

LOVE RETURNS

Gail Mueller

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Back cover photo of Gail from 1967,
San Francisco Zen Center

CLICHÉ

Sometimes I feel
like a motherless cliché
struttin' her mocking bird stuff

Sometimes I feel
like a diamond
(mother hen scratchin' in the rough)

I try to make friends
with my dragons
and wonder
Have I done enough?

And to which star
shall I hitch my wagon
when love
and the going get tough?

Sometimes I *am* coming
from left field
or fly out of bounds
on a foul

Sometimes I may pitch you
a smooth curve
but watch out
for my knuckleball!

Sometimes I march in

like a lion
Sometimes I butt out
like a ram

But deep in the heart
of *my* Texas
I'm just *dyin'*
to find Mary's lamb

COLLATERAL DAMAGE

Little girl, little girl, dressed in black
you just happen to live in Iraq
As you lean against the wall of your shack
a sudden CRACK! rattles bones up your back

Gazing up with wondering eyes
you see black birds soaring
through the clear blue skies
Soon it will swarm with flocks of black flies
What will steel thunder feel like
and who will cry
when my black dressed, small Iraqi
girl's body dies?

You're not too little
to think like that
When your life's in danger
do you fight like a rat?
Or breathe like a dove
knowing love's
where it's at?

Little girl, little girl, dressed in black
Why do you happen to live in Iraq?
You don't know why your papa must go
You just know they act like he'll never come back.

You love to chase and laugh and swing
You love to be alive in spring!
But you live in a country we're panting to spoil
so we can more freely decant your oil

If you lived here you'd lick sticks of candy
and think that life is just Jim Dandy!

But Papa doesn't work as a Wall Street trader
his legs will get shot off by a U.S. invader

Your mother, she won't shed a tear
just make you laugh and keep you near
Your parents are strict, you must be so careful
If you step on a mine you'll get more than an earful!
No prom date for you, no proud celebrations
Just digest the fear, pray for Red Cross rations

Little girl, little girl, covered in black
you're going to die because you live in Iraq
How can you stand there and smile at the sky
when soon it will swoon with heavy black flies?

People you knew will be strewn before noon
But your strong dusty feet
plant their roots in the street
and you sway like you're riding on the moon!

Little girl, innocent Iraqi
something BIG is about to attack ya.

This patriot game between Bush and Hussein
with the power to kill, dismember and maim
will claim your sweet heart
and excellent brain

And I am sad
and surely ashamed
for I will never, ever
know your name

MAYA

I really don't have much time for her
I really don't pay her much mind
She tends to cramp my style, you see
and make me act stupid and blind!

I tend to think I may be *somebody*
or *nobody*, at least
when all I want to be
is perfectly sublime

Now how's *that* for tall orders?
You might think for *this* old bird
could be a stretch for starters
with "NO WAY!" close behind!

But I ain't quit with life just yet
(and she just jumpstarted mine!)
If you're real clear on *what* you lost
it's easier to find

And when you lose
the only thing
that you can't live
while being denied

What treasure is so precious
to that tender child inside
that when you sense it's missing
you might as well have died?

What does your heart require
to keep a faithful stride?
What angels do *you* hide

when you've nothing left to hide?

And who is left
when all the world
is suddenly
disappeared?

And just
who
gazes back at "you"
when "you" gaze
in *your* mirror?

Do you recognize the one
who sees you through *your* years
who snatches you from anger's jaws
and conquers all your fears?

Whose cradle rocks you
all night long
and dries
your little tears?

And when you feel your goose is cooked
and fallin' off your bones
whose voice comes singin' your favorite song
when "you" feel all alone?

So who is Maya anyway?
She's everything "you" own
that's set eternally
in universal stone!
She's the one who makes you hanker
after cherished things long gone
your dreams, her snake charm fakirs
allow to perish, comes the dawn

She's the one comes searching
when you've wandered off your tracks
who follows, taps your shoulder
whispers, "Come on, darlin', let's head back."

She likes to keep you busy
makin' lots and lots of hay
so you'll think you're indispensable
but you're getting in her way!

She lavishes her bribes on you
from compliments to curse
from , "It doesn't get much better."
to "It better not get worse."

She makes you feel uncertain
as to just who "*you*" might be
(Just in case she pulls the curtain
before you're dressed for tea)

But when your swan song trumpet calls
undressed and center stage
you'll stand alone and take your bow
and when ovations fade

The only face

reflecting yours

will be
the grace
you
gave

and it will be amazing!

and anything
but grave

But

only if

you're brave enough

to laugh

at

your own

Burma

Shave

GMO RANT

As long as my heart keeps beating
I have a right to know just what I'm eating
As long as my red blood flows
I have a right to be free of GMOs

We have a right to be farmers
on our own homeland
a right to arm ourselves
against genetically modified plants

A right to breathe clean air
that's free of pesticides
If I can't blow smoke in your share
keep your poisons, please from mine

A war has been declared
Big Money's invaded our arena
but Europe, Australia and Asia
have said "NO!" to seeds designed

There haven't been enough tests done
Yet by the U.S. Department of Ag
to tell us the truth
with scientific proof
for the safety of food that we bag

They fed 'em to pigs and their fetuses aborted
They gave 'em to goats and livers exploded
but results of genes ingested
are not required to be tested

On legal laurels companies have rested
because the law is corporate invested
They say, "Don't think for yourselves

keep your lives on *our* shelves

We're bigger than you, we're richer
we'll bury you powerless peons
We'll slip you Ebola
and fry you in canola
and the toxins will live on for eons

The rights we're naming
are fiercely disclaiming
Congressional inseminations
Abuzz with nature's genetic moddafuckations
designed for global pollen colonization

It's time to stand together
strong, present and truth proud
thunder gathering in our hearts
demands of us LOUD
that we tell our story now

Wake up and tell me
that it doesn't matter
if the guts from your cat are
being spliced in the ladder
of your own food chain?

Are you willing to guess
what kind of a mess
the GMO infections
wreak on your digestion?

Are you willing to risk
the mutant infections
when GMOs run rampant
through *your* genetic connections?

Or would you rather not complain
of the arrogant disdain
when a corporation's batter
whacks a cancerous fish bladder
onto your favorite Pupu platter?

Are you quite sure
you'll never feel any pain
by swallowing a virus
from a salamander brain?

*"You can get anything you want
from the GMO restaurant."*

I can't win, I say, it's too late
they've already brought my dinner plate
How can I be expected to know
what they slithered into whatever I ate?

I don't want to feel fear
confusion and hate
Leave me alone I'll die of something
anyway someday

So why should I pretend my right to choose
this lifestyle I'm only going to lose?

*"Where have all the farmers gone?
to GMO graveyards, every one
When will we ever learn?"*

Let us listen to our hearts
we know what's right!
Let us not take part
in this global blight
Let us keep

compassion in sight

Our fragile ecosystem
calls for our communal might
We must courageously unite
burn our freedom fires bright!

Let us trust the perfection
of natural selection
Just say YES to our lives
that needs our protection

Think about it
think about it
Find the truth out!
Speak the truth out!
Shout the truth out!

Just say NO to GMOs
Just say NO to GMOs
NO to G-M-Os!

LOVE RETURNS

She hacks! She whacks!
She sears! She burns!
She hackey-sacks and don't look back!
Spins WAY beyond some universe
that gives you joy!
Then snatches back

But

LOVE RETURNS

Sometimes,

love sneaks back
in sunny rivulets
that whinny and whisper
through blue silken waters
that sing and sigh
through grief-green leaves
uttering shadowy secrets
that remind you
of your beloved

Sometimes

LOVE ROARS!

And no thunder
but the surf
in full moon
can slake her thirst

Sometimes

love is so full of

SILENCE

you can hear
your heart break
but

LOVE RETURNS

LOVE RETURNS YOU

little by little

LET HER

begin
to warm you
again

She burned you to a crisp!
then left you

COLD

That's mean

Now

she has to

lick your wounds
and glue you back together

Just now!

You can hear her
searching every nook and cranny

WHERE THE HELL'S THE GLUE?

You'd like to know

The echo
hasn't faded yet

the echo
of the fall

You fell a long way, honey

Now

all you have to do
is find what you lost

It helps for someone
to shine a flashlight
and walk beside you
along the path

the

moonless

path

In any case
it's awful hard
to get through this

alone

Pray for ANGELS!

One

will do.

You have no appetite
for the hike just now
so
you must be carried awhile

Love

Is stronger

than you

or

THIS WOULDN'T HURT SO BAD!

She can bear you
while you can't bear

ANYTHING

If you just
watch for her
without hope
you'll find

one day

without warning

like a bird
dropping soundlessly
from a limb

a falling plum
suddenly
lifted

soars

on doubtless wings

The mad maroon curtain
of night's Niagara

parts

and

LOVE RETURNS

LOVE RETURNS

LOVE

RETURNS

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING TO THE GRANDMOTHER ELDERS

Let
my 21st century feet
beat
rainbow light
of broken wing
upon your ancient
honored breast
until
the thunder flowers
weep
the darkness fresh
and cleanse the night

the sacred arrows
breathe
released!

Return
the simple gifts
return
the simple gifts
offering
the hands
of honored guests

NATURE LOVER

Every day! The sky reminds me
who I am
I am always your lover
And you always take me
by surprise

You know who you are
You know me by heart
You show me sunsets that drop me to my knees
weeping

You whisper my names by night!
Sometimes, you call me
"Jasmine"
But I pass you by
in search of "Honeysuckle Rose"

When I reach the bridge I pause
Everywhere my glance falls
You reveal yourself to me
Then we embrace within elemental smiles

*(Little RED riding hood's ROVER
has just crossed over!)*

And shake the secrets of our laughter
into the startled
milk glass
belly
of
the

moon

SONG OF DEVOTION

For VCTR

Because of our weakness
your genuine sadness
blazes through the jungle of samsara
like a tiger breathing fire!

Because of our pain
snow lion petrifies doubt.

Because of your beauty
Garuda picks clean the bones of contention
and sweeps the vast sky with joy!

Because of your brilliance
the turquoise dragon
spins mountains of sanity
into clouds of gold.

Because our every pore
longs for your health and well-being
perhaps the heavy lids
of the sinking sun
will open
and the sour sodden earth
will smile
and be refreshed.

Melt the frozen world
of hatred and desire!

We vow
to perpetuate
your world!
We love you so much!

Gail Mueller's poetry arises from the depth of her heart and humor as well as from the wisdom of awakening. Gail is as fearless a warrior on the page as she has been throughout her rich and brilliant incarnation.—Brigid Meier