

THIS MONTH:

## Poetry Corner



A poetic conversation with poets, Robin Hiersche, Darcie Ziel, David Wiley, Dennis O'Donnell.

### Darcie Ziel



#### Crawl Inside

Judgment comes from within,  
not from without.  
I'm not here for that,  
not to remove that privilege from your hands.  
expressive, soft, hesitant  
the graceful length of them  
stirs up heat in my core.  
But for all of their touching, what have you felt?  
Oh, to crawl inside of you,  
Warm, and dark, to know you,  
or, rather, to be you.  
What I possess now: a collection of impressions:  
your hands existing between us on a table,  
your frame silhouetted against the window  
in a bright room.  
the closeness of our faces  
your soft lips against my cheek  
laughing eyes  
intermingling sweat, and the contour  
of your ribs under my grasp  
the expression of distance in your eyes  
when you go somewhere that I can't come  
and the openness there when you invite me in.  
Hundreds of images

pasting down my experience of you.  
That's why I'm here,  
to share with you  
to taste your hands, to touch your tongue  
to crawl inside.  
There are lots of things I like,  
don't condemn me to be your judge.  
I'm not you,  
And that's not why we're here.



### Dennis O'Donnell



#### **I am afraid**

I am afraid  
of the linoleum,  
the way it lies  
so flat and so smooth  
like the belly of a serpent

I am afraid  
of the guts of the toilet,  
and I know that they move  
differently  
when I replace the lid

I am afraid  
of the bank teller,  
behind the impregnable glass,  
smiling, thinking,  
you poor slob

I am afraid  
of the boat motor,  
putt putt putting away,  
burning the gas  
so I can die of exposure

I am afraid  
of the double axe,  
that extra blade  
obviously  
not meant for the wood.

I am afraid  
of the electric guitar,  
shocking me  
with a cartoon lightning bolt  
that exposes my bones

I am afraid  
of the curves in the road,  
of what they are hiding  
behind well placed trees  
and mountainsides

I am afraid  
of Jack Benny,  
grinning,  
waiting for the joke  
to land

I am afraid  
of the light socket

I am afraid  
of the end.

**David Wiley**



### The Orient

The old man who sold hats,  
with a thousand lines per square inch  
connecting the vast regions of his face,  
might have come, we used to think,  
from another planet, or at least  
from another time on Earth.

First of all, we couldn't understand his words,  
although people said he spoke our language.  
it was a trick, like doubletalk,  
nodding and grinning, two sets of eyes,  
one set focused on something far away  
that none of us could ever hope to see.

He seemed to be surrounded by a nimbus,  
a color never seen in comic books,  
and in the trail of the glow a sound  
like music gently pursued him;  
Each of his teeth was a tiny statue,  
one make of gold, all the rest ivory.

During the year of the autumn flood  
the old man disappeared, swallowed,  
someone said, by a giant carp.  
the little stand on Main Street  
where he sold his hats was left alone  
shrinelike in it's emptiness;  
and as people passed they often stopped  
to look, and even, unaware, to slightly bow.



## Robin Hiersche



### To Fall In Love With A Poet

let *me* tell you  
a thing or two

it's always a bad idea  
to fall in love with a poet,  
who, just for her personal amusement  
will say anything she knows  
will turn you on  
and worst of all,  
really knows how to put it out.

it's always a terrible,  
self destructive choice,  
and if you can choose otherwise,  
you'd be a lot better off.  
I'd say, run  
as fast as you can  
in any direction  
except, of course  
the direction in which  
lies the poet.

she will be waiting with curious arms,  
legs, mouth, mind and heart,  
which you must understand  
for her, are all  
renewable resources.

It's always a bad idea  
to listen to a poet,  
and especially dangerous  
to read the poems written to you,  
which is the equivalent

of being unwittingly fed  
bacon  
when you are a pig,  
or eggs, when you are a chicken.

you are entirely better off  
with a waitress or a schoolteacher  
someone who will make a matrimonial deal  
you can at least understand.  
Flat out gold ring prostitutes  
are a better trade for your time.  
Of this you will become painfully aware  
when you wake up for the forty millionth time  
alone,  
knowing she isn't.

it's a very bad idea  
to believe in a poet,  
who tells lies to anyone  
who asks for them,  
compassionate, fantastic,  
hilarious lies  
about everything, all the time,  
everywhere,  
to everyone---as usual,  
not just you, even in this.

truth, beauty, life, love  
the Divine; whatever;  
but the poet will have a  
secret name for all of that  
that you can not grasp  
quickly enough ---  
like water  
flowing through your hands  
when your mouth is parched.

finally you will go to her  
and say I really understand now,  
my hands can hold all of you  
and all of me is in your hands---  
this simply is  
we simply are  
it's only we.

the poet laughs,  
her voice rippling over  
the present tense  
of the verb to be  
the first person

singular

and steals one last kiss...

consuming

all

the air.

