

DeWitt Clinton



Feature

On Approaching a 70th Year

So it's been strange and delightful, mostly surprising
But anything anyone has ever done then or even *when*
Mostly ends up as something fabricated, but a good story.
I could try a glass of cold Pinot Grigio, but I'd like to keep
The sugars low, as no need to get another diagnosis unless
That's the only new one this year, but soon others will start
Gnawing their way up the system, and perhaps a little faster
Now that I'm on a short-term warranty, with no recent call ups
For used parts, or at least none are for sale or even available.
But there's also something good about turning this year,
That I'm still here, consuming resources, leaving deposits,
Filling a mind up with whatever schemes I can find that
Might help figure out what kind of world I'm still living in.
I'm trying to sit up more, lifting the sternum, as my yoga
Teacher usually always says when she sees my rounded
Shoulders nearly touching the floor, but then it's just crazy
To be upside down blood cleansing the old brain, or wrapped
Like a pretzel, remembering to keep the breath coming
In and letting a bit of it out, but not in any great burst
Like all the beefy guys at the gym do before a big lift.
What else? Friends, I do miss those who haven't stayed
Around, but they all wanted to, just couldn't figure how.
And father and mother, well, they've been gone some
Time now, and don't expect to see them unless I drive
Down to Carolina where they are buried, oddly, on top
Of each other. That's probably the only time ever they've
Been that close to each other, but the thought is still
Perturbing, but then, lots of folks lately have sort of
Gotten on my nerves, but I'm learning not to make too
Much of what anybody says, or thinks, or acts, anymore.
Those ahead of me suggest I'll soon start appreciating
Everything much more, even trips to the bathroom,

And sometimes, I can really appreciate their meaning.
I'm looking forward to some of this, whatever is about
To be what is, and have put off wondering what I'll be
Doing even tomorrow, as whatever is tomorrow won't
Quite be like what I expect it to be today, but who knows?
There's more of course, life insurance, prescriptions,
Power of attorney forms to fill out just in case something
Goes wrong, and everybody, everybody says whatever
You've got, it'll get worse, but even though I haven't
Seen all the places in the world I'd hope to see, still
It's not bad from this view, and hope the evenings will
Continue without too much drama, as I'd rather buy
Tickets for such occasions, than have them in my head.
Tomorrow's almost here, with cake and bubbly, so if
You want to stay on the list, pack a bag and come by.

So So Happiness

We can be so easily pleased, and so easily not, so
It's hard to know which might be more enjoyable,
Though who's going to volunteer here to wade
Through tons of this or that and barrels of details
Just so one of us can say, of course I'm happy.
Who's really happy here, that's what I'd like
To know and If that's so, how did anyone discover
What it is about the sheer loveliness of happiness
When so many of us wonder what is so lovely
About what so few find in their so unhappy lives.
This is what we need to discover, don't you
Think, for so many of us think if we can only
Find what so many want, then everything will
Be so much better if and when we can find
What so many think is so really wonderful
And special, though most of us know this
Will last only a few moments, and then we're
Wondering around trying to find what we
Lost, or perhaps even worse, what we never
Even had, but isn't this what we're always
Trying to find, or hold on to, or worse, keep
As it's such a pleasure to say, I'm so happy,
Aren't you, and if you aren't, what's wrong
With you, and that's what's holding so
Many of us up in tender limbo, isn't it,
That we have no chance at all of really

Feeling that tender moment that so many
Of us want to feel, yet so many of us
Are quite in utter despair longing so
For what none of us ever will know.
It's not that you have made all of us
So miserable, it's more that we have
So little clue as to how to climb out
Of what is so unexpected, a deep
Crevasse that some of us continue
To live wondering that's what everyone
Finds so normal, what everyone
Else is in, but then, we see you waving
And we want to find what you have
Even if we long for what we can
Never even imagine, even in the
Lonely world of which we always
Live in, despite our best intentions
Of loving you so much we're thinking
Maybe this is it, maybe this is all
We might ever want, a bit of what
You have, what everyone wants.

Sun Burn

It seems that we've just about covered, or nearly covered
Just about all there is to cover, but then, I just know it,
Something is going to show up out of the blue, just like that,
And then we've got something we've never seen before,
Sort of like those visitors from way out in the universe
Somewhere, but they're good, they're very good as they've
Made us all forget we ever heard about that, but all of us
Know we've been covered up about that, or they were
Covered up, or some agency covered up, or somebody
Somewhere covered it all up, but by now we're all into
Something else, except nobody is taking the lead and pointing
To where we should all be headed by now, even though
It's late, very late, and unless we get started on where
We're supposed to get going, it's just going to get so much
Worse around here, as the air is a bit too stinky, and even
Some of the mountain tops have started to disappear and
Nothing like that has ever happened, no sir, nope, not ever,
Though things like this keep us dad-gummed perplexed about
What's going to disappear next, like air or something huge

Like that, but then, our friends have disappeared, and where
The heck have they all gone to as it doesn't do any of us any
Good to go down to the cemetery and try to wake everybody
Up, as nobody, nobody is going to say get me out of here, now.
Nope, and it's like this, almost daily you could say, thinking
Something is here, like we've seen it forever, and then, poof,
It's just gone or something terrible like that, and it is terrible,
Wouldn't you say, or is that something you're just not ever
Going to talk about, but bugs of all kinds are just not here
Any more, and it's not like we liked them a lot, and we did
Not, but we always thought that bugs were here before us,
And they'd of course be here after the last of us takes leave,
But then, we don't really want to leave, but there's less and
Less of what's going to help us stay here, as the honey we
Used to just plaster on our toast as just about all gone.
Really, it's so hard to get around that idea, but I'll tell you
What, the big oceans are certainly not leaving us, in fact
They're pouring over us like never before with such son-of-
a-bitch winds that like in one weekend, a whole island is
Under water, and so many who we knew and even spoke
To, they're gone too, so something is happening around
Here, and it's hard to get our old minds around this, but
Did you hear just the other day, all the ice up north is
Just gone, gone, and just where do you think it is now,
And nobody can get around that one yet, and I seriously
Doubt anybody will, though all sorts of ships are now sailing
Through what was 30 feet of solid ice, but see, that's what
I'm trying to tell you, something's going on, even though we
Still have a sunrise, just like in ancient times, but have you ever
Taken a look at how funny it's looked lately with all the clouds
Covering just about everything before the sun appears on what
We used to call our horizon, but even that seems to be changing,
And even true north has moved, and the trees down south,
They're all burning up so somebody else can plant soy beans, and
Soon, pretty soon, all the air over those soybeans, and I mean a
Million or more of them, well, they're just going to get scorched,
And that's just about the gist of it, we're all going to get scorched,
Though nobody, nobody knows when the whole place is going up.
Right?

Something, Something

We have to find stuff, everyday
Or we'll run out of stuff, everyday
But finding stuff with you that
Has made all the difference.

We need gas to go somewhere
We need food to keep going somehow
We need lots of prescriptions as
We're not as young as we'd like
We don't need help yet going
Down the stairs, but pretty soon
One of us will probably hold
The other going up maybe down.
We do need each others' hands
To know we're just that far away.
We're okay on air though one
Of us got junky stuff down there
And had docs and nurses for days
And days, but that's all over now,
For now. We're salting less so
When we're out and something's
Salty, we talk a lot about the salt.
In company we try very hard not
To talk about what hurts, but then
Almost everyone is talking about
What hurts even if it's painful
Politics that makes us blab on so.
We still shampoo and shave as
The public view is still something
We don't ever want to forget just yet.
We're not into earth colors anymore
As we'll be earth colors soon enough.
One of us uses a walker and the other
Is learning how to race and walk but
We always arrive on the day someone
Thinks we're expected even if we're not.
We both have wondered why *not that*
Is something both of us can nod about.
We howl and howl over terrible dog &
Cat shows and wonder what's going on
With our constantly shrinking brains
That makes us curl up on the floor
Over some of the most idiotic scenes
But then we're glad really glad to be
Able to find a way to get ourselves
Back up and ready for something,
Of course, it doesn't really matter
So much anymore, as long as there's
Just something, something more.

Keep Talking, Everybody, Keep Talking

In the end, we don't know too much, do we?
Of course, a few can read aloud, and even write
Something that might be helpful to the rest of us.
But we chatter along just like all the sparrows
Twittering in the bushes, busy with nit-picking,
Or worse, sounding chirps of worry and alarm
For the big birds which have killer instinct eyes.
Then we have to recognize all those who so
Carefully wrote something down for someone
Else, but who remembers it all, that's what
So hard to bend and fold neatly into a brain.
Have we forgotten anything? Most everything.
Personally, I no longer remember Miss Neblong's
Long butt-weathered paddle she used on us
And so many other frightened-to-death urchins,
But we're here, and probably not obsessing over
Third grade nightmares that keep a few awake
Even now. But walk into any library, even the
Old book stalls in Alexandria, if anyone is able.
Or you might remember stumbling through
As a grade schooler, or even your old college
Building that housed huge numbers of so
Many impossibly difficult tomes read only
Under threat of a quickly diminishing final
Grade, but then, nobody really worries about
Such things anymore, in fact, it's really hard
To figure just exactly what is worrying almost
Everyone these days, and it's not always the
Little kid just about to step off the curb who's
Pulled back from the brink by an angry you-
know-who. So we have good data on all those
Who continue to blather and babble until
Most of us are almost crying, or bursting
A blood vessel somewhere inside of us but
We really couldn't say exactly where, could
We? That's the problem, we hardly know
Anything that's useful, but were babbling
And blathering (see line 31 ff.) over so much
And most of us assume we are smarty-pants
Just because some neurons way up there
Have triggered some incomprehensible string
Of syllables and morphemes that makes us

Sound as if we do know what we're talking
About, but we don't, do we? So what's
There to do about this conundrum that never
Stops to think for just a minute, as we have no
Idea what's really going on, and even those
With all the liquid assets in the world, even
Those with gold plated toilet seats, surely
They know about as much as we did back in Miss
you-know-who's grade school class just before
The butt-warmed paddle comes out once again
To frighten us from now until kingdom come.
Of course, it's your turn now, and I can even see
You not listening a hoot to any of this, but instead
Preparing a long a tedious yakety-yak about how
All of this is balderdash, as nobody really thinks
This way, and it's very possible, very, that when
We all lay down after a busy yapping and yawning
Day, we'll all wake up, you hope, ready or not
To go at it again without even a pittance of memory
For any of this business, but I just wanted you to
Know, we're all in some kind of loop, and we'll go
On and on about this until somebody, somewhere
Kicks up a dust storm about all this, but then, if that
Happens, most of us, as planned, will end up as dust.

Recent poems by **DeWitt Clinton** have appeared in *Lowestoft Chronicle*, *The New Reader Review*, *The Bazine*, *The Poet by Day*, *Verse-Virtual*, *Poetry Hall*, *Muddy River Poetry Review*, *Across the Margin*, *Art + Literature Lab*, *One Magazine*, *Fudoki Magazine (England)*, and *New Verse News*. He has two poetry collections from New Rivers Press, a recent collection of poems, *At the End of the War*, (Kelsay Books, 2018), and another is in production from Is A Rose Press, a collection of poetic adaptations of Kenneth Rexroth's *100 Poems from the Chinese*.