

EDITOR'S NOTE

SO THIS IS THE SECTION WHERE I PUT SOME WORDS AND EXPRESS MY VISION. THAT'S OUT OF THE WAY. GATHERED BELOW ARE THE WORKS OF SOME HUMANS THAT ARE DEAR TO ME. ALL THE FEATURED WRITERS HAVE WALKED THE HALLS OF WELLS COLLEGE, EXPERIENCING THE SERENE ATMOSPHERE OF LIVING IN THE MIDDLE OF NOWHERE. REMOVED FROM SOCIETY. IN A TOWN WITH NOTHING BUT A SINGLE BAR.

HERE IS THEIR WORK.

THE SECRET DRINKERS

The secret drinkers drink all afternoon.
“I’m going to stop,” they promise. “Very soon.”...
“I know I have to stop.” That’s not a lie.
They promise. And they drink. And time goes by.

“I’m going to stop,” they promise. “Very soon.”
The secret drinkers drink all afternoon.
They promise. And they drink. And time goes by.
“I know I have to stop.” That’s not a lie.

“I’m *going* to stop,” they promise. “*Very* soon.”...
They promise. And they drink. All afternoon.
They *know* they have to stop. “That’s *not* a lie.”
The secret drinkers drink, and time goes by.

The secret drinkers drink. And time goes by.
They know they have to stop. That’s not a lie.
They promise. And they drink. All afternoon.
They drink, and drink. And drink. All afternoon.

Morning After

I would tell you it's just one of those days,
but I've never felt like this before.

Homeless

I walk to work
with blood on my thighs.
In 26 blocks of overthought,
I long—a longing,
hard-felt want—to just
get my fingers
in paperwork again.

In my dreams, I am homeless,
and the things that I touch—
if dirty, if soggy and old—
have meaning again.
But I wake to such a
warm and unjustified bed
and to uncomfortable thoughts
in my shuddering mind.

Poker in hand,
I could choose to be blind,
to find why desperate men
believe in God.
But I put the kitchen knife down,
sit down, and eat.

I could let myself starve
if I really tried.

The Nuclear Option

I took a temp job,
a temporary position,
where rubbing my temples,
I'm tempted by time thoughts:

time in and time out
on my timesheet
every time I look at the clock
I think of time off,
lunch time, quitting time,
you and I in better times
before all this bad timing.

I need to make sure
that—at eight o' clock
my time—I don't neglect
time zones
and wake someone
when I call California,
where you're off to
in just a matter of time
that cuts me now as if
the hands of the clock
are knives and the digital numbers
are calculator divisions
or the digits of highway signs
—cruelly ticking miles.

I rest my headset on my desk,
and I rise from my chair.

It's really not new,
not timely, to mention
that a big, boring office
is a sea of gray.

But this is just temporary.

Now down the street,

at the power plant,
they're producing permanence.
The half-life of that waste
will outlast lifetimes.
And wow. What a way
to react to change.
No matter what happens
I'll be able to say:
it was all just temporary;
I knew from the start
that time was fickle,
but when people are kind,
love is a quick attempt
at eternity. So I'm sorry
if I call you trashed at midnight
as you're sitting down to dinner
at eight p.m., but it's not my fault
that now I know that human beings
can create near-forevers in nuclear cores
but cannot bridge a day's distance
because the Earth spins too quickly
and the moon's path ain't short.

After all, it's a rock tossed in the cosmos.

Unforgiven

Concrete Jungle of Eden

The greater Philadelphia area is heavily populated with Irish descendants. The Main Line is full of green, white, and orange flags. There's an Irish memento shop every several blocks, and another Irish pub opening up every few months. There are also the Italians, coming full force out of Southern Philadelphia with their meat, fish, and produce markets. Into the suburbs both cultural heritages spread, feeding everyone within sight. The excess and gluttony is overwhelming—which is terribly ironic.

Along the storefront lined roads rise steeples and crosses, breaking into the gray drabness with their own colorful individuality. Stained glass windows reflect in and out of the buildings year round. Christmastime is when the colors show on what would otherwise be plain stucco homes. Streets are cluttered with excess lighting, garish displays of the nativity, and countless depictions of a jolly man in red.

With the Irish and the Italians there is a fair share among them that are Catholic, not always heavy in practice of the faith itself, but drowning in tradition, like the ostentatious lights on their front lawns. In short, it doesn't mean very much to most people in the area if they are truly Catholic or not in the eyes of God, but in the eyes of their neighbors.

I happen to be both a Roman and Irish Catholic descendant. I am related to a nun, have a devoutly religious Nonna, live within walking distance of several Catholic churches, and have never cared enough to read up on the differences between separate Christian sects because, well, Catholics don't do that. Catholicism, at least in the area I'm from, is a bubble, a paradigm of repressed suburbia full of people not interested in life outside of their comfort zone.

I have a confession to make: I am a deplorable excuse for a Catholic. Though I have defined myself as an atheist for the majority of my life, there is still, in the deeply ingrained guilt complex

hammered in my subconscious, a desire to be a Believer. I am not, however, and that makes me feel enormously guilty.

And Lord, do Catholics believe in guilt.

I'm Sorry I Kissed Another Man

You don't love me anymore.

You said so in the rain.

There's nothing left.

No, not one drop,

though a bottleful

could not explain

why we take the things

that we don't want

and hurt the ones

we swear we love.

The next time you think about thinking--
Don't. Don't. *Don't.*

She threw her hands up in the air
and lost them forever.

Twenty-two

everyday the same decision
kill yourself or keep on livin'

They said
Why do most of your poems end in darkness

So do plays, I shrugged

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

BRUCE BENNETT, KNOWN FOR HIS FANTASTIC CHOICES IN SWEATERS, IS A HIGHLY DECORATED POET AND AUTHOR OF NINE BOOKS AND TWENTY FIVE CHAPBOOKS, INCLUDING "NAVIGATING THE DISTANCES," ONE OF *BOOKLIST'S* TOP TEN BOOKS OF POETRY 1999. BENNETT RECENTLY RETIRED FROM WELLS COLLEGE WHERE HE MOLDED THE MINDS OF IGNORANT YOUTH AND KINDLED THEIR SPIRIT OF CREATIVITY.

JUDITH LAVELLE IS ONE OF THE MOST ACCIDENT PRONE PEOPLE IN MODERN SOCIETY. SHE RECENTLY RECEIVED HER MASTERS IN SCIENCE JOURNALISM AND SPENDS THE MAJORITY OF HER WRITING ABOUT OBSCURE BODILY FUNCTIONS AND IMAGINARY CHEMICALS. CURRENTLY IN WASHINGTON D.C. SHE WORKS FOR C&EN.

JES LYONS IS ONE OF THE MOST EXPLOSIVE PEOPLE I'VE EVER MET. INFAMOUSLY KNOWN FOR STANDING HER GROUND AND MAKING PEOPLE UNCOMFORTABLE WITH HER SEX TALK AND EXPLICIT ROMANCE SCENES, SHE IS THE TOKEN ROMANCE NOVELIST. JES IS GETTING READY TO RAMPAGE IN NEW YORK'S PUBLISHING INDUSTRY THIS UPCOMING YEAR.

ABOUT THE EDITOR



M SHEA LYNCH SERVES AS CO-MARKETING. IN THEIR SPARE TIME THEY DRINK TEQUILA, AND OCCASIONALLY WRITE WORDS.