
Puzzled by all these strange things around you,
Confounded by why they are in your room,
You start to learn more than you ever knew,
As your beautiful mind begins to bloom.
And what will your parents say of this thing?
“This day was the day you became a king.”

Incompleteness Theorem

A Sonnet of Abandonment

by Grayson Cowing

It slowly writhes and stumbles forward, deaf.
Its head turns and deadly eyes burn through air.
Stalling suddenly it reveals what's left.
The remains. Memory lies ravaged there.
I feel the darkness you occupied. It stabs.
It pains me far more than when it was filled
With celestial light that burns and grabs.
“My completed law you will find and gild.”
Your words haunted me, and oh! did I search.
You tore my morals and I have suffered.
I still have them, recollections of church.
NULL, according to data now buffered.
For what I've found, I've been turned into Job
The answer to 2, Mr. Hillbert, is no.

Thirst

by Alec Ezratty

Water, still and moving in its many forms
As it tears through treacherous turns
When in the shape of a mighty rushing river,
The mammoth motions of the ever-moving sea,
To the minor motions of a quiet cup –

Snow, be it crisp and dry like chips
Or soggy and foul like old cereal,
Can be balled up and pitched,
Or shoveled and shaped to make a frigid friend,
Soon to be a melting mate.

Ice, floating in your drink or
Passing quickly under the blades on your feet,
An annoying puddle in the morning becomes
A perilous patch of slick frost at night

The hot steam rises to the lid of the pan,
But cold fog falls low above the water.
Steam from a force so small as your breath
Or spray from a power as strong as a wave.

Everything Just Falls Apart

by Eamon Wagner

And like all good things, it fell apart.
Idle days, pierced by prodding pleas
Yet, I blindly walked hand in hand, with Apathy

She was a threshold, a silent siren.
Forgive and forget – sure
But every kettle has to scream sometime

Awake, awake, I lie awake.
No more seeking comfort
From The Furnished Furnace:
Our mother's womb

Listen:
Can you hear my heavy heart
Now that it's in my throat?
'Cause it had something to say,
But it's too late for that.
Its words are torn and tarnished
Not unlike some forgotten doll

The meticulous art of apology
Delicate, the writing of a song
Everything fell apart
But Honest, I was wrong

Resilience

by Michaela Burns

The wind blew.
We shifted north.
I was frozen,
Alone.
Fear surrounded me,
Holding me still.
I was left with uncertainty,
Waiting
I looked for the cause of my suffering.
Things were slipping out of my control.
I could feel myself bending,
Conceding.
I was nothing if I couldn't control this.
I struggled against the tide.
the wind slapped me down,
Pinning my thin body toward the ground.
Losing!
We were losing, I shouted frantically,
Losing to the unseen force.
I tried to speak up,
Crying!
To get my brethren to save me,
To save themselves,
But I had forgotten, I didn't have a voice.
Silence.
The wind blew
And just like that,
We had lost,
Again.

The Strand

by Ryan Clinesmith

Huxley, Hurston, and Hickman create a hollow of mountainous grandeur
It is silly that the silhouettes of others can shift my soul
Odd that paper and leather forces perspiration to my eyes
Weird that simple lines and dots dictate the heat of my body
Inconceivable that feeling beyond physical discomfort is infinite

Three fortune cookie poems

by Holly Holtz

Bad Luck?

Chinese restaurant
Open the fortune cookie
No paper inside

Advice

Don't forget to take
The fortune out of cookie
Before you eat it

Duplicates

Fortune cookie says,
"You will win the lottery"
Friend gets same fortune

Who Am I by Ben Ellentuck

Who am I?
Who are you?—that is the question.
Who are *you*?
I am black and white;
You're all grey. Muddled, murky water, stone soup—

I am pure.
I alone am pure.
It does not matter who *I* am. It matters who are *you*.
It matters who are you and who I am when you are who are you
And if I am, then who are you?
Because I *am*.

Who are we?
Who are they?—that is, moreover.
Who are *you*?
I know what I am;
You're all blurred. Ambiguity incarnate—

I am clean.
I alone am clean.
If it matters who *I* am, it matters more who are *you*.
It matters you or who and I am who I am when you are who
Are you who you knew who you are?
Because I *am*.

Aren't I?

Meum cerebrum nocet (My brain hurts) by Emily Glaser

The best way I can describe it is a video game mentality.
Not thinking about what move I'm making next,
But what level I'm trying to complete.

As in,
I'm always looking towards the next thing.
I'm never playing it by ear.

Maybe I'm passing life by quicker than I need to,
I might regret all my actions when I look back.
It's not like I think of all the consequences -
That would probably be a good trait.

I stay awake too late,
Not to enjoy the present.
Not thinking of the exhaustion for tomorrow,
But pondering the possibilities of the future.

I'm dreaming without sleeping
At 2am.

If you can't remember your dreams,
What's the use?

Awake dreams are a stretching of your imagination.
Sleep dreams are you going unconscious, hallucinating vividly and then
having amnesia about the whole thing.

If you think about something you want enough,
It'll have to come true.
So why not think about it all the time?

the best way I can describe it is,
it's a video game mentality.

Why wait, if I can find the cheat codes?

Dirty Mattress

by Charlotte Japp

The bed looks supple in its white cotton.
Sprawled on this enormous pillow,
I fall into the outlined ditch where my body lay the night before.

Looking beyond the horizon of creases and quilts,
I see trails of mascara and dust from last night's rampage.
As my feet skim along the surface,
The sound of dirt creates friction.

Each note recalls the grind of the week:
Tuesday's heat and sweat
And Thursday's walking in the puddles of rain.

The mattress supports all the dreams
As well as the weight my body carried throughout the week
Until tomorrow when Monday's laundry brings a new song.

For Someone, Somewhere by Stephanie Tam

I've heard loneliness
associated with panes of glass:
rain sleetng down the sides,
blurred indigo
trickling in uneven rivulets.

Out there somewhere
someone's warm inside,
dancing towards the drops
and all the while,
 you sit
and watch
 as loss pools on the ledge.

Tracing down the edge,
there was a time
safe and lost in sleep,
heart pumping dreams to your mind
when life and love were yours to keep.

Confessions of the Tone-Deaf by Caroline Vernick

I thirst not for pearls.
Let Cleopatra drink up!
I hunger not for purpose.
Let Plato digest the abstract!
Instead I crave talent,
A grumbling I can't suppress.

If only I could sing out
Without cueing the dogs to howl,
Or tickle piano keys
Without causing them to squeal.

Alas, I am bum,
But not for lack of effort.
Put simply,
Apollo came to my party bearing no gifts.

The Age of Discovery

by Christine Leeds

Remember why we found each other?
We wanted to watch the sun from the mountain's peak,
As it stretched and striated the sky,
A golden bruise that burnishes inert skin.
We believed that brightness would beam through every bristled cloud.

When the hail hinged itself on my hair like crystallized beads on a strand,
When the hail had surrounded us,
We searched for some form of fire in each other.

That hail collected us in its cupped hands, molded us into a ball.
Inside the silken tent, we curled up in the center,
To avoid the wind from once again whisking the warmth away.

At first, we exchanged the pedestrian currency of teenagers,
Playfully listing what we have never done.
I watched our fingers fall, burrowing themselves into the palms of each other's hands.

Soon simple stories streamed from our tongues
The wind brushed through our chiming vocal cords.
I was no longer shivering, but shaking with laughter.
We were curved in so many places like spoons.

Then as you told me more
A stringed symphony drifted down,
Like the droplets of rain trickling through our tent

It felt like we were submerged within a smoky teahouse,
Huddled around a steaming pot of worries waiting to be sifted,
Swaying to the tune of a sweet and sorrowful sonata.
I watched the soft hum of breath hover about my lips

My eyes askance saw hail creeping in the sides of the tent.
At this point, it hardly mattered much, invasion was inevitable.
We saw the hail was as clean and crisp as our white papered dreams.
Dreams, we candidly cast to those zephyrs.
We waved farewell to these paper planes, our boomerang dreams,
And gazed at them soaring through the sky.

And we watched the overcast weather, a black and white pall,
Finally saturate with sun-ray shades of sepia.

For a while I felt lost, amidst compasses whirling in every direction.
All I could hear was the cadence of yak herders
Calling out pricking the thin crisp air,
Cacophonous echoes weaving through the mountains
Searching for one another.

But looking back, I have discovered:
How the larger than life majesty of mountains
Can diminish into a flat postcard.

Grocery Politics

by Maude Navarre

In the world of Grocery Politics,
the final hurdle is postponed.

Like the best politician,
the task is deceptively simple,

and charms you into
a dull complacency.

“Oh, this will only
take a moment.

One or two brown bags
and you’ll be done.”

But, in true political form,
nothing is quick and painless.

There’s a hierarchy of produce
that must be obeyed.

The hardy plebeians
go at the bottom.

The milk and cheese
can take pounds of abuse.

Next come the intellectuals,
the yogurt and fortified cereals.

They sit next to the working class,
putting on airs of brotherhood.

But no one buys their Communist ranting,
and they’re largely ignored.

Then we have the nouveau riche,
Mint Milanos and packaged petit fours.

They laugh and dance and
enjoy each other’s company.

But every now and then,
they steal upward glances,

craning their necks for a glimpse
of what's above.

Finally, perched at the top are
the delicate raspberries and shiny apples.

They remain quiet and composed,
for that's how things are done.

Safety lies at the
top of the food chain,

where hand-picked figs and white peaches
are nestled in cardboard castles.

Now, there are always those revolutionaries
who scream, "To hell with the establishment!"

and mix up their purchases
in a jumble of equality.

But, in the end, these hopeless dreamers
who spurn the Grocery Politics

are left with nothing but
cracked eggs, crushed strawberries, and broken ideals.

#2

by Eugene Aaron-Cooke

Some of you may remember
And not being so recently removed, I certainly do-
That child of the College Board
My good friend the Standardized Aptitude Test;

SAT

Clench the #2 like it might make you #1
Clench the #2 like it might make you #1
Clench that #2 like it might make you #497,213?

What?

Eke out verification through the expenditure of graphite and lead
Standardize your humanity
And assign a numerical value to your future
Grind yourself out to the machine
And spend your savings 'til you're empty
Ask me of the purpose of standardized testing
And I'll tell you that my well has already run dry
That the number 2-4-0-0 has no bearing on my talent
Or who I am

Clench the #2 like it might make you #1

Exist as the cog
And for your safety, wrap yourself in their lies
Find solace in the unity of legion
Because the monopoly of admissions wouldn't have it any other way

Clench the #2 like colleges might like you
Sell your soul to industry
Take a penny for a thought literally
And after breaking your piggy bank
Realize that \$100 might even buy a college textbook
If you would just listen you might be the proud owner of free knowledge

Clench the #2 like it is all you've got
Clench the #2 like your life depends on it
Clench the...
Push it, work it, use it
Twist it, fill it, guess it,
Stop erase it

SATlogic

Take stock of what you have and sell it
Anything better than losing it

Fold those paper origami dreams
Covered in number two lead
Sent through the scantron to
Iron out your crease
Resistance is futile
You've already given up your free will

Sold from day one
Thought you'd buy back your individuality
With a taste of materialism

Clench the #2 like it might make you #1

Successfully feed the desperate heathen within
So squeeze that #2 pencil harder,
Till the carbon footprint you eke out is synonymous with
Birth, school, work, death
Birth, school, work, death
Birth, school, work, death

Clench the #2 because you're stuck on question 1

Remind me how the twinkle in your eye
Isn't the making of some kind of greed
I don't know how you caught it
But you see life in terms of green
The first question you want to ask is what this will get you

You forgot there was more to life than that
Wake up and smell the capitalism
Sold your best years for a shilling
Because you believed their pleas
To build your future on top of half-hearted guarantees
That things would work out swell
As soon as you got your degree

Clench the #2 because you won't be #1

You've been duped,
Suckered in from the very beginning
With the promise of naptime and snack

Suckered into dividing your playtime
Into reading time and arithmetic
1st, 2nd 3rd, 4th, 5th grades
Until it was already too late

Clench the #2 beca...
Clench the #2 because you thought it would make you #1

But instead there came a day when you saw it all
And you wanted to scream
It came too late
Because you had been distracted
By dreams of money and fame
Beat down by 2am, the new nap time

So you raise your hand to ask the proctor a question

"Ooh! Ooh!"

I'm sorry, please ask College Board after the test

Didge

By Oliver Fisher

Music made by ants.
A slender limb of wood
hollowed by termites
in the blacksmith-forge heat
of the West Australian desert,
cut and shaped and smoothed
by an Aboriginal I will never meet
but speak to with sounds
from my didgeridoo
here beside me
twelve thousand miles
from its red earth home.
Ancient sounds
in this electronic city.
Breath flows,
the rumble rises
and I feel it connect me
to Wudjari hands
and ants that made
this throbbing mysterious music possible

Woodpile

By Oliver Fisher

Angular faces of chopped wood
pout with discontent.
Cracked and warped eyes
bulge from the worn faces of
a hundred frowning old men.
They creak with age and
Mutter under their breath,
crowded,
complaining,
too stiff to move.
Their hard, splintery bodies
jut into each other.
Bony, ashy elbows
jostle for space.
The grumpy men
scratch each other
with sharp, splintering nails,
all the while
slowly drying,
slowly dying.
The pile shrinks.
One by one, tossed into a hungry fire
chewing up their coarse limbs,
rigid wooden tendons
and knotted, gnarled muscle.
They wait,
grumbling and shoving,
unaware of their burning fate.

Maybe I Dream

by Nora Landis-Shack

Maybe I dream in the night before I tumble, groggy,
out of my warm bed at 6:30 am.
Maybe in the morning, as the sunlight filters through the blinds
up above the buildings to the east,
maybe then, in the sweet silence punctuated only by
the creaky floorboards
do I dream.

Or maybe I dream when my breath fogs up the medicine cabinet mirror,
dream about the day to come, maybe today
everything will go perfectly according to plan.

Maybe I dream while music plays in my ears
drowning out the “hey girl”s of the
construction workers turning Claremont Stables into
an apartment complex.

Or maybe I unknowingly dream through the school day,
as I run up five flights of stairs
French still ringing in my head
as I pull out the Aeneid.

Or as I figure out physics formulas,
wondering what the change in time of a speeding car could be.

Maybe I dream that the speeding car is me
and I'm speeding away on a highway of SAT scores to
X University

where everyone rides on bicycles, well within the speed limit,
dreaming of their futures.

Or maybe I don't truly dream until my eyes are closed,
back in my bed, slightly less warm,
as I lie awake in the dark, until the pull of sleep
tears me away from thinking too much.

And when I finally have time,
I wonder if my dreams are only nightmares
graciously twisted around someone's forefinger
so I don't experience the fear all too common
when I was six

staring wide-eyed at the crack of light
peeking in from under my door
not believing the boogie man wouldn't come that night
although Daddy said I'd be alright.

When my tumbling thoughts fade slowly into heavy darkness,
maybe then I dream.

Blue

By Nora Landis-Shack

Somehow
the bird shit and white feathers
scattered on the edges almost don't
seem to matter,
mere bubbles on the deep blue glass of the center
still, save for the clouds that occasionally throw their shadows down
onto the surface.
Somehow, the grey clouds make the grey of the skyscrapers
seem warmer, welcoming the chill wind
that rushes through the trees,
lifting the hair of a young girl's neck
sending shivers down her back
and ruffling the feathers of the swans
who glide along
undisturbed, caring not for the
pure glass-eye sky blue that they stir.
Their arching necks framed
by the ripples that trail behind them
And somehow,
the sweaty, hollow "pat-pat"
of sneakers on gravel
enhances the colors of the autumn leaves
wet from the rain
getting smashed to a pulp
on the path around the reservoir.

Your Chocolate Chip Ice Cream

By Nora Landis-Shack

The music in my ears
does just as much if not more
than any Beethoven sonata
and enhances the clear sky
made more perfect by the autumn air
as the heads of trees press up and up against their limits.
The crinkling of your brown paper bag
and the scrape of your spoon on the Styrofoam ice cream cup
were more unholy, unnatural
than the cars whooshing under the overpass
not even seeing the three of us
clustered around our Subaru hatchback
leaning against the door
me, staring into the sky
face filling with awe and calm
but stopping to cringe with each discordant screech and scrape
and wishing desperately that my music was louder
so I could drown them out.

The Distance Between Us

by Sarah Case

The late summer sunset
Which once lit fires in my soul
Sighs a hot breeze blazing with regret
Too many nights wasted
Tossing restlessly with every inconstant breath
Dreaming in neon
Your mouth on mine
Never close enough
Dawn's caresses can't comfort—
Your wry smile always in my eyes
Searching for those deep pools of blue
In the haze of the pitiless sea
Finding only the bitter taste you left behind
I ask—will the rocky path I have persevered for so long
Ever lead to you?
Your laughter echoes
In the cavern you gouged inside me
Because you don't like answers
Night falls slowly, breathing down my neck
Chills the sweat on my back
Awakens distant memory
Carries me away so gently
I barely notice how far I have wandered from you
Until I touch my cheeks
Pink and wet and warm
The taste of salt fresh upon my tongue

To Be or Not to Be: A Dust Bunny Story
by Serena Eggers

To be a dust bunny must be a wonderful thing!
To crawl through dark spaces,
To hide under couches and beds,
To hop through dust meadows and eat dust carrots.
Okay, they taste like dust.
But the idea sounded good.
And just think—to cling to the edges of people's clothes,
And get carried up and away to strange and colorful places,
Nothing like the gray world where you came together,
Made of dust, stray dog hair,
And other, less identifiable things.
You could fly through the air, perhaps,
Caught and pulled off your perch by the light breeze of a fan,
To you a roaring wind.
You fly and land lightly, settling on something huge and soft and new,
Only to be brushed off by a giant object that you do not know to call a hand.
You fall, crushed, to the ground,
Brief life falling apart into a million little pieces that get swept back under the couch,
Back to the dust.
And so you lie there, stirred only by the occasional puff of air
As someone's foot comes down on the soft red rug of the world you had so briefly seen.
And slowly, very slowly, you move apart from yourself
And join together with the debris, the bits of nothingness in the darkness, until you are a
part
Of new dust bunnies.
And so, I think, to be a dust bunny is a wonderful thing!

If Only...

by Ornella Hernandez

Sometimes she wishes she could be someone else, someone who doesn't feel enclosed by people who strive for her to be perfect by telling her what to do: people slowly taking the life away from her fragile heart. She wants to let it all out and not be afraid.

Sometimes she wishes she were a mermaid: swimming in the vast ocean away from land and war. Believing. There, under the sea, she feels free to be herself: letting the waves take her anywhere and everywhere. Hoping. She pretends there is no competition, no bosses, no stress. Dreaming.

Sometimes she wishes she could break the hands of every clock so time would never move again. She could stay in this moment of pretend and the dreams of a child for the rest of her life.

Is it too childish to pretend, imagine, and dream? It was only a few years ago when cardboard boxes took us miles away from reality, to an uncharted land of so-called impossibilities with mermaids, fairies, and dragons. Is it truly make-believe or simply chosen-to-not-be-seen?

Pain

by Julia O'Connor

Run. Don't stop. Don't look back. He's there. He won't let you go. Any and everywhere you run to, he will follow. It was supposed to be beautiful. It was supposed to be fun. Then he came. Ruined it all. I never got to say goodbye. I never got to tell him I was sorry. It just happened. No one told me it was coming. It was like the first rain drop hits you and you know it will get harder, but you don't do anything: you can't. I just stood there. What was I supposed to do? I was scared. I was cold. I was startled. I was...who I am. I couldn't have done anything. He was full of anger. He was full of hatred. He would do anything to stop me from speaking. I didn't mean to. I didn't mean it. I didn't know what I was doing. I guess he thought I meant it. He didn't have to. I did not love him. I never would. I did not love him and he knew I never would. Why, why did I do it? If I never did it, would James still be alive? James did nothing to him, but he got blamed because of my doing. Why couldn't I stop him? There was pain: pain in his eyes. Pain as I have never seen or felt. The pain that does one thing and everything changes. The pain that leaves you in the darkness while everyone else is in the light. That pain is his life. I could never live that life. Charles was innocent: I was guilty. Charles did not know: I knew everything. Now his pain is becoming mine. Run. Don't stop. Don't look back. He's there. He won't let you go.

Result of a Careless Owner of Two Hamsters: Cannibalism by Stephanie Oprea

So long, oh so long
Time diverges, whirls, mixes
Hunger piles up
Last glance at the vacant bowl of corruption
Because the partly hairless creature
Fades to nonexistence
Withholding the desired precious
Ideas charge violently
Scary ideas
Now normal, safe, comforting
The velvet canvas of my fellow friend
Stretched vulnerably over the bleached inner framework
I long to experience the warmth, *taste* the warmth of this sacred canvas
The mind contorts, feeling superior, a rush of alien passions
Just one nibble
Closer and closer
Heat emanates off the beautiful picture this canvas now possesses
Heat greets my fur, tingling my moist nose
Heat feels around, becoming familiar as if it is blind
Details around me smudge furiously
My downy fur stands up, excited
A paw stretches forward from under me
Yearning, craving, thirsting
Streams trickle from my mouth, meandering through hairs
Closer and closer
Letting go of my restraint, my mouth is released, sinking in
Seemingly faraway, foreign squeals pound the air around my ears
I continue as a pattern is created, a song, *how beautiful*
Savoring every moment with crazed greed
My stomach finally content
Sanity walking out on me, never to return

Pile of Dirt

by Hayley Robinson

I am covered in dirt.
The dirt of my friends,
the dirt of my family,
the dirt of my enemies,
and the dirt of strangers,
dumped on me.

They thought they could just drop it off,
and pick it up later,
but they can't,
the dirt is there.
on me.
after all these years,
I'm stuck in a mound of dirt,
encapsulated in their truths and lies,
their hardships,
full covering my own dirt.

But the dirt,
it does no harm,
rather it pads me as others walk over it,
pushing it closer to me,
making it hard to escape the dirt that has built up
over many years because of passersby.
But do I want to?

Navy Blue Nights by Madeleine Dickens

Navy blue nights
Pretty my world
On December days.

Navy flannel blanket
Covers the vast sky
Pillows precious stars.

Faint- but Strong
Crisp – but Clear
Right in my face – yet so far away;

Will You ever know
My real name?

Navy blue nights
Whisper the impossible
Juxtapositions, Contradictions;
Haters, Lovers, come together
On navy blue nights.

Sonnet for Shakespeare By Noah Weitzman

Failure in literature leads to an altered vernacular.
We speak in foreign tongues and cannot write sestinas,
Shakespeare was the acceptance and forever spectacular.
May we summon him to the stand with demand through subpoenas.
His fair lady was so often seen wearing bonnets,
who had such beauty it was a force for historical inspiration.
We speak in foreign tongues and cannot write sonnets,
Shakespeare made up words and a language for future nations.
Failure in literature leads to a drastic skew in slang.
Ask for his name in the ghetto and they won't know'em.
They failed in literature and made up names and a gang.
We speak in foreign tongues and cannot write poems.

Let Shakespeare be responsible for filling the void,
And let us be responsible for his life's work destroyed.

Just Another Theory

By Noah Weitzman

What if science is only temporary
or melts with time as the revolutions pass?
What if our facts were challenged
beyond elliptical orbits and expanding boundaries?

If our science and religion are both mythical,
could our galaxy's perimeter reflect back to us?
Or are we suspects being pointed out
behind this one-way mirror, by subjects unknown?

Like an enflamed paper, the edges will burn towards us.
Ptolemy's theory means space tsunamis will come to our planet.
We condense into a marble mass with "a big crunch",
dense with life, theories, and questions.

What if a creature holds this marble
and pressures the round boundaries.
Like a popping grape, juicy questions squirt out,
and the creature must decide whether or not to answer.

The creature lives in a world of giants,
and the small marble is placed loosely in a bag of marbles,
carried over shoulder and taken on endless journeys.
A galaxy in a marble, in an unknown universe, in another world.

The shining stars of human sight are smudges
of our marble's friction rubbing on the others in the bag.
We bounce around in a group of mysteries,
but are a mere game to the giant, playful creature.

Fabricated Existence of Random Design by Lauren Martino

Fabricated existence of random design
Outwardly fictitious
It's your head or mine.

Hoist the ropes up on to the deck;
No, dear boy,
Not to your neck.

Swaying through mysterious pages
Seeking literary evidence,
As proof of these bittersweet ages.

Or was it a fabricated existence?
Of random design?

I'll bet you lied.
I'll bet you every second of time.

A miscalculated being
Through my mind's eye,
It is you that I'm seeing.
Forgive me, darling,
At midnight I'm fleeing.

In the cool shade of time,
Rummaging through your sentences,
It's your head or mine.

Within the Darkness

by Hope Abrams Salvan

On a street that is in its own world
In a dark shadow on the right
One building is singled out, conspicuously standing
And unforgotten memories hang within the mind.

One building that stands out in a world of darkness
Separated from the light of the crossing streets and life within the city
It speaks memories that never disappeared or faded
That tall dilapidated building with chipping gray paint
Lurking, waiting, watching quietly in the corner.

Its plastered numbers engraved on the thick paned glass
Just above the intricate wooden and steel door
The side stairs that lead to the basement
An alley hidden secretly in the corner
The unknown occurrences hiding within it.

Though it may be a blur
What happened cannot be forgotten
What was witnessed is imprinted in a mind as a mere memory
And the building in the corner stands out from all the others.

Internal Battles

by Lauren Martino

Claustrophobic thoughts, I must be insane;
Packed tight in the tousled tubes of my brain
Electric, shaking, wild, and dense
A vicarious vacuum of intangible sense.

Conflicted and raw, my heart beats in my eyes;
Pick the wrong card and the fantasy dies
Muffled truths cry out in dirty-rotten air
You've said it before, Mama, you sincerely don't care.

But I'll stand idle in the night, neglect the drowning hours,
Dismal and dead in their strong standing forever-powers.
Callous deceiver,
Your mind is so weak.
Notorious griever,
Your moans are so meek.

Now picture this
Without word or rhyme,
You drop into space
One inch at a time.

Give me your eyes
I can give them true vision;
Now give me your heart
It's not your decision.

Reliquiae

by Emma Thanhauser

You said you loved how small I was
as you fit one hand around my wrist.
You could say that was how we wound up thinking we'd fallen in love;
over earl grey tea, from across my kitchen table.

You used to kiss my ankle with your thin lips
and on a street corner you whispered, "I wish we were older so I could just marry you"
And through the window of my taxi you flung I love you like wedding rice
so much left in the bowl
plenty for the next girl
enough to keep from going hungry the rest of your days

And even now I wear my eyeliner the way you said looked so beautiful.
Like I should be in the sun, you said.
Something about me was like
spring and summer, warm, I belonged in the sunlight,
I looked so beautiful, you said.
The colors you liked on me. My whole life
has an echo of you and your voice and your scent.
My face is just a relic now
something you kissed once, used to kiss, and touch and admire,
not even mine anymore.

Some Swiftly Fly through the Dark, Empty Night
By Elizabeth Heitner

Some swiftly fly through the dark, empty night
Algunos nadan en el mar helado de aqua verde
They seem to drift like a lost wandering kite
Que se queda en la cueva para que lo recuerde

If I were to search every part of the sky for my missing balloon
Para ser comparado con el gran tiburón blanco
All I would find is the reflection of the moon
Dientes crueles, piel suave, me hace sentir como un barranco

I swoon from the dry sky back down to the ground
al sumergirme se hace mas y mas frío
closer I am to that beautiful crashing sound
Me doy cuenta que solo es un hermoso dibujo

To fly in the sky is to sink in the sand
Mi hermoso triburón, te quiero muchisimo
Quite frankly, I just want to be on land.
¿Porque tienes que ser tan impasivo?

In a Harmony with You:
by Sydney Brower

Let her sing to me once more

Those cold and glossy keys
collecting a mask of dust
since you once stroked them clean

When your once
delicately strong fingers caressed her

As your tips would linger sensually on
the tranquil sounds
allowing them to delay their departure
for as long as the listening
air would sanction

I need her to sing to me once more

For your once sturdy and knowledgeable hands
marked with
precious youth

Would show my eager fingers how

But the decaying and replenishing of the trees
has come back and forth
like a devilish seesaw of
under-cherished time
like a slow, steady river

Stealing our diminutive moments together with her
beneath the shadows of our yearning hands

And your magnificently smart fingers
have dejectedly followed the trees
becoming what we all are
damned to be

No longer can her ivory
keys sing me

her melody

For your mind has been devoured
by the river's crude stream

Too far along

For the piano's salvation
to trigger your memory of our song

That piano is gone now
wasting away in its decrepit cracks and grime

Her time has passed

In a harmony with you

Punctuation

by Nicole Bluel

if i sat down on my bed and took out my laptop and opened up a blank document id try to fill it up with a page full of words separated by spaces and words full of letters separated by punctuation such as the period at the end of the sentence that youd wait for in order to take a breath but if that period werent there id force you to keep reading and reading and reading and you wouldnt know when to stop or breathe or what to do because i also forgot to put in commas so that quick pause between continuing is gone and each word just seems to tie into the next one and create one large circle without an end or start not even a start to the line because there arent any line breaks so is it even poetry dont stop i didnt put a question mark you must keep reading good luck with the contractions because there arent any apostrophes and good luck deciphering meaning because i hid it deep

Memory

by Rena Branson

I reach out to touch you
but feel only the dust
that blankets the surface of the faded photo.
Our mouths here form shapes of excited whispers
that grope blindly toward me now
in the frantic echo of forgotten secrets.
Friends forever on the weathered page
but mutual affections long since abandoned
with the dilapidated swingsets of childhoods past
our emotions chipped away
first cracking like the glass picture frame
under the weight of some box in the attic
then disintegrating into particles sailing
through the wind settling
as dust
entrenched in memory.

Auction

by Sara Chernus

With salty water that tastes like a manhattan bagel
I rise, holding my offer to the auctioneer
Who bows like a rabbi in front of the bima,
Bowing to adonai, the lord your god
Waiting for a blessing in response
I lick my lips, the salty skin parched for moisture
As I wave my white flag in the air with one hand, green bills in the other
I bite my lips, a gesture of nervousness to none but me
The room echoing
And I pray.

Light

by Hannah Botkin

*(found poem from the October 2001 National Geographic article "The Power of Light"
by Joel Achenbach)*

It begins and ends with the flipping of switches,
the transitory glory of light.

Bright skies stain the glass of churches
as a carrier of beauty
and a soft glow of dreams.

Energy streams naked
from lightning,
saturating the dark universe in its path.

From technology to spirituality,
we are creatures of light.

Electricity in our homes,
and electricity in our bones
strike all objects
into vision.

There has been light from the beginning.
there will be light, feebly,
at the end.

Where Is the Wound?

by Amelia Stanton

An heirloom that complements the coffee table,
As if it has always been there
Can be purchased on Ebay.
Because, the parents know, true happiness
Leaves only lonesome, glittering specks
When it flees.

This antique green dish – a resting place
For ashes, the remnants of cigarettes
Never smoked and moments never shared –
Was meant for a mantle, a pedestal
In the castle of bedtime stories.
The father handed the mother this gift
Before the castle collapsed,
Before the child would divide his time
Between two beds, with sheets
Unwrinkled and pillows still fluffed.
The dish reigned over the home,
Reflecting the smiles and the frowns
Like a mirror that sees invisible tears.
But then, under pressure or the squeeze
Of emptiness, the thing fell,
And shards scattered across mahogany,
An obstacle course coated in shine.
The child returned, backpack in tow,
Ready to end his day with a popsicle
And watch the juice trickle down his fingers.
But wait – stop – he cringed,
And looked down.

Instead of relishing the raspberry,
The regal fruit of his youth,
He must study the red polka dots
Imprinted on the wood by the ball of his foot.

What is this? He asks,
Where is the wound?
He soaks the toes and the heel
With something like tears,
But he cannot find the source
Of it all –
The blunt edge of his fears.

Where Do the Letters Go?

by Clarissa Taylor

Where do the letters go,
after we lick and stamp
and breathe little prayers into them?
Hand-written in waterproof ink,
we mark their final destinations.
But where do they go?
They leave our hands, and
maybe they flutter away
and make little nests of words in trees.
Maybe they help fight our wars,
loaded with the most powerful of ammunition.
Maybe they orbit the sun and catch
fire just to bring us back a little warmth.
I think
They do our bidding. They live our truths
when we simply cannot ourselves.
They go everywhere
and shed bits of themselves over rivers
and skyscrapers.
And then, all tattered and tired,
they go home.

Silence in a Garden

Eve White

Buttercups, petals withering
In a cerulean tinge,
Could have made his heart whimper;
So the man with
Time-pinched eyes,
could sit for hours.
(Building his mouth
a casket for numb words)
But he wouldn't.
So he flicks the flowers,
stems tilting through wind,
to watch the colors fracture.
And he wonders what happens
when the sun expires
with people.

This Time We Waited

by Eve White

We stood, rain punching ice tulips on the wind-beat pavement. I could run; head tilted, eyes to stars. With the sky screaming lightning, he said not to move. Two years ago we did the same, my dad and I watching the sky's eternal migration; a limp parade in blood orange.

I Remember You Only in Monsters

by Eve White

Did I remember you? You asked, with knotted lips and skin of beaten tan. It rained; the sidewalk smelt of nuclear fish, when I remembered. You used to draw monsters, crooked-eyed tooth-stitched monsters. Heathcliff without his Catherine, you used to draw them all over loose-leaf and hand them to me.

The Dreadlocked Lion, Dying

by Amy Alpert

This is no Simba:
No temperate king of the jungle.
He is neither hunter nor fighter.
This is no lion from Oz.
He is no figure of power,
Of loyalty,
Wisdom, or ferocity.
This is no *panthera leo*;
Pride does not rail in his wake.
No one seeks him,
Needs him, wants him, loves him, respects him—
A leader without followers,
His big, balmy, brown nose peeks through—
The matted mane of a nobody.
About to emerge,
His meaty paw grazes the muddy sod.
He has nowhere to go,
Yet he feels the obligation of frequent dispersion.
Without praise or recognition,
He remains behind the bush.

The Slant and Only Truth

by Maria Correa

after Emily Dickinson

Riddles in Riddles
A Superfluous Mess
My Message deceives
--Just like the Rest.

What Riddle? Which Message?
--To the Poet, you Ask.
I'll Choose not to answer
--Such an arduous Task.

Instead I'll poke fun.
Build Giants from Dust,
Claim Divine vision—
Of Death, the black Rust—

--No amount of CLR could amend.
Think I speak madness?
Shame—You don't know?
Poets speak only the Truth—in the end.

The Game (The night we found out Rizalina was dead)
by Marlena Fauer

A neat stack of cards on the rug
Ready to be scattered, mixed, and played.
Small hands shuffle them over the carpet,
And the dinosaurs are exposed.
The previously giant predators become friendly
All the spikes, teeth, and claws are rounded
And outlined in thick black
Making them harmless and approachable.
They sit flatly on the white background of the carpet
And their bodies are brightly colored:
The Long Neck in vibrant purple with round yellow spots,
The T-Rex in lime green and flashing his non-menacing smile,
And the Triceratops in bright orange wearing harmless horns.
Underneath the pictures are lengthy words with too many letters,
Some that are unpronounceable by a seven-year-old
So an older, wiser voice reads them aloud.
It is a matching game, designed for fun learning,
And it truly is fun!
Laughter fills the room
As the cards are flipped and the kind monsters, revealed.
The joy seems never-ending.
Then the last cards are flipped, the match is made,
And the dinosaurs are all used up: they are extinct,
But we can revive them and start again,
Begin a new age and repeat the gaiety of the previous one.
A shriek rings down the hallway into the room of the game,
And it is unclear whether the cry is
Of laughter or of sorrow.

Just Beyond the Hill

by Nadia Hannan

Nothing new grows here.
Here, without change, even the larks
are tormented; the harsh winds, violent.
They will not take pity on you.
They love and hate equally,
and only underground is there comfort.
What keeps you upright keeps him.
The wicked green and gray of love,
Loss, and lovelessness,
you feel the same way.

The Pencil Sharpener

(I never used)

by Sarah Mellon

A metallic dome,
Blue stripe on silver plastic skin.
The mouth,
Open.
The eyes,
Black buttons,
Always open.
Only the face
The tunnel of the throat
Gated by razor teeth
That shave pencil skin.
The tail
Swimming under the surface of the table
If you believe that.

(Untitled)

by Helena Curbelo

Oh great day! Oh glorious days!
Poets fall away from your beautiful showers of gloom;
Artists, from your creations of sadness.
For didn't the greatest artist of all make beauty in only gladness?
Rise from the sadness of everyday life, that those before you have created.
Raise your head above their influence, raise it into the stars -- where you always tried to reach.
Leave all that has taught you in your creative ways,
And listen to the voice of the rocks and trees.
They know the story which you long for,
The one you've been trying to see,
There is too much to rejoice in then to mope around.
Leave that to the ones before you,
For whom, at the time hope did not exist.
And live in the time given now, learn in different ways.
And be happy that hope has been born,
With your quill and favorite paint brush in hand, draw all that has happened to you,
so you shall look and look into your own art, and never find all that you moped about.
Yet happiest can bless ten men over.
Write like you've never written before with ideas that never stop coming,
That overwhelm you and frighten you, since you fear with so much that most might escape, but do not fret and do not rush for the final shall be what was needed.

Life and Death

by Marcello Fortunato

Life is what makes us who we are,
Life is what takes us to the bar,
Life is what distinguishes one from another,
Life is what creates that brother from another mother.

Death is what leads us to tons of grief,
Death is what makes us a mound of beef,
Death is what bleeds at the stab of a knife,
Death is what happens at the end of life.

The Moment Time Stood Still

by Christopher Fox

If only the stars knew how beautiful you were,
Then they would never stop falling.

And in the early morning when the last leaf touched the surface,
The sun would paint the night sky red with envy.

If only perfection was hidden in the wind,
Then the winter breeze would calm,
And lend life a brief rest from its bitter caress.

If only, if only.
If only forever.

Any Floor, Please
by Massimo Perrino

My life is like an elevator ride:
It goes up and down,
And always opens up to new people.
The more time I spend in it,
The higher I go up,
And all starts to become clearer,
And more visible,
Until I reach the roof,
Where I'm above all clouds,
And nothing is in the way.

A Murder of Crows
by Michele Pirrone

The obsidian sky was near,
Sunlight trembled in fear,
Clouds converged, cowered, disappeared
The dim darkness now smeared
Black wings of death steered
The revered crows cheered
As mortal foes froze.
Blood flows fresh on this red field
Blood drips fast from the claws they wield.

Anew

by Rebecca Leon

Wash these scars away
Reminders of my past
Forgotten loved ones
Melancholy dreams
And horrible mishaps
Broken promises
And lost friendships
I won't look back.
I want to start anew.

Blindness

by Katherine Gregory

When I awake, I turn and see the line
Of light that breaks the heavy blackout shade
And I am not afraid. Morning is not
A sunrise or a crisp beam - it is a
Thin shred of hope that sight exists today.
The bedspread, a diamond plane, blurs blue.
But I am not afraid. What is fear if
Not blindness? I often cringe to think what
I should feel when I wake up from nightmares
And nothing known comforts me; I dream and
Slumber in a black tunnel. But I am
Not afraid. I wonder if forced blindness
Breeds bravery, or simply dormant fear;
A disturbance so deep it lurks under
Blackest waters. There is no crime or blame,
But anger grumbles once or twice a year
And the nearly useless eyes spill
With not hatred. But I am not afraid.

The Compassionate

by Julia Hurley

What you wished, wanted, thought is irrelevant.
The sheets need to be washed and pillows cover the floor
And I am tired of gazing at your sleeping hair, the contour of your arm
As it gazes back, never ready for the sun.
At least learn me a chrysanthemum and make use of your fiery wonder.
It is time for us to all grow up and turn in for the winter.
I am lost in a perfect storm of blankets and self-pity,
And to your eyes (not plastic, I don't think), I may care.
But I, a poor bear, see everything today in a stained-glass coffee cup
Filled with the seven seas of felt and other scratchy things:
You cannot drink your lot, but perhaps you can stuff it and
Some other day will give it charm and ribbons, your taxonomy of compassion.
My face is simple, you see: I have blinked in too much charcoal,
My nose is tattered. It hurt more than you would know, and
It stays sore longer than you might think.
I try hard not to stay bitter but I must stay everything -
I once changed my mind and my brains spilled out.
I have never felt hot or cold, and I know no loneliness.
Call me what you wish, but this chest will never hold anything but polyester.

Perspective by Isabel Sen

i. Wonderland

The cat is your companion on this toadstool.
If you time it right, he will be warm,
a handhold and a friend,
he who is undaunted by Alice's hands,
large as your face, or her mouth
which might eat up your world.
The cat shows you where to look --
Alice is safe - surprised?
Well, safer than the hatter, at whose feet,
beneath the toadstool, in the cool,
snails and crocodiles play.
Up here, if you time it right,
the cat is warm, and Alice's fingers
invite you with the power of lifeblood
granted by the sun.
From Alice's lap, the world can be anything --
the pond is the sea, locked in by land,
filled with tiny sailboats whose world
is much smaller
and larger
than yours.
The trees are simply tall bushes and Alice --
Alice, Alice, Alice --
knows but herself and her companion.

ii. Croquet Ground

Alice's eyes will eat me
and so I stand back,
stones and poems at my feet,
grappling with creatures my own size
in a clash of minds,
most bestial the winner.
The hatter --
cannot tell you what madness is
lest you go mad yourself.
Yet more than quicksilver can
tackle fragile sense.

We are all mad, we must just become
mad enough to know so.
Sister, What is madness?
Quicksilver, I'll say, for
the hatter's teeth tell me so. And
oh, oh, the hare --
only knows the time which is past,
lost,
which might have become something.
Sister, Why do you hold his clock so?
Time, I'll say, for like this hare
I know only what to make of it
once it has passed.
Like the hare, I am forever late,
far too late to learn how to make it
in time.
Oh, Alice. Your cat's head might
fit in my fist.
Please close your eyes.

Snow

by Haley Markbreiter

It is snowing in China,
snow in the fields and in the mountains, choking
a thousand Chinese chimneys.

“It is,” writes Mao in his little black diary
“as if a thousand doves had landed on my roof.”

Mao doing the backstroke even in winter,
snow falls on the banks of the Yangtze river and Mao
dives in, howling at the cold. The second assistant
comrade politico stabs at the ice with a silver cane.

An arm floats by, now a leg,
now a body missing its eyes.

“Winter is like a woman in a white dress and rouge –
what do you think, second assistant?” shouts Mao,
bobbing quietly on his back. “Hills gallop
like wax-bright elephants, don’t you think so,
second assistant?”

The snow is falling like little petals.

On land, the second assistant
is waving his arms as if saying good-bye,
kicking and stamping his crippled feet,
“Chairman, please, come out! The water’s dirty!”

Mao blows a stream of tiny bubbles.

“Spring,”
he thinks to himself.

Upside-down----Image is Mirage
By Darius Brown

The boy walks through the night air.
Beyond the white skeleton structure,
There is the moon. Above the moon,
Brown clouds. Beyond the universe
Roses gather, and a telescope
Observes the sky. "I can't touch
Anything. *It's not real—any of it!*"
Should he go up the staircase?
Where would it lead? A single mountain
In the distance rubs against the moon.
It's past bedtime. Mother will
Be worried. I can't wait to
Tell her what I saw on the moon,
Typed like an epigraph:
"Water is clouds"

Subway Ride 1/15

By Sally Katz

It's the 1 train;
I'm going downtown.
Three young girls come in
and sit near me.
They start talking loudly about
test anxiety—I quietly laugh into my scarf—
and praying to god to combat it.
Their conversation oddly
shifts to tongue piercings—
a topic they seem to find intriguing.
According to one of the girls,
you can barely eat for a week
after getting your tongue pierced—
she explained to her friends that
someone told her this from personal experience.
Her friends stared in awe.
But the woman sitting across from me
glanced over at the girls
and rolled her eyes.
She was a hippy, earthy-looking woman
in her twenties
and wore brown clogs,
a big, slouchy knit hat,
and carried a hemp bag.
I looked closely at her face—
she had her right eyebrow, nose,
and chin all pierced.

Imagination

by Ali Lebow

There is a cupboard
All my own
Where my imagination
Can play and sleep.
It's always slightly ajar.
The world behind it peeking out
And tempting passersby.
Its white wooden frame
And gold doorknob
Are the doors to an endless sky.
It's partly cloudy today.
I step inside and am freed
From the bonds of rigidity.
My responsibilities are fleeting . . .
Don't come looking for me.

Dirty Looks

by Alanna Olken

I got the dirtiest look from a woman on the subway.
She scanned me up and down,
Taking in my boots, jeans, t-shirt, necklace, and jacket,
Then shot me a look that made my stomach lurch.
What did I ever do to her?
Do I remind her of someone she hates?
Someone who teased her in high school?
Middle school? Was she a bad athlete or have a bad lisp?
Maybe my eyes or my smile remind her of an ex
Who broke her heart last year by leaving her for another woman.
Maybe she saw Marie Howe in my bag, and hates her as much as
Mummery hates Ron Padgett.
Who knows?
I figured I would continue on with my day
As though nothing ever happened.

How to Be Popular

by Grace Mandelsberg

Smile even if you're not happy.
Shower every night.
Wear low jeans and pretty underwear.
Carry a camera.
When you're not sure what to do, just laugh.
Listen to Frank Sinatra.
Don't eat messy foods in public.
When you have a cold, wait to blow your nose until you get to the bathroom. Never blow it in class.
Be fake when you need to be.
Never talk about money with friends.
Read Harry Potter books, but don't become obsessed.
Don't be a picky eater.
Always be respectful to your mother, even if she is nagging you.
Watch *The Godfather*.
Get good grades, but be humble about them.
Don't expect anything from anyone. You will never be disappointed.
Eat the orange Starburst.
Have extra pencils on hand to lend to people who need them.
Sing.
Dress appropriately for the weather.
Be interested in football.

Mid-December
by Amanda Mummery

Alongside the frozen Palisades
The grass is covered by snow-frost,
Its blades bent towards the dirt.
Black beads of berries slip out
Of yellow leaves,
The kind even the birds
Won't touch.
A stray cat lopes across my path,
His fur rattled by the late winter.
He sniffs a frozen worm,
Bent in ecstasy, pale, lifeless—
It came for the rain
But was killed by the frost.
Near the river
Someone has planted thyme.
With one finger
I taste the water
Pooled between its leaves.

Big Minnie's

by Greg Oran

How horrible are the wounds:
I can't go on running the world
With the pigs leading
The cult of the ugly
Through a broken church window.

A pale face appears out of a paper car
And floats just above the ocean floor
While Walter and Roger climb a mountain
And slide down the synagogue roof.

Hanging from a noose
And swaying from country to country,
An old woman reaches for a wrench
To loosen the stars in the sky.

Try to say the vowel "o"
With no tongue and
The tongue in your apartment

Gray clouds are
Climbing into the sun,
Knowing not what to say.
But don't worry,
My tongue will catch it.

Love
by Yaqing Wen

You looked at me,
Stared into my eyes
And told me
I'm falling in love with you
For all the wrong reasons.
I didn't know what to say,
So I asked you
If I could write a poem about it
(But only if you actually meant it),
And you only blinked your tired eyes
And told me that you like my poems,
Especially the one
About the plums.
And so,
How can I tell you
That it was William Carlos Williams
Who wrote that one?

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