

THE PAINTED BRIDE QUARTERLY

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Cover photo of Audre Lorde by Layle Silbert

AUDRE LORDE

A BIRTHDAY MEMORIAL TO SEVENTH STREET

I.

I tarry in days shaped like the high staired street
where I became a woman
between two funeral parlors next door to each other
sharing a dwarf
who kept watch for the hearses
Fox's Bar on the corner
playing happy birthday to a boogie beat
Old slavic men cough in the spring thaw
hawking
painted candles cupcakes fresh eggs
from under their dull green knitted caps
when the right winds blow
the smell of bird seed and malt
from the breweries across the river
stops even our worst hungers.

One crosstown bus each year
carries silence into overcrowded hallways
plucking madmen out of the mailboxes
from under stairwells
from cavorting over rooftops in the full moon
cutting short the mournful songs that used to soothe me
before they would cascade to laughter every afternoon
at four PM
behind a door that never opened
Then masked men in white coats dismount
to take the names of anyone
who has not paid the rent in three months
they peel off layers of christmas seals
and batter down the doors into bare apartments
where they duly note the shape of each obscenity
upon the wall
and hunt those tenants down
to make new vacancies.

II.

These were some of my lovers who were processed
through the corridors of Bellevue Mattewan Brooklyn State
the Women's House of D. St. Vincent's and the Tombs
to be stapled onto tickets for a one way ride
on the unmarked train that travels
once a year
across the country east to west
filled with New York's rejected lovers
ones who played with all their stakes
who could not win nor learn to lie—
we were much fewer then—
who failed the entry tasks of Seventh Street
and were returned back home
to towns with names like Oblong and Vienna
(called Vyanna)
Cairo Sesser Cave-In-Rock and Legend.
Once a year the train stops unannounced
at midnight
just outside of town
returning the brave of Bonegap and Tuskegee
of Pawnee Falls and Rabbittown
of Anazine and Elegant and Intercourse
leaving them beyond the edge of town
like dried up bones sucked clean of marrow
but rattling with city-like hardness
the soft wood
petrified to stone in Seventh Street.
The train screams
warning the town of coming trouble
then moves on.

III.

I walk over Seventh Street
stone at midnight
two years away from forty
and the ghost of old friends
precedes me down the street in welcome
bopping in and out of doorways
with a boogie beat
Freddie sails before me like a made-up bat
his Zorro cape just level with the stoops
he pirouettes over the garbage cans
a bundle of drugged illusions
hanging from his belt
while Joan with a hand across her throat
sings
unafraid of silence anymore
and Marion who lived on the scraps of breath
left in the refuse of strangers
searches the gutter with her nightmare eyes
tripping over the brown girl
young in her eyes and fortune
nimble as birch
I try to recall her name
as Clement comes
smiling from a distance
his finger raised in counsel
or in blessing
over us all.

Seventh Street swells into midnight
memory ripe as a bursting grape
my head is a museum
full of other peoples eyes
like stones in a dark churchyard
where I kneel praying
that my children
will not die politely
either.

Audre Lorde

FRANK McCORTIN

PSALMS FOR A FEASTDAY

"Welcome, O Life!"

—James Joyce

Matins and Lauds

Nothing so ugly
As love waking up
To ridiculous hair and bad breath.
Beauty's face wearing down to wrinkles.
Tooth by tooth
Disintegrating, our faint smoke
Vanishes.

What can we do for each other?
Hold hands while we die,
Tell each other the truth.
Admit: we are the ugliest
Animals.

But when you are inside my chest
Love is miraculously conceived.
The music of my minutes
Moves faster, bars
Rush past my eyes and
Octaves crouch towards the next
Leap.

Day begins.
Let me do all my work,
Make a lot of money
For you,
God.

Prime

Today's sun will never die.
Love has opened her eyes to
The first man. Remember the world.
You are my flesh. Listen to me:
I will name all the animals.

Let me tell you the voices I hear.
Holy, holy, holy
Syllables. God
Has no face. The past has become
Invisible. There is no
Sin you can commit. You may steal
The loneliness I have protected

The Little Hours

We move in different directions,
Towards the sun. You have left
Your shadow behind. I walk inside,
Feel your empty spaces.

Let me sit quietly,
Draw a picture of you on my eyes.
I have memorized your numbers.
You are at the top of heaven.
I cannot speak prose to you.

Vespers

Sunset comes with electricity.
The dim lights
Remove my clothes, play
Music you have waited for.

The moon pulls our insides together.
The flow of blood is sacred.
Our stomachs are filled with love.
Tell me your secrets.

The rest of the world is dead.
We can remember how to
Love the night. I see all your eyes.
I understand these tears.

Believe: I baptize you.
For tonight, at least,
You are safe.

Compline

Even when you are sleeping
A hint of light surrounds you.
O shining! O blanket of skin!
I must write softly, protect
Your rest, conquer nightmares.

Let me enter your dreams, touch
The past and turn
Wrinkles into smiles.
I promise: your eyes will open.

It is holy to love.
I touch you.
Sleep gently, all that I love.
We are in darkness.

Frank McQuilkin

SEVEN O'CLOCK NEWS

i am an incarnate yawn
lying on the brink of a flimsy half-killed dream
of cracked guitars and blood, a leftover
from around five-thirty or so,
 the refrigerated morning peers at me
 through the steam on the window,
whispering
 "I am your conscience . . ."
and refusing to plead guilty i turn away
giving my nose a proper christian burial
 in your pillow, then realizing
you're not there

 it's morning, kiddies
i can hear warm water running
over your hands downstairs,
 the open vaseline jar
gapes at me like an empty eye-socket
from beside the bed, and i want to shrivel
more than i already have,
 afraid so, kiddies
someday we really are going to murder
 the bugler, but
right now
 it's time to get up

Jack Veasey

LINDA PASTAN

TO A WATERSKIER

I used to find Poseidon
a comic figure—a man's man
of a god with dullard's hobbies
horses, the navy, those unremembered women
who bore him mortal children on the wrong side
of the blanket. He took
his petty vengeance on Troy
like any other cheated contractor.

And then I saw you rise straight
from the sea—
all suntanned skin, all sovereignty of muscle.
You gripped the air between your knees
and held the reins of fifty horses,
entering like the swan's
own brother my spread V
of a wake.

Linda Pastan

DICHOTOMY

I celebrate
the small victory
that sleeps
at the center
of every defeat.
Wait long enough
and it stirs—
the conqueror grows lazy,
the wandering husband
wanders home.

Even now
each rusting leaf
makes one star
visible,
and the two sides
of the coin,
rubbed bare
by many fingers,
turn and face
each other.

Linda Pastan

WORK WEEK

Two poems were still-born.
They float in their notebooks
with monstrous heads
and tiny limbs.
I still bleed
from them.

One poem got away.
Like a helium balloon
it was brightly
colored
but lighter
than air.

Now I work on a grocery list:
string beans and turnips
and sides of beef.
If the muse is hungry
maybe she'll change it
into a poem.

Linda Pastan

BARBARA HOLLAND

A MEDITATION ON ANDRE BRETON

For Breton, a picture
was always a window opened
on something,
 but the question was—
on what?

For me, a poem
is always a hole bitten out of,
or smashed through most of,
the middle of a sheet of paper,
obscuring something,
 and the question is—
what?

Yet somehow there is always someone,
lacking in the energy
to drive the fist, the strength
in the jaws
to bite,
 and who, instead,
prefers to scribble
on that surface, leaving it,
relatively unmolested

as if whatever has been written there
could substitute
for that which remained
behind it,
 and the question is—
for what?

Barbara Holland

BRIAN SWANN

from the Old Norse HÁVAMÁL

#49

I gave my clothes
to men of wood
When rigged out they thought
they were warriors
A naked man is ashamed

#67

Now and then I was sure to be invited to a feast
when I wasn't hungry,
or two hams would be hanging in a pal's house
when I'd just eaten one.

translated by Brian Swann

ATTRITION

This pool has been cut off
The salt rim makes glass

Invisible sharks drift like pollen
eels fall over and over like trees

flocks of pigeons and hawks
shelter from the glare inside each other

The ocean is less than their roar

When night illuminates rime and wave
all the animals
wrap their shrunken world about them
and tip it back into the sea

Brian Swann

ENCOUNTER

I picked her up over beef stew, near the war memorial. It turns out she's living with a friend who is out at the moment, but whose presence in the room is obvious.

"Are you a lesbian?" I ask her. "No," she says. "At least, we both are." "In that case, you won't mind if I wear my jockstrap."

I take off my clothes and lounge around in my athletic support. She sits on the other side of the table.

The other girl comes in without saying anything to anyone. She sits down at my side of the table and begins to grade some homework she has taken out of a canvas bag. Then she begins to add up some figures.

Her indifference is galling. So I pull down the pouch of the jock and show her a thick dong. The other girl at the other side of the table is reading a newspaper, and doesn't notice a thing. The girl looks up from her figures and calculations. In sign language I hold up 7, 8, 9, 10 fingers to signify, how long?

She is more cunning and lascivious than I'd realized, and holds up 9 fingers as reasonable flattery.

"Wrong!" I say out loud, and hold up 7, (which is already stretching matters a little.)

Brian Swann

LEAH ZAHLER

SPRING FLOOD, 1972

The lowest leaves touch the water.
They have no trunks, no roots. Trees
lie on their sides in the brown rivers.

I am a blank receiver of images
on the other side of glass.
Sometimes I fall asleep.

We have sunny weather for the trip.
Mother looks at the hills ("I love rolling hills")
and at fields half under water
("That field is drowned").
We hear there is an emergency in Reading.

We are going—we go every year—to see my uncle,
who no longer travels. He has lived
forty years in Reading, in a hotel
once the best, but now
there's a new highrise.
The Berkshire has been sold.

To my grandmother, Reading
could have been San Francisco or the moon.
One of her children was leaving. He promised
to write twice a week, and did. "Feeling fine.
Going to Harrisburg. Giants lousy. Love . . ."
on a picture postcard of the Berkshire Hotel.
"Why does he always send the same picture?" I asked.
So he circled his windows in ink, for me.

We saw Reading from his windows—
an asphalt grid plunked down in the hills.
The streets were dry.
Straight main streets
stopped and the trees
began. ("At least there are trees,"
said Mother. "At least there are hills.")

The governor proclaimed an emergency.
My uncle made sure we had enough clean towels.
There were signs in the corridors
Guests should not take showers or flush toilets
except in an emergency.
What was an emergency?

Sunday we looked at pictures
of Harrisburg under water.

Leah Zahler

TO ST. HUBERT

I.

the last of the hunted men
lie waiting in breughels woods

men with mad tight-fitting caps
plowed faces of farmers
fat laughing women

they stand
leering
at the edge of back

woods
in breughels dance
they sing thru the nite
of swords and spears
dippt in sacramental wine

II.

and they are not clowns or tricksters
but desperate men painted
in our minds; left dried-up
on some canvas to rot
out of which we build separate lives.

we live off of those men
we eat those smiling faces

we divide we separate
we write them

we grow and place ourselves outside
of the forest
not knowing they make
hunters of us all

III.

(For aua, an eskimo singer)

"we fear the souls of dead human beings
and of animals we have killed"
we hunt the soul of the woods,
but souls do not perish with the body
"and must be propitiated
lest they should revenge themselves
on us
for taking away their bodies"

thus st hubert and his conversion.
his meeting in the forest
a stag with crucifix between
antlers

a hunter who is one with his game
is no hunter
but a lover

Leonard Kress

BARE ELEGY

I turned away
like a leaf yellowing
in a hothouse from too
much nutrient—your way of love.

I made you stand a distance
apart—cells of my kingdom
resisting your encroachment.

I didn't care.
I was a tomboy wife.
I stole your shirts, men friends
took photographs and sketched me
when you went to work.

Pregnant in a summer field,
old skirt, too much hair, stomach
out to somewhere with a baby

I was secure in a fine blanket
of self assurance, or the light
cotton of my ignorance

like a southern girl from a poor
but proud family. Before the teeth
go, while the skin on the face is
fine, gleaming, and sunburnt.

I would change those postures now,
arrange my album differently
if I could. Your book is closed.

It withered the yellowing love
in shutting. My hair turned white
within the year. I wouldn't talk
to people who said I had a lost look
about me. That was nothing new.

You stopped crowding me,
so I love your memory better—
having sifted through to the hard-core,
hard-scrabble rock, rock-bottom facts.

Margo Lockwood

AGAIN, SPRING

Relieved that Chairman Mao
says even his poems are
"unimportant, or stupid"—

after checking my weakest plant
which sets forth another arrow
as if it still lived on the dark
swamp barrow where I stole it—

noticing red pin-head spores
hemstitching the moss—
ready to propagate again,

only when my insides feel
like stones are living there—
do I have footdragging entering
this season

White sale of the ragged crocuses,
self-advertisements of the quince, cerise
and florid with its rheumy center—
the mindless greenness setting forth

takes time in me to summon a response,
due to disheartening weather in the world,
old men killing old men, poor without gardens
dying younger than they should.

Hope is still fragile as a wax
flower in a burning house
and still a cardinal flames
as if to crack my window with his red,

while myths untuck their skirts
in the inhuman, unconscionable spring.

Margo Lockwood

A YOUNG MAN'S SMELL

In the foyer
of my borrowed house
saying goodbye to young men

what is so mortal
as this smell of a young man?
He has a beard; it is black,
and sometimes curly & blond.

In his fresh laundered shirt
arm over your shoulder
he wishes you goodbye
a good trip
his smell is young, like an animal
or a son.

His hand a spear in your side
his smile the moon
torn from the flesh of the earth

Who am I
to worry about the death of young men?
their pleasant company, faint scent
of their skin through the cotton
of their summer shirts?

It is my fault
memory causes this stitch in my side
making me into a kohl-eyed ravaged
virago, like Anais Nin, like Marina
Tsetsaeva, guttering faithfully
till they put themselves out.

Margo Lockwood

FIRE CEREMONY

Around my fireplace in Dublin
the fair city of gray stone
sit parts of myself hunching
& nearing to the small cloister

black & ash red
piled like a church of dreams
and falling in upon itself
from time to time

I raise & let fall my poker mitre
stir heat, vestigial comfort,
like half-forgotten prayers,
litanies and turf aspirate,
moulder & rise through the stack.

Celebrate fiery things—
shadows, silhouettes,
like a midden age torch singer
or if I forget, like a witch
or other unholy thing
here, near the barrow
of the world.

its stone ornaments remind me
with insistent patterns
of the oldest things, design
and fire, that mean the smell
of man.

I am a pillar of salt flesh
remembering monthly
a red tributary that sets me off,
geographic with my sullen womb,

from the towers
and memories of greatness

Margo Lockwood

VIETNAM

Who grows the future
That breaks against the forehead?
In whose hand
Are the buds of touch
Winding through a cloth?
Blind knees
Settle on graveyard soil!—
Is this a man,
After such years,
Or Thanatos himself
In a skin-cold toga,
The angel for everything?

Henry Braun

HEARTBURN

I sketched a life-sized sunflower
As I spoke with you on the telephone
Each petal took three words
And when we were silent
I sketched a crooked stem
The radio would have been on
But I like your voice, remember?
The door was closed
I could see our silence
Bouncing off the walls,
Bouncing off the sketching pad
And finally sinking into me
I cleared my throat and you coughed
Preparing to answer my question

I hate the sound of airplanes
Passing overhead
Who knows where they're going?
Who knows where they've been?
It's so unfair
They pause to entice me
Then become shy and continue out of reach
Sometimes I think they're thunder
Or the windows bending to the wind
But the steady growth, peak and diminishing
Of the noise is tell-tale
I hate those airplanes
When they make that sound passing overhead

I put down my sketching pad
Eighteen inches by twenty-four inches
Forty-eight sheets
A life-sized sunflower
With a very long stem
You answered my question
And suddenly I wished the radio had been on
And suddenly I wished I had sketched an unending stem

Gene Baxter

SARDINES

i must write about them. i've got to write about sardines, if i can stop eating them long enough. they're driving me crazy with absolute ecstasy, too much of a good thing and all that. you see the thing about it is that i only last week discovered sardines. i mean i always knew they existed but i had always thought that people who ate sardines were some rare breed beyond my comprehension. but now i am one too. i am even eating them now as i write this. i was worried i told my mother i had become a sardine eater and she confessed that she too was one. she kept it quite a secret just as no one ever saw her without her upper plate in her mouth, never saw her toothless, just the same with sardines she would eat them late at night when everyone was asleep. but me, being from a different generation, feel the way about eating sardines as i do about my being gay as they say i will not eat my sardines in the closet. i am going to be open about it and i am not going to allow myself to feel shame.

i was thinking of writing to i've got a secret, can't you just see the printed bubble over my head as i whisper into steve allen's ear, when he says please whisper your secret to me and i say my secret is that i have lived on nothing but sardines for the past three and one half years. they'll never guess it, they would guess i was a plumber before they'd guess that. i mean do you really think you could tell by just looking at me. i will become the leader of sardine eaters the world over they will love me there will be mass confessions at madison square gardens. i am the billy graham of the sardine set famous people will come forth and confess. and sardine haters will hate me they will try to have me discredited. they will say i really eat red herring. they will say i am a paid agent of king oscar's. king oscar will try to buy me but i am a purist i will start demanding free sardines for the people. i will explain how i couldn't write for months and months ever since i gave up tuna fish because of the iodine and then when i discovered sardines the words just flowed continuously, the light of my genius had been rekindled all because of sardines.

i promise that i shall always fight primarily for the cause of sardine eaters the world over and that i will not be able to rest until all sardine eaters can walk in the light of day, hold their heads up high and never again have to feel shame simply because they eat sardines. just as everything else that people look down on there are myths about sardines. i never went near a sardine because i believed that they still had their heads on and eyeballs in them. now i demand that they be sold unmutilated, we are not ashamed of eating the tails we should not be ashamed to eat the brains either. pretty soon our motto will be all or nothing we will boycott sardine companies that refuse to comply. i plan to do everything in my power to make sure that sardine lovers get a fair shake. i will stick by all you sardine eaters out there i will not desert you, i will not leave you . . . floundering.

Diane Devennie

ARTHUR OBERG

ISLINGTON SUITE

1

Sun starts me writing after weeks of rain.
Fronting this storied house, iron-grille work
Comes clear enough to show its painted grapes,
And overpainted vines. I listen from the highest,
Whitest window, wondering, if you hear me, feel
The same scars, between them, the exact,
Familiar distances?

2

It is too easy to be formal and abstract,
To trust to rhythms that shy away, fear
To break off. So laugh. Trust puns.
The dance again starts, pricks and princesses.

3

Row houses. Gardens in the back.
Out back, the downstairs sculptor walks.
The garden's all a giant paper mushroom,
A garden party whim to be moved out, used
In a night. ON CALL. RUSH ORDER. (Her
Name is on his clipboard, in the dark.)

He is uneasy as I watch him paint
The final stripes and dots.

4

Another day of sun. Last night
You told me I again would write, and
Love, not in what order. The sculptor's
Gone to raising newish props, to please
Another woman's costly urgings. I dodge
Him to have nothing, once, to say to him.

Upstairs, you turn the sheets
Down, smooth for love, as wife.
After words.

It is not love is second best, but all.
Before, after words. Loving words.
And in that order.

Arthur Oberg

DAVID HENDERSON

THE WHITE ROOM

for Barbara

your script
is all over my sack
i see you
writing on the purple couch
riding high above manhattan
the east
that white room
against the space of denmark
the long days
the long nights
your round specs
gaze down to the bent book
rock flows
seven powers of africa
illuminate
the back room/

we met
in the cafeteria of the university
overlooking harlem from medieval castles.
i was dying in high style.
you saved my life.
in one sudden night of scorpio
we came together
before the mock high priestess
of the sacred tombs adjacent chinatown,
we have lain above manhattan together
thru holiday
thru season

now the fall winds
have taken me beyond the midwest
as far as the country stretches
from the Inwood Mountains to the Berkeley Hills.
where i sit
in the motel on the street
of the university
i drink rosé wine of califiá
i look in the mirror
my cigarette fumes towards the ceiling
as i watch you move across our room
to lay thee down.
three thousand miles and a cult of words
keep us a part.
i will ride
from any vector of this planet
to be
by your side

David Henderson

SALLY THE SAGA

between two women
i would watch sally-o
thru the space of house
the ohio coop of san francisco dreamin
from room the distance between one space
and another
pass separation of arch
a bogus window in a windowless room
the next space
between which brown and black eyes flash
laying the bed
listening to the adults
heeding the children
they would stomp
on our most tender spots
they would read our minds
in comic book words or gesture/
sally-o draws how she feels
on the world of white pad
all the space necessary
a white woman drawing death
re-presents them in conversation
mixed with a babbling radio
and duties of the common duress
reflections of mood
in the quiet room/
only because i am quiet
i watch my neighbors
between two women
mad red sally-o
kid and me
in the same gesture
at the opening of a door
as above so below/

the children say amazing things
they step on the spots you
think about in repose/
cricket child goes to store
independent
women of America
the continent
of childhood friends
she receives in plaid splendor
instructions "two laddie boys
two containers of milk"
repeat in varied word order
black eyes dart a pale red head
and she is gone
except for that moment
child and me
paused in same gesture
at the opening of the room
synchronize
eternity

David Henderson

DICK GALLUP

Yeah

Paste up the box and put it back on the shelf

Give me another, you say

People wear their verbs like raincoats

STACK THE TOPS IN THE CORNER

PUT YOUR HAND ON THE SPRING

TAKE YOUR CLOTHES IN BEFORE IT GETS TOO LATE

SIT ON THE FOREST LAWNS

LIKE THE WILY RACCOON

WATCH THE WATER RISING

WHIPPED BY THE RAIN

Dick Gallup

JOAN HENRY

SUMMER FRUIT

I have spit men out of my life like watermelon seeds.
They were bitter to the taste.
They filled up my days with cluttered demands.
They ravaged my nights with boredom and loneliness.
They expected me to fulfill their alien visions.
They insisted upon submission, obedience, prostration.
They were non-defrostable refrigerators.
They accompanied cruelty with a smile and a sneer.
I have wrenched myself free of them one by one
And been too quickly suckered in again.
I am thinking about kicking this watermelon habit.
In the meantime I wait to see what you have in mind.

Joan Henry

ISRAEL HOROVITZ

IN THE MONKEY HOUSE

Three little faces press against the glass.
Three prehistoric bewildered stare back. an ordered mass.
I watch the six watching each other. The glass, frost-capped,
Smiles its secret: all trapped, all trapped.

The monstrous red-faced one rules
As a twelfth-century knight.
His hood is flesh of quite another matter,
His eye a disguise for what we never see.

My innocent three, are you still trembling?
No, there's no return, no reassembling
Last summer's easy smile-suits nor their matching caps,
Nor remembered giggles, nor the summer's soft calm cotton wrap.

We've gone on, gotten by, continued, we've stayed.
The process has run us headlong into this gray foggy day.
We are wiser, children, wiser. two shirts, one blouse.
We are the guests. The gentle. The mannered. The watchers
in the monkey house.

Israel Horovitz

DANS LE PAVILLON AUX SINGES

Trois petits visages pressés contre la glace.
Fixes, effarouchés, trois regards préhistoriques leur répondent
une masse ordonnée.
Je guette les six qui s'épient. Le vitrage givré
Sourit de son secret: tous pris au piège, tous pris au piège.

Le monstre au faciès pourpre règne
Comme un guerrier moyenâgeux.
La chair de sa visière est d'une autre nature,
Son oeil, un masque pour ce qui nous reste invisible.

Mes trois innocents, est-ce que vous tremblez encore?
Non, il n'y a nul retour, nous ne ramasserons pas
Les simples habits de sourire d'un été, ni les casquettes
assorties,
Ni les rires étouffés, ni la cape estivale en coton
tendre et calme.

Nous sommes allés de l'avant, on s'en est tiré, on a continué,
Le mécanisme nous a lancés la tête la première dans ce jour
de brouillard gris
Nous voila plus sages, les enfants, beaucoup plus sages:
deux chemises, une blouse.
Nous sommes les invités. Très gentils. Bien élevés.
Les guetteurs du pavillon aux singes.

Israel Horovitz
traduit par
Claude Vigée

LESLIE HERSH

COLORADO RIVER

for A.R.H.

Looking down at this river
I know it moves to the sea
Flooding in its seasons like a woman,
Rising up death out of life,
Sculpting dark, cool chasms where the water
Runs deep and swift,
Pushing too hard at night
Rattling in the cold like ice cubes against the rocks
And seeming to slow with the sun
As it turns to vanish in the shadows of another mountain.

Leslie Hersh

POETIC LICENTIOUS

After we were naked
and I made you laugh
posing as The Thinker

you told me how you thought
I was a clown
dressed serious in words.

Arthur Sabatini

THE WEIRD MOVIES

begin at midnight
with a cast of hundreds

the fat woman who opens the door
wearing an orchid is someone you know

You try to remember the name of the man
eating sandwiches on the sofa

because there is always a connection

even to the baby sitting on the floor
six times like snapshots of himself

The sky is never shown here
The specialty of the house is closet drama

Even when you travel it is a map
instead of hills laid out across a tabletop

The woman raising burros in her garden
is as close as you come to landscape

You imagine a small boat on black waters
with no sound anywhere

but the room is a hubbub

All the people you'd hoped had forgotten you
are here for the premiere

When the monster appears
he's wearing a familiar face

Though you look for his terrible, shaggy one
the smile is too uncanny

He offers you a cigarette, another drink,
and reminisces about old times

Sharon Barba

GERARD MALANGA

FEMININE CONSCIOUSNESS

for Irene Harris

There is someone inside this poem
 seated at a long wooden table
she falls asleep, she dreams
She is dreaming of a howling snowstorm
 that disappears through the holes in her hair
she is dreaming of a great-coat
 that is thrown into the water and drowns
she is dreaming of someone who is writing a poem
 of someone not there
He has been up all night and he is watching her closely,
because the poem goes blind
but the dream in it is beginning to wake
 inside the body
I see the shadows of clouds finding their way home
 up the mountainside
I see the mountains inside me
I feel the warm blood and a cooling wind
It is the dream of myself waking. Heavy rain is falling.
I turn around in my chair
I see morning in the corner of the darkening room
I am walking to reach it
Two hours goes by, I sit down inside it
I decide that death is painless.
I feel the body shining with power
I am inside this power.

Summer '73, Warner Mtn.
 Gt. Barrington, Mass.

Gerard Malanga

POSSESSING THE SECRET

There is a power rushing down the mountainside
I don't know from where. The trees part
I don't want to sleep until it's light outside
the sound track is blank
I open the window

4·viii.73 Sheffield, Mass.

Gerard Malanga

POEM
for Diane

I am in two rooms
the one where you are asleep
the one where I am writing this poem

20·i.74 Boston

Gerard Malanga

PETER BUSHYEAGER

A person learns your name
and stays at night.
This person feels there's
nothing to say and says
"there's nothing to say."
Asleep you sit up in bed
and apologize for nightmares.
In the morning you keep talking.
You have many eccentric stories.
You wonder if you are most honest asleep
when you sweat
when you walk down crowded streets
with no clothes.
All day you're scared.
You shake hands
you're not helpless
disused or ignorant.
You're afraid of habits.
You feel maybe your mouth has grown weak
and you can only eat crumbling cake.
But your chest is starved
and your name is easy.

Peter Bushyeager



Q

