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CALLIOPE (kə-ˈli-pə) the Muse of eloquence and epic poetry.

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Submissions of poetry and fiction are welcomed from Aug. 1 through Mar. 31 and must be accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope. Manuscripts are read and evaluated with the author's name masked so that beginning and well-established writers are read without prejudice.

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WINTER SUNLIGHT

The sun and I
are like new lovers
going about our business
pretending the other isn't present
though the presence is
sending fingers
drunkenly over dishes,
forming woozy letters.

The colors in the kitchen
are as astonishing
as wide black pupils,
the shock of brown
around the penis.

Quietly, light winds the life clocks
in the apartment,
blooding the design
on bedspreads,
the beads of baked rain
on windows.

Even the darkened room
of my memory
receives the transfusion,
gleaming like Chinese ceramics.
AFTERWARDS

You curl around the pillow into sleep.

Downstairs, the record still spins
muffled sound of needle bumping cardboard.

I rinse away the wine left in your thin-stemmed glass,
turn off lights behind me.
Up the stairwell, watch the blown-up picture
of myself, age three,
at mother's grand piano.
My legs in small white anklets
dangle underneath the nylon dress.

There is a quota for how often
and how deeply I can reach you.

Somewhere in our house the crickets hide.
I hear them now above your breathing.
EUCALYPTUS

At sunrise we walk among the Eucalyptus trees, the younger bearing coinlike stemless leaves in pairs.

The slender leaves of older trees grow single on low drooping stems, tips pointed slightly toward new sunlight.

Each of us picks a few young leaves already browning at the edges, slimming.

Sun filters through them. Eucalyptus leaves cast little shade.

We crush them in our hands and smell the medicine, want to heal our own soft aging together, walking daily in the early light.
Janet Krauss

BEFORE STILLNESS SNOWS

The clocks in their places
assert "Life is, life is!"
and the old on their porches
shape the air
to assure a control
a hand in the passage
as they wait for the dealers

who come with the chatter of silver
who come with the flap of tailcoats
loosing the bales of warmth,
late summer's provision,
leaving drafts for winter,
plans for cold storage.

Little time left.
Trees birth colors:
silent larks
holding their breaths
until the letting go
when branches black nest the sky
and blue ships
shadow white stone seas.
Janet Krauss

GIRL AT A WINDOW READING A LETTER
by Vermeer

She must have dropped the bowl of fruit on the bed,
The peaches spill on the red and black print.
Two halves lie open, their stone exposed.
She holds the letter tight between her hands,
the part she reads, the part she is.

A red curtain catches the day
on the window pressed back to the shadow on the wall,
pressed back to assure the light
its generous place. A drape thrust against the dark
answers the sun, the breeze.

It is good not to know what the letter says.
It is good not to know whether she is sad
or quiet with glad news.
Winter. Words. I don't feel like earthly reason any longer, watching the sky break open mornings; and a smear of light above these white, exhausted fields--
When we stroll to the river rocks sheathed in green ice glare at us like giant vegetation sprung from another world!
They bloom. They bear us silent ill.
SISTERS

We lie in the sun between
the pyracantha and the boxwoods,
our bodies blurring
in the glass walls of your house.

The baby's asleep; my daughter
whines in my lap

as the afternoon advances
like the thief it is

and we consider the roses,
the chilling merits of age.
The Surgeon

Tonight in the dark I run my finger
down the scar that divides you in half.
You go on sleeping as you did at twelve or thirteen
when the surgeon, who talked to your father
but never to you, opened your chest
and admitted your heart to the room full of ordinary things:
the green haze of fluorescent lights, polished floors,
coffee break gossip behind the nurse's mask.
I wish I could have been there that day
to see that ordinary thing, your heart
with its malfunctioning valve,
fixed methodically like a carburetor.
I wish I could have seen the secret room inside your chest
cracked open and searched for treacheries.
I would have stood above you
and sewn your right side back to your left
with strong black thread, your heart in place
beneath my hand. I would not have faltered.
But for twenty years I waited to touch the long scar
that divides you like a highway.
For twenty years I waited for this night
when I, having taught myself the boldness of surgery,
could open you and fill you with the things I know:
my stories, my lies, the precision of my touch.
SHIRLEY BUETTNER

STILLBORN

He was as big
as an eight-year-old boy,
with long legs and
white eyelashes, thick
and creamy with sleep.

The farmer blew in his mouth,
and I pounded one side
of the chest where I thought
the heart was, jarring
the gelatin body.

With knees in the snow
we both leaned close
to the just-born brown whorls,
looking for a quiver,
and behind us
the black heifer mother
poured out a rainbowed placenta,
steaming, melting
the wind-hardened crust.
Shirley Buettner

HANDS

they are always moving
in and out of my past

a grandfather's hand
circled with serge, holding out
a blue glass elephant,
the other fist cupped over
a burled wood cane, both hands
moons of blue craters

a mother's chapped hands
draping wet sheets over a wire line,
the wooden pins like small ducks
swimming from her mouth,
the wind snapping the sheets,
the red fingers stretching
and smoothing

and the daddy's hands
just in from carrying
a chorus of milk bottles,
untangling tickets from a wood box,
his head nodding at noon,
my short digits sorting the blue,
the pink, the white piles
to wrap in red rubber bands

the hands of the kitchen sister
at Sunset Home, prayerful hands,
soft cookie warm

but never, never the old hands
in the sun room, hands resting
on wicker, reaching out to reel in
a four-year-old frame, drawing it
close to dim eyes to breathe
something young
Shirley Buettner

THE FAMILY

Once each year
they are released
from the soft white darkness,
from the blizzard of tissue
which covers all their tracks.
The angel clambers once again
to the barn's bare peak,
listens for the clashing
of stars, looks for wise men.

Beneath all wings
the mother rubs the baby's
colorless cheeks, warms him
with a porcelain robe.

The father, with hands pale
from being too long from the saw,
tethers the ass, feeds him
inches of straw.

At last they all kneel quietly
without murmurs, without coughs,
do not even ask for the sheep

whose wooly ribs heave
with muffled bleats as they crouch,
shivering, in their corner,
waiting for the shepherd.
Shirley Buettner

WINTER ON THE PLATTE

Even without leaves
the trees near the river haze.
They lean toward one another
and plan in whispers
to walk out to the highway,
to bend a multitude of thumbs
and leave the light at work
drying the wet holes
their toes now stand in.

Sometimes the wind blows,
and then the old ones
lie down heavily, side by side,
pioneers pulling pine lids
over their eyes.
Bill Hopkins

SEPTEMBER RAINS

There has been no rain since August
heat seared the land free of its
green wardens clutching soil
with the grip of hoarders expecting
a hard winter. Now scent of autumn
lies along brown earth; ground
lean and spare from water's desertion
sighs in the morning nearly hushed
in its thirst. Gray clouds
spread at last over the air
like a restless mother waking
before dawn to fold a blanket
over her sleeping child
in the first cool morning of fall,
touching his forehead lightly
so he doesn't stir.
In the north
the archangel of winter smiles,
caressing his wings of snow,
commanding frost to follow the rain.
Joan Colby

MADONNA IN BONE LACE
by Grela Sondberg

Woman of interstices.
Threads and space.
Design
of maternity. Halo
of stars, halo of spokes.

The infant stares perpetually outward
ready to grasp a world.
The mother holds him
with her gaze, her elaborate cloak
of fictions. They stand in an arch
of intricacy. Frost on a window
in Scandinavia
where a traveler seldom
meets another soul.

A woman's hands
must be occupied. Silver hooks,
child executed in lace.

Hold these figures to the frailest light
of the midnight sun. They knit
like bone until the fractures become
an overgrowth, flowers of healing. Spun
out of the realm of mother and son
what does the future hold
but empty arms,
a difficult question.
Deborah Pye

A ROOT CELLAR TIME

1
Winter: The white simplicity of it all
The wind leaves its mark
in heaps and shallows
and pine trees outlined like passions:
bare on one side full on another

We have come this far
testing our passions or rather
our ability to adapt to survive

You say: It's a matter
of keeping calm, meaning
self-control

I tell you I have had too much
of self-control
Nervous intellectual,
I have feared my body ignored
its seasons
its heating and cooling
Untrustworthy, I called them and washed
between my legs
Blood and sickness and sweat:
I made no concessions pursued perfection

2
Once I lay on my back in the snow
making snow angels kicking
snow angels arms and legs spread-eagled, thrashing
wings' impressions
My socks in their waterproof boots wrinkled down, down
to clammy rubber cold Not that I ever minded
that But each time, each angel
something wasn't perfect: scrawny,
unhallowed head Footmark in a wing
My standing up
Today, this snow, it is harder
and colder    It is sills of windows stuffed with paper
It is pockmarks on the crookbacked Queen Anne's Lace
Pockmarks
on the bricks and ashcans    on the trashmen
Laughing through

3
In winter the sun
stoops closest to earth    a root cellar
time    In winter our love encloses
so much    of cruelty
As always, we think    how we might have done
better
I CLIMBED ABOVE THE REDWOODS CARRYING

I climbed above the redwoods carrying a cliched pamphlet about THE CATHEDRALS OF GOD in my backpack actually I thought the place was gloomy and the trees had awful looking burls on them and the huge sorrel and ferns reminded me of dinosaurs and I felt out of place

I struggled for about 3 hours toward the ocean and finally came out on a cliff so fantastically high that the Pacific looked like it was on a postcard waving at me and the gulls soared 20 feet out in front of my face like punctuation marks for the sublime

but my eyes felt like the dots in the billboard pleading for the ecology of Point Reyes two eighth inch spots of sea spray above a boulder between SAVE and CALIFORNIA

I guess I couldn't manage the grandeur or even the greasy waxed paper and the flies and the Shasta Root Beer can with the ants stuck on the lip like Roman soldiers in an orgy of brown sperm.
NOAH

I heard it while I slept
but an old man
is prone to voices:
his dead speak in his sleep
just so, dead but relentless.

Soon the sky's blue
cast daylong upon water
was magic. I watched.
Then my sons' faces
gleamed one night
with terror: I woke
screaming to the rain.

Now I sleep
weighted with purpose
like a white stone. I learn
more, and morning clouds
break with light enough.
We build and watch.
The dream is precise
as the work, and we hurry.
Snow always affects you like this. You hold the drape and light captures it, small batterings that go on for hours, instead of sleep. Upstairs, her dream released and dissolving, your wife turns and discovers the sudden coldness of your absence but does not call. She knows. She knows everything, the impulsive energy of your obsessions, your moods that shift like balance she alone can hold. Listen to her, footsteps now from the bed's broken folds to the window just above you. In that special silence only you recognize, she recalls all the facts you have become: husband, lover, and a web of habits undeniable as dark hours, as whitest snow.
PAYTON MEYER'S PILLOW

Love is done this afternoon. I dress, watching you
tuck and stretch love's tangle from our bed. You shake
and slap the pillows, and I think of the Navy and Payton
Meyer, how after recon-flights he'd sit on his bunk's edge,
staring as if he saw more than a pillow. I remember his cry
Dzau! as he slammed and slammed his hand's hardened edge
deep into the pillow's center. Careful, he smoothed and shaped
its canvas before he struck. I hear you speak in tones
foreign as the Mandarin he spoke. And I stare at our perfect
pillows, wait for love's calloused stroke.
Ken Poyner

AT THE PROPER TIME

Some trees hold their snow.
Others let it drag into icicles,
Then drip and lie in small crystal puddles.
Five wolves chase the tracks
Of one rabbit. You hold your rifle
Like a candle stick. Out in the drifts
The wind makes snowmen, little helmeted
Bastards, who last a second and then
Leap into the white heap's lee. Your deer
Have passed to the North. The wolves are proof.
A hot bath waits; the cabin's dining room fire
Will blare like a devil's mouth. One shell
Is in the chamber, four in the stock.
The snowmen rise like Yeti warriors
And your shoulder aches for something to withstand.

Meanwhile, the sun is dying.
Your wife's leather skin arches along her back,
The claws of her feet dig in hardwood floors.
A boy watches at the window for Father
To bring home the corpse of anything. He has made
A wonderful snowman, the Komodo.
CHRISTMAS BY THE LAKE

Night creeps over the ice like a hunter.  
The metal of its spear gleams from my porch roof.  
Come into the house; I must latch the door.  
The lake rises from its tomb and dances  
In the moon's frigid sigh. Wolves  
Chuckle under the eaves. Dogs  
Fat with snow circle the wood pile  
Waiting for the fire to sputter.  
Owls in the dark can take your eyes  
For starving mice. Never mind the bones;  
Those long white fingers still at the window sash.  
They belong to no one you know.
Laurence J. Sasso, Jr.

AN EPIPHANY IN WHICH
THE SOUL OF ALL THINGS
IS SEEN TO RESIDE IN
THE MUD

A Vermont restaurant
in the rain

Even the joggers, like cats,
crouch in phone booths
and doorways.
Our view is through steamed
windows.

The day is like seventh grade,
no recess, imperfect vision
of a gray bird sitting in the yard,
the bicycles dripping
their own metal.

You order hot cheese
and salad, coffee, one sugar.

Can you imagine the others
in this?
Mid-day lovers in Vermont
like stalks sunk in the mud.
Soggy ardor in damp cloistral
cells, swelling and reverting
under skylights
as wet on the inside as out.

American rain sinks like guilt
into the flesh.
Even the stone absorbs it.
Laurence J. Sasso, Jr.

You mention the flag off its staff, outside, wet, wrapped like a shroud on the post office sculpture.

We are here without program, digesting stale soup and croutons, becoming aware the rain is impartial, our lives soluble as sugar.

Always the wise one, you have the insight. The downpour is grace, an ordering force.

We hurry out, wetter than confessors, knowing now that we must seek the moment that water comes closest to loam, the moment the earth is about to be water.
REVIEWS
(The opinions expressed are those of the individual editor whose initials follow the review.)

CAT'S EYE (930 Kirkwood Ave., Nashville, TN 37204) Fall 80. The first issue of a well-designed magazine with high quality content. The choice of format and paper as well as print are quite professional. The poetry is very fresh and the graphics are simply-done line drawings which add without distraction. Overall a subtle and creative work well worth one's time. JB

THE GREYLEDGE REVIEW (P.O. Box 481, Greenville, RI 02828) Spring/Summer 80. Magazine has professional appearance and content of the same high calibre. There is good balance between fiction, poetry and review sections. Fiction is varied in form and generally excellent. Poetry offerings are mixture of traditional and contemporary styles. DS

IRONWOOD (P.O. Box 40907, Tucson, AZ 85717) Spring 80. A fine magazine but not quite the type for just anyone to relax with. Very intellectual material. As is usually the case this issue has more poetry than fiction, but the small amount of good fiction holds its own. CT

THE LITTLE MAGAZINE (P.O. Box 207, Cathedral Station, New York, NY 10025) Vol. 12, nos. 3/4. Having read past issues, this issue was disappointing. Even though the cover is explained inside, the logos and the impossible to read script were overall a quite unsuccessful ploy. The content was better than the cover, and both fiction and poetry were on the whole competent. Continuations of poems on reverse pages was bothersome; a staff so design conscious could have avoided this altogether. JB

NEW LETTERS (University of Missouri-Kansas City, 5346 Charlotte, Kansas City, MO 64110) Spring 80. It seems the only poetry we are inclined to be aware of is that which originates from within the culture we are part of. This issue features a sensitive collection of Australian
work and should be congratulated for this effort to broaden readers' exposure.  

NORTHWEST REVIEW (University of Oregon, Eugene, OR 97403) Vol. XVII, no. 3. Contains a great variety of fiction, poetry and graphics, very well put together. Of special interest are an interview with Olga Broumas, drawings of Craig Spilman, and a small press feature on Graywolf Press.  

PLOUGHSHARES (Box 529, Cambridge, MA 02139) Vol. 6, no. 3. Special fiction issue. Edited by Jay Neugeboren with an introduction highly recommended to any aspiring writer. High quality fiction by authors ranging from first time published to established. General theme of stories is that of "loss, exile, displacement."  

PRAIRIE SCHOONER (201 Andrews Hall, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, NE 68588) Summer 80. This issue compiles a large selection of mature poetry, prose and fiction. Certainly not light reading to relax with, as the words are defiant and energetic in their force. A sequence portfolio by David Wagoner reinforces that strength of meaning and imagery.  

SENeca REVIEW (Hobart & William Smith Colleges, Geneva, NY 10021) 79-80. A double volume. This special double issue is exceptionally well designed. Donald Hall's essays began this issue very enjoyably, especially "Polonius' Advice to Poets." The special section "Diversities: Some New French Poetry," was very interesting and worth reading. A very good collection of photography, essays and poems makes this an enjoyable and interesting special double issue.  

SING HEAVENLY MUSE! (P.O. Box 1427, Minneapolis, MN 55414) Summer 80. An outstanding quality piece containing unusual photographs, and imagistic, thought-provoking poetry and prose. This twice-yearly magazine is devoted to expressing a woman's innerself, through male and female writers who are sensitive to a female's outlook.
SOUNDINGS EAST (Salem State College, Salem, MA 01970) Spring 80. This magazine contains a good balance of poetry, imaginative fiction, interviews and reviews. The very limited artwork is excellent; I wish more had been included. LO

SOUTHWEST REVIEW (Southern Methodist University Press, Dallas, TX 75275) Summer 80. This issue contains high quality prose that enjoyably grasps and holds the reader while employing good diction and intense, clear images, and contemporary poems that will appeal to a wide variety of readers. Reviews and an interview with William Goyen that are both precise and informative, and an interesting section on photographic satire are also included. Generally, a well rounded and well balanced eclectic issue. GS
CONTRIBUTORS

Shirley Buettner's poems have recently appeared in *Cottonwood Review, Kansas Quarterly,* and Ted Kooser's *Windflower Almanac.*


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