

THE MEDICAL ARTS

Potted rubber plants

Hint of ether

Efficient nurse

People deep inside their shell

Pictures no one's home would have

Spotless

Sterile

Air-conditioned.

The facts explained

The time determined

Everything they can do . . . . .

“ The Doctor will see you now “

Lowlands

Searching my still house,  
Blowing dust from old treasures,  
Putting them by with a sigh;  
At empty windows  
Faded drapes stand sentinel  
And the day is nothing.

Diane Kemp  
Aug. 74

## THE WALK

So will I carry this Golgotha to the grave ?  
Its weight is heavy,  
    My muscles weak  
With overstrain from infancy.

Tho' often I try  
    to throw this curse aside;  
I never throw it far enough.

Soon, again it gathers round me  
    like a misty cloud of cold  
And shivering I carry on  
    my weighted walk through life.

Diane Kemp  
Sept. 74

## SLOTH

Slug,  
Sliding through the hours  
Drugged on a droning radio;  
Head fogged in nothingness  
Deeper,  
Deeper  
into  
Catatonic  
Sloth.

Diane Kemp  
March 74

## BITTER AWAKENING

Bitter awakening  
You call your awful colors;

I deign a smile,  
Shrugging off your taste,  
Explaining motive,  
Minding you unreal.

Still  
You call.

Grasping other thoughts  
I push beyond  
The insistence of your claim.

And yet your call grows stronger.

Hard,  
Heavy,  
Acrid;  
I vomit up the pressure.

I vomit,  
I vomit 'til the retching dulls my vigor.

Diane Kemp  
Jan. 74

## SONGS OF SORROW

Songs of sorrow  
Fill the hearts  
Of those who dare to dream.

Dreaming is the work of fools,  
Unstable folk  
Who will not understand  
the world is dull.

Run fool,  
Wave your heart about;  
Dream that life  
will rally to your call.

Then sit alone  
And wonder why  
Your fellows will not dream.

Sing your yearning  
your sad  
and sorrowing song.

Diane Kemp  
May 74

## JOB'S DERELICT

Back from hell

He stands

His catatonic watch.

His cavernous eyes

Reverberate a blankness

Consuming insanities

That echo soundless

Unheeded rings of torture

in his vacant skull.

Diane Kemp  
April 75

IT'S ALL A MATTER OF TIME

There are some who seem to sense my trouble

Like wolves

Who smell the weakened deer

And cut it from the herd.

And, when my back is turned

In some disquietude

They pounce upon me

Gnawing at my weakness

Intent upon my ultimate surrender

You know,

Someday,

They'll get me.

Diane Kemp  
Feb. 75

## BEAST OF BURDEN

The yoke

Hand hewn

Slips

Back and forth

Upon the steady ache.

The cross

The parent's weakness

Plodded

Endlessly

Across another day.

Diane Kemp  
Jan. 75

## NIGHT THING

Terror

At the window

Screaming

Frantic banging, jumping,

Clawing for release.

Death

At my shoulder

Grip constricting

Jugular horror

Oh black, black horror !

Diane Kemp  
Nov. 76

PLEASE SOMEBODY, READ THIS POEM

There would be people  
Standing in my empty house  
Bringing flowers,  
Speaking softly,  
Contemplating bits of goodness  
Scattered through my life

Were I to die.

But breath denies my dying.  
Tho' death's tight grip o'erwhelms  
Tho' every struggle  
Brings a new dimension of my helplessness;

Silence  
Is the sound of my despair  
And no one hears my anguish.

Please, God,  
If there were only funerals for the living.

Diane Kemp  
Feb. 77

DUSK

The earth's shroud  
Creeps along the barren hills.  
Dampness  
Rises from the day's remains.  
The grave  
Sits open, waiting and alone.  
And darkness takes forever . . . . .

Diane Kemp  
Sept. 78

## NIGHTMARE INHERITANCE

There's no escape  
Not among the trees  
    away from insult,

    Nor nestled in my quilt at night  
    Where peace and safety used to be.

Nor with loving friends.

For this is closer than my skin  
    Permanent and monstrous.  
A violence upon nature  
    And curse upon my soul.

Fit only for a Dali painting.

And should I scream 'til heaven shudders  
Apply the limits  
    of my strength, my will, intelligence and wisdom  
It will not budge.

This lifelong draining wound upon my spirit

Conceived in error  
    and lived in hell.

Diane Kemp  
March 90

## DEPRESSION'S CHILD

Innocence,

The flavour of my youth

Imposed a hidden price.

For such naiveté

I lost my soul's protection

And bled my spirit

Over all the pages of my life.

For I believed

Trust given was returned,

Words of all romantic songs

were true,

Smiles meant kindness,

And drums and bugles

Had no other call but honour,

Sacrifice was kept in an account,

Hard work was paid for

And justice was protected by the law.

And now,

Too late

I know it isn't true.

Another set of values rules.

Business is business.

Keep your eye on the bottom line.

Power is all and

To the victors go the spoils.

Admit nothing

And cover your ass.

Too late,

I cannot make the switch.

In school

I should have read 'The Prince'

And styled my life from there.

Instead,

I thrilled to Churchill's words

And fed on Keats

and Shakespeare.

Too late,

Too late . . . . .

Diane Kemp  
Nov. 90

THE GHOSTS

Yes,

They'll haunt me.

When evening falls too early

On an empty day,

Or when friends are deaf.

When muscles loosen in fatigue

Or illness.

Then

They will invade my spirit

Chanting

My hopelessness.

Diane Kemp  
Dec. 90