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Never Saw It Coming

Claire Shipman

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Mixed Signals

Kelly Reichelderfer

They pass each other,
Wanting to know
What the other is thinking,
Where the other is going,
And why.

Mixed signals

They assume the other
Knows
What the other is thinking,
Where the other is going,
Automatically and telepathically.
Why?

Mixed signals

The first plans to slow its pace but
Continues going on a straight path
Without others' influences.
Ignorance

The second plans to veer to the left
To reach its destination or goal,
Failing to acknowledge that
Others are present and should be informed.
Arrogance

Mixed signals

They read the other's signals wrong.
It turns out they do not know
And end up colliding in a horrible accident

Since they did not give notice
Of thought or direction.
Why not?

Mixed signals

Pride of self-control,
Assumptions building up,
Maybe even something to hide.

Mixed Signals
Mixed signals

Mother and daughter.
Husband and wife.
Ever differing nations.
Two strangers driving,
Passing on the street,
Not thinking like they should
About where the future will go.

Mixed signals

Since they cannot pass or avoid each other
They decide to communicate:
Share what they are thinking,
Where they are going,
To avoid confusion and pain.

Fewer mixed signals; proceed with caution.

Never Saw It Coming

Claire Shipman

There is never time to think
about the banality of evil or
the evil that men do
Just enough time to get a second
cup of expired coffee
and check the fax
before Mr. Wrong glides
by wearing new
aftershave which trails along behind
him and then settles on me
Meanwhile my hard drive's humming
again and the sticky notes have
begun to overlap themselves
obscuring my monitor
I know nothing of what is
past, or passing, or to come
I know nothing but fluorescent lighting
and orange gum that in no way
takes away desire for nicotine or
anything else except maybe
orange gum
What could possibly be
more invasive than this phone
which rings even when I'm on it?