

# Poetry

centerfold feature

Mick Vranich  
Willie Williams  
Kim Derrick Hunter  
Marie Stephens  
Christina Pacosz  
Ron Allen

## Chains Across The Trees

by Mick Vranich

America's totem is the hamburger  
don't look at me look at tv  
chains across the trees  
generations bread on cheap meat  
glass cars with flashy decals  
x this z that magnum force  
for minute sight  
name a town where the demons  
don't lurk lead heads zapped on crack  
it's just disease we get to see  
in young bodies  
armed and ready to blow your face off  
don't look at me look at tv  
chains across the trees  
smell the burning hair  
the leather straps that hold the ancient  
horn stretch under the weight  
of the desperate breath  
of the few who still breathe  
and walk with careful steps  
away from the machine with steel teeth  
don't look at me look at tv  
generations bread on cheap meat

and paper hats and stars that never  
show up in the night sky  
or leave the mirror  
stars that live in magazines  
stars that haul piles of rags  
around on their backs  
to show you how to look  
when you get there when you  
get where the stars live  
in the magazines and the sky  
is shaking from the light  
beyond here don't look at me  
look at tv chains across  
the trees startled wings  
just before the fire and  
spinning blades reach the nest  
America's totem is the hamburger  
wrapped in skins of beasts  
that run from their homes  
in the thick jungle  
out into the open plains  
to be picked off poached  
packaged up and replaced  
by the quiet cow grazing  
until the water runs out  
the soil wears away  
and there's no place to go  
don't look at me look at tv  
chains across the trees

## **If Darwin Was Alive What Would He Say?**

by Willie Williams

God  
goddess and goddets  
regale in regal laughter  
as pheasants and raccoons  
return to reclaim  
the wilds of this city  
flames cleanse  
the lands before  
forced resettlements leaves  
space for  
nature's natural squatters  
darkened ruins  
are razed  
as echoes of the living  
cry out to space  
traveling at the speed

of tears and  
green colors now  
memories and once cityscapes  
things keep changing  
like Faruk  
losing his dreadlocks  
and Kofi doing  
the fourstep Jabba Jig  
in aging York.

.  
(Beware of open  
doorways they could  
be someone's home  
at night)

## **for frantz fanon the guevara and patrice lumumba**

by Kim Derrick Hunter

Concerning violence

What

Are the terms of warfare in the event of darkness

The practical application of shadows

The technical aspects of dreams

.  
The role of death

In approaching cease fire

And the liquid embryo sleep

.  
Perhaps it is something

Broken once and betrayed

Some ugly justice

Made to lay out our places

At the table of the world

.  
Perhaps

Some one

Wrestling with death

To avoid torture

Beheading bureaucracy and privilege

And in the process

Killing the bureaucrat and the privileged

.  
The hot slant of a small metal missile

Rips the son the daughter

Both began in the womb

And moved into the world

And were in the process

Of being moved by the world

When the world took note

The homeless unemployed worker campesina native took note  
The gay black junkie hillbilly hustler took note  
The pornographed field house wife body bag chauffeur invisible spine of the world took note

.  
How will the bullet repay  
Our masters for their kindness  
How will the flow of blood  
That begins with the bloodless refusals  
Of even the "good" jobs  
Undo the knot of lies that binds us  
To early slow death

.  
Who will own the burning necklace  
The silencer  
When the world is owned by no one

.  
We need a new form  
Of cost benefit analysis  
To determine the price of the bullet  
That will repay our masters' kindness

## **For the Stone-Throwers**

by Marie Stephens

How to carve an image in the  
Stones left scattered here  
Scuffle in the streets  
Students hoarse with yelling  
Tear gas blood and fear  
Branded with the tell-tale ink  
Running from the tracers  
Harder in the smoke  
Of burning cities to  
Define  
The proper line  
Easier to gather  
Under borrowed banners  
Hope, protection, safety  
And an order  
In the quickly gathered  
Counter structure  
Better (thought) to  
Place their limitless  
Good will and trust in  
Parties, leaders  
Lifting scarecrows from their midst  
To battle harpies in the fields  
Children torn asunder  
In the grappling of nations,

Their stolen bodies now become  
Rebellion  
Throwing stones and running  
The lowest common factor  
In the formula of change  
Only, once again  
No change, no revolution  
Only insurrection and oblivion  
Or just another nation  
An excuse for more atrocities  
In vengeance  
And the blood of the stone-throwers  
Will have been sold cheap  
Their deaths, their pain  
People will whisper to one another  
Trying to remember times  
Until invasion, punishment and slavery  
Leaves them numb and without memory  
Except perhaps  
with this brutal truth to live by:  
Every nation built on barbed wire  
Every boundary  
A murder  
Every flag  
A thief.

## **A Gentle Rebuke to American Schoolchildren In the Form of a Poem**

by Christina Pacosz

Turn off that television,  
that sickly electronic light,  
for T.V. is a thief  
robbing you of your life.

.  
A dangerous drug  
making you fearful  
of your own imagination  
that buoyant, flamboyant eye,  
your birthright,  
and then you will be lost  
when you most need  
the bright image,  
the dark vision.

.  
Now, in the silence  
pay attention, child.  
At first you will be bored  
and think there is nothing  
to do. Remember then

what I tell you now.  
Learn to love patience and desire,  
for I have heard the children  
of the Haitian poor, studying  
on the streets of a dark  
island in the southern sea  
because there was no light  
at home to read by.

.  
If you are lucky enough to  
to have a full belly  
fill your heart  
with the blessed names  
of the myriad trees.  
Study light and how shadows  
fall to earth. Learn  
to call the bright birds  
one by one. Fly  
in your dreams,  
sing

.  
the song of your own  
free name.  
Claim it.

## **I Want My Body Back**

by Ron Allen

I want my body back  
I want my body back  
Where is my body  
Did anyone see it dressed  
Incognito in some spy movie  
Is it being killed over and over  
Again in some war  
To prove someone's winning  
It was never photographed  
And placed on milk cartons  
Did anybody see my body  
On to selling underwear  
Did anybody see somebody  
That might be my body  
Don't want anybody  
But (my body) back

.  
Is my body in somebodies  
Body shop  
Sold to replace body parts  
.

Is my body now a centerfold  
For the Detroit News  
The Detroit Free Press  
Or The Metro Times

.

Is my body now lying  
In some funeral parlor  
Pumped full of the  
Embalming fluid of Reaganomics

.

Is my body now being  
A human error  
In thermonuclear holocaust

.

Is my body now working  
In some South African jail  
Pushin' apartheid for both Botha's  
Body and my body  
For the body politic  
Of white supremacy

.

Is my body now a paper boy  
Carrying the bourgeois rhetoric  
Of the news and the free press

.

Is my body now a rapist  
Of women (humanity)  
Raping again and again  
The body of my mother

.

Is my body now a multi-national  
Stamping the emblem of corporations  
On the backs of third world bodies

.

Is my body now a cigar-smoking  
Fat cat pushing dioxin through  
His words through  
The smoke rings of my body

.

Is my body now a cartoon caricature  
On some Saturday morning propaganda  
Sayin' it's only entertainment

.

Is my body now a Contra  
Stuffing Iranian money in  
The holes of its body  
To implement insurrection  
To internally intern the innocent  
Is my body now a neo-colonial  
Missionary blessing the Ethiopian dead

.  
Is my body now a policeman  
Turning his back to crack  
To crack someone else's  
Mind and body

.  
I want my body so I can walk  
The 22 hills lyrics with  
My body tappin' the bass pedal  
Sendin' out multi-dimensional  
Flesh songs

.  
Anybody sighted my body  
In the jungles of mass media

.  
Somebody put an APB  
On my body

.  
I want my body so I can  
Dig my fingers into somebody

.  
I want my body so I can  
Dig my toes into the natural earth  
And walk like a natural man

.  
I want my body so I can  
Breathe again

.  
I want my body  
So I can fly again

.  
I want my body  
I want my body  
I want my body

.  
Back.



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