

The Woman Beneath a Weeping Willow

I'm certain it was my mother because I put her there;
I guided her down the porch stairs because her knees
could no longer bear her weight. I gave her this tree
on these grounds so she no longer had to point out
its elegant beauty from the old red station wagon as
we passed farms and groundhogs along the parkway;
she no longer had to covet the polished pine and
ivy vine she saw in picture books. I served her
sliced strawberries with whipped cream in the shade
while she whimsically reached for the tears of rain
left by an early morning shower. And I gave her a
dream. She climbs upon a spirited appaloosa and
wraps her arms tightly around The Marlboro Man,
weathered and full of western bravado. She wants
to pen a romance novel about the cowboy of her
other dreams, the one who sings to her on AM radio.
She sings to herself now, beneath this tree of wisdom.
She sings the same song she sang to me as a child,
when I thought she would, one day, have her own
porch to laze upon, her own horse to feed sugar to,
and maybe a cowboy to share her dreams with.

My Son Afterward

Via some prophecy, my son has reached one half my chronological age.
And there are so many things he can tell me:

when The Macho Man first claimed the heavyweight belt,
the year I bought him his first dog.

All of these facts and figures, like millions of useless gigabytes stored
in the fucked up cortex where his

memories live. And I was to believe that memory was the foundation
for intelligence; the more things you

remember, the wiser you will become. But these flawless recollections
will not pay his bills, will not renew his

auto insurance. When I am gone, neither his friends, his god, nor his
imaginary sweetheart will balance

his checkbook, will balance his blood sugar, will buy him cheap
cigarettes to smoke on the porch

and throw the butts in the aluminum bucket. When I am gone, when the
mail slides off the coffee table, I have

little doubt that, somewhere, written in a childlike scribbling, he will note
the exact date and time of my demise.

Heat

A tall bad boy
with perfect round holes in his earlobes

she flaunted an intricate butterfly
from shoulder to shoulder

they intertwined like some alien
performing reverse meiosis

hands and arms in a moving and
feeling frenzy that

bordered on public
indecenty condemning

them to a future of disappointment
when the *thrill of living is gone*.

In a booth eating was an
interruption like

a draft that cools the flame
like dinner with family

that torturous imposition that
only serves

to stoke the raging fire

If You Show Me Yours

It's a game we played when
Bugs and Daffy became passé.
When the best part of the Sears
catalog was no longer Lincoln
Logs and chemistry sets, we
exchanged peach fuzz peeks
behind clapboard garages or
under schoolyard elm trees.
There were rules.
We had to be *normal* children
just under the curious influence
of estrogen and testosterone.
We had to have working parents
who gave us lunch money and
took us bowling on our birthday.
We had to be mainstreamed
with goals that went beyond
tomorrow's ride on the small bus.
If we were overtaken by this spell;
If our lustful simplicity suggested
that a clueless child should handle
our ripening fruit, we would
surely be put somewhere.
And, of course, there had to be
an invitation, a furtive glance
from the girl painting her toe
nails on the back porch steps.

Sonder After Dark

I don't know if this word should find itself in 'The Dictionary of Obscure Sorrows, but since the author attempted to write poetry, I will acquiesce to his definition, although I may not find *sorrow* in the face of the retired policeman as he has his last smoke at the late night window. Yesterday, he brought home a Table Talk pie and tried to remember the last time he ate beef. When I see him at the window, I know I'm not alone. His life is a simple one; he eats, he plays, he watches his wife undress. But his thoughts are complicated. I don't know why I think this. And here we have the rub, like when you see the small Mexican man blowing leaves across the asphalt. How do you explain your connection to him, your acceptance that he may also be watching you and wondering if your wife is as beautiful as his. Mr. Koenig has attempted to "fill a hole in the language." There is more work to do, as it seems the hole is ever widening. The river of emotions runs deep.