

BVAA

2018

Art-Poetry

Proofing Sheet

Version 4

Dying Birds

By Evan Plante

2007 Nov 10

(Contemplating Merrick Jarmulowicz's death, a dream and a pile of feathers.)

They're falling from the trees,
those dying birds.
Wings to the body.
Frozen.
Falling off the power lines
and bouncing along the pavement
like bowling pins.

They stare back at me,
though not blankly,
though not facing.
Lightly accusing soldiers
dead in the road.

Years ago I shot at birds.
Now I don't.

We found a feathered feast
in the woods near some
scat-on-a-rock.

Did the scatter eat the bird?
Why are they frozen
cold in rigor?

Yet they feel warm to the touch,
my body heat bouncing off
their shiny feathers?
Those dead birds
lying on the pavement.

Like pins... with no alleys.
No rules.
No overtaking of decay.

If I kick one to the ditch
they seem no less in number.
As I watch, the bird-pile grows,
their blackness covering the gray tar
as new pavement.

Dead birds, not pointy,
First alone.
Now locked together in a
Great mat of death.

Source poem for Liz Decasse

Blink Back

By Evan Plante, December 2017

The focal plane rain told the truth
That we are be-lighted, delighted
Privileged to see all
To be at all
To cruise
And to feel all.

The six fingered spline shows the world
As I blink back, shrink back
Soaked by tears
Drowned by tomorrow
And walk
Like parallel drips.

The missing wind blows nether streets
Yet we hold back, fold back
Upon ourselves
Forced to sit
Compact
With voices unheard.

The mind spends its time in the rain
Made to taste dark, face dark
The cityscape
Edges are soft
And sweet
With shadowless forms.

(End)

Response poem to Liz Decasse

Poem by Jane Nozzolillo

Time

Have you ever thought, as I have, in my
golden years, that time is just flying
by

The years, the months, even the days
are taken from us with barely a blink of an
eye

It seems like yesterday, or at least last year,
that I turned forty-five

And now if it wasn't for a wonderful doctor,
I might not even be alive

But I am alive, exploring and enjoying
every wonderful day

And I'm not letting that racing thing called time
get in the way

Source poem for Linda DeFeudis

Poem by Jane Nozzolillo

The pink bike leaned against the barn
wall waiting for my daughter to be
returning
I whispered to the little bike that today
its wheels would not be
turning
In my heart I will always see her flying
down the neighboring
streets
Her little bike basket which she loved so
much filled with her favorite
treats
My husband came and stood next to me
looking at my eyes so red and
damp
My dear, he said, she will be back in two
weeks it's only summer
camp

Response poem to Linda DeFeudis

Wisteria Ignored

By Jody Zolli

Sometimes beauty thrives on fumes
Delicately scenting traffic
Draping languidly over guardrails
Like gossamer groups of grapes.

I've seen your cousins cozened
Cultivated and espaliered
Preened, prepared, presented
To the pampered and refined.

But here, some accident of nature
Or, perhaps, some strange intent
To bless the autos hurtling by
With your phantom fragrance.

By now you must be unsurprised
By the momentary wonder
Delivered by distracted stares
From gridlock-stilled wide eyes.

Atop the derelict filth and rust
Bestrewn with wind-thrown cast-off trash
Blossoms rustle in spring breezes
Beckoning toward summer.

Source for Sue Dion

Still of the Night

By Jody Zolli

We wake in the early bright
Rouse to sip the sun
Sap rising we bestir our boughs.

Children's cries echo
Below outstretched limbs
First a flurried stop and go
Then lying soft and lazy.

Trickling laughter
Through swaying shadows
Their tiny fingers tracing
The ancient braille of our bark.

Scattering homewards late
Sun sinks bittersweet
Shades the sky to apricot and carmine
All sounds ebb to silence.

At twilight we turn inwards
Sap retires to august roots
Breezes sigh at water's edge
Draw brisk familiar fingers
Between fleeting needles.

Moon wanders wayward overhead
Mirrored in our placid pond
Lapping at fixed feet
Day now done, we drink deep.

We do our best growing in the dark.

Response to Sue Dion

Poem by Kara Krantz

fingers press against wet soil,
compacting my heart deeper against
the concave pressure of the earth.

can I begin again? Is there a point where loss
becomes gain, and can you show me that place
so I can press my cheek against the ground
and feel its heart beat?

my cheeks are smudged with ashes
- you smile and call it smoky eyes -
and I have to admit
it's a good
look.

it's warm here, where the fire fans my freedom
and I'm grasping for your hand, so I can press it
against my chest
and beat again.

Source for Bob Evans

Poem by Kara Krantz

I'm grasping onto a memory.

Relying on this banged-up,
unreliable narrator of a mind
that won't let
you go.

I'm sifting through dirt, searching for vestiges -
calling it archeology so the truth
won't symbolically slay me.

My darling, lay me down to sleep
beside you.

I'm grasping onto my sanity.

Relying on my faith to uphold me
and the memory of our love to mold me
to this place.

I can still taste your lemon meringue kisses
and the bitterness left behind
from our goodbyes.

I'm grasping without thinking,
without a concept of what else
to do.

I'm grasping, I'm gasping.

I'm holding on to you.

Response to Bob Evans

A MOTHER'S INSTINCT

By Patty Cahill

Putting on my coat
Leashing my dog
This crisp Autumn morning

Walking along early
The cool air, refreshing

Crunch, crunch crunch,
The fallen leaves
Beneath my feet

Unexpectedly spotting
A bird's nest
A nearby bush
I gently lift it

Perfectly and carefully built
The nest a symbol of Love:
Paper, tape and twigs entwined

A mother's instinct:
To shelter her babies

Source poem for Carol Frieswick

DELIGHTFUL

by Patty Cahill

Waking up before dawn,
The Beach,
An early morning walk

A beautiful Sunrise
Before my eyes

A sign another delightful beach day

The Ocean calm,
inviting

Rejuvenating,
Refreshing,
Relaxing,
Its nature

Response to Carol Frieswick

Late Afternoon

By Mary McDonald

When day has wrung the last bits of brilliance out of the sun
Softened its edges till the light is like cool drops of water
Towering beech and oak and maple inviting this gentle light in
When shadows grow long and deep
Offering secret places
Come to me.
Wrap your arms about me
Feel my breath upon you
Let the shadows wrap us tight
The smell of cool earth intoxicate
The grass beneath whisper softly
Open your arms for me
Open your heart for me.
I would climb inside

Source for Sarah Beth Guimond

Veils

by Mary McDonald

every moment of every day

we decide.

circle towards one another

reach for each other

or

turn aside

response to Sarah Beth Guimond

Letter of Gratitude

By Elizabeth Decasse

a letter of gratitude-

to you who bares your soul,
 revealing more to me – some stranger,
 some fellow traveler through life -

you have shown me / that which you cannot yourself see,
and for that, / i am blessed. and i am grateful. and i am in awe.

you have shown me / that which is within all of us
suffering / strength, hope / among that which feels hopeless.

you have shown me / that which others cannot have
an inherent trust / which i shall keep sacred.

i am blessed / to have known you,
witnessed your struggles / and basked in your light

i am grateful / to have been receiver
of that which makes you / you, and

i am in awe / of that beauty within you,
of your courage to open yourself

you have shown me / that which you begin to see,
a soul on the path of healing.

and i thank you -
 from the bottom of my heart,
 i thank you, i thank you / for that which
 you have shown me / that which i shall always see

remember your light
and i shall continue to stoke that fire.

-a witness.

Source for Kara Emily Krantz

Resilience
by Elizabeth Decasse

<p>prologue: and so He put ink to paper and her story began.</p> <p>the beginning: crying hungry crying dirty crying hungry crying crying crying crying</p> <p>she learns to depend on no one but herself</p> <p>the middle: she becomes an expert at dodgeball, objects constantly flying at home</p> <p>she becomes a master chef at age ten, feeding the littles while mama sleeps</p> <p>she becomes a live-in maid, leaving no stain behind</p> <p>out of fear of punishment of shame of inadequacy of retribution</p> <p>she becomes a little adult as the adults who care for her couldn't care less</p> <p>she tells Him each night, begs him for help because he's the only one she can safely tell</p> <p>she asks Him why why this life why her</p>	<p>why anyone she thinks He's come through when they finally move on when the adults "save" them</p> <p>but that story's just beginning</p> <p>He places her in a whirlwind, in the hands of countless others- those who are worse even than her own those who are in it for the money those who mean well but just don't know how</p> <p>until finally He shows her one that listens that doesn't hurt that doesn't yell that takes control but gives freedom</p> <p>one that loves</p> <p>the end: she isn't happy, or not the way you might expect</p> <p>but she has grown she has overcome she has forgiven</p> <p>her stories scatter across the state, pages torn and ashen in her wake cast to the dirt, and set ablaze</p> <p>and she is reborn as she was always meant to be.</p> <p>prologue ii: and so she opens to a blank page, and so she lays ink to paper and so her story begins anew.</p>
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Response to Kara Emily Krantz

I Do

by Andrea Lettic

For better or worse...
but this is the worst.
Still much alive
but stuck in this hearse.
Debt and buried alive
I suffocate from this Earth.
The weight from this ground -
your silence a deafening sound.
How many rock bottoms
can one tavern hold?
"Going in for just one."
Or so that's what I am told.
Will it get better,
our now and forever?
Because like I said first,
this is the worst.

Source for Donna Manley

Poem by Andrea Lettic

Slow down.
But time is running out
In this out-west town.

Father time imprints history -
Faded denim.
Worn boots.
Deep lines like cattles' brands.

As waves of technological advancement
grow stronger they stir up the Monsanto's dust,
choking out those who want to live on the land.
Stealing every cent.

There is strength in nature.
Preserve.
Conserve.
Together we'll carry these traditions on.

Response to Donna Manley

When Spirits Cross the Street

by S. M. Nevermore

I'll bet you've never seen,
When spirits cross the street.

A sudden scattering of leaves,
A trail of snow hissing across the road.
Why, you'd never guess what's within the bluster.

The smallest of these gales are children,
Still frolicking in their play.
The larger are adults and elders,
Watching the young create their games.

Life goes on, so to speak.
Woods that are long gone,
Homes that have long been torn,
Still exist for these happy spirits.

They greet each other with cheer,
They shop, they lounge,
They'll even cook a meal.
For family and friends are all that matter here.

Families reunite and friends come together.
'Tis not a sad endeavor.
For even though some may wait what seems like ages,
All families find each other in stages.

So when you see a flurry of leaves,
Or a dusting of snow as you drive,
Think of which spirits you might find.
As you drive on by.

Oh, please don't fret about harm.
For they hardly notice as you drive on through.
They'll continue on as normal just as you or I.
If you did see them it would surely be a sight.

Oh the wonders you see when times collide.
Horses, buggies, motorcycles.
Hoop stick, game boys, and hopscotch.
Empire gowns, flappers, short shorts and leather jackets.

Now, you may think me strange or false,
You may cry folly and faint.
I assure you that I jest you not.

I can see what few others can't see,
When spirits cross the street.

Source for Carol Plante

The Only Question

by S. M. Nevermore

I am the pilot who steers the plane.
I am the one who makes the flowers grow.
I am the one who decides where to go.

But where exactly do I go?

The choices are endless.
The places are boundless.

It doesn't have to exist.
I can visit lands of make believe and fable.
I can traverse alternate worlds.
There are no barriers for me.

I can see things no other can see.
I can do things no other can do.
I can go where no other can go.

Who says ants can't ride a turtle's back?
Who says I can't have cake in the garden?
Who says I can't find a slipper that belongs to a giantess?

No one but I.
The book is there.
The pages are blank.
The door is open.

The only question is where do I begin?

Response to Carol Plante

Serenity

by Lisa Shea

Easing into downward dog,
my spine crunch-crackles. I unclog
and breathe away the stress and must.
News: Nine million killed by smog.

Starving kids hoard day-old crust,
hole-laced roofing wormed with rust.
I'm pondering my full-fridge state.
World's roulette is fixed; unjust.

Outside, leafless trees gyrate;
Wintry winds and rain debate.
Here, within, the kittens purr
while seniors ponder empty plate.

Our entry to our world is pure.
Chaos twists as we mature.
Every day we can abjure
and draw each breath to seek a cure.

Source for John Randell

Freedom

by Lisa Shea

The world is an interlaced thicket.
A dense, disorienting place of twisting branches and
spiraling moss
all seeking to entwine us.
Ensnare us.
Distract us from our dreams.

But there is always a path through.
A way to zig rather than zag,
to find that clear space,
to stretch our wings,
and fly, fly, fly toward
what will make us whole.

Not the shiny, glittery,
ephemeral trinkets craved
by the magpie.

Not the fluffs of blue string
and brightly colored shells
of the bowerbird.

But the things which bring us true
contentment.
Someone to love. Someone to love us.
A place to call home.
Ample nutritious food.

And the ability to soar.

Response to John Randell

Poem by Christine Wheeler Beauchaine

In the early morning darkness
Alone with my thoughts
And the dog
The train rumbles past
Like the end of the world
Or the beginning
We used to chase them
You and I
For you loved them
And I love you
And I could not have imagined
Someday I would miss that

Source for Frank Robertson

Poem by Christine Wheeler Beauchaine

Sitting in the late summer sunshine
Writing and writing in my journal
Jumbled chaotic thoughts
And melodramatic poetry
I might never let anyone read
Trying to sort out everything
All of my life really
But mostly love
When over my shoulder
A buzzing so loud
I wonder
How large and angry is this insect
Yet is no unhappy bug
But a hummingbird
Green and gold
Wings beating frantically
And my heart too
For I have never seen one up close before
It is miraculous to me
I decide to take it as a portent
Of good things to come
And a reassurance
That all will be well

Response to Frank Robertson

Poem by Sarah Beth Guimond

“You Devil
I never imagined hell,
I had no need to.

Told my mother the earth
I didn’t believe in that;

And she threatened to take
Heaven from me,
But I never believed I belonged there anyway.

It seemed too far away.
Too clean, too pristine
For the likes of me.

I think when
There is a frost I could
read all the names of the angels
In the language of nature.

There are thousands more than I know I’m sure, my heretic skin,
My heathen heart.
And there are two.

Two like the two shades of blue that your eyes are darker than most.

Two angels,
Like the children you have named,
Whose names I don’t know
Even though we say we are friends.

I almost named my child Gabriel you know, but then I didn’t.

I stayed up all night staring at a crack in the wall, a nameless child
resting in my womb, he was not worried that I had no name for him.
He was not in a hurry to leave and be born into the world like I was.

You Devil,
I imagine you know exactly what this Illusive heaven is like,
you were there once, and when I learned your name, my blood echoed through the corridors
of my heart like a church bell.

Like a cup over filled,
spilling out like a smile, and laughter, oh, my heart—
You Devil
I ask not for it back.

Long ago eaten by wolves, not
The ones in my childhood that
Devoured innocence,
I would not give it to them.

I am red cloak. I am red cape. I am red dagger.
I am a vanishing act, but I always come back— or do I?”

Source for Lisa Shea

Indigo Escape

By Sarah Beth Guimond

From the blurry depths of
dreamlike fog, beneath the water's surface,
I can just make out the shape—
Like reading tea leaves in a cup,
Like twilight slowly enveloping the Earth.
I want nothing more than to be wrong about what I see.
Is this a chain to hold me?
Perhaps an anchor,
perhaps a snare?— or I pray, perhaps it is a buoy line that holds a boat nearby? That holds our
escape
from our fears?
I want nothing more than your peace.

Response to Lisa Shea

The Old Dog Speaks

By Karen Elizabeth Sharpe

Each day you leave me. I have come
To expect it and do not suffer. By now
We wear each other like an old pair of slippers
And besides, I am tired. For 11 years
I have held my tongue, except when
The crows get raucous in the field out back
Yet now, I must tell you: There is nothing
To be afraid of. When I close my eyes
After you are gone, when my bones click
Into place, the field is all around me
Alight with daisies and purple clover
Full of bees. Each day you leave me
I see it more clearly, the jays and sparrows
In the brush, the gold of the sunlight
Going on forever. Listen, I have been
The bowl you empty your sorrows in
The warm fire of forgiveness to your rage
I have seen your shadows and your stars
And I am still here. At the moment
When you pass from that life to this
When the key turns in the door
When your heart leaps to life
Or forgets to even care
I have already given you mine.

Source poem for Pamela Siderewicz

Chosen

By Karen Elizabeth Sharpe

A half moon last night, rising
over an ice-skimmed Quinsigamond
and the slow earth turning away another day,
as we rolled to a stop, caught,
watching, the moon a sleepy eye winking
at the chain of lights on the highway below
and us in the car, a moon so like an upturned palm,
like a chalice, so like an offering
spilling the night out on the streets,
that as the engine stilled and the car cooled
we said nothing, but leaned our heads close
in the starlessness, in the black moon-poured sky.
Maybe it was the chill December air,
maybe the solstice coming on,

but no moon-pulled tides have ever been guided like this,
to the side of the road on a frigid night,
when best would be to head home, get on with things,
but this is what it means to be chosen to love,
to step out of the blind flow of traffic together,
to strip naked the ghosts of purpose we call self,
to lose our names, our reason in the process,
to ride the brim of a half moon rising,
to know there is not the right word for anything.

Response poem for Pamela Siderewicz

Poem by Bob Marrone

The doors are closed, the locks show rust
No entry through the backward room
Facing forward as I must
Looking at a fateful gloom

Onward onto unknown ground
No road to show the way or pace
Seeking answers never found
Slowing in the endless race

Ever forward no time to tarry
Lasting efforts holding sway
Seeing life now, not so scary
Opening doors to show the way

Source poem for Dennis Smith

New England Scene with Barn

By Bob Marrone

At crack of dawn; at edge of night
When darkness falls; in brightest light
In Misty morning; in summer storm
In snow so thick it hides its form

It stands the test of weathered time
Clapboards bare and showing grime
Majestic purple could steal the scene
But has a rival in nature's green

Adorned with splendor by Old Glory
Adding substance to the story
Soul of nation, heart of man
Making peace with nature's plan

Response to Dennis Smith

Tomato

By Trisha J. Wooldridge

Taken from my native home,
I was dragged to cold, dark, stony lands
where nights were far too long.

I was bred,
spliced,
Frankensteined
to be “hearty”
to last longer than my normally brief life,
to be fatter, beefier,
more succulent,
and bear more children than nature intended.

Hundreds of years,
of science,
of slavery,
of commodification,
of being pulled, too soon, from the vine
and transported miles in darkness,
so you
might eat my tender fruit.

It is no comfort
to know
you
commit
those same sins
upon your own children.

Response to Al Weems

War Paint

By Trisha Wooldridge

This is for me,
not you.

I was up late,
with heartache
with insomnia
with brain weasels
with comics
or cute cat videos
with nothing at all.

And I hadn't time to shower.
And I'm already running late.

But the glossy, flimsy, shimmering
barely there
armor
of eye-shadow, liner, mascara
maybe even lip gloss...

That's for me.

Response to Al Weems

Daughter

By Linda DeFeudis

A deceased mother, Barbara, to her daughter

Daughter, a part
Within you, I am

My spirit,
Your spirit,
Your arms,
My arms,
A warm embrace

A vision,
I see you,
Feel, touch you,
Your face

My being,
Your being,
Within you,
I walk

Walk softly,
Walk softly,
Listen, quiet,
A whisper,
My talk

You now the leader,
Your footsteps,
Now my footsteps

I follow
In closeness,
In unison,
We, together

My being, your being
Now oneness
In time / space

Your walk,
My walk,
Your steps,
My steps

Alone you are not
I follow in heart

Try not to ponder
Or ask questions why

Feel me,
Our closeness,
Our oneness,
Please try

Source for Christine Wheeler Beauchaine

The Typewriter
By Linda DeFeudis

Black and majestic
I sit,
stoic and proud,
My frequent use awaited

Skillful Hands
Searching,
My letters,
Their touch,
My keys of communication

What will I write today?
A letter,
An essay,
A love story?

Infinite possibilities
Now cut short,
Obsolete

I often sit alone,
Untouched,
Ignored

Lonely,
My black,
Once shining
Attire
Now dismal

My "Royal" throne
Vanquished

Technology,
The new King,
Communication

Response to Christine Wheeler Beauchaine

A Life Concluded

By Kevin Saleeba

(Note that even though this is the source poem, Kevin had seen the source piano photo before writing this, and used it as part of his inspiration)

The room is quiet,
Like with a soft kiss,
While outside's chaos
Falls into a dark abyss

Storm clouds surround my ominous thoughts
Hypnotized by the sway of nearby trees,
I watch drops drip down the window pane
The rain persists and builds; Paralyzed by the beating beads

The random rhythm of these drams
Causes me to raise my fist
With cheeks stained with tears
I punch the glass, cutting my wrist

Flood water rushes through the broken glass
Refreshing my face
To thoughts and feeling ultimately brooded
All means nothing to a life now concluded

Source for Mike Zeis

The Upright Mahogany

By Kevin Saleeba

Forced to play the Upright Mahogany
As early as age four
Awkward fingers bumbled and stumbled
A terrible dance, this menacing song

Tripped by black and white keys of spruce
Hammers miss-struck bass and treble notes
The sound board soured with the vibration
No music was made, no inspiration

Bitter false notes ended as puberty enraptured
Not interested in Mozart, not attracted to Bach;
Not caring about Beethoven, Wagner, or Brahms

Ignored and not played, the Upright Mahogany
Moved to the dark and wet cellar
Temperature dropped
Varnished wood, the dust collected

Morphed and contracted, stretched and deformed
The pedal rod, the bridge, the pin block, the strings;
The nails, the screws, the glue, and the keys
Shape permanently changed
Pulled and stretched in all ways

The Upright Mahogany, now lying on its back
Tossed out with an old chair, a dresser, and trash

Response to Mike Zeis