

HAIKU +
SAORT-SHORTS

Glenna Holloway
913 E. Bailey Rd.
Naperville IL 60565

AQUARIUM

Those lacy plants and filtered water supported
ten fish, including two blue gourami--- gorgeous
but disgusting. All they ever did was die.

Now only seven specimens share the excited bubbles,
the ceramic galleon. Out here in our larger glass menagerie,
my two crashed DUI brothers are the missing gourami.

Look at the swordtail lurking in the moss. Uncle Carl.
Manipulating, maneuvering to inject himself
into everyone he encounters, kin or not his kind.

Watch the pair of angels, my twin nieces. All body
and no brains. Ballet students badly rehearsed.
Vain jerky movements, unsure why they're dancing.

There goes the tiger barb. My mother. Always in pursuit,
always nipping at somebody's rear, usually my cousin,
the guppy, returned from a visit to a neighbor's tank,

bulbously gravid again without husband or currency.
Her fry will provide delicate tidbits for Uncle Dylan,
the cichlid. Most of the inhabitants are top feeders,

very particular. Dylan is cannibalistic, sleek, handsome
like Carl, he consumes everyone's trailing edges,
and I suspect, fed on the blue gourami past healing.

That's my husband, Walter, under the auger shell.
I often asked him why he slimes around on his belly,
cleaning up what everyone else drops.

He told me he would inherit the earth. It's true,
he can claim words like "meek," and "redeeming value."
On their way to being flushed, all the others

are mere eye-objects, adorning their element,
flicking boredom, making long ribbons of waste.
--Yeah, right, no finny counterpart for me--

an unknown breed, never in the swim. Just came by
to see if the fish are being fed. Last week
I sickened into a graceless dangle

and threw myself out, gills gasping.

--Glenna Holloway

From
Kendy Jones

Commuters
Aquarium
Bio For Bottom

GLENNA HOLLOWAY
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CALLIGRAPHY BY NIGHT

Glenna Holloway

Three migrating cranes
Brushed their winged strokes across
The waning moon's empty page.

In silvered silence
We read their cryptic beauty
Like an ancient haiku scroll.

--CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR, 1991

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ROMANCING HUMBACKS IN RHYME ROYAL
(Megaptera novaeangliae)

Each day our boat plows ripe Bahama blue.
The engine cut, our dolphin convoy bids
Our bow-waves farewell, turns and arcs on cue,
Parenthesizing patterned froth that skids
The surface with a rising wind. Our grids
And charts insist we're in a likely place
For migrant whales but, so far, not a trace.

I check my camera, put on diving gear,
Convince myself the ocean feels like home.
The bottle-noses push their grinning near,
suspecting us for wetbacks, monochrome
against a beige and turquoise catacomb,
who crossed their borders with our rigged passports
and foreign marques to dabble in their sports.

My partner's bubbling whole notes play their part,
This blue collage is sudden sequin-flashed
With black-masked angels practicing their dart
And pivot, ballet-tuned, pink-silver slashed.
Poor Michael can't perceive the treasures cached
Around us in these gently rocking swells.
He suffers bends outside his scholar's cells.

Aboard, our week is climaxed with a song:
The humpbacks! Humpbacks tuning like a choir.
We hear a solo, duet, chorus-- long
Sea chanteys fill our phones, climb up our wire.
We reel their voices onto spools, require
A second playing to convince our ears.
They sound like pinched chain saws and friction gears.

Two days we chase horizons in a bowl
And never see them. Goblets full of green
Keep overflowing heads of foam, then roll
And raise a brew of writhing serpentine
With shapes of life in skins of opaline.
The pro and poet stare off separately,
Each with his own Cetaceous fantasy.

The evening stirs its palette, bronze and puce.
Then proof explodes the sea in flying shards
As if Jehovah God would introduce
A just-made creature launched on gold petards.
We stand agape; unearthly bulk bombards
The amniotic fluid it returns to.
Then sameness swears no shock took place. No clue.

At dawn, whales blow the surface. We go down
Through gilded glare, a curtain-rise of krill.
Festoons of sun define us yellow-brown.
La Mer, the mother of our lot, life's mill,
Brings back our ancient need of fin and gill.
A glimpse of flipper-white in this deep allness--
Oh, Quasimodo-- please forgive our smallness!

I'm drowning in superlatives and verbs,
My camera weighted down with disbelief.
The nearest humpback glides toward me, but curbs
Its thrust. Its hide hosts life in bas-relief--
Such texture, form-- a frayed sargasso sheaf
Trails down between us, stirs reality.
My film must prove such animals can be.

If elephants are roots of heaven, whales
Are roots of earth, embodied in eons
Of wrinkled metamorphic rock that sails
Like airborne silk the inner echelons
Of poles, their tails heraldic colophons.
Fear has its moment; yards away we yaw
In their dynamics, helpless bobbing straw.

I long to thank my partner for all this,
Enhance his kind of ecstasy with mine,
Repay the bounty he will always miss.
I'd thread him through each metaphor, then line
Him up with shadow tones, wide-angled shine.
He figures age by girth and length. He spooks
A cow and risks too close to sweeping flukes.

The turbulence in-folds him like a pillbug.
He unrolls, tries to glimpse the bull's baleen.
But does he also see the flying prayer rug?
The shells of cloisonne, the muraled screen?
He labels, sorts, bypassing damascene,
Chiaroscuro, Monet hues and light,
The minor-key cantata I must write.

Somehow whale sound should be deep-throated gonging,
Vibrato thunder through the unknown dark.
Or even husky blues like bass sax longing--
With timbal beats to match the regal arc
Of vertebrae between each piston spark.
Four-octave ranges, shrill with high-pitched flaws,
Compel us to pursue effect and cause.

Beneath what genus does Mike classify
Those mermen in the distance? Where are they
In food chains? Are they sailors' incubi?
The crowned one with the trident? I admit
It's time to head for ship and shore, acquit
My goggled eyes. Ascend is not the word--
I'm higher now than any frigate bird.

My partner signals for a final shot.
My belly tightens; I move in and nod.
He paces with a humpback, finds a spot.
We're both encircled deep within the pod.
He sidles closer. Touches! RIDES, wing-shod.
It's plain the whales are gentling their slip stream.
They graze-- content to grace our wildest dream.

Shell hunters and gulls
probing low tide: shrill treble
of discovery

CONTINUUM

Earth time
Is light and dark,
Recycled heat and chill,
Indifferent to all equally.
Unowned.

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November Synopsis

The last loon crazes
horizontal twilight,
its cry a blue ice peak
on my spinal graph. Cold
is more sudden than night.

--Glenna Holloway

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Two eagles flying:
 sound of wet sheets
on windy clotheslines

--Glenna Holloway

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White egrets fishing
in their courting plumage--
drinking their reflections

SEASIDE SIMILE

One fairy tern
hovers high
wings outspread
on a column of air
like a white finial
on Neptune's mast.

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Jagged June lightning
splits night. A fox awakens,
bares lightning-shaped teeth.

--Glenna Holloway

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Blood on first snowfall,
coyote howling at moonrise,
other rabbits hide

--Glenn Holloway

NEVER FAR FROM WATER AND OTHER LOVE STORIES

Acknowledgments:

"Moonwatch, Floodwatch," LOUISIANA LITERATURE; "Summer Siege," THE CAPE ROCK; "Pacific Prologue," CHAMINADE; "December Dinner, Manhattan Island," SHORELINES; "The Winter Brute," AMERICAS REVIEW; "Villanelle in Viridescent Grays," THE FORMALIST; "A Place of Gentle Repair," GEORGIA REVIEW; "Sandscape, Soundscape," VOICES INTERNATIONAL; "Winging It," NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW; "Brine Bitch off the Bahamas" won the Milton Dorfman Award, Rome Community Art Center, NY. "Seascope," GARFIELD LAKE REVIEW; "Repertoire," MIDWEST REVIEW; On The Edge," NOTRE DAME REVIEW; "Making Day Break Softer," RAMBUNCTIOUS REVIEW; "Inside Passage, Glacier Bay," KENNESAW; "The Ignis Fatuus," POET LORE; "The Interlopers," THE DIAMOND ANTHOLOGY, Poetry Society of America; "Narrative in White," GRANDMOTHER EARTH; "Catwalk," THE SILVER WEB; "Snowlight," BLUE UNICORN; "Unmailed Letters From a Young Man Making History," TRAIL & TIMBERLINE, and DANA ONLINE; "A Chant Royal for the Swamp Fox," and "Swimming to Eden," THE LYRIC; "Leaving Home," SOUTH COAST POETRY JOURNAL; "Backbay Brackish," NORTHEAST CORRIDOR; "Watching Charles Vickery Paint the Christian Radich," "Sapphics for a Santorini Sojourn" and "Chicago, First Lady of the Lake," ARIEL; "Wishes, Ten Years Apart," and "Chapter One, Journal of a Journey," SENSATIONS MAGAZINE; "Watercolor Weekends," BUFFALO SPREE; "Yellowknife Outpost, Alaska," SPARROW; "Summer Siege," THE CAPE ROCK; "Autumn Coinage," CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR.

"Dencuement: Flying the Juneau Icefield" won the Grand Prize, National Federation Of State Poetry Societies, 1987, published in PRIZE POEMS

Glenna Holloway's poetry has appeared in more than 200 magazines and anthologies, including MICHIGAN QUARTERLY REVIEW, WESTERN HUMANITIES REVIEW, GEORGIA REVIEW, THE HOLLINS CRITIC, NOTRE DAME REVIEW, CONFRONTATION, SOUTHERN POETRY REVIEW, SPOON RIVER POETRY REVIEW, NATIONAL FORUM, AMERICA, ORBIS (England), NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW, THE LYRIC, GRAY'S SPORTING JOURNAL, McCALL'S, GOOD HOUSEKEEPING, SATURDAY EVENING POST and the PUSHCART PRIZE, 2001. She received a \$7,000 poetry fellowship from the Illinois Arts Council, 2005 and won her second Grand Prize from the National Federation of State Poetry Societies in 2007. This is her first book, just completed, and she is working on her second.

NEVER FAR FROM WATER AND OTHER LOVE STORIES

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NARRATIVE IN WHITE

Arctic people have hundreds of words for snow--
nuances of texture, depth, duration.
My middle America snow is deep chalk dust,
unnumbered chapters of the she-wind's diary.
She doodles idly, sometimes erasing her secrets,
terracing, pot-holing, building dunes.

An old metaphor, the snow as an open scroll
for a poet's musings. But this is not my tale.
A used quill lies on the river bank
where mallards keep journals in precise graphics.
A raccoon's symmetrical syllables run bias
from pine margin to margin. Variable versions
of blue and gray underline each entry.

I trace fox printing half a mile.
He would seem two-legged to the unversed reader
who doesn't know his hind feet
often exactly rhyme with his front. The fox
hunts and pecks, punctuating with his nose.
The theme, ancient as the mouse, is polished,
proofed, sentimental quotations deleted.

The next page bears elongated strokes
of a rabbit, inscribed with emphatic periods
from its cottontail. Over here--
a sudden cursive shift-- wide spaces between dashes.
I expect the paragraph to be followed by the fox.

The plot changes. Hawk wings interject
a quick sweeping signature. In uneven indentations
the rabbit's sentence ends abruptly.

I retrace my rough scrawl
across February's broad shining sheets,
pondering how many small dramas my eyes missed.
Trying to recall the Inuit word for bloody snow.

AQUARIUM

Those lacy plants and filtered water once supported
ten fish, including two blue gourami-- gorgeous
but disgusting. All they ever did was die.

Now only seven specimens share the excited bubbles,
the sunken galleon. In this, our larger glass menagerie,
my two crashed DUI brothers are the missing gourami.

Look at the swordtail lurking in the moss. Uncle Carl.
Manipulating, maneuvering to inject himself
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Watch the pair of angels, my twin nieces. All body
and no brains. Ballet students badly rehearsed.
Vain jerky movements, unsure why they're dancing.

There goes the tiger barb. My mother. Always in pursuit,
always nipping at somebody's rear, usually my sister,
the guppy, returned from a visit to a neighbor's tank,

bulbously gravid again without husband or currency.
Her fry will provide delicate tidbits for Uncle Dylan,
the cichlid. Most of the inhabitants are top feeders,

very particular. Dylan is cannibalistic, sleek, handsome
like Carl, he consumes everyone's trailing edges,
and I suspect, fed on the blue gourami past healing.

That's my husband, Walter, under the auger shell.
I often asked him why he slimes around on his belly,
cleaning up what everyone else drops.

He told me he would inherit the earth. It's true,
he can claim words like "meek," and "redeeming value."
On their way to being flushed, all the others

are mere eye-objects, adorning their element,
flicking boredom, making long ribbons of waste.
--Yeah, right, no finny counterpart for me--

an unknown breed, never in the swim. Just came by
to see if the fish are being fed. Last week
I sickened into a graceless dangle

and threw myself out, gills gasping.

LEGACY OF PAST POETS

Poets die like everyone else--
with one difference--
we keep generating poems.
Metered in other dimensions, implanted
in living cells, fueled with comet tails.
Waiting to be claimed and passed on.

You needn't be genetically related
to inherit the treasures,
to embrace and share the wealth.
Some searching novice
may stumble on Aiken's still warm premises
and Eliot's promises, some conceived
but never quite born. Waiting, not wasted.

All who grasp the gifts, the powers
of Frost, Hughs, Brooks, Ciardi,
will resonate, reflect the inner aura
now worn unseen until transition frees
the spectrum surrounding former flesh--
sometimes visible in the dark
of living sleep,
or on dawn's cusp before waking.

Look deeper, young poets, higher, longer.
Where the poems wait. You are our heirs apparent.

8. Florida State Poets Association, Inc. Award

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Member Illinois SPS

8. Florida State Poets /

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the tree's first apples
hang in leafy shade
smelling of sun

blood on fresh snow--
coyote howling at stars--
other rabbits hide

a lone loon cry
October's last hour:
cold ~~is~~ quick

falling

swamp sunrise
mist and musk rise slowly
cranes rise fast and loud

Dante, Petrarch and Swinburne liked the sestina. Swinburne used it with rhymed end words. Most modern poets do not use rhyme but do adhere to iambic pentameter or tetrameter for a smoother effect. In English, they feel the form is most suitable to light verse.

(The sestina is a French form requiring the same six end-words to be used in each of six 6-line stanzas in a different but specific order. The seventh and final stanza, containing only 3 lines, is called the envoi. It brings the words back to their original sequential order, beginning with word 1 in the approximate middle of the first line of the envoi and word 2 as the end word of that first line. Word 3 appears internally in the second line, and word 4 is the end word. Word 5 appears internally in the last line, and word 6 ends the line, the envoi, and the poem, for a total of 39 lines with 7 repeats for each word.

One of the most skilled practitioners of the sestina is Anne Marx. If you see any of her work, it's a good read and it bears studying. On the other hand, several years ago ISPS had Joe Parisi, editor of POETRY Magazine as a speaker, and he said quite candidly that there would never be a sestina in POETRY MAGAZINE. He feels the form is farsical and artsy, and many other editors feel the same way. However, the form is enjoying a comeback in some literary journals.

The thing is--any time you write formulaic verse, it's good discipline, good practice-- whether you intend to do anything serious or marketable or not. It's good exercise, in other words. A stretch. And in the process you may compose something very clever.

and the I please
I am reserve it

What I ~~show~~ them it right around

SEASCOPE

I

My world stopped half a country short of shore;
my days were walled by steel and concrete-scape
perimetered within a steepled range
of metamorphic rock. Each night before
my sleep curved me in ancient shell-like shape,
I gazed at mauved and mossy hills that changed
with seasons' rituals. Despite their strange
magnetic strength that bound me knee to nape,
they bowed to vagrant streams, succumbed to green;
their shoulders froze beneath a borrowed cape.
Deceived each fall with goldly glinting ore,
they stood betrayed, decrowned and pale between
still sovereign heavens and the ocean's scene
where reign is absolute and evermore.

II

Reluctantly I questioned my devotion
to scarps and summit knobs that abdicate
their thrones to vagaries of fire and rain
or crumble in an avalanche's motion.
A summer sea had tried to alienate
my lofty love, persuade me to remain.
I pulled away, pretentious in disdain.
Once home, I thought the heights would dissipate
the spell; the old romance would lift me still.
But sand that dared each foot to hesitate
and turn again toward sprays of perfumed potion,
imprinted wavering soles with practiced skill,
conspired with seams and souvenirs until
my house was full of missives from the ocean.

(cont.)

III

Beyond the reach of tidal certainty,
the highlands held me close another year.
They grappled with the rival in my mind
with cedar lances, granite fists, a spree
of berries, mushrooms, icy springs, mule deer:
like offerings for a king, delights designed
to levitate my senses, leave me blind
to other views, a wool-dyed mountaineer.
It might have worked if not for what I dreamed.
One dawn I watched exploring sun-shafts veer
from finial to spire and quickly flee--
as I did. Without warning, all unschemed,
I slipped from long-familiar ties that seemed
like arms, and ran toward nothing but the sea.

IV

All caution failed. A deeper love, my last,
now fills my admiration's need for power:
This savage water having many names,
hoarding the future, harboring the past.
Never changing, changing every hour,
devouring storms when weary of their games
and drowning every sun in fluid flames.
Retreating soft then smashing back to scour
surrendered ground. As reclaimed loans provide
new beds for micro-denizens to flower,
each probing noon strikes wells of life amassed
below. White-blossomed animals astride
the reef slow-sway the line where worlds divide.
And mine-- complete-- has never been so vast.