

POETRY

AT THE

BACKYARD

Sept 13, 2023
Tahoe Poetry Collective





KINGS BEACH CLEAN-UP DAY

BLOCK PARTY

SEPTEMBER 30TH | 1:00 PM - 7:00 PM

BEAR BELLY BREWING CO. PRESENTS

BEARTOBERFEST

DELICIOUS FOOD FROM

EL BUEN ZASON

LIVE MUSIC WITH

TRUCKEE MOUNTAIN BANDITS

KIDS CRAFTS, FACE PAINTING, AND

LOCAL VENDORS

Spend the morning tidying up our neighborhood, and spend the afternoon celebrating together!



Located at: 8428 Trout Ave., Kings Beach (behind Bank of the West)



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Untitled

Jessica Hilman

I met death tonight
We've gotten close
She hides in the darkest shadows
The 3am tears rolling down your face
The unsent texts
The screams
The silence

She beckons you
How far are you willing to go
How long are you willing to fight

She doesn't shy away from the light though
No
You'll find her on a Sunday morning
Drinking coffee in the sunshine
Or that smile you flash to a stranger

She's never too far
Like a scar that never quite fades

She doesn't mean to frighten you though
No
She's here to teach you
Sit long enough with death
And you will taste the sweet nectar of life

You are to me

Jessica Hilman

You are
To me
The darkest of nights
The brightest of days
The sun the moon and the Milky Way
You are
To me
A smile from a stranger
A really, really good book
A burning fire
You are
to me
Laughter from children
My favorite song
That last bite of cake I was saving
You are
To me
Music to my soul
Blood in my veins
Air in my lungs
You are
To me
Every heart beat
Every strike of thunder
Every raging river
You are
To me

The World of Wonder

John Merryfield

Just after takeoff
a young girl sitting in the window seat
next to her mother
announces:

I can see the entire world!
The entire world, Mom!
Look!
It's everywhere!

Her words are white cottonseeds
from a cottonwood tree
from a distance
large drifting poems

Though, the girl's mother
in the middle seat was head-deep
in People magazine, giving an obligatory nod

Evidently, on this rocket plane
wondrously defying
the laws of gravity
the world of wonder is concealed
by window shades, like terms
deeply buried teachings
in caves
or lakes
or in the sky
and only uncovered
at just the right moment to help humanity,
or even just one single person,
like an old poet
sitting in the aisle seat.

Haiku

John Merryfield

pacifist-
a soldier captured
by moonlight

Close to Home

Jerry Merryfield

Outside our jerrybuilt shack
with comma-shaped clouds
my path is a collection of broken things
Driftwood
fragments of tile.

I am not a sea turtle who navigates at sea by sensing the lines of Earth's magnetic field.

I never learned the Polynesian method of using stars and birds and waves as compass.

I am an alcoholic guided by the visions of Cody, an ankle monitor keeps me close to home.

I am like water, I remain still or I never stop.

I am overly prone to despair.

I am the slightest of openings at the center of a puka shell.

cool ocean fog
the tiniest pebble
has a voice.

To The Open Fields

John Merryfield

My wife is trying to
kill the washing machine again
another too heavy of a load and
now it's bouncing off the
concrete edging of this otherwise
quiet neighborhood street
like a pin-ball machine
I trail behind her -- the beautiful bougainvillea
with her thorns and bright red color
sweeping up the fallen blossoms
and all the little broken parts
and loose control knobs and
frayed rubber bands
and bent paper clips and post-it notes
about the broken parts
and sometimes I write a poem
about all of it

and I imagine the rebellious
teenage washing machine
running away from home with
a load of blankets made in Bolivia – A remigration
back to the open fields of the Altiplano
or at least back to the yard-sale
at the neighbors from where they came
and I don't say anything about
my wife trying to kill the washing machine
I just stand back and admire
how she's not some sort of
delicate-little-flower that can't stand
steady in a gust of wind
and expects you to do the same
unless you're injured
or a child or old or a small animal
who needs a sip of water
in that case she'll cup her hands

The Full Catastrophe of Life

John Merryfield

in prayer for all the weak and thirsty

souls so that's what I do

I steady myself with cupped hands

and an open heart
and a roll of duct tape

and a stack of wooden shims

and a notebook

and wait for a clean t-shirt

You must begin to say things clearly and honestly

That is what the man on the park bench said

The man who usually listens and doesn't say a word
said that he is the proud owner of the full catastrophe of life
He said he loves deeply and imperfectly

He has a wife and grandkids and a dog named Cacahuete

And he said all of it

is on the edge of the universe

he said all of it is held together by yellow bamboo roots

he said life is very low to the machete

he said it's all like a Charlie Hough knuckleball coming toward you

and you can't decide if you wanna cover up
or swing hard enough to hit the cork out of a wine bottle
but they say not to swing hard at a knuckleball

because you'll screw yourself into the ground swinging hard

and covering up? Well, covering up is covering up

so they say just make contact with a knuckleball

but we know there's no glory in just making contact with the ball

it's the person who goes down swinging for the fence

that can feel good about themselves

so when the day comes when your house moves
four paces toward the Mariana Trench
and your children's children now plagiarize young republicans
and your step-daughter's boyfriend
is dipping his lip

and bragging about his time under the Bodhi tree

with his six buddies shooting tin cans

you can smile

and relax

and you can remember how goddamn hard you swung

at those goddamn knuckleballs

because now you know

it's probably better to just make contact

now you know

just put the ball in play

now you know

because

now you know

and knowing will help when he's

giving his United Nations speech

at the cow's corpse splendid table

on a Sunday in August

you can remember about the

quiet man and about loving deeply

and you can remember about the full catastrophe of life

and you can remember about

the honest things and the clear things

and you can remember you don't have to

say anything about any of it.

Storage Room

Aimee Lowenstern

Originally published in Barzakh Magazine

I'll hide your heart in my stomach so no one can get it.
Come on, cough it up. All slick and wet like fruit.
I'll pop it like a pill. Drink it down with hot chocolate.
Every day I swallow feelings the size of fists,

or very large mice. I can take it whole.

Don't carve yourself up for my sake.
Don't size your bites. Once I'm done,
you won't have to worry about survival anymore,
or being loved. I've got it all taken care of.

I'm singing with a thousand pulses
and none of them will ever flicker out.

I'm shaking? I'm dancing. I've got a tummy full of souls

and they're all doing the cha cha slide.

No, it's not an anxiety attack. Yes, you'll keep everything
in the divorce. Your body. My body (Your summer vacation home).
Your mind and my poems and the dog. Take out my teeth

and leave them like broken-down furniture on the streetside.

Who needs 'em? More room in my mouth
to choke down symbolic organs. My whole self spasms with blood.

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