

Maturing

Georgia Ann Banks-Martin
2005 cc&d chapbook from Scars Publications



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Images from Scars Publications:

Front cover: tower at Paradise Island. Page 1: a Canyon in a Utah National Park. Page 4: Ellen at a sunset in Michigan. Page 5: computer-generated drawing of flowers in different colors. Page 6: a black lit bouquet of silk flowers, Champaign, Illinois. Page 6: a house found in Rhode Island. Page 7: a computer-generated image of two sunflowers. Page 10: a bird at el Yunque Tropical rainforest, Puerto Rico. Page 10: two cats Zach and John Galt. Page 10: two cats Kaiser and Sose. Page 10: kiss photograph, titled "Passion." Page 14: 3 images of a red room, modeled after a red restaurant in Shanghai, China. Page 19: collage of images of assorted men. Page 21: image of snow on trees, photographed in Gurnee. Page 22: fall vegetables photographed in Fort Meade. Page 23: Instrument with strings photographed in Kent, Ohio.

What Adeline Sees at Sunrise

4:30

time to apply
lotion
and stroke
the cat
whose affection
is expressed
through half
close eyes

that note every
move as if they
are occurring for the
first time

Then

water the plants
whose long fingers
hang in moon lit

arches like
lace curtains

In another hour
my black top road
will jam

with trash collectors,
fire trucks, cabs,
school buses
and mailmen

All

observed by a
black and white cat
whose interest never wanes



What I Want

What I have are chestnut,
and strawberry red horses
prancing 'cross
someone else's yard.

What I have is a little wooden
sail boat. Painted in rich blues
and greens, sails white and blue.

What I have is a red brick house
whose gardens give birth to wide
leaf plants, and tall trees
whose petite
pink and purple blooms
lightly perfume the curb.

What I want is to be awoken,
each morning, by my chestnut
and strawberry red horses.
Giving me reason to walk
to my picketed white fence.

What I want is my sails to grace
the lake that is my back yard, as
I survey it's wisteria scented
shores.

What I want is my red brick house
to stand in the middle of a man
made heaven and be called home.

Leaving Home

Today I was thinking of leaving
Nothing here to do but re-fight
The frays
That will soon inspire another war

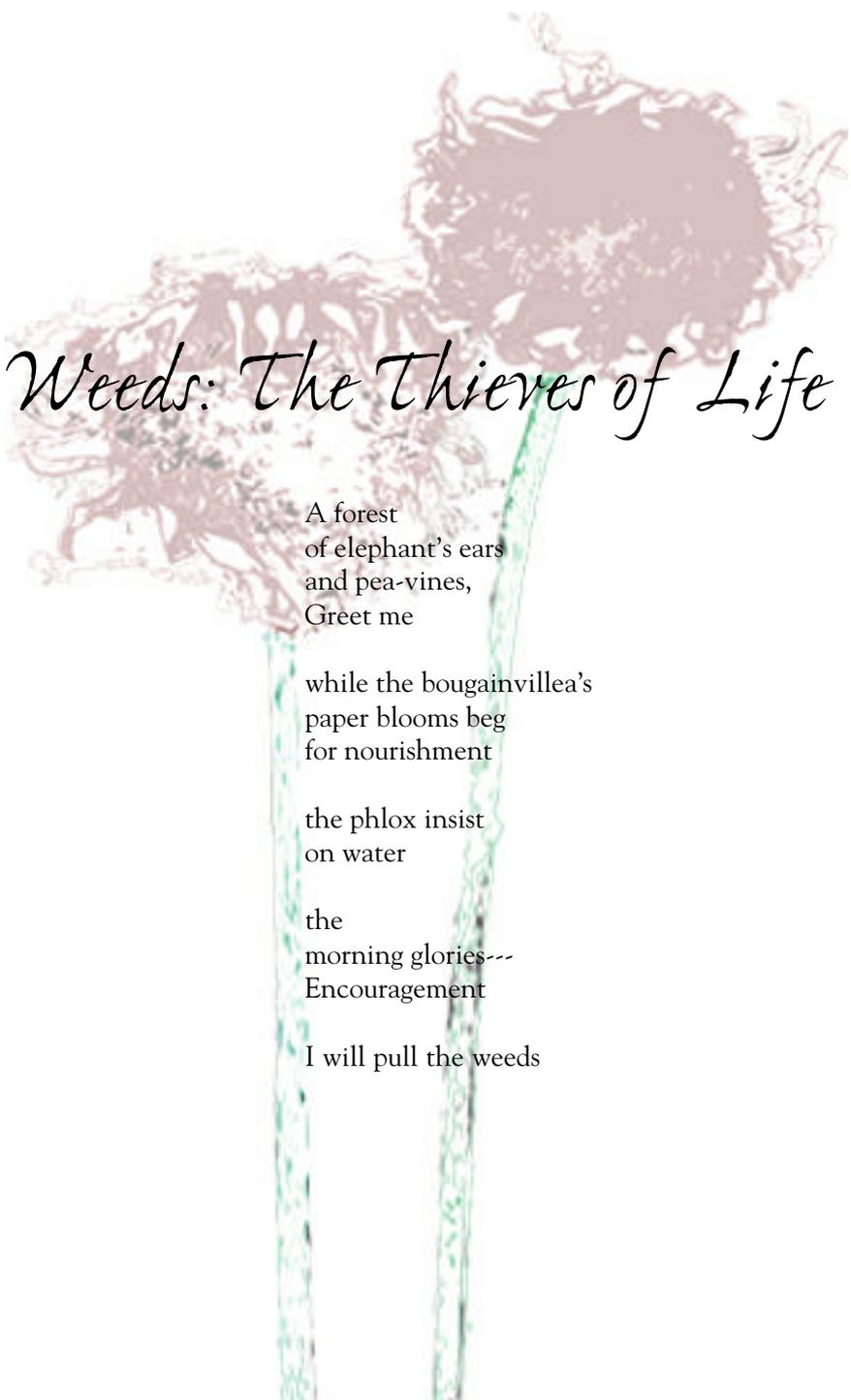
The only hope of escape
Is to bar all access
And cease existence

Let the morning glories,
Wisteria, and
Ivory
Rot the boards
Straggle the doors.

Then someone rang
The bell just to say,
“Nice Yard”
And I remembered

Why I have stayed
So long.





Weeds: The Thieves of Life

A forest
of elephant's ears
and pea-vines,
Greet me

while the bougainvillea's
paper blooms beg
for nourishment

the phlox insist
on water

the
morning glories---
Encouragement

I will pull the weeds

Blue-Gray Colored Crane

You readily
move beyond
barricades

your boldness
causes misidentification
of your
gray and blue nap

secure in its knowing
that no harm will come
today---

My feet find your path
we appreciate one another
and agree that
this is not
my home.

but I leave
forever grateful
for the opportunity
to visit.

Summer Storms

To my dearest love,

A resented rain delayed
my arrival---

In the kitchen I
was charmed by
a bouquet of Vidalia
onions, tomatoes
and oregano,

I inquire
about dinner

but

I'm
complimented
on my tardiness
and lack of interest

served
on previous
days---

Penalized
for having friends
and walking
Mama's dog---

A staccato screech
summoned me
to the bathroom
window
were our pallid
curtains had
become clouds
and our blue walls,
sky.

There, to a pool
of warm water,

I relinquished my hurt---
my haughtiness.

The noodles and sauce
will be fine.



Discontentment in a Perfect Home



I fill my home with songbirds
who speak and chirp



cats run the halls
like children

White gold and diamonds
coil round my fingers,
creep up my arms
and overwhelm my jewel
cases

Silks and velvets hide my body

Delicate flowers grace my interiors
and exteriors

A husband shares my bed

Happiness and contentment
are hard to capture



Exam Day Dinner

There was no kiss
goodbye
or good luck breakfast.

You were too
busy sleeping

When I returned
there was no dinner
no recognition

You were watching
television

delayed by a train
and summer
storm

I have eaten
less for dinner:
The grits
were good.

I Remember When I Became Old

I remember
The day I became
Old.

Not the day my coffee and tea
stained certificate alluded
to an unfashionable number

Nor
The day I wore patches
on my knees and that brown straw
hat with sunflower trim, on my head.

No I became old
when I came to understand
that the new school
was really the old school dress
in retro bell bottoms
and platform heels.

I became old
when I
became
the scare crow from whom
I stole those ugly clothes.

But now I recognize my error
and
I'm going to get young again.

Looking for Myself

My heart controlled what it must
My lungs were dry---and strong but,
There was a dark spot---down near my liver.

It hadn't always been there,
I tried to touch it; it moved.

It was not cancer
But just as deadly.

For years I fought
To repair this place-plaster
It over with a paste; a paste
Made from the soft skin,
Platelets and morrow of conceived
Yet, undelivered creations.

I spent days crying
For others; nights crying for myself.

My sobs so low most never knew.

I walked the stones, the wooden decks,
There my foot steps were heard but
Only in keeping with the rest of the unrested.

Who was I looking for?
The homeless wrapped in black, and white newspaper;
A lost child----

No.

I was searching for me.



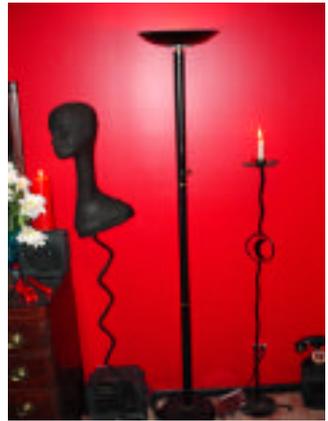
The Red Room

I sit among yellowed pages
that tell, eloquently,
the ineloquent story

of a man who could hear
but refused to listen; a man
whose legs

were broken but walked;
a man who could speak,

yet, hid behind narrators
until the day he entered
this room and painted it
red.



Praying for Patience, Understanding and Grace

Each time you ask for help;
the sullied looks, the eidolons
of bloodless wounds
and other unspeakable
qualms unite
to present scenes
from battles
that I fight,
although, the machines
have been put away.

I still see the bodies
that no longer house
minds
I still feel the hate
that caused
us to fight,
united yet, quarantined.
I still see the face of a man
who called for the death
of nations--and

I remember why we hated
the Vietnamese and the memory
of that war---
and I remember the times
that like me you fought,
although, the planes sat idle

So it is with apprehension
that I listen and,
with faith I pray
for patience, understanding
and grace
each time you ask for help

Cropped Pictures

Pictures are cropped
to hide what you
and I see as we
drive up

Cropped
so
outsiders never
know that the neighboring
lots are decorated
with old newspapers
pop bottles
mufflers,
cardboard
and gray block
buildings;
buildings
used to provide
jobs;
that used
to
provide
china, crystal
cigars, diplomas---

Quality of life
that could be regained
if only someone
knew of their lost.

Nothing

I drive through the city past
renounced homes, enkindled
businesses and allowances---
All curated by insouciance

I drive through a school zone
children run in front of my
car while others play
with the cadavers of previous worlds.

People---children---used
to dream here. Evidence presented
by those above.

When this generation matures
there will be no more dreams to bury.
They will not have learned to dream,
instead they will have learned
to love and strive for nothing.

Teaching

I am tired and angry
Indifference has stolen
my time and lowered
my patience

The paper that surrounds
me is wrinkled
and scarred.

Why can't children be neater?

The news announces
that another building
has been blown away

It goes on to say,
that a politician
thinks he can control
the crime by building
a fence.

For, relief
I turn to my God
and art

The first will forgive
my anger the other restore
my mind

Then I return to the work
of cleaning up the mess

It won't be much of a burden
I will work with one child
at time.

That Didn't Used to Happen

Lately, I cry
at the sight of skeletons
covered with flesh,
referred to as children.

That didn't use to happen

Lately, I cry
when Horatio say,
 Now Cracks, a noble heart. Good
 night, sweet Prince, and flights of
 angles sing thee to thy rest!

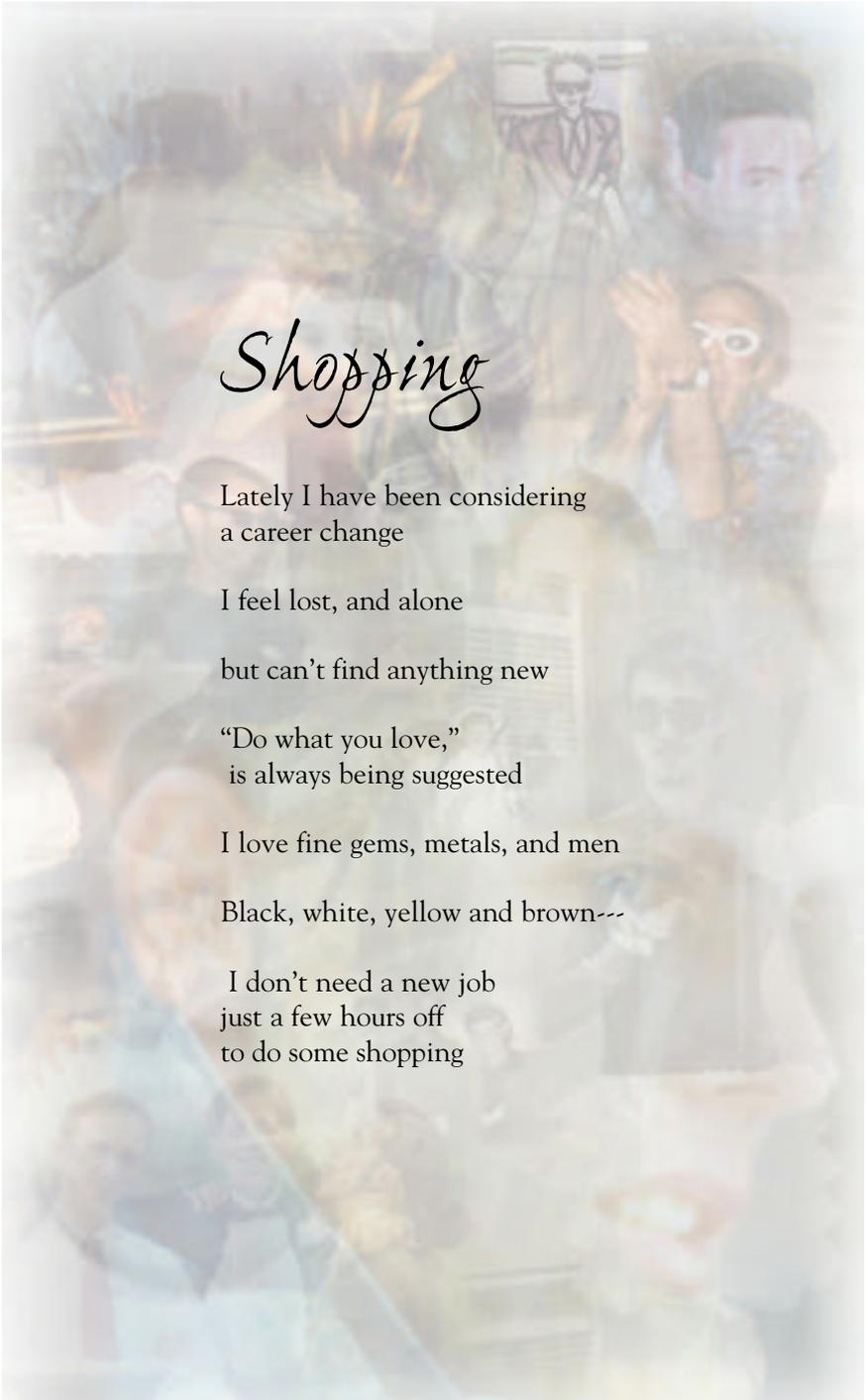
That didn't use to happen

Lately, I cry
over my lost love
I miss his soft skin; the type of skin
a man isn't suppose to have

I miss the smell of his cologne soaked
sheets and the sight of his clothes
on my floor.

That didn't use to happen

but then I've never known
life the way I know it now.



Shopping

Lately I have been considering
a career change

I feel lost, and alone

but can't find anything new

"Do what you love,"
is always being suggested

I love fine gems, metals, and men

Black, white, yellow and brown---

I don't need a new job
just a few hours off
to do some shopping

Homeless Woman and Coat

Yesterday, I notice
a woman wrapped
in a worn quilted coat.

thrown away
due to age,
and lack of care

Today, I sit warm
and fashionable
knowing somewhere

She cries tonight
unheard, unnoticed
because her tears
and that coat
are all she has
and I feel a shamed.

Childhood Memory of Snow

I remember
the blizzards
of childhood
lighting my heavily
draped room,
and nudging
me with their soft
fingers.

Nothing could go wrong
for me on those days.

While the adults
were hopelessly stalled
there were snowmen,
angels and forts
to be made.

Childhood is over
and the playful storms,
like Santa Claus,
don't visit anymore.

Many tempests
call ---yet it's--- not
the same.

'Cause freshly fallen
snow, can only tiptoe
into a child's chamber,
and ask it to play.



Cotton: Fall's Offering

I hate when fall visits
bringing its palette
of yellows, reds and browns,

like bothersome relatives

Along with weariless
winter winds
who treat tree
and thistle the same.

Yet, it brings an end
to the farmer's worry
and smirk at the mention
of the green leaves peeking
through their soft white blankets,

waiting for the October harvest.

Fall doesn't
color a man's field,
so perfectly,
that it favors a paint
by number canvas
or an English rose garden---

But it does bring the warmth
and companionship of cotton.

Strange Music

I hear music each morning;
music that makes no sense.

Vases of dead roses
await their graves
but find jars instead.

All the cars
I thought I might
own pass each day

None of them are as good
as the one I choose.

The sun reflects off
the night's dew
making the invisible
spider webs appear

and touching my golden
skin with the trained
fingers of time brings me to realize

I'm happy with the choices
I've made even though the musicians
of the world don't agree.

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scarspublications

published in conjunction with



**children
churches
& daddies**

the unreligious, nonfamily-oriented literary and art magazine

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ISSN 1068-5154

Editor@scars.tv

<http://scars.tv>

829 Brian Court, Gurnee, IL 60031-3155, USA, Northern Hemisphere,

Planet Earth, Solar System Milky Way Galaxy, the Universe

Freedom & Strength Press



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