

a roar of unified outrage swept
like a rumor of v.d. through the room,
and i was shown roughly to the door.

the next day the hostess called
to thank me: the party
had been a huge success.

I LIKE CRITICS

i like critics (this is
my first published poem)
they tell me which books
to detest without reading,
which films i'll like
and maybe see.

i like poetry contests,
and film festival prizes.
i like n.e.a. grant judges.
i trust, respect, and admire
editors everywhere: i believe
in their sound judgment.

critics have helped me
to become a better poet:
of course i'll subscribe
(i've enclosed a little extra,
also a photo of my wife
in the shower).

this is my submission,
my art.
judge it well.

A PERFORMING SEAL

After years of love, patience, and reward-motivation training, he had finally taught a seal to understand human language and commands, and to perform so many human functions as to make the seal the principal celebrity of the entire circus menagerie. People would come for kilometers around to see the seal compete with chimpanzees in gymnastics, or do such tricks as "eat lobster newberg with a knife and fork while dressed in an expensive evening gown," or "drive a porsche around

a swimming pool." Imagine the trainer's surprise when he found his seal, clothed in a full-length polar bear coat and adorned with a diamond necklace, performing unnatural acts with a stranger.

-- Greg Boyd

Sepulveda CA

PLUMS

Suddenly, toward the end of summer, they are everywhere, huge black love-bites on Sunday morning skin. Bulging with the sun's heat and puce colored, like fleas black with borrowed juice, they are piled in mounds, a giant's caviar.

So rich their blush is a paling: blue.

One doesn't eat them. Break the skin and suck. They go down in a slurp: black oysters; a liquid titivation of the tongue; a perfumed embalming, stiffening the spine with pleasure; Cleopatra's dying kiss, asptung.

Mind the stone.

CHERRIES

One of the pretty discoveries of Marcel Proust, chimérique de son thé.

Polished inside the tree as they course upwards through the limbs to their spring réclame, they are the color of drops scattered by wounded curassiers in gaudy uniforms on rolling green 18th century battlefields.

One thinks of ancient lacquer, of the snub noses of Chinese schoolgirls in February snow, of Amazonian nipples mother-of-pearl lustered by War's wet mouth.

Bloodknots holding the huge whiteness of Manet's Christ.