

Three Strikes and You're Out

I stood behind the plate
as the screwball hit
the catcher's mitt—SMACK
Strike one.

Palms sweaty, I waited for
the second pitch.
A fast ball—
high and outside.
I swung, made contact—CRACK
Foul to right field.
Strike two.

One more chance.
My pulse is racing.
I step back from
the batter's box.
Watch him—his eyes.
What will come next?
The game is in my hands.
A curve. Take the chance.
A hit, a big hit.
Home run.

My heart is lost.
The game is won.

Cheri Chester

35,000 Feet

A roar and a sharp tug at the shoulders.
Blood fills the ears — uptilt and strain.
Rooftops shrink by, hills slide away,
familiarities mottle into small panic.

The glint of dissolving cars belies
motionless ground, windless mirrors.
Roads stretch out like veins, curving
around pitchfork lakes, a park of buses
schooled like kernels of yellow corn,
the ribbed fan of a drive-in theater.

At 35,000 feet the notch
of volt towers through a quadrilateral farm
graphs our sense of boundary —
a nuclear hourglass, the blue
inlaid stamp of swimming pools,
a button card of oil tanks.
New wheat lines up against fallow.

But geometric constraints lift
to surprise: an armada of pillows
steams across an Antarctic plain,
their distant, turbulent wakes
dissolving above the time zones
and the weight of anchored dreams.

Ken Chamlee

Circularring
(To my mother)

PTK
CONTEST
WINNER

Golden graduation tangibility transcends time
To rest upon active fingers which deliver
Messages much as you must have rhymed.
While searching all of Pennsylvania to discover
The young moments which experience kissed,
Vigorous energies caused to slide
What tense nerves made to twist.
But now that spirit exists at my side
That I may understand the infinite unity
Which genetically, materially, and intangibly
Passes lovingly from you to me.

Jane Roberts



A Fatal Experiment

Linocut by Stephen Witte

I'm trapped here in my leaden prison,
A tangled cobweb of oppressed emotions
Upset without delay but not destroyed.
Vehemently I search for an escape

I find a door and can almost see the light
With bright and hopeful heart I open it —
There is no light. Yet I tread through the door —
It closes with a Venus flytrap calm.
I'm in another leaden prison cell
More bleak, more tight, and still I don't give up
Although my head's an overcharged balloon
And I discover more new doors...and prisons.
I open yet another door — there's light!
My energy returns like sap in spring.
I see a stream and take off my shoes and socks
The coolness of the water calms my soul.
I look in the direction the stream flows
And see its moving toward a great river.

When stream water is mixed with river water
It is transformed and grows more vast.
The river does not run like the small stream
There are no leaden rocks that block its path
But even if there were they would not stop it
I look back toward the stream which fights the rocks
And notice that the rocks provide its form
A stream with rocks works harder and grows stronger.
Leaden rocks are much like leaden prisons.

Regina Wortman