

hemlock

to the unhappy and disturbed

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My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains
My sense, as though of hemlock I had drunk,
Or emptied some dull opiate to the drains
One minute past, and Lethe-wards had sunk.

Barbara Terry

The Glorious Cause

Its awful hot and dark in here and Godfrey keeps on saying i wanna go home wheres my mommy? And then I tell him to shutup and he starts crying. Then I feel bad and pat him and say how he shouldnt cry cause everything will be alright. Only I dont know. It smells like when Godfrey wets his pants in here only a million times worse. And all the little guys and the girls are crying on a count of there sick from the ship roling or there nose runing or something. The big guys ate all the food only the brede had worms. Stephen says how we should pray to the mother of God to save us only I dont know if itll work. I tried it a lot of times and nothing seemed to happen so thats why we hardly ever listen to Stephen anymore. I guess Gods mother is like mine she doesnt always give you what you ask for only my mother wouldnt let any body put me in here. She didnt want us to come and cried and told me to be a man and take care of Godfrey on a count of he was littler than me but sometimes mothers are awful silly. And she put our cloths in blankets and rolled them up and give us cheese and rolls. And Godfrey took his toy dog only he dropped it in a bush when the big boys laffed at him. And all the mothers stod around when we left with red noses and kind of slobbering and kept saying god be with us and watching us march away. And there were so many of us that sometimes we had to march in the fields only it was hard on a count of the grass was over our heads. Pretty soon we stopped singing and talking

and the little guys got tired and slow down
so I had to carry Godfreys blanket. When it
got dark we neeld and said our prayers but
almost everybody fel asleep and didnt even
eat. I can hardly remember much after that.
Only we walked for an awful long time and
each time we passed a village there were more
children and there mothers sewed crosses on
there shirts and they took up the cross. We
beggd food in the towns and picked grapes
and green apples in the country and Godfrey
and I got the direar only we didnt die. We
left the sick ones behind to get well. I
never saw them again. I remember it rained
along time and it was awful cold and a girl
startd cofing and next day startd mumbling
and twitching and so did lots of others.
They died and we left them. My shoes wore
out and my cloths had holes and pretty soon
the people wouldnt give us food anymore and
my stomich hurt. Some of the children wanted
to go back only Stephen said no cause then
how could they walk across the sea like
Moses and the children of Isreal. And a few
more days and one morning we could smell
dead fish and it was hot and a breeze blow-
ing. And most of us that could started
running and when we came to the water we
ran in it and played. And then Stephen
called us all together and we prayed for
the sea to part and Stephen streched out
his arm only it didnt so we did again. But
it was no use and luckely some ships nearby
came sent from God only if there angles on
them there not pretty. I would rather see my
mother. I hope we get there soon i dont feel
good and Godfrey wont stop crying. I hope
we save jesus tume only its hard to think of
that now.

William Teunis

Dorothy Ellis

1

In the honeysuckled fence
Lurks the nest of excellence,
Secret twigs that cannot fly
Cancer's green bureaucracy.

Schizophrenic flesh rebels,
And the pale promiscuous cells,
Not content to stand and wait,
Lawlessly proliferate.

2

Dorothy at last is gone,
Fitful bright phenomenon,
Firefly of neurotic bent
In the marsh of government.

Civil servants sucking spoons
Through the office afternoons
Turn perplexed when clattering keys
Hinted bright disharmonies.

Now her match has flared its flare,
Ashes scattered God knows where,
Everybody walks once more
Fearless through each office door.

One there was who liked to pose,
 Go where intimacy goes,
 Pull on love till self-defense
 Shrank it to indifference.

Sonnets typed in pain outlive
 Faults we guiltily forgive,
 Wishing our familiars dead
 Across the sword she took to bed.

THE NEED

a part of me fell
 and i died with it.
 a smile has lost itself
 where i have never been.
 the flesh of a face can hold only so much
 before it bursts forever.

Before the Crisis

She sat on the steps
 with a book
 which she did not
 read
 but only kept in her hand
 to remind her
 of what should be done
 She pushed her long hair
 away from her face
 and squinted toward the sun
 to catch the last glint of late afternoon
 The little boy next door
 a red-head
 skipped and hopped up the steps
 to tell her that his
 baby sister
 now had three teeth
 She smiled at the purity
 of childhood
 and waved at the little boy
 when he ran home to dinner
 The sun dropped
 And a breeze began to blow
 She stretched with feline grace
 and walked to the house

we talk, you and i
 we contemplate, he and she
 but where in whose kingdom do we sit
 where may we lie
 and be

The Sea Above the Sky

O Cerulean seas flash laughingly on,
 bathed in a pool of azure,
which hangs in stolid pallor below
 the hyaline waters.
Descending never it roars on and on
 with ceaseless ardor,
where billows ashen, sing in eternal
wisdom, upon the sparkling skies,
 where fleece and embers
embrace with beauty solemn,
 and dance joyously on and forever on.

Now letters can not be tomorrow

The unwordable is not said
on stamped paper.

Now in our time. I can not
speak with words
of former mouths, or answer
eye touch with hands.

 listen
I know a dance. light on light.
love the opening of petals in the soft
sun love the soft petals in the sun.

The unwordable is not said
with stamped paper
or form.

You must come with the whispering eyes
of tomorrow come bringing
my arms bringing with surprises
and all wonder
trembling in my blood.

Mark Schulman

To Caryl Chessman

So much for California

massachusetts, yes:

could do those puritans

anything;
anytime

so that miscarriage was not so hard

to understand
unders

But

California, and my
California.

so much for california

Ron Boroson

vision

Why does he sigh?--the
Young girl's legs crossed high--the
Friendly rub of time.

Elaine Levin

Truth

Blinding
Sun--Man hides from
You behind parasols
Of ignorance and sunglasses
Of fear.

In his
Little house he
Fabricates his own sun
With a light switch and forgets what
Dawn is.

MARK SCHULMAN

Aum

I

The Child was young then and mother
has suckled him though father had been angry.

And now seven, free to the undestroyed
country, he told them he would walk short-
pants among the land he had never known.

Father had laughed at the Child when he
said he would roam the land. Seven, he had
replied, is the mothersboy age; eleven was
the time when you would leave your mothers
skirt.

No, the Child had insisted, tomorrow I
can walk alone to the low valley. In the
daytime, though.

Father had laughed but mother had cried.

What the hell is the matter with you,
father had shouted.

Mother only cried and wouldnt say her
blessing at supper, and vomitted the home-
baked apple pie in the living room on the
old stained rug.

Father had eaten the rest of the
apple pie and warned, mother, Clean that up
before I sit down there.

The Child sobbed softly in his crib
that night, but clutched his Cecil, and
moaned less, but wished father had not
burned the fish.

Mornings, mother made a meal for the
Child, a hotgrain cereal that was always
good.

The Child asked, Whats the matter?, for ~~not~~
mother lay in bed pale that morning. She
said, Nothing.

Closing the door he saw father

Is she coming out or resting the rest of the day, said father.

The Child walked past him. Father opened the door.

Breakfast. Its time.

The Child turned and saw mother roll in the bed away from father.

Go away, away, you don't know what you're doing.

Father slammed the door.

The Child went to the barn to curl in the warm hay, but the brown mother cow mooed warily to warn the nursing calf, and the Child remembered he must not remain.

The light in mother's room in the house went on, casting shadows through the torn shade.

He walked to his secret place. And after it was over, he again felt that ecstasy of somethingness that he reserved for he and his secret place.

Then the Child slept in the tranquil grass windblown by the calming warm morning breeze.

II

Awakened by the heat of the midday sun the Child felt hunger and whimpered crawling to the house for his sustenance.

He pushed his weak legs through the kitchen door. Father sat head in arms at the table. The Child realized father and awaited the command. Father sat. He said nothing.

III

And he ran forward to walk the low valley, long pants on.

The low valley was far and hands in pocket he approached near in the cold evening. The blue-

greenness of the lake startled him in the setting sun.

The Child's small fingers grasped a flat rock, liberating it from its weed dungeon. A good throwing stone.

In the sunset the lake water existed placidly; existed only to the red sun above the motionless valley. The sparrow, too, and the rabbit, knew; -- only the Child blinked in the reflection of the sun dying below the hill transferring its life to the attentive lake.

His hands coaxing the throwing stone to its greatest efforts the Child hopefully cast the rock to the darkening water.

But it skimmed the rippling surface three times and plunged below the black far from the greentreed shore.

Stephen Maurer

a conversation

I am going to destroy the earth
no I will not let you destroy the earth

Im sorry but

I am definitely going ahead with it
regardless of what you say

well Im sorry too

but Im just not going to let you do it

I consider it

my patriotic and chauvinistic duty
to stop you

and how are you going to stop me
when I have made up my mind
already

Why should I let you know
then you dont know yourself
on the contrary I know very well
but how will you be sure when you die
that in fact you have died
and that in reality
I have not just then
destroyed the earth

What

oh but what if you die first
oh thats impossible
since Im determined to destroy the earth
Im sorry but as I said
I just cannot allow myself to permit it

well lets wait and see

Bev Hays

F 2 2

Mother I am sick
Bring me a bowl
of consecrated chicken soup
and a slice
of Saint John's bread and butter
Let me partake of God

Mark Schuman

Ben Hauer

In the barber shop

The barber asked how many
Coloreds
were there in
my school

And I told him
he had barbered me too ^{short} ~~short~~
I wanted it
longer

a solitary bird
sits on my white fence
and sings to please itself

Roberta Koch

refrain

The boys try to comfort me
with oranges
and apples they give me for lunch.

At parties they touch my hair
and hold me close
with smiles and their eyes
asking.

All the time
I know what your hands do.

Yesterday another's letter came.
I am waiting for a poem, it said.
I still believe in you.

Well, what should I do.

How strong must I be,
not to answer touch for touch.
the letter. the eyes.

All the time
what your hands do.

Sharon Koch

our web

our web
thrusts us together
if we didn't like it
what would it matter.

here we are

and splendid too
is our laughter
holding hands in a park of
cobwebs.

bending we touch the earth
the dirt is so cool

and smooth
we wipe its softness on each other

lovely just lovely
too bad

we're so enwrapped
in ourselves

we forget
to love

Judy Perlmutter

ELAINE LEVIN

Kiyoshi would have been a Samurai
Had he been born two centuries earlier
He was proud of the warrior tradition
That ran jagged through his ancestral pattern
But it is the twentieth century
And Kiyoshi works in a factory
Fitting bolts with the strong hands
Meant to grasp the swift clean
Sword.

Death

Armored
Shadow mounts a
Galloping tree-top to
pillage a kingdom of giddy
Sunbeams.

An occurrence of an unfortunate
nature in a famous institution

The subway rolled to the left and
to the right as it jumped the
tracks in the rails placed
by a thoughtful council
& he, kissing her one
last time, smiled
as his hands
touched the
third rail

THE SENSE OF: IN A SENSE

I am still here.
what of the darkness
(and the shadows on the wall)
the times when I'm not quite me
(or really anybody.)

You may take me
and of course I'll take you,
what matters is the fact.

I have put myself high on a shelf
where you can look down on me.

The old man of the street
doesn't recognize me
anymore. The young man
doesn't want to.

We have come to a connection
that has made us possible
and all things

not without including
tongues which color us
pink with delight.

MISS SNELL

One Saturday morning in April, three children were playing Blind Man's Bluff in a field. They were all eight years old: a boy named Horace Leach and two sisters named Dotty and Lotty. Litchum. They lived next door to each other and were in the same room in the third grade, and would probably have been playing in their back yards if their mothers, who were hanging out clothes to dry, had not chased them away.

The girls had taken up positions about fifteen yards apart and were trying to stifle their giggles as Horace, with a towel wrapped around his head and tied in a hard knot at the back, came creeping for them through the weeds with his hands outstretched. He was about halfway between the girls and ten yards in front of them when they both bent over, covered their mouths with their hands, and shut their eyes tight, convulsed with silent laughter at his grim and inevitable advance. When they opened their eyes a moment later Horace had disappeared.

Both girls were rather startled and then frightened. Quickly they looked about them, to see if Horace had darted around them somehow and was sneaking up. He was not. Except for a gentle slope at the far end of the field near the wood, the field was perfectly flat and there were no trees or bushes for Horace to hide behind. There was nowhere he could have gone, but he was nowhere in sight. The girls looked at each other.

"Where's Horace?" Lotty said.

"How should I know?"

"Maybe there's a hole somewhere and he's hiding in it," Lotty said without conviction.

"Horace!" Dotty shouted.

"What?" shouted a voice.

"Where are you?"

"Wouldn't you like to know?"

The voice had a queer echo to it.

"He's over here," Dotty said. "Come on." They walked forward cautiously. "There's a cave or something there," Dotty said. "Look."

"Let's go home."

"Come on," Dotty said. She walked ahead a few more steps and stood looking down. Lotty came up beside her.

At their feet, in the middle of the field, was what looked like a well. Weeds had grown up around it and concealed it. The mouth was narrow and about five feet long. The shaft widened toward the bottom, about twelve feet down, where several stones from the rim had fallen. The whole lower part of the well was rather muddy, but there was no water in it.

"What are you doing down there?" Dotty asked.

"None of your business," Horace said.

He was sitting on a pile of dislodged stones and rubbing his knee.

"How did you get down there?" Dotty asked.

"God, what a stupid question," Horace said. "Just like a woman. I fell in."

Both girls began to laugh.

"How do you think you're going to get out?" Dotty asked after a while.

"Don't worry about it," Horace said.

"I'll get out when I want to."

"I don't see how," Dotty said. "It's ever so deep and it's steep as anything. And it's muddy. I don't think you'll ever

get out."

"Do you like it down there?" Lotty asked.

"No," Horace said. "It's too muddy and there's too many snails."

"Snails, ugh," Lotty said. "Serves you right."

Horace bent over and picked something up and made a throwing gesture at Lotty. A large slug appeared on her neck. Lotty screamed and tore it off and shuddered after she'd thrown it away. She rubbed her sleeve across her throat and rubbed her hand on her dress. "I'm going home," she said. "I hope you rot down there."

"Goodbye," Horace said.

Lotty began to walk away. Dotty hesitated beside the well for a few seconds and then ran after her sister.

"Let's tell his mother," Dotty said.

"Then he'll catch it."

They walked across the field and through the neck of woods that surrounded it, down the hill, along an overgrown road, across the planks in the mud of the housing development--deserted on Saturday with its unfinished houses and empty cellar-holes--and up another hill to a paved street. At the end of this street was a small brick bungalow, with trellises beside the front door and withered rose bushes growing up them. In the front yard a middle-aged woman wearing dungarees and a gray sweater was stooping to pull weeds from a bare flower-bed next to the cement sidewalk. Although the girl had never seen her before in the dungarees, which made her look like a different person, they recognized Miss Snell, who had been their teacher in kindergarten. She was now giving lectures in a course called Principles of Education at the

State University, and also directing the English Language Arts Curriculum for the county high schools. Miss Snell had dark hair and a hawk-like nose and turned around and smiled. One of her breasts was drooping several inches lower than the other.

"Hello, girls," she said. "Aren't you Dotty and Lotty Linthicum?"

"Uh-huh," Dotty said. "Hello Miss Snell."

"Where are you coming from this fine morning?"

"We've been playing in the woods," Dotty said.

"My! All by yourselves?"

"Horace Leech was with us," Lotty said.

"And where is Horace?" Miss Snell asked. "Did he run off and leave you?"

"He fell down a well," Dotty said.

"Great heavens! Is he all right now?"

"He's still down there," Lotty said.

"Heavens! Who's with him?"

"Nobody. He's all by himself."

"And you just came from there? You haven't told anyone else?"

"No," Dotty said.

Miss Snell started to say something and then stopped. She put down her weed-digger. "Girls," she finally said. She stood straight and looked at them. "Where is this well?"

"It's in the middle of the big field on the other side of those woods," Lotty said, pointing. "We were just going to tell his mother. He'll never get out by himself."

"I see," said Miss Snell. "Girls,

if you'll just wait for me, we'll go back there and see what we can do. Now come inside while I get ready."

She took the girls by the hand and led them into her house, shutting the door behind them. "Is he hurt?" she asked.

"Maybe," Dotty said.

Miss Snell opened a drawer in the kitchen and took out some rope. Then she turned on the hot water in the sink and washed her hands vigorously with soap. She ran into another room, and came back carrying a first-aid kit and a blanket.

"Now we're all ready," she said.

"Come, girls."

All the way back to the well Miss Snell was humming a little tune. She walked so fast that the girls could hardly keep up with her to show her the way.

"Hurry, hurry," she said. "Horace may drown before we get there."

"The well is all dry, Miss Snell," Dotty said, panting.

"Don't be silly!" Miss Snell said. "You said it was a well, didn't you?"

When they got near the well a stone came flying up out of it and they heard Horace whistling.

Miss Snell ran up to the edge of the wall. "Horace!" she cried. "It's so good to see you!"

"Hello, Miss Snell," Horace said. He was sitting on the pile of rocks.

"What do you want?"

"We've come to get you out," Miss Snell said.

"Oh, all right," Horace said. He stood up. "I didn't much like this place anyhow."

Miss Snell gave her hair a pat. She

put all the equipment she was carrying on the ground beside her and said,

"Now, girls, as soon as I ask for anything, you must find it there quickly and hand it to me. All right?"

"All right," Miss Snell, they said.

"Give me the rope."

Dotty and Lotty pounced on the rope together and handed it to her.

"Horace," Miss Snell called down, "I'm going to throw you the end of this rope, and I want you to catch it." She grasped one end of it against her chest with her left hand, and dropped the rest into the well.

"I've got it," Horace called.

"Now, dear, I want you to wrap it once around your stomach, then bring it up between your legs and around the back of your neck, tie a big knot where it comes up there, and hold it like I'm doing. See?"

"Gee whiz," Horace said, "this seems like an awful lot of fuss."

"Do as I say! That's the boy. Now, brace your feet against the side of the well--that's it--NOW!" Miss Snell gave a tremendous heave on the rope and walked away from the well, with the rope behind her taut and grinding the gray weeds and dirt at the edge of the well. Horace yelled. The girls looked down from the opposite side of the well. "Keep your feet up against the wall!" Dotty yelled. "Miss Snell, Horace isn't doing what you told him. He's all up against the wall!"

"It's muddy and slippery!" Horace shouted angrily. "Let me down!"

"I know it is, dear, I know it is,

I know it is," sang Miss Snell, "but you'll be all right, You can come to my house afterward and have a nice hot bath and get clean again. Now, --" and she walked a few more steps away from the well. Sweat was trickling down her forehead. She stood and panted, bent backward by the rope, her legs bowing.

"Let me down!" Horace yelled.

"Let go the rope!"

"You can't let go, Miss Snell," Dotty cried, "he's way off the rocks!"

"Heave!" Miss Snell cried, but she could only surge forward a step this time, and immediately was forced to take half a step backward as the taut rope over her shoulder pulled her.

"Dotty, Lotty, come and help me pull," Miss Snell called.

The girls ran to her and tried to hold the rope, but it was too high, so Dotty ran behind Miss Snell and locked her arms around her waist. "Come on, Lotty," she said, "get behind me!" Lotty ran and held her sister, and the two of them pushed, leaning forward at an angle against the taut and straining rope, which disappeared at the edge of the well. "Heave!" Miss Snell shouted. Horace gave a muffled bleat which was cut off. They lunged forward furiously but their feet remained almost in the same place.

After several seconds, Miss Snell gasped, "Wait, girls, let's just rest for a minute. If we all just lean ahead like this, the rope won't pull us back, and we can collect our breath." They stood breathing heavily for a couple of

minutes bringing air back into their spent lungs. Then with a cry of "Heave!" they managed to advance three more steps. Again they rested. They pulled again. They rested again. They pulled again. Then they rested for several minutes. Finally Miss Snell said, "Just one more heave ought to do it, girls!"

Miss Snell's hair and eyes were wild and she moistened her lips with her tongue. She gave a sort of wiggle to ease her muscles. Her sweater had worked halfway up her back and her blouse had come out of her dungarees, revealing skin colored a grayish-white. She panted: "Dotty! Lotty! ready-- set--HEAVE!"

The two girls pushed hard and came ahead several steps with a rush, slipping and falling, Lotty to one side, Dotty to the other.

Dotty felt the damp grass beneath her and lay there for a moment panting. A cry of wonder from Lotty startled her and she looked up.

Against the pale sky Miss Snell was leaning forward on the rope, pulling with both arms, her eyes staring ahead exultantly, and behind her, at the other end of the rope Horace's head already emerged from the wall, sideways, with his eyes rolled whitely back, his face a dead color, and the taut rope wrapped twice about his neck.

Mark Schulman

Sun worship

~~An occurrence of an unfortunate
nature in a famous institution~~

into the warmth of former edens go forth
... sayeth she

eternally never in the womb
of my waist long black hair
sleep thyself prenatally.
quoeth she

and so went forth i
but mayhap the solistice be
solely frigid than the night

Sharon Koch

AFTER THE DRINKING

With wine japanese or any kind
you can fool me
by saying the world's
crazy and ourselves
toujours we are
of the same....

....and your eyes slanted
or otherwise. Tell truths.
Tell truths of our existence,
In the very exlusion
of delusions
 naming people
 pretending
 and bright lights

But when the smell
and spell of wine
is broken. And the air
turns out the lights.

what has your hand
wild and groping what has it
to say to my eyes

over and under and there.



