

## Select Poems

### The Mermaid

Elizabeth Raby

The mirror says—  
See what desire has done?  
Her voice gone  
to the witch who cut out  
her tongue, the mermaid  
keeps her mouth closed.  
She doesn't want  
to see the stub.  
Her tail  
exchanged for legs,  
every bleeding step  
agony, like a walk  
on knife blades.  
The underwater palace,  
king and queen, her sisters,  
gardens of coral and kelp,  
shining golden carp,  
all lost for the love  
of a prince. He says  
he prefers her voiceless,  
her eyes speak sweetly  
enough, never offend.  
He lets her sleep  
on a cushion outside  
his door. When he leaves  
her, off to claim a more  
plausible bride,  
the mermaid knows  
her fate—she will dissolve  
to foam on the shore.  
It must have been  
worth it she tells  
herself, her back  
to the cruel glass  
that gives her nothing.

### Adagietto II, a Love Song

#### On the Untraveled Landscape of the Symphonist

Catherine-Grace Patrick

In your spirit, lies the heart of Orion:  
Flawless. Our world's to explore.  
Bold strains of *The Egmont Overture*,  
    Heard just beyond the door.  
You are the white smoke of autumn.  
    Hypnotic. November-sleek;  
Stillness of the season's first snowflake:  
    Perfection brushing one's cheek.  
Your essence is clad in the breath of God:  
    Sanctified. Called out from among us—  
Wildly circling Time's feathered flame—  
    Purple blaze of the fallen star.  
For, in you lies the deep core of mystery;  
    Exceeding the band-width of words.  
Indeed, you alone are Mahler:  
    Mighty symphonist of sovereign bliss.

### Mozart in the Tropics

Clarence Wolfshohl

Mozart sat at the piano  
the most of every day,  
and scorpions lived in the cracks  
of the notes he played.

Not Viennese bon vivants,  
but iguanas climbed rock walls  
to sit outside his studio  
and hear the scorpions call.

While geckos and constrictors  
wrestled catch-as-catch-can  
in passing notes eerily dolce,  
Die Zauberflöte screeched centipedes

into flocks of parrots  
squawking in the minor keys,  
hordes of mosquitoes snapping their fingers  
to Rimsky-Korsakov as fast as bees.



### Ever This Night Be at My Side

Tara L. Carnes

Sitting in the rocker frozen  
held breath, listening hard—  
twitching  
at the night's  
skittering sounds

Does he know we're here?

lights out  
phone unplugged  
car parked elsewhere

and baby sleeps on

Angel of God  
my guardian dear, we  
wait for his drunken footsteps

my fingers brush the  
reassuring steel

breathe in  
breathe out

no sleep tonight