

strap myself in his place to  
shove a nipple (*any* nipple) in my mouth to  
wash away my (yum  
yum  
    goo  
      goo)  
      life



**David Hilton**

## THE EYE

One day in San Jose  
nextdoor to a family of lettucepickers  
I read the entire  
*Leaves of Grass*. The wall  
shook with drunken Mexican howls,  
slapping, punching, hurled bodies.  
I kept reading—by blue-white neon,  
by yellowing windowlight, by bruised dusk,  
by black-cowled student lamp, finally  
by nothing but the lambent page itself—  
words and exhalations  
irradiating my eyes.

Til then, I had known  
only "O Captain! my Captain!" and  
"Come up from the fields father,"  
loving them both.

By midnight,  
my brain had escaped the skull  
and was pulsing crystal and waves  
thrumming from floor to ceiling,  
becoming the kosmos.  
I was starved, I wept,  
eyes streaming salt and soot.



My feet were buried under empty  
Lucky Lager half-quarts.  
My desk was a huge undumped ashtray.  
I still wore nothing  
but a previous lifetime's pajama bottoms.  
The wall had settled to snores,  
low salsa, hoarse curses.

Fourteen hours,  
never before this world, first trip,  
aching muscle and light inseparable—  
the book lay closed, quiet  
heart of a sleeping god.

\* \* \*

Since that day, every day  
my right eye climbs north,  
tries to roll back in the dark  
and follow it down  
to the cool, blind source.  
Vitreous jelly suspended  
inside a little gristly globe  
can see only fracture-lines of the sun,  
forms often beautiful like naked  
young human bodies, like teeth  
in a silver comb. My eye saw more,  
all spaces between and within  
filling with sunburst flesh,  
jetting energy up the soul's root,  
pine torch blazing at the cavemouth,  
casting all colors upon the mind's firewall.  
So now the eye twists, dives,  
almost out of sight, gets free  
until I catch it back.

Maybe that day and night of red tobacco,  
the phosphorescent pages unending,  
the truck-dusty August heat—  
Did all these injure the eye,  
permanently tic a nerve,

slit some wiry threads? I do not know,  
but the eye wants loose.  
For 25 years, I've gone to eye doctors.  
No matter how much I pay them,  
they can find nothing wrong.



### E. Jean Lanyon

the keys

the power is in the keys,  
and the man with the keys  
has the power.

ring ting ring-a-jing  
and the keys on a ring  
on a chain  
on a clip  
on a trouser waist  
on a leather belt.

even though the suit is gray,  
or kahki janitor color,  
the power is in the keys,  
ring ting ring-a-jing  
makes a soft  
makes a smug  
makes a smile  
on the face of the man  
with the power at his waist.  
he can say no. he can lock out  
all others who would  
usurp his kingdom.

ring ting ring-a-jing  
music for his song  
rhythm banging  
on his thigh  
jangling notes  
singing out  
reminders of his might.