

who you tell your dreams to

we were driving down the freeway
you and me in the pick-up truck
and your girlfriend in between
where you could move the gear shift
and it would mean so much to you

and you saw something that you thought
was beautiful, and you said, "look
at the lines, look at how it was made"
and you were inspired by the beauty
of an everyday object no one else noticed

and your girlfriend, riding in the middle
said "that's him, people think he's crazy"
and i thought, "no, it just depends on who
you tell your dreams to" but i couldn't
say it in the truck i wouldn't say it

janet kuypers



self-portrait

victim blaming

by courtney steele

No... I don't victim blame.

Nobody wants to think that they are at fault. When it seems that the accused is too innocent looking, when it seems that the boy next door is the one being accused of rape, it may only seem appropriate to think that somehow the victim caused the incident to happen. And especially when we are bombarded by society with messages that state that if the victim of sexual harassment was wearing a tight dress, was drunk or flirting, then they were at fault, how could we not come to that conclusion on our own?

But just as a burglar has no right to steal, a rapist has no right to rape.

That last sentence is often never considered, however. Most seem to feel that an act of rape - acquaintance or stranger - is just too bizarre to actually have no reason for happening. It may seem too strange to think that a man you've never met before could just come out of a bush, pick you out and attack you. It may seem too strange to think that a friend, or a boyfriend, or someone that you thought you could trust, could turn on you in such a way for no apparent reason and hurt you so much. In this world, things don't just happen - there's a reason for things, and there is sense in the world. Besides, the victim probably brought themselves into the trouble and therefore deserved what they got. If we as onlookers just don't make the same mistakes that they did, we won't have the same problems that they did. In this way unexplainable, traumatic acts such as rape can be explained away and therefore be easier to handle.

This is the line of reasoning that many people go through. If a woman can victim blame another woman, then she can eventually say to herself, "That's never happened to me, so it must have been something that she did. Well, if I don't do what they did, then I will be safe." Since women live with the fear of rape all the time, victim blaming makes them feel better about the irregularities of the world. If a man victim blames a woman, it may be because he can't understand that another man - possibly someone that he knows, possibly a friend - can do what the accused did. If another man has the capacity to do that, than that male onlooker may have that capacity, too. It's a frightening thought to think that you could be a rapist. The man may eventually say, "I couldn't do that, and therefore that other guy couldn't do that. It must have been something that she did."

The reason I find is the most believable is the reason that there is sense in the world and that there is a reason for everything. If there is a reason for everything, then there must be a reason for something as insane as rape - even if the reason doesn't seem immediately

apparent. Maybe, as many come to think, maybe the reason that it happened is because the victim led her attacker on or didn't do enough to stop him. When someone blames the victim, the behavior is then correctable, and when the victim corrects that 'wrong' behavior, then they feel not only safer, but also a better person for correcting their own faults.

I have often found myself victim blaming, and although I may realize that it is irrational for me to do so, I can't seem to help it. What I have noted, however, is that I only seem to victim blame when it comes to myself. Maybe I do that because experiences that happen to someone else aren't as hard-hitting as experiences that happen to yourself. You hear newscasts of people dead in a plane accident, or of people held hostage by irate third world terrorist groups, or of a woman beaten to death after she was raped, but these experiences, possibly because we don't experience them first hand but only hear about them, don't seem to affect us. Sadly enough, when I hear of these experiences, they don't affect me and I therefore don't have to explain them away through victim blaming. But when I live through an experience and it seems as if there is no reason for the violence or the trauma, I can't help but try to explain it away through investigating my own behavior.

When I hear of another person that has gone through a traumatic experience such as rape, I never think that it was their fault or that they deserved it. When it comes to my own experiences, because I have to explain them away (when I don't have to explain away other's experiences), I find myself victim blaming.

I have always been taught respect and kindness for others. I have always been taught to turn the other cheek when I am hurt, and I have been taught to do unto others as you would have them do unto you. Because I possess these qualities, I often have a tendency to think of them as faults and see them as a cause for victim blaming - when it comes to myself.

I was forced into a traumatic sexual experience, and although I had no choice in the matter, I still to this day can't help but feel that there still was something that I could have done. I should have been more explicit in what I wanted. I shouldn't have had so much to drink. I should have seen that he was trying to get me drunk. I shouldn't have been so nice to him. I should have said something afterwards: to him, to the police, to myself. I keep thinking that if I just keep looking over the pieces of the puzzle, something will fall into place and make it all understandable, all comprehensible. I keep thinking that if I keep looking for what I did wrong, once I find it I will be able to explain away what happened.

If I blame myself for what happened, I feel that then the problem is solvable, avoidable, and correctable. It makes my world make sense again.

But the thing is, I can't. I can't try to depend on the myths that surround us to explain away unexplainable behavior. I can't try to hurt myself by blaming myself for something that wasn't my fault. But sometimes that pain seems better than shattering everything I've always believed in.

more than we should have

when i think of bob i usually think about the drinking

actually, i never think of him as drinking
come to think of it
i just think of him as drunk
i can't even remember seeing the drinks in his hand
but his perception of the world is always altered

but someone reminded me tonight
of when he would work outside in the the cold Chicago winters
and he would come back with his moustache frozen
and there would be little icicles hanging
down toward his mouth

and then i thought of
when i waited with him once at the airport
because we were picking up someone
and we sat in the shrimp cocktail lounge
and he drank, and ate, and i waited

and as we left
we tried to pay the expressway toll with pennies
but some of the coins fell into the street
and we had to throw more change at the machine

we paid more than we should have
i'm sure we did

janet kuypers

old things

I find an old suitcase
Containing my life's treasures
I open it and see reminders of
Things that never were
There's my Sluggo doll
Dirty from time and hugs
From my grimy little hands
Lavender and lace
Musty now
Locked up in time
Tattered letters
Written as a child
That were never sent
Lace doilies, yellowed with age
Some torn, some saved
Wash delicately
Happy childhood
Stuck to the bottom
Congealed and matted
With love never given
Throw away when you scrape it
From the bottom
Memories of things
That never took place
Wishful thinking

In my heart
Forgotten in time
Stuck in the suitcase of my mind
Old baggage
Retrieved upon reflection
Reminding me
Of the memories
That never took place

rachel crawford

to the gypsy's dancehall

more than once
i've heard the expression
"good
 in
 the
 world"
describe someone else.

this morning
i woke up.
sur
round
dead
on three sides by drawn shades,

the fourth side
my oft fled
otherworldly
w i n

d o w
to the gypsy's dancehall.

in the last
i'll hear the expression
"good
 in
 the
 world"
describe someone else

and i'll spit
and smile.

doris popovich

the one you always loved

what if you and the one person you always loved
the one person you would always have a place in your heart for
the one that was your mentor
the one that was your first love
the one you'll always feel a twinge of pain when thinking about
the one that was your soul mate
the one you thought of as the one that got away
the one person you have regrets over leaving

what if the two of you were friends
and you thought still that he was your soul mate
and you didn't know what your future entailed
and you wanted to see him because he was your teacher
and you'll always love him
and you don't know what you're hoping for
and you're definitely hoping for something

and then you talk to him
and he says that would be good to see you
and then he drops this bomb,
that he has a girlfriend
and then he says that he's been
going out with her for over a year

and i know it's retarded
but you've never met anyone like him
and you don't know what else to hope for

what would you do then



sheri #1

mackenzie silver

Janet Kuypers

this halloween

this halloween i got a costume together
i wore a black page-boy wig,
a vinyl dress and matching vinyl boots

it was strange for me
i'm not such an outgoing person

and every time i was left alone at a bar
someone would hit on me
usually someone ugly
but i didn't tell them to leave me alone:

i gave them a fake name, a fake number

and looking back, what made the difference
was not wearing the revealing clothes
but wearing a wig, changing my identity

and it's not that i'd do it again
but i must admit
i really like being someone else
just for a little while

janet kuypers



over the glass

the chocolate woman

They gave her a lethal dose of
chocolated
as her gift
Really fine pieces, not
chocolates confected at a fancy farm
not chocolates rustled up on a stove -
O, no -
drooling, sucking, smacking primo pieces these were,
with internal parts
heretofore unknown to
the probing tongue of man
slurpily liquid, dripping down the clutching fingers
yummily gummed together
dark, passionate, bittersweet
like an interracial love relationship
She couldn't stop, couldn't stop
Flopped she across the bed, legs spread
arms flung above her head
inflated cheeks walloping the mattress
while they swallowed up her ears
like a pair of pink fluffy pillows
Before the chocolate's binge -
earlier in that day -
her cheeks had been as dainty as
two small cushions of satchet

nancy l'enz hogan

Alexandria Rand

finest feeling

Drench me
in the finest furs
surround me
in the rarest silks of the Orient.
Rest me in the clouds.
I don't care.
I still contend
that the finest feeling
is laying
with my head
on your shoulder

alexandria rand



why i'll never get married

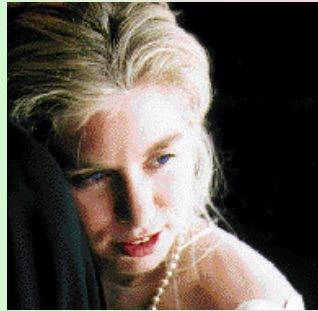
at work we've been looking
for a new employee
we've sifted through resumes
we've interviewed a few

and some were good
some were very good
and we took some time to decide
and then we called our #1 choice

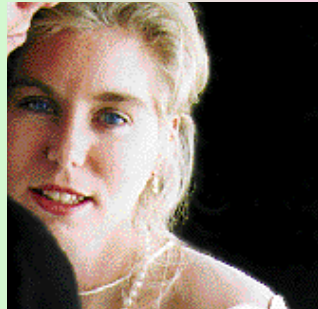
and they said they wanted
more money than we offered
so we said our goodbyes
and we called our second choice

and they said they couldn't work
at such a small place
so someone at work said
we should interview some more

and that's when i knew
at the rate we were going
we'd never find anyone
and no one would want us



sheri #2



sheri #3

janet kuypers

a dream about murder.

by janet kuypers

I had a dream last night, it was different from my usual dreams, usually I dream about stuff that seems pretty real, somewhat mundane and at most usually frustrating. But I don't know if it was the wine I had at the Thanksgiving feast at Rachel's down the block, or if I heard some strange story on television earlier, but I dreamt about murder.

Dave and I were staying at a hotel, I don't know where the hotel was, but it was on a body of water, I think it was a lake, not an ocean or anything. And I remember at some point, it was dawn in the dream, I went for a jog, I noticed two good-looking men outside while I was on my jog, and then I went down the hill to the water. I wanted to jog along the water. But they had it roped off - I don't even know who "they" would be, but the area along the water was roped off, maybe until full daylight, maybe then lifeguards would be there to protect the people. But the point is, I couldn't jog along the water, so I sat down at the bottom of the stairs by the water's edge, right in front of the ropes, and watched the water. And a woman came along down the stairs, and sat down next to me to watch the water, too. I remember thinking that I didn't like her being so close, I like to keep a sense of personal space, but then it occurred to me that there wasn't much space for her to go since the whole area was roped off. And the thing is, I don't even like to jog.

Oh, so anyway, I don't even know why I went for a jog or at what point in time in my dream this jog occurred. But I know that in the dream I killed someone. It occurred before my dream technically started; I don't remember anything about the murder, I don't know if it was me alone that did the killing or if Dave was there with me, all I know is that I killed a guy, I don't know why I killed him, but I killed someone in another room in the same hotel, someone who I didn't even really know. And the thing is, I was wearing fake nails during the murder, or at least that's what I inferred in the dream, because I thought I lost one of them at

the scene of the crime and the main part of the dream was me in the bathroom removing all of my fake nails because they might implicate me in the murder.

So I was removing my nails, they were plastic nails glued on to my real nails, and they weren't even painted, they were still just white plastic. And as I was removing these fake nails I was dropping them on the floor because I was ripping them off so frantically, I didn't want anyone to be able to link me to this murder. So when I got them all off, I was still worried that I had a little glue left on my real finger nails, so I was trying to scrape that off, and then I was trying to pick up all the fake nails off the bathroom floor. They all fell just to the right of the toilet, and were on the tile floor, and I remember as I was picking them up I also picked up a dust ball and a used piece of clear tape. I remember thinking that was odd, because usually hotel bathroom floors are clean, they're cleaned every day. So anyway, I kept picking up the nails, trying to make sure I got them all, occasionally dropping one of them back on the floor because I was so hectic and so nervous. This made the whole procedure take up most of my dream.

Once I had all of the nails, the only thing I could think about was how to dispose of the nails, and the rest of the dream became a frantic effort to figure out how I could get rid of them so that they could not be traced back to me. I thought that I could just flush them all down the toilet, but then I thought that there might be a chance that one of the nails wouldn't go down and would just stay at the bottom of the toilet and I wouldn't notice it and think I was home free but in actuality I'd be leaving a huge piece of evidence in my own hotel room linking me to the murder. Then I wondered if they'd have a way to sift through the sewer water from the hotel, so then I thought that I shouldn't flush any of them down the toilet, but go to various public restroom around town and flush a few at a time.

Then I started to worry that if the nail I left at the scene of the crime took more than just the glue with it, that it actually took some of my nail with it, then I would have left DNA evidence at the scene of the crime and there would be nothing I could do.

And then I started to wonder if I actually lost a nail at the scene of the murder, or if I was just overreacting.

And then I wondered if anyone had even found the dead body yet, all this time laying there on the floor of their hotel room. And then the phone rang and I woke up.

you feel more

it's like this:
run your hand
back and forth
in a line
parallel to
the ground
that's the world
you see
it's that line
now raise
your hand
a few inches,
maybe six
above that line
and run your hand
back and forth
and that is you
you're above it all
you're better
than them all
you can do more
you succeed more
you feel more
and then,
you see, you
raise your hand

a few inches,
maybe six more
above that line
and run your hand
back and forth
and that is
who you love

and when you feel
you're above
them all
how will you
find someone
higher?

janet kuypers



vicki

the cicerone sees a trashed columbus

(for P. R.)

The tour group is amused to see
HONKY GO HOME splashed on the base
Of far-staring bronze Columbus
At the foot of Columbus Drive in Chicago;
The cicerone is caught between
His beloved midquakes and
The jumbled attic of his lore:

The cops gassed us in 1968
When we gathered at the old bandshell,
Long since torn down and marked only by memory,
And we played hide and seek with them
Around the base of Columbus here.

Chicago schools still get this holiday;
The Catholics make sure of that, especially the Italians,
They learned they had to control a piece
Of the great revolutionary ruling myth.

Maybe it can be moved to a safer place,
The way they moved the big cop in Haymarket Square
To an always guarded spot in police headquarters
After we blew it up a couple of times
Or Kosciuszko that they moved across the way
Because they were afraid Puerto Ricans would not respect
A Polish statue when the neighborhood changed.

Maybe they can make it invisible for a while
By re-routing traffic the way they did
For the Roman column that Mussolini gave to Chicago

"In the eleventh year of the fascist era," really,
Check it out; it's less than a mile away.

Maybe, don't laugh, this statue could be art again;
Galleries are full reverently preserved Apollos once
made dickless and noseless by enthusiastic Christians;
Mosiacs have icon dust plaster carefully peeled off
In mosques that were once churches and are now museums.

Of course it is too late for leaden George the Third
Melted for bullets, then fired at his soldiers,
And Kalinin, whom I saw in his namesake city
Now once again Tver, with PUNK ROCK
Chalked on his shoes, may never come back.

Graffitists triumphant, we anti-imperialists,
We anti-racists, we true preservers
Of ecologies and cultures; we caught
A symbol off balance, seized a teachable moment,
And proudly flaunted our black belts
As we made old myths do our will.

The imperialist recessionist goes
"Lest we forget, lest we forget,"
And no one can predict who
Will be the last statue in the park;
We are fused with Columbus, like him
We could not go home and could not
Even if we knew
Where home was.

j. quinn brisben

quill

bricks in my boots walking on pages of gold
i get the call on a whacked mushroom
for the sins of my mother who
only did the washing, drove the brown wagon
that grew daily, the shit hardening on the wood wheels
flame dreams that cracked my neck to look
in the ebbing of silent waterfalls that never foam
to the experience of my dog who would wait
at the glass in the door, and heard her coming
getting up, black tail moving, a shriek,
a total moving of parts, as a day meant a whole week
and we were all glad she made it

ben ohmart

soul
war

She expresses her anger
Deep in her soul
Through poetry and song
The war goes on
It won't let go
The fight is in her soul
She needs the anger
To help her hold on
War.....She can't let go

rachel crawford

irony

The wretched irony becomes apparent.
 You twitch and climb
 through the entangling web
 crawl through the intricate maze
 to learn that you will never
 reach the end
 but a terrifying minotaur
 only the center
 the heart
 where the most horrifying evil preys
 the towering walls grow arms
 an infinite sum of groping
 overpowering arms
 there is nowhere to run and hide
 as the walls stretch taller
 touching the sky
 they creak and move closer
 while the arms reach and pull you
 the tentacles grab you
 and try to destroy you
 the sky turns a deep dark black
 an infinite black
 there is no hope
 the solid ground begins to melt
 as the blades of grass become sharpened
 knives
 cutting
 slicing
 the treacherous teeth of the animal below
 suck you down
 and consume you
 there is nowhere to go but forward
 as you write in agony
 go forward

forward
 with the only hope
 that soon the monstrous
 insidious nightmare
 the desperation
 the pain
 will end

shannon peppers

traveler

by bernadette miller

I am a tumbleweed. Unanchored, I drift about on a desert, clinging to life. Hate being a tumbleweed: melancholy, no purpose. Blown by a breeze, I roll this way and that--unable to avoid the merciless sun, but somehow avoiding the prickly cactus. I'm searching. For what? I only know that by my third drink, I've become a traveler...

A sea gull! Yes, I'm now a sea gull circling over New York City, recklessly zigzagging around smoke stacks. I've migrated from a posh Connecticut town, separated from my flock; their route was unappealing. Alone, I spread my wings and soar, then coast on the wind. Oh, the exhilaration of flying. So beautiful, don't want to stop.

Tired, though. Very, very tired. Must find a resting spot.

I've settled down as a rock near the Atlantic Ocean.

Solid, dependable, enduring. Steve Wilson, the lush, has become a rock. Nothing tires a rock. Having no eyes to see with, I face the ocean stoically, accepting whatever fate offers. My slender, refined ex-wife walks by. She can't see me inside the rock, but her daughter, Jana, can. Adorable six-year-old Jana pauses, pats my shoulder, and whispers affectionately, "Nice rock." I'm stirred by sweet little Jana, feel intense loneliness as I watch her skip away to join her mother gathering seashells. Even Jana can't see me now. Locked up inside this rock, I gaze with sightless eyes. No good being mere background. I'm a traveler...

Could be a horse or cow or pig. Maybe ass--ha! ha! I could wallow contentedly in mud like a hippopotamus, or trot over sand like a camel. Or, how about a watermelon? Cool, delicious watermelon, fertile with seeds, protected by thick rind. People would want me. A nice, middle-aged housewife in Murray Hill might select me at the supermarket. Thoughtfully, she'd weigh me in her steady hands, wondering if I'm worth the price. I'd smile, hoping she'd notice my pristine condition, unsullied by fifteen years of alcohol. Agreeing I'm pure, she'd deposit me in her grocery cart, and serve me at family dinner. The kids would scream with delight, "Oh, boy, watermelon!" I'd be relished--a refreshing treat on a hot summer day. Then, forgotten.

Okay, I'm not a watermelon; I'm a wristwatch. Mr. Moran, my owner, checks me

impatiently as he runs for the train. He reminds me of my ex-boss. Obese and sixtyish, Mr. Moran is a big-shot executive in a super corporation-like the one I used to work for. He lives in a swanky house in Newport, Connecticut, and commutes to New York. Mr. Moran depends on his wristwatch to fill his life. Time is important to him. I'm awed. Being a wristwatch is a heavy responsibility. Responsibility is not my forte. In fact, that's why I quit my prestigious managerial job and started dropping by my favorite East Sixties pub. Don't want people laying their burdens on my conscience; can't take it. Mr. Moran frowns at me as he finally sits, huffing in his seat. He almost messed up his routine and, for some idiotic reason, blames me. Why do people blame me when things go wrong? Why did my parents blame me for being unhappy with success? Demands, demands, demands. That's what started my drinking. Can't stop now. Too late. I'm a traveler...

Could be a canvas. That would be hopeful. A canvas waiting to be filled up: lines, shapes, rhythms, faces. Yes, I'm a canvas wanting an artist to buy me in a supply store in Greenwich Village. He'll take me to his studio with its cheerful skylight, and for a long time I'll ponder the artist while he ponders my emptiness. I yearn for the colors he'll splash on me. He'll give me life. How I crave life! But, must be patient, wait for the painter's gift. He'll make me significant, worthy. I wait. The painter, an intense young man of twenty-five, shakes his head. He's not in the mood today to paint. Perhaps tomorrow. I wait in the darkened studio. I feel forlorn, despite the other canvasses. They're alive; I'm not. For weeks I wait, but the painter doesn't return. Something has happened. Don't know whether he's been killed in an accident, committed suicide, or what. His wife, Louise, enters the studio this morning. She gazes with velvety eyes at the paintings, strokes her husband's work with her long, thin fingers, and sighs. I'm certain something terrible has happened to my painter, but don't want to think about it. Can't be a canvas--too upset, lost heart. The young man seemed so full of potential-like myself at that age--and now he's gone. Not a canvas anyway. I'm a traveler..

A cloud, that's what I am. Floating lazily in an azure sky. Not a worry in the world. Ah, feel utterly content. Don't need another drink. May never drink again. You don't need liquor when you're a cloud. I'll float over New York and watch the inhabitants. Busy, busy, busy. They have so much to do: going to work, shopping, making love, maybe even traveling, like me. It's comforting being a cloud. Free of human pressures, I can descend wherever I like, peek into my favorite pub, and see what my drinking buddies are up to. They're eating pretzels and watching television. Don't like to observe them because I know they're wasting themselves. Makes me uncomfortable. I quickly rise, then descend again to inspect offices, kitchens, tennis courts, hear nonsensical chatter about stock certificates, hairdos, buying a second car. Bored, I retreat into my carefree sky. Don't like it there either; atmosphere too rarefied. Being a cloud no longer ends my

need to drink; feel the desire returning.

So goodbye, cloud, puffy with importance. Must resume my journey, escape this pub with its pseudo-Tiffany lamps glowing over sad-faced couples in booths, my buddies at the bar repeating their maudlin stories to ears that don't listen. The affluent drunks are those in conservative suits with loosened ties. Drunks without affluence are sprawled on park benches or gutters. How lucky I am to be an affluent drunk! Thanks so much, Dad, for making all that money in real estate. Truly considerate of you to insist I attend Harvard, pursue a sensible career like Business Administration. You made sure I did all the right things, yet none of them...

I'm a train. Sleek and shiny. I can toot my whistle and puff steam. Pregnant with passengers, I proudly roar out of Grand Central Station and head toward the Midwest, away from the frantic pace of the city. I'm a train. What freedom! Feel as if I were born to be a train. I fly by the countryside, watch the tracks spinning and weaving like black ribbons, watch the planted fields adjoin and merge, looking alike yet somehow different. Sometimes kids on bicycles wave as I pass, and I whistle at them cheerfully. Oh, I feel so happy being a train. I pass through little towns and big cities. Such variety. I discharge passengers, welcome others; I'm beginning to love them dearly. I obey the engineer's every command.

I go, wait, stop, whistle, steam, grin. Yes, I actually grin, though people in the pub don't notice and wouldn't care anyway. But that's because they don't know I'm a train. Now I approach a ghetto. I sneak through, ashamed as I scan decaying tenements. I see hopeless faces, feel their hate. They hate me because I don't let them rest. I rattle the windows of their obscenely-poor apartments, give them no peace whatsoever. No wonder the ghetto hates me. My tracks always run through the poorest section of town. Not allowed to bother the rich, only the poor. My God, being a train is getting on my nerves! Don't want hate; only love. My parents didn't hate me. Misunderstanding is more apt. That's why, when drunk, I'm careful not to disappoint anyone. I smile a lot, am very accommodat-ing. But, shouldn't dwell on that. Too depressing. Instead I'd rather be a mirror.

My owner, a divorcee, goes out a lot--mostly to bars like my favorite pub, where she picked me up. Judy worries about me, fearful I'll shatter. Gently, she props me on the booth seat. What a soothing relationship we have! As a mirror, I receive much attention. My owner studies her reflection in my blue eyes, discusses her hopes as she combs her dark curls, and I listen.

Don't feel lonely anymore. Sometimes she clowns with me, wrinkling her nose in an amusing way, and I laugh. It's such fun being a mirror! But, after several weeks, Judy regards me mournfully, which makes me squirm. When she first propped me in the

booth, she was excited about finally being on her own, and I shared her delight. Now, I glimpse her terror of the unknown future, and I don't like it. Contemplating the future makes me nervous. She's lousing up all my joy of being a mirror. She's causing me to want to be something else, sending the road again, a traveler...

A Pekingese? Yes, indeed, a pampered pet, that's me! I'm the mascot of a drying-out hospital in Long Island. Feel so protected here: fed, bathed, medicated, given vitamins. Marvelous! In return, I follow orders, am lovable, eager to please. Though the doctors try hard, they can't cure my self-destructive habit. Know they mean well, but I'm beginning to resent their tyranny. In the back yard, a nurse calls me:

"Stevie! Stevie! Come here, you naughty little dog. Come here at once or I shall become very angry!"

Don't know why she doesn't realize I'm running toward her as fast as my little paws will allow. Running so fast, I'm losing my breath, but her yells are getting angrier and angrier. Oh, I see why--I'm running in the opposite direction! I've left the yard and am fleeing down the street, away from that scary institution with its electric-shock treatments. Well, seems I wasn't happy being a pet. No more calling me, overly-concerned nurses. Can't hear you. I'm off on another journey. I'm a traveler...

An old man has bought me at the liquor store. What? Can I really be a bottle of wine? Is that how I end up? Ironic, perhaps, but morbid. He pats me tenderly, gazes at my label, but doesn't see me. He wants to quench his unquenchable thirst. He doesn't care about me. As they say, if you've tasted one drink, you've tasted them all. He staggers from the store, and pauses with his cargo. He's very dirty, baggy trousers colorless, like his life. His shirt is torn. Think at one time it was plaid, but now hard to tell the pattern. Streaked with stains: liquor, undoubtedly, and maybe last week's breakfast. He wanders for awhile. Finally settles on a bench in Central Park, removes me from the paper bag, and takes a long swig. I sense his appreciation, but wish he'd linger more. Savor me, cherish me. He drinks in gulps, as though it were his last chance, and who knows, it might be. Thought I'd be happy being a bottle of wine, satisfying someone's deepest desires. As I watch the old man with his grizzled cheeks and bleary, once-blue eyes, I'm sad, terribly sad. Want to cry, for him and myself...

Why can't I satisfy people? Why can't I ever be satisfied? Hell, I'm damn lucky to be standing on my feet, fumbling in trouser pockets and shoving bills at the skinny bartender. So long, Mike baby. See you tomorrow. And every day after that...

Finally leave the pub, stare at swaying apartment buildings across the street, and faceless people floating past in the rainbowed lamplight. Not a traveler now. Noooo, too drunk to travel. Just groping along, trying to find my way home.

who is at my side

all i want now
is to have a piece of me back
i want to do something for me

and everyone wants a piece of me
and everyone wants my help

but when the chips are down
who is at my side

mackenzie silver

masquerade

You asked me to the masquerade
and I willingly complied
but I'm tired of wearing this dress
for the feathers in my costume
won't stop licking my face
and you cannot see the tears
falling behind my mask -

When you see the price they pay
I'm sure you'll come and join
the masquerade, you say
but the price is too high
for I don't want to wear a mask
with you, and I would only hope
that I don't have to.

shannon peppers

chances one: yes, it's yes

you asked me before
if there are only so many
loves in our lives

if there are only so
many chances
for love

and i said yes

and i know
that you think
it's because of fate
or god
or religion

but i know that
there are only
so many chances
to feel that bond

that there can only be
so many people
who perfectly fit you

who fit like a glove

who want what you want
who feel like you feel
who dream what you dream

you ask me if
there are only so many loves
and the answer is
yes
oh, yes, it's yes

sydney
anderson

Helena Wolfe

no regrets together

how else can I explain
sometimes I look into your eyes
and I see us in rocking chairs
on our porch
when we are old and gray
I see my future

and sometimes I see your face
and I think you're a despicable
useless defenseless human being
and I hate myself
for ever loving you

and I think
I have to stay away from you
I have to

I used to think
that everything would be wonderful for us
that we'd have our white picket fences
that we'd have no regrets together
that we'd love together
for always

and now I look at my life
and wonder what my future holds
and wonder what I'm doing
with him
with us

but I want you to understand
I want the world to understand
that although I'm afraid of my future
I have to live in the present
I have to feel needed
I have to feel loved
I have to look for my future somewhere

I have to do something
even though
some nights I dream of him
and some nights I dream of you

and I don't have the answers anymore
somebody help me
oh, somebody help me

helena wolfe



joe

ice cubes

I wondered if you'd have the patience
to wait for the ice cubes to melt
in time they will

as you sat next to me
head hanging down
you swirled your cocktail glass
the ice cubes crashed with one another
and beads of sweat dripped from the rim
all I could do was sit there
shoulders back
eyes fixed in the wall

I'm sorry

Did I give you too many ice cubes
you asked for them

alexandria rand



sunflowers