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Calliope

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Calliope

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EDITORS

Terra Beaudoin
Lindsay J. Blumenthal
Susen Burnash
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Michael McGrail Gleason

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Damien L. Ober
Melissa L. Roselle
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Khalif A. Kittner-Williams

Advisory editor: Martha Christina

Cover design and illustration: Kathleen Hancock and Merce Wilczek

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Indexed in *American Humanities Index* and *Poem Finder* (a CD-ROM index which has assumed the indexing function of the *Annual Index to Poetry in Periodicals* and *American Poetry Annual*).

Calliope is published twice a year, in December and May. Single issues are \$3.00; a year's subscription, \$5.00.

Until further notice we will not be accepting fiction submissions.

Submissions of poetry (3-5 poems) are welcomed from

August 15 - October 15 for the Fall/Winter issue and

January 15 - March 15 for the Spring/Summer issue.

Manuscripts received at other times are returned unread.

Manuscripts should be accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope. **No simultaneous submissions, please.**

Manuscripts are discussed with the writer's name masked so that beginning and established writers are read without prejudice.

Address all correspondence, submissions and subscriptions to Martha Christina, *Calliope*, Creative Writing Program, Roger Williams University, Bristol, RI 02809.

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Robert Cooperman

FAMILY REUNIONS

Battalions of relatives
shouted, laughed;
their names and the exact knot
of kinship impossible to unravel.
I was supposed to love them all,
though older cousins
stuck noses so high
they could smell heaven,
blind to anyone
not impossibly gorgeous.

I'd wander room to room,
searching for a quiet sanctuary,
but my mother always tracked me down,
introduced another cousin,
as if play were possible
in best trousers,
not a chance
of getting soiled and friendly.

I hear of them when my mother calls:
operations, divorces, funerals,
names to make me feel guilty,
still strange children
who hated each other on sight.

Robert Cooperman

FIFTH GRADE GIRLS AT RECESS

They've learned a new game:
shrieking, voices scratching
like branches against siding,
each agonized soprano
vying to outdo her rivals.

They slouch against a fence;
then, when the spirit claws free,
they stand, spines arched,
arms plunged taut as yo-yo string,
mouths open, demented divas
for that soaring of flung air.

Maybe it's to bother the boys
trying to concentrate on softball,
or to practice the tactics
parents have taught them
when disreputable men approach.

Or maybe they're letting the world know
they're impatient to be teenagers,
the years taking so long
all they can do is scream
their maidenly desperate peril.

June Frankland Baker

DAYBREAK

Now in winter, the shortest
day—snow blotting the shapes
of this desert town, ice
keeping me in the house.

I remember last summer,
my daily walk at daybreak
when the light uncovered an eastern
air of palest apricot
and yellow—water-color tints that soothed
like the lawn sprinklers pulsing
that early hour before the houses,
their spray arching to the streets.

The air was newborn,
no commuter exhaust and dry heat,
no one awake except those girls, boys,
pitching their rolled-up
breakfast news, and the woman
carrying her sleeping child from the car
to her mother's house before work.

At the point in my walk where I turned:
a yard with old trees, the sun flaming
a three-foot concrete pagoda
raised on its mound, light
blinding through its windows and dripping
from the graceful fir beside it,
the small Buddha in front looking ahead,
away from the dawn,
to the place where the day would go.

Helen Frost

DRAWBRIDGE

When soft rain turned brittle in the night,
clattering on roof and windows, I moved
from my dream toward you, solid
against flashes and thunder. I fumbled
to unplug the phone. This morning
thousands of pea-sized lumps glittered in heaps
around the house. Noontime now,
the children play indoors. Dangerous
outside where ice breaks from trees and wires,
falls like lightning but stays, clear
sticks with hollow centers scattered
in lines and rings against the grass.
Our friend, his wife steady beside him, sleeps
in his hospital room. All those icy tubes.
I do not want to go. I want to stay here at home
with the children, a seven-year-old and her friend,
whose mom dropped her off an hour ago, and will
be back before supper. The girls have built
a castle, placed seashells all around the parapet.
They have made a little family
out of cardboard—see the crayons scattered
on the deep green rug—Mother and Father,
two little girls and a baby, asleep
and the bridge drawn up.

Helen Frost

SUN, VISIBLE

Bluebird, bright chest
russet and white, blue
wings carrying light
in air, then still. Sun
visible in these feathers,
the same sun, hot in Rwanda
rotting the bodies that float,
daily now, down the river,
too many hundreds
to count, too many
to bury, more every day.

Her skull pulled away
from its base, her hair
found ten feet from her body,
Polly was pulled
from her home as she played
with her friends, as these
two butterflies play
deep blue purple black, one
orange spot at the base of each wing,
alighting and flying for joy
wings newly dry from cocoons.

Joyce Odam

SORROW'S NOCTURNE

In the
white
halo
of night
death enters
with its
pale violin
making
such
pure
music
holding
one
note
so
fine
one could
listen
forever.

Rustin Larson

THE EMPEROR'S TAPESTRY

He tasted no languages on his tongue,
just sand.

He had a certain amount of hopelessness

hanging over his eyes
like a tapestry of white roses.

He slept, and dreaming created

cities of echoing clay.

He listened well, he didn't ask questions,
he beheaded his teachers.

He had a few desperate books he was reading,
a few wine stained poems—
the swan's icy fluting could rise

in his window like the sun.

He knew when new birds stirred the pond
to live, to eat,

or merely ignite the water and fly on.

Peter Makuck

BEYOND FRENCH DOORS

We took a chainsaw to the room's one window,
widened the frame, lengthened it ceiling to floor
braced the lintel with steel,
each change leading to another—a porch,
a roof, sidelights, a brickwalk, and so on.

But now more light,
reveals a rivering grain in the floorplanks
and moving through this remodeled room,
I find myself stalled again and again,
willing to forget old scores,
family and friends.

Beyond the doors,
fur up and taut for attack,
the black manx and calico square off over turf,
a forgotten cardinal above them turning
brighter with each turn
 of the hanging feeder
middle distance in this new depth-of-field.

With each moment, I forget even more.
How can one match such lucid stillness?
I'm all eyes
for the endless patience of pine boughs,
blowing like a girl's full sleeves,
 adjusting themselves to the wind,
old insults and betrayals
 light as those dead leaves
in a brief churning that crosses the yard.

Peter Makuck/**Beyond French Doors**

A rosy finch flashes to the hedge.
At the threshold, near my feet, a wobble
 of dappled light disappears.
I open the doors, step out, and clap my hands.
The manx and calico scatter in the cold sweet air

Walter McDonald

NIGHT FLIGHTS IN PILOT TRAINING

I knew the air we breathed
could kill us if we didn't believe
jet dials and gauges. Better wings than mine
had snapped in downdrafts. Bounced at night

like a ball in a killer storm,
I called for clearance for the stars.
A voice on the ground said *Wait*, easy to order
far from lightning and thunder

muffled by a crash helmet smashing my skull,
shot up like a cannon testing the muscle
of rivets, a jet already old
with metal fatigue before my first solo.

Red collision lights blinked
like a dance hall after nine beers,
chandeliers spinning on the ceiling.
Vertigo warned me to level my wings

and not stall. At last, a voice
steered me up from the squall, fire and rotors
burning through clouds to the stars,
the roar of jet flames thrusting home.

Walter McDonald

THE YEAR MY BROTHER ROLLED THE FORD

Their first trip in his car,
somewhere into Mexico.
He and Otto Bauer walked off
with scratches, saved for fox holes
and battleship, Pearl Harbor
weeks away. At Christmas, both
left for boot camps with hundreds
of high school boys and farmers
from towns around Lubbock.
Churning smoke at crowds forming,
the bus roared off, my only brother
by the door, a chaos of waving arms.

For years, after the telegram,
I wondered why Mexico
for his last trip out of town,
hot and flat as west Texas,
and why the Marines. I asked,
but Mother shook her head
a long time in silence
by the window, staring at me,
one hand hard on her mouth,
the flag with a gold star
hung like a signal
any passing by could see.

Barry S. Marks

SOMEWHERE IN N.H.

—12/19/95

the snow
hurls itself against
the windshield, born
somewhere past
the headlights' reach,
furious at this intrusion

you and the kids
down south alone,
the furnace
probably cold,
choked on a suicidal
chipmunk

and the right front tire
looks bad and
the tank's empty
there's 83 miles to go
and I don't know
what to say
when I get there

only the wipers
soothe like
a perfect mother,
sweeping away
the patterns of
ice and angst,
whispering over
and again hush now
hush now

Adrie S. Kusserow

WHEN I DIE

A large tree trunk
falls on me.
The others go on,
thinking I have cut
through the woods.

I flail about,
grab at the stems of trout lillies, trillium,
my pelvis caught
like a wish bone in the earth.

When death begins
I separate into islands,
limbs drifting off,
the fluid from my veins
winding like snakes over soil,
and in the sun
even this liquid
evaporates.

I follow my body into the fields,
give it what it wants:
the last light of day
where everything looks raw
with envy for the night.

I lay myself down
in a cold glove of soil,
the bones of my body
stiff as a rocking chair,
my taut skin breaking like an egg.

Adrie S. Kusserow

DAILY BREAD

Long ago my father died,
the death spread
like liquid everywhere—
I saw it coming like a storm,
through the hills, across faces,
and into my body.

I was young,
I had no choice.
I hadn't learned how
to solidify the body,
stand like wood against the world.

Now I see
death inside the living,
the liquid caged
but pushing and swelling against the skin,
leaking out of the eyes,
through the breath, like mist.

These are the bodies
I try to be near,
the bodies that cannot close themselves.

I move close, inhale the breath,
my body loving what it knows,
the past spreading through me, like a fever.

I know what's mine;
grief draws me
like the smell of baking bread.
It's like going home for me.

It's what I grew up on.

J. Tarwood

FAKE FLY IN FAKE AMBER

I remember the gritty globes of gumball machines,
scratched up crystal balls with dreamy heaps
of cheap toys in plastic bubbles.
In A&P, in Piggly Wiggly, I gazed
at those mechanical magi by the door
while Mom pinched tomatoes and husked corn.
Sometimes, I gambled loose change
for a fake fly in fake amber
to spook pig-tailed girls on jungle gyms,
but what thumped down the chute instead
for those sluggish recesses on a tarmac court
was always an orange rocket or a decoder ring,
and nothing creepy in gold.

Allison Joseph

IN TRANSIT

A woman with a tired starlet's face
sits in the airport lounge, fingering
the worn strap of her patchwork purse,
tapping ashes into an overflowing tray

She's plucked her brows to lines,
patted pink rouge on each white cheek,
lined her lips with a red so dark
I'm sure it won't come off until

she wipes it off, tissue in hand.
She could be thirty-one or forty-eight,
her hair pulled back by a single
rubber band, auburn streaks painted

through a mass of dark brown hair
almost too thick to brush. She
doesn't seem to notice I've been
looking at her too long, staring

at the lemon yellow scarf she's
knotted around her neck, the
pink v-neck sweater that barely
reaches her thin wrists. She

doesn't look like me, not
like any woman I know, but
I can't help thinking I've
seen her before—seated

Allison Joseph/In Transit

next to me on a crosstown
bus, across from me on a
subway ride downtown, passing me
on a commuter rail platform,

her face obscured in murky light.
History—her denial of it—has
hardened her face to a strict mask
I try to read in moments of travel,

minutes when I can't stand to glance
at one more glossy magazine page.
Instead, I look at women, loving
their haggard plaid overcoats,

their hair nets, rhinestone jackets.
Each woman I watch has done something
wrong: painted her fingertips
a blatant neon green, highlighted

under-eye circles with too much
concealer, teased her hair to thinness.
But a woman travelling alone
has no need to be subtle, no need

for anything but a suitcase to lock
her life away in—a place for every
loose roller and bobby pin she owns,
each eyelash curler, cold metal tweezer.

Allison Joseph

NIGHT WAITRESS, SIXTEEN

At least it's steady work—
who else would want to be
on their feet at two a.m.
serving chicken pot pie
and spaghetti to truckers
who haven't seen a woman
for three hundred miles?
I'm polite in my stiff
green apron, white uniform
beneath it clinging to me
under the diner's hot lights,
close and damp on my body
as their hands would love
to be. They want to touch me
in the same easy way they
steer their rigs, as deftly
getting under my seams
and buttons to lick
the sweet skin beneath,
knowing then that I'm more
than the child who brings
them water, scalding coffee.

Some try to make me blush
with loud stories, details
of quick run-ins with women
in rest areas, truck stops.
They think they tell me
what I've never heard before,
that each one of them is first
to hiss dirty words in my ear,
to swat my ass with a rough hand.
And I don't correct what they
think, letting them believe

Allison Joseph/Night Waitress, Sixteen

I've never touched a man
below the belt, never kissed
what lies underneath.
Smiling as I serve them,
I'm all dreamy and innocent,
so they'll think I'm too
young and dumb to bother.
Besides, they've got to get
back on the road, on highways
that lead out of one-diner towns
like this one, its gas stations
abandoned in the sun, ancient
pumps rusting. I'm the girl
they pass up with a smile,
tempted to taste me but knowing
I should be older before
they sling me back on a couch
in some roadside motel.
They slam their tips
on the tables, on the counter,
leave grinning and laughing about
all my possibilities: the soft skin
of my neck, the downy hair
on each forearm, the breasts
bound by this strict uniform.

Charles Rafferty

**A BEDTIME STORY FOR MY NIECE
TO KEEP HER SAFE
THIS LATE IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY**

Whatever was banging
beneath your car
finally falls off on a road
in rural Connecticut. The car
coasts into the gravel
of the shoulder and refuses
to make more noise. This,
you guess, is where
you'll be sleeping. There
are very few cars,
only cornfields and hills
and the big blind eye of the moon,
and the people seem friendly
enough to roll down
all your windows. Come morning
this is where the search
for your body will begin.

Charles Rafferty

PARKED BY THE MAN-MADE POND

All summer she said what I wanted
was wrong, but by the time
fall arrived, we found ourselves
sitting in her car
by the man-made pond
in East Gate Industrial Park.
It was Friday night. The movie
had been bad, and the gin
I took from her father's house
distracted her. Beyond
her shoulder, I could see
the ricochet of insects
off the reflected logo
of a company we knew nothing about,
and in that tangle of arms
and promises, both of us grew
desperate, desiring the salvation
we were certain we sat next to.
I don't recall the gesture or the phrase
that finally made her part
like the palms of Jesus—
only that she did
and that the car ride home
was a miracle of wheels
and perfectly fitted gears
humming down streets
we thought we knew the endings of.

Francine Witte

BROCHURE

It all looks good on paper,
the blue, posed ocean where a wave
is waiting to break, the flexed muscles
of a canyon in the right light.

I spread the world across my kitchen
table, the salt shaker tall as a tree.

I could leave here for a moment,
these brochures are saying, swing the West
in a bus full of people who've left
their own geographies, patient, in place.
I could feel the rush of a waterfall moving
faster than my own small breath,

stand waist deep in the placid sea
that never blinked when the camera
flashed, or moved one stripe
of light, which, for all I know,
might have been the moon.

Francine Witte

FIN DE SIECLE

As my heart splits,
Charlie sits folding
and refolding his fingers
like lace. What good
would it do to scream?
Charlie's got a broom that can
whisk up anything. *Anything.*

See, Charlie's a *fin de siecle*
man. The whole century's
gotta be fixed up, in place
or the next one can't start.

What Charlie doesn't know
is that at 12:01, when the big ball
shimmies into the next
hundred years, the streets
are gonna be too big, too full
of champagne cork and broken balloons
that are shriveled into wordless little
tongues, which like mine have nothing
left to say.

And Charlie can't be everywhere.
Now can he?

Francine Witte

PAVLOV'S CAT

probably yawned
through it all,

the bells,
the saliva,
the shameless display

of need.
And Pavlov's cat
might have swiveled
its head

and, for all we know, said
"Y'know hunger's a bitch—
it'll screw up your life.

Now just look
at me — I haven't tasted
in years.

My mouth
doesn't water
for food or for love.

And just feel my tongue,
my sandpaper tongue —
so cool, uneventful,
and dry."

Nancy Peters Hastings

A CHANGE OF SEASONS

It took all of us to turn the mattress,
sister on one side,
mom along the edge,
me in between—

turn it end for end
and over on itself
once or twice a year
this upending.

Something I don't do now.

Mom too far away,
sister busy with her own beds.

O for a day of fall cleaning
when this bed could be turned
and flipped, end over end.

Just once
a work I can't do myself
but would love done

if distance wasn't such
a thousand miles.

Timothy Muskat

RESURFACINGS

(for A.R. Ammons)

This evening's
rain comes rumbling
off roof-pitch

scouring deck, driveway, stoop —
streaming it
over thirteen jagged

quarry stones
laid smoothly
edge to edge:

under no stress or system
whatever
it's remarkable

something so lawless
& carefree
accepts the governance

of things for the most part
contrary
to its nature: even

if it's only a
downpout—running
roof to foot-

path past the wormy
dank compost at the end
of my yard—it's

Timothy Muskat/Resurfacings

the getting down & then
the getting on with it
that I admire

Doris Henderson

INTRUDERS

In early May I find them,
along the walk, underneath the porch—
fronds of wild carrot sprouting from the dust,
oak trees two inches tall, the acorns still attached.

I break my nails digging the crabgrass
at the edge of the parking lot,
the long crack in the macadam
stuffed with green rushes like a giant fishmouth.

They fight back: small saplings cut red stripes
on my palms and fingers, a crumble of bloody leaves.
The tall ones line up at the edge of the blacktop,
waving their pennants in the wind.

Written in the curl of tiny roots,
cunieforn of the split seed, their memory:
lush primeval wood, fat snakes and possums,
beetles like fox eyes, black mossy streams,
the impenetrable green. . .

In June the heatherweed and Queen Anne's lace
blow their heady fumes.
They long to put us all to sleep
for just a century or two,
with all the engines rusting in the field,
sweet William, tiny buttercups
sprouting from broken hubcaps,
wild grass over the dirtblown roadway,
sunflowers over the plate glass windows at the mall.

Doris Henderson/Intruders

They whisper in the dusk,
when the dank mist rises in yellow moonlight—
They want it back.
They want it all back.

Kelleen Zubick

THE PORTRAIT PAUL KLEE ADMIRER

was human when it broke, a woman
who wears ochre eyeshadow
under blue. Mornings, there
is the rinsed look around her eyes
only another can notice: pain,
division. Gravity deciding
a crooked view. When she was
a woman walking in a park,
it was Battersea, November, Klee
decides, the leaves of plane trees touching
ankles—her—with their rude perishing skins.

Kelleen Zubick

GRUB-GIRL HAD SOAPY EYES

I didn't know what infancy was
when I took you from your mother,
gingerly, afraid to stand with you or
between the things in the room of your first weeks.
There was silver and quilting and robin's egg paint,
books for you, plush things, a circus in air,
and all you were, in those blankets that I held,
was the warm center, the breath coming.
I couldn't read or rock or sing; this was newness and all
I'd seen was scalp, the marked brow,
hands—leaf tight—and the dusk on your shut eyes.

How to call you, how to be in that place. Except by pleasurē,
melted sound, the sinks in your name. *Anna*,
When you slept against me I knew stillness,
the world which was not in the world.
We were inside all winter, your needs commanding
my life; you made me undone. It was not love
I felt then but gratitude for all we can
not know, for the heft of late-year hours
that left you stirring against my shoulder
Gratitude for the lexicon of movement that came
within our time, and for how I learned to be there at the issue
of your waking cry, the world inexplicably regained.

Brendan Quirk

SOJOURNER

Your hemline once did more
miracle-making than the graceful descent
of this desert highway. Paved lanes
weld together the charred gulley
to save it from bursting into ocean.

Yuccas nod and sanddrifts waste
to black in the wake of me. It could
be reverence for the last living thing
within reason—the trained eye
of my single headlight, white
as cactus milk. The divinity
of the late-model sedan
is something this needless frontier
knows, by now, to heed.

The traveler is reserved
no awe. It is clearest
in the curtness of mileage markers
and the privilege of moonlight
to comb everything behind me.
I am allowed to reply,
but only in the speech
of tires, a thrush of speed.

Brendan Quirk/Sojourner

Phantom signals carry through
a tear in the atmosphere.
Local affiliates from cities
unfathomable sound and fade.
For wakefulness alone, I siphon
the fumes of fidelity. The
midnight hiss of a slide
guitar seizes the prayers of Amarillo.
A weather report, the known
news of yesterday, a road damned
to bear every theory of escape.

Brendan Quirk

**THE GHOST OF MERIWETHER LEWIS
RETURNS TO THE FOREST
IN WHICH HE COMMITTED SUICIDE**

He halted his afternoon walk
in the Tennessee Valley pines
to compose a letter to Clark:

*The quantity of dirt piled
into the mountains of the Divide
was a sum equal to all the dirt
under the water of the ocean we sought.
For this, I believed they were of equal good.*

*The maps you drew were flowers of India ink,
patched with pencil marks
and westward-leaning contours.
Indelible non-fictions.
Perhaps they curl beside your body now*

*I left this world, if you hadn't guessed why,
for ineffable memory of the thin Shoshoni maiden
whose French-Canadian betrothed
refused to perish, though he trembled with fever for weeks
along the banks of the river I named Columbia.
She hid dried petals beneath her shawl
and at night she wet them to daub his face,
cooling him and sweetening his disease.*

*And to think that I desired to exhume my spirit,
believing I could return to our chartless aims
and still read deeply of the dirt.
Who would have known, my old friend,
that the needled shadows would have kept
so dim, so scented?*

Vivian Shipley

THE SUMMER I TURNED SIXTEEN

Take jewelweed, you told me, for the sting
of nettle, digitalis for a broken heart.

The bells of jimson weed were bitter
but pennyroyal with small lavender flowers

spread over a field was the sweetest of wild
mints. Heal sprains with comfrey, rashes
with goldenseal, burns with aloe. To show
me passion you found foxfire that was like fifty

years of love for grandma: luminescent fungi
even in decaying wood and leaves.

Picking blackberries, you wore
the fish gutter's gloves of black leather with

the fingertips cut out that my father brought
you from Maine. That way you could
feel the fruit, soft like a heart, ease it
off the briars. The pleasure of a hot cobbler

was worth the pain. No way you knew of to keep
them from being born, you took me with
you to the creek to drown kittens where
they would wash away, making me watch you to

teach me not to give life to anything I couldn't
feed. The lesson holds on like moss,
like the rhythm in corduroy pants when
you walked. Tonight, the ninth of July, as my son

turns sixteen, I will put the circle of gold you made
for me from a coin on his finger, the ring
a reminder that like the bad, the good we do
can turn on us as a surprise when we need it most.

Tim Seibles

MANIC

A Conversation with Jimi Hendrix

Berkley, CA August 1970

All these hang-ups, all this time wasted when
everything really could be really groovy. I mean
I'm not tryin to come down on anybody you know,
but the whole thing is a big, fat comedown—
nobody think I notice that almost all my audience
is mostly white. Man, I'm not blind and I can't I mean
music isn't about whether your skin how your skin is.
Music is somebody arguing with God. It's about
what you feel about bein alive,
here, right now: Vietnam to the left of you—
Watts to the right and straight ahead, the future
like a really beautiful girl whose face you can't
quite make out—maybe 'cause you're scared, maybe
'cause you're so busy pretending, so wrapped up
in cellophane you forget to unzip your heart.

We can't go on livin like this, and anyway, you can tell
the world is begging for a change—where you're loved
for who you are instead of for what you got from Sears
and whoever. Ever since the beginning of America
they been sellin us this idea that buying things
make you a better person, but it just make you a slave—
them things you got **got you** as much as you got them.
You're workin every day without a minute to make love in,
trying tp pay for all your pretty wall-to-wall rugs
and fur this and leather that, knowin all the time
your life is zoomin by in one a'them *wish-I-had-a-cadillacs*.

And all this bad electricity between the races—
I think alotta people, well everybody, everybody,
well almost everybody is tired'a bein afraid
and then actin like their fear is really hate

Tim Seibles/**Manic**

and then hurting people which just causes more fear
and hate and on and on down the yellow brick road
to where you can't even say hello to a body
unless they're your mother and lord knows
you better not **love** nobody of another shade.

I mean, what kind of life is that—I *would love you,*
but you're too dark, you're too light, you're
too beige? I mean, here we are, all of us, ridin
on the back of this huge, iridescent dragonfly
called Earth and all we can think, the best we can do
is keep comin up with new ways to make it impossible
to live together. Even the devil gotta be amazed
at how we're tearin ourselves apart—more in love
with money than with people. So sad, so sad.

But at the same time alotta people are lazy.
all they wanna do is be angry.
They don't try to **become** something new—
which is the only way the world ever really changes.
If we keep runnin around with all these sledgehammers,
and all the governments do is send in more pigs,
man, it's just gonna be a big mess.
And music has got to help. Definitely
The music has got to become a new religion.
All these *thou-shalts* and *you-better-nots*
hasn't gotten us no closer to heaven. Matter a'fact,
it's just the opposite: 90% of the people act afraid
of their bodies, scared to be naked. That
doesn't seem helpful, not at all.

Our bodies are a hundred percent natural.
You don't see nobody puttin boxer shorts on zebras.
But that's all part of the pretense: if you keep
your pin-stripe suit on you can play like
you're not part of the jungle. Without your body

Tim Seibels/**Manic**

you're not here, man. Like God ain't got nothin better to do than be bashful. Like the Pope all buried in curtains: we don't need him. What kind of example is that? The music has got to teach that **anbody** can be Jesus—woman or man—but that's like the M&M candy thing, you know, melts in your mouth, not in your hand: talkin is not enough. I've gotta push a little love and understanding in **sound**.

I wanna play for everybody— Chinese, people in Nigeria— but I still don't consider myself *ambitious*. Seem like such a military term and we don't need no more soldiers. We need to cut down on dyin. Once upon a time I was 'posed to be a paratrooper. I was in the army and everything, but I got hurt on a practice jump. Some leprechaun reached up, twisted my ankle and saved my behind. When they get you in a uniform you become capable of some very scary things, man— like who was born to *take orders*? Who jumps out of a plane just to land in a scene where people want to shoot you?

Don't get me wrong: we're all just babies down here— even soldiers but somebody flips you into *your country*, some goat-eyed general draws some lines on map, next thing you know you're in *their country*, in their jungle, lickin somebody's blood off your bayonet. But I try to stay positive, play loud like a baby cryin for his mama. But damn, even at Woodstock you're not sure they can hear you, like maybe nobody can dig why you're up there fussin with the strings, searchin for those notes that make you more than entertainment. Sammy Davis is cool so's Frank Sinatra, but a guitar solo can be a sermon— know what I mean?

Tim Seibles/**Manic**

Most of the time I just can't do it
and I get so mad, but some days, like
at Rainbow Bridge, everything comes: the beach
right behind the stage, the green-blue sea,
gallons of grape wine and grass, no tickets, no
pigs, no buttons to push, and we made a music that day
that made at least one angel glad— there was this breeze
like ostriches like ostrich feathers
being drug over you again and again—
now who do you think was behind that?

All that day, man, nobody died. You might think
I'm losin my mind, but I had this feeling all day
that **nobody** in the whole world died— ol'man Death
was spendin the weekend in some other Milky Way.
And that's how it should be. I mean, I believe music
can save people because most a'the time people
die too easy, like they're already halfway gone
and any little nudge sends'em right to the next world.
Good music can remind you why it's, why livin
is such magic. Well, I guess if you watch the,
"The Wild Kingdom" sometimes, after'while
you might have your doubts, but when I go,

they gonna have to pry me loose from here,
dig me out witta steam shovel— at least,
that's the way I feel about it now. Later on,
I might get really tired of all this and just
drift downstream or I could just disappear, zap!
like some bug snatched by a bullfrog.
Or I might take it to another level, slip into
Sherwood Forest turn into a Cheshire Cat—
you know a *Hendrix In Wonderland* type a'thing,
which could be really outtasight when you think about it,
you know just a smile— all that's left of you
is a smile, you know.

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