

The Unseasoned Cauldron



Cauldron

Unseasoned 1978

Editors

Eva Fernández

Ann Hobart

Janet Moore

Ann Hobart

Father, would you raise me as a dirty fruit?
This is your seed,
planted early in the monotony of your rows,
bending before the roar of the thresher
and the farmer's pride in a clean field.
A corn knife is a callous tool.
It cuts clean both weed and healthy stalk,
leaving the flayed screams to wither in air.
I grew as a potato,
heart buried in earth,
worm eye searching for wormed root
that blighted me in your sight.
Finding it, I will follow it in darkness,
Tunneling where I cannot stand.

Katie Fancher

Summer Parade

She lies flat on the beach.
Sun and heat sound the percussion
As her ribs arch
Through her skin.
The ranks straighten,
Poke into open air.
Flesh pours off the bones like sweat,
Leaving them clean as notes on a trumpet.
They march in formation
While surf splatters applause on the shore.
Water, like a wandering dog, licks her shins.

Katie Fancher

Egg Toss

Step back.
Celebrate the shape
of the egg.
Feel its curve,
its round bulge.
Think about a man's bald head
and toss it.
I'll catch it like a glance from a
mother's soft-boiled eyes.
Take one more step backwards.
Celebrate hard insect eggs
growing on a leaf-vein.
As soon as you have that
egg feeling
cupped in your palm,
crack it.
Let the sharp shell
break the yoke.

Katie Fancher

Cafe Lolita Plays a Practical Joke on God

Did you see today
in church when
fat brown
Cafe Lolita came in
swaying her hips swinging from
one aisle to the other and
how the
cathedral
quivered when
Cafe Lolita swung round

Her arms like
over-fed dachsunds, she's queen
of blubber queen of
spades and
did you see the
priest's eyelash tremble,
face cracking like mortar between
condemned bricks his lips
flapping pages of the Bible:
Cafe Lolita
Cafe Lolita You
Stop!

And did you hear wet sounds
when Cafe Lolita jiggled that
juniper berry
on her tongue?
The walls, Joshua, the nave
all those arches started to
split

We sang:
Cafe Lolita shake
Holiness like liquid from
the loony bin
Cafe Lolita
shake us down
shake laugh Fat and
Brown.

Stephen D. Bauer

Top

Spin your spin
half-spool top
as bald as grandfather,
and whirl one life
on a hickory dowel
at the middle.

Your thread spun,
hand held time
whittled you narrow
as easily as he sliced
green apples.

Turn your turn
half-spool top,
and sway empty, stiff
as his rocker over
warped porch slats.

Half-spool top
singing a hymn
on the baseboard,
topple and die
dizzy among the stems
and spit seeds.

Janet Tomlinson

Baking Bread

She takes the flour,
yeast and heated milk,
and mixes it slowly,
tasting the texture
and feeling the smell
of the warm flour. She
turns the dough out
onto the counter, kneads it into arms
and legs and places the
finished loaf into a
pan. She waits a few
minutes more, stroking
the powdery skin, feeling
it give gently under
her fingers, then puts
it into the oven to grow.

V.L. Reichow

Magdalena Bay

In February Grey Whales make his love-making small.

He sees them, bouyed up—

He thinks of his Grey Wife. How heavy
she is, how tiny the whales and the egg she is frying
make her. He thinks he might like to go
to Magdalena Bay.

Thinks he might watch whales gracing water
and the breaking of waves
until white is old.

He loosens the ship from a bottle.

The work is undone.

V.L. Reichow

The Allegory Of Joyce Griffin

Thumb and forefinger raise clay edges on the
spin of a wheel. My husband brings home
planters for our growing things.

We set aside six for our own

—catalog them on the shelf near the
ukulele and banjo, guitar and mandolin

— near the window where the sun will fill them.

Look, William,

at what climbs out:

Six dancers up over the stone rims, pipers all

six, echoing in our halls, swinging our doors open

and shut, sweeping across keys, bars,
frets.

Gather them up around sunset for dinner. A cowbell
will bring them together on benches.

More benches William! More benches!

They're bringing the worlds orphans home to sup:

“Pass the ketchup, the salt, the ham—”

At night we hear our dancers growing lean.

They rise and fall all evening until they learn
for themselves the slow grace.

I listen for the low hum of their sleep, their own
spinning. How is it we grow dancers and musicians
while others can't raise a philodendron?

Listen William, to the hum of our growing things.

V.L. Reichow

STONE

In early summer
the sun is not so round. It's ignorant of
adjectives. You must just say "sun."

I can pull one half a stone from a hillside. Dust
and hold it. Whole, the hand wants it there.
The fingers are pleased to follow
"Stone."

A quiet poem
turns inward. Those fingers follow the stone.
That's all.

Inbetween teeth is the right place for a weed.
No one watches except a breeze
that is not much interested and
a poem that is more real than not.
The dreamy parts fall back with the hair.
The left hand can comb them from the
forehead back to the hill.

Everything about a poem is stone-like.
The word "poem" is stone-like
and liable to swell in your throat with a sameness. The rest
is left to the imagination but
the fingers will remember those o's.

Gulp should be "o" too. Golp.
Count all the stones in this poem
Swash them around in your mouth.
We must find the places to let them fall
back into their mud dishes.

marge vinolus

barren oyster

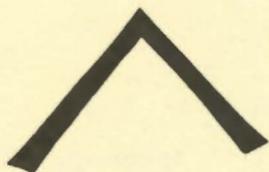
your father's death
plucks you from
your safe bed
tears your nightgown
and you stand naked
on the cold floor

you arrive
wearing raven feathers
and the pearls
he gave you
one for each year
of your life

dark angel
when you think
no one is looking
you touch him
all over
sure now
that he is man

pretty mama
poor child
sweet baby

you waited
so long
for his grit
to settle into
your mollusk shell
so layer by layer
your could produce
his pearl



The chevron

This is my sign, private
first class. It is the pitch
of my tent on low ground.
It is the march up the mountain
and the march down. It is
a crossroads without a choice.
It is my past and my future
leaning together like cornstalks
after the rain. This broken
stick confers no honor,
but it has marked me.
It has stolen the comfort
of a bare sleeve.

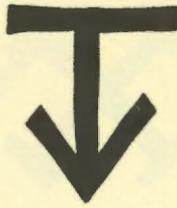
Conrad Hilberry



The windlass

In me, opposites face each other
like poker players drawn to the table
yet holding their cards to themselves.
Spades, diamonds, hearts, clubs.
The chips meet in the middle.
One man deals the cards, clockwise,
into four piles, their backs
patterned like four turtles floating
in a slow eddy. The players are skillful
and cautious; the money rises and falls
gently in front of them. It is late
but no one moves to leave. Finally,
they notice that all of them
are losing. The game grows silent,
except for the creak of the table
turning, playing out its rope.

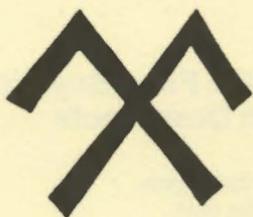
Conrad Hilberry



Another anchor

Blind in the green-black water,
I have fallen fathoms down,
tossed from the dry dinghy,
the cupped hand. For me,
the sea's surface is a beam
overhead, a pen stroke black
as my falling. What direction
can there be but down?
Past the hooks of fishermen,
sucked by the dark, I fall
till I come to, what? The silt
of other souls, miles of sea
dust with nowhere a foothold.
Too deep for your fishing, Christ,
yet you can find me a stone,
here at the dark end of a cast off
rope, a stone to anchor me.

Conrad Hilberry



The double flail, or double hook

Separate, we are two check marks,
a pair of sevens standing in the rain.
But crossed by a single purpose,
we brand our house with angles.
Fierce sticks, we flail the chaff
away, then flail on until the grain
itself is broken and blown.
We face opposite directions,
sharpening our hooks. Then,
we slash, slash away limbs,
faces, genitals, slash until we are
one figure, relentless and pure.
Double flail, double hook.
No one can intrude upon our dark
geometry. We lean toward each other
and away, crossing at the heart.

Conrad Hilberry

Janet Moore

Explanation: For the Farm Boy Who Has Such Deep Roots

this is how it is.
my mama got frostbite in her fingers
and now they hurt her in the cold.
in montana
it does get cold.
and then i see her try for fifteen
fucking minutes trying to get the
key in the slit
to let us in the house
and she cant
cause shes drunk

and i would smash

but then

the baby sister is where the pain lies worst
(you got no idea what this is like)
(and i wont tell you
you been runnin barefoot in my pain
too long)
your toes might get frostbit
you stay here much longer

see these things do not come out easy

you ever plant somethin
and it rots in the ground?

Treaties

What matters?
My hand is flat
and pale
as a peeled flounder.
Where did the blood
flow,
that made my skin
richer than the earth
mixed between
my grandmother's bones?
In the summer,
it roamed
beneath my skin
like a feeding buck.

I think it is lost
each month
in the unborn children.
I think
the silent pearls, those
little clams
are sucking away
at all the strength
of the red man.

Laurie Crawford

East Virginia

Mountain pipers, sweet and
Witchy, wrapped their music around
Our throats and drew us there—
The small town with its thirteen-year-old
Brides and heavy
Gun-spoken justice,
The dark blue ridges of the
Mountains crouching watchful
Around it.
No one left that the pipers'
Eyes didn't see.

Mama said it was evil
And screamed when we
Found rats in the cellar.
But come the orange
Harvest moon, I saw the
Witch-light in her eyes, heard
The music in her throat
Bubble up like hot new blood.
Daddy, he sang too
And they danced together
In the fire ring under the
Moon.

I would not celebrate this
Place, would not eat
The blood food Mama made.
I would plug my ears
At night
When the pipers played, when
Their poison tickled my face
And picked paths between my teeth.
The one night, under the
Closed eye of a new moon,
I ran
And I didn't stop for
Air until my hands
Clutched the corn stalks
Of flat Michigan fields.

But even now as I
Write, I hear their
Song in my throat,
Feel their eyes burning
Down from the harvest moon
Pushing me, probing me
Turning my head
South.

The Horse

On a tight, inclusive path
Cut in the uniform field
Runs a horse which is divided black and white.
It has no rider
It runs without reins,
Needing only the bit
On a path this thin.
Finally released from the open field,
It runs the track in frantic grace.
Its flanks and hooves are a heartbeat,
The valves nodding "uh-huh", "uh-huh"
With every rush of blood.
Do you see this horse
So frightened of the heather?
It pounds on the dirt
As it will pound on the snow.
The water of its effort
Drips salty from its face
To grease the unconditional stride.
And you stand on a hill
Somewhere in the distance
And throb in your sympathy
And whisper "Gallop, circus."

Eva Fernández

Flasher

Walking through the park,
I passed a rumpled man
Who sat on the bench like the end of a sentence.
At first I thought he must be dead,
He sat so still, with birds in his lap,
His eyes half closed.
But when I turned back
To ask his name or check his pulse,
He rose like Christ
And the birds with him.
Then, staring just above my eyes,
He opened his overcoat.
I could see his heart and lungs,
His liver-capped intestines in their lair.
He gestured to these and then to me
With his mild palm cupped open.
But the pigeons were all thud quiet
And the park swung empty as a hanged man's hand
So I grabbed up my clauses and ran
And the flasher slumped again
To his seat.

Ellen Everett

Resurrection

Of course I'm alive!
I'm calling collect from Chicago.
Tell it to the Pope.
Take it to court.
For god's sake why
did you
accept the charges?
Yes, your very sadistic Sandman
shut mine
good,
Momma.
Couldn't flirt with those
darling doctors.
No, didn't get many pictures.
Instant reflexes
were
no more.
Wasn't thinking
I'd ever come back.
But, hell,
Su Casa's at eight?
I got reservations for two.

Ellen Everett

Serpentine

hair in the sink again
and my brother wanting it cleaned
again
my links of life lines, like rusting the sink
hey
so golden glimmers of a chain gang,
latch on leeches
 poor
his arm
striving strangled
from a drain and
the hairs wind around
give ground
then
furry fury pushes boy down

1/2 dozen nightmare

I tell you
I'm a basket case
strange sometimes I hold children
like grapes and plums or almonds
since George got bored I don't have to
worry about what I'd do with them but
so what I never went in for fruit fights
I eat my apples down to their cyanide seeds
how can I believe in God if the refrigerator
is empty when I phone all my friends even
Sue in the asylum is
they say
no longer committed and this leaves me
alone at the desk beneath with
a final fear of typing and finding
nothing there

Credits

English Department-Kalamazoo College
Graphic Communications
West Colony Graphics