

AFTER CARRINGTON
Carol Hoesch, Rio Salado College
Third Place, Poetry

It's not an intellectual choice; it's pheromones.
A genetic predilection. The rest is rationale.
When you hear music it starts as an assault
On the corpus callosum. Then the frontal lobe controls
Kick in. (After a hundred million years
Of evolution there has to be something to show)
Words. To label the feeling. That's all. This - poetry
Is an adjustment to pain. Cerebral cortex
Discharging electrons. An incantation.

Repeat in variation on the theme.
"He's a good man; he keeps the family together."
Chopin tried that. It ended his liaison with George Sand.
I think he loved her for who she was but she'd set her sights
On sainthood for both of them while he struggled for breath.
Arthur Rubenstein said you're not a pianist unless
You *have* to recreate "that certain sound; that ping.
It's the same as sexual obsession." The ache in the hand
Becomes compulsion toward *that* touch, *that* tone.

I braid their flesh into pale verse. It's more
Like a memorial service. Chanting the beads
Is an act of atonement. *For my heart*
The game is to keep the neurons firing. That's all.

The calico cat in her Elizabethan collar
Stumbles for all known space has become too small
Anticipating comfort I turn toward you, my eyes
A rosary in repetitious drone. Unclearly drawn
Our lines of demarcation were visibly heard
As incomplete phrases of music. *It's called elision*

(You close the door. Departing, your back intones
Another unresolved dissonance in our polyphony.)