

Under Construction

All day the cranes have been moving
slow, massive wands against the sky

Coffee break, the crane operator
crawls out of the glass egg
& along the arm, walking stooped
in the yellow network of steel

The workers sit, legs apart
dangling steel booted feet
10 storeys up;
brave enough to whistle belch & catcall
from the safety of numbers
& up there

Women on the street walk on
praying for earthquakes
& sudden winds

Rhona McAdam

Edmonton, Alberta

Release

Destructive, relentless, uncontrolled
The tempest struck with rush and roar,
Lifting the roof to whirl it away,
Breaking windows, smashing doors.

Then out the doors the memories rushed:
Of repressed anger, unnamed fears,
Spasms of sorrow, unfilled desires,
Bursting forth on a flood of tears,
Of hopes denied and ideals shattered
Of desperate struggles to keep calm;
And then abruptly tumult ceased
And Love came with its healing balm.

It patched the roof, replaced the glass,
Repaired the doors and made them fast,
And left the house to quiet Peace,
Emotions long pent up, released.

Bea Payne

Richford, Vermont

you never told me you were a
musician,
yet look at the way
you have put those notes together
in your laughter.

Clara Valverde

Montreal, Quebec

Old Age

Not the decaying of the body
which adds a geography of lines
around the mouth grown weary
of uttering wisdom and folly,
but the loss of the Dream
and the belief in the Miracle,
the closing of the door
to life's shattering Infatuations.
Old age is perhaps
never to be tenderly and fondly
touched again.

Giovanna Peel

Toronto, Ontario

Voice of a Woman

A skyrocket of sparrow energy
belying her abundant years,
she lobbies for disarmament.
Bifocals askew, her eyes glinting
like a determined beaver,
she chews through the dead-wood
of political apathy, demanding
answers to damn tricky questions.

She's right, you know.
Instead of spending billions
on bombers, we could be
harnessing the solar rays
for energy. Instead of buying
new fighter aircraft,
governments could be building
homes and funding
anti-pollution programs.

It's all a matter
of priorities, she says,
her meagre body straining
to put across ideas
fleshed with realism.

The universe grows green leaves
in her veins, and all the rivers
of the world wash currents
through the watershed
of her imagination.

The pocketbooks of nations
are her mighty concern.
In national budgets,
she sees the means
to proliferate,
not nuclear weapons,
but the smiles of children
holding a bowl of rice
in their emaciated hands
like a precious flower.

Mona Elaine Adilman

Montreal, Quebec