

LULLABY NEAR THE RAILROAD TRACKS

Go back to sleep. The hour is small.
A freight train between stations
Shook you out of sleep with all
Its lonely ululations.

Through the stillness, while you slumber,
They trundle down the track,
Lugging cattle, coal, and lumber,
Crying, "alack, alack."

It's cheap to pay the engineer.
The moon's a shiny dime.
Shut your eyes and you will hear
The Doppler shift of time.

The hour is small. Resume your rest.
Tomorrow will be kinder.
Here comes a freight train nosing west
Pulling the dawn behind her.

A. E. STALLINGS

WHY THE MANTIS PRAYS

The male mantis when wed
approaches the conjugal bed
with anticipatory dread,
knowing his Mrs. may devour his head
—and on a whim
the rest of him—
without waiting
till they've finished mating.

EDWARD LODI

COCKROACHES

Some say that cockroaches
will outlive the world
and all the denizens thereof
including faith hope charity and love.
I say that greed lust
and developers will survive
to build the kitchens
in which those cockroaches thrive.

GERONIMO BASSETTI

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THE YEARS FLY BY

"It's true what you've always read. The years do fly by."

-Gene Smith in *American Heritage*

1987, trying to catch the Pan Am flight to Nostalgia,
I hailed a taxi whose meter was running very fast,
Got lost on the way to the airport,
Had to pass through numerous metal detectors.
Flight delayed.
The jet turned back for minor repairs.
12 yrs. later, 1999, I gave up & went home.
My luggage, of course, had been sent to another destination.

LOUIS PHILLIPS

IN THE BORGHESE GARDENS

Again, that terror in the afternoon,
The dribbling fountain, and the silent sun;
Let it come when it will come, late or soon,
I shall sit sunstruck, empty and alone.

The statues blank-white in the Roman sky;
The avenues of narcoleptic shade;
A tragic marble mask, a mad, fixed I;
An endless, perfect, homeless colonnade.

I am already lost. Strength turns to pain.
Loneliness grows, in company, or sole.
And yet this is the birth-pang of the soul,
Where recklessness perceives its youth again
Flitting like mad birds in the Roman pines,
Demented, free, bleeding among the shrines.

FREDERICK TURNER

LOOK OUT BELOW!

When I am flying in a plane,
I close my eyes and rest my brain.
But when I use the airplane john,
I wonder who it's pushing on.

BRUCE LANSKY

WOODCHUCK NOSES

*Inspired by an article on a bounty in
New England offered for woodchuck noses*

Some people try to tell you
the woodchucks ain't our foes.
I say they're good for nothing
but growing woodchuck nose.

The woodchuck digs up hollows
that if they are not plled
might lame a calf. It follows
the woodchuck must be killed.

A couple noses bring you
for bounty fifty bucks.
It isn't just the money.
I like to waste them chucks.

I carry me a razor
and hide it in my boot
in case I find a woodchuck
to scalp his woodchuck snoot.

Now if a little woodchuck
is hiding near the trees
when I'm around he better
be careful not to sneeze.

MICHAEL LIND

FRILLS

The taste for the indecent,
some say, is rather recent.
Our ancestors would amble
through meadow, brake and bramble
and take their pleasures but
had little use for smut.
Now, roaming city streets
that tempt us, those cheats!
with barmaids, girlie shows,
and admen's lurid prose,
we get all hot and dirty
and soon we're talking dirty.
O happy days long gone
of proud and thoughtless brawn!
They felt no need to prime
the pump with naughty rhyme,
no need to joke and kid it.
They just got down and did it.

RICHARD MOORE

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