

The Beach in Southold  
To Carolyn Lass

Since my grandchild is six  
he knows he'll reach China  
if he digs deep enough.

Clink! The shovel's hit metal;  
something glints in the sun. He's  
turned up a ring, gold with a whitened stone,  
ragged around the edges. Maybe there's an inscription?

A mad fumble for my glasses in the bottomless beach bag --  
Snapple, peach pits, sunscreen #35 -- and the inscription reads  
*"Southold High School, 1960, J.H.K."*

A grandmother is nothing if she isn't a sleuth,  
so Monday I phone up Southold High.  
"Who's J.H.K., 1960, and where is he now?" I ask.

Well I wouldn't have believed it  
but Main Office secretaries sure can scramble.  
Everyone loves a good romance.  
They track down the dusty yearbooks;  
They find our J.H.K.

We meet on the beach --  
my grandchild; the tall straight man of middle age; the sleuthing grandma.  
And J.H.K. tells how he lost his ring.

Thirty-three years ago, at Southold Beach,  
on his first sail,  
the ring fell overboard.  
He was certain he'd lost it forever.

The three of us are barefoot in the white sand;  
the sun still hangs in the apricot sky;  
not "lost forever," I think.  
Our beach held his youth for him,  
~~And brought him following seas.~~

Enid Graf

## THE ANTELOPE

FOR JAY PARINI

Both of us understood the concentric circles  
of tone honked by a flight of nun-collared  
Canadian geese winging eloquently  
on the backside of the nimble northwest wind.  
Fall frost was glazed on tanned grass stems  
that leaned south pointing the direction  
to the green in winter. You surveyed the whipped  
Wyoming plains, the indifferent leader standing  
on a favorite look-out a mile or so away.  
What could you know of an eighteen year-  
old's cunning, brazen and crouching  
in furs of fantasy, the lone hunter  
and provider of dripping fresh meat to a cave,  
home to shivering babies, a hungry woman  
and shriveled parents? Who would condemn me  
as I lifted my .22 in the silence of  
my anointed purpose, squeezed my finger against  
the cold of indifferent metal and arched  
my lead-nosed missile? It was only an idea  
that could never travel the distance;  
but somehow the bullet pursued my intention,  
that killing tool I toyed with, and ravaged  
your flesh perfected from a thousand generations  
of soul and light. Shocked first, all insight  
shattered, then crazed, your vision  
blinded and controlled by a reddening nightmare,  
inexperienced terror exploding through your lips.  
No longer would we contemplate  
the meaning of unwavering winds that slip  
the seasons past us like faded pictures we've etched  
on our memories. You charged directly at me, on that,  
your last run, dropped within feet, asking only  
for an explanation in exchange for your death.

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by Donald Everett Axinn  
from The Colors of Infinity  
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Love Poem

for Jerome

Late, you ran across the marsh  
in tee-shirt, shorts, bare legs  
and sneakers, carrying  
your clamming pail, growing  
smaller, smaller  
until like a child again  
silhouetted on the horizon  
of grasses you joined him  
in the inlet knee deep in mud  
digging out steamers, oysters

and watching you I thought  
it's funny the moments love chooses  
to reveal itself. The tide turned then  
and against its inevitable force  
the two of you worked hard  
side by side in the cool afternoon.

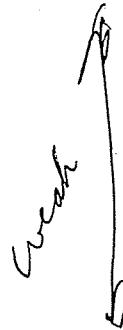
## THE SURF

A. B. Ferrato

Vibrating underfoot  
Crashing, pounding waves  
Uniquely, no two are the same.  
Awesome, rushing towards the beach  
Intimidating rocks and sand alike  
Churning white foam coils  
Against teal grey hues.

Menacing rip-tides lurk beneath  
Its brutal force is fearsome  
But, even a roaring wall of water  
Ends whispering at a landfall.

*weave*



*stung*

Macadem streams swirl and twist among them today - super  
highways filled with ~~the~~ sounds of fast cars, and singing  
tires.

Rainbow colored signs promise treasures and joys just ahead.

Vines creep slowly,

Winds slash and strain,

Icy teeth gnaw and scrape.

One by one the chimneys will be ground apart and disappear.

Judith Ann Costa  
2 Peconic Overlook  
Shinnecock Hills, NY 11946  
25 lines

EVENSONG

The cicadas have hummed all day  
Now ten-thirty evening  
They still sound off  
Their sexy siren call.

As we promenade around the point  
Worry stalks us...privacy loss,  
The beach house's plummy days gone,  
A vicious neighbor's feud ensues.

A scuffle through fallen gold  
Distracts you my lover  
Not at all. You worry by  
Inflicting a wound on yourself.

Ancient strategem of god  
Appeasement internalized.  
Ritual repetition comforts  
Us as fish crows screech.

Are we really rootless?  
Neither here nor there?  
In a gypsy condition?  
In transition...

Trying to make sense  
Of a senseless world?  
The cicadas ceaselessly  
Sing a serenade.  
Shouldn't we?

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if he digs deep enough.

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turned up a ring, gold with a whitened stone,  
ragged around the edges. Maybe there's an inscription?

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Snapple, peach pits, sunscreen #35 -- and the inscription reads  
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Well I wouldn't have believed it  
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And J.H.K. tells how he lost his ring.

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on his first sail,  
the ring fell overboard.  
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the sun still hangs in the apricot sky;  
not "lost forever," I think.  
Our beach held his youth for him,  
And brought him following seas.

Enid Graf

CREATION

March 21, 1993

Max Mobley

In the pueblo, Kantokan bent to her work.

She decided

For the form, I will use husk

For the hair, corn-silk

For the eyes, dark beans

For cheeks and lips, crushed berries

For clothing, a strip of skin

For ornament, this bright feather

And, so she did.

Singing softly,

swaying gently,

offering doll to east, to west, to north, to south -

to sky, to sun, to air, to Spirit.

She saw that it was good:

Made of the earth

Made of the harvest

Made of the Spirit.

Clapping her hands, Kantokan laughed.



*Helen  
Cooper*

Where the Fishing Boats Come to Rest

This morning I stood  
at the end of the dock  
and saw my shadow  
chiaroscuro on the waves:

they slithered over my feet  
and I was careful  
how I walked back along  
those slippery planks of wood.

## FROM TWIGS

Morning's mail brought to our door a slender, peat-lined tube  
delivering a world of scrawny, bare, sticks. Ten,  
maybe a dozen --- God alone knows ---  
Each, totally indistinguishable.  
Each, tightly wedged inside. And each,  
wrapped in newsprint showing  
familiar, living-color illustrations: glorious

landscapes where yellow glints signify  
Forsythia, trumpets of cherry-pink; Weigelia,  
tiny massed clusters of white; Spirea. All  
nestle under Silver Maple's shimmering umbrella  
and Dogwood's delicate, ladylike flutter. Nearby,  
an Apple Tree is in boisterous bloom.

An Apple Tree!

We, with the cockeyed optimism that envisioned  
sod lawns replacing mud, a patio  
and circular driveway from bags of Screte  
piled atop rusty wheelbarrow, saw  
our backyard,  
our Apple Tree,  
our children swinging on its lower branches,  
and everything, the ad said:

"...for-only-ten-affordable-dollars...." Little price

for a dream. Then,  
dream-in-a-tube in hand,  
all we were to do, was the impossible: figure  
which stick  
was what plant.  
We just dug everything in.

What thrived, we identified.

An Apple Tree!

Apple blossom's fragrance made us giddy.  
We fertilized, fungicized, watered, wrapped  
plastic baggies over tiny apples,  
hung branches with clattery whirlygig devices  
for chasing pecky birds away. Then,

miracles:

applesauce,  
apple-stuffed coffee cake  
and apple pies' with  
cinnamon/brown sugar juices bubbling up  
seeping between crusts, spilling  
across oven's bottom, burning  
scents of Home  
through hearth's every corner.

F.L.H.  
1-93/10/93

## JAY PARINI

---

### *Mizzle*

The sodden weather of an early spring:  
loose gravel on the road, the ice-floes melting  
in the brook behind a patch of hemlocks.

I could smell the pine-tar, mud and mint,  
the stink of fox: a wan slow smell  
in winds that gathered from a nearby swamp.

The deadly owl's asleep by rosy dawn,  
but one fat raven lifts its wings  
and veers into a field and drops from sight.

They say that somewhere in this range of hills  
a man still wanders who left home last year,  
an old man looking for the end of time.

A thousand stumps that stud the swampland  
once were something you might want to climb;  
I watch them sink to silt and crumble,

decomposing in the same sure way  
that everything we love at last undoes  
its laces, sighs at ease, then lays

its head down, nuzzles into loam,  
relinquishing the lovely stand of life  
to meld, the slow atomic mince and slaughter.

## *Belonging*

I do not belong here  
in a summer field at midnight, walking.

It is not my world, however much  
I love the brightness falling from the air,  
the slur of tires on blackened roads,  
freesia in the wind;  
the long wet grass around my knees.

A million crickets work their wings:  
they multiply, divide, play all the numbers  
and survive in noisy August clouds.  
One anthill underfoot is Nineveh or Rome,  
depending on how close I care to look.  
An owl is steady in the highborn oak  
and watching for what moves.  
A green eye tilts beneath a log.

In China,  
one old man is sitting by a yew;  
he's puzzling over what he never said  
to one who died.  
In hot Zimbabwe, there is someone's mother  
by the bloody ditch  
without a word of explanation.  
In Salvador, a small girl asks for more.

So many stories.  
I would hear them all.  
Write down each sentence till the pages tore,  
till ink was spittle  
and the world's last tear returned to ocean  
and my flesh was dirt.

Tonight, however, I will speak  
but for myself.

The sky snows stars.  
I feel the slow, compulsive spinning  
of the globe through night,  
the axle of the earth  
that drives a needle through my heart again.  
I hear the high and spectral whine  
of unborn spirits wanting more.  
I won't pretend to welcome,  
wave them down.

It's not my world to give away.

A LOVE SONG  
For a Fashion Show

If I had a camel  
In Manhattan where I dwell  
We'd go hopping see the sights  
I'd really dress her swell

And for those special occasions  
When I'd take her to the zoo  
I'd shop at Phil the Furriers  
Where I'd love to shop for you

I'd ask that charming camel  
What she loves the very best  
Is it shorty foxy jacket  
Or a modest sable vest

She'd lift one leg a little  
And with saucy-sexy blink  
She'd answer  
Oh my darling

I adore  
The full length minic

Marsha Siegel 8/24/93

Love Poem

for Jerome

Helen  
Cooper

Late, you ran across the marsh  
in tee-shirt, shorts, bare legs  
and sneakers, carrying  
your clamming pail, growing  
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Intimidating rocks and sand alike  
Churning white foam coils  
Against teal grey hues.  
Menacing rip-tides lurk beneath  
Its brutal force is fearsome  
But, even a roaring wall of water  
Ends whispering at a landfall.

Margie Duncan

November 1991

Desert

The house on the shore of the desert  
Opens its doors to the wind.

Inside I lie on sand-swept floor  
that sways with the breathing current.

Outside night stretches, a shadowy cat,  
Alert in the dark for sounds.

I am the only water for miles.

My thoughts are the only whisper, except  
for the wind that shifts,  
the waves that sigh, and the sand  
Beating against the walls of my house.

John T. Wolfe  
445 Lockwood Drive  
East Yaphank, N.Y. 11967-12

## Life Cycle

As the Sun sparkles  
on the sand,  
the ocean waves  
sculpt the beach,

The sounds,  
~~the~~ smell,  
the feeling  
of life being created.

~~With the persuasive force~~  
of the gentle tides  
~~the shells roll~~  
and grind themselves  
into oblivion — OR,

~~What is that bubbles floating by?~~

Could ~~it~~ be a forms of life  
seeking the building blocks  
provided by ~~its~~ <sup>THEIR</sup> world,  
~~to~~ someday grow into  
a beautiful masterpieces  
that brings ~~a~~ smiles  
to a child's face?  
*children's*

John T. Wolfe  
445 Lockwood Drive  
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at the end of the dock  
and saw my shadow  
chiaroscuro on the waves:

they slithered over my feet  
and I was careful  
how I walked back along  
those slippery planks of wood.

LONELY CHIMNEYS

October 19, 1991

Max Mobley

Stone chimneys

are silent sentries

of abandoned farms and lost dreams

in Tennessee.

Friendly rooms

that huddled close to their hearths

lie now in rotted ruins.

Like tombstones,

chimneys give testimony to that which has

passed.

Lonely, grieving hearts decipher their epitaphs:

here - a frail, old man waited for the crop-saving  
rain that never came.

here - a woman wept over her still-born infant,  
wrapped her tenderly and buried her in a  
cardboard box beneath a flowering tree.

here - the pretty boy who grew to love men ended his  
shame with a bullet. So they say.

here, here and here - young couples rushed to Detroit  
and Granite City,

seeking greenback rewards in cars and steel.

Only the chimneys remain - mute and eloquent reminders of  
times when things were different.

Macadem streams swirl and twist among them today - super  
highways filled with the sounds of fast cars and singing  
tires.

Rainbow colored signs promise treasures and joys just ahead.

Vines creep slowly,

Winds slash and strain,

Icy teeth gnaw and scrape.

One by one the chimneys will be ground apart and disappear.

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March 21, 1993

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She decided

For the form, I will use husk

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For ornament, this bright feather

And, so she did.

Singing softly,

swaying gently,

offering doll to east, to west, to north, to south -

to sky, to sun, to air, to Spirit.

She saw that it was good:

Made of the earth

Made of the harvest

Made of the Spirit.

Clapping her hands, Kantokan laughed.



## TREE

FOR NADINE HEYMAN

Do you remember when  
I was little? You were my

comforter, a canopy with  
wings spread wide, who listened when

I couldn't talk to *them*.  
You were my refuge from spring rains,

summer's scorch and in winter  
flakes of wet snow. I would stand

tight to your rough skin, your  
thick body blocked me from the iced winds.

They couldn't hear  
our whisperings and the things we shared.

If I cried you would touch me  
or do something to make me forget.

When I climbed way up in your arms,  
I was taller, more powerful

than anyone below.  
I loved you in ways I could

never explain, and one day  
you said my initials were yours.

I grew up, went across  
the horizon, planted new trees.

Yesterday I watched them cut  
you down, dump you on that

flat-bed hearse, your limbs gaping,  
graceless, uncoordinated, awkward,

sliced into grotesque pieces.  
I followed as they carted you

couched in your embarrassment—  
uncovered—onto Main Street

like a freak show for all to see.  
But somehow, even after all that

you were still alive, juices oozed  
out your sheared limbs and you lifted

a few leaves, waved into  
a last wind. I turned from your

final humiliation,  
unwilling to witness the very

end, after your last gasp, when  
someone would warm themselves over

your burning bones, perhaps  
laughing by the heat of your heart.

by Donald Everett Axinn  
from Against Gravity  
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