

Echo

Julie Claus

Out of the blue, the blue stray kept coming back.
back to my doorstep every evening at twilight. Why?
Did some star shoot across her black map of instinct?
Or was it my voice, thin, quavering, indistinct,
questioning above the kitchen sink? Who am I
to repeat why? When she echoed
my hymn, I took her in.

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Peonies

Ginny Paulson

The peonies hang their heavy heads,
drunk with intensity of color,
ant pearls,
and morning water.

Peonies have a love affair with gravity.
They lower their bosoms
graciously.

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Fe

Ashton Duncan

We were magnetic.

Spinning, reinforcing.

Our transitions were almost Austenite
(like the Brit)

At three million Kelvin we burned like stars.
And then burnt out.

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What is Poetry?

Marvin Bell

A shovel with which to move skeleton bones.
Fingerprints on a sickle.

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The Bay Leaf

Dan Champion

You, faithful chef who never leaves
The bay leaf in the dish, but weaves
A suite of flavors delicate
Without a threat of mortal cut,
What spared you being careless cook?
Belief? Apprenticeship? A book?
Or sharp-tongued sweet bay leaf itself?

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Above Me

David Duer

The now naked branches of the maple dissect the sky

In the garden

nestled in my two hands

the last ten ripening tomatoes

small, perfect, tangy jewels of summer

and a few faded pink roses

for my love

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The Well

Christopher Merrill

For warmth in the dank pit the garter snake
Coiled round the purring motor of the pump
And was emblazoned to the switch by lighting –
A black ring scraped and lifted from the metal
And then deposited in the arroyo
By the thin man who dreamed of centipedes
And Punji sticks. He never left the tunnel.

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“Untitled (Autumn 2012)”

Kelly Scott Franklin

Where do the unwanted pumpkins go?
Those green ones, gnarled and trampled, with broken stems?

When the leaves fall, and the last apple withers,
And the world closes up shop for winter,
Where do the last unwanted pumpkins go?

Do we leave them to seed?
Will they slowly cave in under the weight of the earliest frost?

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Coffee Shop Magician

Lily Allen-Duenas

I watched him cast a spell on his computer
he waved his hands over the shallow screen
as a conductor would fling a symphony --
his coat was heavy fur that haunted his slouched trousers
he watched black and white boxes
on his screen as he chewed his cheek
I saw his face in every square.

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“Drift”

Paul Shumake

I remember January like the collapse in your stare

the gasp behind each settled toss of your hair

as you moved to ease the tension

compacting as particles

soon to avalanche

the slighted air

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Monday Morning Gift

Carol Tyx

Someone is singing in the copy room
across from my office, a joyful noise
rising above the hum of the dehumidifier
that keeps the notes from sticking together.

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In Sink

Mario Duarte

One sleep-hazy sunrise,
I found Baby Boy, the cat,
curled in the dry sink bowl:
nose and toes unified,
tail wrapped around his back,
until the faucet dripped,
and he leaped in my arms.

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Fidelis

Barbara Kalm

Fifty cedar waxwings
crown the maple tree nearby,
all facing east into the sun
to greet the morning sky.

In quiet and serenity they face the day as one,
the sun has never failed them yet...

and so the sun comes!

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September

Claudine Harris

Rain on the river,
Geese and ducks fly overhead.
Summer's not forever.

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Captivated in Iowa City

James Schoenfelder

Fall semester of sixty-five
I and my fifty-six Chevy arrived,
Where protesters gathered with handwritten signs,
And students and educators were far from benign.
Today I sit with my Java House brew,
Watching the citizens in orderly queue,
Discussing not the bombing of city hall, but merits of the chicken stew.

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Winter Blend

Maxine Bulechek

Snow on the ground
Sun through bare trees
Sadness for some
Solace for me.

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Rejuvenation

Usha R. Balakrishnan

My worn clothes
Rinsed cold, spun warm

Dewed layers of homey bonds
In laundered youthfulness

Life's attires
Shed in timed cycles

Dawn the hues of another day

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Still #2

Jennifer MacBain-Stephens

Sitting here, roots establish.
Will there be peace or war time this evening?
Quiet time gives over to starburst explosions.
Fires started by a mirror on the baking sidewalk of redemption.
See how quietly you can sit on this chair or that bench or no one's lap
Sit here and see what eats you up on the inside while roots grow.
That is silly. We don't grow roots. We grow tongues if we are lucky.

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Poem Without Symbols

Paul Diehl

I slide my grandfather's slate from his leather school bag.
The slate is dusty but unbroken, a dark almost purple sky from the depths of Wales.
The frame is oak, rich gold, straight grain, the pieces joined invisibly.
The chalk is blinding white, each piece unused.
This is no longer slate to shape letters or calculate the angle of the sun.

With my hand I clear the surface one last time, wipe seashell dust from the
harder seashell plane. It's all literal now. The realm of words has passed away.

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“Excuses of the Well-meaning But Indolent Househusband”

Lucas Shepherd

Soon my wife is coming home. Will she be disappointed?
I tried to sweep behind the fridge, but I’m not double-jointed.
Much time was spent (alas, in vain) searching for the duster;
Determination rivaled only by the final stand of Custer.
I tried to have the dishes washed; the lamps and tables glistening,
But truth be told I’m lazier than Alaskan air-conditioning.

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4 PM Your Time 5 PM Mine

Ruth Manna

Anthony's voice is clear:

"Look at my new grammar book, Grandma!"

Lucas, three, shares a tortilla chip through the screen.

Our Sunday skype proceeds.

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One-Year Diary

Kathryn Hall

"At 3 p.m. Mama left us. Fed the blower.
Sold eggs 3 ½ doz. .41 c. Pulled beans at eve."
Those endless but nameless
Neighbors (W, L, R, etc.) bringing pies,
A pint of cucumbers, elliptical. "Beets put up.
Carried flowers to the cemetery. Paid Liberty
Tax."

All verb, 1943.

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Iowa City Ditty

Daniel Daly

Polly eyes hamburg hatter Weber, while through the haunted dark
Fireflies light prairie, brook, field, college, green, and hickory park
Defunct gas lights a black angel, buoyed tower looms, gold dome glistens
Healers take to footlights, fiddlers to tavern lights, through the night, a poet listens
Our penchant for tolerance, sharing, and grace rejoices
When we, settler's heirs, hear and illuminate, new immigrant voices

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The Shock of Prairie Grass outside Coralville Public Library after Three Months of Not Writing

Lisa K. Roberts

Green fire. Potted star. Dirt
in translation. One shape.
Tail feather of an arrow
shot toward earth. This
is the spot. Dig. Here.

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David Danced

Scott Lindgren

His hand guided the wheelchair into a smooth arc
until the room became a blur – spinning, dancing,
melting into streams of color and light.

He hovered, weightless, suspended in air,
touching heaven without touching ground.

And he danced until the world disappeared
and joy filled the empty spaces.

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Dinosaurs

David Hamilton

The boy brings another book. This time I adlib *Pooh* while paging through his *Big Book of Dinosaurs*. “No,” he starts, suppresses that, then giggles, “Read *Pooh* again, Grandad.”

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pirouette

Mary Jedlicka Humston

sailing in crisp air
on smooth glaciating pond
a leaf twirls alone

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Passing

Rachael Carlson

Pressed together between bar doors,
One in, one out.

And when in the passage your sleeve whispers against mine,
Crows in the trees rise from their roost.

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For All

Becky Soglin

A bus needs a poem

As much as lovers, grievors, sinners, believers,

As much as children, thinkers, teachers, tinkers,

As much as players, leaders, loners, seekers,

As much as the fighters and the peacemakers,

As much as us, them, me, you

And more than anyone can know.

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Hope Springs Eternal

Patrick Nefzger

We walked and walked and talked and talked and then we walked some more.

I suggested, but she deflected and then we walked some more.

I asked out rightly, she shied politely and then we walked some more.

I kissed her bright head, she was delighted and then we walked no more!

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Lincoln

Lisa Roberts

When he told a story,
laughter "whistled off sadness,"
and his smile warmed the crowd.
Happiness reformed the creases of his face, and
Melancholy relinquished her hold on him
for a moment

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Winter Troika

Jeff Nesheim

From two days weighted with fog came the snow
And the crows. They revel in the mood when
Other birds go quiet. Three claim the yard
As theirs, cracking the peaceful gray quiet
With slow conversation from a streetlight
Perch. Smug in cleverness they spend the day
Waiting for snow plows to stir up some action.

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Snow Serpents

Janet Skiff

At 8 am at a stoplight I watch
dozens of dusty white serpents
shift weight, switch lanes,
swiftly glide with the cars
along the Coralville Strip-

Soon to blow away altogether with the wind
or vanish meltingly when the sun appears with more resolve.

Poetry
in public

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