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Instress



Instress is a word coined by Gerard Manley Hopkins to signify the moment when the reader comprehends the essence of an artist's creation and shares in it with him.

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The Citadel

Cluttered desk...
 Friendly wood, oak,
 Spread with a
 Half moon of junk,
 With a typewriter
 The center attraction.
 (For interaction
 When there's time.)

Pens with dried ink.
 I never think to
 Toss them away.
 (Little flagpoles
 Without flags are they,
 Standing in a glass.)
 Clips and pads amass
 In studied confusion.

Bottled ink, a pipe filled
 With "Captain Black."
 (Stale a year or two,
 Crumbs and flakes
 That stain my work.)
 Cigarette smoke coils
 O'er the smear, oil,
 Where my hand rests.

"His Honor's Desk"
 Now mine, inherited.
 Sensing something deep inside
 This citadel,
 I reach to touch
 Grandfather's pride.
 The odor of him tides
 In the grain and scars.

John R. Smith

Lions and Things

There is a stairway leading to the third floor,
 It beckons, promising more,
 A turn halfway causes a pause,
 The creaking stairs echo lion jaws,
 Thin plastered walls--bony ribs show,
 Like ancient dinosaurs waiting to grow.
 Splintery, wooden floor lies in wait,
 A hostile porcupine looking for bait
 Bizarre, musty dresses hang on a rack.
 Waiting--a mistress never came back.
 Silence reigns, a cold hungry master,
 Devouring footsteps bounding from a rafter,
 A sudden noise--fast, stampede away,
 From attic's scary yesterday.

Mary Mackin

Passages

There is a stairway leading, leading I know not where.
 It wanders, like a poem, is neither here nor there.
 It has a basic structure and looks concrete enough;
 But underneath appearance, it's otherworldly stuff.
 It circles, twists, starts and stops, takes journeys in the air;
 It claims to live, sounds alive, but really nothing's there.
 This staircase, it's not real, no, it's from a stranger place:
 The staircase we call language came here from outer space.

Michael Daley

LETTING GO

"You have to face the fact, Liz, Tommy's growing up."

I glanced up briefly from the huge mound of dough I was rolling out on the old, green, kitchen table. I had been thumping and pounding it the whole time he had been talking. If I didn't quit soon I would ruin it, and I prided myself on my homemade bread. The late afternoon sun shone warmly in through the plant-rimmed windows and lit up Joe's dark, glossy head. It hid the few grey hairs at his temples.

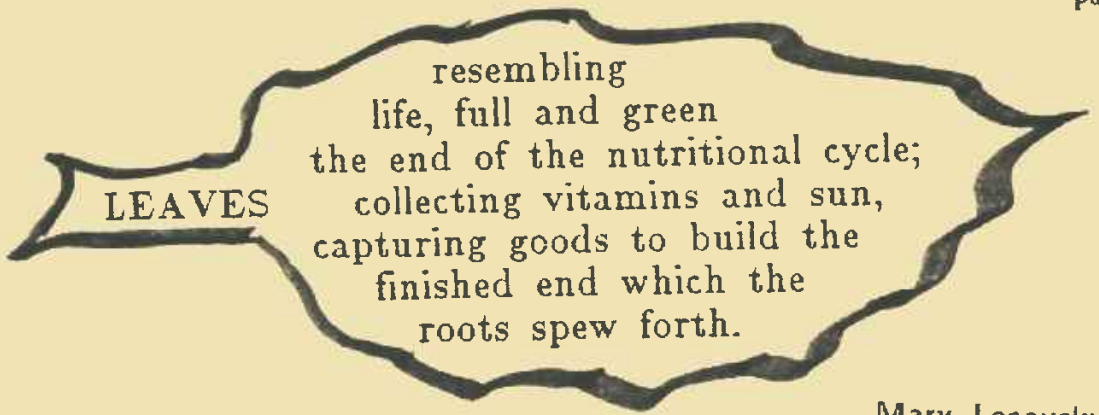
"I know he's growing up. I just feel he's too young yet to be gone away with you for so long. A whole month, Joe!"

I didn't want Tomy gone away from me for a whole month. He was a comfort to me. When I looked at him I remembered the young, hot, vibrant days of my early marriage to Joe. The excitement of his first business promotions, the pride in our first new car, baby teeth and braces, new puppies and 5:00a.m. Christmas mornings. Tommy was all I had left of our past together. I needed him to give my life stability, to flesh it out with meaning.

He sighed softly, pushing his hands deep into his pockets. He knew changes came hard for me, but we had been divorced for over two years and his patience was wearing thin. "He'll be just fine with Theresa and me. I need him, too, Liz. He's as much a part of my life as yours, and I don't want to lose touch with him. Try to share him a little with me...with us."

I thumped and pounded the dough some more. I knew he was right. Slowly I sprinkled flour onto the old bread board, and rolled the dough one last time. It was resilient, elastic, and sprang back under my hands. "Okay...okay." I nodded at last and with a fine, sharp knife, reluctantly cut the first loaf away from the great pile before me.

Georgetta Potoski



LEAVES

resembling
 life, full and green
 the end of the nutritional cycle;
 collecting vitamins and sun,
 capturing goods to build the
 finished end which the
 roots spew forth.

Mary Losovsky

Christ's Wounds

In the
 Name
 Of the
 Father

And of
 the

Holy
 Spirit

A
 M
 E
 N

Staircase

I saw a stair case
 Spiraling upwards
 Leading from the dark
 depths
 atop
 a the roof
 to the sun-filled deck
 Offering a (hideaway)
 from the rushes and ramblings
 giving time to rejuvenate
 and start again.

And of
 the Son

Rosanne Griffin

Mary Losovsky

Five O'clock Martini

*The clinking of ice
 By addicted hands
 Croons a sad song.
 The cold callous blocks,
 While chilling the gin,
 Sing the blues.*

Mary Benevino

Haiku

The haiku is a
 Poem with a demanding
 List of directions
 Michael Daley

Night insect noises
 Echoing in the darkness...
 Fall awakening.
 Joseph Pallante

Mountain range, like a
 Crumpled morning bed...something
 To be overcome
 Michael Daley

The pond still in ice
 Air frozen invisible
 Numbing cold...silence.
 Joseph Pallante

I woke up and was
 Damned if a bunch of elves had
 Not done my homework.
 Michael Daley

Variations on Haiku

Fish blow bubbles at the sky
 Mirrorless at night...
 Their home is always changing
 Thomas Galka

Rivers rage on tiny trees
 Seas are grassy green...
 My rubber boots are leaking.
 Thomas Galka

 Flower Children

I hear the sound of water running,
 Night and day--ten minute showers,
 Teen age kids--like thirsty flowers.
 Mary Mackin

Country Fair

*Carnival fireworks summon us
To see off migrating summer with
A Chinese New Year BANG!*

*Neon balloons extol Mickey Mouse;
Stuffed Pink Elephants plead to be won;
Carney hawkers hook fish.*

*Family-run stands delight nose and tongue:
Sausage--funnel cakes--hot pretzels--clams--
Sauerkraut--french fries--Joy!*

*Elbows stick to counters; old friends meet.
Young folks' courting games amuse us and
Youthful vigors resurge.*

Teen Turf

Teen age mania,
middle age strife,
anxious parents,
a hassled life.

Big Mac, pizza,
food on the run,
football, soccer,
time is for fun.

Stereo, hi-fi,
Springsteen, the king,
rock, pop, country,
free love, they sing.

Wheels for cruisin',
phones are to call,
six-pack Genee,
cycle for all.

They play to win,
with stakes too high,
the scoreboard BEEPS,
YOUR TURN to die.

Mary Mackin

*Overlapping rhythms/screams/bells/shouts
Buried in an avalanche of sound...
Druglike, dizzy motion...*

*There used to be games of chance. One year
Dad lost his pay playing a shell game.
Mom cried. Dad called the cops.*

*The carnival left town the next day.
For us kids, the firecracker fizzled.*

Florence Harry

Epicurean's Delight

Withered witches watch at midnight,
underneath a harvest moon.
at the cauldron they were stirring
with a shoulder-bone made spoon.

All their troubles they put in it,
round and round and round some more.
Long black tongues to taste their mixin'
fingernails to sample gore.

One witch asked if it was ready,
of the brew that they prepared.
Another said, "It's not quite finished
till the frogs come up for air."

Bats and buzzards tongues were in it
sprinkling their batch with care,
ground up eyes of salamanders,
with a pinch of golden hair.

Then they drank it down in buckets
blood oozed down their breasts so bare.
"Oh, this dinner is delightful,
humans are quite good when rare."

Thomas Galka

The Hills

Friendsville's green fields and forests stay the same even as changes occur in buildings and people. Because in small towns small changes are obvious, I noticed on return from college that the wind stole pieces of my Grandfather's barn roof. Now he has shiny new aluminum roofing. The campers, who have started coming to Friendsville for "roughing it" in the summer, are unaware of small changes. They concern themselves with their Winnebagos and plastic strung Chinese lights. The campers do not know that although neighbors have sold their land in pieces and gotten rid of the antique empty barns, Grandpa and Dad still use theirs. Because vacationers make up part of the changes of home, they do not notice changes. When campers look at Dad's barn they do not see the concrete foundation which keeps the old grey wood walls at right angles with the mud-filled, spring-fed barnyard.

That yard is where, as children, my brother, I and the two neighbors our age dug for worms before we fished. Dennis and I, along with Robby and Tammy, spent days playing together. We traversed through woods to barns and rode bikes on dirt roads. We only returned to the house when Mom called with her "dinnertime" whistle. The hayfields became forts in the summer and fast sledding trails in the winter. One snow jump was so slick that Tammy and Robby's father insisted that he try it first. He flew over the packed pile, ran into their solid porch, and broke a wrist on the trial run. Years later their parents divorced and Mr. Hunter lived alone in the house down the hill until one night he again flew over packed ice and ran into a bridge. The car was ruined. A friend I had attended elementary school with fought along with the whole ambulance squad purposefully, futilely, as the life of her friend's father slipped painfully away. Tammy's family sold the house.

A different type of children now live in the house. They too ice-skate, but they own shiny new skates, not neighborhood "hand-me-downs" like we used. Their baby-dolls were not as rugged as mine were, and the boy's small plastic trucks make roads through "store-bought" sand, not like the metal Tonkas which mastered gravel piles under my brother's control.

I do not know if the new children go exploring in the woods to find grapevines to swing on. The best vine, which my brothers found, hung way back in the woods along a logging path (where I cross country ski today). But that vine broke years ago under the stress from Timmy Morgan's full weight. His heavy round boy's figure which turned into a tall little man's is another change. He was my first love. But now I find, even though he still lives in Friendsville, my love is only a memory. Because like the dirt piles, hay-bale forts, sledding trails, and Mother's whistle calling home, his special appeal to me is just sentimental.

As time passes one constant remains: the hills. The ever present trees still invade pasture land almost as quickly as we consume them for heat (as my parents did before my birth, as their parents did before them). When I view a range from atop one hill I hear silence there. I listen through invisible wind to which old trees respond reluctantly.

The trees grew in Friendsville before Mom lost part of herself to cancer. The wrought iron and stone-fenced cemetery existed even before Tim's father was laid cold beneath the ground. Although people are born and grow, come and go, run laughing through the fields, and finally rest silently under the earth, the mountains still wait at home, just wait.

"For everything there is a season and a time for every matter under heaven"

Ecclesiastes

Rosanne Griffin

Something Lost

I have lost something,
 Under the willow silently weeping,
 On the ponds edge
 A delicate single drop--
 With a silent splash--
 Shatters the stillness of the surface
 Gone Forever
 Whole perfect rings reach out
 Beyond the image of my stretching shadow
 Beyond the image
 All around--
 The wind is wailing in the trees

Joseph Pallante

Upon Meeting the Rapids

*A pebble slowly pushed by the current
 Meeting other stones as we pass by,
 Momentarily stopping to utter a
 Churgill, a gurgle, a swosh.*

*Wishing to stay a while longer
 But no, only heard and cherished,
 The current compels them forward.*

*Some pebbles may move only a foot,
 Others a yard or two; some one or two miles,
 Yet the courageous will reach the sea!*

J.K. Worth



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