

ice, hopeless

studio apartment
Detergents
and dishrags as though
they were rare Persian ru

5. There is not a way to avoid it- no matter how I bind myself
little dolls get in

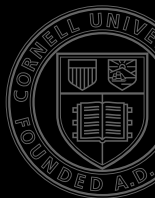
were fixing their Messerschmitts
ace
to make the long flight west, every
wait
trained in black maps we couldn't

Poetry in Your Pocket

This is the
sound, still
throbbing
in the ear
canal, of
translucence

he sipped his wine as if he had confessed.

The final image/ will be of emptiness.



The school bus driver will survive,
will blame it on the fires, will say the flames
were so high,

Poetry in Your Pocket

In celebration of National Poetry Month
and New York City's sixth annual Poem in
Your Pocket Day, April 17, 2008

Poetry by MFA students
in Professor Kenneth McClane's
poetry seminar in the
Department of English at the Cornell University
College of Arts and Sciences

Published by Cornell University, Ithaca, NY 14853
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Revolution—

I've made my mother cry twice
in my life. The first time in high school
after basketball practice,
when she misplaced her planner
and forgot to pick me up.

The curb was cold. I had chemistry
to learn. Still I kept myself warm
plotting her death; the moon
like a cigarette-burn against the sky.

Second was at college
when she came to visit; her Mitsubishi
a blood-vessel ready to burst.
She brought twelve pounds of tofu
to my studio apartment. Detergents
and dishrags as though
they were rare Persian rugs.

We fought all weekend over toasters
and hair-gel, over how many
dustpans a person really needs.
I recall each item like battles
in revolution. Tears but casualties
in a necessary war.

Jared Harel

Yellow

Indian summer
and fires blaze in the canyons
and the blonde girls are unfazed
by the fissures
in the sidewalks. They skate by on beautiful legs—
matchsticks ready to snap.
When asked what is yellow,
they think delicately. With long lashes,
they say a dash of saffron, Rapunzel's swinging hair.
They say the sun. The sun—
always yellow for girls like them.

In the kitchen, my father is burning.
His eyes like a little bit of arson before dawn.
When asked what is yellow,
I say butter—little block of fat my father insists on.
I'm not allowed outside today—fires too close, earthquake
weather.
I watch them skate right along.

I don't know it yet, but tomorrow, when asked what is yellow,
I will say an overturned school bus,
hair that used to be. Hair
like a Pollock—
all strings of yellow, cigarette, red weaving through—a ribbon.

The school bus driver will survive,
will blame it on the fires, will say the flames were so high,
couldn't even see the sun.

From now on, when asked what is yellow,
I will lie.
I will say the sun. The sun—

List

Sixth-grade they taught us Fort
Wayne was fifth on Hitler's bombing list.
The *Luftwaffe*, a word we couldn't pronounce,
were fixing their Messerschmitts
to make the long flight west, every ace
trained in black maps we couldn't wait
to escape. It was the east side
of the city they would have hit
had such a list existed, the wire
and magnet factories so far downwind
we'd never even smelled them,
though everyone said it was hell
on the other side—sulfates, the scent
of eggs in the brassy air.

Truth is, every midwestern city I've lived in
was fifth. South of here, in a town I always have
to work to imagine, Marion, they made
steam shovels and steel for B-17s.
In Cleveland, it was the port
and precious ore that formed us, taught us hard work,
like freedom, could be important enough
to die for, all those foundry hours finally
adding up. It was Dayton's flight, Akron's tires
they tried to blitz. Indy's silent speedways. Once,

in Toledo, it took me three hours
to find my way home. I remember how
cavernous the old Jeep plant seemed
when I staggered inside—steel feeders
keeping the line alive, indented metal,
presses. I wandered over the oiled-up
floors, high off the fumes
far enough from home I thought
I'd never survive.

I was six that year, adrift
in a city that should have been
destroyed, its big drills sounding
like airplane engines, the Germans
low over Ohio.

Christopher Kempf

The Famous Poet

A handsome man, athletic in his youth,
his tall, broad shoulders filled his old black suit.
Yet, turning, his figure looked almost slight.
His silver crown might vanish in the footlights . . .
While gazing at the audience, he paused
As they adjusted with polite applause.
They considered him a star. He shuffled notes.
Then, someone coughed. The poet cleared his throat
As quiet fell. Now, careful and composed,
he read "The Poem of Silence," which he'd chosen.
He spoke with soft and simple speech one line's
perfume of smoke. His voice would fall from time
to time. He touched his face, as if to check
if it was there, uncertain of any fact.

The final image/ will be of emptiness.
He sipped his wine as if he had confessed.
Whereas others had wanted to say more,
to surge into the splendor of the world,
he'd struggled for years to write less and less
'til what he meant became anyone's guess.
He told of that briefest moment caught between
awaking and the nothing of our dreams:
those dreams from which we will never emerge
remembering their details, on the verge
of another day whose story is one long sigh,
as we enter the brightness of our lives
where the dark weather out the window seems
to've been polished into forgotten meanings.

After the reading, he glided across the room,
a ballroom; all the sadness he'd assumed
dissipated into an aura—*whoosh!*—
and, for a second, he danced as if he'd wished
to disappear: his body shrunk towards
the mute geometry of drunken mirrors.
He signed his books like death certificates;
they formed a wall. He smiled with half his face,
the half he turned from his admirers.
He shrugged, as if irony were an answer.
He'd worn his heart not on, but up his sleeve,
faithful to the nothing he could believe.
The crowd, now exiled, had retreated home.
He walked to his hotel to write a poem.

William Cordeiro

Autopsy

This is the sky where it meets
the water's surface.

This is the wet ridge of it,
the line between life and drowning.

This is the glow of embers rising
against the rigors of evergreen.

This is a ring of large stones,
and in the nostrils, cedar burning.

This is the sound, still throbbing
in the ear canal, of translucence

passing through narrow tubes.

This is the salt of confluence,

and the sweet of imperfection.

This is melody, harmony, silence.

And this—

is the dead space, the rift
behind the gums, that hollow.

Virginia Heatter

first published in *American Literary Review*
(Spring 2006, Volume XVII, Number 1)

The Winter

Our maps hold no name for this place.

We call it nothing. The ship is moored
here, a steel-black ellipsis in this eternal

ice, hopeless until the thaw. The sun
has abandoned us. It does not claw

above the ice now, has not for months
though we pray like new sinners for the relief

of a horizon, a dimming of the awful
stars. How would we have known

that the globe would end here, that
words could be so brittle?

We subsist on motions, fleeting
solipsism, inexpressive grunts:

the ice is blue, we sign, the sky
is clear. It is too cold, even, for a breath

of wind. Our throats are bated,
exhalations splinter in the air.

We swing our arms
to stir the blood.

The winter stretches on and on.

Justin Souza

...tting
...e moon
...ke a cigarette-b
...against the sky.

had such
a list
existed,
the wire
and mag-
net facto-
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Poetry in Your Pocket

And this—

is the dead space, the rift
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grunts:

solipsism, inexpressive

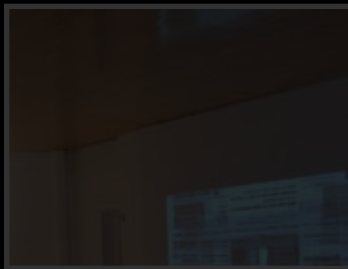
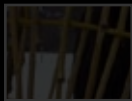
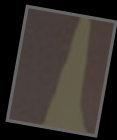
fleeting

We subsist on motions,

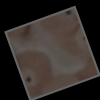
remembering their details, on the verge
another day whose story is one long sigh,
we enter the brightness of our lives

a matter of hrs.
morning sickness
[maybe not in the direction]]
6. Night half-sleeping of
stomach/off

ay butter—little block of fat my
n not allowed outside today—fir



Art in Your Pocket



father insists on.
es too close. earthquake weath