

## Mother, Time

By Stephen Mead

What is the trick  
To freeze, to rewind?  
Fluid, fluid,  
But I would re-do life,  
To keep it, even break arms  
By holding for the irresistible  
Let-go  
Begins to seem thievery...

Flow, all is flux &  
New openings to live with death  
Surpassed, but does the flesh have faith?  
I believe in its spirit, Mother, a held  
Photo of you with my face &  
Your daughter's in your swimming cap  
When you were twenty-one...

In that time we could be each other,  
The framed flight of souls  
Scrapbook pages link  
As much as blood, & in transit,  
I apprehend this goodness, the cycles  
Of passage, the seasons, with all  
As passing ...

Stay, I say yet,  
Feel the flood, reel the waves, & us,  
All flashes wholly brought back alive.

So love knows its heritage & nothing stops,  
But Mother, time,  
I want the depths to slow up some,  
Until lightness, the savored, the tasted breath,  
That shall be saved too.

## Warriors

By Stephen Mead

Have the bagpipes begun?

This quill issues jigs, woven  
tambourine nosegays, all small  
exuberant blurs  
now titanium, now laces undone,  
bodices falling to milk silk flesh  
on pasture green...

Is it royal then, ceremonious,  
to have a warrior's hand, worn  
and tired from battle  
presently adept, gentle upon spirit,  
spirit drifting from skin?

Here is its navigation:  
a soft dispersion of violets  
fishbowl flung after too brief  
yearly excursions  
in a wilderness.

Spread now, now resurrected,  
un-kenneled, these sweet maize husk  
sheets, these fingers enveloped, are  
a dervish, Celtic, momentarily

corresponding.

*"It's a long long story to tell/And I can only show you my hell... Broken mirror/White terror...  
It's that faint faint sound of the childhood bell/Ringing in my soul."*

*Yoko Ono, Kiss Kiss Kiss*

## Recap

By Stephen Mead

It was reported  
that of all violent crimes  
in the United States  
those against gays  
had a particular rage...

Rage, crimes reported  
against nature, against flesh—  
castration, decapitation, missing  
penis, missing head  
& the bodies, sexually suspect, found  
found on fire  
in a nearby garbage bin...

Missing, crimes reported, rage,  
rage, where did it begin?

Begin, look on, look long, the school  
yard of darts, the whistling, the whine,  
the wars of our childhoods, child & back further,  
back beyond oppression keening  
beneath civilized civilized...

Civil, civil—bell, where you've been  
& are ringing still, also lifts wings, has lifted—  
souls, the souls risen, day after day, resistance,  
the attempts at making sense, making  
love Gus

of gloom, goof, be goofy, these instants  
of silliness...serene...so good...you make me  
laugh, laugh, live...grace in crazed times...

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working the windshield wiper with a clothespin,  
a clothes...our driving & rain coming in...in  
the wrong direction...up a one way...a runway...  
our faces, streets... streets & stories...funny  
human, of glass, of bark, of sky & some  
violence has a bias for, & some  
tell jokes, whisper peace, keep  
the flame round  
round the fire  
the fire (kiss kiss, put your head)  
on both sides (back on) burns long.

## Remember Remember

By Stephen Mead

Cobweb against snow, a formation  
from a wind which swept on.  
So the pattern approaches & goes, goes off...  
the skeletal residue of a spider's entrails.  
Those tendrils drift as wind distributes,  
continuing, continuing, spun currents of air...

Here in this room what I remember is floating.  
I had scenes in focus, photos in mind.  
From chair to chair, fastidious I perched,  
preparing & plotting, an architect  
trying to see the realization of dreams.  
Finally I found the place where the light  
filtered just right, decisively took aim  
& clicked the shutter in...

The pictures never did  
live up to their original intentions though.  
They came out fingered & fuzzy, something  
integral lost in translation:  
the spirit which possessed fascination  
& held, suspended, the bright rare dust.

Being sentimental, I recall  
a snap shot I took of my brother  
while phoning a friend.  
He stretched floor length  
beneath the table,  
his own camera flashing a polar-white bulb  
at the cat.

Now that animal's dead  
& he's as ever estranged, though made  
surprisingly close by this old picture's evidence,

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different & pure with irony's bite.

If you look closely life's legacy's right there:  
the snow-steeped web in some vacant window,  
the ghost of a spider which was everything's sum,  
the breeze & the dust, the air, the air!

Remember, remember. We bear what we are.

## Matthew's Doe

By Stephen Mead

Brown softness, warmth's furry coat,  
her nostrils sniffing and fogging,  
sensing bones frozen with pain  
like I was one of her own, fawn-sized  
for the flanks settling down, belly-close  
as if to show there was nothing more  
to be afraid of despite the lonely night's  
black length, and strange frigid numbness  
my wrists knew as burning rope.

Perhaps the post I was tied to  
reminded her of some similar sight:  
distant buck of hoisted girth  
behind a barn through fields deathly still.

Suddenly would come the scent of that  
even as breeze yet stirred the wheat,  
breeze as a messenger for the iron blood smell.

My hunters left me to be carrion for crows,  
not finishing the job mercifully, not at all efficient,  
even if taking my shoes for chill to grip me with its vice,  
until her shape drew off the raw pall.

How such shelter can be consoling kindness  
even when just innocent animal instinct,  
the other side of what evil men do.

That's why there were clear tracks under my eyes  
where blood stains dried and darker bruises welled.

She left me way past daybreak, mama,  
when the uniformed one came  
taking her place  
for the long voyage back home.

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**Stephen Mead bio:** A resident of NY, Stephen Mead is a published artist, writer, maker of short-collage films and sound-collage downloads. If you are at all interested and get the time, Google Stephen Mead Art for Stephen Mead, Poet/Writer for links to his multi-media work.