1978

Wake to the Horns A Collection of Poems

Cheryl Ferney

Utah State University

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WAKE TO THE HORNS

A COLLECTION OF POEMS

by

Cheryl Ferney

Utah State University

1978
Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for graduation in Honors.
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slim spires,
housing for
the massive, antique bronze bells
pausing with dignity
as the majestic echoes
roused by their hollow voices
tremble the solid base--
the momentum builds
in smooth acceleration
as they all keep pace
in the twilight of the chill dawn,

while in the mountains lit with morning sun
the cadence wanes and reaches ebb,
the throb, a faint thin whisper
barely disturbing the remote fragile silence,
merges, blending
into a small ripple in the tremulous hush,
an electric shiver in the air.
6:42 a.m.

Construction paper cloud
Lavender
With pink smears, orange-tinted
Bottom edge flat
Top edge torn and humpy
Sky yellow below
But blue above
A thick straight strip
Pasted onto the backs of the mountains
At the edge of the world.
Sunbathing

translucent gloss of the loch
a deep royal blue
surrounded by empty downs
reversed in the depths
where the sun
playfully plunges from its sunrise pinnacle
to zenith suspended in the chasm of the lake
proceeding with a fluid sway in its flight,
emerging tousled at the other shore
to leap back into the sky and
run redfaced and laughing home.
The Interchange

Five fingers spread
Reaching east
Sunset behind
Ruby stained and threatening hand.
twilight
pale glimmer of brightest stars
in darkening blue

swift passage of red star
growing brighter--
shooting closer and down
to impact in the middle of the city
with deafening explosion

shards of glass litter the pavement
a twisted arch of concrete
glittering in the light of
the crawling fires nearby

the peaceful stars are blotted out
by the cloud of airborne death
released in the explosion
night of black and red
filled with the stench of burning
the wrecks of the buildings shudder
as another tower surrenders to gravity
and collapses to a heap of rubble

monstrous hail
of shattered brick
pounds a deserted playground
into jagged scrap metal

stained glass window melts
and runs,
dripping down the wall
like warm wax of a candle
set too long in the sun

a tsunami races the riverbed
smashing the suspension bridges
sinking the river craft with debris
in its headlong charge to the sea
the statue in the park,
topped from its base,
fell into the duck pond
its bronze green hidden under muddy water
and tattered feathers

boiling mud rains upon the city
bouncing off charred rooftops
a searing paint to hide the blackened rubble
under a uniform camouflage of brown

tangled knot of power lines
wrapped around the broken toothpicks
of flattened poles

fractured tree
falling,
crushed in the side of a building
ragged wooden teeth stiff with rigormortis
tearing at the sky
water sprays in all directions
from cracked pipes,
losing pressure
until a last small trickle stops,
and the flames edge closer
to sizzle around the puddles

the streets are dense
with crushed cars and buses
instant crematoriums
drive-in mortuaries
exploding gas tanks in chain reaction

roar of the holocaust
sucking in wind to funnel skyward
dwarfs the noise of dying humanity
Corona

Stonehenge

the world from rough stones--
monstrous shards of cataclysm
sail the west wind in a sea of grass
as dawn of the solstice
comes straight as a blazing arrow
on a line laid from horizon to kingstone
and decks the grave with awesome light.
sun sinks in the lake.
golden misty glow fills the valley
like an amber sea
as the dark weighted clouds
trap the sunshine
between unlit water above
and below.
fiercely burning paper sun

clean cut white disk

cooled off behind charcoal smudges

of thin cloud cover

sinks quickly into the dark

gray of gathering snowstorm.
flame curtain

cold night
glazes the windows with ice,
elaborate crystal designs
back-lit by red light
of passing patrol car.
moonring
stratospheric ice crystals
bending light
open a hole to deepest space.
shunted aside, the stars
form a huge faint ring of luminescence
about the moon
suspended in a black tunnel to infinity.
Skye Cathedral

three rows of organ pipes grow along the road.
the short ones in front are painted brown
the middle ones have rusted from the rains
and the tallest stand at the back
with the black plowed field behind them,
somber gray.

when the bellows pumper
comes back from lunch,
the organist will play.
Wheat field

Each spire
Rises to the height
Specified by Sam

Green paint
Fading in the sun
To yellow brown

Excess water
Flooding from
Untended ditches

Storm wind overburdens
The finely balanced
Soggy stems

Flattened patches
Of muddy grain--
Rumpled half-cut poodle coat
thin ribbons of water
tracing squares in concrete channels
shining black and silver
under lamplight
wrinkle loosely around
leaves and gravel in the ditch
refracting shadowy maps
to the browned bottom
* green shingles on a roof
waves making shadows
across rippled sand
at the bottom of the lake.
Bear Lake Outing

white gilt clouds
ponderous mist
float above undulating surf of
lime sherbet mixed with blue
various shades streaked along
the length of the lake
with miles of light brown sandy crust
packed in ridges
and the shore is garnished with
slices of gargantuan black olives
stuffed with well-oiled red peppers.
The Sighting

rounded objects
wheeling over water

blip blip blip

thin gray shadow
above white flash
The Collection Doll

Starched white hair
Drawn loosely back,
Falls in a cascade
Of tiny ringlets.
Shimmering white bodice
With handsewn tiny stitches
In smoothly fitted silk
Has pleated shoulders
Flowing into long full sleeves
Gathered in at the wrists.
A full skirt of crushed velvet,
Royal blue in shade,
Is gathered at the hips
Into a sculptured yoke,
Form-fitting.
The base
Is a plastic gallon jug
Weighted down with plaster.
Not-me in the Glass

to wear a mask
playing a part for the public
perhaps to persuade self
perhaps by plan
who can tell?
the mask becomes the skin
just as real
terrifying
maintaining the mask, the soul conforms
shell shaping contents
contents shaping shell shaping--no!
shells shaping shell
vicious cycle
ruled by law
action-reaction
marbles.
So says the fable of the Waxen Molding.
In truth,
no fable--
--reality.
focus outward--
the Other,
and inward--
what lies there?
a calcified rock
pitted, worn, and gray
lies sunwarm on a ledge;
seen, approached, and gathered up,
a sudden blow leaves a chipped corner,
revealing heart of dense black glass
thick grease smooth--
obsidian
lime jello for dinner

a bowl filled with
the plastic gleam
of green bottleglass
crumbled into chunks
by mechanical fingers
of a garbage dump
gem cutter.
tiny glass snail
on the nightstand
lists to starboard
head tilted, antennae crooked--
   one pointing forward,
one to the side,
one snapped off--
   replaced with Elmer's
and awkward fingers,
pinhead bubbles
frozen in smooth pyrex
when the craftsman left for lunch.
The Attic

grandma's fairyland was hidden
away at the top of the house--
tattered streamers of hoary cobweb
white daemons' dance
in the draft from the broken attic window,
textured fragments of the past
stacked thick with dust
reincarnated by the magic spell
of a playground for imagination.
Kitten

tiny
hollow-weighted
furred
squeaks
lifted from under the truck
by a big heavy boot
on its way to the field.
the stove
with manhole covers agape
has spritely folk
down inside
peering out at us.

*
A Mime with no Rosetta Stone

His words are rare,
Though he's fluent enough
In his silent language
Of gesture and touch.
Always trying something new,
Playful, pesky,
Or curious in turn;
Reflective
Tucked in quiet corners,
His thoughts indecipherable
As the expressions
Everchanging,
Enigmatic on his face.
lost in thought:
relaxed
except for wondering eyes,
pressure on one leg
hanging half over the edge,
three fingers and thumb
rubbing along the quilt binding.
Summons

sungold glitter
a burning cloud around
the branching finger
thrust from earth
high up the drying hillside
of Thunder Mountain.
* 

seventeen thousand 
nine hundred and sixty-one 
one-inch 
natural 
olive green 
pom pom balls 
make a bush.
standing ovation
from the crowd milling about the square
their muted cheers rise lazily up
to the church steeple
where Quasimodo waits,
peering down to see the gypsy dancer
delicate as aspen leaves in the breeze
and watch the flash of silver pieces in the sun.
old tree
sweeping skirts
of the Mother Buffoon
creaked to a stop long ago,
skirts lifted,
little clowns blown away.
the tree stands and
waits
for the lights to go up
the music to start
the ballet to go on.
This Ship Goes Nowhere

superstructure visible
through the trees on the lawn,
black and white funnels,
their steam billowing up
in the frosted sunshine--
steamboat
sails a gully dry for years
just off the avenue.
Frustration and K.H.

A blob of shattered mercury
that must be gathered home
and be made
whole
once more,
Yet every feather's guiding touch
splinters it further
into fragments of fleeting quicksilver
scudding away before the breath of reason.
proud seashell
spines awash with
clinging strands of seaweed
slimy soft green
in the hollow of a sunwarm pool

looking up to gaze out over the surf
with its iridescent overlay
an ancient spell laid on the high sea
like spindrift lace
of pale moonshine on black water

beckoning finger of the surf
clear jade green with seaweed
springs forward in joyful puppy greeting
and retreats, sliding down the packed sand,
pause to plead, 'follow me'
drawn in
to a world of wind and wave
awakening
to a proud independence
and the shore an ethereal blue shadow
lying low against a misted horizon
Ad Astra

Child of the starrovers,
Left to determine his destiny
In the cradle of a bluegreen jewel,
Infancy a test of worthiness,
Watches the stars come out at night
And dreams of the day
When, cradle outgrown,
He can claim his heritage
Beyond the sky.
Exordium

curve grown ponderous
now in shrunken collapse
lingering on the threshold
in sullen defiance,
remote balefire
a tenacious flush of faintly shining embers
synthesizing rot at the core
slowly decaying
to merge with the thick dusk,
coiled about by the gathering dark
as time drifts past in endless flow,
making a slow withdrawal
into permanent oblivion.
ancient twilight serene and haunted
cadence of the surf muted
in the hushed silence,
grown stagnant
under the delicate crystal lace of ice
girdling the sea,
glimmering ruby in the waning sun,
awaiting the shadows
as a swirl of flakes eradicates the beach
and snow erases the grotesque ruins,
the wastelands of a derelict world
abandoned to die alone.
the fiery heavens have been dulled by time,
yet a few blazing scintilla
formed from the nebulous dust
fill the rift,
giving a challenge of escape
and a race dared to dream,
to face the outward frontier,
say farewell to the familiar--
create a bridge and depart
in search of light,
wander into the strange
dawn and the children
are gone forever
from the cradle of this dead star.
Luke

wake to the horns
    their clear notes carrying,
live, trembling tones
    reach out of the dark,
out of the past,
rising from the dim and forgotten,
    the dead,
to whisper . . .
    the dream echoes . . .
and is young again.