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WI

By: Miranda Scharf

the pickup is heavy with
freshly ripped lumber
brick dust
the girl with the braid and boots
hops up
thrusting an aging sideboard
helped by the man
who sips morning coffee
in Annie's
he reads the sports
you the local news
the sun warms
so the cold in the shadows
provides refreshing hints
that morning hasn't faded fully

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World River

By: Miranda Scharf

the river bubbles and blunders
crashing like clumsy lovers clutching
world river wider than eternity
fathoms below
moss strains to anchor on the rocks
the rotting weeds smell acrid
twisting twining thrusting
into you
the blue flash is seizure inducing
giving vision to the synapses firing in your brain
shaking slithering tearing through
i run away
the witch behind the door
a comfortable nightmare
i sip the smoke pouring out
the taste lingers on my tongue
and in my hair
long after sand has blasted away the stormy stones
i ask the questions they dread
the universe quakes with fear
my mighty force can topple
ivory moons and starry nurseries
my breath will bust up the Milky Way
caged dragons whistle the good news
they swish raw their pink tails
whipping up a hurricane
which rips apart fusion

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"This Changes Everything"

By: Ann Clary

*Arms spinning, demonic dance played through her bones and pressed against her skin.
She dodged spitting fire as tremors threatened the rebellion's translation.
Surrounded, suppressed, smothered by a crowd drenched in screams of damnation.
Amongst the masses, she related by pain to strangers same as kin.
"What was done to deserve this?" repeated through thoughts and shouts as question.
In an unknown fashion, she realized, "We've all rejected salvation."*

*She heard the trumpet sound, and her name was not found.
Hearing Devil's laughter, in fire ever after.*

A knifelike pulse of effusion shot through me, echoing the devil's laughter in my ear.
If I cried aloud or not, I didn't heed. A jolt, a heartbeat, a gasp, I was awake.
My nerves were perfectly discomposed then and there as I discovered my new worst fear.
In the realest of dreams, I'd tasted hell's smoke as earth beneath me had begun to break.
Now sitting in my bed, conviction whispered around me in the form of another tear.

Breaking a gap in the silence, an urgency sustained my patience.

In flight of fancy, the darkness seemed almost to suffocate;
I couldn't tell if my eyes were actually closed in sleep.
Though the duration of night still asked the rising sun to wait,
my mind was alive with screams of Hell's passion, hardly skin-deep.

I've heard the rapture story once, twice upon many a time.
But Hell becomes far more than a word used a dozen a dime
when the Devil snarls, and all demons find strength in their hold on sinners like me
My dream was host of this truth, which I solely felt with the greatest intensity.
Every sin was revealed; against every atheist claim was seen the prophesy.
Every lie was exposed; demons' fiction contrasted with the red words' honesty.

Yet through a peace I've never felt, my mind is now clear against all odds.
Now entertained by only one thought, knowing my death will come if I don't take action.
A craving of forgiveness matures as my tears are begging for it's satisfaction.
Searching for the book I know will be dustiest on the shelf,
This time finally aloud, the single thought repeats itself:
"This changes everything."

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Garden Plot

By: LeeAnne Lepak

In this garden dead things grow
Around me where I stand
Rusty tools and leaves collect
Everywhere on the ground

Each flower plot abandoned
The weeds have overrun
The fence with peeling paint now rests
Upon the broken stone

A frozen cherub watching
Emerald moss creeps at its feet
And ivy twining all about
Obscures what's chiseled on the stone

My hands brush back the clutter
Discovering a date
An infant lies here sleeping
Sighing - rest in peace

A place once lovingly tended
Now mourning fills this spot
One hundred years have all flown by
Every soul has been forgotten

A broken trellis and a bench
Now covered with debris
Who sat, who watched, who waited
Beneath this shading tree.

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Salty Christmas

By: Lee Brandon

A peppermint espresso on the desk,
And forty noisy watts above my head;
A feeble workshop now an abstract mess,
I stand amidst it all, a silhouette.
With scissors flapping on and on and on,
A tear rolls down my cheek and to the lips;
I taste the tear and a phenomenon
Flies through my neck and breaks me at the hips.
I'm shaken by its seasoned salty taste,
And yet continue forcing St. Nick's niche;
The tear like Sodom's people fornicates
With my saliva like it was its bitch.
My tongue was taken on this Christmas Eve,
My throat stood by to watch the crying thief.

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Flower Bulb

By: James Taylor

Here I lie beneath the surface-
below the realm of abundant life
as if in a cryogenic limbo.
I sleep in the cold dark ground-
In a shriveled and worm eaten state
like that of the cemetery masses
below the mournful feet of the sycamores.
Just as I leave my state of decay
I will rise again, like a phoenix
from the ashes, to the land of the living
and I will be a corpse no more,
but a vivacious wonder, reborn to this world.

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Him

By: Ann Clary

*Teens are told torture is glamour, a romance of artistic beauty.
Mistreatments show how much notice they deserve, even if it's pity.
We've lost control of purity to preserve and sin ever so pretty.
So by wearing black proudly and exposing scars in plain view, we boast.
'Calling all youth stained with scars! Gather round, and show us just who has the most!
Slowly forgetting extraordinary days as they vanish as ghosts...*

Would your past compare to his past? Would your pain be lavish contrast?

If he told you his story, would yours seem to you as little value?
If he told you his secrets, your shocked reaction could you not subdue?
He could confess of a dire enslavement while all love was left absent.
Not just his past, but his present...knowing love's absence will continue.

But would it matter?

Would it make a difference? Would you make a difference for his tomorrow?
Would you tease the silence, now aware you've known nothing like his sorrow?

Seems soon you'll learn because he needs a friend.
Be it unknown; you're the one he's got left.
His life stained with lies, he fights to contend,
Only to hide a life of joy bereft.

And he's crying now, though he wouldn't reveal.
He's not sharing to brag, so different than most.
With all the sincerity that one could feel,
He simply confides, not intending to boast.

His vulnerability is one characteristic of desperation.
Remember Extraordinary? Through Truth you found separation.

Once, soldiers trusted wounds to Red Cross, saving lives in numbers immense.
War like his is only saved from loss by the cross red in abstract sense.

Would you realize the power you hold simply in a witness of Truth?
You could be a shy listener untold, or the one who saves this boy's youth.

Do you know it would likely be the first try someone's made to end his suffering?
Do you know you could change all his addictions, his pain, his dreams, his everything?

Hope, love and passion, in just a few words,
Are all it would take to be his rescue,
Sharing the favor as a loyal steward,
To One who changed everything in you.

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Speak By: Eric Hagen

I wonder if the young me,
beating on the walls of social hierarchy,
would see the me now as someone who sold his beliefs
if he'd notice the razor's edge of intellect, the fire
behind the eyes built by the years
of what can never be unseen, the being in their moment, my moment,
the momentum of words to page, on stages under the hot
lights, eyes, would he follow the trail of burned ignorance to see
how deep, how far I'm willing to go to hear the voiceless
Speak.

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