

Fall 1973

Three Poems

Quinton Duval

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LOSING STARS

They escape through the eyes
like secrets. They will not be held.
Even as the white cells fall dead
among the days, a silver ounce of light
is going up to a new place.

We are jealous. We cannot agree
among ourselves, even who fills
their mouth first with bread.

The color in the eyes diminishes,
and fills in the face with a faint
tattoo of pain.

We have glimpsed this, time and
again, and still insist upon pulling
ourselves down in it.

This is not fair. A match cannot
aspire to be only smoke.

Somewhere there is a blue halo
that will fit all sizes.

Somewhere there is a huge black dog
whose only job is to bite flesh.

There is also the young woman whose
teeth are missing, who collected them
as they fell from the mouth, and
put them in a jar filled with tears.

PITY

So the hand is fast, does not
slip, does not even feel
the age, the redness, the
solid snake, driving distance
before it with a tiny but
accurate brain.

Perhaps the reason why I feel
caught, why I am
crying.

I am telling you: the dog in my
pocket is dead. Not a runaway,
just dead.

You have cheated me.
A flick of the heart, of
a softer flesh. I am
like a man who lies
in the sun so long
his nose just starts bleeding.

A BLOW ON THE EAR

Goodbye. She walked slowly out
of my life: her mouth formed the
words of a poem, shaped like
the suitcase she carried below her wrist.

Goodbye, came the answer,
the door cracked behind my ears,
to the wind sneaking away through
a window in the rear of the house.

Those words, what were they, that
stunned me like a blow on the ear?
That made me blink and fall backwards
into a chair.

There is this coma of fear now.
I know it is silly. I am a romantic
and cannot help it.
I open a can of hearts and eat them,
one by one, by myself.
I watch the T.V. lying to me.

The darkness does not ask
my permission to enter. My
fingers are not willing to make
the shape necessary to pick up
the pen. I eat my hearts, in their
heavy syrup, alone.