

# Poems for Our 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

Various Authors

Poetry has been a part of the Fifth Estate since its origins, so it is with great pleasure that we print these sent to us by The Alternative Press on the occasion of our 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The Alternative Press, Grindstone City, MI 48467, does hand-printed broadsides, postcards, bookmarks, etc. from the pressroom of Ann & Ken Mikolowski and comes in three packets a year for \$15.

## **BORN TO WORK**

Jim Gustafson

Now I was born to work!  
To toil endlessly without purpose or true reward.  
I've worked as a stone pulverizer,  
as a blue-steel actualizer,  
as the dude who crawls through tunnels  
full of shit to pull the plug on the mess!  
I have toiled mindlessly without purpose or true reward.  
Born to work! Proud to work.  
Every day, day after day.  
But I've had some easy jobs.  
I've been paid to lay in a hospital bed  
and watch Barney and Fred and all them cartoons  
and twice a day let 'em suck something  
from the middle of my bones.  
Oh it hurt,  
but they said it was important work,  
and I was born to work.  
To toil mightily and labor endlessly  
without purpose or true reward.  
I've done a bit of everything,  
worked in all the important industries.  
I've juggled white-hot ignorance right out of the furnace!  
I was once a juice taster and power tester.  
It was a double job for  
The Greater American Power and Wine Company.  
I was employed to travel the west in a truck  
to taste the wine to see if it was fine

to test the power lines  
to make sure the juices were flowing  
I was paid to piss the wine  
on the power line  
and if it was on  
that was fine and I got  
a jolt to my business  
but if it wasn't  
I was being paid  
to drink and piss!  
I was born to work!  
To toil and guzzle and labor endless without purpose  
or true reward!  
Born to work!  
Born to work!  
Born to work!

## **TURN AROUND**

Mick Vranich

the line in the magazine ad  
next to the picture of the leg  
share the fantasy  
thick carpet under the spike heeled foot  
an elegant female hand holding  
the spray bottle at the knee  
when the magazine is found  
in some damp basement  
the page will carry  
that smell of enticement  
the mice stop chewing  
for a moment  
spit out the odorous morsels  
reject them  
unsuitable for their nest  
half chewed high heel  
you are the fantasy.

## **THINKING OF JACK SPICER**

Donna Brook

I've been thinking about Jack Spicer especially  
how in No. 3 of "Love Poems" in the book Language 1964  
he uses the word "rhododendrons"  
he says "the drift of rhododendrons"  
and I think, Oh Jack Spicer, you rake,  
you roue, you raconteur, Jack Spicer,  
to put "rhododendrons," "the drift of rhododendrons"!

but actually I don't  
directly address him.  
I could never address Jack Spicer, I wouldn't even dare  
to wave to him from a bus, I just think  
about Jack Spicer  
and I'm embarrassed I even said roue about Jack Spicer  
because actually I don't even think about Jack Spicer  
or know very much about literature or his aesthetics  
or the real reasons why he chose "rhododendrons" although  
I can see the plant. I think of Jack Spicer  
as an alternative experience, you might say, as one thinks  
of Spain in the dentist's chair.

This is going to hurt for a couple of months, they said,  
so why don't you close your eyes and think of Jack Spicer, don't  
remember how he died or that he did so just  
let the rhododendrons drift by.

## **WOMAN**

Faye Kicknosway

There is a woman standing in the doorway. She has sallow skin and hair like metal shavings. Her dress fits her as though it had been dropped onto her from the ceiling. She is fatigued and would like to sit down, but there is only one chair in the room she faces and it is occupied by someone who is asleep. It is a kitchen chair and it is pulled up to a table and the sleeper is bent forward, his arms folded upon the table and his head rested upon his arms. There is a window near the table and the curtain blows out from it, touching the fingers of the hand nearest it. It is raining. There is no fragrance in the rain, no scent which is clear and distinguishable. The woman in the doorway touches her face, remembering how as a girl she liked to walk in the rain with her head turned up into it, her fleshy tongue escaped and protuberant between her open lips, catching the rain into her mouth.

## **BANNER SPANGLED STAR**

Ken Mikolowski

Hailed we proudly so what  
Light early dawns the by  
See you can say Oh.

# fifth Estate

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<https://www.fifthestate.org/archive/322-winter-spring-1986/poems-for-our-20<sup>th</sup>-anniversary>  
Fifth Estate #322, Winter-Spring, 1986

**[fifthestate.anarchistlibraries.net](https://www.fifthestate.org/archive/322-winter-spring-1986/poems-for-our-20<sup>th</sup>-anniversary)**