

THE PHOENIX

PEACE
TO ALL
WHO
ENTER
HERE

This is the year 2000.

Post Partum

By: a pearl berry

Goodbye meaning hello.
Hellos lead to goodbye.
Never ending cycle.

She tells them goodbye.
Hello old life.
Missing, yet looking to the front
As she wipes the tear
From her ever wettened cheek.
A joy lightens her face.

The missing breaks her heart.
But the longing gives her life.
The old life
Really identical
To the missing.
A masked charade.

All is one.
One is living.
True satisfaction
Means pain intertwining joy.
Appreciation.



Lisa Depler

Tell me True, my White Knight

By: a pearl berry

When the human savage has
Flesh of a much lighter color.
And the search for truth
All a lie.
We feel then we've reached heaven.
What a hellacious sight.

Longing to discover
What this whirlwind is trying to create.
Blurred vision.
Light found somewhere,
But the road leads nowhere.
Seems frightfully dark.

Young hating dark
Where imaginations run wild.
Are we ever young in our age.
God loves the little children.

Still the plight.
Ever facing a fight.
Searching for white.
Still in the night.

Breath of heaven blow on me
Let me smell the sweet perfume.
The essence of a melody,
Breath of heaven, blow. On me
Pour down your potpourri,
Dew drops from eternal bloom.
Breath of heaven blow on me
Let me smell the sweet perfume.

...Lizzie Conrad

The Oldies Station

By: anonymous

I heard a song on the radio,
but didn't catch its name.

It sang of trees in Autumn,
fire gently swaying in the breeze,
and pure December rains,
and budding blooms in the Spring;
they were like a woman long gone away.

I think I saw her once in passing,
but didn't catch her name.

The Living Respond to Death

By: anonymous

She sat on the window sill,
stiff with pain,
her skin burned red and hair sun-bleached white.

Now gone, and the memory follows.

The Dead Respond to Protest

By: anonymous

Did I just fade away?
Fade away and leave you empty-handed?
When you turned back around
my sickbed was vacant, my soul a mist on the floor?

Let me dissipate quickly, quietly.
Let me seep through the cracks in the floor-boards
and don't cry too much for me;
shake out my sheets and lay down to sleep,
while my soul still hovers in your eyes.



Keri Ann Sherwood

Poems

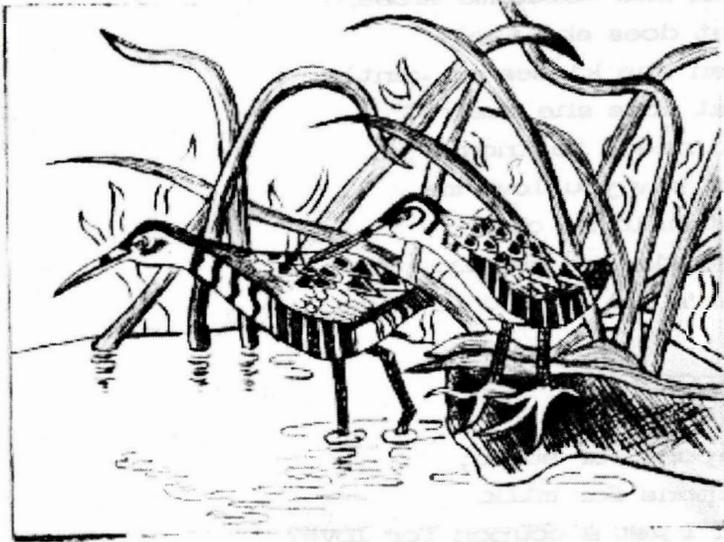
by The Greatest American Poser

Questions Confuse

When she says she loves me,
what does she mean?
When she holds me close,
what does she feel?
When she kisses me gently,
what does she desire?
Who needs to know?
Just say you love me.
Just hold me close.
Just kiss me gently.
That's all I need to know.

Coupon Lovin'

Coupons for sugar,
Coupons for milk.
Can I get a coupon for love?
And can I get a witness?



Encounter

By: Lisa Hendrix

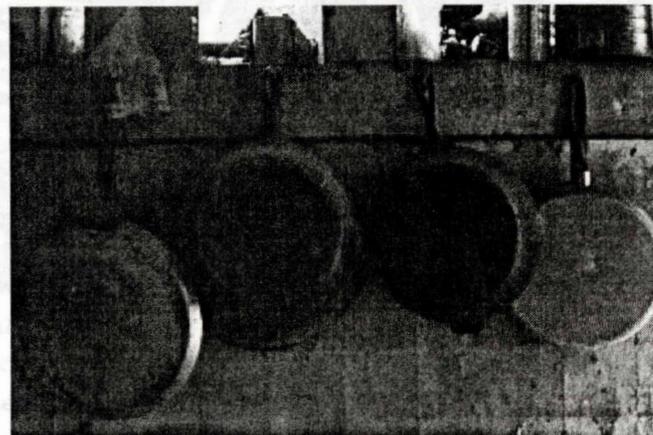
The air was icy and clung to me, sticking to my jacket and scarf and nose. It ruthlessly forced my hands deeper into my pockets with its penetrating, bitter might. I closed my eyes and breathed in through my scarf, as if to forget the world around me was cold. Absently I noticed that the kids at Lizzy's Kinder Kompany weren't playing outside today, and no one but I sauntered down the straight, cracked and crumbling sidewalks toward Oakwood Park. Most days I enjoyed the house-lined walk and liked to look at the old houses and imagine their past and present occupants. But today was different. The fog plagued me, as it surrounded every dwelling with its suffocating hands. The world had become one white, unknown blank, and I hardly recognized it. Pushing forward, I hoped that at least the park would be clear.

Oakwood Park had always been a place of refreshment and activity, where you could be sure to find a rich lady walking her dog, a father and son trying to fly a new kite, or scampering children, building sand castles and running behind bushes to tease their parents. Though here the park was clear of the choking fog, it was still uncharacteristically barren. A

lone man sat on a bench, reading yesterday's newspaper and sipping a coke. I could see several dedicated speed-walkers together, gossiping and pumping their arms in the distance.

Walking to the east, I decided to start my routine out differently. Anxious, I glanced around the Park and saw no one but the newspaper-man and the ladies. I sighed deeply and looked at my watch. 10:15. My usual time, and yet he was still no where in sight. I walked dutifully, automatically down the pretty, white park path. Crunch, crunch, pound sounded my feet as they hit a combination of snow mingled with ice. I was careful to step only where I saw white, as to avoid the patches of shining dark, cement that disguised slippery ice. Soon I heard a walking, crunching sound in the distance, but kept my head turned toward my feet more deliberately than before. Knowing that it had to be him, I imagined the faded jacket, the dark tousled hair that matched the familiar footsteps. I rehearsed the same speech in my mind, praying that I would be able to say it this time, if only this once. He grew nearer and nearer until I knew it was time to lift up my head and gaze full into his lustrous blue eyes. I looked up and smiled, but instead of receiving a smile or knowing look back, his head remained bowed, and

focused on the same snowy-sidewalk that I had just memorized. He kept coming. His eyes remained deeply fixed on the ground. He walked closer and closer and past me. My smile faded. I stood stationary, caught, lifeless, my eyes fixed on the bobbing, bluish form ahead. More quickly than I realized, it changed from periwinkle, to navy, to black, to nothing. Nothing but the cold snow around me, nothing but the sound of my half-noisy, half-lifeless breathing, nothing but the small tear running, falling down my face and disappearing through a small hole in the snow.



Lisa Depler



Dark and Doubt

By: anonymous

From cold rocks I stare out
for the last things untouched by dark
and doubt.

Alone in icy blackness,
I recall faint glimmers of happiness and sad-
ness,
and shadows walking into fog,
all that once was, all that will.

In night, dark and void of light,
the wind whines strains of broken melodies,
and disembodied voices sing
of bliss and sorrow I cannot have.

Never to live or love,
I am chartless,
though I see the North Star dawning.

That Stranger, My Mother

by: Danielle Gudmestad

Yesterday,

I separated myself from who I was to see you
more.

Yesterday,

I was not your daughter but a person who, as
a stranger, looked back on your life

Realizing who you were.

At the time you were bearing the beginnings
of me in your tummy,

You were enduring the sting of a cheating
husband on your back.

Then we left, you and me.

And when you had no money, you fed me.

And when you hadn't been loved, you loved me.

And when I cried out for dad, your heart
hurt for me.

I was made to choose; I was denied; I was
left; I was beaten; I was despised.

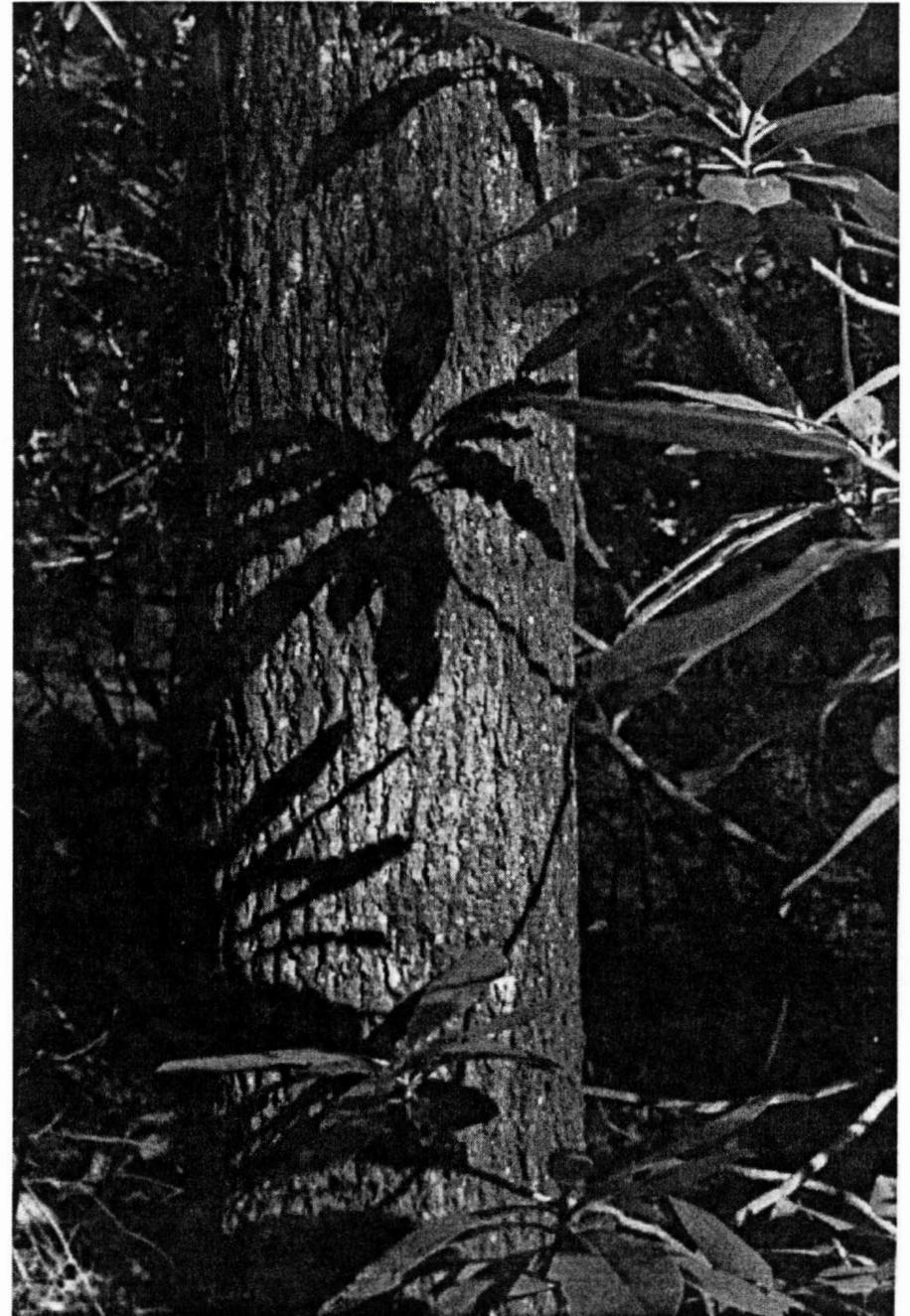
And because I was, so were you.

Yesterday,

I separated myself from who I was,

And I realized all the hard times I had ex-
perienced you had experienced too.

For in your heart whatever they had done
unto me they had done unto you.



Leigh Doty

HUMDRUM

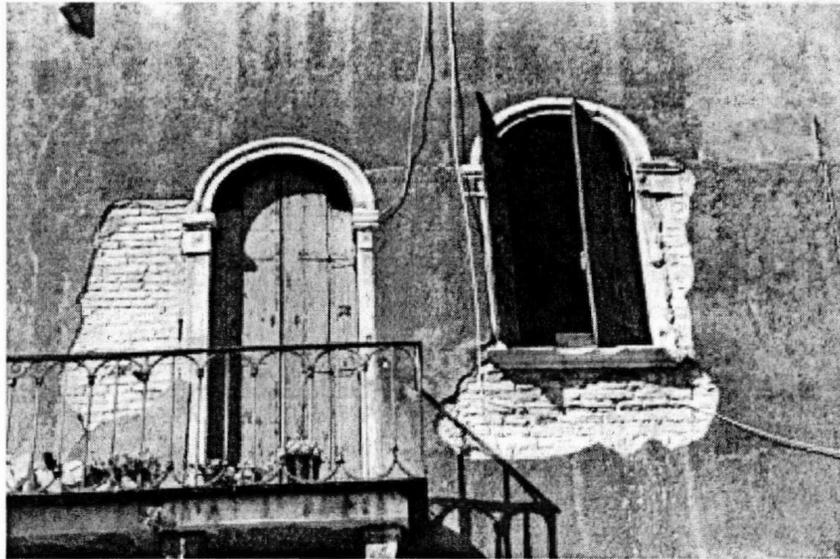
A: What would you do if you were trapped under a mattress?
B: Trapped under a mattress?
A: Trapped under a mattress. What would you do?
B: (Pause) I would make peace with the box springs.
A: You would make peace with the box springs?
B: I would make peace with the box springs. It's the only thing I could do.
A: You wouldn't try to get out?
B: If I could get out I wouldn't be trapped.
A: But you wouldn't know that you were trapped.
B: I wouldn't know that I was trapped.
A: You wouldn't know that your were trapped.
B: So what you're asking is What would I do if I found myself under a mattress?
A: That's exactly what I'm asking.
B: Then my answer is the same: I would make peace with the box springs.
A: You can't make peace with the box springs.
B: I can't make peace with the box springs?
A: The box springs are an object. They can't return the favor.
B: But I'm not doing them a favor. I'm lying on top of them.
A: Exactly. Why would they accept your peace?
B: They can't accept my peace.
A: Exactly.
B: The box springs don't care whether I am lying on them or in the grave.
A: Then how do you make peace with them,

since they are so indifferent?
B: I wouldn't make peace with the box springs, I would make peace with the idea of the box springs.
A: You would make peace with the idea of the box springs?
B: Yes.
A: And then what would you do?
B: What do you mean?
A: After making your peace, what would you do?
B: After making my peace, there would be nothing to do.
A: But you'd be under a mattress!
B: Right.
A: You wouldn't try to get out?
B: Why would I do that? I'm at peace.
A: But that's inhuman!
B: What's inhuman?
A: Staying under the mattress!
B: But I would be at peace.
A: Why would you want to be at peace?
B: Why would I not want to be at peace?
A: Because maybe you could get out.
B: What if I tried to get out and I couldn't?
A: When would you know that you couldn't?
B: I would never know that I couldn't.
A: Exactly.
B: So I would live a life of failure?
A: Not at all!
B: But if I lived trying to get out, and died without succeeding, then I failed.
A: But your life would not be a life of failure.
B: My life would not be a life of failure?

A: Your life would be a life of possibility.
B: My life would be a life of false possibility.
A: Yes, but only at the end, only when you knew you were dying.
B: Then I would be pitiful.
A: But your life would be so much richer.
B: But my death would be so much uglier, so very anticlimactic.
A: You'd have lived with a purpose, with a mission!
B: Then my life would be a joke, a sad story.
A: But that wouldn't lessen the good life that you lived.
B: Of course it would! It would cast a dark light o'er the whole shebang.
A: Not necessarily.
B: Necessarily.
A: But suppose you got out. Wouldn't it have been worth the risk?
B: What would I do once I got out?
A: I don't know, you could run around, and dance and jump, and do whatever you felt like doing.
B: Whatever I felt like doing?
A: Whatever you felt like doing.
B: Why is that preferable to being trapped under a mattress?
A: Why would it not be preferable?
B: Because I would still die, that's why.
A: But this isn't about death.
B: This isn't about death?
A: This is about living.
B: This is about living?
A: This is about being alive, and not just being alive, but doing things with your life.

B: But part of living is dying.
A: And part of dying is living.
B: So you are focusing on living?
A: And you on dying?
B: I am focusing on both?
A: On both?
B: I am focusing on both.
A: Ah. (Pause) So where were we?
B: I asked you why it is preferable to be out from under the mattress.
A: And I asked you why it is not preferable to be out from under the mattress.
B: And I said because I would still die.
A: Ah. Yes. So if you would still die, wouldn't you rather have lived life freely?
B: What's so free about life?
A: Take movement, for instance. You couldn't move much under a mattress.
B: Movement's only one side of life. Under the mattress, I would be freed from movement to pursue the other sides of life.
A: Other sides of life?
B: Other sides of life. Since I couldn't move, I would have much more time and energy to think.
A: What would there be to think about?
B: What isn't there to think about?
A: Good question.
B: Thank you.
A: So you'd be released from a bondage, ironically, in being trap . . . er, pinned under a mattress.
B: ...just as I would be released from a bondage were I to move freely.
A: So why would you prefer to limit your range...
A: Ah. We've been here before.

B: So we have.



Kellye Bumpus

in the light of this feeling

by Rachel Knowles

"I say I'm in love...what does that mean? It means I review my future and my past in the light of this feeling."...Jeanette Winterson

My heart stopped just now, thinking of you
It's been doing that a lot lately,
momentarily pausing between time and space.
Perhaps it's racing to the point of extinction...

maybe that's where we're all headed[]to an
empty abyss

and every once in a while I get a taste of
that possible eternity

I catch a glimpse of it when I recall your
eyes and their absence of me

I can feel it when I look at my hands, miles
away from yours.

You are my eternity, and I am your abyss
you are forever in my heart and on my mind
and I am forever nothing in yours

At what point in this small life did you be-
come this manifestation in my mind?

an attraction evolved into an opus,
a great work composed, but left unwritten,
taking up residence in my thoughts and mak-
ing this mess beautiful

You're tangible only when my eyes are closed...

I question these blank faces I greet from day
to day

what is it like not to know of you?
I whisper your name like a blessing,
as if the mere mention of syllables is a secret
anointment,
an utterance that graces some stranger's exist-
ence without him knowing it
aspiring to beauty and such things as these
and I know I stand out in this sea of strangers
because I know you...
I know of you.



Leigh Doty

Twenty-Three Point Five

By Jeff Harbin

sometimes i hope you can see me
i never want more
make me enjoy a pasture walk
plunge me beneath the cool water
restore me
walk with me aright
even though miles of canyon separate us
i think of you when i am lonely
i think of you in the company
of my enemies
you are with me
you comfort me
we'll sit at a table while my enemies brood
kiss my forehead
make me gush with adoration
i hope you remain as mine
my whole life long

The Dome Model

By Jeff Harbin

The end could fall:
The years, the end, the freedom, the spite,
The loss, the left, the canyon,
Rising inflection, falling tonation,
A spondee of guilt.
All the characters are Greek tragedians,
All the players are lacking in inspiration.
I wonder if they wonder,
Lying awake at night, arms crossed under pillow
Imagining a life without love,
A life with no pleasure,
Just pain enough to ease them into the soothing
arms of Morpheus.
If, upon rising, they see the new day
As a journey of three hedonistic parts:
A quest for love, for thrills, and self-enrichment.
Using all Jacob-trickery to incur
Or invoke the blessing of wealth upon them,
A life with no wisdom,
A circular journey of 24 hours:
Science calls it a rotation,
But these brave tragedians see them as new
days:
How ignorant they are!
Can they not see?
See how they script themselves to failure?
To failure, guilt, tears, faults, open wounds,
How blinded they are to think
The world should change for them!!
This web they weave entangles all-
There is no true love in their love.

All that fazes them is a shot through the
soul,
After which they arise,
As if no lesson has been learned.
What is gained through deceit is lost through
justice.
This law holds true universally-
Its awful truth is inevitable.
How they can escape inevitablity is beyond me.

The words were sloppily thrown on the
pale blue, creased sign, "FREE KITTENS,
PLEASE TAKE OR WILL DROWN, NO NEED OF
INQUIRY WITHIN." Rachel passed by the box,
unmoved by the small short whines coming
from within. She looked again at her shop-
ping list, and planned the route of attack:
first the paper aisle, then the make-up, then
the toilet paper and paper towels, and fi-
nally gum. If no one got in her way, she
could usually finish the whole trip in a
matter of minutes.

...Lisa Hendrix

Dirt in my Eyes

Her eyes bored into mine
Shamefully, I looked away

I knelt in her dirt
one embarrassed to need help
another embarrassed to stoop so low

Having never seen my own floor at such an
angle
why inspect this stranger's to such a degree

Being frail, she needs this care, family re-
sponsibility
I know, for I have cared for frail bodies
past

Her eyes ever steady
frame though fades fast

I watched, soaked in her grime, sickened by my
cleanser
finally the penetrating chemicals clear my
mind
not a stranger but a sister
bound not by this earth but time eternal

She is my family, my responsibility
blood stronger than mere man's tied us to-
gether

Had earthly family not neglected my sister
I would have missed this spiritual kin

My eyes now look back, steadily on her
love now is returned, my disgust scrubbed
away

Joy is now in stripping away her exterior dirt
the process by which my interior filth is made
clean

Our eyes meet finally
mutual respect washes us both

She accepts my help
as now it is freely given.

by: Erin McRae

Clean dishes

I wash dishes

I don't always say a lot
and I rarely prepare the meal but

I wash dishes

I wash them to say thank you
to say I'm glad to be in your home

I wash dishes

I wash them to remember my grandmother
the one with the blunt fingers whose hand still
fits in mine
the one with tapered hands, already neatly
folded

I wash dishes

because sometimes I'd rather do than say
rather roll up sleeves than let loose words

I wash dishes

It's hard not to feel on even footing
as you both stand at the sink
Difficult to be intimidated by anyone
in soapsuds up to the elbows

I wash dishes

can't be too serious, can't laugh too much
with damp shirt and grease under my nails

I wash dishes

and when I pull the plug
more runs down the drain than dirty water
and I am left with more than clean dishes

...Erin Mcrae

THE PHOENIX

FOR STUDENTS, BY STUDENTS

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Changing lives,
one word at a time.

Kellye Bumpus



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All views are those of the writer. If you disagree, submit next year.