

children *churches* & daddies

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Deja view
right there within the frame of my apartment window
like a snapshot I can hear it Spring
to life
rustling and I am there wrestling with my youth
so young
weeping willow
unaware of anything going on around me because
my father is alive
playing with me the way a father does
with his hands (like time)
open wide to the endless possibles
and he's going to tease me again
I can feel it coming and I'm
too 8 years old to worry to fear to
"Do you think you're gonna marry her, Sport?"
he asks in his New Jersey-esque
I'm-only-kidding-more-than-
I-can-rustle-your-hair-anytime-I-want-to
voice
and I (giggling)
gladly accepting his challenge respond
Yes (uncertain)
YES (taller standing)
with his arm
(yes)
draping around me until the son is gone and I
the tree
faithfully remembers everything
(leaves)

**A Tree
In
Princeton**

**Adam
Chester**

Gears get caught in the mud

I've wanted to be so much for you
I've wanted to to cook your meals
and clean your clothes
And even wanted it to surprise you
I've wanted to do things
To catch you off guard
To beat your intelligence

And once I want to start
My gears gets caught in the mud
And they start spinning
And I try to get them out
But I usually never learn
And I spin them and some more
And I get further buried in the ground
And it's like I'm digging my own grave
By spinning my own wheels
And trying so hard
To be everything to everyone,
No, wait, to you

I'm trying to be so much
And do so much
I'm trying to accomplish so much
But I'm spinning my wheels
And I'm burying myself
And I want you to know
(At least)
That I'm trying

This New Age Technology Is Alan Catlin

the nuts. Remember where we were in high school & they used to say that-if you gave a room full of monkeys typewriters, eventually they would compose the complete works of William Shakespeare?-well, since we've got the internet, you don't need the monkeys. all you need is the keyboard. Like for instance, you know the real reason why John Glenn went back into space a second time? I'll bet you don't. Search the internet and you'll find out. seems that the real John Glenn was abducted by space aliens & they thought eople would freak if they found out an imposter was a US senator for 24 years. Maybe they should run a search & find on Jesse Helms or Strom Thurmond, if they can back that far. Anyway, now that JG is getting on, the aliens thought it was time to replace him with the real thing so that their secret would be safe. Maybe you wonder what JG was doing all those years

with the aliens, doesn't it? Maybe,
that's in the next site update.
There has to be one too, an Update
that is, as it's seriously out of date.
The alien senator trick is like so old:
I think I still have one of those
headliner t-shirts from the early 90's
that the Weedkly World News sells
that says: Alien Senators for Clinton.
Glenn was definitely one of those.
Plus there seems to be a certain
Logic missing in the information
like: didn't all those NASA doctors
who examined Glenn notice anything
unusual about him for the first six or
seven million times they examined him,
before and after he was sent into space?
either time? I guess asking for Logic
from a Conspiracy Theory is a bit
much. One thing heartening about
finding this site: all those unemployed
Shakespearean monkeys are now
gainfully employed designing Web
Sites. You'd hate to think of them
out on the streets, starving to death
now that the cold spell has hit with a
vengeance or transported into another
galaxy looking for work.

TIME

Jessica Arluck

if time were made out of logic
it would play in rewind
for disillusion thrives on years
as inevitable experiences regress the soul

No Way Where

Henry Kowarski

No matter where I fall,
A chair of experience.
An old tattered coffee stained recliner,
The voice of my father, frowning on my joy.

art

matthew shugart

I was watching an out of town poet read his work

a middle aged woman sat in front of me with
her young child and
her husband who makes it painfully obvious that
he doesn't want to be here
the middle aged woman is here to receive extra credit
for an english class she is taking

the child sits between husband and wife
eating granola bar
speaking quietly
too young to understand what the poet is talking about he
talks to the mother
who is enjoying her five extra credit points
and is married to the man on the other side of the young child
the man who keeps nodding off in his tight jean jacket that
reads the name of a local drywalling company

the middle aged mother passes a note to the child which reads
I love you
the child writes I loved you back with his shaky hand
and passes
it to his middle aged mother who smiles
and looks over to dad who is thinking
what a pussy
his son is becoming

it's the best work of the evening

Moving Day Sidewalk Encounter

Paul Cordeiro

We had just moved in next door to them
and I didn't know and hadn't unpacked one carton.
She breezed over and said my name warmly
as if thirty years of nothing said and done
hadn't passed between us.
She smiled like we were pals in high school,
or even lovers, which wasn't true.
She had vanished between the sixth
and eighth grades like a beauty
stolen away by illness, accident, or death.
Though there is no yearbook picture
of her smiling, unsmiling face,
she stood there and talked like she had
spent four years among us dripping pain.
Had she been there, I'd have asked to take
her to the prom, tried to date her,
tried to make her hate me for eternity
when we broke up for the reasons spoiled kids
break up when they can't handle the job
of loving someone well.
I'd have been more prepared for our moving day encounter.
I'd have kissed her on the cheek at least to bruise
or to soften the sidewalk talk and the hurt.
Would've wished I could hug her with wild abandon

like a soldier come back from war.
Instead, I stood there stiff as a lamppost.
Her husband's breath was as close to me
as death as he held their hunting dog's choke collar tight.
I felt twisted up inside, foolish,
like a safe cracker taking a bank job,
when she walked over to say hello.
I almost cracked a smile but couldn't do it.
I've never wanted so much to take
a thing of beauty that wasn't mine.

Hazard of Dancing With Sirens

Jeffrey J. O'Brien

Being with a poet,
maybe hazardous to your health
the Marborol Man seems=20
to be saying;
as I speed past
his billboard,
grotesquely placed on I-70.

Poets talk about things,
things everyone wants to forget,
the day Mom died,
the day she leaves for good,
the day you were so depressed,
it felt as if your soul melted away.

Ironically, poets use beautiful
words, imagery, and metaphors
to conceal their loneliness,
for them poetry is a bad girlfriend,
she causes so much emotional pain
the poet hates her for that
like a moth to light a poet always
returns to his love.

My trip through the rapids
of the river of life continues,
continues for another day
my raft is nealy sinking
but my will remains
strong like the sun,
reflecting off the unrelenting current.

Sun burnt, wet, and renewed;
I return to the confines
of suburban life,
a much needed respite
from our prepackaged, prefabricated
, sufficating western world.

Forever my river will remain
uncontained and liberating
still able to freely create=20
and destroy,
without being tupperwarded
in a suffocating container
insulated from reality.

Blood

Melissa Frederick

Blood is red and runs
violent. On the evening news,
Dan Rather warns when we should
look at our chicken cacciatore,
tangled with red and green
pepper ribbons, rather than

the idiot box, where a rescue
team bend over tiny limp
figures, red speckled white,
in Oklahoma or
a patch of brown curdled

snow on an Italian slope.

We need to be protected from the idea
the blood runs freely in most parts
of our planet. On all seven continents.

It's brutal, blood is.

Some blood is weak, some thicker
than water. My grandmother had

diabetes, so she had to keep
her blood sugar free.

**children
churches
& daddies**

Mine, on the other hand,
is too thick and rich., like

a banana double-chocolate milkshake:
it can't get through the straw.

Pot-bellied and bull-headed
as a Capone-style gangster, my hemoglobin
takes its sweet time trudging
through my capillaries. It terrorizes

the populace, roughs up organs, smashes
arterial walls, leaves peach and green

bruises on my wrists, and stops traffic
indefinitely for a street party in my veins,
with shady associates in gold pinkie rings
and a slender blond moll in tow. The good

citizen commuters it leaves in chaos
to spill into any cavity: eye,
sinus, mastoid bone. Blood has no regard

for the rules.

So never let it be said that blood
doesn't have cards up its sleeve,
its own agenda and hidden avenues
where it can motor off and never return to
anything like normal. Blood lives
the way it pleases, regardless
of a body, of flesh.

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And it would make me know I'm right
And it makes me know that you want me too
And I'd let your hair go
And you would stare at me
And give me a look I just can't explain
 And can't argue with
 And have to submit to
And when I want this
I would wonder
Who would grab the other's neck
For the kiss

I still don't know who would make that move
 Or who could make that move
So I'm begging you to start this cycle
I'm pleading you
I don't want to be the only one with these fantasies

Tell these stories to me
Tell me you've thought these things too
Tell me you know that we're both stuck
Because you know there's nothing we can do
And I know this too

But I'd like to hear you say it
To validate my fantasies, in a way,
Because I'd love to hear you talk that way to me
I'm a sucker for that, you know

But tell me I'm not alone in this
So I'm begging you, I'm pleading you
Tell me I'm not insane for thinking about you
Tell me you have these fantasies too

Fred

Chris McKinnon

Rings around my neck and circles under my eyes
from the map that stretches between us.

Or U Gone for good?
Chinese American in my demeanor
Japanese in my cups but not drinking in the
futon that eats zucchini

Webberville Conference

Chris McKinnon

The halls revolve around my head as I sit feet propped on your dis-
pleasure

and the bobolink that flew as party bob sits grounded
its feathers clipped beneath the gorilla of my dreams in red square

I bow to your waiting Yankee Doodle and that's just dandy

Are you my mentor or my keeper?

The flame burns high for Hi Mae the alpha wolf
son of dawn

RIPPLES IN THE WATER

Joyce McKinley

We stood by a pond that autumn day,
skipping flat rocks across the mirrored water,
creating ripples in each others reflection.
Abruptly, the wind consumed us,
battering our thin sweaters and
forcing chills through our bones.
I remember, you threw your arms around me
to shelter my body from the cold.
It was then I knew I loved you.

It is today I stand by that same pond,
reflecting on the past and wondering...
wondering why you skipped out on me
after battering my body and
breaking my brittle bones.
You forced me to struggle against the coldness
of your hate.
And I had loved you so.

It is now I know I am free,
as I return to the warm shelter,
leaving the ripples behind.

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