

women's poetry for a change
issue # 62 fall 2004

the weight of memory and past defeat overwhelms

a sunny Sunday
i live near a church
bells ring and remind me of the heinous and the glorious
childhood. adolescence. maternity.
well within the range of normal, filled with torment and poverty
is this our world?
excellence forgotten a mass of indifference and greed
what makes the world heavy on me today?
turgid, stagnant romances ache
unshed bliss
send me home alone
unveil it
dawn empty
wander without meaning to the end of all beginnings
and not a christmas light in sight
no new flowers budding in soft dewy spring sunshines
no wind caressing
all money mammon mammoth
refusal
tickling transcendence
music a shallow conduit but sound makes it possible to continue
tempt me
contemplate love, peace, romance, happiness, and forgiveness
hope makes it ok
temptation - the only worthwhile exploration
love - the vastest, most irredeemable temptation
chance transcendence
hail the heinous
the glorious
temptations all
temi rose



when you take the cross away from jesus, he looks like he's flying
temi rose

*P*ercepti*Ons*

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hope is gone

all i ever hoped for - gone
possibility dies here
is there a way to live
i can learn
every step on shards of glass
shredding my intestines
bursting from horror
if i had not loved him
it's inconceivable - to see him was to love him
an ecstatic reality
i lived on an island
friends and lovers were easy on me
i was aaking's daughter
but i never felt my power
til i saw him standing there
the sun shining on his shoulders
all i could be
was to fall inside his shoulders
into his heart lifted
carried - he smiled
every gesture
my hopefulness
when he kissed me
when we lay together
he showed me
a depth in me
a spirit of wild hunger
i would do anything for him and he
he never said he would do anything for me
he said i could come with him
and then my will vanished
don't blame him
i did the killing
he took the spoils
the texture is he never loved me
i see that
feel its devastation
now
temi rose



bits of glass

turn up in the yard
religiously
along the path
and they remind me
as i gently lift them to the waste basket
away from my daughter's tiny little feet
they remind me of all the times
i didn't slit my wrists
temi rose

hopelessly grey, he said

really? she said
absolutely. no solutions
should we just die then? she said
i don't see why not, he said
there really isn't much to live for if
it's all about consumption and dress up
ending up
achingly, wretchedly alone
inhabiting a series of social rituals
avoiding taboos
discovering nothing
sharing the creation of nothing
same old more of the same old
shit
temi rose

this feels like loneliness

silent
sitting
dark
press my heart
strange juices flood my chest
rise
eyes swell
overflow
temi rose

Innocence Betrayed

my mind is scarred
with thousands of whips
each time this thought eclipsed
my youth
the sight by accident
sown
for i was afraid to be in the house alone
and lifting the trap in the attic door
observed, unnoticed
the act of a thousand years
and more
a helpless head held down
and innocence
mown
a flower `neath a scythe
as he did rise - and she
did moan - to be free
as he in rhythm in her
mouth
did come

i closed the trap
backed down the stairs
wondering why I didn't speak

how do children sense wrong
knowledge by instinct
when havoc wreaks?
Eleanor Kodofsky



Mars Café: Out of this World

better than church bells ringing
three corned beef hash with rye
two up and one over easy
butter please, on the side
three good friends
awaiting
breakfast on Sunday
the weather snowing and blowing
the extent scarcely to be borne
still, the church on one side
chiding, beckoning to bless
out of this world! On the other
just the same more or less
it's the food of life or Jesus
Mars Café comes with coffee and cream
the other, 2000 years stale
eat up and continue your dream
2000 years of selling
the payment, heaven or hell
no changes please on the menu
leave a tip
and you've paid your bill
Eleanor Kodofsky

A Man is my Enemy

i cannot stroll the streets
of the city in which I was born
fear prowls me
when I leave my car
i am never safe. I am a target
my fear does not lie
on the chance some tiger
will leap on me
man is my enemy
man with his secret weapon cocked
i fear this weapon that gluts
the egos of men towering over cowering women
destroyers of dignity, home, children
the innate rapist
each man is
Eleanor Kodofsky

Civilization 1945

don't picture the shallow grave
of human bones bulldozed in mass
graves
people caught in the maelstrom
of a country at war
a different form of justice
gas, bullets, or having too many
dead
falling, suffocating
the only-wounded to death
don't imagine the stench
the polluting flesh
don't think of the grimacing skulls

think of the flame of literature
music, art, philosophy
all of the culture in graves
that will never come to life
Eleanor Kodofsky

marriage is a miserable bargain

for women
on the other hand
highly recommended
without reservation to
men
what does the word marriage mean?
a bond?
a promise?
uniting?
i think
a true tourney of
endurance
Eleanor Kodofsky



this is a silly em

remember
... the song starts here
a coupla things
tips if ur interested
if not
don't read on

intimacy is not a monologue
intimacy is not two monologues
intimacy is not dialogue
intimacy is not intercourse, verbal, financial or body fluidical
intimacy is not balanced
intimacy is not cold
intimacy is companionship
intimacy is private
intimacy is meaning-full to the parties involved
people in intimacy are partying in it
intimacy is the aura of the party of the intimates

so
even tho
fallen from paradise
we must
work to create the energy that becomes the aura
the shadow and the dewy radiance
encompassing
embracing

once created
intimacy self-sustains
maintains
the intimates within its living room
who - turning
replenish their world with energy mingling

intimacy is the ecology of growing people
take it easy baby
love is fundamental
temi rose

you gotta do what you gotta do

if I knew how to say what I wanted to say
i would say it
the thing is
i don't know how to say it
maybe it's because of all those people
who kept telling me to *shut up*
go away
you make us uncomfortable
the way you talk
girls aren't supposed to be smart

but when i make myself stupid
i get sick
and i don't like being sick
it's lonely
and i've done it a lot
but i got
smarter
healthier
now
it's even worse
fewer people want to talk to me
socialized out of their senses
worried about how smart they are
i wonder if i'd feel differently about intelligence
if i were stupid
temi rose



Disease and Armaments

how much atrocity
before mankind
destroys our world
genocide, disease - uncontrollable
famine - uncontrollable
men - not primitive
not military
ordinary domesticated
men cramming courts
jails, for brutal abuse
rape, murder - uncontrollable
judges, police
helpless in the flood of intrinsic
human hatred - uncontrollable

philosophers, authors, painters, composers, explorers
the people of the past who made this world beautiful
worked for no purpose
there is no reason for the precipitous spread
of the proportions of destruction
to which this planet is
insidiously planned for death
Eleanor Kodofsky

he desires a love

he cannot be in love
do not pass go
do not exist in a state of loving
a state of profound acceptance of mutuality
murderers
sever that connection
abusers
predators
bullies
temi rose

How do i really feel?

how do i really feel when you blame me
how do i really feel when you shame me
how do i really feel when you threaten me
how do i really feel when you talk about my cunt
my breasts, my person or my child?
i feel afraid, i feel threatened, blamed and shamed
and i don't like it
i walk away
wander into a private world of friends
my heart reaches out then i must
go outside
meet the real world again
my hand on a cool brass doorknob
a black boot in my belly
i fall
writhe
past becoming afraid
i am terror terrorized by the look in your eyes
i no longer trust
i don't reach for too much
i can be part of your support system, why can't you be part of mine?
he wants to trade things for love
i try to explain, we become lost in counter explanations
i am beginning to feel he should find himself a woman who
can be bought
and buy her and then
when those
needs are satisfied - maybe -
we can be friends
i wasn't born to be a masturbation device
i wasn't born to be nice
i think i've been born more than twice
i'm not made of sugar
not made of spice
i eat brown rice
the puerto rican men play dice on Saturdays
they play the radio and kids get dirty and their wives drinks beer
and everyone knows there will be sex tonight
and fighting too
temi rose



Woman of Courage

i never met this beautiful woman
in the photograph
her arms outflung
head thrown back
the wind catching her hair
all glorious abandon
this woman's naked body
two unmatched hemispheres
one pearl pink skin
a swelling roseola
cresting to a red tipped nipple
arms outflung
her other breast bared
not mated
mutilated
scar tissue decorated - now
with a painted bough
only one woman
not my sister
all of my sisters
a façade
only one woman
a charade
arms outflung
exposing avaricious science
with a killing license
arms outflung
exulting courage - life
arms outflung
defying the billions of dollars to secret
the cure for cancer
arms outflung
provoking the humiliation
the bed, the dread
the love-make-believe
pity? hatred?
women have no use for lackeys
women of courage
have borne all of mankind
arms outflung
she embraces us all
she lives
Eleanor Kodofsky

i thought you were a poem

i thought you were my destiny
i thought we would be together
in every way
every day
and then
i became
your lover
no longer a friend
only a woman to fuck
no longer a pal
no gossiping, confiding or adventuring
just your woman, no longer your friend
temi rose



it's darker than usual tonight

bad news floating in with the tide
remains
debris and sand
between my toes
i must allow
myself
to function
even though it is darker
than usual
tonight
and i am
alone
temi rose

dearest obstacle

obviate, obfuscate
me
into the ashes a phoenix could be born from
relieve me of the strain of standing on the edge of the abyss on tippy toe
let me wander in fields of bliss - i can imagine the rest
i can't inhabit heaven inside this hell
we have constructed a vast monument to insurmountable torture
no one wishes to realize themselves
everyone hopes for annihilation
so much quicker to conclusion
not life with its torturously long development of story
times
everyone hopes for annihilation
if not for themselves
then for someone else
if only they were gone
if i only i did not have to feel this pain
no longer wounded
but dead
temi rose

circumstantial evidence

apparently not enough
but that's all i have to relate
the circumstances of my life
perhaps they were my fate
does it matter for the story's telling
whether it's the truth or a lie?
a story's nature is to be believable
like a river it follows the path of least resistance
like a river it must sing
like a river it supports life
like a river it destroys life
like a river it flows from its source to the sea
stories too closely defined
stories which exculpate, alienate and terrify the authentic in a person
til consciousness is a jumble of unmet needs and inhibited desires
temi rose

I weep as women weep

as if the whole world were bleeding
floods of noisy sobs
hot
violent shocked tears
the face working
the eyes blank, wet, staring
not the pain of a woman crying
no
it is the finality
of the acceptance of wrong
Eleanor Kodofsky

Abortion

bring four hundred
one dollar bills!
a sum of money
i could nowhere find
i cried til i thought
i was blind
for twenty years i had
produced babies
my youngest in months
my sons in their teens
i loved them all
i knew it was enough
i sold and borrowed
finally had all it took
except courage
i came to the door
knocked twice
on the table
again in stirrups
my legs spread
i remained very still
my body, speculum-opened
waiting
one cut, forty-five seconds
i knew it was enough
what came away
after days of pain and dread
was a conglomerated mass
already dead
Eleanor Kodofsky



5760

the stirring of a new maelstrom
in my 6000 year old bones
continuing cycles
the rage of the bigot
a clerisy of judiciary, politicians, ecclesiastics
has advanced the world
in mastering
war, destruction, rape
starvation, genocide
murder, terror
harsh words
creating vitality on prime time

too much time has passed
the young men of many lands
bored, bursting with blood
spread the malignancy
now
their moment in time
to abominate
kill
man, woman or child
run
wild, rampant, crazed
revive
horror, atrocity

the accursed
forever damned
male-volent

my six thousand year old bones
Eleanor Kodofsky