

Joanne’s Birthday Poems

Carl Lahser

 Another Fine Birthday

The painter Constable said,

“Nothing is ugly in this old world. “

Shouting girls from one side of the street

exude sexual defiance

in the way they challenge boys across the way

with their tinkling laughter.

Two mustached nuns dressed like penguins

walking side-by-side like penguins

in a flat-footed way

wave shyly as a passing Lowrider toots its horn.

A homeless woman sitting on a bus bench

eating potato chips out of her purse

mumbles to anyone and

holds up a finger to a passing police car.

Snotty infant paddles rapidly along the sidewalk

in a T-shirt and screaming

his sister runs after him waving a diaper

shouting for him to come back this very minute.

Time races and creeps and crawls

Minute by minute

Until another year has passed.

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**Donde**

It’s cool man

a Sarah Vaughn LP

with clicks and scratching

lit by candlelight

Where are you?

A sparkling spring day

Walking through azaleas and dogwood blooms

Under a wild blue sky

Across a wooden bridge over a roiling creek

Where are you?

Tropical sunsets paint the sky

Pina Coladas

Lobsters sizzling on the grill

Tropicbirds circling homeward

Where are you?

Mannnnnn bummer

**\*\*\*\*\***

**Glimpses**

I saw her in a Christmas crowd

but she vanished in a sea of bobbing heads

I called to her in the Plaka in Athens

She turned and spoke to me in Bulgarian

I bought her favorite drink from across a bar in St Louis

but she was gone before the waiter arrived

Countless glimpses of her over fifty years

in airports, on busy city streets, passing on busses

She must be gone by now

Consumed by time

Absorbed in space

Existing only in a tiny corner of memory

Unchanged in a lifetime

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**Summer Madness Is Finally Here**

It looks like a long, hot summer already.

The temperature has started to climb.

Militants have started to riot.

The destitute are turning to crime.

It’s too hot to sleep or work

And they'd kill you for only a dime

If it wasn't so damned hot.

Maybe some other time.

The weather is dry.

The sidewalks fry.

Lawns and trees cry.

Cold weather's a lie.

I want ice cream pie

I've run out of rhymes and patience so

Ihopetheycanfixmydamdedairconditioner NOW!!

Thank heaven for ice water and mesquite tree shade

While I wait for the bad news.

$300!!!

It better be one Hell hot summer or I'm gonna be mad.

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**THE WALK**

**Mid-afternoon on a fine fall day**

**Overcast and humid after a quick shower**

**Footfalls muffled by damp leaves**

**A jay screams in the distance**

**An acorn falls shattering the heavy stillness**

**We walk not speaking**

**Holding hands where the path is wide enough**

**To a log on the edge of a clearing**

**Sitting and watching cardinals flit**

**Through the changing and thinning leaves**

**Holding hands**

**Memorizing worn knuckles**

**And scarred fingers**

**Warts and bluish veins**

**Until we agree it’s time to return**

**Up the silent path through the half light**

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# Breaking the Bracketville Drought

I pulled off highway 90

into the wet parking lot

of the Burger and Shake

on an August Monday morning

joining half a dozen other pickups.

A black cow dog jumped

out of a pickup bed

and lifted his leg on my left front tire

then stood looking at me

slowly wagging his soggy tail.

Inside out of the drizzle

were a dozen men

in ball caps or straw western hats

all smiles with the morning rain,

the first in months.

This rain could save the remaining

cotton, cattle and goats.

Purple Sage was in bloom.

On Tuesday morning

the smiles were gone.

They talked of the 14-inch overnight rain,

cattle stranded on high ground,

goats up in the trees,

sheep floating down flooded draws, and

cotton plants beat flat.

“Wish it would stop raining,” says one.

“Bet you wish you’d have wished for rain

instead of praying for it,” replied another dryly.

They all kinda laughed to keep from crying.

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**Fossil Mind**

I sit in the middle of a Cretaceous fossil bed,

On a hillside of marine animals 70 million years dead.

A submerged reef of oysters turned to stone

exposed to the western sun. Time has flown

and the sea has gone. The shells remain.

Mute evidence that nothing is permanent but change.

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**Maybe there is a God**

I went out this morning

to put out the weekly trash

when a neighbor’s junkyard dog

ran out ready to bite my ass

One of my hot-rodding neighbors,

just then, came roaring by

and put that ornery junkyard dog

into the big kennel in the sky

The car jumped the curb and bent its frame

and he was hoppin' mad.

No more will he roar by at 40+

and that makes me sad.

In one fell swoop, the car’s off the street

and the dog is under the sod.

There is neighborhood peace and quiet again.

Maybe there is a God.

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**MEMORY PROD**

Driving through the city park

For the first time in years

I saw an old oak tree with one low-hanging branch

That had a distinct dip about mid-way along its length.

I remembered a girl back in our high school days

Posing on this dip

Arms crossed on the rough bark

Chin resting on overlapping hands

Head tilted with a sly smile

The tree was still there

But where is the girl

Of a half century past?

Her and the beguiling smile

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Old Enough

Old enough to kiss a boy

Old enough to take a drink

Old enough to save or spend

Old enough to choose your life

Old enough to see the world

Old enough to stop counting

¡felix cumpleaños¡

Happy Birthday

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