

Michael D. Nordhart

A Few Poems by an itinerant field worker

Who was also a small-time country guitarist, ranch hand,
A cowboy who lost his horse, became a mountain man,
then a farmer when he married a widow who played piano.

Hitchhiker approaching the transient dusk

Sunlight cast on a slanted windshield, eclipsed—
A shadow appears to wait behind the glass,
Or is the interior, invisible to him, empty?

There seems: A face inside the cab, watching--
From that dusty old pickup truck in a dirt lot.
Is he looked at from behind his own reflection?

Sunset, wrath—resentment—
Retreat. In the dark—a cricket.
Burnt red army defeated.

Wood Pile with Hatchet

Stains of melted snow in March, turn dark:
The hearts of dry, split logs (to all exposed),
Where seeds with insects lite and fungus grows.

Ripened berries, in June, like broken dancers
Waste, collapsed in death by rites of spring,
They fall to break and lie in beauty, bleed

Dark blue, dark with rain and moss.

On an Early Evening

She leaves with me and walks.
Inside of all I write she breathes
her poems--we talk of death
In winter, comfort, cold.

Her reason wounded,
She waits with-in her need,
The buried seed consumed,
Like me is born, but old

And honest: Lore and spell
Through muffled blow
The darkest stories
Of my footfall heart,

She'll tell, then tread
With me the mystic snow,
No hell to dread; for now,
No heaven's peak to climb.

I wander near to enter
The garden gate, a creed
To ponder, hear her
Linger there but go,

Or lest awake too soon--

The covered root and seed

That best I take to eat

When pumpkins ripe, to know

That just to feel her mist of quiet

blue, by winter kissed, a warmth,

a promise, in her cold embrace.

You are the darkness I breathe upon

You are the bend of light in time and space--

A stage. Were you not, there would be no play,

No actor. There would be no dream to wake from.

Movements, measures, words, no artful villain,

Reactionary splashes of pain, pleasure, music.

No ocean mist that rises, falls and rises, churns,

Conceives the deep storm torments of my desire--

A sky that rains to mix with emptiness, spiraling

Relentless on the surface of your fleeting smiles,

Moments, moons reflected, blinks enhanced between
attempts to grasp; my powers relinquished, drowned
In wave lips of salt and wet, a sea tide swell surrender--

To chance, to death; evasive, detached and ever changing
Expressions of the illusory. A luminescence briefly seen
In your face, a beauty that is cruel and worshiped. Beneath--

My wonder, in love with all those beings--transient, forgetful,
Tragic beings who swim that dangerous beauty of your deep.

In Winter We Skate

Like children we imitate the birds.
In unison match each other's turns.

Recklessly suspended, coupled, rotate
The vortex, quickening, we levitate

Outward to the edge, yet inward hold,
Magnetic fields with balanced poles.

A Voice I Hear Behind Entreats

For me to stop, do not attempt to re-create,
skate after, catch that dance of courtship--
Gone. Accept: The widening cracks of ice.
They seep to sink and spread their portent.

Come back, I hear the voice behind me say,
Return to eat, at least. Let go the memory
Of her, retreat from worship: Your sacrifice
To fantasies in a dream, ideal. Release her.

Do I reject the voice? Resume the chase? Away
your figure seems to go, but still, as if you wait—
A non-existent star, though so far from me in time,
your distant light in darks expanse can still be seen.

My Mother Calls to End This Play

with romance, with ideals and sentiment.

She scolds to never blindly skate on ice that's thin,
to risk a break on cold with death in crushing depths
of darkness, fear. Return to me, again, she says,
from melancholy, attachments, desires. Return

to my kitchen. Climb that mountain tomorrow.

Sit beside me, read. Recite the story of your life,
your voyage home and speak to me in tongues. Sing
of monsters fought and all the men, religions traveled,
evil spells, powerful witches thwarted, even courtly

outsmarted, sexed, resisting sirens, hungers lust.

And envy. Tell a story. Rest in a single beginning,
Middle and end of a morning dew drop eye of eternity.

Wait. Then, leave, go ride with her, your Valkyrie,
your lover. And fly to the edge of screams, of wind,
your hurricane of words turning, turning.

Horizon

Retain a non-existent past, imagined future.

We fly to keep from what we fear. We flee
the truth, we seek the fairyland of forever,
under the rainbow, where all events will die.
