

UP TO US CHICKENS

EMILIE GLEN

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HELLO

All winter away
 Thrushes tender thrushes
Their spots spotting May
 I missed them all winter
 But they never missed me

Myrtle warblers
 Rain scrubbed
 But not for me
Yellow patching
 Among the forsythia
They don't care I waited for them
 All winter
 Any bug on the bark
 Has a better welcome

The Northern water-thrush
 Doesn't go about fine striping
That I'm here to say Hello

Not a returning bird
 Cares that I waited all winter

EVER

See you

My son walks away from me
In his tallness blondness
Swimmer's figure
Stroking through waves of shadow leaves
My eyes chase after him

See you

Two way sun ray
Taking him to class
My student son
Who will be building tomorrow's bridges
If that is what he wants
Light footing me into a supermarket
After the family's favorite dishes

See you

His last words
See you
Last time ever
A car jumped the curb
Crushed him against the wall
My son

See you

DID YOU HEAR ABOUT JENNY

Jenny say Jenny say Jenny,
A Mother who names her daughter Jenny
Wants for her a sweet-grass life:
When someone asks *Did you hear about Jenny?*
All the Jenny wrens
Come out from rock hollows of the mind

This Jenny
Wears her name like a jacket
Left over from high-school:
Such a pale Jenny,
Dark eyes taking up most of her face,
In her first stage role
So at home in the dying scene
That the audience almost did a double take
When she came up out of death
To bow

Jenny day-named Jenny
Child of the moonless night,
Named Jenny home Jenny
By a Mother who wanted her daughter
To bake to sew to sun to live:
What about Jenny? What happened to Jenny?
She died for real,
Took her own life,
Jenny ran after death along the bank
Of dark flowers,
Jenny Jenny
We say her name say her name
Call after Jenny Jenny wren

PINK TO THE GUTTER

Blood on the sidewalk
Rain washes the blood
On the sidewalk
Flows it pink to the gutter
Where the child
Sails a paper boat

OFF HAND

Off hand

You're on a disaster course

Off hand

I don't believe you'll ever make it

Off hand

It can only end in divorce

Off hand

Off hand

I question your talent

Off hand

We're through

Off hand

Off hand

Oh by the way

Drop dead

DOBIE

Dobie I call my dog
On account of he's a Doberman pinscher,
I've had him since he was a puppy,
My brother found him lost in the Park
Just before he was cooped for armed robbery:
We trained him to guard our place
From junkie thieves,
I ain't no junkie at thirteen
Like some in my class,
But I gotta steal from honkies
On account of they made slaves of us blacks;
I spend my loot on Ma and my sisters,
Tell 'em I have a job nights scoopin' ice cream.
If honkie don't give me no money
I say to Dobie *Rip him*
And the guy comes across quick

Man and his horse,
How it was in the old West,
In this jungle town it's man and his dog:
Dobie is black like me
Except he has brown eyebrows
And brown under the chin
Like I have pink heels and palms;
He licks my face like a lollipop,
Looks up at me from under them brown
eyebrow spots,
Jumps me with a lotta love,
Plenty of dog Dobie,
Plenty of dog all mine,
And I'm all his

Right now I'm in youths' detention,
This guy wouldn't give up his wallet;
I said to Dobie *Rip him.*

When that didn't work I let him off the leash,
And did he rip,
Bloodied him all over
While I went through his pockets,
One of them unmarked cars spotted me:
Dobie and I ran into the park,
When I see we're cut off
I say to Dobie *Rip him*
But when I see they're gonna shoot him
I say *Heel Dobie Heel*

So here I am in detention without Dobie,
But he's jumpin' and barkin'
And playin' with the red rubber bone I
stole off a pet shop
On account of we have it comin' to us

NAKED ROUND

Round round the round

She paces

The girl from Iran

Fierce of face

Heavy breasted

Clothed only in her hair

Black snaking

Round round the round

In the foyer of the theater in the round

Lunging like a yak

From the stage round

Where she sits odalisque

While the Sodomites orgy beneath

She paces round round the round

Naked round like a hostile tribe

The girl from Iran

Round round naked round

Her mind done up in many petticoats

BALD

I lay down bald

I in my twenties

And no Yul Brunner

Lay down bald

In a summer field

Woke to a feeling of growth

Through my scalp

Flowers

I was growing a head of flowers

Tangle of moon blooms

Reluctantly

I had a barber cut my flower hair

But the moon flowers are growing again

Even more luxuriant

In the fragrance of woods after rain

For the delectation of women

Glory of my mirror

UP TO US CHICKENS

Chicken that I am,
 White of feather,
 A leghorn,
Descended from the jungle flyers
 Of India
I can see we're nothing but egg machines
 In the third-degree glare
 Of our well-kept coops
Laying eggs white eggs
 White eggs white eggs

Slick feel,
 Eggs rolling out of me,
 Like eating in reverse,
But they're always being grabbed
 Out from under my warming feathers

Sometimes I just can't lay,
 I roost wondering how it was
 With jungle flyers,
I can flutter flap about the yard,
But we chickens laze around
On over-rich food too easy to come by.
What poor wingers we are,
 Flap flap flutter flap,
While birds small enough
 To tuck under our wing,
 Fly over our heads

Separating myself from the others
 I go off into the woods,
 And flex my wing muscles,
 Exercise them until they ache
 Toward the flight of our ancestors
When white flocks flew over the jungles,
Over cane brakes and bamboo thickets

I may not be an eagle
 But I will learn to fly
 As well as a finch,
When I'm with the others,
 I keep it a secret,
 The new strength of my wings

With the Spring South wind
 I rise on a spiral of warm air
 To the height of warblers
 Flying North,
I a flutter-flap chicken
 In full flight,
I sleep in the night
 Instead of laying eggs to light bulbs,
 Sit only the eggs I choose to lay
 Warming them to new birds for flight,
 And I will return with the North wind
 To teach the flocks how to fly,
 Wild free

NEW BUST

New bust in the cast

Le Sacre du Printemps

New bust in the cast

New nude

Just when our dancers have flopped

What little they have away

Earth stirs again

New bust in the cast

We lost our nude

With breasts big as two pregnant bellies

She lay around on cushions

Too top-heavy to rise

Breasts to cleave hooves lift sags

Turning last rites into fertility rites

New bust in the cast

New Cybele

Yet not so big she can't shake it

But lie around on cushions

Don't dance it away

The others dance well but bustless

Nudes to no purpose

We were beginning to think we had burned

The breasts along with the bras

Attendance shrank with our bosoms

With a new bust in the cast

Watch our box-office swell

ADULT-ERY

Let the French have their adulteries
Under prised chandeliers
Let the Latins have their langors
To storming guitars and heel beats
I have my own way of carrying on
If my husband ever turns the key
 In the lock early
He'll find more grounds for divorce
 Than coffee grounds
A white knight charging into my kitchen
 Mr. Clean on the floor with me
My latest love arrives
 By way of the toilet tank
I lift the lid
 And there he is in his motor boat
 Standing up ready
Oh Captain My Captain
 Should my husband lift the lid
 And surprise us
I need only say he's here to freshen
 Thank you Madison Avenue

RUNAWAY

Runaway,
Pushed away really,
Pushed out of her stepfather's house
For being a teen reminder
That her mother is older than the new man:
Working in diners for bus fare
Up from Dallas,
She finds a pad in Manhattan
With other runaways,
And a lunch counter job
Where you had to be nice to the manager
For being under age
When she always thought
You went to bed with somebody
Only to be a star

On the acid with the other kids,
She had a bummer that bedded her into Bellevue,
Her severed head screaming
To be put back on her body:
More girls than boys in their pad,
You passed the boys around,
Got passed around with syphilis sauce;
Took birth control pills,
And syphilis control shots
As if birth a disease along with V. D.

Sunday above the Park boating lake
She wrote home for her doll,
The one she could throw up to the ceiling,
And catch and hug,
The doll she could talk to
When nobody else would listen,
A real at-home doll in a pinafore,
Pink to her pale,

Brown braids instead of her own honey-kink hair,
Smile just a little sad:
All she asked for was her doll,
But her mother wrote back
She would by no means release the doll
To a runaway

MY DAUGHTER'S EYES

Eyes of forest dapplings

A song to your eyes

My folk singing daughter

To your hazel eyes

Why long for my limited blue

When your eyes are the hue

Of whatever you wear

Wherever you are

He who loves your eyes

Loves many yours

Your eyes are blue

They are golden

They are green

Lemon lime in quick starting tears

Root beer drops by the brook

Green in our green ocean

Blue in a Caribbean cove

Golden in desert light

Moist yellow-green of early

Spring leaves Autumn berries

Summer bloom

Eyes ever seen anew

Are they blue

Are they green

Eyes of hazel

Many hued as your folk songs

Many hued as your moods

Why one hue one finite hue

When you have the infinite in your eyes

EMILIE GLEN saw her poetry and short stories appear in countless anthologies such as *New Directions*, *New Voices*, *New Folder*, *New Jazz Poets*, *The Golden Years*, *Best American Short Stories*, *Best Articles and Short Stories*, *America's Poets Speak*, *Anthology of American Poets*, and the *New Orlando Anthology*. Her poems were published all over the world with domestic credits including *The Literary Review*, *Poet Lore*, *The Southwest Review*, *Georgia Review*, *Massachusetts Review*, *Genesis West*, *Northwest*, *The New York Herald Tribune*, *The Christian Science Monitor*, *The Nation*, *NY Quarterly*, *New Mexico Quarterly*, etc. One of her narrative poems won the Stephen Vincent Bennett Award.

She worked briefly on the staff of the *New Yorker*, and for Macmillan Publishing before setting on her independent life as one of Manhattan's full-time poets. During the 1960s through the 1980s she hosted a famous poetry salon in her Greenwich Village apartment (and additional readings at lofts and theaters). She acted in off-off-Broadway in roles ranging from the witch in *Hansel and Gretel* for children's theater to priestess and nun roles as the only clothed member of a nude theater company. Some of these experiences are reflected in this chapbook.

This chapbook was first published in 1972, and went through several reprints.