

New Directions

Volume 2 | Issue 2

Article 9

4-1-1975

Poems

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Recommended Citation

Staff, Editorial (1975) "Poems," *New Directions*: Vol. 2: Iss. 2, Article 9.

Available at: <https://dh.howard.edu/newdirections/vol2/iss2/9>

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This poem is dedicated to Sisters with children who sometimes get so caught up in their cute smiling babies and their newness and forget the man who helped bring the baby into the world.

She Cried in the Night

Quick, my love, quick
 With God's speed in haste
 Seek the medicine man!
 Plead you awaken—no time to waste
 Quick, my love, quick
 Our baby is sick
 [She cried in the night, all hours that passed
 My heart filled with fright, how long will she last?
 The medicine man will heal her right here in our nest
 He can't let her die, she still sucks at my breast.]

He'll dance for her sake
 Awake, my love, awake!
 Brave warrior of mine, can't you hear?
 Your child is not well—she may die, I fear!
 Quick, my love, quick
 Our baby lies sick!
 [She cried in the night, all hours that passed
 My heart filled with fright, how long will she last?
 The medicine man will heal her right here in our nest
 He can't let her die, she still sucks at my breast.]

I gave you a cry
 Which you dare to defy.
 Curse on your soul, you lay there asleep
 While your baby is crying, you don't hear a peep.
 I'll leave you alone
 Get the medicine man on my own.
 [She cried in the night, all hours that passed
 My heart filled with fright, how long will she last?
 The medicine man will heal her right here in our nest
 He can't let her die, she still sucks at my breast.]

She went fast as the night
 It was breaking daylight
 And she returned with the medicine man
 who took the child's hand
 Sang songs, rhythmic chants, danced with all his might
 Called to the spirit to set the child right
 [She cried in the night all hours that passed
 My heart filled with fright, how long will she last?
 The medicine man will heal her right here in our nest
 He can't let her die, she still sucks at my breast.]
 The medicine man stopped his song
 Said something here is wrong
 Your husband lay asleep all this time
 Did he partake too much of the palm wine?
 Her face looked of anger, angry words she said
 "Never mind him— he can drop dead!"
 [My baby she cried in the night, all hours that passed
 My heart filled with fright, how long will she last?
 He lay there asleep, right here in our nest
 You won't let my baby die, she still sucks at my breast.]
 Woman stop crying
 Your baby's not dying
 He went to the man and moved his head
 Women weep for your man he moved not his head
 Hang your head in shame— Your baby's tears had said
 That the man who lay beside you was dying instead!
 [My baby she cried, my husband is dead
 My baby's heart filled with fright, he lay still in bed
 Mercy on my soul, my man died right here in our nest
 My baby did not die, she still sucks at my breast.]

Poem on a New Year's Eve

Infinity doesn't interest me
not altogether
anymore

I crawl and kneel and grub about
I beg and listen for

what can go away

(as easily as love)

or perish

like the children

running

hard on oneway streets/infinity
doesn't interest me

not anymore

not even

repetition your/my/eye-
lid or the colorings of sunrise
or all the sky excitement
added up

is not enough

to satisfy this lusting adulation that

I feel

for

your brown arm before it
moves

MOVES

CHANGES UP

the temporary sacred

tales ago

first bikeride round the house

when you first saw a squat

opossum

carry babies on her back

opossum up

in the persimmon tree

you reeling toward

that natural

first

absurdity

with so much wonder still

it shakes your voice

the temporary is the sacred

takes me out

and even the stars and even the snow

and even

the rain

do not amount to much
unless these things submit to some
disturbance

some derangement such
as when I yield myself/belonging
to your unmistakable
body

and let the powerful lock up the
canyon/mountain

peaks the

hidden rivers/waterfalls the

deepdown minerals/the coalfield/

goldfields/

diamond mines close by the whoring
ore

hot

at the center of the earth

spinning fast as numbers

I cannot imagine

let the world blot

obliterate remove so-

called

magnificence

so-called

almighty/fathomless and everlasting

treasures/

wealth

(whatever that may be)

it is this time

that matters

it is this history

I care about

the one we make together

awkward

inconsistent

as a lame cat on the loose

or quick as kids freed by the bell

or else as strictly

once

as only life must mean

a once upon a time

I have rejected propaganda teaching me

about the beautiful

the truly rare

(supposedly

the soft push of the ocean at the

hushpoint of the shore

supposedly

the soft push of the ocean at the

hushpoint of the shore

is beautiful

(for instance)

but

the truly rare can stay out there

I have rejected that

abstraction that enormity

unless I see a dog walk on the beach/

a bird seize sandflies

or yourself

approach me

laughing out a sound to spoil

the pretty picture

make an uncontrolled

heartbeating memory

instead

I read the papers preaching on

that oil and oxygen

that redwoods and the evergreens

that trees the waters and the

atmosphere

compile a final listing of the world in

short supply

but all alive and all the lives

persist perpetual

in jeopardy

persist

as scarce as everyone of us

as difficult to find

or keep

as irreplaceable

as frail

as every one of us

and

as I watch your arm/your

brown arm

just

before it moves

I know

all things are dear

that disappear

all things are dear

that disappear

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