Unreachable

Gregoria Pena

I saw you sitting alone by the old weeping willow tree reading as usual. You never noticed me, no, you couldn't. Eleven years apart were too many between you and me. But Sir, since that is what you like to be called, Mr. X, I have loved you since the day I saw you walking out of school holding your books. I thinking you were only twenty plus three and you believed me to be no more than sixteen. Studious you, silly me, I need only twelve more months to reach twenty. One year older I'll be, and eleven years apart you'll stay from me.

Peaceful

Feng Lee

White forest, you are so peaceful, maybe just for a while.

Sleeping bear, you are awakening.

Quiet will run away

Be careful, others are uniting, they could end your dream.

Gregoria Pena

Oh...Breeze!

Rachel Kacenelenbogen

I was walking in the summer afternoon. I felt the embrace of the breeze. She played with my hair and clothes.

She cools our days and nights. She cradles trees and leaves. They murmur softly back to her untold secrets.

She is everywhere; I can feel her dancing on sidewalks. Picking up dust and particles. She brings us the sweet smell of flower and fruit. The smell of wet soil, the humid scent of misty down. And the freshness of night.

Rachel Kacenelenbogen
INNOCENCE

We played Doctor
under the stroking
haze of the
morning sun
when no one knew
that we existed
under the soft
dewy moss, grass
licking our naked
bodies,
embracing each other
in the tangle of
love;
secret
secret
secret
we whispered
to each other's
ear
as we kissed
while the dew
of our
lips
tingled;
for ever...
for ever...
for ever...
we vowed
while the dancing breeze
touched young bodies
to love...
you and I
as our nakedness
met
under the dewy moss,
but then one day
while we played
Doctor
I told you
I was pregnant...
You ran away
I was thirteen
and
you were fifteen

Gregoria Pena

The Beach of Time

On the campus of the University of Chicago, there is something called the Fountain of Time,
whose theme derives from a poem by Henry Austin Dobson, the "Paradox of Time," in which he wrote:

Time goes, you say?
On no! Alas, time stays, we go!

If I could turn back the clock, I would take you to an August day in 1945 when I was on the beach at
Leyte in the Philippines, poised for the imminent invasion of Japan.
The living was easy. We had good food, chicken, and sometimes steak, no more K rations, beer
and even the native equivalent of Scotch, called "tuba juice." Women, too, for we were the
expendables, asked even if reluctantly, to give our lives in order that the world might survive.
We dared not think about tomorrow and certainly not of the day after
Suddenly, as the sun went down, the wind came up, and the waves lapped at our tent, the word
came: "They dropped the bomb!"
Little did we comprehend then, my comrades and I, that what meant life for us may have sounded
the death-knell for mankind.
What might have been the end of ultimate violence was perhaps but prologue to unknown terrors.
aren't we now on the beaches, in the cities and on the farms waiting for we know not what,
helpless in perceiving that what once was our victory may now be our final defeat and carry with it the
destruction of all we cherish?
Given this, what then would we do, if only we could hold back time?

Richard Hamilton

Activism

I fell victim to your allegiance
You drove my heart across this bloody regio
And everything I fought for
Means nothing 'cause you want more, more, more

Take your belladonnas from my lawn
Remove your trenches and wired thorns
I'll plant a tree of peaceful words
I'll build a shelter for all the birds

Ishmeai Cooper
Secret Anguish

On a desolate winter night, you can hardly find any sparkling starlight in the murky sky. The branches' clapping sound comes in through the windows of a ward. The fierceness of cold wind makes one shiver with dread.

A pale-faced patient, Lin, is lying on an iron bed near the east window of the ward. He seems to be in his proud youth but takes feeble and intermittent breaths, and he groans frequently. Sometimes his eyes open a little to gaze at the white ceiling.

Occasionally, his mind became a little clear; then he felt he was wandering on the wrong path, and he couldn't get off it. Other times, he felt himself at the apogee of danger.

Youths who have just started adult life with a hopeful heart and pure soul are intoxicated by the beautiful prospect of the future. In the past eighteen years, Lin praised life as other youths did, and his praise became more intense as time went on. He had been considered a lucky boy, for he lived in a pretty home with much happiness.

In the summer before the last year, his life begin to change. The mighty god definitely settled his life in an unfortunate way. Within just one year, he suffered great irritation and depression. Sometimes he felt himself more dispirited. He spent the days sleeping and by pretended activities, his unnatural actions and facial expressions increased their inner sufferings.

During the seventy-day vacation, he was not able to have a good rest, but also became more dispirited. He spent the days sleeping and usually worried about the future. All the mental scars of the past recur in his mind as movies played on his screen one by one. Nobody, even his best friends or close relatives, knew his concealed pain. Once he thought about the love and expectations of his parents, he deeply regretted it and cursed the cruelty of life. He went to see his doctors, as his parents wanted him to, yet how could a little herb cure his deep-rooted illness?

Time flew swiftly; school would start soon. Several days before he left home for school, Lin's father had the idea to remove Lin from school until he got his health back. But experiences of the past two months showed that a complete rest wasn't helpful to Lin. No one knew the real cause of his illness. His father thought that living in a strictly-ordered and animated environment of school might be good for Lin's recovery. So Lin went back to school.

But after going back, he became more seriously ill. Beside his original symptoms, he was attacked by asthma and had a severe cough. Later on he was urged to confine himself to bed. The school doctor diagnosed the illness as the ultimate stage of tuberculosis. Lin was sent to the hospital and stayed there.

Nanking's winter seems to ruin one's health intentionally. Lin was getting thinner every day. The paleness of his face made his eyes seem larger. His whole body appeared a skeleton wrapped by bloodless skin. You could never believe that he was the Lin who always used to talk cheerfully and humorously. One of his friends had written to his parents about the seriousness of his illness, but the cruel devil didn't give them a last chance to see him.

The night of Nanking's winter was extremely dark, and the wind roared more fiercely than ever. The silence in the ward made the Ti-Ta clicks of the clock clearer. In the dim light, Lin's dismal face was more pallid and horrible.

Now Lin is lying comfortably in East Gate graveyard in his hometown. His parents are nearly driven mad by grief; their hopes and expectations thoroughly expired. Since his death, Lin has been forgotten gradually. Nobody knows the real reason why he couldn't get his health back. People might think that it was just an ordinary death.

Occasionally in the dawn or the dusk, you may catch sight of a simply dressed young girl with a gloomy mood wandering around his tomb. Although this mere clue cannot solve the mystery, people sense that the girl has some relation to the dead Lin.

Lucheng Tsao
"I Wanna Die: The Epidemic"

"Jesus Christ! Not another one," John Harper said as he slammed the newspaper on the kitchen table. "That's the tenth one this week. What the hell is going on?"

What are you shouting about?" his wife Kate asked. "Do you realize that another teenager committed suicide last night? And he lived just two blocks away from here. The newspaper is saying that it's an epidemic that spreads through teenagers, but it doesn't affect adults. They make suicide sound like the common cold. First one kid gets it, then another kid, then another. And soon there will be no one in this world between the ages of thirteen and twenty. Well, it's glad that our daughters are not that crazy to do something like that," John finally added.

"I'm not sure about that," John, said Kate. "Samantha has been acting really depressed lately. I think it's about that low score she got on the SAT." "Well, there's nothing wrong with that. She can just take it again," said John. "But this was the fourth time she has taken it and she still can't get that high score she wants." "Stop worrying about it. Kate. She'll get over it."

As soon as they finished talking, Samantha, their eldest daughter, entered the kitchen looking very depressed. "Good morning," she said as she sat down and drank some juice. "Good morning. Samantha, you don't look well, are you coming down with something?" John asked in a comforting voice. "Yes, I think I have it. But I'm not sure." "Have what, dear?" Kate asked. "The epidemic. But don't worry, I'm not ready to die yet," said Samantha. Just then, John rose from his chair and walked over to where Samantha was sitting.

"Don't say that, Samantha. You don't really want to die. You're just saying that because your depressed about the SAT. Just take the test again. I'm sick of taking it. That test can go to hell for all I care."

Samantha then ran out of the kitchen and upstairs to her room, which she shared with her kid sister, Ann. "What's wrong with you?" asked Ann. Samantha landed on her bed with a big thump and started to cry. "Ann, Ann I don't want to say it! Say what?" "I don't want to say what!" Ann pleaded. Finally, Samantha couldn't hold it back anymore. "I WANNA DIE. I WANNA DIE!" Samantha continued. "Don't kill yourself. What am I going to do without you? I love you." "Stop talking like that. People are going to think that you're a lesbian," Samantha said as she wiped her eyes. "Can't a sister show some affection to another sister?" Ann said as she tried to give Samantha a tissue. "I don't need your affection. Just go away, and leave me alone," Samantha replied.

Ann left the room and went into the kitchen to join her mother and father. "Mom, I'm worried about Samantha. I don't want her to die." "Neither do I, Ann. But if she really has this epidemic, there's nothing we can do about it." "If only she had a boyfriend or more friends. Maybe she wouldn't be so depressed," "You have a point there. Ann," John said jumping in. "I never see you depressed. You have Bill Cannon as a boyfriend. And you two are the most popular couple in school." "Yeah, you can say that, Dad. "Oh, Ann, you better get dressed or you'll miss your doctor's appointment," said Kate.

"Okay, Mom." Then Ann went upstairs to get dressed.

By nightfall, the house was very quiet. John and Kate were watching television, Samantha was writing a letter, and Ann was in the kitchen talking on the telephone.

"Yes, I'm sure... No I don't know what I'm going to do... No I don't think he knows himself. ...All right... All right, I'll call you back... I don't know when... Goodbye." She hung up the phone, looking very depressed. But because of her self-esteem, the epidemic could not get into her system. She needed a boost. So that night, she walked over to Samantha's bed while Samantha was sleeping. "Samantha, you have nothing to die for. You have a purpose in life. You have no worries ahead of you. I must save you." At that moment, Ann lifted the bed covers and got into bed with Samantha.

The next morning, John and Kate were eating breakfast, when Samantha came into the kitchen. "Good morning," she said with the most friendly smile John and Kate have seen in weeks. "My do you look and sound great," Kate replied. "I know, I haven't felt this great in weeks. I guess I was depressed over nothing." "You see, Kate, I knew I was right. That epidemic could never reach me." "Samantha, you will get Ann up for me, please?" asked Kate. "She wasn't in bed when I got up. She was in the shower." "Well tell her to hurry up, or she will be late for school!" "Okay, Mom." Samantha left the kitchen and headed up the stairs. Five minutes later, John and Kate were still asleep. "MOM, DAD; IT'S ANN! HURRY! When John and Kate got to the bathroom, there was Ann lying on the floor, surrounded by papers. One piece of paper told about the result of a VD test. Another was about the result of a pregnancy test. Both tests were positive. In her left hand, she held a coat hanger, with which she tried to give herself an abortion. That expanded the pool of blood between her legs. "Oh my God, she must have caught the epidemic during the night, and she couldn't handle it." Samantha said as she turned around and saw her father crying on Ann's bed the same way she was crying a day ago.

"Jesus Christ! Not another one. Not another one," she said hysterically. "WHAT THE HELL IS GOING WRONG?"

Tasha Staggers

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Moonsun

The rainy season is here. It brings October. But unlike the ones before, it seems so modernized. Lurking in the eye of the storm Brews the dark age of logic. Our Mongol warriors washed away by Monsoon—

Cool, cool breezes... Freeze up our mid-wives Leaving the future of our generation unenhanced.

You remembered me today. But will you tomorrow? When this prevailing wind has left us; leaving us an incubus? And starting over will be like turning grains of sand into water. Turning water back to sand. And what of our mysteries? Where have they gone? Like our ancient warriors Have they too been washed away Leaving us to ponder in the wonders of this fertile soil?

Oh Monsoon... For only now we have heard your message. We are no longer a single cell or a single root But an island of colours, Clashing and challenging the holy. We thank you, Monsoon, for setting our paths in the fossils, Shadowy footsteps of those long deceased.

Ishmeal Cooper
SNOW IS IN THE AIR

The storm is in the wings...
Snow particles dance softly in the air to the wind's melody
A white blanket covers the desolate narrow street
its glare illuminates the night frightening darkness away
The snow's magic fingers have painted capriciously
the vapor stained glass of the closed windows
Divine presence is felt everywhere
it seems time has come to a halt
I am neither cold nor hot
One can sit outside by the steps watching the night pass
staring into the greyish emptiness of space
thinking it impossible that madness could exist in a world
like this

Rachel Kacenelenbogen

NEFARIOUS GRACE

moving very slowly
to savor the taste of "first impressions"
having enough time to step aside and breathe
Cuz getting too deep is also a hazard
traces of other moments gone
Time
to explore idiosyncrasies
longing for more
perhaps settling for less
knowing time is short lived and
no guarantees can we give
or believe
Time
is ultimately
touch all we can touch
and the means by which
we may safely assume
there will be more
Time...

Carol Young

Time I

One thousand raging views
applaud in my ears
and torrents of speeding blood
drain my years.
Shadow minds generating
millions of strophes
marketing unscrupulously
human catastrophes:
One thousand blind dreams
traverse my mind
and frantic wars blot out
intimacies of every kind.

Michalis Andreou
Memories Of My Mother

My mother is dead...
My grief has no bounds.
Why must mothers fall into eternal rest?
Why must they leave their children behind?

Three years have gone since she passed away.
When is my pain going away?

I remember her wavy black hair,
Bright hazel eyes and black dense eyebrows
High cheek bones and exotic color of skin.
I was a sick child.
I remember her sitting quietly by my bed,
Anxiously written on her face.
Each time illness struck, she nursed me back to health.

She told infinite fairy tales and fables.
She made marine hats out of newspaper.
Lovingly, she braided and combed our hair.

I have shed tears in my hours awake.
I have seen her face in my dreams, over and over again.
I want her, I need her, once more near me.
But to visit her grave is all I can do,
To place a pebble or rose on the top of her stone,
To say a pray, to hope...
In this silent calm, her soul is with mine.

Rachel Kacenelenbogen

THE SHOES

While walking through the alley behind the London Dance Club, Pat N. Leather’s eye caught a glimpse of something reflecting the light of a full moon. Curiosity seized Pat’s attention and drew him nearer to the mysterious gleam.

On the ground before him was a man, dead, shot once in the right temple. Once Pat got over the shock of finding the body, he began to notice the man’s attire. He was elegantly dressed and obviously a performer of some kind.

Then Pat realized what had caught his eye. It was the man’s shoes. The shoes were classy and unique looking. They seemed to shine like a newly made blade. “I must have those shoes,” he thought to himself. Quickly he removed them from the dead man’s feet. As he prepared to leave, he glanced once more at the man and noticed he had some rather peculiar facial hair. Pat turned on his stereo and immediately tried on the shoes. Listening to the music began to move to the beat. His feet started moving more in time with the music. Suddenly he realized he was dancing, dancing as he had never danced before. Along with this talent, an air of sophistication rushed over him.

A voice came over the radio and interrupted the music. “In Cobblestone Park today, a woman was found with a broken neck, evidently murdered by strangulation. The local Bobbies haven’t any suspects or indications of motive. This is Ted Barry reporting for WOL-FM, Midnight News.” Excited about his new find, Pat thought nothing of the news. He took the shoes off, went to bed and dreamed of dancing at the Waterfront Dance Club on Friday.

The month came and went. Pat’s life had changed so much. He went dancing week in and week out. His charm and grace had warmed everyone, except a jealous few. He had even met someone special, Virginia, a beautiful girl and an exceptional dancer. Her golden hair draped down her head onto her shoulders and highlighted her silk-soft neck. They had become dance partners. It was even rumored they were paid quite handsomely to dance at the club just so people would come, have a good time, and watch.

One night the club was packed. Pat and Virginia were doing their usual dancing, when Virginia said, “Do you mind if we sit this one out?”

“Of course not,” said Pat obligingly, “my feet ache anyhow.” They wormed their way through the crowd and sat down at the bar. Pat took the shoes off to cool his feet and had a few drinks. When they were ready to dance again, he looked down to get the shoes and they were gone.

Immediately Pat became unglued. He lost his cool character and started yelling. When Virginia suggested he calm down and not worry, Pat shouted, “Shut up, you don’t understand!” Feeling outrageously out of place and a loss for words, he ran for the exit.

Lying in his bed next to the window, Pat stared at his feet, silhouetted against the light of the full moon. His mind began to wander about the shoes. He knew they did not belong to him. Who did they belong to? Where did they come from? The strange power they seemed to have, to give him confidence, charm, personality and yes to dance—thinking these things, he gradually fell asleep.

Jumping out of bed, Pat awoke in a cold sweat. His breathing was very heavy and his heart was beating erratically. His throat was dry and he thought to himself, “I must quench this thirst.” Running, in a panic, Pat went to the bathroom and drank all the water his stomach would hold. Still sweating and thirsty, Pat washed his face and hands. Almost instantly he became relaxed and calm. Looking in the mirror, he noticed he needed a shave. Unable to go back to sleep, he decided to take a stroll.

The walkway by the Thames River is usually filled with people, but not tonight; tonight there was no one. Staring down at the river, Pat began to think about Virginia; however something diverted his attention. Down at the edge of the river was a bearded man’s body. Looking more closely, he saw something familiar, the shoes. Caught up in the moment, he raced down to the body. All he could think of was the shoes. How lucky he was to find them again. While taking the shoes off, he noticed the man was shot once in the right temple. Shaking, Pat clutched the shoes and ran all the way home.

The next day at breakfast, Pat was reading the morning paper. A small article appeared at the bottom of the page: “Second woman found in Cobblestone Park, neck broken, police baffled.” Unbeknownst to the article, Pat turned to the entertainment section, for he was going dancing Friday.

One month passed and Pat was on top again, dancing week in week out. His charm, charisma, personality all returned, and his love for Virginia was at a peak. Had the shoes made him this way? He was a gentleman, a lover and a dancer, but Pat’s thoughts were elsewhere; he wished to marry Virginia.

Virginia felt the uneasiness of Pat’s actions. Was he hiding something from her? Pat was nervous.

He didn’t know how to ask her; would she accept? After entering the Fini Dance Club for the fourth consecutive week, Pat and Virginia went to the lounge. He decided to speak. “Virginia will you... will you, give me a cigarette?”

OF DOGS AND MEN

As usual
He licks by my feet.
I pet him
and find myself wondering
If he reasons too.
What matters most
In his daily routine?
Love
Earth
Honor
or None.
God I wish he could speak
I want to know
If he thinks
If he needs.
To feel the warm touch of a hand
To defend
To be proud
I want to know
Is his day worth it?
Or is mine insane?

Mario Arreaga
Kevin Carey

"Of course," she replied. As she opened her pocketbook, Pat could not help but notice she had a gun.

"What are you doing with a gun?" he snapped.

"Well, with the two women murdered, one can't be too careful now, can one?" she answered.

"Give me that thing," he said, "you're liable to hurt someone." She handed over the gun and he put it in his right coat pocket.

"Let's get out of here, I have something very important to ask you," Virginia stood up and was ready to go.

It was a beautiful night. The sky was clear, the stars were out, and the moon was full. "I never did ask you how you got the shoes back," inquired Virginia. "It's a long story, and besides we have more important things to discuss," he said with a smile.

"One block later, the two lovers stopped in front of a park. "We're not going in there, are we?" Virginia asked hesitatingly.

"Why? You scared?" Pat replied. "Remember, we have a gun, and I would never let anything happen to you. I have but one question to ask of you." Sitting down at the park bench, Pat began staring at the shoes. The reflection of the moon was in both shoes. How exciting his hands, tired but determined, teach his wife to recapture the use of her hands.

Kevin Carey

My Father's Hands

His hands, large and weathered, gently finger the strings of his violin.

His hands, large and weathered, skilfully make delicate repairs on his car.

His hands, large and weathered, artfully swing a hammer to renovate his home.

His hands, large and gentle, cradled a babe showing him the ABC's.

Now his hands, tired but determined, teach his wife to recapture the use of her hands.

Anita Penino

Satisfaction

Yesterday
I waited for you in the rain
Yesterday it was worth it now
I make you wait in the guise of fairness.

Norma Earle

A Man

A man is like a ton of steel,
Heaver at times
Than others,
Sometimes light as a
Black and white feather—
Is he? No, never.
Do not despair:
He will always be there
To ruin your season.

Hermattie Devi Persaud

A Classic Re-Run

The angry crush of Early morning irritation.

Does not touch me on My travel of isolation.

Upon arrival, climbing Upward, from below concrete.

Of a day, a week, a year Before just another repeat.

Scurrying swiftly along a well-tailored avenue.

Not to waste a moment, To absorb the view.

Chris Duffy

Indignantly, am I thrust From self-inclination.

A man, whose age is mystery, Spun in filth and desperation.

I turn my head, not to see, Though moreso not to feel.

The pain, the fear, the anger. So not make them real.

As I pass by, I'm drawn back, But quickly shift my glance.

Calm the outraged conscience, With my own circumstances.

Chris Duffy
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