

Poetry

A few moments before learning of her son's death

sitting on the porch
my grandmother in the rocking chair
my mother and her sisters
on the steps
the darkness comes
and it is thick and August

they watch the moon rise
huge and yellow above the fields
and grandma says, oh my
look at that sad picture
in the moon
it looks just like a lady
with her girls
and they're all together crying
oh, that's a sad picture

John Brehm

Snow falling

this cold has burst the stars
and snow falls and falls

it is good to stand here
in the snow, my breath rising

the snow falling through
the broken vein-work

of black trees frozen
in this fashion, held

and holding the cold
and falling snow

John Brehm

Paternal silhouettes

when I feel an indian summer wind,
yet see the black naked tree
out my window, I shudder
at winter's approach—
at those
golden wafers layered below that
soon like popcorn seeds will
burst white to cool and hide a warm fired earth—
at that
squirrel recovering a lost nut
in the shadows of leaves Oh
the winter comes fast here
and slick, never departs
until may—now, any comfort
on a warm breeze does not
account for the deathly
beyond—even
in spring, winter
never quite withdraws its ephemeral
tease to green buds and with
its frosty tongue chides
the naive—oh
the constant regret
of those warm days, the insincere
thought of spring and winter
winter seeping into the slow air
like an ominous vapor fills a complete
space

Patricia Autremai



Photo by Steve Boerner

Untitled

Never so sweet
has life been on earth
as the world we knew
before our birth.

A time not our own,
no sense of fear;
like a story in the clouds
that God is near.

Once its life has begun
its spirit is clear.
Be it happy, not sad;
Laughter, not tears.

Should God hear this sigh
from man's heart, woman's womb;
"Please give life to this child
we let die."

Michael Haley

Alexandra's repetition

i spent a year
watching al sit
facing the wall
everynight
raking her scalp
with her hands.

her yawn squinting
face used to drag
straw-sandaled feet
to the bar
everynight.
she's rude
to the barmaid and
cries in her beer 'til
the guy on her left
hovers, brushing her
hair and tears with
his hands; their Alsatian
eyes begin to get drunk—
drunk with longing for
someone to take home.

home again
everynight
she savors each note
on the record,
she alone after
bottles of beer, swaggering
harpsicord
lulls her upstairs where
she trips over shoes
in the hall.

the next day
redfaced
requests I walk much softer
and my voice be turned
to a whisper...
not moving
not speaking
with her face to the wall
alexandra shaking.

Patricia Autremai



Daily Nebraskan photo

EDITOR'S NOTE: Writers who would like to submit fiction or poetry for publication in Fathom are invited to bring their work to the Daily Nebraskan office, Room 34, Nebraska Union. The deadline for the next issue is March 12.