

Premature Elegy for an Imaginary Friend

by Gary Zomlek

Animal Science, Jr.

I rest my case with you: he was my friend.
The day I buried him I had inscribed:
Here rests an accomplished listener;
He died quietly, afraid to miss a chord.
 He might (he thought) disturb a sequence of ideas.
 It was better (he decided) to stand quietly,
 Not as a sneaking, backdoor mouse, but
 As a gateway column, silent, but soundly reassuring,
 For in that silence, support.
But (they thought) he must have been the egg-watchman:
“Did you see how closely he would turn his ear,
And there were noises none of us could hear?”
“I think he’s counting chickens as they hatch,
And strains to hear them as they scratch
The walls they live in, walls away from him.”
But (they guessed) he was a woolly sheep-baa:
He could be coddled, never taught.
The instruments he used to test the universe
Were hooves, not hands: he lacked refinement.
The wool he pulled down on his mind
Prevented visions, grandeur, enterprise:
At least, in him they had no expression.
Since he said nothing, they took him for a fool,
A soft oddity, but they were taken.
They took him in for a jest, and he thought:
When all is clatter and quacking, the silent wear the bells.
There was no mother to ease his young age;
Those goddesses all men seek to sleep in would not breast
 him.
His soul (they said) would neither suckle nor bite.

And though, for tenderness, he would not grip things with
his teeth,
He would not press his lips to us (they judged) from his
timidity.
But (he knew) their nests were overwarm,
And though he liked to hear their songs,
Their shackles he despised and would not wear.
So as you try him, Deeds-Accomplished Judges,
Ignore the lack of merit in his files,
And remember, in a age when hearts and ears were blind,
He was an accomplished listener.

Integration

by Joe Franko

English & Speech, Soph.

Wet ground
Around the sandstone slab
Falls, sighing, to its lower level;
Gathering the water
Falling off the vine and down
To merge itself with grass, new cut,
Into the brown wine, green wine, pools
Above your head,
The cemetery workers in
Cover-alls, pressed and dry,
Will meet here soon
With the living sun
And run the bones above you
For a seven or eleven,
As silently you smile without lips,
And your tombstone,
Huge and Important,
Will cover-up their fun from
Bossing white eyes.
The black dots sit
Upon the ivory bones.