

***Pirates & Slaves***

Commodify yourself,  
your words never echo your thoughts,  
let the drums roll,  
and drown yourself  
in pretence.  
You resent the world around you,  
denying it what it denies you;  
pirates and slaves,  
you know,  
pirates and slaves.

**Tom Hengen**

***A Ghost's Warm Embrace***

The ruffled bedspread, the walls' tilted appearance.  
The eye betrayed – momentarily  
Sensing the ghost of a wish –  
The heavenly shape of an angel once more.

Drifting through the half vacant room,  
An absence that pierces the soul.  
The heart infected by the cure it stole,  
Delight born in a tomb.

The intimate velocity of a spinning wheel,  
Blind as the will no shackles can withhold.  
With each touch each thought more eagerly real,  
Secretly getting increasingly bold.

Nothing remains, all things consumed,  
The battle called off, peace resumed.  
The storm has passed, only the heart still sways  
on the ripples of a ghost's warm embrace.

**Tom Hengen**

***Winter kills***

Winter kills by the roadside,  
hunger-driven into death's path.  
Shreds of rodents and lifeless foxes,  
their fur nearly untouched.  
A blackbird knocked dead,  
a bunch of black feathers uplifted,  
in a final spin,  
adrift over my head,  
in solemn salute.

Tom Hengen

***Ghost dancing***

Three cowboys and a little boy,  
ghost-dancing round like sparks  
in the camp fire light  
upon the wind-thrashed farmlands  
lost against the endless sky.  
Broken clouds below the full moon.

Diabolo figures tricking gravity,  
inventing impossible swings;  
minute eternities untangled.  
Playing buffalo and arrow games,  
and almost believing it.

The bonds of experience shared  
and reduced to nothing  
but ourselves, guessing the stars,  
indivisibly connected to the soul  
of a pheasant's cry,  
lost in space  
that second later.

Tom Hengen