

The Hat

When I close my eyes I see the pond
and all of us skating—it must have been
December, Christmas vacation, me home

and all of us skating on the Hewitts'
pond. Ah Jenny! Do you remember?
You whizzed by, plucked my hat away

and tucked it in your red sweater.
I followed you, caught you, thrust
my hand inside the sweater, and wham!

My face stung long afterwards. I was
so young I didn't know. I was only
reaching for my hat, stupid me. Now

I wish I had known, known how to make
a game of the stealing, the reaching,
the recovery. Had I known, I might

Have kissed you in the barn, deep
in the bales of hay, when we played
hide-and-seek or sardines

The Man Who Fought with His Computer

He knew it would one day come to this—
the computers taking over as they did
in the old science fiction movies, editing
his punctuation, changing lower case
to capitals, and suggesting even new words.

One day the computer overreached. Now
it was war. He had signed a student letter
Dr. A., short for Dr. Abbott, informal, friendly—
but the computer had insisted he change it
to "drab." "Drab" indeed. He was not drab,

not in the least. Some of the computer's
ideas were passable, even funny. Calling his
nephew Stu "stud." Or his poet friend Valentina
Gnup "gnu" or even "gun." His favorite was
"grandpa renting" which the computer derived

from "grandparenting." Yes, the grandchildren did, on some level, rent their grandpa, and to suggest his grandpa name, Babbo, be changed to "baboon" was only reasonable from a computer point of view. But to call his dog "Junie" a "Junkie" was simply

an insult as was the idea that Frederick Buechner was a butcher. Butcher indeed, Mr. Computer, it is you who butchers the English language, putting a turban on my friend Turhan's head and reducing Montaigne to a montage.

Ah well, you are not so smart after all, you with your oh so clever ideas like reducing St. Louis to "stylus" or MWF to MIFF or MUFF. But I must admit that calling Professor Emily Seelbinder "spellbinder" shows true imagination.

So see if you can do better than "drab."

Anthony Abbott is a retired professor of Davidson College in North Carolina, whose volumes of poetry include *The Girl in the Yellow Raincoat* (1989), *A Small Thing Like a Breath* (1993), *The Search for Wonder in the Cradle of the World* (2000), and *The Man Who* (2005).

Mendel

Mendel in the monastery
muses over pea-plants,
stoops to scatter pollen
from one to another:
short yellow
 wrinkled green
 smooth tall

Mendel in the shadowed garden,
year after silent year,
pores over pea-plants,
plotting permutations:
tall wrinkled
 yellow smooth
 green short.

Mendel in the cloisters
ponders the patterns,
dies without knowing
he found the key to life:
tall short
 green yellow
 wrinkled smooth.

Linda Bosson is a writer in Pittsburgh. Her poetry has appeared in *Red Rock Review*, *Natural Bridge*, *Southern Poetry Review*, *Rockhurst Review*, *Green Mountains Review*, and other publications.

Bay Farm Island

(Alameda, California)

Wind blows windsurfer sails seaward
beneath the full curve of a gull's wing.

Sand responds not to the steadiness of wind,
but just lies there, daring it to blow everything away,
as the wind tugs, ripples, vies with tides, surf,
and headwinds that turn tables
turned by past seasons.

Joggers oil their hearts with sweat,
prepare for races to be won nose by toe.

Voices of fishermen are caught and
fanned into the wind. Sleek hulls sail
into currents too loud for metal detectors,
too short for memory, too violent
for peaceful bicyclers on a Sunday afternoon.

Richard Alan Bunch's collections include *Greatest Hits*, *Rivers of the Sea*, and *Sacred Space*. His poems have appeared in *Many Mountains Moving*, *Kennesaw Review*, *California Quarterly*, *Poetry New Zealand* and *Black Mountain Review*. His latest poetry collection is *Running for Daybreak* (Mellen Poetry Press) He resides with his family in Davis, California.

A Grand March

Again with the absence of feeling, gaining of fat
Not for winter but for hiding and burning, rolling in

holding up to the light. Remarkable. When
could there be more waiting around?

When could fingernails grow any longer?
There are empty train cars to attend,

too much paperwork for deciding,

there must be something to do with the loss. An upset,
perhaps a glimpse of bare elbow

whose swallow draws in all light and breath;
then a subsequent restart—

Mary Flanagan's writing has appeared in several books and journals, including the first volume of *The Electronic Literature Collection* (2006). "Reskinning the Everyday," a blend of critical and experimental text, is forthcoming in the anthology *re:SKIN* (MIT Press).

The Old Man and The Sea

I'm telling you truthfully.
I had a dream Manolin.
The fish was wretchedly big.

But the sky, Santiago,
The sky was the same as always,
Wasn't it?

It was heaving the way the sea
Heaves in a storm and the light purple
Of twilight had darkened, and the fish
Was wretchedly big.

Do you tell me this to frighten me?

I tell you this because I tell
You everything and I

Am frightened.

But I am just a boy
And you are a very old man—
Why should you be fearful?

I'm telling you this fish
Was wretchedly big.
We should stay in today.

Matthew Kearney

In the Woods

I am Hanzel in the forest among fear.
I put my finger outside the cage.
It wears thin.
The danger of dust is coughing.
The danger of getting caught is being eaten
By the witch.
I can always throw her Gretel.
But I'm not as much of a coward as I seem.
I think I could be heroic.
I'd follow my breadcrumbs home.
But the birds ate them.
Still I am a bird watcher and know how to follow
Their flight.

David Lawrence's new book, *Lane Changes* by Four Way Books, will become available in 2007. He used to be a professor; now he's a boxing coach.

The Cardinal

If, in a clean, clear-windowed classroom
on an early summer's day,
as you stare at your somnolent students,
you let your eyes drift away -

You might catch a glimpse of a shimmering wing,
crimson, a raining rose red,
and, failing to dismiss that bird as a thing,

utter a soft "You" instead-

Then find that your students are no longer students,
the room, no longer a room,
as you stare at that full-feathered cardinal
with nothing to claim or assume -

The air now nameless, wordless,
your voice, no longer your own,
as if, by some grace, you were knowing
all that could ask to be known.

Jeannine Pitas is a native of Buffalo, New York and a 2005 graduate of Sarah Lawrence College. Her work has appeared in *The Buffalo News* and *The Looking Glass*, Sarah Lawrence's undergraduate literary journal. "The Cardinal" was inspired by Martin Buber's *I and Thou* (which she highly recommends that you read) and by her philosophy professor, Nancy Baker.

Fall Planting

A week ago we ripped
two roses out, giddy
to see them go: no blooms,

plenty of thorns--regrets
come from not what we've done
but from what we haven't

as winter fires her rifle
closer to the house. Soon
ground will harden, frost's

white flame igniting. Today
November suns our jackets.
A Margaret DuRoss dahlia,

always fashionably late
to any garden party,
wears her best orange babushka--

in this time of endings,
we plant. A sudden gust.
We plant some more.

Winter-ruption

Daffodil and aconite bulbs crave
cold's touch. They wait. While
we hang pictures we meant to hang
for months, cover ourselves in

blue afghans, wind makes awnings
sound like off-kilter washing machines--
the first snow flake drops,
a white rock on a leaf's torn back.

Secret

Naughty Marietta marigolds
open early this year, in mid-May--
they bloom and bloom, know what autumn holds,

when trees shoo off brown leaves. Summer folds
her tent, looks nervous, and runs away.
Naughty Marietta marigolds

crank out more buds. A peeved bluejay scolds
a robin too near her nest. Each day
they bloom and bloom, know what autumn holds--

a secret, death, that slowly unfolds.
August trembles down, death on the way.
Naughty Marietta marigolds

don't flinch or worry, keep their households
tidy, pleased by raindrop or sunray—
they bloom and bloom, know what autumn holds

when cold nights will put them in blindfolds,
lead them to a hard frost, sky gone gray.
Naughty Marietta marigolds,
they bloom and bloom, know what autumn holds.

Kenneth Pobo

Caterpillars

I search – something
is eating the butterfly
weed in its salt-glazed
pot, stripping orange

sprays. Two smartly
dressed caterpillars -
green and black stripes -
lurk in blossoms, pepper
the counter with droppings.

Not stopping to think
they might chrysalis
into wings, I grasp each
between thumb and first
finger, pinch shut their double
softness. One worm squirts
my white shirt. To squeeze

the trigger against any them,
a crime - if condoned, still
brought home to haunt. Q-tip

sopped in bleach. I dab cloth.

Margaret A. Robinson's most recent publications are in *Bellevue Literary Review*, *Rhino*, and *Prairie Schooner*. She teaches at Widener University and is a gardener. "Dark blue morning glories - much adored weeds - festoon my compost pile fence."

Zero Season

this is the transplant season
pillars falling, pedestals rising
without an anthem

this blood pilgrim / that blood pilgrim
the courier to these differences
too hurt to exit - locks

I might love you...

Battered and broken,
death's smile stretched
wildly across
like a stalled, final goodbye.

Beneath the rhythm
of my footsteps, march
ants in cadence
towards your grim feast.

If only
they were strong enough
to carry you

far away. If only
they could lift you—
your weight
a still parade.

Judson Simmons resides in Bronxville, NY, where he works in the main library at Sarah Lawrence College. His work has appeared or is forthcoming in *Big Muddy*, *Westview*, and *Pebble Lake Review*.

Flashback with Cousins

The windows are open
again. Spring pours through,
not just spring but the
spring of thirteen:
the smell of jasmine,
the yellow of forsythia
against the dark.

Then, warm wind, like
whiskey. This feeling, less
and less now: the clench
of soft muscles, deep inside,
a nervous hand reaching
for something
it doesn't know.

A motel in Alabama, night
after a cousin's wedding,
cold blue lights in the pool,
hanging lanterns, grownups
smoking, ice clinking,
cousins.

No way to prepare.
And now, thirty years
later, again-the night
wind entering this hot
room. Sprinklers hiss.

And you out there,
making all this
happen.

Anna Smith grew up in Greensboro, North Carolina and now lives in Junction City, California where she works at a center for Tibetan Buddhism.

If I Could

Spade in hand, scents of earth
and mulch thick as incense
burning, I teeter between
two worlds, the tangible and
the implausible. My prayers punctuate
our silences, quiet as breaths.
You don't hear. In the dusk,
seated only feet away
you are almost a ghost.
The lobelia's blue intensifies,
peonies deepen

as the seconds tick. An ant,
erratic, crosses my paused glove
so intent he doesn't dream
this mountain can move. The air
lives another life in my lungs,
molecules spinning, splitting
without thought. If I could,
I would step over
into the butterfly's body

with its knowledge of miracles
and heal you in your chair.

Nearby in the orchard dark,
daisies float, disembodied
gray stars with nebulous power.
Something I can't quite hear

parts the bluestem field.
Swifts dive and dart overhead,
catching what I can't see.

I lift a finger so easily.
Impulses speed along the neural
paths. To conjure light should be as simple.

Terri Wolfe