



Photograph by Amy Raxter

He stared blankly at his own reflection in the window, as the lonely sound of the train whistle and the hypnotic rhythm of the steel wheels against the track soothed the young man into complete oblivion. He could no longer see the rolling hills and countryside passing before him. He kept trying to convince himself to be happy--after all he was going home. He would try to put up a front--he had always been very good at that. No one could ever tell how he truly felt.

Suddenly the man felt the glance of a small boy peering longingly at the brightly colored display of medals on his drab uniform. He instantly recognized the familiarity of the young boy's expression. He understood the fascination that the medals played on the child, for the young man had, also, once been disillusioned by the meaning of the metallic ornaments. When the man was younger he used to dream at night about becoming a hero. He was obsessed with the romantic idea of saving millions of lives and everyone living happily ever after. Now he had made his dream come true--he was a hero in every sense of the word, and he was coming home where he would surely be greeted by cheering crowds and many honors. He could picture it in his mind. His family would be there and they would be proud! He especially wanted to see the proud expression of his father's face--he had become what his father wanted him to be. Yes, of course, he had to be happy, his father was. The young man felt contented and, yes, happy. After all, he had fulfilled his dream and at such a young age.

Suddenly, however, an uneasiness came upon the man as he noticed the young boy's admiring expression change to one of horror. The boy had finally noticed the price for which the man had obtained the medals. The medallions no longer placed a hypnotic trance on the boy, but instead he only stared at the legless body of the man. The man turned away from the expression exhibited on the young boy's face. He continued to stare out the window.

Sandy Hulbert

A RAINBOW SMILE

The colors that bend, and span our skies,
Amidst weepy days, under angel's eyes,
Hold in their grasp the goodness of life,
To renew our hope and defeat our strife,
The simple smile paints far prettier scenes
Then all the images of dusty dreams.

John Delaney

AUTUMN STORM

Your words
 splash heavily upon my mind
 Like early cold October rain
falling on my roof
 at dusk.
The patterns change
 like an autumn storm
 From violently heavy
thundering sounds
To clear
 soft steady
streams of expressions.
Through it all
 I look at you
 soaked in past fears and turmoil
Then patiently I watch
 with you in the darkness
For the breaking of black clouds
 that linger in your smile
 that comes
 in the light of new beginnings.

Michael McCormick

You open your eyes and the world turns to fire
as all of its moments now flicker, now bend,
only moving in concert: no reasons conspire
to shape with intention the efforts we spend
in your holy, uncertain and well-abused name
but, blown brighter, we arc in an unadorned flame
of reaction, enkindled by all the black heat in your glance.
you approve, and the air becomes crisp as we try
to outdo one another in excellent heat
on your altar: this pleasence, this dream burned awry
is dissolved and made new in the narrowing seat
of attention you frame these, our follies, within
while the minds of the Age sadly spin, sadly spin
and the floor disappears from beneath blazing feet as we dance.

David Drury-