

Clinton Van Inman

## INVITED

It was no accident my coming here  
For they must had known long before  
I wandered to their farmhouse near  
That soon I'd knock upon their door  
During this darkest season of the year.

Call it more than a good neighbor's sense  
In snow to leave a porch lamp lighted  
Or post the sign upon the picket fence  
For those in need are all invited  
Even if I thought it mere coincidence.

SYLVIA

I hear they have placed  
A pretty blue plaque  
High above your flat  
So that tourists can find you  
And say that this is the spot  
Where you killed yourself.

Lucky girl, you modern Sappho  
To take the quantum leap  
Like a comet to take your place  
Among the darkest regions of empty space  
With a brilliance that few can keep  
And even less the mind to know  
Where no dull planet can perturb you  
As fallen flowers have no faces.

## THE LAST OLYMPIAN

Across wet glass we rub our noses  
And paint a picture that presupposes  
Like confused footsteps that reach  
Across some worn and weathered beach.

Words that fix you, words that find you,  
Words that bind you, words that blind you,  
Words that lead you to a trance  
Or spin you round some sacred dance.

Your fingers cannot perturb  
The pliant petals of a rosebud  
Within the jar the question lingers,  
While you count with broken fingers.

A mermaid sings in a distant sea.  
Like the stars she cannot be seen directly,  
Etched in moon glow beyond all proof  
Like some last Olympian, proud, aloof.

## FRANKENSTEIN

Color coded complete with picture I.D.  
We'll teach you to be like us.  
Give you a turtle neck or bow tie  
You will be our kind of Mensch  
We'll give you a new brain, doesn't  
Matter whose for they are all just the same,  
Complete with certificate of authenticity  
Credit rating and charge account,  
Security, savings, and even disability.  
We'll teach you how to walk and talk  
In circles as if you had some sense.  
We will give you some brand named shoes  
We will give you a new name like Frankie,  
But why are you still reaching for  
Flowers?

## THE REAL MISSING MASS

They say that most of you is missing  
Perhaps even from your private places  
Something more than just an arm or leg  
And deeper than your darkest spaces.

Researchers conclude as much as ninety percent  
Lost deduced from a long line of X's and O's  
But it takes no greater science to tell me  
Your muted mysteries no one knows.

I too have peered down your opaque passages  
Have felt your fractal pulse dimensionless  
Have seen your eyes hidden in a veil of stars  
And knew that you are quite featureless.

Like staring at the stars  
You cannot be seen directly  
As your skies are blue only from a distance  
Because you are a tease only.

## DRESSED RIGHT

They said that you were dressed right  
In your blues, your red and white,  
The fresh cut flowers were neatly laid,  
The flag folded as the band had played.  
We stood and watched with Sunday's best  
In places not for playing you would rest,  
Momma fell sick, said it was the heat  
When they lowered you under our feet.

They said that you were dressed right  
With your blues, your red and white,  
But none of those names engraved in stone  
Or those flags waving for some proud cause  
That gives the grownups much applause,  
Or your medals matter—because you are gone.