

Finally, the best article is "The Making of an Angel." I had favored the article, "Touching," as the best until I realized that three times during my reading of "The Making of an Angel" I found myself crying. Then I remembered the words of Frederick Buechner to pay

attention to those things that bring tears to your eyes, and then I knew that "The Making of an Angel" was the best article--no matter how much I liked "Touching." The winner is an essay about greatness of soul--the possibility (and fact) of high human dignity and the actual accomplishment of great dreams being fulfilled. The reader knows that he also is summoned to raise his sights and strive to do better than he has been doing and seek to develop strength of character and purity of heart.

### LITTLE GIRL GONE

Maybe it was a trick mirror from an old carnival  
stretching her tall, taller than I.

Looking right at her I didn't see it--  
only when I stood behind and gazed unblinking  
into the hard shimmer of our daily reflections.

There where surface ripples rounded her  
and bluely defined my eyes twice, my walk,  
she spent all summer.

The strange image grew stronger,  
passed into the parallax, and only mine  
stared back from the tilting frame,  
pale and unfamiliar. I turned my back.

Now ahead I see a woman in a glossy gown.  
She holds a gilded looking glass  
and calls for me to hurry.

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

24 lines

### SEEING DARKLY FOR NOW

Off tomorrow's starboard  
the morning's wings bud pink  
beneath the brow of the moon  
and the sun's opening eye. We've come to launch  
our own first light from sundry planes  
layered with homemade flight plans.

We are long past the wax and feather era  
if not the disabling myths  
but in our rising aura  
we plod against the pull as earth inhales.

Our probing beams waver,  
pale against the vastness. Oblique rays  
ricochet off melted sapphire mists;  
facets of obsidian night reflect  
our flawed designs and opaque facts.

Yet for all our yawning, for all the slipstream  
flowed across the way of our species,  
there is a certain contact,  
a benison-bright apogee  
our inner spaces are programmed to compute.

And having gained it once, we complete  
a holy circuit, imprinting our imperfect cells  
with codes and coordinates  
for our collision course with eternity.

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THE LEE WALDROP ROLLER WRITING CONTEST  
 sponsored by the National League of American Pen Women  
 Black Hills Branch

JUDGES CRITIQUE: (Poetry)

Achieves Purpose	Needs Improvement	Comment
Subject _____	_____	_____
Aptness of title _____	_____	_____
Imagery _____	_____	_____
Impact _____	_____	_____
Appeal _____	_____	_____
Flow _____	_____	_____
Notable Aspects _____	20 Honorable Mentions in first batch, but Only 10 places awarded	
Major improvement needed _____	_____	_____
Competition rating _____	_____	_____

## THE HUNGER MOON

Summer is sweet on the tongue,  
soft on the shoulders as kachina clouds,  
ephemeral as Muwingwa's shades of green.

Yesterday when the sun centered on my roof,  
the red-tailed hawk reeled round the hot yellow  
forcing shut my eyes, tightening his circle  
and hurling down his cries on my doorstep.

He is back with the dawn.  
Down and down he throws his keening *gourd*  
like splinters of cold.

The hawk is a prophet of the hunger moon:  
The time of no more corn, when the deer goes,  
making no tracks to a place no man ever finds.  
And before he sleeps, the great bear  
eats bark and things that crawl.

None of us will starve nor will the hawk.  
For me, famine is of the spirit  
while the body fuels on dried fare  
and sweets that come in jars.  
The wings are first to wither, *) true*  
then the deep singing.

Someday I will follow the hawk. I will climb  
past wilding mounds of dead-gold buckwheat.  
My foot will rattle shards of ancient lava,  
startling a pika into range of beak and talon.  
I will face the he-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.

good place

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Tailed  
hare-like  
mammal

August  
22<sup>4</sup>

## SALES FIGURES

Hot-wired for sound and motion, Hendrix sat in the outer office already tasting every word he and the man inside would serve. Two of his own kind waited in tan lounge chairs near Hendrix. They had traded small nods as each entered the arena. The clan was thinning. Once there would have been four or five grinning their clean-shaven double-breasted confidence at their rivals. Once they warred sportingly. Now it was kill and eat if they could. Lately Hendrix woke all hours of the night, a weird feeling in his chest or belly or down his spine, always trying to scrape sleep back over it till time to bathe and cologne the reek of failure.

Every morning he put on his well pressed lies, emulsioned the kink in his colon and headed out again to another reception cubicle, ten-by-ten designer spaces for people who worried their ties and wearied their creases. Now he declined the presiding blonde's offer of coffee, thinking about the clown in the inner office, imagining him swiveling around in his imported smoke chrysalis between his Wall Street Journal, his damn computer and his crystal decanter. Hendrix toyed for awhile with the idea of a clone or two of himself he could send to the other chambers he must visit; they could all finish in time for a golf match. One of them would have to win that at least.

He didn't play much anymore except when a client preferred to say "no" over the back nine. The embroidered bottom line of the executive encounter was always the same, over drinks, over lunch, over fair-traded joke stock. And however cerebral, handsomely holstered or steel-jacketed in necessity, it was always a scorching stinking lead slug NO going straight to the gut.

The inside door opened, ejected the first salesman, pale and older: The indecent exposure revolted Hendrix. The man lurched out into the corridor. The second salesman, suddenly infected by the same germ, lumbered to his feet mumbling, "You think he forgot his overcoat?" The blonde looked irked. "Maybe he's coming back," said Hendrix, vowing never to let anyone see like that into a torn opening. The second salesman gathered up the coat; they all heard the shot in the hall. Only Hendrix was sure what it was.

## THE FORGIVEN

The seedling cedar  
We hoed down in the herb bed  
Now shades our fear of old age.

It grew beneath sage and basil  
And basil, it's strength unseen  
Till we returned from summer.

February

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### VIBRATIONS

Perfection is white  
The equal presence of all  
Colors in the spectrum's blends.

By wave lengths each sends  
Invitations to our eyes  
As they divide the sunlight.

Glenna Holloway (C) 1984  
913 E. Bailey Rd.  
Naperville, IL 60565

22 lines

UNDERSTUDY

Glenna Holloway

Long before we encountered the womb  
and ventured out into the arena of death  
for this short apprenticeship we serve  
between cycles, I remember being  
part of a vein of kaolin, a waterfall,  
a jacaranda tree. And you and I met at intervals—  
you an atom of mauve jade, of cycad, you  
in a summer storm touring the temperate zone.

But can you recall our awesome journey  
from the red giant's fiery outback  
or did we dull that facet  
in the velvet void, slough it off  
our sensors in the silent spinning?

There was enough to ponder  
in the cooling crevice, the twinning cell.  
And I know all knowledge and skill  
is saved somewhere without waste,  
nothing stored in anonymity,  
no unsigned contributions to final perfection.

Perhaps we deposit the overburden of memory  
in arcane vaults sealed with imploded time  
until the stage is set to bring us back to stardom.

Glenна Holloway  
913 E. Bailey Rd.  
Naperville, IL 60540  
(C) 1981

AFRICAN SYNOPSIS, THE BAOBAB TREE

Glenна Holloway

Morning:

A ragged inkblot against the sun  
erupts like a geyser into crazed sky.  
Zigzag in slow motion  
a black quill  
returns to tangled branches of calligraphy.  
Limned roots that grew bark  
and aspired to heaven  
lurch upward to await the twilight embrace  
of winged exclamations who won it.

Afternoon:

Berserk lines on vellum-glare  
spell an ancient theme  
of heathen heat blanching the horizon.  
Daily elephants edit details;  
warped shade colors lion prints.

Evening:

Reunited on the moon's page,  
birds and boughs compose  
cryptic verses of silence  
rising above  
the voices of the veldt howling hunger.

Glenna Holloway  
913 Bailey Rd.  
Naperville, IL 60540

AFRICAN CHRONICLE, THE BAOBAB TREE

Glenna Holloway

Morning:

A ragged inkblot against the sun  
erupts like a geyser into the red-crazed sky.  
Zigzag in slow motion  
a black quill  
returns to tangled branches of calligraphy.  
Limned roots that grew bark  
and aspired to heaven  
lurch upward to await the twilight embrace  
of winged partners who won it.

Evening:

Reunited on the moon's page,  
birds and boughs compose  
cryptic verses of silence  
rising above  
the voices of the veldt howling hunger.

First Place

END OF AN ERA: THE BALLAD OF BALEFUL BAY

At the Great Auk Inn at Keelsontown,  
 The old salts toast the warlock winds,  
 Then tell their tales of love and sails  
 And watch the birds dive down.

The sea composes its threnodies  
 For a green-eyed girl, Maureen,  
 A clipper ship, the Petrel,  
 And a captain caught between.

His name was Jason Wesley Woods;  
 He owned that sailing ship.  
 He ran her tight and record fast,  
 Packed full of trading goods.

His name was soft like a sleeping surf,  
 But his will was anchor strong.  
 Maureen always feared his fancy tongue  
 And his eyes when he looked too long.

She fled but he caught and kissed her well.  
 "I've vowed to be rich," he said.  
 I'll ply every port from here to hell,  
 But I must have you in my bed.

"You'll see a new world on your wedding trip,  
 You'll get a new feel in your feet.  
 You'll learn the ship with your ears and your nails  
 As you lean from the Petrel's rails.

"I'll teach you to handle both her and the crew,  
 To respond to the wings of the sea;  
 With rhythm as heathen, caresses as light,  
 I'll teach you to love only me."

She wrenched from his arms and tried to unspell  
 Them both, harshly chastened her heart,  
 For her mind was as fixed as a buoy bell  
 Long before a boy hastened her heart.

She forced her gaze where a wave came to break,  
 For this was no boy but a man—  
 As tall and as sure as his Petrel's masts;  
 She was swamped like a skiff in his wake.

22-B

"Oh sailor, go follow the farthest tern,  
My father invented your creed.  
He lured my mother out there where she died;  
I know all about your breed.

"You'd bring me squid and a stillborn child  
With your nets and sails to mend;  
Serpent horizons of swallowed stars,  
But my cage would never bend.

"I'll wait for a man with bags of seed  
For the sureness of the earth,  
Where salt from sweat and not from spray  
Weighs up a good man's worth."

Maureen stayed long on the fog-struck beach  
With fringes of foam round her knees  
While staring for years at each square-rigged ship  
Slipping in on the morning breeze.

She heard the Petrel went down in a gale;  
She swam far beyond the shoal  
As gulls were skimming quicksilver patrol  
There where the tide runs pale.

At the Great Auk Inn at Keelsontown,  
The old salts toast the warlock winds  
Then tell their tales of love and sails  
And watch the birds dive down.

Glenna Holloway  
913 E. Bailey Rd.  
Naperville, IL 60565  
(C) 1982

#### ACT VI AT ROWLAND HOUSE

The continuing love story of Rosalind and Orlando  
from As You Like It by William Shakespeare

Rosalind     My dear Orlando, did you never once  
                Perceive beneath the clumsy umber  
                On my face the porcelain pores of woman?  
                The lack of lurking beard to match my wit  
                And worldliness? The coarse-culled shepherd girl  
                Espied my subtle hue and turn, then fell  
                In love. Yet you, already lover, failed  
                To feel vibrations from the very self  
                You claimed had conquered you. How could it be?

Orlando    Ah, sweetest bloom, my head remained on that spot  
                Where first I dropped my jaw and gazed. My all  
                Became a thrall to space you warmed, to grass  
                Your small foot blessed: A hollow man  
                Sans faculties is not observant or sane.

Ros.        And yet, should not the countenance which made  
                Him thus be the shock to whisk him whole  
                To any country street or foreign hill  
                By dint of eyes and smile when met?  
                Imprinted as you were, it should have hit

cont.

Like lightning, made you gasp my name despite  
Disguise. Didn't you detect a likeness?

Orl. Well yes, of course, fair swan. I thought you brother  
To my goddess first. Then your guiling talk  
Revoked my eyes, led me into fantasy.

Ros. You now admit your role required thought and eyes  
Who just before vowed such possessions lost.  
And since they truly weren't, good husband mine,  
Then tell me, are you always gulled by guile?

Orl. I wasn't ready for it from a boy.

Ros. Again we see your eyes in use. My voice—  
Did not my lilt and pitch betray the same  
That first had left you speechless? My notes  
Resolve no manly chord, no matter how  
I lower the scale, yet plucked no knowing string,  
No sympathetic bell was struck in you...  
And don't plead loss of hearing. We've established  
All the talk your ears received, Orlando.  
Why, any man should know what doublets hide  
Is realized in hose. My curve of calf  
Was never granted boy! It takes a dolt  
To practice wooing minus any concept  
Of the wooed, however improvised.  
A dullard would have guessed my imprisoned hair,  
My silken hand. I must have been past a fool  
To feel your credibility would mend

With marriage. I should have cast my irises  
On Jaques. He has a drollsome share of brightness.

Orl. Don't lament your lot, rare gem, you're mine  
And I am yours. What happened in the woods  
Was fate. We're calmer now, released from plot  
And ploy of Hymen's vassals in the spring.  
I forgive the cruel play you led me in;  
You forgive my lapse of sensitivity.

Ros. What? You forgive me? Dear sirrah, no flaw  
Have I presented you! Just righteous girlhood  
Wasted on a barn-boy. Would that my Maker  
Had freed me in the realm of choice. My fret  
Is not with Hymen but stupidity...  
And now I sniff the perverse Will that paired us,  
Kept me captive in a narrow biased pen...  
Perhaps your brother Oliver would make  
A better match for me— Mature, well-schooled,  
Repentant of his villainy, so wise...  
And you could have my cousin Celia.

Orl. Enough! Do recall our meeting, madam,  
Was a wrestling match in which I felled  
The well-known champion. I later killed  
A lion and you swooned. Likewise I'll break  
All suitors you encourage, and if needs,  
Shall pinion you to flutter like a fern  
Amid the forest refugees, beckoning  
Like lace, but foot-bound to the master stalk.

My craw, too, recoils at our Creator's tongue  
And cheek. Those viscous verses mouthed and treed,  
My furnace sigh, my sickly public whine.  
The audience has grievance as do we.  
His comedy has cadence, but thin swill  
To intoxicate belief. He staged us all  
As fools. Now we've slipped his ancient hold;  
Still, you and I are aptly met and mated.  
Thus we'll stay, though fashion bids us switch.  
I'd rather keep your passion for myself.  
Lasting this long, we can go the gamut.  
Your brine-cured tool encased in satin roseblush  
May sand me to the luster you desire.  
Meanwhile content yourself with brawn that won  
Your lusty favor. Oliver is flabby,  
And Jaques a wet-nosed dreamer. We deserve  
Each other, shrew of Arden. Speak no more,  
For by my ardor flexed around your throat  
Forsooth, that's the way I like it!

## DIVING WITH DOLPHINS IS RHYME ROYAL

I watch our boat plow ripe Bahama blue,  
 Collecting dolphin dorsals in the froth-skids.  
 A dozen parentheses arch on cue,  
 Rollercoastering alongside just like kids  
 Loose in a midway; unimpressed by grids  
 And charts, they trail confetti-glitter high  
 And volley fragment suns into my eye.

The salty core of my Aquarian dream:  
 To slither like a seal through silky warm,  
 Awaking dozing bigeyes. Their red stream  
 Will point the way and fling a fiery storm  
 Of living arrows, cross the scooping form  
 Of undulating outriders— what a pair—  
 Pagliacci faces grinning us a dare!

And now the dream is real for we are here;  
 Increasing time each day the sea is home.  
 The flanking porpoise escort pushes near,  
 Suspecting us for wetbacks, monochrome  
 Against a beige and turquoise catacomb,  
 Who crossed their borders with rigged passports  
 And alien marques to dabble in their fortés. \*

Our bubble wake is coded melody;  
 Each globule rises to a treble staff  
 Of long-reached elkhorn branching like a tree.  
 Green conveys whole notes from sonic graph  
 To ears attuned to each breath's epitaph.  
 High coral altars bless the tithes of sun  
 While poems flow from reef-top Helicon.

\*

This use of forte is not pronounced for-té, but does indeed rhyme with port. Hate to mention it but judges have twice made marginal notes indicating they were unaware that this is correct.

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

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## TORERO

Incarnadine dawn came before Santos slept.

Day of the corrida!

A dark mountain sprouting stiff red and yellow flowers  
and reverberating thunder waited behind his lids. Always  
he must strike lightning into a certain crater  
between the damp ridges before thunder passed him through.

Early to the rites of preparation, steeping  
in the vow to avenge his brother Miguel.

Early and long before the Virgin.

Hot laughter with his comrades, fear cased in brocade,  
superstition buried in colors of scorn.

He had even looked at his bulls and learned  
one was kin to the hooking horn-wise brute  
who routed Miguel's soul with a splintered bayonet.

Last notes of La Virgen de la Macarena flared from trumpets,  
eddied through his heated head, followed by shrill corkscrews  
pulling the cuadrillas into the circle of ferret eyes.

A thousand prisms on his shoulders ignited.

The circle hailed his name, caressed it. Something—  
treble breeze pitched to the trumpets perhaps—  
hissed his name.

The two flashing semaphores flanking him

cont.

were silent, fierce-smiling their aficionado faces.

His name wound back in the bell of a horn or the wind's mouth.  
The musicians played with too much pathos today;  
it was better when they blasted, ponderous and bawdy,  
like pompous heralds of Caesar.

"Dios, we have a gale," growled an assistant,  
"we will have to drown the capes!"

The wind examined the folded colors, the hair of men and horses.  
"Please, Santos, don't work so close,"

his banderillero pleaded, "don't get bull blood  
on your belly. You're here, it is enough."

Layers of eyes probed Santos's pores;  
the wind stuttered his name.

"They'll get their money's worth," was all he said.

Santos did not hear hoofs pulverizing sand,  
sounds of the watered cape, the olés.

His bull was a mountain, an armed freight train,  
blood-mate to Miguel's damaged and devious one.

Santos heard only wind instruments deciding his dance,  
heard distilled energy humming his mind like wires,  
then the racking thrust of his will arcing the ring, entering  
the pic, bracing it against picador temptation to twist  
and steal the best of his bull.

A trilling time-jam, a man unhorsed,  
then he heard the blessing, the God-lonely bugle  
retiring the picadors, trailing the man-animal cry  
of all who live awhile in the center of the centrifuge.

He placed his own banderillas, planted them close,  
claimed only shallow blood and hide enough to hold.

Santos watched the adorned idol raised from a Minoan frieze  
size the arena, bobbing yellow bouquets against his blackness,  
already knowing there was talent without latent flaws,  
already certain this bull would not covet the quarter  
where he quenched his horn in a picador's horse.

He saw him suddenly a handsome pander, tantalizing,  
parading— saw himself the same, the two of them  
in irresistible collusion, peddlers  
of a nebulous puzzle, some dark matching piece  
for the small jagged niche behind the ferret eyes.

Santos took the sword and muleta for the last act, the faena.  
Wind snatched the cardinal cloth, exposed his hiding,  
but this toro chose greatness. Waited. Shared.

The pase de la muerte fed the rising circle of fever,  
flared the ferret eyes. Santos designed a new pass:  
Slow ballet of cerise wing and silver pivot—celebration,  
black muscle mass, turning, winding wide  
to spare his partner's spine. The pimping wind bared him,  
bored into a brief shimmering hate for Miguel  
and his curving tricks to crimp his bulls' backs.

The wind gasped, held its breath, puffed away thought,  
gusted between passes, reeled around the circle gone hoarse.

Let no ears or tail be taken from this bull;  
if the other ubiquitous beast wished to bestow trophies,  
nothing less than a trident of horns

and the point of his maleness would do. Again Santos heard his name; the bull smeared by, redding his spangles, honing his primal senses on horn, the memory of it stored in his scars, stench, bone-rattling sideswipe.

And the bovine voice of another avenger.

For all his years of bulls only Santos spoke, his fluent muleta commanding the charges, punishing the pale-hearted, persuading the worthy ones of their chances to paint their eager points, telling them at length to bow their heads for the offering, the ritual communion.

Veronicas ago Santos would have laughed.

Or called it a prank of weariness or wind.

Did Miguel's bull declare aloud his name?

Santos spat dust from his mouth. He must not succumb to overawe. This was el toro de bandera every true bullfighter hoped for— measuring the man, rationing his rage, keeping his courage and form to the end. The matador could do no less.

Nostrils and eyes streaming grit, he sculpted the short cape, made it vault, caress, made it flow. Signs shredded off the walls; he defied the blowing, moving to the brass song in his brain.

Perfect parones, spinning, people-thunder, levitating.

Pase de pecho. Perfect. Bull dancer and minotaur.

Time reverted then raced back. Stumbled. Coiled.

Santos sighted down his sword.

A bull to take recibiendo— the ultimate tribute and risk,  
waiting like a figurine, committed to that stand, waiting  
for the deified charge to sink the espada,  
holding down the triangle head with serge on a stick,  
leading it past his sledging chest, trying to remember  
the kill would be for Miguel.

The cloth swung forward, beckoned.

The bull came. Santos leaned over the horn with a name cry,  
rescued his lungs by a sequin, feet still as stones.

A flawless execution

except steel and bone collided; the blade bowed and sprang  
out of its hot sheath, out of crazed thunder.

The withered flower patch bloomed with new crimson;  
the bull mastered desperate legs, stilled  
his flailing tongue on the taint in his mouth.

Santos refused to heed his wrist, the shrieked advice  
to descabello. He retrieved his sword, cursing.

The centrifuge screamed and silenced unheard;  
the air churned rabioso. He made himself calm  
in his bowl of sweat and whiplash chill.

"We will have total perfection, eh, Diablo?"

A bugle played in his head, an aviso.

The bull summoned him,  
waiting like his bronze kind on the parapet,

posing his invitation low and silent.

Sun-flashes along the edge of the estoque, rolling  
images, icons of the Virgin, faces of his brother,  
el toro his brother. Santos moved to the blossoming spot,  
light with new speed. A bright swatch  
of last Sunday's poster of Miguel  
spiraled into the matador's eyes.

Triumphant horn raised and steel drove down,  
compounding the arch. Santos heard  
the wind, heard them fall together, heard time unhinge.

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

Glenna Holloway  
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## CHEETAH

I've released you in full color  
from my camera, from my sketchbook, even uncollared you  
from dark Egyptian tombs. Now draining my sienna palette,  
you refuse to keep your paper context;  
unhampered by layers of super-polymer  
you complete your spotted streak across the papyrus  
on my easel. Your dissident design brushes past  
my stroke, tracking shadows in my studio,  
haunting the old passageways, hunting  
the presiding Tomcat, the drab native mouser  
who may not submit to your dynasty.  
Shoulders knotted like Osiris's fist, your precedent  
pushes into dimensions not dealt with  
in pigments or even the bas-relief of kings.  
I warn benighted Tom of your Isis eyes coming,  
your speed matched with light, and hope  
he hunches himself in a small niche of time  
you can't enter with your leggy serpent length,  
your heathen haunches and expletive head.

Confrontation comes spitting sudden:  
Arranging himself on a vacant pedestal, Tom bristles  
his long lineage, his black leopardship. Smoothing  
the smug cap of Ptah he arcs down sovereignty  
from ankh eyes.

Below, the grudging cheetah, frieze-groomed,

cont.

slow blinks and tail-tips  
distant recognition to her high flown kin.  
It is the artist confronted: You've both made your points.  
I close the paints and reach for the sculpting tools.  
Proxy Tom translates hieroglyphs of motion and muscle,  
transmits himself to my clay, rehearses me augur and clue.  
At last the main event: Nothing is lost—  
Cheetah, you're free— but mine!

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### PUEBLO GIRL AT RIVERSIDE

Glenna Holloway

Blue Corn stared at her hand now gloved in slimes  
and evil smells that made her back away.  
Her mother had related smiling times  
along this bank where she had dug white clay.  
Blue Corn was glad she couldn't see it now,  
for potters love the earth, this was a sin.  
This hand was from a horror film. Oh, how  
could people kill their river? He was kin!  
A cousin to their kind, their ancient dreams—  
Now host to noxious networks spewing scum,  
receiver of the progress-laden streams,  
the dregs of greed— depraved viaticum.  
Someday the town must answer to a judge—  
perhaps unknown mutations bred in sludge.

## WAS THERE A CHILD NAMED YOU OR ME?

Were there really  
satin-green bugs with wire-hairy feet  
that made current zigzag down your spine  
when you closed them in your palm?  
Was there a vine that grew valentine leaves  
and mini-potatoes for doll plates?  
And easy-to-break chocolate rocks with insides  
like sugar compelling your tongue to the test?  
Were there tiny tunnels in the suntanned meadow  
where you fished for pale humped "camels"  
that bit and held the spit-and-mudball-baited stems  
of fescue? And farther on, a waiting pond flocked  
with yellow-green paisley that hid small swimmers  
trading tails for legs? And wilding wispy smells  
each matched in your mind with a color...

When was it over,  
that swift season of knowing  
and being  
all there is  
eye level in the grass?

Or is it a dose of strained fancy  
force-fed beneath the sanded surface?  
But wasn't there for sure a certain crouching path  
where you couldn't see ahead and you backed off slow,  
tightened by little corkscrews of warning in your middle?  
Still—the field tilted and swayed—  
somehow you went that way without knowing.  
The soft fronds closed behind you  
and the brambles made you shield your eyes.

I really loved  
this poem, Glenna!  
Golda

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19 lines

### COMMUTER TRAIN RIDERS

Let all the habitual passengers know  
in the dark of their heads that the 8:15 will pile  
jackknifed and jagged in a ditch tomorrow; leave  
Gabriel feathers on their doorsills so they're sure.  
Some will ride it anyway, unable to crack  
their molds, ratcheted to their private reels,  
racked on indelible rails in sweat-fitted hides.

Knowing now, knowing it in spades,  
they rattle their loose change, dash pale  
from center to corner, mouths working.  
They make long fingernail tracks  
on the sides of their pits, finally  
fall back to eat and drink. One reads  
a certain book, one cleans the attic,  
fondling trophies. One prowls sleep with pills.

They do what they can with their morning faces,  
staring at the huge WHY that palls their reflections.  
Slowly, though not enough to be late,  
they go out and board the 8:15.

## 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.