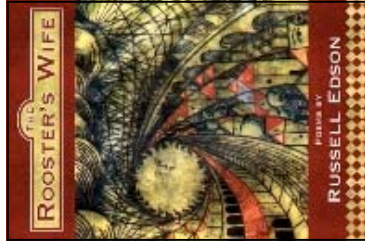


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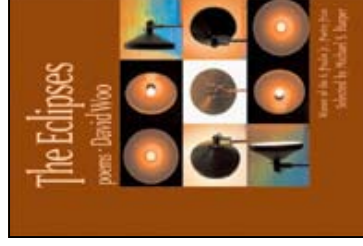
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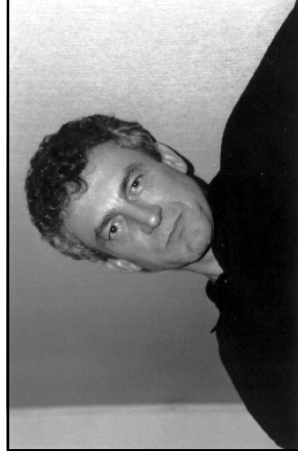
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Russell Edson



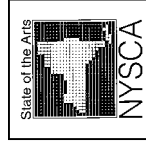
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Jean Michel-Maulpoix

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**Season Sampler**

**Spring/Summer  
2005**

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## ***Blue's recovery after the downpour....***

The sky repaints itself. The trees drip and the pavement drinks. The city, too, tries out sentences. Damp laughter and barefoot rain. It seems like the scenery has been sprinkled with belief.

You would like to grow a garden of this blue, then pick it and slowly place it into a canvas apron or a wicker basket. Arrange the sky in bouquets, reap its perfumes, hold beauty against yourself for a few hours and be reconciled.

You would like to, you look, you know that nothing more can be done and that it is enough to remain there, standing in the light, stripped of gestures and words, with a somewhat foolish desire, of no interest to the scenery, but you are sure that it is not fired up for nothing, since love is our mission, our duty, even if it were as frail as these drops of water after the downpour falling on the grass in the yard.

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## ***The sea within us tries out sentences***

From time immemorial, the same voice spells the same alphabet in the same child's brain. It mutters words, which quickly fly off, snagged on the beach grass, on the swimmers' browned skin, on boats' bows, on the masts. Ordinary words, for nothing and no one in particular. It is just about love. This is why we hardly know what to say and we suffer when someone's gaze fixes on our face, when we would like it to look into our heart. Our lips are so awkward, our body invisible in the opaque night, our hands inept, yet lightning flashes or wings are at our fingertips.

# **I**

## ***Selections from Russell Edson's The Rooster's Wife***

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## ***The Dog's Tail***

An old woman was absentmindedly stirring a pot with a dog's tail.

When her husband asked her about the furry stirrer she said, It's the dog's tail, it came off in my hand.

When her husband asked her what she was stirring she said she didn't know, that all her thoughts were now for the dog's tail.

When her husband noticed that the dog was in the pot she said, Oh, is that where he is? I wondered where he got without his tail.

Her husband said, I'll bet he likes that, being stirred with his own tail. It's sort of like the tail wagging the dog.

The old woman said, I was just petting him, and it came off in my hand. I hope God wasn't looking.

Her husband suggested that perhaps it wasn't the dog's tail that broke off, but rather the dog that broke off....

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# **V**

## ***Selections from Jean-Michel Maulpoix's A Matter of Blue*** **Translated from the French by Dawn Cornelio**

## ***Of Memory and Distance***

It's a scientific fact that anyone entering the distance will grow smaller. Eventually becoming so small he might only be found with a telescope, or, for more intimacy, with a microscope....

But there's a vanishing point, where anyone having penetrated the distance must disappear entirely without hope of his ever returning, leaving only a memory of his ever having been.

But then there is fiction, so that one is never really sure if it was someone who vanished into the end of seeing, or someone made of paper and ink....

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## ***Postcard from the Party***

You have to be invited, and there's nothing you can do to be asked. Headlines and bloodlines don't help. It's a long way from home but I'm here, the view much better than I'm used to.

How did this happen? Dumb but good luck, right place and time, the planets aligned.

No contract, no deadline, no risk. And what did I do to deserve this? Slept with all

the wrong people, gambled too much on friends of friends with light bulbs over their heads.

Wrote every day no matter what.

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## ***Postcard from the Bus***

Notorious humbug, unlovely rider of buses  
everywhere, tell me you remember the night  
we met between Flint and Detroit, and I'll  
tell you exactly what you taught me: not  
to believe in the lives of saints, the death  
of God or the genius of the insane, but  
to watch the moving dark for the lights  
of the next town, the one that's half-  
way there, halfway not, painfully  
close to the one I forgot.

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# **III**

## ***Selections from David Woo's The Eclipses***

## ***My Father at 21***

“My innocence back then was real, not a style,”  
“a green flame of water as the bomber attacked”—  
gnomic utterances, Heraclitean fragments:  
I step through the evidence of you, like dust motes.

The swarming dust-cloud that hovered on the edge  
of the green sea, you a single mote stepping into  
the argent hull of a Pan Am prop plane,  
the VIP lounge closed to you on the other end.

I have the photograph: you on a San Francisco street—  
Geary or Sutter—in an oversized bomber jacket,  
strolling toward the basement where thirty years later  
I sipped coffee and read *The Way of Chuang Tzu*.

The leanness, that angular intensity, so readily confused  
with vacuity or boredom: the mouth empty  
of words, save those gleaned from a dog-eared  
pocket dictionary, each word nervously earned.

Inside the lining of the jacket a ganglion of nerves  
firing each time a beautiful face enters  
the peripheries, and then that sheepish blur,  
our common diffidence, my inheritance.

Or smiling in wonder, the same tremble at the corners  
of our lips, as on the long concourse you searched  
for a face that matched the photographs  
and, a grown man, saw your own father the first time.

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# **IV**

## ***Selections from Wynn Cooper's Postcards from the Interior***

## ***“If Wishes Were Horses....”***

there would be a ranch called Night  
Sky or Sleepy-head and a bay  
with a white blaze called Sloop,  
and another, a roan seventeen  
hands high, called Bottom Dollar,  
and wouldn't they fly  
like flame licks before first light  
when the wind kicks up and clouds  
are kites cut loose in the dark.  
There would be a river, some cool  
water like a vein of silver  
dimpled with trout, shivering  
beneath stars innumerable  
and faint as faces  
forgotten by children drifting  
into a dreaming deep as a heart.  
The river would be called Heart,  
and there would be a prairie  
called Endless, shaking  
out its rope of dusty miles  
burled with shadows,  
bunchgrass, sagebrush,  
and a shape in the distance  
like smoke or something lost.  
The shape would be Nameless,  
and the horses, the roan  
and the bay, with their lips  
stripped away from their teeth  
like death masks and ears  
ironed flat, would stop,  
and nose the wind,  
and nicker, their withers  
trembling like spider lace.  
And the shape would nicker back.

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## ***The Eye***

Afterecho of sirens, a sliding-glass door, curtains  
parting, the dark-green room with the white bed,  
the tiny spot of blood on the useless tube  
in her throat. Eyes closed; we never closed them  
for her. “Sleep is sleep,” she'd scoff, which meant  
death was not a dozing lamb. And yet I opened  
one lid to expose a dead eye, empty and glassen  
as the sweet beast's gaze. I wanted one last look in,  
but it didn't stay open. Something, not my touch,  
closed it for her again, something, mere inertia,  
reflex of the orbicular oculi, something that defied  
the solace of metaphor, the succor of half-truths  
she taught us to resist, like the words I uttered  
to console my father: “She wants to stay asleep.”

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## ***Out There***

I know where I'm going.  
And it's not out there.

Where things happen and  
happen and why aren't they

somebody's fault? I can  
see from in here, between

the slats of the blind,  
what I need to.

I can see a white truck  
parked like a dog

waiting for a walk.  
I can see a mailbox

with its tongue out  
like communion.

I can see the mountain  
I can no longer climb

beyond the ordinary,  
durable pines, their spines

stiff and barked against  
whatever spark wants

to burn its way inside,  
and in this place what

flame or face again  
shall touch me?

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# **III**

## ***Selections from Jim Simmerman's American Children***