

mark piesenan



swirlingspinningstumble
brain broke in transit
motion means matter
matter means nothing
a billion cells splatter
and colour the world
blink blood pink
all the way out
never clued in
swirlingspinningstumble

Stephen Shay

REALITY CONFRONTATION
(ONE AGING VETERAN TO ANOTHER)

The ancient veteran —
(All of ninety-five years, they say)
Enveloped in his flame coloured robe,
Advances at snail's pace on his two stout canes,
His legs forming a hoop — completely bowed
From years of Rheumatism,
His gnarled neck chords and veins outstanding,
He comes to a halt before me,
His rumpled white eyebrows lift in hostile challenge
As his ancient blue eyes rivet unblinking on mine.
He obstructs my passage in the narrow hospital corridor.
He waits, daring me wordlessly
To pass without a verbal greeting.

I fasten a tight smile on my mouth
And try to hammer it down with an interest
Not wholly curious.
'Well, old man, I wondered,
What would you have me say?'
And I thought again:
Even in your younger or middle years
I would not have found you attractive!

He remained silent but increased his eye contact with me.
'I wish you well, Mr. Black' I felt compelled to say,
But I knew my tone was cold geometry —
Just an unsolved equation, (and I wondered,
'How can your knotted old pride demand more of me
Than that I wish you well?')
He did not move. Needing more room to pass
I added the cosmetic hospital words, "Take care"
He detached his eyes, moved his canes to the right,
Thus allowing my heavy bulk to pass.

And so we passed, each climbing his own steep summit
Me, a veteran (female) of 74
He, as I have said, at least 95,
He going his way with his trusty black canes,
I going mine, seeking the faint pink flush
That surmounts all summits.

I had not told him the truth:
Not wanting to diminish him, I had not said,
'I can rarely tolerate the old age of another —
I have all I can do to contend with my own'
But people never want to hear the truth.
(Truth is one of the public myths. . .
Truth is 'for the birds'

Or whatever. . .)

Jean Lambert

mark piesenan



Speak white
into me as easily as
you have held my
tiny heart to your ear
and heard no sound of
sea. Speak
to me now from your
curtained room as you
are naked and in
tears, where nothing
fills the air, there are no
smiles or whispers but
dusted light from our avenues
and rest, now
that we have survived ourselves.

Darren Murray

ariella pahlke



DAY BEFORE SUNRISE

day
before sunrise woke
grey & blue
skies we toss
in dreams of
each someone else
away
we turn both
sunriseward through
darkness
eyes sky-far
in sleep
awake
& wanting each
other dream soft
skin & sinew
slide below
eyes
sightless sensation
I & you & no one
else beyond
bodies
together
remember
no dreams

Kathy Mac



janet nicol

These leaves are not sparrows —
small things scratch at asphalt, at air
till half fly away — they are sparrows
& the rest slam down once more —
leaves

breaking up against concrete
dashed again & again these leaves
are not sparrows

after rain all that is left
are dull colors leached on
the sidewalk

Kathy Mac

stephen shay



dead.
That
was
what
he was
when I
saw him
on the
street.

Stephen Shay