

Glenne Holloway,

not Native & pit
but person in World, etc.

This is good, but we're over-committed
with Poetry books through '96.
Sorry, but Good luck —

John

BODO (*Infant of the Aftermath*)

NEW FROM THE SMITH

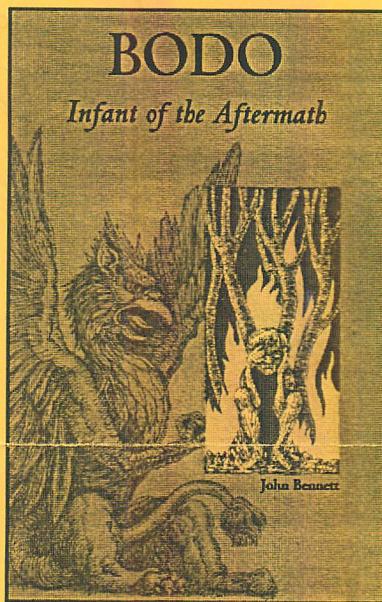
Author John Bennett once again proves that he is our most dynamic writer, blazing a trail of energy through the desolation of contemporary literature.

Scarred in body and psyche by the ravages of World War II, Bodo is one of those rare creatures who seems out of place everywhere, even in his own life. More than most, he retains and lives a state of innocence that is ultimately his undoing. Bodo is a German war orphan who is brought to America by ineffectual foster parent of both nations. Growing up to become a revered disc jockey, he falls through the cracks of mainstream America, catching up too late with the renegade lifestyles of the alternate cultures. Bodo ultimately enters a dream from which even those who love him most cannot free him. Or is he already free?

Bodo is the story of one man's rise and fall, careening through America and life, written with an energy unseen since Kerouac, observed with a cool eye that misses nothing and never flinches.

Bennett's talent is secure enough to alternate between mainstream prose and that which *Small Press Review* has called "expressionistically fractured and condensed."

Hugh Fox has calls John Bennett "a spiritual cousin of Henry Miller," while Saul Bellow has said of Bennett's *Night of the Great Butcher*, "I knew there had to be a human way to write about these subjects."



Comments on John Bennett's writing:

"John Bennett's talent is to build unforgettable characters, infusing them with life, humor, and tragedy. Bodo finds his voice in radio as a DJ, and Bennett takes him on a wild ride through New Orleans and San Francisco of the 60s. And Bodo's story is well worth the ride."

— Tom Person, *Laughing Bear*

"Bennett is the real thing. His voice is honest and strong and a little wild. I highly recommend him."

— Tom Robbins

"You've fought a harder, cleaner fight than anyone I know."

— Charles Bukowski

"Bennett's books are tremendously readable . . . a kind of moral stamina alongside the capacity for sheer survival."

— *Gargoyle Magazine*

"It's some of the best stuff I've read in a long, long time, and I've been reading forever."

— Al Martinez, Columnist, *L.A. Times*

BODO (*Infant of the Aftermath*)

Fiction

written by John Bennett, original artwork by Jim Kay

\$14.95 paperback, 192 pages, ISBN: I-882986-17-2

YES! I would like to order ____ copies of BODO (*Infant of the Aftermath*) at \$14.95 plus \$2.00 shipping for the first book, and 50¢ for each additional copy (New York residents, please add 8 percent sales tax).

Please send a free catalog.

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October 2, 1995

Signature Books, Inc.
564 West 400 North
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Dear Editors:

I'm just completing my first two books, a collection of mostly published poetry, and an illustrated wildlife book with a poetry text. The first runs 80-85 pages. The latter runs about 50 pages plus 10-12 photos. The wildlife poetry is accurate, informative and entertaining while adhering to high literary standards.

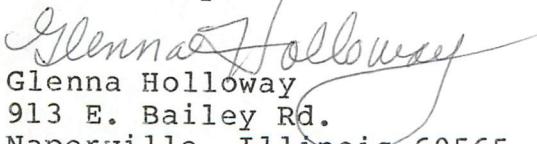
My poetry has appeared in WESTERN HUMANITIES REVIEW; GEORGIA REVIEW; LOUISIANA LITERATURE; THE FORMALIST; MANHATTAN POETRY REVIEW; CHICAGO TRIBUNE; THE HOLLINS CRITIC; WISCONSIN REVIEW; THE NEW RENAISSANCE; McCALL'S; ORBIS (England); IOWA WOMAN; GOOD HOUSEKEEPING; CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR; AMERICA; BLACK BOUGH and many others. Also many anthologies. Recent awards: Hart Crane Memorial, Kent State; CPU REVIEW (Columbia Pacific U.); CRUCIBLE, Barton College; National League of American Pen Women, "Best of the Best, '87, '91," and '94-'95 "Dial-A-Poem, Chicago." Last month I won an award from DEXTER REVIEW. I also write human interest and travel features for THE CHICAGO TRIBUNE.

You probably don't include color photography in your books so I'm concentrating my query on the collection. However, should you be interested, my photography has won a number of art awards and has appeared in INSIDE CHICAGO MAGAZINE; THE RETIRED OFFICER; CHICAGO TRIBUNE; RURAL HERITAGE; CITY STAR; ILLINOIS MAGAZINE and others.

I'm enclosing samples from the collection, both free and formal verse. The working title is "VOICE-OVER."

Would you like to see the ms?

Yours truly,


Glenna Holloway
913 E. Bailey Rd.
Naperville, Illinois 60565
708-983-5499

*No Thank you,
signature yours*

Confluence Press, Inc.
Lewis-Clark State College, 500 8th Avenue
Lewiston, Idaho 83501-2698

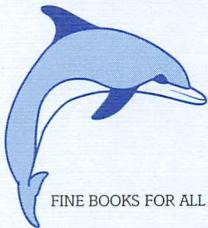
Dear Writer:

We are currently backlogged with publishing projects and unable o consider new ones. We hope to begin considering new projects again this coming spring.

Meanwhile, thank you for your interest in Confluence Press. We wish you the best of luck placing your work elsewhere.

The Editors

**Blue Dolphin
Publishing, Inc.**



FINE BOOKS FOR ALL AGES

Glenna Holloway
RE: Poetry & Photographically Illustrated Wildlife book

Dear Author,

Thank you for the submission of your book proposal/manuscript to Blue Dolphin. Unfortunately, it does not fit into our publishing plans at the present time.

We receive approximately 15-20 new manuscripts or queries each day, so we apologize for any delay in responding to you. Please be assured our decision does not reflect the quality of your work, but only our specific interests at this time.

We wish you every success in finding the right publisher for your work.

Sincerely,

Paul M. Clemens

Paul M. Clemens
Publisher

Your book sounds very nice! It would be
expensive to reproduce.

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THE ECCO PRESS



Dear Author,

Thank you for your recent submission to The Ecco Press. After careful consideration, we have decided that it is not appropriate for us. Unfortunately, time does not permit us to respond to every submission with an individual response.

We appreciate your support and interest in The Ecco Press and wish you the best of luck in placing your work elsewhere.

Sincerely,

The Ecco Press

{ Samples (best ones) }



Dear Contributor:

It is with regret the editors of *Yippy Yi Yea Western Lifestyles* are not currently accepting submissions, due to a six-month hiatus of the magazine.

Please feel free to submit materials to our other publications, *Country Folk Art Magazine* and *Quick 'n Easy Home Cooking*. Send submissions in care of the editorial department.

Thank you for thinking of our magazine.

Sincerely,

The editorial staff of *Yippy Yi Yea Western Lifestyles*



Writers' Guidelines

Country Folk Art Magazine™

We seek queries on country decorating, artist profiles, antiques, collecting and how-tos. Representative photographs should be submitted with query.

General Guidelines

We are interested in knowing the availability of professional transparencies on all subjects queried. On assigned articles, individual word counts will be suggested, usually 1,000 words or less. You can expect a response within six weeks.

Long Publications, Inc. pays writers \$250 on acceptance for each editorial assignment; \$25 per slide or transparency used, on publication (photography will be returned).

We request first North American serial rights.

Accompanying this writers' guideline is an editing-guidelines sheet you may find helpful in writing your articles. It contains information our staff uses in editing submissions.

Send all queries in care of the editorial department.



BULFINCH PRESS

November 7, 1995

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

Dear Ms. Holloway,

Thank you for sending your proposal for a photographically illustrated wildlife book to Bulfinch for consideration. While your credentials are impressive, I'm afraid we are going to have to pass. We typically publish our art and photography books in conjunction with a major museum exhibition or an artist retrospective. You may wish to consult, if you haven't already, *Literary Market Place*, which lists many different publishing houses and the types of books they publish. Best of luck, and thanks again for thinking of Bulfinch.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ann Eiselein". The signature is fluid and cursive, with "Ann" on the first line and "Eiselein" on the second line.

Ann Eiselein
Department Assistant

cc: [unclear]

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LITTLE, BROWN AND COMPANY
34 Beacon Street, Boston, MA 02108
Telephone (617) 227-0730 • Facsimile (617) 227-0790



Dolphin **Moon**
P.O.Box 22262
Baltimore, MD 21203
USA

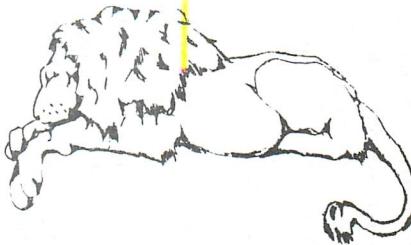
We're sorry, but Dolphin-Moon Press is booked up with projects for the foreseeable future and cannot consider any new work at this time. We wish you all the best in your submissions elsewhere.

The Editors

Thank you very much for your poems. I'm sorry to say that we are too occupied with a present project to publish a book.

Thanks again.

FITHIAN press



POST OFFICE BOX 1525
SANTA BARBARA
CALIFORNIA 93102
(805) 962-1780

MANUSCRIPT GUIDELINES

About Fithian Press. Fithian Press is a small-press publisher. We specialize in trade paperback editions, although we occasionally publish hardback books as well. Our print runs range from 500 copies to 2000 copies. For this reason, we seldom publish long books—books over 70,000 words. Our distribution is limited; we place some of our titles with Bookpeople in Oakland, California, the country's largest distributor for small-press publishers; other titles are available to bookstores through other distributors, primarily Baker & Taylor. Most of our sales, though, come from direct-mail advertising, either to lists supplied by our authors or to appropriate special-market lists.

Editorial Focus. We are currently publishing four titles a month. Our goal is to publish one book each month in the following four categories: poetry, memoir/autobiography, fiction (novel or story collection), and general nonfiction. We are presently receiving several hundred manuscripts a year for consideration, which provides us the opportunity and the challenge of selecting the best works we can find in each category. Because of the financial arrangement we have with our authors (see below), the "best" manuscript need not be the most commercial. In fact Fithian Press is not the appropriate publisher for a highly commercial book, and we are far more interested in the book's value and the quality of the writing. On the other hand, we are reluctant to publish any book that has no likely prospect for sales or good reviews.

Financial Arrangements With Our Authors. All Fithian Press books are copublished with their authors. This means the author pays the costs of production in exchange for a large royalty (50-75%). We pay royalties cheerfully and quarterly. In addition to producing the books, Fithian also contributes, at no additional charge to the author, full publishing services ranging from editing and design to promotion and marketing to such administrative details as ISBN, copyright, Library of Congress number, listing in Books in Print. The published books are the property of the author, who may take possession of them at any time.

Enclosed is a query form. We hope to hear from you, and if you have any questions, please feel free to call or write.

Finding the right publisher is not easy.

MAJOR LEAGUE PUBLISHERS don't have time to read all the query letters they receive, let alone all the manuscripts. Nor will they take a risk on an unknown author. They rely on agents to do their screening, and they publish only what they feel confident will earn them a profit. But, as any newcomer knows, it's almost as difficult for an unpublished author to find an agent as it is for an unagented author to find a publisher.

THE SMALL PRESS scene offers some of the most creative publishing happening today. Unfortunately, most small-press publishers operate on a shoe-string budget, so they must be very selective about what they decide to print. So, although the small press options are more encouraging than the big time, it's still not easy finding the right publisher in this area.

SELF-PUBLISHING is open to anyone with a manuscript, some time, some money, and some know-how. But it's time-consuming work—work that most writers would rather leave to experienced publishers. Self-publishing works best for how-to books or informative nonfiction; self-published "literature" seldom breaks even.

VANITY PRESS publishers are not always ethical, and you could be paying a lot of money to receive less than you expected. In selecting a subsidy house, ask the following questions: What is the quality of their production? Is binding included in the production? What sort of promotion is planned for your book? Who owns the books once they are manufactured? Finally, shop around: these companies' prices vary from simple cost-plus to whopping fees.

Creative Copublishing

Often the reason a publisher won't publish a new book is because of the risk: publishing is a business, and the publisher needs to know that each book will make a profit. If the author can reduce or eliminate the risk, the publisher will be far more likely to take on the book if the book fits the publisher's list. There are many ways an author and a publisher can work together, but here is the way it usually works at FITHIAN PRESS.

The author pays the major production costs: typesetting, printing, binding, etc. The publisher contributes services ranging from editorial (editing, proofreading, jacket copy) to production (design, paste-up) to marketing (press releases, brochures, galleys, review copies, sales and fulfillment) to executive (ISBN, Books in Print, copyright, Library of Congress number, contracts and permissions).

All copies of the book remain the property of the author, who may take possession of any or all copies at any time. In addition, the publisher handles sales and fulfillment, and the net receipts from all books or subsidiary rights sold by the publisher are split 50-50 with the author. That way the author gets paid back (to some extent) for his or her investment.

FITHIAN PRESS is a small-press copublisher whose function is to bring out worthwhile books that other presses might not consider commercial. We specialize in literature, but we will consider manuscripts of all sorts; we do not, however, offer to publish every book that comes our way. Although we can't promise big sales, we tailor an aggressive special market campaign for each book we publish. Our production standards are high, our prices reasonable, and our contracts fair.

Should you copublish?

Every author has a different reason for wanting to be published: money, recognition, a message, self-expression.... Before you decide to copublish your book, you should know why being in print is important to you.

COPUBLISHING WON'T MAKE YOU RICH AND FAMOUS. FITHIAN PRESS publishes realistically small editions, and our authors don't appear on the Johnny Carson show. The financial risk rests with the author, and we can't guarantee that you will make your investment back. We do, however, promote each title to its fullest potential, and for that we need your help.

KNOW YOUR MARKET. Because we publish short-run editions, we're most interested in books with a specific target audience. Do you have a realistic idea of how many people will want a copy of your book? Do you know who they are?

YOU CAN HELP YOUR PUBLISHER by providing lists of people interested in what you've written about. Tell us names of authorities who would read galleys and give us blurbs for the back cover. Promote actively in bookshops and in the media. Copublishing means more than just subsidizing production; it means working with the publisher to make your book a success.

CAN YOU AFFORD IT? IS IT WORTH IT? Just ask us. Use the query form on the back to request a free editorial and marketing analysis, plus a book design and a quotation on the cost of production. If we like your book, and if you like our copublishing terms, we'll happily mail you a contract.

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Daniel



and
Company

A DIVISION OF DANIEL & DANIEL, PUBLISHERS, INC.

Post Office Box 21922
Santa Barbara, California 93121
(805) 962-1780

Dear Author,

Thank you for sending your book proposal to us. I'm sorry if you've had to wait a long time for this response, and I'm especially sorry to be sending you a form letter. We receive over 2500 manuscripts and query letters a year, and a human being does look at each proposal; however time does not allow us to answer each proposal personally.

I also regret to tell you that we have decided not to make you an offer on your book. Please understand that this is not necessarily a negative judgement on the value of your work. It simply means that we feel your book would not fit our list, which concentrates on belles lettres in small editions, or that your book would represent a risk if marketed to our rather limited audience.

I wish you the best of luck in placing your material with another publisher. I'm also enclosing herewith some information about Fithian Press, our imprint for copublished books. Under that imprint we have helped over a hundred authors put their books into print. If after reading the Fithian manuscript guidelines you feel that copublishing is an appropriate option for you, I'll be glad to hear from you again.

Sincerely yours,

P.S. If you included a self-addressed, stamped manuscript envelope with your submission, your material is returned to you herewith. If not, I am holding your manuscript for one month. If you want it returned, please send three dollars to cover stamps, envelope, etc.

has contributed to the survival of African American families.

Summary

African American families have functioned under a legacy of challenges to their survival, beginning with slavery when families were not allowed to exist and when they were continually disrupted by abrupt and permanent separations. Surviving these disruptions, African American families have continued to demonstrate their flexibility and resilience under many adverse circumstances. It is not surprising that many African American families would be in crisis, given the range of routine assaults they face. What is more surprising is that many of these families display a remarkable legacy of adaptive strengths. James Comer, in *Maggie's American Dream*, reminds us that what we learn from survivors will tell us more about the circumvention of problems than will an exclusive focus on victims. African Americans are, if anything, survivors of historical and contemporary circumstances that may increase their vulnerability. However, as survivors they have much to teach us about resilience.

NF

Beverly Greene is a professor of psychology at St. John's University and a clinical psychologist in private practice in New York City. A Fellow of the American Psychological Association and the recipient of national awards for her distinguished professional contributions, she is a coeditor of *Women of Color: Integrating Ethnic and Gender Identities in Psychotherapy*.

ELF OWL (*Micrathene whitneyi*)

The saguaros lose weight and pleat
as they enter the death phase. It may last
for years. It's been so long since water
made good the sky's promises
there's a rattle in the desert's breath
not made by the sidewinder.

Leafless ocotillos comet lone blips of red
across day's end, one-spark blossoms
dangling from long arcs
like bobbing semaphores
signaling the elf owl to hunt.

In midnight sandshine, the tiny raptor
withdraws to its hollow
in the oldest saguaro. The cactus tightens
on its own tall thirst, narrowing its cells,
its clustered spines like medieval maces
guarding its deep secret moisture.

Twice more the pygmy predator haunts the night,
silence feathering swiftly over empty silence,
coming home empty.

GLENN HOLLOWAY

Glenna Holloway's poetry has appeared in *Western Humanities Review*, *Georgia Review*, *Louisiana Literature*, *The New Renaissance*, *The Hollins Critic*, *The Formalist*, and many other publications.

ing along “searing vignettes” about what has preceded them. They view this process as a long collective memory that is in and of itself an instrument of survival.

The single-parent family as a large and diverse group among African Americans is not synonymous with teenaged or underaged mothers.

African American families must do all of these things in addition to providing the normal range of basic necessities that all families must provide for their children. In the context of a racist society, however, African American families’ ability to do this may be compromised by the institutional barriers that providers in the family invariably confront. In these scenarios there may be a drain on the family’s emotional and material resources, making the extended family structure an important resource in this regard. Sharing the burden of child care and child rearing helps to ease this burden in many families and can be seen as an example of resilience.

Multiple Mothering

In *Black Families*, Nancy Boyd-Franklin gives one example of this in what she describes as “multiple mothering.” “Multiple mothers” refers to grandmothers, aunts, cousins, close friends, or people considered “kin” to a child’s mother. They need not be biologically related. These multiple mothers provide emotional safety valves, sounding boards, and alternative role models to children while often providing their real mothers with important tangible support in the form of child care. These arrangements also emphasize the important role for elder members of the family and the importance of their connection to members of the next generation. It is important to remember this extended family structure when viewing “single-parent families.” The fact that African American families

may deviate in structure from the White Anglo Saxon Protestant norm does not warrant pathologizing them or presuming that this deviation accounts for family problems.

In what appear to be many single-parent families, extensive networks of other family members, family friends, neighbors, and others are routinely involved in the caretaking of children. Hence, the unmarried status of the mother does not automatically tell us what the rest of the family structure is like. The single-parent family as a large and diverse group among African Americans is not synonymous with teenaged or underaged mothers. Becoming a parent before one is biologically and emotionally mature, or when it interferes with important developmental tasks of the parent, is certainly not what is recommended. Rather, I suggest that African American family structures be viewed as perhaps having a wider range of flexibility in what is available to its members, reflected in a wider range of persons, in addition to biological parents, involved in parenting roles.

Gender Role Flexibility

Robert Hill, in *The Strengths of Black Families*, identifies major characteristics of African American families: strong kinship bonds, a strong achievement motivation, a strong religious and spiritual orientation, and a strong work orientation. Hill views these characteristics as strengths that have helped African Americans survive and function under difficult circumstances. He further cites gender-role flexibility as an important and adaptive characteristic of African American families. This flexibility in gender roles is explained in part

as a derivative of the value of interdependence among group members, typical of Western African precolonial cultures, that is unlike the value of rugged individualism of the West. It is also a function of the need to adapt to racism in the United States in many different ways.

One of the features that distinguished African American women from their white counterparts was their role as workers. Aside from being brought into the country as slaves whose primary function was to work, the status of African American women as slaves superseded their status as women. Hence they were not given the courtesies of femininity that were routinely accorded white women. Conventions of femininity considered many forms of labor that were routine for white males inappropriate for white females. Slavery deprived African American women of this protection, and as such their roles as workers did not differ from those of African American males. Hence at the very outset, rigid gender-role stratification among African Americans was not permitted. Later, because African American men faced significant racial barriers in the workplace and could not fit the idealized image of the Western male provider, women were forced to work to help support the home. Thus, the dominant cultural norm of women remaining in the home while men worked outside the home was never a practical reality for African American families.

This does not mean that there is no sexism within African American families. Tensions are often produced when African American men internalize the dominant culture’s value of male domination and female subordination. Working women become the targets of African American male frustration rather than institutional racism. Despite such occurrences, flexibility in gender roles represents another example of an adaptive strategy that

GLENNA HOLLOWAY
913 E. Bailey Road
Naperville, IL 60565

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 back-and-forths.
Short rolls across 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 her 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. Mama never told me that.

--Glenna Holloway

GLENNA HOLLOWAY
913 E. Bailey Road
Naperville, IL 60565

CUTTING A FINGER ON OBSIDIAN
to Georgia O'Keeffe

Searching the desert,
plodding in sand-filled shoes,
bent beneath blows of light,
you and I never met.
Yet I knew you in veinous ways,
in behind-the-eyes ways
where hot blue strikes
mirrors in the secret vaults
of knowing.

Exclaiming aloud and alone
when the desert showed me its bones,
its spiny life, still and green
or sidewinding I knew you.

We passed at angles crossing
the parallax out on Hogarth's curve,
palimpsest for colors and shapes,
some knee-skinning, some cheek-soft,
seeping in and out of each other
under the mallet of light.

You are willful and wild
as a spirit hawk. You are
lava glass trapping fire
under conchoidal wrinkles.

You are hands brushes eyes
no longer peeling light, feeling
its pulse, shedding it like snakeskin
to dry and iridesce on paper's tooth

but still living
where I know you.

Moonwatch, Floodwatch

The well still offers grit, muck and mouse taste,
even boiled and salted-- skin-tainting,
clothes-staining. A clod of earth wedged
twelve feet up in the oak tree grows clover.

Your being gone is everywhere. Thinking
makes a sibilant sound; mold's graffiti
shouts from the walls-- old obscenities
under new paint, dirt smell abiding in my head.

Just when I thought euphemisms might work,
the moon floated up, sloshed
in the cattle cistern, shafted through a window
to spiral down the drain with the dishwater.
Look at it now-- a pale wet omen for a halo,
a rheumy eye watching in collusion
with hungry streams lumbering below.

Grayish, khaki green in sunlight, water
pretends to mind its own business--
wide-- profound-- river business, secretly
gnawing rock, smuggling topsoil like contraband
but not likely to the needy.

Indispensable-- indifferent as air, the river
has age, history, often ignoble, beauty I deny.
Rehearsed fear runs deep in my own dark bed.
My banks overflow with mud-caked deposits.

Tonight's moon is sludged. Hurrying, it rises
above the current tugging on its south, summons
a thunderhead to cover its retreat. Slow rain
begins, bleeding the clay, red-veining the shore.

Our warped doors have been replaced. And you
who can't be, sometimes inhabit poems. Sometimes
you trace the slimy signature on the bricks,
the receipt for surrender of all your premises.

Hearing the river louder than thought, its promises
ruckle my mind, ripple over and into me
like a sudden chill; sometimes it wrinkles
me inside like outdated memos wadded in a fist.

Water as simile is hard to shut off.

GLENNA HOLLOWAY
913 E. Bailey Road
Naperville, IL 60565

32 lines

OLD HOME ABANDONED

It's still upright but terminally gray,
claimed only by beetles and bindweed.
The fence has a falling sickness. My bedroom
window shutter protests against pocked boards
like Jay's fist on the bathroom door.
I wish I hadn't come.

It was easy to leave here
when movies and magazines showed us other ways,
made us grump about frigid linoleum,
squawking stairs and hot water enough
for only one bath a night. I never waited
for my turn every fifth night, instead lugged
buckets and dishpans of stove-heated water
softened with hoarded drops of Christmas scent.
I'd soak and sniff my upright knees
and slide my hands over my shiny shoulders
thinking about silk dresses and three-inch heels.
Until someone, usually Jay, pounded his impatience,
made this bare spot in the door paint. And I'd yell,
"You grew up with nothin' but the two-holer, sport.
Go re-live the good ole days now the snakes're gone.
It'll keep you humble." But he'd thump away
just like that shutter clinging to its only hinge.

Dead leaves scudding across the porch
make me turn to look for Mama's shadow in the hall,
tiptoeing, coming to feel my flu-achy forehead.
I almost hear cows impatient for milking, and Papa
calling pigs. The old swing, quarreling with wind,
makes noises like Sara's asthma attacks. I break
into a run for my car, leave a tuft of mink on briars.
The shutter's rhythm changes, grows urgent.
Oh Jay, you can't come in!

GLENNA HOLLOWAY
913 E. Bailey Road
Naperville, IL 60565

To the Master Poet From His Student
Glenna Holloway

Knowing how it all hangs on the turn of the lathe,
on the ordinary wooden phrase, reshaped,
I try to miter your favor around my small corner.
I nod like leaves in the breeze
of your observations, answer your questions
with what I hope won't split or you can't chop.
Someone with a louder voice
has already routed the heartwood.

I search the forest for perfect pith
to drop your jaw, make you file me away
in the gray rings of your head--
oh, not near Dickinson or Pound or Jarrell--
I hope for just enough good grain
to make you consume my unseasoned burl
with a hunger-- the hunger
of lone trees for other trunks and canopies,
ferment of kindred humus at their roots.

But the timbre of my pitch bends,
my carved sentences are cut mid-stroke, drilled
by other voices, upended and left dangling
like stringy hemlock participles. My presence
scatters like pine pollen.

"Who?" you will say a week from now
on hearing my name. I struggle to rivet you
with possibilities, rummage my tool box
for sharpness, anything pointed,
find my needles too soft and green.
But beware, long-time hero and summer mentor,
I may yet slip a splinter beneath your nail.

GLENN HOLLOWAY
913 E. Bailey Road
Naperville, IL 60565

DECEMBER DINNER, MANHATTAN ISLAND

Embossed and tasseled menus offer sole,
Fresh-caught, sauteed with lemon, chives and dill,
For fifteen dollars. I'm not hard to sell.
My mind flies back to offshore Maine: A shrill
Breeze blows; two fishermen are braced until
A wave plows by. One checks the last end-knot
In seven-hundred pounds of ice-caked net.

The day drains into dark, an eerie glow
On bitter spindrift near Three Dory Ridge.
The pair make ready for the longest tow.
The hungry net flares out to form a bridge
With mud-slime ninety fathoms deep, to nidge
Through ancient green dimensions. Spools unwind,
The dragger boat aims high into the wind.

Dan begs the cable not to twist. "All down!"
He cries, his teeth bared in the salty cold.
The trawl will prowl the bottom until dawn.
Five hours on a northerly course, a bold
Approach near the ridge's curse. Jarl can hold
The dragger true if anybody can;
One eye is cocked on weather, one on Dan.

They keep their senses honed on winter, knowing
No one else is out, slipping into troughs
More calm than either side, and always going
For the fissures between storms. Jarl coughs,
A brine-hack, one of fishing's ons-and-offs.
When seas are warm and docile, all the boats
Come plying, trailed by waves of white wing-beats.

The price of fish sinks like a weighted trap.
Now grays will bring a buck a pound or more.
But then it drops to thirty cents like tripe.
If these two drag luck's lap enough before
She rolls away and orders them to shore,
They'll own their boat. Moon dirties comber caps
As numb lips hover over coffee cups.

(cont.)

GLENNA HOLLOWAY
913 E. Bailey Road
Naperville, IL 60565

The latest catch stinks illing-sweet, no matter
How hard the blowing scours the culling pens.
Afoot in mucus, ice and offal-spatter
On a writhing deck, Dan guts fish, and pins
The rattling tarps, working out his back pains.
A sprawling hillock angle-slaps the bow;
He almost slips. He wipes his spray-stung brow.

Their thoughts are never easy in the bag
They tow. They're after flounder, giant hake,
Gray sole and other flatfish if they're big.
Is this place right? The time? They watch their wake,
And wonder. Far below did something break?
A different dip and shudder in the pull,
Uneven drag. They don't believe it's full.

They man the winches, play the cable, reel
The snarled mouth of the mesh maw up. They set
Their own jaws, wrestling with the plates of steel
To free them. Spirits start to rise with net;
It isn't ripped! They see enough to whet
Their hopes again. The back half holds its fill!
Enough good ones, maybe they still won't fail.

The struggling sack is pierced with bony fins,
A single gasping monster hoisted high
To dangle and then burst into the bins
As Jarl yanks on the knot. With sharp know-how
Dan wades the mound, outlandish alien who,
With crystal in his hair and beard, assorts
The flapping gourmet silver from the quartz.

The North Atlantic picks round their craft,
Hurls foam invective. Jarl shoves in the throttle,
Eyeing shifty winds. Dan shouts from aft,
"Mostly grays! We pay off the Aristotle
Tomorrow!" Pre-dawn brings a bluish mottle,
Bias-lighted clouds. Spume climbs the hull.
But grins crack tension as Dan works the haul.

The biggest part of being best is knowing
When to leave and live for next-time risks.
Now in the wheelhouse they begin renewing
Silent pride in their boat, their skill. Whisks
Of rain accent aloneness. Panel discs
Of light ignite their eyes. I long to rub
Their poor shocked hands and draw them a hot tub.

(cont.)

GLENN HOLLOWAY
913 E. Bailey Road
Naperville, IL 60565

My husband doesn't know, nor does my brother,
How much I miss them now, how much I pray.
I should have known there couldn't be another
Place for me. My most is in Boothbay.
My plans swirl by in mounting disarray.
Our New York waiter pours our fancy wine;
I watch his hands instead of drinking mine.

He spoons the ritual lemon butter on
My sole as my companion nods and smiles
And I would give up everything I own
To put behind me all the stubborn miles
Between the spot where ocean reconciles
Ambition, love and discontent. I hear
Another diner say the price is dear--

I long to say he only pays a fraction
As he complains that sole should cost much less.
Beneath my skin I feel the rising friction,
And tell the man I'm with: "I can't say yes.
I'm sorry, but more time won't help. I guess
The job is not for me. That sounds insane
I'm sure. Good night. I'm going home to Maine."

GLENNA HOLLOWAY
913 E. Bailey Road
Naperville, IL 60565

THE DISPOSSESSED
(Equus caballus, feral)

His soft whicker builds to an angry snort
disturbing the dust. His mares
move slowly, heads bowed and bobbing
as he drives them to the water.
Scummy hot, it's there for cattle thirst,
and the spotted mustang knows its source--
there is no welcome for him and his kind here.

Nervous as a sweat bee, he menaces the mares
with his teeth, trying to hurry them, nipping
and shoving, darting after his latest conquest
wandering wide and listless past the trough.

He smokes with flies.
Snapping his mane, muscles shivering,
he shakes them off new wounds on old scars.

Apart, a younger stallion watches
behind a creosote bush, wasting none of himself
on motion excepting his avid nostrils.

The smooth rival roan is unmarked.
He knows about the dried blood
on the one he races out to challenge.

Before last light drops below
the blowing, stubbled plains,
the roan wears a redder shine on one flank.
But the mares, still indifferent, thirsty again,
are all his.

--Glenna Holloway

GLENNA HOLLOWAY
913 E. Bailey Road
Naperville, IL 60565

IN A ZOOM LENS

Explosive expletives, blonde speed
Define this cheetah hunting prey.
Designed to chase, an ancient breed.

Aloof, she seems to pay no heed
To nervous antelopes. She looks away,
Dark spotted expletive, blonde speed.

Alerted, healthy bucks stampede;
The cat is looking for a stray
Designed to chase, flaws in the breed.

She's driven by three young to feed.
Tall shoulders, rowing spine convey
The oldest expletives, blonde speed.

Choice made, intentions freed,
She sprints, the rolling muscle-play
Designed to chase, perfected breed.

She kills a lame calf for her need.
She hunts by sight, she hunts by day,
Dark spotted expletive, blonde speed.
Designed to chase. Endangered breed.

--Glenna Holloway

GLENNA HOLLOWAY
913 E. Bailey Road
Naperville, IL 60565

DON'T STOP NOW

Glenna Holloway

The sun broke through the gray with verve
And promised May-time blues and greens.
It winked and banked off laughter's curve
Then sifted through the in-betweens
Of cold soup and a warm hors d'oeuvre.
I long for pears and nectarines--
Don't falter, Sol, don't lose your nerve!

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ENCOUNTER WITH CANIS LUPUS
Northern Montana, 1992

His kind are few but he's no loner.
The stance, the stare
confirm him. Pack leader.

He feels no need to summon the others.
My rabbit gun stays shouldered.
Startled into perfect stillness,
neck hairs alert,
communion is a thrumming wire,
predator to predator.

So much is coiled in his laser eyes--
lessons in alpha honesty--
millenniums of wolf wisdom
filling the dark doors of his pupils.

Pale yellow eyes admit everything--
secrets of the dominant female,
of spruce shadows in moonfall,
the taste of warm blood.

In a swift curve of light
I enter for a moment
the pure heat of their certainty,
and forgive all their knowing.

GLENNA HOLLOWAY
913 E. Bailey Road
Naperville, IL 60565

ADDIE AT EIGHTY

It's hard, she said,
always being so damn grateful
for snow shoveling or moving a couch
or rides downtown. Afterward she sat rocking,
scolding herself, I knew, for saying it.

Once, she told me how some nights
she'd think about white lightning,
the kind the sheriff used to make
and stash away for years. You knew, she said,
it was honest. No birds or frogs fell in it,
nothing that didn't belong,
and it wasn't colored with tobacco juice
posing as bourbon. It was smooth,
she said, kind of a pure clear silver
that took some of your breath away
but left your mouth intact
and contented your gullet and gut
like a ripe honeydew melon only warm.

Maybe that's how it oughta be, she said,
to grow old.

GLENNA HOLLOWAY
913 E. Bailey Road
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SUNRISE IN ST. LOUIS

Dawn overwhelms the window,
bias light stretched wrong,
a mulled shade of ugly,
streaky as the failed painting
intimidating my easel.

My palette and the new day
make a drab medley
that might pass for blues.
Such power there is
in unwanted effects.

Still damp,
the canvas can be scraped
or burned. It's harder
to dispose
of a misbegotten morning.

GLENNA HOLLOWAY
913 E. Bailey Road
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THERE WAS A WOMAN WHO USED TO GIVE ME FLOWERS

When I was ten I heard her called a whore,
the sentence fletched with barbs that stung my spine.
I'd followed her through years of phlox before
that word bored itching in my brain. Define
the user of a hoe: But that could not
explain the rancid tones of voice that fell
like spattered ale-foam on my father's hot
hearthstones. Unfitting with her bouquet smell.
I later learned the meaning of the slur,
through tears watched spots of sun refract with lies.
Then wicked moons mimed coins, men's grins and her--
while rage enlarged to learn what to despise.
My childhood, white phlox petals, all my prayers--
quicksilver dropped on jagged granite stairs.

Long days uncoiled the ancient codes within,
preparing me as resident temptation.
I saw the pausing eyes my next of kin
imposed on me, their sullen fascination
with hip and thigh, my budding breasts. Were they
designs of sin? Oh, for an older friend!
The one I'd cherished so had moved away
when father "had a word with her".... "You tend
your lessons, girl, forget that piece of trash,"
he growled when I inquired. I missed her more
that season, watched her garden's slow backlash
of weeds where beauty used to rise and pour
against our wall. At summer's end, I knew:
What my father called her wasn't true.

But why did he degrade her? Why such hate
a child could feel its pulse? The evening fire
hissed and cracked like a rabbit gun, a spate
of sparks gnawed on the rug. He cursed the spire
of smoke that rose like one ghost finger prodding
prospective hosts. He drained another glass.
He started teasing, yellow-smiling, nodding.
I never learned effective ways to pass
him off. A choking feeling, hot and brittle,
abashed excuses trailed me to my room
attended by his grinding "Surly little--"
My door closed on the rest. The quiet gloom
encased my mind till sleep brought amnesty.
I woke, my father reeking over me.

--Glenna Holloway

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The snarled mouth of the mesh maw up. They set
Their own jaws, wrestling with the plates of steel
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(cont.)

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How much I miss them now, how much I pray.
I should have known there couldn't be another
Place for me. My most is in Boothbay.
My plans swirl by in mounting disarray.
Our New York waiter pours our fancy wine;
I watch his hands instead of drinking mine.

He spoons the ritual lemon butter on
My sole as my companion nods and smiles
And I would give up everything I own
To put behind me all the stubborn miles
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Another diner say the price is dear--

I long to say he only pays a fraction
As he complains that sole should cost much less.
Beneath my skin I feel the rising friction,
And tell the man I'm with: "I can't say yes.
I'm sorry, but more time won't help. I guess
The job is not for me. That sounds insane
I'm sure. Good night. I'm going home to Maine."

GLENNA HOLLOWAY
913 E. Bailey Road
Naperville, IL 60565

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 back-and-forths.
Short rolls across 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 her 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. Mama never told me that.

--Glenna Holloway

GLENNA HOLLOWAY
913 E. Bailey Road
Naperville, IL 60565

CUTTING A FINGER ON OBSIDIAN
to Georgia O'Keeffe

Searching the desert,
plodding in sand-filled shoes,
bent beneath blows of light,
you and I never met.
Yet I knew you in veinous ways,
in behind-the-eyes ways
where hot blue strikes
mirrors in the secret vaults
of knowing.

Exclaiming aloud and alone
when the desert showed me its bones,
its spiny life, still and green
or sidewinding I knew you.

We passed at angles crossing
the parallax out on Hogarth's curve,
palimpsest for colors and shapes,
some knee-skinning, some cheek-soft,
seeping in and out of each other
under the mallet of light.

You are willful and wild
as a spirit hawk. You are
lava glass trapping fire
under conchoidal wrinkles.

You are hands brushes eyes
no longer peeling light, feeling
its pulse, shedding it like snakeskin
to dry and iridesce on paper's tooth

but still living
where I know you.

GLENNA HOLLOWAY
913 E. Bailey Road
Naperville, IL 60565

13.

ELF OWL
(Micrathene whitneyi)

The saguaros lose weight and pleat
as they enter the death phase. It may last
for years. It's been so long since water
made good the sky's promises
there's a rattle in the desert's breath
not made by the sidewinder.

Leafless ocotillos comet lone blips of red
across day's end, one-spark blossoms
dangling from long arcs
like bobbing semaphores
signaling the elf owl to hunt.

In midnight sandshine, the tiny raptor
withdraws to its hollow
in the oldest saguaro. The cactus tightens
on its own tall thirst, narrowing its cells,
its clustered spines like medieval maces
guarding its deep secret moisture.

Twice more the pigmy predator haunts the night,
silence feathering swiftly over empty silence,
coming home empty.

GLENNA HOLLOWAY
913 E. Bailey Road
Naperville, IL 60565

2.

THE DISPOSSESSED
(Equus caballus, feral)

His black tail swishes side to side
like ravellings of raw silk.
His soft whicker builds to a snort
disturbing the dust. His mares
move too slowly, heads bowed and bobbing
as he drives them to the water.
Scummy hot, it's there for cattle thirst,
and the gray-spotted mustang knows its source--
there is no welcome for him and his kind here.

Nervous as a sweat bee, he menaces the mares
with his teeth, trying to hurry them, nipping
and shoving, darting after his latest conquest
wandering wide and listless past the trough.

He smokes with flies.
Snapping his mane, muscles shivering,
he shakes the torment off new wounds
crisscrossing old scars.

Apart, a younger stallion watches
behind a creosote bush, wasting nothing
on motion excepting his nostrils.

The rival roan is unmarked.
He knows about the dried blood
on the gray spots he races out to challenge.

Before last light drops below
the dust-deviled, stubbled plains,
the roan wears a redder shine on one flank.
But the mares, still indifferent, thirsty again,
are all his.

While another stallion rests until sunrise.

GLENNA HOLLOWAY
913 E. Bailey Road
Naperville, IL 60565

3.

LIONESS
(Felis leo)

Your mate abdicates the role. You rule.
You don't need that paling tan
pooling with shade in the parched brush
protecting your stealth. Not even
against sunburned veldt gnawed bald.
You could pose bold as bird scarlet;
you could pause at the water hole
to cool your bright insolence
glowing orange as monarch wings.
Your span doesn't spin on daily choices
between locusts in the nerve center
and grassfire in the throat,
doesn't wheel on trembling limbs
supporting fear and thirst.

You don't need camouflage to raid the night,
parting zebra stripes, stropping your fangs
on kudu bone. You are Artemis,
bane of the grazers, eyes like arrows,
an exercise in dominion for your subjects
never to forget their ranks in the realm.
Your coat of arms should be iridescent
with pride colors-- royal blue, gold, purple
should radiate rampant where you preyed.

And when at last you lie down with the lamb,
do it in spectral splendor.

GLENNA HOLLOWAY
913 E. Bailey Road
Naperville, IL 60565

ENCOUNTER WITH CANIS LUPUS
Northern Montana, 1989

His kind are few but he's no loner.
The stance, the stare
confirm him. Pack leader.

He feels no need to summon the others.
My rabbit gun stays shouldered.
Startled into perfect stillness,
neck hairs alert,
communion is a thrumming wire,
predator to predator.

So much is coiled in his laser eyes--
lessons in alpha honesty--
millenniums of wolf wisdom
filling the dark doors of his pupils.

Pale ochre eyes admit everything--
secrets of the dominant female,
of ritual hierarchy in moonrise, pride
in his rank, his the sole right to breed,
the taste of warm blood.

His eyes do not blink.
In a swift curve of light
I enter for a moment
the pure heat of their certainty,
and forgive all their knowing.

GLENNA HOLLOWAY
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5.

THE INTERLOPER
(Eichhornia crassipes)

Beneath inverted black fir jungle
of water hyacinth roots underweaving
my hidden bayou, my diver's lamp the only hold
with my world, I disturb a concert of stripes:
Hundreds of inch-long fishes silver-slanting
right or left as my hand directs. A king-size
mud cat like Genghis Khan eyes me
from the olive drab floor. And overhead--
my lost boat! Impounded since winter's big storm,
secreted under a broken cypress branch
and clamped listing in a wet/dry vise:
sun-half of bulbous green vases
feigning innocence with flowers; night-half
of fringed lace entwining the propeller
upholstered in velvet. I rip away the slimy grip
and feel hairy stalactites creep closer,
determined as topside kudzu.
The gasoline-fed screw might thresh a few yards
before losing. An army of young trees
wades out to make a stockade. Roman-helmeted
herons patrol the spreading perimeter above,
weapons spring-loaded, lances plunging.
The mighty Khan rules here, phalanxed
by armored turtles. And I, lingering nakedly,
slave to light and lungs, must fight myself free.

GLENNA HOLLOWAY
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Naperville, IL 60565

6.

CAPTURING THE CAT

Cougar, puma, panther (old timers say painter).
Felis concolor, cat of one color it means:
Spotless, stripeless, designed
for granite cleft and scrub canyon,
for quiet and quick and gone.

By any name, he's hard to find. She's harder.
But if your backpack is light, and your step,
if westering luck is just so, and the wind,
your six senses stropped on its wake-- you may
see him. You won't forget a mountain lion's eyes.

Some tongues rhyme his names with curses.
In cow country, dogs and bullets
are the exclamation points of rationale. Some ears
close on all but myth, maligning epithets,
isolated truths, cat tales steeped in time.
The fluent feline glance encodes the sum, returns
no trust, no malice. A shrug of fact, a blink.

Now I'm the painter. Searching my film
and my palette for his only color:
Alloy of gold idols and summer lightning.
Topaz eyes burning easy cool in browned beargrass
or secret solitude matching cat shade and size.

Caught in the act,
leaping the kindred sun between rocky rifts,
framed free on my sprocketed strip of truth,
his reign repeats across my screen
while I stroke and gild him to canvas

and pray it's not the only place he's saved.

GLENNA HOLLOWAY
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Naperville, IL 60565

7.

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 metered links.

High noon predator, posing as a jewel
on silk, your realm continues beyond
my premises. Your design sways 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,
shining black and gold enamel
she reserved for special spiders.
I applaud your skill, 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.

SWAMP STANDARD TIME
(Ardea herodias)

Long-legged appetite in courting plumage,
still as the stylus on a sundial,
the great blue heron presides
over his reflection in a circular pond.

Too far away, the Saturn rings
of his gilled bull's-eye rise
to the surface, spreading.
The heron's leg must not quiver.
He must let the fish come trusting
into the jurisdiction
of his spring-loaded waiting.
All the heron knows of speed is cocked
in the curve that propels his beak.

The feathered fishtrap fires and misses.
Slowly the bird moves his blue shadow
toward another quarter, reckoning the hours
in increments of hunger.

GLENNA HOLLOWAY
913 E. Bailey Road
Naperville, IL 60565

9.

ASSATEAGUE SILVER
(Equus caballus, feral)

The moon's image quivers, wrinkles wetly
like tie-dyed silk as a brindled mare
crosses the shallow backwater.

She leaves the loose passel of ponies,
their listless ears, languid tails,
and moves toward a pale hump of beach
carved by wind, curved like her neck
and fringed with a mane of sea oats.

She pauses on its crest, poses farthest
from the new white-blazed leader
pounding after a wandering filly.
He warns his others, circles them,
tightens them into a clump.
The brindled mare stays motionless, apart.
Suddenly his senses fill with her.
He swings his ebony head like a pendulum.

The old deposed stallion,
watching from a hummock of salt-marsh grass,
backs his wounds deeper into the night.
The victor prances forward, muscles
undulating moonlight, a silver flame
on his forehead, flares igniting in his eyes.
The mare waits then turns away.

The flat surf is sibilant
with the year's lowest tide. Fluted dunes
ripple contiguous shine and shape. The mare
snorts at a scuttling crab, an oblique shadow
crossing her domain. The dark stallion
hurries to block her premises. He nickers
and nips at a moon streak on her hip.

Claiming his right to her promises, throwing
his ardent cry to the ancient salver
serving light, he declares himself best
of his remnant kind, his New World kind.
Here in their only home
of barrier island sand biased with silver.

GLENNA HOLLOWAY
913 E. Bailey Road
Naperville, IL 60565

10.

PHEASANT, HUNTED
(Phasianus colchicus)

Earlier,
I saw you settle-- blue and russet,
ruby haloed eye, white-collared as a CEO.
I watched you go down in a corn row mounded
with yesterday's rime, slurried, refrozen
pearlier
than the loose grained humidity falling now.

The dog's nose has discovered you. My eyes
have not. My boots are moments away as you wait,
melding
your camouflage with the surface you covet,
welding
your sweet meat to the ground.

Ours is an old pact. You provide food; I provide
feed and habitat. Now is a contest of waiting--
motionless mammal, motionless bird
rathering
to let the pointer's trained desperation
stand close enough to hear its heartbeat,
gathering
your feathered mulishness into perfection,
practicing every avian art but flight.

How do you know this dog will hold,
curbed
on this rung of feral urge to catch
and eat? How do you know this hunter will heed
protocol that calls for your being airborne?
My pattern of shot need only pelt the circle
beyond the canine's flawless freeze.
Loathing to fly, loving to run, yet you sit,
unperturbed,
personification of cocksure.

But your nerves at last become a lighted fuse.
Prepared or not, I always jump when you explode
from cover: Sudden propulsion, winged missile
whirring.
I mend my aim, can't lead you at this angle--
blurring
of collages, fragment thoughts, the atavistic
stirring
in my cells-- The edge of my sight catches
the quiver of dog jowls,
the splayed iridescence of tail sweep,
corn stubble jigging in bias light.

My burst of decision matches the bird's.