

## MAYBE THIS WILL DO THE TRICK

a couple of months ago, i let  
a salesgirl sell me a blue  
ink refill for my ballpoint  
pen instead of the black ink  
refill that i really wanted.

today, being near the stationery  
shop, i went in and replaced the  
blue ink cartridge with a black  
ink cartridge, even though there  
was still a little blue ink left.

this raised my spirits.

i believe that,  
for the time being,  
i will resist any impulses  
to make further changes  
in my life.

## THE INGREDIENT

my uncle virgil  
was an uncle by marriage,  
the husband of my father's sister,  
a great beauty who died young  
of tuberculosis.

every year virgil renewed my subscription  
to the *national geographic*.  
the issues accumulated, many  
unopened, as in, i suspect, most families.

he lived in pennsylvania,  
an engineer at sylvania electronics,  
and he married the housekeeper, roseanne,  
not long after his wife was buried.

roseanne was not beautiful,  
just helpful and warm and good-natured.  
their marriage was a success.

my parents were never critical  
of virgil and roseanne.  
i thought it strange to marry  
a plain woman after having had the glory  
of a beautiful one, but my parents seemed  
to understand.

i'm beginning to also.

*MUMMY MASK, PTOLEMAIC PERIOD*

such large gentle eyes  
and modest mundane features.  
you think: this woman would have  
made a good wife.  
you also think: certainly this is but  
another aspect of the immortality  
art can bestow: that your image, at  
least, can remain lovable, more than  
two thousand years after your death:  
no wonder the wiser potentates not  
only honored their artists but made sure  
that they were well liked by them.

finally, though (and it's the stuff of  
science fiction), you think that it  
is an awful long trip back in  
time to have to make just to find  
a woman that you might be able to  
live in harmony with.

—Gerald Locklin  
Long Beach, CA