

mistress would be willing to satiate  
my animal urges.

The irony is that women friends tell  
me horror stories of endless hornyness  
and husbands flacidly snoring away  
the night. I yearn to help them, ease  
the edge off their 'blue clit' ache.

But my wife says that god is punishing  
us both -- she to be forever tormented  
by a horn-dog man to appease her  
Irish Catholic guilt and me forever  
cursed by a woman whose libido is  
lost in a time twat and whose lament  
can be heard in Garboesqueness late  
at night, "I vont to be alone."

She's only partially right. Another  
part of the Victorian woman loves to be  
endlessly pursued and caught and  
taken under protest. But we're both  
too Victorian to admit it.

#### THE ALL-PURPOSE STOMACH

Putting food into it is the least  
of its talents.

It's a comfort to the wife and kids.

A babysitter.

A lover.

The kids climb on its imposing mountainousness  
(while Dad sleeps on the couch) in one wild  
fling before bedtime.

The wife has so much more than love handles.

It's a steel-belted radial 500 that runs her  
over with love.

And food.

Dad tries but the stomach has its  
own garden now right in the backyard ...

zucchini, beans, carrots, pumpkins,  
and fresh strawberries, blueberries, etc.,  
all growing within the length of a colon ...

Dad resists, but home-baked breads, cakes,  
pies, season after season, a stomach for all  
seasons.

Dad says, "It's genetic -- my stomach runs in  
the family," or "I'm doing more exercises now  
so I'll firm it up soon."

But then hot, fat blueberry muffins and

strawberry-rhubarb pie with whipped cream  
and a big batch of oatmeal-raisin cookies  
or tollhouse chocolate chip ... and the  
stomach does firm up, round and full and  
content and securely protruding from  
the family album.

-- Leo Mailman

Cape Elizabeth ME

PEPPERS:

ON A NEWSPAPER REVIEW OF A ROBERT ALTMAN FILM: "THREE WOMEN"  
MORELIA MARKET, MEXICO

Peppers green, peppers red, peppers blue  
peppers peppers peppers everywhere  
hide me, I scream, I can't get away from peppers  
jalapeno peppers, little deadly peppers, ground peppers  
peppers black, peppers that make you sneeze  
the pepper that ate Tokyo  
peppers that make you swallow your teeth  
peppers bell, superpepper, the pepper from outer space  
peppers as harmless as mushrooms  
behind every great man is a good pepper  
peppers that will make your car battery sing with volts  
peppers that will strip the chrome off your bumpers  
peppers that will melt the fillings in your teeth  
peppers in my chorizo, peppers in my eggs  
cream and sugar in your coffee, señor, or peppers  
chili peppers and doctor peppers  
peppers in my curried chicken  
peppers on peppers  
the day of the peppers, pepper uppers, pepper trees  
peppers eating out a whole new stomach  
peppers between my teeth  
a girl named Pepper  
peppers that sank a thousand ships  
I admit that the flies don't like them  
and they keep the meat from rotting  
and they don't stink like onions and garlic  
but they are in the restaurants on the table, pickled and  
smiling  
like there is nothing to worry about  
I order something safe  
and some sadist in the back of the kitchen  
is salting my waffles with peppers  
they come floating with bananas in my cornflakes  
they sit like gate-crashers on the edge of my plate