

Classic Poetry Series

James Marcus Schuyler
- poems -

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James Marcus Schuyler(9 November 1923 – 12 April 1991)

James Marcus Schuyler was an American poet whose awards include the Pulitzer Prize for Poetry for his 1980 collection *The Morning of the Poem*. He was a central figure in the New York School and is often associated with fellow New York School poets [John Ashbery](http://www.poemhunter.com/john-ashbery/), [Frank O'Hara](http://www.poemhunter.com/frank-o-hara/), [Kenneth Koch](http://www.poemhunter.com/kenneth-koch/), and Barbara Guest.

Life and death

James Marcus Schuyler was the son of Marcus Schuyler (a reporter) and Margaret Daisy Connor Schuyler.

A native of Chicago, he attended Bethany College (West Virginia) from 1941 to 1943. In recollection of his times at Bethany College, Schuyler said in an interview published in the spring of 1992, that he did not excel, "I just played bridge all the time."

Schuyler moved to New York City in the late 1940s where he worked for NBC and first befriended W. H. Auden. In 1947, he moved to Ischia, Italy, where he lived in Auden's rented apartment and worked as his secretary. Between 1947 and 1948, Schuyler attended the University of Florence.

After returning to the United States and settling in New York City, he roomed with John Ashbery and Frank O'Hara.

In April 1991, at age sixty-seven, Schuyler died in Manhattan following a stroke. His ashes were interred at the Little Portion Friary (Episcopal), Mt. Sinai, Long Island, New York.

Personal Life

Schuyler was not known for revealing much about his personal life. It is known that he was gay, was manic depressive, suffered several years of psychoanalysis and withstood many traumatic experiences. One of these includes a "near death experience" in a fire which he caused by smoking in bed.

In a spring 1990 special issue of the *Denver Quarterly* that was written by Barbara Guest in devotion to Schuyler's work, Guest refers to Schuyler as an

"intimist," saying:

...for me Jimmy is the Vuillard of us, he withholds his secret, the secret thing until the moment appears to reveal it. We wait and wait for the name of a flower while we praise the careful cultivation. We wait for someone to speak, And it is Jimmy in an aside.

Inspiration and Style

Schuyler's move to Italy, as Auden's typist, was accompanied by his intention of writing. In 1981 he was said to have recalled "that he found Auden's elaborate formalism 'inhibiting.'" This was likely an influence to his own "conversational style and proselike line."

While living in New York, Schuyler found inspiration in the art world. From 1955-1961, he was a "curator of circulating exhibitions at the Museum of Modern Art." He was also an editorial associate and critic for Art News. While working as an editorial associate, Schuyler wrote criticism about a large amount of art. In an interview that was published in spring 2002, he said, "I did learn an awful lot during those years, and then went on in the 60s writing occasional articles about specific artists and their specific strategies. Partly it was to make money, and partly because I wanted to write about painting, about art." His time as an art critic, then, became a major inspiration to his work.

From 1961 to 1973 Schuyler lived with Fairfield Porter and his family in Southampton, Long Island. Porter became an influence for Schuyler as well, and he dedicated his first major collection, *Freely Espousing* to Anne and Fairfield Porter.

Schuyler is also noted for his distinct ability to take things that are "normal," and bring out their greatness. He takes a look at things that many people may not see, or care to take note of, such as individual raindrops. He evaluates the ordinary and the way they work in relation to other things: "It's the water in the drinking glass the tulips are in./ It's a day like any other."

Schuyler was also responsible for writing Frank O'Hara's elegy, "Buried at Springs". Schuyler recalls <http://www.poemhunter.com/ralph-waldo-emerson/> Ralph Waldo Emerson's transcendentalism, and uses nature to express himself in the elegy. Schuyler also has several works that are about, or that reference lists.

In his Diary, Schuyler says that he is "more of a reader than a writer," and "everything happens as I write."

Awards

Schuyler received the 1981 Pulitzer Prize for Poetry for his 1980 collection *The Morning of the Poem*. He also coauthored a novel, *A Nest of Ninnies*, with John Ashbery in 1969. Schuyler also received the Longview Foundation Award in 1961, and the Frank O'Hara Prize for Poetry in 1969 for *Freely Espousing*.

Schuyler was a Guggenheim Fellow and a fellow of the American Academy of Poets.

His poem *The Morning of the Poem* is considered to be among the best long poems of the postmodern era.

A Man In Blue

Under the French horns of a November afternoon
a man in blue is raking leaves
with a wide wooden rake (whose teeth are pegs
or rather, dowels). Next door
boys play soccer: "You got to start
over!" sort of. A round attic window
in a radiant gray house waits like a kettledrum.
"You got to start . . ." The Brahmsian day
lapses from waltz to march. The grass,
rough-cropped as Bruno Walter's hair,
is stretched, strewn and humped beneath a sycamore
wide and high as an idea of heaven
in which Brahms turns his face like a bearded thumb
and says, "There is something I must tell you!"
to Bruno Walter. "In the first movement
of my Second, think of it as a family
planning where to go next summer
in terms of other summers. A material ecstasy,
subdued, recollective." Bruno Walter
in a funny jacket with a turned-up collar
says, "Let me sing it for you."
He waves his hands and through the vocalese-shaped spaces
of naked elms he draws a copper beech
ignited with a few late leaves. He bluely glazes
a rhododendron "a sea of leaves" against gold grass.
There is a snapping from the brightwork
of parked and rolling cars.
There almost has to be a heaven! so there could be
a place for Bruno Walter
who never needed the cry of a baton.
Immortality—
in a small, dusty, rather gritty, somewhat scratchy
Magnavox from which a forte
drops like a used Brillo Pad?
Frayed. But it's hard to think of the sky as a thick glass floor
with thick-soled Viennese boots tromping about on it.
It's a whole lot harder thinking of Brahms
in something soft, white, and flowing.
"Life," he cries (here, in the last movement),

"is something more than beer and skittles!"
"And the something more
is a whole lot better than beer and skittles,"
says Bruno Walter,
darkly, under the sod. I don't suppose it seems so dark
to a root. Who are these men in evening coats?
What are these thumps?
Where is Brahms?
And Bruno Walter?
Ensnored in resonant plump easy chairs
covered with scuffed brown leather
in a pungent autumn that blends leaf smoke
(sycamore, tobacco, other),
their nobility wound in a finale
like this calico cat
asleep, curled up in a breadbasket,
on a sideboard where the sun falls.

James Marcus Schuyler

A White City

My thoughts turn south
a white city
we will wake in one another's arms.
I wake
and hear the steam pipe knock
like a metal heart
and find it has snowed.

James Marcus Schuyler

April

The morning sky is clouding up
and what is that tree,
dressed up in white? The fruit
tree, French pear. Sulphur-
yellow bees stud the forsythia
canes leaning down into the transfer
across the park. And trees in
skimpy flower bud suggest
the uses of paint thinner, so
fine the net they cast upon
the wind. Cross-pollination
is the order of the fragrant day.
That was yesterday: today is May,
not April and the magnolias
open their goblets up and
an unseen precipitation
fills them. A gray day in May.

James Marcus Schuyler

Buried At Springs

There is a hornet in the room
and one of us will have to go
out the window into the late
August midafternoon sun. I
won. There is a certain challenge
in being humane to hornets
but not much. A launch draws
two lines of wake behind it
on the bay like a delta
with a melted base. Sandy
billows, or so they look,
of feathery ripe heads of grass,
an acid-yellow kind of
goldenrod glowing or glowering
in shade. Rocks with rags
of shadow, washed dust clouts
that will never bleach.
It is not like this at all.
The rapid running of the
lapping water a hollow knock
of someone shipping oars:
it's eleven years since
Frank sat at this desk and
saw and heard it all
the incessant water the
immutable crickets only
not the same: new needles
on the spruce, new seaweed
on the low-tide rocks
other grass and other water
even the great gold lichen
on a granite boulder
even the boulder quite
literally is not the same

II

A day subtle and suppressed
in mounds of juniper enfolding

scratchy pockets of shadow
while bigness—rocks, trees, a stump—
stands shadowless in an overcast
of ripe grass. There is nothing
but shade, like the boggy depths
of a stand of spruce, its resonance
just the thin scream
of mosquitoes ascending.
Boats are light lumps on the bay
stretching past erased islands
to ocean and the terrible tumble
and London (“rain persisting”)
and Paris (“changing to rain”).
Delicate day, setting the bright
of a young spruce against the cold
of an old one hung with unripe cones
each exuding at its tip
gum, pungent, clear as a tear,
a day tarnished and fractured
as the quartz in the rocks
of a dulled and distant point,
a day like a gull passing
with a slow flapping of wings
in a kind of lope, without
breeze enough to shake loose
the last of the fireweed flowers,
a faintly clammy day, like wet silk
stained by one dead branch
the harsh russet of dried blood.

James Marcus Schuyler

Closed Gentian Distances

A nothing day full of
wild beauty and the
timer pings. Roll up
the silver off the bay
take down the clouds
sort the spruce and
send to laundry marked,
more starch. Goodbye
golden- and silver-
rod, asters, bayberry
crisp in elegance.
Little fish stream
by, a river in water.

Anonymous submission.

James Marcus Schuyler

Destitute Peru

For John Ashbery

We pullmaned to Peoria. Was
Gladys glad, Skippy missed
Sookie so. So Peru-ward, home.
"I'll sew buttons on dresses yet."

Nike's peach-knife nicked little
finger Chinese straw finger-cuffed
to Minna's Siamesed. Hartford,
how are your wheres, our whens?

Or extirpated traumas' gifted
guilt smothered aboard a club
car. Lake Ontario spilled
Jo Jo's knapsack: "Pasternak."

An alligator ate an alligator-
trapping monkey. We ate because
"it's dark, it's air-conditioned"
like lurching to the movies,

shot marbles in lobbies. What
interests? Takes? Escapes? Eat,
moth-light, part and apart, slowly
we slow waiters serve hot plates.

James Marcus Schuyler

Faure's Second Piano Quartet

On a day like this the rain comes
down in fat and random drops among
the ailanthus leaves---"the tree
of Heaven"---the leaves that on moon-
lit nights shimmer black and blade-
shaped at this third-floor window.
And there are bunches of small green
knobs, buds, crowded together. The
rapid music fills in the spaces of
the leaves. And the piano comes in,
like an extra heartbeat, dangerous
and lovely. Slower now, less like
the leaves, more like the rain which
almost isn't rain, more like thawed-
out hail. All this beauty in the
mess of this small apartment on
West 20th in Chelsea, New York.
Slowly the notes pour out, slowly,
more slowly still, fat rain falls.

Anonymous submission.

James Marcus Schuyler

Foreign Parts

Meat-eater, salt-licker, piped spring
dribble-sucker, an exiled Bolshevnik's

villa at Viareggio. The beach sheep
shit crumby money, munificent marks,

lire, dollars, Dolorous Daintyfoot,
Proudass, Chinadoll, a three-way clut-

ter, the piazza pizzeria. Mrs. Smith-
Jones, rich, gonged aground a pissoir.

At three the imprisoned poisoner's tea
tells her rice-cake fortune, it is it.

Who to who? You yew alley ewes knew
goatsuckers in Swedish horse-hide hid

the boathouse key, locked the oarlock,
sung Sam's nutsy song, Sin Fleet, at

night. Night, ketchup cup, pepper-pot,
bid bound Belinda break her bracelets:

the dirty photographs apostrophize mon-
soons. Swimming snakes shake the lake.

James Marcus Schuyler

Freely Espousing

a commingling sky

a semi-tropic night
that cast the blackest shadow
of the easily torn, untrembling banana leaf

or Quebec! what a horrible city
so Steubenville is better?

the sinking sensation
when someone drowns thinking, "This can't be happening to me!"
the profit of excavating the battlefield where Hannibal whomped the Romans
the sinuous beauty of words like allergy
the tonic resonance of
pill when used as in
"she is a pill"
on the other hand I am not going to espouse any short stories in which lawn
mowers clack.

No, it is absolutely forbidden
for words to echo the act described; or try to. Except very directly
as in
bong. And tickle. Oh it is inescapable kiss.
Marriages of the atmosphere
are worth celebrating

where Tudor City
catches the sky or the glass side
of a building lit up at night in fog
"What is that gold-green tetrahedron down the river?"
"You are experiencing a new sensation."

if the touch-me-nots
are not in bloom
neither are the chrysanthemums
the bales of pink cotton candy
in the slanting light
are ornamental cherry trees.
The greens around them, and
the browns, the grays, are the park.

It's. Hmm. No.

Their scallop shell of quiet

is the S.S. United States.
It is not so quiet and they
are a medium-size couple who
when they fold each other up
well, thrill. That's their story.

James Marcus Schuyler

Hymn To Life

The wind rests its cheek upon the ground and feels the cool damp
And lifts its head with twigs and small dead blades of grass
Pressed into it as you might at the beach rise up and brush away
The sand. The day is cool and says, "I'm just staying overnight."
The world is filled with music, and in between the music, silence
And varying the silence all sorts of sounds, natural and man made:
There goes a plane, some cars, geese that honk and, not here, but
Not so far away, a scream so rending that to hear it is to be
Never again the same. "Why, this is hell." Out of the death breeding
Soil, here, rise emblems of innocence, snowdrops that struggle
Easily into life and hang their white enamel heads toward the dirt
And in the yellow grass are small wild crocuses from hills goats
Have cropped to barrenness. The corms come by mail, are planted.
Then do their thing: to live! To live! So natural and so hard
Hard as it seems it must be for green spears to pierce the all but
Frozen mold and insist that they too, like mouse-eared chickweed,
Will live. The spears lengthen, the bud appears and spreads, its
Seed capsule fattens and falls, the green turns yellowish and withers
Stretched upon the ground. In Washington, magnolias were in bud. In
Charlottesville early bulbs were up, brightening the muck. Tomorrow
Will begin another spring. No one gets many, one at a time, like a long
Awaited letter that one day comes. But it may not say what you hoped
Or distraction robs it of what it once would have meant. Spring comes
And the winter weather, here, may hold. It is arbitrary, like the plan
Of Washington, D.C. Avenues and circles in asphalt web and no
One gets younger: which is not, for the young, true, discovering new
Freedoms at twenty, a relief not to be a teen-ager anymore. One of us
Had piles, another water on the knee, a third a hernia—a strangulated
Hernia is one of life's less pleasant bits of news—and only
One, at twenty, moved easily through all the galleries to pill
Free sleep. Oh, it's not all that bad. The sun shines on my hand
And the myriad lines that criss-cross tell the story of nearly fifty
Years. Sorry, it's too long to relate. Once, when I was young, I
Awoke at first light and sitting in a rocking chair watched the sun
Come up beyond the houses across the street. Another time I stood
At the cables of a liner and watched the wake turning and
Turning upon itself. Another time I woke up and in a bottle
On a chest of drawers the thoughtful doctor had left my tonsils. I
Didn't keep them. The turning of the globe is not so real to us

As the seasons turning and the days that rise out of early gray
—The world is all cut-outs then—and slip or step steadily down
The slopes of our lives where the emotions and needs sprout. “I
Need you,” tree, that dominates this yard, thick-waisted, tall
And crook branched. Its bark scales off like that which we forget:
Pain, an introduction at a party, what precisely happened umpteen
Years or days or hours ago. And that same blue jay returns, or perhaps
It is another. All jays are one to me. But not the sun which seems at
Each rising new, as though in the night it enacted death and rebirth,
As flowers seem to. The roses this June will be different roses
Even though you cut an armful and come in saying, “Here are the roses,”
As though the same blooms had come back, white freaked with red
And heavily scented. Or a cut branch of pear blooms before its time,
“Forced.” Time brings us into bloom and we wait, busy, but wait
For the unforced flow of words and intercourse and sleep and dreams
In which the past seems to portend a future which is just more
Daily life. The cat has a ripped ear. He fights, he fights all
The tom cats all the time. There are blood gouts on a velvet seat.
Easily sponged off: but these red drops on a book of Stifter’s, will
I remember and say at some future time, “Oh, yes, that was the day
Hodge had a torn ear and bled on the card table?” Poor
Hodge, battered like an old car. Silence flows into my mind. It
Is spring. It is also still really winter. Not a day when you say,
“What a beautiful spring day.” A day like twilight or evening when
You think, “I meant to watch the sun set.” And then comes on
To rain. “You’ve got to take,” says the man at the store, “the rough
With the smooth.” A window to the south is rough with raindrops
That, caught in the screen, spell out untranslatable glyphs. A story
Not told: so much not understood, a sight, an insight, and you pass on,
Another day for each day is subjective and there is a totality of days
As there are as many to live it. The day lives us and in exchange
We it: after snowball time, a month, March, of fits and starts, winds,
Rain, spring hints and wintry arrears. The weather pays its check,
Like quarreling in a D.C. hotel, “I won’t quarrel about it, but I made
No local calls.” Strange city, broad and desolating, monuments
Rearing up and offices like monuments and crowds lined up to see
The White House inside. “We went to see the White House. It was lovely.”
Not so strange though as the cemetery with guttering flame and
Admirals and generals with bigger gravestones than the lesser fry
Below Lee’s house, false marble pillars and inside all so
Everyday, in every room a shawl tossed untidily upon a chair or bed
Created no illusion of lived-in-ness. But the periwinkles do, in beds

That flatten and are starred blue-violet, a retiring flower loved,
It would seem, of the dead, so often found where they congregate. A
Quote from Aeschylus: I forget. All, all is forgotten gradually and
One wonders if these ideas that seem handed down are truly what they were?
An idea may mutate like a plant, and what was once held basic truth
Become an idle thought. like, "Shall we plant some periwinkles there
By that bush? They're so to be depended on." The wind shakes the screen
And all the raindrops on it streak and run in stems. It's colder.
The crocuses close up. The snowdrops are brushed with mud. The sky
Colors itself rosily behind gray-black and the rain falls through
The basketball hoop on a garage, streaking its backboard with further
Trails of rust, a lovely color to set with periwinkle violet-blue.
And the trees shiver and shudder in the light rain blasts from off
The ocean. The street wet reflects the breakup of the clouds
On its face, driving over sky with a hissing sound. The car
Slides slightly and in the west appear streaks of different green:
A lid lifted briefly on the spring. Then the moon burns through
Racing clouds, its aureole that of rings of oil on water in a harbor
Bubbling up from an exhaust. Clear the sky. Beside a rim of moon.
Three stars and only three and one planet. So under lilacs unleaved
Lie a clump of snowdrops and one purple crocus. Purple. A polka-dotted
Color little girls are fond of: "See my new dress!" and she twirls
On one foot. Then, crossed, bursts into tears. Smiles and rain, like
These passing days in which buds swell, unseen as yet, waiting
For the elms to color their further out most twigs, only the willow
Gleams yellow. Life is hard. Some are strong, some weak, most
Untested. These useless truths blow about the yard the day after
Rain the soft sunlight making softer shadows on the faded lawn.
The world looks so old in the spring, laid out under the sky. One
Gull coasts by, unexpected as a kiss on the nape of the neck. These
Days need birds and so they come, a flock of ducks, and a bunch of
Small fluffy unnamed balls that hide in hedges and make a racket.
"The gift of life," as though, existing in expectancy and then
Someone came up and said, "Here," or, "Happy Birthday." It is more
Mysterious than that, pierced by blue or running in the rain
Or simply lying down to read. Writing a postponed letter which may
Bring no pleasure: arduous truths to tell. And if you thought March was bad
Consider April, early April, wet snow falling into blue squills
That underneath a beech make an illusory lake, a haze of blue
With depth to it. That is like pain, ordinary household pain,
Like piles, or bumping against a hernia. All the signs are set for A OK
A day to visit the National Gallery—Velázquez, Degas—but, and

What a but, with water on the knee "You'll need a wheelchair, Mummy."
Coasting among the masterpieces, of what use are they? Angel with a
Hurdy-Gurdy or this young man in dun clothes who holds his hat so that
The red lining shows and glows. And in the sitting room people sit
And rest their feet and talk of where they've been, motels and Monticello,
Dinner in the Fiji Room. Someone forgets a camera. Each day forgetting:
What is there so striking to remember? The rain stops. April shines
A little, stormily, the ocean off there makes its freight car noise
Or rattles with catarrh and asks to have its nose wiped. Gray descends.
An illuminous penetration of unbright light that seeps and coats
The ragged lawn and spells out bare spots and winter fallen branches.
Yardwork. And now the yardwork is over (it is never over), today's
Stint anyway. Odd jobs, that stretch ahead, wide and mindless as
Pennsylvania Avenue or the bridge to Arlington, crossed and recrossed
And there the Lincoln Memorial crumbles. It looks so solid: it won't
Last. The impermanence of permanence, is that all there is? To look
And see the plane tree. Its crooked branches brush the ground, rear
In its age, older than any of us, destined, if all goes well with it,
To outlast us all. Does one then resent the plane tree, host
To cardinals? I hear them call. Plaintively, in the mating season.
Why should a white city dog my thoughts? Vast, arid, a home to many,
So strange in its unamiability. Stony city laid out on an heroic plan,
Why are you there? Various answers present themselves, likely
As squills. It doesn't really matter, for instance, to miss the spring.
For this is spring, this mud and swelling fruit tree buds, furred
On the apple trees. And yet it still might snow: it's been known
Falling like cherry blossom petals around the Reflecting Pool, a sight
To see. And there are sights to hear, music from a phonograph, pop
Or classical, please choose one or both. It doesn't matter. What matters
Is how the light becomes entrapped in a dusty screen, masking out
The view into the depths of the garage where the cars are stalled like oxen.
Day, suddenly sunny and warming up for more, I would like to stroke you
As one strokes a cat and feels the ridgy skull beneath the fur and tickles
It behind its ears. The cat twists its head and moves it toward your fingers
Like the lifting thighs of someone fucked, moving up to meet the stroke.
The sun strokes all now in this zone, reaching in through windows to jell
Glue in jars (that takes time)—may I send you a warmed bottle of Pliobond?
It is on this desk and—here's the laugh—I don't know who put it there.
"This is something he will like, or use." Meantime, those branches go
Ungathered up. I hate fussing with nature and would like the world to be
All weeds. I see it from the train, citybound, how the yuccas and chicory
Thrive. So much messing about, why not leave the world alone? Then

There would be no books, which is not to be borne. Willa Cather alone is worth
The price of admission to the horrors of civilization. Let's make a list.
The greatest paintings. Preferred orchestral conductors. Nostalgia singers.
The best, the very best, roses. After learning all their names—Rose
de Rescht, Cornelia, Pax—it is important to forget them. All these
Lists are so much dirty laundry. Sort it out fast and send to laundry
Or hurl into washing machine, add soap and let'er spin. The truth is
That all these household tasks and daily work—up the street two men
Install an air conditioner—are beautiful. Flowers and machines that people
Love: the boy who opts for trade school while white collar kids
Call him a 'greaser.' I wish I could take an engine apart and reassemble it.
I also wish I sincerely wanted to. I don't. "Love is everything that it's
Cracked up to be." There's a song for you. Another is in the silence
Of a windless day. Hear it? Motors, yes, and the scrabbling of the surf
But, too, the silence in which out of the muck arise violet leaves
(Leaves of violets, that is). The days slide by and we feel we must
Stamp an impression on them. It is quite other. They stamp us, both
Time and season so that looking back there are wide unpeopled avenues
Blue-gray with cars on them, parked either side, and a small bridge that
Crosses Rock Creek has four bison at its corners, out of scale
Yet so mysterious to childhood, friendly, ominous, patable because
Of bronze. The rain comes back, this spring, like a thirsty dog
Who goes back and back to his dish. "Fill it up, please," wag wag.
Gray depression and purple shadows, the daffodils feigning sunlight
That came yesterday. One day rain, one day sun, the weather is stuck
Like a record. Through it all the forsythia begins to bloom, brown
And yellow and warm as lit gas jets, clinging like bees to
The arching canes where starlings take cover from foraging cats. Not
To know: what have these years of living and being lived taught us?
Not to quarrel? Scarcely. You want to shoot pool, I want to go home:
And just before the snap of temper one had sensed so
Strongly the pleasure of watching a game well played: the cue ball
Carom and the struck ball pocketed. Skill. And still the untutored
Rain comes down. Open the laundry door. Press your face into the
Wet April chill: a life mask. Attune yourself to what is happening
Now, the little wet things, like washing up the lunch dishes. Bubbles
Rise, rinse and it is done. Let the dishes air dry, the way
You let your hair after a shampoo. All evaporates, water, time, the
Happy moment and—harder to believe—the unhappy. Time on a bus,
That passes, and the night with its burthen and gift of dreams. That
Other life we live and need, filled with joys and terrors, threaded
By dailiness: where the wished for sometimes happens, or, just

Before waking tremulous hands undo buttons. Another day, the sun
Comes out from behind unbuttoned cloud underclothes—gray with use—
And bud scales litter the sidewalks. A new shop is being built,
An old one refurbished. What was a white interior will now be brown
Behind men's clothes, there are these changes in taste. Fashion
It anew. Change in everything yet none so great as the changes in
Oneself, which, short of sickness, go unobserved. Why watch
Yourself? You know you're here, and where tomorrow you will probably
Be. In the delicatessen a woman made a fumbling gesture then
Slowly folded toward the floor. "Get a doctor," someone said. "She's
Having a fit." Not knowing how to help I left, taking with me
The look of appeal in faded blue eyes. Between these sharp attacks
Of harsh reality I would like to interpose: interpose is not the
Word. One wants them not to happen, that's all, but, like slammed
On brakes—the cab skids, you are thrown forward, ouch—they
Come. Times when religion would help: "Be merciful" "Intercede"
"That which I should have done ..." Fear and superstition and some-
Thing more. But without the conviction of a truth, best leave
It alone. Life, it seems, explains nothing about itself. In the
Garden now daffodils stand full unfolded and to see them is enough.
They seem no more passing than when they weren't there: perhaps
The promise when first the blades pierced the wintry soil
Was better? You see, you invent choices where none exist. Perhaps
It is not a choice but a preference? No, take it all, it's free,
Help yourself. The sap rises. The trees leaf out and bloom. You
Suddenly sense: you don't know what. An exhilaration that revives
Old views and surges of energy or the pure pleasure of
Simply looking. A car goes over a rise and there are birches snow
Twisted into cabalistic shapes: The Devil's Notch; or Smuggler's
Gap. At the time you could not have imagined the time when you
Would forget the name, as apparent and there as your own. Rivers
Reflecting silver skies, how many boys have swum in you? A rope
Tied to a tree caught between my thighs and I was yanked headfirst
And fell into the muddy creek. What a long time it seemed, rising
To the surface, how lucky it didn't catch me in the groin. That
Won't happen twice, I imagine. That summer sun was the same
As this April one: is repetition boring? Or only inactivity? Quite
A few things are boring, like the broad avenues of Washington
D.C. that seem to go from nowhere and back again. Civil servants
Wait at the crossing to cross to lunch at the Waffle House. In
This twilight Degas a woman sits and holds a fan, it's
The just rightness that counts. And how have you come to know just

Rightness when you see it and what is the deep stirring that it
Brings? Art is as mysterious as nature, as life, of which it is
A flower. Under the hedges now the weedy strips grow bright
With dandelions, just as good a flower as any other. Unfortunately,
You can't pick them: they wilt. But these burgeoning days are
Not like any others. Promise is a part of it, promise of warmth
And vegetative growth. "Wheel me out into the sun, Sonny,
These old bones that creak need it." And the gardener does not
Come back: over the winter he had a heart attack, has to take it
Easy. You see death shadowed out in another's life. The threat
Is always there, even in balmy April sunshine. So what
If it is hard to believe in? Stopping in the city while the light
Is red, to think that all who stop with you too must stop, and
Yet it is not less individual a fate for all that. "When I
was born, death kissed me. I kissed it back." Meantime, there
Is bridge, and solitaire, and phone calls and a door slams, someone
Goes out into the April sun to take a spin as far as the
Grocer's, to shop, and then come back. In the fullness of time,
Let me hand you an empty cup, coffee stained. Or a small glass
Of spirits: "Here's your ounce of whisky for today." Next door
The boys dribble a basketball and practice shots. Two boys
Run by: high spirits. The postman comes. No mail of interest.
Another day, there is. A postcard of the Washington Monument,
A friend waving from a small window at the needle top. "Hoo
Hoo" he calls. Another day, and still the sun shines down, warming
Tulips into bloom, a redder red than blood. The dandelions
Cringe before them. In the evening there will be time enough
To drive from here to there, study the vegetable patch, admire
The rosy violets. Life in action, life in repose, life in
Contemplation, which is hard to tell from day dreaming, on a day
When the sky woolgathers clouds and sets their semblance on a
Glassy ocean. Only its edge goes lisp. On no two days the same.
Is it the ocean's mindlessness that troubles? At times it seems
Calculatedly malevolent, tearing the dunes asunder, tumbling
Summer houses into itself, a terror to see. They say there are
Those who have never felt terror. A slight creeping of the scalp,
Merely. How fine. Finer than sand, that, on a day like this.
Trickles through my fingers, ensconced in a dune cleft, sun
Warmed and breeze cooled. This peace is full of sounds and
Movement. A couple passes, jogging. A dog passes, barking
And running. My nose runs, a little. Just a drip. Left over
From winter. How long ago it seems! All spring and summer stretch

Ahead, a roadway lined by roses and thunder. "It will be here
Before you know it." These twigs will then have leafed and
Shower down a harvest of yellow-brown. So far away, so
Near at hand. The sand runs through my fingers. The yellow
Daffodils have white corollas (sepals?). The crocuses are gone,
I didn't see them go. They were here, now they're not. Instead
The forsythia ensnarls its flames, cool fire, pendent above the smoke
Of its brown branches. Beaches are near. It rains again: the screen
And window glass are pebbled by it. It soaks through a rain coat that
Has had its water repellency dry cleaned out of it. Most modern
Inventions don't work so well, or not for long. A breakdown occurs,
Or something simple, like the dishwasher detergent eating off
The pattern on china, even the etched florets on wine glasses.
Strong stuff. From the train, a stand of larch is greener than
Greenest grass. A funny tree, of many moods, gold in autumn, naked
In winter: an evergreen (it looks) that isn't. What kind of a tree
Is that? I love to see it resurrect itself, the enfolded buttons
Of needles studding the branches, then opening into little bursts.
And that Washington flower, the pink magnolia tree, blooms now
In little yards, its trunk a smoky gray. And soon the hybrid azaleas,
So much too much, will follow, and the tender lilac. Persia, we
Have much to thank you for, besides the word lapis lazuli. And someone
You know well is suffering, sees it all but not the way before
Him, hating his job and not knowing what to change it for. Have
You any advice to give? Have you learned nothing in all these
Years? "Take it as it comes." Sit still and listen: each so alone.
Someone driving decides not to take that curve, to pile it up
In smithereens, the anxious and unsatisfying years: goodbye, life.
Others keep on living so as not to wound their friends: the suicide
Fantasy, to awaken rested and fresh, to plunge into a deep and
Dreamless sleep, to be mindless and at one with all that grows,
Dies and revives each April, here, crying, "Stir your stumps!"
In the mental hospital a patient is ready to be discharged. "I'm
So glad to be going home!" Where the same old problems wait;
Still, to feel more equal to them, that's something. "Time heals
All wounds": now what's that supposed to mean? Wounds can
Kill, like that horse chestnut tree with the rotting place will surely
Die unless the tree doctor comes. Cut out the rot, fill with tree
Cement, score and leave to heal. The rain comes down in buckets:
I've never seen that, though you often speak of it. The rain
Comes down and brings depression, too much and too often. And there
Is the fog off the cold Atlantic. No one is at his best with

A sinus headache. It will pass. Stopped passages unblock: why
Let the lovely spring, its muck and scarlet emperors, get you
Down. Unhibernate. Let the rain soak your hair, run down your
Face, hang in drops from facial protuberances. Face into
It, then towel dry. Then another day brings back the sun and
Violets in the grass. The pear tree thickens all its boughs and
Twigs into silver-white, a dimmed brilliance, and already at
Its base a circle of petals on the unmowed grass. Far away
In Washington, at the Reflecting Pool, the Japanese cherries
Bust out into their dog mouth pink. Visitors gasp. The sun
Drips, coats and smears, all that spring yellow under unending
Blue. Only the oaks hold back their leaf buds, reticent.
Reticence is not a bad quality, though it may lead to misunderstandings.
I misunderstood silence for disapproval, see now it was
Sympathy. Thank you, May, for these warm stirrings. Life
Goes on, it seems, though in all sorts of places—nursing
Homes—it is drawing to a close. Abstractions and generalities:
Grass and blue depths into which the evening star seems set.
As windows are set in walls in whited Washington. City, begone
From my thoughts: childhood was not all that gay. Nor all that gray,
For the matter of that. May leans in my window, offering hornets.
To them too I give leave to go about their business, which is not
Nesting in my books. The fresh mown lawn is a rug underneath
Which is swept the dirt, the living dirt out of which our nurture
Comes, to which we go, not knowing if we hasten or we tarry. May
Opens wide her bluest eyes and speaks in bird tongues and a
Chain saw. The blighted elms come down. Already maple saplings,
Where other elms once grew and whelmed, count as young trees. In
A dishpan the soap powder dissolves under a turned on faucet and
Makes foam, just like the waves that crash ashore at the foot
Of the street. A restless surface. Chewing, and spitting sand and
Small white pebbles, clam shells with a sheen or chalky white.
A horseshoe crab: primeval. And all this without thought, this
Churning energy. Energy! The sun sucks up the dew; the day is
Clear; a bird shits on my window ledge. Rain will wash it off
Or a storm will chip it loose. Life, I do not understand. The
Days tick by, each so unique, each so alike: what is that chatter
In the grass? May is not a flowering month so much as shades
Of green, yellow-green, blue-green, or emerald or dusted like
The lilac leaves. The lilac trusses stand in bud. A cardinal
Passes like a flying tulip, alights and nails the green day
Down. One flame in a fire of sea-soaked, copper-fed wood:

A red that leaps from green and holds it there. Reluctantly
The plane tree, always late, as though from age, opens up and
Hangs its seed balls out. The apples flower. The pear is past.
Winter is suddenly so far away, behind, ahead. From the train
A stand of coarse grass in fuzzy flower. Is it for miracles
We live? I like it when the morning sun lights up my room
Like a yellow jelly bean, an inner glow. May mutters, "Why
Ask questions?" or, "What are the questions you wish to ask?"

James Marcus Schuyler

Korean Mums

beside me in this garden
are huge and daisy-like
(why not? are not
oxeye daisies a chrysanthemum?),
shrubby and thick-stalked,
the leaves pointing up
the stems from which
the flowers burst in
sunbursts. I love
this garden in all its moods,
even under its winter coat
of salt hay, or now,
in October, more than
half gone over: here
a rose, there a clump
of aconite. This morning
one of the dogs killed
a barn owl. Bob saw
it happen, tried to
intervene. The airedale
snapped its neck and left
it lying. Now the bird
lies buried by an apple
tree. Last evening
from the table we saw
the owl, huge in the dusk,
circling the field
on owl-silent wings.
The first one ever seen
here: now it's gone,
a dream you just remember.

The dogs are barking. In
the studio music plays
and Bob and Darragh paint.
I sit scribbling in a little
notebook at a garden table,
too hot in a heavy shirt
in the mid-October sun

into which the Korean mums
all face. There is a
dull book with me,
an apple core, cigarettes,
an ashtray. Behind me
the rue I gave Bob
flourishes. Light on leaves,
so much to see, and
all I really see is that
owl, its bulk troubling
the twilight. I'll
soon forget it: what
is there I have not forgot?
Or one day will forget:
this garden, the breeze
in stillness, even
the words, Korean mums.

Anonymous submission.

James Marcus Schuyler

Light Night

1

A tree, enamel needles,
owl takeoffs shake,
flapping a sound and smell
of underwing, like flags,
the clothly weight of flags.
A cone of silence stuck
with diamonds, the watch
she hunts, the frayed band
broke. It was a black night.
Dawn walked on it, the sun
set its heel. She won't
find: a boundary of marsh,
the island in the wood.

2

Stoop, dove, horrid maid,
spread your chiffon on our
wood rot breeding the
Destroying Angel, white,
lathe-shapely, trout-lily
lovely. Taste, and have it.

3

In a rain-dusk dawn, the
clearing edge, the wood's
fangs, the clear crystal
twist of a salival stream,
announce you hence. Tear
free of me, mountain, old
home bone, down sheer fear
tears mossed boulders
bound me, pool, deceptive,
trout-full, laugh and
chatter of finch and pecker,
gargle my liquor skin I

catch your face on. Scar
a look and leave. A rust
plush daycoach unfathers
me. A field of crosses. Let
iron clang iron.

James Marcus Schuyler

Now And Then

Up from the valley
now and then a chain saw rising to a shriek, subsiding to a buzz
"Someone" is "cutting in his wood lot" another day
shows they are not
someone is two men clearing shoulders
of a narrow high-crowned road
stacked poles were lately sapling
the leaves on the slash gone limp, unstarched, unsized
one man with one fierce eye and where the other should be
an ill-knit cicatrix
men who don't make much aren't much
for spending what they do
on glass eyes, tooth-straightening devices ("a mouth
like the back of a switchboard"), nose jobs, dewenning operations
a country look prevails
and a vestigial fear of the evil eye lurks
". . . my skin creeps . . ."

Out of Adamant Co-op

men in "overhauls" step into evening rising
in long-shadowed bluish haze to gold and pink
by Sodom Lake (was it that any Bible name
was an OK name?) and boys stare unabashed
and unaggressive not what the man on the bus fled
from his one day job talking excitedly about
"teen-age Puerto Rican tail-bait" and
"You can have New York!" Some present
you'd rather have wouldn't you an apple tree
that climbed up into keels over
sad, and too bad, the best apples on Apple Hill
still, it can be propped or budded on new stock or just
that it once was there

Driving past, driving down, driving over

along the Winooski
through the home of Granite City Real Ice Cream
The Monument Capitol
buildings of rusticated granite marred
to our eyes by etched polished granite remodeled downstairs
may be found by a future happily heterodox
"There's a touch of autumn—

there's another touch of autumn"
and the dark tranquility of hemlocks encroaching on untilled fields
"You can't make a living
plowing stones" subsistence
farming is well out of style: "You can't call it living
without the margin"
coveted obsolescence!
a margin like that on this page
a paper luxury "Collectors"
the lady in the antique shop said "are snapping up
silver" "Since we're off the silver standard?" "Why,
maybe so" Perhaps
six 1827 Salem coin-silver spoons for \$18
or what about
"Have you The Pearl of Orr's Island?"
"That's a book I'd want to read myself.
I'm from here but live in Florida.
Winters are too hard: 40 below.
You don't feel it though
like zero in Boston. I'll take St. Johnsbury any day
over Boston."

Over St. Johnsbury the clouds shift in curds
and a street goes steeply down
into Frenchtown by the railroad station
into which anachronistically comes
a real train: yesterday's torment of dust-exhaling plush
on the backs of bare knees today's nostalgia
but not much. Curls cut out of wood, brick
of a certain cut and color, a hopped-up cripple
on a hill above his pond, a slattern
frowning at the early-closed state liquor store,
an attic window like a wink,
The Scale Co., St. Johnsbury has everything

Not this high hill a road
going in undergrowth leads up to
by walls of flat cleared-field stones
so many and so long a time to take
so much labor so long ago and so soon
to be going back, a host to hardhack
and blueberry baby steps
first fallings from a sky
in which the wind is moving furniture

the upholstery of summer coming all unstitched
the air full of flying kapok
and resolutions: "remember to fetch the ax
whack back pine intrusions"
from the road turning down to a lower field
and across the roughest one the County keeps
a woman and a boy come up
on heavy horses. "Morning!
Had frost
last night at Adamant.
Might have a killing frost
tonight." Quick and clear as the water
where cress grows the cold
breaks on the hills to the soft crash
of a waterfall beyond
a beaver pond
and slides on
flinging imaginary fragments of cat's ice
from its edges to flash
a bright reality in the night sky and it —
the cold—stands, a rising pool, about
Sloven's farmhouse and he dreams
of dynamite. A bog sucks
at his foundations. Somewhere a deer
breaks branches. The trees
say Wesson. Mazola
replies a frog.

It doesn't happen though the cold
that is not that night. It happens all right
not then when the white baneberry
leans secretively where a road forks
met with surprise: "Why here it is:
the most beautiful thing." The spirit
of Gelett Burgess sets Mother Nature
gabbing. "That's my *Actea pachypoda*, dear, we
call it Doll's-Eyes." Got up as smart
as ever in muck and dank she belches
—"Scuse: just a touch of gas"—
swamp maple flames and ambles over and plunks
down on a dead rubber tire
to contemplate smashed glass and a rusty tin
and "some of my choicer bits: that

I call Doctor's Dentures. These
are Little Smellies." Not
the sort you look to meet so near
gold-domed, out of scale Montpelier
a large-windowed kind of empty public bigness
so little to show, so much
to take pride in rather more than on the way to Stowe
a pyrocrafted maple board in a Gyp-to-teria
IF MORE MEN WERE SELF STARTERS
FEWER WIVES WOULD HAVE TO CRANK.
Welcome to the chair lift and cement chalet.

Days

of unambiguous morning when dawn
peels back like a petal to disclose blue depths
deep beyond all comprehending and tall field growth bends
with a crushing weight of water cut
into sac-shaped portions, each less than a carat
and which streak an early walker's trouser legs
"You're soaked!" crossing on a door
the spill to where Nodding Ladies' Tresses
pallidly braid their fragrance and the woods
emit their hum. Days
when the pond holds on its steel one cloud
in which thin drowned trees stand
spare shapes of winter when summer
is just loosening to fall and bits of ribbon
from an electric typewriter patch a screen.
Croquet days, scissor-and-paste nights
after dinner on the better sort of ham
and coffee strong enough to float a goose egg.
Are those geese, that V, flying so early?
Can it be so late? in the green state
needles, leaves, fronds, blades, lichens and moss create
Can it be so soon before the long white
refrozen in frost on frost
on all twigs again will flash
cross cutting star streaks—the atoms
dance—on a treacherous night
in headlights?

"Horrible Cold Night
Remain at Home"

“Clear and Beautiful
Remain at Home”

James Marcus Schuyler

October

Books litter the bed,
leaves the lawn. It
lightly rains. Fall has
come: unpatterned, in
the shedding leaves.

The maples ripen. Apples
come home crisp in bags.
This pear tastes good.
It rains lightly on the
random leaf patterns.

The nimbus is spread
above our island. Rain
lightly patters on un-
shed leaves. The books
of fall litter the bed.

James Marcus Schuyler

Poem (I Do Not Always Understand What You Say)

I do not always understand what you say.
Once, when you said, across, you meant along.
What is, is by its nature, on display.

Words' meanings count, aside from what they weigh:
poetry, like music, is not just song.
I do not always understand what you say.

You would hate, when with me, to meet by day
What at night you met and did not think wrong.
What is, is by its nature, on display.

I sense a heaviness in your light play,
a wish to stand out, admired, from the throng.
I do not always understand what you say.

I am as shy as you. Try as we may,
only by practice will our talks prolong.
What is, is by its nature, on display.

We talk together in a common way.
Art, like death, is brief: life and friendship long.
I do not always understand what you say.
What is, is by its nature, on display.

James Marcus Schuyler

Poem (The Day Gets Slowly Started)

The day gets slowly started.
A rap at the bedroom door,
bitter coffee, hot cereal, juice
the color of sun which
isn't out this morning. A
cool shower, a shave, soothing
Noxzema for razor burn. A bed
is made. The paper doesn't come
until twelve or one. A gray shine
out the windows. "No one
leaves the building until
those scissors are returned."
It's that kind of a place.
Nonetheless, I've seen worse.
The worried gray is melting
into sunlight. I wish I'd
brought my book of enlightening
literary essays. I wish it
were lunch time. I wish I had
an appetite. The day agrees
with me better than it did, or,
better, I agree with it. I'll
slide down a sunslip yet, this
crass September morning.

James Marcus Schuyler

Salute

Past is past, and if one
remembers what one meant
to do and never did, is
not to have thought to do
enough? Like that gather-
ing of one each I
planned, to gather one
of each kind of clover,
daisy, paintbrush that
grew in that field
the cabin stood in and
study them one afternoon
before they wilted. Past
is past. I salute
that various field.

Submitted by Larry Bole

James Marcus Schuyler

Scarlatti

last night
locked in
the castle
of pride and
egotism
goes on two
legs

 Webern

orchestrated a
sky the clouds
move to a
bass
on
an instrument not
an oboe, gray
on light-gray in
blue and green
goes by
on glass

 Schoenberg

serenades with
a view through
to where
a girl
swings
her
body displaced
against the
pull of her
hands head-
high on the
ropes

 night

before the night
before last
unlocked the castle
of pride and
egotism

 bliss

clouds stand
and go by

James Marcus Schuyler

Sunday

The mint bed is in
bloom: lavender haze
day. The grass is
more than green and
throws up sharp and
cutting lights to
slice through the
plane tree leaves. And
on the cloudless blue
I scribble your name.

James Marcus Schuyler

Sweet Romanian Tongue

Drew down the curse of heaven on her umbrella
furled and smelling of wet cigarettes,
Jo ran off in rain one pitchy night,
one bloody a.m. found her staring, snoring.

"Why do we all stay up so late?" Jo queried.
"Though I don't stay up so late as my friends."
She tripped the little bomb of wasps.
They got her.

Tears for Jo, four, each perfect, waspish.
A silver tongue and piss-blond hair
decants a funeral oblation for the mouse.
"She was a rare sight, a winning wonder.
Jo cultivates her toothaches elsewhere."

James Marcus Schuyler

Tears, Oily Tears...

Crying is a habit with me.
You mustn't mind: onions make me
smog
headlines in the Daily News,
not getting enough sleep
going to the movies and not going.
Fear of getting bawled out by people shorter than me,
animals in zoos,
deserted buses late at night,
teargas, hunger, frustration
sob
and, oh, yes,
superfluous lines of verse and great beauty
move me to tears,
sliding out of me like oil
out of an over-oiled electric fan

James Marcus Schuyler

The Bluet

And is it stamina
that unseasonably freaks
forth a bluet, a
Quaker lady, by
the lake? So small,
a drop of sky that
splashed and held,
four-petaled, creamy
in its throat. The woods
around were brown,
the air crisp as a
Carr's table water
biscuit and smelt of
cider. There were frost
apples on the trees in
the field below the house.
The pond was still, then
broke into a ripple.
The hills, the leaves that
have not yet fallen
are deep and oriental
rug colors. Brown leaves
in the woods set off
gray trunks of trees.
But that bluet was
the focus of it all: last
spring, next spring, what
does it matter? Unexpected
as a tear when someone
reads a poem you wrote
for him: 'It's this line
here.' That bluet breaks
me up, tiny spring flower
late, late in dour October.

James Marcus Schuyler

The Crystal Lithium

The smell of snow, stinging in nostrils as the wind lifts it from a beach
Eve-shuttering, mixed with sand, or when snow lies under the street lamps and
on all

And the air is emptied to an uplifting gassiness

That turns lungs to winter waterwings, buoying, and the bright white night

Freezes in sight a lapse of waves, balsamic, salty, unexpected:

Hours after swimming, sitting thinking biting at a hangnail

And the taste of the—to your eyes—invisible crystals irradiates the world

“The sea is salt”

“And so am I”

“Don’t bite your nails”

and the metal flavor of a nail—are these brads?—

Taken with a slight spitting motion from between teeth and whanged into place
(Boards and sawdust) and the nail set is ridged with cold

Permanently as marble, always degrees cooler than the rooms of air it lies in

Felt as you lay your cheek upon the counter on which sits a blue-banded cup

A counter of condensed wintry exhalations glittering infinitesimally

A promise, late on a broiling day in late September, of the cold kiss

Of marble sheets to one who goes barefoot quickly in the snow and early

Only so far as the ash can—bang, dump—and back and slams the door:

Too cold to get up though at the edges of the blinds the sky

Shows blue as flames that break on a red sea in which black coals float:

Pebbles in a pocket embed the seam with grains of sand

Which, as they will, have found their way into a pattern between foot and
bedfoot

“A place for everything and everything in its place” how wasteful, how wrong

It seems when snow in fat, hand-stuffed flakes falls slow and steady in the sea

“Now you see it, now you don’t” the waves growl as they grind ashore and roll
out

At your feet (in boots) a Christmas tree naked of needles

Still wound with swags of tarnishing tinsel, faintly alarming as the thought

Of damp electricity or sluggish lightning and for your health desiring pains

The wind awards: Chapped Lips: on which to rub Time’s latest acquisition

Tinned, dowel shaped and inappropriately flavored sheep wool fat

A greasy sense-eclipsing fog “I can’t see

Without my glasses” “You certainly can’t see with them all steamed up

Like that. Pull over, park and wipe them off.” The thunder of a summer’s day

Rolls down the shimmering blacktop and mowed grass juice thickens the air

Like “Stir until it coats the spoon, remove from heat, let cool and chill”

Like this, graying up for more snow, maybe, in which a small flock
Of—sparrows?—small, anyway, dust-kitty-colored birds fly up
On a dotted diagonal and there, ah, is the answer:
Starlings, bullies of birdland, lousing up
The pecking order, respecters of no rights (what bird is) unloved (oh?)
Not so likeable as some: that's temperate enough and the temperature
Drops to rise to snowability of a softness even in its scent of roses
Made of untinted butter frosting: Happy Name Day, Blue Jay, staggering
On slow-up wings into the shrunk into itself from cold forsythia snarl
And above these thoughts there waves another tangle but one parched with heat

And not with cold although the heat is on because of cold settled all
About as though, swimming under water, in clearly fishy water, you
Inhaled and found one could and live and also found you altogether
Did not like it, January, laid out on a bed of ice, disgorging
February, shaped like a flounder, and March with her steel head pocketbook,
And April, goofy and under-dressed and with a loud laugh, and May
Who will of course be voted Miss Best Liked (she expects it),
And June, with a toothpaste smile, fresh from her flea bath, and gross July,
Flexing itself, and steamy August, with thighs and eyes to match, and September

Diving into blue October, dour November, and deadly dull December which now
And then with a surprised blank look produces from its hand the ace of trumps
Or sets within the ice white hairline of a new moon the gibbous rest:
Global, blue, Columbian, a blue dull definite and thin as the first day
Of February when, in the steamed and freezing capital cash built
Without a plan to be its own best monument its skyline set in stacks
Like poker chips (signed "Autodidact"), at the crux of a view there crosses
A flatcar-trailer piled with five of the cheaper sort of yachts, tarpaulined,
Plus one youth in purple pants, a maid in her uniform and an "It's not real
Anything" Cossack hat and coat, a bus one-quarter full of strangers and
The other familiar fixings of lengthening short days: "He's outgrown them
Before you can turn around" and see behind you the landscape of the past
Where beached boats bask and terraced cliffs are hung with oranges
Among dark star-gleaming leaves, and, descending the dizzying rough stairs
Littered with goat turd beads—such packaging—you—he—she—
One—someone—stops to break off a bit of myrtle and recite all the lines
Of Goethe that come back, and those in French, "Connais-tu ... ?" the air
Fills with chalk dust from banged erasers, behind the February dunes
Ice boats speed and among the reeds there winds a little frozen stream
Where kids in kapok ice-skate and play at Secret City as the sun
Sets before dinner, the snow on fields turns pink and under the hatched ice

The water slides darkly and over it a never before seen liquefaction of the sun
In a chemical yellow greener than sulphur a flash of petroleum by-product
Unbelievable, unwanted and as lovely as though someone you knew all your life
Said the one inconceivable thing and then went on washing dishes: the sky
Flows with impersonal passion and loosening jet trails (eyes tearing from the
cold)

And on the beach, between foam frozen in a thick scalloped edging so like
Weird cheek-mottling pillowcase embroidery, on the water-darkened sand the
waves

Keep free of frost, a gull strangles on a length of nylon fishline and the dog
Trots proudly off, tail held high, to bury a future dinner among cut grass on a
dune:

The ice boats furl their sails and all pile into cars and go off to the super market
Its inviting foods and cleansers sold under tunes with sealed in memory-flavor
"Hot House Rhubarb" "White Rock Girl" "Citrus Futures" "Cheap Bitter Beans" and

In its parking lot vast as the kiss to which is made the most complete surrender
In a setting of leaves, backs of stores, a house on a rise admired for being
Somewhat older than some others (prettier, too?) a man in a white apron
embraces a car

Briefly in the cold with his eyes as one might hug oneself for warmth for love
—What a paint job, smooth as an eggplant; what a meaty chest, smooth as an
eggplant

—Is it too much to ask your car to understand you? the converse isn't and the
sky

Maps out new roads so that, driving at right angles to the wind, clouds in ranks
Contrive in diminishing perspective a part of a picture postcard of a painting
Over oak scrub where a filling station has: gas, a locked toilet (to keep dirt in)

A busted soda pop machine, no maps and "I couldn't tell you that" so

The sky empties itself to a color, there, where yesterday's puddle

Offers its hospitality to people-trash and nature-trash in tans and silvers

And black grit like that in corners of a room in this or that cheap dump

Where the ceiling light burns night and day and we stare at or into each

Other's eyes in hope the other reads there what he reads: snow, wind

Lifted; black water, slashed with white; and that which is, which is beyond

Happiness or love or mixed with them or more than they or less, unchanging
change,

"Look," the ocean said (it was tumbled, like our sheets), "look in my eyes"

James Marcus Schuyler

Unnumbered Ward

And accustomed ungentle hands of two blue-uniformed attendants
wrap the patient in suffering's white bed gown
sewn with bright invisible emblems of virtues,
or pinned with them, as with fraternity pins, or mosaic pins,
meaning travel. Has he always only just arrived?
Really suffering, within and without his head
burn hot wires of pain: "I cannot bear this": and does,
and does the time and place outwardly expound
what is within? To be well, to wear new clothes,
to decimate his wage for a necktie, a scarf or gloves, love
"your magic spell" scabbed his fevered lips, lay
no cold cloths, though to be him bent on him
eyes of those called to selflessness, lonely for more selfish days.

James Marcus Schuyler