

## THE NAMINGS

Long starless nights when she couldn't sleep  
or violent dreams of fiery swords awakened her,  
the thought persisted: Why? Sweaty noons when sun  
broiled skin, and blistered soles were more painful  
than insect-bitten legs and arms scraped on thorns,  
she wondered why. Why hadn't the serpent approached Adam?

The fruit proposition, first phrased as a question,  
psychologically packaged, was more than a mere exercise  
in temptation. The serpent needed knowledge. Each time  
he tried to sample the coveted tree's prize for himself,  
he was blown to the ground by ferocious winds.  
Already well-versed in evil, he needed facts about good.  
One can't conquer what one can't comprehend:  
a basic principle. He watched the human pair for days,  
knew when they ate and slept, knew when she left  
his hand to stroll with the canine he named "wolf,"  
or fill the flowered air with her lyrical laughter  
at the bouncing creature he named "hare."

The serpent was amused when Adam named him "dragon."  
He was convinced that Adam, made of common clay,  
could be easily mastered. What he didn't know was  
how soon the taster would die as God declared. If one bite  
killed the man quickly, his mate he called "woman"  
would be left. Alive, untainted, Eden hers alone.

She was the one the serpent feared most, the unpredictable,  
the more complicated half of a superior life form.  
God spent extra time making her, used bone not dust,  
added nuances He hadn't used with Adam. If "woman" fell  
after one taboo taste, her riddance would be welcome,  
and Adam could be overcome at leisure. But if, as suspected,  
the punishment were protracted, "woman" would then have time  
to offer the fruit to her mate, and both would be doomed.  
Yet possibly not before useful information was revealed.

The perfect solution. How interesting to learn how long  
God would let them stand. How fascinating to observe  
the thing God planned called "death."

Thus the serpent's leading question to "woman"  
as she stepped out of a cool blue stream: "So the Lord  
said you could not eat from all the garden's trees?"  
She replied that they could eat from any except  
the centerpiece tree. She repeated God's grave warning  
not even to touch it.

(cont.)

The serpent moved closer, softly assuring her: "Oh, no, your life here won't end. That isn't what God meant. That tree will impart knowledge. God just wasn't sure you were ready then to know as much as He does. Now you are. See how perfect, how sweetly inviting is the fruit of this loveliest tree? Made to enjoy!"

Everything visible was beautiful. The tempter was beautiful, his lithe symmetrical body was warm and plump with evil wisdom and evil thirst hidden under gold and silver scales, opal wings, ruby eyes and iridescent patterns on its hide glowing with every color human eyes could see. Unlike the other fauna, he had a dulcet voice. Almost as melodic as God's.

Innocence without suspicion, inexperience without caution, no stores of lore to draw on, no hormones of fear. The woman took what was proffered.

The serpent was still smiling as Adam ran to her side and bit. The humans frowned at each other, disconcerted. They stumbled off to gather leaves to wear.

Afterward, she often pondered God's last visit. The shock, the shame, the expulsion. Now she dropped to the forest floor to rest. Adam picked leeches off their ankles and scratched the rash on his back. He sloshed aside the slime at the edge of a pool, cupped his hands around a drink just as she screamed at a long legless threat crawling toward her on the ground. She struck the hideous gaping head with a stone and Adam beat it dead with a branch. It was like nothing he had named back in the garden. They wondered if there were others. They hurried away.

At last the woman asked her mate, "Why did you taste the fruit? You could have refused, spared yourself."

"No, I could not. God warned us not to eat it. I could not let you suffer the consequences alone. Nor, once having you, my joy, my companion, could I bear to be alone."

(cont.)

Adam began making tools, tilling soil. The woman ground seeds between rocks, hauled water, gutted fish. They had seen an unnamed creature eat a fish, and saw a strange animal kill and consume another animal, startled at the bright crimson inside it. Were they filled with such? Were they meant to eat such? One day, hunger drove them to eat a wounded bird.

Often they wished for other humans to share their toil. They thought God had said something about reproducing them, but His voice was thunder, His eyes lightning, and His words difficult to understand that awful day.

Her lower belly ached again, and once again blood trickled down her thighs. Unlike the gush of red when Adam fell and gashed his shoulder on a jagged stone, she had no discernable wound. She swabbed with moss, hoping her predicament would pass more quickly than the first time, back in that dark vault of rock where they shivered, and were attacked by another unnamed creature--like a combination "bird" and "rat" that swooped at them. Back where everything trembled and rumbled and part of the cave collapsed.

Within the time of Earth's first journey around the sun, memories of God's face and their first glorious home faded and they could not recall some of the names Adam gave the various life forms.

Then on a new day, Adam named his wife "Eve" for she, in her pain, bore a son, and became the mother of all humans. And the world would forever remember.

GLENN HOLLOWAY

913 E. Bailey Road  
Naperville, IL 60565

QUITTING

Tomorrow is the great awaited Smoke-Out.  
Today I'll implant steel rods in my spine,  
Rev up the old will power, chase off doubt,  
Command my grody craving to resign.  
I started on the countdown when I woke;  
My leather case contains ten weeds I broke  
In half. I'll ease up on the dawn's taboo  
Dispassionate and calm, sans ballyhoo.  
These things are simple if well-planned; I'm set.  
Just keep it cool, that's all I have to do.  
Tonight I'll have my final cigarette.

I won't be like those chronic bores who tout  
Their victory over habit's fist. I'll shine  
With sheer example, careful not to sprout  
White wings and halo. Gracious and benign,  
Not spewing sermons, just a quiet stroke  
Of genius in the frenzied fumes. An oak  
Against temptation. --Maybe if I chew  
Some gum this urgency will pass, this corkscrew  
In my brain demanding ransom. Gee, I bet  
Myself I'd last till breakfast. I've had two!  
Tonight I'll have my final cigarette!

Now drop your voice an octave, please don't shout.  
Don't jump ahead so far, don't undermine  
Resolve before you've started on the bout.  
Relax. This system's gonna work just fine.  
When I feel weak I'll give my pride a poke  
And hole up in my office, maybe stoke  
The bod all day with candy bars in lieu  
Of lunch, and coffee-up with stronger brew.  
Relax. And do whatever seems to whet  
Determination. --Is it really true?  
Tonight I'll have my final cigarette?

It's times like this I'm glad I have some clout.  
I'll work alone today. Those sorry swine  
Across the hall will puff cigars and flout  
Good breeding, gesture with their full packs, dine  
Amid the burning of the leaf, provoke  
Me past endurance. Hopefully, they'll choke.  
--My ashtray's nearly full of residue  
And this makes ten. I'll never make it through!  
But hey, hang on, they're halfies, don't forget.  
I'll save my next for someone wearing blue.  
Tonight I'll have my final cigarette.

(cont.)

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Tonight I'll have my final cigarette.

Our head of advertising is a lout  
But all his suits are blue. "Call Mr. Stein,  
Miss Pitts. And bring more cake and sauerkraut.  
Yes, buzz me when he's off his other line."  
Oh, cut the sheep dip, rise above the hoke  
And pull the act together. Guzzle Coke.  
Get hiccups. Faster! Eat that cold ragout.  
My stomach's rolling like I'm getting flu.  
Well, that would do the job. I've never yet  
Smoked then. With luck, pneumonia will ensue.  
Tonight I'll have my final cigarette.

Now see? It's not so bad, this rendezvous  
With grave decision. I've pulled off a coup  
To free this realm of nicotine. My sweat  
Has made me strong. I'll rule the corporate zoo!  
Tonight I'll have my final cigarette.

--Glenn Holloway

GLENNA HOLLOWAY  
913 E. Bailey Road  
Naperville, IL 60565

Quitting 2.

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(Form: chant royal--60 lines, iambic pentameter,  
turning on 5 rhymes throughout, ending with an envoy.)

### THE HUNGER MOON

Summer is sweet on the tongue,  
soft on the shoulders as kachina clouds,  
unlasting as the corn god's shades of green.  
Yesterday when the sun centered on my roof,  
the red-tailed hawk reeled around  
the hot glare forcing shut my eyes,  
tightening his circle and pouring down  
his cries on my doorstep.

He is back with the dawn. Down and down  
he hurls his keening like splinters of cold.  
The hawk is a prophet of the hunger moon--  
a time of no more corn,  
a time when the deer go far,  
leaving no tracks to a place no man finds.

None of us will starve, not even the hawk.  
For me, famine is of the spirit  
while the body fuels on dried fare,  
and the only sweetness comes in jars. The wings  
are first to wither, then the deep singing.

Someday I will follow the hawk. I will climb  
past mounds of dead-gold buckbrush.  
My foot will rattle shards of ancient lava,  
startling a lizard into the dominion  
of beak and talon. I will face the she-wind  
angering in the cinder cones, prying  
at broken shadows of the sacred peaks.

There in the secret heights I will master  
the proper maintenance of wings.

--Glenna Holloway

THE REACH OF SONG, 1987; The Diamond Muse Award,  
1990; DEAR MAGNOLIA, Grand Prize, 1991; POET, 1992;  
RED MOUNTAIN REVIEW, 1995.

1500 A.D., ANOTHER ATLANTIC CROSSING

The dream-- or was it weariness and wine  
Inventing scenes of gargoyle fantasy?  
Convulsing heart, an ague in the brain,  
Cathedral bells and stabs of fiery tongues,  
Vignettes of naked natives, cursing Spaniards.  
Canary Island trees kowtowing west  
Like supplicating crones, trunks forming arches,  
Hair flung down foretelling the ground--  
That vision loomed so many times before,  
Asleep, awake, a simmer in the soul.

Half-thoughts in swirling idiom, a stew  
Of Latin, Portuguese, Castilian steeped  
In seaman's argot. He wondered where he was--  
Back in a yawning cradle, child again,  
Or ill across a horse ignobly sprawled?  
The Admiral, rising, bumped his head; the dusk  
Revealed his place. His hands reflexed, he heard  
The linking metal, felt its weight and wept.

The caravel was under way across  
A bias-running tide. The bulkheads groaned  
Disrhythmically; he languished on his bunk  
To drain the tankard pressed between his palms,  
His hard-won palm-lined shores lost from his grasp.

The captain of the ship released his bonds  
Which he, Colón, the colonizer, true  
To God and Sovereigns, loftily relocked.  
Let Isabella witness this injustice;  
Chains would be his scepter, calumny his crown!

By day, his silence broken only by  
His iron expletives against the rails,  
He watched the tropic birds dive whitely hungry,  
Longed to hold a quadrant to the sun.

The caravel embraced the blue winds-- his.  
His route, his reckoning, unknown before  
He shaped the course. Now every idle sail  
In Christendom would fill with jealous greed  
Of westward-bearing amateurs who sought  
The East, the scoffers and the scholars who  
Believed but had no spine for unmapped risks.

The monarchs would restore his station soon.  
 They must! His words would open, clear their eyes.  
 He would return; his mission was Cathay  
 And still Cathay: This salt of Genoa,  
 This commoner who lived by wool and wits  
 And charts to touch Cipangu's fringes, claim  
 Them for Castile, was Destiny's own son  
 Ordained by God. He would not founder now  
 So close her gold reflected in each stream.  
 Next voyage, her silk and spice, her lace-carved tusks  
 And more would ride his holds low in the sea.

By night he made the stars his rosary,  
 Lamenting long to heaven's porchlights, pride  
 Still preened, comparing all his griefs to Job's:  
 And did I govern badly? Providence  
 Almighty was my guide. What choice had I  
 But execution of insurgents who  
 Defied the law? The gall of Bobadilla  
 Seizing private papers! And my house!

The captain was uneasy in these waters;  
 He sought and took his prisoner's advice:  
 "Northeast to catch the stronger westerlies.  
 This time of year Madeira is the landfall--"  
 The only words Colón spoke on his journey  
 Of degradation back to Spanish judgment.

The Admiral of the Ocean Sea could walk  
 The quarterdeck between arrested sleep.  
 He thought about how knowledge changed a man.  
 While proving others wrong, teredo worms  
 Of error/doubt could enervate his own  
 Accepted stock. But one thing never changed:  
 The Evil One beset all chosen men  
 Proportionate to greatness. Take the jinns,  
 Those cursed spawns of Islam loose on earth  
 To foul supplies and water, cause a plague  
 Or agitate the settlers' discontent.  
 Or pour malevolence in ears at court...

Misfortune falls on triumph like a fever.  
 Nor yet is either over, guiding angels...  
 I rally at this wrongful bitter dose!

How much is music, key lowered now,  
gone minor again, flowing that little groove  
where pain runs convex to the surface? How much  
is the glint of crystal hung from mirrored arches,  
barely moving with audience breath,  
striking flints in his pale blue eyes?

He is a prophet. Forecasting ruin, forecasting  
rain, predicting your heartbeat, willing it,  
playing your spine like a keyboard, electrifying  
your long red guitar strings. He compresses  
a grain of hot salt in every pore, starts  
small internal combustions, all pistons at odds,  
then one enormous turbine synched with him,  
generating enough current to throb down  
the marble columns, revving the riderless carriage  
outside the fourth dimension, holding a seance  
with Gabriel and Gershwin, Debussy and Berrigan.

His grin is sudden, mocking. He flats his fifths  
and goes south on a short bridge, tootles  
to the carved unicorn, blows out the chafing dishes  
along with the illusions. And for a jigger of time  
you can stand it, fill your lungs on the afterbeat,  
see that he's nothing but a trumpet man,  
not a sorcerer, not a fakir  
pulling the cobra out of your basket.

He is a child. Blowing bubbles of light,  
expanding the spectrum,  
merging with bobbing sixteenth notes. He is  
imperial Rome, an announcement of gladiators,  
Caesar chariots, a boast of soldiers,  
an ancient fury. He is Africa. Black hunter cry,  
leopard stalking, impala bleeding, eyes looking  
out of water, eyes burning, curling edges of night,  
smoke rising, winding winged scales,  
sucking back into his bell, recycling.

He slams a fist in your throat, turns you  
on a spit and hamstrings you with blades of ice.  
He hustles the horn, wrestles it,  
mistress and mentor, a panpipe saved by his kiss.

Feel the sound, mama? He's concentrating  
on all your edges now, honing sharp sharper,  
quivering on a sill to otherwhere, retiring  
to a glistening waver pulsing between turquoise  
and green, hanging on like dying gills.  
A trumpet man, mama, more lives than a cat,  
more wind than a Texas twister.

(cont.)

You used bad materials to start with.  
All the wrong components. This soft flimsy stuff  
won't hold up no matter whose brand.  
There should be building inspectors for such things,  
an edict declaring them purely esthetic,  
utterly nonfunctional. fireproof. Not

I never dreamed there was activity  
up in that little back room or that you were  
creating something in the closed dark.  
Once I opened the door by mistake  
and thought it a closet where you kept  
old outgrown loves on their way to the Good Will bin.

We had so much in the other rooms there was no time  
~~there was no time or reason to wonder~~  
or reason to wonder what was happening up there.  
The suddenly it was finished,  
glazed with gold and set with jewels. your most precious  
And you, raging, dragged it out for confrontation,  
warped and crazing, collapsing on its base.

Didn't  
Don't you know?

No ~~an~~ idol made of used flesh and blood  
can't support the weight of worship  
until after death.

Complete Woman, May 28 - June 2 ✓  
Purification, June 23 - Sept. 15 ✓

THE IGNIS FATUUS

I

Men marvel at her hair, corona bright,  
the color of a waning winter moon,  
for she is strange and wild, a child of night  
who loves the swamps where twilight lurks at noon.  
I followed her until she disappeared  
through sedge and slimy pools of brackish black;  
she always raced ahead where ravens jeered,  
past dying pines and past the diamondback.  
She led me faster, luminous and lithe,  
through devil's darkness cleft with wisps of fire.  
Behind me came another...with a scythe...  
but still I stalked her in footprintless mire.  
Men say her eyes fluoresce with blue-green flame.  
I must embrace her once, must learn her name.

II

Come searcher, learn the real will-o-the-wisp.  
Come slog among mutated mud-grown trees  
and wait for wind's unwinding snake-tongue lisp  
to wrinkle stagnant water near your knees.  
Here, latent night seduces natural time  
though fronds of sun still penetrate tall ferns,  
while strangler figs and chokeweed greenly mime  
your myths and struggling gods, your snarled concerns.  
Again illusion spreads elusive light,  
a solar trick, not what you risked to see.  
Stay braced for total dark and call it right:  
the ignis fatuus, lure's apogee.  
Hold fast to scientific explanation  
as lambent flares ignite mind's conflagration.

III

Old Jonas knew the country called "Big Deep"  
that muddied up the margins of two states.  
He served as guide for forty years to keep  
adventurers from snakebite/quicksand fates.  
Then Jonas went off fishing. New teams tried  
to cross the slough, explore the worst quagmire.  
Three members wound up hurt, another died.  
When Jonas heard, he vowed not to retire.  
He knew the jack-o-lanterns danced out there,  
those freakish flames that made men lose their way.  
He knew the legends, knew the truth to spare,  
enough to be the expert of his day.  
Still, men pursued the elf fire, watched night burn...  
till legend won. The guide did not return.

form: Shakespearean sonnet trilogy (42 lines)

## LIFE IN THE CHOIR LOFT

Mr. Cowper waited for the quotidian mouse run across the pipe organ console's sharps and flats. Maybe staying on the black keys was a rodent game, or maybe the creature sensed vermin were more unwelcome on white. The sooty little offense always scooted between Cowper's practicing and the chime music broadcast, a noon tradition. People likened his winged arpeggios to angels blessing the town.

Cowper was sure the mouse was female, personifying grayish women skittering across his path, too bright-eyed,<sup>next line</sup>/pointy-nosed, whiskery. Like soprano soloist Letty Long, always wanting to rehearse, leaning her discordant perfume over him, always bringing him sticky cake and something in a bottle for her throat.

Cowper caught the mouse once in a trap that broke its tail. The cheese was gone. The mouse must have flicked a triumphant parting gesture, then snap! Cowper was pleased with the crimp in its impious arrogance. But when he felt its warm squirm, its scrabbling claws, he dropped it like a live coal. He saw it zip under the organ pedals, followed eye-level to poke with his umbrella, causing a bass eruption that jammed city hall's switchboard with queries about the unholy racket emanating from the church cupola. Cowper needed a sedative before his own ganglionic halls rang again with cherubic chords.

Forthwith Cowper pledged himself to rid his space of intruders, doubtless plural by now. Twenty-four years he had played there, the nervy mouse for six weeks, bolder every day, avoiding cunning devices guaranteed to dispatch, frolicking around janitorial efforts and congregational input, even Letty Longnose's homemade poison. He devised a new approach.

He filled a solitary Monday morning with Bach and righteous resolve for dealing with pests. Suddenly a chuckle escaped as Cowper's thoughts covertly included Long Letty and two flat tenors.

The swell diapason rattled the rose windows, the flute tremolo segued a stringy dirge, then silence. Mr. Cowper adjusted his 39-cent dust mask and poised one classically trained hand. The trespasser appeared at 11:57, defying toxic treats, defiling the keys. Miss Mouse. Cowper fired his Mace.

Jan. 1997  
edited

MAJOR RHAPSODY IN C-SHARP MINOR

You didn't expect him here  
with silk hangings and life-size classic sculpture.  
He made no entrance, he suddenly was  
onstage, easy as moonlight, fitting with fountains  
and topiary as if here was always his place.  
But the way he moved and smiled, you knew.  
You knew he was a trumpet man.

Son of a thin ragged line inhaling used smoke  
mixed with applause to blow from rubber cheeks.  
Son of the hard-molded case-followers,  
those rolled-up bus riders  
down the stretched, streaking nights, closing  
their painted eyes, seeing brass hanging over them--

begging to be snatched and hidden  
for a night or two of peace, watching it  
turn to an armored snake in their jealous hands,  
hearing it tongue out tarnished laughter  
on three ribs, belling out morning and a hangover  
in some town they mispronounced.

You didn't see this loose-angled one pick it up.  
The instrument came like quick cell division  
from his lip. And the sound began:  
uncoiling slow, coming for you, crawling  
into your head, changing the texture  
of your bare arms. You know that sound, mama?  
Nothing as simple as ever-popular heartbreak  
or phantom train whistles. Nothing  
as explainable as a tenor sobbing Eili, Eili

or wild animals moaning up the moon. His eyes  
ignite and lightning arcs from his hair,  
striking the conductor zapping it  
into your gravity center. The sound, mama,  
leaching tones out of the caryatids,  
out of your wine glass, rearranging molecules,  
making them glow like neon fog, fulminating  
red and purple, alive like magnified ocean drops.

(cont.)

DESERT ODYSSEY, FEBRUARY, 1991

This endless sea is dry, its wavy crests  
designed of sand, its granulated tides  
eternally unscheduled, owned by wind.  
Or gravity when overburdened heights  
slide down a concave swell. And now disturbed  
by men in motion and their weaponry,  
A mortar shell will spew a mighty splash.  
A hole fills up like leakage in a bilge.

Could be the desert has its own Poseidon.  
And if he chose this realm for peaceful rest,  
his hideaway for secret meditation,  
he's now incensed at savage noisy lights  
that rip the dark and craze the blistered sky.  
If so, this god must be enraged enough  
to pour his bile on mortals setting fires  
that char the clouds, and blasts that crater hell.

My own seaworthy ship: a tank with eyes  
to leap horizons, pierce the dark and relay  
images Athena couldn't conjure up.  
My crew is trained but none is battle wise  
like those Odysseus commanded once.  
I make myself no such comparison,  
no hero. No enchanted sojourns, nymphs  
or ogres-- ah well, maybe counting colonels--

My Army unit got called up and here  
I am, late of a college classroom where  
I taught the classics: Homer, Virgil, Dante,  
themselves no strangers to the Fates and war.  
And like all men who fight on foreign ground,  
I wonder when I'll see my wife and home.  
Professional professor, weekend soldier  
for years-- no incongruity in that--

If one exists, it's in the harpist there  
on my right flank, the best damn driver here.  
A tank-jock's normally a tougher cut  
than he who plays as if retained from childhood  
to grace Hellenic halls and royal feasts  
with Meneláus praising his sweet hands--  
those proven hands that bully steel and heat,  
commanding his big thunderbitch with verve.

Deployed in battle line, my bulky fleet  
of blunt and roaring vessels sailing sand  
is on alert. Our thermal sights blip full.  
Identified as enemy, I still  
beg instruments for every shred of knowing.  
These guns make pale Lord Zeus's lightning bolts,  
make trash of other tanks. Our radios  
have words. The column is approaching fast.

I give the order to destroy the targets.  
Incredible the way our rounds locate  
their marks, make tracks and turrets flash and soar.  
Grey-eyed Athena gasps, her aegis high  
above the rubble, sending us a hawk,  
a grey-backed raptor screeching victory.  
Her cloud expands more slowly than our eyes.  
My crew exults in scores like arcade games.

In thirty minutes, wounded men arrive.  
Elation dwindles in a grinding pall;  
we watch as one man fumbles on his way  
as if to hide a pistol in his sleeve.  
On closer look, he holds his severed arm  
and dies beside my tank as others groan.  
Two more make wine dark seas with their own blood.  
Iraqi armored troops, surrendering.

This ocean's wretched wrack clings to our wake  
as silica Poseidon watches, waits  
astride an Arab horse or camel hump--  
avenger riding on the tidal dunes  
and hard-caked flats nailed down with light.  
Without a trident, does he wield a spade,  
this unknown deity whose spleen we rasp?  
What sacrifice will he require of us?

Back on patrol at dawn, the goddess glows;  
Homeric rosy fingers earn their poems.  
The crews are sobered from the bite of combat.  
Now, animated sights demand decisions.  
The shapes we read are not precise enough  
to leave no doubt. But if we wait too long  
then we'll be in their range. Commanders all  
have grappled this chimera in their crows.

"Sweet Jesus, Cap'n, time we oughta shoot!"  
my gunner cries, a blond Telémañhos,  
his tongue undone, his trigger in control.  
The radio confirms no other tanks  
of ours are in this sector. No more choice,  
our time runs out, I order the attack.  
How many gods and men have we provoked?  
Please my dear God, don't let us torch our own!

As images explode we hear the news.  
An error. Static, curses: "Hold your fire!"  
We hit two U.S. tanks, off course for hours.  
No one survived our deadly friendly blasts.  
I must not break, must keep my men from breaking.  
Penelopes must learn they wait in vain.  
And who explains such useless costs to them?  
And in this world, who can explain to me?

"Before the end my heart was broken down.  
I slumped on trampled sand and cried aloud,  
caring no more for life or the light of day,  
and rolled there weeping, till my tears were spent."  
--The Odyssey, Book IV, translated by Robert Fitzgerald

A REASON IN THE WORLD

Once Mama goes  
I'll use up the chicory and sorghum, swap  
the Mason jar of Kennedy half dollars  
for green rectangles, get in the pickup  
and just drive. I'll swap steep gravel roads  
for fast interstates. Joe-pye weed  
for squared lawns and scalloped bushes.  
Coon dogs belling in the gap for traffic pulse  
and streamers of light like music I can sing.  
I'll drive until I find a reason  
to stop or a reason to turn around and come back.

Wet tires sizzle, heatless. My rhythm sometimes  
fades like the station the radio loses  
on the way. The next state's too-early frost  
is a ditto of ours, limp crops leaning  
like lines of ragbag refugees from some new war.  
Old stores with gritty sharecroppers leaning  
over Pepsis and Moon Pies. Me,  
separate as the lone gas pump out front,  
not wanting to explain my hurry, not knowing  
the lyrics to "Where you headed, stranger?"

Away from you, I might shout. Away  
from what I know and don't know. Away from  
familiar nothing to maybe only different nothing  
that just replays in another key.  
I'm after live songs, trumpets, guitars enough  
to fuel my tank to Chicago. I'll sleep  
under sheet music, inhale hot jazz for lunch  
and wind me in a gospel-slapping choir robe.

Practice runs I call these Sunday goings  
and right backs. Short rolls on the treble staff,  
quick upwardly mobile riffs on a limited scale  
and down again. Mama's not gone yet.

But I've taken the whole trip  
on so many midnight turntables, her words  
on my back like a hand-me-down coat  
that weighs too much and warms too little.

Today I found a forty-year-old road map  
in Mama's Bible, the highways traced and dated  
with quarter note rests all the way to New York  
in red. And by a different, dimmer route,  
all the way back in blue. She never told me that.

It's all the magic horn, mama, that golden fetish,  
possessed and possessing, that haloed concubine,  
caressed and polished, surrounded with plush.  
And you-- chapped, smacked,  
earning your master's degree in martyrdom,  
sewing clothes out of mill ends,  
that eternal alloy suspended between you  
even in bed, that icon he hocked once  
to buy you an emergency doctor in Dayton.  
And you sold your mother's ring to get it back.

And the man, mama, with the hard mouth,  
dead weight in the bus seat, little slivers  
of life telescoped in battered cases  
under collapsible stands. Trumpet man.  
Pitched all shades and angles like shadows,  
worse for women than drifters. Gone too high  
too often, a pile of singed feathers  
dripping wax on the downers, always patching  
to fly one more set too near the sun.

Was there a man at all?  
Or just a flared gold phallus that seduced you  
and crammed you in the gears of a music box  
on wheels, hurled you across the bad-weather map  
into broken-john motels with lint bedspreads  
and the boozy corners of never-quite-level halls  
full of lurching bodies and bad acoustics?

Tears emptied, he mounts the god syndrome  
like mercury, surpassing sound, no longer  
protoplasm and metal but some new alchemy  
entering the last panging tunnel you sealed  
and secured. Driving deeper, blowing down  
your barricades like Joshua,  
peeling off new notes like bright blisters,  
exorcising the orchestra, resolving  
each chord with light. Nebulizing fire.

White consumes you, turns you immaculate,  
unhurting anymore. The trumpet  
fluoresces like his phosphorous eyes,  
confetti light orbits his head.  
His image blazes beyond seeing.

You open your eyes as the waiter pours champagne,  
hear something shut like a latch, focus absently  
on an alabaster herald you hadn't noticed before.

ADDIE AT EIGHTY

Glenna Holloway

It's hard, she said,  
always being so damn grateful  
for snow shoveling  
or getting a couch moved or rides downtown.  
Afterwards I knew she was scolding herself  
for getting crotchety.

Once she told me how  
some nights she'd think  
about white lightning--  
the kind the old sheriff used to make  
and stash away for years to mellow.  
You knew it never had dead birds or frogs  
in it and wasn't colored with tobacco juice.  
It was a kind of slow pure white  
that takes some of your breath away  
but leaves your tongue intact  
and contents your throat and gut  
like a good honeydew melon only warm.  
That's how it oughta be, she said,  
to grow old.

## DESERT ODYSSEY, THEN and NOW

That endless sea was dry: its wavy crests  
Designed of sand, its granulated tides  
Eternally unscheduled, owned by wind  
Or gravity when overburdened heights  
Slid down a concave swell. Or when disturbed  
By men in motion and their weaponry.  
A mortar shell would spew a mighty splash.  
The hole filled up like leakage in a bilge.

Could be the desert has its own Poseidon.  
And if he chose that realm for peaceful rest,  
His hideaway for secret meditation,  
He's still incensed at those first noisy lights  
That ripped the dark and crazed the blistered sky.  
No doubt the god remained enraged enough  
To heap more bile on mortals who set fires  
That charred the clouds, and blasts that cratered hell.

My own seaworthy ship: a tank with eyes  
To leap horizons, pierce the dark and relay  
Images Athena couldn't conjure.  
My crew was trained but none was battle-wise  
As those who followed brave Odysseus.  
I made myself no such comparison,  
No hero. No enchanted sojourns, nymphs  
Or ogres-- ah well, maybe counting colonels--

My Army unit got called up and there  
I was, late of a college classroom where  
I taught the classics: Homer, Virgil, Dante,  
Themselves no strangers to the Fates and war.  
And like all men who fight on foreign ground,  
I wondered when I'd see my wife and home.  
Professional professor, weekend warrior  
For years-- no incongruity in that.

And always on my right flank was the harpist,  
Young and handsome, best damn driver there.  
A tank-jock's normally a tougher cut  
Than he who played as if retained for life  
To grace Hellenic halls and royal feasts  
With Menelaus praising his sweet hands--  
Those proven hands that bullied steel and heat,  
Commanding his big thunderbitch with verve.

Deployed in battle line, my bulky fleet  
Of blunt and roaring vessels sailing sand  
Was on alert. Our thermal sights blipped full.  
Identified as enemy, I still  
Begged instruments for every shred of knowing.  
Those guns made pale Lord Zeus's lightning bolts,  
Made trash of other tanks. Our radios  
Had words. The column was<sup>209</sup> approaching fast.

I gave the order to destroy the targets.  
 Incredible the way our rounds homed toward  
 Their marks, made tracks and turrets flash and soar.  
 Grey-eyed Athena gasped, her aegis high  
 Above the rubble, sending us a hawk,  
 A grey-backed raptor screeching victory.  
 Her cloud expanded slower than our eyes.  
 My crew racked up their scores like arcade games.

In thirty minutes, wounded men arrived.  
 Elation dwindled in a grinding pall;  
 We watched as one man fumbled on his way  
 As if to hide a pistol in his sleeve.  
 On closer look, he held his severed arm  
 And died beside my tank as others groaned.  
 Two more made wine-dark seas with their own blood.  
 Iraqi armored troops, surrendering.

Back on patrol at dawn, the goddess glowed;  
 Homeric rosy fingers earned their poems.  
 The crews were sobered, combat had its bite.  
 Then, animated sights required decisions.  
 The shapes we read were not exact enough  
 To leave no doubt. But if we held off long  
 We'd be precisely in their range. Commanders all  
 Have grappled that chimera in their crows.

"Sweet Jesus, Cap'n, time we oughta shoot!"  
 My gunner cried, a blond Telemachus,  
 His tongue undone, his trigger in control.  
 The radio confirmed no other tanks  
 Of ours were in the sector. No more choice,  
 Our time ran out, I ordered the attack.  
 How many gods had we provoked? I prayed:  
 Please my dear God, don't let us torch our own!

As images exploded we heard words:  
 An error! Static. Curses. "Hold your fire!"  
 We hit two U.S. tanks, off course for hours.  
 No one survived our deadly friendly blasts.  
 I could not break. I kept my men from breaking.  
 Penelopes were told their wait was done.  
 And who explained such useless costs to them?  
 And in this world, who can explain to me?

Last year I had a letter from the harpist.  
 Like mine, his children dreaded further war.  
 My students asked unanswered questions daily.  
 What Muse would guide us through the final course?  
 We studied Homer's "man of many wiles."  
 And could he in the end persuade himself  
 Of what was justified? What learned or gained?

Like why we're here to do it all again?

## DESERT ODYSSEY, FEBRUARY, 1991

That endless sea was dry: its wavy crests  
 Designed of sand, its granulated tides  
 Eternally unscheduled, owned by wind  
 Or gravity when overburdened heights  
 Slid down a concave swell. Or when disturbed  
 By men in motion and their weaponry.  
 A mortar shell would spew a mighty splash.  
 The hole filled up like leakage in a bilge.

Could be the desert has its own Poseidon.  
 And if he chose that realm for peaceful rest,  
 His hideaway for secret meditation,  
 He's still incensed at savage noisy lights  
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 I was, late of a college classroom where  
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 And like all men who fight on foreign ground,  
 I wondered when I'd see my wife and home.  
 Professional professor, weekend warrior  
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 Than he who played as if retained for life  
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 Those proven hands that bullied steel and heat,  
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 Identified as enemy, I still  
 Begged instruments for every shred of knowing.  
 Those guns made pale Lord Zeus's lightning bolts,  
 Made trash of other tanks. Our radios  
 Had words. The column was approaching fast.

I gave the order to destroy the targets.  
 Incredible the way our rounds homed toward  
 Their marks, made tracks and turrets flash and soar.  
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 Above the rubble, sending us a hawk,  
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 And who explains such useless costs to them?  
 And in this world, who can explain to me?

Today I had a letter from the harpist--  
 Who earned a medal in a later battle.  
 His children fear he'll leave them for a war.  
 My students ask unanswered questions daily.  
 Muse, tell me of the "man of many wiles,"  
 And could he in the end persuade himself  
 Of what was justified? What learned or gained?  
 Must we go back and do it all once more?

--G. R. Holloway

DESERT ODYSSEY, FEBRUARY, 1991

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designed of sand, each grain a seed  
eternally unplanted, borne by wind.  
Or gravity when overburdened heights  
slide down a concave swell. Or when disturbed  
by men in motion or their weaponry.  
A mortar shell will spew a mighty splash.  
A hole fills up like leakage in a bilge.

Could be the desert has its own Poseidon.  
And if he chose this realm for peaceful rest,  
his hideaway for secret meditation,  
he's now incensed at savage noisy lights  
that rip the dark and craze the blistered sky.  
If so, this god must be enraged enough  
to pour his bile on mortals setting fires  
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or ogres-- oh, well, maybe counting colonels--

My army unit got called up and here  
I am, late of a college classroom where  
I taught the classics: Homer, Virgil, Dante,  
themselves no strangers to the Fates and war.  
And like all men who fight on foreign ground,  
I wonder when I'll see my wife and home.  
Professional professor, weekend soldier  
nine years-- no incongruity in that--

If one exists, it'd be the harpist there  
on my right flank. A tank-jock's normally  
a tougher cut than he who plays as if  
retained for kingly halls and wedding feasts.  
Old Menelaos heard no sweeter hands--  
those proven hands that bully steel and heat  
to make a better driver than the rest.  
He guides his bitchy thunderdog with class.

Deployed in battle line, my bulky fleet  
of blunt and roaring vessels sailing sand  
is on alert. Our thermal sights blip full.  
Identified as enemy, I still  
beg instruments for every shred of knowing.  
These guns make pale Lord Zeus's lightning bolts,  
make trash of other tanks. Our radios  
have words. The column is approaching fast.

I give the order to destroy the targets.  
Incredible the way our rounds locate  
their marks, make tracks and turrets spin and fly.  
Grey-eyed Athena gasps, her aegis high  
above the rubble, sending us a hawk,  
a grey-backed raptor screeching victory.  
Her cloud expands more slowly than our eyes.  
My crew exults in scores like arcade games.

In twenty minutes, wounded men arrive.  
Elation dwindles in a grinding pall;  
we watch as one man fumbles on his way  
as if to hide a pistol in his sleeve.  
On closer look, he holds his severed arm  
and dies beside my tank as others groan.  
Two more make winedark seas with their own blood,  
Iraqi armored troops, surrendering.

This ocean's wretched wrack clings to our wake  
as silica Poseidon watches, waits  
astride an Arab horse or camel hump:  
Avenger riding on the tidal dunes  
and hard-caked flats nailed down with tons of light.  
Instead of a trident, does he wield a spade,  
this unknown deity whose angst we rasp?  
What sacrifice will he require of us?

Back on patrol at dawn, the goddess glows;  
Homeric rosy fingers earn their poems.  
The crews are sobered from the bite of combat.  
Now, animated sights demand decisions.  
The shapes we read are not precise enough  
to leave no doubt. But if we wait too long  
then we'll be in their range. Commanders all  
have grappled this chimera in their crows.

"Sweet Jesus, Cap'n, time we oughta shoot!"  
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The radio confirms no other tanks  
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Please my dear God, don't let us torch our own!

As images explode we hear the news.  
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Penelopes must learn they wait in vain.  
And who explains such useless costs to them?  
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## EPISTEMOLOGY

After you fulfilled all I could wish,  
making me think humans were never evicted from Eden,  
I suddenly told you: this continued moment,  
this ongoing now-- is the essence of epistemology.

Not expecting philosophy in my arms,  
you made an uncertain sound, and I replied  
against your skin: this is the purest knowledge,  
because of how we receive it, where it comes from.

Holding you after hunger is quiet reveals more  
than things spoken. Blood cadence at rest says  
what no written language can. Words are clumsy,  
threadbare. Now I feel your thoughts as they form.

You tell me you sensed we were talking  
before I broke the silence. So much hovers between  
slow breaths, beyond what voices trivialize, what tongues  
have betrayed, what dictionaries can never define.

Your yes presses closer. Love's lore originates here,  
a long languid synapse arising from where we live,  
this tranquil time and place  
where flesh and being distill truth.

Where we know what needs knowing. We know.

--Glenna Holloway

GLENNA HOLLOWAY  
913 E. Bailey Road  
Naperville, IL 60565

FRONT OFFICE DRAGON

My job is to keep  
you waiting,  
telling you sweetly  
my boss is in a meeting.

My job is to keep  
advising you  
he'll call when he can.

My job is to keep  
(as we both know very well)  
you from getting to him.

My job is to keep  
only if I succeed.

## HOPI HOMECOMING

Miles fry under our wheels  
and slough off. The drought is worse  
than I thought. Crops are gatherings  
of desiccated crones leaning on each other  
rattling death wishes. The racing shadow  
in the dry washes and high basalt roadcuts  
is my bus from Cleveland. I can  
participate in its cubist performance  
by holding my magazine up to the window  
though no one else would notice the shade  
of difference I make in one small square.  
Out there the shadow-bus composes  
its true image, compressing its length,  
recoiling from desert and heat,  
rising taller to look back for its lake.

Blue Corn would smile at the analogy--  
that smile that begins at the left  
of her mouth and leaves a luminous aura  
after the rest of her face has forgotten it.  
Odds are she'll be at the bus stop  
with the want ads and the Appaloosa instead  
of the pickup. Hell, a horse'll feel good  
between my legs after steel chairs  
and seminar stools. The horse and I  
will be in sync before we pass First Mesa.

But can I interface with my Badger Clan?  
I'm like this bus-- speeding a new highway  
still sticky-- a late model vehicle of alloy  
containing other lives besides. Which one  
am I? Somewhere is there a spirit me  
beyond the smoky abstraction the sun reveals?

Blue Corn, my love, you write happy  
from your mother's Bear Clan.  
You too are no longer programmed  
by kachinas. When you dance I know  
your eyes are uncloudy beneath the mask.  
Most of you belongs to me  
but the foot, the drum, are your own.

Can you make any part of me whole?

--G. R. Holloway

GLENN HOLLOWAY  
913 E. Bailey Road  
Naperville, IL 60565

### MILLENNIA

The magma cooled and centuries of seed  
Arrived in birds, by tides and tropic gales.  
Some sprouted, slowly changed the island's hue.  
Rain washed the crater slopes, began to feed  
Small pools as trickling run-off turned to swales.  
Varieties of natant larvae grew.  
The germinated coconuts spread shade  
For ferns. Sun warmed the germinating glade.

At last a human population came,  
Attracted by the verdure of the shore.  
They found no snakes, the native geese were tame.  
Despite fire-streams, good fishing, fruits, and more  
Insured their stay. They gave the place a name.  
--But Pele loved her Eden best before.

--Glenna Holloway

## NARRATIVE IN WHITE

Arctic people have hundreds of words for snow--  
nuances of texture, depth, duration.

My middle America snow is deep chalk dust,  
prairie pages of the she-wind's diary.  
She doodles idly, sometimes erases her secrets,  
terracing, pot-holing, building dunes.

An old metaphor, the snow as an open scroll  
for a poet's musings. But this is not my tale.  
A used quill lies on the river bank  
where mallards write their journals  
in precise graphics.  
A raccoon's symmetrical syllables run bias  
from pine margin to margin. Varied versions  
of blue and gray underline each entry.

I trace fox printing half a mile. The fox  
hunts and pecks, rhythmically punctuating  
with his nose. The theme, ancient  
as the mouse, is polished, proofed,  
sentimental quotations deleted.

The next page bears elongated strokes,  
emphatic periods of a cottontail.  
Over here-- a sudden cursive shift,  
then wider spaces between its dashes. I expect  
the paragraph to be followed by the fox.

The plot changes. Hawk wings interject  
a brief sweeping signature.  
In an uneven indentation  
the rabbit's sentence ends abruptly.

I retrace my rough scrawl  
across February's broad shining sheets,  
pondering how many small dramas my eyes missed.  
Trying to recall the Inuit word for bloody snow.

**GLENNNA HOLLOWAY**  
913 E. Bailey Road  
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SHOWING CHICAGO TO BAUDELAIRE

You were always attracted to city nights, monsieur.  
I own a copy of *Les Fleurs du Mal* in French,  
ripe with urban musk, erotic alliteration, the patina  
of impacted space. This should have been a good venue  
for your verse. Too bad so few people came  
to the reading. This venture leaves me broke, Mr. B.  
Leash your strophes, hang your demons backstage;  
you can walk the Loop with me and Jack Daniels.

Lake breezes flutter the curtain of Diesel fumes,  
not a smell you would know. The phallic towers  
of the powerful probe the high haze, challenging  
low-flying angels. You can see the aura of millions  
of lives for miles offshore-- part light, part heat  
and motion. The old termagant's broadened  
since dragging her ragged petticoats through black mud,  
Indian twilight and the evil stink of skunk cabbage.

Michigan Avenue fires millions of rounds  
of electric white ammo from oblique angles.  
You can't escape the shrapnel of light, incendiary  
shards of it, imparting no illumination,  
no warmth you can hold, sucking out what you hoarded.  
Infecting you with a virus that keeps you  
coming back for another pelting, another piercing.  
--Do you wear a wry smile, Mr. B?

Now we're in the outback, still in sight  
of magnificence--magnanimity--maggots.  
The lower level is pocked with puddled reflections,  
shimmering shades of lust and logic, business  
as usual, obligatory beauty. The trumpet  
in that storefront retreat is tonguing out blues--  
a color, a condition. Some of the mop-and-dust people  
rehydrate inside, jockeying their barstools, betting  
on hot-lipped riffs to move them higher.

Giant tools are at rest, teeth slightly bared.  
The metal traffic never stops; the motorized moving  
from somewhere to otherwhere scores the dark,  
never out of reach of hands that open, caress,  
point, make a fist. Simmering grease sounds like rain,  
glass clinks; small machines gritch, whine,  
and mostly close hard on your cash. Neon viscera  
surround the collage-- geometrics of red beef,  
opaline fish, potato pyramids, miles of newsprint,  
wood, fabric, fabrication, fable. The man dozing  
in the cardboard box waits to eat from upscale garbage.  
The city honors and trashes, adores and ignores.

(cont.)

GLENN HOLLOWAY  
913 E. Bailey Road  
Naperville, IL 60565

2.

You nod at parallels to 19th century Paris. You were the brilliant rebel, doomed genius, the damned. Does the city make the artist or defile him? Maybe both. You were like that building on the corner— meticulous brick and polished balustrades— fronting a brothel. Your poems seethed behind formal facades. Your lines wept under carriage wheels, chimney soot. Mine are free— wrinkled with racket and smear.

Chuffing semis gather now to disgorge at sun-up. Nothing is blossoming wicked and wild in rusty cans on cracked stoops, only forgotten cold-burnt geraniums. The city's sleepers roll over, restless before rising relentless to track across her not-yet made-up face.

Look there— a night-blooming cereus opens ghostly rare in a florist's window. To the west, the top floor of that steel and glass lance is open to new arrivals, all hours. Steaming or frozen, the city is a womb. The city incubates death. It has character but outgrows its soul. The city coughs, spits, curses. This city is a phoenix.

Like your poetry.  
Maybe it'll fly in spring. Come back.

Glenna Holloway  
913 E. Bailey Rd.  
Naperville IL 60565-1652  
day or nite

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Chuffing semis gather now to disgorge at sun-up. Nothing is blossoming wicked and wild in rusty cans on cracked stoops, only forgotten cold-burnt geraniums. Sleepers roll over, restless before rising relentless to track across Chicago's not-yet made-up face.

Look there-- a night-blooming cereus opens ghostly rare in a florist's window. To the west, the top floor of that steel/glass lance awaits new arrivals, all hours. Steaming or frozen, the city is a womb. The city incubates death, despair, discovery, desire, greatness. She has character but outgrows her soul. The city coughs, spits, curses. Still, Chicago is a phoenix-- amassed ashes not her blight but fuel for her strength.

Like your poetry, Mr. B. Maybe it'll fly in spring. Maybe I'll find an old fashioned angel. Come back.

You nod at parallels to 19th century Paris. You  
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Does the city make the artist or defile him?  
Maybe both. You were like that corner building—  
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Like your poetry, Mr. B.  
Maybe it'll fly in spring. Come back.

--Glenna Holloway

## SOUTHWEST DRY SPELL

Scorched. Singed. Nothing tongues can say  
is brittle enough. The right word would craze  
like old pottery, fall apart and turn to dust  
before it hit the ground.

Cattle lying down may never get up.  
Already they smoke with black flies,  
ears and tails too limp to flick off the biters,  
more after moisture than blood.

This gray-brown heatscape has stopped breathing.  
It's been over a year since a creek ran through  
the landscathe. Fine grit fills creases  
in our faces, upturned, searching the glare

threatening to combust. The only shade is  
between cows' ribs, outlining their misery  
like prison bars they tried to pry open  
to escape the jailer sun. Stilled windmills

are brands against its fiery setting, burnt  
into submission, blades welded to silence.  
But now, wind would be another enemy, sweeping  
all worth from the surface maybe forever.

Lungs hurry to expel each breath. Forced  
to draw another, they swell again on 107 degrees  
until rolling thoughts of unresisted drowning  
displace wisps of green breeze memories.

Our brains are full of blips,  
short-circuited logic. Each synapse sputters,  
sparking another non sequitur. We don't look  
at each other. We buy imported water.

We add supplements to the last desiccated hay,  
not for weight gain, just to give the cows strength  
to beat their hearts. Knowing no one will buy them  
or the land. Not even at the price of bone.

--First Place, 1998, POET'S ATTIC QUARTERLY

## THE SPECIALIST

Confident in step and hand,  
cachet of well-trained youth,  
a coat of nineties gloss--

But his eyes are ancient.  
He listens with them,  
connecting deep behind  
the asking eyes he faces.  
His patients--the ones beyond  
sophistication's pose,  
will tell you  
he has hearing of the heart.

Yesterday I needed  
more than bottled nostrums  
and prescribed smoothespeak,  
more than surgical steel wizardry.

Consulting this practitioner  
of modern internal medicine,  
I recalled that blue comes from  
the cool part of the spectrum.

But his warm irises incised  
confusion and fear  
and applied non-synthetic caring.  
My hidden sore was lanced,  
more balm applied  
than words alone can deliver  
  
and I slept in the healing ward.

--Glenna Holloway

### SPOON RIVER AFTERTHOUGHTS

Here stands the finest marble carving,  
words befitting my worldly position,  
a place of perpetual caring  
for Braxton Sturgis, IV.

Yet it's plain from the carelessness  
of your feet you've read my life elsewhere.  
The crass biography my only daughter wrote  
bulged with best-selling details bound  
in commercially viable vindictiveness.  
Besides making crude sport of my initials,  
she proclaimed me  
this planet's most prolific liar.

Not so. I sometimes skewed data  
and dates, mixed a metaphor or two,  
indulged certain whims.  
But not without assistance.  
My sins were never worse than yours.  
Trust me now, old cohorts and consorts,  
below the heroic urns and noble lines  
the bottom line here is:  
This is the last place  
Braxton Sturgis would lie.

--Glenna Holloway

## STAR SALESMAN

You're native to this territory, skilled  
in local idiom and dialect,  
politically correct, at ease on stage  
with pagers, flow charts, wine lists, limousines.

You sprawl across the king-size hotel bed,  
designer alter ego hanging pressed,  
awaiting morning's cue, your Gucci shoes  
ashine for well-rehearsed auditions for  
the role of sweet success tomorrow— or  
you'll even settle for a part next week.

A dozen times each month you play this lead.  
And nothing but heroically blank verse  
suffices to recount the episodes  
you tell yourself in mocking dialogue  
in rhythm as you buff your manicure  
and duly note the comic undertones  
that permeate this neo-classic farce.

Provider of expected locomotion,  
the style and polish to complete the plot,  
to make the entrance and escort the client  
to lunch, silk lining iridescent wit,  
lapels well-tailored with sincerity,  
pants creased with confidence. Your faded shorts  
don't show as lively anecdotes emerge  
from pockets filled with practiced protocol  
and uptown jokes, a little charge card magic.  
Instead of hotdogs, you have haute cuisine.

Despite the talent and the presentation,  
the bottom line is (how you hate that line!)  
the customers aren't clapping for the number.  
However bourbon-coated and benign  
they make it sound, their script says NO, a word  
of lead and ice that lodges in soft spots  
beneath your belt, attacking gourmet spoils.  
And when the scene plays out, the wound-up mime  
propels the props to yesterday's airport  
where soon the custom-made attire, almost  
adept enough to give its own performance,  
goes inanimate back on the plane.

Your seat-mate gripes about approaching winter.  
You wonder how you'll pay for warmer clothes  
before the ice man cometh, credit gone.

At last, unfolded in home's terminal,  
you wait in line in Ma Bell's crowded alley,  
and dredge your slept-in depths for change enough  
to call, report the bust to your exec,  
director of these high-camp, one-act flops—

who'll maybe say you don't still head the cast.

## STOPPING IN THE DESERT ALONE

Did I drive 1200 miles just to sit here staring  
at my sweaty hands on the wheel? To memorize  
the livid veins like ruckled roads crossing  
hot desolation heading deeper into the interior?  
The interior is what I'm running from--

nothing inside worth keeping-- mucked up  
with misbegotten cells and superchemicals  
that don't know good from bad. Sitting here,  
slashed and burned, poisoned for dessert, myself  
a damaged ecosystem-- more of a desert than this.

I'm no longer afraid, just dried up. Mumbling  
to whoever still lives inside, pretending  
to still be a woman, not just an animated logogram  
for ignorance posing as medical prowess. When I die  
the docs will finger their beards and say:

"A shame it didn't work this time. Maybe  
we'll hit the right combo next time."  
And next time is already sitting  
in their waiting rooms filling out the forms,  
preludes to filling coffers and coffins equally.

Cut the commentary, girl, you're not the type.  
Some patients get lucky; maybe you will.  
Listen, if you've got a few months,  
why spend 'em driving? You can still dance, dammit.  
You could adagio with that dust devil out there,

what's left of your hair standing straight up--  
grit to grind your teeth on for a soft-shoe number--  
grit to sting you pink and alive, to sand  
your scars smooth and touchable as rosewood.  
Enough grit to get you back on point like a stylus.

Look at that wild thing dervish around the cactus:  
secret rhythms-- slow spins-- winding down now--  
naively graceful. You could choreograph that. Could it  
lift you like a ballet partner? Is it strong enough?  
If you cover your eyes and nose could it hurt you?

Actually-- could anything?

#### A TALE OF TWO POETS

The first one spiraled her words, preened  
her posturing, posed her poem spindled,  
oblique and opaque on the twilight page.  
Roots choked on themselves as she spiked  
shallow insights with small conceits,  
infected the wound, paused in vagaries  
to couple with disjointed abstraction.

The second poet, fluid and fluent,  
picked up the fallen wand, confronted changing  
winds unwinding truth from tangled vines,  
and spread it on bleached vellum at noon.

Modernists wandered by with shielded eyes.  
How long, the second poet wondered,  
before they would be weaned to solid light,  
before their outrage waned  
after catching a writer  
in the unforgivable stance  
of being understood?

--Glenna Holloway

GLENN HOLLOWAY  
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. Naperville, IL 60565

THE TETRARCH AFTER MIDNIGHT

Anything remotely round--  
Moss-crested stones upon the ground,  
Curved shadows in his garden  
Could make him suck his breath  
With a muffled rasping sound.

A change-- perhaps a trip to Rome,  
He thought. Some place away from home  
To leave the episode behind  
Along with that beguiling child  
Who briefly stole his mind.

The name Herod means heroic,  
He announced aloud. I'll not  
Allow some unwashed Stoic  
To stalk my sleep and plot  
Against my very sanity.

That man burned oil behind his eyes;  
His tongue resounded, smoked  
Like incense, wild disguise  
Not hiding power in his thighs  
And arms he never called upon.

Crucifixion-- much too public--  
Yes, I should have hung him.  
Instead-- decapitation! Whim?  
Or female devil's vengeance-- rubric  
For some future rite? Synonym

For usurpation? What a pair--  
Most women shrink from blood. Beware!  
I still can see the princess, hair  
A-flying, prancing to her mother  
With that ghoulish salver.

I should have harkened to John's word  
About Herodias. She's mad!  
She set the tray beside my bed  
Unknown to me. And then I heard  
Her humming, turned and saw the head!

(cont.)

She ordered it to watch  
While we made love. My crotch  
Went icy, sweat rolled off my face.  
She raged: "I should have kept the rest  
And put it in your place!"

She pushed John's eyelids open  
While she danced and mocked all men.  
I swear his fire still burned  
As if some ancient god returned  
To validate his advocate.

And now this Christ is doing things  
No mortal can. It's John, I know!  
Back to punish me, to show  
The world my weakness, prove that kings  
Stand helpless under heaven.

Oh, pull yourself together!  
With Jews there's always more afoot.  
I must be careful whom I put  
In prison. Why and whether  
They brew disruptive weather.

Curse you woman, curse the troth  
I pledged before your daughter  
Like a drooling fool. Curse you both,  
And best you heed my latest oath--  
You two will serve me as you ought!

--Glenn Holloway

THREE GENERATIONS AFTER

In the morning distance  
crows rise  
like oily smoke  
claiming the air space

Behind curtains  
she watches them  
obey their leaders  
dirtying the new day  
more coming  
beyond counting

The first wave scrabbles  
on her roof, a commotion  
like combat boots  
on winter clay roads

The ceiling amplifies  
claws  
beaks  
coarse calls  
Their ranking member  
screeches a command

She reflexes to the dark  
of the kitchen to hide  
two great grandsons  
in cupboards  
under leftover night

She wonders if  
they have genetic memory  
Her own chromosomes cock  
like a .45

She waits  
suspended  
as new cells remember

She waits  
for the generic fist  
on her door

--Glenna Holloway

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two great grandsons  
in cupboards  
under leftover night

She wonders if  
they have genetic memory  
if their brains  
are blipping codes

Her own chromosomes cock  
like a .45

She waits  
suspended  
as new cells divide  
and remember

She waits  
for the generic fist  
on her door

--Glenna Holloway

### ALMOST FORGOTTEN JOURNEY

Eons before we ventured through the womb  
and entered into death's arena, this,  
the short apprenticeship we serve between  
revolving epochs-- there was staging room  
where I remember bending toward the kiss  
of light, becoming crystal tourmaline,  
then part of tide-wash flooding a ravine.  
Next I became a seed, the genesis  
of being. Probably we met at times,  
you in a storm or molten rock's abyss.  
Can you recall the others, those with whom  
we shared galactic fires and helix climbs?  
Or did we leave them in the early rimes  
of cooling clay to plan a nobler tomb?

--Glenna Holloway

COMING TO TERMS WITH HIGH VOLTAGE

July lightning cracks.  
A red wire falls in a field,  
blackens one bean row.

Linemen make repairs.  
One hands tools to another  
higher on the pole.  
He nods--gloves, sleeve seams live-traced  
in creeping glow like fox fire.

The field browns with fall.  
Tall green weeds hide the charred stripe  
long after harvest.

The farmer, electricians, passers-by never noticed  
two haiku and a tanka happened here.

--Glenna Holloway

GLENNA HOLLOWAY  
913 E. Bailey Road  
Naperville, IL 60565

DEEP SWAMP

Sun falls suddenly.  
Human steps hurry away.  
A night heron shrieks.

Wind wrinkles water  
around jutting cypress knees  
and cottonmouth coils.

Mist and moon mingle,  
crisscrossed with silent owl wings.  
There are young to feed.

A fawn drinks quickly.  
Sawgrass parts, a bobcat springs,  
staining the green moss.

Now is the hunter's.  
Only hunger rules the dark.  
Law is ancient here.

GLENNNA HOLLOWAY  
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Naperville, IL 60565

12 lines

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GLENNA HOLLOWAY  
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TO AN ORB WEAVER  
(Arqiope aurantia)

Wildness is not a lack of rules. Our roles  
are merely different, yours ordained  
by Athena, framed in geometric shimmer.

Your realm continues beyond my premises.  
Your black and gold cloisonne sways  
faint promises in music of an alien school.

Your net of notes only the sun knows how to play  
stretches between minor keys, filling chords  
not resolved by my harmonic scale.

High noon predator, I applaud your skill,  
your patience, your choice of prey. My potions  
will spare you to rid my garden of vegetarians.

But beware. The red-wing blackbird,  
another player, another wild difference,  
admires you without deference to beauty.

--Glenna Holloway

TO HIM WHO PROPOSED WITH SHAKESPEARE'S SONNETS

Oh love, were I to know the larger truth,  
Would I find feigning in thy patterned prose?  
If flatter-fogged eyes and sweetened tooth  
Could truly gauge the metal of thy pose--  
Would it be pure and precious? Would it hold  
My imprint dearly, yielding to my touch?  
Or would alloyed resistance make thee bold,  
Revealing in thy fond caress a clutch?  
Ah love, perhaps it is not wise to test  
How malleable or rich thine offerings.  
And yet one answer my soul must request  
Before we move to merge our profferings:  
Art thou in love with all the sums of me--  
Or more enamored of fecundity?

--Glenna Holloway

GLENNA HOLLOWAY  
913 E. Bailey Road  
Naperville, IL 60565

TO KILL A CROW

Like an oily wind-borne rag, it flapped out of a broken window in a rapid transit car parked on the siding. Track workers, lunches in laps, hunched inward as it screeched overhead, landing its black insolence too close to Holt's coffee. Holt's fast pitch zapped the crow with an apple. Dust flew, the bird squeaked like a cankered file, then hustled to the car roof as Pete, the apple owner, squawked louder.

"Aw, it was just a reflex," said Holt. "Here, take my candy bar." But Pete wouldn't have it, curses converged in shoves and the crow feasted on bread and ham between shuffling boots.

After I broke it up, we clumped like toadstools, glaring at the soot-winged offense, everywhere at once, scarfing up apple pieces and crumbs. "Where th' hell's my candy bar?" Holt pawed his sack. Wind waved the wrapper stuck on the car roof. We pointed and whooped.

There's no telling about a bunch of rail benders-- at least one has a record, one an engineering degree, and one named Pike keeps his distance-- maybe our idea instead of his, smelling like he does of Ben-Gay and yesterday's sweat. Holt muttered, "Them birds're jinxes. My old man used to say you can't even kill 'em unless you're in league with the devil." I saw Pike's hand fiddling with the heavy rubber band around his broken lunch box but I didn't see the rock.

The crow took a header from the car, landing at my feet, splayed wings, bulging belly, beak open to the sky as guffaws and mimic caws moved past me. I bent down to pitch its finality in the trash truck. Jackhammers started, vibrating the carcass, imitating life.

One claw closed; wings folded in slow dignity. The crow rolled over, limped a step as I blurted HEY, and exploded in the air like Satan's best expletive. Crowing all the way.

--Glenna Holloway

GLENNNA HOLLOWAY  
913 E. Bailey Road  
Naperville, IL 60565

TO AN ORB WEAVER  
(Argiope aurantia)

Wildness is not a lack of rules,  
our roles are merely different,  
yours framed in precision symmetry,  
ordained in metrical links.

High noon predator, your realm continues  
beyond my premises. Your design sways  
faint promises in music of an alien school.  
Your net of elided notes  
only the sun knows how to play, stretches  
between minor keys, filling chords  
not resolved by my harmonic scale.

You ply the wisdom Athena gave you,  
flaunting the gold and black cloisonné  
she reserved for special spiders.  
I, beguiled, applaud your charm,  
your patience-- also your choice of prey.  
My potions will spare your artistry  
while you rid my garden of vegetarians.

But beware. The red-wing blackbird,  
another player, another wild difference,  
admires you without deference to beauty.

--Glenna Holloway

GLENNA HOLLOWAY  
913 E. Bailey Road  
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Naperville, IL 60565

TO THOSE DOCTORS AND OTHERS IT MAY CONCERN

These last notes from my research lab may be unfinished when found. My jar of reprieves is empty. I have entered the complex process called death. And my dear sworn-by-Apollo colleagues (who labeled me loner, prima donna, bastard), despite all the times we've seen death, heard it, caused it on occasion, we don't know much about it, do we?

Based on my forte for human horology, my time will stop near midnight. Till then, I write my thoughts as a poem:  
No more late hours to haul my heaviness up the ladder to inhale library dust, mine the only fingerprints claiming those heights since my old professor's. No more mornings to stare through the lighted shaft probing mindless obscenities feeding on healthy tissue. Nor afternoons to breed and stalk the seething child-killers in glass cages. Having defeated one once, I'm driven to destroy others. But my demon, destructive as any virus, has come again with the fuel bill. Unpaid, he's shutting my shop.

No time left to isolate the mutant entity I suspect lay each day beneath my eye imitating innocence. My life's goal--to expose it to world attack, unlock doors, to stand and throw Messianic lightning down the corridors of science. I would deal with the devil to do it. But the dream must be delivered by others.

I move away from magnification and atomic rhythms to culture my notebook in starlight. What do I know of poetry? Yet the minutes allow for nothing else. Now is distilled sediment, vitro-essence of failure sealing my cloudy siphons with unanswers. My sulphuric tongue is already silent. And no life will be better for an eleventh hour poem.

So much waste. Great strides to standstills. Unless-- that one! My wire-drawn student who yesterday challenged the godsmith. And turning to dispute me in the flush of discovery, incised and laid open a moment by my point, gave me a glimpse of the bright burning edge of a demon I know.

To that damned and holy host-- that lonely pupil-- I leave all I have. The harsh shine of my keys-- and my only poem.

--Glenn Holloway

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Naperville, IL 60565  
630/983-5499

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THE TRIHEDRONESS

You've seen her, a cunning child  
looking from under  
lashes long enough to blow  
in the wind. You've seen her eyes,  
wild and craving as a falcon's,  
cool and hot as a cougar's.  
Waiting, always weighing.  
When the lids lower and raise  
she's gone.

You've seen her,  
eyes benign as a fawn's,  
you've met them transmitting praise  
and hope, blue-green tunnels  
of velvet understanding.  
Reflex lenses anointing you.  
She may stay long in the past;  
she may come back tomorrow.

A blink. That fast.  
Disconnection is silent.  
Looking returns to a vagrant sea.

You know I share the eyes  
with her and her.  
One member of the trio  
needs confining below the surface,  
forever out of sight.  
One should wear  
a wide-brimmed white lace hat  
and hold hands with the sun.

Both are prisoners of me.

GLENNA HOLLOWAY  
913 E. Bailey Road  
Naperville, IL 60565

Upstart in a Stetson

I'm surrounded by sunburnt flats, homogenized smell  
of sagebrush and manure and the hot forge. Letting  
loose my accumulated nosiness and trying to wear  
my hat so it doesn't look bought yesterday.  
I'm a writer soaking up the West in a week.

This guy's name is a surprise: Basil. Nothing  
you'd expect for a horseshoer south of Albuquerque.  
Hell, I'd have bet he's pure Navajo. I wanted  
to learn some of his words--like maybe a few phrases  
the Japanese couldn't crack in WWII.

His next words are newsroom familiar  
as he straddles a horse's hind leg and it flinches  
to remind ole Basil he's vulnerable.  
I want to ask him if that happens often as he  
bettters his position to finish filing the hoof.

The animal is pied, not as big as my fine roan  
back home. Wiry and jut-angled like the sculptures  
made of coat hangers at Taos art fairs. You'd swear  
this creature eats cactus. I venture to ask  
what it is. Cayuse, he says. He implies more  
with a tobacco juice exclamation point,  
the commentary as likely for me as the horse.  
If Basil already thinks I'm citified hopeless,  
I might as well clinch it. Yeah, well,  
what exactly is a cayuse? I say it out loud.

Indian pony originally. Mustang. Bronco.  
Wild stock. This one's fast. For some reason  
he's developed a crossfire. Basil looks up, knowing  
I need to ask. This hind leg collides  
with the opposite front leg. I'm correcting it  
by raising the heel of the rear shoe. He gestures  
with a hammer. I make noises like I know that.

I've got a platter foot back in Baltimore, I say.  
Had an infected frog. I put him to stud. Daisycutter  
but good blood. I square up with Basil's glance.

Another exclamation point hits the sawdust.  
Good hot shoer can fix all that, he says. By now  
Basil has another horse in that dangerous slot.  
By now he's reading me like the Times. This shoe  
is called an eggbar, he informs me. It's therapeutic.

(cont.)

(stanza break)

Guess you've been shoeing a long time, I say, wanting him to say his father taught him. Wanting him to say he's at least part Indian. Then I see the sign burnt in wood: Dr. Basil Cauldron. Veterinarian. Four years, he's saying. One more year at this and I'm off to New York.

He reads me as I frown at the sign then the iron oval he's nailing. The vet's my grandfather, he says. We make a good team. But I want to see the East. My mother was from New York. The old man's betting I won't stay long. He may be right. He usually is. Basil straightens, committing his eyes to a grin. Granddad's a full-blooded Navajo.

The picture is perfect again with the far mountains and free-ranging horses in the foreground. You speak his language? Was he in the war? The big one?

Yeah. But I can't speak Navajo worth a road rose. I speak my mother's tongue well enough though.

You sure do. You sound like an Oxford graduate.

USC, he says. I didn't mean English. Mama was a Mohawk.

--Glenna Holloway

Mrs. R. W. Holloway  
3811 Carole Dr.  
Doraville, Ga. 30040

TO MEASURE TOMORROW

by Glenn Holloway

Woven brilliant birds on draperies  
Feather-draping my dull windows—pretending to  
Seclude my wanting world, but  
Hiding nothing. I see and go.  
Watching.  
Wafting wild wings release you,  
Raise you like Nike past  
Where leaded minds still stumble.  
Beyond  
The silence of silver galaxies  
Into the singing suns of infinity.  
Beyond  
The fourth dimension. Who said the fourth  
Was all? Who knows? There may be fifty!  
You and I know five...

A LETTER FROM A MAN OF MANY LETTERS

Everything and anything  
Has been said all ways anyway.  
No thing is a new thing.  
So why should I kowtow to modern dictum  
And avoid roses and June and love,  
Or whatever things I love?  
Theh subjects of peasants  
Please other peasants.  
(Take it any way.)  
Besides, what is more hackneyed than man  
Himself, or worse,  
What is more trite than  
Yet another pedant poet?  
At least my hair is short.

Mrs. R. W. Holloway  
1028 Apple Lane  
Lombard, Ill. 60148

A LETTER FROM A MAN OF MANY LETTERS

by Glenn Holloway

Everything and anything  
Has been said all ways anyway.  
No thing is a new thing.  
So why should I kowtow to modern dictum  
And avoid roses and summer  
And God and love  
Or whatever things I love?  
The subjects of peasants  
Please other peasants.  
(Take that any way you wish.)  
Besides, what is more hackneyed than man  
Himself, or worse,  
What is more trite than  
Yet another pedant poet?  
At least my hair is short.

WHO NEEDS EDEN?

We breathe the fog that crawls the beaver-run

And climbs until impaled by spears of pine;

It fled the sea and soon will flee the sun

To secret places where blue herons dine.

We watch the valley's for the twilight's rise,

And walk the blood-red hills against the wind

To meet the moon and wait there while it vies

With nimbus rings like cotton newly ginned.

The morning brings the rain that ~~dimples sand~~ bleeds the clay;

It dabbles in the marsh and dimples sand.

A few miles down the highway's puddled gray

It rinses whitewash off the old fruit stand.

Our land is moody, restless like a child;

Kaleidoscopic wood designs grow wild.

## POSTSCRIPT

You think those who fake it, ignore it, or drown it  
At least have the freedom from stress we all crave?  
La Dolce Vita's a way that should crown it  
With laughs, and a liver the medics can't save.

Mrs. R. W. Holloway  
3811 Carole Dr.  
Doraville, Ga. 30040

ON OMAR, THE BELIEVER

(A Ballad)

by Glenn Holloway

If nothing and naught were our father and mother,  
If only more dust is the goal of the grave,  
Then let us stop fighting a clay-begot brother;  
We've no time or talent to waste being brave!

Old Khayyam the tentmaker tried to be savage;  
He claimed the sole truth was the juice of the grape.  
He said that man lives like the head of a cabbage—  
To flower, to fade, without hope of escape.

He dared One Whose power was more alchemistic  
To show man His gold and His blessings to pour,  
But even while trying to be atheistic,  
He cried out for Heaven's forgiveness, and more—

He cursed all the pitfalls He laid out before us,  
He constantly blasphemed the Holy Concept...  
In spite of denial, in one tortured chorus,  
He begged the Creator our pardon accept!

If nothing and naught were our father and mother,  
If only more dust is the goal of the grave,  
Then let us stop fighting a clay-begot brother;  
We've no time or talent to waste being brave!

## PARADOX OF OMAR, THE BELIEVER

(A Ballad)

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Mrs. R. W. Holloway  
3811 Carole Dr.  
Doraville, Ga. 30040

THE VARIABLE CONSTANT

by Glenn Holloway

Stone, wind, flesh—  
Greatness, weakness, conceit—  
Brutality, gentle faith, despair—  
There are some made of each.  
And sometimes they are all one.  
<sup>pluttered</sup>  
A curse can be a desperate prayer;  
Love can devour the loved.

"The meek shall inherit the earth," said a small shadow.  
"And they can have it," shrilled another, hulking, angular,  
"They deserve it," It's all semi-pseudo, ersatz, quasi."  
"...Many search but never see, hold but never have,"  
Offered a deeper distant voice.  
"Because there are a thousand shades of black and  
White, mostly grays; nothing is cut and dried neatly,"  
Recited the blustery one.  
"You're only saying everything is relative. I've heard  
All that," came the quiet reply. "Isn't it merely the  
Need for sighting in from other observation sites? A  
Matter of changing shoes?"

Day, night—fire, water—man, woman.

Sometimes all are the same. Always

(cont.)

There is the captive sacred Cyclopean Eye that  
Never shuts—even when painted with pitch.  
And always the fastidious id, the naked I.

CHELSEANNA, LITTLE GIRL

Her mother taught her to be like a queen:  
To think above the ranks of common birth,  
To keep her soul aloof and pressed between  
Lush layers of prefabricated worth.  
Her mother fed her daily with this fare,  
Explaining how the merest flick of fate  
Had thieved them of their titled name, their share  
Of tangibles to crown their high estate.

No matter though, for lofty blood would tell.  
Nobility of mind would outweigh wealth.  
And as the daughter thrived, digesting well  
The heady helpings of her mother's health,  
She planned the daughter she would someday bear:  
The world-transcending kin, the angel-heir!

Poor Chelseanna never had a chance  
Her neighbors said while she was still a child.  
Such airs, such high-flown heraldry self-styled  
Made everybody look at her askance....

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Had thieved them of their royal titled share  
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Nobility of mind would outweigh wealth.  
And as the daughter thrived, digesting well  
The heady helpings of her mother's health—  
She planned the person she would someday bear:  
The world-transcending kin, the angel heir!

(cont.)

She spoke sigh-softly, thinking none could hear.  
Her pomp and pretense now betrayed by fear  
That some dark force had tarnished her birthright,  
She pled her case with Psyche in the night....

## CHELSEANNA, MOTHER-BLIND

I raised a rose for Eden in my yard;  
Each day enhanced the promise of a bloom.  
~~Each pointed~~ Ballooning buds that made my soul a bard  
Enslaved me, made me proud perfection's groom.  
No spot or blight could mar that precious plant,  
No careless foot or lower life invade  
That destined ground where I prepared to grant  
New Eden's need for white of purest shade.

Then came the day my prize unfurled its news...  
Not like the vision I would still impose—  
Of white, the equal presence of all hues!  
What bee or hybridizer's blunder grows  
And flowers, streaked with pink, chartreuse and wine?  
How could this thing have happened, Child of Mine?

(cont.)

Mrs. R. W. Holloway  
1028 Apple Lane  
Lombard, Ill. 60148

TWO SONNETS TO SARAH  
by Glenna Holloway

BEHIND THE CURTAINS

Each day she measures fabrics in her chair,  
The padded chair with heavy rubber wheels.  
Her clients talk of going here and there—  
They never seem to wonder how she feels.  
She sews their curtains, swags, and tats their lace;  
Her artful fingers applique and pleat.  
She smiles as they discuss some famous place;  
She minds her craft and never leaves her seat.  
Her work is sought, exquisite, highly praised.  
She would not wish for pity from her friends  
Who, if they thought at all, would be amazed  
That nature in its wisdom makes amends:  
The scenes that she has seen they could not travel  
On average feet, nor average eyes.unravel.

Mrs. R. W. Holloway  
1028 Apple Lane  
Lombd, Ill. 60148

## THE VARIABLE CONSTANT

by Glenna Holloway

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Greatness, weakness, conceit—

There are some made of each,

And sometimes they are all one.

And sometimes a curse is a desperate prayer.

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Offered a deeper distant voice.

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White and mostly gray; nothing is cut and dried neatly,"

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Merely a matter of changing shoes?"

Day, night—fire, water—man, woman

Sometimes all are the same. Always there is

The captive sacred Cyclopean Eye that never

Shuts—even when painted with pitch.

And always the fastidious id, the naked I.

### SAGANESQUE SONNETS

Empyreal contrails must have awed us when  
the red giant burst and spewed us through the void.  
The swift sidewise flashbacks of our beginning  
illuminate dark mental niches-- then  
they vanish like a burned-out comet. Freud  
said we forget what we can't face-- Did spinning  
through velvet silence, constant press of twinning  
cells erase that imprint? We've employed  
soft-padded rationale on which to lean  
our origins. It may be we enjoyed  
the centrifuge, imploded time. All men  
were processed thus. The vast exchange machine  
we know as death will one day intervene--  
returning us to stardom once again.

Eons before we ventured through the womb  
and entered into death's arena, this,  
the short apprenticeship we serve between  
revolving epochs-- there was a staging room  
where I remember bending toward the kiss  
of light, becoming crystal tourmaline,  
then part of tide-wash flooding a ravine.  
Next I became a seed, the genesis  
of being. Probably we met at times,  
you in a storm or molten rock's abyss.  
Can you recall the others, those with whom  
we shared galactic fires and helix climbs?  
Or did we leave them in the early rimes  
of cooling clay to plan a nobler tomb?

SAGANESQUE SONNET

I'd read of other life forms, full of doubts.  
And yet one scientist has made me quell  
My skeptical response, no easy sell.  
His studied speculation now re-routes  
My reasoning; it drowns pragmatic shouts,  
Then stirs up images of nonpareil  
Exotic beings on some parallel  
Who might inhabit other whereabouts.  
I studied all of Dr. Sagan's theses  
Then on the cusp of this millennium,  
His bold position on unproven species  
Persuaded me to recognize the sum  
Of his beliefs. His logic rose like cream  
To lift his words beyond the earthly dream.

IMMORTAL MARINER  
(At the Art Institute of Chicago)

His heart went out to sea when he was ten,  
a boy whose toys were pencils, brushes, paints  
he borrowed from his artist mother when  
his talent overwhelmed all her complaints.  
She realized he had a special gift  
that ranged beyond the limits of her palette.  
She understood he must be set adrift  
in years ahead. It hit her like a mallet.  
And drift he did, on times and tides of ocean,  
painting waves and windstorms, fishing boats,  
all drawn from depths of mood and shaded motion,  
capturing each moment as it floats  
on nuances of sun and shadow scoped  
on spectrums gleaned from all he ever hoped.

With living colors cloned from old salts' eyes,  
the sea and solar secrets of refraction,  
his canvas blends a mix of gasps and sighs  
in peaceful themes and stabbing peaks of action.  
With loving strokes of light he poetized  
each scene with potent truth and inner soul.  
Now gazers linger, awed and magnetized  
by artist, subject, swallowing them whole.  
His audience, as always, loath to leave,  
collects before his "Gulf Stream" and "Life Line."  
They speak of artistry that can achieve  
such urgent feeling, make you taste the brine.  
Another Winslow Homer hasn't come  
to share such mastery of medium.

SEEKERS ON THE EDGE  
(Sagan-esque Sonnets)

I'd read of UFOs with scornful doubts.  
Now certain scientists persuade me well.  
The logic of their speculation routs  
my negative response. I'm in their spell.  
My thoughts were often occupied by those  
who might inhabit other unique places.  
Unchecked imagination soared to pose  
exotic beings in fantastic spaces  
and situations facing unknown species.  
Then on the cusp of this millennium  
I read some more of Dr. Sagan's theses.  
My mind was activated with the sum  
of his beliefs. A sonnet rose like cream.  
Of course, the things I wrote were just a dream:

The strangers watched familiar home stars fade  
as engines thrust them free from pull behind.  
They spun through vast dimensions, shine and shade,  
three volunteers, their mission a desperate kind.  
The dauntless emissaries prayed their risk  
would somehow save their desiccating land.  
The daring new design of their aerodisc  
propelled them Earthward as their leaders planned.  
They must have water; they would pay in gold  
for hydro-sciences, a rescue course.  
Brilliant specialists equipped their hold  
to locate help, an intercosmic source.  
In time to save their blistered asteroid--  
life's last galactic outpost in the void.

They came to us, pathetic in their need.  
They hoped Earthmen's compassion would surmount  
first fear, then curiosity and greed.  
They gambled everything on one account  
interpreted by elders from old lore  
about a "golden rule" this planet had.  
Their legends said they'd been here once before  
to seek advice when ancient kings went mad.  
Our folklore hints of visitors from space  
but modern scholars scoffed it off the pages  
of our affairs. We meet now in a race  
with time, our water squandered through the ages.  
And as we watch-- our wealth, our science fails.  
We learn together-- only God prevails.

#### RETURN OF THE REAPERS

The travelers disembarked and checked their chart.  
Where were the trees and crops they left to grow?  
They stared at rot, a silo torn apart,  
Debris of death abandoned long ago.  
The strangers spread out, searched the fossil land  
For fertile fields and streams described in books.  
Still hoping, they dug deep in fetid sand  
For roots and corms, for signs of inglenooks.  
One found an odd rock underneath his sole  
Then saw scratched words the nodule held in wait:  
"Within this case beneath corruption's toll  
A primal spore survives to germinate.  
We failed, we cultivated our worst weed.  
To live, we cannot propagate our greed."

"For this fear of death is indeed the pretense of wisdom, and not real wisdom, being the appearance of knowing the unknown; since no one knows whether death, which they in their fear apprehend to be the greatest evil, may not be the greatest good."  
--Apology, by Plato

TO PLATO WITH THANKS

That you, so long before Christ came to Earth,  
Perceived that death might be man's greatest boon  
Is marvelous to me. Your mentor was  
A wise man, yet no wiser than you were  
Who recognized dualities in things  
Man clings to (sometimes right and often wrong,)  
Who recognized that striving for the good  
Should be man's first concern, not mortal life.

Who recognized philosophies were void  
Without the caring for each other's souls,  
Researching truth, supporting what withstood  
The test of dedicated minds to God.  
A God not made of myth, but felt without  
The stone designs, the sun, the temple fires.  
A sense of love surpassing Eros, far  
From self, past filial, best called agape.

Surrounded by possessions, gazing blind  
At columns posing as eternity,  
Its caryatids wrought exquisitely  
In marble lies, I marvel at the minds  
That reached beyond acceptable assumptions.  
Forsaking comfort zones of thought, you plumbed  
New answers, keener scruples, higher knowledge.  
Applying logic, you defeated fear

Of death, its old genetic grip on man,  
Its hollow eyes and baleful leer, a false  
Reflection of the body's armature.  
These centuries removed, you could not know  
A modern Cardinal who called death "friend."  
Of course, he knew of you, plus centuries  
Of wisdom and the holy Word passed down.  
This Bernadin would seek you out, I think.

I hope the two of you have met by now.  
You have so much to talk about. You learned  
The greater part of truth when you passed through  
The gate you knew was there. Two Old World sons,  
Two intellectuals with well-known names,  
Believers of two different faiths, but kin.  
What conversations you will have together!

My wish would be to listen, but you gave,  
Before my birth, the words I cherish now:  
The perfect ideology for life.

VIEWING MAGRITTE'S "THE LOVERS"

I recognize that man on the canvas,  
the one with the swaddled head, all features  
covered. The arrangement of his drapery  
is a bit too debonaire for a Halloween mummy.  
Not a bed sheet, more like an Arab pate piece  
gone hyperbolic. For all the elegance  
of his wrapping, his collar is a disaster.

His kissing partner is carelessly swathed  
in her anonymity. Almost an afterthought  
she tossed on. Or did he?

Is it starlit assignation?  
Thinking if they're spotted,  
who would be so gauche as to pull off  
their masks? Some suspicious spouses might.  
Or it might be convenient in other ways.  
Either could slip in a surrogate  
and be elsewhere kissing  
without muzzy curtains between their lips.

More likely they share strangerness  
tearing intimacy in strips  
to bind stings unhealed enough to be seen.

--Glenna Holloway

VILLANELLE IN VIRIDESCENT GRAY

The line between neap tide and sky  
Has disappeared like rubbed pastels,  
The canvas primed for terns to fly.

They draw their graphic pattern high  
Across mixed hues; it parallels  
The line between neap tide and sky.

Light's changing moods intensify  
The foreground textures, sheen and shells,  
The canvas primed for terns to fly.

The pier shades truth while colors lie;  
Imagination's stroke compels  
The line between neap tide and sky.

Winged calls begin to prophesy  
The storm this palette's blend foretells,  
The canvas primed for terns to fly.

They pose on pilings, preening dry  
Before their stippled rising swells  
The line between neap tide and sky  
The canvas primed for terns to fly.

--Glenna Holloway,  
THE FORMALIST, 1992  
ORBIS (England), 1993

GLENNA HOLLOWAY  
913 E. Bailey Road  
Naperville, IL 60565

### VOICES

In darkness  
or aloneness with telephone or radio,  
voices can touch, something can connect  
through human sound that doesn't happen  
between flesh. Maybe nearness  
gets in the way. The notions our faces foster.

I never liked Aunt Clara, the why unsure,  
defenseless. If you forced an explanation,  
I'd shrug and mention her vapid smile,  
the way she held her teacup.  
I used to want to put eyebrow pencil on her,  
creating some trace of expression.

In the still vastness of unannounced daybreak,  
voices hold a different tone,  
changing with distance, not the same  
when you can't see the lips. Sometimes  
you think a voice on the wire or across  
the hall is not the person claiming it.  
And even if it's saying the expected,  
a whole new set of sensors takes the message.

I'll always regret not being far enough away  
to hear Aunt Clara's call for help.

GLENNA HOLLOWAY  
913 E. Bailey Road  
Beverly, IL 60510

WALKING TO WAKING  
(after Richard Wilbur's "Walking to Sleep.")

We're seasoned to believe the garden fence,  
coffee pot, chairs, everything we last saw  
with open eyes will stay the night outside  
our languid lidfalls just as we left them,  
as we trusted them to be: Unmoved by time  
or tricks of dark we think impossible  
in our fragmented understanding.  
Against the hostile forces of morning,  
feet flung from sheets, fingers spread,  
we see nothing is the same.

We try to grasp cold vacancy snagged  
on splintered air as sharp as what impales  
our soles with every step, letting us fall  
in increments. We're unsure if this will pass  
with repossession of a full range of faculties,  
blown like the Big Bang with nothing to stop  
their outward bounding until gravitational drag  
kicks in. At which time their trajectory droops  
into the pull of some peculiar planet,  
some place not meant for mammals.

Our only option is the bed, the one absolute,  
the one universal lodestone we must return to,  
and persuade sleep to renew the contract  
using sturdier stuff. And add a clause  
providing quick precise termination of tenure  
plus a ready steady gait.

It's six a.m. Does anyone know where we are?

--Glenna Holloway

GLENNA HOLLOWAY  
913 E. Bailey Road  
Naperville, IL 60565

WATERCOLOR WEEKENDS

My brother found this secret place  
he calls his spirit home  
where recumbent clouds rest.  
High in the covert hills,  
this glacial gouge is full  
of clearest quartz pressed to liquid,  
leftover tints and tones swimming--  
sometimes rainbows jumping rainbows.

Staring at pooled sky, I can believe  
the monster ice once passing through  
so tall and jagged, reached up to snag  
a patch of azure, a swatch of fluff  
for a tail, and pulled it for miles  
like a kite--then spread it under glass  
to keep, the blue so intense it seeped  
and stained the grass the first warm May.

By night, the captive cloud's kin  
come calling on this mezzanine of land  
and lake till time to board the right wind  
aloft or morning's rapid transit sunshafts.

But sometimes, like my brother's guest,  
they loll against cedar and pine,  
settle down in tent and lean-to,  
even firepit--and hang around for days.

--Glenna Holloway

**GLENNA HOLLOWAY**  
913 E. Bailey Road  
Naperville, IL 60565

WHAT IT WILL TAKE

Simple sleep is not enough.  
Tonight I need no less than  
swift temporary designer death.  
Drugless ubiquitous suspension  
of time and place, of me,  
computers, closets, colors,  
my own alterstate/counterstate,  
beginning and ending at will.

Holloway

## THE WILD LOVER

No garden prize for me. I say  
Let seasons' cycles have their way.  
I don't subscribe to formal rows;  
No leaf or stem on my place grows  
According to a pinioned plan,  
And nothing's planted other than  
What came by wind or bird or bee.  
My land's a haven for the free.

The galax slopes and piney floor  
Grow bloodroot, squill and many more  
That you might label common weeds.  
I smile as cranesbill sprays its seeds  
Beneath the hardwoods' regal stand  
Which knows no pruning reprimand.  
No chemicals or rasping blade  
Defiles this purple-scented shade.

Unlandscaped ground, rain-scarred and gulched  
Is gently nature-nursed and mulched,  
For here she rules with perfect scales  
Between bobcats and baby quails.  
Machine-made sounds don't interfere  
With daily rounds of sloe-eyed deer.  
I've known arbutus buds in ice  
And frosted webs and spruces' spice.

Through summer scorch and winter freeze  
My patient wonders wait to please.  
I welcome all who wish to pause  
To look for beauty--not for flaws.

2nd

### WINTER OVERTURES

Gardenia scent is gone, November's breeze  
Brings icy needles jabbing at my nose.  
It sends its early warning through my knees,  
Distressed and stiff, confined to heavy clothes.  
I'm not exactly getting out of sorts,  
Or not preserving well with passing years.  
I still can hold my own in tennis shorts,  
Returning summer's serves, or changing gears  
With speed to spare right through October days.  
But when raw wind impales me on its points  
And pewter sky infects me with malaise  
I hover by the hearth to rub my joints.

Invading like a parasite, the cold  
Claims bones that otherwise don't know they're old.

--Glenna Holloway,  
(C) THE LYRIC

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I'm not exactly getting out of sorts,  
Or not preserving well with passing years.  
I still can hold my own in tennis shorts,  
Returning summer's serves, or changing gears  
With speed to spare right through October days.  
But when raw wind impales me on its points  
And pewter sky infects me with malaise  
I hover by the hearth to rub my joints.  
Invading like a parasite, the cold  
Claims bones that otherwise don't know they're old.

--Glenna Holloway

### COOKING UNDERCURRENT

Time-savers, gadgets, wired shortcuts,  
The plug-in help I've got  
Will never change a kitchen klutz--  
A cordon bleu I'm not.

Electric knives to slice and peel,  
Hot prongs to poach tomatoes,  
A probe to pinch and punch and feel,  
A mace to smash potatoes.

Machines to string out noodle dough,  
Twin mauls for crushing beans.  
The oven beeps to let me know  
It's lethal while it cleans.

An automatic coffee urn  
Extracts exotic brew.  
The range can sense impending burn,  
Won't overcook the stew.

Robotic tongs both grasp and lift,  
The Smart-Pots skim and baste.  
Computers measure, mix and sift;  
I'll bet they even taste.

My kitchen's armed, a battle zone  
And I'm the casualty.  
I long to own a super clone  
With no more need for me!

--Glenna Holloway

THE CLUMSY CONSUMER REPORT

My finger's cut as I open a can,  
A plastic bag claims a tooth.  
The crimped-closed edge of a frozen pan  
Finds I can be uncouth.

The canopy that covers the ham  
Might yield to a bayonet.  
Designers closely studied the clam  
But they aren't happy yet.

To greater, rarer heights they aspire--  
Impregnable wraps for cheese,  
And seals for nuts and cakes that require  
Three engineering degrees.

My bread reposes behind chain mail;  
I spring the flap with a thud.  
My sandwich contains my fingernail--  
And look-- is that ketchup or blood?

Inventors should get deserved acclaim.  
Would all of these masters stand  
To bow to the clapping due their fame?  
And then--would they give me a hand?

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THE CLUMSY CONSUMER REPORT  
Glenna Holloway

I'm a gentle soul, relaxed and mild;  
I love my fellow man.  
But there's this stuff that drives me wild  
And shortens my life span.

I go to build some midnight snackage--  
That's when my trials begin--  
Getting the goodies outa the package  
Thoroughly does me in.

My finger's cut on a zippered can,  
A plastic bag claims a tooth.  
The crimped-closed edge of a frozen pan  
Finds I can be uncouth.

The canopy that covers the ham  
Might yield to a bayonet.  
Designers closely studied the clam  
But they aren't happy yet.

To greater, rarer heights they aspire--  
Impregnable wraps for cheese,  
And seals for nuts and cakes that require  
Three engineering degrees.

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Inventors should get deserved acclaim.  
Would all of these masters stand  
To bow to the clapping due their fame?  
And then--would they give me a hand?

1st place, P.S of Penn.

THERAPY

I will go to my cabinet to find  
Something for the light-headedness,  
The fever and the flush, the flutter in the center.  
And the ache.

Ah, a purge should do it.  
If not, there is a natural remedy,  
A certain staple street, busy with things so basic.

Why do you smile, imp in the steamed-up glass?  
I have overcome such a syndrome before. I am  
No child with damp ears.

In a few days I won't even remember; I will not  
Carry a kaleidoscope  
Of jasmined jewels and satin sparks in my brain.

A drink, of course, a drink!  
For I must sleep. Without dreams.  
Arabian nights wide awake is distraction enough  
Submerged in sequined cerise notes of this insane  
Concerto. One can die of beauty.

(cont.)

Worthless nostrums! Height of sophistry!  
You win, my love, you win. You  
Are the only cure. You  
Are the panacea for peace. But now  
You can never leave, nor can I—  
For peace is only temporary.

IF THE SHOE FITS...  
or PASS ANOTHER BUCK

After cutting and haggling, Congress cobbled a shoe.  
It was so much too tight no one knew what to do.  
The joints couldn't wiggle, the sole couldn't bend.  
"That foot is so bound, it won't run off and spend,"  
said a Senator, pointing to stockpiles of leather,  
"and look what we've saved back for inclement weather.  
"The pattern they gave us was so much too big  
no Tory could wear it, nor even a Whig.  
"It would flop and would slip, and would fill up with rain;  
you'd see all that padding go right down the drain."  
"But now," said another, "the foot cannot grow;  
it might lose the race from a cramp in the toe."  
"Nonsense," said the statesman, "why, everyone knows  
that a cramp in the toe is the fault of the hose."

BEAUTY IS

(Japanese Tanka)

Until you notice  
Iridescent filigree  
On a lowly fly,  
Truth to see eludes your eye  
In loveliness of lotus.

---

Mrs. R. W. Holloway  
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### MEASURING STICK

by Glenn Holloway

They told her—kindly, of course—  
To try something else, ~~because~~  
She had no talent for poetry. ~~she~~  
~~I found her sitting~~ on the ground,  
Silent and slumped like the toadstools around her.  
~~She wasn't crying,~~ But from the pages  
~~read~~  
She gave me, I knew  
She knew how to cry.  
Her meter was as seldom as a total eclipse.  
No, not free verse— an iambic beat tried to be there.  
They told her the rhyme pattern was all wrong.  
And it was. Like wearing mismatched shoes.  
No newly minted phrases. No provocative twists.  
They said she was ~~just~~ not a poet. But  
~~her lines said~~  
~~From her lines I knew~~ this about her—  
She looked at a dandelion and saw resurrection;  
She reached into black holes and felt the fingers of God.

Heaven alone may understand,  
If even Heaven does—  
This strange estate, this Satan's seal,  
This clutch that claims my soul.

These strangled callings, can you hear?  
They clamor for control—  
Erato's whisper: "Poet art thou",  
Some playwrite's ghost ~~soutshouts~~!

I never prepared my voice to sing;  
Why did it turn to gold?  
I never have toasted Terpsichore,  
Yet still she came and bred...

The shades of sculptors haunt my hands,  
And fight my mother's gift—  
The only birthright gift I own—  
The rest are bastard freaks.

Her truth of touch, her rare technique,  
Her keyboard mastery  
Precede this horde that made me host,  
Infesting heart and mind.

How long will my destruction take  
Upon this devil's altar?  
They wind me, tease me, feed me wine  
To keep me running longer.

Oh, never let me hear again  
The sound of wild applause.  
Serve no more sticky spoons of praise;  
It doesn't soothe the burn.

You proud, proud parents, bring me not  
Another gifted child.  
You fools, you dreamers, it's a curse!  
No worse can Hell devise!

I often read that parable--  
The man with just one talent...  
I envy him above all men;  
Most people envy me!

Would I be wrong to bury some?  
Will mine continue doubling?  
Oh, God, I'll gladly share with ten  
My fair and fatal demons!

## ANCIENT WINDOWS

First  
there was  
only blurred  
dullness and doubt.  
I might have squinted  
all my life but for friends  
who wiped the panes with belief  
and taught me how to pray to Him,  
clearing away all my own smeared prints--  
for now I see through the glass less darkly.

## THE ANSWERED

Two beds to make,  
Two rugs to shake,  
Which means I'm not alone.

Fresh corn and squash,  
A grill to wash,  
Which means that I'm not hungry.

Some clothes to scrub,  
Hot water tub,  
Which means I'm warm and clean.

I've been without,  
Lived through a drought  
That lasted seven years.

Then came the fire.  
Just ash and wire  
Were all it left my name.

I've been without;  
I know about  
The awful pangs of need.

I'm now without  
The slightest doubt  
That someone does take heed.

Glenna Holloway  
913 E. Bailey Rd.  
Naperville, IL 60565

21 lines

THE ANSWERED  
Glenna Holloway

Two beds to make,  
Two rugs to shake,  
Which means I'm not alone.

Fresh corn and squash,  
A grill to wash,  
Which means I don't go hungry.

Some clothes to scrub,  
Hot water tub,  
Which means I'm warm and clean.

I've been without,  
Lived through a drought  
That lasted seven years.

Then came the fire.  
Just ash and wire  
Were all it left my name.

I've been without;  
I know about  
The awful pangs of need.

I'm now without  
The slightest doubt  
That someone does take heed.

THE ANSWERING  
A Sequel to Browning's "Evelyn Hope"

Because no one has ever spoken  
Back from here, we've all supposed  
This coldest seal remains unbroken,  
This ancient passage always closed.  
If only you who think I died  
Could know this is a sweet exchange,  
Could know how boundaries fade inside  
The spectrum's unimagined range!

You never would have come to me  
Had I remained a normal length  
In mortal phase. I'm sure you see  
The structured weave, its narrow strength  
Would never grant to us a place  
In that frame's weft: A giddy girl,  
A proper gentleman of grace  
In middle years allowed to purl

Into the fabric of acceptance.  
Not while I lived, but only after,  
Could you speak love without the chance  
Of shock, rebuke, or even laughter.  
Like you, I never dared express  
My secret. Silly child, you might  
Have thought. But by this leaf you press  
Into my hand, we will unite.

Don't grieve, my dear, your words are not  
Earthbound. I hear your lover's heart  
With mine and don't despair our lot.  
Now new dimensions frame my part  
As they will yours at your last breath.  
The cycling portals pivot, spin  
On far-off stars that hinge on death—  
An old wronged term that means begin.

And by your token, I transmit  
My pledge through veins of green leaf stillness:  
We'll meet renewed, a better fit  
With place, my hand then free of chillness.  
It's fitting that my name was Hope.  
Please don't deny its muffled call  
Or waver in transition's scope.  
Here, time is nothing; love is all.

—Glenna Holloway

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ANTHROPOLOGY PROFESSOR SAYS DARWIN GOT IT WRONG  
—caption, Chicago Tribune

"Most likely there," he said. "Rich ground, warm sun." He pointed to an Old World map, a plain Where rivers met. "The Edens, more than one, Nearby and round the world, all bore the stain Of that first Eve and Adam's sin, all equals. The genesis, our time on earth, began Incumbent on the pairs, the human sequels. More pairs were made; incest was not the plan. No quarrel with evolution or the Word: Sub-beings did descend from those in trees To walk upright then fade away unheard. Experiment is one of nature's keys. Some forms were left to mutate line from line. But ours was drawn apart-- the Grand Design."

--Glenna Holloway

**GLENNA HOLLOWAY**  
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AUTHOR'S IMPRINT

I know her. Her words  
come from keen hearing  
of the heart.

Her artistry defines her:  
sometimes a blue ache,  
a peony, a sudden peak  
on my spinal graph.

And after such intimacy,  
holding my fragile premises  
in her hands,  
how can either of us say  
we've never met?

--Glenna Holloway

AUTHOR'S IMPRINT

I know her. Her poems  
come from hearing centuries,  
listening to hours, to now.  
A hearing of the heart.

I know her by touch,  
her words making contact  
in surface ways,  
a one-finger caress. Her lines  
plunge deep in veinous ways--  
corkscrews and neon probes.

I know her in right brain ways  
where no progress ventured  
for years. I feel her push,  
a force not prepared for,  
rooted yet pliant.

Her artistry defines her:  
sometimes a blue ache, a peony,  
an ice peak on my spinal graph.

And after such intimacy, holding  
my fragile premises in her hands,  
how can either of us say  
we've never met?

--Glenna Holloway

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AWAKENING

Now that it's no longer true,  
I can bear to say it: For years  
my most memorable moments were spent  
outside  
a jewelry store window in Chicago  
looking  
at a piece of Australian black opal,  
green, red and blue simmering  
softly in its dark core.  
From a certain angle, lightning struck  
and the colors collided and crazed.  
Overwhelmed,  
orange and pink shivered, flared  
inside where something reveled  
in its experience with fire.

One day you taught me to love--  
the agape kind for others, and slowly,  
another kind for you.  
You pulled sounds out of guitar strings  
just like the opal looked. And I felt  
rocketing lights when you touched me.

Now the place for keeping my memorables  
expands  
with a vaulted ceiling. I blink  
at the jewels in my trust,  
knowing  
the secret wealth is mine to share  
with you-- a solar celebration  
where once was only black.

—Glenna Holloway

#### BEGINNER'S PRAYER ON 89th STREET

It took a long time to climb, Lord,  
away from the oozing landfills,  
away from where the slumlords mock  
the masses yearning to breathe free  
of fumes and radon and asbestos.

I was like a roach, Lord, crawling up  
a slimy pipe while you watched.  
When I got to the top I was blown away.  
In that terrible hollow of my falling,  
I heard laughter. But not yours, Lord.

You're the one who caught me, jarred me  
awake inside. The first time, I made  
my way up alone. This time I know  
I need your help. This time, Lord,  
I can see-- up isn't where I thought.

12 liner

BEGINNER'S PRAYER ON 89th STREET

It took a long time to climb, Lord,  
away from where the slumlords moon  
the masses yearning to breathe free  
of Diesel fumes and radon and asbestos.

I was like a roach, Lord, crawling up  
a slimy pipe until I was blown away.  
In that terrible hollow of my falling,  
I heard laughter. But not yours, Lord.

It was You who caught me, jarred me awake  
inside. The first time, I made my way  
alone. This time, Lord, I need Your help.  
Now I can see-- up isn't where I thought.

### BUTTERFLY GIRL

I overheard them laughing in the hall,  
Four voices ripe with confidential tones.  
My best friend said, "Where does she get the gall  
To pour at tea and flash those tawdry stones?  
And use mauve blusher with her dyed red hair?  
Another said, "She must think she's a star.  
Someone should tell her what she shouldn't wear.  
Next thing you know she'll buy a purple car."  
I waited till they left before I cried.  
They never met the cowed and damaged soul  
Beneath bravura hues and painted hide,  
Or knew the fears I sometimes can't control.  
How fragile is the monarch's jeweled wing;  
How thin the gaudy shield is to a sting.

--Glenna Holloway

## CHALLENGE

In a time men call the beginning  
there was unbridled light,  
too pure, too intense for any but God's eyes.  
A time of mass and matter,  
awkward elements warring and waiting--  
His playthings--  
molded and willed and flung from dawn to forever.  
Let science break creation's code,  
tell us what life is and how it happened.  
And when those wise ones stumble, let them discover  
the Why. Let them locate the lost language  
of holiness, the origins of praise. Find us new words  
wrested from granite, born burning, tempered  
on glaciers, cut and polished with diamonds.  
To be spoken by men in whispers.

## CHALLENGE

In a time men call the beginning  
there was unbridled light  
too pure, too intense for any but God's eyes.  
A time of mass and matter,  
awkward elements warring and waiting,  
His playthings—  
molded and willed and flung from dawn to forever.

Beginnings continue; all things hold the message.  
You leaders of science, equip us to receive  
the signals of truth; train us to transmit the whole.  
Break creation's code; tell us what life is  
and how it happened, then let us learn together  
the WHY.

Locate the lost language of holiness;  
discover synonyms for praise. Give us new words  
wrested from galaxies, born burning, tempered  
on glaciers, cut and polished with diamond.  
To be spoken by men in whispers.

### CHALLENGE FOR A SCIENTIST

In a time men called the beginning  
there was unbridled light,  
black light, white light,  
too pure, too intense for any but God's eyes.  
A time of mass and matter,  
awkward elements warring and waiting—  
His playthings—  
molded and willed and flung from dawn to forever.

Beginnings continue. All things have a voice.

Equip us to receive molten truth,  
tongues to transmit.

Break creation's code; tell us what life is  
and how it happened, but teach us the way  
to respond to WHY.

Locate the lost language of holiness;  
discover synonyms for praise. Give us new words  
wrested from granite, born burning, tempered  
on glaciers, cut and polished with diamond.  
To be spoken by men in whispers.

### CHALLENGE FOR A SCIENTIST

In a time men called the beginning  
there was unbridled light,  
black light, white light,  
too pure, too intense for any but God's eyes.  
A time of mass and matter,  
awkward elements warring and waiting—  
His playthings—  
molded and willed and flung from dawn to forever.

Beginnings continue. All things have a voice.  
Equip us to receive molten truth,  
prime our tongues to transmit it.  
Break creation's code; tell us what life is  
and how it happened, but teach us the way  
to respond to WHY.  
Locate the lost language of holiness;  
discover synonyms for praise. Give us new words  
wrested from granite, born burning, tempered  
on glaciers, cut and polished with diamond.  
To be spoken by men in whispers.

#### CONTEMPLATING PLATO AND THE CARDINAL

Forsaking comfort zones of thought, you plumbed  
New answers, keener scruples, higher knowledge.  
Applying logic, you defeated fear  
Of death, its old genetic grip on man.

For you, so long before Christ came to Earth,  
Perceived that death might be man's greatest boon.  
You recognized that striving for the good  
Should be the first concern, not mortal life.

Millenia removed, you could not know  
A modern Cardinal who called death "friend."  
Of course, he knew of you, plus centuries  
Of wisdom and the holy Word passed down.

This Bernadin would seek you out, I think.  
I hope the two of you have met by now.  
You have comparisons to make. You learned  
The greater part of truth when you passed through

The gate you knew was there. Two Old World sons,  
Two intellectuals with well-known names,  
Believers of two different faiths, but kin.  
What conversations you will share together!

## CUCKOLD AND KING

Uriah swore his valiant sword to Israel:  
A Hittite, he strove to prove allegiance  
To Zion's holy cause. And many heathens fell  
Before his might who seldom lived to tell  
The prowess of Uriah.

As Joab's hand-picked battle-wisest veteran,  
Uriah thought himself a lucky man.  
Born poor, his soldiering provided much  
Of comfort's touch—soft linen, wine and meat, a house  
Well shaded by the king's for his new spouse,  
That strange shy girl he wed.

His mind was peaceful knowing his wife was sheltered  
By more than tent flaps protecting her bed.  
But the campaign for Rabbah was going less well  
Than spoiling Ammonites had gone. The king  
Was needed at the front to lead his troops, to sing  
And play his songs of inspiration to them.  
Yet David idled in Jerusalem.

Israel was stymied outside Rabbah's wall.  
The king sent forth a summons for Uriah  
Who hastened to his lord, devoted to his call.  
After his report, David gave him leave,  
Aimed him toward pleasure, primed him well with meat.  
But the guilty plot was wasted on the Hittite  
Who joined the kitchen servants for the night  
Beside the king's back door.

When David heard, he tried again to replant  
The vineyard with the owner's proper seed. Once more  
Uriah failed to cover up the deed. "I can't  
Indulge my flesh while my comrades suffer  
In the fields," he cried, suppressing all his longings  
For Bathsheba. But the wintry will of kings  
Is seldom denied. David called for seal and quill.  
Exquisite feel for punishment and irony  
Went in the message to Joab.

Musician's hands with newly learned regality  
Put planned execution in the executed's hands.  
David watched him go: Uriah had his chance.  
He could have kept it all, but no, he chose  
A principle. So be it. Every soldier knows  
The battle's risks. The army must advance;  
Every obstacle to Israel must fall.  
Every soldier makes the most of all his weapons.  
David sighed. Lately he wearied of war.  
Soon...a wedding to prepare for.

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DARING

I dare to ask blessings from a God  
I sometimes forget, a God I don't  
always obey, don't praise enough.  
Yet I dare to believe He hears me  
in my insignificance, my wrongness.  
And because He is the one and only  
God beyond all human understanding,  
I dare to believe He will help me.

--Glenna Holloway

## DARING

I dare to ask blessings from a God  
I sometimes forget, a God I don't  
always obey, don't praise enough.  
I dare to believe He hears me  
in my insignificance, my wrongness.  
And because He is the one and only  
God beyond all human understanding,  
I dare to believe He will help me.

--Glenna Holloway

## DAY LILIES

Fiery  
exclamations  
against the garden wall  
willingly shouted all at once,  
expending all they have  
under one sun  
in joy.

--Glenna Holloway

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DAY LILIES

Glorious  
exclamations  
against the garden wall  
willingly shouted all at once,  
expending all they have  
under one sun  
in joy.

--Glenna Holloway

L

## DEATH: A STARRING ROLE IN THE CELESTIAL SCENARIO

### I

But death is just a word we mortals use,  
Other entities don't regard the same.  
Time curves away, form alters to diffuse  
Its atoms, rebuilds, takes another name.  
No part is new— man, beast nor any noun.  
All deeds are old before the doer thinks them.  
We still have frontiers (ours are up and down)  
But scripts may fail before the printer inks them.  
Matter returns to elemental wheels;  
We must do the same for nothing's wasted.  
Our energies rewind on cosmic reels  
As basic thread for stars to be basted.  
Beginnings terminate some other phase;  
Ends are stages where cyclic portieres raise.

### II

Death never was the enemy supposed  
Nor is it sinister or strange. Our acts  
Could not go on without it. Runs are closed  
By saturation, change, the emptied facts,  
Not death. In silent worldly partnership  
The ancient contract makes the drama work,  
Whets our dialogue, underscores the grip  
To play a lead instead of ticket clerk.  
But roted plot and static ad libitum,  
The daily now, foreverness of here,  
Compose an overture to tedium.  
The wise Director lets no sonneteer  
Remain so long he mouths a shibboleth  
Instead of song. The scene is saved by death.

### III

Transition is a better term. Our scenes  
Will turn with different combinations, keys,  
Where new dimensions number more than genes  
And other sensors tell us more than these.  
Forget acquired reflex to veinous chill  
And stumbling lungs. Time spirals into space  
Where death and birth are one within life's mill.  
Eternity is humans' choicest place.  
Dying deserves better press; vent the hate  
On sickness, affliction, the pained and poxed  
Ignoble ways we sidle to the gate,  
Disfigured, unclaimed, quickly packed and boxed,  
By evil scheme, old age or careless youth.  
But don't fear death— perfection transcends truth.

## DEATH: A STARRING ROLE IN THE CELESTIAL SCENARIO

It never was the enemy supposed  
nor is it sinister or strange. The act  
could not go on without it. Plays are closed  
by saturation, change, the emptied fact,  
not death. This is an honest partnership,  
this ancient inviolate contract that  
makes the drama work, that gives us grip  
and drive. Imagine how wearying flat  
our plots, our rotted lines ad infinitum,  
dailiness of now, foreverness of here,  
a strung out status quo of tedium.  
The wise Director gives no sonneteer  
a part so long he mouths a shibboleth  
instead of song. The scene is saved by death!

But death is just a word we mortals use,  
other entities don't regard the same.  
Time curves away, form alters to diffuse  
its atoms, rebuilds, takes another name.  
No part is new— man, beast, nor any noun.  
All deeds are old before the doer thinks them.  
Frontiers still beckon (ours are up and down)  
but scripts may fail before the printer inks them.  
Matter returns to the elemental wheel;  
we must do the same for nothing's wasted.  
Energy rewinds on the cosmic reel  
as basic thread for stars being basted.  
Beginnings must terminate some other phase;  
endings are stages where cyclic portieres raise.

Death never was the enemy we thought,  
Nor is it sinister or strange. Our acts  
Could not go on without it, this pivot tip  
That makes the drama work. Our closing is brought  
About by saturation, emptied facts,  
Not death. It gives us earthly drive and grip,  
This old inviolate contract to equip  
Us with an exit that repels but attracts,  
Spares us roted lines, dull plots, our staling breath.  
Foreverness of now and here impacts.  
The wise Director leaves no player caught  
On stage so long he mouths a shibboleth  
Instead of song. The scene is saved by death,  
Resumed by understudies we have taught.

But death is just a word we mortals use,  
All entities don't regard the same.  
No design is new— man, beast or other thing.  
Time curves away, form alters to diffuse  
Its atoms, rebuilds, takes another name.  
Matter returns to an elemental spring;  
We must do the same, completing the ring.  
Energy recycles, fuels cosmic flame  
As basic thread for stars being basted.  
Each role we learn supports the total frame;  
Evolving stages offer different views.  
Nothing we master is lost or wasted;  
We're part of vast collages being pasted.  
Endings are openings where each one renews..

Transition is a better term. Our scenes  
Will change dimensions, turn with different keys  
And combinations, be perceived by other  
Sensors. Those dimensions number more than genes!  
The ones we know will be passé, and of these  
Who understands the fourth? Time is mother  
Of birth, death is the sire, space the brother.  
Death deserves far better press; veinous freeze  
And stumbling lungs are not reacts of truth.  
The revulsion we feel is for disease  
And wounds and all ignoble painful means  
By which we meet, unready and uncouth,  
In evil scheme, old age or careless youth.  
Fear no death itself— perfection supervenes.

DEATH: A STARRING ROLE IN THE CELESTIAL SCENARIO

Eons before we encountered the womb  
And ventured into death's arena, this  
Short apprenticeship we serve between  
Revolving epochs, there was a staging room  
Where I remember bending toward the kiss  
Of light, becoming crystal tourmaline,  
And once, part of a pool flooding a ravine,  
And next, a mustard seed, the genesis  
Of being. And you and I met at times,  
You in a hail-storm, then a blue clematis.  
But can you recall the others with whom  
We shared galactic fires, and spiral climbs,  
Or did we leave them in the early rimes  
Of cooling clay to plan a nobler tomb?

Our blazing fall must have been awesome when  
The red giant burst and spewed us through the void.  
Swift sidewise flashbacks of the beginning  
Ignite the under-edges of our minds then  
Vanish like a burned-out comet tail. Freud  
Said we forget what we can't face— Did spinning  
Through velvet silence, pressure of twinning  
Cells blank that memory? Or have we employed  
Soft padded rationale on which to lean  
Our origins? Perhaps we even enjoyed  
The centrifuge, imploded time. All men  
Were processed thus. The creation machine  
We know as death will one day intervene  
And gather us back to stardom again.

Transition is a better term. Our scenes  
Will change dimensions, turn with different keys  
And combinations, be perceived by other  
Sensors. Those dimensions number more than genes!  
The ones we know will be passé, and of these,  
Who understands the fourth? Time is mother  
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And wounds and all ignoble painful means  
By which we meet, unready and uncouth,  
In evil scheme, old age or careless youth.  
Fear no death itself— perfection supervenes.

Death never was the enemy we thought,  
Nor is it sinister or strange. Our acts  
Could not go on without it, this pivot tip  
That makes the drama work. Our closing is brought  
About by saturation, emptied facts,  
Not death. It gives us earthly drive and grip,  
This old inviolate contract to equip  
Us with an exit that repels but attracts,  
Spares us roted lines, dull plots, and staling breath.  
Foreverness of now and here impacts:  
The wise Director leaves no player caught  
On stage so long he mouths a shibboleth  
Instead of song. The scene is saved by death,  
Resumed by understudies we have taught.

But death is just a word we mortals use,  
All entities don't regard the same.  
No design is new— man, beast or other thing.  
Time curves away, form alters to diffuse  
Its atoms, rebuilds, takes another name.  
Matter returns to an elemental spring;  
We must do the same, completing the ring.  
Energy recycles, fuels cosmic flame  
As basic thread for stars being basted.  
Each role we learn supports the total frame;  
Evolving stages offer different views.  
Nothing we master is lost or wasted;  
It fits in vast collages being pasted.  
Endings are openings where each part renews.

**GLENNA HOLLOWAY**  
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DECODING 101

It's late. Elongated shadows crosshatch  
my back yard, extending beyond definitions:  
Black on black cryptograms I can't read.

My neighbor's silhouette hunches over her desk  
lurches abruptly, holding my eye to her window.  
She rises unsteadily. Her hand goes  
to her face, lingers. A single legible line  
among the hieroglyphics of a shaded frame.

I never liked her by day.  
In this moment I recognize a lamed  
and lonely sister.  
One deciphered blip on night's graph.

Tomorrow she will have a new neighbor.  
Tomorrow I will introduce myself.

--Glenna Holloway

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DECODING 101

It's late. Elongated shadows crosshatch  
my back yard. Black on black  
cryptograms I can't read.

My neighbor's window draws my eye,  
her silhouette hunches over her desk,  
lurches abruptly. She rises unsteadily.  
Her hand flies to her face, lingers:  
A single bent and legible line  
among the hieroglyphics of a shaded frame.

I never liked her by day,  
origins, isms, idioms posing large,  
differences sharply lit. In this moment  
I recognize a lamed and lonely sister.  
One deciphered blip on night's graph.

Tomorrow she will have a new neighbor.  
Tomorrow I will introduce myself.

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DECODING 101

It's late. Elongated shadows crosshatch  
my back yard. Black on black  
cryptograms I can't read.

My neighbor's window draws my eye,  
her silhouette hunches over her desk,  
lurches abruptly. She rises slowly.  
Her hand flies to her face, lingers:  
A single bent but legible line  
among hieroglyphics in a shaded frame.

I never liked her by day:  
Origins, isms, idioms posing large,  
differences sharply lit. In this moment  
I recognize a lamed and lonely sister.  
One deciphered blip on night's graph.

Tomorrow she will have a new neighbor.  
Tomorrow I will introduce the self  
just met  
to her I've never known.

--Glenna Holloway

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"...Joy, whose hand is ever at his lips  
Bidding adieu..."  
--John Keats, Ode on Melancholy

#### DEFYING THE BREAKERS

The truth, two-sided wave of grief  
and joy, I intimately know.  
One half conceals a stealthy thief.

The other bears elation's sheaf  
of blessings which I store to show  
the truth, two-sided wave of grief.

I focus on the greening leaf  
instead of raked-up piles of woe  
whose depths conceal a stealthy thief.

Survival of a coral reef  
attests to standing in the flow  
of truth, two-sided wave of grief.

I hold to this, however brief,  
the gladness-- always turned to go.  
The other is a stealthy thief.

With buoyed cheer, my small craft's chief,  
I sail across the undertow  
of truth, two-sided wave of grief  
and joy, one half a stealthy thief.

And soon I shelter in my soul's belief.

—Glenna Holloway

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ERINIA

You could always count on Erinia's eyes.  
She listened to you with them, heard it all,  
what you didn't say with words. Her eyes  
were country cures, not old wives' tales  
like Aunt Vi's--squinty, darting, doubtful.

Erinia was wise-warm in the eyes,  
although blue is a cool color.  
She made you think of summer irises  
on apple crunch mornings. North winds  
forgot to snap and bite when she smiled.

You'll never find a better definition  
of beauty than Erinia, but she wasn't pretty.  
Her thicket of sable eyelashes defied  
the years stored beneath, age that comes  
from hearing of the heart. If you looked,  
you could see those indigo shadows were old  
as change or sorrow. She knew where  
she was, held steady to where she was going.

Her verbs were seeds, her prayers oak trunks.  
Even Aunt Vi admitted  
it was just like her to leave us nothing  
but good things when she was gone.

--Glenna Holloway

GARDEN KINDERGARTEN

Blue heliotropes  
opened wide young eyes, their lives  
celebrating light

Their cells splurged color  
tracked the sun all day then dropped  
from sight together

The sun rose again  
without flowers to follow  
its westward progress

Cold rain rolled off leaves  
Tears from children's leaf-shaped eyes  
fell on dead petals

Leftover stalks bowed  
making shadows on blank walls  
Unseen roots waited

In April-- buntings  
repeated the exact shade  
Blue is never lost

--Glenna Holloway

THE GARDEN WE CAN'T FORGET  
Anthropology Professor Says Darwin Got It Wrong  
--caption, Chicago Tribune

"Most likely there," he said. "Rich ground, warm sun."  
He pointed to an Old World map, a plain  
Where rivers met. "The Edens, more than one,  
Nearby and round the world, all bore the stain  
Of those first Eves' and Adams' sin, all equals.  
The genesis, our time on earth, began  
Incumbent on the pairs, the human sequels.  
More pairs were made; incest was not the plan.  
No quarrel with evolution or the Word:  
Sub-beings did descend from those in trees  
To walk upright then fade away unheard.  
Experiment is one of nature's keys.  
Some forms were left to mutate line from line.  
But ours was drawn apart-- the Grand Design."

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### THE GATHERINGS

Watch them awhile and you know.  
Some heads bow, some turn upward.  
You can almost see their prayers  
rise like smoke above the wall,  
skimming the rock's dark shine,  
bearing the imprint of the names  
they stroke with their fingers.  
And some now come to a new wall  
for an older war. Always the same.

Mostly they do not know with whom  
they share the wall's reflections.  
But their whys are shared, silent  
wonderings heard by the same God.  
And if at first they do not come  
in His name, He is still there  
for all who call out, believing.

--Glenna Holloway

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THE GO-BETWEEN

Dear Lord, my closest friend  
is stumbling. My words, designed  
to keep her on her feet,  
have only angered her.

Dear Lord, her hand slipped out  
of yours; I know she doesn't mean  
to disobey. Her busy thoughts  
are occupied with thingfulness,

and thankfulness is clouded.  
She doesn't realize she's lost  
her shoe and dropped her map,  
direction sense awry.

She says her luck is bad,  
but she'll find her own answers.  
She needs unfailing guidance now.  
Please be her compass, Lord, I pray.

--Glenna Holloway

GLENNA HOLLOWAY  
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32 lines

#### GOD'S ROCKER

I'm no Handel composing hallelujahs  
for ringing around the world, bouncing  
off satellites, spires and pious statues.  
I write and sing and move to a different song;  
I thump and pick and twang, loud and electric,  
sometimes slack-string. I swivel low-down,  
up-tempo or whiney blue. I may flat my fifths  
but I don't drink 'em. I made Christ my rock.

You say my music, my hot-step rhythm is not  
fitting, maybe sacrilegious. Sure, I know,  
some gospel bangers you can't always tell  
if they're singin' about their lovers  
or the Lord. And secular rock is revved  
with sex, drugs, violence and cult stuff.  
But listen up-- my words come from The Word.  
Maybe they're not your style  
but my lyrics've got no double meaning  
and my beat is honest. Out of ghetto  
and jail, despair and deliverance it came.

A Bach chorale won't reach that stud  
on the corner, that mama at the bar.  
No Latin chant or Anglican anthem,  
not even Onward Christian Soldiers will move  
that dude on the Harley. When Jesus was here  
he mixed with the riffraff, pimps and hookers  
and roughnecks. Me, I sing for 'em, tell 'em  
the story the only way they'll hear. If I did it  
stately and prettified, it'd be Pharisee sound  
comin' from me. It would make my witness a lie.  
When people hear my music and give their lives  
to God it means He's using me for His glory.

These feet-- these drums-- are my hosannas!

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19 lines

#### LILY OF THE FIELD

Perfection takes practice.  
How long did it take to become a lily?

Beauty begets more beauty. Yet,  
once being a lily  
lovely enough for Christ to mention,  
what can you aspire to after death?  
Not Solomon's silks, nor a white cloud  
after tasting gold in your soft throat.

When your one day is over  
you close on yourself so as not to see  
your ruin. All you know is beauty,  
your own, your nearby kind. What then?  
All I know of mine is a promise  
of things to come when all is changed.

But wait--isn't that faith? And faith,  
whatever the form,  
is its own beauty--not in transience  
but in holding at the root.

Lily, I know your secret.

--Glenna Holloway

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### THE LONG LONG FALL

One night as the handsome harpist played,  
the music tingled the king's blood,  
and the blood rose in his seasoned arm  
and his fingers gripped his spear shaft.  
His brain plotted the path and hurried  
his javelin's point toward the rippling chords,  
toward the west wall and the heart  
he hated enough to nail its last beat there.

But the musician was young and quick  
as a dancer, ready as a warrior  
and newly anointed of God. His name  
was louder now than Saul's in Israel.

The serpent in Saul coiled and hissed day and night.  
Sleeping, the king moaned and beat his bolster;  
waking, he gnashed blood from his mouth  
Once more he sent his loyal enemy to war.  
But when the battle messengers came to report,  
the feared subject was never among the killed.

Saul cursed and called his daughter, his spies,  
priests, sycophants, and any he could buy  
to recover control of the pounding course.  
His heirs, his servants, his people  
loved his rival. He saw his kingdom leaking  
like a torn wineskin, all its sweetness  
flowing down to David's lips.

Saul tracked him like a lion on the scent of lambing,  
a lean old lion outside his pride, with broken fang  
and worm-infested gut, a rogue that tasted man-flesh  
and lusted ever after for salt. He pursued him  
over rocks only wild beasts owned, threaded through  
wilderness where many men were lost, hauled his camps  
to mountains without names. And wherever he pushed,  
Jesse's marked son slipped past his fist like smoke,

Then Saul, the king of Israel, grew weary  
and rested in a cave away from the rattle and stink  
of his troops. He slept a Jehovah sleep while  
the hunted and his band sheltered deeper  
in the same cavern. And the former shepherd  
softly bared his sword, bent slowly over the hunter.

Saul roused from shredded dreams and stumbled  
toward the light. He heard a voice behind him  
shouting, turned toward David bowing, calling  
honors to his king. Then David stood and raised  
a swatch of color from Saul's robe. The ruler  
clutched his garment, remembering Philistine  
foreskins those practiced hands had gathered.

### THE MASTER CRAFTSMAN

His hardened hands were wise in ways of wood.  
His gleaming treasures warm the finest rooms.  
White oak and maple grains were understood  
So well his furnishings became heirlooms.

He felt a gangling board and knew its heart,  
The gain to come from steady sawing's bite.  
He worked the native quirks into his art  
Or used steel clamps to make an angle right.

When his sure pressure bent and was released,  
No part of any chosen trees returned  
To former ways. His hands, so deeply creased,  
Retiring now, have passed on what they learned

To nimbler heirs-- a dozen boys, now men--  
Who once had heard the state's cold cell doors close.  
He turned them on a lathe of love and then  
Aligned them with a spirit level, chose

A greater will to join with each, dovetailed.  
So most are expert cabinetmakers now--  
And some are preachers, teachers-- none has failed.  
He knew they'd win. The Master showed them how.

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THE MASTER SILVERSMITH

Poured from the crucible, silver  
looks disappointing, smeary,  
not the worthy brilliance of mercury,  
less bright than tin. Cooled solid,  
turning proud, it awaits my knowing hands.

This is an exquisite trade, beguiling  
the craftsman. Oh, these figures I cast  
are not idols, no molten household deities  
smoke in my workshop, desirous of worship.  
I have no use for lesser gods.

What emerges from the molds is beauty  
sterlingly personified, ready to serve  
its maker, eager to gather praise  
for the hunger that designed it.  
Acclaim is an addictive pattern. I need

to look often into the soldering flame to see  
the source of artistry is not myself.  
The bestower of talents is not genetic dice,  
it is the only, unalloyed God  
who has told us he tolerates no rivals.

So may the Lord master the smith, burn out  
vanity like wax, leaving the fire-clean cavity  
to fill-- not with my creation, but his.

--Glenna Holloway

But what is a shape? Only a cup for the blazing soul that  
God provides us all. --The Fire Balloons, Ray Bradbury

#### MESSIAH

"It has to happen. Yes, I've thought it out.  
Already happened more than once, no doubt,"  
Grey voiced his thesis. As he rose to leave  
the unconvinced one's hand was on his sleeve.

"But, Reverend Grey, how can you be so sure?  
Such outer space theology's impure!  
The Bible doesn't mention other planets;  
there's work enough to do on our own granites."

"Yes, Father Black, with that I do agree.  
More reason He must go Himself, you see.  
But as for mention-- 'Other sheep have I,  
not of this fold...' We've chosen to apply  
it to the Gentiles. Yet it could refer  
to beings men have never dreamed. And were  
they given souls, would they not need Him, too?  
It's not incredible to feel it's true."

"And do they look like us?" asked Father Black,  
"or like the signs of some weird zodiac?  
Or maybe they resemble cartoon creatures  
with alien parts and wild unheard-of features.  
And will there be another virgin birth,  
another resurrection as on Earth?"

"They'll have what's needed for their own redemption.  
Their sins must be paid for without exemption.  
But as for how they look," mused Reverend Grey,  
"like us, they're also made from sacred clay,  
and in His image too. 'His image' means  
what pleases Him. In substance or in form.  
It doesn't mean we represent the norm.  
Or even that we look like Him. We're God's  
design conception-- whether peas or pods."

That night the priest slept fitfully. At dawn  
he woke, then closed his eyes. Withdrawn  
this side of dreams, he saw new scenes unfold  
as once again the old words were re-told:

NOT OF THIS FOLD  
Another Take on John 10:16

As herders watched their flocks and wished for light  
from their twin moons to shine with rays of green  
to put the hungry predators to flight--  
a practiced angel came and blessed the scene.

His message quickly calmed familiar fear:  
"I bring you wondrous news from Paradise!  
Transmit the holy words for all to hear.  
Your Savior's born in Chalgor's cave of ice  
beyond the fiery gonfalons of Glarque.  
You'll know Him thus-- a baby in blue fur  
asleep in borrowed nests of frostbirds. Hark!  
Celestial choruses draw near to stir  
your souls with love on this young asteroid."

The angel vanished like echoing chimes  
to travel through the next galactic void  
to where more whirling worlds await their times.

--Glenna Holloway

First Prize, Richard Gardner Memorial Award  
(C) Pennsylvania State Poetry Society, Inc. 1981  
--FREEZER BURN, 1989  
--SILVER WEB, 1991

## OVERTURE

All night I probed the gamut between harmony and discord;  
Somewhere beyond my reaching was a song I longed to capture.  
Cacophony. Frustration. As first light came I called the Lord  
Who once had let me hear divine duet: despair and rapture,  
The holy scale, the melody of man, the sound of time.

Was it proud imagination, orchestration of a dream,  
Presuming much, assuming I was somehow meant to prime  
My piano to receive and reproduce a sacred theme?  
The Lord was silent, my numb fingers bowed upon the keys.  
It seemed the death of music, the acoustics of the grave.

Then down the dawn came winged notes to linger in the trees,  
to wake my weary sense and sensitivity to save  
Each scrap of tune they improvised, and once again remind me  
Where all concertos must begin, where tone and rhythm starts.  
The minor chords are born in wind, the major in the sea.

The bass explodes in thunder from the swift-colliding parts  
Of cymbal clouds; vibrating treble comes from counterpoint  
Of stars, the cosmic obbligato with hollow logs and rain.  
The mighty middle range is rivers pouring to anoint  
The sounding board of land, and amplify the whole refrain.

The final movement is composed of all humanity.  
No, never mine to play or write, confined to flats and sharps,  
My poor preludes are variations on my vanity.  
One hears this symphony from source-- someday on heaven's harps.

### PAULINA'S PLACE

She's collected these things for years,  
exquisite delicate things.  
You can see the decorator touch  
beyond her warped door: here a swag of mist,  
there a shimmer of draped sea foam.  
Silk frost swatches patch the peeling corners.

Paulina's words aren't always plain  
but when she makes pictures, when delight  
invents her smile, her meaning shines.  
She lifts her wilted right arm with the left  
and holds her hand on her heart to convey  
contentment. She laughs like a door chime.

She gathers her clingy cloudlike stuff  
in cardboard cut-out frames, sprays on colors  
through her stencils, and calls  
the finished paintings seines for catching  
scenes of summer afternoons.  
When friends don't understand, she prints

it out-- how some hold the spectrum's stripes,  
and those outside are beaded purses in the rain,  
and on the porch they're fairy awnings.  
After she won state fair prizes for her work,  
people traded words like "weird" and "nut case"  
for "unique," "creative," and "artiste."

Kids don't call her Spider Woman anymore,  
or her treasures nasty cobwebs. They walk  
the woods with Paulina, help her find  
her lace mantillas of moonlight,  
conversation pieces filled with shed petals  
and pastel hope-- the shoring for her dreams.

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#### THE POWER TO PRAISE

How could I glorify almighty God?  
He has a psalmist He anointed king,  
Has chroniclers and choirs of angels shod  
In fire-tongued sandals, has a star-strung ring  
Of sun-robed saints; their worthy lyrics bounce  
Off planets, carom off magnetic poles  
As all of heaven's harmonies announce  
His majesty, His omnipresent roles.

I am, poor poet, bound by wooden words;  
No Herbert, Hopkins, Donne, I'm hostage to  
The commonplace in everything I do.  
And yet sometimes I'm borne as if by birds:  
He leads me, lends me unexpected grace--  
A Word that makes a difference in this place.

--Glenna Holloway

### THE POWER TO PRAISE

How could I glorify almighty God?  
He has a psalmist He anointed king,  
Has chroniclers and choirs of angels shod  
In fire-heeled sandals, has a star-strung ring  
Of sun-robed saints whose holy lyrics bounce  
Off planets, carom off magnetic poles  
As all of heaven's harmonies announce  
His majesty, His omnipresent roles.

I am, poor poet, bound by common words.  
No Hopkins, Herbert, Donne, I'm hostage to  
Banality in everything I do.  
And yet sometimes I'm borne as if by birds;  
He lets me soar to make a worthy choice  
Of verse-- to honor Him with my small voice.

While struggling with the weight of wooden phrases,  
Sometimes insight, beyond my own, amazes,  
As when He lends me strong ongoing grace--  
The Word that makes a difference in this place.

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PRAYER LIST

I'm back again, Lord. On my own list.  
Asking more questions. Is length a factor  
when I talk to you? Do you like repetition?

I need more help with my life, Lord,  
and for the people in my life. I need  
to learn more about love. You tried

to show us, but how do I make myself  
love someone unlovable? You do it  
every day. But you're God.

Time is nothing to you, my life a blink.  
But such a long haul for me.  
I'm discouraged, Lord. Do you even hear me?

Before the amen is over, I know you do.  
I know you care. I know you're the Lord.  
I know enough.

--Glenna Holloway

## RENASCENCE

Day blackened at noon. Clocks disintegrated.  
Astronomical implosions deposed all order,  
place and time.  
All that was known collapsed in unlit silence.

When our eyes opened, we were young again;  
the all, the else was hoary ruin. History fell  
as rain and sleet: Shards of war, ravelings  
of shore and sky, polyglot thunder, iron, oil,  
torrential music, China, Rome, the New World,  
the currency of kingdoms, wheat and plague.  
Needles and drops of everything gone before.

An ocean licked our feet as lightning struck  
each ravaged tree into an upright cross. A tide  
of blood washed over us. It clotted, paled,  
and vineyards grew along with saguaro, sedge,  
and phlox. But Mars and Woden awoke anew  
to twist the crosses in a mutant sign to hurl  
against the globe, defiling each quadrant.

Unnumbered human spirits rose like desert dust  
to dervish in numinous winds. Some souls we knew  
as we witnessed the world from above and below.  
Our hands held laws and comets. We could vault  
magnetic poles, walk ocean floors, perceive  
the perfect helices in chaos. We began to age  
once more on pinnacles of knowledge, and learned

we must abandon the heights, descend to the nadir,  
the carpentry of Calvary where all must meet  
before the final phase. Before the promised time,  
the King's millennium, before  
we reach the sacred apogee beyond the sphere  
where all centuries join anachronisms,  
match codes and coordinates to realign  
their sights by a holy horologe

and complete the collision course with eternity.

## RENASCENCE

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and vineyards grew along with saguaro, sedge,  
and phlox. But Mars and Woden awoke anew  
to twist the crosses in a mutant sign to hurl  
against the globe, defiling each quadrant.

They subsided like lava, always waiting in pits  
of vitriol and violence to erupt again, defacing  
every trembling serenity, every greening tendril.  
Unnumbered human spirits rose like desert dust  
to dervish in numinous winds. Some souls we knew  
as we witnessed the world from above and below.

Our hands held laws and comets. We could vault  
magnetic poles, walk ocean floors, perceive  
the perfect helices in chaos. We began to age  
once more on pinnacles of knowledge, and learned  
we must abandon the heights, descend to the nadir,  
the carpentry of Calvary where all must meet

before the final phase, the promised time,  
the King's millennium, before we reach  
the sacred apogee beyond the common sphere  
where centuries must join anachronisms,  
match codes and coordinates to realign  
their sights by a holy horologe

and complete the collision course with eternity.

## RENASCENCE

The day blackened at noon.  
Astronomical implosions deposed all order.  
All that was known collapsed in unlit silence.

When my eyes opened,  
the place and time I knew were gone. I was  
young again; the all, the else  
was hoary ruin. History fell as rain: Shards  
of war, ravelings of shore and sky,  
polyglot thunder, steel and corn,  
torrential music, China, Rome, the New World,  
the currency of nations, ice and plague.

An ocean licked my heel as lightning struck  
each ravaged tree into an upright cross. A tide  
of blood washed over me. It clotted, paled,  
and vineyards grew along with lodgepole pine  
and phlox. But Thor and Woden woke anew  
to twist the crosses in a mutant sign to hurl  
against the globe, defiling every quadrant.

Unnumbered souls rose like desert dust  
to dervish in the wind. I knew them;  
my eyes were borrowed from eagles  
to witness the world from above and below.  
My hands held laws and comets. I could vault  
magnetic poles, walk ocean floors, perceive  
the perfect helices in chaos. I began to age  
once more on pinnacles of knowledge, and learned  
I must descend, back to the nadir,  
the carpentry of Calvary where all must meet  
before the planet's final phase, before  
the promised time, the King's millennium.

Before we reach the apogee beyond the sacred sphere,  
where all centuries join anachronisms,  
match codes and coordinates to realign  
their sights, to steer by holy horologe.  
And complete the collision course with eternity.

SERPENT SEED

Glenna Holloway

Now.  
Right now.  
It's the only  
moment you can  
kill it: Envy  
isn't green the  
way you were  
told except  
as that very  
first tender  
tendril freshly  
clawed from fertile  
dirt, uncurling and  
catching red. You have  
to move faster than a  
snake can strike or  
it's too late for  
anything to stop  
the process. The  
shoot leaps into  
flames; a ravenous  
tentacle throttles  
itself impotently,  
thickens, grayly  
toughens in the  
final fire. Dull dross  
remains, cold rolled into  
a coil. Another stage begins  
below the deepest layers of the  
ashes: Planted like Medusa hairs,  
they thrive and writhe and wait  
for any hint of happiness, any  
crumb of joy to devour and when none  
can be found, they  
start to feed  
fiercely  
upon the  
nearest  
eye.

GLENNA HOLLOWAY  
913 E. Bailey Road  
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DON CORNWALL

A STARRING ROLE

Retiring from the earthly stage at last,  
We change and put on makeup so unique  
No actor could have worn it in the past,  
Nor bowed and raised so radiant a cheek.  
Each player's voice resolves a major chord  
Which swells into dimensions never heard.  
Each tongue transmits the music of the Lord,  
Each ringing passage amplifies His Word.  
I will not mourn my exit toward the wings  
Or sadden over lines left unexpressed.  
Soon I will have a part in greater things,  
Assume my true identity more blessed:  
Beginnings duly end life's old disguise;  
Endings are pauses while new curtains rise.

--Glenna Holloway

ST. ANTHONY MESSENGER, 1994

## SUBJECT TO SUBLIMATION

A man's an enigma, Lord:  
You filled him with many strengths.  
You also gave him gentleness,  
and You filled him with many fears.

He sees male animals fight  
for food, for females, for territory.  
He sees the fittest win and breed  
their strength into their progeny.  
And he says, "This is nature's way."

He looks at his own strong arm.  
It can curve inward to hold,  
comfort and protect  
a wife, a child, a neighbor.  
And he knows its latent force  
can lash out,  
spring-loaded like a lethal machine.

He looks in his dynamic brain and sees  
the circuitry for producing marvels,  
surpassing his bone and sinew skills.

He looks at all he is and doesn't know  
the sum. Questions overwhelm him.  
Is he shield or threat?  
Sometimes the shield must fight  
to be a shield. But whether turning  
the cheek or raising the whip as Christ  
once did, a man can't hide.  
Or even turn his back  
while he struggles to master himself.

The one pure truth is:  
only faith can save him.

The form is Japanese Sedoka,  
pairs of 5-7-7 stanzas

### A TIME SO FAIR

Man has climbed so far,  
bloomed so full in his short days...  
Has he done it all before?

Is this an old route?  
Were there other gardens where  
natives dared to walk upright?

We crossed lower sills;  
other foes became fewer  
when we mastered tools and fire.

The birth of our souls  
implanted skills and music;  
our skulls enlarged with power.

Star memory lost,  
we groped light for things we knew  
when infinity loosed us.

In each rooting calm,  
after the lust of rutting,  
the scent of growth prodded us.

Once we knew that E  
equals MC square, we saw  
mutant clouds re-define fear.

Branched from slime to fur  
to slightly under angels,  
endemic flaws recycle.

Still the pulse of change  
flays the core of each atom.  
A tomb may reform fury.

Maybe we will learn  
to tame this wayward species,  
rise to build a time so fair.

Or must we backslide  
to our beast-forms with a growl,  
whimper as our cells revert,

prime the next big bang,  
begin again, sort, attach,  
till we touch the holy grail?

Glenna Holloway  
1028 Apple Lane  
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VIEWPOINT IN HAIKU

Glenna Holloway

June bug bouncing on  
Lily stamen—springboard of  
Sticky gold beach balls.

Mrs. R. W. Holloway  
1028 Apple Lane  
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HAIKU FOR HUMANS

by Glenna Holloway

A great optimist  
Is one who starts a crossword  
Puzzle with a pen.

A great pessimist  
Is one who thinks of all the  
Germs on all his cash.

A great mind is one  
With no prominent tunnel  
Below ears and eyes.

A great physician  
Is one who himself has had  
The operation.

Author's note: These are offered as a complete poem or individually.

3. Poetry

f. American Haiku

ZM / 161

THE FORGIVEN

The seedling pine I  
Tried to kill in my herb bed  
Now shades my old age.

GLENNA HOLLOWAY  
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### November Synopsis

The last loon crazes  
horizontal twilight sounds,  
his cry a blue ice peak  
on my spinal graph. Winter  
comes suddenly as night.

--Glenna Holloway

### 十一月記要

最後的水鳥碎裂  
地平线上的暮音，  
他的叫声是我脊髓上  
一座蓝色的冰峰。冬天  
骤然来临如夜。

GLENNNA HOLLOWAY  
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Face down in snow  
the fallen tombstone  
buries the family name

臉朝下在雪裡  
倒落的墓碑  
埋沒家姓

GLENN HOLLOWAY  
Naperville, Illinois

HOPI HOMECOMING

Miles fry under our wheels  
and slough off. The drought is worse  
than I thought. Crops are gatherings  
of desiccated crones leaning on each other  
rattling last wishes. The racing shadow  
in the dry washes and high basalt roadcuts  
is my bus from Cleveland.

I can participate in its cubist image  
by holding magazines up to the window  
though no one else would notice the shade  
of difference I make in one small square.  
Out there the shadow-bus is being  
its true self, compressing its length,  
recoiling from desert and heat,  
rising taller to look back for its lake.

Blue Corn would smile at the analogy--  
that smile that begins at the left  
of her mouth and leaves a luminous aura  
after the rest of her face has forgotten it.  
Odds are she'll be at the bus stop  
with the want ads and the appaloosa instead  
of the pickup. Hell, a horse'll feel good  
between my legs after steel chairs  
and seminar stools. The horse and I  
will be in synch before we pass First Mesa.

But soon I must interface with my Badger Clan.  
I'm like this bus-- speeding a new highway  
still sticky-- a late model vehicle of alloy  
containing other lives besides. Which one  
am I? Is there a spirit of me beyond  
the smoky abstraction the sun reveals?

Blue Corn, my love, you write happy  
from your mother's Bear Clan.  
You too are no longer programmed  
by Kachinas. When you dance I know  
your eyes are uncloudy beneath the mask.  
Most of you belongs to me  
but the foot, the <sup>drum</sup>, are your own.

Can you make any part of me whole?

## ORIGAMI

Orientals know  
how the ineluctable  
folds within the quixotic.  
These small exotic  
gifts transform banality:  
peonies from scrap paper.

Three ponies caper  
from two-fingered pleats, a crease:  
emerging without inked lines.  
Patient folk designs  
waiting in old magazines:  
Recycled phoenixes rise.

Third dimensions please:  
forms as old as printed words  
cut from discarded pages.  
Poems for the eyes:  
never written, never read,  
shaped to hang in laughter's breeze.

--Glenna Holloway