THE RED WHEELBARROW
In the twilight
a wolf pack howls
while nearby, a deer
files a civil suit against them
for violating the
local noise ordinance.

A great gray owl
sits in a tree.
He is not hunting tonight;
all the mice
have court injunctions
preventing him from stalking.

One spruce nudges another
and says he's made a deal with a beaver
to wipe out the annoying pine
who blocks their view
of the mountains.

Below, a gang of squirrels
holds up a chipmunk
demanding an acorn
and above, a cougar
sells secrets about the cliffs
(locations of other animals' dens,
good spots to get a tan...)
to a bald eagle, who in return
gives his AMEX stock.

Are these the last days of the forest?
Does Mother Nature decline?

No.
In an LA boardroom
CEO's and senior partners
crawl around the room
growling, and some howl
at the fluorescent lights.
Woman Ironing

Cassie Johnson

The steel-grey of her dress has melted down into her arms, sinewy and gnarled with tendons. It has oozed into her neck, glided beneath her hair, and pushed through her head to appear, heavy, concentrated in her eyes.

Draped over her iron-grey iron, grey tendrils vining up the brown wall behind her, she smooths a landscape of grey cloth, and smothers mountains, her eyes thunderclouds over the dry riverbeds of valleys.
Still Life of me from my Fourth Year
--for my parents

Kate Angus

In the picture, I am four.
I sit on the front porch between our two cairn terriers,
each of whom will die within the year;
one by water and one by age.
The air coagulates into clouds
as it leaves the warm cavity of my mouth
so I breathe heavily,
creating a haze around my head
of air turning cold.
Now, I am eighteen and have discovered
that I don't give a damn
about how clean the air was then
or how it looks now as I breathe out in winter.
In the photo, the three birch trees behind me
have shed themselves
in a shower of gold leaves veined with green.
And in front of me, my father stands,
taking the photograph for my mother.
His long shadow almost touches my feet
and he cradles his camera
as if it too were someone he loved who might leave him.
He tells me to smile for Mother and I do,
our love for her reaching across miles and years
and even now.
Dear Kate,

Matt Krueider

Let me tell you about
the Wilson's Warbler
I saw yesterday,
thrusting itself from a bramble
and twist-turning its black-capped
yellow lightness a foot above
the mess of leaves, landing
on the low branch of a cedar.

(I won't mention the black flies
rising and swarming, and rising
from the leaf-rot and cold
dead-flesh of the earth,
angry dark specks that float
everywhere, flicking
against my face and arms.)

The Warbler takes flight,
from shadow to light, flashing
its golden beauty once more,
and snatches a fly before finding rest
in the bramble where it watches, and waits.

Severance
Daria Portillo

"When you part from your friend, you grieve not; for that
which you love most in him maybe clearer in his absence,
as the mountain to the climber is clearer from the
plain."
-Kahl Gibran

1
If you are not here
then let me forget you exist
otherwise I am unwhole.
The mountain range is a mirage
or paper cutout, suspended
in the backdrop of another bleak, small town
that I am supposed to call home.
This clarity hangs in the air
with a sharpness lacking warmth.

2
The weight of memory is longing.
I can not forget the curves
(Where land meets lake)
and hollows
(the way the sky opens
as clouds close in)
of your back
(the light from beneath leaves)
the broadness of your shoulders
(as sun or moon sets)
the closeness of your arms.

3
Tell me how I should begin to climb
when I am unsure
if it is my vision that is failing
or the mountain that is fading
and I grieve
because I cannot find
what you have left of me.
Tell me
where I should begin.
I had him drop me off near a farm outside of Des Moines. I climbed into the hayloft of this barn, a rustic American icon, looking like something from a postcard, though it has an actual purpose as well.

The large, loud headlines and sub headlines of the Times sound even more distant and odd than they usually do: "NATION SHOCKED: SENATE MINORITY LEADER SAYS MEDIA IS UNDERSTATING THE AMOUNT HARTFORD STOLE.

'AFTEER EIGHT YEARS OF THIS, THOUGH,' HE SAYS, 'WHAT DOES IT MATTER ANYWAY?"

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I toss the paper aside and lay down. The mass media can't hold my interest as much as it once could, and besides, the hay is surprisingly soft and comfortable. I am quite exhausted after all these recent events, and need to get ready for tomorrow, as it promises to be another big day.
"Good luck with everything, sir!" he said, waving from the boxcar, looking ridiculous in my neck tie, which he had tied wrong. "I can’t say I’m better off than I was eight years ago, but I sure am better off in this new getup!"

Once in town, I immediately held up a gas station, needing money for a New York Times (the clerk was surprised when I also demanded the few quarters and dimes in the register). The clerk had heard the news about the former president being at large, and recognized me despite my unpresidential attire. He was honored that I had chosen to rob his particular gas station.

"Mr. Hartford, sir, I have sixty two dollars in the register, you’ll be happy to know. A much better haul than what you got in Chesterville!"

I glanced to my gun a moment. "Just give me the money, please!"

"Okay, okay! Don’t shoot!"

I hitched a car heading north, again not wanting to hang around an area in which I had just robbed. The driver didn’t seem to recognize me. I had covered by Commander In Chief cap (no, I hadn’t traded away that, it’s good to have one relic of the past) in mud, and pulled it low over my eyes. I managed to change my voice, in addition. I fooled him well.
an example of the sort of scenic splendor one normally associates with the last minutes of CBS’s "Sunday Morning." With all this at every turn, such a lifestyle as the hobo’s can't be completely unenjoyable!

"So ya’ ran away from it all?" he asked me soon. "Now ya’ don't get any more secret service, any more money for talking, none of those government pensions?"

"No, none of that."

"You just rob what you need for a living from stores that are part of some giant company, and get nothing from the taxpayers?"

"That’s right."

"Hat’s off to you, sir! You are savin' this country some money!" He gave another wheezy laugh.

After a while I suggested to my companion that we trade clothes, saying it would behoove the both of us. I thought it would be advisable to blend in, and his clothes looked rugged and warm. When he agreed to the trade, however, and I tried them on, I discovered to the contrary. I felt as unprotected as a Chief of Staff reading a statement at a press conference.

I got off a while later when the train stopped for a switch by another small town. I jumped down, saying goodbye to my companion, who was staying on.

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You May Find Me in the Forest

Jill Jennings

Sun
Hanging low amidst the trees’ Emerald arcs and swooping bows.
In afternoon,
Big star is booming, blasting and beginning to almost blacken
My body that dozes, lightly
Daunted by petals of sun.
I think now I will stand, reach to the branches,
Clamber through the leaves,
Sit long among Mangrove and Magnolia—arms upraised.
he was, an elderly man, perhaps in actuality not much older than I am, hunched up in a corner. An actual, live American hobo, complete with a frazzled grey beard!

"I just like to look presentable. You don't mind me riding in this car, do you?"

I saw him stand and squint at me, then shriek in astonishment. "I'll be! You're Hartford! That president we just had! I saw a whole mess of police combing the town for you, sayin' you was a wanted felon! Must say I didn't believe 'em! I'll be. I meet the darndest people on trains!" He laughed loudly, and it sounded to me more like a choking wheeze.

At the time, I was quite surprised that this old derelict, this "bum" if you will, could recognize a president, let alone know the name of one. I asked how he knew who I was.

"Well, I seen your pictures in papers and such. You think just 'cause I live on a train I don't try to stay informed?" Again he gave his odd laugh.

It turned out, in fact, that he had voted for me in my first run for president. I was flattered but uneasy at being implicated in his economic difficulties.

The train pulled ahead and off we went into the countryside, every view from the open door of the boxcar...
although not without an enormous amount of confusion added to his expression.

How disappointed I was when it was over! After all this, all the dangers and risks of criminal behavior (nameably police apprehension), my only reward was a paltry thirty seven dollars! What do real crooks see in this? Is money such a boon to them?

Thus, I was more determined than ever to have a profitable robbery, with better dividends. But not in that town, of course. It was such a small town that the police would know every place a fugitive could hide, and would be ready and waiting for the former leader of the free world to hold up another 7-Eleven.

So I hopped a freight train. At the train yard on the edge of town, I climbed into a big empty boxcar, the kind which (surely) carries machinery parts or some such across the great Midwest, to and from the great centers of industry. So vital to the national infrastructure!

My eyes hadn't even adjusted to the dim light inside when someone called to me from a shadow.

"Hey pal - you here to ride the rails or work in a bank?"

I looked around to find the voice's source. There

THE RISE AND FALL OF MADISON HARTFORD

Dieter Weise

I can't say just what it was that drove me to a life of crime. I had not been doing bad financially. In fact, I was quite successful. What's more, people listened to me, liked me, and even respected me. Hell, I was the 43rd President of the United States, and had had two very successful terms in office. But it all ended, of course, and I was expected, as is the custom, to retire to a ranch in some remote locale and find suitably sedentary hobbies, all the while never doing anything more substantial than opening my presidential library, giving speeches for various candidates of my party, and living off enormous pensions. All these things repulsed me, even though I had known throughout my presidency it would one day come to this.
As I actually did pack up and head out west, life as an ex president proved to be as unremittingly dull as I had feared. Yes, it was good to get away from it all, but after a few months of assorted demeaning incidents, such as people bumping into me in a grocery and then saying something like, "You look familiar...Do you shop here often?" I couldn't handle it anymore. So that's how I got to the point I'm at today, hiding out in a barn, smelling the earthy scent of a couple Appaloosas, as I chew on a piece of beef jerky and read the headline of the New York Times, just picked from local papers, which says, "PRESIDENT HARTFORD ROBS CONVENIENCE STORE; $37 STOLEN, HE REMAINS AT LARGE."

The entire front page, in fact, is exclusively devoted to the details of this, my first venture in crime; how I hadn't bothered to wear a mask, how the clerk had asked for my autograph, and how, upon giving me the thirty seven dollars, he looked at the bills and said, "Well, guess I won't ever see your face on one of these!"

It had been exciting, and I carried it off well, if I do say so myself. I dressed nicely, thinking the robbery would go easier if I made a good impression, and besides, I didn't want to look unpresidential. So I wore grey slacks, a white shirt, and my favorite necktie, the one with blue and red stripes. Not wanting to appear as if I took the robbery business too seriously in clothes like these, I also donned my "Commander In Chief" cap. Finally, I carried a briefcase, and inside it, an assault rifle (which had been a present from the NRA a few years back).

"Could you please hand over all your legal tender?" I said, trying to use a line with a little grace and panache.

The clerk glared at me in what I thought at first to be some typical adolescent clerk look of non-comprehension, but then I saw it was a look of surprise and admiration.

"President Hartford! Wow! What are you doing here? Gosh, I was a big supporter of you! In fact I just got my voter's card, and I joined your party!"

"Good!" I said, meaning it. "We always need young people like yourself to bring in fresh, new ideas. Now open the register and give me all the money: I have a gun."

Let me tell you, it took a while to convince the kid that these were my intentions, but soon he complied,
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wednesday
Kanako Wynkoop

snow does not always drift effortlessly falling speechlessly down towards a still and frozen ground

It can storm across the world traveling forward backward away lashing at bare faces making it difficult to watch how angry white cold snow can be
Dear Kate,

Matt Krueeder

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the Wilson’s Warbler
I saw yesterday,
thrusting itself from a bramble
and twist-turning its black-capped
yellow lightness a foot above
the mess of leaves, landing
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THE RED WHEELBARROW

Memorial Day, 1994

DEAR KATE - Matthew Krueger

WEDNESDAY - Kanako Wynkoop

SLICK PUDDLE - Kanako Wynkoop

YOU MAY FIND ME IN THE FOREST - Jill Jennings

CADENCE - Jill Jennings

THE RISE AND FALL OF...

MADISON HARTFORD - Dieter Wiese

SEVERANCE - Daria Portillo

WOMAN IRONING - Cassie Johnson

IN RESPONSE TO POETRY - Katie Eyer

STILL LIFE OF ME FROM MY FOURTH YEAR - Kate Angus

PARTS OF A HOLE/LAST DAYS

OF A FOREST - Dieter Wiese
In Response to Poetry

Katie Eyer

I don't want blue moons or lupus moons,
I want this moon.
Which is not to say I don't want
the extraordinary. No,
but to say that my loves are my own,
as close to my heart as any ever were.
But not poetry, not
the stuff of pretty words.
Only loves, a precious few:
myself, the moon.
Still Life of me from my Fourth Year
--for my parents

Kate Angus

In the picture, I am four.
I sit on the front porch between our two cairn terriers,
each of whom will die within the year;
one by water and one by age.
The air coagulates into clouds
as it leaves the warm cavity of my mouth
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the red wheelbarrow

1983-84
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