

POETRY

DABDA - Letters of Grief

by Jan Niebrzydowski, Tampa, FL

Your strange letters, tangled, seem to make no sense
And yet, their elegance of truth stands like mighty oak
Denial that came upon me with most strident rigidity
Could have shook my mental rafters as turbulent
As any tropical sea, undeniable strength existing there
The wave rising to 100 feet seemed to remain crested
It would not crash into the land, it held with tenacity
Anger that would follow surely seemed so out of place
But came out of genie's bottle rubbing sand into my face
Powerful that letter you tattooed in your monogram
I would try to shake it off but blackened eye revealed
It could not be escaped; the dreaded beast would not shy
Bargaining, my coveted one,
this I branded boastfully into my skin
For here I remained the longest, with my gift of flowery speech
It came easily to me to create myths that fell into my poetry
Depression became the contender with octopus tentacles large
Darkness sometimes comforting,
like getting lost in aimless crowd
Although so often confusing because there is no visibility
The path on which to leave it
is an English garden with porous maize
Acceptance came with deflation,
the fighter sprawled onto the floor
After pummeling and weaving to somehow stay in as a contender
Now just collapsed with mindless confusion
of why I even fought at all
Realizing after all this drawn out battle
I had trained for meticulously
Could never end in victory,
and now I must climb out of this fighter's ring
Taking with me another hole to mend
when I no longer can find the thread

Sweet Child

by Tim Sullivan, East Northport, NY

Breathe easy sweet child
Your human experience is complete
You've learned all you needed to learn in this lifetime
You can finally be gentle with yourself
in the presence of God
No longer burdened by the shackles of humanness
Your spirit soars freely above the mountaintops...
Pausing briefly to acknowledge; the miracle is you

Two Haiku

by David Frieman
Huntington Station, NY

when the Autumn calls
dance in Her falling gold leaves
and laugh at the world.

at the end of life
what you gained will fade away
what you gave lives on

Countdown

by Rhonda Weiss, Leeds, NY

Wait
Not so quick
Well some departures are quick
Blindside quick
Like a Band-Aid pull
A skin separating rent
Because your life
Has taken a downturn
And you've been devalued
To Inconvenient
And no one
Will invest
Their Time
In you
So they run
They run
All you thought cared about you
Run
Without a backward glance
Because they
Fear
They will
Become
You

DINAH

by Roberta A. McQueen, East Islip, NY

My calico cat Dinah has cancer
her jaw's swollen and
her right eye's half shut
there's a tumor pushing outward
destroyng skin and bone
She jumps on my lap
silently she stares
while I hold her gently weeping
She purrs softly
and rubs her face against mine
then reaching up with both paws
she hugs me as if to say
everything will be alright
If only she could talk
and let me realize
we are kindred spirits
for I have cancer too
Why can't she let me know
the secret of life's mysteries
and how not to fear death
Perhaps that's too much to ask
even if the answers seem hidden
behind her luminous green eyes



Watercolor by
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Breaking Free

by Seana Ankers, Warrenton, VA

Echoes of childhood whispering through the woods.
Unspoken traumas breaking free,
Floating past the mourning doves,
Silently on watch, waiting for a tear to fall.

Rising up through the clouds
and on towards the sunset,
My story rewrites itself for future generations.
Moist eyes blink slowly,
as the deep scars disappear before them,
Never to be felt again.

The doves break their silence and sing a lonely song,
before taking off to witness another rebirth.

It is difficult to get the news from poems, yet men die miserably everyday for lack of what is found there.

— From *Asphodel that Greeny Flower*