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Summer, 2022, Vol. 28, No. 2

*Rattle* (ISSN: 1097-2900 print, ISSN: 2153-8115 online) is published quarterly in March, June, September, and December, by the Rattle Foundation, an independent (c)3 non-profit whose mission is to promote the practice of poetry, and which is not affiliated with any other organization. Address all correspondence to *Rattle*, 12411 Ventura Blvd, Studio City, CA 91604. Subscription rates: \$25 per year, \$45 for two years, \$55 for three years. International subscribers add \$10 per year for postage. Single issues \$6.95. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Rattle*, 12411 Ventura Blvd, Studio City, CA 91604. Printed in the USA by The Sheridan Press. Distributed to bookstores by Publishers Distribution Group and available through Ingram Periodicals, Book Link Solutions, and Ubiquity Distributors. All rights reserved by the authors; all poems and essays in the magazine are works of the imagination. Rattle®, the R® logo design, and Respond® are registered trademarks of the Rattle Foundation. *Rattle* features poetry, translations, and interviews. Submissions accepted online. *Rattle* only accepts original submissions from incarcerated poets and others who have no access to a computer. Payment for work accepted is \$200. *Rattle* accepts simultaneous submissions, but all work must be previously unpublished. For more information visit:

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**Tribute to Prisoner Express**

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waiting in the bed,  
I called to him,  
and he came cursing,  
stumbling down the  
hall and muttering  
and I said, you know,  
I'm in here, real  
sweet-like, with those  
rose petals smelling  
wonderful I thought.  
Well, but he, you  
know, he said, what  
is that funny smell  
and he asked me if  
the electricity had  
went off, and I just  
smiled to myself,  
you know, thinking  
I had got it all exactly  
right and waiting,  
you know, for him  
there, and he finally  
did come and it was  
good for me too  
for a change, you  
know. Well he fell  
asleep on top of me  
right after and then,  
you know, the next  
day, it took me half  
the morning, down  
on my hands and  
knees, to pick up  
all those petals.

*Kristina Erny*

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**BAD FRIDAY**

I put on my good  
lipstick in preparation  
to mourn,

and outside  
three redbuds pink out  
like Magdalenes  
holding cherry margaritas,  
each cup full  
of blossom rimmed  
with salt sun.

The Kid Bible  
doesn't show  
any blood.

And when my daughter  
asks about the crown  
of thorns, I tell her  
the truth  
complete  
with whips, nails,  
long drips of bright  
blood.

I make her cry, thinking  
about Baby Jesus  
nailed at right angles,  
pierced in the side,  
the shape his baby  
body made, dangling  
there.

"No," I say, "he wasn't a baby.  
He'd grown up to do this."

“But why’d they have to nail him,”  
she says, “it would hurt.”

Her eyes grow glossy, her lips fall, pinch.

“Because they wanted to kill him like a criminal,  
and this is how criminals were killed back then.”

“But it’s not fair,  
he didn’t do anything wrong,  
didn’t they know  
that he was good?”

Her brows push together,  
begin clenching  
and unclenching their fists.

“I know, baby,  
that’s the point.”

Feeling good, my head nods,  
I’m doing good, she’s getting it.

“When’s Bad Friday,” she says.

After a pause,  
the tree behind her  
shakes, spills its cocktail  
across the lawn.

Suddenly, she reaches out  
and clasps my cheeks  
with both her palms,  
kisses me hard  
on the mouth.

Then she rubs her index finger  
slowly across her bottom lip,  
looks down, smiling,

and she shows me,  
it’s red.