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Cleaning Out a Spring

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says her name easily
drinks a beer makes a play
works the same 8-hour day
cuts with a dull-edged knife
the reoccurring pattern of
anybody's life.
beneath it all, the dipping
of the ladle,
persists feeling of change
permanent, fatal.

JOSEPH HOPKINS

CLEANING OUT A SPRING

*Very near here
as a boy live never
failing water I
remember gushed.

Poke your clumsy shovel into the muck,
Scrape filth with stiff sweeps to a heap,
Slash gravel, lay open clay and loam,
Cleanse the basin clean to the blank stone.

And wait.

Still we have not unstoppered that conduit.

Wait.

Only a sweat prickles the bank.

Oh am I too late to unbury the precious body
Of that pulse, unsilt that ancient artery, letting
Its life flush from the past, restoring its throat
To sing, resurrecting spasm and flourish?

Wait!

The turbid seep begins to stir. A clearness,
Look! like storm-pallid sunshine, ribbons through.

I, bent here,
shall stare on my boyish face
and other eyes that float
from the buried chambers.

Strange, subtle this fountain, the streamlets that fringe
It; hues of childhood gold and azure fuse
In its cup, the old life flushes through it like sun.
Hear the lost messages unstiffen its tongue.

NORMAN A. BRITTIN

NO SOLITUDE

In a winter murk,
I saw pass by
A running hound
With a spectral eye.
A wraith he glimpsed
On the whining air
Was unto his eye
The bounding hare,
Or a bloodied fox
Was the gleam he saw,
Life unfriended
By chance or law.

I wake at night,
In the stark and still,
To the bell of his voice
From the frozen hill.
He runs hard by,
A visional hound
Still on the trace,
Searching this ground.
And whether he presses
A faith or feud,
The hunted will find
No solitude.

HOWARD RAMSDEN