

the leaves on the lower branches
of the sugar maple and yellow birch
crackle in the November wind
catch the late afternoon sun
form designs on the grass
fall lingers beyond its time
through pine bedroom blinds
light burnishes the captain's chest
as I pull the down quilt
over sheets where our bodies meshed
last night
flowing and contained
like the ironstone cup
whose snake handle I grasp
when I drink my morning tea

Designs

we take what we can
from each other
quick kisses
touches that don't swim
below the skin's surface
after so many years
sharing bed and board
we're no longer anchored
but float
in space we splice
we need no compass
to know the direction
we're always at sea
just treading water

At Sea

through a dance of detached legs toes
things cut from trunks colored
red orange green
we swirl floor by floor in the spiral museum
where artists stretch extremities
and couples who wear faded jeans
pass before paintings
as they hold hands
you trail me
don't speak
later on the street
elms and poplars bleed
resins which smudge car windows
while we wait for the bus to move us
away from the art
we stand side by side
the starlings sing

Framed Life

time appears to contract
less light more color
beside our slate walk
children skip and trample
brittle leaves
I sit on the basement floor
play Ma Rainey Bessie Smith
their songs slash the air
blues whose lyrics I know by heart
you carve a seal
from driftwood
salvaged last summer
snow and sleet forecast today
mirror my mind
your silence seems more than a sign
hands can shape anything

More Than A Sign

**More Than A Sign
by Joan Fishbein**



I picture my poems as small abstracts of emotion. I don't punctuate so meaning, sound, and rhythm can become flexible elements.

The reader can play with the poem on the page, or in his or her mind. And, if I succeed, my work will endorse and, perhaps, enhance personal experience.

Interior Modifications

a dream kindled
by some sublime candle
a jade crane grounded
on a glass top table
views of tumbling objects
a white cat flipped upside down
clothes cleaning in a washing machine
swept pebbles that make a garden
I fall through feet first
as I watch flying roaches
smash against sun porch windows
a voice says you have abandoned me
piece by piece
make interior modifications
unlock the clock
behind the wall
rewind yourself

Please recycle to a friend.

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