The Merging of Two Daydreams

to Rob

He was raw sugar
She was refined
He wanted to kiss in the street
She'd been socialized
And didn't

He would smoke escape
She'd weigh situations
He'd close his pupils
and see only himself

In scope she was what you saw
He cleverly hid every flaw

Time's tricky hand
strummed a short tune

So different
Distance took hold
Space grew
And all was separate
Once again

Regina K. Young

And They Called it Violence

I just wanted to serve
my muscles
to the public.
A man died,
and they called it violence.

The next time,
I used no violence.
I did not serve
my muscles.

He exhaled violence.
I killed him.
People
called it self-defense,
not violence.

Regina Jackson

Incantations

Olatunji grapples tall bongoes
Rimsky Korsakov brandished clashing cymbals
Rod Stewart croaks velvet English
Debussy balooned a serenade in C-minor
Ray Charles waves lyrical cakennes
Tchaikovsky conducted melancholy overtures
Scott Joplin rolled rhythmic raptures
Beatles jostled the tune waves
Bach hammered resounding harpsichord
The Temptations cry cool mystery
Quincy Jones swirling threads of destiny
Teddy Pendergrass penetrates desolate hearts
Jose Feliciano lilts passion tones
Errol Garner skirmished up and down the scales
Donny Hathaway lisped mournful didactics

Regina Jackson

Somehow

Composed in a state of mind.
Not knowing of what kind.
Don't lead me wrong.

Strong sensations on the street
Falling circles surround my feet.
It's like sitting real high—
right blue,
poppy red,
yellow fire stars.
Yes there really is a Mars.

So much infinite,
and where is Mother Earth?

Somehow,
a puddle's mirror
an organized container
of bones
exhibits
one faceless soul.

Liz Kobe

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You're going to be one of those cool babies. No kicking, no fuss, just be cool and maybe they'll let you stay in here. Nine months and they want you to come out, well not me! I know the deal. Racism, wars, pollution, and who knows what else. I mean those are just some of the things I picked up on from the brain upstairs, and the nervous system. Look, if those things upset her (my mother), what kind of a chance does a little guy like me have?

Damn that Mother Nature; she just had to have her way. I mean she stacked the whole thing against me. She has this whole system worked out, that one way or another you have to come out. I gave it my best shot though; I held out nine days past due date (later this was to be related to my stubborn nature as a child).

Well I'm lying here in what is called a nursery, with a bunch of my peers. If you think I was stubborn, you should check out this young lady in the next crib. She refused to come out and they had to do something called a Caesarean; boy, that girl has determination. There seems to be some kind of myth that when babies cry they want to be fed or held. Well let me tell you something: most of these babies arrived on time, and once they go there they didn't like it. So when the nurse hands them to their mother, they stop crying because they think they are going back from where they came. They eat only because they think that's part of the flight package. Eve (that's the girl in the next crib) says "they are suckers" (as in targets of con-men); "the adults keep running the same game on them. After they eat, they throw them right back in this damn nursery with the big picture window." That's the window where the grown ups keep looking in here and invading our privacy. They look in here and make funny faces, pat each other on the back, and act like nuts.

Anyway, I'm getting kind of excited about this thing called life. Besides the bad, it sounds like there's a lot of good things out there as well. I think I'll stay a while and check it out. If I find I don't like it maybe I can still arrange to go back. I wonder if I can work out a deal with Mother Nature? I don't know. One of the other fellows told me her real name is Betty Friedan, and she's not too crazy about little boys who want everything their own way.
The Angel seemed a bit cranky the morning of surgery so the nurses cuddled her, trying to keep her quiet. She was flushed and had a thin film of moisture on her forehead as if under some sort of strain. The operation was under way, the doctors were scrubbed and sterile, the equipment was checked for the one hundredth time, the filming crews were in place and the chief surgeon, in all of his glory, was handed the first scalpel. The Angel screamed just as they cut into her brother's already mutilated skin. It was a scream that made everyone's smallest hairs stand on end.

At the first sign of the baby's blood, from the incision, the room grew intensely hot, but everyone reasoned that it was just the heat from the filming lights. The good doctor, sweat pouring down his determined face, worked on in a feverish frenzy ignoring the discomfort of the heat. He sliced and rearranged parts of the mutilated child. His ears began ringing from the heat and he had a drowning nauseous feeling but he continued. "I will succeed even if it kills me," he thought out loud.

The Angel continued to scream and her temperature continued to rise. The nurse also noticed a slight change in the child's features. It faded in and out, and the nurse almost swore for just a split second that she saw the deformed face of the boy in place of the Angel's.

To the amazement and horror of the confused surgical team, the good doctor changed into some kind of obsessed, possessed, madman. He sliced the poor creature's body and peered inside the incision as if looking for some hidden secret. "Maybe it's his heart," he thought out loud. He opened the child's chest cavity and just as he was about to grab the child's almost arrested heart, a flash of light, that only he could see, blinded his eyes, forcing him to throw down the bloody scalpel and protect his eyes. The staff cautiously backed away, no longer confused. They understood what was happening now; they had witnessed this kind of thing before. The quest for glory for whatever the price, this need, out of greed, to have it all. But they didn't see it in time, and now a child was going to die mercilessly.

The nursey's compusre was lost. The Angel was dying and there was no apparent explanation. One minute she was healthy, eating contently and the next minute she was feverish, her heart failing. But most disturbing was the constant flash of grotesque features that kept taking over the infant's face, accompanied by the agonizing screams. The Angel's mother knew that this was not the child's face, accompanied by the agonizing screams. The Angel's mother knew that this was not the child's face, accompanied by the agonizing screams. The Angel's mother knew that this was not the child's face, accompanied by the agonizing screams. The Angel's mother knew that this was not the child's face, accompanied by the agonizing screams. The Angel's mother knew that this was not the child's face, accompanied by the agonizing screams. The Angel's mother knew that this was not the child's face, accompanied by the agonizing screams.

So the doctors called it "precaution" when they were ordered to separate the twins into different nurseries. They claimed that the healthy infant might catch "it"—whatever it was. It did not occur to these humans of science and textbooks that the twins had, for nine months, shared the same
to the Angel's bassinet or witness the bizarre occurrence that took place. The girl's transformation from an angel to the eyeless, limbless, skinless creature went unnoticed and by the time the heat died down and the nurse regained her professional compo-
sure, the perfect-faced child would be stumbling peacefully, leaving the nurse with the devastated feeling of surviving the atomic bomb.

It took a great deal of cajoling and unnecessary medical jargon to convince the mother of the importance of this much needed operation. But after the good doctor finished his condescending speech about the importance of science, the mother reluctantly gave in. The good doctor paraded around the hospital, like an arrogant peacock, proud that he'd cunningly pulled this facade off. He knew that the operation would serve no purpose other than his own and the poor creature had no chance of surviving at all, especially not with surgery. But he would be famous, even more than now, and would of course be promoted to some greater title, respected by all. Nothing was going to stop him now. Some staff or the mother, not even the already weakening condition of the child. He especially was not going to let the nightmares he had of seeing his own body change into an eyeless, limbless creature stand in his way. The recurring fears would not even stop him.

On the morning of surgery, the mother sat in the waiting room with her knowledge—knowledge that this wasn't the first time she had seen such horrors, unexplained, and it would probably not be her last if she returned home. She was only grateful that they had not asked her where she was born.

...
His veins erupted wildly when he introduced the knife into the enemy's stomach. Ripping the flesh and feeling life fade, he stopped twisting the fist which held the blade. Now he withdrew, veins tamely diminishing to normal. The soldier had done his duty. "No more right or wrong for you," he thought, and then added in contempt, "some people have all the luck."

He stared at the body for just a second, no more. No time to think in this place, only to survive. No time to think, unless you want to die in an unknown, hostile world. With the knife still in his hand, Max ran towards the forest, where his company made its stand, as the battle lived on. He ran for cover, from strange enemies and bullets, and found the open battlefield in front of him; it now owned the bodies, which seemed to melt into the ground. Then he thought again, "They said I'd be a hero if I made it back. But if that's true, then what does it make them? Those who died?"

"Max, are you all right?" It was the voice of the lieutenant from about fifty yards behind. "Try to make it over to us; we're moving back." This was no easy task, for the trees were not united, and were small protection for the distance to be covered, but still he would try. Once again he was left no other choice. Max took a moment to prepare before the run. Breathing deeply, he closed his eyes. It was only for a second in actuality, but longer in his mind, which showed him a place in his life.

Suddenly he was back home, twenty years earlier, just a kid growing up in a reservation. Evening.

He could hear his grandmother once again, sitting, looking at the burning fire by her side recalling tales of glory, tales of a past, and a future that was not. The words were gentle, yet mysterious, like what they described. "Mother is the Earth, Father is the Sun. Father's rays touch the mother, creating life. The children live off the land, worship it and love it, and all that it contains. For them there is no right or wrong. Nothing will make them fall apart." Then, as the image of his grandmother vanished, a frightening one came to mind. In this nightmare vision stood his brother, all alone, in the darkest of nights. He was holding medals in his hand, like the ones that Max desired. But these were cutting away at the hands which held them. Cutting them to the bone, making them bleed profoundly. And on one of them the words would shine, even in the dark, blinding the sight. It said: To the heroes of the land. A cold shiver ran through Max. He opened his eyes; it was time.

Now Max started running, harder than he had ever tried. Running for his life. He heard the other soldiers shouting, urging him on, as they protected him with fire from their arms. He heard the leader's voice yelling, "Come on. Only a few more feet to go!" He heard the bullets all around. He could swear that he knew the path that each would travel. He could tell that one had hit him. It came from behind... or was it from the front? No difference. In a moment he was lying on the ground, looking towards the sky.

He felt nothing this time. The sun on his face, the bullet tearing at his heart. He heard even less. Now eternity was him, sanctuary the earth. Eyes fixed on the clouds, he could almost see a face... was it crying? He felt himself pronouncing the words: "Father, please forgive them; they don't know what they do." A smile sprouted on his lips, which were unsure of what they meant. Realizing what was coming, feeling breath grow weaker, Max tried to think about the last words he would say, his epitaph, but nothing came to mind. And then he looked at his bloodied hand, and looking back at the sky, he said, "Father, will you forgive me too," before he passed on, into the land.
Silence
Listening to your voice coffin sounds no laughter.

Wrong what could there be are you inside or outside alone.

Here I think should I not say to you your voice heard before in gift-wrapped days.

I wish not forbid wash away the flaccid face, shattered scenes.

Listening to your voice I hear no one.

Liz Kobe

Boundaries

Boundaries
Desires connection with living Life puts boundaries on desires Right and wrong help to confine Dreams have no place For boundaries there is no erase

No erase For those boundaries To be in confine Never to explore forbidden desires Can one really enjoy living? Dreams have no place

I want to escape to a place Where I make living Where there is no erase No room for confine To thrust upon desires And to destroy those boundaries

What is living? It is a place With no erase Full of thick blood-gorged boundaries You can call it confine For everyone a supposed desire Not within my desires Pain puts pressure on living On those boundaries Yet there is no erase For desire to reap there is no place So we adjust to confine

My shell confine Alone without desires Drab lonely living This is my place With no erase Life's boundaries Boundaries confine Living desires This place with no erase

Regina K. Young

My Supervisor

my supervisor struggles with anger unrelated to the incident a rush of green arrows she buys herself a diamond on time before she could see why something happened yesterday a sculpture of jagged ice

Regina Jackson

The Bridge

by William Gumbs

He got a kind of high when he killed the enemy in close combat and a kind of low when he didn't get the chance to see the enemy dying. He enjoyed the "role" of God, deciding another guy's fate. I remember a time Johnny, a few friends and myself captured a soldier. We started asking him some questions, but the prisoner didn't answer. Johnny pulled out his pistol and pointed it at the guy's stomach. He explained what a horrible sight it was when someone is shot in the stomach. John then asked the prisoner some questions; again there was no response. He then pumped two bullets into him at point-blank range. Me and the rest of the guys just stood there in shock while the prisoner died slowly in great pain and agony. Johnny just laughed and said, "He should have answered me."

As all good things must come to an end, the war came to an end and Johnny was no longer able to play the role of "God." It was now time for Johnny to come back to stateside. Amidst great joy that was felt by his comrades, Johnny however was feeling depressed. When Johnny arrived home, his family and friends realized there was a change in his personality. Once a happy-go-lucky introvert, he was now a quiet, uncaring introvert. Disturbed by his new personality, his parents asked him to seek medical assistance, and he reluctantly agreed. While under psychiatric care, he began to return to the Johnny of old.

September 1: A sad incident happens; a close friend of Johnny kills himself. After hearing this distressing news, Johnny begins to think of the two of them when they were in the war together. Johnny disappears.

September 7: A seemingly unrelated incident occurs; someone is murdered in cold-blood.

September 8: Another person is murdered, but this one is tortured.

September 9 In desperation the police are asking that anyone with information please contact them immediately. At the University, someone reports sniper activity. Before the police arrive, the sniper disembarks, leaves 2 dead and 4 wounded. After questioning a few witnesses, the police believing that they have enough to go on, put out an APR on the suspect. A patrol car spots someone who fits the description of the suspect, believed to be a veteran Johnny Cunningham. The police follow him to a supermarket. Realizing he is being followed, Johnny opens fire on the police, who fire back.

Amidst an array of gunfire stemming from every direction, Johnny, scared, wounded and tired, grabs a middle-aged woman, hoping that this may stop the gunfire. Seeing his hostage, the police chief declares a cease fire. Aware that he is now in charge of the situation, Johnny seeks better refuge in a basement of an abandoned building.

In the basement Johnny tries to get a hold of his faculties and review his options, but with a hysterical lady he finds his task even more difficult. Suddenly he realizes that a great way to calm someone down is to simply talk to them in a calm and orderly manner. He then asks her name. The lady nervously mutters, "Joan." Johnny then tries his best to assure her that he wouldn't hurt her. He laughtingly says, "If I hurt you, I'd just be hurting myself." Joan lets loose with a nervous murmur. Soon, the conversation between the two becomes more personal. Johnny opens up and tells Joan what has been troubling him, hoping that she may receive a better understanding of why she was there. After explaining his situation, Johnny apologizes to Joan. He then picks up the gun. Joan lets loose with a horrified yell. Johnny places the gun underneath his right temple. Joan cries "no." He again apologizes, then presses the trigger. After the gunshot, there is a silence in the entire area. The SWAT team enters the basement blasting and wounding Joan.
On September 9th, Johnny placed a pistol to his head and blew his brains out. One may ask why? Why would a man with seemingly everything going for him do such a thing? He had a loving family and was engaged. Let us review the period from Johnny's 18th birthday to that fatal day, September 9th.

On Johnny's 18th birthday a few of his friends took him out to a party. The next morning when Johnny woke up, he found a family invitation from the government inviting him to register for the draft. After a family discussion, Johnny and his parents decided that the best thing for them to do was to get a lawyer and inquire as to the possible alternatives. With a lawyer's assistance they decided it would be in Johnny's best interest to go to court.

One day, after going to court, the judge gave John a choice, either the armed forces or jail. But John decided on the armed forces.

While in the Army, John had a distinguished war record: the medal of honor, the bronze and silver star, and the purple heart. But John also had a change of heart. Once a young man who couldn't see any point in killing, he now began to enjoy it. According to a war-time friend, Bobby Walker:
Doin' Time or Vacation Time
by Anna Austin

On July 1st, 1982 I boarded an airplane to Miami, Florida. Then I embarked on a gorgeous cruise ship en route to San Juan, Puerto Rico, St. Thomas and Nassau. What a glorious summer of 1982!

One year later, on July 1st 1983 my summer schedule began in a totally different way. I had an important appointment. Now I was compelled to keep the follow-up doctor’s appointment.

Sitting in the waiting room, I looked around and pondered with anticipation about what the next hour would bring.

“You are next. Would you follow me please?” As I walked down the hallway, I reflected on the fact that I had come forth willingly. No need to be apprehended by force—thus far! I chose to keep this follow-up appointment to hear the results of my recent physical examination.

Was I guilty or innocent of the crime of overeating? Some of my thoughts said yes—but I had my alibi ready. I classified my behavior as a misdemeanor, not as an offense. I would even submit to a lie detector test if required.

Dr. G., as the judge was seated behind his massive desk. We exchanged cordial greetings as I sat down. My eyes and concentration were fixed straight ahead. This judicial chamber was quiet. He studied the data and then looked up.

The judge enumerated my violations and offenses. The rundown began: “Exhibit A — the preliminary examination and laboratory specimens indicate that you are overweight. Exhibit B—cholesterol is above the acceptable levels. Exhibit C—your blood pressure is fine—you’re lucky!”

My mental computer correlated the data. My thoughts formulated images of delicious burgers, crunchy french fries, crispy, delectable fried chicken, luscious ice cream, sweets and other high caloric contraband.

I was devastated! What kind of alibi could I come up with now? Suddenly I felt flushed. I was sitting in a hot seat. I felt remorse. I had been seduced and influenced by enticements in bakeries, restaurants and by the TV visual ads for goodies. I was guilty of forfeiting wisdom for pleasure.

I listened to the judge foretelling the risks of continued criminal activity. Public and non-public offenses and continued recidivism could result in a stiff verdict and a maximum security sentence. Could I get time off for good behavior? Did I qualify for an appeal? Was there an honor system? What would I have to do to reverse the inevitable conviction and penalty of doom—Death Row?

The judge said verbal cop-outs were passe. This case would require immediate scrutiny, monitoring, painstaking regular inspection, hard labor, bread and water. Implementing low calorie meals was primary. Rehabilitation could occur with weekly physicals and weight checks, according to him. Punishment involved 45 minutes per day of stretch calisthenics or else solitary confinement.

Count down would be two months hence!—September 1, 1983. The follow-up hearing in the judge’s chamber would decide if time off for good behavior had been earned.

On September 1st, less 20 pounds in weight, mutual congratulations were expressed. To my friends; garlic bread, seasoned croutons, wine, liqueurs, cocktails, cheeses, scrumptious cakes, delicious pies and pastries, melt-in-your mouth cookies, rich chocolate delights, creamy custards, delectable ice cream, gum drops, peanut brittle, coconut and almond nuggets, lamb chops, popcorn covered with melted butter, corn on the cob, Polish sausage, shrimps, succulent curry sauces, quiches, soups, puddings and on and on...

Poem

As we wait for the signal,
time steals away ambition.
Yet day by day our hands become fluid
in the grasp of monopoly.

Three A.m. in the Summer

Red fell from the rooftops burning
as the branches cheered for the night, echoing
between the houses
like blades of grass a crowd assembled, millimeters apart
they existed
how much blaze did they breathe?
Still the wind blew whisking away their fears
The crowd stood watching, *her* eyes dried by the sizzling Red.

In All of Us for Mother

Come with me Inside yourself
Silent depth
Endless Crusades
Quiet Quest
All within one

Bones battling
Neurons confusing dendrites
Nerves jumping
Senseless senses
All trying to control

Intruding bacteria
Sick viruses
Cancerous visitors
Life-sucking parasites
All trying to control

Systems shut
Rushes stop
All has halted
For when all try to control
Nothing gets done
All within one . . . . . . . .

Regina K. Young