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Put simply, I need help. Unlike Coleridge, I can't afford to get stoned and I'm fed up waiting for the heavenly muse. In any case, speed sonnet writing is a drag. Nevertheless, I'd like to take this opportunity to thank all those who have submitted material over the last couple of weeks. But why this aversion to prose?

Seriously, I'd really like some short stories, book reviews, and even some hard-hitting satire. So help a harassed hack and show up with some copy. Please!

THE COVERED BRIDGE

Mark Henderson

They built the covered bridge
so that two chariots might pass easily.
None of the builders had ever seen a chariot
unless McCaulay or Webster illustrated one.

Timbers and planks and principles
as old as the Roman arch
gave the bridge resiliency and solid strength
belied by the filtered sunlight
sifting through the cracks.
Rotted wood was replaced by new,
seasoned grey and fresh tawny
combining like the smells of horses and
apple-carts
rumbling through them.

The covered bridge was razed,
replaced by iron rods and concrete.
The new bridge crumbles
before all natural things
and will fall in the Stillwater someday,
losing a family of swallows to the undertow.

THE WIFE OF NEPTUNE AND THE DEAD CIGARETTE

Martin E. Warren

A hermit damned by gothic crowns
And flowers strewn upon the ground,
Plastic streams of misery
From worlds dying on the tree.

And then at once a thunderclap,
And thirty bloodied lampshades,
And Sally's lemonade stand...
The fall beside king Xerxes' flag.

By crystal gleam awoke the three to greet the broken rose,
And cluttered in the garden green were branches of eight orange trees
we planted,
Squid dancers reached the barren rock and as the sin they missed the most
died with it,
The leader turned a dial just to fake sarcastic smiles on cellophane.

RAILS

Mark Henderson

Rails lead out of town,
iron bands that held my father forty years.
When I was young and walking here,
rails could take me to the four corners of the earth,
even McAdam.
That was when I was young
and rails had an end.
That was when it was summer,
and the days dragged on for hours.

These are the ties that bind.
You don't stop walking these rails
till you get off;
red ants will eat you alive
like they ate my father as he stood
one place,
paid by the ton,
moving fishmeal and tin.

I am on rails at dusk
at dawn.
I walk along then;
there's a bear in the woods, they say.
They're right.
I've seen his footprints in the sand,
heard shadows crashing through the underbrush.
But while I am on rails
he has to come out
to face me,
or I will see him on rails
ahead.

PEACE

solitude at the edge of a lake
stillness in falling snow.

beauty in rustling leaves,
a sleeping child -

reaching and
touching your hand.

M. Jane Arnott
BA II