

## New Poems by Elinor Nauen

Contributed by Elinor Nauen

### Motor Mouth

Orson Welles has no trouble with bricks  
level-headed as he is  
yup he can pile about 30  
in a cave of minor nationality

where a thousand posies  
approach Sappho, who leans on a doorpost  
like a cowboy shoots up a bar  
ransomed & redeemed

cher chez la femme  
behind the house is a woman  
nothing is behind the house  
I am the house & twice as safe

or take Italian cinema  
red wine & guns, liars & lira —  
every day when the sun comes up  
I dress in my potbellied two-tit stove

### What We Carry

X--- thought everyone despised him  
because he was black  
and Z--- that she didn't get her fairshare  
because she was female

it was because they were jerks  
there's always a prize  
if we slice thin enough  
I want the prize for being awake right now

the cat's perfect weight  
cancels my breath  
the coffee's french'd & milk'd  
I hate that picture

he isn't thinking of me  
what else should his life be?  
what should my life be?  
I could do 100 pushups

I could not do 100 pushups  
I could take a bath  
the inland sea, they called it  
but I could say the coastal prairie

the high plains  
of giant sky and prairie dog  
big wind & mini pasque  
the bull was a bully

only the corn was the same size  
as me  
I love corn  
now the cat is on the floor

now the coffee is in my brain  
now my brain is striped with--

now he turns over  
to think of me at last

The Poem Not Called Jacaranda  
for Susie

I love your book so much  
Ei  
that I want to borrow your  
titles  
for my own poems  
still  
don't  
know  
what jacaranda is is  
that  
my failure  
or yours

sorry, E

the E who is I  
as I am the E  
who is L

your white thighs  
roll & tip & move  
like mine  
upended  
how terrific to have  
hip  
sockets & a pelvic floor

pelvic clock  
ibis  
mermaid  
swan  
my life is less  
stirring  
than a German bodybuilder  
after 25 years  
we get  
the jokes  
& purple jacaranda

Show Me, Shower Me

what arrives  
in a cascade?  
rain shower, snow shower, love shower

suddenly the sun  
lances ice  
so bright you can't see

tumbles through  
trees air  
that redhead's hair

into your eyes:  
that's a sun shower

### The Trouble with You Is

you're not the warmth  
of Louisiana in March  
where we run across tar  
to get out of town  
with a cat on a leash  
pretty  
primal: are there  
trees?  
are there plants?  
are there birds?  
Yes! cuckoo or mockingbird or catbird —  
something gray —  
something with —  
a long tail —  
a cat is nature too  
straight south of Minnesota snow

### Great Day in the Morning

I reckon  
I forgot  
to marry  
Ben Johnson  
& now  
he's dead  
that boyish  
lanky  
cowboy  
a real cowboy  
&  
a movie cowboy  
&  
a Republican  
an icon  
can be  
whatever he  
damn well  
wants to be  
yes ma'am

### Bride May Be Icy

What if what  
flashes

past  
when you lie

are small debts unpaid things  
lost remarks misunderstood

like everyone, I regret  
only the undone

what have you forgotten?

only what I wish to forget

what have you lost?  
only what I wish to abandon

what do you regret?

### The Big Joke

the big joke  
of all the small betrayals  
is what they  
add  
up  
to:  
someone else entirely  
who doesn't mind  
being  
dead  
or over there  
or over  
looked who doesn't  
mind  
manners or rules or  
the quick change  
just out of sight  
"her life" "your life"  
might be sleeping lying  
wait  
for  
the last betrayal

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### Train Poem

the V train takes  
me & 3

Korean women  
to incorruptible Augustine

it's not as fun to be god  
now that choosing

colors for monkey butts  
is done

maybe god could focus  
on better haircuts

or tell me if I should go blonde  
or to Jamaica

where I will fall  
for a handsome rasta

I could never marry

a man rushing to his grave

I could never marry  
a man who didn't trip