

*the undigestible end
of the periodic table*

maybe you'll create lead
this time. or maybe gold
with your accelerating fist
your atoms colliding with my atoms
splitting us into before

and after

or maybe you'll create something
heavier. more radioactive
an exotic element that will hang
unnoticed in the air
and poison your food and your bed
or coat the knives in the kitchen
with desire for blood

the results of these experiments
are unpredictable

A Small Garlic Press

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<http://www.enteract.com/~marek/asgp/chapbook.html>
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LeeAnn Heringer 1996

LeeAnn Heringer is a nomadic
software engineer in Silicon Valley
where she is regularly sent out across
the US and Europe armed only with a
handheld computer, torque wrench,
compass, night goggles, and the best
damn C compiler money can buy. But
just like those Disney movies, she
keeps finding her way back home.

She has poetry published or
forthcoming in *Liberty Hill*, *Hook and
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Interbang, and *Poetry Motel*.

Her chapbook, *Picture Postcards*, is
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Love and Death

5 poems

by LeeAnn Heringer

there should have been candles

a good independent art film
would have had candles
against strange bright velvet
and a mariachi band

rows of candles like a cathedral
entrance
to show how holy our love was how
our prayers had been answered how
the gargoyles and demons
had all been banished

in time for the closing credits
of who was the third assistant
to the second director
swirling bending around us
in a clear clean font like futura
as we danced
the roman numbered copyright of our
library of congress approved
happy ending

but even with candles
i couldn't love you more

the advantages of dying young

a young man was selling
photographs on the street
pictures of red tulips
against a greasy white rag
and he said he was trying to capture
the moment before everything falls apart
before we start sleeping
further and further
from the people we love
because we want to be missed

and i told him tulips
would never tell that story
they die too young to know
what happens at the end
of the black tire marks
out on the highway
too young to see their loved ones
move off into the silence
surrounding death
where they're not missed

and i will forget you

time
god's metronome voice
hides my youth in mirrors

soft lit and
steady handed as the fog
that crowns the oak trees
along the slough
twisted and black
against the murky water
and the winter twilight sky
as the sleeping silks
of worn flags are lowered
folded
and taken away to be burned
where no one is watching

i am returning
the arms you held me with
and hands that stroked my hair
and the small kisses
at the nape of my neck
because i have used them to measure
the duration of loneliness
and now know that
we are 93 million miles from the sun
and no closer to god

*what finally happens
to the homeless*

the clouds have faces tonight
with santa claus beards
and deep twilight eyes
weary with watching the earth
spin slowly below them
unwanted here
the wind pushes them on

they're the lost souls of the nomad
who left family and safe home harbor
walking west
until the weight of the road
flattened them and
they drifted away
having gotten their wish
to belong to no one

