

## Tim Queen

### Cold Beer

Men and insects  
driven mad in the sun  
dragonfly in aviators  
crackles his jeweled case.

Still waiting for words.  
Worlds, Godot, Christ.  
The ride of the Valkyries.  
Only the heat, buoyant

rises as a festering wound,  
blunts the bottoms of souls.  
Women in pews. Men on canes  
snore prayers.

Young gun, blister finger.  
Point at your brother,  
green tarpaulin cover.  
Worlds buzz. Refrigerator

out of key. Strange cadence  
in the Dairy Mart. Beeless hives  
none of them climb thru halls,  
wax cathedrals. Invisible stingers

chase ghosts. I grab a cold beer.

## Dead Reckoning

Dust the bones of dead  
years, dead clocks, dead friends  
walk. You don't want an old  
friend to remind you of  
old days. Old dogs are good listeners.

Trees listen to John Denver.  
Quaking Aspen's been a-listenin'.  
It's only September, all  
the leaves are lost. Featherless  
as a deranged cockatoo.  
Sometimes she'd bust out  
*Frampton Comes Alive!*

Don't want old friends  
stopping by.  
Talkin' about time. (*somber strings*)  
Like when you fell  
out of that tree.  
I hit that squirrel with an apple.

Old friends in Panavision.  
Ghosts, decades untouched,  
walk circles in dreams  
like they own this place.  
The space, little attic  
in my head. (*next to our yearbook*)  
Keep lookin'. (*right behind the Christmas paper*)

Old friends to rank strangers  
to watching cartoons  
in your underwear.  
Alone with an old dog,  
a defoliating tree. Best

let dead friends be.

## Ghost

—for Charles

You were the face on the wind.  
Candy for the mind.  
In the boys' home I dreamed a thousand miles.  
Your eyes orbited my head like a satellite.

Candy in my mind.  
South of Smithville you giggled.  
Orbiting me like a satellite.  
Our skin together in the library of Wooster High.

South of Smithville we giggle.  
Under the table you were my girl.  
Our bodies alone together in the library.  
Every road in Cleveland led to your house.

Under the table you were my world.  
A fever dream painted on the ceiling.  
Every road in the city led to your door.  
An emerging stone relief, one working headlight.

A fever dream moved on the ceiling.  
The busted string guitar.  
Stone relief, one bright headlight.  
Every song knew your name.

A guitar with broken strings.  
I examine moons, faraway fingernails.  
Every song sings your name.  
I make a fire from bones.

Examining moons, found fingernails.  
You were the face on the wind.  
A bone-fire burning in the wood.  
In the boys' home I dream a thousand miles.

## Rite of Passage

### I.

Day went  
this and that.  
We were eclectic eels  
tingling down  
the swollen street.  
In our heads  
singing blues, jubilees  
eyes wild, polished  
obsidian black.  
Silly putty faces  
stretching our smiles  
into friendly grotesques.

Trees breathe  
heavy, swell and die  
down. Every leaf,  
a feather  
on a burrowing owl.  
The earth somehow  
spreads wing  
as if suddenly,  
a prior commitment.

### II.

Ghost train  
through our souls  
lays heavy tracks,  
penetrates us.  
In a heated rush  
we share breath  
for an instant, gone,  
left only the song  
lonesome, sad.  
A train and a river  
who can never

come together.  
At night I hear  
the shriek and moan.

## Randomly Pulling Lines from Larry Levis' Elogy

With his fly undone  
he no longer spoke at all  
snarling gods  
whose faith and hatred  
was perfect  
and into something else forgetful  
I can't imagine it back  
cutting through the empty  
room of air  
the present can't remember  
what it was  
the eye of the swan  
walk with me a little  
this is not about her breasts  
grins and says nothing  
just went on completely  
reflecting the moon and stars