

Perceptions

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1304 Third Street
Catasauqua, Pa. 18032
<http://www.2cyberwhelm.org/perceptions>

Perceptions

your body expands
inhaling mine
for our every fulfillment
eleanor koldofsky

sanctus
temi rose

we learn our abuse like a catechism
repeat its sanctified phrases
until we expire crawling to the altar
our self destruction guaranteed
sanctified

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Percep-
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*Percep-
tions*

Perceptions

look
rochelle hope mehr

the beginning of wisdom
may have come
when I realized
that there is nothing in this world
that can make me happy
the end of wisdom is to prove
that happiness lies
not in this world
but in this poem

Perceptions

women's poetry for a change
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anger

rochelle hope mehr

it's not a happy way to live
it's not a joyous way to live
but it keeps me alive
it feeds me as it feeds upon me
we have a symbiotic relationship
we two
anger and me

every time I forget
every time I let down my guard
and am singed by ignorance,
prejudice
or malice
its hungry tongue laps
hard against my breast
and I am galvanized
into pure ire

I won't melt a heart
but I will resonate through
the canyons of insensate resistance

waiting

margaret boles

today I play a waiting game
for some time it has been the same
yesterday I waited with my mother
today I have another
waiting room to view
(that's nothing new)
yesterday it was hospital and doctor
today, music exam and daughter
tomorrow dentist and my son
another week, more treatment begun
and every week I must wait
while they sing or swim or skate
I wait at school at one and two
waiting, waiting, nothing to do
how much waiting can I take?
waiting my life away for goodness sake
my life - the waiting game

born

najwa salam brax

in my cozy, rosy garden varicolored
rosebushes dance and sway
an artistic ballet that sets the rock
to sing in the awakening summer
pansies, still butterflies dreaming
of platonic shadows to reveal
their true existence. wild butterflies
inspire matter and spirit - they waltz
with iridescent birds of paradise
spreading tiny muses of serenity
my thought swells into visions
my heart catches flitting beauties
of paradise. in my flower-filled garden
new ideas flap in the summer breeze
a long poem is born, well written
by various pens. Shall I trim it, edit
and publish in the book of nature?
Orpheus sends his immortal notes
on ethereal wings, circles of butterflies
in rainbow flight herald nature's
feathery dreams. I fly with them
a wing merging with wings

trogolodyte

rochelle hope mehr

frozen in time
stalagmite
unable to divine
its source
obsessed with the depths
unable to confess
the love
from above

the meaning of consciousness
rochelle hope mehr

I dabble in doubt
I doubt my dabbles
doubt is what keeps me free
doubt is what keeps me me

I doubt therefore I am
I am
therefore I doubt
the moment I am certain
I am dead

simple simon
temi rose

met a pie man
going to the fair
but Simple Simon lacked money
the where and with all
to represent and so
was not
allowed
admittance
no remittance
not a pittance

after a long illness
rochelle hope mehr

blessed solitude where have you gone?
thrust into the world I am newly undone
too much to remember
too much left undone
thrust into the world
naked
alone
scared
undone
raw
flesh to be eaten
by a devouring world
heart exposed
flesh to be spat upon
heart to be shat upon

my mind is dishevelled
my hair is tousled
we've spent the night
totally caroused
how can the day be
stolid and staid
when through the night
we've been fifteen times laid
eleanor koldofsky

soul searcher's diet
margaret boles

peeling, peeling, peeling potatoes
skimming skins scantily
fabulous food, ferocious waste
feel the bitter famine's taste
reflect my rash peelings
pandering hurry, my feeling's
always for the humble spud
for my hunger, it's so good

morning
rochelle hope mehr

now the room barely contains me
I am so much of the moment
and the stark appearance thrusts
its mottled self squarely into my eye
something sensitive is lost to the sensible
what was held in this room
- suspended in horizontal fixture -
defined and squeezed
and nestled into its own
nebulousscurvatureexistence
is gone

books on the bookshelves
just books
a bed, a bed
the gingham pattern on the bedspread
looks superfluous
the curtains spread gingerly
the light trickles in

misdiagnosis/mistreatment lament
rochelle hope mehr

catch it. Catch it if you can
catch it early
do not wait
until the tentacles
lose their grip
until the tensors
forget their intensity
until the mind
slackens and the tongue
flaps gibberish
until the drool
congeals
and nobody sees you as sane
and your mind and body
are not mundane objects
of manipulation
in an assembly line
of the latest one-size-fits-all
weathervanes
they'll affix one to an amenable
membrane
you'll point in all the correct directions
at all the appropriate times
but still be quite insane

that's my poem about pickles
temi rose

I want to write a poem
about pickles
pickles taste good
they're crunchy
or not
but if not
they aren't pickled properly
and pregnant women purportedly
crave
them
pickles

om
rochelle hope mehr

is there nothing left to write?
no animus?
no angst?
no abounding symphony
of histrionic
pang(s)tellar
nobler
battles still to come?
all I want is peace
all I want is
om

what kind of ice cream?
temi rose

i am an ice cream sandwich
you are a banana split
she's a sorbet
he's a milkshake
o' lonesome me
woe is me
time is on my side
the words are not the same w/o music
the world is not the same w/o you
there is nothing in the foreground
nothing between my tedious self-reflection
and the long view
well, there are people in a middle ground
knowing, trusting, loving
but no one comes as close as you do
w/o blurring my vision
au contraire
you light up my life
but it's not the same w/o the music

lost in appreciation
circular suspension
fiduciary unpleasantness - war
reduces the patience of saints
to dust

I melt into madness
fiercely
competitive
sacrificially paranoid
an infinitude of betrayals
abounding

I seek the night
wildly peaceful
openly tyrannical
lovingly obsessional
we wend our way forward in time

I quiver in anticipation

temi rose

force

eleanor koldofsky

crushed by the weight of his body
choked by the reek of sweat and cigars
no protest, I was married
it never occurred to me that motherhood
was optional
I thought it inevitable
if I thought of it at all
I filled a bath
slid my body down to the taps
my legs extended straight up the tiles
the taps poured as forcefully and hot
as I could bear - into my vagina
hoping to force the semen out of me
but my child was there
though not always
so many miscarriages
they became natural
pain is natural
rape is not

the uncertainty principle
rochelle hope mehr

when I got sick
and had to leave school
I felt humiliated
I had lost my mind
I could not focus on my work
this was a humiliation
for so much of my self worth
was determined by how well
I did at school
if two and three no longer made five
how could I have a future
how could I have a life
if things no longer added up
no longer made sense?
Still, I longed for someone encouragement
a kind word from someone that somehow
someday I'd be myself again
therapists offered theories
therapists assigned blame
this week to Mom
the net, to Dad
I "always wanted to be in control"
then I was "too impulsive"
farther and farther I slid
from myself
I wondered why
this guy I had known
never called
was I so far from
the realm of the acceptable?
What had made me
acceptable before?
Was I more sure of myself?
Is uncertainty so unattractive?
I keep asking myself
knowing in my heart
that the closer I come
to gauging my own worth
the farther away
you recede

born

najwa salam brax

what if eve didn't listen to the serpent!
would we drink from the fountain
of the holy truth and live a thousand years
in the blissful garden, talking in verse?
would the fallen angels be redeemed
and the secrets of creation be revealed to us?
would gaea be embraced by eternal peace -
no idols for mammon and eve? would
the secrets of many lives ago be opened
to our blind eyes and the root and fruit
of spiritual fluids awaken the light within?
why have the poisonous bit fashioned
our miseries and broken the crystal clear
chalice that adam, a spiritual posy
of prophets? will earthlings restore the tree of
knowledge with lofty ideals? could the seeds
of obedience spring forth? will civilization turn
to dust and a new merciful genesis follow up?
do we gather our remote ghosts? alas!
the blessings have been thrown to the wind
leaving us journey over our tears and blood!
our dreams have shattered; ages come to dust
we grow fast, we die fast ... hard has been
the harvest seasons - time nods, leaves fall
and blossoms swell. earthly life is a beat in the
cosmic heart. rhythm tucks us into the bosom
of bittersweet truth and embittered repentance.

mourn

rochelle hope mehr

all's fair in love and war?
I could ambush, I could deceive, even kill
in the name of all that's good
for war is a means to an end
but love, love is pure
an end unto itself
arty lie told in the name of love
lies low
and deftly, daftly
in the small, quiet hour of the morn
murders love

please

temi rose

please don't touch me
when you touch me
i cringe
the back of my tongue twists
sly saliva builds its acidity fills
the back of my throat
my nose aches from where you hit me
don't touch me again

saccharin

rochelle hope mehr

it all started when my mother said
"I have a wonderful surprise for you"
I waited all day until she unwrapped the present at night
and put on Tchaikovsky's Swan Lake
So disappointed was I by the saccharin sentimentality
I never realized my true affinity with the dark Russian soul
I really should have - my grandfather from Odessa drank
his tea hot from a large glass
we had a tin saccharin container which I used to open. I'd marvel
and watch him plop saccharin into his tea
He'd crack walnuts open with his bare hands
no nutcracker for him
I never could get over it
He seemed so strong
What does this have to do with Tchaikovsky
Who loved Mozart but whose music sounds nothing
like Mozart's?
With Swan Lake which ends as bitterly as saccharin?
With beauty which starts off with such promise
and, once dissipated, rings tinny in the ear?

economic opportunity in 2003

temi rose

we don't have much
what we have can't really be considered ours because the state
the church or the bank, institution or vagabond bully
will come and take it all away from us
they tell me I am lucky
i'm not dead - they're probably right
but I'd like to raise the bar
step off this roller coaster
grow up and
live

specimen

rochelle hope mehr

you ask me to read the poem aloud
perform it
bring it to life
but I cannot
I am muzzled on the page
I bit off
a sublayer of my gut
lies exposed
toxemias froze
it is a specimen
to gawk at
not a beast to summon
to arise
let it lie low
constrained by the page

romantic

rochelle hope mehr

If I could figure out what happiness is
I'd hoard it like a miser.
I wouldn't display it like confetti -
No one need ever know
I'd be so quiet
With my stash in tow
no one would see the chain
the world might think me deaf and blind
to all I should esteem
I'd give my life up
In a flash
to revel in a dream.

in the midst of life (we are in death)

margaret boles

in the numbness of the unbelievable
papers flutter like confetti in the wind
prayers are unformed but felt
a throbbing pulse to heaven
"Dear God, may they rest in peace!
May they that died not have suffered
Let there be less, not more dead!"
life is reborn to that awesome reality
"In the midst of life we are in death!"
a new reality for americans, for whom
terrorism has always been somewhere else
new york's skyline horribly altered
american psyche never the same again.

refugee

helen isaeva

It was a very warm August afternoon. She stood perplexed and confused. A slight breeze gave her a little freshness, that helped her feel a little better. She sensed tiredness in every part of her body. Her feet were in pain from the wounds. Weakness was so overwhelming. She felt that her strength would last to move for only several minutes. No more.

There was a long, hard way behind. The beautiful scenery of that glorious city made it seem like a dream. She looked around: river Seine, strange buildings, boats with a lot of people there, bridges across the river, a tower to the right. Could it be the famous Eiffel-Tower? She strained her short-sighted eyes. It couldn't be true. It was a just a beautiful night's dream. She could wake up any moment and was afraid of it. It looked like that famous tower. But her thoughts were blurry from the exhaustion and hunger. From everywhere came sounds of French. Her mind still refused to believe that she was in Paris. She forced herself to believe that she was in France, in Paris... Nothing worked out.

Suddenly she felt so lonely. Sadness and helplessness overwhelmed her. Alone on a new planet. She looked down at the dark water. It was strange, too. She couldn't grasp the reality. A boat distracted her. It was full of tourists. She thought many of them looked at her. She waved slightly greeting them. And some people began... to wave her! She started to wave at them more actively and finally smiled. More and more people were waving her! Some people even stood up. It was like a child's voice that cried out "Hi!" and she heard a lot of voices. They greeted her arriving to the new planet!

No, she was not lonely! How many people were glad to see her and sent her a welcoming wave! How brightly coloured were the clothes of those people! How warm and friendly were their voices! The tourist's boat was getting farther and farther but she could still see people waving at her from all their hearts!

Suddenly she felt strength inside her. The life returned to her. She felt that she wanted to fly after that boat, to fly above this beautiful city, to fly and to laugh with joy! She was full of life!

She felt the smile of the brightly shining sun! She smiled at all the crowds of people around her, at the tender warm sun, at the huge magnificent Tower, at the blue river Seine with the little waves playing in the sun, at those strange but wonderful buildings with the old marvellous architecture, at the proudly curved arches of bridges that stood out in the distance! Everyone and everything greeted her! Everything was strange, new but so welcoming and beautiful!

Yes, it was Paris, it was the Eiffel Tower to the right!

She was in PARIS!

mink

eamer o'keefe

my grandfather thought that a mink jacket would make me a lady. Nearly thirteen I wanted frills and petticoats dad resented the gifts she gave us chicken each month, a house for my mother the nuns complained that my school clothes were nearly threadbare. We have to sell the furniture, my father threatened his love letters had promised always to shun convention. instead of armchairs we sat on car seats. he played the clown grandma ignored him. once a week I stayed at her house. meals were peaceful. she listened to me. her obstinacy had won the man she loved all her life til his heart attack. it came in a box with tissue paper. like a bolero with over-long sleeves in sparkling white my father made jokes. I stuffed the jacket deep in the cupboard. my grandmother was smaller than me. she had half a lung and a large hump. I pushed her up hills in her long fur coat. the jacket got crushed but my sisters used it for dressing up til they got too old. when grandma died we moved to her house. I missed our talks and her sense of fun. yet she never made me into a lady. mink or no mink!

my time of life

temi rose

i remember learning to read
vividly
i remember cold insanity
i remember falling in dreams
widening down deeper into endless dark
running from a witch
which witch was she? the witch in me or the witch in you?
when did i turn and face her, me, you?
she shared the world with me while i stood paralyzed
on the edge, watching
she had sublime skills i seem to lack
she has immersion in the actual
she can believe in the real
and now they're dead
exhausted. drowned erotically - not exotically - on the battlefields of life

not with guns, tear gas or missiles - extravagantly, dramatically
poetically, pointed and poignant, savage, robust, heart-felt
they died of love
competition w/o compassion is a prolonged armageddon
an empty, hopeless expanse through which we each crash into each
destroying everything touched or felt

opposites are merely coordinates
disparate meanings strong in their separation
except in love where love loves its opposite and merges into something
new

it's

rochelle hope mehr

it's some biochemical calculus
I'm stuck with
some squamous stoichiometry embedded
in my brain
this minerological colossus
I pay obeissance to each day
it's there, lodged sinisterly
somewhere I can't see
inaccessible
incalculable
incandescent
free

spirit

rochelle hope mehr

Apoem is an elusive thing
you grab one end
and try to pull the string
and are caught unawares
by its beetling sting
The heart that beats
in its own lair -
conscious by day
at night, unaware
is glory a-wing.

after-image

eamer o'keefe

perhaps you'll always be there in the picture
watching me from behind the wall
outside the frame, tossing my love
like a rubber ball out of my reach
if I stretch out my and, you still burn me up
but you're clearer than any photograph
watching me from behind that wall
as I search for you in each negative face.

metaphysics

rochelle hope mehr

I don't know anything about quality or worth.
About the weightiness of a stream of thought
What is the poundage required to weigh down the trawl?
To secure certainty?
To damn infinity?
To flood the gates?
What does it take?
I threw a pebble into the stream
the waters parted
the piranha cut into my dream
Whose flesh are they devouring?
Who oars this trireme?

the awful truth
rochelle hope mehr

For too long I've agonized over what other people think.
I used to think it must be part of the insecurity of having an illness no one understands.
But now I understand that it's really a very negative personality trait that I had even before the thyroiditis
It's this push-me-pull-me
I have a sense of raising expectations
No, they're just my own expectations
What really happens when I encounter other people, the human race?
Now, or years ago?
Does it matter?
Does it matter
that I'd have staring contests with therapists because I was trying to figure them out just as much as they were trying to decipher me?
That I'd run to bookshops trying to find books that would expatiate on the theories I thought they were using to try to analyze me?
I never could understand what they were saying so I figured there must be a method behind the madness and I looked for the method in psychiatric tomes (to no avail)
What does that have to do with my misgivings with ordinary mortals?
Am I afraid that they too are trying to read things into my demeanor or into every word I utter in casual discourse?
Am I being oversensitive?
Maybe they just don't like me. Maybe they never really liked me.
In any case, they seem exquisitely uncomfortable in my presence.
Maybe it's not that they're acting any differently now
It's just that they're acting the same
The world has not changed
except for extraordinary circumstances people are largely indifferent to each other's fate
or maybe it's just that individuals do not count for much
I shouldn't think I am so important
But am I totally expendable, am I no better than a computer that is obsolete?
It's funny, when I was a child the other kids used to call me, "Computer"
I really like to be treated like a human being.

a night
eleanor koldofsky

make me a chair I whispered in her hair and she turned on her side and drew up her knees to please me as I fit on her lap my legs draped over her thighs her articulate fingers trailed designs over my belly as I beheld a mahogany hand on her botticelli shoulder both mine our love so tender and deep we may have thought we were asleep until the blue eyes lifted to me spying the small mischief around my lips waiting for a sound we were muscled silk had loved and wrestled probed tasted tested soft nipples swelling I the full breasted and she the ruby tit tilted thalia her voice was music: "are you hungry" lazily we stood gazing at one another slipping on a shirt the lightest cover and silently drifted on our way down the stairs to the big kitchen heaping food on a tray tiptoed back to our rumpled bed punching pillows spread this different feast between us me and my venus the french pate, crackers crisp, italian olives with a pimento twist, cheese from wisconsin, wine from the usa the perfume rising from between our legs all around us lay at two a m - by three a m we were sort of sated most of our appetites moderately abated we shifted down and as nature intended our bodies soon, once again blended.