

All her attention focused
On assaulting darkening night air

Our planes of travel intersect
For fleeting seconds
I watch her
Revel in her cooling creation
My image eludes her field of vision

Determined eyes thrust forward
Expecting any moment
Her wheels will be freed
Of hot, dark pavement
Only the sky and clouds remain ∞

Twenty – Two

In

Five

Poems by
Carl Russo

Parkflo Press ∞

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Anonymous Rider

Wild eyed woman
Frantically pumps her pedals
Into a personal pool
Of still night air

Slicked back, short black
Hair; matches thick black
Frames over deep dark eyes
Stark white tee, under
Fluttering, open front, gray shirt
Black trousers ripple against her wind
This style smartly proclaims
A return of the '50s teen boy look
But her front proclaims femininity

She smiles before a welcoming wind
Her body jerks back and forth
Almost Haphazardly
Over the sleek metallic spine
Despite the loose cohesion
The bike just flies along
Worn black macadam
Skirting tired concrete curbing

SEARCHING

Cornstalks are dried; bleached palest yellow
Those that remain.
This plot has yielded its fullest crop.
Broken stalks with discarded cobs
Litter dark, wet, rutted soil.

Morning air breathes misty gray.
Bright sun, clear blue sky
Field and woodlands warm steadily
Crimson and yellow just past
Thanksgiving yet to come

We search for their sign.
Slowly walking the woodland margins
That frame the resting land.
Are their tracks and trails nearby?
Where, when, how

Small caches of dried kernels
Unintended bait.
Tempting the chosen
To abandon a forested sanctuary.
Their imperatives:
 Feed for the winter to come
 Breed to perpetuate their numbers
Betrays them to the seekers.

Elusive beasts exchange safety for
Satisfaction.
Then the quest has ended.
Now they are the harvest. ∞

For my mother

Marjorie F. Russo

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Anonymous Rider

Are his hopes for love
shattered?

Can the bond of love be renewed?

Can the passion be rekindled?

Are only the recriminations left? ∞

Love and romance and passion
are finite without
planning and patience and maturity
the bond between them
weakened then severed.

She must return to her mother.
He must return to his father
Her mother pushes her into her past;
too late,
she can no longer resume the role entitled,
dutiful child.
Never Again.

She flees her caged sanctuary.
He welcomes her into his fathers' home

His stepmother demands she accept
control
isolation
collusion

Her mother, seeking her, confronts the stepmother
struggle
violence
hate

Torn apart again

Are her dreams of love
abandoned?

House

There was or rather is a point

In which this simple joint

Must see the zenith of its day

Evading its current state of decay

Truly but a brief reprieve

It must surely leave

Meandering toward an inevitable decline

Eventually succumbing to relentless time ∞

Morning Struggle

The sky – now a lovely pinkish gray
patiently awaits

Its' Sun – for the new and glorious day
yet tenacious

Moon and Stars – shine a certain, stubborn way
with resolve

Eluding the golden brightness
now in play ∞

IT'S BROKEN

All too often
life just happens
for the rising generation
before they can grasp
each new experience
it's over.

The sweet young woman
somewhat learning disabled,
struggled to finish high school.
Just barely out of her teens;
she surely did love him

He drifted, never finishing school.
She was a total surprise.
He was taken aback by
the intensity of his love
for her.

The apartment was cheap.
Their happiness together was dizzying.
They declared themselves, soulmates;
and their love wrought passion into life

Reality came upon them
like thunder and lightening
from billowing dark clouds;
everything changed.

It was then this tree choose to justify its' given status

One hundred feet of air and darkness
Did little to muffle the tragedy
A creaking then cracking sound
Shocked sleepy ears
A hasty whoosh and thrump followed

No one was nearby to witness this indignity
Morning light revealed the tale of the tawdry tape
The remainder of the tree, in tact, for now
Its message clearly given ∞

Summer Afternoon - 1962

Sunny — Warm

Sunny — Warm

Sitting — Waiting

Sitting — Waiting

RADIO — BASEBALL

Paper route — Walking

Paper route — Walking

Supper — Eating

Supper — Eating ∞

Caught Somewhere in It

I just don't know
Why they never stop the show

I just don't know
When it all began

I just don't know
Where I am to go

I just don't know
How I fit their mold

I just don't know
If ever my part will start ☺

LAST WEEK

They marked that old tree across the street
With bright yellow plastic tape
Wrapped all around its massive trunk
Bold, black, letters proclaimed "CAUTION"

Warning of a fate

The tree in question is a lovely silver maple
Lanky tally branches sweep up eighty or ninety feet
To an increasingly sparser mast of smallish leaves
There must have been half a dozen major branches

Until the other night

Early August nights reverse the heat of the day
Our bedroom windows were positioned that night for
full advantage
By midnight our street fairly resonates silence
Even the hushed conversation of late night strollers
Is amplified by virtue of its singularity

Prepare ourselves for the role.

Make the commitment.

Embrace the truth of it.

(but what if it's death)

(isn't that a rather pointless exercise)

Now everyday people live with that option
clenched tight
in their hand.

Some embrace it, accept it and
with no remorse
coalesce to it.

Others work hard to ignore
pretend their life unchanged
deny the inevitable

(and we always hear of those who fight the noble fight)

Then there are the truly unique;
In the prime of life
The world at their feet

Who snatch up the dice
In their hand
Unseeing

Just as the curiosity unfolds
Their path has ended

Before the first step is taken. ∞

Its Late Spring

Backyards are lush and green

Wherever the eye may see

Now the work unfolds

In earnest

Shape these green treasures

They abound

To please the eye and calm the mind
Beauty is wrought

From Control

And Dominance

Chaos lurks

In leaves, stems, blades and branches

Never truly tamed

For now

Just subdued ∞

Why won't this damned cigar stay lit?

It needs your full attention
A cigar is a project unto itself

To read
Or write
To lose one's self in thought

Betrays the well packed leaves

To Enjoy it
Is to savor its glorious smoke

Concentrate on the burn
Without your effort
The red-hot tip
Wanes fully to
useless white ash

Strike the match to begin again 

WHAT WOULD YOU THINK IF.....

In the regular flow of life
one's options
are erratic

And, as we all know
but are loath
to acknowledge

Ultimately there is but one option
(getting back to the term erratic)

Fates carom about
on the surface
that is our reality

Each time their flung about
by the unknown
Or Ourselves

Tumbling randomly, until they achieve
A pronounced lack of kinetic energy
(i.e. they stop)

Like so many dice come to rest
on the green felt
of a casino table

What we are supposed to do then
is take one;
And Live It

I Have Got To Have It

"clichéd desire in metal"

It's a car

Not a truck or minivan nor SUV

It's: **FOR SALE**

OH——— This machine is looking truly fine

The shape———bold and brassy

a perfect conglomeration

Of curves and arcs

creases and folds

Sleek yet manly — dignified not whimsical

Whoooah oh oh———check out those wheels
can those babies shine!

AND the color

Teal ?

Well maybe a shade of turquoise

You know its blue green for sure

This vehicle appears to be going fast

Just standing still

That may not be a good thing

but who cares

ZOWWEE——— the interior is to die for

the wood, the leather, — the pebble grained plastic
inserts

carpet — fuzzy, warm and deep

a tune system to make the ears smile

cupholders, bins, and mappockets galore

Its' **ENGINE**

Ah what a work of art

Gleaming chrome

On each and every part

Turn the key

To life it does roar

Producing power

From reasonable to then still more

Just put the petal to the floor

Gas mileage - you must ignore

Finally there is but one last consideration

And that, unfortunately, is the remuneration.



CAMERA

Body

Rugged yet light
Black not white
Must be tight

and

format
format
format

Shutter

The need
Is for speed
To control the lights' bleed

with

click
click
click

Lenses

Zoom is a ride
Must go wide
Can not hide
from

macro
macro
macro

Film

Color with speed? or slow.
Black and white, dramatic, all aglow
Dust on a negative, no!!!

the key is

emulsion
emulsion
emulsion

Accessories

Flashes, cords, caps and rings,
bags, filters, tripods and things,
Umbrellas, softboxes, reflectors with wings

all of them

gadgets
gadgets
gadgets ☹

GARAGE

It has been lost in recent history

And thus remains a mystery

Why a practical New Englander would decide

To go so far beyond the true and tried

Built with walls of brick and roof of slate

It shelters two vehicles from nature's fate

Why would he provide his daily ride

A home with such a stately side

He must have demanded his cars be pampered

Expecting their dependability be not hampered

Six generous windows, nine over nine

Provide ample sunlight throughout the daytime

When evenings darkness envelopes all

Electricity lights each vehicles' stall

Should temperatures drop to twenty below in the
winter

These engines will start without a whimper

It has a chimney on the rear wall

A vent for the stove that heats at his beckon call

Should dirt and grime need be washed away

A spigot for water is in the right bay

Excess or necessity, who can say

The garage holds its' secret to this very day. ☹☹

CRAWFISH

Local ponds and streams do keep
Little monsters of the deep
You can see them lurking there
All you need to do is stare

Living with one true refrain
Their typical day goes by just the same
Still as a statue; they exhibit no care
Unless one does spy; its' next tasty fare

Once a victim they do pick
Tiny claws so strong and quick
Reach and grasp the hapless prey
You know they will eat today

Masters of their tiny universe
But, a life lived under a curse
Hermits they must always be
Two together; you will not see

These watery depths cannot hide
The drive that each one must abide
To always seek most notably
Darkness so they'll lonely be ∞

SILLY

No matter how near or far
He chooses to drive that car
Its' newness a mere echo of what he felt then
The exhilaration gone from way back when
An average, ordinary teenage kid
Succumbed to his relentless id
Ah the very first time
Into the leather seat he did climb
His head filled to bursting with evil desire
Reason flooded through him but just fed the fire
Only one stream of thought ran through his head
Nothing was ever verbally said
A smirk lit his face with fiendish glee
What a perfect automobile it will be
His hand wrapped 'round the wood steering wheel
Here I am faced with a fabulous deal
This is the motor vehicle I want to steal!
And He Did. ∞

ANY A.M. (workday)

First it's the socks
Somber is, as it must be
Dark Blue or Gray
Never Vermillion or Chartreuse
Perched on the edge
Of my comfy bed
Usually it's right then left
Occasionally
The vice is versa

Oh
I forgot the underwear
Not a pleasant image
Its already on
Before the socks
happen

YES - the Joy of joys
Lets pick
A shirt
Blah is our working description here
Although I really do like
The one
With the narrow blue stripe

Pants are either Gray
Or
Grayer

Now I'm back
Right on track
Working in a steady rush
You see
Quickly making photographs
Good Enough
For me ∞

GONE BACK

Its been years
And fears
Since I took my photographs
I still saw them
Lying there
Neatly packed away
Along with my desire
To make these pictures
Just my way
There was No fire
Clearly, it was me
Who really should have been aware
Always offering no care
Never seeing
What was truly there
Excuse was but a flimsy
Mask
My whimsy
A lack of Confidence
In my photographic
Task

No, I don't know which leg goes on first
It all depends

A tie now
No favorites here
Whatever is ready, willing and able
I carefully tie the knot
My dad taught me so long ago

A few years back
I stopped wearing those formal, clunky wingtip shoes
Just not comfortable enough
Casual but unobtrusive,
black walkers
Appear to me
More formal than in reality

Sport or Suitcoat next
Depends wholly on the pants, you know
Dark Blue
Or
Grayer

Well, I'm ready to go now
And earn a living
Dressed
In more or less
The perfectly appropriate way ☺

CONSIDER THE MILL RIVER - I

I have stood
On Meadow's sweeping bridge

and Watched

Mills' gentle, hidden motion
Flowing within the serene stillness

Sky and Trees
Reflections cast in
Vibrant blues and greens
Etched upon the water's face
Unchanging
In the lovely heat of a sultry summer day

Yet the subtle movement
Of a single leaf afloat
Betrays the currents' constant whim

Now the paradox renewed ∞

Doesn't see me
Not yet at least
Jeez, look at all the brush and branches
an arrow may never make it through the maze

I think I will give it a try anyway
So what if the arrow is lost

Slowly, Slowly, Slowly
bring the bow up to shooting position
Pull the string taut
and aim — aim carefully
for the spot just to the right of its shoulder

Now hold that draw
till the doe moves just a little more
Thank God for cable and pulley bows
It is sooo easy to hold a draw for ages
What with the modern miracle of applied physics

Yes that's it
She's turned to present the side angle
Now very steadily,
nice smooth release
And then
thwang, bang, scrunch
That arrow hit at least three different branches
Up goes the white tail
Off goes the deer
OK so much for that one
Let me try for a cleaner shot

Tomorrow ∞

LOCK UP

The accused

held within its' rough walls

metal

cement

glass

massive sliding doors,

colored with light blue green

worn

chipped

dirty

large key cast in brass,

mates with steeled tumblers

smooth

dull

cold

florescent lights

recessed deep within ceiling panels

stark

incessant

merciless

bright chromed manacles

shackle every ankle

denial

desperation

despair ∞

HUNTING: A STREAM OF CONSCIOUSNESS

I've been sitting here now for quite some time,

just waiting

this spot looked really great

last month

it was a well worn run

there were fresh droppings along it

every morning for at least a week

and tracks,

the place looked like a deer highway.

But not today

And you know something

I'm ready, I mean really really ready

I sure have practiced hard this year

It shows

Those arrows are flying flat and straight

right to the center of the target

No Lie

Yeah, Yeah, I know

Deer don't have targets

Painted on their sides

The wind is blowing just right

carrying my scent down and away from the run

Makes no difference anyway

the deer are gone

They must have headed over
to that abandoned apple orchard
it's just about a third of a mile
down the old logging road

But they should not be there now
they were there mostly evenings
when I scouted that site, last month

No sense in moving yet
Its just too late
to leave my early post
Stay here till late morning
when they settle in for a little siesta
Then I go stake out a new spot

God, Is It Cold out here
So much for all these layers of clothing
Not worth a crap after you've been
sitting totally still for two and a half hours

Wait — what's that!
there's some noise back behind me
in the leaves
Carefully now turn and look

Just those damn little red squirrels
look at them running around like crazy
they make that energizer bunny seem kinda sluggish

Hey what's that movement over there
in that clump of brush and saplings
Yes!!! a good sized doe

CONSIDER THE MILL RIVER - II

The Rivers' bed a wondrous channel
Home to soils of earths' mantel

Rocks and sand do pave its' way
Mans' debris fallen where it may

Banks do hold its waters clear
Once sullied by factories built too near

While dams confine a swelling might
To preserve the Ponds' lovely sight

One simple fact we all must know
That the River yearns to flow

Beyond the massive earthen dyke
That blocks its path of ancient right ☸