

"A body was washed upon the shore..."

The door faced west, so the sun had not yet burned away the night; I turned deliberately toward the more morning end of the street, where the day seemed to be a happier colour, to be getting a better start, a start which I hoped would be contagious, since it hardly reflected our night before.

—What had been the meaning of that sob which had murdered the stillness of the aftermath and brought a darkness greater than the night, and which hid the mutual understanding which we thought we had finally found? What had been the thought which surely she had tried to suppress, but why, and which nonetheless had fought its way through her to become a cry in the night, anomaly, question for a seeking soul?

Clouds were gathering in the western sky, as though vying the sun for possession of the dome — surely it would rain later, yet I couldn't think of it as "the sad sky shedding tears for the grateful dead". More like the heavens laughing themselves to tears at man defeated by his own vanity.

—She laughed at my claiming to be able to believe the beliefs of all people. "I knew a woman who claimed that God made love to her while she slept, and she knew it wasn't just a dream because she could still feel the glow of it after waking. But she never became pregnant. I am left with the choice of questioning either her sanity or God's potency." I am attempt to ease her dilemma, I suggested that we might have to question neither if we allowed for God's slipping her BC, but: "You're a Saturnian creep." She winced in mock pain, mock mock.

The bay was misty and unreal, seemed to tower above the beach when seen from my side of the highway; the beach was dark and dewy, as though trying to retain the night, or maybe it had sweat for fear of the darkness. For fear of what the darkness meant to its loneliness.

—Her theories were as wild as her eyes. "If we were all really who we are in public, then we wouldn't really be who we are, would we?" She was a mystery. "I had the same professor for psyc and math, and had nightmares of having nightmares in which he never finished giving a lecture on "The Sexual Implications of the Binomial Theorem for a Geometric Society." She was a witch.

A car went over the causeway, its headlights still vainly seeking their way, though the day was already brighter than they were. They were yellow eyes creeping blindly, only because their sight was unnecessary, unwanted. But there they went, faithfully unblinking.

I faked a smile, a futile laugh, as my eyes watered at the thought of not blinking, not shuffling out the world for minute instants of inward escape.

—I told her that I was a thousand people, that I had to be new each day, simply because I was old each night. She said, wickedly, "I know who you are." I asked her what faces she had collected: "Only my own." But we all gather people, snaring presents to enrich futures — "No," she cried, "look at that old lady upstairs in the tiny back room. She collects no people, just scrap books and pictures and dusty old memories. She's crazy, real'v insane." So I wrote her a poem about the woman to help her to understand. Sorry thing about —

—cluttered with life, to hide the death which has brought her to this small and lonely end.  
—cluttered with smiles, to hide the sorrow in which each careful memory meets its murderer.

—she is not just a little old lady, no — she has sent her husband to fight and called him home broken and lost within himself at all the horror, watched him scream at her son, and fight with him, when he would not allow his father's fate to crush his youth, not even for the spirit of his proud nation, to sacrifice his own. She has stood with both of them at once on either side of hateful misunderstanding.

—hers is the harshest sanity —  
She read it; she just smiled, a wicked smile, and kissed the window just where the sun came in. And then it was night. For me with her, night was a curse-black blessing, and I had never to open my eyes to see it gone. Day had no stealth and, to all our senses, betrayed itself.

The wind lifted as it passed me by, whispering something I couldn't quite hear, nor which I could have understood, had I known what truth it claimed to have stolen from the distance.

The sky was blue in the east, grey in the west; and rain pimples were hurrying across the far side of the bay. The storm and I approached each other — like to like.

I wonder if she has yet opened her face to the day, to be proudly alone, yet not selfishly lonely. What a wonder she was — a stranger to everyone except the most important person — herself. "I am only unknown if I don't know myself. I am the only person I care to know, and the only one I care to have know me." "You're unreal," I ventured. She said, not really just to me, but to everything, "It's much better, I think, to be confusing than to be confused. Besides, I like being a stranger." Well, wonderful stranger — I could be in the midst of a million people — and each could mean something special for me, and I, for each of them — yet so long as you were not among them, I would be lonely. I tried to make you understand that we see but to collect faces, and to seek in our memories for the face, but you didn't care to know.

Why am I thinking in the past tense? I know only one face, and it is yours!  
The sun is far too low in the west, and the whole world is blacking.

The rain falls in infinite and sky clad mystery. Quick and casual, I slip through the shower, conscious only of my deepest and innermost self, and of the chattering drops which keep me unalone. mock mock. It is twilight. The whisperings of gentle evening and the cool fragrances of moist darkness wrap themselves slowly, possessively about the stranger who walks in rainy solitude.

I think that I shall feel this way for the rest of my life — a few thought forever

doorways open like mouths to swallow me  
they lure me to their tombs of oak  
and lock them behind me  
i would burn my way out, but i can't  
i am dead

i am supposed to be dead  
and it would freak them out if i moved  
or i would shout in all the rooms  
of the world  
and tell them

this world is not in the clouds  
but like their world  
it is buried in earth  
and it is only a wall we build  
that keeps it from touching us.

jayne

Mask of Anger

I stand alone, my fists clenched with impotent rage.  
How could I have been so stupid as to fall for your  
stupid tricks?  
Liar! You lied to me!!  
Cheater! You cheated on me!!  
Oh yeah; in the beginning you were so kind, so gentle,  
so afraid to hurt, ha! What a clever facade.  
I hate you!!

Untitled

Lilianne

If anyone who reads this and thinks they recognize themself, well,  
as the old cliché goes 'If the shoe fits, wear it'

Stop it! Stop it! Stop it...  
I'm tired of playing this silly game of pretending I don't  
see when I do see, of pretending I don't hear when I do, of  
pretending I don't feel, when I feel so deeply.

I hate you, I love you, I like you, I don't know you, I  
don't understand you, and God knows you aren't making it  
any easier.

Just leave me alone, don't see me, don't touch me, don't  
hear me but most of all don't try to know me or even  
understand me....just love me...

Christ!! Here I go again, don't believe me when I say  
my feelings! Don't close the door and leave me alone in the  
dark, just leave but leave a light on for me to see...

Lilianne

ON MEN ← → ON WOMEN

A heart frozen with fear  
A mind flooded with doubt  
What is this "love" bit  
all about?

An ego on the shelf  
A penis in the drawer  
A shadow of his former self  
Not "adequate" any more.

Bastards!  
Are all men movers  
Never caring where they stop?  
Or are they just too proud  
To concede that they need  
An anchor to reach the top?

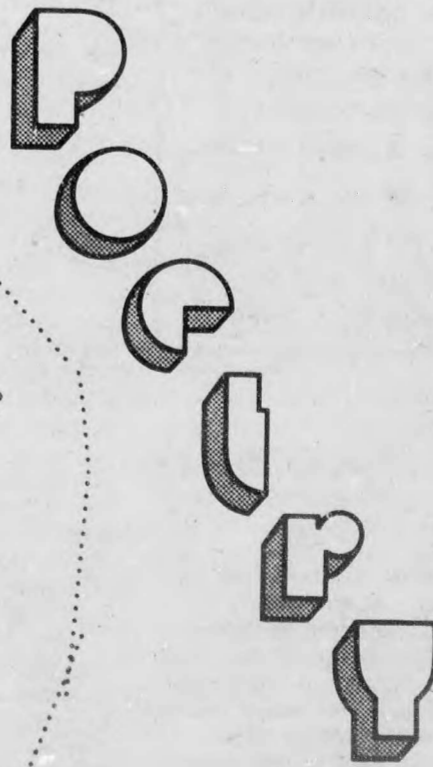
Bitches!  
Are all women witches  
Intending evil from the start?  
Or are they just too starry-eyed  
To see that they need  
To admit what they feel in their hearts?

Poems by Cathy Baker

AFFINITY

Clatter on little leaf  
Soon you shall be dust...  
—But race me now,  
Skipping and dancing,  
Effortless!  
Of us both  
I shall endure  
...But, take comfort,  
Rest assured  
I'm in a cycle, too.

BITE!  
Bite and chew  
and let it pass through  
or  
Bite and spit out,  
grin or pout  
but  
BITE!



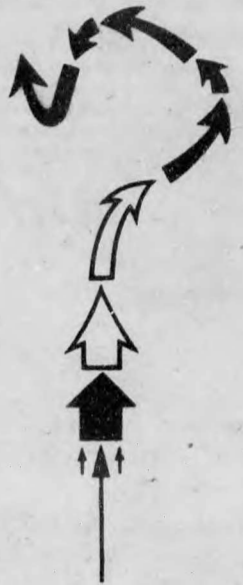
OUT OF PLACE

Am I an anachronism,  
Too much cynicism  
No thought, no sense,  
No give, no take  
Too much spiritualism?

Then why content  
In a world spent  
On turmoil.  
'Cause Love, as the Dove  
Draws me to toil.  
A smile makes a heart sing.  
A word removes the selfish sting.  
God's love, so sweet, so kind;  
Precious peace, rests sublime.  
All's Christ's, All's Ours, All's Mine.

Pray and Except  
Today Christ Accept  
Means Life or Death  
To Choose is Best

Gordon Tippett



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