

The Statements

Arts are actually anthropomorphic.
 Business is often bilaterally baleful.
 Causality is a considerable cow.
 Desires are delightful as well as desperate.
 Energy in everything is everlasting.
 Freedom is frequently fairly fallacious.
 Growing girls go gay with gallantry.
 History has some horrible hermits.
 Illness is injurious only to idiots.
 Jokes are jealous and jazz is jolly.
 Kitchens are kinetic like kisses and kiwis.
 Love is laudable and lately laundered.
 Matrimony is mainly merry and miserable.
 Names are numinous and never negligible.
 Officers often open their offices.
 Palaeontology is particularly painful.
 Quails are queer but quiet and queently.
 Restless rovers are rarely repentant.
 Soles slide sideways in silent seas.
 Terrible tornadoes torture the terrain.
 Under umbrellas the uncles take umbrage.
 Various virgins veer into vinegar.
 Weary wallflowers wait wetly for wisdom.
 Xylophones excel in extemporization.
 Yelling in youth is yesterday's yawning.
 Zen is as zealous as zebras and zinc.

— GAVIN EVART

(Calphabet poems)

HOWARD NEMEROV

A Primer of the Daily Round

A peels an apple, while B kneels to God,
 C telephones to D, who has a hand
 On E's knee, F coughs, G turns up the sod
 For H's grave, I do not understand
 But J is bringing one clay pigeon down
 While K brings down a nightstick on L's head,
 And M takes mustard, N drives into town,
 O goes to bed with P, and Q drops dead,
 R lies to S, but happens to be heard
 By T, who tells U not to fire V
 For having to give W the word
 That X is now deceiving Y with Z,
 Who happens just now to remember A
 Peeling an apple somewhere far away.

JULIA ALVAREZ

from 33

Let's make a modern primer for our kids:
 A is for Auschwitz; B for Biafra;
 Chile; Dachau; El Salvador; F is
 the Falklands; Grenada; Hiroshima
 stands for H; Northern Ireland for I;
 J is for Jonestown; K for Korea;
 L for massacres in Lidice; My Lai;
 N, Nicaragua; O, Okinawa;
 P is the Persian Gulf and Qatar; Q;
 Rwanda; Sarajevo—this year's hell;
 T is Treblinka and Uganda U;
 Vietnam and Wounded Knee. What's left to spell?
 An X to name the countless disappeared
 when they are dust in Yemen or Zaire.

Alpha

A is for atlas, but I am not in it.
 B is for beehive, but I have the honey.
 C is for cheesecloth, but I shall not materialise.
 D is for Darwin, but I am a mutation.
 E is for ecstasy, beyond your apprehension.
 F is for fools — how are you, my friends?
 G is for gunfire, all in the day's work.
 H is for high altitudes, for some.
 I is for invisibility — see?
 J is for jailer, but mine is not born yet.
 K is for knell, but mine is not tolled yet.
 L is for law, but I have none.
 M is for mantra, but mine is silent.
 N is for nature, but I am beyond it.
 O is for owls, but wisdom is for me.
 P is for plot, and that you have not got.
 Q is for quick, and you had better be.
 R is for rust on your trap — look!
 S is for sweetness I stole from the stars.
 T is for truth, terrible as fire.
 U is for untruth, an old yellow tooth.
 V is for veil, and mine is of iron.
 W is for war, but I do not advise it.
 X is for xerox, but I have no copy.
 Y is for you as you sink in your grave.
 Z is for zero, and that's all your secret.

January Haiku

No spade can dig this
earth. Winter protects itself
from all shoots of change.

**

Glassy fists of frost
clasp green daffodil throats,
un-spring their breathing.

**

Flat stone sun skipping
over ice, burning my eyes.
Winter phosphorous.

**

The hellebore bends
like Atlas, its face purple
with the weight of frost.

**

An army of ice.
Its endless, stifling shroud creeps
throughout the garden.

Calendar

Spring

Swallows crotchet and
minim the telephone wires,
sing volts down the line.

Summer

Bees go down at the
lips of foxgloves, nervous like
a lover's first time.

Autumn

A spider has danced
a fingerprint in the space
between two branches.

Winter

Nests clot in the veins
of the tree – the rooks are a
passing infection.

Adam Horowitz

CHURCH FELLOWSHIP WALK

They left with urgent boots and straining rucksacks
On a way rocky and hard in places.

That day the leader was Morris. He helped
The uncertain across a flooding stream.
When he tried, he could see further than most.

Shy Josh made notes about mending some stiles.
His wife wouldn't thank him, he said. She had
Other interests. They missed their son dearly.

Paula was a revelation. She kept
Them all focussed. GPS was God's gift,
So she sprinkled hills and valleys with names.

Francesca loved the birds round her council flat.
How many thousands did she feed? For the others,
She wove a quilt of their songs and habits.

Pete told a story. Then another... about
Various fish he would catch. He wore white
And was usually the group's back-marker.

Stone-faced Martin was back-marker, though.
He argued with fences, tapped his head a lot,
Drew lines in the earth and stepped over them.

The one they couldn't really place was Judy.
She disagreed with Jez about the route
And had burning eyes, red hands like rashers.

With their hearts raised to the first of the stars,
Jez drove them down Thieves Lane to The Crosses: ✓
The Weepers
Their week's last meal together. And then home.
(Time is a town)