

[Home](#)

[Current Issue
\(Winter/Spring 2008\)](#)

[Autumn 2007](#)

[Summer 2007](#)

[Spring 2007](#)

[Winter 2007](#)

[Autumn 2006](#)

[Summer 2006](#)

[Spring 2006](#)

[Winter 2006](#)

[Fall 2005](#)

[Summer 2005](#)

[Editor's Note](#)

[Guidelines](#)

[SNR's Writers](#)

[Contact](#)



College, the Early Seventies

they played *conga* drums
they lived below,
I did pen and ink drawings
Of my pillow
Picasso died
Mao swam in a river
I shared a suite
With two woman
I did not know,
One a burn victim
Both Italian
They never left the room
Watched Walter Cronkite
I invented their past,
Liked their indifference
and wafted into
the room below
a plume of light before me
pulsing light
it was there
I saw it,
I didn't drink Ripple
It was all energy,
All male but sexless
Or hermaphroditic
bent upon the possible,
the infinite,
by day, we danced in the street

at night we shimmied to the blues,
I wore a felt hat with a plume, a
Cloche I think they called it.

they played congas and guitars
I think we spoke of life,
no longer do we talk about life
we talk about our lives
our individuation
leaving particles
to physicists
truth is
dangling participles
the revealed
by turn
as an afterthought
afterbirth
inconvenient,
productivity is key
we are a concatenation
of honey bees
each one larger and more
useful than others
but I can't smell
or see or taste
diminished
in my belief in
experience
but not experiencing
I breathe shallow breaths
I like the shade:
Coward.

mars is gas,
we are water
and the photos of far life
galaxies known and imagined
sustain me,
I live in the possible
And the plausible,
Swim in it,
It is swill
Ordure
But still I do not
Give up on it
I live in the ease
Of dreams.

Trolley Cars in Boston

cell dimly lit
plodding furiously down
vague brown canal
windows, a scrim
trolley car in Boston
noisy encapsulation emanation:
of eyes dull and dark

dirt-caked sneakers
urban school urchin
custodian's shirt

baggy brown pants
U.S. geography scarf
Upon lady in curlers
lady who breathes
heavily
down
my neck,
the face heavy
laden
the teeth sharp
silently
confessing her life.

ah,
breadbox of humanity
where worker student
stand settle
like a comeliness
momentarily but then dislodge
breadbox whose contents
go stale from time passed,

A secretary
whose black-limned
heavily lidded eyes
search
and meet mine
scanning
silhouettes so hard
she transforms them
into giddy life.
hope flickers in her hands
sedately placed upon her lap.

oh, tunnel, yielding us up into the lean horizontality
of warm Cambridge-on-the-river,
which beckons us
to sidewalks neat and concrete-caulked
which follows steel, cement and glass
which disappear shrilly.

we are suspended between consumer-ended
frankfurter-standed pale
of inner-city
and antique
newly-varnished
Cambridge:
guitarists strumming
shoppers strollers
lovers
piercing-eyed intellectuals
walls rubbed thin through time
small towers, secular
inviting.

who lived there then through the centuries,
the jailer? the derelict, the thief,
the fat salami-legged woman
who gets off the trolley stop
same as me,
who lives here

through all time
and takes the same train of sadness?

They Follow Her

they follow her
with their eyes
ready to attach
themselves to her
they come ashore
she shakes off
her composure
like sleep
and they are
fooled by it.
she breaks
herself off
in pieces
like taffy,
the sea enters her
the men advance on her.

for centuries
she sits
at her islet
with no outlet
a small hellenic
trade-route post
she sees all
she lives alone
and those who come to call
are consumed
by her lizard eye glance
her berryred hellion crew.

I like
the woman's power
I like
her pluck.

Copyright 2008, Ellen Pober Rittberg. © This work is protected under the U.S. copyright laws. It may not be reproduced, reprinted, reused, or altered without the expressed written permission of the author.

Ellen Pober Rittberg is a poet, fiction writer and playwright. Most recently, she was the featured writer of the month in *raintiger*, and has been published in *Slow Trains*, *Flutter*, *Long Island Quarterly*, and *Kansas Quarterly*. She was one of the winners of the Mid-Island Y's annual poetry contest last year. Her plays have been performed Off-Broadway and at festivals. Her works can be found on her website: www.ellenpoberrittberg.com.

