

Poetry from students of Prof. K. Thompson's Creative Writing Course, English 3100

WANTING

If I could reach as far as the farthest star
Or touch as much;
looking for one thing unbroken,
the smallest word unspoken
that means the most,
the greatest need with the least desire
I would give and would want no more.

- John Dempsey

BLUE CANDLES

The hand writes, incense swirls, and
I am a changed person.
The artificial light flickers, goes out
The hand remains in the shadows
Of the candles and the flickers and the swirls
Whatever holds the future
The incense will linger
To remind the future lodger of this room
That incense burned where I was
Lived, saw blue candles glow.
Its beeswax companion spilled, before
The hand created a blue creation.

E.M.J.

IN THE COFFEE SHOP, WHILE IT RAINS

Blue jeans, hair, and greasy chips,
Wad of gum from moving lips-
Still wet.

Jukebox thumping Elton John,
Pub this Thursday-get it on?
You bet.

Blue lounge smokers, Smoke Shoppe crowd;
Social Club, all freaks allowed,
Five Bucks.

Got a class? To hell with it-
Let's hit the SUB, the day's not fit
For ducks.

L.A. Pitcher

THE GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST [A SONG]

Satin and flowing lace
descending a staircase,
the room comes alive with her glow.
While outside the window
the cold northern winds blow
untiringly drifting the snow.
And just for a moment...
the breath of a moment
the world that I've known fades away.
My mind starts to wander,
and I can't help but wonder
if this is the way it should be --
But the times, they are changing
the world rearranging,
and satin and lace flow no more,
except when I'm dreaming
and the old ones remembering
a quiet way to spend Christmas day...
to spend Christmas day
to spend
Christmas
day.

Patrick O'Brien

THE RIVER

The French found this river
And farmed its fresh valley
and loved it
and made it Catholic
and built a white church
and farms
and barns
and sheds
and children
were born in bed
and they made them Catholic, too.
My mother was born here
in a room filled with virgins
and crosses
and the smell of old cloth
and sick old people.
She brought me here,
and let me hide in the tall grass
while she spoke strange words
to the lady next door.
And every July it was the same
and the hay was scythed,
and the firewood split,
and the lamps were cleaned
and lit-
and I loved it, too.
Even the trips to the well
and the smell of the shed.

They're all dead now.
I'm back to see my uncle.
The house is his,
and the sun is down,
and I'm almost there,
and I see through the windows
of the farmhouse
older than my mother's mother's mother
Unnatural light.
In the damp, high grass
I creep closer.
The ceiling throbs with colour,
pulsing from my uncle's TV.
Burbank
K-mart
Plastic
and Goddamn,
they're speaking English again.
I run
down the hill
Scramble
over the bank
Slip
Fall
in the dank, rotting seaweed,
Swear
and cry to the river,
"Why are your people
washed up and rotting?
Why do they want
mass-produced rosaries?
Why do they stack
Bilingual boxes
English-side out?"

But she does not care-
she is still free.
The river stares at me
with a thousand starry eyes,
and sighs,
"Je m'ennuie, je m'ennuie..."

L.A. Pitcher

ARTHUR AND ANNA

Came back from the grave,
They sat quite silent then.
Evening sun filling the small kitchen.
Older woman wiped her hands,
Placed them, clasped, upon her apron,
Nodded once and once again,
Amber highlights, golden on her brow.
Words lodged in her chest,
The captive of truth.
The younger voice, mere breeze of sound.
That sigh, it too went by unnoticed.
"Didn't suffer much, I hope", daughter said.
"Not really, not near the end at least."
"Well mother, he is resting now."
She looked up from the floor.
Daughter knew it wasn't much to say,
When after all these years she'd been away.
"Suppose he is, suppose he's happy now."
"Well mother, go to bed."
"He said that often, 'Go to bed, I'll finish up.'"
"Go now. You haven't slept for nights."
I heard you up and coughing. Go to bed."
"I can't sleep. I think I hear him coming in,
It's not, I know, it couldn't be.
He'd come in that door, whistling,
Hang his cap there on the nail.
Said if it was going to rain tomorrow or tonight.
Said, 'Anna, you got supper on?
Could eat a horse for sure.'
He'd rock and talk and tell me
Stories from the mill and tease me
'Bout a girl he likely never seen.
And in the evening, time like now, the two of us;
Him rocking, reading, and me, darning socks
Or turning collars on his shirts."
"Mother, want some tea? It's steeped,
It's ready now."
"I'll have a cup. Not that! That's his,
I'll put in on the upper shelf."
"Sugar? Want some sugar, mother?"
"You never sweeten tea my girl,
If it was meant that way, would come like that."
"That's crazy talk."
"It's not, indeed it's not."
Arthur never liked his tea served sweet."
"All right. -- Will you be moving into town?"
"Moving? To what? I'm staying put,
Not leaving here. Can't go.
Who'll feed the hens? The cows need milked,
And a garden over-run with weeds.
I'll be all right, the pension comes in too."
Daughter shook her head,
The foolish Old, she thought,
And how a woman weeps for love.
Daughter left the morning next,
And on the train she read,
Then thought about her dead father
And his younger brother, Arthur.

- Richard M. Burns