




Coraddi



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Coraddi

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Coraddi welcomes all creative or critical work mailed or delivered to Room 205, Box 11, EUC, UNCG, Greensboro, NC 27412. Nonfiction contest deadline is Halloween, 1994.

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Cover: **Karen Ingram:** *Untitled*, etching with aquatint

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ElizabethCore: 220 North, lithograph

Honorable Mention

My (Everybody's) Mother's Big Black Underpants Elizabeth Core

But even though the elastic is loose as the change
you pocket, the briefs still reach over the line
where you left your own mother alone,
cover the small, round depression that could catch
a peanut falling from its shell, looking for a place
to collect salt. I think you thought black
or space as you bought each pair, something
to put sleep to rest. And like a teacher, marked
the color absent, kept it brief, pulled a number
on your hips, with some vague twilit area
codes of lace. Black irony, big, long, wide like
an elephant's foot, and your drawer gripping
more dark drawn nylon wrappers
that cover a range of values. Curtains
of a tenant's space, they pull closed
an open space and shadow the circle of my birth.

Letter to the King of the Sea

Lorrin Harvey

I first saw you at the end
of the pier last summer
as if you were a pale,
sun-bleached sea king, thrown
up by the waves, onto a lounge chair.
You watched the point where the sea
meets the sky and breaks away.

I was the quiet girl, walking
head down when the lights were turning on behind us,
making shadows with the sea oats. My sister skipped
from shell to darkening shell. Spotlit crabs
waved, and backed into shadows.
Perhaps you remember how I glanced
back over my shoulder.

What were you thinking when the wind began to blow,
the lighthouse flashed, the sirens sounded?
All that remained was an unlocked beachhouse,
the cruisers trawling back and forth,
casting circles of light across the water.

You left your forwarding address in the sand,
written in crab-scuttle lines.
May this letter sealed in its green vessel
with a cork and a little wax, reach you intact.
I threw it off the pier you'd been pulled down from
months ago. They say you'll never be found,
but some nights I see your silhouette.

How far you can swim now,
Further than I can fish from this pier.
If you come and tug firmly on the line,
I will not resist, but dive to meet you.

Honorable Mention

All Your Clothes Have Blown Away

Lorin Harvey

Escapes from the clothesline,
they careen to the meadow's edge,
blown by the wind and captured
in trees like strange birds.

What will you do now?
Hide in the dust under the bed
when the men come to fix the sink,
or turn them away, your body hidden,
shy behind the wooden door.
The dripping faucet will keep you up all night.

The dogs groan behind the barn, hungry.
When your friend called, his voice was ragged
as he asked if you'd gotten her letter.
Beyond the ocean of sunlight, by the highway,
the red flag has dropped.

You wait until dark when you see
the clothes ethereal on branches,
flapping their drowsy arms.
Climb naked into trees to retrieve your socks,
the towels, your old blue jeans.

The world is blue and the insects
exclaiming. They too are unabashed.
And on the way back, how nice
the moonlight feels on your skin,
as you carry your clothes nestled in your arms.

Stray Seed
Marcia Cox

When she was a child her mother told her
she must never eat the seeds
of fruit. She feared
the seeds could take root somewhere inside,
could push and shove their feathery shoots
up the latticework
of ribs, and spill
in curls of watermelon vine
around her ears. With every seeded grape
nearly swallowed whole, every
apple bitten too close
to the core, she buried
a child's mute terror within, believed
one morning, she would wake
to the petaled nudge of tight-lipped cherry blossoms
pressed against her teeth.

On the bad days, now, she imagines this is so,
in the painful hours, dreams
some alien seed has pierced the womb
and lodged in the cradle stretched between her hips,
flexes kudzu tentacles as if
to twine throughout the body's honeycomb of cells.
She visualizes this intruder as it grips and climbs
vertebrae by vertebrae up the spine,
its leafy clutch the twinge she feels
in every marrow and tissue
and as if she were an inadvertent Eve, she cries
what did I do? what did I do? what did I do?

She no longer sees the face reflected in the mirror
as hers; it is a smooth flecked pear
marred by its web of faint blue lines
beneath the skin.

As nurses puncture veins, insert IVs,
she feels as if she's trapped inside her childhood dream.
She counts the drops of poison inching
through the needled vines and prays
the poison will seek out, destroy
the seed
before it overtakes the garden.

Cross-Stitch

Marcia Cox

The day your daughter unpacked the linen
I had so carefully tissueed, wrapped in ribbons
I thought of your needle in that long ago summer
flashing gold with each dive through the cambric;
how strands of your hair swung with the movement,
spun webs against your cheeks.
We sat out on the terrace, while the babies slept,
working our threads into patterns,
counting the stitches one by one.

The last summer of your life, sister,
I watched the silken strands flowing out through your needle
into their invisible seam.
We sat out on the terrace while I wept
brushing the thin pale threads of your hair,
counting the fibers one by one.
Near the end, your pattern completed,
you folded your hands and I folded
the linen away:

*Tell me about my mother, your daughter says and I do,
Imagining the needle, I pull you back through.*

On Kersham's Bust of Medusa

Graham Horton

Her head lies on the snakes that were her hair.
The half unfinished stone makes no more stone
of flesh, those serpents stilled. But she was fair
as Venus, once. Her unloosened curls shone
like gold before Olympus, whose angered maids
made transformations. Her pale blue eyes, now closed
by stone, saw all the games that young boys played
for her. But who can say the altered form,
who crept along the darkened caves of Seriphus,
was not still fair? Her stone leavings may have worn
those anguished looks in loving the mother of Pegasus,
who roamed labyrinths so empty, and so dim,
ever hunting statues, and never men.



Roger Goldenberg: *Untitled*, lithograph

Third Place

My brother-in-law speaks of death

S. Greene

My brother-in-law speaks of death in a low faltering voice. As fireman, he chats of wrecks or blazing housefires glibly, but when he speaks of death he circles words round it, and his slow calm voice is soft with tones he seldom takes. The fireman grows calloused to death, its forms and frequency; the man must face the harms beyond the dead: that death in coming breaks a family's home, a child's. So my sister's spouse speaks of death in abstracts, as statistics, not as veils and tears, as if realistic talk of it, unlike a storied burning house, should be concealed, words running rings outside, flames stamped down hiding bodies burnt inside.

Going to the Sun

David Olson

Below Logan Pass the glaciers
had torn great walls in retreat,

the valley's ribs left open
to fill with rain and melt.

My father is buried just East,
where my clan came against this range

and said no further.
We had camped down there,

the tent rattling under stars
in the wind threading through passes.

You slept wrapped in dreaming
of the prairie just ended.

On this journey the world
came out like your clay:

glaze uncertain, colors retreating,
bearing the tectonics of hands

held still to pass
the caress of leaving,

the uneven radius of exploring
the buried left behind,

as though shedding towards
some secret center

smoothed by the friction of going:
a pot like yours

or a life like mine
turning gently in the light.

An Oklahoma Birth

David Olson

Across the hard fields
pearl with sun, crows drag
jagged tracks in the sky
where the summer grass fires
rise in the twisting tornadoes of smoke.

When the fields across the road
burned we stood and watched
the rage taking trees
and boiling the swamp.

Next day, walking the ruined land
of ankle-deep ash we kicked skeletons
of rabbits with small skulls
and the twisting arc of snake bones,
all too slow to escape the purging.

Next year, in the space
left open and rich,
in the new grass of sharp blades
and the red tears
of Indian paintbrush flowers
we found old charred branches,
new home to beetles and ants

who when boring through the dead insides
listened to the winds of the dead fires
listened to the ancient rage whisper: change.

The Picnic

Anne Moore Odell

It is curious the way angels try sitting on the ground with their legs straight out in front and their stomachs folding.

They wiggle and look uncomfortable. They plant their fingers into the ground; they pull out grass,

like the children do, and cry "tornado." At lunchtime, the angels take a little of everything offered

although they cannot chew. Chewing is not like making love which the angels also like to pantomime;

when the angels dry hump it is beautiful and close to life but when the angels chew, it is unearthly. They do it messily,

shoving food through their heads, no saliva, teeth dysfunctional, no esophagus or intestinal tract.

The food stays untasted. The angels fan their wings slowly to keep from floating up; they imagine

they are weighed to the ground. They eat, like the children do mud pies, with little grace.

Second Place

Now

Anne Moore Odell

1.

At the top of the path, you can look down at the entire lake. It is the same size as the huge dining room table in the hotel. The camps around the lake are astonishing. They are so hazardly arranged. They are so durable, so full of hope, to be filled with people born later. Of course, I don't dare reveal what I really think. Why should I? I stand by him, now, on the front steps of the hotel, going to lay down before the lunch bell. Don't we already know enough about each other?

2.

At the hotel, by the mountain lake, the two of us were sitting by another couple under the faded umbrellas. Nearby, a tiny girl splashed in the water. The sky was large with the shouts of boys racing sailboats. I, too, felt that rising in myself. It was noon and like no other. Now, when I sit by him, the vague summers of the past join us and the dishes that rested on the table, the foundation of the hotel washed by the lake. The two of us are astonished by our own thoughts and the scent of the water trees and the summer marigolds is with us.



Billy Hanes: *Untitled*, etching with aquatint

The Yard

Anne Moore Odell

A dog hit by a car dodges past you,
her chest heaved open. Heads hang
off their bodies like rotting buds.
Red flowers mark the unforgivable ground:
lipstick on goat lips. Doctors advertise
new infections, the cows line up
and along the flaming fences, mourning monkeys.
The escapees, the new children, about face
through the invisible gate and you cannot
follow; they are naturalized; they grow
feathers and fly out and up.
Yet you beg the guards. You make promises.
You lick your hide. You set up shop.
You hee-haw, but this is hell, hee-hee.

School Desk
Zachary Mull

Me?

I am the one without memories
with a legacy of scars
I've known dead boys and smart girls
my lines are less deep
my broken ribs, my missing links
Me?

I'm the one with "Fuck" on my face
my wavy grain
I creak and moan
I have no memory except what
you make of me,
my legacy of scars
(and my service to the stars)

Frosted

Matthew W. Bryan

I'm floating angelic
beneath my halo
Looking down into
an aquarian abyss
Occupied by moonshifting
Taurians & the like
Eyes shine ultrablue
from below
I smell
Your soul
Simmering on low
I can taste
ever so slightly
Your mouth
on certain evenings
I could live in there
I know...

Beginning
the gentle descent
I knock my head against
the pillars of your trust
and bleeding
I smile and believe...
Hall light illuminates
Your sleepy form floorwise
eyes half empty
arms in a trance, stretched out
I fall
Dropped like water
into the embryonic
warmness you dilute
In door shut black.

Only in America
Kimberly Holzer

Renegade Driving Woman
hair catching whatever flies by the window
Cat Stevens prodding her along,
"If you want to be free,
be free..."
on fifty-dollar speakers
that give a general idea as to what's
on the radio.
Life is too short to
drive the speed limit in a terminally diagnosed
Honda hatchback
that wants to see the world before
it dies,
opting to bypass
newly resurfaced
safety-enhanced
chicken-fried
I-40 for a
schizophrenic
chronically neglected backroad that only
fools
or four-wheelers
dare cross.
Stops to eat only where
"diner" is spelled incorrectly, and
service
is guaranteed by Wanda, Cookie, or
Mabel.
Where a hearty belch rivals
a three-dollar tip in measures of love.

Everybody knows everyone
except Renegade Woman, and they wonder
why
such a clean, healthy-looking girl drives
alone on this man-eating stretch of
highway. She watches the only
real world
pass by her windows
where good old boys are
where bullshit is fertilizer, and it
smells kind of sweet.

That's the reason.
There's no reason at all.
Started from nowhere
in no direction ended up
somewhere that's not much but it's
here.

A place to idle over a Slim Jim
and trucker's blend coffee, filling
her impatient hunger for
stuff unfit for human consumption.
Another return to the road, and a new
great American nowhere.



Michael Andrew McNair: *Doubt/ St.Salty*, etching with aquatint

Raskolnikov
Colin Mathews

My pellet gun was there in the corner.
I took it and a yellow box of ammo, and
walked out the back door. No one saw me.
In the thick heat of afternoon, my shirt
stuck to me. Past the fence, the canefield unrolled
dry and dusty. I shuffled along, shooting
up little clouds of dirt, until I saw
in Mr. Boudreaux's yard the purple-martin
house. No one would see me behind the
fence. Looking up, I saw one, black against
the white house. I shot him, and watched the
blood wet his feathers. Then, quickly, I
walked home, through the back door, straight to my room
and stayed there awhile, thinking nothing.

Six Haiku

A. Doren

Amid Autumn mist
before morning awakens
Wind caught in silence

A sharp steady hum
breaks the silence of night-time
Cicada, I think

A startled marsh-hawk
winging, takes to flight
a cry from its beak

Beach plum plant in bloom
Black ants scurry to and fro
a Dragon-fly rests

With the day dying
ocean waves rush frantically
toward the late sun

As the sun lowers
I think with melancholy
Ah, it too must rest

First Dead Body
Jennifer Militello

When the nun died
and her body was displayed in the rectory section
of the school,
the girl was led to view it by curiosity, fear,
and the urging of classmates.
She was amazed at the stillness;
it was not the curling of the self
deep in the center nutshell of the body
as in sleep.
This was vacant, empty;
there was no one anywhere inside.

The face of the ded sister
ballooned in her mind
until it pressed to the outside of her skull,
filled her features.
An image stained itself there.
It is me, she thought.
She was lying still, dressed in black;
her hands were neatly folded
across her chest.

First Place

On the Seventh Day

Jennifer Militello

1: the Child

plays with his pudgy hands,
can't see how they belong to him.
fingers close,
fat sausages.
He will learn his skin and toes
belong to everyone else.
He can't understand why
he's not inside those others instead.

2: the Man

wears black pants,
shiny shoes,
irons precision into his shirts.
When he shaves
he sees his eyes in the mirror
before it whitens with steam.
The irises are brown and buffed
like the leather of his briefcase.

3: Louise

eats strawberries for breakfast,
wears open-toed shoes,
paints her toenails red.
She thinks she needs a private cafe,
one for herself;
she loves the atmosphere,
hates the people at the table beside hers.
The men talk too much,
eat scones without delicacy;
the women leave lipstick stains on the cigarettes
crushed out in ashtrays.

4: the Angel
spreads his dark wings.
They lengthen like the shadows
of trees at dusk.
Someone thinks they're the wrong color.
The picket fences around his house
are missing teeth,
smile with gap-toothed mouths.
He's been waiting for the repairman
for years;
a few fresh boards,
a coat of paint,
and the place will look like new.

5: the Parrot
stands speaking on a lampshade,
black tongue lifting like a dry worm.
Everything he says is an echo,
a repetition of the only four words
he knows.
If he was struck by a car,
the only evidence would be a spot of blood
and the feathers in the road.

6: the Woman
knows she swells in places
for a reason,
feels if she hides the curves
no one will know they're there;
asexual is her goal.
She kisses men only when they
ask her to,
never opens her mouth.

7: a God
forms accidentally in the sky,
is shaped in air, clouds,
until the rain falls
and the water vapor disperses,
collects on the ground
in puddles and rivers.
The people know it was
formed by chance,
didn't last,
still lingers in the green moisture
gathered in veins,
dripping from leaves,
fragmented.



Karen Ingram: *Untitled*, etching with aquatint

About the Judge

Dillon Johnston is a professor of English at Wake Forest University, where he teaches courses on British and Irish literature, mostly poetry. He is the founding director of the Wake Forest University Press which since 1976 has been the leading publisher of Irish poetry in North America as well as publisher of French poetry in translation. Author of articles on poetry and a book, *Irish Poetry After Joyce* (1985), he currently is on leave in St. Louis where he is working on a book entitled *The Economy of Modern British and Irish Poetries*.

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