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Poems

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The King Sits Across from the Corner Market

Serfs and nobles alike find him there—
bright & early—most everyday.
Unless it rains/Royalty abhors rain.
Squat atop his narrow wooden throne,
a plank by any other name, the
King tolerates the gabby court
jesters (who look remarkably
like him).

Breezes flap the sparse leaves of his
private shade tree (and his only pair
of grey gabs).

It is rooted in soil long since dead,
like his Rule.

And (he thinks) passersby are subjects.
The King hails heartily for quarters
and cigarettes.

Taxes for the kingdom.
Colored glass litters his courtyard:
Diamonds.

Rubies.
Precious jewels chipped from containers
of cheap reeking rotgut.

The King stays burnt.
It melts his brain.

Scalds his eyes.
Hallucinations are reality:
He believes his is free/free to run his
own life.

Sad sorry Sovereign.
Controlling only his right hand (Sceptre
laid aside momentarily) as it lifts
& pours death (he doesn't seem to
notice) down his throat.

Ordinarily, that hand shakes, bad!
So the King wisely leaves his crown
at home wrapped delicately in a
blue Banlon (he alternates with
his red).

It is lighter than emine and wearing
pullovers makes him feel more like
common men and women to whom
he must never reveal his blood line.

So the King begs to keep them off guard.
The peons smirk.
If they only knew,
If they only knew.

Peter Harris
Baltimore, Md.

The Struggle

Sometimes when the balls of life
become too great to juggle,
I pray that tomorrow will die in the
night—
Ending forever my dismal plight.
But when I wake, dawn smiles.

She reveals no signs to my eyes—
Only more uncertain miles.
Yet I rise,
And resume the struggle.

Wilma D. Perry
Silver Spring, Md.

Another Revolutionary

There he is upon my screen,
a wild-haired, glary-eyed, sputtering
revolutionary, citing
and berating wrongs he's seen:
drug-wasted youths and workless men,
children who are used to "Nope!"
whose guts are filled with gas and hope.
These things will change once he's
spoken.

Am I perturbed by this drivell?
My hair is styled, my clothes the best,
my life's a comfort; thus my mien civil.

Yet this silky tie seems a cinch,
my stomach growls, my bowels
protest—
some baking soda, in a pinch.

Craig A. Reynolds
Friendly, Md.

Retrospection

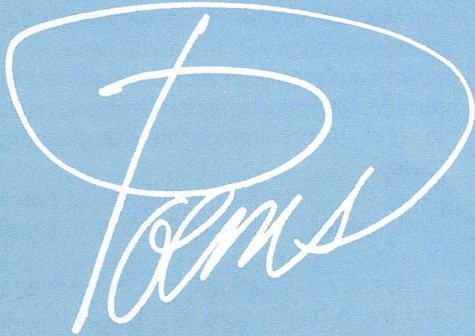
The desert flower that pushes through
the sand,
Demands its season in the universe;
And yearns for rain, in which it can
immerse

Its fragile petals, like a gentle hand,
Before its bloom commences to disband.
Man also has his seasons, some
adverse—
And good or bad, his deeds cannot
reverse

The list of things that he would
countermand.
And if he could, the insights he
would gain,
Would not restore him to his rightful
place.

And though he would strive harder
to attain
A somewhat more ennobled state
of grace.
He still should have good reason
to redraft
The folly of his ill-wrought handicraft.

Rollin C. Williams
Salem, Conn.



Black Smile

I am black
But I carry a smile
That reflects me.
And I like what I see.
For I am black and I am me.

I am black, as black as I can be.
And I'm not going to hide
the black you see.
For I carry a smile.
That reflects love, joy, and peace.
And I want the whole world to see
That I am black,
And I am me.

Gerald Franks
Washington, D. C.

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