

## SANDY SHREVE

### Marbles

Perhaps it is spring, the air clear, an after-rain morning  
Friends gather in the street, take for granted the slip  
of distant ocean scent into their lungs  
the hint of first green in its chill  
One among you begins to grind her heel in the dirt  
tentative at first

It is a casual question, when you crouch  
for another turn, the edge of your forefinger stained  
mud embedded in gravel scratches  
*So, what do you want to be*

You remember your father, your mother  
insisting: anything, anything at all, whatever you want  
So today you say, *lawyer*, tell your friends  
one of your aunts thought of it because  
you are talkative, always arguing, and for some reason  
this reminds you of your mother saying she can't stand  
women's voices on the radio  
how that soprano-sound grates on her nerves

and you can't imagine a day thirty years later  
when the newspapers you don't read yet  
will report that women's voices are lower than thirty years ago  
because of all their new careers  
Reading that story you will remember

today, your mother working at home  
you and your friends dreaming up a different future  
for yourselves while you play marbles  
in a small Maritime town on the edge of an emptiness  
when the thought of your mother's dislike makes you think  
of cheddar cheese, how it ribbons against steel  
to a shredded pile for the soufflé she makes  
how its sharp flavour will rise to mysterious heights

Your friends are laughing now, one has already  
*lost all her marbles*, the game barely begun  
you want her to stay, scoop a handful from your bag

and you see her face, then, the way it was in winter  
the uncomfortable cold of it, walking to school  
she asked what you planned to do but that time  
your mind was as blank as a snowman's  
so you tossed the question back to her

*I'll be a nurse* Her certainty sank into your heart like a stone  
in a snowball, it was nothing you ever imagined  
but she is your best friend, you want to stay together forever  
*Me too* you enthused

Today her face is that frozen as she turns and strides  
away from friendship again, her independence fierce  
against translucent globes in your outstretched hand  
all your precious colours trapped in glass

*Sandy Shreve's most recent poetry collection, Bewildered Rituals is published by Polestar Press (1992).*

## MARG YEO

### pour all over you like rain

when i get my  
arms about you when i  
fold you and hold  
you right up tight and you are kissing my  
earlobe or the back of my  
neck in a discrete and  
neighbourly sort of spirit and my knees  
buckle a bit and my heart's going  
whump whump and kicking my breath out  
what can i

say

*don't*

*do this to me* maybe just for a few  
minutes while i learn to stop  
grieving and get back to being in  
here and alive

what's in  
me is so much love and no  
place to put it so much  
love no one could stand up  
under if i were handing it  
out i keep  
hold of myself

and still our eyes  
meet over the table and right  
away my heart's off  
again with me just rag  
tagging along after it it's a kind of  
disco beat a little  
latin i wish for  
you i could be twenty  
one again and relatively  
harmless but i'm forty  
five and think when a car backfires in the next  
street *they're killing*  
*children* my hands are so  
angry they would talk to you in  
flames  
i wish i could  
pour all over you like  
rain  
that  
easy  
but i'm  
thunder and lightening and the whole  
sky goes dark and everyone  
waits you  
too wondering what  
i will do

*Marg Yeo's most recent collection, Getting Wise, was published by gynergy books in 1990.*

*Our apologies to Sandy Shreve and Marg Yeo for errors in their poems which first appeared in the Spring 1994 issue, volume 14, number 2.*