

## Seasonal

You fling yourself down snowy mountains,  
in summer leap off boards, and shriek  
at one another's displays of flesh,  
a muster of parading peacocks.

Afflicted with the brief disease of youth,  
you pity those who might prefer  
more grace than noise in what they cheer,  
the ones who pause before they step  
from a curb or through a revolving door,  
whose silver movements are slow, who pause  
to think as they read life.

That gray-haired man in faded trunks is one.  
He wades with care in the shallows but hears  
diminished echoes of your songs  
that bring a tiny smile of recognition  
to his whiskered face.

Your leaps, like his, will soon enough give way  
to coffee at a sunny window  
that overlooks a hillside ever green  
with heedless young at play where you will cheer,

or to a rocker on a cabin porch,  
a pond below that mirrors distant mountains,  
a warmish one, to share with little fish  
that kiss at hairy legs. And you will find  
yourself content to wade and watch  
while other younger runners race.

echoes

gunshots thunder from deep in the woods  
and interrupt an old dog's nap  
disgruntled crows caw brief complaints  
as a doe rests below and bleeds

an acorn laden oak emits  
its own resounding crack  
begins a leisurely recline  
accelerates crashes explodes  
an exaltation of scattered seeds  
and golden leaves blanket the doe

an old man ponders what good might come  
of his single pittance of ashes  
scheduled soon to be dispersed  
among these burnished trees

## About Time

Thinking about an annoying neighbor girl  
    who splashed in puddles out in the street  
while I was trying to write a serious poem  
on the porch of a student rental, 1972.

    I don't remember a word I wrote.

But neon pink and orange demented joy  
    that echoed off wet Oread Street,  
the way a cookie monster bandage dangled  
from one of her knees: I do recall all that.

    And she'd be maybe sixty now.

I hope it still is summer for her somewhere,  
    a poet on a porch nearby  
to please compose some lines for her  
that I should have written while she splashed  
    and it rained in Lawrence, Kansas.

## Green Beret Psychiatrist

-Nha Trang, 1970

the colonel quotes philosophers  
in Latin or in Greek  
is fond of those who speculate on fear  
he also tortures kittens  
mostly late at night  
he keeps them caged where no one else comes near

works of love he calls it  
save them from the pot  
and all that stinking sauce gooks dump  
on everything they eat  
that teach them what to hate  
and how to stay alive

so maybe tipsy soldiers  
coming from the club  
as crickets chirp one softly humid night  
an orange glow of napalm  
on the distant hills  
see midnight lights hear human howls

the screeches of a cat  
where lights behind the lowered shades  
reveal a silhouette that holds  
a vaguely furry shape up high  
and faces scream at faces  
peaceful night in Nam

## Sarge

*Nha Trang, 1970*

The girls sarge hires to work in the clubs  
are all extremely young. He shows  
them how to walk and what to wear,  
or not: short skirt, tight tee, no bra.

Sarge has them demonstrate on him  
best ways to coax GI's for tips,  
makes sure they're well, keeps them on time  
for shots and medical exams.

But when they come to work each night,  
I wonder if sarge sees in them  
two girls in tiny beds back home  
who each night whisper prayers for him.