

A CALENDAR: THE BEAUTIFUL NAMES OF THE MONTHS

By David Young

January

On this yearly journey two faces
are better—a weary
woman, a wary man.

February

Where the earth goes
to run a fever. The care's good.
Herbs brew. The rooms are airy.

March

Bridge curving over a swamp.
A bruise that smarts, the long
patience of an army.

April

Neither grape nor apple.
Any monkey, a pearly sprig,
a prism. Flute notes.

May

The arch opens. Crowds.
Goats, babies, vowels, and
the wind, permitting anything.

June

A jury rises.
The moons of Jupiter
set. Bugs, berries, prairie grass.

NAMING THE SEASONS

By Joseph Hutchison

for David Young

Autumn

A sigh of faint surprise. Then
lips lock, shut the tongue
into its shallow tomb.

Winter

Tearing wind. Trees flinch
like splinted fingers. Ice
enters us. Night windows hurt.

July

Jewelers snooze on the grass,
one eye open for the tall
constellation-poppies.

August

Clearing your throat of dust.
Wading in lagoons ... algae,
hot bursts of wind.

September

Lives away from his brothers,
gentle-tempered, a little solemn.
Bears pests, eats peas and beets.

October

Cold roots and a fresh-caught owl
rocked on a cot.
An orange boot.

November

Toothache and memory.
Nine women. Overdressed beavers.
No new members.

December

Something decent, easy.
Frozen meekness. Wax. A good
end, an ember, then ten of them.

Spring

Dawn spreads wings: downy
rain. Amber welling. Limber
boughs on a blossoming spree.

Summer

Bees hum in bloomers. Sun,
then slumber. Someone murmurs.
Only the mirror remembers.

TWO RAMAGES BY ROBERT BLY

From Bly's introduction to a group of rimages during a reading at Stanford University on May 7, 2008: "The *ramage*, a brief poem of eight lines, is a reverberation of sounds, like two-thirds of a sonnet. The word *ramage* occasionally appears as the name of a movement during some French compositions for flute; it is related to the French noun for 'branch.' We can hear the root of that in 'ramify.'"

THE BIG-NOSTRILLED MOOSE

Horses go on eating the Apostle Island ferns,
Also sheep and goats; also the big-nostrilled moose
Who knocks down the common bushes
In his longing for earthly pleasure.
The moose's great cock floats in the lily pads.
That image calms us. His nose calms us.
Slowly, obstinately, we retrieve the pleasures
The Fathers, angry with the Gnostics, threw away.

THE BEST OF IT

By Kay Ryan

However carved up
or pared down we get,
we keep on making
the best of it as though
it doesn't matter that
our acre's down to
a square foot. As
though our garden
could be one bean
and we'd rejoice if
it flourishes, as
though one bean
could nourish us.

DISARMED

By Wendy Videlock

I should be diligent and firm,
I know I should, and frowning, too;
again you've failed to clean your room.
Not only that, the evidence
of midnight theft is in your bed—
cracked peanut shells and m&m's
are crumbled where you rest your head,

WHAT IS SORROW FOR?

What is sorrow for? It is a storehouse
Where we store wheat, barley, corn an tears.
We step to the door on a round stone
And the storehouse feeds all the birds of sorrow.
And I say to myself: Will you have
Sorrow at last? Go on, be cheerful in autumn,
Be stoic, yes, be tranquil, calm;
Or in the valley of sorrows spread your wings.

STRANGE FRUIT

By Seamus Heaney

Here is the girl's head like an exhumed gourd.
Oval-faced, prune-skinned, prune-stones for teeth.
They unswaddled the wet fern of her hair
And made an exhibition of its coil,
Let the air at her leathery beauty.
Pash of tallow, perishable treasure:
Her broken nose is dark as a turf clod,
Her eyeholes blank as pools in the old workings.
Diodorus Siculus confessed
His gradual ease among the likes of this:
Murdered, forgotten, nameless, terrible
Beheaded girl, outstaring axe
And beatification, outstaring
What had begun to feel like reverence.

and just above, the windowsill
is crowded with a green giraffe
(who's peering through your telescope),
some dominoes, and half a glass
of orange juice. You hungry child,
how could I be uncharmed by this,
your secret world, your happy mess.