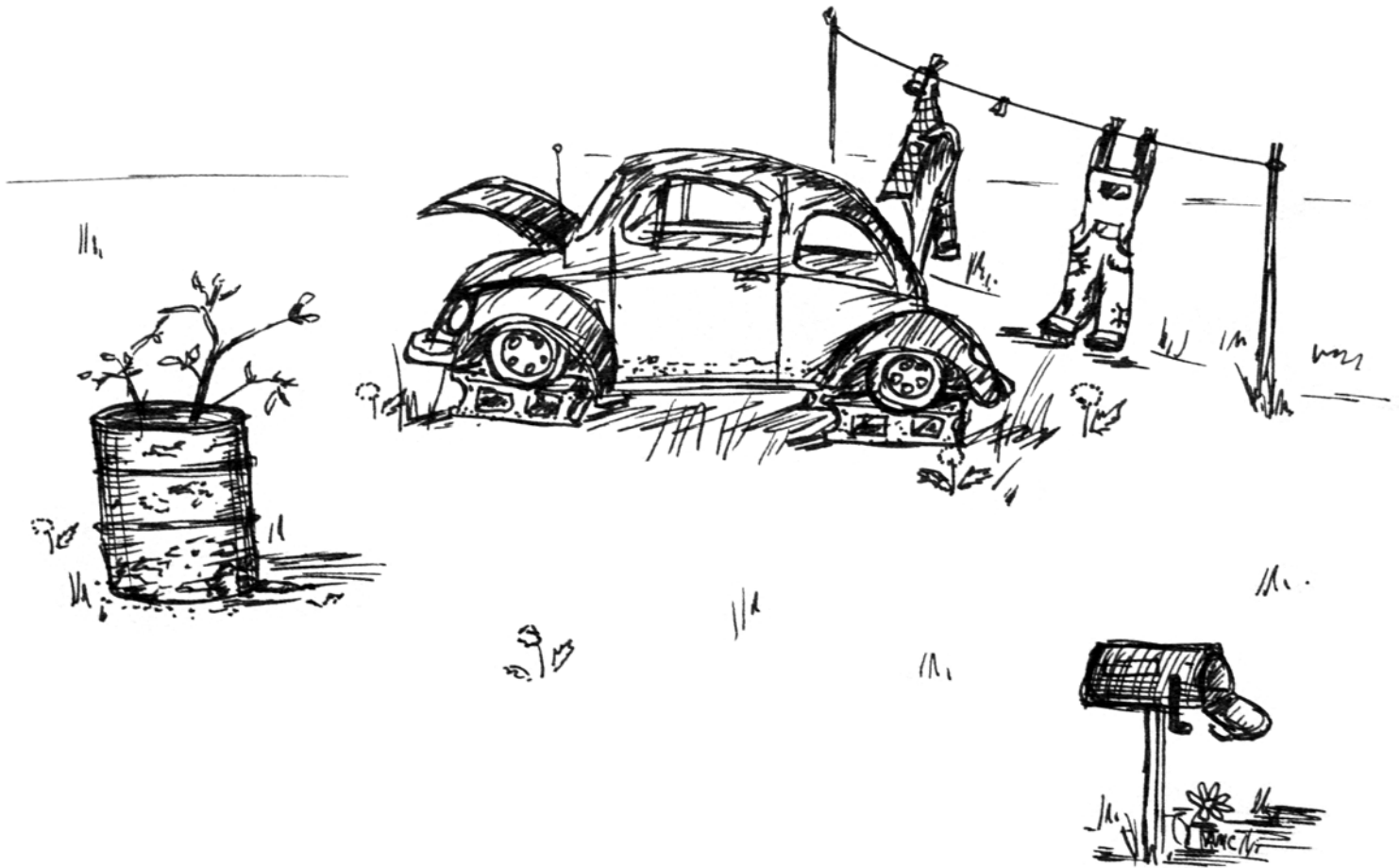


PruneJuice

Journal of Senryu, Kyoka & Haiga prunejuice.wordpress.com



Issue Ten : July 2013

PRUNE JUICE

Journal of Senryu, Kyoka & Haiga

Issue 10 : July 2013

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Life does not cease to be funny when people die any more than it ceases to be serious when people laugh - George Bernard Shaw

Before taking over the editorship of Prune Juice, I read a lot of senryu — some I liked, some I didn't. I had to figure out what resonated with me and why. What was going to be *my* definition of senryu? Not sure I came up with a definitive answer, not sure I ever will, not sure I even want to. What I did decide was this: In general, senryu are about finding the funny in the serious and the serious in the funny.

I have always loved horror movies and the macabre. And so, my sense of humor is slightly askew. As a kid, Vincent Price was my favorite actor and Rod Serling's *Twilight Zone* and *Night Gallery* were my favorite shows. But I digress.

I guess you could say I had a fascination with death, though in my opinion, not morbidly so. Death and sex are two subjects humans think about . . . a lot (although the order and regularity with which we think about them certainly changes as we age)!

Death is one of the few things that can be done easily lying down. The difference between sex and death is that with death you can do it alone and no one is going to make fun of you. - Woody Allen

I received lots of submissions about sex for this issue, but very few about death (which may say something about the age of the contributors or simply that senryu writers are an over-sexed lot!). The ones I did receive dealt with death in various ways: some of them with irony and subtle humor, such as the following two.

*survivor guilt
the carrot nose
outlasts the snowman*

Cara Holman

Cara's senryu took me from the silly image of that carrot lying in a puddle of slush to the mixed up feelings of one spared death at the expense of another.

This senryu made me smile with its clever play on words and underlying message.

*ex-wife's funeral
he lays to rest
bones of contention*

June Y. Collini

Sometimes in dealing with death, such as the death of a soldier or a loved one who has suffered, there is no room for humor. The following two senryu deal with death's darker side: the first one using a startling metaphor and the second a more subtle, but equally powerful, image.

*Memorial Day
the closed sign
on the butcher's shop*

Michelle Harvey

*leaving the hospital
he pushes the wheelchair
heavy with bags*

Kirsten Cliff

While I don't desire all of the submissions for the next issue to be "death senryu," I would encourage you not to shy away from this topic or other issues and experiences that do not routinely find their way to the pages of senryu journals.

I hope you enjoy this issue as much as I have enjoyed reading your work.

Terri L. French
July, 2013

S.M. Abeles, US

behind the deli counter
my grandfather's dreams
sliced thin

motorcycle the distance between day and dream

finally some recognition
for my poetry blog!
(I find it listed
among a group
of mental illness websites)

Jenny Ward Angyal, US

on the plane
an old man reads a tract
securing God's abundance
the horizon
thick with clouds

John Armstrong, US



John Armstrong, US



Johnny Baranski, US

Carnival Cruise half inside a bottle the ship's captain

tundra...
the off-road path of
a Toyota
(for Cor)

Chaste Moon —
my virginity left
at the altar

speed date I come then go

Oreo cookie
my split
personality

Johnny Barnanski, US

As Seen on TV

Memo to advertising spammers: I know I just celebrated my sixty-fifth birthday but I don't need a Hoveround or a walk-in bathtub; I'm sure those Chinese women are beautiful but I'm not looking to date one; and I already have a pretty good grip on my arrest record and credit score. So back off.

six pack abs
not sold in stores
\$19.95

Mark Barger, US

red light —
the hearse driver
head banging

on the fresh grave
a small cross
of popsicle sticks

hazy morning . . .
on the naked stranger
a matching tattoo

Zen ovation the sound of one hand clapping

Abraham “Freddy” Ben-Arroyo, Israel

13th floor —
he presses 12
and climbs the stairs

even at pianissimo
she fans herself
MOLTO AGITATO

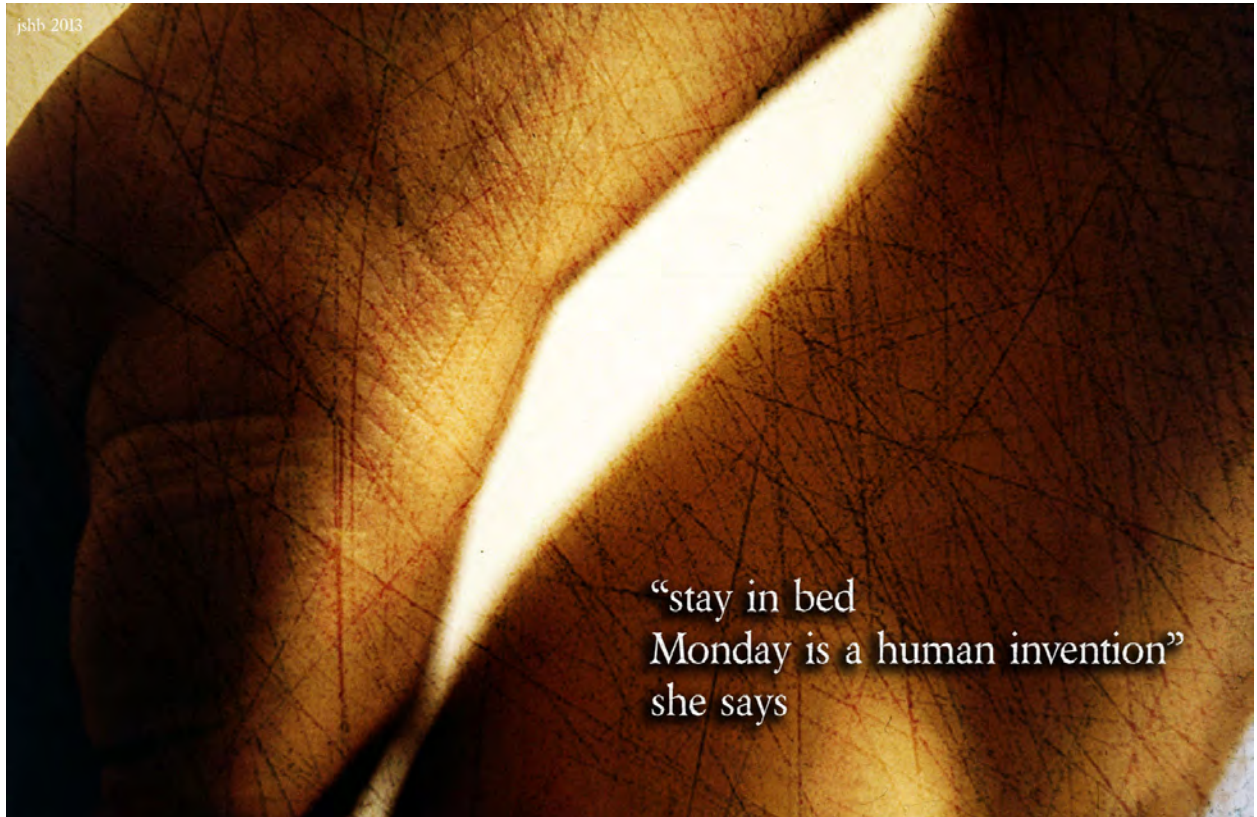
the taxi driver
sneezes —
switches the wipers on

hotel room
free condoms
but no Viagra

Brad Bennett, US

Zen garden
waiting for change
at the tea house

Johannes S. H. Bjerg, Denmark



Johannes S. H. Bjerg, Denmark

Sir

Man, I'm getting old. Two people at the super addressed me "Sir". I turned my head to see if anyone was standing behind me. Negative. Being quite hazy — one of those days where I can't seem to wake up no matter how much I try — I smile and trod on toward the milk counter. Then I wander aimlessly or indecisively round between the snack department and the counter with Italian ham and sausage. I decide to stop buying snacks. Trans-fatty-acids (fat trannies on acid?) and all that. And the salt! I'm at that age where my doctor insists on taking my blood-pressure and measuring blood-sugar and signing me up for cholesterol checks every time I see him. The dangerous 50s. Either way it's a waste of money and a total rip-off. The snacks, not the test for all I know. Except of course that the hysteria is created by the pharmaceutical companies making pills for high/low BP, diabetes meds and anti-cholesterol tablets; which I suspect. I end up in a queue by the counter with the things I think I went out for. There's this here sound I vaguely recognize. I slowly surface to the place right behind my eyes and begin recognizing my surroundings and there, at the end of the counter, a boy has discovered, that if he puts an empty drops box in his mouth and blow in a certain way, it makes a funny howling noise. I laugh and he laughs. We connect. He comes up to me and asks:

"Can I put your groceries in your bag?"

"Wow", I think. "What a strange and unexpected question!"

"But of course", I say. "Just put the heavy stuff in the bottom and the light on top."

"Yes, sir", he says. The third "sir" today.

His face is quite dirty. I guess he has been out playing all day. He's quite good at it. I bow to him in an old-fashioned way and he laughs. Then his mother calls at him and we wave goodbye.

spring rain
the pollen count says:
candy-floss 50

Maxianne Berger, Canada

StudFinder
the divorcee
does it herself

Robyn Hood Black, US

night thunder
shaking the house
and the dog

Alan S. Bridges, US

lovemaking she tells me about
the layer of dust on my dresser

interfaith service
doves and grackles congregate
outside the church

after the sex change
he said she said

'a left, two rights
& straight ahead'
GASTROENTEROLOGY

Andrew Brier, UK

her eye
framed by the drop of a curl
country road

before the words
my tongue on a
cut lime

Sondra J. Byrnes, US

locked out —
he tries
key words

Helen Buckingham, UK

slugs fuck stuck like festive dates

Dad returns
armed with toy koalas
and a boomerang charm

church spire metal god conductor

Owen Bullock, New Zealand

the financial adviser
curdles my illusions
now I'm eating
homemade
Yoghurt

the way I've evolved
I feel like Dr. Who
I hope the tardis takes me
deeper
into my heart

Susan Burch, US

I watch my mom
greedily count the cash
from the pervert
who winked at me
after buying my brother

all the lies
I found out
after he died
the worst truth
a second wife

getting married
after dating four months
my cousin
on his third wife
a charm on her bracelet

Andy Burkhart, US

Sunday afternoon
spelling p-a-r-k
in front of the dogs

reincarnated
as myself —
déjà vu

Pris Campbell, US

Lothario Blues
he strums the abc's
of her g spot

class reunion
my first sweetheart's hair
doesn't attend

rabbit hole
alice works two shifts
to pay the shrink

tent revival
the stray dog howls a duet
with the preacher

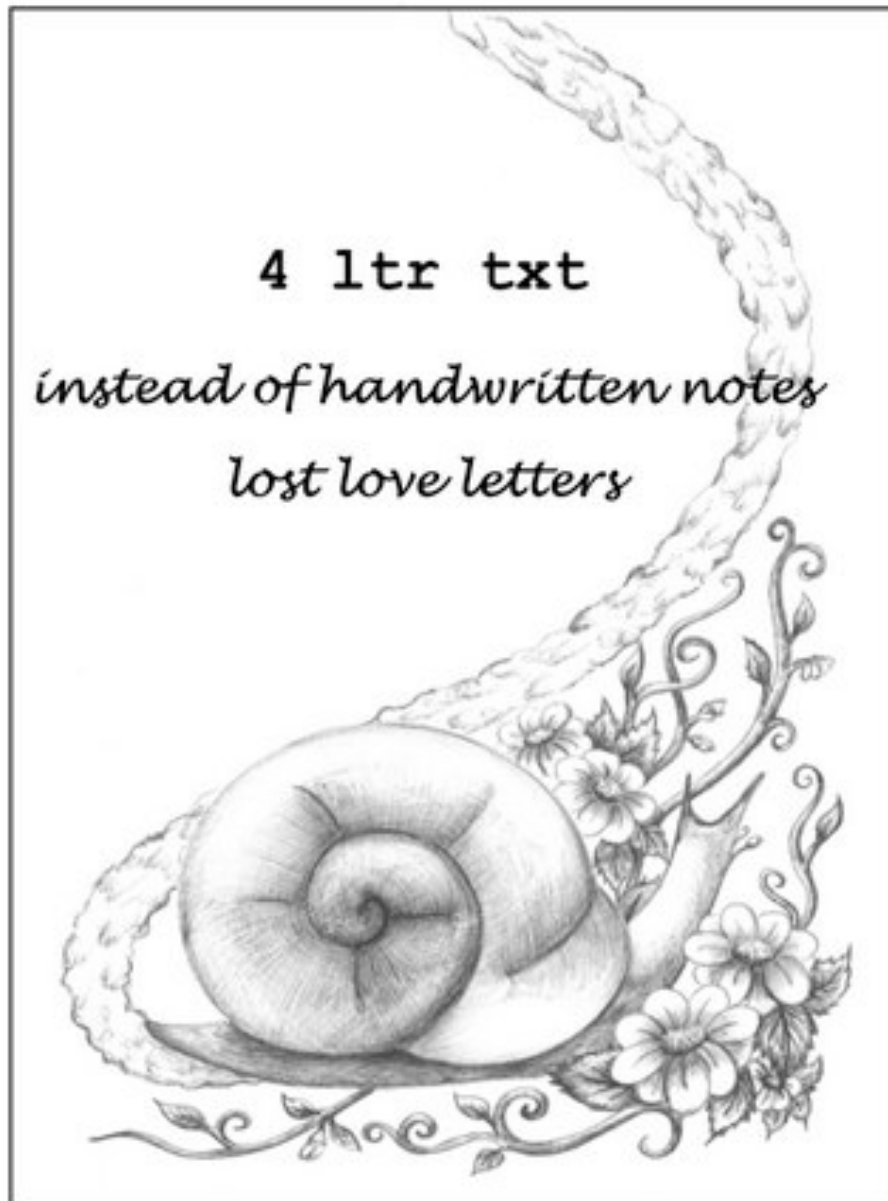
Susan Campion, US

blessed red wine
enhances my hangover
at morning Mass

one more gin bottle
tossed in an obscure trash can
son's life becomes waste

changed my outfit
John asked:
"Why did you change?"
which suggested
he liked the first me better.

Sue Campion, poet (US)
Corrinna Holyoake, artist (UK)



Marion Clarke, UK

Confirmation mass . . .
scratched on the front pew
JC was here

morning exercise
I flip between tabs
on the menu bar

Kirsten Cliff, New Zealand

leaving the hospital
he pushes the wheelchair
heavy with bags

summer solstice
in the spa pool
we compare wrinkles

June Y. Collini, Australia

ex-wife's funeral
he lays to rest
bones of contention

doctor's waiting room
I pray he's more up to date
than the magazines

internet romance
he says it's time we meet
Facebook to Facebook

speed dating
she can't get out of there
fast enough

hen-pecked husband
even his GPS
tells him where to go

Susan Constable, Canada

waiting room
the chiropractor's sign
looks crooked

all kidding aside . . .
the doctor leaves me
in stitches

day after Valentine's
a half-price sale
on kissing gouramis

Tracy Davidson, UK

tea leaves
she reads my fortune
then takes it

at dawn
the execution
of a perfect handstand

childhood memories
resurface as I clear out
my mother's attic . . .
faded dolls with limbs missing
and a broken buckaroo

Tracy Davidson, UK

the piano player
how he plays our tune
over and over
until we're sick to death
of the bloody thing

pearl wedding
your anniversary present —
a string
of harsh words and insults
a petition for divorce

Friday the thirteenth
I don't step on the cracks
walk under ladders
alas, I didn't see
the number 13 bus

Dedicated to Sanford Goldstein

Janet Lynn Davis (US) poet

Karen A. Smith (US) artist



Bill Deegan, US

first cardio appointment . . .
she asks for my insurance
without skipping a beat

Jan Dobb, Australia

coiling hot spaghetti
round and round her fork
table for one

breakfast tiff
bubbles in the porridge pot
popping

Nan Dozier, US

car lot penny
scratches
on my good luck

Rebecca Drouilhet, US

census form
in the space for race
he pens 'earthling'

Gary Eaton, Canada

the stickiest part
of the spider's web
Alimony

dressings room
a man in a powdered wig
snorts his lines

his crows
of self-satisfaction
nevermore

Haiku Elvis, US

for a second or two
world peace

the length
of a daylily
young love

music critic
the melody
of your venom

recycled
his favorite pickup
lines

Haiku Elvis (US) and Jeffrey L. Salter (US)

tired dog
the echo of his
last bark

Al Fogel, US

bumper cars —
this one's for the van
that cut me off

campus bookstore
every other title
for dummies

biology class
taking notes
on her anatomy

Terri L. French, US

next to

the empty pill bottle



tlf, '13

on her dressing table

the last drops

of L'Air du Temps

Terri L. French, US

Sparkles Disco

1977 — the era when John Travolta switched personas from Vinnie Barbarino to Tony Manero. My friends and I were bookish types, pseudo hippie-nerds, who shunned meat and studied metaphysics. During Spring Break we decided to take the train in Windsor, Ontario to Toronto for a weekend of “wild revelry.” So why was I the one sitting at the table minding the purses and nursing my Sloe Gin Fizz while they were on the dance floor shaking their booties? A young man with thick glasses and a creepy grin sat down next to me. I could feel my self-esteem melting faster than the ice in my drink. He smiled and leaned in closer. “You really shouldn’t cross your legs,” he said, “It causes varicose veins.”

senior dance
the smell of gardenia
from old wall flowers

Terri L. French, US

Ain't It Nifty

My baby sister just turned fifty. I called her to wish her happy birthday, console her, tell her fifty was the “new thirty,” etc. We wound up talking about our bathroom habits.

shit!
all the things that get harder with age

Raymond A. French, US

her tea cup
lying broken on the floor
old bones

first date —
the awkward silence broken
barking spider

lovers in the cemetery
among the tombstones
size matters

Raymond A. French, US



Eider Green, UK

Fiddlehead

Someone has to decide whether to tell her. Or not to tell her. Or to wait until tomorrow or the day after. She is nearly 100, she has dementia and her daughter has died. People are tempted not to mention it — after all she will forget — but I know that someone will tell her. They will pass on their condolences, post sympathy cards, whisper. I tell them she will feel pain and that she will feel it even if she has forgotten why. She will invent a reason for it, blame someone, call the doctor and say her stomach aches. He will ask when she last moved her bowels and she will tell him all is regular, he will prescribe something meaningless that she will forget to swallow.

an ant
in the maze
of a fiddlehead

So I walk to her house on the edge of the village. On my way through the woods I pick bluebells, pussy willow and fresh green beech. I grate the hinge of her iron gate, climb the steps to the front door and ring the bell. I ring it a lot. I turn to leave and see her in the bedroom window. I wave smiling... and so now must wait. Much later, after ringing the bell several times to remind her that the bell has ever rung she comes to the door. Even through the rippled glass I see she is half naked, she struggles with the lock. She keeps the chain on and has no teeth. I tell her I walked here to give her bluebells and she should go back to bed now. She thanks me and closes the door.

birdsong —
I leave the stone
in my shoe

A. Ray Griffin, Jr., US

forty years
of federal fecklessness
elective dysfunction

ethical well
sucked dry by avarice
Politicks



TRAILER TRASH

Alan Pizzarelli

bitter morning
neighbors sittin' together
without any teeth

from the sink
piled high with dirty dishes
i pick one that's almost clean

sick of eating spam
i turn on the pc,
more god damn spam!

deer maw,

i applied for a job as a short order cook
at the "sizzling steaks".

i nose im not so short, but i applied anyhow.
anyways, on the application where it sez
"what is yr ambition" i wrote in:
"to cook sizzling steaks."
i think that should land me the job.

yr big boy,
etmo

unable to afford
a fly swatter
we adopt a stray cat

the cat does a soft march
on my big beer belly
then the lil' fucker pukes!

deer maw,

flo was walkin' to the laundry mat yesterday
when she cum face to face with a huge green creature,
with "big red eyes" n' well she just flat out fainted.
when she cum to,
she noticed her new salvation army coat
wuz full of large holes -
must be that damn moth man again!

yr baby boy,
etmo.

new years day
a strand of tinsel dangles
from the cat's ass

old couple next door
arguing again
about the damn prunes

dear maw,

i aint callin' cousin mary beth jo bob ugly,
but when she cries, its mighty strange
how the tears roll down her backside.

yr lovin' son,
etmo

after sex
she paints her eyebrows
back on her face

she farts
n' its o.k.
i burp n' she sez
i'm disgusting
go figger.

deer maw,

flo iz feelin' much better
tho she's filled our trailer
with moth balls n' wont
turn on the lights.
i keep slippin' on dem dang balls
but dey sure make our place smell nice.

yr sonny boy,
etmo

dere goes that mouse again
the cat
no longer gives a shit

deer maw,

i nose i been out of work a spell.
,n' y'nose I been a'tryin' -
now the news is an asteroid,
"large enough to wreak worldwide destruction,"
is headed towards the earth at 60,000 mph
and is due to strike this fall."
so why bother?!

yr boy,
etmo

ps: hears five bucks for groceries.
sorry i can't give more
cuz i ran out of beer.

thought i smelt
vegetable soup
but it was just me

the cat turns its nose up
at the leftovers
n' licks its ass

deer maw,

my good buddy, call him mutt
cuz i dont no his name.
anyways, mutt is a beer chuggin'
tattoo artist - but for sum reason
he dont do tattoos no more.
he worked at the pet store in town
but got his ass fired the first day -
i guess putting the gerbils in
with the snakes was a bad idea -
now he's stuffin' road kill n' sells 'em,
its called taxi dermee -
anyways, i bought one dat wuz
all mashed up n' shit -
but i agree with mutt
it does makes a kewl conversation piece.

yr "little bunny",
etmo

misplacing her glasses
the hoarder
finds another pair

trailer park picnic
every one of the fat broads poems
mention food

in her pants
ants ants ants

picking his nose
one of our neighbors
tells us what he likes to eat

pie eating contest
no contest!

even when i walk
against the wind, the stink of
my fart stays

deer maw,

flo's been feedin' dis'ol stray dawg n' we sided to take
him in. he's a scruffy lookin' mongrel n' sneezes a lot,
so i calls him
"disease". anyways, he makes a good playmate for our cat.
dere he goes with the cat in his jaws again!

yr boy,
etmo

at my trailer door
the bible ladies act like
they never seen a man nekkid

deer maw,

today, when i was huntin' squirrels in the back woods, i
met dis geeologiest fella -dey study rocks & hard stuff-
so's i asks this fella "how do rocks grow?" n' he laughs
& sez

"that's the dumbest question i ever heard, rocks don't
grow!"

so i sez "well then, if yr so smart, how do they get so
big?!" -- & walked away.

guess dat gave him sumtin to think about!

yr pride n' joy,
etmo.

taking a short cut
through the cow pasture
my shoes 3 times bigger

a pit bull
dry humps my leg
i let him finish


dear maw,

thanks for yr letter.

i know flo cusses like a truck driver
after all, she wuz one - at least she don't cuss
out loud during church services anymore,
so she's been tryin' to hold her tongue.
it's a fuckin' hard habit to break.

yr one & only,
etmo duey

end of the month
time to take a bath

oooooooooooo 

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Cover Photograph by Lisa Pitcher

Autumn Noelle Hall, US

cougar purrs
at a zookeeper
half her age

cool mint
roots running like wildfire
beneath the mulch —
our summer love muddled
with honey, lime and run

Autumn Noelle Hall, US



Autumn Noelle Hall, US



Bob Hartwig, US

exact change
and an unexpected tip . . .
pocket lint

Michelle Harvey, US

Memorial Day
the closed sign
on the butcher shop

lover's leap —
we overlook
the danger sign

restroom stall
a stranger's voice
asks for paper

Mother's Day
giving her flowers
to the nurses

Dallas Hembra, US

Aging

The trips to the beauty shop to cover the grey are growing too frequent for my purse. Accessorize or not accessorize, that is the question. Purple was my favorite color until I read the book *When I Am an Old Woman I Shall Wear Purple*. I think Sensodyne toothpaste eases the discomfort of receding gums, just a guess. When I look in the mirror, I don't know whether to laugh or cry. But at least my hearing isn't quite as bad as really old people.

the reflection
in the bathroom mirror
shattered her ego

I have to stretch to see the positives, but there are a few: I've learned to pause and smell the roses; the sky unfurls in ribbons of azure. But if it's grey, so what! It can't erase my joy. When I stroke a baby's cheek or catch the scent of a Johnson's powdered bottom, I am reconnected to the joys of motherhood. Time is no longer a cheap commodity to be rifled through or wasted, so I spend every day awakening to the laughter of good memories and the taste of sweet surrender.

serenity
is recycled sorrow
unmasked

C. William Hinderliter, US

first (and last) date
she insists I should have
my colon cleansed too

Caroyln Hinderliter, US

tea party
with my granddaughter —
all the schoolyard gossip

Cara Holman, US

survivor guilt
the carrot nose
outlasts the snowman

homecoming
refitting my shoe
into an old footprint

mosquito hawk
the fine line
between sense and nonsense

Alegria Imperial, Canada

spring rain
we compare
crow's feet

lunacy . . .
I once swallowed
a moon pie

Alegria Imperial, Canada

tree removal bylaws in case a twig resists

Cedar Ridge Tree Care at 10:30 parks. Men in hard hats orange and neon vest size up the large oak. As if a dying tree bore weapons. I stand on the terrace with the sun. Below the red rhododendron turns heads. The shredder brakes under the small oak. The procedure begins. The chainsaw grinds the air. The dismembering begins. Twigs first. Then branches. The aphid infested leaves tumble in wan neon green. Shoulders next. Trunk from the top. Three feet by two. Down to a stump. The oak reveals its age. Fourteen going on sixteen. The morning Alicia on the second floor bared green painted toes. When John came dashing off the gate with his goatee. Oak dust litters the blooming holly. A gaping ground what's left of laughing shadows. I turn away bereaved.

end of spring
my wildness takes over
the garbage bin

Alexander Jankiewicz, US

The Midnight Hour

I just finished the late-shift flipping burgers at the neighborhood grease joint. I'm always tired as hell as I stand alone waiting for my bus. There's nothing, though, like hearing a gunshot on a deserted street in Chicago to pull you out of the lull of mental nothingness. There's that certain feeling that you get in your knees when your heart kicks in again after stopping for that brief moment. Then the adrenaline takes over and you just stand there hoping you're not going to be a random target for gangbangers. My senses go into overdrive. I keep my eyes open for anything strange about the car heading my way. I've got to keep my cool.

a cigarette lit
at a dark bus stop waiting
in a cold drizzle
alone with street lamp shadows
becoming Humphrey Bogart

Debbie Johnson, US

woman in a wheelchair
never has to ask
"is this seat taken?"

woman in a wheelchair
need not worry
about panty lines

Alexander B. Joy, US

fountain basin
a panhandler collects
someone's wish

Carol Judkins, US

Memory Cards

It's early May. We meet friends in Calgary and drive to Lake Louise just north of Banff. The lake is still frozen except for the edges, where glacial blue water peeks through. Snow-capped Mount Victoria is visible in the clear sky. Our friends say we brought good luck. What a beautiful day, the sun on snow is almost blinding. We snap several pictures before heading back to the hotel for a scoop of ice cream.

The next day, we join our tour group whose first stop is Lake Louise before heading to Banff. It's cold; everyone is wearing coats and gloves. Fog drifts across the mountains; Mount Victoria is hidden. It's mostly grey outside, with intermittent rain tapping black umbrellas. Disappointed tourists are huddled inside the Chateau, gazing at the lake through massive windows. We share yesterday's pictures from our digital camera.

stampede
a run on postcards
in the gift shop

Bill Kenney, US

Thanksgiving
the family gathered
in an old photo

windy corner
the beggar and her child
again tonight

Lydia Lecheva, Bulgaria

long night
sleeping pills
with the coffee

Chen-ou Liu, Canada

in moonlit mirrors
held up to one another:
the critic and i

campaign speech —
words moving up and down
his Adam's apple

Gregory Longenecker, US

coke habit
licking honey
from a razor blade

waiting for her call
he launches another
Angry Bird

stepfamily potluck dinner

Bob Lucky, Ethiopia

Tour de France I crash on the sofa

coffee drive-through
turning *The Book of Tea*
face down

sing-along
the audience starts
a measure early

full English breakfast
all the waitresses
from Poland

John McManus, UK

shooting range —
the bodybuilder gets
his guns out

art gallery
we stop to admire
a cobweb

date night
she gives the dice
a kiss

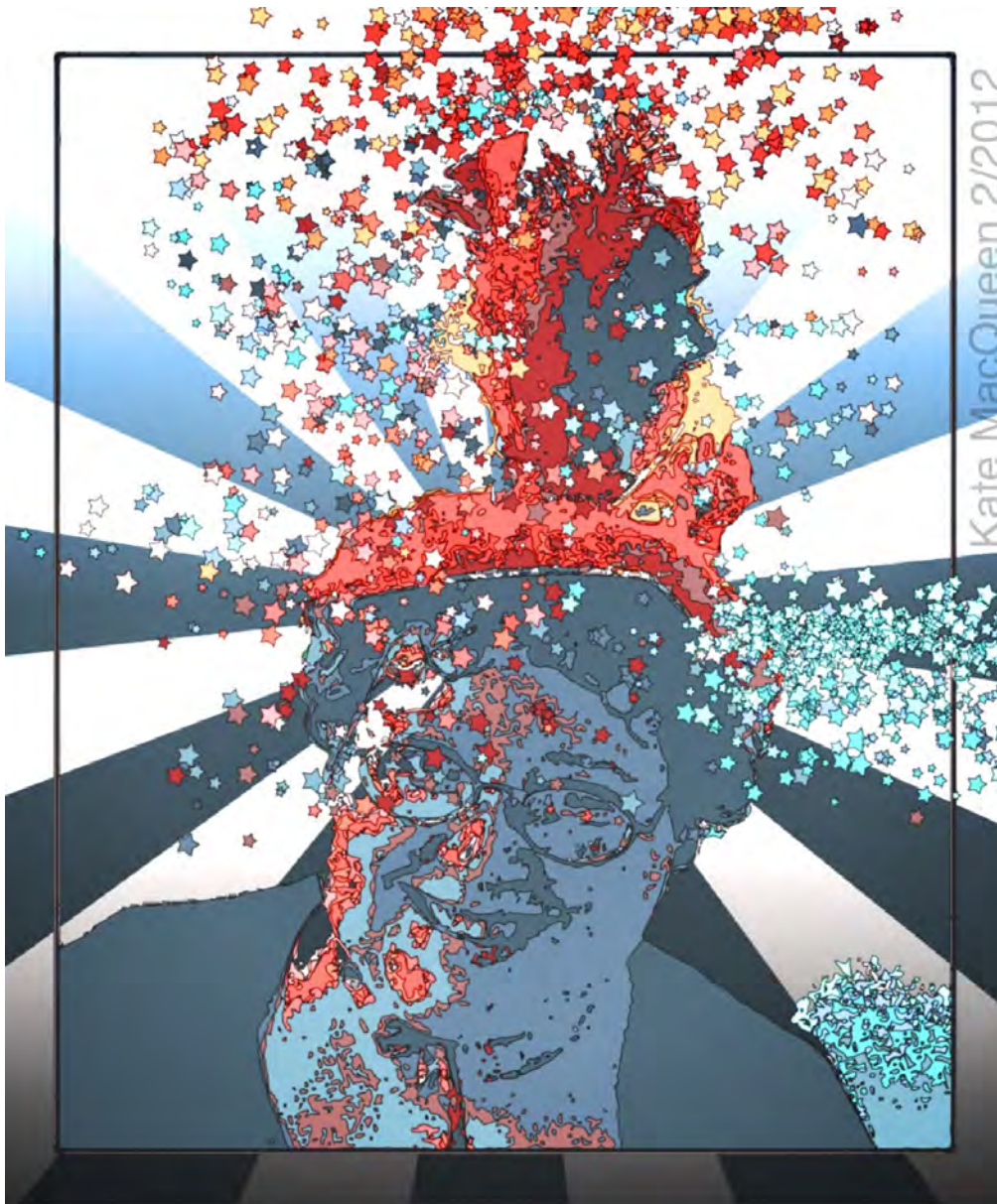
stargazing
I offer her a piece
of Mars

Kate MacQueen, US

office games
his wind-up toy zips
over the edge

jammed in
with her anger
brake lights for miles

Kate MacQueen, US



mother's magic
pulling a smile
out of her hat

Annette Makino, US

Air and Space Museum
the crowds leave little
of either

breadcrumbs gone
Hansel and Gretel
consult their iPhones

worn elastic
even my underwear
is tired

Annette Makino, US



Lauren Mayhew, US

everywhichwaywind
seniors in the park
doing tai chi

Korean market
she gives me my change
with both hands

alone
at the restaurant
she plays with
the pink stamen
inside a wax lily

Susan Murata, US

Central Park spring —
her boxer's toenails
lacquered red

Peter Newton, US

height of summer
the traffic cop
busts a move

with or without me
the cocktail hour
staggers on

the neighbors
I know least
closest

Christina Nguyen, US

"it's complicated"
my divorce
from Facebook

Republican neighbor
his flower garden full
of bleeding hearts

after
the cleaning lady
the toddler

Richard Penn, Canada

last call
and all of Cupid's shots
missed my heart
but Jack Daniel's shots
all hit my liver

energy
drinks were enough
to keep me up all night
now I need
Viagra too

Stephen Peters, US

guilt
by association
old age

Minh-Triết Pham, France

7 billion people
and it falls on me . . .
the bird dropping

after Mass
she munches
on an apple

Jennifer Gomoll Popolis, US

desktop-ku
the computer suggests
better words

global climate change
none of the season words
will do

along this road goes no one . . .
none of my friends
get the reference

Thomas Powell, UK

shopping centre:
his bell tolls closer
to Santacide

Joan Prefontaine, US

treadmill
driving five miles
to walk five miles

end-of-summer break-up
he scrapes the grill
with a wire brush

Joan Prefontaine, US



*online dating
but you said
you were svelte*

Michael Rehling, US

my stories
getting better and better
four fingers of scotch

I promised myself
I would age with dignity . . .
mouse ears on grandpa

daring me
to follow it
jazz riff

Leslie Rose, US

ginger tea
trying not to mention
the biopsy

red planet rising talk of custody

salt on icy steps his excuses

retrieving
the morning paper
the cat dogs his steps

Valerie Rosenfeld, US

in this disease we share
I am the veteran she comes to
for advice
glad to help
wish I didn't know so much

Liz Rule, Australia

my ex's wake . . .
finding bits of me
in his house

Claudette Russell, US

thrift store
I buy back
some memories

spring crocus
your preoccupation
with being first

no contest
seedless
watermelon

sorts bar
no time outs
for conversation

Ernesto P. Santiago, Philippines

she's wearing
lighter eyebrows —
spring is here

Stanely Sicheloff, US

58th thanksgiving
still landscaping
the mashed potatoes

ants
on the Red Bull can
run in circles

Carla Shepard Sims, US

cloudless sky
redbud blooms
she buys her first bra

omg! brd!
abbreviated visit to grandparents

doctor's office
she hears the results
of a stranger's divorce

Carla Shepard Sims, US



Carla Shepard Slms, US

Time Will Tell

It's eight o'clock in the morning. The sun has been up for hours. I have not. Although I am caffeine deprived, I feel jittery. The waiting room is packed and smells of burned coffee, floral cologne and hand sanitizer. A dusty fake ficus flanks rows of thread stretched chairs. Under a large window, a couching toddler holds a Hot Wheels car in one hand and winds bright beads around a wood maze with the other. The only empty seat is between a table strewn with outdated magazines and a middle aged woman picking at a styrofoam cup. I weave in and out of nervous chatter among strangers about their bodily functions and the weather. I reluctantly sit, sensing someone else's warm bottom has recently vacated the chair. I cringe. I can't help but wonder what news my rear-end's predecessor is hearing behind closed doors.

chance of rain
she stares at the clouds
on a tissue box

Craig W. Steele, US

decision day—
the flames of burning bridges
light my path

Karyn Stockwell, US

please, people
if ya gotta suck the life outa me —
take the fat

Rachel Sutcliffe, UK

pharmacy queue
we hear all about
her IBS

Judy Swanson, US

his jeans
fit so tight
I can't breathe

nice guys finish last
right after I do

Marie Toole, US

surprise party
her demeanor
slips

painting still life
her subject
fidgets

Vladislav Vassiliev, UK

Election Night

November 5, 2008, while watching people go crazy in Times Square in New York, I suddenly recalled the conversation I had had almost 20 years earlier with one of my friends who at that time was making his way through the ranks of the marketing department at Procter & Gamble...

“Your detergent ads really confuse the hell out of me . . . now, what’s the difference between Tide and Ariel? Can you just tell me which one is better?”

“Don’t be silly, there is no difference. . .they are identical, it’s just branding and packaging which are different, that’s all.”

“Hmmm. . . but this makes no sense, why would you waste money promoting two competing brands of the same product?”

“We do it so that people think they have a choice . . . while in reality they don’t . . .”

VOTE OBAMA

the hot air balloon
higher and higher

Anita Virgil, US

he folds towels differently than I
and it bothers me
not one bit

with different spectacles
in each room life continues
to catch my eye

trees planted
long ago
for privacy . . .
now I crane my neck
to see my neighbor

Marilyn Appl Walker, US

decorated —
she draws he daddy
without an arm

diaper-doo
the toddler in his baby bed
finger painting

Michael Dylan Welch, US

50th year —
the creak of my bones
has its own music

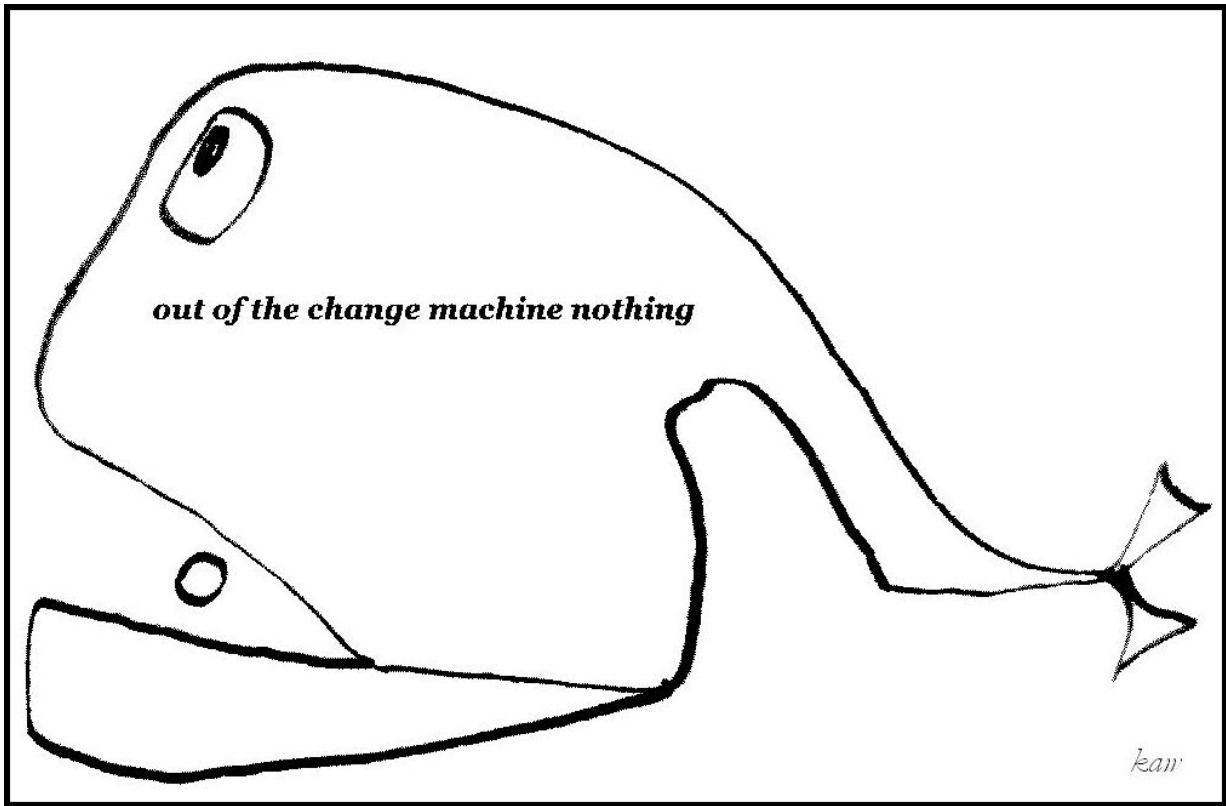
black and white
and red all over —
I smile at her joke
that I too
told as a child

after the old lady
next to me on the plane
sprays her perfume
I wish I could fart . . .
and I do

Kath Abela Wilson, US



Kath Abela Wilson, US



Sara Winteridge, UK

dark moon
a gang of street boys
luring the stray

changing the clocks
his 5 o' clock shadow
gets home late

blue heron —
we can tell by the way
she stands
in the sea, that secretly,
mum is peeing