

*after the photographs "Bay/Sky, Provincetown, Massachusetts, 1979" and  
"Bay/Sky, Provincetown, Massachusetts, 1977" by Joel Meyerowitz*

The World Rusts

to sepia until  
you take another

picture, then nothing  
but purple

as if the world  
is only one color

at a time.  
Look closer.

See the stirrings  
of different lights.

These colors  
have no names.

They are night or day  
or many at once.

Just reach.

All color comes  
from faraway

stars.

Andrea McBride

## In Service of Sully

*after the photograph "Battle Buddy" by Mylin Campbell*

Death hides from the young.  
Masquerades as a tree,  
    brush under foot as  
skeletal vines trailing lifeless,  
    a whisper of color enough to  
shroud any trace of graveside days.  
Scarlet eyes steep in reverie,  
    sing life eternal,  
it takes root, inspired—it isn't fair really.

I don't see the dog.  
Ink cloaked, dirt deep and  
    fierce as the night in summer.  
I see the irony, the humor, the inevitable weight,  
the gravity of time, but not the dog,  
    not the watchful eye of companionship,  
the joyful unconditional devotion  
    planted firmly, on the ground.

I see the path.  
It may turn, twist like that gnarled tree,  
split and fold in on itself,  
grow green with the season,  
blooming traitorous before revealing it  
    leads only to one end.  
We all have one foot in the grave.  
Some of us are just  
    more intimate with it  
    than others.

Dawn McMahon

## Visitors

*after the photograph "The Cottages" by Joel Meyerowitz (1982)*

The winged gray blur of cranes  
nearly erases  
a wind-quiver of bare clothesline.  
Seeds of light sprout  
between rows of raked clouds in slate sky.

Wind whirs, whistles on empty beach.  
Behind a wall, identical cottages hide  
from foaming sea.  
Potted petunias gone.  
Out-of-state license plates  
driven away.  
An outdoor corridor  
of empty boxes  
stands at attention, salutes  
squares, rectangles.  
Angles reproduce  
an accordion regiment of slanted roofs.

Thirsty Fall sand holds footprints  
of soles that burned there,  
the vestige of visitors' heels—  
cupped hollows engraved  
in the dull mineral rub of limestone,  
the shapeshifting shimmer of ground quartz  
worn down  
by wind, salt, tide.

Music, damp swim suits,  
scents of soap, marinara stews—  
their traces now erased.  
Swimming, shelling, laughing,  
they hadn't noticed  
shadows lengthening,  
moments  
drifting away like sand grains.

As if to out the one who didn't leave  
this row of deserted cottages,  
the sun knocks at one white metal door,  
blazes its screen, demands an answer.

Cheryl A. Van Beek

## **The Counter-Protestor**

*after the photograph "New York City, 1965" by Joel Meyerowitz*

Lady in tan wool coat,  
faux fur collar, side-saddled  
on swooping cement railing  
in Central Park, pensive

profile of sinking chin, jowly cheeks,  
short, gray curls tucked beneath black chenille cap.  
Rash of barren trees in distant horizon,  
shadowy skyscrapers poking murky sky.

One hand seeks warmth in left coat pocket,  
other hand spread like a crab claw  
between pistol grip and magazine of an AK-47,  
barrel hangs off her lap like a long-legged grandchild.

Maybe she's resting feet aching  
from standing too long with old guards of the past,  
guns talking back at hippies holding signs  
saying *Draft beers, not boys!*

as the first troops landed in Da Nang.  
Or at the Mattachine Society  
chanting, *We're here, we're queer!*  
Perhaps she mourns the polite way young people

used to dress, respect their elders  
and resign themselves to the script  
that directed her life.  
Or rather, she could see herself as lion

tamer of her husband and boys,  
removing bullets as they relieve themselves,  
silently cheering for those brave souls  
petitioning for equality and change.

Gemma Kay

## Flags for Sale

*after the photograph "New York City, 1968" by Joel Meyerowitz*

Walter

counts dollars in a  
20-story building, wears  
sunglasses even when  
it's grey and cloudy.

At the end of the day  
we smell like pennies  
collected in a cup  
while a Manhattan is  
passed to him  
by a manicured hand.

Leo

sells hot dogs, forehead dotted  
with sweat, steam rising from  
stainless steel bins.

At the end of the day  
he smells of  
ketchup, mustard, onions.  
He peels off his T-shirt—  
the refrigerator light shines  
on his Pabst Blue Ribbon.

Ralph

steps out of a blue cloudless sky  
after four long years flying  
B-52 bombers  
over the fields of Vietnam.

At the end of the day  
the scent of burnt gasoline  
drifting in a distant field  
never left him  
but I remember most  
he smelled of Bay Rum, dressed  
in starch black and white,  
his whiskers like fine sand on my cheek.

I felt weightless in his arms.

A sliver of blue sky, our witness.

Leah Clark

**“Dairyland, Provincetown, 1976” by Joel Meyerowitz**

Under a pink-and-blue swirl of dusk  
florescent yellow downlights the eaves.  
Like an end-of-a-beach-day oasis,  
Dairyland beckons with signs and suggestions:

FOOD.

At the front of the parking lot, under a spotlight,  
a tri-part sign rises to the sky:

DAIRY *Land*

Enjoy *Coca Cola*

Ham

Beef

Steak

Cheese

Clam chowder

Onion rings

A lighted sign near the roof peak projects  
a huge vanilla/chocolate twist and:

SANDWHICHES

FOOD BASKETS

FISH CHIPS

A paper sign taped to the window recaps: “Ice Cream Cones”.  
A competing poster touts the newest treat: *Frogurt!*  
“Eat it All” urges another flyer.

It’s like the first time I went to the Jersey Shore.  
We stopped to take pictures and I pointed at the sign:  
*Eat Here or We Both Starve!*

It’s like when Dad would treat us to Bo’s Ice Cream.  
I’m a kid in the back of our white Dodge Dart,  
with chocolate dipped in chocolate.  
I bite through the frozen shell, lick the silky coolness,  
and nibble until I’ve made the world’s smallest cone.

“Dairy” and “Land” curve under each side of the roof slope  
like the eyelashes on two eyes.

At the order window is a plaid shirt blur.  
There is no one in the kitchen.  
We can’t see the “MA” on the place next door  
and there’s no one to note it’s just “RKET”.

In Meyerowitz's photo, it's always 1976  
and the same six cars are still empty in the parking lot.

Gianna Russo