

LIGHT

1: THE CHANGING SEASONS

BEWITCHED BY AUTUMN

Autumn's enchanting—
a riot of color
the envy of winter
that's grayer and duller.

Autumn's alluring—
a time that bespeaks
a spring in your step
and a glow in your cheeks.

Autumn's surprising—
it harks to a drummer
who loves the refrain
of an Indian summer.

When autumn arrives
I succumb—and that's why
I'm not an all-season
but just a fall guy!

—NED PASTOR

2: PARTY FAVORS

SMASHING CHINA

I like the sound of it: the Crash!
Of a whole sideboard of pure cash
Reduced to smithereens—Spode,
Meissen, Ming—the debt we owed
To Beaux Arts gone in a flash.

Here is a set of Sèvres: smash
It! Make of it ceramic hash,
And christen it *Sèvres à la mode*.
I like the sound of it.

Should the beau monde say you're rash,
Reply it's just your little bash,
A latter-day Horatian ode.
And if they say that's balderdash?
I like the sound of it.

—TOM DISCH

2: PARTY FAVORS (cont.)

SMALL TALK AT NEW YEAR'S

So how's the family? The old friends you've seen?
What color's the lint in your washing machine?

Did you like the play? Did it make you cry?
Did you beat the traffic last Fourth of July?

How about them Mets? Don't they beat all?
What high-priced jerk'll they hire next fall?

That baby-faced actor, what's his name,
the one who o'deed... wasn't that a shame?

How's your Mom's heart? And your Dad's depression?
Why didn't he bail out at that last recession?

Does your son put you down? Does your daughter smoke pot?
Is your brand new marriage totally shot?

Do you ever curse God? Do you believe in Hell?
Don't you just *love* this party? Isn't it swell?

How's your cancer progressing? Has it metastasized?
Have you made out your last will and testament? That's wise.

I toast you good buddy. Without you in the room
next year we'd have no corpse to exhume.

Here's to the Pope, and here's to the President,
here's to our old people's home, every resident.

Here's to our host, this thirty-first of December,
and here's to the surgeon who lengthened his member.

May you all prosper in money and sin,
and may I never get this drunk again.

—L. N. ALLEN

3: BEASTS

THE TERRIBLE TYRANNOSAURUS

How the terrible tyrannosaurus
That roamed the earth eons before us,
 Though colossal and feared
 Nonetheless disappeared,
Is a story unlikely to bore us.

It has paleontologists guessing
How an animal so prepossessing,
 So huge and carnivorous
 Is gone (Saints deliver us!)
There's a question that's well worth addressing.

Though our planet they're no longer gracing,
In my head, one wild thought keeps on racing:
 If you'll just close your eyes
 Can you visualize
Two tyrannosauri embracing?

Although modesty seems to forbid it,
It all comes down to sex, let's admit it.
 As I look at those scales
 And those fifteen foot tails,
I keep wondering just how they did it.

If the act of sex they were renouncin'
Then those fossil remains in Wisconsin
 (Which were found in a quarry)
 Were tyrannosauri
Who should have read Masters and Johnson.

—BEN MILDER

THE GIRAFFE

An Ogden Nashlike Portrait

This little-known fact about the neck of the giraffe
May cause the populace to laffe
From Sacramento to Toledo:

The giraffe has the same number of bones in its neck as
 we do.

It has but seven cervical vertebræ from its shoulder
 to its skull,

An elongated resemblance to the monkey and to man (over
 which Creationists may wish to mull).

A cousin of the camel, its hump was stretched and relo-
 cated for the sake of altitude,

And seemingly addicted to the leaf, it often gets quite
 quite high securing fude.

This herbivorous crane parades with grace and is quite
 pretty,

A cloven-hooved leopard—obviously designed by a com-
 metty.

Yes, the preposterous proportions of this animal could
 make a fellow laugh,

And when I need to, I just think of the giraugh.

—ROCKIN' RED

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