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Metamorphosis

by Spring Maleckar

Emerging slowly from its deep sleep
The tiny beauty slowly awakens.
Shedding its blankets
It wakes up to a new morning.

The fragile creature leaves its nest
And cautiously opens her wings.
The delicate, colorful wonder leaves behind her cocoon
And silently flies to tomorrow.



**“Are you the girl from
Lisdoonvarna?”**

by Emily Persic

Under the pub's electric halo
she lifts her head
to his bleary, missingtooth grin, accepts
the pint with “thanks”, “howsyous” and
is crowned with drunken mutterings.

The rain has started its night mist,
the city silent, from the curb
the homes
are glowing with shadowy figures
behind lace curtains.

She stumbles home,
Lovers huddle
under the shattered
streetlamps.

Peaceful Russian

by Joslyn Virgin

In the silence she spends her free time,
buried in the translations.
Looking around her ever so often to see
the purple walls, the nail holes,
the old dust.

Is this what she had expected?

Trying to feed her was useless.
Like a sparrow
making a meal out of an eagle's feast.

She arrived in a red coat
that traced her slender body like a bell.

I would often look into her blue eyes
turned gray by the clouds hanging over
Moscow.

What has she seen?

We tried to converse one evening;
"My Mutta."
I knew she missed her.

We stood in the doorway of the purple room.
A smile not quite of understanding, but of care
became the language between us.

"I weel, I will go study," she pronounced
while closing the door behind her.

by Norman L. Minnick Jr.

Forevermore shimmers down
Like a honey waterfall.
Her face to my eye
Is like a ———.

Precisely, beauty is in the eye.
Love is the beholder.
Her soul to my eye
Is like a ———.

Precisely, I am going to
Reach deep inside of me
And pull my heart out
And give it to you.
Her heart to my eye
Is like a ———.

There is a word,
Oompalationelionicasatoning
With a Y and a Z.
Precisely.

The Chemistry of Love

by Brenda Guldner

Once there was a very smart **element** named **Einsteinium**. He was a **Rhodium** scholar and had a **PhD**. He pledged **Sigma Bond** at Oxford University. One day Einsteinium realized he didn't have a **Nickel** in his pocket. He set off in his **Mercury** with its shiny **Chromium** to **Califorium** where he made his fortune in **gold** and **silver**. Einsteinium was a good element. He was **Nobelium** and **Gallium** as well. He was always doing things for others. Some even called him a good **Samarium**. He was a **liter** in his community.

One day as Einsteinium was sitting at the **Palladium** in Hollywood drinking a **Phosphorous** soda, he noticed a beautiful element across the bar. She was so **Radium**, he had to **meter**, but he thought his chances were **absolute zero**. He introduced himself and she said her name was **Glucinium**. It was the sweetest name he had ever heard. She was a **Platinum** blonde. She was a little **dense** but had a **significant figure**. She had a cute little **mol** on her face and had the most beautiful **orbitals** he had ever seen. She was a real **joule**. She said she drove a **Neon** and worked as an aerobics instructor, but she liked to call herself a **reducing agent**. She used the **Induced-fit Theory**. She really liked Einsteinium, too. He wasn't really all that tall but he was **fahrenheit**. She thought he looked like the Greek god **Thorium**.

They both fell in love. When they were together, they both could feel the **potential energy**. When he saw her his **temperature** increased and he felt like he needed **oxygen**. She felt as light as **Helium** without **specific gravity** and like she was nearing her **melt-**

ing point. It was like they had an **ionic attraction** between them. They could feel the **electron magnetism**.

One day Einsteinium asked Glucinium to marry him and offered her a beautiful **Cubic Zirconium** and **Rubidium** ring as a **symbol** of his love. Her **reaction** was one of surprise and joy. Glucinium joined his religion because there is always that **conversion factor**. Their wedding was lovely. They hired the great composer **Mendelevium** to write their music and play his **Lutetium**. The **mass** was magnificent. They pledged their love according to **periodic law** and **law of conservation of mass**. Theirs was a **covalent bond**. As a wedding present Einsteinium bought her a little dog called a **Manganese** and she named him **Plutonium**.

For their honeymoon they went to **Europium**. They flew **Transuranium Airlines**. They visited **Francium**, **Germanium**, **Indium** and **Scandium**. They took a ride on a **Gadolinium** in Venice. They even met **Lawrencium** of Arabia. They almost didn't make it back home since they sailed on the **Titanium**. Luckily, they both could swim like **Neptunium**. At least they weren't on the **Xenon** Valdez. They were both glad to get back to **Americium**.

When they got back home, they hired the world-famous architect Christopher **Rhenium** to design their home. The house was incredible. It was **Cobalt** blue with a big **Iron** fence around it. They had it built in **Tellurium**, Colorado, because they both liked to ski, even though it sometimes gets to the **freezing point** there. After a year, they had a little **test tube** baby called **Kelvin**. They both shared in giving little Kelvin his **formula**. He was truly a **product** of both of them. It was a dream come true.

One day Glucinium started having temper

Tantalums. She would get so angry she would almost reach her **boiling point**. One day things got so out of hand that a **rubber policeman** showed up at their door. The **Copper's** name was Mark **Fermium**. He was from One **Atom 12**. Einsteinium asked how he found them, and the policeman replied that he could always **trace elements**. He told them to keep the **volume** down.

Glucinium went through many **physical and chemical changes**. This was an **indicator** to Einsteinium that something was terribly wrong. She told Einsteinium that he was a **Boron** and this only **compounded** their problems. You could feel the **surface tension** between them. They were nearing the **end point**. Einsteinium thought maybe her **electrolytes** were unbalanced. Maybe her **Potassium** or **Sodium** was low, maybe she had **Lead** poisoning, or maybe she just had **gas**. He had Dr. **Avogadro's number** so he called him. If anybody could find a **solution** to their problem it would be him. Einsteinium knew he could **solvent**. The doctor said it could be a **mixture** of things and said it was not uncommon in most **heterogenous** relationships. He told Einsteinium to leave her alone for a while because he was only acting as a **catalyst** in the situation. He told him the most **basic** thing to do would be to **buffer** the problem. Dr. Avogadro finally found the **Curium**. He prescribed **Lithium** for Glucinium.

After several sessions with the world-renowned marriage counselors Dr. **Ruthenium** and Hugh **Hafnium** their relationship became more **balanced**. So they became more **homogenous** and lived in **balanced equilibrium** the rest of their lives.

Doll Houses

by Angela Hatem

In my doll house hung a picture of the 3 us together.
Now hangs a picture of a pair.
My dolls had one house fit snugly for 3,
now there's 3 separate people and 2 empty houses.
Memories tug at my heart like a 30 lb. Weight,
to drop it would smash the plastic faces.
In my heart hangs the portrait of the 3 of us smiling.
Not the reality of two empty doll houses.

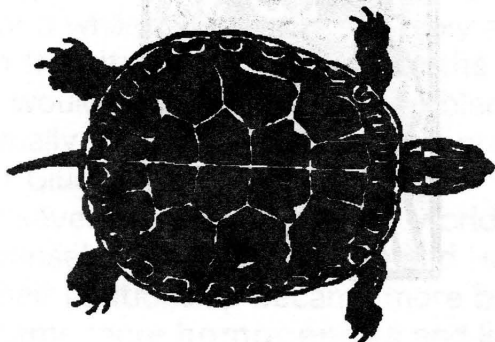


Crossroads

by Jennifer Beck

I have never known a place so quiet, so still
As those dark rows of corn barely waving in the night
Where the summer's heat embraced me like a lover
And I drowned in a sea of stars.

I have never known a fear so intense
Nor felt a comfort so reassuring
As I found in those fields and under those stars
On that night when the essence of my being
Cried out, and found a soulmate.



Untitled

by Aaron Hubbell



There are times when
I feel for the tree
In autumn.
Summer passed
The dry season now withering its leaves.

Green blood flowing out,
Draining.
While carotenoid red, orange, and yellow remain.
Strength departs,
But and absurd beauty
Lies in that weakness.

Even that soon departs.
The source of its power
Scattered at its feet
Desiccated.

So it stands
Naked
Vulnerable
Cold.

But it will soon see spring.

Backward Technique

by Miranda Hines

Clammy hands brush the pleated skirt.

Thoughts are racing as the apprehension fades.

(Don't freak out and everything's fine.)

I begin with a powerful run.

(Technique is the key...no muscling it.)

Plant the hands, lift the legs, and

Seal the roundoff with a twist.

Long backhandsprings,

One after another.

Pull!(see the floor)Pull!(see the floor)

(Get ready for the tuck.)

Reach up! Spot the clock.

(There it is. Yes!)

Rotate it; knees-to-chest, hands-to-knees.

Land it. Stick it.

Perfect.

The Expensive Check

by Jacqueline Finney

I was hoping that she'd leave him. After staying with me for a few months, physically miles away from him, I thought she had.

They met in a bar. I had advised her once never to pick someone up in a bar and she said, "Blow it out your back-end. I'm going to meet somebody and I don't care where." So they found each other on a night marked on her calendar with a butterfly sticker.

I remember seeing them together on one of their first excursions as a couple — before the storm. We passed during the food festival held on the square every year. I had a gyro, they both had corndogs. One of her arms was wrapped around his like a snake. They were pulling each other to different booths to watch food being prepared. They looked genuinely happy. I actually did think in those first few weeks that they made a pleasant couple. At that time she didn't think it would work out because he was "boring."

"I just don't know about him. He's just too nice, I guess. He opens every door for me, always apologizes for everything."

"Everything?"

"The other day he apologized for an untied shoe."

"Would you rather have what's his name back?" I said. She had been in a bad relationship just months before.

"Oh God, no. I'm done with men like that. I know I deserve better."

And so she decided, upon my advice which I wish now I could take back, to stick it out with the man who appeared too harmless to her. Now that I reflect back on it, I believe it was the only advice of mine she ever took to heart.

After they settled in to one another he began to show the side that provoked her to leave him — and go back, and leave him again, and go back again. It started with forgetting a date one evening and then picking her up a couple hours late another. I guess I can give him credit by saying he was gentle enough to ease her into his true nature.

All I heard in those months she stayed with me was how horrible he was and that she should never have stood for his crudish behavior. She told me about the time they were in the restaurant in the basement of the courthouse and he decided to leave without paying because he was dissatisfied with the food and the service. It was one among many incidents where he embarrassed her. Then there were the abusive remarks he used to hand to her personally: “shithead” and “my old cow.” She said he had threatened her many times. How brutal he was, I don’t know.

My favorite story happened at another restaurant, one in which he could not have gotten away with not paying. She told the story to me during one of our Saturday night bitch sessions:

“I’ve heard of it happening so many times. The guy doesn’t want to pay the expensive check so he tells his girlfriend he forgot his wallet and would she please pick up the check. I believed him, even though I could have sworn I saw him pick his wallet up off the dining room table when we left the apartment. Then he said he’d pay me back later. Well he never did. And he probably spent the money he saved on beer and cigarettes.”

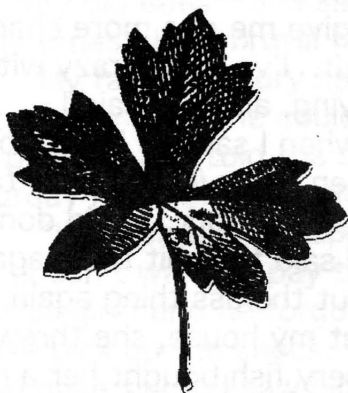
My response, so often repeated, was, "The asshole. I can't believe he did that to you." Hers was, "Don't call him an asshole, Julie. That was the only time that happened." Once I reinforced what she said about him she always turned around to defend him.

I had never quite noticed the type of person she was until she fell in with him. But after coming to me in tears so frequently and returning to him within hours I knew she was the dependent type. The dependent type — always returning to the oppressive male after the usual six hour break up without ever resolving the issue(s) that split them up in the first place. To the dependent type the issue does not matter. She simply enjoys the crying. She savors being treated like a child or a pet once she returns to her owner's arms. She being a close friend I respected once for common sense, I was hoping this was the final exit. I really believed her when she said she was never going to let him walk all over her again. She disappointed me with her change of heart.

She went back to him the last time following repeated voice messages from him saying, "I know I've been a jerk, but If you'll just give me one more chance I'm positive we can work it out. I've been crazy without you." I told her he was lying, and she said I couldn't recognize sincerity when I saw it. I said no, but I could recognize shit when I saw *it*. His next tactic was to deliver flowers to her at work. I said don't cave, she said it's romantic, I said the shit thing again, she gave me the blowing it out the ass thing again, I reminded her she was living at my house, she threw the flowers away. Then the slippery fish bought her a ring. That one was the icing on the cake. The minute after she slid it on her finger she was out the door and I was left in the house to be the sole person ashamed of her actions.

One evening over coffee and Hawaiian bread she asked me if I was jealous. I had ended a serious relationship months before and was extremely hesitant to jump back into the game. In her own personal crisis, diverting her frustration, I understood her confusion. After I told her no she wouldn't take my answer and urged on, promising that she understood why. Again I insisted I wasn't. I told her that I could never be jealous of someone who was paying the highest price for someone that would never give her anything of real value in return. In anger I said I had lost all respect for her because she didn't have any more for herself. She told me that I misread everything and that I was the one living in waste because of what I could no longer enjoy. That was the last time we spoke.

The last place I saw them was in a shop on the outskirts of town last week. I shook my head in disgust at the pitifulness of the sight. There he was, smug and so sure of the trust of his dependent and there she was, still, like a child clinging to his shirt.



Deirdre of the Sorrows

by Emily Persic

When Deirdre's skull
fell broken over the salt dark stones
the waves rose up to bathe the rose pale lips
the still wide eyes,
and

lapped gently
the half curled hand.

For with her man reaching,
her quicksoaring body
elusive to his grasp

over the green black cliffs
to the polished stones below
she fell, silent in the falling

Her lament
voiceless
by the tumultuous wind.

Coffee-Shop Writing

by Timothy J.F. Vollmer

Soothing strands of Enya wafted breezily through the smoky, dimly-lit air of the small coffee-shop.

I sat back in the plush lounge chair and pondered over the blank notebook paper strewn carelessly on the checkered table, half-eaten apricot cheesecake before me, cup of frothy capachino in my hand.

I knew what I was going to write. Monsters. Demons. Tragic heroes. No prince in disguise, though; he was going to die.

With a negligent hand I scattered thick tendrils of cigarette smoke which threatened to overwhelm my senses, then picked up my pen.

I knew what I was going to write.

Putting pen to paper, I paused, and began to doodle. Gradually, a word began to take shape through the black mists of ink.

-The-

The? The what?

My fevered imagination resounded with the possibilities, with the unlimited horizons which awaited only the liberating power of my pen.

Overcome with passion, I began to doodle again.

It was going to be wonderful, I knew.

It was going to be classic.

Sot

by Norman L. Minnick Jr.

She hates jazz
Like a cow hates milk
Chocolate and razz
Berries that ripen on a window sill.

She likes thinking
With old number seven.
Ten thousand bohemians sinking,
Multicolored cows in the Seven Eleven.

She finds herself slipping
On shiny slick words.
Offensively pretty she is

A confused muse musing
Fell on a bed of words.
She wanders in spiral
Movements seem absurd.

She likes her stormy seas
Sailing half-seas-over

And milk like jazz churns,
Whose blender belly swells,
A chocolate fire burns
In her seventh heaven hell.

Fancy Poetry

by Joslyn Virgin

Suffocating from silence
as I drove home with my eyes fixed on the blackness turning
bright gray.
Something in their words made me heavy.

My heart swallowed my voice, my feet in restless shoes.
Wordy hors d'oeuvres left my hears with a bitter taste.
My stomach fringed in pieces of falling rust.

I wandered about their personal life,
kitchens with empty jars and plates of the whitest sugar.

Tongues in sweet conversation, strawberries dipped in fudge.
They were feeding one another,
and my fingers scrounged for their crumbs on the ground.

One picked up a silver platter,
white gloves and wine glasses of word matter
circled around the room.
Porcelain china dolls spilling over with tea.

Mercy

by Stacey Clevenger

At first
A child's game
Hands grasped
Strength pulled up
Withstanding of pain
Eyes locked
Challenge present.
Mercy!
The first one cries
The mental game
Won once more.

Not so much
Childish now
I play the game
Hold my ground
Finally, I give!
Mercy! I think.
I cannot
Withstand the pain
Mental anguish is
Not my forté
Mercy!
You win.

It's your turn
To make up
No more effort on my part.
It's hard to
Sit on my hands
And not reach out
But you move.
Do we play again?
Do I pull out all stops?
Mercy!
Do I win?
Mercy, you cry!



