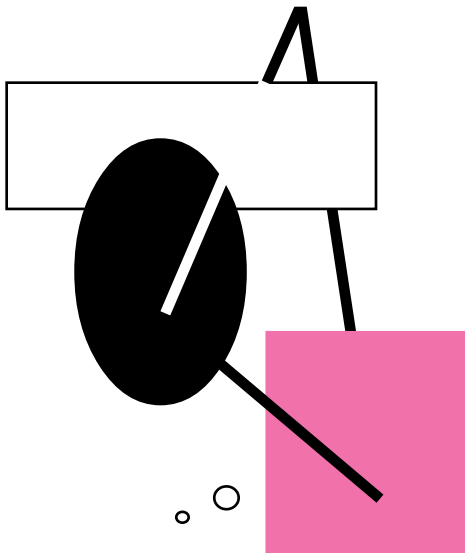


optical illusions

someone told her Fords were best
so she bought a dark blue one
with a headliner patterned
in ten thousand pinhole circles

if you stared at it long enough
your eyes brought the whole thing
down close to your face
but if you reached up to touch it
your hand went straight through

she was like that too
sometimes if I looked at her
for a long time
my eyes brought her close
but when I reached out
my hand went right through
to nothing



Born under a Gemini sky in a cowboy town, Renay doesn't fit or subscribe to stereotypes. Her poems catalog both the common and the mystic features of a life often lived daredevil-fast or slow-painful, but always unobstructed and alive. By trade she is a designer, by luck she is a poet, and by choice she lives on the road.

Her first chapbook, *They Drivem Pickup Trucks/ They Shootem Shotguns*, was published by A Small Garlic Press (Chicago/Kennewick) in March 1996. It was printed twice in the first 3 months, which makes it ASGP's currently most in-demand book.

Some years earlier Renay's work appeared in print as part of *Fresh Oil, Loose Gravel*, a small-run, private-issue book, compiled and manufactured by Chris Losinger then of Rochester, New York.

Most recently, Renay is one of the 39 featured writers in *~/xconnect: Writers of the Information Age*, a UPenn literary review in 200 pages and color plate art.

Likewise, the web installation *Agnieszka's Dowry*, and the larger web site of its sponsor, A Small Garlic Press, enjoy a similar standing. You will find more of Renay's poetry there, as well as a handsome and informative display of other chapbooks and broadsides published by A Small Garlic Press.

To purchase Renay's chapbook
They Drivem Pickup Trucks
They Shootem Shotguns

ISBN 1-888431-06-7

send \$3 (US) to:
A Small Garlic Press
3030 West Fourth No. 27
Kennewick, WA 99336, USA

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

Recycling the White Trash

POETRY FROM THE CURB

© Renay

laugh lines

this is the time for not frowning
for not smiling either
because each time I do
the gentle crescent creased
between my nose and chin
lingers longer afterward
reminding me
maybe I have smiled
too much already
and at some point some
soft humor will etch itself
permanently along my cheek
until I either have to smile
forever to hide it
or face my face as mine
wondering
what was so damn funny
that it chiseled me
like stone

wrongly convicted

at six ay-em the hammer weighs
half what I do
busta rock busta rock
my sentence: 8 yards
square yards
and my chain is September
when it gonna rain
gotta busta rock
gotta build a roof
I don't kill no one
I don't rape no one
I don't blow up no-thing
busta rock
when the sun come up
I sweat like a sow
ache like a sad heart
busta rock busta fingernail
my skinny arms buff up
and the hammer swings
and the hammer cracks
and the sun just get hotter
so my white white skin burns
the warden say
stop, girl, stop!
but I'm working off my time
working off my breakfast
at ten ay-em the hammer
weighs twice what I do
and I think
I don't do no crime
but I do my time
let those fuckers did
do theirs
busta rock

paying the price

we're snobbing through Pebble Beach
wearing hats
our rented T-Bird windows down
watching izods putt
on greens green enough
to make Eire jealous
while caddies lug full bags
of Pings and coastal deer sun
serene under golfball meteors
all calm, all rich,
nobody sweating but the caddies
all backdropped against
the green bluegreen Pacific
we stand middleclass awed
in our rodeo boots
while rich rich alice's
play eighteen in wonderland
when a perfect autumn wind
blows in the smell of sealion shit
and we have to run watery eyed
for our rented t-bird
in our scuffy rodeo boots
gagging at the clingy
sweet mix of dead things
dying things decomposing things
rotting kelp splattered on the rocks
of a public sealion restroom
sans maid service
and we wonder over the green fees
you pay to play golf at Pebble Beach

a probable parable

his are the fists of god
preying over the white shrine
of her skin.
blood rights and tradition
old and old and old
he is reconfirming himself
recommitting himself
to her body. leaving a
legacy marking this new
earth recreated in his image

his are the hands of god
the fingers are each gods
rough in retribution
worshiping in the temple
between her legs
a zealot, he is teaching
this disciple the discipline
of the creator
moaning mantras
he makes her repeat
until she is redeemed

his are the arms of god
strong for saving the brethren
strong for rebuking the women
he writes the law in blood
on the tablet of her face
so it will always be before her
as soon as she can open her eyes
to see the truth of his holiness

this is her body
which is broken for him
