

# serpentine

Poems from the Poetry Workshop  
CWR / ENG 270-71, FALL 1978



THE COLLEGE OF STATEN ISLAND



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**ser-pen-tine** — A mineral or rock, essentially a hydrous magnesium silicate,  $H_4Mg_3Si_2O_{10}$ , usually dull-green, often with a mottled appearance — prominent in the geology of Staten Island.



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my mind is like an endless sea

*Robert Raffaniello*

my mind is like an endless sea  
of thoughts and dreams and fantasies  
each day i visit strange new lands  
and touch on new and distant sands

'tis limitless this sea i sail  
where hope and faith and love prevail  
one with the soul my mind must be  
my mind is like an endless sea

all through the senseless sky i soared

*Robert Raffaniello*

all through the senseless sky i soared  
(far above all reckless fear)  
through crosswinds of uncertainty  
and swollen clouds of twisted tears

all through the senseless sea i sailed  
amid the thrashing painful waves  
through visions of distorted faith  
where neither soul nor self is saved

all through this darkened day i die  
yet live for an eternity  
inside a vacant paradise  
i found between the sky and sea

## Sea of Darkness

*Eleanor S. Katz*

The swift tide engulfed her heart.  
Black water whirled round her head.  
Stillness chilled the sky with death-memories.

Brown rocks were piled high  
Covered with gray cackling birds.  
A thin line of silence divided sky from sea.

Animals bearing grotesque features  
Slid along the ocean's edge.  
Beneath the waves hung heavy tears of life.

A small pink baby was born from the sky.  
But before his eyes were opened  
The sea of darkness stretched its arms  
And pulled my baby in.

## Last Stop

*Eleanor S. Katz*

Jumble running tracks of steel  
Fall and crumble under wheel.  
Buzzing, whirring house of sound  
Transportation underground.

Nature cycling no one sees.  
Boxed wind imitates a breeze  
Rushing past at the speed of sight.  
Block the vision, fly at night.

Life and moments all have passed.  
Walking seems to be a task.  
Gray wisps out of window spy  
On the robots riding by.



on the rocks

*Allison Williams*

living  
in a shell  
i always hear  
the sea and  
this brings  
my happiness  
to a peak

on the rocks  
i am  
not in your glass  
though  
in a mind  
of the sea  
kind  
breezes  
calm

words  
u brought  
me up  
to your  
ear  
and i breathed  
deeply

we both fell several times before

*Allison Williams*

sliding  
gliding  
translucent travel  
o'er branches sturdy &  
breezes hollow  
we both  
skated on ice  
both strong & shallow

we both fell several times before

i  
pushed  
u to the  
deep end  
although i didn't  
realize  
thru lies  
untold that  
u guided me  
upon the ice  
on this unending  
tour of more  
for waiting  
the final  
fall

we both fell several times before

at different parts  
of the pond  
on and off  
off and on  
your distance  
shakes me  
my fear becomes a  
totality  
my mind is conquered

we both fell several times before

and  
u  
skate  
back and forth  
forth and back  
away  
gliding thru my head  
i believe i  
want to leave u  
though somehow i  
know i will stay  
in stead

## What Happened to the Light

*Anita Gordon*

At dawn the young child  
Restless and wild  
Yearns to begin his day.  
His mind's full of schemes  
Fantasies, dreams  
A carefree pup ready to play.

The sun's rays brighten  
His interests heighten  
Awareness is reaching full bloom.  
Buds burst into flowers  
There's still countless hours  
Before he returns to his room.

Then all too soon  
The clock rings in noon  
He utters a soft sounding sigh.  
The long morning crept  
Yet in retrospect  
The hours had swiftly flown by.

The afternoon races  
He feverishly chases  
To catch all the moments remaining.  
Dusk starts to appear  
Defeat is so near  
He unwillingly succumbs still complaining.

He's worn out and weary  
It's somber and dreary  
To face the darkness of night.  
The day passed so fast  
Why couldn't it last  
What happened to the light?

## My Man is Coming Home

*Anita Gordon*

The only sound that interrupts the screeching silence  
is the fierce rain pounding on the patio windows.  
It subtly slows down to a soft drizzle.  
Soon the shiny sunlight will illuminate every inch of every room.

My man is coming home!

The house at 51 Kelvin Avenue  
giggles at the thought of his imminent return.  
The lifeless black chair in the family room oozes with vitality.  
It will once again house the familiar form.  
The novels and manuals dance on the dusty shelves.  
The tools are thrilled at the thought of tinkering their tune.  
Happiness hypnotizes the household.

Alas. He is here!

Where are the giggles

vitality

dancing

tinkering?

They are mere images  
only to return when he leaves once more.

Late

*Jimmy Halvorsen*

The whistling wind  
And the whining wheels  
Are now a part of me.  
The double yellow line  
Moves like a hula girl's hips.  
The rear end slides  
The front end dips.

Glistening garnet  
Glides by my eyes  
Like a stuttering film.  
The scenery goes by unnoticed.  
Swiftly I swat another gear.  
I love the sound  
That does not exist.  
A perfect mesh  
Of machine and flesh.



## My Mother's Cold

*Lorraine Pistilli*

We sit in a living room,  
lean our backs against the same couch.  
The blue hue of the television  
reflects in our faces.  
An actor's words are obscured  
by your cough--  
    ceaseless cough--  
which forces your hacked body  
into a hunch,  
head hooked over your torso,  
fishing for some air.

Mother earth brown eyes  
grow weary with the web of illness.  
    Your cough--  
like the carcass of an insect,  
crackles and fragments in your body,  
withering from the  
weathering of bad times.  
In the cold season,  
we sit and watch the web grow.

Currant follies of my life,  
lidded in mason jars of preserves,  
are shelved for a future occasion.  
Pears are prepared for a winter morning.  
I am paled  
with pity and fury.

The gasp of your breath  
pierces my eardrums,  
which beat to your rhythmic rasp.  
Mother, my kin,  
I am startled by the tone  
of your earth white skin.  
The lunge of your lung  
thrusts the wind  
that steadily unwinds  
from your wailing shell.  
Staccato sounds  
erupt from your unsound body.

The actor  
brings me back to focus;  
he sings a jolly jingle.  
But your rough cough  
blocks his tune.

We won't venture outdoors tonight.  
We'll blanket ourselves  
with living room warmth.  
The mason jars,  
clothed with a grey web,  
are taken down from the shelves.  
I'll toast some bread  
to serve with preserves;  
while you rotate the dial  
to find your favorite station.





## Para-sight of a Dog-gone World

Lorraine Pistilli

I sit and type on paper wrinkled as my grandmother's face.  
Telephone disconnected, I think of my evening's antics.  
I have probably made a wrong decision again,  
in wanting to want a man.  
The creative man,  
overtly so unconventional,  
flees the creative woman;  
she is stigmatized with emotional syphilis.

Every man wants a mother to give him a good boot in his ass,  
or a washwoman servant to shine his shoe,  
or a princess wearing a glass slipper.  
No man wants a woman to attempt to be his equal;  
no man wants a sister-rival;  
no man wants a woman to slip into his slippers.  
Rather she should carry his slippers to him in her mouth.  
Puppy love is as deep as it should go.

What man wants to tame the shrew,  
or mate with a bitch?  
Self-preservation demands the relinquishing of dreams and nightmares.  
It is easier to deny one's own demons  
than fight someone else's.

Perhaps the answer is in biting.  
That is, one has to bite out a chunk of life,  
taste it, digest it, defecate it,  
and then begin the cycle anew.  
Some people are born with dulled canine teeth,  
and they never seem to grasp the texture of the food.  
Just when they sink their teeth into things,  
someone zips past and pulls the nourishment out from under them.  
Poor sons and daughters of bitches,  
Wanting to bite,  
to taste the lifesource of another,  
the life'sblood of another,  
to bite, to suck,  
to inhale the sickly perfume of another's life into their own.

Human hungers,  
happening throughout time and space,  
at different places with different people playing out the parasitic roles,  
~~in different histories~~, hysteria, heaven, hell.  
How does one cope with the letter *h*,  
except to divorce the meaning behind the words  
and abstract the letter into a harmless symbol?  
But if *h* never existed, *harmless* would be *armless*,  
which is to be without arms--meaning physical arms or weapons;  
at which point, people who were armless would also be harmless,  
not changing the meaning of the word.  
Hence, why bother having *h*?  
ence, w y bot er aving?

at different historic  
hysteric stages.



Games to play to distract the restless mind  
from the pain that burns in the gutless gut,  
the pain in the brain that numbs my thumbs,  
beats my feet, stunts my cunt, buckles my knuckles,  
and devises idiotic rhyme schemes such as these to pass the time.  
Pass the time.  
Pass the time, please.  
Thank you.  
Pass the butter, please.  
Thank you.  
Pass the bread, please.  
Thank you.  
Pass the knife, please.  
Thank you.  
Pass the time, please.  
Fuck you.  
Fuck me.  
Fuck daddy. Fuck mommy.  
Fuck sacredness.  
Fuck feelings. Fuck feelings . . . .

Alliteration does not amuse me as it once did.  
Alliteration is redundancy putting its best foot forward, for word.  
Drop a few letters from *for word* and we arrive at *food*.  
Food.  
Feed me.  
Mommy feed me. Daddy feed me.  
Somebody feed me.  
Somemind feed me.  
Somesoul feed me.  
Pits.  
Empty pits.  
Empty pits have no seeds,  
cannot reproduce themselves and be reborn.  
O pits, pity to be seedless.  
Empty ~~mouth~~. **PITY**.  
Open mouths.  
Empty mouths.  
Cavities in mouth, in teeth, in ears, in eyes, in nose, in pores,  
in throat, in esophagus, in lungs, in heart, in stomach,  
in womb, in vagina,  
in between fingers and toes.  
So many cavities, so little time in which to fill them.  
Only the almighty ass stays full, full as all the earth,  
full with food, poisoned food, recycled food, food wastes.  
The human parasite depending on food for survival and revival.  
How dependent we are.

Are we much different from the bloodthirsty tick  
that burrows its way into a dog's fur?  
It staples itself into the animal's flesh,  
bites through skin, sucks the blood,  
puffs into a fat round little brown balloon,  
grows pregnant with blood, grips symbiotically,  
and holds on tenaciously for all its dear, cheap life.

**butter the great give away**

*Mindy Davis*

butter the great give away  
open your eyes as it gives away a fresh scent  
odorless, colorless knife slides upon the belly  
oozing with divine delight -- falling into place  
interlocking one piece to a fleshy wound  
with deceiving luscious sounds airing out the room  
rocking the curtains side to side  
opening the waterway for sunlight to expand the area  
to let maturity be the cause of us being so close  
still moving in synchronized rhythm when we're sixty-five

**the storm**

*Mindy Davis*

i search continuously  
looking for that mud hole  
the place where i lay my head  
when the rain pours down on green pastures  
where the grasshopper  
in the mist of production  
disturbs my intentions  
of restful rain

the rain pours into crevices  
blown by slick wind  
pressuring the leaves yellow  
pulled out by roots  
with over-turned soil

this place  
the place where i lay my head  
when the rain pours down on green pastures  
is where i want to be  
when it stops raining

Midnight, By the Sea  
(On Remembering--Forgotten)

*Edward J. Keegan*

Dark, inky--habitude? : the realm of the sea;  
all manners of questions pretend to redeem;  
not the less do I vie with the land under me,  
but what unwholesome madness to you it must seem.

The wink of an eyelid, though me it would break;  
of a place, or a time, on the brink of a sea;  
on the wisp of a breeze, with much potency spoke,  
when, the waves all a-chatter, the heart would be free'd.

I stand at the brink--a yet founderless ocean;  
the sea crawls and moves till it looms out of sight;  
bedecked with the midnight, a deadly black potion:  
and me: but a person--to spy--by the light.

Such "remembered--forgotten" (forgotten--remembered),  
stands so still at the head of a beach 'neath the moon.  
It must be but returning to man-child's august sender;  
and you'll reckon the past to be gone rather soon.

I just can't explain why the time runs all backwards--  
though yesterday's gone, toward tomorrow I'm prone;  
A run 'cross the beach and a stretch, body starwards--  
the longer I stay here, the less am I grown.

I can remember having an idea as an embryo:  
not to be what a person would not want to be;  
and now, as summer moons pass by me,  
I'm remembering forgotten midnight, by the sea.

## Vagary in Six Parts

*Edward J. Keegan*

### I Three of a kind

Also, I came to a footfall at the outset of the return.  
Trying to quicken my pace, but running over land  
that turned under foot; something prevented me  
from optimizing my proximity, criticizing each step  
with renewed malice, until I stepped through the  
light-veil into the dark, where all was known by day.

### II Quadrant

Until seven I'll be running from yesterday;  
then I'll begin to attempt to prevent tomorrow.

### III Sample Questions

I overscream beginning, somewhere updown ending being.  
Said I: thought. Whereby: sometime always, always never,  
never sometime, ever ever. As If: I ought to try an approach  
somewhat more naive, but appealing just the same. As if:  
I was consummated to complete Self just yesterday--  
and outdid myself overnight?

Somewhere there is complete justice, reason, peace, love,  
identity, knowledge; perfection, totality, simplicity, sanity, ideal?

I hope; I despair?

From Providence, light is brilliant, not blinding but ingratiating--  
the exacting, definitive "perfection of truth"--a violent upheaval  
of all that is wrong--forever?

It's unreal, the suffering.

Kind being, Apollo unrelenting, saving cellar-room for saints.  
Until tomorrow, the Savior of the Night is seeing roads like stars  
under the terra-firma of holy lit space under the ground.

### IV Sample Answers

I am the Lost, the False, and the Darkness,  
When seeth mine ignoble eye a remnant of hope  
beyond the skullsplitting light of forevertruth unfound,  
my image is darkened, and I know the end of my  
idolatrous twilight of evil hope has grown seconds nearer  
to shatter the mocking illusion of opposite directions--  
in the quest toward the end of time.

The deep water and the fiery mountain  
are rooted firmly beneath the great foundation  
under which they struggle for sovereignty.  
Each would be engraced of the other's achievement.

So sail headlong, strafed and broken;  
desolate straits precede you.  
When the riddle has been broken and the phoenix has flown,  
the desperate flight is finished and nothing has been won,  
I will stay. Providence will see me now.

**V Apology**

At forest's edge, darkness looming;  
unknown outside, still no inside.  
To know beyond awakening,  
all time-consuming mere moments to live, no time to die.  
    Saturnian apostle, unliving--  
    still to be seen, never to be known,  
    wood stretches forward forever:  
    Mysteries set one back a thousand years!

**VI Repeat**

Screwed, I attempted to get my head straight again,  
and could not. Philosophy does not help.  
Poetry becomes an aphrodisiac to terror!  
Frederick would ultimately prove to have been correct--  
Horror! What goes up must come down.  
Screwed, I say--a contemporary (?) colloquialism.  
Born to be terrified--elders used to say;  
but now I am no elder and no younger.  
Frederick died. I went to the funeral, but I could not find him.  
There is one more terrible, incomparably horrible experience left:  
It will not fade away in a haze of misunderstanding ignorance.

The Old Country Waltz plays . . . .

## Time and Time Again

*Joseph Lynch*

A new born baby  
a freshman of life  
is helped along  
until he can help himself.

The young one races on  
on the highway of life  
at a speed faster than is  
known to all.

Clear highway leads to a tunnel.  
While traveling by through the  
seemingly endless encumbering  
darkness he falters,  
when finally is seen  
the light at the end of the tunnel.  
At last the tunnel ends  
yet the road is filled with  
many more.

In the miserable amount of time,  
he will be given to learn the  
necessities of survival  
he will be ultimately overcome  
by this unrealized madness.

Danny

*Cathy McCarthy*

She turned away and stepped inside herself  
Quietly, not wanting to disturb the tender balance of her mind.

Questions, like icy droplets of rain, fell around her.

Why . . . Where . . . When . . . ?

She searched in the dark caverns of her mind for an  
explanation to her confusion.  
Then, the answer, as soft as a shadow's footstep, came  
from between her lips,

“Because . . . I love you.”







## **They Wouldn't Listen**

*Monique Melero*

Sigmund Freud was the only physician  
Of his kind.  
He developed many theories, and when  
He developed his  
Theory of Libido, the people, they  
Wouldn't listen.  
They wouldn't listen until he was gone.

Vincent Van Gogh was the only artist  
Of his kind.  
He painted many pictures but the people,  
They wouldn't buy them.  
They only laughed and said he was mad.  
The people,  
They wouldn't buy them until he was gone.

Jesus Christ was the only man  
Of his kind.  
He spoke words of wisdom, but the people,  
They wouldn't listen.  
Instead, they nailed him to a cross.  
No,  
They wouldn't listen until he was gone.

## **Love**

*Monique Melero*

Love is rather strange.  
It can fall into anyone's range:  
A boy, a girl, and a kitten too,  
But you never know when it'll catch you.

Love, of course,  
Can cause remorse,  
For someone you love may not love you.  
You'll then be asking, "What will I do?"

Then one day  
That person may come to you and say,  
"Where have you been all my life?"  
Soon he may ask you to become his wife.

looking into twin stars set in brown

*Mark David Ransom*

days gone, days to come  
things abandoned  
things begun  
nights passing, mornings spent  
realizing what  
wasted meant  
time to stay, time to go  
can you really  
say we know  
                  each other

so clear yet still uncertain  
easy smile  
eyes flirting  
howling wind and summer breeze  
relentless time  
changing seasons  
reaching out, slipping away  
how far  
who can say

nights forever, nights gone  
memories still  
lingering on  
strangers here, lovers there  
in between someone  
who cares  
space for freedom, room to grow  
lasting forever  
no one knows  
                  for sure

## The Moon and the Sea

*Mark David Ransom*

I'm of you, you've grown from me  
I am the moon and you are the sea  
all around is cold dark space  
'cause within you I've lost my place

I love you, you love me  
we both fell so easily  
too easily to let it grow  
the moon's a stone doomed to roll -

when I look into those sea-green eyes  
I see a memory I know is mine  
a memory is all I am  
another drop, a grain of sand

when a storm blows over you  
there isn't much that I can do  
I fly above the clouds and hide  
can't calm the storm, just change the tide

my phasing moods are quiet and solemn  
but my love can't be bought or stolen  
the sea has taught, the moon has learned  
love is given and love is earned

you are the sea and I am the moon  
long ago we were bound in one  
but I have gone to find the stars  
and now must love you from afar

## My Blue August

*Denise Wertling*

My Blue August:

Lonely, cold, and desperate.  
Needing friends and crying for freedom.  
Wanting help, but refusing to accept it.  
My plea for strength and courage while  
Feeling unwanted, rejected, and useless.  
Being depressed and putting up a front.  
Wearing a mask that just isn't me.  
Feeling imprisoned while I yearn to be free.

My Blue August:

My life is ahead of me, yet I dread tomorrow.  
Digging up the past, wanting to relive it.  
Living in a fantasy world where my bubble never bursts.  
Crying for no reason, vengeance-filled with no cause.  
Feeling different from everyone else.  
Convincing myself that this is normal.  
Clear skies above my cloudy head.  
Wanting to laugh, but cry instead.

My Blue August:

Sundays and Mondays dragging by.  
Time seems to pass so slowly . . .  
But before I can blink my eyes  
The time is gone . . . past  
And I can't bring back yesterday.  
So I say to myself, "Sit back, enjoy and take life slowly,"  
(Only I never take my own advice).  
Spending time thinking, worrying, and dreaming.  
Letting out my aggressions by simply screaming.

My Blue August:

Leaves me with an empty feeling.  
Like a hollow space inside that I just can't seem to fill.  
Trying to plan my whole life at nineteen,  
When I don't even look forward to tomorrow.  
Hiding my tears just like a silly clown  
My mind is spinning round and round.

My Blue August:

Filled with feelings of sorrow and jealousy,  
Full of anger, full of unjustified hatred.  
A lack of communication compels me to keep my emotions  
Bottled up inside,  
Wanting to get away, to run and hide.  
But I can't hide from myself,  
Feeling like a statue on a lonely shelf.

My Blue August:

When I let out frustrations, and try to control hostilities.  
I wait for things to get better for me.  
And then I think, "September is almost here."  
Burnt orange leaves, apple-picking, and pumpkin pie.  
I hesitate- and dream of things to be  
I wonder when life will get better for me.

Carry-On

*Denise Wertling*

To love is the reason I live  
And to make people smile  
For a while.

When they're sad  
I make 'em glad  
And their troubles fade away.

And courage helps me to give  
Hope to those who are down  
Or wear a frown.

I make them strong  
So they belong  
With all the other happy people.

And dreams I save for myself  
When in deep sorrow  
For a brighter tomorrow.

Through all thick and thin  
If I lose or win  
Dreams, they help me to carry on  
To carry on.

10½

*Kathryn Handel*

You are so very special to me.  
We laugh and cry together--  
feel for one another.

Being with you makes me feel so good.  
Unlike with others, a special occasion  
is not needed for us to join together  
in our feelings, thoughts, or dreams.

Some envy our relationship  
but those whose opinions are most cherished  
admire us.  
They see in us what was  
or could have been for them.

If I need a comforting thought,  
I think of you.

You undoubtedly know the right things to say.  
I can always depend on you.

We're all human, no one's 100 %.  
But on a scale of 1 to 10  
you're 10½.

**Day at the Zoo**

*Kathryn Handel*

I visited the zoo one day  
and found it all so very gay.  
There were birds and bees of every kind,  
none of them were hard to find.

Watching the monkeys was lots of fun,  
their chittering and chattering amused  
everyone.  
And the shiny black seals perched on  
a stone  
were ready to dive into a pool of their own.

But the one that stood above them all  
was the proud peacock with his feathered  
tail so tall.  
So take my advice and visit the zoo,  
an enjoyable day is in store for you.

Flame of Love

*Kathleen Corrigan*

With each spark  
which you have ignited there  
has grown  
    a flame  
and, along with each flame  
has come love which has  
grown into a  
    fire of love  
which could only die if you  
    put it out;  
and, if you dare, I shall die  
too, and turn to ash and  
    blow away.

gone away

*Kathleen Corrigan*

I wish you'd love me  
but it seems  
you only have me  
in my dreams

the love that was  
that came so fast  
was once ahead  
but now is past

you came and went  
like night and day  
but I'll still love you  
anyway

what could I have done  
to make you stay  
it's too late now  
you've gone away

## Saturday Night King

*Greg Clancy*

It was a Saturday night  
when a great metal God  
blasted his way through the street.

Traveling in full flight  
this sleek and mighty rod  
never had to face defeat.

With his bursting gold flames  
and shining chrome armor  
he defended his domain.

They called him dirty names  
but he felt no harm, or  
feared the loss of his reign.

Then one night came a Goat  
who wanted to take control  
so he challenged the crown.

But the King made a quote:  
"I swear on my soul  
I will not go down."

So the battle began with a blast,  
and fire and smoke were all over the place  
as they were gone in a flash.

But the Goat was too fast  
so the King withdrew from the race  
for he feared a crash.

The King left without a sound.  
Now on Saturday nights, he can no longer be found.



## Not to Spill

*Francine Adams*

The world turns softly, not to spill  
its lakes and most  
beautiful  
rivers.

One man's pace is to run, but he falls.  
By chance he stumbles so close  
into rainy visions of water;  
now a new face  
flows.

Face to face thoughts pour.

A softer pace, to be sure, not to spill  
what's instilled in his  
running,  
flooding  
mind.

## Little Girl Tears

*Francine Adams*

Supreme in size those full sparkling eyes.  
One can't miss such attractiveness.  
Pulling you, they magnetize  
by their immense intensity.

Gently, her lids went down as curtains,  
hiding her wet crystal centers.  
Her fine lashes were now heavily dipped,  
shining with glassy, crystal chips.

New chips caused a few to slip from her eyes.  
A sleek, glossy path now formed,  
swerving down her round cheek.  
It curved to the curve of her lips;  
caressing and then resting  
slowly, it slipped between them.

## My Turn

*Donna Franco*

A catacomb -- enclosed within  
and I can not get out.  
Shut out from the rest of the world, an outcast  
treated as a leper though a leper I am not.  
Once like you, you will be like me.  
The world to offer  
my experience is gold but will not be accepted  
for it is thought to be useless.  
I tried to tell them how it was with me  
and soon will be with them.  
They heed me not but nor did I -- those who tried to warn me.  
Hear me all before it's too late:  
had it not been the same with me?  
Didn't I laugh at those who tried to tell me?  
Why am I put aside?  
Does my withered skin frighten you?  
Do you not want to be reminded that you soon will be the same?  
Is that why?  
Is what why I am cast aside?  
I shudder as I walk the streets  
for I know it is not safe, I am easy prey for all,  
defenseless and I know it.  
    Oh, how terrible to grow old!

## bitter-sweet

*Donna Franco*

i'll build a shell around myself  
to keep out the hurt  
-- but don't let me be alone  
sporadic tears keep my face moist  
with a constant layer of salt water  
suddenly the corners of my mouth  
point to my forehead  
as my eyes close tight from laughter  
i leave no lines to show my sadness  
or gladness because there is a  
constant balance of tears and smiles--  
sometimes both at once  
feeling bad and knowing why is bad  
feeling bad and not knowing why is frightening  
feeling good and knowing why is good  
feeling good and not knowing why is fantastic  
don't play a happy song  
because things are not that good  
play me a sad song  
to remind me  
things are not that bad



