

# THE PAINTED BRIC QUARTERLY

vol.1/  
spring '74.



TUBE COLORS have a  
slightly body than Liquitex  
may be brushed or knifed for texture  
if not thinned. Thin with water  
for washes, with Liquitex Polymer  
Matte Medium for glazes.  
Liquitex Gel Medium increases  
transparency and brilliance, re-  
tains texture and form.

LIGUITEX dries insoluble and  
may be painted over immediately.  
Tube color remains wet longer for  
easier palette and painting manip-  
ulations. Use on a dry non-oily sur-  
face. Liquitex Gesso provides the  
ideal ground.

KEEP BRUSHES WET  
CLEAN WITH SOAP AND WATER

Contents 2 Fluid Oz

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

# THE PAINTED BRIDE QUARTERLY

vol.1/no.2  
spring '74/100

## EDITORS

Louise Simons

R. Daniel Evans

Roslynn Smerilson: art director

With special thanks to:

Gerry Givnish and Frank Vavricka  
The Painted Bride Art Center  
527 South Street  
Phila., Pa. 19147

COPYRIGHT © 1973 BY PAINTED BRIDE QUARTERLY, Inc.  
527 SOUTH STREET PHILADELPHIA, PA. 19147



527 South Street  
Phila., Pa. 19147

Manuscripts welcomed with stamped return envelopes.

SUBSCRIPTIONS: \$4.00 yearly  
\$1.00 each issue

**Subscription Form**

name.....

street.....

city and zip code.....

amount enclosed.....

# CONTENTS

Sonya Dorman . . . . .	4
Clarence Major . . . . .	9
Emmett Jarrett . . . . .	10
Rhoda Gelfond . . . . .	14
R. Daniel Evans . . . . .	17
Eric Sellin . . . . .	20
Alexandra Grilikhes . . . . .	22
Ken Bluford . . . . .	24
Joel Colten . . . . .	26
Michael Horovitz . . . . .	28
Kathleen Norris . . . . .	30
Nathaniel Tarn . . . . .	32
Paul Mariah . . . . .	35
Henry Braun . . . . .	36
Susan Daily . . . . .	37
Del Molarsky . . . . .	40
James Bertolino . . . . .	41
Barbara Holland . . . . .	42
Louise Simons . . . . .	44
Gene Fowler . . . . .	46

Cover design by Art Spikol

SONYA DORMAN

“THE BLUE RACCOON WEEPS BLOOD  
AND THE COLD FOX DIES”

– *Li Ho of the 9th century*

Man's world is black even in daylight.  
Ice chars the tree, the nest, the roof.  
When the owl swoops over town it sees  
small lights from hearth fires.  
It smells our cold dwelling.

Hand in hand, people link their loves and murders.  
It's a long way down the hills to drag a corpse,  
heels leave a carbon track in the snow.

The fires burn even when a heart stops.  
The cold fox dies while a boy chops wood.  
Freezing rain hisses in the ashes, god's spit.  
The blue raccoon with a girl's face  
weeps in the trap's black jaws.

Sonya Dorman

## FARE WELLS

Goodbye, Andrew of dawn kisses.  
Goodbye, Carmella with the flute

In my pocket I carry  
two tent pegs,  
I leave the tent to you,  
our heavy skillet  
and squirrel pelts  
left from desperate stew

Goodbye, Aunt Razor  
and Uncle Scythe,  
my cuts have healed  
and down at the pier  
fifty sailorbirds  
wave me off on my ship

Goodbye, Father Blood,  
the tide's going out,  
it's half past time  
to leave you  
with all my books and speeches  
and Mother Salt  
for a lantern.

Sonya Dorman

## STARVING

My daughter says a prayer  
for the bread before we eat.  
In the newspaper it says famines  
have begun, the land's cracked,  
the devil issues from a baked crevice.  
It looks as if he drank the cattle's blood;  
they lie dead.

I think of my cousins' ghosts who hang,  
starved, around the Dachau gate.  
It was only a beginning when  
good citizens closed their doors.  
Vietnam made me a good citizen  
and the famines, like the wars,  
take place somewhere else

My husband says a prayer  
for the dead, citizens of nowhere,  
a list of names  
crystallizing in cold space.  
A prayer for the earth, for the wine,  
for the souls.  
It sticks in my craw.

Sonya Dorman



OUR SOULS ASPIRE IN SPITE  
OF TYPOGRAPHICAL ERRORS

Good God, the sea is clam today,  
on sliver maples the sun almost touches,  
and clod air settles.  
All winter, storms at sea  
are raving small boats home.

Birds, fluing from chimneys' shelter  
land in the snow, leave pointy tricks  
like blue claws. Nit a breath  
on the sea, while our breath ruses smoky,  
inerted pyramids going before us

Weal as morning, the pale sin stretches  
along the low arc of winter.  
Our day closes codly, avout still waters.

Sonya Dorman

## EARTHWORKING

What a shoveler my father was,  
what depths he dug for shelter,  
pitching high his mountain of heavings.  
Botched, patched, and beautiful,  
his burial mounds work  
a dirt and stone maze  
over my map.

He sank shafts from which I pocketed  
bad pennies of basalt, threw up  
hills of shale that avalanched  
down again. You dream figure  
with jackhammer, sledgehammer, pickaxe,  
with resinous veins like blue ore  
on your hands, look this face  
you hacked from green love  
smiles in my soft pine casket.

Sonya Dorman

WORDS INTO WORDS WON'T GO

There are no things the rain is like.  
The trees are like brick walls.  
But there are no things the walls themselves are like.  
I am like you. The contents of a book  
is like margarine. The hard green surface of my car  
is like a forest fire. There are adventures in things  
I cannot pinpoint—like the snow, the storm, the sleet.  
The handyman who sweeps the leaves in the yard  
is not like himself. German fiction is not  
like African fiction. The umbrellas are like birds.  
They fly in the rain storm. The radio, that says we can expect  
snow, is not like itself.

There are no things the rain is like.  
*I am not like myself. I am like you.*  
More or less. I am less myself.  
But I cannot touch the change. Even change is not itself.  
There are no things that change is like

Clarence Major

CHICKEN AND EGG

in the garden next door the hen  
has laid an egg she flaps her wings  
as she sits on it and cackles proudly  
look at the egg I have laid  
it is so warm from my body heat  
so smooth and white there's only  
a little shit on the shell  
everybody look I have laid an egg

Emmett Jarrett

## MOODS

1

how an empty mailbox  
can spoil the day  
even a printed notice from  
The Manhattan Theatre Club  
is better than nothing

2

sitting in the garden  
in shirtsleeves  
drinking beer and reading  
Plato's myth of Atlantis  
the end of February and it's  
spring already the early birds  
are solo flutes rising  
above the din of trucks  
on Belt Parkway almost

3

dreaming of what I would do  
if I were made editor  
of an important magazine  
the telephone rings  
I am afraid to answer it

Emmett Jarrett

## SOMETIMES I'M ASHAMED

sometimes I'm ashamed to stand before women  
I think of the times I have failed them  
I think of the fat girl in Paris  
who cut through my infatuation for her  
skinny and fickle roommate with simple need  
we made love one afternoon in her hotel room  
but her gratitude terrified me and I fled  
from museum to museum for days avoiding her

or I think of the old friend in New York  
who whimpered and laughed so fiercely  
beneath my clumsy attempts to satisfy  
not her but my vanity

I didn't know then  
how easy it is to please a woman who wants  
no excuses who can forgive anything but not  
being there

or the girl on the ship  
coming back from Greece I couldn't see her  
until she fanned my desire with a hash pipe  
then got me in the shower to make love under water  
but I came too soon and never called her

when I think of these women and others  
I'm ashamed because they know what they want  
and it isn't my soul or my money  
then I am almost persuaded to stand naked  
of pretense discarding my shame like a necktie  
and let myself be drawn slowly and simply  
without fear or vanity into the action of loving

Emmett Jarrett

AEGEAN AUGUST

the heat scrapes our mouths  
like sand  
the static air is  
filled with its tension  
we are dry leaves  
about to catch fire  
in the sunlight

when we try to speak  
our tongues are black and swollen  
the darkness behind them  
swallows our words

we know the wind will come  
a few more days and cool air  
will rush down from the Black Sea  
as it did before  
scattering the Persian fleet  
off Sepias

Emmett Jarrett

GIVE-AND-TAKE

You've taken everything for yourself.  
the bitches

of dishes, the lithographs; kids; delf  
earthenware,

our dead cat's old dollar photograph;  
quilts I'd put

down like my own signature. Horse-laugh  
from your throat

canted in these rooms as if grafted  
from quarry.

Abandoning your handcrafted  
love-movements

towards the end of your leaving, you yelled  
like a rip

in stiff flesh on fire. You said, "Sell  
the damn house."

(which I did the next week). But you took  
everything.



When I come to you, I'll simply look  
at your lips

then maybe question you half-sweetly,  
"Should those I

send to slay you enter by twos, threes,  
or singly?"

Or maybe, affirming us riven,  
might I hold

fast my revenges my ungiven,  
constant gift

Rhoda Gelfond

TRANSOM

There is a space that spans change  
and change that takes us  
from loss to lost.

I see, there, our sun-heights  
dusked  
in light.

I hear, there, your voice  
in low pitches  
of night-thicks

A space where you say,  
"I'll need you more  
the next time I see you."

A space where it is  
the next time

Rhoda Gelfond

MASKS

I know what a mask is  
skintight on the face.  
it's the prayer on your lips  
your mind forgets  
you doze off in it like  
listening to a speech.  
I pass for my mask by now  
alive in it for thirty years  
It's the bits of truth scattered  
broken rock under railroad tracks  
that trains run over.  
With a mask on  
it's all flowering lie underfoot.  
Not only my face  
my hands are masked too.  
Hands that feel between legs, rub chest,  
spread hair away from frightened eyes,  
place the lock of a finger over lips  
My mask has gotten to me.

In the museum  
a hundred masks  
masks to dance in  
masks to call gods in  
masks to turn men into gods  
masks to chant night music in  
masks to bloat adolescent faces  
with fear  
masks to flash evil eye and kill.

Masks to dominate women with  
masks to stand conqueror in  
masks to take on the sex of tigers,  
sex of lions, sex of hawks:  
the predator masks.

Masks of gold, masks of cowrie and ebony  
masks of false bronze and human bone  
the money masks.

Masks made of skull, the most real,  
masks do not cover the face  
they become the whole head.

The Mm'wo mask of the Ibo:  
white for death  
white for death to Africans  
the way black is death  
to white Americans.

The tall Kanaga mask of the Dogon  
super cross, square eyes, tubular mouth  
small as the accidents that bring death  
its cross the parted hands of God  
pointed Skywards and Earthwards.

The gold pendant masks  
of the Baule and Ashanti.  
lines on the metal and  
underneath on the face.  
Since masks always scar  
lines of mutilation, self-inflicted  
by the spirit you choose to become

Bear paws track blood scent  
across the cheeks of the Tlingit mask  
they glow in bright colors  
their maker an honest man.

All these and more remind me of my  
False Faces  
my deformities  
lies I'm sick of telling  
concealing my life.  
So you will not recognize me,  
middle class America,  
I wear a conformity mask.  
Baser than metal, harder than wood  
it absorbs all your scratches, licks  
the salt from your insults' wounds  
its ears suck in your words.

You've carved wrinkles of  
self-hate into my chin and forehead.  
If you stare closely you can see  
Mm'wo  
Bajowkwe  
Balega  
Balumbo  
Ibibio  
Baule  
Ashanti  
Kwakiutl's sissiutl  
Haida  
all in me.

I'm throwing my mask down now  
though it's hard to tear off  
pulling flesh scabs and blood kisses  
with it, leaving what's left  
defenseless as baby skin.  
Your hands in my hands  
eye to eye  
enemies and friends  
I'm starting all over again.

R. Daniel Evans

IN THE TEETH OF THE VOID

1

when the world is quiet  
landscapes fall into place  
grow vertical and horizontal

expanse of green  
and  
the side of the barn

the unpainted wood is  
gray silver and orange  
full of knots

2

in the twisted  
oak's trunk  
time crackles

and sheds rays  
on the split  
stones of the fence

in the cracks  
dust gathers  
eternity  
sprouts

3

the still lake  
is a dull gray  
mirror

or a window

either way  
the sky is  
murky  
and runneled  
by clam spoors

4

night's gyration of stars  
and day's cauldron  
are immense questions

the conflagration at twilight  
is an unfathomable riddle

the crickets glistening  
black in the green grass  
are perhaps an answer

Eric Sellin

THE REVERIES

those  
where our mouths  
clasp and we're  
overcome me continually  
in the midst of important  
matters  
    Off in the Caribbean  
    sky I'm taking a breath  
    taking dive over the beautiful  
    cliff and the  
flower soaks through me I  
fantasize terrific  
longings in color  
    spending it all you  
    become fruit in my  
veins soaking through soaking  
through I  
hit water  
swimming for life

Alexandra Grilikhes



LISTENING TO THE STORY OF  
YOUR LIFE

Overwhelming, the torpor  
of your twisted lives how you lay  
back revealing your timidity all

day you had been fishing with different  
baits As you thrust your  
arm over your wounded by the light eyes I

lowered the shade, gently, drank  
your extended presences, took  
your languidness, let it grow  
momentarily for  
both of us, ignored the  
tangled lines, found  
my hands working the lampshade  
down for your wounded  
eyes, slipped the  
shadows deep into your garrulous  
mouth  
kissed you goodbye  
when you least expected it,  
we were both happy.

Alexandra Grilikhes

KEN BLUFORD

So Annie Oakley has done it again.  
Her boots remember La Fanciulla del West, an opera  
in three acts by Giacomo Puccini  
Her throat remembers water At the last moment she tastes  
a tumbleweed and feels an exquisite  
quite inexplicable pleasure Her gloves remember death.  
They also remember music, although  
not La Fanciulla del West or Giacomo Puccini  
either Annie Oakley remembers us  
She remembers she must save the life of the man she loves

Ken Bluford

## STRAWBERRY BLONDE

Night-fallen and silvery moonstruck  
luminously rain-driven, she turned  
her Galaxy through westbound traffic  
spiraling in and out of brightness—  
cloudburst headlights in the dark of night.

First light I imagined she was you  
your mother-of-sperm, your tortoise shell  
in leather, naked and red-headed.  
Last light I think therefore you are

You are the moonshine playing Clair de lune;  
either that or music of the spheres  
meeting West Side Highway near Chambers St

Ken Bluford

JOEL COLTEN

A Dream  
Having my cock sucked at Times Square  
At 12 noon  
In a pup tent  
Surrounded by reporters  
Unable to get an erection  
I read the funny page  
And send out for a coke

Janis Joplin  
Rock star  
To star dust

On Monday it is cheaper to go to the Art Museum  
Than to many public restrooms

I had a friend  
Who had a crucifix  
That glowed in the dark  
We would go to his basement  
And turn off the lights

Last time I went mad  
I was half way through my Psychology Today subscription

Joel Colton

MICHAEL HOROVITZ

from THE DISCOVERY OF AMERICA

San Francisco to England

. Honest Indian to God—  
lamby fleece-light cloud spread pumped  
in frolicy scrolls on bay sea breeze  
across the Abbey Road—record sleeve blue  
San Francisco sky—

children of many colours  
squall careening every-which-way  
digging many spaces/ filling holes of the day  
that cannot end

in California

till the morrow  
breaks

across the waves/ upon the shore

of Albion's

—green & pleasant Sunday dance  
of greens & pheasant (I saw one strutting free  
in Berkeley Hills the day before  
the day before yesterday—pacific here—

today let's vault the heavens of all mind  
—Amerika to Europe—Gloucester vale  
where owls do cry & foxes mate—pacific  
there.

& evening sun

go down

—Lil Armstrong died  
in mid-bar—playing  
St Louis Blues  
in memorial concert  
for St Louis bluey Armstrong

down & up—  
bowing—“outasite  
to fat planet—  
                    (newly staked out)  
                    goddess of night  
. . . earth man’s time  
                                passes  
in work in sleep in love  
    in music  
                    —pacific delight

O WHITE O SURF STRIPT CLEAR  
    ‘TWIXT BLACK’N BLUE & MORTAL GOLD  
        —O SANDS      —O TIME  
OF ASSASSIN WARLORDS’ BLOOD-RED SPANGLED  
                                BANNER HANDS  
. . . O STAINLESS STEEL OF ENGLAND GRIP THY LIMBS  
& FLEX THEM FOR JERUSALEM  
                                —EMBRACE THESE STATES  
O FABLED DAMNED OF NATIONS  
—O BEULAH’S LAND AWAKE—UNITED STATES  
—OF BEING!  
—FLEX TO SPACE TO SPHERES & UNDO THE WRATH  
THRU BEAUTY THO MAN BENT IT TO DESTROY  
    —NOW RECREATE & EMANATE  
                                pacific eternal delight—

Michael Horovitz  
*(written in the Fall of 1971*  
*Hopefully: IN MEMORIAM:*  
*THE WAR IN S.E. ASIA)*

KATHLEEN NORRIS

MOTHER,

It was Mrs. Aja, who happened to be  
In the infirmary one night when  
I could hardly move from the pain  
And I moved like a turtle  
On the lawn, getting my feet wet,  
Tapping on the window, waking her.  
She gave me rhubarb and soda,  
Kept me the night.

And Ellie, preparing two daughters,  
And Dorothy, giving life to lists of names

Mother, the lioness has  
Retractable teats, for hunting and feeding.  
You made a contract with death,  
Mother, and saved me when I was small.  
The nuns let you in, every day, to hold me  
And I told you (no language yet)  
About the pain.

Mother, we won. To turn is to change the view.  
When I was 15 I would have said:  
"What's the moral here? Nothing that would have occurred  
To Mother "  
I hated you then.  
Everything you did annoyed me,  
Mother

Kathleen Norris



A VIEW FROM 85th STREET, IN HORIZONTAL PERSPECTIVE

The faithless, their endless preparation  
As if they want to hurt themselves,  
Not too much, feeding on magazines,  
Inventories of despair.

A beagle with his face and paws out the window,  
Shoppers with children (one on a leash!)  
The motorcycle hoods  
Who keep vaudeville alive,  
Three movies advertising two rapists  
And one amnesiac.

Emblems of the spirit this morning  
Are an air shaft  
And blackened toast.

The couple going to the methadone center  
Are teaching their son to walk.

Wordless, barely human  
We ride the bus to work  
And caged, obedient, lock ourselves in at night.

Kathleen Norris

NATHANIEL TARN

FOSSIL SONG

*for P. R. T.*

You live inside me  
hung from the roof  
of my skull

the rope knot  
in the region of my throat  
where thoughts tangle

with the need to speak  
born in chords of fire  
voice burns

your belly sleeps  
among my loins  
there is branding also

with embers  
that have almost lost color  
but cut deepest

this burden  
of body fallen & of voice  
still rasping on

as if the green shoots  
of their own accord  
filing thru amber

depended on it

Nathaniel Tarn

## THE MICROCOSM

*for P.R.T.*

The land is larger than itself  
breathing beyond its normal girth  
in the light-hearted air

it takes a bird even of prey  
many wingbeats  
apparently still to cover it

it is heaving as if with voices  
throats distending to throw words  
ejaculating from all the furrows

the mole has fallen like a star  
into the inhabited world  
pushing the lawn up into rills

the everesting rose  
her roots put down to boil  
throws up a cloud of flowers

between the tree-tops' waving fingers  
the virgin telescope achieves the sky  
quietly like a confident husband

and at the apex of the firmament  
ringed with a crown from another sphere  
Saturn is spinning on itself alone

in the unwavering summer light

Nathaniel Tarn

## THE AURA

*for jas, if she ever sees it*

I look in the mirror  
what is there is surrounded by aura  
why shouldn't that aura contain  
not only all the beings I might want  
but also the you I might want

why always another

Waking remembering your shape  
smile at the thought of you  
Gea the triangle the heavy earth  
your base of hot lead on its pins  
holding everything down

up top the beautiful small head

I want to jerk my seed  
drop by drop into your lap  
attached to those lips  
I kissed first yesterday  
in a frenzy of perfumes

old Leonardo face with shades for eyes

it's happy being with you  
and who can say that of most lovers now

Nathaniel Tarn

PAUL MARIAH

A NOTE ON G

*for Gerhard Samuel*

I can't make the st  
Rings any clearer  
Stand on the st  
Reet and Rook  
Are both my bays  
And Mayakowski  
Hangs in my mouth  
Like a word,

Swallowed.

Paul Mariah



SUSAN DAILY

of the fish of the mirror

*on reading Imaginary Beings  
by Jorge Luis Borges*

oh, you try and you try and what comes up first  
turns out to be what you wanted to believe  
slot machine paradise american dreamscape scheme  
schemata diagram hologram double vision schism

or, how what you didn't want to think  
turns out to be a big fish  
like the fish I used to believe  
*lived in the mirrors*  
and would surface  
and would become the surface  
and would become no longer undercover  
underwater unstated underspoken unmentioned and  
unmoving

but years later, by the time you have forgotten  
even that near invisible ripple the fish leaves  
when it passes through the edge of the surface  
the fish keeps swimming up  
in the bathroom and the bedroom mirror  
in the stainless steel pots and pans and in the window  
and you begin to wake up in the morning to face  
a flat-faced pair of eyes glinting at you  
and you begin to make up conversations in your head  
that turn you around and turn out to be true

easy enough to explain in the great flat plain  
of cause and effect, isn't it? I mean logical,  
almost, as all nightmares and broken emotions  
can tend toward becoming something else  
something  
one, some a b c extension of something  
only you? is it only yourself? but of course  
you want to doubt everyone else's sanity first.

maybe the answer is  
everything comes back to sex.

the sex of the typewriter.  
the sex of the typewriter in the office  
the sex of the office in the typewriter.  
the sex of the typee on the typewriter.  
the sex of the type that becomes the letters.  
the sex of the words that come out of the letters.  
that come out of the typewriter in the office.  
and is

even always female?  
will we be stuck for the end of our days with yin and yang?  
do I have to believe that the fish of undersides  
and undercurrents and unspeakables  
can only be exorcised if I speak that magic word  
is sex the answer in fact, the only solution,  
the key to magic, the cure for madness  
and if I hook it to the fish  
will it sink?



what do I mean by bring out my fish?  
(do I, can I have the audacity to call it mine?)  
this invisible spectral creature, this fish among  
eyeballs, hands, legs, elbows and ugly knees,  
this fish in fact whose only crime is its assault  
upon the dimensions of my world, o albatross of fishes,  
harbinger of mixed minds and fragments,

WHAT DO I MEAN by calling it up to the world  
it has never inhabited,  
mixing its sleek scales  
with the ugly world of typewriters and offices,  
its curved and oval profile with the clumsy clout  
of pecks and ringing bells and that word  
that word among words, that every-person slogan  
o lord we cannot escape it, everything comes back to it  
it all has to do with it, o americana paradise lost

but perhaps, after all, it is not the fish that is the problem.  
not the flat angry eyes, the invisible passage.  
all that, after all, is less than a motion  
smaller than a word, more quiet than your breathing.  
perhaps it is the mirror that is frightening.  
the mirror, yes, and the thought of the other side.  
the place you have tried most hard to put out of your mind.  
that dimension you have now, unhappily, moved into.  
and only the fish is left of what you were  
just as it always was, an omen and a warning.

Susan Daily

DEL MOLARSKY

SHOE STRING

A broken shoe string has been annoying me all day  
as I walk the streets  
job hunting.  
My shoe is loose.  
My foot drifts in outer space.  
I stop at a stand and buy new laces from a huge blond man  
with a job who stares at me.  
I sidle away and stop at a fire hydrant beside Provident Bank  
where I rest my foot and change the broken lace.  
A policeman pretends not to see me.  
I tighten the lace and amble off.  
The shoe bites into my foot with a double row of shark's teeth.  
I bend to loosen the lace and let the shark escape  
but it continues prowling about, nudging me with its nose.  
If I don't hurry on it'll snap a chunk out of my ass.  
It's after five and I should return home to my wife  
but she will only stare at me.  
I walk on and quickly look behind me.  
No shark.  
I glance down at my feet  
I am nowhere.  
How can I ooze cold sweat when I have no body,  
when I don't exist?  
A derelict sprawling in a doorway looks drunkenly up at me  
as if he could see me.  
I'd smash his ugly face but I have no fists.  
The dirt in the street blows through me.  
Suddenly I find myself tightening my shoe propped on a  
garbage can.  
I yank and pull at the lace until the shoe cuts into my foot.  
I continue to yank and pull,  
yank and pull.  
Finally I tie a triple knot  
and walk on.

Del Molarsky

JAMES BERTOLINO

THE LANDSCAPE

I draw a line from  
edge to edge  
to provide place, a land-

scape within which  
to begin. Writing. Birds

float down from a great height  
across the page, wings  
like paper kites

brushing air, eyes  
flashing the

landing lights of the 747  
gear unfolding seat-  
belt warning holds

our attention the squeek  
stomachs clutching  
as cement grabs rubber

you touch my hand it's  
been nice Jim maybe we'll run

into each other someplace honey.

James Bertolino

BARBARA HOLLAND

HOME CAN BE ANYWHERE

They come in clots the abused buildings  
with boarded windows, abandoned shops  
and bars that barely function.

Between them squashed houses  
sink in lots, frantic with the Dance of Shiva  
that suffers the parodies  
of scrub pines, or with deciduous runts  
whose fat bouquets of leaves  
fuss in their discontent  
against indifferent walls

All these along the edge  
of a fed-up ocean,  
dabbing at the shore by habit,

whose beaches, three parts soil to one part sand,  
breathe an unlikely green  
against their raw sienna.

A fossil, still alive  
in squalor? The crisp, blue buses  
racket through its veins,  
carrying no advertising,  
even for miracles

But the proud plaques in every park weep  
the guilt loose from the grooves  
of letters, that tell the count of those who died  
in two world wars, Korea and Vietnam  
for Staten Island, but never  
note Staten Island's death. Be sure of that!

They burnt the certificate  
that made that real and lie about it brazenly  
on air-conditioned buses. Home  
can be anywhere at all, they say,  
even in Staten Island, and they mean it.

Barbara Holland

LOUISE SIMONS

A WALK IN THE WOODS

*"do not remember me as a bridge"*

—Audre Lorde

From A Land Where Other People Live

Young, tense, trying to control  
The rhythm of our breathing,  
When we made love  
On the soft pine needles,  
We were other people looking for a magic ring  
That would show us how to become our selves  
Like happening upon Christmas future  
Trapped in a circle of holly wreath.

In the sifted light  
We walked past the rough-barked trees  
Pulling off handfuls of the long needles.  
The sap marked my fingers for days,  
My hands like my body  
Sticky with remembrance of you.

Far above, calling to each other  
At the edges of that day  
Blackbirds were at work measuring the woods  
Into evergreen patterns  
Understood only by them.

Now we meet again as old friends  
And you analyze time past.  
I want you to know I am not a way into life.  
I am your life.

Louise Simons

## TAKING IN YOUR BOOKSTORE

You had on a khaki shirt  
three buttons unbuttoned.  
You belonged to someone else's poem.  
To get you, I had to steal you.

It's true you had a cool manner  
while I was standing close by  
nuzzling the racks of magazines.  
Were you on the look-out  
for shoplifters and maybe  
I was one?

I was. Besides you  
I am taking over your little shop.  
I always wanted a bookstore of my own.  
I can curl myself around the books  
scratch them across my shoulderblades  
rub them up and down against my snatch.

Louise Simons

GENE FOWLER

WINTER LIGHT

Thick  
skag-winged  
cloud bank  
sliding across the pacific,  
black dancer  
filling the whole view,  
sweating  
hungry for the land  
Water hissing  
in the rocks,  
grey breath licking me.  
Water  
green foil crinkling  
dirty white scuffles  
ruffling and panting.

Salt on my face  
draws flesh into a jerkied tough sheet  
burying me  
in crystal  
grey light  
frozen  
onto my skin.

Gene Fowler



ATTHIS

Recollection lies still  
and restless.  
Atthis came near to us.  
She splintered light  
    with her taut silver skin,  
casting shadows of strange color  
into the marble discs  
under our coffee cups,  
among the blue-white eyes  
her eyes were bronze hyperions.  
Candles spit  
into night; coffee darkens;  
i should be thinking of where  
i'll sleep when night's cold  
comes in the dark, not where  
this glimpsed pale slip will  
be lying asleep.

Gene Fowler

## ANCESTORS

*on reading Hester Storm's*  
Shadows From The Wu-T'ung Tree

I climb a hill  
to keep a tryst with the moon.  
Old cultures  
struggle to their feet to walk with me  
on such a venture.  
There's no profit in it.  
Just an ancient wind  
curling through me  
and leaving me with the feeling  
i've eaten what Gods eat.

Gene Fowler

