

1988

Wineskin, 1988

Eric Richey ed.

WINE SKIN

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Crucified

Until taut muscles tear
And tendons strain
Almost off the bone,
We can never know
The peeled flesh pain
Of that stretching toward belief
Those curled fingers knew—
Closing on nails wet red
With flow and clot
Of pierced hands.

Only sharper truth piercing
That seared brain
Finally brought the voice
Of comfort to those who
Watched in helpless horror.

They still saw anguish
But later affirmation, too;
At this vanishing point
Of all sin's pain.

Ed Higgins

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While He Waits

I. And the frail shells strewn on the beach,
like scattered beads of a broken rosary,
served as polished headstones; each
reminders of a thousand whispered Amens
in darkened gardens.

And the waves caught the moon
like a hawk in flight,
and brilliant amethysts rose in the light,
only to fall crashing to the shore
and join with the beach once more.

II. He stands watching at the gate,
waiting for her
in the wintered eve...
So white and pure...
...With an ache he waits for her.

And she sleeps in honeyed slumber
and dreams of gods and spice and silk.
While the bells toll
for those trapped in the night;
for those left behind,
the mist rolls
like incense into the valley
where he waits.

III. And the sculptured rocks
placed with deft hand
in jeweled sand
like moonlight through stained glass,
over them, and caresses them
like he caresses his roughened palms,
and listens to the songs
of the night.

And he waits for her.

Kristin Carson

You didn't tell me

It'd be like this—

Life.

Cold,

Impersonal—

Frightening.

You shoved me

Here

And you won't

Even

Hold my hand.

Dixie Cochran
Breada Adams

SIT AND SWIM

From afar I gaze upon their coupled pink
Pilgrimage. Two by two of every persuasion, breadth,
Stamp and stain, like beasts boarding the
Ark. Impenitent I watch, knowing their ignorance of
The impending wretched stench, soon to envelop them, the
Feces and urine soaked floorboards upon which they will
Stand. My frame lies reclined smiling in condescension
Of their conspicuous fate, seen from a lofty perch. A
Palm raised to rain's Benign patter and heedless
Movement to unpretentious shade.
Dysfunctional noise enters my ears thrashing above the surface
...amidst black below I'm unbeknownst, even unto myself.
Forceful gallons crush my features pallid. In the
still aqueous black my eye swells, bursts. I
feel myself drifting downward and know
it's because my lungs must now be
completely filled with water.

Kirk Mylander

Sacrifice

- I. Enough of the day
of the typewriters and clocks
and stale coffee.
She pushed back her chair
lit up a cigarette
and punched out early.
- II. The lake
littered with yellow manila envelopes
scattered like fallen leaves...

She dragged heavily on her cigarette:
one for powersuites
another for electric pencil sharpeners
the last for meaningless contracts.
- III. She took off the expensive shoes
and walked around the lake
stepped out of her powersuit
kicked it into the water
and watched it being swallowed.
She threw her glasses into the middle,
and began to laugh.
- IV. She spread her wings
and then she was gone.

Kristin Carson

BADDAYS

yesterday i was mad at the world
today i just don't care
i think tomorrow i'll blow it up
and then it won't be there
days don't always start out right
no hot water in the shower
my breakfast milk just turned sour
fetch me a match
and a fuse to light
i'll blow up this confusion
i hope tomorrow
i'll feel much better
so when the room's not cold and noisy
i will go to bed
and if I wake and the world's not there
i'll pull the sheets back over my head
and hope my eyelids turn heavy
but as of now
i'm wating here
just waiting for a chance to leave
and go to my small, small room
and just
stay there

Ever Camua

I didn't know
that you could hold
a moonbeam or
even a soul in the palm
of your hand;
hands like hands, swinging—
jumping into air, dancing—
what does it matter that the sun
shines or that the clouds
blot the muddy sky, when
we can hold a soul, gazing
at stars we can't quite see.

Brenda Adams
Dixie Cochran

Startling the Trophy

Truth darts

in and out of shadows

stalked

like a coveted prey.

We catch

quicksilver glimpses

startling the trophy

from sacred depths.

When exposed

it thrashes,

fighting for our life

and breath.

Laura Engle

Water

Water, falling

Caressing rock

Feeling the contours

Ignoring the clock

Dripping and splashing

Infinite chaos

Rock being eaten

Forever lost.

Steve Spindler

the emporer's new clothes

one day two naked men come to your door

naturally you are surprised, but being polite

you invite them in

they have something to sell you

“a suit of clothes more magnificent than any other

washed whiter than white, so clean they are transparent,

washed white by the blood of a fresh-killed lamb

(but don't worry, ma'am, we're very humanitarian here)”

you try them on, and even though you don't

see anything, they fit better than any others

“only the wisest of people will be able to discern

the fabric of this marvelous suit,” the men say

you buy it and go outside

a kid with an earring laughs,

“he's naked, he's not wearing anything at all!”

you ignore him. some clothing is worth the price you pay.

Dixie Cochran

If You Were A Garden

by Kirk Mylander

Tom Forester was weeding his garden for agriculture class when he suddenly stood, threw his arms in the air, said, “This is hypocrisy,” and sat down in the dirt.

A patient man, Dr. Fieldman walk over to Tom's garden. Knelt down and said, “Why, Tom?”

Tom held a small dirt clod with one of his gardening gloves. “It's the weeds, Fieldman. I can't tell some of the weeds from the plants.”

“And some of the weeds you can tell from the plants?” Fieldman replied.

“Yeah. The grastic eccentric looks just like grassweed, and totally different from these dandelions. I get most of the dandelions out. That's easy enough. But I can't always tell the grassweed from the grastics plants.”

“So what.” said Fieldman.

“So this is hypocrisy. It's futile. Stupid. If I can't get them all out I shouldn't pull any. It's not fair.” Tom looked up from his dirtclod to the kneeling Dr. Fieldman. “Do you see what I mean?”

Fieldman smiled and said, “No. I see an intelligent student trying to slither out of his responsibilities.”

“No no. Take the idea of it. Dandelions don't hurt things much, but they get pulled out. Grassweed does more damage but usually gets left alone. You see? It's not right for the weed that does less damage to get pulled when the more harmful is left to grow.”

Cocking his head slightly Fieldman said, “Okay Tom, what's the most important thing here? The plants, weeds, the gardener, what?”

“The plants I guess. I mean, I don't know.” Tom answered, still sitting in the dirt.

“How about the garden itself?”

“Huh?” said Tom.

“The garden,” said Dr. Fieldman, “the ground, the soil.”

Tom's face held a confused look. “What does that have to do with the weeds?”

“Suppose you are the earth making up this plot and you have one kind of plant and two sorts of weeds growing in you.”

“Like in this garden here.” said Tom.

“Right, like this one. You're a garden so you want to grow things, right?” Tom nodded. “And weeds keep your plants from growing. So would you rather me pull as many weeds as I can out of you, or none at all.?”

“I just think consistency is the most important thing. If you know good and well you aren't going to get all the weeds out then you shouldn't yank on any at all.”

Dr. Fieldman rolled his eyes. “Sounds to me like you prefer dandelions to the grastic plants.”

“Well, they grow faster, and don't take as much work.”

Looking off toward the science building Dr. Fieldman said, “If you feel that way Tom, let your garden grow weeds. But it will give nothing to reap. And you'll fail the course.”

At this Fieldman stood and walked off toward his office in the science building. Tom sat in the dirt of his garden. He sat holding the little dirtclod, and he wouldn't let go.

of skin and waiting

We undress

in

a slow spiral kiss,

sighing curves

on soft shoulders...

If only

this touch

seemed

now,

less real,

then—

maybe,

I could

believe

it.

Anonymous

Relativity

Consider the dust in the air

Forever floating

Unseen

Pierced by the sun

A million tiny stars

In the microcosm of my room.

Consider space

All its expanse

Infinite bodies

Crowded together

Separated by eons

A million specks of dust

In the microcosm of another.

Steve Spindler

There's been a death.

No one knows

but me.

The last faint cries

were so deep they

did not escape.

The grief goes unnoticed,

unknown,

unshared.

Loneliness is

unbearable

When even colors die.

Sonja Brooks

Testimony

once upon a time

not too long ago

i thought

if you looked hard enough

you might find your frog

an ugly stepsister, i

tried to cut my wrists to fit

my foot into the shoe

(sleeping pills don't

make a sleeping beauty

and even frogs want

princesses)

Dixie Cochran

Infinity

Crickets scream

Eternal pulse

Water nonchalantly

Passes by

Without a turning eye

Wind in the trees

Mixes the air

Snapping and waving

Earthly hair

Planets heaving

Universal course

One great molecule

Where is the limit

What is the source

Steve Spindler

we drift through a universe, unseeing
climb a mountain, catch a bird, put it in a cage
and we praise our achievements.
we don't even know what we've done—
what was so great and wonderful—
it was nothing.

we spin through a universe, unfeeling
glide over treetops, drop a match, start a fire,
and we watched the destruction—
not with sadness—
feel a sense of accomplishment—
are we that cruel?

we travel through a universe, unhearing
down in the streets, throw-away words their only comfort,
and we think we've done something good.
we did nothing to stop the pain—
we did nothing to heal the wounds—
we didn't listen.

i see a universe, full of stars
in the sky, surrounding us, seeing—
feeling and hearing— knowing
what we can only guess at.

Dixie Cochran
Brenda Adams

Ever wonder
if you could
peel
a fat person
like a grape
and find
a slim brown
seed
inside?

Dixie Cochran

Helpless Pain

Temple
Pillars
Cobblestone
Dust in the air
Beggar cringes
Waiting
In a bailing pool
Of frustration
For his verdict
His justice

Steve Spindler

a moral to the story

Once
upon a time...

A bird
sat on it's perch,
singing,
chirping love
for
life
behind
the
chipped paint
of it's
gilded cage.

Bored
and
more than
passingly annoyed,
the owner
killed it.

The end.

Philip Higgins

