

APPLE PIE

*The fear of mice is an anxiety
of our own murderousness, because
mice symbolize our weaknesses.*

—Silverman

Because of the homemade apple pie,
we had the cheese.
Because of the cheese or the winter sky,
we had the mouse.

Why the mouse was upstairs, miles
from the cheese,
was known to the mouse alone, while I
sharpened the knife.

More murderous than the farmer's wife
who took only tails,
I took with a doorstep the entire life,
mouse life.

Now a member of the SPCA,
murderer member,
my hair and skin gone gray,
I wait for the THUD. The doorstep.

—JOYCE S. BROWN

HOT SPELL

No cloud relieved the sky;
No wind allayed the heat.
No bird had strength to fly
Above the desert street.

Dazed by my snapshot sight
I could not stir or think.
Hexed by a splurge of light
My eyes forgot to blink.

The motes so hung about
The shadow of the wall
Lucretius in doubt
Might have conceded all.

And then a sudden cat
Rose with a stretch and yawn
And found the shade and sat
And all the world went on.

—LIONEL WILLIS

RAINDROPPINGS

Can anyone make out
The quality inherent
In being with an umbrella, that makes people without
Completely transparent?

On the rainiest days,
In the hardest of showers,
People with umbrellas courteously step out of other
umbrella'd people's ways
Right into ours.

Or, if as it starts
To really pour, ya
Dash for the shelter of a little awning, sure as rain's
wet someone with an umbrella darts
Under it before ya.

And you look at the fella
As you stand in the steady
Downpour, but he ain't gonna budge, 'cause, as any
one-eyed idiot could plainly see, his umbrella
Is wet enough already.

Beyond disputation,
We already hear a lot
About the many forms of indiscriminate discrimination
Our world has got.

Still, I wish some teller'd
Deign to tell us
The reasons for the way the umbrellered
Treat the umbrell'less.

—MAX GUTMANN

ON THE POPULARITY OF THINGS CELTIC

The Celts, the Celts,
They had scalps in their belts,
And danced by the light of the moon,
Painted blue,

Which is not to suggest
The same may be done
Without repercussion
By me or you.

—JOHN MCBRIDE

JOKES TALK BACK

1. The Chicken

Human beings must be mad!
They must be bored and lonely.
There's so much to discuss and yet
they seem to want to only

chat about the street I crossed
and wonder what possessed me.
I guess it's better that they talk
about me than digest me.

2. The Fireman

I'm sick of people asking me
about my red suspenders.
For me the question tops the list
of conversation enders.

But if you want to guarantee
a conversation stopped,
just say I stuck my feet in flames
to see my corns get popped.

3. The Elephant

Can you tell time? Then tell me this:
What time is it when I
stretch out to lounge upon a fence
and gaze up at the sky?

You think it's time to fix the fence?
No, my friend, you're wrong.
I gave up peanuts, lost a ton.
Besides, the fence is strong.

It can be any time at all.
There's no way you can tell.
I love to watch the sky by day
but midnight works as well.

—ROBERT SCHECHTER

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