

Three Poems · *Dean Young*

NOT NOW THOSE LITTLE GOODBYE STORIES

Today my friend is having her heart fixed.
A hole in the septum is mixing blood,
the red and blue on the diagrams—gray.
When I last saw her she was partially
happy, knowing at last why she could only
pick so many socks off the floor.
And she seemed even more beautiful
as the cup went to her lips, a small white cup.
Around her the room seemed pulsing as if
something stunning had been said
and there was soon to be a soft-spoken reply.
When I was little I thought the body
solid as a potato. Then, grade by grade,
it filled with Xs and Os, circulations
and decussations intricate as a Swiss toy
from another century that could be broken
by dust. By now all my grade school teachers
are dead and done with their lessons
but, please, not now for all that. Not now
for the little stories of our old neighbors
who bend lower each morning for the morning
paper that never explains those explosions
in the night. She is young. We're all young.
An intern I know sketched me the procedure,
the good percentages and silver vise
they use to spread the ribs. I can feel my own
heart brought up into the cold air and light,
a Saturday hero sprung from jail, bars
bent, a toothy grin and quick to the horses.
By Tuesday she'll have a canoe-shaped scar
for her husband's finger to rest in
on his way to her breasts.

A blue canoe setting off in sunset.
Left behind, we await her return,
news of fish that fly, gems big as hats,
flowers that eat meat.

CHICKEN LITTLE

Yesterday the low-end guy
on the steps with the new neighbor's
couch huffed between upward umphs
about an asteroid due in 1992 or 3
to collide with planet Earth—
a geyser of dust unfurling
like a dropcloth between us
and the sun, source of all life.
Or it could just nearly miss,
shred the stratosphere,
the already blighted ozone-rind.
Same old story: freeze or fry.

Once on Star Trek the Captain's stuck
on an asteroid that's really a ball
within a hollow ball, a people
hermetically sealed and devoted
to a computer gone ka-floey
like a cheap touch tone phone
that dials 3 when you push 6
so you finally quit calling
and wait to be called.
Anyway Spock's only got a couple minutes
to phaser or one of the quadrant's
thickest populations will be caroomed through
but down there Kirk's in love or McCoy's
in love or maybe even Chekov's in love.