



POEMS

by Gerald Rice

#41
this poem
would not take
life.

its stroke fell
short of
genius.

it opened
up to gasp
its

first
breath but sipped
at air

and
changed its mind.
i tried

Note: Mr. Rice is a senior at Oakland University

my hand,
over and again,
massaging

each
line, scratching and
rewording, ink-bleeding

as
I sutured it
with my

pen,
but it bled-out
on the

table.

A DAY AFTER

They have written on my brain with
Words not my own.
Their etchings
Shrilled down my spine
Made sharp red streaks
Through my vision
These memories are terrible;
Ghosts of strangers
Who call me by name
And smile with pinched faces
I have never met
These authors who have walked my feet
Past oceans, and onto foreign soils
I have never reached.
I have held precious jewels
Yet untouched by man
But this map they have built inside me
Traces life I have not yet lived
With a thousand different scripts
I felt them, penning away,
Page after page
In the folds of my brain,
Taking me out of context,
I wouldn't have minded if
They hadn't overwritten me.
They didn't look for blank
Spaces, instead, using scraps
Of me I'd saved for
Myself.

I felt them up there,
Like a 'funeral in my brain'
They were happy mourners
Signing over names in a guest book
Unbothered with staying between lines
And scribbling wholly inappropriate things.
I would have shouted, but I feared
The words they would've sent out
I would send you a message if they weren't
Already done with me
I can only sift through the primitive bits
And fingerpaint with ash of what I was, left behind
Hoping there is something forgotten here
They didn't bother with
I have been remade and
They are with you next.

GREY

In the grave of absence
Clasp your hands upon

The One you love
If only a memory,

In the trivial years spent,
Honeying and making love,

Let not the thought be wasted
But pressed for every drop

To oil the stale clutch
Of Age from your heart

Take this ghost
By the wrist and dance

It through hard air
And down, down farther,

Past Deep, under Below
Spill over stones enveloping

Hook-backed Mirrors, deposited
Like clam-pearls

Wring them with a dry kiss,
Hug onto the knees of brittle years,

Each one petal-winged and slipping free
To rusted sky,

Feathering you down,
Settling, settling into Final Earth- Yawn,

And show spectators
How to

Pantomime
Sleep