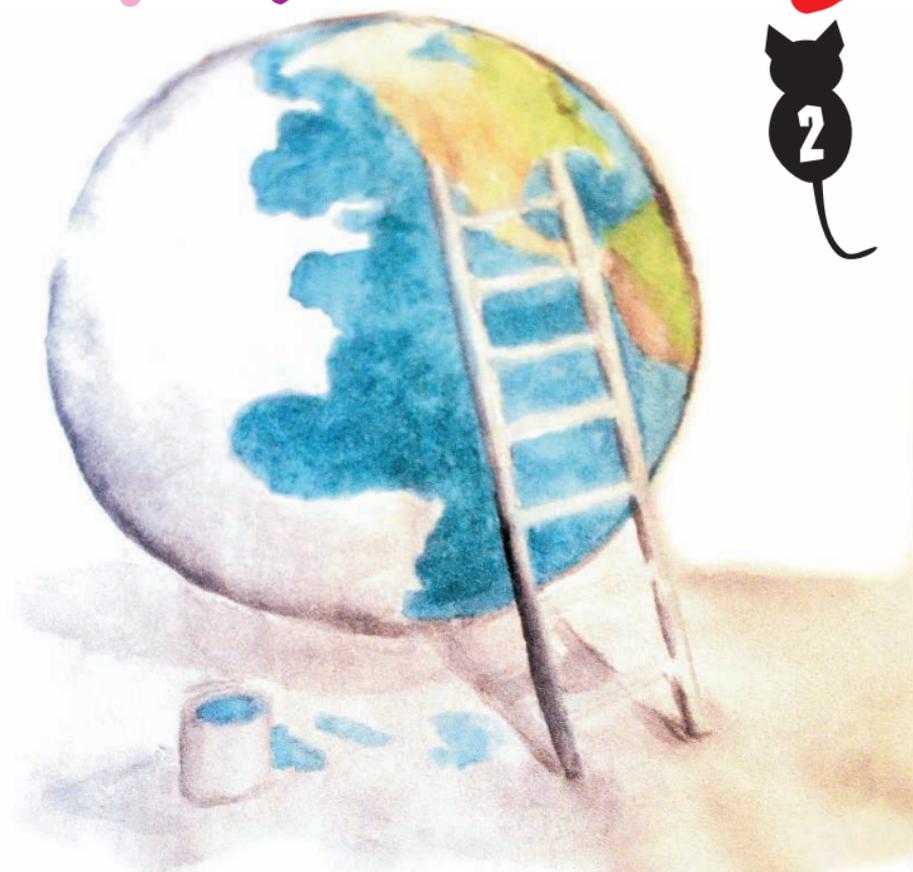


VENDING MACHINE



Poetry for Change
VOLUME TWO

VENDING MACHINE: POETRY FOR CHANGE

you must **BE**
the **CHANGE**
you wish to
SEE *in the*
WORLD

-- *Mahatama Gandhi*

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People thick streets
are not awash with blood,
nor need they be.
Impatient young feet
are not drums of war,
nor need they be.

The rumble
in the distance
that you hear,
the shift in vibration
that makes you want to
raise your hand
heavenward
to indicate
that you heard it
through the cacophony,
that is for you.

It will not hit you
like a wall of sound,
but it will take
the breath from you
just the same.
It will lay its
healing hands on you
just the same.
It will overwhelm you
one lovely note
at a time.

"If You Let It"
by Steve Brightman

lift your hands
into the air
palms facing you
count the digits
if you are fortunate
you have ten
if you cannot
lift your hands
lift your spirit
reach deep inside you
share your soul
with another
each one
reach one
with love
and acceptance
cultivate curiosity
reinvigorate
peace

"Each One, Reach One"
by Catherine Criswell

Where did we hide
the romance between us?
We wore it like a suit made of bones,
beneath the fists and fist-shaped bruises
that made our skin feel like skin.

Although I never wanted to,
you made sure we took the time
to lay out in the open field nearest our house.
We took off our shirts and stared
at a sky without clouds. You said we had to,
because we needed that itch on our backs
to remind us there is more to the world
than YouTube videos of Sarah Palin
and the kindling of academic language.

We wore the tiny binary of those old genders
like a sandwich board,
our too-long strides bumping knees
against a rigid backbone. We spooned
in a tray of knives and forks. We marched
in the streets and I remember the words
you shouted into the megaphone.
When the police confiscated our protest signs,
we stole magic markers and wrote on our chests.

Whose tits will be illegal
when we're free?
Whose skin?

"To Signify Nothing"
by Andrew Rihn

Our fathers fought in no wars,
did their service to family and town,
and worked the steel mills at home.
Their sons and daughters
taught school, nursed,
raised strong families,
helped the veterans who returned.

I honor those who lived
knowing that no "good war"
ever existed, that love and
sacrifice come from the heart.

"Memorial Day"
by Larry Smith

She is thin with fatigue, her face the shadow of work
in the gray of morning before the sun.
The yellowed newspaper curls in her hand
in a room with peeling flowered wallpaper, and
a dingy brown rug with a two-inch hole in the floor.
She begins to teach the child to count pennies,
laying them shiny-faced on the floor in prim rows.
It is uncertain whether the child is a boy or a girl,
whether the face is three or four years old.
Its hair is unkempt and not terribly long
but not entirely short.
"You might have been a Job," she says
after the Bible story to the small frame of the child
turned away from her with a piece of broken crayon
about to touch it to a scrap of newspaper.
Her voice is tender, swollen, and soft.
There is something that breaks in its tone.
The woman closes her eyes and places her hand to her face.
Her thumb and index finger arch about her nose,
the tips resting against the inside corners of her eyes.
Her head is bowed in serenity, sleep, or prayer;
one cannot truly say.
The nameless one (the *"Job"*) draws triangles in red,
hums quietly, sings the alphabet brokenly,
counts pennies in the piggy bank before bed.

"Sunday"
by Tina Puckett

The earth is quaking
like soil remembering
footsteps in unison,
like toes sinking into the ground,
tearing at society
'till it reaches the edges of the earth.

As we step from our hollow, donning revolution in pen tips
and spoken psalms
we are chanting into microphones,
sound waves echoing off the sky,
hands too small to wrap around the globe,

large enough
to grasp injustice by its neck,
hang it along with empty war.

We have been walking peace into a bank of sand,
touching fingertips across country borders,
breaking barriers
with parchment thrown against the sky,
setting minds on fire,

quenching the thirst of open faced palms.

I will not say we are rebels.
I will not say we are fighters.

I will label us dreamers,
with unbroken strides to touch broken clouds.
I will label us lovers,
hands held to settle a world bent on collapsing.

Label us movement,

shaking a world that has grown too accustomed
to standing still.

"Quake"
by Autumn Aki

Cha-ching.
Cha-chink.
Life on the brink.
Another coin thrown
Without intention.
A future hangs in suspension.
Hope pinned on ascension.

Change without motive
Is superficial.
Funny how we all knew the deal
Going in,
But coming out,
We forget to shout
And raise our torches in anger.
Such clandestine behavior
For such a rebel lot.

Change is the bastard of passion,
Which mushroom clouds through fashion.
And we are told,
"The runway is only for the bold."

To our docility, we are sold.

"Change"
by K-

Change resides within
look deep inside your own heart
in your own virtue
find patience and temperance
live with a sense of honor

The world will tell you
to take an easier path
that of destruction
tearing down to build yourself
do not believe in this lie

By your own virtue
paved by your own achievement
leads to happiness
by the path of peace and love
change begins in one's own heart

Exposed like the seeds in a cut lemon,
I'm a star gouged out of the constellation Osiris
falling to earth at the speed of sound to find
clarity. My layers of rags have unraveled; I am no
longer a silenced mummy. I no longer have
fear of becoming.

I'm ready to be
become
be one,
Transformation
has just begun.

So I tell you once,
I tell you twice.

We're playing
a game of
cats and mice
virtue and vice.

Be
Become
Be one
BeBecomeBeone.

"Become Be One"
by Eva X

crumpled green
dollar bills
stuffed in jeans
pocket,
once unfolded
flutter away
unrestrained
arcing on the wind
and lost,
you know the pain
of hunger,
the shadow of debt,
you wonder how
to catch
some more
in that tattered net,
but they never
return

"Green Butterflies"
by Chris Lawrence

Autrey.

Not like the cowboy who crooned on his trusty steed, but an average guy who lives an average life.

All the better.

There is no reason why Wesley Autrey jumped to the rescue of a young man who just had a seizure and fell on to the train tracks.

Maybe he saw too many lives float away while he was dodging bullets in Vietnam; Youthful death in a land of world and hate.

Maybe he thought of his two daughters who witnessed their father place his body between an oncoming train and another human being, hoping that another angel would do the same thing if it happened to one of his children.

There is no evidence that Wesley Autrey can sing Rudolph like his famous namesake, but when the distressed, the disillusioned, the conclave villains who preach about the right and the good insert their opinions of morality within earshot.

Mortal man should look Mr. Wesley Autrey in the eye, give him thanks, then proceed to have a huge bounce in their step; greeting the world a little more cheer, a little more empathy, and most important--a lot more h-o-p-e-f-u-l.

"Autrey"
by Dan Provost

Today is my birthday.
I wake up.
I take my first step.
I see.

Today is my birthday.
I no longer talk
about metal and glass;
the lustful quench of color
lingers on my tongue,
newly grown food
that I have never before tasted,
because today is my first day,
my birthday.

Today is my birthday.
I know it by the gypsy moths,
reinventing their traveling songs,
and I teach it
to the feathers and the fur
and the manes and the hooves.
For the first time,
I can hear every voice.

Today is my birthday,
and dancers spill their costumes
across public transit
and lunch hours,
and someone shakes my hand,
passing me a card
signed by mankind.

Long before today,
it was decided if I would be
a cobbler, an engineer, a clock builder,
a reaper, a doctor, a farmer,
but on my birthday,
I have decided to be.

>>>

Today is your birthday.
Wrap yourself in a jacket of eyes,
blue and green,
a peacock's tail
pointing all directions,
all the better to see.
The corners of a field
square themselves,
mountain, valley,
pinch, tuck, back,
folding earth and grass
into the shape of
your hands and face.
Through the alchemy
of some earthbound kitchen,
your heart is fired in the oven
until it beats.

Today is your birthday.
You whispered so many things,
crippled by the bleeding wound
of a story untold.
But today, a crown is placed
on your brow,
and the oak and the rock maple
ply your ear, telling you
all the old stories
in the blessed language
of the crane fly and the ground ivy,
the story of the tree that drinks
from the stream,
from the rain,
and from the well.

>>>

Today is our birthday.
We sing an epic hymn
about following rain-bright taillights
down the epic throat
of our god.

The butterfly breaks the engine
and saplings buckle the supply chain.
We count the seconds
between the vision and the voice
until we can tell
if the storm is coming
or going.

On our birthday,
we wait in the patience
of a nightshade root,
washing our skin
in a bathtub of starlight,
even though we expect
to be burned by the heat,
knowing that we will carry those scars.

Today can be our birthday,
if we choose it.

"Birthday"
by T.M. Göttl

Our life the choices that we make
Are similar to ripples in a pond
Whether we like it or not
We are responsible for the actions, and
Reactions that stem from them
To me, the most cowardly action
Of them all is none
We can not stand by any longer, and
Let ourselves fall prey to ignorance
So I educate myself
I do this so
Every person I meet or come across
May learn from me
My successes
As well as my mistakes
That they may imitate me
Take my knowledge, and
Add a bit of their own
I am that first ripple
Let my actions and thoughts
Be the catalyst for change
Let not my hopes be in vain
I do not wish to see the end result
I just want to know what I did
What I said
What I feared
What I dread
Today, made someone's
Life take a turn for the better tomorrow

by Weldon Davis

maids change hotel rooms
and leaves change their colors
loose change collectors
change coins into dollars
politicians change policies
like magicians change bunnies
mothers change diapers
and players change honeys

couch potatoes change channels
speeding cars change their lanes
and when love changes everything
new brides change their names
reformers change habits
second thoughts change decisions
AAA changes flat tires
contact lenses change vision

models change outfits
and lawyers change heirs
folks who change busses
need exact change for fares
spices change flavors
statistics change charts
dancers change partners
and actors change parts



time changes with seasons
and seasons change weather
voters change presidents
and hope change is better
MTV changed the business
"Change of Heart" by Tom Petty
"Wind of Change" by the Scorpions
ch-ch-ch "Changes" by Bowie

change your mood, change your sex
change of clothes in your baggage
change it up, "Change the World"
--sometimes so much to manage
but per Gandhi's directive
if we want Change we must be it
so loose Change, keep the Change,
and may we all live to see it

"Keep the Change"
by Dianne Borsenik

Sometimes the world is fried pickles splattered on a Lucille platter.
Disgusting batter, fried so deeply dwarfing any songs Seeger, Dylan, Mitchell, or Marley left inside.
It's one more dining out dinner diving past the outer shell,
Grease muffling flavor's strident protests
Almost, but never silencing deep sounds always found in homes when somethin's cookin.
Turkey burgers fryin in someone's skillet.
Mustard sweetly testifyin. A little mayo sometimes dabbed on wheat.
Tomatoes sliced in large sections from Sister's organic garden of love.
Sautéed onions doo wappin on the corner of the sink with alfalfa sprouts and spinach leaves.
Mushrooms temptin taste buds, the chords robust with elation and surprise.
Green tea soothin, no sodas.
Raw almonds or yogurt for dessert too?
"Junior, get Grandmama a plate, please."
Dining at home, talking is music for palates too. Talkin without televisions.
You do not have to ask or answer, "Yes, please."
The world is you, family, invitees. Us. We. The food!
Thought even Semple dazzles what we eat and say. Swear. Do not.
With whom and where is private, that special private.
Not just Norman Rockwell private.
Home gatherings are comfort, fine tastin, secrets, trust, and truth.
Newborns crying are not the only ones needing food now,
So please.
Life, please please!

Please, Please, Please! Stop!
Sometimes our delusions are loving Kardashians and pickles fried too much!
Fried pickles!
First lesson Mamas from Mississippi used to teach, "We are what we eat,"
Right before servin us meals with fresh carrots, cauliflowers, or cabbage. We hated then, not now.
At dinner tables with Alabama Daddies. We always loved. Home cookin writes the song with
No fried pickles!
Lickin our plates clean. Then cleanin them ourselves in sinks, no dishwashers then.
While laughin, listenin to Nina, we dried all the plates, do not forget the platters, everything together,
And we went to sleep still full inside.

"Fried Pickles"
by Marlana-Patrice Pugh Hamer

Enlightenment of environment:
Corporate souls like unabashed
black holes of cash lurk as front runners
in back corners of a shadowed nation.
International terrorists and
militaristic industry's illusory lies
and radicalists
for race, religion, and politics run 'round
irrationally.
Fattening french fries with fabled labels
and pollution and propaganda's
swagger sways and rocks a filthy cradle.
Paper to plastic, to oil in the river-
Slickened streets and streams of slime
run a criss-cross circumference.
The globe is on fire,
but we dance in glee
to the "free" chime of the American rhyme.
We slip and slide in skates that shine,
Pointing to the glimmer and shimmer of things,
making rings around our space in time,
ignoring decay and grime.
Gliding and riding on our
sparkling things that are blinding.
We laugh past muck
and duck through the goo
and goblins and crooked
crooks who sell the looks
of life.
To stop and really look,
to drop their book
and to rewrite our own
with words grown within,
that which with we agree
is when we're really set free.

>>>

When Ignorance's glee turns to
uncertainty, and confusion
becomes glum:
"Oh dumb is me!
Oh woe is me!"
Wait!
Insight gave light
into what's right
and what isn't.
What are you in it for?
To stay inside & to hide indoors
or
to step out the door &
see samples of slime,
so as to collect
a direct examination
and to detect illumination
into cessation
of society's contamination
and the perpetuation of perfection?
Hey, the world turns
& the globe is dripping drops
of dew and goo,
but who are you?
What will you be
for humanity?

"Enlightenment of Environment"
by Amy Hikel

I change every year, every day
and so does everyone else.
And why do we change these ways
if this isn't what we wish to see?
Maybe we have no choice.
We do each have a voice but
maybe that's not enough either
and maybe we need to use it or
maybe we need to stop and not
just be something but do it.

I admire much about Gandhi
and on the surface his saying
"be the change you wish to see
in the world" sounds beautiful.
But Bush wished to see two
wars and tax cuts for the rich who
wanted to see themselves richer
while Bin Laden wished to see
buildings full of people destroyed
and Hitler wished to see millions
of eyes and wishes exterminated.

Telling a hungry mother to be
the change she wishes to see
is like telling her to be the meal
she wants to eat and the money
that'll pay her family's heating bills
and as long as she can hardly
afford her latest baby's formula
Gandhi's will not satisfy.

"Being the Change Is Not Enough"
by John Burroughs

Babies are starving ~ NOW ~ Can they wait for peace?
Mothers are crying ~ NOW ~ Can they wait for peace?
Parents are dying ~ NOW ~ Can they wait for peace?
Children are slaves ~ NOW ~ Can they wait for peace?
Daughters are whoring ~ NOW ~ Can they wait for peace?
Sons are busy killing ~ NOW ~ Will they wait for peace?
Grandchildren are unborn ~ NOW ~ Will they ever see peace?

All the days of history, the same refrain of the fray;
has the song of peace ever graced the light of day?
Its muted strains always hushed and halt
drowned out in the raucous hootenanny of war...
Such grace notes eked out of silvered strings
Swallowed by the great and terrible War Harps of old.

Guns are firing ~ NOW ~ Can we wait for peace?
Streets are fighting ~ NOW ~ Can we wait for peace?
People are hating ~ NOW ~ Can we wait for peace?
Workers are groaning ~ NOW ~ Can we wait for peace?
The rich are fattening ~ NOW ~ Can we wait for peace?
Lovers are grieving ~ NOW ~ Can we wait for peace?
Haters are lying ~ NOW ~ Can we wait for peace?

All the days of history, the same refrain of war;
has the song of peace ever graced the light of day?
Its muted strains always hushed and halt
drowned out in the raucous hootenanny of war...
Such grace notes eked out of silvered strings
Swallowed by the great and terrible War Harps of old.

People are gathering ~ NOW ~ Can we wait for peace?
People are shouting ~ NOW ~ Can we wait for peace?
People are sharing ~ NOW ~ Can we wait for peace?
People are singing ~ NOW ~ Can we wait for peace?
People are struggling ~ NOW ~ Can we wait for peace?
People are swearing ~ NOW ~ We cannot wait for war to end!

"NOW"
by Teleri

My hypocrisy has done its job better than a pair of Spanx,
contorting my soul into that which is expected of me.

I have learned to play the chameleon to the company I keep.

Angry about the destruction of the environment?

I will clothe myself in organic cotton indignation
and drive to your events in my V6 Grand Am.

Do the pictures of starving children make you weep?

I will apply water proof compassion and weep with you
before I go to dinner at the buffet up the road.

I have nothing to defend when I look like everybody else.

I'm due for a make-over, though.

Other people's thoughts have become stale fashion;
my form-fitted hypocrisy rubs me with the vigor of haircloth
binds like a too-tight corset
leaves me clawing at my soul.

Give me un-dyed, tight knit, honesty.

I know there's not much give
and sometimes you have to work hard to wear it right;
but it's timeless as a little black dress
and goes easily from day to night.

Wipe away the stubbornness from my cheek
and discard that cheap trinket, cowardice,
that hangs heavily and shines dull.

Remove tried, true and well-worn wardrobe
from apathy built storage.

Patch holes with understanding, forgiveness, and determination.

Layer them over anger and sadness and joy.

Wear them in the style of my choosing.

Wear them, and make them mine.

I know I may not always be pretty.

My patterns will clash, my hems may fray,

I will stain myself with the color of temper and mistake.

But I will take the ugliness with the beauty
we can't look perfect all the time.

And I'll know, when I look into the mirror,
who I'm looking in the eye.

"Makeover"
by Alexis-Rueal

the girl with the quavering voice wore camouflage
stood before the congregation Sunday
when asked to speak, she mumbled
revealed her appointment: Afghanistan
her face innocent yet determined
she said I won't be here
'till 2012, fall

I could see the words beating
behind her eyes and awkward smiles
I'm not afraid
not afraid
not afraid
I'm brave and proud to represent

then the pastor projected a picture of the Twin Towers
back when they were still haughty and glorified
suddenly everything seemed terribly vulnerable
we froze and remember that terrorism is real

the girl with the quavering voice
was ready to face guns and cold-hearted enmity
while we gaped with fear
at the sight of a former skyline
remembering we are never safe or strong enough

the girl at 19 was nervous to speak
but strong enough to face those Goliaths
I pretended were action figures and ghosts
so nothing could hurt me
insults only mosquito bites
tried to forget the language of ugly memories
like the day a plane violated a tower's virginity
said the terrorists were only a whisper that
caught a stiff wind
but no, the memory of vulnerability sank heavily into my breast
the day the decade fell

resolution:

next time I will be the girl with the quavering voice
ready to speak before a congregation of ordinary misfits
this time I'll be honest about threats and vulnerability
but be brave, remembering
David only needed one stone

"One Stone"
by Lynne Albert

The
drama
regarding
who you are
what you do
who you fight against
and what you struggle for
is a reflection of your struggling
and not proof of your strength in battle.
Look for your place in the stream of your consciousness
and turn away from that which you wrestle against.
You will not find peace in a dispute with
those who do not understand you.
Understand yourself and
you will no longer need
to struggle or win.
Peace is strength.
Just love
and do
and
be.

"Shhhh..."
by Jackie Koch

Old Marty walks in from next door and points to one of the two TV's above the bar. "It's crazy," he says. The Dow Jones has dropped dramatically in the past two days. The TV shows men in suits standing with mouths gaping. Sweat slicks their foreheads and those mystical, unfeeling numbers shift across the bottom of the screen.

"I lost \$10,000 over this shit in a month," Marty says.

The bartender quips, "I'm just worried cuz more and more, all we got are haves and have-nots." I like the bartender, and not just because he gave me a free Diet Pepsi. ("If that's all you need," he'd said.)

Then there is the lady who is in town as part of the "Avenger's" production crew mid-50's, pretty, long brown hair. She feels some need to get her New Age on, "What is 'having?' You mean money? Is that our self-worth?"

What is "having?" Are you kidding me? I turn red in the face and blurt out, "Admittedly, I'm fine I'm at the poverty line, but I have a place to stay and enough food.

"But some people don't. The people I work with want to know if they're getting their SSI checks next month. They may have to choose between medication and food IF they still have places to stay." There is an uncomfortable silence for three heart beats, and then the film lady changes the thread.

My Diet Pepsi is down to melting ice. I swallow the rest of the cold water and say, "Take care, guys." I swing my backpack over my shoulders and leave the bar, stepping into the sweltering midday.

I walk uphill, away from the Flats, up past St. Malachi's where they serve lunch every day to homeless and indigent folks. I wonder about things like disparity, like haves and have-nots and what people who have found their ways through life, by hard work or silver spoon, by heart or subterfuge, what even I think about those with nothing.

"Pub Forum"
by Marc Mannheimer

I am a revolutionary.
I think.
Aren't I?

We all have that moment when
 we know what we're destined for.
Most times I just feel like a cog in the wheel
Winding up and moving ever faster in my track
 towards a turning, tumbling catastrophe
But that's just me.

I was taught to think outside the box
The first generation to be told and sold on that phrase
 to think wider, grander
 to come up with innovative solutions
 to solve the problems the previous generations
 left for us.

Some days, I believe in the Matrix.

The bad with the good. No light without darkness.
We cannot *become* what we envision
 until we believe in ourselves enough -
 believe that *it can be done*.

And then take the measures to plan and progress
 and change the world for the better.

I admit, I'm a pessimist and an optimist
A philosopher and a teacher of wisdom
I make my mark upon the world
One small scratch, one small seed
 one small word of kindness
 one small hope, one small idea
 one small promise for change
 one small call to action
 at a time.

One small belief that my positive actions
 will be added to the cosmic wheel of evolution
 for the betterment of all.

I am a Little Revolutionary.

"A Little Revolutionary"
by Lori Ann Kusterbeck

Wind carries voices-
we must follow to find
need's harmony.

To acquire the knowledge of the unknown
How the day speaks fluently about over riding into fantasy
So I become silent and listen
My pupils dilate to a circumference lost on the calculator
I tell stories of my childhood through dripping tears
and frugal actions

And I don't believe
As if the everlasting light that the angels shed is real
And how my fantasy is just soap suds in a bathtub
I drown in every night

My god works hard on hiding the future in the palms
of his hands

The weather is fair and thick inside the holes of
blackened migraines

So I keep walking through the forest that has no end
The sun shines brightly in the afternoon;

While at night;

I can hear my heart beat just a bit louder
Through the frosty breaths of air in front of me

So I stay there thinking about my world

How the city is lost in undertows

The faces that lay vacant expressions leave my sight
so rapidly through the trees

And I don't cry this time

In the unknown the thieves are like lovers

With pinpoint promises that break with loud noises

The liars are like rebels without a backbone;

Just ideas of something more wrong than what their
world can bring them

So I laugh and throw stars new names with holy pictures
of slavery towards the sky

All my words are fixated in a kaleidoscope collage

My sight;

It's like a new born child's

The taste in my mouth is fresh and ominous

My heart;

It pulsates unconditionally

Fluid and moist my tears drip

>>>

Deep sadness raging particles through my soul
Not that this mind can embrace for one minute
images
Watching children drawn to sea
Like painted pictures of memoirs
Loving them to spite fate
I am not going to pretend I can imagine
The frantic race, pulled out from under
Fragile feet, wind knocked out of fragile lungs.
Slowly, we have digressed to fighting our own earth.
We have caused great imbalance, we must face and mourn
Together, as one people, breath in, breath out, sobbing lungs,
Tears streaming salty air onto our tongues.

Tyranny comes in all forms, you see,
Breath in, breath out,
this comes from
Root to sky, tree, like me.
Planted firmly,
our feet must tread upward to meet repression face to face.
Shake hands and than embrace
Together, one people walking upward

Men like to take what they do not deserve.
They like to feed their children, but not worry about
our children.
They like to tell lies in order to move upward, in their way,
Up does not mean up in this way.
Phallic war against gender barriers.
Holding us for ransom. Our lives, our children, our earth.
Our teachers, our workers, our people. Our women.

When Egypt awoke and found dictators reduced to dust,
What was it they felt in that moment?
To as a people come together like fresh water, air and land,
To take that which is yours and give it back to your children.
In that moment how did energy shift in souls?
It is time for us to find out.

>>>

I did not enter onto this earth to watch my freedom
Dissipate into the line formed to the right.
I did not ask for a country that would rather
Take private jets to buy million dollar homes,
While our poor rot in streets built with the blood
Of our ancestors.
I did not go through my lifetime to walk cuffed
To fascist men, who tell me I am not as worthy as I know I am.
I have not withered and weathered this lifetime
To be repressed and depressed
This is it. The time has come.
I am taking back what is mine. What is ours.

Breath in breath out.
I will speak for earth, and tell you,
She is out of balance. Like our people,
Our government, our laws, our land,
Our hearts. It is all out of balance.
We have to grieve for her, we have to light fires
Under our feet and begin to sing ceremonious love songs,
Sing high and loud, and in streets,
People holding each other up, as we take back what is ours.
As we take back what was theirs, our past sins
Washed clean. Starting new. Starting over.
Together.
Breath in, breath out.

"The Quaking of Earth and My Heart"
by Shelly Gracon-Nagy

feel it burning
like hunger,
a deep internal shift
core distortion,
metamorphosis,
permutating, fluctuating,
external refinement.
reach for magic thinking
turn the brain
from pain, lift it towards
the sun, fall from
the comfort zone.
experience the gravy.

"Behavior Modification"
by Jen Pezzo

In the constellation of possibilities
stars were stars
until Simmah lit upon Earth's oceans
and glimmered to her dim sister
I wish to splash like the silver trout
and Anunitum blinked back
Let's be the change. So

they lured their neighbors together
illuminated the distant seas
and sparkled *Swim with us*
through these celestial waters.
Stars winked and flared
burned with desire
to reflect light from scaled skin

to be piscatorial not astral
and so Alrescha cast the spell.
Fishify! The void became liquid
and the sister stars laughed
as they swam off one west
one east until they ran aground
found that Alrescha had bound

their tails with the cord
that binds all things
to be what they are.

"Pisces"
by Shelley Chernin

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VENDING MACHINE: POETRY FOR CHANGE

CHANGE is
INEVITABLE
except from a
VENDING
MACHINE

--Robert C. Gallagher

Proceeds and donations collected during the "Poetic Provisions" food-drive will go to the Akron-Canton Regional Foodbank, which serves Carroll, Holmes, Medina, Portage, Stark, Summit, Tuscarawas, and Wayne counties (akroncantonfoodbank.org). Please support your local foodbanks and soup-kitchens year-round!

