

Victor Henry

Wind Burn

I spray water in the direction
of some scattered leaves and a lump
that looks like a small black rubber ball.
It rolls to the edge of the sidewalk,
falls into the gutter.

My neighbor, a contractor,
baseball cap tilted at an angle,
hands in bulky jacket,
wearing paint stained walking shorts,
brings me a bill for some money I owe him.

I'm hand watering the lawn, I tell him.
The wind's been blowing hard all day,
drying out the grass, turning it a dead yellow.
Now, nearly six in the evening
the air calm and cool, the street silent.

We both walk to the spot
where the lump is.
Looking down at it,
we can't tell for sure what it is.
I begin to reach over and pick it up,

but my neighbor nudges it,
rolls it over with the tip
of his tennis shoe.
Transfixed, heads bowed,
we stare at a tiny, naked baby bird.

I see the pain in its half open eyes,
the frailness of its paper-thin wings,
notice its beak beginning to take form.
Must have fallen from the Bottle Brush tree
my neighbor says.

Yeah. I agree. Must have.
We stand looking at it,
like it's nothing more
than a relished rubber toy
some child lost, scrambling to get out of a car.

The Woman Who Wanted to Be an Actress

She had watched hours and hours of hospital shows during the last year of her life, a patient in a local nursing home. Near the end, mentally confused and disoriented, she pretended she was a famous soap opera actress in a popular hospital series. Now, in room 504, a tube ran from an IV to her bedside. Nurses administered different colored pills morning and night. She delighted in never having to make her bed, never having to bathe herself, never having to brush her teeth. When it was time for her shots, she'd roll over on cue, grinning and giggling like a newborn, pulling up her gown, exposing her pale, flabby buttocks. When her favorite hospital soap, **Beverly Hills Hospital**, was cancelled, she went into mourning and died, fading out to black during a two minute commercial break.

Psychic Confusion

For years at the office where he worked he had been practicing unconditional love, loving a woman who barely knew he existed. They worked in different departments and on different floors. Occasionally, he'd meet her on the elevator and they'd greet one another, dabble in small talk, chit chat about nothing. Often times he wished he'd had an older brother when he was growing up, an older brother who could have taught him the ropes, taught him about love and sex. His only saving grace was that he got to see her every day. His first urge was to wear his heart on his sleeve, but he thought maybe that might scare her away. He tried not to act desperate in front of her. But he was desperate. So desperate that he contacted a psychic. He'd read various ads for psychics in his hometown free newspaper, hoping they would help him land the one he loved. He tried the Internet as well. Some psychics claimed their love spell would work within twenty-four hours. That within a short matter of time he would have the woman of his dreams. In addition, he tried TV psychics, independent psychics, and telephone psychics. One psychic, specializing in Egyptian spells, told him she needed more money to buy crystals. A love addiction therapist told him he had symptoms of love addiction. That he was getting high off the fantasy. That once he went into withdrawal, he could have a psychiatric meltdown, that he could become homicidal or suicidal possibly. But one psychic, not charging him anything for her services, told him truthfully, You can't win if you don't know how to play the game.

Victor Henry's work has appeared in various small press magazines, anthologies, and e-zines.
victor_henry@sbcglobal.net