

Maintenance Man

By Joan McNerney

Everything falls apart,
all things rot and crack.

Each day another tenant
fills out forms to request
repairs. Hot water tanks
burst, sinks back up, toilets jam.
Smoke alarms break.
It's a messy life, he pushes
against riptide.

All spring and summer,
weeds keep growing.
Leaves gather during fall.
In winter time, ice
covers walkways.

It's time to go home now.
Tomorrow he will return
to pick up the pieces again.

The History Professor

By Joan McNerney

Sat in dusty corners of a mildew
room fingering old tomes. His
murmurs filled the night as he
thumbed through yellowed pages.

How he strove to weave history
into life for students, intertwining
tapestries from the past.

For some the scholastic life was
fulfilling but many simply met the
requirements for graduation.

How many battles he had analyzed
when he was young and fresh,
excited by war and strategy.

Floating through his memory
were dates and places and names.
Yes, the names of the valiant.

Now they were forgotten as he
would soon be. Gone to that
destination none have studied.

Meteorologist

By Joan Mc Nerney

One summer when only seven,
she heard thunderstorms bursting
through skies, watched lightening
slash bright Z's across night.

Later she studied for hours currents
of mercurial storms and cloud
formations. Stratus, altostratus, cirrus,
cumulus fell swiftly from her lips.

Some places burned with rings of blistering
winds sweeping across the desert. Rains
rammed houses downstream on the plains.
Northern ice bashed trees breaking power lines.

Her desire was to understand grand forces...
tornado, hurricane, drought, blizzard.
Calculating air currents, moisture, heat
or cold indices to predict the atmosphere.

Moods of the sky master puzzled her.
She only knew what she did not know.
Why this same force creates rainbows
yet pummels whole towns with its fists?

Pharmacist

By Joan McNerney

She thought of herself as a
modern alchemist. Fluent
in an arcane language
about the composition of so
many minute capsules.

The rest of the store could
be in a gas station or bargain
store. Filled with candies,
lip sticks, other frivolous items.

If you simply had a cough, syrup
could be found on aisle three.
Her area was sacred to patients,
those with serious ailments.

Filling prescriptions navigating
insurance companies, seeking
authorizations. Always aware of
side effects, multiple drug reactions,
possible allergic problems.

Austere yet approachable,
she dispensed heroic potions
from her prized domain
as chemical priestess.

Word Processor

By Joan McNerney

Margie often thought words
just spilled through her fingers.
It was all learned so long ago
by touch typing in school.

Then she was thrilled by winning
an over ninety-words-a- minute
prize. Margie was sure to
transcribe important documents.

She finished the form letter. Now what
must be remembered was paragraph
three goes with addressee list five.

Section seven contains financial
disclosure which only went to top list
number one. Someone would check it.

Technological advances had replaced
people. Equipment never felt sick or
required holidays, vacations, breaks.
Much more cost effective.

Margie wanted to close her eyes
against this flood of words. Shut
her ears against the pounding of
machines, sighs of other operators.

Writing Raw

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Joan McNerney bio: Joan McNerney was born in Brooklyn, New York and now resides in Ravena, a small town outside of Albany, New York. She received her Bachelor of Arts Degree in English from the Board of Regents, New York State Excelsior University. Most of her professional background has been spent in the advertising business. Her poetry has been included in numerous literary magazines such as Seven Circle Press, Dinner with the Muse, Blueline, 63 channels, Spectrum, and three Bright Spring Press Anthologies. Four of her books have been published by fine small literary presses. She has recited her work at the National Arts Club, Russell Sage College, McNay Art Institute and other distinguished venues. A recent reading was sponsored by the American Academy of Poetry. She has received three Best of the Net nominations. The internet has expanded her outreach and given her great impetus to continue writing.