

ACKNOWLEDGE

—Stephanie H.

I don't have a problem
with being homeless
others do,
say it in no uncertain
terms: spit, stare,
cross to the other side
of the street, hold their
children close when
I pass by.
I'm just trying
to make it.
I'm forced into a reality most refuse
to acknowledge.
Chased out of stores,
accused of petty theft,
burglary...
I stare them dead
in the face.
Smile.

A LATE DINNER WITH MY SON

Jennifer A.

Remember that night at dinner—
it was about a year ago—
we went to Sammy's restaurant on Caroline Street.
You ordered a shot and the Mediterranean Plate.
I had water
and the avocado, sprouts, and Swiss on whole wheat.
You paid because I didn't have any money,
remember?

We exchanged polite chit chat for a while—
you obsessively fingered your tortoise-shell frames
feeling superior and suspicious the whole time—
me just trying to get to the meat.
Without meaning to, I cut too close to the bone.
Your face, that face I know so well, flushed crimson.
Thunderbolts of ridicule stormed from you mouth,
remember?

You started calling me names—mocking my bright spirit.
Then you slammed fifty bucks on the table
and headed for the exit,
me following a little behind.
Out on the street, you leaped into the driver's seat,
gunned the engine, and peeled off into the night
leaving me standing in Niagara rain on Caroline,
remember?

Well, my umbrella was in your car.
I'd like to have it back.

CHECKOUT LINES

Wayne W.

(Isaiah 3:16-4:1)

The racks are stacked and quite **In TOUCH**
in **VOGUE** on every shelf.

There's **marie claire**
and **VANITY FAIR**
and mega magazines all about **SELF**.

True Confessions are **BAZAAR**
yet **allure** the **ELLE** their way.

A **Teen** with sheen
becomes **seventeen**
all in a **Woman's Day**.

ASTRO girl is off to a **Star**,
Lucky and singing a song.
SiSTER may have missed her
but **LaTina** has seen her
taking **NEW BEAUTY** along.

There's **MORE** to come;
get closer and see
no end to the **ESSENCE**
and **SHAPE** of me.

PIZZA

Deborah R.

I could eat pizza every day.

But that, I'm afraid, that
would be too much.

Once a week is enough. That way
it won't go to my butt.

PLAY REAL PLEZ

Bill W.

We crawl the streets
Looking for crumbs to eat
Where is Jesus and a big talk—
God is right—or perhaps a
flunky
These items in place are
too much of a waste of time;
To that vapor crust; so
defined; so cool – ah baby
kitty don't cut your finger
on that butter slice
It's only sin again again and
again

Duxbury Beach
Wayne W.

Wash over me still,
cool and cleansing tide.
Calm the restless waves
and the churning deep inside.

Trickle 'tween my toes,
tiny grains of sand.
Lead my life to follow
your laughter's kind command.

Spread out your blue wings,
boundless ocean sky.
Coax the weary mind
to go with the leading eye.

Breathe into my soul,
steady heavenly wind.
Turn my barefoot tracks around
and whisk me home again.

NURSERY RHYMES FOR THE HOMELESS
Ed G.

Jack and Jill went up the hill
to fetch a pail of water
when they got to the well
it was dry as hell
closed read a sign
government order

Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall
Humpty Dumpty had a great fall
he laid there shouting

I need a doctor, hurry please

but he couldn't afford
the doctor's fees

Little Miss Muffett
sat on a tuffet
eating her curds and whey
along came a spider
sat down beside her

said he was homeless
and needed a place to stay

Mary had a little lamb
its fleece was white as snow
but when the depression hit
the lamb turned as black
as a crow

Jack Sprat could eat no fat
his wife could eat no lean
so in the end they lost
a lot of weight

and became homeless in between

WHY WE NEED MORE PETS THAN SHELTERS
Cathie B.

A special thanks to Woodbine for providing homes for homeless individuals with pets, and for Laurie Green and the

vets

she gets to help our pets.

Pets offer love without hoops to jump through.
They are accepting no matter how or to whom we pray.
They never tell us to go away.
They often give us joy and something to live for.
And never make us leave our stuff in the courtyard
where buzzards lurk to pluck it all up.
They offer safety in all the unsafe places
and make us aware of devils in the dark blue.
They never turn their face or walk the other way.
They share the things we have and are satisfied.
They are always well-calming even when we feel out of control.
Never a tough tongue or bootstrap rap.
They love the way we smell
even when there is no water to be found.
They keep us warm on long, lonely nights.
And they keep the rats at bay.

A Friend
Diane G.

My cat is named Snickers.
She kind of looks like a candy bar.
She is definitely the most beautiful by far.
She makes my day, everyday.
It is hard living on the streets with a pet.
But we stick it out together,
you can bet.
What is hers is mine:
snakes, birds and mice.
And I try to reward her
with a little rice.
Probably out of a dumpster,
she doesn't seem to care.
As long as we're together
we will make it anywhere.
I love her and she loves me.
I guess that's why God let it be.

First Will And Word Testament
David S. P.

As curator for the
preservation of poetry
in my own home, I
hereby leave my little
girls everything—the
inner spirit's porcelain
spy glass for special
investigations into any
hard or loving heart,
the inlaid dowry chest
for their choicest poems,
the rock crystal candle-
sticks for display on
the cedar tilt-top
tea table, the mahogany
bow-backed armchair
for after hours reading.
and tonight, I leave
them with my wishful
words to help thread
their dreams with pink
party lanterns and
frosted glass fairy
lights for illuminating
blue river pebbles
floating through razor
rock rapids of REM
sleep where white
slipper shells slide
towards new aquamarine
avenues just one soft
wake up away.