

children
churches
& daddies

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scarsuonreppnd

MORNING'S GRACE

PAUL CORDEIRO

I'm not religious,
Yet sometimes I come close
to the feeling of prayer.
When I wake up from a dream
and write down the poem as fast as I can
and somehow it smoothes out in my hands.
Sometimes, I feel it when I sip
and savor the green tea and quiet
that always settles my stomach.
Find words that go down smooth as soy milk.
It's as if I was then older than I am now.
I sit cross-legged on a rolling hill
that overlooks Abraham's and Isaac's camp.
Their pitched tents and sleeping camels
stretch out in the sand.

STAR STUCK, HENRY

PAUL
CORDEIRO

“Sean Connery, was the best James Bond.”
He says it so loudly and religiously
that I cringe as he talks through his nose
of Roger Moore and lovely ladies.
Lonely Henry was Betty Davis’ janitor
at the Durfee Theater for forty years.
Now he just sweeps up part-time
at the cloned cash cow Cinema complex.
I can’t help but look away from him
as one of his aloof heroes would
when his eyes leak pity
like the secret agent fountain pen
staining his work shirt pocket
with hapless blood.

MUHAMMAD ALI

PAUL CORDEIRO

His tongue was the greatest.
Now it plays rope a dope
against teeth and roof of mouth
and words twist out slow
as from a drunk.
He's a ghost of the young man
who playfully taunted and shouted
"I'm King Of The World."
Witless, as his puffy face
behind the palsied hands
fights off Parkinson's left hooks,
he leans so far back
into a plush chair,
that part of him has flown
over the ropes into the next world.
All sparkle and spirit
escaped those knock out eyes
before his cornerman ever threw in the towel.

DEER SPIRIT
DEER DANCER

CHRIS MCKINNON

deer spirit
deer dancer

prancing high spirited
among your companions

the great spirit summons

your brave
beneath hooded eye

your feathered waist shivers

A CHUMASH MAIDEN

CHRIS MCHINNON

A Chumash maiden
cool as water

tiny steps around the stage

fer father sings
for her nest virgin dance

holding a small kerchief like a banner

holding and waving to the wind

her beauty subdues the wind

IF I COULD MOVE LIKE JACKIE CHAN

MELISSA
FREDERICK

If I could move like Jackie Chan,
I would twist ten times in the air then walk up a wall before you could
take one breath;
I would open windows with my forehead and never bother to scream;
I would dangle by my toes from a hundred-foot billboard to make sure
you noticed my legs;
I would hang weightless in a right-snap lunge while a jagged city
sparkled at nightfall;
I would weave your name in the scrolling motions of my hands;
In a dark alley, I would lure our enemies toward me from right and left
then double-backflip onto a fire escape and watch heads knock together,
an old Stooges routine;
I would spin through the stars like a satellite, and, if you cared,
I would catch you out of the sky and lay you on a mountain of pillows,
look deep in your eyes and open my mouth,
and a voice reading lines in perfect English would flow over my lips,
flailing,
praising a passion you have never really shown me,
pouring out phrases you will never translate.

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THERE IS A MINUTE IN EACH MORNING
WHEN THE DAY IS FRESH AND
FULL OF POSSIBILITIES

MATTHEW SHUGART

the monsters of life are the mickey mousers
and game show hosts

they are the same ones who molest the children in
the streets and abandoned houses of detroit

the ones who plant flower beds
that line driveways of houses
across america

the same ones with cars that have
clean air standards
and
office chairs with heat and massage

the monsters of this world
hopeless and sick
believing that there is a minute in each morning
when the day is fresh and full of possibilities

worse of than you and I
it's a minute that many
tend to sleep right through

BITCH

JESSICA ABLUCK

He awoke way before you did

And exercised

Then he made omelets for the both of you

Did your laundry

Did the shopping

Did his paper work

Showed you how to use the goddamn computer

While you screamed at him because you didn't get it

Cooked a stir-fry dinner for you

Picked up frozen yogurt for dessert

And all he wanted to do is check his e-mail for a mere 30 seconds

But you were on the computer

And you wouldn't fucking let him

DELICATE STRENGTH

JEFFREY J. O'BRIEN

A single red rose,
beautiful yet imperfect,
the stem is crooked;
littered with razor sharp thorns,
making her delicate hands bleed.

Its luscious crimson petals
invoke a sweet smile,
exposing her joy,
the joy of helping create
such a delicate yet strong flower.

Why give a rose?
Why scream at the stars?
Why smile?
Why say, I love you?
Why say wow?

Because, it makes you
feel human again,
Because, it just feels good,
Because, it takes less energy,
Because, it warms the heart,
Because, I just want to.

ALLOWING THE CHIPS TO FREEFALL

JEFFREY J. O'BRIEN

Feeling like a fool,
as if she loves me
making a mountain from nothing
i=92ve smothered her fire
as I do everytime.

Love sometimes seems
to be a pointless venture
when we are left alone
and crying.

She might call,
but probably not,
at least the beer will
numb me from reality
for one night anyways.

I return to the dark night
with hopes of never returning
back to the depravity called life
why does everything good turn to shit?

MEETING THE TORNADO

MELISSA
FREDERICK

1.

The girl from Kansas was a mistake,

a cognitive slip so garden-variety
I flush to mention it: a name
scrawled on a vacant
envelope and dropped
in the unfathomable space
between the wall and dresser.

2.

Six years ago saw
my grandmother buried,
calendar blockslike train ties
spreading
eternity between us. Some details

children churches & daddies

are discarded, documents, hair,
the final phone call, a vital element
always misplaced.

3.

Her first name was Dorothy.

4.

My dream tornadoes strout
like corn here in Iowa.
Wide as a forearm, they pitch
and turn, harrowed from hauling
the weight of the world. Inside
are fragments: street lamp,
bed frame, limbs of a red oak
throttling a Ford sedan. A narrow margin
between wind and earth, they gaze
down as they churn, pairs of ruined eyes
inviting me to a fractured table. I decline
by spouting verses, I believe O Lord I believe.

I hide in available basements
with farmers and their wives, waving like fields
in wicker rockers, faces averted
to a sea of surges green and bitter
through high window sills. My nother

finds me. We link hands and run,
fingers pressed as if in prayer
against what's still undone, what
our bodies hold together.

5.

Dorothy taken by the twister, sits up in bed,
all curls and gingham, open like a star,
and looks out her window, where the apnes
have cracked. The Wicked Witch cackles
in green facepaint, peeling under pressure
to resemble ancient canvas, a torn map.
Sneering, she points to a mother and two little girls
dressed for church, the smallest clinging
to her hat with rose and cornflower blooms,
the oldest girl a pinwheel. Her eyes reflect the wall
of wind, Dorothy's eyes. Long ago she released
her bonnet. plain straw, and her hold on her skirts
so that a lacy pair of drawers poked skyward
for every cycle of legs and hair, her face
twisted in a snarl. She plows fingernails
in her sister's fine scal. The hat tumbles away,
and Mother cuts through the wind, avenging
demon with a birch switch. Bitter still, the girl
takes refuge near half a dance hall, where couples
revolve like a missing factory to Jimmy Dorsey's
big band. The girl folds her hand between loose slats
in the fence, and a man smears the back with ink
from a used ticket. She's admissible now, but
before her patent leather mands on the doorstep,
a cross-current drags her to a dinner
where she serves hobos and Bible
study wives. A bug turns over in a ditch outside.
One soldier with head wounds calls her name,
and she rushes to cradle his lacerated skull
in her lap. He asks, "Lady, am I going to die?"

OPERATION BY GOODMAN

CHRIS
MCKINNON

Look up to pink ribbons on the table.
Faith lies motionless, my arm extended.

Volcanoes erupt within the
betadined unopened flesh
limp wrist tithely bound

The sheets drawn, jokes beside
the nurses circulate mash
to the scapelled crevass
to the within canvas of eternity infinity

Song to High May, Virgin
of the Peace Corpse

CONFLICT OF INNOCENCE

THE DIVORCE WARS, CHRONICLED

CHRIS MCKINNON

We divide into camps;
The children drawn as pawns
Schismed, checkmated
Shoulder to shoulder
power engaged
house divided for sale
sign in the front yard

BLUE HERON

CHRIS MCKINNON

Black shadow on a pink sky
Legs extended, silhouetted
hieroglyph

Elusive flight of wondrous bird!
Feathered totem hung by
Norma
above my mother whose feathers meld into the bird above

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