

**#6 Miniature Poem**  
**Esther Kossoff/June Shipley Memorial**  
**Sponsor: Gert Rubin**  
**Judge: Joyce Shiver, Crystal River FL**

**First Place Miniature Poem:**  
**Glenna Holloway, Naperville IL**

**The Unlikely Host**

A poem cold-nosed my spine,  
Sniffed each vertebrae, fingered upward  
like it was playing a keyboard.  
Good stuff, fresh  
from a high-placed synapse.  
Surprising it would emerge  
from my musings, willing to settle  
for an uncelebrated launch pad.  
Maybe it didn't see you sitting there.  
Or Billy Collins sailing around the room.

\* \* \* \* \*



**Sunday March 4**  
**Lily of the Field**

*Glenna Holloway*

***Lily of the Field***

Perfection takes practice.

How long did it take to become a lily?

Nothing beautiful is wasted; beauty begets  
more beauty, yours grander  
than Solomon's silks.  
Yet, once being a lily,  
lovely enough for Christ to mention,  
what can you aspire to after death?  
Not even a white cloud  
after tasting gold in your soft throat.

When your brief bloom 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 my future is a promise  
of things to come when all is changed.

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

Lily, I know your secret.



*Sunday March 11*  
***Making Good Connections***

*Glenna Holloway*

***Making Good Connections***

It's hard to let another know you care,  
And words are awkward, inefficient things.  
The surest way to help someone repair  
A damaged self is when you bring  
An open, understanding mind to bear  
In tandem (nonjudgmental, without strings)  
With fellow human hurts. Invest a share  
Of love—and soon, two souls begin to sing.



**Sunday February 25**  
**Searching for Road Signs**

*Glenna Holloway*

***Searching for Road Signs***

So where are my feet going, Lord?  
And what are my steps heading toward?

It's not enough to just believe:  
I know I somehow have to weave  
You into the pattern of my life,  
This winding journey always rife  
With breakdowns, burdens, sidetracks, *more*,  
And vendors hawking at my door.  
There's good and bad and yes and no  
So deftly mixed the lines don't show.  
It's not so hard to find Your way  
Through white or black -- but oh, the gray!

Uncertainties mark east and west;  
My wrong turn missed the right fork blessed  
With footprints that have gone ahead  
To mark the trail through swamping dread.

So guide me, Lord, my sense is blurred,  
Distracted by each doubt incurred.  
Please lend me grace and let me see  
Your dusty sandals leading me.



*Sunday March 18*  
*The Artisan*

*Glenna Holloway*

*The Artisan*

His hands were wise in the ways of wood,  
understanding the grain, the strength  
of maple, cherry, oak. He could handle  
a gangling board and know its heart, foresee  
the gain from a saw's hot bite. He shaped

and clamped according to inherent beauty  
others couldn't see. When it was time  
to release the pressure, no part  
of his chosen trees returned to an old intent.

His hands are over eighty now, twin burls,  
mahogany stained, dovetailed across his jeans,  
their talents passed to nimbler heirs --  
a dozen boys, now men, who once knew  
the cold clang of the state's steel doors.

He aligned them with a spirit level, turned  
them on a lathe of love, joined his planes  
with each -- mortise and steadfast tenon,  
following the plans of a Nazarene carpenter.

And, when people marvel at his work, treasured  
in fine homes, when they praise  
his students' triumphs, the old man smiles  
and says the Master Craftsman showed them how.

GLENNIA HOLLOWAY  
913 E. Bailey Road  
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### GIFT HORSE

It's not as if you rolled melty brown eyes  
at me and nuzzled my arm, not as if I've had  
years of pleasure from you. You even bit me.

On a family visit I happened to comment  
on your regal bearing. And Uncle Jess said,  
"Take him, he's yours, saddle and all."  
Uncle Jess, the clan autocrat, insisted.  
Good breeding (mine) dictated that I not  
look you in the mouth. At least until later.  
Caught flatfooted in the adage,  
all I could do was thank my mother's brother,  
and wonder which of us incurred the deficit.

Once you were here, each day revealed  
worse things than wayward teeth.  
You're an equine misanthrope  
with the disposition of a gum boil. The once  
I tried to ride, you waited till we reached  
the Pendleton's pasture in full view  
of their porch. You scraped me open on a fence  
then pitched me in the county's only patch  
of poison sumac.

You've been a blight on my calendar  
since August. Now here I am, watching  
the vet frown as he cleans his thermometer.  
Sun plays the sheen of your flank. You look  
like a fallen bronze monument. The doctor  
says the future is unsure.  
There's not a single reason I should care.

I kneel to rub your blaze, expecting even now  
a recalcitrant snort. As the long needle  
pierces your rump, I feel no equalizing of scores.

Your eye on mine, you cozy my hand. I hear myself  
saying, "Doc, is there anything else you can do?"

"...though some have called thee  
mighty and dreadful, for thou art not so;"  
--SONNET X, John Donne (on death)

#### CRITIC'S REVIEW OF A LEADING ROLE

##### I

Death never was the villain we supposed,  
nor is he sinister or strange. Our acts  
could not go on without him. Plays are closed  
by saturation, seasons, emptied facts  
and change. It's Death, our wordly partnership,  
our ancient contract still inviolate,  
that makes the drama work, that gives us grip  
and drive. Consider how the years deflate  
our starring parts. Foreverness allots  
a strung-out tedium of now and here  
while grinding down our once-dynamic plots.  
The wise Director lets no sonneteer  
recite so long he mouths a shibboleth  
instead of song. The scene is saved by Death.

##### II

Sometimes he loiters when we'd wish more haste;  
sometimes he's crude, obscene, and far from neat.  
He may come on too soon which seems a waste  
of knowledge, skills, a sorrowful defeat.  
Yet Death is just a word we mortals use  
for what we think will end all life the same.  
Time curves away, form alters to diffuse  
its atoms, rebuilds, takes another name.  
Then unimagined drama will unfold  
in new dimensions, past the spectrum's hues.  
The human story's largely still untold.  
Recycling stages offer other views.  
Our learning is not wasted, never lost.  
It's saved beyond all bridges once we've crossed.

(cont.)

## BIRTHSTONE

It was the only time in my life I gave in  
to extravagance, dallied with metaphor:  
Those last days before you shipped out  
flickered and flared orange and purple,  
Our own microcosmic July 4th, you called it.

We looked at black opals-- mined in a place  
called Andamooka in Australia, the lapidary  
said. He let us hold chunks of the rough--  
like fossil fire. You had him cut a cabochon  
for my finger and we watched his grinding wheel  
expose green lightning in domed catacombs--  
something's secret home under a gold shimmer.

The cutter said opal would be wearer-friendly  
to me, October born. Each time you kissed me  
I saw those colors crazing my deep dark,  
harmonic allegro and velvet largo,  
barbs of flame counterpointing nocturnes.

Listen, you said when you put the ring on me,  
there's a brass trio in there playing  
the rainbow, showing you what love looks like.  
Think of me when you watch the pretty music.

I did every day. But now I see a burst of red:  
What you may have seen in the desert under fire.  
Staccato and sudden. Cacophony of fire.  
Friendly fire. Blundered light.

I hear the trumpet playing Taps. Shivering blue.

## 1. FREE VERSE

### ADOLESCENT ACUMEN

Grownups have a song about September.  
They get goofy when they think of time  
marching on and making them remember  
how each minute takes them past their prime.

Don't they know each month is like forever?  
Halloween to Christmas drags along  
worse than seventh grade. We grumble: "Never  
will it get here!" That's our song.

Hey, we know it's stupid to expect things.  
Stuff won't happen when you want it to.  
Bet it's just the same for nerds or rock kings--  
no one's got a clue for what to do.

Old Man Time's just sorting out his backpack,  
not about to hurry anyhow.  
Folks aren't gonna change him with their yak-yak.  
Why not make the honkingmost of now?

BALIADEERS BY NIGHT

It's still you I sing to every evening--  
so natural I almost forget the audience,  
the orchestra, the facts. After closing,  
I come here, jeansed, bandanaed, beaded silk dress  
locked up two blocks north. Just a few fast steps  
from there down to *de classe*, but the vodka  
and maybe the *habitués* are more honest.

The old man drumming spoons on the bar  
is my friend. You'd like him. The obscenity  
on his T-shirt offends me but I forgive his need  
to lash out. The obscenities of his years offend me  
more. He must have been handsome when he was young,  
maybe as handsome as you. I rattle up fierce joy  
with the ice in my glass-- age will never savage you.

My friend tells me cigarettes are bad for my voice.  
"So's singing 4 hours," I say, and he laughs.  
I watch how he does it before willing him faceless  
as the bar top, cool against my bare arms, smooth  
as Doc Severinsen's canned trumpet haunting the smoke.

Doc hovers over the practiced booth sitters,  
the twosomes and the sorry solos.  
He levitates them on a single luminous note  
the way I sometimes do my audience  
if I'm sure I can do it without breaking.

I sip the trumpet's lush legato lines, the sound  
you reveled in, the sound you rivaled Doc with,  
tasting the high blue-green vibrato. Easy to pretend  
it's your warm elbow near mine. Soon my friend  
will see me to a cab. I'll go home, maybe sleep.

But the next riff comes on like a siren damped in fog  
out on the tollway. Like what you may have heard  
that night. If you heard it...

## 1. FREE VERSE

### 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?

## WAITING ROOM

There are five of us,  
practiced sitters, digging channels  
in our outpatient heads. We devoured  
all the magazines last month.  
Disjointed phrases settle like dust,  
syllables regroup, connecting knuckles,  
elbows, a string of beads.

Our impatient cells divide quietly.  
The pimply girl stares the brown floor tiles  
into forbidden chocolate.  
The young stud in bandages  
disconcerts the collective mind  
numbed with drapery swags, wallpaper ivy,  
yesterday's song fragments--  
all steeped in predictable scent  
from behind the inner door  
making sure we don't stray far  
from the bodies brought in to be explained.

In common we have the clock  
with its unsteady hum and impaired face  
probably damaged by our eyes.

ON A MAUNDY THURSDAY IN MACAO

If the sea is calm, the machine walks on water,  
hydrofoiling gamblers from Hong Kong across  
the blue half-inch of map to Macao. Reclaimed by  
its original owner, its surface is still the same.

Inside the city glut you can still see  
the one-sided Basilica of St. Paul, long ago  
burned-- a front presiding over sweaty tourists,  
shadowing the commerce of Cantonese hawkers,  
Portuguese sailors, mixed-blood hookers. Nearby,  
saffron-robed monks train shefflera stems  
to coil back on themselves, greenly squandering  
their juices in leaves like parasols  
shading huge cloisonne urns consecrated daily.

The operative shrines gleam magnificence. Polyglot  
patron saints bow as you enter. You can choose  
your denomination, your game, your brand of booze.  
Prayed-over wheels are not Buddhist.

The baccarat dealer wears twenty years  
of uncut fingernails on his left hand, thickened  
switchbacks, dragon coils the color of fossil tusks.  
On his cigaret break, he ignores a woman wearing  
a gold cross who asks to touch his grotesqueries.  
Other players tease him about breaking a nail  
but he never laughs.

Outside, conspiracies of summer steam across  
the river from China, steeping in the detritus  
of trade, abetting the fish stink.  
Casino windows wisely admit no scent or sound.  
As long as air conditioning blesses  
the pilgrims, neither religious preference  
nor national origin affects shared willingness  
to lay down the tithes in unison.

A peak of angry words juts up suddenly  
from two English couples. The croupier looks over  
his shoulder; three well-pressed hosts appear  
on either side of the foursome. Even without a prince,  
quick peace is restored in the heart of the old colony.  
Across the room a slot machine erupts an avalanche;  
all heads turn toward the silver offering.  
Macao's waiting-for-the-Easter-rabbit smile prevails.

III

When all transition is complete, our sets  
will alter, locks will turn with different keys.  
The bad press Death attracts-- ("The spinal freeze,"  
a sample of the glib contempt the hero gets  
costumed in hokey hood, a scythe, our debts  
all listed in a book called "Final Wheeze")  
is hateful slander. Unversed writers please  
to heap his role with bile, implying threats  
of worse reviews in major magazines.  
In truth, our outraged angst is for disease,  
ignoble wounds and pain. Whatever means  
by which we meet, unready or uncouth,  
the star is Death. Old age or cheated youth--  
accept your part. Perfection supervenes.

IV

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  
With which to sing dimensions never heard.  
Each tongue transmits the music of the Lord,  
Each swelling 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 twice blessed:  
    Beginnings are endings of this life's disguise;  
    Endings are pauses while new curtains rise.

#### THE END OF FORTY DAYS OF DROUGHT

For weeks the earth rattled like a giant dried gourd.  
Our land sifted into books, beds, teddy bears, coffee cups.  
Our teeth gritted on fewer words each day. A little hail  
pattered the roof twice, a broken strand of pearls.

Aunt Vi talked about her wedding in the '40s, called it  
a lovely day of long-leaf silver rain making wispy music  
all through her honeymoon with Uncle Hal, lost a year ago.  
She showed us the photos of their first lush wheat crop  
and her first cake made with their own flour.

We listened to Sinatra, Tschaikowsky, Garth Brooks  
while anvil-heads gathered and thunderclouds bloated  
without spilling their promises. Vi shared her sharp wit  
and last fall's Mason jars of green largess. Our prayers  
the reverse of Noah's, we made ourselves quit gazing up  
at the glare as if our eyes were a factor in fulfillment.

Monday, Aunt Vi had rain pains in her barometric big toe.  
The Lord rewards faith, she mused. We have to wait  
for what we want most, but it won't be long now.

Noon gravity tugged the cumulus into a shape like Italy.  
It sagged. Lean. Black. The boot's tongue flopped down,  
licked up our silo, whisked it away whole. We found  
the rubble half a mile off in one lone wet spot.

Aunt Vi always could tch! better than anybody. Later,  
she said that crazy auger drilled a hole in the sky.  
Tomorrow, she announced, rain would pour through.

It did. Honest rain all across the state.  
She nodded, gave us her sassiest "Told you!" grin.  
Just before her heart serenely stopped.  
The rain kept beating all night.

## EULOGY FOR AN ACTOR

1  
Oh no, he's not dead yet. He's even making another movie. It's called "Know Thyself." "To thine own self be true" is one of his lines. The sort of stuff Hal's resonant perfection delivers nonpareil.

Maybe all the world's Hals find their natural habitat in theater. Being (as in human), only comes with some other name, some other lifeline. Only then can such men swagger and swear, cry and die with greatness.

Hal's coach called him a genius at eighteen. With professional verve his mentor still hoists the cliche: "Hal becomes each role he plays."

Easy. There is no significant other. Credit cards, social security number, an Oscar-- all attest there's a Hal Halloran (born Halbert Hagmeyer). They lie.

Hal is  
clock parts, a smorgasbord of heros and heels  
knowing flawlessly who they are.  
Hal is  
calendars of screen time, entrances and exits,  
costume changes, press clippings.  
It's hard to love a man with no flesh  
on the bones of a single truth.

Post script, he decomposes  
in a custom decorated set: his mansion,  
his yacht, his mountain chalet. Even he  
can't remember all the titles of his films  
or the characters who famed him and framed him  
in the dimensions of two generations' knowing.

Silkily, he ravel out of his fifth marriage,  
skillfully playing out the last loose ends  
of what he never was.

SLENNNA HOLLOWAY  
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7:15 REGULARS

The commuter train broke down  
pulling out of Suburban Heights.  
Some of us fill a bus aisle, some walk back  
to the station to fidgit with stranded metaphors.

Daily we board morning habit, propeling us  
noisily to the city. It never fails  
like fatigued metal or electrical parts,  
never crashes like overloaded computers.

Fellow faces are pressed in our gray matter  
like celebrity handprints in Hollywood cement.  
For years we've made the same run to Chicago  
and back, five days a week,  
learning each other's names after it was clear  
we were trained partners,  
riding, ridden, driven to prescribed spaces,  
steel wheels incidental to the process.

Now we fill the nearest ears with growls about  
appointments missed. Some of us almost touch  
the possibility of skipping the rest. One of us  
quips that a day off is just the ticket we need.

In the dark siding of cerebral tunnels  
we're informed our absence would not alter  
the planet's orbit; our shoulders could  
unclench for a day, maybe two.

But opiates of indispensability are not  
what fuel this engine. We find generic conceits  
elastic enough to cover uncertainty, quiet  
the vibrato of why. Rising like saliva  
of Pavlov's dogs, the hidden imperative  
expands its premises. Hearing impaired, we  
respond only to the next train's boarding call.

**GLENN HOLLOWAY**  
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## STUDYING JOHN CIARDI'S BRIDGE

He tried to look at love with inner eyes,  
he wrote of marriage-- his poetic school  
was never founded on blue iris lies  
or pap composed atop a barroom stool  
where others go to inundate their sighs.  
He learned to steel resolve, forgive the fool,  
to make commitments strong as trestle ties--  
and realize that listening is the tool.

graceful, lyrical  
{ lovely and easily grasped  
elsewhere.

The strength is where the arch is pressed together, east bearing west, west bearing east, all weather.

The strong load-lifting span relieves the aches  
as trust anneals the iron with indigo.  
Such allied power rises, lifts, and makes  
a love postmoderns seem afraid to show.

--Glenna Holloway

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

#### IN DEFENSE OF MY POETRY

How can I make him understand?  
I'm a child of reef and kelp,  
a water sign. My muse is La Mer  
who comes unbidden, rolling  
from unknown depths to regale  
my shores. Sometimes I find  
the metaphorical nacre she left  
behind for me to make a poem.

I claim scant artistry. Only a way  
of seeing. Not even knowing when  
or where it will happen. Or how.  
The rest is work. Like sifting sand  
and washing shells.

He read my last poem and frowned.  
"You never write about anything  
but the sea or ships," he said.  
"Don't mountains appeal to you?  
And what about love?"

I've been remiss, it's true.  
I mulled over mountains once--  
listing eastward, keels immersed  
in rippling green far below.  
Some had white-capped crests  
like mighty waves of geologic time.

I studied a man once, and still--  
tall and sure as a mainmast,  
eyes blue-deep as summer undertow,  
caresses soft as low tide surf.

His kiss is a freshening promise  
of trade winds speeding us home.  
And our love is all the anchorage  
this dreamer needs of any port.

I will write him a proper wifely idyl  
in rhyming ictus, a lighthouse  
to shine through his coastal squalls.  
It will begin as a sonnet.  
It will become a sonata.

### CHICAGO WATERCOLOR SHOW

Chicago's river spreads a wash of gray  
While spackling city margins winter-dull.  
Spring's palette adds chartreuses flocked with creams  
And lacy whites while lightning rips the seams  
In blue reserves, conspiring to annul  
The drabness with more vivid interplay.  
As jonquils pay off most of March's debt,  
New artists work in shades of lullabies  
And stippled lakeside sheen. Picasso's brush  
Repaints the scene surreal in summer's blush.  
The nights are flashed with cubist fireflies,  
Each moonrise flecked with birds in silhouette.  
As backgrounds hold impressions of Monet,  
The next stroke primes a redding sumac spray.

Holloway

AUDITORIUM

Wrapped in ocean, its total song, its circles and circles of sound astound me. Atavistic verbs reverberate dark within, darting light and low around me. Water amplifies this allness, resonates through shells and shoals and floral-feathered animals abounding.

My dives are plotted, filmed for study. My secret lyrics are for me, counterpoint to the sound of swaying noon-sunned kelp. Ribbon staffs are wound with my wake of blistered silver whole notes. Some play in nets of algae, some escape the tune to join an endless monotone of aquamarine.

Descending the scale where my lamp has found warm colors in blue cold, rhythms pound with mine, sibilance changes to an unknown key. Here, sounds are older, louder, rumbling in polyp mounds, millenia of forms once bent on feeding, breeding, sea drum voices echoing, bouncing beyond sight.

I look for places never probed, species never seen, I synthesize shapes into music: A frowning moray snapping its hunger on finny iridescence. A carapace browned with parasitic plush skittering through the theme. The sound of parrot fish gnawing the reef, bright mills grinding coral into miles of sand.

Two flounders hollow out the bottom range, a gamut filled with unseen appetites. Downed by day, they lie in wait to hound small denizens of night. And as dark nears, the timbre grows rounder, fuller, like the coursing salt inside me. I must return to higher ground, respond to other tempos,

my frail obbligato drowned in rising volume. Tomorrow, uncrowned, minus Triton's trumpet fanfare, research will rule, observations seined by partners in science. But softly blending, I'll find a chance to make close harmony once more-- an unrenowned duet with the world's most ancient sound.

## SEMANTICS

You're still asleep, an arm's reach away.  
Winter light seeps under the shades,  
analyzing yesterday's verbs. I inhale  
this a.m. differently, altering chemistry,  
alternating electrical currents, changing  
the magnetic field of the sheets.  
The new day's dynamics meddle  
with my circuitry, with the words  
that overnighted in our pores.

I concave against your back, a compress  
of blood, bone, forgiveness: sending  
and intercepting red, blue, orange.  
Shop talk in cells, semaphores blossoming,  
nodding like neon begonias, skin through skin.

Language is a body of inventions, diverse  
around the globe, tensed with misunderstanding.  
This is conversation, pure and simple,  
the same for both bodies.

You turn, exclamatory-- ankle, belly,  
mouth underlining the fluent exchange.

## PISTEMOLOGY

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

Not expecting philosophy in my arms,  
you make an uncertain sound, and I reply  
in your ear: This is the purest kind of 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 tells  
what no written language can. Words are worn out  
and clumsy, but I feel your feelings as they form.

You nod and tell me you knew we were conversing  
before I broke the silence. Did you also hear me  
say what tongues have trivialized, what voices  
have betrayed, what dictionaries can't define?

You whisper yes and press closer. Love's lore  
originates here, coming from where we live,  
this tranquil time and place  
where flesh and being concentrate truth.

Where we know what needs knowing. We know.

GLENNA HOLLOWAY  
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29.

### PILGRIMAGE TO BLUE

The ripe moon mounts a steepled tower,  
hailing the appointed time for celebrants  
of some ancient rite my cells seem to remember  
here in the high blue watching places.

A summer-shedding coyote flings itself leanly  
into the chase of shadows, silent as a star shooting.  
Tollways vanish in the ash patterns  
of a potter's cold fire. Custom-made cacophony  
is buried under the humps of hogans  
listening to Venus rising.

In the morning I'll inhale turquoise horizons  
unscaled by tall containers stacked together  
by corporate cliff dwellers. I'll move slowly  
through granite halls posing for the centuries,  
staging endless similes under the direction  
of wind and water, enclosing nothing but samples  
of light and a lone hawk's treble. I'll search  
for the shine and sharp of obsidian and ocotillo,  
I'll touch sand, pinyon, and a sweating pinto.

Leaving, I'll stop, turn and stare at pronghorns  
just as they wheel back to stare round-eyed at me.

Undiluted azure anoints me now, my mouth tastes  
of royal. And the crimped mass of wires and coils  
within me loosens like the brittle clench  
of a resurrection plant in rain.

GLENNA HOLLOWAY  
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SWAMP STANDARD TIME

Two rival egrets  
in long courting plumage  
drink their last reflections.

Sun drops suddenly.  
After is not for humans.  
A night heron shrieks.

Wind wrinkles water  
around cottonmouth coils  
and bald cypress knees.

Mist and moon mingle.  
Wings and pawpads ply shadows.  
Rats and rabbits hide.

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

I return to my world reluctantly  
where light disguises evil  
and law is less sure.

--Glenna Holloway

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#### ARTEMIS IN THE SKY ON DIAMOND POINT

She knows him from ancient astral trips,  
gauze gathered at her ballerina waist,  
ankles wrapped in strips of moonlight.  
He lifts her like a bit of cumulus,  
master of the dance that follows  
when day's end slips below  
the obsidian stage. His hunter's horn  
calls only her, her galaxy of gleam  
and spin. He leads her in the pas de deaux  
with the wisdom of his role. He grips  
his star-strung belt, strewing sparks;  
he dips and turns, the cosmic choreography  
older than silver arrow tips.

This millenium she's less the huntress,  
rounder hips, called Diana again,  
and still amused at the old tales  
that she slew him to eclipse his fame.  
Generations witness there's been  
no tropic midnight he failed to track.

Sometimes he spells his name O'Ryan now,  
posing as a mariner to misguide ships  
and regale his lady. You'll miss his tricks,  
his astrodust and comet tail clips  
unless your eyes of glass are trained just so.

Sometimes he lays down his flashing sword,  
skips equatorial regality, and flips  
a gold coin to choose his mood.  
But she still knows the blips and tracings  
of his path across her southern dark,  
and hurries to her name warmed with his lips.

--Glenna Holloway

## OVERTURES

Gardenia scent is gone, the winter 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 November 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

"WHEN EVERYTHING THAT TICKED HAS STOPPED" . . . Emily Dickinson

This stark cubicle stays closed,  
No green grows; only the walls  
Are tender. Your prodding finger knows—  
But found no entry,  
No valve for compressed dark to drain.

The machinery is jammed with black.  
One only who could repair my brain  
Suffocated in the crumbled cell block  
Of my soul.

This cold crucible stays filled:  
Refined slag, a purity of dross—  
Your hopeful hands bruise  
And now they smell of losing.  
On your way home, gather all  
The dying anodynes from my old garden.

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#### SISTER ACT

Let the playful lover be on guard.  
Melpomene and Thalia may swap masks  
to hide behind falser faces-- one bored  
with a man's embrace, one craving it.

Some swains are wise to the sibling game,  
their own a swaggering chase, the thrill  
of chance. Suspecting amusement waits beneath  
tonight's dolorous visage, they follow  
muffled laughter, half-skipping feet.  
It's Comedy, of course, sweet Thalia  
reveling in her sometimes tricks.

A suitor grabs her sleeve.  
Black-hooded robe and baleful features fall;  
he stares. Uncovered, she is still the same.  
Her wiry fingers lock around his pulsing wrist.

Both are amazed he doesn't resist her  
peregrine eyes. Not even when honest Thalia  
dances by and pauses in the wings.

He tosses her a sidewise glance, peels off  
his cardboard smile and stays onstage  
beside Melpomene: Captor/captive,  
uncaring which is which  
except they have each awful other, all.

--Glenna Holloway

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OLD TESTAMENT FROM JOHN

For forty years I've wandered the wilderness  
of your hair, exploring it like a pilgrim,  
getting lost in sorrel thickets,  
plunging my face in feral fragrance.

Saying you're past wearing it wild,  
you discipline night's tangles  
possessively vining your cheeks; you confine  
willful tendrils high above your morning smile.

Only the sun knows where to find a few strands  
gone white as salt. Sometimes wind  
sneaks them out to glisten  
while the prim clump espaliered at your nape

believes the deep coiled woman waiting.  
And I still covet the jungle midnight  
when your freed charges flare  
and wisp across my pillow,

and riches flow over my skin, cool teasing  
like milk and honey on my mouth  
as I caress the long fringes  
of my promised land.

--G. R. Holloway

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REPERTOIRE

Sea wind is a bright wind  
even in the dark  
a bleached white wind  
with agate-shiny planes and glinting edges  
Shaped like a boomerang

Sea wind is a searcher that never gives up  
fingering the cut of your clothes  
the color of your hair Street-wise  
it hassles and hustles you  
insinuating whispery intimate as sin

Fridays it's a witch-wind  
imprecating from the mouth of cove  
and coven banking riddles off rocks  
dervishing out of bubbling vats  
trailing mischief through your eyelashes

Sundays it's a broken song fallen  
through the treble staff snagged  
on ragged edges flapping discontent  
even as you hold it in a perfect sail  
against the world's most dedicated blue

Sea wind is wild vanilla sandalwood  
and frangipani promises

before it swings a salt-dipped scimitar  
and raises Jolly Roger

--Glenna Holloway

### ADDIE AT EIGHTY

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 scolded herself 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 to mellow.  
You knew, she said, no birds or frogs  
ever fell in it, nothin' died in it  
and it wasn't tinted with tobacco juice  
posing as bourbon.  
It was kind of a slow pure white  
that smoothed your smile, she said,  
and made you forget about stuff  
that didn't matter anyhow.  
It took some of your breath away  
but left your tongue intact  
and contented your throat and belly  
like a good honeydew melon only warm.

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

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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 Baxter, the apple owner, squawked louder.

"Aw, it was just a reflex," said Holt. "Here, take my candy bar." But Baxter 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 apart 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 all 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 was a farmer-- he used to say you can't 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 off the car, landing at my feet, splayed wings, bulging belly, beak open to the sky.

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. As I blurted HEY, it limped a step then exploded into the air like Satan's worst expletive. Crowing all the way.

--Glenna Holloway

#### A BOWL OF BLUE BLOSSOMS

The delphiniums budded, demanding their own  
container, a competent complement for blue.

Glass-vased cosmos watched, bland and blueless,  
as this bowl began-- a fat gray coil of earth,  
cold slimy to my touch, reluctant to accept  
my warmth or my will. I insisted a deep shape,  
a reservoir to prolong blue.

Free of my hands, the clay surrendered moisture  
slowly. Rearranging its molecules, it shrank,  
fossil-dry on a shelf. Encased in continental crust,  
the dark hollow of my design lusted for light.

Graduate of the first fire, country coarse  
as big bucktoothed zinnias in baskets in my studio,  
its rough brown surface drank deeply of unguents.  
Native manganese and copper pigment anointed its flaws.

In a final revelation it vibrated like a nova,  
orange to white in the kiln, healed and ripened  
in hereditary heat. Today it came into its own  
first flowering, alloyed with now-pollinated sisters  
of the soil. Sharing the blue planet's perfected blue.

## BAND PRACTICE

DRum your fingers to static, watch the leaders:  
smoke-eyed, star-eyed,  
hot-eyed, misty-eyed,  
in huge halls swaying  
to something-for-everyone lyrics  
anyone could have written in flats,  
snagging any handy pumphandle for  
yea-yea choruses. Folk-rock-op-  
portunity racking up the people  
always clapping for a new rhythm,  
clasping anything that changes key,  
even chants by professional virgins  
singing pander songs.

Listen, acid-rocked, lullabye-rocked, rooked citizen-player,  
whoever leads the magic combo,  
sheep shuffler, shibboleth-dancer,  
tunes coiled deep in the horns won't change.  
Watch the big sound break decibels,  
shatter eyeballs  
while your hearing trickles  
down the slot where echos go,  
hung-beat in your brain, afterbeat  
in your bones, and clap, damn you,  
but come on hard with your hulking  
homemade drum and your own sure tempo!

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#### THE MASTER SILVERSMITH

Poured from the crucible, silver looks greasy,  
disappointing, lacking the brilliance of mercury,  
less bright than tin. Cooled solid, turning proud,  
it awaits the complements of my tools.

An exquisite trade, beguiling to clients, beguiling  
the craftsman. Oh, no household deities lie molten  
in my shop, desirous of worship. I have no use  
for lesser gods. What emerges from the molds,  
from the dull gray sheet, from my hands--is beauty  
sterlingly personified, ready to serve its maker,  
eager to gather praise for the hunger that formed it.

Acclaim is addictive. 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, but the one only, unalloyed God  
who has told us he tolerates no rivals.

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

--Glenna Holloway

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LAST CARD DOWN

Aunt Anastasia drove three hundred miles  
to take her place in the deathwatch  
with Jack and me and our old dog.  
"Don't let her in," said her favorite nephew,  
my husband, when I told him she was coming.  
He called her the Queen of Clubs for her lack  
of tact, her bossy bluntness. "She'll advise me  
how to die, lay a Bible on my chest, instruct me  
on eternal protocol, drill me in correct address  
of angels. Next, she'll move her self portrait  
from my desk to Jack's, rearrange his paper piles  
while she's there, then she'll put  
the dog's bowl and blanket out in the yard."  
Holding hands, we shared chuckles  
until she arrived to prove him right.

She told our son he was improperly dressed  
for the occasion. Proudly we watched Jack  
refrain from saying what glinted in his eyes.

Bedside she bid and trumped until  
the impatient patient feigned sleep. She made  
a list of things I should do. Then I insisted  
she get some rest after her long trip.  
Jack firmly escorted her to the guest room.

My husband and I were dealt another hour,  
a final royal flush. You might say Aunt A  
was the ace. Our joker king died laughing.

--Glenna Holloway

### DITHYRAMB IMPROMPTU

A tall man with a banjo leaned against the Ozarks,  
propped his boot on granite, made himself a song.  
He borrowed chords from falling water  
down the deepest canyon wall; he sang  
of blowing cottonwood and bluestem miles of prairie  
tomorrowed with the off-key bawl of calving.

He saved insistent rhythm from an Appaloosa hoof,  
a pumping well and tin roof rain,  
the ragged rugged meter of the languages that met,  
a Hopi shuttling sunset through a rug loom.

Two cowboys mouthed harmonicas, puffing out the melody,  
hummed loneliness and thumbed some badlands bass.  
A Choctaw added drumming, like the coming of a twister,  
like the warning of a rattler and the fear-beat of a doe.

Play the ranging polyrhythms changing green to gray  
or tan, heathen heat that stills the windmill,  
spirals deep inside the core drill, thrums  
the alto obbligato for the dreamer and the drum.

Other voices join in. The ballad changes key  
from minor to major and back again:  
Dustscape, windscape, miles of mood as black as crude,  
magpie eighth notes perched on barbwire staffs,  
salt-flat hopes pitched higher-toned and sharp.

Tighten old guitar strings, patch and stitch the tune,  
lighten with the lupine, touch a wing.  
Listen to the underlilt, the afterbeat of thunder,  
whistle up the wonder of thistledown and sand hill,  
modulate the sounds from silversmith and logger.

Scale it all to satisfy harmony's quest.  
And sing! Another chorus of the West.

--Glenna Holloway

## NO BREAK IN THE FORECAST

The drought invents words from dust:  
Landscathe. Heatscape.

Antithesis of rain,  
gritty gray dust from 3 counties  
muffles the death rattle of corn.

Our dreams begin and end with water:  
Sloshing over the rim of the cistern  
when cattle drink. Filling  
the baked gouge of Catnap Creek.  
Falling down the granite scarps  
into plunge pools, feeling it  
roll over skin, liquid music  
to make harmony with, fingers flicking  
notes in the air.

The waking word is "sere,"  
a crossword puzzle word, archaic,  
out of sync with satellites and DVDs.  
Alien as smeared crust on our cheeks  
and caked around the collie's nostrils.  
Random blips flare in bias sun shafts,  
tiny unspecified warnings of maybe worse  
to come, sifting through the thick curtain  
hanging from unheeding heaven.

Anvil-heads gather, great thunderclouds  
mushroom without spilling their promises.  
Gravity tugs one into a shape like Italy.  
Suddenly it sags. Lean. Black.  
The boot's tongue flops down, licks away  
our silo. We find the rubble hours later,  
a dusty mile away. In a single shiny wet spot.

**THE ROAD NOT FINISHED**  
**(An Evening's Chance Encounter)**

New in town? I'm Hart Crane. Haven't seen you at any of Sam's soirees before. He mentioned you write poetry too. Are you blessed or cursed? Is booze a boon or bondage? Is sex driving, draining or definitive? Do you wish I'd shut up and go annoy someone else? Why, thank you. Glad you liked "White Buildings." No, I've never been to Africa but I don't shy away from images of other cultures-- twisted horizons, a carcass quick with flies, another man's stinking shoes. Poetry transports you anywhere, anywhen, anywhy.

At present, I owe my best work and my life to Sam. Priceless Samuel Loveman, New York bookstore owner who reads his wares and understands what he hawks. One Manhattan night like this-- good company, wine, music, laughter-- I suddenly deflated like a punctured tire, wobbled to the edge of the roof garden-- intending to jump. And there was Sam-- a fast firm grip on my arm from behind. Relentlessly, silently pulling me back. And I hated him for it. The next day I couldn't thank him enough for saving me. It was an epiphany. And my stanzas, my verses transcended mere rhetoric.

Oh, the reprieve won't last forever.  
 And I'll never be the mythos master I want to be.  
 But for now my words are alive again--  
 singing, pulsating with illumination  
 of all the colors in white.  
 Words are all I've got-- the same weary words  
 everyone has, but I strip off their lousy clothes,  
 pry up layers of plating, pierce the rusty armor,  
 expose their nakedness shot with pumping veins  
 or sometimes the multiple faces  
 of flashing amethyst-- like a just-split geode  
 I'm the first human to see.

You say you know what it's like to hit bottom?  
 Most poets do. Seems to be part of the package.  
 Don't blame your parents. Mine couldn't bear  
 each other beyond eye-blink attraction  
 and the first belch of fact. Caramel-coated cur are  
 for a mother, hide-bound ledger book for a father.  
 They can't help who they are.  
 You can't help who you are, poet.

Remember, words are your life boats,  
your conveyances. Kindling words,  
load-bearing words. Chameleon, ambisexual words.  
Build your bridges across the voids with words.  
Maintain them with words. Be ready to fight  
anything coming between you  
and what you're building.

Each word has a root, a stem to lift it, a calyx  
of connotation holding petals posing as truth.  
And some are the real thing. Words sail every sea,  
stream and sewer. Words walk the city  
after midnight, hustle through Harlem, swagger  
or stumble or hobble down Wall Street.  
I thread Brooklyn Bridge cables with them, strung  
with shreds of starlight, riverlight, peoplelight.  
Words merge with rain and wind  
and pluck the superstructure's harp.  
Words orbit earth, gather inventive cosmic dust,  
settle in cellars, sift into a lost cat's fur  
and wait. Words are all a poet can own, but first  
they have to be rescued, warmed, persuaded  
to be heard, forget the damage done to them.

Does that excite you? Good, but beware  
unreined exhuberance. It teeters high  
on a narrow rail above emptiness  
unable to break your fall.

## SUPERSTITION STANLEY AND THE LOST DUTCHMAN MINE

Elongated scrawn with a mat of tawny hair and burro eyes,  
camouflaged for chaparral or rocky canyon, smarter  
than any coyote, he had the look of ocotillo in a drought.  
Named for the mountains where the gold still lies,  
he dug the prize for other men  
deep in the Red Cloud, Old Yuma, Oro Blanco.  
He glory-holed with the best nugget-busters in the West,  
bed-rolled with dust-baggers gone rich to Reno long ago.

His rhyme was covert, bias, unpredictable; his reason  
was disrhythmic as his horse that threw a shoe and Stan.  
Awhile he was a cowboy till he broke another bone.  
Next he probed the Atacosa Mountains on his own,  
got claim-jumped, moved to the Apache, gambled every game  
in Globe, bellied every Bisbee bar. He was born, he said,  
in a hollow saguaro, his ma a fox, his pa a Utah badger.

He'd disappear for a year or so, and the yarns always  
began again. Sprung up like California poppies after  
the spring rain, they clung to him like cholla spines  
to sheepskin chaps. Some whispered he found the Dutchman  
near the Gila River. Others said they saw him panning  
in the Salt and swore he grinned then vanished  
in a dust devil, leaving a mile-long trail of rust.

Some vowed the Superstitions hosted secret tribes in caves  
above the mine. Lost Dutchman was the kiva hall for all  
kachinas, and Stan a spirit-scout assigned to mislead  
searchers, bandy them about in piney mazes, raise  
their hair with crying winds and crazed sidewinders.  
No recipe for legend ever lacked a cook;  
a charro even took it back to Mexico.

Stan surfaced last in Morenci, left over from the past  
like a head-frame towering the weeds of a town  
turned ghost. He lingered on the edge  
of people's knowing like narrow-gauge rails  
going to a closed-down shaft. Sometimes he tipped  
a waitress chunks of wulfenite or malachite  
with full bull's-eyes, and sometimes royal azurite.  
"True treasure," he would say. "I like it better than  
that yellow stuff; this here's a hunk of sky and lake."

He tried to be a cowboy one more time, but pain  
was in him deep and, some said, fever in his brain,  
the metal kind no love of God's outdoors could cure.  
If he ever heard the tales he didn't care. He sold  
his mining tools to buy an old wool coat. Late and soon  
he'd lean against the wall of the Busted Gut Saloon,  
still as a chilled chuckwalla, just as sudden gone.  
He lost his gun on a Jack-high flush. That night he died  
at Emmy Bresha's boarding house, same as any flesh  
and blood man. Some folks sort of grieved. But no one  
ever believed he never hid a thing  
and one last semi-precious stone was all Stan had.

## 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.

THE DEXTER REVIEW, 1995, prize winner

### STILL DISCOVERING THE WHEEL

Something about being borne on tandem circles,  
about two of them turning together;  
something about surfaces reeling past  
under a dome of migrating birds:  
not as ancient as invention, not as overwrought  
as spring or magic-- just treasure for hoarding.

The feeling is powered by pumping legs,  
so practiced you wonder if they continue  
in sleep as lungs do. So automatic  
they could be part of the frame you ride.  
Sometimes you study them, newly bare  
after winter, blushing before re-learning tan.

Often you share the trail with others,  
see bobbing reds, yellows, ahead or behind,  
part of the collage. Some pursue speed,  
the wing-heeled god in silver spandex, always  
in front, daring you to catch up if you can.

You can. You have. A hard high rush,  
worth trying. Unlasting as a meal.  
What it's about, what you want-- you can keep,  
no assertions needed, no batteries required.  
Chords get resolved in a higher key, your own.

Sometimes you'd swear you've left the ground  
and the wheels are rolling on some other plane,  
some new dynamic of chance balanced  
on the curve of time, leaf-sifted air,  
subtle differences in the taste of blue and green.  
New theories of relativity, new concepts  
approaching the outer rim of the possible.  
Continuum of motion and space as home.

## LEAVING HOME

A man with a guitar sits in a swaying boat  
strumming "Moon River" and it's a hard song  
to hear as the wet fact inches higher.

It rose in the night like a rheumy moon  
despite here-and-there dark patches  
the morning defined as dams and dikes.  
It overcame them easy as clouds shimmering  
across sight, surface shiny as the moon  
but nothing like the celebrated satellite  
you could gaze up at, it was water! Miles  
of it loose as moonwash  
spreading daylight truth on the earthscape.

Water and moon: Some ancient arcane bond  
still strong, far from ocean tides,  
beyond old midwives' tales. Amniotic fluid  
flowing without a birthing,  
a week's travail and nothing to show  
for it but a slimy signature-- a receipt  
for all your labor and maybe all you own.

Moon-filled water, stink-filled sandbags,  
ribbons of rotting crops bandaging the levees,  
mud-caked metaphors and your life's artifacts  
--a sorrowscape no melody can carry,  
no lyrics can lift.

The last motorboat loads, leaving a brown wake  
like a fresh-plowed furrow in your best land.  
The guitarist, drifting, peels off a few more  
chords like soaked plywood and floats them  
after the barn gone downcurrent two days ago.  
Slowly he resumes rowing into an oak woodland  
greenly ghosted beneath him, its moss floor  
coming loose like pieces of lawn carpet,  
rising, bobbing around his oars,  
one rafting a Barbie doll dressed in gold lame.

And you declare nature the master ironist.  
And you quit thinking of when the fabled moon  
and river made their appointed rounds and knew  
their place and you could recognize yours.

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SUPERSTITION STANLEY AND THE LOST DUTCHMAN MINE

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camouflaged for chaparral or rocky canyon, smart  
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Awhile he was a cowboy till he broke another bone.  
Next he probed the Atacosa Mountains on his own,  
got claim-jumped, moved to the Apache, gambled every game  
in Globe, bellied every Bisbee bar. He was born, he swore,  
in a hollow saguaro, his ma a fox, his pa a Utah badger.

He'd disappear for a year or so, and the yarns always  
began again. Sprung up like California poppies after  
the spring rain, they clung to him like cholla spines  
to sheepskin chaps. People whispered he found the Dutchman  
near the Gila River. Others said they saw him panning  
in the Salt and vowed he grinned then vanished  
in a dust devil, leaving a mile-long trail of rust.

Some said the Superstitions hosted secret tribes in caves  
above the mine. Lost Dutchman was the kiva hall for all  
kachinas, and Stan a spirit-scout assigned to mislead  
searchers, bandy them about in piney mazes, raise  
their hair with wailing winds and crazed sidewinders.  
No recipe for legend ever lacked a cook;  
a charro even took it back to Mexico.

Stan surfaced last in Morenci, left over from the past  
like a head-frame towering the weeds of a town  
turned ghost. He lingered on the edge  
of people's knowing like narrow-gauge rails  
going to a closed-down shaft. Sometimes he tipped  
a waitress chunks of turquoise or malachite  
with full bull's-eyes, and sometimes royal azurite.  
"True treasure," he would say. "I like it better than  
that yellow stuff; this here's a hunk of sky and lake."

He tried to be a cowboy one more time, but pain  
was in him deep and, some said, fever in his brain,  
the metal kind no love of God's outdoors could cure.  
If he ever heard the tales he didn't care. He sold  
his mining tools to buy an old wool coat. Late and soon  
he'd lean against the wall of the Busted Gut Saloon,  
still as a chilled chuckwalla, just as sudden gone.  
He lost his gun on a Jack-high flush. That night he died  
at Emmy Bresha's boarding house, same as any flesh  
and blood man. Some folks sort of grieved.  
But no one ever believed he never hid a thing,  
and one last semi-precious stone was all Stan had.

HOW TO GET BY

Since you have to start and end with something,  
make it sound: the sound of toffee-colored  
alto sax riffs sliding off hotcakes, trumpets  
keening crushed ice and java, pianos spraying  
barbs of fire over a tough skeleton of drums.  
Blend in verbena and mint from Southern nights,  
October moon dipped in satin-melt, fish  
silvering to the surface to whisper whole notes,  
quivering the lunar smear on rumpled black water.  
Tune it to chiffon, warm clay, blue steel,  
malleable, infallible, indelible. Pour it  
in the revved-up engine driving the solar machine.

Since you have to call it something, call it jazz,  
Gershwin style, Charlie-Bird, Duke and Doc style.  
Everything else insinuating into your ears,  
your years, is unsound noise. Jazz comes together  
as something you can move to, sit still to, kiss to,  
milk cows to. You can heal to jazz, or die to it  
when the time comes, easy-smiling like my Uncle Hal.

One note attracts another, forms a spiral  
like human cells, connects a cadence. Somebody  
invented things to blow and beat, bow and strum,  
concentrating the layers you can hear-- never mind  
those you can't or those secret increments  
of after-pulse you can't quite feel,  
all lending vibes to the parts you can.

Jazz harmonizes snow, lightning, gin, Jello,  
a lemon look that says leave, a laugh that says love.  
Some passages sing tears, ache-to-the-bone,  
write-a-psalm tones or melon-sweet, sass-hot measures  
rolling off tongues before they smoke. Jazz  
never loses its cool, always finds that one space  
you can't close off, winds through your vents,  
your veins, firing synapses along the way,  
a synopsis of your life.

*Josh Sapples*

--Glenna Holloway,  
SENSATIONS MAGAZINE, 2001

GLENNA HOLLOWAY  
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SAGANESQUE SONNETS  
Creation According to Carl

I

Our blazing fallout 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? Have we 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.

DEJA VU

II

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

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SAGANESQUE SONNETS, TWO YEARS APART

I

I still can hear him: "Mill-yons and mill-yons of stars!"  
His voice, his style, his background videos,  
His theories of asteroids and Mars,  
The stellar grandeur, his persuasive prose  
Commanded my attention and my time.  
Dismissively, one night I shunned his fare,  
But went right back like poor magnetic rhyme.  
Avoiding future programs on the air,  
Pronouncing them addictive, I denied  
All access to my mind and closed the door.  
Too many space freaks; no one's qualified  
To speak of what defines the cosmic core,  
A jigsaw puzzle no man comprehends.  
I shrugged. We'll learn whatever God intends

II

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.

--Glenna Holloway

## APPRECIATION

Browsing breeze with mockingbird;  
The musician fingered his flute.  
Pastel petal and ~~shapely~~ polished pine;  
The artist dipped his brush.  
Warlike waves on broken beach;  
The poet put it to rhyme.  
Moonlit mountain silhouette;  
The lovers lived a sigh.  
~~Both~~ Old ~~Eve~~ saw all and was inspired  
To paint, to write , to play!  
Sadly she lacked the means for these  
And her love was yesterday.  
She looked and humbly bent her knees;  
She ~~had learned~~ how to pray.  
*did know*

### DITHYRAMB IMPROMPTU

A tall man with a banjo leaned against the Ozarks,  
propped his boot on granite, made himself a song.  
He borrowed chords from falling water  
down the deepest canyon wall; he sang  
of blowing cottonwood and bluestem miles of prairie  
tomorrowed with the off-key bawl of calving.

He saved insistent rhythm from an Appaloosa hoof,  
a pumping well and tin roof rain,  
the ragged rugged meter of the languages that met,  
a Hopi shuttling sunset through a rug loom.

Two cowboys mouthed harmonicas, puffed out the melody,  
hummed their loneliness and thumbed some badlands bass.  
A Choctaw added drumming, like the coming of a twister,  
like the warning of a rattler and the fear-beat of a doe.

Play the ranging polyrhythm changing green to gray  
or tan, heathen heat that stills the windmill,  
spirals deep inside the core drill, thrums  
the alto obbligato for the dreamer and the drum.

Other voices join in. The ballad changes key!  
from minor to major and back again:  
Dustscape, windscape, miles of mood as black as crude,  
magpie eighth notes perched on barbwire staffs,  
salt-flat hopes pitched higher-toned and sharp.

Tighten old guitar strings, patch and stitch the tune,  
lighten with the lupine, reach a wing.  
Listen to the underlilt, the afterbeat of thunder,  
whistle up the wonder of thistledown and sand hill,  
modulate the sounds from silversmith and logger.

Scale it all to satisfy harmony's quest.  
And sing! Another chorus of the West.

--Glenna Holloway  
---BYLINE, January, 1996  
---POET, Fall, 1997

GLENN HOLLOWAY  
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CHICAGO: FIRST LADY OF THE LAKE

She moved leanly through Indian twilight,  
shabby and unmet, slogging through swamps,  
trailing her long skirts through tarlike mud  
and the evil smell of skunk cabbage.

She stumbled and fell on shores that bullied her  
with dares and promises others never heard.  
She lay on the flats in bosomy youth, gazing  
blueward-- high hollow blue, pale-seamed  
with deep wet blue, teal and indigo  
priming the canvas, waiting for a subject:

Waiting for her to quiet her urgent hunger,  
waiting for her to find a wintersmith husband  
and breed a breed taller and stubborn  
than blue emptiness. Without first-glance beauty,  
without dowry or lineage-- a razorish termagant  
on Tuesday, demure as dimity on Wednesday,  
racy as red sequins on Saturday night  
then Sunday-caring through the rains  
gone white and heavy on her head. She was  
an enigma-- fine figure, unfathomable sum.

After her wedding for better and worse, feast  
and fire, splinter and gilding, she took  
her time with the art of ladyhood, more earned  
than learned, writing her own music while moving  
miles of railcars, tons of bloody meat.

She roughed-in composition with charcoal,  
handled pigments and brushes her way,  
toned the flattering, fuming, prodding blues  
waiting for their match, icing and steaming,  
waiting for her to model her rising brood  
with the back of her hand. She taught them  
to pose substance on air and water,  
add the warm shades to the palette,  
close harmony to the minor key chords. And at last  
to put in perspective a million highlights  
framing the watercolor palimpsest,  
the sound and light-stretched gamut of blues.

--Glenna Holloway ,  
ARIEL

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### SUDDEN TWIST

We saw his omens in the surly sky  
as Woden pounded kettledrums nonstop,  
belligerant vibrations aimed to skew  
begonia baskets lined up on our stoop.  
The dishes jittered, both dogs whined. "Looks like  
an air force coming to attack at noon.  
Black bombs of rain. I'm glad we fixed that leak."  
Formations peeled off, targets still unknown.

One cloud took shape like Italy. We watched  
the boot's long tongue flop down in nearby woods.  
"Lee, get beneath the basement stairs!" Bewitched,  
I heard my voice but could not move, saw wads  
of earth with trees, a truck, a silo flying.  
The roar wound me like rope as I was fleeing.

--Glenna Holloway

### WITNESS IN THE PINES

She was a water witch, my great grandmother,  
quenching generations of need, dousing  
scoffers, dowsing through collective faith,  
herself the ranking believer.

Nearing her hundredth year, she vowed  
to find the ancestors her mother disclaimed.  
She laid down her favorite hazelwood  
to hold a new rod she dug up--  
wishbone of the tribal thunderbird,  
she told me, slyly smiling.  
Mad as March wind, neighbors called her  
when she began searching for the Old Ones.

I watched her chanting, weaving herself  
into the forest, an upright rag  
borne on breezes following the fork tip.  
Sometimes I'd have sworn no one was under  
her cowl and her voice rose from the earth.

The bony point of her rod twitched, jerked  
down. The slender arch leaped from her hands.  
"Help me," she cried. "They're here!"

My shovel plunged through years of pine drop,  
turning the layers of centuries.  
Disturbed shadows fluttered with light.  
Crosshatched roots defeated our spades.  
She died digging. I carried her home,  
hardly heavier than the cloth she wore.

It's been twenty-five years, the land  
bought and sold, cleared and squared.  
The Indian Pines bulldozer uncovered  
the spot. The state acted quickly.

I'm told they lie in the fetal position,  
trinkets and painted pots at hand.  
My grandmother wanted to be with them,  
the Old Ones. I'm glad we failed.  
The roof of their privacy is laid aside;  
museum lights shine on clay-stained bones.  
Visitors pay \$2.50 to stare.

1. Poetry

CHALLENGE FOR A SCIENTIST

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,  
warring and waiting-- His playthings--  
molded and willed and flung  
from dawn to forever.

When you crack creation's codes,  
when you tell us in detail  
how Earth and life happened, when  
you prove at last it was no accident,

teach us the 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 diamonds.

To be spoken by men in whispers.

This gem-encrusted joke! Globe guardians,  
Pew sitters, squatters on the Earth, the brave  
Custodians of humanism grant  
And shout me noble names. They watch me rise,  
The monolithic paragon, the arrow  
Pointing iridescently to Heaven,  
Heaven as its target! Oh, the farce!  
The righteous rationale, the Gnostic good,  
The Savior syndrome. Satan merely quoted  
Scripture to his ends. I write it, burn  
The words in liturgy then purge the pray-ers,  
Sear their souls with flames of dedication.  
The people want machines, solutions, rights,  
And mighty citadels in Draco's heights.

I give them miracles, small victories,  
And clever nostrums tailor-made for death  
Whose bastions in Earth's privy I will storm.  
I'll let them find out life, I'll let them make  
It, let them keep it longer. Yet they won't  
Discover what they have. I'll lend them power,  
Feed them with it while I wear the wreaths  
Of simple service, wash myself in love  
Then pass the drippings to the doting drove.

The pose is priceless. Now that Satan sleeps  
Who can suspect? I show the holy signs,  
The visions and the end-time parables.  
In God's own name, the billions worship me!  
So who will notice how the road is paved  
With slowly sinking monuments? Who'll guess  
The compass point is magnetized, and clocks  
Are secondary idols, mine alone,  
Whose hands enthrall, whose workings I align?

Yes! I, too, challenged God-- Who lets man rule  
His destiny. And man...is such a fool...

APPRENTICE ARTIST

Ages ago, images ago,  
she was accustomed to acclaim as a painter  
of iris, content with replication:

Brushstroking floral vitals at their peak,  
shape and sheen of the premises,  
exactitude of shade,

the whole canvas conspiracy  
of two dimensions in mitered space  
comforted her with awards for perfected views.

Suddenly confronted with sightings  
of unguessed galaxies in petals,  
strange promises beyond lavender standards,

*Perhaps "vary" uses of*

beyond bearded junctures of veined purple,  
she now sees runic nodes ripen beyond  
the reach of sable hair and palette knife:

Planets and fetal faces inhabit white;  
oceans, lungs, mountains, bones  
blend with pink plasma, dust of maroon.

The pale scent of blue and yellow fades  
from her sleeve. Armies and godsmiths,  
prophets and poets abide in wet furls

as tropic pastels fail and fall.  
Now the impatient stem, the stalk of knowing,  
twisted like steel wire, supports a forming:

Marrow grows in the unknown dimensions.  
There is no such thing as still life.  
Her not-yet captured subject seethes

on an inner palimpsest, stretches and turns  
on its own pedestal, testing invented armatures,  
clawing its way to the surface of her clay.

## PACIFIC PROLOGUE

I first saw him in his natural setting  
close to water, shirtless and sweat-shiny.  
He struggled with long wood bones,  
an ungainly skeleton  
that didn't, that day, resemble a boat.

Nor did I, that day, resemble a sail  
straining, full of hurry and motivation.  
None of my plans called for shaping trees  
to the demands of waves, or skimming wetly  
over an alien surface. There was no reason  
for building time frames around him, investing  
my summer, learning the language of luffers.

Even as I deplored wind's briny bite,  
the promise of his design curved its smile  
at the sun. The shore shimmered with knowing.

Together we curved ribs with laughter,  
caulked seams with sticky August, painted  
the hull with September twilight.  
I dreaded the launching,  
watching craft and craftsman borne away  
on Protean blue.

I think I would have clung to the keel  
if he hadn't bound me  
to the mast with a length of kisses.

### HILTON HOLLINGSWORTH, III

Elegant name, don't you think?  
There won't be room on the marble marker  
for all there is to say. But it always ends  
the same. Ritual metal box in a soft color,  
half the lid open, overkill of carnations,  
sibilant sounds, people comparing  
how I was when they saw me last:  
Teeing off at the club, working late  
at the 13th district polls, driving  
my custom-made fenders around the capital.

Today's gathering vies to establish  
acceptable links-- men smiling over anecdotes,  
women nodding between selected instances,  
all coined for the slot of why they're here  
within my wife's hearing.  
They could always count on me, always a winner.  
Even the way I dodged debts, shotgunned rules  
and skewed facts becomes endearing today,  
doesn't it? They know everything I did  
was for them. So listen, stone carver,  
standing quietly in the rear,  
maybe you should just say on the marble:  
"This is the very last place  
the last Hilton Hollingsworth will lie."

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WHO NEEDS EDEN?

Glenна Holloway

I 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 old herd bucks dine.  
  
I watch the valleys for the twilight's rise,  
And walk the bony hills against the wind  
To meet the moon and wait there while it vies  
With nimbus rings like cotton newly ginned.  
  
The morning brings slow rain that 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 melon stand.  
  
I wander this kaleidoscope, a child  
Whose patterned ~~green~~<sup>leaf</sup> and ~~wood~~<sup>bark</sup> designs grow wild.

AUTUMN IS NOT A SEASON

but a gaudy arena where Summer and Winter collide,  
where royalty in torn colors falls to a pale new monarch.  
Her warm Majesty is thrown out of her palace overnight.  
A moat of black chrysanthemums surrounds it, ice bars  
secure the windows, smog is stationed on the perimeter  
to stop sun's spying on the new regime.

A wind-driven fusillade of rain, grit and leaf shrapnel  
keeps subjects bowing as Summer and her courtiers retreat  
to regroup between Capricorn and Cancer. And you who stay  
must shed your ripe skin to blend with snow.

**GLENNA HOLLOWAY**  
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### 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:  
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  
ruckles and fades like stations 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. Me, separate  
as the lone gas pump in front of old general stores,  
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 replays like magnetic tape.  
What I'm after is live songs, trumpets, guitars  
enough to fuel my tank to Chicago. To sleep  
under sheet music, inhale hot jazz for lunch  
and wind me in a gospel-slapping choir robe.

Practice runs I call these Saturday to-and-fros.  
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 thirty-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. Mama never told me that.

## 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 lean  
over Pepsis and Moon Pies. Me,  
separate as the lone gas pump out front,  
not wanting to explain my hurry, not really 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 gigs  
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.

Yesterday 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.

## MAINE FLOOR

Garlands of ground pine decorate the aisles,  
matching the Christmas zeal of city merchants  
before Halloween. Puffs of minuscule spores  
send seasonal smoke signals to customers  
milling around upper and lower levels  
of the woodland mall as new entries are tunneled.  
Fungi set up umbrella tables loaded with snacks.  
Vivid hyperbole seduces consumers browsing  
last year's litter and today's largess.  
Wild blueberries and cranberries flash neon ads  
for the long-awaited autumn rummage sale.

Ants of every persuasion  
are the most numerous shoppers, beetles  
the most selective, squirrels the hastiest.  
But it's the bargain-hunting black bear,  
indiscriminate grasping rude  
who makes me abandon my squatting rights  
of having spied the best wares first.

### THE EXHIBITIONISTS

Gaudy. Shameless. Swaggering.  
Vast expanses of hardwoods are vested  
in orange and amber ruffles. Oak colonies  
stud the display with garnet flash.  
The tallest pines and spruces among them  
state their almost overwhelmed points  
the only way they can, tips barely visible.  
Complementary clouds moving closer,  
some blushing, hang low to take it all in.

There's even a sweeping swath of blue water,  
blue enough to turn Levi Straus green  
with envy, knowing his aniline dyes  
can't compete.

How does this place dare such flamboyance  
in the face of advancing claws of cold and sleet?  
This isn't a victory celebration, it's a taunt.  
Don't the showoffs know they're in for  
humiliating loss, destined to become bare  
and brown, rough skeletons stripped of all glory?

Or do they feel deep in the heartwood--  
this time--this year  
their splurges of ostentation will overcome?  
It's possible. Stunned by such outrageous pomp  
winter may surrender.

APOLOGIES TO CLEMENT MOORE ONLY

T'was the eve of election, and all through the House  
Everyone had gone home but a small lonely mouse.  
The pledges all hung from the rafters with care  
In hopes that their authors would soon return there.

The union-owned boys stroked their soft featherbeds  
While visions of future plums danced in their heads.  
Some dreamed about honors, the gown and the cap,  
While some merely planned on a long winter's nap...  
Provided that nobody raised such a clatter  
That snoops would be sent to see what was the matter!  
Provided no agency raised such a clatter  
That agents would come to see what was the matter!

Such thoughts made one spring from his bed in a flash;  
He threw on his bathrobe and knotted the sash.  
"My motives were pure as the new-fallen snow,"  
He cried out the window to objects below.  
He thought how his stand on the debt would appear,  
And his sleigh rides to visit old allies so dear--

But his steamroller staff was quite lively and quick,  
And peopled with folks who were full of Old Nick.  
Astride of the Eagle his courses they came  
To chasten and castrate opponents by name:  
"Incompetent," "Dunderhead," their phrases blitzed 'em;  
The talk got so hot on the networks it fritzed 'em.

From rooftops to war zones, to each City Hall,  
They'd thrashed away, gnashed away, hashed away all.  
Let shibboleths clash, let the wild charges fly--  
He'd surmount any obstacle clear to the sky!  
He'd make 'em forget all those junkets he flew;  
He'd give 'em a tax break and subsidy too.  
He'd promised each house and each barn a new roof.  
He'd promised to fatten each steak on the hoof.  
He waggled his head as he paced all around,  
Then pleased, he returned to his bed with a bound.

He dreamed he was cold from his head to his foot;  
His raggedy clothes were all covered with soot.  
A bundle of junk he had flung on his back,  
And he looked like a peddler untying his pack.  
His eyes lost their twinkle, the scene was not merry.  
The garbage pail yielded the pit of a cherry  
And one bone he clenched in his chattering teeth.  
His chilled breath encircled his head like a wreath.

(cont.)

He'd once promised chicken for every lean belly  
From platforms as firm as a bowl full of jelly.  
He'd been chubby and charming, a magical elf  
Who laughed at the people, believed in himself.

A wink of the eye and a nod of his head  
Would end this fool nightmare, this feeling of dread.  
If that didn't do it, oration would work.  
He mouthed flowing phrases with never a jerk.

A beggar who heard him was thumbing his nose.  
From his squat at the foot of a chimney, he rose;  
With dignified manner he started to whistle  
While snow swirled about like the down of a thistle.  
He tweeted a dirge as he faded from sight,  
And left the Old Boss to the bitter cold night.

--Glenna Holloway

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

APOLOGIES TO CLEMENT MOORE ONLY

by Glenna Holloway

T'was the eve of election, and all through the House  
Everyone had gone home but a small, lonely mouse.  
The pledges all hung from the rafters with care,  
In hopes that their authors would soon return there.

The union-owned boys stroked their soft featherbeds,  
While visions of future plums danced in their heads.  
Some dreamed about honors, the gown and the cap,  
While some merely planned on a long winter's nap...  
Provided that nobody raised such a clatter  
That snoops would be sent to see what was the matter!

Such thoughts made One spring from His bed in a flash;  
He threw on His bathrobe and knotted the sash.  
"My motives were pure as a new-fallen snow,"  
He cried out the window to objects below.  
He thought how His stand on the Debt would appear—  
And His sleigh-rides to visit old Allies so dear—

cont.

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cont.

WOMAN BEHOLD YOUR SON

The little boy was hungry,  
the little boy was cold.  
Not more than nine or ten  
with eyes so tired and old.

His coat was torn, his shoes outworn.  
His face was ~~pale~~ and gaunt  
with ~~eyes~~ designed to haunt.  
His stance defined forlorn.

*with deep sad eyes*  
He looked at me so pleadingly,  
this young boy all alone.  
The facts I learned ~~churned~~ my heart  
out of its comfort zone.

My plans aligned to make him mine.  
~~Adoption was the answer.~~  
I'd give him love, security,  
a family, warmth and shine.  
~~Adoption was the answer.~~  
And in return for hearth and home,  
he makes my heart a dancer.

2 TBSP Baking soda shampoo  
30 mins

## THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW IF I SAY YES

I've never understood my favorite friend very well.  
We're like oblique rhymes. Then she leaves at will,  
returns unexpected, often more than once a day.  
She's so selfless, sometimes I turn and do  
a double take to make sure it really is she.

Her voice is alto soft; you called her shy.  
She's the one to marry, she's the one  
who doesn't have to win  
or even compete. She'd be satisfied  
with a bungalow, an economy car, ordinary food.

This place can get crowded; I didn't see  
my other friend come in just now. I say  
"friend" only because she's always so close--  
all through school in the same class,  
so many nights in the same bed.

Fantasizing about some boy she wanted bad,  
she never spared details. Her imagery would wheel  
through my mind, center in my lower half and while  
I lay thinking how a slow hot cure would feel  
against my aching, she'd begin to fill

her mental shopping cart with perks and goods  
her favors could harvest-- as if the gods  
designed her just to be rewarded for her beauty.  
I'd call her nasty names and say her body  
was not meant to be used that way.

I'd make her promise to behave, then we  
wouldn't speak for several days and nights.  
She'd wait till I was maybe studying, stomach in knots,  
then talk about mink coats or yachts; she wanted it all.  
Next day I'd hear her laughing as I rode the el,

struggling with a thesis and a nine pound book,  
her "degrees won't get it for you, babe," hung in the back  
of my head. So of course you've also met her,  
the cunning one tossing her trailing scented hair,  
looking lies from under lashes long enough

to blow in the wind, her voice sometimes a knife  
out of its sheath. You've seen her eyes, wild  
craving as a hawk's, cool fire like a cougar's, willed  
to the art of pursuit, always weighing, always hiding  
something. And you've fallen in their orbit, unheeding.

But watch. The lids lower and raise and she's gone.  
Here sits a middling woman with nothing to gain  
by telling you this. I wonder why I did.  
Yet you must have noticed when daisies died  
and orchids appeared on a dandelion stem.

You've seen fawn eyes offer praise, trust, then steam  
with sudden rage or desire before making the switch  
to layers of velvet empathy, an unfurled swatch  
of understanding, reflex lenses of kindness. Right now  
two personas are past tense. How long I never know.

I share these eyes with her and her. I've confessed  
the complexities of a woman. A blink. That fast.  
The change can happen with a syllable, a color,  
or slowly like the soreness from a chafing collar.  
Part of this trihedroness should be kept

in garden sun; part needs to be tightly capped  
like fulminate of mercury, never stirred.  
The less definite one needs to be steered  
with a modicum of persuasion, a steady hand.  
And one hand should be mine, my conscience hound,  
  
or just the basic elements of humankind.  
Are we so different after all? If you had  
a psychic scalpel would you sever  
all your selves, or keep them in the brew for savor?  
Flavor may flourish more with more than one receiver.

Jihad excuses everything that's done.  
No end in sight, and here I fight again  
Sans tanks, a stranger battle, secret foes.  
Beneath a belt, a burkha, wagon seat,  
A bag of rice, or maybe just a fist  
Lie instruments of death awaiting victims.  
A corpsman's corpse, a legless female sergeant  
In the dirt await evacuation.

Morals vanish in a martyr's zeal.  
Another Jeep dismembered, human limbs  
Strewn on the road. The desert is unchanged  
As are the questions killing never solves  
And never stills. But we are changed--by nothing  
Learned or gained. Yet we are here again  
Supposed to end destruction and dissension,  
Ancient hates and fears with origins  
In Ishmael and Isaac, both from seed  
Of Abraham. Will new millennium loins  
Produce new leaders and new genetic pools  
Endowed with wisdom? Has God ordained that men  
Create more chaos every generation?

Last May the harpist wrote he'd reenlisted.  
He was heading for the Gulf that day.  
We planned to get together but before  
We could, he wound up in a body bag.  
Baghdad Mosul Basra Kirkuk Sunni,  
Shia Bathist places peoples isms,  
Incompatible beliefs, ambitions,  
Needs. And none about to change a word  
Of text or texture of this shredded land.

I find myself a sudden duplication  
Of one of Homer's scenes, evaded twice,  
Now overwhelming uncontrollable:

"Before the end my heart was broken down.  
I slumped on trampled sand and cried aloud,  
Caring no more for life or light of day,  
And rolled there weeping, till my tears were spent."

Quote: Homer's ODYSSEY, Book IV,  
translated by Robert Fitzgerald

"...two solitary strollers did not for a moment think on coincidence, that unswum stream which lingers at a man's elbow with every crowd in every town." --The Picasso Summer, Ray Bradbury

#### THE BEHOLDER'S EYE

For thirty-five years he starred her  
on imagination's lavish stage, the heroine  
of levitating scenes, eye level  
against a gray highway, flitting across  
a newspaper, a diorama under the shower spray.  
Producer, director, still wanting to co-star.

He didn't question that she still looked twenty,  
or other anomalies, never updated the script.  
After each performance he felt somehow closer  
to the pastel denouement of boy gets girl.

Vacationing in the mountains, his wife  
antiquing down the road, he Sunday afternooned  
at a small art museum, pausing to revile cubists  
for being blind to beauty. His eyes tripped over  
a painter's signature. The love of his life  
had married some guy with that common name.  
This one was the show's featured artist; his  
collection of nudes defaced the east wall.

The visitor moved toward them. Clumsy lines grated  
against each other, crashing colors tightened  
his jaws. A framed newsclip hanging nearby likened  
the artist's style to Picasso's, applauded  
the interpretations of his wife. The words  
surrounded a black and white photo of the couple.

The visitor shook his head. Ugly old woman,  
no wonder he painted her that way.  
Worst kind of escapism. Alteration of truth  
and pretense of alternative glory.

The artist, early for the wine and cheese reception  
at 5, sidled up to the frown in front of his work.  
"Tell me what you think of it," he said.

The visitor did. They conversed. Other guests  
drifted by. To keep it polite, the two men enacted  
the card swapping ritual. Outside, the first man  
saw he'd been talking to the painter himself,  
shrugged and flicked the card in a bin. Inside,  
the artist stared at the card in his hand.  
Can't be but one name like that, he thought.  
No wonder she didn't marry him.

## STAYING

This is a never before time and place,  
yet old. A crumbling under a dark weight  
reeking of permanence. Not somewhere  
I could live, nor you. Especially you.  
The houses look stricken, sidewalks abscessed,  
roads humpbacked. No recurring nightmare  
ever taught me this dirt smell rising  
from crevices alien as my own voice  
cleaving the night with your name.

How long has it been? Away from the fir-lined  
hills and music, fine wine and tulips  
on our table. I remember being expelled  
from a silver express train, booted off  
as if we didn't have the fare or some VIPs  
claimed our compartment. For a few moments  
we recall watching out our window the white-tail deer  
in velvet as they browsed the moonlight.  
A fawn and doe raced us beside the rails,  
albino as stars, fleeting as good dreams.

I've heard about this place  
in rattling prologues to winter.  
Or from spider tracks behind the furnace.  
These alleys are ruckled with flickering eyes,  
fever warps these rooftops. The walls tremble  
as something passes heavily.

And yet you stay, not knowing when or if  
my pale feet can return to the station.  
Knowing only  
that no one else knows about the deer.

It took five years to carve their faces.  
Such lovely columns so rare  
Are meant to shine in public places,  
Not pose in grave-like despair.

Their loosened grace grows strangely warm  
And Jason says the dead  
Enjoy regaining human form  
Through marble veins of red.

Their agate plinths catch pearl-like tears  
As Jason rubs their hands.  
They speak of a future full of fears  
And disappearing lands.

A necromantic haruspex,  
His is a Dark Age art  
From somewhere on the parallax  
Where time and death depart.

This simple-minded man, tongue-tied  
Till ghostly essences free  
Occult dimensions hidden inside,  
Was once salvation for me:

When I lay dying years ago  
He came and touched my cheek  
With a small carnelian cameo.  
It left a mark in Greek.

I'll stay until his wizardry wakes  
The caryatids anew.  
And his own departing spirit makes  
Them speak whatever is true.

I can't explain a moment of this.  
Some unknown presence is here.  
Who knows what inhabits the vast abyss  
Or where prophets may choose to appear?

--Glenna Holloway

END OF AN ERA, LINGERING LOVERS OF BALEFUL BAY

In 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 still hums old threnodies  
For the green-eyed girl, Noreen,  
A clipper ship, the Petrel,  
And her captain caught between.

Their portraits hang above the bar;  
Men stare at hers and talk of him.  
The frames are carved from the Petrel's spar,  
Her binnacle brass as trim.

His name was Jason Wesley Woods;  
He owned that sailing ship.  
He ran her tight and record-fast,  
Her hold packed full of goods.

His name was soft as a sleeping surf  
But his will was anchor strong.  
Noreen was afraid of 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 nails  
As you lean from the Petrel's rails.

"Her teakwood is smooth and her ribs are sound,  
And she's soaked with a spicey smell.  
We'll take you and wake you to things unbelieved  
By folks who are tied to the ground.

"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."

(cont.)

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(cont.)

Noreen 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.

Her hope reached the depth of her scuttled pride.  
Then one day the Petrel returned.  
She barely believed her widened eyes  
As the crew came ashore for supplies.

None ever heard of an owner named Woods.  
She was bought from a Captain Quayle.  
One man remembered a rumor about  
A master who vanished-- a gale--

Noreen kept on swimming beyond the shoal,  
Her eyes on a distant gull  
Skimming and circling quicksilver patrol  
Over a half-sunken hull.

The ale is strong at the Great Auk Inn  
Like it was when canvas was king.  
The years wash back if you let time spin,  
And listen to figureheads sing.

The old sea dogs squint out at the bay  
Each dusk when the water looks brown,  
Then tell their tales of love and sails  
And watch the birds dive down.

BRINE BITCH OFF THE BAHAMAS  
Love Letters in Jon's Log

Day 3-- Silver Navidad Banks--

Slipped into tall rain on the trailing edge of blue,  
slid through a squally quadrant like a wrasse  
grazing the kelp. Sighted Megaptera. Counted 4  
conning tower dorsals. One monster showed us  
a close-up expanse of facelessness, an eye  
mounted in it. Got the shot.

Day 6— Off watch 12:02 a.m. If I haul in  
the cerebral anchor, the weightless part of me  
moves to the ocean's heartbeat, bobs over ridges  
and troughs, absorbing salt enough to sink.  
You promise to follow me to the dark  
of my carapace, flowing your obsidian hair,  
winding your treble notes shades perfumes  
through my deep chambers.

My bed is grandmother-rocking-me water. I am  
child old man lover song lyrics.  
Your jade nautilus swings from the valley  
of your breasts as you lean over me, waiting  
to anoint my sleep with moonwash  
when I let its tide rise and take me.  
Let no one come to relieve me of this watch.

Day 8— No sightings. If there are whales beyond  
the bow, they're oneiric, like me, forgetting  
to breathe, not wanting to disturb the tender surface  
tension, the ship's shadow, the silent engine.  
Caught in the bias of this latitude  
I want to dive deep and alone, to generate  
a cephalopod arm a barbel a snail foot  
to slide among other nocturnal prowlers. Things  
down there are shining codes and coordinates  
to their kind I could read tonight.

Day 10— I've happened in the wrong century.  
I want back what's lost and losing, want it  
undissected, not clinging to margins of abstraction  
and extinction. I want back the metaphors,  
the full reflections, not disjointed hyperbole  
of what was whole, not the work of shitsmiths.

Day 12— My covert bonus: watching fantasy parrot fish  
gnaw away calcified layers of academic reefs.  
Even the tube worm professor is shedding his shell.

(cont.)

SHOWING CHICAGO TO BAUDELAIRE

This was probably our last production. I'm broke. I thought Chicago would be a good venue for your verse. And The Lakefront Players delivered it well. But, no doubt, you saw how your poems played the house. Out of sync with immortality. Killing the audience is what we hope for but not that way. At least they died politely. Be glad you aren't available for an interview with the Tribune critic. He's already rummaging your rhymes, fingering words like passe.

You were always attracted to big 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. Park your own demons backstage, Mr. B. Unlace your strophes, your dodecasyllables. Walk The Loop with me and the rest of the Jack Daniels. I'm not too drunk to be your docent.

This old broad's broadened since dragging her petticoats through swamping black mud, Indian twilight and the evil stink of skunk cabbage. 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. Michigan Avenue fires millions of rounds of glowing ammo from all angles. You can't escape the shrapnel of light, incendiery shards of it, infecting you with a virus that keeps you coming back for another pelting and piercing.

Now we're in the outback, still in sight of magnanimity, magnificence, maggots. The lower level is pocked with puddled

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Now we're in the outback, still in sight of magnanimity, magnificence, maggots. The lower level is pocked with puddled reflections, shimmering shades of logic, lust, obligatory beauty. The trumpet in that bistro is tonguing out blues-- a color, a condition.

You nod at parallels to 19th century Paris. Tell me,  
how did you bend the edgy shards of yourself  
inside dodecasyllable margins and rhymes you called  
"lanterns that light the pathway of the idea?"

Oh, you did it so well, but your light  
came from passion, rage, not limned thoughts  
with flickering finials. Did you impose strictures  
on your work in misplaced desire for discipline?  
My old professor suspected you of self-punishment  
in tight seams and chafing collar while bowing on paper  
to the rigid icon of acceptability, and your mother.

Does the city define the artist or defile him? Or both?  
You were like that structure on the corner--  
meticulous brick and polished balustrades  
fronting a brothel. You were the brilliant rebel,  
the doomed genius, the damned. Your poems seethed behind  
formal facades. Your lines wept under carriage wheels,  
chimney soot. *Les fleurs du mal*--a cultural gardener's words,  
definitive of times, plantings, random reapings.  
Or the world's indifference to all of it.

And me? Just a failed producer who knew  
the risks, who hoped your genius would come through.  
My jeremiad palls like your end-tied pentametrics.  
Chuffing semis gather now to disgorgé at sun-up.  
Nothing is blossoming wicked and wild in cans and pots  
on cracked stoops, only forgotten cold-black geraniums.

But look over there-- a night-blooming cereus opens  
ghostly rare in a florist's window, its perfume  
leaking out to the gutter. False dawn holds in its palms  
the white curve of petals like a skull, predicting  
the final metaphor, teasing me to borrow from Avon's bard  
for amusement. Or lack of good-bye words.

<sup>A1</sup>  
All right: Alas, poor Baudelaire.  
No one knew him well. Tomorrow-- maybe not at all.

--G. R. Holloway

## GATHERING OF VERBS FOR FINDER'S STEW

From the sculleries of Hradčany Castle, the cookpots of Lowicz,  
the stalls of Warzawa's Old Market Square, the small secrets  
were picked up like pollen and dusted over time,  
crossed on the tongues of women: The ancient wisdom  
of dill, horseradish, onion, sorrel and dye-roots,  
how to look for fungi under Carpathian pines,  
where and when to pluck sweet marjoram on the Wisla's plains.  
Endemic wizardry sprang up hot and wild, romancing  
nose, eye and palate of peasants blazoned in floral embroidery,  
white lace bouncing off wrists, spilling down skirts and shirts  
in rhythm of inspired feet accented with harmonicas—  
Or germinated quietly in the yeasty warm  
of homemade brushes stroking hand-me-down magic  
on eggs for Easter. Conspiratorial as spies,  
visionary as poets, mosaics of history, Lachian daughters  
geniused the hybrid treasures in their heads  
and came to a new world with room  
for all their saved seeds to flower.  
And now, pungently rooted in western earth,  
their genetic flavors special the days, the seasons.

Glenna Holloway  
913 E. Bailey Rd.  
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TRUE NORTH FOR THE TYRO

A friend said I'd never really see Alaska unless I was game enough to fly with a bush pilot. He introduced me to one named Grimby. Soon I was in the makeshift back seat of a biplane that looked like an early Wright brothers reject.

I was along for the view. The official passenger was a Mr. Clark who was going to join a pipeline survey team on the coast.

"Tighten your seat belts, we're goin' up fast," said Grimby. "We got us a williwaw, a sudden weird wind off the Aleutians. Full of silt and seal hair and rutting moose musk. One thing about a williwaw, you can take off downwind with just enough power to rise vertical like them fancy VTOL aircraft. A smidgen of runway is plenty-- which is good, seein' it's turned to slop we need to get shed of in a hurry." His next remark was: "Your innards'll catch up with you in a minute." He glanced at Mr. Clark, back at me, then stared at Clark.

"Uh--oughta be a bag in the door pocket," Grimby said to him.

We soon leveled out over a snowfield filled with as many shades of blue as a painter's palette. "It's more beautiful than I imagined," I exclaimed aloud.

"You ain't flown in a bitty bird before, eh?"

"No, we were always too high to appreciate the scenery."

"Yeah well, this little ole gal shows you ever'thing. Never had a

(cont.)

designer crate, never will." He snickered. "Adam Adcock used to call my plane a bunch of spare parts flyin' in formation. Yeah, it's old, but dependable." Grimby glanced at Clark again. "First time out? Relax, you'll get there just fine." He grinned back at me. "Yep. Adam's the one used to intercept my radio calls for a pick-up. He'd beat me there then tell my customer I smeared up at Nulato. One far back night he even moved the flare pots so's I'd land on the worst of the muskeg, maybe turn turtle, and lose me the mail contract. I disappointed him, but when I hit them hare holes it dang near did bust the seat of my pants. Could've been bad, that's what I flew by. Still do."

The Grimby grin was contagious. Despite Clark's misery, I couldn't resist conversing, asking questions.

"Oh, I've got some real smart gadgets now, even LORAN," replied Grimby. "But up here where you can't believe magnetic north, here where you get six hours of light and sixty-below-zero, your gut is still your best instrument."

"Bet you could write a book about your adventures," I ventured. "Maybe I will. Bush pilots ain't bad folk, just hungry. Always lackin' fifteen cents of havin' a dime. Weren't enough runs for all of us so we used to compete on the dirty side. Things're more polite now. Got my own little company. Jets ain't worth a damn for pipeline inspections, gettin' equipment to a leak, airliftin' an injury off a Bering Sea pressure ridge. Hey, we even ferry Dove Bars to one-lung villages and cognac to Denali climbers. --You okay, Mr. Clark? I'll shut up if you wanna hear a cassette."

(cont.)

Glenna Holloway  
913 E. Bailey Rd.  
Naperville IL 60565

True North 3.

Clark muttered a question I couldn't hear.

Grimby nodded. "Did I ever forgive Adam? Oh, yeah. The night he joined a search party and landed on the Chena River where I was down in a whiteout, stuck in the cockpit, feet almost frozen."

Clark's adam's apple twitched each time he spoke.

"Naw, I didn't crash--just ran outa gas lookin' for a break," replied Grimby. "Ole Adam's pushin' 70 now, never lost a load, the best mountain flyspeck from Talkeetna to Selawik. Which is why I'll hire him to supply my new chain o' video rental shops. Funny, everything on TV used to lag behind the Lower 48. With cable and VCRs, an Inuit beaches his umiak, mushes home to watch tonight's news and a sitcom, then he wants the latest sci-fi flick."

Between the icescapes and Grimby's narratives, I wouldn't have traded seats with any nabob on a champagne tourist flight. I blessed my friend for suggesting this. Someone in the movie business could make a fortune on this man's life and the cinematography possibilities. Wish I had time to hear more.

Clark didn't look out the window until Grimby said, pointing, "There's your survey camp on the slope. Lotta new snow. Good to see that Marsten matting. Not that we couldn't put down anyways but it's not as dodgey. Aw, hey, don't be embarrassed. One guy used two whoopie bags and his cap before we landed."

Safely deposited on the tundra, Clark bid me a shivering, polite goodbye as I climbed into his seat. He didn't offer his hand which didn't offend me.

"Yeah, nice meetin' you too," Grimby told him. "Probably see you next week. Already know your team likes anchovy pizza. Extra cheese?"

When finally she saw her offspring's glow,  
Resurgent pride again began to flow;  
Till suddenly the pattern broke forever.  
...And Chelseanna posed her last endeavor.

## THE GRANDAM'S ADOPTED GRANDSON

A country seed came to her rare-rich sod;  
It mingled with the planned and pampered greens.  
That tensely tended bed without a clod  
Gave life and purpose to its field-formed genes.  
The gangling outcast quickened into view,  
Affronting well-shaped heads of better kind.  
She tugged and slashed, but stealthily it grew  
Firm feet ~~between~~ the rest she did not find.  
  
Entwined, it was too late to dig again.  
"Just try to make the best of it," friends said.  
"Why, look, that's not a weed!" they shouted when  
It blossomed out one spring with ~~sprays~~ of red.  
And now she says she's not the least surprised  
To see fine fruit she always recognized.

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

### GUIDING HORN

by Glenn Holloway

Whatever else you may declare of me,  
You must concede that I have tried to live  
In such a way that all the folks could see  
How much, how willingly, I always give.

Now isn't that the very heart of good  
When one unselfishly reveals the way  
To others who in darkest manholes would  
Fall down and never find the light of day?

So dear old friends, just follow by my side—  
Uh, not too close— a little to the rear—  
Just so I keep my field of vision wide;  
My lamp is high, there's nothing you should fear.  
Leave other pathways to the bad, the bored.  
Why walk with those who go without reward?

Glenn Holloway  
1028 Apple Lane  
Lombard, Ill. 60148

PHARISEE? WHAT'S THAT?

by Glenn Holloway

Whatever else you may declare of me,  
you must admit that I have tried to live  
in such a way that all the folks could see  
how much, how willingly, I always give.

Now isn't that the very heart of good  
when one unselfishly reveals the way  
to others who in darkest manholes would  
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So, dear old friends, just follow by my side—  
uh, not too close—a little to the rear—  
just so I keep my field of vision wide.

My lamp is high, there's nothing you should fear.  
Leave other pathways to the bad, the bored.  
Why walk with those who go without reward?

## SOMETIMES SELF NEEDS RESOULING

Keen, proud, analytical mind,  
Professor-praised and pampered,  
Pronounced sound by professional prowlers  
And inky shapes—  
Why are you bothered by the Virgin Birth?  
Any God worth His salt, worth our attention at all  
Could have caused His Son's life in a womb of  
Solid stone! A Messiah could have emerged enormous  
From erupting constellations, or the travail of  
The secret sea...  
Would you then be more impressed? you and your  
Maligning mockings of a girl named Mary...  
In His wisdom He chose human genes  
To complete the mercy mission.  
Otherwise,  
Man would have said: "How can He know what confronts  
Us? How can a non-mortal know temptation ? How can  
He judge us? You and your excuses for Mary ! If you  
Have trouble here, at the beginning—how can  
You believe resurrection?  
Why do you accept the name "Christian"?

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

## CRAMPED QUARTERS

by Glenn Holloway

The confined condition man labels  
Sanity  
Is narrow,  
Is a slender thrasonical thread  
Looped around a certain kind of thrallodom;  
Living will test its tensile strength.  
Now and then it snaps. ~~its~~ ~~long-windedness.~~  
Only those who remember where  
They wandered in such freedom ~~also~~  
Know how narrow...

TO GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS AND OTHER SIRES

You now nebulized into the stuff of poems,  
You who planted fiery spores of mighty art  
That sometimes altered lives and history—  
Can you weep for us? Can you forgive us when we  
Pervert your fertile offerings on ~~time's~~<sup>altered</sup> altars, and  
Often waste your energy and imagery in fruitless hybrids?  
You will be remembered in spite of us.  
You now fused with Sappho and Solomon, earthquakes and  
Antelopes, left to us and through us your word-woven  
Arras of gold, vermillion and lapis, embroidered with  
Lightning, ~~layered tourmaline~~, and permeated with ancient  
~~Spices hard to define and find.~~  
You framed them in disciplined  
Delicate borders, precise like planet paths;  
You peeled the blistered skin off your souls,  
~~+ give us~~  
~~And your eyes, to learn that poetry is~~  
Smelted truth, drained of slag.  
~~the~~  
Auras of it flow and flower hot in new veins.  
How can we propagate and not profane?  
It may be that imitation surpasses mutation.  
You left nothing to reveal.

(cont.)

II

How your gifts could hurry the blood or push  
Orange coals into the loins, or ~~sand~~ needles  
Of rain into the pores to cleanse the eternal core.  
How we search for ~~these~~ certain basses and trebles <sup>the joyful unison of them</sup> notes  
You pried from wind and sea <sup>to</sup> and played in our heads.  
You decoded mountain graphs and sun signals, ~~you~~  
Heard poetry in the babble of children, in the <sup>lame!</sup>  
~~ringing~~ Clanging language of lance and shield, in the <sup>lame!</sup>  
~~outcry~~ Climax ~~cry of love~~. You felt it at the last breathing,  
~~You~~ saw it, a God-ground magnifying mirror  
Of man, unsoftened, unretouched.  
This is the <sup>morning</sup> target you left us  
~~As we~~ aim with shaky shafts, ~~our~~  
~~skinny~~ watery quills, ~~our~~ fat fountaining pens.  
Our mirrors are smoke-smeared, concaved ~~convex-warped~~.  
Our furnaces are flawed; ~~and dissipated and~~  
Our ore is not refined.  
But it may be that the purest poetry of all is faith.  
Even fading, squirming, on the way out.  
And best of all coming back.

THE GO-BETWEEN

(Petrarchian Sonnet for the First J. N.)

Old Judson's wrinkles deepen with dull pain;  
He stiffens as his eyes roll out of sight.  
I tremble in his room's oblique half-light;  
From corner crouch, I watch him go insane.  
His body mimics death but not his brain,  
For there a host of people will unite—  
Great history stars, the famous erudite—  
To tell him of the future, to explain.  
He quotes it all to me and makes it clear.  
Jud never read a book or grasped a plan,  
Yet talks of wars and kingdoms like a peer,  
Knows energy and space where time began.  
He foretells too much truth for me to sneer  
When prophets choose to speak through this old man.

THE ANSWER IS NOT IN THE BOOK

"We must go back to the values of our forefathers," the old professor said from shirred lips.

"How far back?" the studious pupil asked. "Back to whom? My father was a bigot— as uncommitted as a sail without wind. My grandfathers held their generation God-appointed guardians of the world, wanted to shape it all to their image. My great grandfather fought for rights and slavery. His father came on a boat with cattle to see a promised land and soon died of disease. Before that he tilled the earth and maybe always had a dream, I do not know. Behind him lay a worthless title. Robbers took the substance of it. Something worse absorbed its honor— Pride—the parade kind—the ruthless price of nobility that dehydrates without oil. From there I must resort to generalities. The Scots and Irish feuded. There was a war over opium. I also have some Latin blood. In Rome an empire cankered. Spain had an Inquisition. France begat a Napolean. Germany wet nursed monsters more than once. Shall I look back to Greece, the ancient Hellene culture of a hundred gods and goddesses? Which values do you recommend?"

(cont.)

The professor rapped the student on the wrist and wound his robes around himself. "Young fool, I mean your American forebears! All those who settled this country and fought for it!" "Oh? Strange—I think of them as men who almost wiped out the race of real Americans..." The professor ripened with rage. "Have you learned nothing?" he rasped. "Think of the brave at Valley Forge! Recall the authors of our Constitution! Set your mind on Washington and Jefferson and Franklin and Lincoln! Those men smelted out a nation with their wills and their faith and their unmatched visions!" He shook with righteous conviction. The sun changed color. The young man bowed his head. Shadows moved uneasily. "I do not question those men or the stars that led them. They flew more lofty heraldry than was ever mine. But they too dropped the shields of their ancestors and forged their own designs rampant, burning the bar sinister behind them." "Young upstart," the tutor flicked him aside, "my whole point was wasted on you. Now, class—" "No!" he cried. "I want to be led and inspired but not from behind, not from a closed era. Many stars have fallen. Some have burned out. The new ones are dim and no two have the same path. And which will show me the way?"

*on - optional*

## A Hex~~(for)~~ My Neighbor's Green Thumb

May your shovel break, may your fertilizer bake,

May your droughts be long and dusty.

May moles make holes, may blights take tolls,

May your pruning tools get rusty.

A killing frost on the hybrids you crossed,

May your pink chrysanthemums sicken.

✗ A pox oh your phlox, may your seeds fall on rocks, on

May your aphids and mealy-bugs thicken.

And to add to your woes, may you slice up your hose

When you run your power mower.

One last incantation: While you're on vacation

May stinkweed grow up to your door.

At the next Garden Show they'll surely know

Just who should have gotten first prize.

My brow with sweat was twice as wet,

And twice as green were my eyes!

—Glenna Holloway

FIRST PSOVA

More than any other in the contest, this poem has captured the beautiful yet terrible essence of nature using strong descriptive language (alliteration—panders purify, hosting hordes, pyre of pines, moontime magic; consonance—wears a rose, sameness to her sins I would expose) and irony (don't trust the warming solar rays she hangs out in retreat; entreat her mercy, all the while recalling cattle that she froze). It is a strong entry with a consistent style and richly concrete imagery (to lie and birth a bastard peak; tears of slashing sleet). The fluidity of the rhyme adds to the relentless message. I like it more every time I read it!

## JEREMIAD FOR A CRUEL QUEEN

Unnumbered songs and sonnets lie at Nature's royal feet--  
The sentimental drippings from the maudlin tongues of those  
Who try to catch her essence in a pentametric bleat,  
Who do not recognize a whore because she wears a rose.

Her ritual rhymes of season seem to charm the fool esthete;  
I see a certain sameness to her sins I would expose.  
She trysts with Satan at the poles or on some wild arete  
Then takes back everything she gives, each favor she bestows.

There was a time I mouthed her songs, believed her cliche-sweet  
In days when April softly feathered hidden wrath's repose--  
The resting time before the tyrant showed her vast deceit  
Concealed inside a breeze caressing streams' unhurried flows.

Her languid sighing promise makes her treachery complete.  
As all her panders purify her soul with Sunday prose,  
She kills a sleeping village spreading out her molten sheet  
To lie and birth a bastard peak where no man ever goes.

Benignly fertile silt and sod belie her ancient heat  
While many miles below, the devil's cauldron seethes and glows.  
Unfathomed plates and fissures and a sunken gulch compete  
In stealthy silent movement of opposing jagged rows

Until one day some unsuspecting residential street  
Is swallowed writhing, spewing brick and glass and bloody snows.  
And next the waiting sea is seized in manic fists to beat  
The fallen shores and hopeless hearths, defenseless to her blows.

Don't trust the warming solar rays she hangs out in retreat,  
Or feel at peace because a wanton woman changes clothes.  
I've watched her fiery ensign burn up miles of prairie wheat;  
I've seen the crops I planted hosting hordes of worms and crows.

She saw my need for rain; one day she came to my defeat  
With flood. The land and I cry out, but still the water grows.  
She leaves her slimy signature, her bona fide receipt  
For missing homes among the trails of sorrowing she sows.

She drives the revolution, making rival pressures meet  
To funnel down for bridge and barn as though they were her foes.  
She builds a pyre of pines to light her masses of conceit  
Then sprinkles forest bone and ash with every blight she knows.

I've smelled her perfumed breath and heard the mockingbirds repeat  
The legends of her lilded fields, her famous fabled pose.  
Oh yes, I've marveled at rebirth, her flaunted favorite feat,  
And drunk her moontime magic full of myth and false agos.

She parodies my sadness with her tears of slashing sleet,  
Yet I, long bitter, tremble still in autumn's passion throes.  
Despite her endless treason, once again I will entreat  
Her mercy, all the while recalling cattle that she froze.

She, the brute, the beautiful, capriciously will greet  
Each future generation with great wonders and great woes  
Until we storm her secret doo<sup>228</sup> and steal the keys to cheat  
This reigning house's charnel clutch, this queen we must depose.

First PLACE

EMISSARY  
(Memo to Octavio Paz)

Dissatisfied with what you knew of death,  
That dogmatist without an honest name  
Who, proud with patience, coveted your breath,  
You disconcerted him and skewed his fame.  
Imprinting him with verbal vertigo,  
Your hot synaptic sparks, your veinous ink  
Exposed in him some things you craved to know.  
Your molten poems formed a brazen link  
Between galactic trees and graven stone--  
Your chosen space to stand and pose your questions  
Eye to eyeless socket. If anyone  
Can match his stare, it's you. Beset his bastions;  
You still speak for every slack-jawed soul.  
Your pen predestined you to fill the role.

# 932 \$50.00  
10/27/05

2. Formal Verse

FORMAL

Third place

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 know 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 worth your risks 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.

X 939  
9/5/00  
10/21/05

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.

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## TRYING TO IGNORE THE METAPHOR (While Writing a French Rondeau)

--Glenna Holloway

### ENIGMA: THE GEMINI THING

Once,  
afloat in our own wine dark sea,  
we were closer than lovers  
sealed in long tropical night  
where love was unknown  
as enmity and dread were unknown.  
When our small chances came  
with the light, love was harder to know.

Once,  
we were close in sweetened bathwater,  
soft blankets, drifting in and out  
of each other's secret sleep,  
the long waking shorescapes. We shared  
maternal premises, promises, her.

We looked through a glass darkly, doubly.  
Was joy multiplied or diminished by half?  
Eden knowledge came when we discovered  
not our nakedness but our separateness:  
Each became betrayer of the plural.

Year after year we severed, magnified,  
savored differences, fleeing  
the vertigo of center space,  
the implacable pull where everything  
impacts in equivocal being.

Yet no lancet can bisect  
the design, not even two-edged words  
plunged into ticking exactitudes.  
A magnetic field holds us. Binary stars,  
we reflect, conceding the path's pattern,  
each repaired seam, each amended sum  
still part of the same.

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"His flaming robes stream'd out beyond his heels"  
--Hyperion --John Keats

HYPERION NOW

Your rising is the same, assertive, vast,  
With radiating hues eye-aching bright  
To prod awake your realm, demanding homage.  
Keats said you even roared like earthly fire--  
Perhaps at impositions you foresaw.  
The pantheon was subject to rebellion:  
Uprisings from within, downfalling thrones,  
Emblazoned scepters changing hands again.

But much depended on the latitude  
Of viewers. Man's perceptions of the gods,  
Their machinations, jealousies and loves,  
Had ethnic stems, climatic veins. Some came  
From rotting grapes, and some were dream derived,  
Accompanied by lyres and satin whispers  
Of Erato. Her worldly devotees  
Were always ripe with lavish fruitful words.  
A searing summer could induce new tales  
Of usurpation: Helicon besieged,  
A flood, a lava tide, gyrating weather  
Could unseat Apollo, could restore  
Your name. Or wizened Saturn hung in space.

(cont.)

A different angle in a farther land,  
Horizon tilted to a golder gaze,  
Engendered obelisks of onyx pointing  
To their chosen deity of life,  
Too sacred to be named by human tongue.  
And in the New World Tonatiuh rose  
Above the Aztec monuments to smear  
The sky incarnadine and all below.  
Ascendent Inti heated Incan priests,  
Sent colored rays through curling incense smoke  
As supplicants bowed low, beseeching favor.  
When you withheld it they assumed the blame,  
Appeasing you with living sacrifice.

You called on dying Keats to spread your legends,  
Knowing lovers' pens are predisposed  
To beauty, drama, grand hyperbole  
And artful hymns you prized in every setting.  
Poor Helios-Hyperion, you have  
No modern bards with garlands for your altars,  
Nor weavers of heroic narratives  
To thrill your minions-- only scientists  
Whose probes reveal your fire is dying too.  
Like any other star, your being, glory,  
Brilliance will collapse; black holes of time  
Will swallow all your names as Gaia spins  
A rime of lifeless white...no longer blue,  
This shining eye reflective of your reign.

--Glenna Holloway

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TRUMPET MAN SOLO

It isn't written. He's raveling this music  
out of me. High on the treble periphery  
he alloys sound and light, blisters color,  
peels pale gold butterflies off my eyelids.

I don't know how three ribs and a funnel  
can unwind my double helix, play all  
my possibilities in a single opus,  
a gamut of jazz, anthems, blues, arias.

His notes insinuate against thin membranes,  
vibrate glowing filaments. Contrapuntal wings  
he's freed follow him to the knife edge  
of turquoise, flitter into smoking fragments,  
then coil back in the bell of his horn  
to revel in their experience with fire.

--Glenna Holloway,  
*MONTSERRAT REVIEW*, 2000

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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



WOMAN BELOW

She lowered herself, wishing the crawl space had another name. Something about descending past ground level always invoked a vague shadow from childhood. Glimpses of multi-legged movement made her pause. She attached her thoughts to color brochures of carpeted basements, not the gritty nap of scraped earth and its needy sound underfoot.

In an hour her guests were due. The image of Aunt Grace among them, nose and jowls twitching like a bloodhound's, lent urgency to her quest.

All the natural world was above, its solidness now a threat to her head for reversing the order. The center area, dug out to a six-foot depth, allowed her to stand straight, but she shrank as her own dark depths filled with cerebral excess and spinal lightning.

She suspected a mouse of spiting her immaculate home with its death. The stink was creeping upstairs, prying into every crevice. Her flashlight trembled as the cone of brightness followed old spider tracks behind the furnace. Her throat felt full of cobwebs; she swiped at real ones, the compulsion to flee coiled in every muscle.

Her frail beam found the offending rodent; she scooped it in a box. Retreating, her temple banged a solid beam. She was holding an icy compress when the door chime sounded.

Old nightmares hung in Aunt Grace's pupils. Flapping black sleeves reached to enfold her like wings fanning the smell of decay.

--Glenna Holloway,  
PUERTO del SOL, 1998

*Reading*

### The Interloper

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 last summer's ~~big storm~~ clamped ~~listing~~ submerged  
~~in a wet/dry vise,~~ sun-half of bulbous green  
 vases feigning innocence with flowers--  
 night-half of fringe and garland chain,  
 propeller upholstered in velvet.  
*of a broken cypress tree*  
 I rip away the slimy grip and feel  
 hairy stalactites creep closer, determined  
 as topside kudzu. ~~The gasoline-fed screw~~ ~~night~~  
~~thresh a few feet before losing.~~ A spring army  
 of trees wades out to make a stockade.  
 Roman-helmeted herons patrol ~~the narrowing perimeter above with~~ <sup>plunging</sup> lances.  
 Here, the mighty Khan rules, guarded by turtles.  
 And I, lingering slave to light and lungs,  
 must fight myself ~~back to my world~~  
*captivated*

## HIM I KNOW

Harried and hurried humans need more  
than the Christmas babe the mangered Jesus  
haloed smiling bland  
The explorer encountered Him in a wilderness  
hairy hungry tempted  
The machinist found Him in a factory  
work-muscled sweat-shiny  
toiling with hardened hands  
The soldier met Him on a battlefield  
grimy and grim  
walking on calloused feet  
confronted by confronting  
the cannon and the carnage  
I remember Him raising His arm with a whip  
I leap to His voice commanding the sea

This now Lord and King sweet infancy past  
man-breathed His last  
and God-looked down  
to say "Forgive them"

--Glenna Holloway

HIM WE KNOW

Harried and hurried, men forget ~~baby~~ Jesus  
<sup>falling</sup>  
white-robed  
haloed, ~~smiling~~, bland.

The explorer encountered him in a desert  
hairy and hungry,  
wilderness-wild and tempted.

The machinist found him in a factory  
work-muscled, sweat-shiny,  
toiling with hardened hands,  
skilled with tools and tongue.

The soldier met him on a battlefield  
grimy and grim,  
walking upright on calloused feet,  
confronting and confronted by  
the cannon and the carnage.

I remember him best his arm raised with a whip;  
I leap to his voice commanding the sea.

This is our king,  
sweet infancy past,  
man-breathing his last  
and God-looking down  
to say: "Forgive them"

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### AVONNA LEE'S MOUNTAIN

She's made it hers,  
climbing it when the light is right,  
struggling up its steepness with easel, oils,  
canvas, investing long hours in its moods.

She lives in shades of sky and aspen leaves,  
breathes conifer shapes and shadows, ~~gathers~~ capturing / ever changing light  
all into mitered wood corners, capturing the scent  
of seasons, winged silhouettes above variable shine -  
and sheen, unknown rustlings out of sight. *Rustlings, the scent of seasons*

Decades ago she began with a palette of sunset  
and moonrise, a blend of ocher earth, ~~an eagle feather~~ + sculpted stone.  
Now ancient music threads through pigments,  
mastering margins, dimensions, even the fourth.

Her palimpsest is bear prints, gray trails,  
mauve dust, discarded antlers, roots, old ashes.  
Her foreground remembers songs men long ago forgot, *tribal chants*  
the pulsing undertones of hidden hues,  
the arcane movements of metamorphic rock.

Her patient brushes repair eroded slopes  
where colonnades of pine and spruce  
colonized the eastside gulch but failed to hold  
against vindictive rains and wind-wash. Exulting  
in each small survival, each new stroke of green,  
her composition grows with chiaroscuro changes,  
commanding the cold strokes of dawn, the knife  
of noon, the stiff bristles of winter.

No one knows her age but the mountain--  
keeper of all good and sacred secrets.

*Momus which she has already seen a lot*

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Glenna Holloway

### GATHERING OF VERBS FOR FINDER'S STEW

From the sculleries of Hradčany Castle,  
the cookpots of Lowicz, the stalls  
of Warzawa's Old Market Square, the small secrets  
were picked up like pollen on prevailing breezes  
and dusted over time. They crossed great distances  
on the tongues of women: The ancient wisdom of dill,  
horseradish, onion, sorrel and dye roots,  
how to look for fungi under Carpathian pines,  
where and when to pluck sweet marjoram  
on the Wisla's plains.  
Endemic wiza@dry sprang up hot and wild,  
romancing nose, eye and palate of peasants blazoned  
in floral embroidery, white lace bouncing off wrists,  
spilling down skirts and shirts  
in rhythm of inspired feet accented with harmonicas.  
Or germinated quietly in the yeasty warm of humming  
and homemade brushes stroking hand-me-down magic  
on eggs for Easter. Conspiritorial as spies, visionary  
as poets, mosaics of history, Lachian daughters  
geniused the hybrid treasures in their heads  
and ventured to a New World with space for all  
their saved seeds to flower.  
And now, fragrantly rooted in Western earth,  
their genetic flavors special the days, the seasons.

## HERALDRY

For a century, stealthy bowmen beseeched  
couchant northerlies to rise and face them,  
willing a frontal assault from the wolf-wind  
to keep their hungry scent from the king's deer.

They had to be fast. There was a death penalty  
for venison eaters, a slower one for those  
past aiming true at browsing briskets  
when the crops failed. Daily, more elders  
went limp like soiled draperies piled  
in corners, no fabric noble or whole,  
no color proud. And only anger had the strength  
to remain rampant.

Across escutcheons of hunters,  
winter pried in bar sinister crevices of castle  
and hovel, spiraling the borders of dark forest,  
carving its bearings with dirks of ice.  
And sometimes on its own bias,  
offering a stag on morning's white field.

Yes, daughter, your knight's armor shines  
and your banners are well-made,  
cross-stitched crests elegant on mauve silk:  
Splendid spread of golden antlers and poised hoofs,  
regality balanced blackly with a bare-fanged entity--  
panther, perhaps. Embroidered with more truth  
than you were designed to inherit.

YELLOKNIFE OUTPOST, ALASKA

Jim's breath is shattered glass, deep in his lungs.  
Aurora glow, sleet-darts, an Arctic wind  
Affix him to the ladder's topmost rungs.  
Their radio's in trouble, signals thinned.  
Their main antenna's blown and bent askew.  
They sent a younger member of the crew  
To make the icy climb but he slipped down;  
He dropped the tools in snow, his jaw was skinned.  
That numbing metal! Hands undisciplined,  
Jim trains the frigid unit toward the town.  
Below, they yell to keep his spirits up.

Repairs now done, reception's loud and clear.  
It takes some time to raise his coffee cup—  
The time it takes his throat to thaw and cheer.

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.

## CHICAGO: FIRST LADY OF THE LAKE

She moved leanly through Indian twilight,  
shabby and unmet, slogging through swamps,  
trailing her long skirts through crow-black mud  
and the evil smell of skunk cabbage.

She stumbled and fell on shores that bullied her  
with dares and promises others never heard.  
She lay on the flats in bosomy youth, gazing  
blueward— high hollow blue, pale-seamed  
with deep wet blue, cobalt and indigo  
priming the canvas, waiting for a subject.

Waiting for her to quiet her urgent hunger,  
waiting for her to find a wintersmith husband  
and breed a breed taller and stubborn  
than blue emptiness. Without first-glance beauty,  
without dowry or lineage—a razorish termagant  
on Tuesday, demure as dimity on Wednesday,  
racy as red sequins on Saturday night  
then Sunday-caring through the rains  
gone white and heavy on her head— she was  
an enigma— fine figure, unfathomable sum.

After her wedding for better and worse, feast  
and fire, splinter and gilding, she took  
her time with the art of ladyhood, more earned  
than learned, writing her own music while moving  
miles of gritty railcars, tons of bloody meat.  
She roughed-in composition with charcoal,  
handled palette and brushes her way,  
toning the flattering, fuming, prodding blues  
waiting for their match, icing and steaming,  
waiting for her to model her rising brood  
with the back of her hand. She taught them  
to pose substance on air and water,  
add warm shades to the mix, close harmony  
and rhythm to the minor key chords. And at last  
to put in perspective a million highlights  
framing the watercolor palimpsest  
accompanied by the newborn sound all her own,  
and the light-stretched gamut of blues.

## SEARS TOWER

Refusing to concede the title of world's tallest,  
it juts its own big shoulders above Chicago's,  
convincing the sky of its rank, stray clouds  
and leftover moonlight caught in its pylons.

A few years ago, on an infamous day,  
unnatural clouds found their way inside,  
small clusters on stair landings, dark fragments  
in elevators, offices, restrooms. Mostly unseen,  
they still circulate softly, now and then  
fingering neck hairs, changing the texture of skin  
or faintly damping low-voiced discussions.

And still, aeries of elegant ladies give luncheons  
for forty, layers of high risers and rollers  
animate the interior, eye level with lakelight  
or lightning.

Contained in 110 stories, Fongoing life stories continue  
on all levels, multiplying weekly in custom-made climate,  
flourishing on bilingual premises and promises encased  
in glass and pink marble with its own zip code.

Wrapped in designer winds, the great stack moves denizens side to side,  
dependent on its whims, holding them all in sway.

*Doesn't work for me*

*GREAT!!*

## INFLICTION

An embryonic poem cold-nosed my spine,  
sniffed each vertebra, moved around  
like it was playing a keyboard.  
Good stuff, fresh  
from a high-placed synapse.  
Surprising it would seep  
into my musings, willing to settle  
for an uncelebrated instrument.  
Billy Collins must be out of reach.

I scratch an idle itch on my hand,  
waiting for it to nudge me again—  
no, hit me, inject me. In the gut  
or the heart. Not that preoccupied pump  
centered between two lungs, not that  
mawkish condition purpling  
drunken songs and birthday cards.

I want to contract a fullblown case:  
The fever, inflamed nerve, the red rash.  
A fingernail quiets the corporeal itch  
but the condition clamors for attention.  
A vacancy squirms to be filled,  
colonized, overwhelmed, never cured.

Where does the germ come from? Where  
does it go? I'm infected; I felt the sting.  
Yet it's not unwelcome. I'll wait  
without antidotes for its full development.  
Even if it's the slow-incubating sort  
I'll almost die of.

*Exquisite!*

*yes! May 9<sup>th</sup>*

--Glenna Holloway

SECRET PIECES

We're getting there, good buddy.  
Like Frost's old codger with his lamp,  
not seeing snow-starred windows,  
the glistening beyond, not remembering  
what he clamped into the room to look for.

*delete punctuation  
entirely?*

You and I, never anything but young,  
supposed it would be different for us:  
Lazing like corks on a pond with few fish,  
rocking chair wisdom flavoring the roast,  
Wherewithal to buy sports cars or run  
in club marathons if we pleased.

Now we disturb night rhythms, rummage winter  
for things we put somewhere. Things  
we never believed we'd want, and we wonder  
~~if they're still viable~~ <sup>eternal</sup> ~~if they ever were~~ <sup>and</sup> *too abstract*  
or if proverbial moth and rust prevailed.  
*seable*

And you, confidant for the best part  
of my life, do you have a name for those things--  
maybe the missing half of a rhyme, a prayer,  
a few slivers of understanding-- or are they  
unsayable, fragments of forgiveness and hope  
tied up in scraps of love that someone wanted  
but we never knew how to give?

Maybe it's the wanting, ours and somebody's,  
that keeps us looking. Maybe soon we'll know  
enough to know what to do with the ~~nebulous bits~~ *piece*  
we're finding. Before we forget.

If you like, I'd  
appreciate a copy  
some time. larjauski@sbglobal.net

*I love this.  
Thank you so much.  
Larry*

Mail to Poet ?

DEATHVIEW

Looking back, she hoped, she beseeched God, that she might see only the good things, the glowing things he liked showing others while he withheld them from her. He polished and perfected public acts of kindness and assistance, gestures of caring, expressions of interest. In the beginning she was certain they were genuine, not just for effect. In the beginning they were right on top, so many things she admired, learned to adore. Later when he revealed a grim and brittle lining of gray, impossible to lighten, she admonished herself, tried to be a more loving wife. Then he began showing her striations of black, smeared with incarnadine, blistered with spite. And the last layer he turned toward her quickly hardened, fabricated into a tool, spiked, sharp as the tines of a gourmand's fork. Even then, she thought she could see traces of fine threads in the weft. But not enough to soften the rope that burned, the warp that bound any vestige of a prayed-for underweave of human empathy. And as all niceties vanished, she became visibly smaller. When he dined, she was the main course. Looking back after his funeral, desperately trying to be charitable, she still can see nothing but his plate piled high with the bones of her love.

RIVER MOTHER OF THE ALGONQUIAN

*The old shamans tell her*

*rippled  
that never ran  
in her shallow water bed  
before.*

Once the river punished them when a band of braves attacked their foes on the selvedge of her fern, in the fringes of her gentian and she vowed to turn them into turtles for bloodying her light-loving waves, for disturbing the texture of her wilding spring weaves. To the next who dared to stain her ancient purity she promised retribution too grim for any son to grasp, and all who saw the turtles believed. No one was tempted to learn what other she conceived. Assuaged, she went her way in swiftsurety, offering mallards, trout and birches by the ton.

*In time*  
She banked the Red Man's treasures and his bones; his faults all returned to her cool black vaults. His afterspirit glistened and summered in her stones. She was provider for his world; he knew he was a guest. Like liverwort and beaver, his tenure was a plus. He revered her habits, her spirit and her place till an alien appeared, hungry for space, and pushed the native son across her mighty cousin west.

Crow Wing, the shaman, mulled his tribal circumstance; all living would be different from that hour. He'd marveled at the settler's goods, watched plows and saws devour his lands. He hummed himself into a deep medicine trance: The river's old threat now lay on those who didn't know, who wouldn't hear. ~~and~~ Crow Wing smiled ~~as~~ he drummed his knee. But his smile turned to fear as he watched and dreamed. The river ran thick with slime and foam — a strange unnatural hue; the shores went dead, sloughed off and streamed under low-hung cloudstuff, stenched and murked, and people coughed and wept and all were marked as the waters seeped ~~the walls of~~ their inside rivers steeping softness and hardness, their wails and shivers. Fishes and turtles were first to die; for them it was quick. *plants flowers*

The vision's reek and wreckage overcame Crow Wing; he plunged into nothingness and woke up crying without knowing why, without a clock to tick at time and wind the turtling years around an atom wick. For many moons he wandered west still wondering what he dreamed, / and if the white man's boons were all they seemed.

## A DAY AT DANADA

Her eyes roamed the vast sweep of prairie grasses like rippling ocean waves. Early twilight intensified the green. An intermittent breeze ruffled wheat and corn rows to the west and acres of trees beyond. She paused often as she approached the stables, smiling at the soft whinny she recognized as her favorite brood mare. Sometimes she had to stand still and mentally pinch herself into belief-- so much bounty and beauty belonged to her and her gentleman farmer. Knowing how blessed they were, they had resolved to always give back. Generously and often.

How long had they been in their evergrowing paradise, each day a new scene, new adventure? She caught her breath. Hard to believe they bought the first acreage in '29. Years later, just back from an exciting day at Arlington, she told Dan she wanted a race horse. He grinned, then bought her eight yearling thoroughbreds. She remembered raising good broodmares and foals. They were fortunate in finding good trainers and the Rice colors, cerise and white won many honors at the tracks. The Ada L. Rice Racing Stables became well-known.

Oh, they still raised cows, chickens, draft animals and dogs, and she still loved to paint and be a story teller, but her heart was saddled to the sleek backs, flying manes and lightning hoofs of her first love. And her secret dream of winning at Churchill Downs.

In 1965, it came true. Her three-year-old bay with the white star on his head was first under the wire in the Run for the Roses. Lucky Debonair won the Kentucky Derby and the world's most coveted gold trophy. In 1966, his stablemate, *Advocator*, lost it by only a neck.

Now was a new decade, the early '70s as she thought how gracious time had been to them, now in their seventies. We need to make definite plans for the future, she nodded, gazing blueward at the fading light. Ada walked on through the fields beyond the paddocks, her head bowed in gratitude for their many blessings and for the encompassing beauty of Danada, their home.

--Glenna Holloway

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Bob confirmed my suspicions that you have become  
(or always were (just hiding it) weird --  
no <sup>blank</sup> phone calls from me. That third hello  
will fix any ranger in. Forgive my late critique  
I couldn't resist! Tom

TAKING THE CALL

I was near the phone, picked it up  
on the second ring, clearly enunciated  
the proper greeting. Three times. ~~Three.~~  
~~Silence expanded like a bellows,~~  
~~filled me with silence magnified.~~  
A well's depth of deliberation pumped  
through the wires before disconnection.

repeats previous  
line less successfully  
& unnecessarily

It was not a wrong number. I know.  
It was all the calls I ever wanted  
and waited for. ~~All~~  
the lost letters, messages, affirmations  
that somehow dropped down the wrong slots,  
went through the wrong conduits.

Something about the way I answered  
changed the caller's mind,  
caused a decision.

I was not the right one. If only ~~try a space, & think visually with~~  
~~my voice had conveyed more degage, more—~~

Or maybe someone I know was testing  
me. Listening for the slightest clue,  
the face beneath my skin ~~that~~  
doesn't match. And now  
they've heard the plea and the curse  
and the ~~diseordant ululated feral note~~ weak  
~~lodged in that last hello.~~

How about  
feralulation?

weak end. Maybe stress those above  
repition

love the breaks  
very bold & expressive  
for

present tense too  
out of place

too ordinary

GLENN HOLLOWAY  
913 E. Bailey Road  
Naperville, IL 60565

14 lines

BRACKISH

Like that other loner,  
the great blue heron, I patrol  
the salt marsh for hours, measuring  
time in increments of hunger.

How the heron persists,  
solitary in his courting plumage,  
long-legged patience dedicated  
to customs of past success yielding  
nothing for the hole in his belly.

Esparto grass sways against  
your absence, the old habits of sand,  
its cryptic patterns  
persuading my emptiness  
to see your sandal prints.

--Glenna Holloway

GLENN HOLLOWAY  
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EMILY/EMILY

"Like a panther in the glove," Dickinson wrote,  
probably after another manuscript's return  
from her mentor, also blind behind the eyes.

Whitely expectant, I open my poem  
and your critique, my blood rushing somewhere  
beyond help. On Tuesday evenings  
you skim my lines and twist me skinless  
in fluorescent light precision, a class specimen.  
Again you ask for "a painful revelation  
in neoclassical idiom." I search  
the empty margins for something more.

You open the session with a quote of hers.  
You are not fluent in the idiom of silence.  
Or the afterbeat of metaphor trembling a page.

You dream of her, that other Emily,  
late nights by your cold hearth, heaving  
academic sighs into your sherry when you see  
my like name among the poems you must read.  
You hoard your red coals to ignite ghost fire,  
you in her batiste milieu--or her aloneness  
lighting your leather-stale privacy,  
believing you know her as a lover should.

Your passions don't mesh with hers, professor,  
defender of the form, the faith, the fifth  
of old Southern whiskey tucked under  
your crumbling inheritance.  
You aren't an overthrower. You've never grasped  
the wildcat in tight quarters. She would  
devour you from blue willow bowls.

Despite parallel lines, beyond  
the parallax of understanding, I keep vying,  
repetitious as sin. Already widely  
published while I live is not enough. In any idiom  
my most painful revelation will surprise you.

--Glenna Holloway

R. W. Holloway  
~~Carryover~~  
Apple Lane  
ard, Ill. 60148

SOMETIMES SELF NEEDS RESOLVING

by Glenn Holloway

Keen, proud, analytical mind,  
Professor-praised and pampered,  
Pronounced sound by professional prowlers  
And inky shapes—  
Why do you struggle with the virgin birth?  
Any God worth his salt, worth our attention at all.  
Could have caused his Son's life from  
A womb of solid stone! He could have emerged enormous,  
From erupting constellations, or the travail  
Of the secret sea. Would you then be more impressed,  
You and your maligning mockings of a girl named Mary?  
In His wisdom He chose human genes to  
Better equip the divine mission.  
Otherwise... man would have said:  
How can He know what confronts us? How  
Can One so high and far know temptation? Ah, bothersome  
Brain, if you have trouble with this, the beginning,  
How can you believe in resurrection?  
Why do you call yourself Christian?

Glenна Holloway  
1028 Apple Lane  
Lombard, Ill. 60148

RENASCENCE AND RENASCENCE

Glenна Holloway

There was a million megaton implosion of tense and time:  
When I opened my eyes I was young;  
All else was hoary-hued, anointed with ashes.  
An ocean licked my ankle. It started raining  
History, scraps of war, pieces of peace,  
Minutes of moon, polyglot thunder. Torrents of leopards  
And steel, Nile and China. Ice and rods of condensed sun.  
Lightning struck each tree into a cross. A tide of blood  
Stained my soles. It clotted and paled and vines grew.  
But Woden and Thor awoke again, smiling.  
They twisted the crosses into a mutant sign and  
Hurled it against the globe.  
The orb rolled and cauterized itself in viscous fire as  
Souls dervished like desert dust.  
I knew them all in their collapsed clocks. My eyes  
Were borrowed from extinct sires of eagles. My mind  
Kenned all men's knowledge. I could touch  
Music and planets, see infinity and Genesis  
Unending. I walked the bottom of the deepest seas then  
Climbed the apogee of Thule galaxies. But I  
Kept returning to the nadir--  
The Carpentry of Calvary—where all centuries ~~must~~ meet,  
<sup>the</sup> Lap, and ~~leap~~ anachronisms in a rood horologium.  
To rechart the collision course with eternity.

RHYMING THE REASON

Some folks acknowledge God  
with nothing but a nod.

Some bypass holy laws  
and shrug at mortal flaws.

Don't listen to the man  
who always claims he can  
worship under oak or birch  
better than he can in church

unless he sits beneath the trees,  
an open Bible on his knees.

--Glenna Holloway

#### RONDEL FOR EASTER

We need a psalm to celebrate defeat.  
Our common enemy was made to fall.  
Unlike man's fall, the breach in death's old wall  
Is permanent, death's power obsolete.

For centuries life was a one-way street  
Until the Savior broke that grip and gall.  
We need a psalm to celebrate defeat.  
Our common enemy was made to fall.

From ancient times we sought the way to cheat  
Finality. Our Father heard our call  
And sent His Son to lift that hopeless pall.  
His triumph made deliverance complete.  
We need a psalm to celebrate defeat.  
Our common enemy was made to fall.

--Glenna Holloway

### THE MASTER SILVERSMITH

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

An exquisite trade, beguiling to clients,  
beguiling the craftsman. Oh, these figures  
I cast are not idols, no household deities  
lie molten in my shop, 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 formed it.  
Acclaim is an addictive design. 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,  
but the one only, unalloyed God  
who has told us he tolerates no rivals.

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

--Glenna Holloway

### A LONGING TO PRAISE

How could I glorify my God?  
He has a choir of angels shod  
In fire-tongued sandals, and a ring  
Of sun-robed saints; their lyrics prod  
The dullest tone-deaf soul, they sing  
Celestial harmonies to bounce  
Off planets and magnetic poles  
As heaven's choruses announce  
His greatness, His majestic roles.

I am, poor poet, bound by words,  
Banality in every phrase--  
Yet sometimes borne as if by birds  
Beyond the scope of earth-bound days,  
He lets me make a worthy choice  
To honor Him with my small voice.

--Glenna Holloway

Glenner Holloway  
1028 Apple Lane  
Lombard, Ill. 60148

RENASCENCE AND RENASCENCE

Glenner Holloway

There was a million megaton implosion of tense and time:

When I opened my eyes again I was young;

All else was hoary-hued, anointed with ashes.

An ocean licked my ankle. It started raining history.

I recognized scraps of peace, war, fragments of moon,

Polyglot thunder. Torrents of leopards and steel,

China, Nile and Rome. Ice and rods of condensed sun.

Lightning struck each tree into a cross. A tide of blood

Stained my soles. It clotted and paled and vines grew.

But Woden and Thor awoke again, smiling.

They twisted the crosses into a mutant sign and hurled it

Against a part-ghost globe.

The orb rolled and cauterized itself in viscous fire.

Souls dervished like desert dust.

I knew them all in their collapsed clocks. My eyes

Were borrowed from extinct sires of eagles. My mind

Kenned all men's knowledge. I could touch

Music and planets, witness infinity and Genesis

Unending. I walked the bottom of the deepest seas,

Then climbed the apogee of Thule galaxies. But

I kept returning to the nadir—

The Carpentry of Calvary—where all centuries must meet,

Lap, and lock anachronisms in a rood horologium.

To rechart the collision course with eternity.

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GLENNA HOLLOWAY  
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THE GO-BETWEEN

Dear Lord, my friend has lost her way.  
Her hand slipped out of yours; I know  
she doesn't mean to disobey.  
Preoccupation dulls her mind  
each busy night and thingful day.

Direction sense in disarray,  
she needs unfailing guidance now.  
Please be her compass, Lord, I pray.

--Glenna Holloway

**GLENNA HOLLOWAY**  
913 E. Bailey Road  
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RECLAMATION

To think such common clumsy things as words  
Can flow into a sonnet's silken woof  
And leave no ragged edge, no scattered sherds  
To mock the lyricist with sharp reproof.  
Those verbs we stroke or hammer into forms,  
Nouns passing through the streets or on the air,  
Those pieces of foundations, parts of storms,  
Odd phrases of old cultures past repair--  
The tarnished heaps we've spat out, killed with, wasted,  
Can always be re-used to build and mend  
In spite of all the bitter tongues they tasted,  
Can be proclaimed again, a better blend.  
With God's grace we can salvage human curses,  
Recycle slag, create new songs and verses.

--Glenna Holloway

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RHYMING THE REASON

Some folks acknowledge God  
with nothing but a nod.

Some bypass holy laws  
and shrug at mortal flaws.

Don't listen to the man  
who always claims he can  
worship under oak or birch  
better than he can in church

unless he sits beneath the trees,  
an open Bible on his knees.

--Glenna Holloway

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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

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ROAD SIGNS

So where are my feet going, Lord?  
And what are my steps heading toward?

It's not enough to just believe:  
I know I somehow have to weave  
You in the pattern of my life,  
This thingful journey always rife  
With breakdowns, backtalk, sidetracks, more,  
And vendors hawking at my door.  
There's good and bad and yes and no  
So deftly mixed the lines don't show.  
It's not so hard to find Your way  
Through white or black-- but oh, the gray!

So guide me, Lord, my sense is blurred,  
Distracted by each doubt incurred.  
Please set me straight and let me see  
Your dusty sandals leading me.

--Glenna Holloway

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PRAYER LIST

I'm back again, Lord. On my own list.  
Asking more questions. Is length a factor  
when I pray? Does repetition bore you?

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 out  
of courage. Do you even hear me?

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

--Glenna Holloway

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

Lecture Series: THE GARDEN WE CAN'T FORGET

"Most likely there," he said. "Rich ground, warm sun."  
He pointed to an Old World map, a plain  
Where rivers met. "And there was more than one,  
Nearby and further on. 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

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JOURNEYWOMAN  
(McNeil Sonnet)

My same-street neighbor, buried yesterday,  
was never static, always on her way  
to parties, sports events and trips abroad.  
Each time we talked she said she couldn't stay.  
I felt deprived; my life was boring, flawed.  
Agendaless, it sprouted burs or yewed  
across an unmapped social marsh. My time  
was seldom spoken for. I hemmed and hawed  
when asked about my plans, my five-and-dime  
existence lived by rote. I tried to mime  
delight at camping up at Graybar Lake.  
She smiled, said she had one more Alp to climb.  
Today I learned her pain was long; I rake  
old weeds of envy, shudder in shame's wake.

--Glenna Holloway  
THE LYRIC, 1994

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APPRENTICE ARTIST

Ages ago, images ago,  
she was accustomed to acclaim as a painter  
of iris, content with replication:

Brushstroking floral vitals at their peak,  
shape and sheen of the premises,  
exactitude of shade

and light's promises. The whole canvas  
conspiracy of dimension in space.  
Comfortable with awards and perfected views.

Suddenly disturbed by sightings  
of unguessed galaxies in petals,  
in bearded falls, lavender standards

and the exposure of mauve junctures, she sees  
nodes of knotty runes ripen beyond  
the reach of sable hair and palette knife.

Planets and fetal faces inhabit white;  
moons, lungs, mountains, bones  
blend in plasma of pink, dust of maroon.

The pale scent of yellow fades  
from her sleeve. Armies and godsmiths,  
prophets and poets abide in the wet furls

of dying as tropic pigment fails. And falls.  
Now the patient stem, the stalk of knowing,  
twisted like rusty wire, supports a forming:

Marrow swells in covert excrescence.  
There is no such thing as still life.  
Her not-yet-captured subject seethes

on an inner palimpsest, ruckles and pocks,  
surpassing all invented armature.  
Clawing its way to the surface of her clay.

--Glenna Holloway  
--MONTSERRAT REVIEW, 1999

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LEAVING HOME

A man with a guitar sits in a swaying boat  
strumming "Moon River" and it's a hard song  
to hear as the wet fact inches higher.

It rose in the night like a rheumy moon  
despite here-and-there dark patches  
the morning defined as dams and dikes.  
It overcame them easy as clouds shimmering  
across sight, surface shiny as the moon  
but nothing like a celebrated satellite  
you could gaze up at, it was water! Miles  
of it loose as moonwash  
but with daylight truth on the earthscape.

Water and moon: Some ancient arcane bond  
still strong, far from ocean tides,  
beyond old midwives' tales. Amniotic fluid  
flowing without a birthing,  
a week's travail and nothing to show  
for it but a slimy signature. A receipt  
for all your labor and maybe all you own.

Moon-filled water, stink-filled sandbags,  
ribbons of rotting crops bandaging the levees,  
mud-caked metaphors and your life's artifacts  
compose a sorrowscape no melody can carry,  
no lyrics can lift.

The last motorboat loads, leaves a brown wake  
like a fresh-plowed furrow in your best land.  
The guitarist, drifting, peels off a few more  
chords like soaked plywood and floats them  
after the barn gone downcurrent two days ago.  
Slowly he resumes rowing into an oak woodland  
greenly ghosted beneath him, its moss floor  
coming loose like pieces of lawn carpet,  
rising, bobbing around his oars,  
one rafting a Barbie doll dressed in gold lame.

And you declare nature the master ironist.  
And you quit thinking of when the fabled moon  
and river made their appointed rounds and knew  
their place and you could recognize yours.

SOUTH COAST POETRY JOURNAL, Jan. 1995

THE WIDLING  
(Felis concolor)

All men called him names he didn't know.  
Tribal elders proclaimed him "Spirit  
of the Canyons," secret as a Shoshone shaman,  
going and coming like a dust devil. He watched  
his world through smoky quartz: arcane fire  
embered in his jewels studding quiet gold.

Down from the rimrocks he came, a warm shadow,  
moving the same way lava once flowed,  
remembering how obsidian cut his footpad  
when he caught his first vole-- barely a chink  
for the huge hunger hole he carried constantly  
after his mother drove him from the cliff-hollow.  
He missed his home creviced by juniper roots,  
screened with fallen limbs and acacia shoots where  
he cut teeth, signed the bark with budding claws,  
lost his dark spots somewhere in twisted shade.  
Up there, in sight of his tree,  
he watched a sego lily grow tall as his eye  
till his compulsion to taste it. He made toys  
of pill bugs, learned how porcupine grass  
tests an inquiring nose, learned the noise  
of a diamondback, saw it strike his sibling.

He missed his mother's tail tip signals.  
Now he was more fur-sheathed power than she,  
but new, unpracticed in the ways of jackrabbits  
and solitude. Surrounded by drought, his gauntlet  
was scorched arroyo, sanded playa,  
a rancher's buckshot. Shimmering brightness  
closed down his eyes, hummed along his nerves.  
Harried by emptiness, he wandered past cholla  
and yucca, hurried by scent-claims of his kind  
telling him to move on.

stanza break

(cont.)

The chaparral rustled with deadness, no safe bed.  
His nostrils began stinging, his mouth tainted  
with something unknown. His eyes burned  
from an outside source. Ahead, scrub oak  
and manzanita seethed and whistled in flames.  
He zigzagged flaring brush and blowing ash.  
A stone exploded, pelting his rump with shrapnel.

The swirling black ceiling broke, a sudden sieve  
releasing more water than he had ever seen.  
A smoke-blinded quail darted toward him. Hunger  
overcame fear. Rain washed feathers off his face.

Four more days a migrant, prodded  
by noon-baked smells, moonflash of alien eyes.  
He paused to take in the sweetness of sage,  
the lowered stars, scurrying skinks  
patterning the transient surface.  
He caught a white-footed rat. It wasn't enough.

He entered piney half-light,  
became a half-tone crouch crossing straw carpets  
and centipedes, past mariposa yellow  
and jabbering jays that couldn't keep a secret.  
A coyote tucked behind buckbrush  
saw the ancient rite of passage,  
understood another role was being filled,  
knew something would be spilled but never wasted.

All the hungry muscle meshed in ritual rhythm,  
arched, elongated, aimed by his mother's tracings  
on his brain. The mule deer felt nothing; shock  
was swifter than fangs, a plan long perfected.

He was whole at last, auditions over,  
the part his. He stretched, considered his stage:  
strangled shapes of wood and jutting agate  
streaked with russet, citron, mauve.  
He sat like cast bronze on a carved plinth,  
watching twilight rise from the low waiting places,  
content to know his niche. High desert held  
his triumphant scream. Ocotillo, beetle,  
the stream struggling to continue  
beyond the sand and straggling trees,  
everything that curved around his sound,  
was his.

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MAJOR RHAPSODY IN F 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 had always been his backdrop.  
But when 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 and 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 definite 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 marble statues,  
out of your wine glass, rearranging molecules,  
making them glow like neon fog, fulminating  
red and purple, alive like magnified ocean drops.

How much is music, key lowered now, half a step,  
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,  
moving faintly with audience breath,  
striking flints in his pale eyes?

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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-- so for a jigger of time you can stand it, fill your lungs on the afterbeat, see that he's nothing but a live 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 the bell, recycling.

He slams a fist into your throat, turns you on a spit and hamstrings you with blades of ice. He hustles the horn, wrestles it, shares it, his mistresss 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 somewhere, 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.)

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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 harsh mouth,  
dead weight in the bus seat, little slivers  
of life telescoped in battered cases  
and 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?  
Trumpet man. Composite of flesh and reed—  
and if you separated the instrument,  
cold spite to your touch,  
hot pipe to all we know of paradise to his.

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, playing  
what no mortal ever played. 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 with 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.