Donald Over the Bridge

by Jan Laskar

Then why won't you go? Do you want Bill to walk with you? Are you afraid to walk home by yourself?

I don't know.

And Bill standing behind her aiming at me with his paper bag lunch and his face and fist clenched, twisted, menacing glaring at me. No, I don't want Bill to walk with me. I'm not afraid.

Then will you go to school?

Yes.

Will you stay there Lou?

Yes.

And Mom handed me two cookies in a brown bag and Bill unclenched his fist and I went to school.

But there was Donald on the way back. Third grade Donald and the biggest the biggest that I had ever seen and he moved with such slow enormous footsteps and his arms and legs twisted like an octopus and his hair dark grease in his eyes behind me every day. Never spoke or threw rocks or looked in my direction. But Donald every day with octopus feet and thick black grease and me walking home on the bridge every day by myself.

They never guessed that I was plotting murder. That every night I prayed hard for rain and for Dad's big umbrella and I plotted and counted how long it took Donald to lumber out of his third grade classroom onto the sidewalk. It would take a little more time in the rain, of course. And if I wanted time to have a plastic rainhat tied at my chin and help me please buckle my yellow raincoat and such a big umbrella for such a little girl well I could wait till Donald got ahead of me.

Then the bridge. The big wooden falling apart bridge where I had suffered the echoes of Donald's footsteps so many times. And having removed my boots which sloshed so loudly I would run up silently behind him and quickly of he'd never know what hit him so quickly stab at his back with Dad's big black umbrella and a burst of power like a lever simple machine and Donald over the bridge.

Operator, Maria reached in front of me and I dodged from the octopus. The switchboard bloomed into Christmas lights. Margaret was

(continued on back)
PHOENIX

Beyond scattered maples, withered with fall.  
An idling girl, filtered clear then indistinct,  
Like a face through a white picket fence,  
Rises toward the stream, as if to cross.

Wailing, sprawling unwares, she leans,  
Breasts to knees to toss a stone against  
Beached - out clay, and glances over splintered  
Shale and fossilized stream toward weed-shriven graves

Feel a boy run past on a hilly side road.  
He leans panting against a guard post,  
Shirt undone, shoes scarred in ascent.  
Afternoon breezeless, moment unending.

A stone drops clattering; a confluence of tears  
Sparkling in a final ray of silent sun.  
— Jay Paul

GOD INSPIRES THE POETS

He was about to read the one  
where his family almost suffocates  
in darkness white as the Paradiso

when the rain really began,  
sirens slogging warnings  
like screaming stones over the city.

The room had been too stuffy  
anyway. Backs  
were falling from the chairs.

People closed their minds  
like books. Whirlwinds  
cannot be eluded.

Phone calls to sitters/quick trips home/bear cans popping  
faster/risking  
creaking steps into a  
cooling cellar/the real  
party had just begun.

The old man, hair slicked,  
beard jetting into the wind,  
the porch an open bridge  
where some were pretending  
to steer, wind smashing  
his face with laughter, his own words  
(“I’ve lived long enough already.”)

The chatter below/the roar  
surrounding/a choice.  
Beer upstairs/friends below.  
So it went.

until a flash  
silenced the cellar. All eyes  
mourned the burned and broken  
cord, the smashed radio,  
knowing now they’d never know  
if the laughing captain had a chance  
to weather the lurking blow.

The entire city saw  
the black funnel of fate  
the next night/took pictures/  
phoned friends, but our poet  
lay disconnected, still  
of use, like the beer.  
He came up, faced us  
read and knew we knew  
real wind had swept  
his life away.  
— Jay Paul

(Untitled)

Coming on you unexpectedly like that,  
at Washington and Shiawassee  
you seemed a Jonah -

Freshly spewed from the darkness,  
from the closed - mouth conspiracy  
that kept us turning different corners.

For a moment we stood,  
grounded in each other’s eyes,  
making sentences from the scraps at hand,  
building an island with words.

But it was cold there on the corner,  
and we could not withstand  
the current of our separate selves.  
Our island was too soon swamped,  
and you were swallowed up again.  
— Lorraine Sigle

Lorraine Sigle — a junior English major, transfer student from Lansing Community College, a new poet to the MSU literary magazine, has recently appeared in many literary journals, including "Nine," a New Black Poets series published by Moore Publishing Company.

Richard Thomas — a history graduate student, recently married, works in the Civil Affairs, his poetry has been featured in anthologies including "Nine." A former resident of New York City last term which attracted many literary journals, including "Nine," a New Black Poets series published by Moore Publishing Company.

ink, drawing by Pi
(Untitled)

This past winter was dead in the center.
White ash of burned stars settled on our minds.
It did not snow.

It remained unmusical
as the clack of cleated tires on dry pavement.
Then we had rain;

Freezing rain that iced in the town
and threatened to refuse traffic.
We slept in that morning.

But by noon the roads were salted,
and there wasn’t enough conversation
to last the evening.
We let the coffee go cold in our cups.

Our street began to look hollow cheeked.
All the houses grew round - shouldered
and apologetic about their pain.
It was February and we expected snow.

The clouds collected and hung like slow lovers,
ponderous and afraid.
A fine powder fell and hid itself like a young girl
who knows she has no bosom.

We went to bed that night without turning on the light,
and talked about the storm of three years ago,
when you wore snow shoes to McGowen’s Grocery,
and I baked bread for the first time.

—Lorraine Sigle

— a junior English major, a

— a history graduate student, student

— a history graduate student, student

— a history graduate student, student

We are no one.
A stone carving they
touch and love.

We the Brothers
loved and unloved
while Judases make out
under our crosses
with our ex - lovers
swores to never leave,
our names now annoying
memories
as they undress to
give themselves to
our executioners.

While we
look down
choking on spotlight
—Richard W. Thomas

morning

there are no buildings here
no early morning neurotic traffic
no blank faces racing
with clocks in their bloodstreams

no chicago sudden morning explosion
no new york mob rushing underground
into the sickening belly of the city

Vomiting up the souls of the people
no detroit blue shirts
ford and chrysler zombies
rushing to their daily funerals
no stuffed buses full of
dying shapes of obscene visions
of fatter wallets and mini-skirt
teenagers advertising their thighs
to the old men looking over
their newspapers in the park

Morning here stretches out
treeline touches but does not disturb
the settling blue sky. birds circle
insects sing (do insects sing in subways
have you ever watched a small bee
drink from the yellow face of a flower?)

no cities roaring in the morning
never sleep - restless whores!
beds full of men.
the only intruder is a jet — and
it is gone now.
the outhouse is
a suite to us — Listen! Listen!
you finely dressed deadmen
your inside choked with smoke and
car parts, your breath of smog —
your neurotic pace
your empty face
your jet jetting you through time
and space

Listen to your subways
Listen to your noisy coming awake
Look at the blueshift factory workers
the black domestics
the white slaves
the technicolor slave drivers

Listen cities/
and

Dig your doom swelling
and you on top
of all your technology
chasing yourself through
the bellies
of your ugly magic
— Richard W. Thomas

in magazines, appeared at the poetry
drivers in America in New
Red

ink drawing by David Kirkpatrick
We were all keen to get to the large room. My father was there, and so was my sister. We looked up at the ceiling, which was made up of many red beams. It was a beautiful sight to behold.

We entered the room, and I could see that there were many people inside. I saw my friend, Tom, and we spoke for a while. He told me about his recent trip to the mountains, and I was really impressed. He had some great stories to tell, and I enjoyed listening to them.

As we chatted, I noticed a group of people in the corner of the room. They were playing a game of chess, and I could hear their laughter and conversations. It was a fantastic sight to see, and I couldn't help but feel a sense of excitement.

After a while, my father called me over to join him. He explained that he had something important to show me. He led me to a corner of the room, where there was a small table. On the table, there was a beautiful model of a spaceship. It was incredibly intricate, and I was amazed by the detail that had gone into it.

My father explained that this was a prototype for a new spaceship that was being developed by a local company. He told me that it was going to be used in a future space mission, and I was really excited about it. He also mentioned that I could help with some of the design work, which I was thrilled about.

As we talked, I couldn't help but feel a sense of pride and excitement. I knew that I was going to be a part of something truly amazing, and I couldn't wait to see what the future held. It was a truly unforgettable experience, and I will always cherish the memories that I made that day.