Poetry Series

Jimi Doyle

- poems -

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A frank discussion

Here is the serenity:
  it fell out as we entered the cab

Here is the loyalty:
  Tammy Wynette singing that song again

Here is the courage:
  blinded staggered down

Here is the sacrifice:
  rusted in cans

Here is the wisdom:
  bursting forth with steady double hunger

Here is the faith:
  pleading with the executioner
  afraid at last

Here is the joy:
  siezed in crumbled robbery

Here is the promise:
  sea pines and the scent of the sea
  the rain bird starts a song

Here is the love:
  reduced to stymied poetry

Jimi Doyle

American Jesus

there is no dog-gone Jesus
like the American Jesus
big and strong
with hundred yard dash

he built a dam
he built a railroad
he drives a Cadillac
or a pick-up truck
on the highway system he built

he washed the feet
of a pretty girl

in his bed
in his motel room
by the side of the highway
system he built

Jimi Doyle

Anvil Arm

the rain forged its anvil arm
through the dusty membrane
kissing the grass leaves
into an ocean trance

now snow is turning...
i'm bone-jacked
with slink shy girlfriends
here in the third floor apartment
trimmed behind
a grey city back porch

now and again
we run out
for this and that

i saw the best minds of a generation
lying
asleep

we worked at races over the phone
made calls for a collection agency, too
gaining consent
like the electric moments
of afternoon thundercrack

ancient sense
like spring soil ascending...
then you're dazed with strength

randomness compels
lucky circumstances
which can pay the dream tax
for all the ammunition we need

our gang was movie stars- no film
no ammunition for our pistols

five gallons of gasoline
in big glass jugs
weird sisters tried to warn me...
i know that now
but i scotched it like a bug

Jimi Doyle

Bill the suicide

cold grief or demented vacuum?

grey head in coffin
suicide neck

drunken sorry note (with misspellings)
something nice about everyone (i love you)
debts owed to companies (many thousands)
punk kids from the other marriage (haircuts at the wake)

martyrdom of dust and tedious fear

ordinary con job
with thank you notes and symmetry
(the wife who found his body)

Jimi Doyle

Breathing Machine

I have a breathing machine
I use it when my lungs are dirty
blocked with soot or feathers
or when there is too much moisture
in all of the air around me

I have a breathing machine
I use it when I breathe out my dreams

when boredom gets to panic
I think about my machine

every time a buzzer sounds
every time a snake slides
every time Jesus gets lonely

machine

Jimi Doyle

corn

first the seed

...in March the muffle cover of snow disappears and good Illinois soil emits from moment to moment all the scents of the history of the earth

then the shoot

...in April with each rain grows stronger in May as thick as a doe's leg in June stronger still and green

then the ear

...as June is July as tall as the boy who rides in the tractor in August all children work at de-tassling 'til the end of long days now golden and rose

then the kerrnel

...August bakes away and September on the coolness of evening is harvest the monstrous combine gleans all the cobs and screens fodder for forage forever

Jimi Doyle

Dawn beaches of the city of Tijuana

Tijuana beach sunrise
night's darkness passing
its colors to the stars...
orbing westward
   to tomorrow
over the Tijuanas of Tokyo
   Shanghai and Perth

It is today right now
as the sun shoulders up
over painted boards
   bright and various
battered into houses
   on sand-scrub dry hills

Beautiful poverty beach
   tar film and bits of trash
   scent-marked
where the breasts of the sea
   and sand-bell
are displayed like a galaxy

Morning dogs
   are by instinct roused
   to vagrant curiosity
Returning like soldiers
   of the lost revolution
   to the women war heroes

Everything held in balance
   by the very salt flakes of air
the city street on the cliff
   is an obituary
   for the history of a country alive
in spite of wounds
   to the heart
   wounds to the family...

the tribe of fusion greets the day
on the bone-sand
of ancient murders

Jimi Doyle

Floating on cold water

No vanity fair magazine
to float on cold water
and arc further out
with sea moss and iodine kelp
   and the run of slapping waves
then wash up sandy in ensenada

Near a cracked up automobile
   breaking through a house rusted by sea life
insects ornery and electric
hang in the air
as Christmas ornaments
   all unpacked

There is nothing to hear now

The water pipes broke in the house down there
   and wood rot
   deep root-flesh
   took over for good

all salt
all junk

Between which
   tiny blue flowers
   will themselves up
   through cold early dew
thick as a welcome mat

each a prism
   of all the blue water
each obeying
   in substance the sun

Jimi Doyle

impossibility of bad poetry

a poem is born
   somehow like men
and then is
   like a flower or a razor blade
and lives forever
   like a saint

will it slay me?
or end this dirty vice?
or teach?
or pity?

turmoil?
miracle?
a tender connection?

needs truth
needs beauty

poetry?

Jimi Doyle

Kentucky Derby

(for Smarty Jones)

horse-naked

a barn sleeper
he can swim in the sun, in a barn

he loafs in an apple yard,
snapping the pea grass
as blossoms inhale and exhale kentucky spring

his friend the goat is
patiently
trimming the grass beneath

today is saturday

steel strips are winged to his toes
tiny shields

he can carry a man running
his tail is a whisper trail

in sharp silk clothing
a fearless man holds on
still cropping the slender useless whip
a man and a race-horse in a jagged steady burst
pushing through the vortex

is this the vortex of horse speed?
a horse in a puff
in a dreamscape a puff

can he see the dawn coming?

he's fast!
on his toes and
he's passed us!

Jimi Doyle

Life Stretch

Running the day to twilight
Trusting the night 'til dawn
Challenging pure fire
Flexing pure light
Lengthening the sense of poise
Living in the alibi organs
    of my body
Flowing into the moment of
    rubber band snap back
Racing eyeball to eyeball
Chanting the death flow
Flashing the vitamin of zeal
Tolerating muscle movement
Attracting hunger and waste
Reaping weaving instincts

Jimi Doyle

Moon Poem

Just another poet
writing about the moon...
a place he's never been,
never truly seen.

Meanwhile, his heart
is peeling away from his life
like paint from the walls
of a cheap hotel.

Jimi Doyle

Mosquito Fog

Our sweet mothers watched from the porches
    as a big truck would sway down our street
bestowing a vapor upon our neighborhood
    in a public war against mosquitoes

Was it once a week?
    once a summer?
    did it happen just once?

Kennedy in the white house
Daley in Bridgeport
...we were not afraid

God it was fun
    to run behind the truck
clouding ourselves in and out of eccentric sky
    on earth's surface
hiding and seeking in killing magic

Big diesel steam cloud
    hazing in billows
gasoline butter mothball gum

Stenching our clothes and skin
    lasting
on the grass blades
elm leaves
car hoods
eyes and noses and throats
scarring tattoos into green branches

It was a bitter blue carnage
    of lightning bugs
    amphibians
    birds

With mosquitos rising
    from the ground again
    steady as the sun

We all wound up going dead bang crazy
    taunted by the grace of children

Jimi Doyle

Ode to Karen and the Summer

June wore her green dress, long her favorite color
   the color of her ancient Roman clan
Roman Green
June wore her green dress...as my finger traced a soft essay
upon your perfect back

June wore green
Karen wore blonde
   and all around us was light

the solstice was the turning point- solstice curve
   poignant as the course of the sun through our summer bodies

the season of the short-lived beings
   dead through the dry folds of winter
   to flood to life in green vigor
I'm green as a frog, green as any new bug rushing or Mayfly lingering

June's nephews, July and August, were lulled to boredom
   by wine and soft days
   and left us the blessing
   to wallop and play in the gardens

Karen on a summer sidewalk
or a tv show
or a dream in the light
or green eyes

Jimi Doyle

Ode to Macaroni

Strong enough to carry
   a war army on your back
union of purpose
   heart with hand
sun buffs floated
   through green gold wheat.

Strong enough to carry
   40,000 acres of last-patch farmland
through Morgan County
   bank notes.

Magnetized into
   cooperation through
the sea-crested toiling
of cauldrons...

Still strong enough to carry
   every kitchen in this neighborhood
from Poland
and Mexico
and Kankakee.

Strong enough to hold
   as if in factory- calloused hands
Spices
Sausages
Salt

The mornings diminish
   by twos and threes
and birds of differing songs
   land in wheatfields...
   on the fingerslips.

Jimi Doyle

Ode to the Uncle Vanya players

which line is better:

'art gives proof to our ideals'
or
'art gives truth to our ideals'?

phrases are limestone crusts,
trudged into dust and footprints;

Uncle Vanya, in the back part
of a storefront theater,

to an audience
unknowable each night
chaos grifted
foolish
lonesome
lost

from the players
somehow courageous
somehow filled with hope,

is an acrobat

of water, oxygen and light

Jimi Doyle

Please

please
please
pleasepleaseplease
pleasepleaseplease

pleasepleaseplease
pleasepleaseplease
pleasepleaseplease...

Jimi Doyle

Shouting At The Sky

My little nephew Kevin
    is riding on the swing set
Muscling and thumping
    the wooden saddle
Like a jockey in the derby

Arcing to equipoise while
Showing the bottoms
    of his feet to the moon

Up and down
Back and forth
Suspended from above

Now almost a revolution!
And a free fall from
    the forest canopy
Free falling to earth
Then free speeding to the crowns
    of the trees again

He is silent in reverie...
until he shouts wow wee at the sky

Wow wee!

I am sitting under a pine tree
    drinking coffee...

And shout wow wee at the sky

Wow wee!

Jimi Doyle

stray dog

maybe a lady
full of love already
will fix upon this stray
and trim him
and brush him
and clean him
and love him for today

and devote herself
to tender episodes
and her kind desires

maybe the lady knows
he didn't get this friendly
without being kicked a bit

he will not claw the door
he will not chase a scent

he will love her like a stray, of course
until he's chased away

Jimi Doyle

The Alcoholics

birds are perched
various and serene
in a sun bleached bare tree

can't they avoid the death there?

I don't care
I'm just here
to get drunk

the Mexican artist won't paint the apostles
the way the Pope paid him to

twelve...not three
not fourteen
not six

can't he see the talent wasted?

He doesn't care
He's just here
to get drunk

river turtles are basking on a sunny log
some dropp off
some remain
some return

why make a decision?

We don't care
We're just here
to get drunk

Jimi Doyle

The Battle for Time (a poem to end war)

3,000 years ago or fifty or any
now to control
to the time when

any warriors religion my the
religon made perfect sense; sanity's sense

the way it was written and how it lay explained as written

generating from its loins the useless word...
as the mother of a puny mule

(they are wise and sly and boldly slide
when the definitions in people's language are slyly, boldly, under the...)

pointless vanity rule of the psycho

so how can a child grow up without words to learn?
lifetime of a man oblivion

the internet battle field is a weapon they found!

any psycho with candy
and only the time victor
can enjoy sanity in its image
stolen time by internet photos pocket lens
ubiquitous gizmos
comic book gizmos
that's how its waged!

the photos!

i'm begging you Jesus!
i'm begging you Allah!

how about the Holy Ghost?
how about the Holy Ghost?
how about the Holy Ghost?

Jimi Doyle

the dog from the bog

the dog
from the bog
is my new nick-name

i give it to my self

the dog
from the bog
the man
from the ranch
the fish
from the water
the vine
from the garden
the blood
from the stain
the hand
from the can
any name
from any place

i give it to my self

Jimi Doyle

The History of 79th Street

at night 79th street was a Miles Davis
    with sound coming out
    of window cracks and building bricks
and the melody forcing out
from way inside

i know because i saw it
                heard it
coming home late on the bus
    from rainbow beach

79th street was like a germ easing through a bandage
    remorseless will
    inevitable trying

all night long
    shouting like the southland!

all night long
    drinking booze straight!

shark skin suit
paper bag can
little green fedoras

legs of ladies sliding through
    heat!

into caddy
into lounge

high legs of ladies
sliding through
    high heat
    79th street
all night long

Jimi Doyle

the motorboat lady

she is supple and slender and shining blonde
she is ready for the open water
she is readying her skin with lotions
she is beautiful

i am standing on the wabash street bridge
slipping the day, willing it

needing a motorboat
hailing a cab

Jimi Doyle

The Rattle-Gator

an unselfish reptile

with absolute honesty
    he warns you he's right here
with purity of purpose
    he will bite you, poison you, eat you

swampish love

rolling in the sun
    digesting your body
    or watching you run

Jimi Doyle

the thousands

1000 arenas
1000 flaws
1000 yellow steps

the thousands

deft-footed ones
sidewise wonders

the moon tonight
slashing a ray of light
upon the window slats
through to the walls
as moontide arrows

thunder slack moon
is now hiding
now showing
against odd
almost false
purple clouds

the thousands
1000 sirens
1000 charities
1000 vapors
the moon tonight
razoring through
1000 false clouds
finding itself
against the window
slats and walls

Jimi Doyle

time is stiff

time is stiff

the last brown leaf
is letting grip go
stubborn, too, the cherry

the stone-bursting squeeze
of winter's bone
the thrilling forces
of the green fields

Jimi Doyle