Take thought:
I have weathered the storm
I have beaten out my exile.

- Ezra Pound
Poetry

Grammar lesson
Julie Lockwood

Hunter
J. Barmeier
(rare)
Alice Merrill

November Leaf
J. Barmeier

In retrospect
Julie Lockwood

Weaving
Alice Merrill

SPETSE
Cary Anne Spear

View From A Garret
To Infinity
J. Barmeier

Morning after Reflection
J. Barmeier

A MINOR CHANGE AT DENISON U.?
Pete Porteous

Snowflak
J. Barmeier

LOVING
Curtis Hutchens

IRISH CONVERSATION
Cary Anne Spear

On This Planet
yayue aoki

Fiction

Visiting Before
The Mirror
Holly Battles

Cypher
Keith McWalter

Art

Cover: Sandy Adams
Beth Newman
Jill Harris
Ned Bittenger
Bill Musgrave
Jill Harris
Gail Lutsch
Gail Lutsch
Gail Lutsch
Gail Lutsch
Sandy Adams
M. A. Albert
Charlie Greacen
Diane Ulmer

Photography

Jill Harris
All other by Tim Heth

Editor-In-Chief Carol Rogers
Fiction Editor Keith McWalter  Poetry Editor Frank Bellinger
Art Editor Gail Lutsch
"I am raining" is impossible in French; English too, he implies, but I know the truth, and it is je pleux.

I am raining in my soul; teardrops falling, washing away the color in me like dye that hasn't set, streaking, fading, flowing away leaving the pale of a brilliant seashell taken from the water.

And je me pleux, I rain on myself, alone, railing against the world, against myself, against it all.

- Julie Lockwood
She got up from the chair and poured water on the fern, watching it spill down one of the sides of the bowl. "I suppose you want to write a novel of manners or something."

The boy remained seated in his chair and smiled at her. He pulled out a pack of cigarettes from the inside breast pocket of his jacket. While he was busy with the lighting, he thought to himself that she was very pretty for a woman of her age and means.

"I know your father, Charles. I knew him when he was without a job and without much to recommend except his good looks. You look very much like him."

She smiled at him, not catching his eye. The room needed tidying up. There were some partially eaten biscuits on a table next to the bed, on the same table a tea pot with tea that had been in it for several days, and many filled ash trays. She moved easily around the room, casually picking up the most obvious of the full ash trays, emptying the butts and ash in the basket next to the chair in which she had been sitting, and handed one to Charles.

"Your father never smoked."

He looked at her then, pulled his chin toward his chest, and acknowledged this woman's previous gift for private amusement. She looked out the window at the afternoon sun between the buildings and the trees. They were probably quite old. Their leaves seemed to be slightly sooty. Everything around him seemed to have been in its place for a while.

"I haven't seen my father for a few years, I don't seem to need him much anymore."

The courtesy returned to her chair and looked at Charles's hand which was placed casually upon a small table between them. Nothing was said for a while. Charles removed his hand, suddenly growing conscious of its casualness and circled it around the rungs of his chair.

He looked around the small room. The bed behind the window, the orange sheets went nicely with the blue bedspread, he thought. There was a jar of some kind of ointment on the orange sheets. She got up from the chair and poured water on the fern, but continued getting out another tea pot and the cups. He saw upon closer inspection that the edge of the table there by the door, perhaps the corner of the stove, He imagined that the lighting was poor. Probably just a light bulb hanging from its socket in the middle of the ceiling. He could not imagine his father in a place like this.

She acknowledged this woman's previous gift for private amusement but continued to sit in her chair. From his seat he could see another room that looked like a kitchen. Perhaps, he thought. There was a jar of some kind of ointment on the one to Charles.

"Maybe, But in France teaching English means teaching Grammar. I don't think I'd ever only teach for a little while until I could find something better."

She seldom looked at Charles, but now he bent his head into the chair under her stare. She moved her eyes through his dark hair, and curiously at the ends. He remembered a leanness like his, tall, angular, and with an arrogance in his stance. She remembered that as the corner of his mouth, a height of height seldom met people - to eye - to eye; but not at this room. He leaned slightly forward, the head, and probably smile. It would not be a very smile, merely one of convenience. She remembered eye Charles for the intensity of their stare.

"Do your father know that you're here?"

"No, of course not, I told you that I seldom see his younger days. I wish you would not talk so much of him."

The words were out before he had given heed to the woman. He had not spoken to them, but to the wall on the other side of the room. He leaned slightly forward, his head and probably smile. It would not be a very smile, merely one of convenience. She remembered eye Charles for the intensity of their stare.

"Do your father know that you're here?"

"I came here today because I knew that you had many friends in Europe and I thought you might be able to help me."

She looked up quickly and pushed back the chair with her hands. "Yes, I do. I used to live over there and I would be glad to give you some names. I don't think these people could help you find a job, that you have to do for yourself, but they know about places to live, and would be willing to give you a room until you found one of your own."

She stood up and walked toward the kitchen. "I'm going to make us some tea. The afternoon's getting on, and I always like to drink tea at this time."

He stood up with her and walked around the room while she went out into the kitchen. He could hear her putting water in the kettle. She did not speak to him then, but continued getting out another tea pot and the cups. She walked over to the forsythia and looked at the petals around the bowl. Picking one up in his hands, he touched it with his tongue. He noticed that there was a small collection of sea shells on a black lacquer tray with a magnifying glass beside them. Holding up the glass to his face, he minutely looked at one of the shells. Its surface was furrowed with very lines curving along the width. He had seen a shell like this before, only much larger, at the sea shore one time when he was little. His mother had picked it up from the sand and asked him to hold her mind in the shell's hollow, told him that he would be able to hear the sea rolling around in there. He thought he recalled her saying that it was a chambered nautilus.

He became conscious of the quiet again. There was no noise in the kitchen. He was not even certain if there was life on the other side of the room. He held the lighting was dim, no light being on except for the one on the table next to them. Its shade was a soft orange and it had a brass dim, no light being on except for the one on the table next to them. Its shade was a soft orange and it had a brass shade. The lighting was very low, nothing being on except for the one on the table next to them. Its shade was a soft orange and it had a brass dim, no light being on except for the one on the table next to them. Its shade was a soft orange and it had a brass shade.

She suddenly grew conscious of its casualness and circled it around the rungs of his chair. He had seen a shell like this before, only much larger, at the sea shore one time when he was little. His mother had picked it up from the sand and asked him to hold her hand in the shell's hollow, told him that he would be able to hear the sea rolling around in there. He thought she recalled her saying that it was a chambered nautilus.

She came back into the room and placed a tray with two cups, saucers, spoons, cream and sugar, lemon, and the tea pot on the table between the two chairs. He had moved away from the bed and stood near the table. She sat and poured the tea, offering him his cup as she took her own. There was a pad of paper and a pen alongside the tray.

"I'm going to write out a list of names for you. I can't remember the addresses of a few, and others have moved, I'm sure, but I don't think you will have difficulty finding any of them."

"Thank-you. I think that will help alot."

She put the pad on her lap and bending toward it began to make a list of names. Charles looked at the top of her head. Her hair was still quite dark and looked nice with the paleness of her skin. She wore her hair up, few curls falling toward her chin and toward the nape of her neck, without ornamentation or a consciousness of its effect. She seemed familiar and soft. Aware of his looking at her, she glanced up at him.

"None of these people are in teaching, so I'm not sure if they can help you at all, really. But here is the list and they will not mind if you call on them. They have been old friends of mine and will be glad to help you out."

She handed him the list, picked up her tea cup and watched him read it. There was no expression on his face. Finished reading, he put the list in his pocket and took out his cigarettes. Offering one to her, she took it and waited for him to light it. She put it in her mouth, just at the last minute, and blew out a small puff of smoke.

"Charles, why are you really going to Europe? What (Continued on Page 31)
(RARE)

someday, when you’re busy
alphabetically filing anxieties
in your head
I’m gonna sneak up behind you
And crack my soul open to you
on top of your head
like an egg—freshly laid

It'll mess you up

Make you cry "oh shit"

inside wet surprise
And we'll labor and pant
together to try
and clean up the honest slime
sticking in slippery threads
in air tight spaces
praising each other
with meaningful glances (rare)
as the pretty pictures we tacked on each other
fall down

- Alice Merrill

NOVEMBER LEAF

A chlorophyll-rusted arrowhead,
spaced in a cog-crown of mercurial form,
the solitary leaf loosened itself from
its barked moorings,
stirring, shifting
in wavelets of sound hissing through the
zigs and zags of the dark, sombre branches
to plummet
like a flatboat drifting in a heady, whirlpool sea
of autumn breeze,
swishing on a vacuous corkscrew transport
to an earthprick of death.

- J. Barmeier
IN RETROSPECT

I remember
curly blond hair
that wouldn't stay combed,
gray-blue eyes,
straight brows,
and the smile that snared me:
all pieces of a puzzle,
but the putting together,
the solving,
is what's beyond me.

I remember
the birthday, and
Monday's Child
Fair of Face was true.
I looked at that face,
the right ear,
the nape of the neck,
the crooked fingers, for a year.
I left, but it was
you who changed.

You're a handy past
to bring up,
when the need arises;
you're a memory
in formaldehyde
I'll slowly dissect.
And if I wince
once or twice, it's
only from habit.

- Julie Lockwood
WEAVING

From swishing skirts and threaded braid
The women spin their creamy fibres
Stretching bark-moss fingers and knotted nails
Bending eyes and brushing heads from side to side.

Soon they will touch one another, their work is so close.

Then they will stop, take tens
And creep again into work.
Like seeds in a ball of cotton.

- Alice Merrill

SPETSE

The King comes
to the island
in a motorized chariot
(the only piece flaming is his)
Looking for a queen
he finds two
hardened
disciples
who put up their nets.
Anointed
in night’s juices--the ritual dance begun--
smiling, blubbery-smooth
slippery King--
They do him right
then roll him on the rocks.

- Cary Anne Spear
VIEW FROM A GARRET TO INFINITY

Yesterday
blimpfingered with softness
I spread
careses around the roses
of you mouth, touching
their petals like a
sheath of feathers
lightly
kissing
the ground.

We floated to Venus
and back
in the springfaced afternoon;
a covey of swans
lifted us over the sun like skycranes

And on whitewing plateau watched
a velvet alcove
of exotic winds
tracing circles over the red oceans
of your hair

Dusk parted temporal seas
and the coagulation of our bodies;
I boarded a wooden ship
and sailed
into your bloodtressed sunset

Never to return
Until tomorrow

- J. Barmeier

MORNING AFTER REFLECTION

Yesterday
My hands encircled
your flagship
a nebulae
one foot across

The earth flew
into the suns of your feet,
a veil of stars on your
cheek,
thundering
sunclaps of light
danced endlessly
on the mountains
of your face.

Daybraked
when nightclouds whitecapped on waves of
Zephre's black breath.

And
darkness
swallowed the ravenflow ribbons
of your hair: shoulderlength blowing
to eternity like kite-string in March

Now
I wish that you had
stood on the sky with your hair hanging
into the oceans
the stallions would have flowed into the seas
like trees

- J. Barmeier
There was a man who had been sleeping. He awoke naked. He felt bare skin against smooth hardness, and a shock went through him. It was the icy birth-stroke of unfamiliarity, for he knew full well that he should not have been naked and the surface under him should not have been hard. He was instantly terrified. His eyes snapped open, gaped to meet the mystery, to embrace it and reduce it, but all they took in served only to compound it, doubled and redoubled, until it was a crushing weight upon his consciousness, and doors began to slam in his brain, in his ego -- he could intimidate them, rail them into silence. Yet it seemed haughty in its indifference, its detachment, its coldness. The cube -- it could wait. Now he concentrated on the dome, the thing that contained him and saw, with a numbing sense of confirmed expectation, that there was no door, no portal, to entrance.

No entrance.

How had he gotten here?

He turned instinctively to the thing in the center of the dome.

It was a tower of colored geometric shapes, a pile of assorted cubes that occupied several square feet of floor space and reached almost to the white apex of the dome. It was circularly curved smoothly down to the hard white floor. It was, he thought, some twelve feet high at its apex and forty feet in diameter. There was, of course, the other astonishing thing, the presence inside the dome with him, but he consciously kept his immediate attention from it. He looked up and around, avoiding the thing in the center. He sensed intuitively that it was inanimate -- it would not harm him. Yet he felt such a sense of presence that it was as if the thing were aware of him, as if he were an integral part of it, as if he belonged to it.

Fear crept through him before consciousness. He was fully awake long before he opened his eyes. He was preparing himself. He again felt the hardness under him, felt himself naked, and knew that the nightmare had been real. He stopped and breathed slowly, his legs gave way, and he was again faint with fear. He broke the silence, of himself, of the mind, of the thing, of the unknown. There was a stunned panic in his voice as he spoke, for he was overcome with the strangeness of this thing that was happening to him, with the fear of it, the uncertainty that he had no control over what was happening to him, no control over what was happening to his likeness with, those beings beyond remembrance that he would never again see, nothing more. Not think. Not react. Not now. Just

He stopped trying and forced his mind blank. He wanted to see, nothing more. Not think. Not react. Not now. Just perception. Just know where he was. He was ready to roll slowly onto his back and opened his eyes.

His knees were inside a dome. That was the first word the thing occurred to him. It was a dome; its walls were white, curved smoothly down to the hard white floor. It was, he thought, some twelve feet high at its apex and forty feet in diameter. There was, of course, the other astonishing thing, the presence inside the dome with him, but he consciously kept his immediate attention from it. He looked up and around, avoiding the thing in the center. He sensed intuitively that it was inanimate -- it would not harm him. Yet he felt such a sense of presence that it was as if the thing were aware of him, as if he were an integral part of it, as if he belonged to it.

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Ah, the small animal-thoughts were meticulous, ways breeding more and more of their kind.

He had learned to think of time in segments; hours, minutes were lost to him. The light was constant, and days were counted only by the inter vals of pause. His body was off balance, as if it were a lost child definition: sleep melded into wakefulness imperceptibly, as smooth as the cast of light in the dome. Time began to move more and more slowly, like long, slow thrusts of blood through pale veins, gushing and ebbing, but always continuous, always with the contracting force of a vast weight. He watched the sky as it turned the same color, the same night for weeks, if not years.

And in the center, the moonlight that time could not touch, oblivious and therefore eternal: the toad, he had learned, hatched, fed, and worshipped it, cursed it, beat at its hard angles till its fists bled, fell on his face before it in love and awe. It made him feel pitiful, like a child, and his eyes would have been instantly free of it. He could have turned, and, for given, and concentrated instead on the wall, on escape. But it remained silent and gripped him, relentlessly.

He awoke from unremembered dreams and began the time - pulse with his usual exercise -- ten laps around the dome, lower, clockwise, five more walking cir cles, counterclockwise. He stopped, breathing shallowly, hands on naked hips, waiting. For what? Waiting as he had for a time now lost to mind, for the answer, or at least for a beginning. He had crossed the walls of all the facets of the cube - tower; there were forty-seven cubes in all, two hundred and eighty - two faces, hypothetically, but, due to the overhang of the dome of cubes in the tower, only two hundred and thirty-five were immediately visible. Ridiculous. Useless knowledge. Yet the counting had held him, had kept him working at the wall, and his mind to the wall, for hours. He had kept his mind at bay, occupied, unemotional. But now he had begun to wonder: this endless, continuous, always with the contracting force of a vast weight.

Playgoer who watched from the other side of the wall, acting as one-way glass, permitting clear view from the wall to the stage but not back. He had already found the hollow of my temple.

And none -- through the echoless white air that no shadow, that no color. He had left with the tower, thinking to climb it, thinking to descend it. He stayed on the dome and somehow pushed his way out, to the signal - liner of his universe and spilt out into chaos, into time.

His dreams were eloquent beyond his conscious thought, their worlds vast and interpenetrating beyond reason or memory. For they were also the vague, amorphous shapes upon an immense, heaving sea of experience; and he imagined the dome at the bottom of that exterior sea, the crushing weight of the wall like the weight of the most heavy, most small, white world, communicating its fury down through the pressure of its mass, even through the strong walls, down through the thickness of his nostrils as he slept, curling in his visions as he dreamed, coiled like tightened muscle in his arms as he was torn from the life of the world.

He thought the thought step by step; he thought it with the only the dome to protect him from that rolling, suffocating power, that intense ocean of undreamed emotion and un-lived event that boiled just beyond the confines of his small, white world, communicating its fury down through the pressure of its mass, even through the strong walls, down through the thickness of his nostrils as he slept, curling, curling, curling in his nostrils as he slept, curling in his visions as he dreamed, coiled like tightened muscle in his arms as he was torn from the life of the world.

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He thought the thought step by step; he thought it with the only
her eyes. A tender stream of saliva in the corner of her mouth, her breathing shallow and intimate. I slide out of
asleep again, dreaming. There are gentle hollows about
hair and skin like cream, I am amazed by it. She whispers
toward me. I embrace her. She is not quite awake and
face. like a recalcitrant forest, the teeth still excellent. My
is a narrow, kindly, suspicious face, the hairline holding
or photographs viewed too closely. It is permanent. It
said my name, I answered at once. How the face has blot-
ning as they poured into words:
"My wife says my name now. She whispers it, moving
?...
A few weeks ago it was unmistakably winter and V
in fitful, hyperbolic paths through the house. He wo'
at home. It was winter and my father was mad, tra
A few weeks ago it was unmistakably winter and V
ed. The beach...
all that he sees. It is wholly intuitive, terribly fragile, but it is infallible. It is ever present, but it is so deep in him that the rush of his own blood quenches it, the surface sheen of all that he meets dazzles it into importance. A simple play of light in a room or the laughter of a woman can blast it into compromises. So is it once whole and utterly fragmented, as constant as a star and as infinitely mutable as its cold fire. He is singular and large and knowing, yet in his largeness he is legion, small and multiplicitous and rigidly mad. He possesses infinitely and is by all that touches him infinitely possessed. He is, finally, a man, and is not content . . .

The man and his friend leave the university and part with a clasp of hands, words still rattling at their lips, thoughts still threatening, It is a sunny day. The man goes his way, feeling the sun, amused by it. There is something in the thing, in the sunlight, the ultimate goalseaker, the infinitely diaphanous, striking a red brick wall, rooted firm and hard beyond the care of man -- the light, the stuff, invisible till striking, existing only in its act, to strike and, striking, light, and the wall, existing only to stand and be stricken, and to endure the striking beyond the care of man, seeming long after and before man, long after man has tired of the sunlight in its infinitely striking fall -- still, still, the wall. There is something to the thing. . . .

"The man sees that there are no final tragedies -- only the tiny ones wrought in silence in a thousand small rooms -- as the snow falls outside, and their cries die off the close walls. He sees that his own suffering is such a tiny thing, such a private thing, and the sufferings of his world are so vast -- he weeps small tears in his own small room, and the universe rolls on, a vast, bleeding gash in the side of infinity, a festering sore on the sweet, smooth skin of chaos. . . ."

So spoke the man in the dome, quietly and fluently. The universe of his dreams expanded and became more intricate; parts that had appeared completely unrelated now seemed to bear subtle kinship to one another, events and persons and images as disparate as sea and land, fire and air began to coalesce into patterns and formulae, systems and hierarchies, like a grand mosaic of a smash-ing stained - glass window drifting slowly back into order, colors repeated, lines mirrored and extended. He began to see how all time and space lay open to him in this universe, how each meshing piece of the mosaic bridged immanent parts that held each in the sprawling grid of the universe, how each meshing piece of the mosaic bridged and gave it proper shape. And when he had finished he had made a handsome child. And the vulnerable head was oddly distended at birth, so that the mother sweats and screams in labor. . . .

The son was born in Detroit, on a sweltering night, an August shortly after the closing of the second Great War. His mother was a long time in labor, and his small tears ran down his face. He lay spread on his back in the arms of the closing darkness, that did not surprise him, or frighten him, he dreamed or saw the great walls begin to buckle inward, and the huge weight of the great sun above rushing in to embrace him . . .

. . . the child. The child. It began with the child, and ended with him. All things were made new in him, and things were laid to waste by him, in that fiery constriction of time through which all life passes, new emotions rising to birth, crowded and burning with friction, through the waist of the hourglass, that did not surprise him, or frighten him, he dreamed or saw the great walls begin to buckle inward, and the huge weight of the great sun above rushing in to embrace him. . . .
did you lose?
The suddenness of the question startled him. He looked
directly at her, took a puff of his cigarette, and moved
his feet from where they had been crossed under the chair.
He put one of them on his knee, the sole of his shoe
and moved the other
turned up toward the kitchen door, and placed the other
up to the front of him. He looked at it for a while, then looked
at her again.
"Why, I just wanted to get away. I wanted to go to
Europe before I had a steady job or something. I don't
want to start working right away."
"You'll be working over there."
He was quiet. She continued looking at him and then
moved a hand to the back of her head, picking up a few
strands of hair from her neck. She placed both of her
hands in her lap. Her head was tilted a little to one side.
"I just lost a girl."
She picked up her tea cup from the table and placed
both her hands around it, letting them still rest in her
lap.
"That's why I want to get away. I feel as if I have nothing
more to do right now."
"I lost someone once too. I even went to Europe.
Lived there for a couple of years and then came back.
And now I'm here in the meantime. After that, I went
to Europe again."
"Did it help? Your going to Europe?"
She settled back in her chair and took a sip of the tea.
Turning the cup in her hands she looked at his mouth and
smiled, "No Charles, it did not help. I still think about him.
I knew him when he had no money, no family that he was
close to, no position. He's wealthy and successful now.
But I still think of him. I knew the woman that he married."
"Well, I'm going to give it a go." The words didn't seem right to him. He continued,
softly, "Thank-you for the list. I want to write to these
people before I arrive."
"That won't be necessary, They won't mind."
He put his cup down on the table in front of him
and stood. Holding out his hand to her he said,
"I think I'd better be going now. I want to thank you for
the afternoon, your company, and for the tea. I'll come
and see you when I return."
She stood, extended her hand, and walked him to
the door.
"You do look very much like your father. It gives me a
shock to see someone so similar to him. I used to know
him quite well." She paused. "Is he happy, do you think?"
He answered shortly, a little distractly,
"Happy? Good God, yes. He's settled and he's happy.
I hope not to be as settled as he."
She opened the door for him and watched him take his
tallness through the frame. He turned to give her a short
wave of his hand. She closed the door and returned to
the chair. Pouring another cup of tea, she looked at the
chair where he had been sitting. There were letters in
the dresser drawer. She left them alone. The room needed
cleaning up; the bed needed to be made, the ash trays
to be emptied. She left all as it was.

---

HUNTER

Tomorrow,
my mind will cast back,
throwing a line into the sun
for some mythical recollection
of the forest
of your hair

Like a slender leaf hugging the salt tide,
you are
consummated
on the mirrortwists
of my eye

---

Pete Porteous

---

A MINOR CHANGE AT DENISON U.?

I shook hands with them all
in a row
without missing
I tore up my name before the next
to get away. I wanted to go to
stead Job or something. I don't
right away.

I glanced at freaks
sitting in a circle
and cursed vomit on sides of sinks

I bitched about
the food
the cold
the days until Thanksgiving
the days before Christmas

Why had I come?
I went to the Market
to forget the question
but it got up with me
coating my headache

Pete Porteous

---

J. Barneier

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HUNTER

Tomorrow,
my mind will cast back,
throwing a line into the sun
for some mythical recollection
of the forest
of your hair

Like a slender leaf hugging the salt tide,
you are
consummated
on the mirrortwists
of my eye

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J. Barneier

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SNOWFLAK

From aerial foyer pushed
into the swirls of cumulus nimbus heaven,
a pigmied hexagon of ice: delicately sutured
cobwebs of crystalized winter

fell
ten thousand feet
like

that

stewardess on page fourty-six
of the New York Times,
smashed frozenwhite on a midwestern plain.

- J. Barmeier
Loving Negative Ten

My sweet Jesus, what's wrong with you
I want your body but I don't love you
Sex is creation
creation, creativity, energy which
is and always is and never is not
so when you don't get laid
you grab your number two soft
phallic penis pencil and violate
a clean sheet of paper
Your energy is diverted, subverted
preverted and sublimated
so instead of pure pleasure a poem
exists.
The virginal poet panders pure energy
in the hope of an end that will be plain desire
The desire exists!
Christ, you probably read poems before you
sleep each night.

Loving Negative Nine

How Do I love you
let me count the ways
I love you in position six
twelve and ten
I love you Saturday night
and Sunday morning instead of church
and I love you with the dreams
of future loves.

Loving Negative Eight

I see you on the quad daily
everyday at the same time
and we both smile. Hello.
Suddenly I start to see,
more often I run into you
and slowly I get to know
that you are capable of love
Yet why do I bother myself
and slowly I get to know
You are capable of sex

Loving Negative Seven

It is very late at night
and I'm very very tired
I would leave, go home and go to bed
This party is dull
and I'm too stoned to have a good time
But there are still a couple
of girls here. They must be thinking
the same as me.

Loving Negative Six

I hate to harp
on one point forever
but I really do love you
I really do know
I will admit that I
did not love you at first
but we have gotten so good
in bed
that my love grows and swells
as you warmly embrace it.

LOVING

Loving Negative Five

You write of love
but you are moved by hate
I'm sure you will agree that
love is a plus
a something that is there
while hate is an absence
a hole in the void
So you write of love
and your highly sublimated
high level relationships
but the source of these
pseudo-plus-presences
is your lifeless life in a sexless void

Loving Negative Four

Hetero
Homo
boys and girls together
or all at once for that matter
Love, you say, is more than sex:
Love of Mother
Love of country
Love of fellow man,
The only thing you can't ball is a flag

Loving Negative Three

Lust is movement
perhaps the secret
of perpetual motion
like a pendulum
back and forth
in and out.
Don't you wish
you could do it forever?

Loving Negative Two

I Love you
your body protects
you from the rath of
my hopefully non-castrated
humility
I can tolerate you
the nausea won't kill me
but we can't have a relationship
because I must remain superior,
I love you

Loving Negative One

You look at me and say you love me
and you hope that I will define love
so you can have sex while I have love
Your stupid superiority really is
too much. Frustration is only mine,
while you make sure you have your pride.
Did it never happen in your head,
the thought in yours was also in mine
I don't care for your love
your sex is all I want.

Zero Loving: Fuck-you.
IRISH CONVERSATION

Peat boggles.
It tickles the sight of an asphalt-blind traveler,
swallows cool clouds from our speech
with its warmth.
Delicate surgeon—it opens hearts deftly,
pulls out a drawl, softens
clackety-clacking words,
billows on echoes of boggling
peat
boggled.

- Cary Ann Spear
ON THIS PLANET

Once I was twice as old as you
When you were tiny two
And I was four
    making a flower-crown
    in a paddy field
When you were on the other side of
    this planet; nine thousand miles apart
You were running
    across the lawn
With a big red balloon
    filled with dreams untouched
Didn’t I feel
    the foot-steps of your tiny feet
    right under my feet?
Once I was twice as old as you
When the moon was
    singing a lullaby for you while
    the sun was high
    over my head

Since then
The sun has made a daily journey
    not knowing how many times
And the seasons repeated patiently
But the time flew backwards
When I crossed the Pacific
And I met
For the first time
That little boy with a balloon
Now grown tall and strong
Yet it must be you
Didn’t I feel
    the foot-steps of your tiny feet
    right under my feet?
When I was twice as old as you
On the other side of
    this planet

-yasue aoki