

The poem is at last between two persons rather than two pages.

- Personism: A Manifesto by Frank O'Hara

QUESTION: What is this?

ANSWER:

This collection is focused on exploring poetry's role as both a question and an answer. In many ways poetry can embody both the quest for truth and the truth itself. Poetry has the power to articulate many subtle truths while in the end raising just as many questions as it answers.

The act of writing a poem is an act of *asking*.

The act of writing a poem is an act of *seeking*.

When writing a poem, the poet embarks on a journey: a journey to the past, to the interior self, to faraway lands and alien spaces. The poet records these journeys like an adventurer keeping a log, and presents these findings on paper. A poem is an artifact, brought back from these journeys.

Because the poem is presented as a *result* of these searchings, we could conclude that it is an answer, a conclusion to the journey, a satisfactory ending.

But more often than not, the artifact raises just as many questions as it answers. The poet turns it over in her hands, discovering observations previously unnoticed. The poet is drawn into journeying back into these spaces, creating an endless cycle of questions and answers.

I conducted the *Q & A* project over the span of nine months. The poems contained in this collection were written as responses to actual questions posted on the online site 'Yahoo Answers'. On this site, anyone can post questions for the rest of the community to answer. They can do so anonymously, or create a public profile. Points are awarded to those who attempt to answer questions, in order to encourage participation. The title of 'Best Answer' is awarded to each resolved question by the questioner, or voted on by the community.

There is something very compelling about the idea of a community that simultaneously questions and answers itself, mirroring the endless cycle of questions and answers posed in poetry.

Also fascinating is the character of the 'Asker'. Often anonymous, people from all around the world seek answers to questions both trite and deadly. Some questions incite scorn and ridicule from the Answerers, while others draw great compassion and concern from the Answerers for the struggles of the Asker. While browsing through the site, I would often come across a question articulating a particularly dire situation, and wonder, *who are you?* Who are these people, who have nowhere else to turn to for answers but this giant, anonymous, chaotic community?

During this project, I browsed through a sea of questions posted from all around the world, by users both young and old. People asked for diagnoses (*could this be cancer?*) and relationship advice (*why is he acting this way?*). They asked for opinions on God, on the conflict in Syria, on make- up tips and advice on weight loss.

I chose questions that were particularly compelling to me on a wide range of topics and wrote poems as answers. I then posted these poems in the ‘answer’ form on the site, or as comments on the discussion. In some of my answers, I included a link to a site I created explaining my project and offering some context for the site visitors. But for most answers, I gave no explanation for the poem I posted.

Users voted my ‘answers’ both up and down, posted messages in agreement or disagreement. My purpose in including the poems on the site itself was to experiment with placing poetry inside the very context that inspired it.

In ‘answering’ these questions, my approach varied greatly. At times I viewed the question as nothing more than a means of establishing a *mood*, or setting a scene. I used it as a springboard into my own abstracted musings. However, other times I was drawn, helplessly, into the world of the Asker. Not knowing the identity of these Askers, I made them up. I created whole worlds and landscapes in which they could exist, and in which I could attempt, earnestly, to answer their questions.

This project allowed me to place poetry in a non-traditional space, and provide a new kind of reading experience. It also allowed me to navigate, through my poems, so many people’s innermost desires and questions, shared online with strangers.

Carolyn Supinka

WHAT'S SO HARD ABOUT EXTINGUISHING A COAL FIRE?

1. *The world needs no warning signs*

It is the kind of day that holds out on you,
the sunlight burning slow holes in the sky.
Hyper anxious constellations flaring out,
a choreographed dysfunction.

2. *And through the window*

Everything is suspect of a secret identity-
the silhouette of the church steeple
knows. The lavender sprouting on the windowsill-
knows. Withholding information makes for one happy family. It's impossible
not to care when the scene shifts but the house lights stay
on: the smiling oven, the smiling street, the smiling
sagging table. It is easy, as a child, to imagine everything
on your side.

3. *The light will change*

The day grows darker,
order is upheld in the order
of things, ordering acute shifts
in space, order and ardor
of this/then/that, of here/there/that,
of why/why/why.
Covering your eyes, what you thought was a veil
is truly a gentle insect camera, a lens
expanding hindsight.

4. *And so will the taste of wind*

This morning, black coffee will pour
like language into a mouth. Bird songs
will shoot over your head
as fast as gunfire from an invisible war.
Cars will expand and contract on veins of road,
and if you should kneel, the ground would cry out
and fall away from your feet.

YOU WILL GO TO A PLACE OF REST?

What you fear is a horse.
Shaggy, bay hide smelling
of wet hay and syrupy oats,
his eyes are ice on a lake
frosted and cracked.
Horse, I remember you.
The day before they decided
to put you down, I spread my hands
on your trembling shoulders
to test my weight:
your legs folded too easily
and I felt the shame
of forcing a tired body
closer to earth. Horse,
if I had just watched you die
it would have been better. But no.
You slipped away at night
a shadow flowing over cold stone
sliding through tall grass. You shifty
horse, they said you were dead
for sure. I searched anyway
turning over the tall grass.
That is how I learned
that things disappear in their own way.
Even today, forests make me think
of your shoulders, falling.
When I walk, I step carefully, unsure
if I am looking for bones
or the half-moon slices in the earth:
marks made by something running.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN WHEN YOU DREAM ABOUT CHASING TORNADOES?

It means you are caught in a tornado. Wake up.

You are lying on a mattress in what we call 'the eye.' The eye is not very large, but it is quiet. There is a pleasant breeze. There is a funnel of air rising high above you into the sky, which is blue and very bright. You slide your legs out of bed and stare up.

The silence is almost painful. Your head aches as you stare at the circle of blue. You realize you can't hear the wind swirling around you. You speak. You clap your hands, snap your fingers, slap at your ears. Nothing. You start to think you will never be able to hear again. You start to think you are being watched, that someone up above is scrutinizing you through the funnel of the tornado, a great celestial eye at a microscope.

You start to think there are two possible actions for you to take, having woken up in the center of a tornado. There is a force, stronger than wind, holding you down to earth, and there is a force beckoning you upward. You start to think you are not standing, but suspended. There is a noose around your throat, and chains around your ankles. You are a fly on a line. You are a fleck of oil on clean water. You are dumb as fish and twice as dry.

You start to think you are mute as well as deaf, and just as you think that, it begins: you start rising. At the same time, your feet are being dragged deep into the earth. Dazed, you watch yourself separate, and think of spiders being pulled apart by children.

You think of oil on water, of a soft onion, of your mother, of the man whose face you caught, once, in the reflection of a puddle, of things that were always meant to come apart, like you are coming apart. You are coming apart. You start to think you were always meant to awake in a tornado, and you finally separate. You start to think you can hear a great voice above you, below you, an audience willing you to *move, move, move*, and you do.

HOW CAN I BECOME FAMOUS REALLY QUICKLY?

You should star! You should sing. You
dancer, you fancy art. You can talk
a magician's ear off, pluck yellow flowers
from his face. You hold your breath, waiting.
Yes! Someone catches your eye to smile
promising a younger future: *You should be
in the movies!*

Birds fly south and burst into flame.
Ratings rise. Figuring out what people like,
a figure you always needed, you always knew.
Faces practice themselves, evenings slip
out of silk dresses and into nakedness, slowly onto
stage. *Oh heaven, who knew you'd look so
sure?*

Your life, a cold body, a practiced flesh
charm. This is the kind of show a family watches
together. Bringing people together!
That's what we do, whistle, smile,
sing! That's what we do, when caverns loom,
when alarms take on colors and deep frequencies,
that vibrate on our innermost instincts, humming along
with basic desire, with all of our wants,
with need, need need: *smile, whistle, sing!*

DO I HAVE ENOUGH TO MOVE OUT?

A king will appear at your door with a gift. It is a Tuesday
and his elephants are charcoal grey with silky ears, his entourage
clothed in white silk and are laughing, sharing drinks. You fumble

with the lock. Each emissary that has arrived is bearing something
strong: the brave wrestler, who beat you to the ground. The bright parrot
who told you shrill wisdoms, the dark painting, now hanging

above your head, with the stony blues and green hues that muddle
your mind, make you think of the past. Every offering seems
to anchor you, calling your eyes to something darting to a corner

of your life. Yesterday a woman brought you oranges,
and you could taste them before you even opened the door.
You refused, then, to come to the door. Without pleading,

she left them in your mailbox and they scented your dreams
sweet- you woke up in a cold sweat, your fingers still stuck
in the milky peel of a memory. Hysterical now, desperate

for a way to refuse, you bolt the door and wait for the king
to leave. Outside, the laughter has stopped, and you can hear
the elephants shifting in the front yard. You crouch beneath

the windows and wait: the room is growing darker.

You put your hand in your pocket, find a paper that wasn't there before,
whisper the message written like a prayer. A summons. A kingly gift.

Q: HOW DO I EARN RESPECT WHEN I'VE LOST IT ALL?

You have to
hold yourself
the way you hold
the door to his room.
Knowing what you hold,
what it holds, what it
might bring when you finally
open it. You have to hold
yourself the way
you hold your body
above his body, aware
of the exact amount of space
between you.
The space is not empty.
You can feel it
like a body.
The space is really
a third body lying between you
and him, holding you up, and apart.
You have to hold
yourself like you hold
this third body, tenderly,
like a friend,
taking care to keep it
between you and him,
keeping you
from crashing into him, keeping him
from tearing you.

DO MIXED RACE MODELS HAVE TO BE SHORT?

You have to be short and built
in an area clear of brush and dry wood.
You are the dry wood. You have to be composed
with a heart of tinder: wood shavings, pine pitch.
A soft center. You have to be surrounded by a star
of logs, which will serve as kindling. They are there
to protect you and to conserve the heat
you will give when you are lit, and your heart
of wood shavings and pitch is on fire
and burns out in just a few moments,
when you are left cold and unused,
smoldering on the ground.

DO YOU THINK I AM GOOD LOOKING OR NOT?

I think of you as good
looking as girls kneeling will do.
There might be an altar
in front of you or a friendly
dog or a map or a television
or another girl, kneeling, looking back
at you, mirroring your actions,
wanting to look good, wanting
to look like you, wanting you
wanting you to want her, she
wants you to want only what
she wants.

How to make a wish properly ?

How to make a wish properly ?

Question

Question

Question

DOES AGE REALLY MATTER?

At thirteen we talk about boys
slouched in a tangle on a cool basement floor

like dim young flowers growing upwards
at the same time, in different directions.

Our hair tangles, smelling sweet as flowers
and heavy on our heads. Our bodies tangle.

We do not exist separately yet. Her legs flush against
a back, a bony arm crooked over another's stomach,

our quick breath mingling, forming a cumulonimbus of soda
and salt. We draw breath and speak rain, rain falling from ourselves

onto ourselves. Dewy does. Awash with our
selves. Innocents, in every sense of the word except

that we know what we want, we are smooth seeds
in a dark basement, talking about boys and when we talk about boys

we talk about what we want, what we might grow
to want, what kinds of men/boys, and as we talk about men

/boys these things bloom: *These* shoulders. These eyes. This face.
That thought. We lie in the dark and broadcast neon signs glowing

with want. We want these things, and we want somebody
to give them to us. We want boys/men/things, the ones we paste together

in crude collages of *this feels right* and *this might make me happy*
and *who are you* and *what the hell do you want*

WHY DO I STILL THINK ABOUT THEM?

We lived in our heads. Easily done,
almost like climbing a ladder
of wet black branches leading a way
to a clearer sky. We lived on top of trees.
We lived in stories, we lived perched
in the prickly places between. Not wishing to speak
to anyone else, we made language. Not wishing
to forage, we learned a new kind of hunger, a less earthy respite.
Now self-sustaining, we spun wild in circles and claimed
satellites—these are our moons, strung round our necks.
These are our meteors, slipping from our skirts.
Circling each other, we succumb to our collective
weight. This is a space turned blank, here,
the world turned white
and biting, this is us turned inward
and alive in ourselves. Our bodies as soft
as a waxy drawing, we became silver webbed,
we became thinly etched, a drawing,
an idea, a dream.

WILL AMERICA SPLIT INTO THREE KINGDOMS?

We have this fact: they come in threes: fact.
Each circling reveals no new tracks to follow
only our own tails. Our own tails. Our own bodies
languishing, stretched across time, this is history.

Recall the peace, then the dissent, then the uprising.
Recall the colonies, fruitful, the cold winters, the silence
that follows a death. Recall the last-hope charges, the solemn
surrenders, the sewing of a new flag from the scraps of its dirty brother.

The rise, the crest, the fall. The deep breath, the clear note,
the slow song. Recall the heavy grapes, the sting of fruit
on a dry tongue. Recall the warmer months— will the earth change?
Recall that the earth has never stopped changing.

HELP FIRST KISS ADVICE?

We have expanded.

Wandering, enraptured.

We have bloomed! Flesh blossoms, we revel
in roundness. We share ourselves freely,
being bread newly baked and fresh- taste us!

We taste so nice. You will like us, I am sure. Break off a piece
of me, place it on your tongue, let me melt. Walking shaky,
we find our legs. This is what it feels!

To run. We are newly hungry ourselves, starved
for something. Somebody. We stalk seas, dive.

Find men, women. Unveil their bodies, ask, "ARE YOU THEY?"

Bodily explorations are best
without maps. We love to shock each other.

Who have you touched? How? We never ask why.

Knowing the right faces to spot in a crowd,
we eat the world out. To know the right arms, bodies
to embrace, hands to hold. We lick some straight through.

Our bodies feel new. Leaning against a new stranger, watching
the sky fly away, I feel you fade into a lightness.

We are so bright! One by one
our skin dissolves.

What we have always wanted.

To become light as air,
to rise, together.

HOW MUCH WEIGHT DO YOU HAVE TO LOSE UNTIL PEOPLE START TO NOTICE?

Once we almost disappeared.
A loving endearment turned sour,
a slow curve of a mango skin, peeled
to cup a turned cheek. Our limbs
sagging, a new gravity casts anchor.
What is this weight? Will she have to bear it
forever? She clutches her eyes to her chest,
avoiding us. We circle in uncertain orbits.
How close are we allowed to get? Like a sunken star
she might swallow us whole, and we might want that.
The only way to count this time is through
our bodies, through our things. We are rooted
in flesh and so aware- some veil has been pulled back
that once cast a gentle glow
over our cartoon. Our hands: ballooned! Our feet
festooned in a musculature of comedy. We are ludicrous, we
can't bear to sleep on mirrors. We can't bear
to cry big tears. We can't bear. We can't bear.

HOW YOUNG IS TOO YOUNG TO HAVE A BABY?

A recurring dream: something living
inside of me. Knowing the symptoms
contributes to the development
of the disease. Contracting it, asleep-

-I dream I am lying in a field of watermelon, learning
the meaning of 'swollen': something green,
angrily veined feigning face, feeling full
and wet inside. I am covered in vines

and heavy with fruit. It is night,
but the ground is still warm
from the heat of noon. The ground carries
warmth inside of itself, concealing

buried hot grace in its body. Grace!
Thursday's child is me, a corrected
grin of baby teeth, a flowering of fullness,
a planned trajectory across the sky in non-complicit

sparks. This is something about my life
I had nothing to do with- who planted this seed
of me? Who left me lying here? I roll to my side
and listen for footsteps from the past.

INFORMATION ON AN ANCESTOR?

An address found me yesterday, it looked me up
and hung itself on my doorstep. Mad numbers!
Marking familiar, a frame bent and blown inward.
A mahogany rabbit hole with a familiar curve, slicing up
the weight of a longitude, a latitude, seamless arcs binding me to an orbit
I never agreed to— such contracts are made
by sheer place. By being here, by being there, the weight
of bodies falling from the sky, rude raindrops, sinking
into the earth

ARE THESE NAMES GOOD FOR BROTHERS?

Brother One

The kind of joke that sours
after five seconds in open air.
The first gift. The attempted line
drawn freehand, black charcoal
tooth stain, signing a canvas
with a quick bite. The window-ness
of an oily smudge, hazing the air
with a veil of salt grease, something
consumed. The sting of light falling
rough as wood. The fading
of an intricate carpet. The stain
of an embarrassment, pinking
a cool evening.

Brother Two

The space left on a forehead after shaving
a curl away. The bat's face.
the moment after a phone call. The muscle
waiting for a weight.

Want!

where should I

If I want

You Want What at

I want

I want

I want

How

day

What would you want to do?

DOES ANYONE KNOW WHERE I CAN FIND THIS COMMERCIAL?

Being broadcast, it's nice. Life behind
glass means life that moves fast. Fat snake
signals swirl, shifting with dry whispers
around a landscape that turns pink and chokes.

Losing breath to such a bedfellow, you get used
to the constant betrayal. I'm surprised when I wake up
and I'm lying in the same field! Here is the flower
I crushed with my head, lying down. Here is the ground

that bore me, coldly. Still being here
disappoints. Once, I woke up in a landfill. I picked my way
away over refuse, yawning. The sun rose and revealed
each castaway beneath my bare feet- a brown bottle!

A torn sweater. So familiar to me, so distinct in such
a disgusting sea, each memory only added to the horror- who threw me
away? While I slept some wave had crashed and bore my life
from its shore. Objects from my past now made refugee,

I gathered myself and sobbed. The cruelty of nature
is always the hardest to bear, the ugliest offense
to the tenant, the sleeper. But what's to be done? I dried up
and shivered, rising in air, tasting the wind for signs of change.

HOW CAN I DEAL WITH THE STRESS OF NOT KNOWING?

breathe in

breathe out

breathe in

breathe out

Repeat 2x

Light bends through leaves. *breathe in, breathe out*

Cool, emerald water.

I am golden.

I am soaked. The ground is wet and black between my toes.

The smell of earth-

deep inhale

so strong!

exhale

I sway on my heels.

How good to be here. I can think of nowhere

I need to ever return to. We are all here, pretending

we have a journey, a mission. Something to do,

when really, there is nothing to do. But be here.

inhale exhale

Once, there was a river and we pretended

to drown. Playing death was fun. So laughable.

Just in time. Splashing towards each other, hooking our arms

in the bravest net. It is as natural

as rivers, to save one another.

inhale

exhale

Frost is melting, licking

warmth into the leaves. Trees sag under spring burdens of old water.

Swallows are calling, echoing through the air. I cannot see them.

The forest is too thick.

A canopy of green, an earthy embrace.

HOW FAR WOULD YOU TRAVEL FOR A WOMAN?

A certain distance is necessary for all
love. You live on a small, blue planet

so I must live on a neighboring ball of hardened ash,
spinning quickly in circles. I spin too fast

to look for you so I keep my eyes closed and focus
on the ground beneath my feet. Honey, the ground here

is soft and uncertain; if I move too quickly clouds of earth rise
and I have to hold my breath. Honey, the ground here

seems alive. Sometimes it collapses into itself, taking my house
with it. Sometimes it molds itself into shapes: a bird, a plane with propellers,

a slice of pizza, a child. Sometimes we talk. I ask it questions, and its answers
are always thunderous and angry. Honey, the ground here

is going to kill me one day. I spend my days walking east,
the way that my planet turns. I follow the sun, which is green

and hazy here. Is it the same for you? I think if I keep following
the sun around my planet this day might never end, and I might never grow old.

Is it the same for you? I fear that soon you might build a ship
and visit me here. The weight of your invention would crush

my planet to death! My poor planet. You must promise
never to follow me here, you must promise to maintain

the kind of distance that keeps us spinning forever, in perfectly weighted
circles, the exact amount of miles apart.

ARE CAPRICORN MEN REALLY *SINCERE*?

Sometimes I think of them
as gnarled and low, bearing blunted
crowns, swooping horned brows, bent
on brushing up dirt, on foraging, on roars.
Men must be goats. Men must be like goats?
Men must answer to goats. The image is cloying
and strangely convincing, a strange belly sagging,
burdened with an appetite
for disturbing peace.

But this is usually after a day of clean
living, clean sheets. Candles have been lit
in the house, and the smell of lavender is seeping
into the walls, where it will stay the night.
I have done what I can do, and my body
knows it, and everything seems to come in arcs:
the drink pours like a cool flame, smoldering
in my cup. My legs bend in strange angles, and every dream
transmits beautifully—what a subconscious! Such silent
commercials I have seen, absent of daylight saturation,
advertising this and that, this and that,
and that, and that which I know I want,
that burden, this, that
I only want in dreams.

MY LOVE FOR HIM IS NOT THERE NOMORE?

And even closing my eyes, I can anticipate the end
and the fogged-mirror thoughts into ballooned breaths
it will bring, the hidden thorn, the cats claws
stuck in my side the recovery through

forgetting. I admit – there is an acquired
knack of mistaking a face with innocence
of guessing your past, picking a new
who/what, misremembering the journeys

so carefully mapped. Reverting to a blank
broad expanse, the yonder blubbers, crying for home.
Leaves fall and quietly smolder
in my gaping mouth, consuming

time blindly. Staggering rickshaw
legged, back blind and struck-
not by stars, by that dim light, that bathroom
furnace fuming madly red fustic-

asking for rest, asking
who/what who/what, who/what, I shall
dip my face in milk, I shall walk
newly shod, blinking madly, licking
at the history dripping down my neck

**DON'T YOU JUST LOVE IT WHEN SOMEONE GIVES YOU THEIR HEART
TO MAKE YOU FEEL SPECIAL?**

This man's body is composed
of every gift. From his fingers dangle
chili peppers, dried, crackling a sweet
coral, ready to slice and taste. I feel
he is giving me something with his presence,
with the shape of his body and its obstruction
of light, the lines creased in gravitational waves,
an unbroken arc. Sometimes at night
I know he is giving me dreams. He gives me years!
Folded like maps, we spread and trace
our trajectory across temporal landscapes.
Here is where we crossed mountains. Here
is where we met—there? I think he has given me
false memories, foggy panes of glass.
What is there hidden, to forget?
Every void, filled. What could happen to a chasm,
repurposed as a softer valley? I cannot refuse
any gift but I fear it is lost on me. I fear
he will lose something on me .

I AM LOOKING TO CONVERT TO THE ANCIENT GREEK RELIGION?

This is where I motion
to a desk. "You and me
both, buddy," I laugh. Smile.
Get down to business. I am good
at smiling. I peel each grin from some
hidden wallet and slide it into place
smooth as foreign currency, values
fluctuate. Customer service!
That's a quarrelsome boulder
to shoulder. You can take a horse
to water but you can't make him see
the product, drowning in the trough.
What really makes me go wild:
that transubstantiation. Can't *stand* the scene,
but the act! I've seen those suits
corner a guy on the street, two-on-one.
One held the guy down while the other
started to pull things out of a briefcase,
explained, "This is really this,
this is really this." A rabbit,
a top hat. A single rose, a cigar,
a little mirror. Human flesh,
a slice of bread. Bloody hands
lift a bottle of wine,
offer up a drink.

WILL THE FUTURE BE COOL AND GOOD?

There is nothing that I have always wanted.
My body grew faster than my desires,
my shin bones expanding
in slide ruler increments,
in horrible flowerings.
Some nights I would wake up screaming:
What did I want?

Then, stuck gargantuan, my feet are found
severed in tin tubs, shuffling across
a long, dry continent, homeless
and sullen. Some nights I would chase them
screaming, *Where are you going?*

I clawed my way through the Atlantic
singlehandedly, gasping joyful breaths
of salt, savoring. Memory
bears me like strange fruit to a foreign
shore, where I will grow plentiful and multiply
my selves. A crop of me! Some nights
I watch them fall to earth, screaming
What are you doing?

They are not my children. They are like me
but not, like a mirror's reflection
the moment I turn away. They take root
with relish, learn to run before they fall.
some nights I hate them, screaming:
Who are you?

PRICE FOR A 105 YEAR OLD OAK FLOOR?

And with one knock the whole tree fell down. He gurgled, having talked all morning about pain medication, pink liquids, the warnings attached. He had been planning to meet a friend at a café later, to split a slice of bread and explain the side effects. And now what? He asked that, having regained his breath. Nothing answered. He repeated the query, trembled, sank to the earth, which blew wet kisses at his knees. He leaned forward, sank dry fingers into rich moss and wound them. He was tired. He had only meant to lean against the tree.

WHY IS THE YEAR 1963 SO RELEVANT TO TODAY'S HEADLINES?

The following year a man woke up in a forest.
He had fallen asleep, he thought. He had to go home.
He had fallen asleep on the forest floor,
tucked against a long flat rock. He woke with moss
tucked into the cuffs of his shirt sleeves. His collar wet
with dew, woven through with the pale green, salty tendrils
of young onions finding their way to light.
He pushed himself up and found chains of root
linking his knees to the earth.
Thus bound, he remained sitting, trying to remember.
Above him, a mourning dove sang the first two notes of its song,
(*boo-hoo, boo-hoo*) and then stopped. I had fallen asleep, he thought.
The forest was silent. I had slept for a long time, he thought.
A year? More? He tried to remember. He could feel pillbugs curling
against the soft skin spaces of his joints, but he let them sleep.
A grass snake slipped through the leaves beside him, and he thought
of dreams. I must have dreamed, he thought.
The forest said nothing. He tried to remember.

WHAT EFFECT DOES THE EUROPEAN STARLING HAVE ON HUMANS?

With the finality of a knife against the crisp green stem of a wild flower, she knew she would never go home. Except, the return, the process of returning ,

that had already begun inside of her. As she flew, the crease of the coastline smoothed into the horizon. The air turned bitter, then warm, and brought to mind memories

memories of past warmth: the heat flowing from dry earth at noon. The taste of a hot iron fence perfuming a breeze. The dumb, stubborn heat carried in the body

of a dying rabbit, preserved in fur, in ears, in panicked black eyed glances that grew glassy and still. Each memory was a return. She carried home

like she carried heat. A promise in her blood, her body a contract, her body a map, a path of warm stars, leading herself home.

HOW TO PROMOTE YOUR BEACHBODY COACH BUSINESS?

‘And who would love you then,’ she asked the small boy, who was whistling through his teeth. He never whistled on purpose. It happened with each breath, the result of unnaturally small lungs and a front tooth hooked in a snarl like an iceberg. Sometimes when brushing his hair, or buttoning his coat, or smearing sun screen on his nose she would spot that tooth and wonder if, like an iceberg, it was secretly much bigger underwater than it appeared. His head might be full of tooth, she often thought, and, as though he heard her thought, he would fix his eyes on her and she would be momentarily dumbstruck by the coldness of his gaze, the blue ice.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN WHEN A GIRL STARES AT YOU AND DOESN'T SMILE?

It means she is looking past you, to the boat floating on a lake, silent and still as ice in a clear glass. She sees through you to it and through it to the land the boat will take her to.

The land is called *Sook*, which translate, *I will give you a wide brimmed hat so you will never be blinded by the sun* in the language of the land the boat will take her to.

When she first walks on the shores of this land the sand will seem to stain her feet a golden amber. She travels up its coast and finds a forest, filled with trees bearing fruit.

When she puts a fruit to her lips, her mouth is painted a dark blue. She stops eating.

She notices that the air mists a plastic pink layer onto her flesh. She walks back to the shore.

When she steps out of the shade the sunlight feels harsh to her eyes. She closes them.

She can feel herself burning. She can feel the sun washing her colors clean, turning her clear and cold as ice, pure and silent as glass.

HOW DO YOU FEEL AFTER A CAR ACCIDENT?

Full and sick of this, the gray dove hacks
a laugh, beats its wings madly,
stares at the wreckage visible
only to survivors of something
pure. Life now divides into the pre
and post, and the strangest things
come to mind: that song
the woman bagging groceries used to sing,
hidden in the movement of plastic and paper,
a light riff of piano, a promise, that trick
of words frustrating the meanest
physic. In a movie, a man says words
he doesn't mean.

Say, "I'll see you soon"
and leave the room. Say, "It's almost
over", and enter the tunnel, breathe
smoke. Say something about forever, say
something about the future, live
through the day like a bird
on borrowed wings.



Screenshots of the poems posted on 'Yahoo Answers' are collected at this site:

<http://answeringpoetry.tumblr.com/>