



Dandelion de LaRue

and

Daisy Sidewinder



cover photo by Edy Lou Benjamin

line drawings by Alice M. Armstrong



Published by Motherbird Books

Silver City, New Mexico

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Dandelion

de

LaRue



Greyhound Dreams

I am born
in Greyhound dreams
sleek and wild.
I hear the rumbling music
through the night
smell of diesel
fast yellow light lines sliding by
through the magic time and space
of the interstate.

Catfish shacks beckon
but we don't stop
I turn, longingly, thinking
of fishing poles
and a long and lazy man
on the river bank,
waiting for me
home-rolled smoke between his teeth
humming something blues
but we don't stop.

The fried chicken lady
snores softly
fourteen children
in her lap.
The big man next to me
slumps against my shoulder
pinning me to the dusty diesel window.

I peek through the windows
of ticky-tacky houses with

night lights and burglar lights
and motion lights in the yards
fear me, I think to them, and
fear the big bathless guy and
the fried chicken lady and her
fourteen kids, for we are
terrible to behold,
after three days in the Greyhound dream.

I see the late night sidewalk people
as we pull in, huffing and grinding.
They aren't afraid of us, I know.
What's it like to be them?
I think I knew, a long time ago
but now, I forgot.

But I'm a flea
on a big beautiful fast moving dog
I can jump off anytime, and be reborn
and I can remember
whatever I want, and see
whatever I want, and be
whoever I want
when the bus that births me sets me free.

Last Drop of Courage

I see young clones
of my kindred
fresh and new
and I sense
the spirits
of My Kind
gone before me
and the spirits
of our altruism and
our belief in
the inherent
Goodness of Man
and The People
somewhere in time
but not here
not now.

But nothing is
so simple
the whiteness dazzles me
white cubicles
white insurance policies
poking from the pockets
of the clones
smart enough
to know the game
and play it well.
Perhaps they'll
change the rules
or perhaps
the rules will

change them.

I run to the shadows
to hide to lurk to look
hopefully, for
Life after Dream
because I am still here
mysteriously awake
but broken, I am broken
a gray-haired mouse
with singed whiskers.
My cape is just a cape
and the supercheese
from the gleaming romance moon
is tinged with GMOs.

What now? I ask
the sold-out moon
but it jeers at me
and offers
a bowl of pesticides.
There is no supercheese
here it says.

Am I the last dandelion
in the well-manicured
yard? Off by the
edge, hidden by the
roots of a picnic tree
unseen and alone
my braver, louder kindred
long ago uprooted
and discarded.

It is past the first frost
they will say
with disgust
my once-glossy
orange mane is gone
to seeds
now scattered
but still I live
leaves and broken headless
stem bent and withered
in the shadow.

Shall I move
to the middle
of the perfect grassy lawn
and shout
"I am Weed!
Hear me! See me!"
We were once
legion,
beautiful young
herds of weeds
slaughtered
mowed down
to make way
for something else.

And what place is there
in a not-so-brave new world
for a shriveled
and withered weed?
It is harder to
survive alone, unseen
unheard, uncertain

than die a
vibrant wildflower
in the midst
of a righteous dream.

Do I have
the courage?
I must,
for I am here.
There must be
yet a drop
of courage
in Alice's
magic bottle.
I will lick
the last of it.

Courage for what?
To shout!
To sing the old songs
once again?
To be an old weed?
Courage for what?
I do not know.

I Hope You Were Laughing, Sometimes *(to John)*

Languid nights of weed and Ripple
reciting Dylan with sly humor
visualizing Motorpsycho Nightmare
and the Memphis Blues
We wanted to go
to Desolation Row
because it sounded
more exciting
than Kansas
and our innocence
bored us.

I heard you spent some time
in that neighborhood
but I never saw you there
nor you me.
We should have met again
and had some wine
and laughed
at the Desolation
we'd dreamed
and the absurdities
we'd met.

Blue Lady

I watch the faith
sometimes
looking at the auras
of the faithful
listening to their gentle
songs and mumblings.

I sit on the
dirty curb
my feet in ancient mud
seeing their parades
the peregrinos
drumming, dancing
walking calm
floating over potholes
all eyes and hearts
on the Blue Lady.
Miles and miles
but they walk on air
for love and mercy.

I hear the voice of
the one legged man
rising above the rest
as he hobbles by
crutches on cobblestones.
He sings to the Blue Lady

and I sit in the gutter
with chills and tears.
All that love

makes me cry, and makes me
love humanity.

I watch the faith
sometimes
with sadness.

To Kenny Swank (*John Lee Hooker's drummer – '70's*)

Free spirit friend
you wandered into town
for just a little while
not long enough for me
Free spirit friend
I wish you'd stayed
a little longer.

We shared a mile
of this long dusty road
I watched how you walked it
like it wasn't really there
but the road it
called you away
too soon for me.

Some mystery day
I'll find that road
I'll be on it too
and I'll look for you
but I got a feelin'
that you'll always
be ahead of me.

I learned from you
My free spirit friend
for just a little while
not long enough for me
Free spirit friend
I wish you'd stayed
A little longer.

A Pack of Cards

Cardboard town
you look just like I remember
just like I expected
nothing's changed
everything's changed
the magic's gone.

The magic music
doesn't hum
through the desert
and the lonesome
desert ghosts
aren't wandering
over the big dirt hills
with their ghost burros.

The hill I sat on
the little rock I cried on
the night John Lennon died
when the little desert gnomes
cried with me.
That hill is still there
the rock is still sticky
with my ancient tears.

The men at the bar
are the same men
telling the same jokes.
Are they older?
No, only I am older.
They're only mannequins

propped there
for eternity.

I leave
but the maple syrup air
is sticky as the rock
gluing me here.

You're just a bunch of cardboard cutouts
I shouted
and they all fell down.

The dust devil
dances around the
cardboard town
and winks at me.

Road Souls

We met in El Paso
in the place outside the station
where smokers go and
smoke and talk with
voices low
amid the bus rumbles
and diesel smells.

I liked the round scar
under your eye
a souvenir from a
broken beer bottle
in some Texas roadhouse
I think.

We recognized each other
Two Road Souls
kindred spirits going different ways.
But I know you're out there
Greyhound Man
And my world is bigger
for the knowing of it.

Roads Don't Jell Easy

Hang around with too many
like minded people
in a closed society
and pretty soon all those minds
get together and get together and get together
and don't fool around with any
unlike minds
and next thing you know
you have a pile of inbred brains
lying around
boring each other.

But the road
keeps on going
and the road thinks its own
various and lonely
thoughts.

Santa Rosa de Copan, Honduras

I have seen the
pale, sweatless ones in their beige cubicles
silently staring
in their airplanes
their clothes saying it all
saying all they have to say.

Did I seek this?
Did I sweat for this?
Do I want insured survival
at the cost of my soul?
Surely not.

It's not what I thought
as Faust told the devil
not really what I wanted
at all.

There seems to be no place
for educated American white trash
unless I toss the trash
the best part of me
selling my redneck white trash soul
for a spot in a cubicle.

But I can go home
and say it was all a
mistake, an illusion,
and sit on the bench
outside the post office
looking up and down the street

at the dust, miles and miles
of clean desert dirt
and smell the sage
and know who fathered
the puppies
and talk to the skinny old men
who spit between the spaces in their teeth
and tell me
they are not heroes
and tell me
don't fall in love with me,
I'm no good.

And in the afternoon, after
the mail has come and gone
I will drink coffee with my friends
and talk about writing a
cookbook of 1001 lard recipes
and how somebody ought to take
that old hound dog out to the vet
and get him fixed
because all the puppies
all over town
look just like him
but we like him too
so we never will.

Then the town drunk will stumble by
and call me his darling
saying he'll marry me
for the price of some
good Irish whiskey
and a dust devil will
put its arms around me

and leave some grit and tears
in my eyes
and it will be good
to be home again.

We're All Parades, Here

The whole town was in
the Memorial Day parade
old vets young vets war horses
scouts bands clowns on bicycles.
They waited for the audience
arriving unaware on the Greyhound bus
because a parade
needs an audience
at least someone on the sidelines
cheering and crying for
the brave little parade.
The passengers cheer on cue
knowing their roles
in between tuna fish casserole conversations.

At Christmas time
the bus driver is late
the roads are slick
he doesn't want to stop for
the little Christmas parade
but the parade is too smart for him.
The parade jumps out in front of the bus
stopping it and then runs down the road
fast because its forty below
and the parade is cold.
The bus follows, warm and angry,
part of the parade now.

A reluctant jester sneaks off the bus
hides in a patch of foggy steam

and watches for awhile with
the ghosts of audiences past
two Cheshire Cats and
the statue of a Civil War hero
before slipping back onto the bus.

The bus, still thinking it's a
rolling sideshow audience
ambles down the interstate
bleating its horn sometimes
at little cars and diesels and hay trucks
and old farm pickups with baling wire
sticking out the back.

The ravens on the telephone wire
watch the cars and trucks and the bus
and the puffs of black smoke
and listen to the horns
and snatches of tuna fish casserole conversation.
They sometimes wish
the parade would just go away.

Two parades pass in the night
and stare at each other
curiously.

Jackie Dreamstreet Man

A painted world
surreal empty streets
Nighttime streets with
hazy glowing light
above the energy
of this dimension
just enough
to know it floats
in midnight
dreamtime magic.

When I walk there
in my dream
I walk alone
the soundless footsteps
of my astral feet
musing me
by their absence.

The doors along the street
all closed
but they can open
I know
if I knock.
Dare I knock?
And once inside
Can I get out again?

What lies
beyond those doors?
Bygone mysteries?
Ghosts from my

years waiting
to trouble me
with unfinished business?
Is there a room
where all my madnesses
lie exposed
exhibits
in a museum?

Should I throw them
from the painted window
and dance alone
in a vacuum?

If I were Alice
in a silent Wonderland
then you might be
the Grin Without a Cat.

But here on this daylit
street of busy
clowns and horses
You are the Cat
Without a Grin.
I think you have a foot
in both dimensions,
Dreamstreet Man.

Dreamstreet Man Revisited

Porch swing life in
some other place
moon humming happy
bugs playing fiddles
pies cooling
by the window.

Down the road awhile
in smoky midnight bars
torchy songs low and thick
red lipstick eyes closed
songs for someone gone
a long, long time.

Outside slow motion
saxophone
wakes the blood
sends foggy feet
to the magic house
yellow glow windows.
Strong souls there,
souls so big
they never die.

Dreamstreet Man
drew that door
then walked through it.
You don't know
he said
who's the dream
and who's the dreamer.

The air's the same.
The air's the same.
It's the same good
honeysuckle air.

Waiting for the Someday Bus

Maybe that bus
is coming someday
while we just wait
lazy on the
grass and curb and
turned-over newspaper box
listening to the clean lady
with the new bus schedule
and new blue shoes
saying Bus is Coming
Bus is coming
Bus is surely
coming now.

We talk, slow.
One-Tooth Boy
shows us his
spider bite
and the old
man hums and nods
and smiles and
there's a blues beat
somewhere.
That bus is
surely coming
someday
we all say
and we'll all
get on and go
somewhere
sometime soon.

Invisible Mystery Friends

Remembering days and nights
of wandering through
criss cross designs of
water vapor and
other disembodied energies
thick with the
ghosts and spirits
of Old New Orleans.

I felt their
kinship with me
their embrace
their music
I heard and felt
their songs
around me
over me
in me.

They walked my walk
as I walked theirs
and it was
grand.
I felt that
I belonged.

Are they lonely
in abandoned
buildings empty
streets?
Do they see
the stricken place
it is today

or the magic streets
that they once
walked alone
loving the city
and being loved
the living and
the dead alike.
Where will we gather
now, for bi-dimensional
communion?

The Merry Schizo Waltz

The face I saw
in the mornings
wasn't mine
a tighter face
my kin, I think,
tense, insecure
not quite sure
where to step
or what to say
one that didn't
smile so easily
or so much.
I might have
liked her better
but something made
me step aside.

This morning I
saw my face again
and glad to see her
so many months away
I watched her
stretching slowly
through the thickly
silky air
the face behind the face
slipping into
old shoe places.
Who was that
other worried one?

She's gone away.
It's just as well –
she didn't
laugh enough.

Illusions

Wise and worried poet
sending word pictures
eulogizing dead illusions
and sorrowing over
the evil charades
that grow up in
their places.

My dear illusions
I loved you
I saw you
luring generations
into complacency
We are the thinkers
We are the leaders
We are the saviors
of the World
They said.

Who knew that they
were born in fascist camps
to brainwash and mislead
and plant the lies
we loved?
I cannot bury you
with honors,
my false friends,
my false illusions,
but I can bury you
with angry tears.

And now we ask
the question.
The big one.
Are we the evil ones?
Are we an evil plague
crafted by the devil
to prosper and destroy?

Late night thoughts
not quite disappearing
with violent and capricious day.
Do I dare invoke
my freedoms to speak
my thoughts
and say, out loud,
perhaps a shrub
is not a mighty oak
and not a burning bush
and is McDonald's really worth
5,000 nomad lives?

But Truth
slithers in
slowly
like a terrier
scratching at the door.
Some thoughts
won't stop knocking
and I see glimmers
here and there
lights going on
as others rise
to let the terrier in.

And poets take the
wandering thoughts
and carry them
through the harshness
of their hells
to the little outposts
into the forts and
into the settlements
and beyond,
telling the world
This isn't what we thought
This wasn't our dream
This isn't what we wanted
This isn't what we loved
We didn't see
our cloven hooves and tails.
If only good and evil
didn't wear
such clever disguises.

But maybe now we know
and maybe now we see.
Hope is always
the last one
to climb out of
the forbidden box,
and Hope grows stronger
when we sing Her songs.

A Frog is Just a Kiss Away

Watching the world
through half-closed lids,
Buddha-like...?
No, Frog-like!
I see the old play
but I no longer
feel it much.
It is not for me,
this drama.
The actors do not
turn to me
with comic asides,
and the strutting peacocks
preen for other eyes.

I must find
a new drama.
I must leave
my lily pad and
strew bright colors
across a gaudy stage
of my design.
I will toss my many masks
into the wind
and wallow in
my own adventure
devoid of all
greasepaint
and be fine with
myself
and with this world.

The Other Road

I watch them
trotting slowly
on the road less traveled.
Four white horses
looking at Not Me
seeing me not
in my parallel universe.

But I see them.
I slow
watching them
their road
trying to guess
their secrets
and why they glow.

I have no glow.
It's all a blur
here
on the superhighway
that magic energy
lies only on
the dusty rocky
secret wild horse road.

Horns honk
I must go 55.
I must keep up.
The horses are behind me now
their road is disappearing
into mist.

But NO!
I must not lose it.
I pull over
hearing shouts of rage
and warning cries.
“You can’t stop here,
You fool!”

But stop I do
fearing losing
the misty magic road
I climb the fence
barbed wire
piercing me
vicious claws
to keep me in.
A siren shrieks
I have parked
in a No parking Zone.
They want to throw
away the key.

I lay at last
in the magic road's
clean dirt.
I breath it in
savoring
delicious dust
making snow angels
in the dirt
and laughing.

I make footprints
and look at them

archaic memories
springing forth of
footprints past.
This road will know
that I was here
until the next wind comes.

The horses come along
around the bend
seeing me now
watching carefully
with thoughtful eyes.

You're welcome here
Stranger
they think to me
but there are no signs here
no laws
no ambulances
to protect you here.
I want no signs
no laws
no ambulances
I think to them.

I look back, once --
barbed-wire fence
superhighway
at the dark shapes
racing along it
orderly, a fast and
dull parade with no
clowns on bicycles.

I will not go back
I think to them
for it is living death.
They nod understanding
and trot on.
I will find others
here I know
other refugees from
the superhighway
and we will walk
this glowing
living road
and sometimes we will
glimpse
the superhighway
in the distance
and celebrate
our footprints
and the scars
of our escapes.

Sisyphus Doesn't Live Here Anymore

Maybe Sisyphus lives
around here, still, in us
as huffing, wheezing, sweaty,
we push our rocks
up the hill to the top
not even stopping to rest
while the rock rolls gleefully back
down the hill where it waits
impatiently to be pushed back up.

Me, I say, Good bye, Rock!
I run away from the
demands of stubborn rocks.
Why do you want to go back
up that hill anyway, I ask.
The rock just stares and won't even
give me his name, rank, or serial number.

You've already been up that hill.
You've already rolled down that hill.
Don't you want to see another place?
I ask.
No. The rock shakes its head.
It wants its pension.
It wants to live on a rocky flat beach
where snakes shed their skins
on the rocks.

So, when the owl hoots at midnight
I'll leave this place.
There are other hills

and other rocks to roll
and I want to see them all.

Answers on the Nowhere Road

I sit amidst the
desert rocks which
beckon still
the ghosts of those
who loved these stark
and clear-cut places.

This is the spot
the very spot
I think
to sit and solve
the puzzles and the riddles
of the cities and the towns.

But no,
I cannot think
of them just now.
I muse instead upon
the mystery populations
of the mountains just beyond.

I see the giant footprints
of a bashful mountain beast
but not the beast
never the beast
who made them.
He travels alone,
like me.

The answers do not
matter here
where questions
do not linger,
for modern puzzles
mutate fast
and destinations
are but static
accidents of time.

So, like the beast
I wander
down the dusty road.
The destinations
do not know the answers.
Perhaps they do not
even know the questions.
Only the dusty
nowhere road
might know.

Reality Reconstructions

On the way
to somewhere, and then
to somewhere else
my muddy footprints
disturbing the Daoist Universe
just a little
in my role
as audience,
but perhaps
that's just my vanity
and I affected
nothing, after all.

I saw so much and yet
was never seen myself
invisible observer and reporter
of other people's
importances.

I watched the saints proceed
down cobbled streets
as clowns in devil masks
blew their horns
with fiendish glee
and wished that I
believed in all of this.

I saw the fear of strangers
on the faces of the strangers
who I've seen
and sensed the sense

of gaiety
at other people's
parties and parades.
I did not
disturb their universe.

I heard some lies
and saw some truths
and spoke a few
of each
not knowing, then,
that I knew nothing.

Now's the time
to deconstruct
and reconstruct
reality.
Here, in this
isolated desert town
of lonely clowns
and tired, tattered saints.

Jungle Pizza

Surreal expatriotism
Down by the jungle
Dwelling among cobblestone saints
Where the air plants live
on high flying wires
suspended in time
sharing space with
Second World Illusions

Listen silently to
Neighborhood Music
between the banana trees
throbbing acoustics
wobbling through
subconscious souls
Bringing them the
gauzy summer music magic
that makes the First World
Go Away

And in the Oasis the
pied piper plays, calling
postmodern refugees
Out of illusion,
And they come,
backpacks and snakeproof boots
instead of jalopies
instead of covered wagons
instead of papyrus rafts
instead of ships of fools

The piper plays his computer
singing of something/anything
different to the frenzied,
whistling a promise of adventure
to the traffic jammed

Strumming an invitation back
to another dimension
humming a suggestion that
Reality is Still Out There
Somewhere.

Eulogy to Allen Ginsberg

I haven't thought of Allen Ginsberg in a long time. He once gave me a new world view, new to me, anyway. Among others in the beat generation, he shaped my thinking. He gave me the idea to float over myself and my niche, seeing things as a humorous, satirical crow might, looking sideways at myself as an actor in a spoof on life.

My goal, in 1965, was to live in a flimsy wooden apartment building in New York, a grimy place with a dirty naked window, a single unshaded lightbulb dangling from the ceiling, a dirty old roach infested mattress. I wanted to live on French bread and red wine, and hang around coffee houses, hearing the brilliant thoughts of Ginsberg and Ferlingetti and their friends. I wanted to suffer for ART, and maybe, maybe, someday, have some brilliant thoughts of my own.

I forgot to do that, but some of the time, I have remembered to be the humorous crow. Did I let them down, or were they a little bit pleased to see another crow watching the show from outside the circle?

They were, in a sense, my parents, the Beat Poets and writers. They raised a generation of us, and now they begin to leave us. They were wise and brave and outspoken, even in the midst of McCarthyism. Who is as wise and brave as they? Who can lead our young toward enlightenment when most of us wallow in a self-centered hole of materialism and fear?

Am I suddenly supposed to be wise and brave? I need more time!

Hell is when your gurus die and you aren't ready to take their places.

Daisy Sidewinder



Sea Carneys

Sea carnivals call to me, carnivals
carried by the wandering carney waves
to land and back
around the globe
trading bits of driftwood
seashells and jellyfish
with each other
glittering sunlight hiding surprises
crashing and splashing
driven by the moon and wind
tossing themselves at the world
with foamy glee
breaking up on the shore
tickling the toes of little children
lapping at the sides of pirate ships
always singing the songs of the waves.

They ignore the words of
fearful doldrums
warning words from those
holding tight to every drop
jealously guarding
every grain of salt and sand
warning the waves to come back
warning them to stay away from shores
where they'll be broken to bits
and have to crawl back into the sea
in pieces becoming
the bagladies and hobos of the deep
scrounging for their lost bits
to recreate themselves.

Stay here in the doldrums, they say,
where you're safe
imprisoned in safety
so that you may live
to fear again.

But a wave, having crashed against a distant shore
doesn't mind
recreating itself.

**Ghost Walkers and Other Patriots
or: If the Helmet Fits...**

I dreamed I saw
Darth Vader last night
Ghost walking through
Space
For all eternity
Looking for the secret numbers
of his Swiss bank account.

"All gone, all gone,"
he moaned
his head in his hands.
"The horror, the horror,
to be dead and broke."

"What's it like
to be Evil, Darth,"
I asked
but Darth said
he knew nothing of Evil
until he met
The Boy
The Pirate
The Princess
and the Wookiee.
"I just wanted to control
the universe,"
he whispered.

The storm troopers

stood behind him
in stiff lines wondering when
they would get to go home.

I ripped the mask off one
and woke up screaming.
I didn't want to be
a Storm Trooper
in this movie.
I hope I was
miscast.

Music Weavers

Weaving magic music
with old guitar strings,
creating new dimensions
invisible but there,
forming playgrounds for
iridescent creatures
in the miracle worlds.

Letting the sun
slide into the cave
slowly, showing the shadows
to themselves and
showing them
the crystals in the
once dark walls,
giving life to
wispy dormant thoughts
and visions of wonders
beyond my sight.

Alice's Adventures in Capitalism

Twinkle twinkle little GATT
How I wonder what you are
I think perhaps you're much too fat
To be a shining star.

I see you sitting on an Alp
With GMOs and NAFTA
I watch you dance I see you sneer
I hear your evil laughta.

The World Bank watches from its throne
A vulture at its side
Just drop your freedoms by the door
He'll take you for a ride.

Eat me, Drink Me cries Monsanto
Feeling wild and frisky
Money grows as choices shrink
It's not so very risky.

The emperor has lovely clothes
The press was heard to say
But little Alice in the crowd
Decided not to play.

The emperor is naked
He's just the rich boys' clown
They're nothin' but a pack of cards
And they can tumble down.

Ode to Everydog

What if some ancient scribe
was a little dyslexic...
transcribed Dog as God?

I dreamed this...
a place at the pearly gate
where a dingo questioned the newly deceased
about their kindness and love.

I watched those humans,
in their ignorance of
the true nature of Dog,
had stoned them for being
in the wrong yard at the wrong time,
being led, quivering and shaking,
by the Dog who once befriended Francis
to the sad Place Where Dogs Are Not,
While those who shared
their lunch with the
scraggly mutt in the park
walked right in
greeted by the wagging tails and delighted
barks of the angels.

Dog is Love
And dyslexia's been around
for a long, long time.

Ode to Cobra

I didn't notice
my wrinkles,
or the gray,
or the gravity,
much,
but young Cobra
noticed
and with sympathy
and kindness
showing in his
pretty eyes
pretty boy eyes
he smiled with all
the radiance of
a toothpaste commercial.
I can take the stress
from your lovely face
he murmured
brushing the silver
gently from my brow
for a reasonable fee
because I like you
so much.

Does this mean
I've reached
"a certain age?"
Have I reached the age
of advertising smiles
and deference

on the beach
from friendly young men
with guileless eyes
and open hands?
I have always been
curious.
I have always wanted
to meet a gigolo.
I didn't expect a gigolo
to want to meet me.

Letting Go of Jim

I dreamed I must
let go of you, the
man I loved
with so much turbulence
and still love now
sometimes
on lonely, bluesy nights.

It was as if
your soul crawled
from its sooty cave
into the light
and speaking softly
unaccustomed
these long decades
to honest speech
blinded for a moment
by long-forgotten beauty
the forest greens
beyond the field
dark and warm
amidst the sunlit
prairie grass in which
we stood.

It's too late you
say it's far too late
vague shapes behind
me walking talking
slow and serious

a little too impersonal
say he is right
it is too late
there will be no
reprieve.

But no, I will not
listen, I have hope
to fix your ailing liver
sweep away the virus
rearrange the neurons
in your brain with
Keep Out signs for
your addictions
and bandaids
many bandaids
for the pains
of your existence.

There is no hope
no hope at all
the voices say
and you agree
and look away.
You can fight
this I tell you
I will argue
your case before a
judge, St. Peter himself,
and a jury
of twelve strong angels
good and true
and we will win
I say, for I will be

so eloquent
to make the angels cry.

No no, you shake your head
no no, the voices echo
those unseen figures
pacing close behind me
a little out of focus
always behind me
no matter how I
turn to try to face them.
I think you see them
and the distant forest
I see that you are
like one half-asleep
and half-aware
not ready yet
to run across the grass
and plunge into the trees.
You are much younger
here, the you who
lives inside
your shell of pain.

I cannot ask
that you would
stay inside
the crusted cave of
your design.
The roof becomes
too heavy with the
weight of your collections
and the uninvited bats
and barnacles of

life and age.
I fear I recognize
some barnacles and cobwebs
there, remnants of those
days of you and I
accidentally forgotten or cast off
of course, I never meant
to darken your windows.
I had the best intentions.

My heart says stay
please stay
don't brush away
the cobwebs of
our life together
grimy and heavy
as they may seem to you.
I sometimes shine
those cobwebs lovingly
and patch them up
with crazy glue.
My soul says run
into the woods
with joy, be free.
But none of this
is really up to me.

The Old Nail Seller

Scrawny and toothless
Covered in rags
Sitting cross legged in the dirt,
Her little collection of
Nails for Sale
Arranged before her
Made in Korea, Sold in Morocco
by the old woman
with the ancient mythic eyes
showing kindness, wisdom, curiosity
Until I paid too much for nails
she knew I didn't need
my dollar my insurance
my ticket into heaven.
I waited for her grateful thanks.

Why does she laugh
softly and sadly to herself?
Why do I now see pity
in those eyes?
Why would a skinny, toothless
old woman pity an
American with teeth?
With a good job?
With a new Buick?
Does she know something
I don't know?
Does she think I have
too much to learn?

Does she suspect that my new Buick
won't take me to the Cosmos?
Does my toothpaste smile
remind her of the changeless smiles
of ancient skulls on museum shelves?
Does she see my soul and
Does it shine less brightly
than her little array of
stainless steel nails?

She doesn't need teeth
to smile with beauty
I see,
Something they hadn't
taught me in America.

I want to know what she knows.
I want to see the places my Buick
can't take me to.
I want to quit my job and
be her apprentice.
I want to be her, when I grow up.

Another Dimension Heard From

(as told to on a Streetcar in New Orleans

by an Unknown Entity)

I am the listener
I hear
dreams and wishes
whispered
on twilight summer
blankets of heat
simmering
on musky clouds by
animated wish-makers,
Never real to me
lifelike cartoons against
this enchanted backdrop
balloons in human form
inflated by
their own desires.

Dreams and dreamers
Make-believe balloons
floating through
My World.

Are they there?
Shall I pinch one?
I cannot enter
I cannot see
inside them.
I question the humanness

of humanity
and the humanity
of humankind.

I cannot be them
I cannot feel them
I can only
listen
and wonder.

The Fears of an Unknown Planet

Beautiful unknown planet
Circling slowly
Lazily
Do you watch with amazement
the colorful ones
running and spinning and
manipulating their satellites
absorbed with their closeness
to the sun and their
place in the order of things?

Did you hope
lovely lonely planet
that you could drift
in a never ending orbit
for eternity
invisible beyond the margins of
the known solar system?

Do you fear discovery
and being dragged with soundless screams
into the bedlam and chaos
of their self-important circles
or can you, should you,
like the outermost electron,
bond with another solar system
for an eon or so and escape
the endless discussions
and traumas and egos.

You know you fear they will
suck you in, if they see you
with their high powered telescopes
and send out space probes
and inspections and analyses and cameras
their weight pulling you too close too fast, and
you fear they will warm you with welcomes
until show and tell is over,
and then stake their space and
put up their portable
no trespassing signs.

Can you should you
enter the drama or
sneak out at intermission
and watch another play
down the universe apiece,
seeing all the beginnings
but never an end.

Silent Mourning, Silent Howls

I am the wolf
atop the mountain mesa
of my private
meditation place.
The moon is up.
My nighttime sky
is littered with visions
of my mentor,
my old guru.
I want to howl
I try to howl
but no sounds come.

Come back! Come back!
but no
the vase is broken
and all is scattered
across the damp Saltillo tile.
Scattered yes
but not dispersed
twigs of honey locust
delicate and painful
tall white yucca stalks
stay for now, I beg you
just a moment longer.
I want you there
Free, if you must be.
Perhaps you do not
need a vase.

Too soon these remnants
will be gone as well
gathered up and away
and the sounds of
silent howls
alone
will bounce against the
dry Saltillo tiles
and my old guru
will live only
in the wild and lonely places
in my mind.