

1991

Clemson Chronicle, 1991-1994

Clemson University

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Recommended Citation

University, Clemson, "Clemson Chronicle, 1991-1994" (1991). *Clemson Chronicle*. 36.
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1994: spring



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CHRONICLE



Autumn 1991

Editorial

Just this morning I received a copy of the November issue of the CSA News. In it was a letter to the editor from Nancy Love, a graduate student in Environmental Systems Engineering, commenting on the parking problems on campus. I want to applaud Nancy for her suggestions to Bill Pace and the Parking Committee. Not having enough parking spaces is not the problem on campus, too many people are driving to campus alone when they could carpool or walk or bike.

Several years ago, Chronicle sponsored an aborted rally on parking conditions. We thought the conditions were ridiculous at that time. Not enough spaces, too many tickets, we didn't even have the option of the shuttle then. Things are much worse now. Many cars are illegally parked in lots all across campus, usually blocking traffic and limiting access to emergency vehicles. And yet the "ticket witches" are too busy to strictly enforce the rules (where necessary).

About the same time as the cancelled rally, I appealed a ticket for parking on the grass near Milky Way. I was not blocking access or egress in case of an emergency. It appears as if the unwritten rules have shifted in favor of this situation temporarily. I support that. But when a driver cannot successfully navigate through a two-way street because of cars parked along the curb, something needs to be done quickly (not over the course of a semester or two).

Nancy Love's suggestions for reducing traffic were partially ignored by the board. Their focus is on expansion of parking lots to allow for the high levels of traffic, not on the reduction of traffic. This is an environmentally destructive attitude. There is already too much pavement on campus. Carpooling and biking would alleviate some of these situations.

I recommend that the Office of Student Affairs look into this issue and take action where the Parking Committee would not. Carpool sign-up for students could be coordinated in the Loggia along with the current Ride-Rider Board for weekend trips. Faculty Senate and the Commission on Classified Staff Affairs could coordinate similar attempts among the faculty and staff.

As citizens of the United States, many of us are spoiled. We are so independent it proves difficult to adjust our personal schedules to accommodate another's responsibilities. I don't want to arrive at work early and someone else does not want to stay late. But compromise can be reached. We do not need to be so self-centered to believe that we are the center of the universe. But if in fact we are, when the center breaks (and it is cracking), the whole system will fall apart. And even if the whole universe is not destroyed by our foolishness, our home (and the perceived center of our universe), Mother Earth, will be.

Mike Luck



Front Cover Art: Urica Pope
Portal

color pigment on paper 30" x 58"

"This painting is a look into the natural and the supernatural. Who's the observer and the observee? Life do you control it or is it destined to control you."

CHRONICLE

Established 1897

Volume 95, Issue 1, Autumn 1991

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As Clemson University's official art and literary magazine, Chronicle offers a central medium for publication of original works produced by students, faculty, and staff. Address submissions and all correspondence to: Chronicle, Box 2187, University Station, Clemson, S.C. 29632.

Student subscriptions are paid through student activity fees. Advertising rates are available upon request. Opinions expressed in Chronicle do not necessarily coincide with those of the student body, faculty, or administration. The editors assume all responsibility for opinions, should there be any, presented in Chronicle. This magazine is printed on recycled paper using soy-based ink and is recyclable with similar paper products. (Don't forget to remove the staples.)



Marcus G. Mims

End of the Rope

sabattier photographic print 8" x 10"

"A playfulness or commonness in form changed to a more serious or crucial expression of emotions has evolved as one of my major interests through this process in photography."

The Pound

Rhonda Pressley

Her name was pronounced like this:
my-YOU-me

But I never could remember how to spell it. If Jimmy could see this, he would say, "Who even cares how to spell the chink's name anyway?" He always called her a chink, but I think she was from Japan. Jim, I meant to say. His birth certificate says, "Jimmy Ray," but when he turned thirteen he decided he was too old for a little boy's name like "Jimmy"

Mama always yelled at him for calling her the chink. I raised you better, you'll hurt her feelings and then I'll hurt your tail, and all that sort of thing. Jim never listened, though. He hasn't listened to her since he was five years old and she went back to work at the mill. She was always either sleeping or working; I was the one who was supposed to have raised him better. He didn't like it one bit, either.

He would say, "You ain't my mama! You can't tell me what to do!"

But eventually he realized that there was nothing he could do about it, and we made an uneasy peace. He has always been cynical and short-tempered—he got that from Daddy, who has nothing to do with any of this because he got tired of listening to us and left a long time ago. Jim, anyway, was only getting worse when we took the Japanese girl in. He and Mama bickered night and day.

"Where are you going?"

"Out." With his hair in his eyes.

"You're not too big for me to wear you out! I asked you a question and I want an answer!"

"Oh, *God!*" he would screech. He'd roll his eyes and out the door he'd go, probably even madder because his voice was all the time going from a growl to a screech.

"All I ever get is a rash of shit from you!"

"You watch your mouth in *my* house, young man!"

"I'm not in your house!" from out in the yard.

Mama would scream after him, "I was just asking you a question! God forbid anybody try and make conversation around here!" Then she would turn to me. "He thinks he's got it bad around here. He's just gonna have to learn that life is a S-H-I-T sandwich and everybody has to take a bite sometime. There are people who have it worse! At least he's got a roof over his head and food in his belly! I don't know why he thinks he has to come in here acting like a smart aleck. All I do is try to talk to him

and he just... goes crazy!" This last with her hands waving around her head, and really, she seemed to me a good deal crazier than Jim.

But about Maiyumi. That is the closest spelling I can remember; it will do. When she first came to us, I asked her how to spell her name and she gave me a curious look and said, like it was the most obvious thing in the world, "But you don't know the letters."

She somehow came up with this English spelling, though; when I saw it, I almost wished she hadn't. It looked so strange and graceless on paper, an un-American, un-Southern word that was, unfortunately, our only way of placing her. She did draw the letters for me once. First small, and then larger, with a blue magic marker I gave her, so I could look at them better. They were fine, beautiful things, these characters, but so foreign to me that I couldn't find any sense in them.

Mama didn't think about us not knowing the characters when she decided she wanted an exchange student. She saw ad in the newspaper and said, "Oh, what a wonderful idea! We could have our own foreigner right here in our home! Wouldn't that be wonderful, Annie? We should take advantage of this opportunity; we couldn't do this if we didn't live so close to the university. What a wonderful way to learn about other cultures! Wouldn't you like a new friend here, Jimmy? We might get some handsome Italian who could teach you how to be a hit with the girls!"

"Oh, Mama, I don't need advice from any spic or chink or nigger or God knows what else comes trotting through that university. I can pick up my own damn girlfriends."

Mama gave me the Isn't-he-being-silly look. "Now, Jimmy, I just know you'd enjoy a new friend. You're just purposely trying to get a rise out of me. And you watch your mouth. You know, 'blacks' or 'coloreds' will do, you don't have to use that word."

"I don't think we need any exchange student. But hey, it's your house. You can give 'em my room if you want to and I'll move out."

"I think there's room for all of us, and you can learn to live with it."

Jim slouched out and Mama got her exchange student.

Maiyumi and I became friends quickly because we were about the same age and because Jim was as hateful to her as he was to me. We didn't have much in common except that we wore the same size clothes and we both had black hair, but we managed. That hair of hers was a smooth and straight as silk, like I always wanted mine to be. We were in the kitchen one day when I finally found the courage to ask her if I could touch it. She laughed and leaned towards me, and her long hair fell off her shoulder and into my hands like water.

"How do you make it so soft?" I asked, pulling it between my fingers.

"How do you make yours so thick and curly?" And she reached out and touched my own, which was coarse and permed.

"Yours is the prettiest, Maiyumi."

She dropped her hand and stared directly at me. "But you have better eyes. They are so blue... light, you know... almost white. They look..." Her hands make little circles as she searched for the right word. "They look mean, like a snake's eyes."

I had gotten lots of comments about having Daddy's ice blue eyes, but never one like this. I must have looked offended, because she hurried on to tell me that I wasn't really mean.

"Your eyes just look... different, you see? Beautiful, but different. You are very nice, not like a snake," she said. "I wish Jim would be nice like you. I do not think he likes me."

"Jim doesn't like anyone but himself. Ignore him. You know how thirteen-year-olds act. His hormones are raging." I smiled at my cleverness.

Maiyumi's eyebrows wrinkled up.

"Never mind. It was a bad joke."

"Ah," she said, with a hopeful "hee-hee" afterwards to show me that she understood about jokes.

"Now what were we talking about?"

"About your white eyes." When she spoke, her upper body leaned towards me a little, like she was fixing to bow, and it was unnerving because I never did anything to earn that kind of respect. She seemed so sincere, though. And, like anyone else's, my ego clung to that sort of thing, admiring it mostly, but sometimes despising it, too, for its sheer sweetness.

"They aren't really white, you know. They're just real light blue," I said. Maiyumi nodded and did that bow thing. "Yours are so black you don't look like you have pupils." Having pale, sensitive eyes creates a natural envy for warm, dark ones. I wondered if the opposite was true for her.

"Pupils..." she pondered. "The hole?"

"Yes."

It wasn't long after that when Mama looked out the kitchen window and saw a strange cat eating out of her babies' bowl. She went screaming out the door and scared it off, but the poor thing was persistent and it kept coming back. After a few days of this, Mama sneaked up behind it while it was eating and threw a clothes basket over it.

"I knew I'd get you before too long, you little rat! Annie! You and Maiyumi come out here! I want you to run a little errand for me."

We went, and Mama told us that we were to take the captured cat to the Pound. I sat down next to the clothes basket and poked my fingers through the holes. The prisoner meowed at me. She was a pale calico with yellow, intelligent eyes. There was a bald spot on one elbow and a long, crooked scratch across her nose, like she'd been fighting for something. It was nearly healed, but I could tell it was going to scar. I thought it would give her character. "She's probably just lost, Mama. We don't have to—"

"I don't care! I've got my own babies to worry about! I'm not paying to feed every mutt that comes through here!" She had recently gotten some sort of grant from the mill and had taken secretarial classes at the university at night. Then she went back to the mill and got an office job, and ever since, she had been a monster about her money. "I'm not wasting my money on *that*," "I'm making good money now and you're not gonna blow it," "This costs too much and that's a rip-off, nobody's gonna gyp me," "I'm so glad I can afford to have Maiyumi—no one else on the mill hill could do this, Annie," and on and on.

"Mutts are dogs," I said. "It's a cat and it's not going to hurt anything. Why can't we just let it go?"

"I don't care if it's a camel! It's not gonna eat the food that I pay for!"

"It's going to screw her out of a few pennies a week, Annie," said Jim. "Take it so I don't have to listen to this."

So Maiyumi and I put the shaking cat in the car and drove to Benjamin to deposit it at the county animal shelter. Maiyumi didn't understand why I was against it. I tried to explain to her that it would probably get put to sleep if no one adopted it, and that it most likely wouldn't get adopted because it was full grown and all anybody wanted from the Pound was cuddly kittens for their kids. Maiyumi didn't seem to get it.

But the cat did. She had been bathing herself—first her back, then her legs and between her toes but she stopped as soon as I turned by the sign that said "The Humane Society" in big, black letters. She gathered her legs up under her and crouched in the seat, trying to make herself look less noticeable, maybe. But she was a big cat. She made a noise that was a meow but sounded suspiciously like a question. It sounded like *why?* I got the queasy feeling that she knew where we were. Maybe

she read the big sign. Whatever, she knew. Animals surprise you that way, knowing things. Going off to some cool, isolated animal place to die. Our own cats knowing when something is wrong with me if I'm sick, or sad, or angry—sniffing carefully around me, wondering where the malfunction is. I remembered a roommate who used to work with a man named Elliot who was undoubtedly, thoroughly crazy. "Oh, he's harmless," they all said, "just a little crazy." Our friends thought he was big fun and they brought him to our apartment one night for a party. The dog heard his voice outside the door and panicked. Elliot ambled inside, and the dog cowered in my lap and barked and growled and glared at him the whole time he was there. We all giggled nervously and pretended to dismiss it. Elliot left soon. And a month or so later, he pushed the roommate into a storage closet for a wet, awkward kiss that would have probably led to a straining, awkward rape except for the fact that Elliot was crazy enough to attempt this during business hours and surrounded by other employees. The roommate said it was a terrible shock and she never would have *dreamed*. The dog, it seemed to me, looked very smug.

There was another sign that said "Receiving" and an arrow pointing down the long side of the building. I followed it and we heard dogs barking as we passed the maze of green cages that made up the building's center. A little voice in my mind said, "Why are they barking?" But I pushed the thought away before I could answer. I could feel my anxiety building. The cat made the noise again. I glanced back at her and she was crouched even further. "It's okay, kitty," I lied. My instinct told me to turn around at the end of the drive and go back home. Never mind the three cats of my own, I'd find something to do with the stray. Just please, please don't leave her here.

I parked at the back of the long building. There was a gray door with another "Receiving" sign on it and I was beginning to think of the post office in Belltown.

"Why do you call it 'The Pound?'" asked Maiyumi. She was smiling for some reason.

"I don't know," I said. I turned in my seat and called the cat, but my voice was full of something nervous and sad and I knew the cat could hear it. She stared at me with her intelligent eyes but did not come. I gave in, leaning across the back seat to pick her up. I held her close to me and stroked her but she did not purr.

"You can stay here," I told Maiyumi. "I won't be but a minute." The prisoner and I got out of the car and went through the gray door to the gray Receiving room. Inside, there were two men in work uniforms. One of them chuckled and said that it sure was a bad day for cats. I made an effort to smile at him but I knew that it looked more like a grimace. They left through the gray door and I was glad. I approached the counter and placed the cat on it; my hands wandered over her, trying

to give her comfort. I could feel the pounding of her heart beneath my fingers; and, in my ears, the pounding of my own. For a moment, I imagined they were in unison. I stroked her, and still, she didn't purr.

Behind the counter was a scruffy, middle-aged woman with short, difficult hair. It was orange-blond and looked scorched. Her makeup was the same: orange, dusty, except for her eyes, which were matted in something blue and shiny. She looked like Halloween. With her crooked teeth and her painted eyes and her overwhelming orangeness. A walking, talking jack-o-lantern.

"What can I do for you?" she croaked. Her voice was as harsh and difficult as her hair. She was thin but not firm; her thighs sort-of sagged underneath her dark jeans. I was faintly annoyed with her already, with her pumpkinness and her aging flesh that somehow managed to look dry and soggy at the same time, with her drab, outdated clothes. I wondered why she was so behind.

"I just need to leave this, uh, this cat with you." I said. The scruffy woman yanked a pen and a form from under the counter. Her movements were quick and jittery. I wished that she would calm down.

"Where did it come from?" she asked.

I told her that it wandered up to my house. I wanted to explain to her that I would keep it if it weren't for Mama's babies, if it weren't for the new office job at the mill and Mama's refusal to feed every mutt in town. I wanted to explain this to her, to tell her that I really didn't want to be doing this, but I was certain that she wouldn't believe me anyway so I kept quiet. On the form there was a box for "stray" and a box for "unwanted." It occurred to me that nothing that is alive should be labelled "unwanted." That seemed blasphemous. It is only right to love what is alive. She checked the one beside "stray," but I didn't feel any better. There was another place on the form that asked if the animal had bitten or scratched anyone in the past fourteen days. There was a box for "yes" and a box for "no," and the woman drew a child-like question mark between them.

Suddenly, a swing door behind her burst open and a fat, scowling black girl plunged into the Receiving room. She lurched to the counter and snatched up the cat with one hand. Her dark, sausage-like fingers curled around its ribs, the cat hung under her arm, and they walked away from me. I wondered if she could feel the racing heart beneath the sausages. The cat's legs dangled meekly in the air, her shoulders bunched around her neck, and she looked, in a funny way, like she was about to pounce. I wished that she weren't so limp, though, and I realized that it would be better if she would fight. A big cat like that should fight, but she didn't, and neither she nor the enormous black girl looked back. They barreled dully through the swing door and they were gone. In the second the door was open, I saw a half-grown tom clawing at the door of his cage. The black girl marched

blindly past it, the swing door closed, and the Receiving room was muffled again. Like from outside myself, I saw that my mouth was hanging absurdly open and I closed it.

"Ma'am?" the jack-o-lantern said in her harsh voice. "I need you to fill this out. Read before you sign."

I looked down and she was pushing a form towards me. Her hands were dirty and her fingernails were ragged and half-covered in red polish. I took the pen from her and read. The form told me that once I signed an animal over to The Society, The Society would do with it as it saw best, and that no information would be given me concerning its welfare. That was in bold print. It also said that The Society adopts out as many animals as it can but it still must put some to sleep. I was stricken by the way "The Society" was written. Why did they do that? Everything in the world that is cruel or frightening or unpleasant is brief and capitalized like that. The Mob, The Donald, The War, The IRS, The Police, God. They taught you that in elementary school. The Principal, the Dentist, Preacher, Dad. Everything with power. "Is there such a thing as too much power?" I thought. Yes, that was The Nazis. But who knows? No one may have noticed.

The Society.

I thought about that momentarily but it was too much. The world was insane enough already. Mama at home yelling at Jim about shit sandwiches. Jim changing his name and acting like he hates us all. Maiyumi out in the car missing the point and me not knowing the letters. Finally, I signed the form and filled in the spaces for address and phone number, bending very close so that my coarse hair fell around my face and the woman wouldn't see me crying. When I was done, I pushed the form back to her and looked at the floor.

"Donation to help feed the animal?" she barked.

And of course I didn't have any money. Mama was the one with all the money. I almost asked to have the animal back, but I was crying and I didn't want to talk and I wouldn't have known what to do with it anyway. "Oh, oh no." I managed. And I knew I had revealed myself because the jack-o-lantern's voice softened.

"Would you like to receive information about The Society?" I nodded and she gave me my copy of the form, telling me to have a nice day. I grabbed it and rushed back out the gray door and into the car with Maiyumi. I put my sunglasses on so she wouldn't see. In the narrow drive there were chickens and ducks. I wondered if people adopted chickens. I wondered if the extras were gassed. The cat's smell was still in my car and it smelled like fear and confusion. I heard the dogs barking and felt ashamed.

"I still do not understand why you call it The Pound," said Maiyumi. She was not even listening to herself. She was peering out the window at the swaggering, unconcerned chickens.

Suddenly an idea came to me and I stopped the car. She turned to give me a questioning look but I didn't give her time to ask. The idea was fullblown. I couldn't stop myself. Maybe I didn't want to stop myself. I snatched her little white hand out of her lap and pressed it tight against my chest.

"DO YOU FEEL THAT?" I screamed.

She sucked her breath in and stared at me. She looked like she'd just been told a dirty joke and she didn't seem to understand that I'd asked her a question. I thumped her hand against my chest.

"CAN'T YOU FEEL THAT?"

My face hung in the air between us like a moon, my white eyes hidden behind the dark sunglasses. Her broad face wrinkled up and shook itself. She was afraid—I could feel her fear like the cat's. My little lost children. Why couldn't I make them see, why couldn't the world make sense to them...

But finally she was answering.

"I don't, I don't," she stammered. And then, very cautious, "your heart?"

She had felt it.

"Yes... yes, Goddammit, a heart."

Murky understanding glimmered in her black eyes and her free hand crept up to touch my wet face. "You loved it already."

"Oh, Maiyumi," I whispered, turning my head and driving away. Past the chickens, who didn't seem to care, past the ever-barking dogs, who obviously *did* care about *something*, past the indifferent men in their green uniforms smoking cigarettes beside a truck. I tried to stop the tears that ran down my cheeks, but they kept coming. Regardless of their own stupid futility. Regardless of the fact that you can never say *Tears*, you must always say *tears*. With a small 't,' for a small word. Not abbreviated, mind you, just small.

Oh, Maiyumi.

I knew that the pound would lumber around inside me for months to come, but how could she ever understand. Didn't they eat dogs or something over there? How could she ever understand if I said something corny like "I loved them all."

But she was silent all the way home, and she held my shaking hand in her little white one like a sympathetic lover.



Exhibitions

by
Just Jenn Todd

Have you been to a play lately? Or maybe even a movie? While you were there, did you stop and think about the performance going on in front of you?...

In today's technical times art is full of collaborations. One of the best examples of collaboration between media, utilizing objects, concepts, and actions, is Performance Art.

Since the 1960s, there has been a growing interest in this phenomenon that is not strictly stage art or gallery art. It is a combination of all sources of the fine arts, used by artists to keep from being limited in form. Performance Art, however, is a "live" art: one that requires public interaction. Anything can happen and any number of materials can be used for an unlimited amount of time in front of an audience.

Sometimes, it is possible to see documentation of performance pieces, but it is much better to be in the audience, experiencing the work. Performance Art can be seen as a way of bringing life to a concept as well as challenging one's view of art.



schizophrenia

i steal your sorrow thrilling
in the borrowed bitterness
with a clinical eye towards the look
of white metal on white skin
making red on white.
the artist's choice—
is it the knife or
the skin which
holds the emotion?

'art is selfish,'
said the reclining nude,
to no one in particular.

Beth Lyons

Storm

I hear rain
and lightning glows around me for an instant.
Thunder breaks the rain into little pieces that laugh separate in my ear
and slide down my windowpane into the reaching grass.

Heather Anese Reid



Urica Pope
The Bedroom
acrylic on canvas 24" x 30"

"This is a study of the exaggerated female figure in exaggerated surroundings."



*Clemson's Performing Arts Department awaits the
opening of its new home—
The Robert Howell Brooks Center for Performing Arts.*

In the Fall of 1993, Clemson students in the Performing Arts Department will walk into new classrooms, theatres, design studios and rehearsal spaces. The Robert Howell Brooks Center for the Performing Arts is scheduled to be completed in the Spring of 1993 and the Performing Arts Department is abuzz with anticipation.

"The building is fabulous for Clemson. It is perfectly suited to meet the needs of student groups and Clemson audiences," said Chip Egan, Head of the Department of Performing Arts.

"I drive by every day and look at the concrete being poured and I get excited about seeing any little change," said Bruce Cook, the former Director of Clemson Bands who was recently named the Director of the Brooks Center for Performing Arts.

The Brooks Center, now under construction between the Strom Thurmond Institute and Barre Hall, will bring all performing arts areas together under one roof. No building on Clemson campus was designed with Performing Arts in mind, said Egan. "We've been occupying 'found' spaces."



The University Chorus and Tiger Band perform during the pregame show before the Clemson versus Wake Forest football game. Both groups will be housed in the Brooks Center for Performing Arts.

Jo Play

These "found spaces" are spread across campus. Currently band rehearsal spaces are located in the basement of Holtzendorff; dance classes are taught in the multipurpose room on the second floor of Holtzendorff; music classes and choral ensembles meet in Daniel classrooms; and the Clemson Players use Daniel Auditorium and the Daniel annex for rehearsals and performances. "When you combine the traffic flow of all the students that are currently meeting in different areas in one building, you are going to have a hubbub of student traffic," said Egan.

"The center will become the new home for these very active existing programs. When we move into the building, we'll occupy every existing corner and fill it with people, students, and activities," said Egan. "The center will have a profound impact on student life on campus with benefits we haven't even conceived of."

The Brooks Center was designed to meet both the instructional and performance needs of the Performing Arts Department. It features a main theatre which seats 1,000 with 500 seats on the main floor, 250 seats in the dress circle, and an additional 250 seats in the balcony area. The design, which reflects a European influence, allows for an intimacy, said Egan. "Each audience seating area can be lit discreetly to create the ambience of a full house even if there are only 500 people." The main theatre is equipped with the latest in lighting and sound technology and even boasts an orchestra lift.

A smaller theatre, dubbed the Black Box, will provide a more flexible outlet for smaller or experimental productions. Most of the Clemson Players' productions will be staged in the Black Box which will seat up to 180 people. The Black Box will be a welcomed change over the much-smaller Daniel Annex. Like the main theatre, the Black Box will have state-of-the-art lighting, grid and sound systems. Because the Black Box has its own lobby and the wall between it and the main theatre is soundproof, there will be no problem staging simultaneous events, Egan added.

The Choral Ensembles and the University Bands also have been allotted much-needed rehearsal and storage space in the new center. University Chorus will have the use of a smaller auditorium that will double as a choral rehearsal and recital hall. CU After Six Singers and Chamber Singers will have an additional practice room. The Band will have a large rehearsal space that will accommodate the 270 plus member Tiger Band. A smaller rehearsal room also will be available for the Jazz Ensemble and Symphonic Band.



Chip Egan (right) performs a vaudeville comedy routine with Larry Hembree in the Clemson Players' summer production of *Tin Types*.

When we move into the building, we'll occupy every existing corner and fill it with people, students, and activities. - Chip Egan

For instructional purposes, the Brooks Center will also house a dance studio with adjoining men's and women's locker rooms; a music education room to be used for community outreach programs such as the popular Kindermusik program; a piano lab for teaching piano class; a design studio for teaching costume and stage design; and studio classrooms for teaching theatre and music history. A recording studio and a computer lab for music composition are two more exciting features, said Egan.

With the performing arts center a reality, Clemson University is in the proposal stages for a Bachelor of Arts degree in Performing Arts, said Egan. "It's our hope that the major will be in effect when the doors to the Brooks Center open." The Performing Arts degree would be unlike any other offered in the state. "It's unusual because it's not a performance degree; it's an interdisciplinary degree tied to the liberal arts philosophy offering dance, music, and theatre," he said.

Besides offering a more current facility for instruction and student performances, The Brooks Center will also be an asset to the community, said Cook, who as Director of Brooks Center for Performing Arts is responsible for coordinating the programming for the center.

"The Brooks Center should allow us to balance the programming at Clemson between theatre and music and with the addition of dance, which has been hard to present at Clemson with current facilities," said Cook. "We will also have the opportunity to bring in road shows such as Cats

which in the past we have not been able to accommodate because of the technical needs." The Brooks Center, Cook points out, will have the lighting, stage space, sound and dressing rooms the University presently lacks for such productions.

Currently Clemson hosts three performance series: The Concert Series, a subscription series with formal concerts held in Tillman Auditorium; The Utse Chamber Series, an endowed music series free of charge to public with performances from small ensembles, trios, duets, quartets, quintets; and On Stage, the series sponsored by the University Union, devoted to lighter fare concerts from mainstream artists. The Brooks Center will house all of these performances, in addition to performances from Clemson Players, University Choral Ensembles, and University Bands, which are now scattered across campus.

Completion date of the Brooks Center was originally scheduled for December 31, 1992, but the extremely wet fall has slowed construction. "We might be moving into the offices in the Spring of 1993 but we probably will delay the grand opening," said Cook. Presently Cook has made no concrete plans for the grand opening. "We've had suggestions for performers from Pavarati to Muddy Waters."

During the next two years, Cook will spend much of his time planning and organizing the grand opening for the center. "We are looking for something that will make a statement about what the center's all about—but we also want something that represents our community, which



Artists' rendering of the Robert Howell Brooks Center for the Performing Arts.

includes the student body, staff and faculty, and the extended community which reaches into Seneca, Anderson and Easley.

"We think it will be nice for our students to be the first to perform in the new center," said Cook, but he added that it's more likely that a series of events, including events showcasing student performances, will be planned for the grand opening. "It is a student performance center, but we will also offer other events for the community."

Cost will be a big factor that must be considered when organizing such an event, said Cook. "There are people contributing funds in the name of Friends of the Brooks Center to help gear up for the opening events," he added.

While he hopes to make a splash with the Brooks Center grand opening events, Cook stresses, "We are not going to be in competition with the Peace Center. We are going to select programming that is appropriate for our setting—that is, educational programming."

Besides bringing in seasoned performers, Cook said programming could include children's theatre or an artist in residence who could come into the classrooms as well as perform. "I hope this center will allow us to provide artists with the chance to come in and work with the school and community to create new works."

Cook realizes the importance of performing arts education. He was Clemson's Director of Bands for 24 years. "They have been talking about building a performing arts center since I came to Clemson in 1969. I'm just lucky that it's happening while I'm still here."



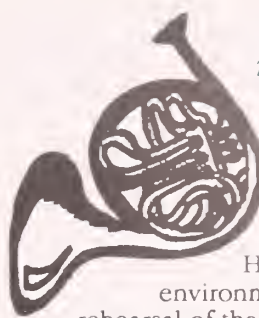
"The Brooks Center will instill a sense of pride in the students and in the Performing Arts department at Clemson," said

Wendy Overly, assistant professor of Performing Arts. "It will make us more visible in the community and we will attract more interest from the student body as a result."

"The fundamental improvement will be more space for our student artists to practice their craft," said Overly. "We can't grow right now as a department until we have the space." The Brooks Center also will allow students the opportunity to perform in different environments, said Overly. "The new center will have three different stages that can be used for performances which will help our students to be more versatile when they go out in the field, performing in different theatres."

The new Black Box theatre may provide the greatest benefit to the Clemson Players, said Overly. "It will be so much more versatile than Daniel Annex. Not only does it have twice as much seating but it has more space to present experimental pieces. The possibilities will be unlimited for what can be done."

The large stage also will provide new challenges for the drama department. "At this time we can't even think about doing large scale musicals at Clemson," said Overly. "As a director and choreographer, I'm looking forward to expanding the scale of productions. The large stage will allow us to plan larger productions which will allow us to use more students."



"We will actually be able to rehearse with the marching band inside," Richard

Goodstein, Director of Clemson University Bands, said of the Brooks Center for Performing Arts. The current rehearsal space in the Holtzendorff basement is too small and environmentally unsound for an indoor rehearsal of the marching band, he added.

More than 350 students are involved in the different Clemson University Bands. The Tiger Band alone has a membership of more than 270 students. "The Tiger Band is practicing in an area that was not designed for more than 200," said Goodstein. "It's just way too small and if you try to fit everyone in, it is too hot and too loud."

Besides having a room large enough for the marching band to practice indoors, there will also be a practice field adjacent to the Brooks Center. "We are excited about the convenience of having the practice field right there," said Goodstein. "We will be able to practice the music indoors and then just walk outside to practice the marching routines."

The Symphonic Band, The Jazz Ensemble and the Basketball Pep Band also will find the Brooks Center a great improvement over existing facilities. "The acoustics in the practice rooms and the performance areas will be more conducive to professional performances," he said. "It will make our whole program rise to a new level."

"It will be a much better facility as far as professional quality of performances is concerned. Not only will it provide more space for the bands to perform, it also will provide a more comfortable and enjoyable atmosphere for the audiences. Tillman was not designed as a music performing hall," said Goodstein.



"Right now everything's in one room and it's filled up to the ceiling with uniforms, equipment, music and office supplies," said Dan Rash,

Director of University Choral Activities, commenting on his cramped office that also doubles as the Choral Ensembles supply and storage room.

"Having storage space will be the greatest benefit the new performing arts center will offer to the choral ensembles," said Rash. In the Brooks Center will be separate storage areas for uniforms and equipment and a Choral library where music will be stored.

Approximately 150 students are involved in Clemson's three choral ensembles: Chamber Singers, who perform Renaissance Through Contemporary music, has 37 members; CU After Six Singers, a show choir, has 18 singers, dancers and instrumentalists; and University Chorus has close to 100 members.

"The new facility will allow us room to grow," said Rash. Currently the University Chorus is rehearsing in a room that accommodates music classes of up to 50 students, but when the chorus is rehearsing, they have up to 90 in the same space.

In the Brooks Center, the University Chorus rehearsal room will have standing risers on one end of the rehearsal space and seated rehearsal space on the other end. "We will be able to begin with a seated rehearsal and then move to the risers for performance conditions," said Rash.

The addition of an adjoining recording studio will greatly benefit Choral ensembles, he said. The recording facility with suspended stationary microphones wired to the Choral Rehearsal/Recital Hall will allow rehearsals to be recorded. "We will be able to record our music during rehearsal for immediate playback," said Rash.

"The Choral Recital Hall has a lot of flexibility," Rash said. It will be used not only for University Chorus rehearsals but also for smaller-scale performances such as voice or instrument recitals. A separate rehearsal room for the Chamber Singers and After Six Singers, will be equipped with mirrors, uniform storage, and a sound system.

The main theatre of the Brooks Center will have some features unavailable to the Chorus in any current performance facilities on campus, said Rash. "One really nice feature of the auditorium is the staircase from the main stage to the balcony. This will allow us to present polychoral performances where we place one choir in the balcony and one on stage. After the polychoral segment, the choir in the balcony will be able to move down to the main stage."



"The new performing arts center will allow us to better display the talent we have on campus — and we do have a lot of talented students at Clemson," said Jennine

Carter, who will be a senior when the Robert Hall Brooks Center for Performing Arts opens.

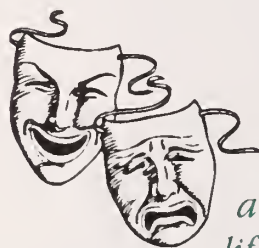
Last Spring, Carter was one of 60 students who auditioned to become a drum major for the Tiger Marching Band, and she emerged triumphant. A sophomore majoring in Civil Engineering, Carter is now one of three drum majors for Tiger Band as well as a Clemson Player. "I also wanted to be involved in chorus, but I didn't have time," she said.

During her four years of high school, Carter was a piccolo player in the school's band program and did some backstage work for the drama department. After being accepted at Clemson, she received information about the University Bands and decided to join Tiger Band. Carter also became involved in the Clemson Players by landing a role in last year's production of *Present Laughter*.

"I think the performing arts center will bring a lot more recognition to Clemson's performing arts programs," Carter said. "We always hear from other schools that Clemson's band is just a band for fun. We're working hard to change that image."



Dawn Jones (seated) and Thom Seymour, Jr. perform a scene from the Clemson Players' production of *Landscape of the Body*.



"The Clemson Players as well as the University Chorus and band groups play an important role in student life at Clemson," said Dawn Jones, a

junior majoring in English. Jones is the president of the Clemson Players and Alpha Psi Omega, the dramatic fraternity. "The construction of the Brooks Center shows us we are important to the university. It is something the University has been needing for a long time," she said.

"The Clemson Players, and all of the other performing arts groups, work so hard. We don't really do it for the applause or the recognition, but it is nice to see that the University realizes that we are important," Jones said. "The new facility along with the new performing arts major will make performing arts an even more vital and visible part of campus life."

While she won't have the opportunity to perform in the Brooks Center before she graduates, Jones said it will be great to come back and see how the Clemson Players grow and develop in the new center.

"Having areas designed specifically for theatrical productions and the latest modern technology will allow the Clemson Players much more freedom in their productions," said Jones. "It will be a great boost to our reputation."

Many of the Clemson Players get their first taste of the theatre in high school, but Jones says she was not involved in performing arts before entering college. As a freshman at Clemson she was encouraged by her sophomore roommate to audition for a Clemson Players production. Jones is now a veteran Clemson Player, having most recently performed one of the leading roles in *Landscape of the Body*.



"I can't imagine not being involved in Band, it's like a tension breaker, an outlet,"

said Margaret Lewis, a senior majoring in Industrial Engineering. Lewis plays clarinet in the Tiger Band, the Symphonic Band and the Pep Band. "I enjoy being in the bands. It's quite different from Industrial Engineering—it's nice to be expressive."

Performing arts are important to the students at Clemson, Lewis said, and not just to those minoring in music or theatre. "I love to play and to perform and I have met so many people through my involvement in the bands," she said.

Although the Performing Arts center will not be completed until after she graduates, Lewis says she is excited about the future of performing arts at Clemson. "The new facility will bring all of the different performing arts groups together. Now, even the different band groups are spread out all across campus and the only way I ever see any of the Clemson Players is when I go to a rehearsal or a performance. Once the center is completed we will be able to interact between classes and rehearsals."

This interaction between the different performing arts groups will strengthen the program, said Lewis. "As the

different groups begin to work more closely together, I think we'll see improvements in all of the performing arts programs at Clemson."



"The nice thing about Clemson's Chorus is that it is a non-audition group. Anyone who enjoys singing is welcome to join,"

said Christine Malik president of University Chorus. "University Chorus offers a good opportunity for people who are not necessarily interested in a music major, but who enjoy singing." A senior majoring in Secondary Education with a Spanish concentration, Malik says she joined the chorus because she loves to sing and perform.

The major advantage the Brooks Center will offer Clemson Choral Ensembles is space, Malik said. "We have one room in Daniel where all of the choral groups rehearse and it is very small, particularly when the 100-member Chorus is rehearsing. Sometimes we get flack from the other classrooms about the noise." Another advantage of the new facility and the performing arts degree is that it will attract more students who are interested in the arts to come to Clemson, she said. "At most schools where there is a music major you have to audition to join the chorus, but even after we move into the Brooks Center, that's not supposed to change."

Malik says the University Choral Ensembles plays an important role in student life at the University by bringing students with a common interest together. "We don't only sing. We also have social events and we do something for the community," she said. Each year the University Choral Ensembles present two concerts—one in the fall and one in the spring.

Feature written and designed by Julie Walters-Steele. Artwork courtesy of the Performing Arts Department, Publications and Graphics, and TAPS.

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You bite lips,
stretch tongues
and bet smoke rings
until cancer hangs
down from the ceilings.

Balanced on your shoulder
I can watch the clocks
and smile at things
you squint to see,
but there are no locks or nametags.

Leaving is just another
curb to step up over.

Russ Hallauer

Owed to Immortality

O eternal muse! who pisses me
off and wastes my time, I patronize thee
for the sake of *art* that I may be famous and
remembered after I die and
can't remember a thing; that I may be unhappy
while I'm alive and selling immortality
a dollar a line; O for a muse for hire!
that I may rent my skin and pay for my sin
and argue on the head of a pin
with the all-languaged angels till I
join everyone else in the sky
or the dormitory ground
where we're not allowed to make a sound
or even rise, before the bell cries for fire.

Richard Hartnett



Bill Sizemore
untitled

gelatin silver print 7.25" x 9.125"

""Things are more like they are now than they ever were.' I think Nixon said that. Or was it Reagan?"

Listen Up!

by
Cecilia Herles

Raw, fresh waves of music pulse through the cool breezes of a Clemson evening. The intensity may disturb some residents, and the lyrics may offend others, but not even the regulations and fines can stomp the musical talent arising in Clemson this year. Some of the most innovative music originates in college towns across the country, and Clemson is not an exception. Clemson bands such as 134, Thoughtcrime, Sunbrain, and Dreamhouse tear down the curtains of convention and expose their youthful fervor and confrontational individuality.

Probably the most theatrical band, 134 approaches the performance aspect with a refreshing creativity. 134 consists of Sam York, vocals; Finley Lee, bass; Mike Benson, guitar; and Will Connor, drums. The group originated as Wüsspig which reveled theatrically, and when Finley Lee joined the band, 134 was formed. Incorporating art slides, costumes, and odd antics, 134 produces a distinct stage presence. Sam York's voice, distorted through the amplifier, generates a zany yet captivating sound. 134's powerful instrumentals break down barriers of conformity with dissonance, creative rhythm, and an extensive range. The members are rural Southern in origin, but their style evokes an urban form. The members of 134 laugh at detractors because they recognize their genuine impact on a significant portion of their audience.

Another band to emerge into the music scene in Clemson is Thoughtcrime, which consists of John Foster, vocals; Hugh Meade, bass; Paul Gibson, guitar; and Chris McFeeley, drums. The band dominates an audience with its aggressive stamina and shattering honesty. The influences of defiant bands such as the Sex Pistols and Dead Kennedys is evinced in Foster's vocals which awaken the audience with brutal truth. The energetic roar of Gibson, Meade, and McFeeley lifts the intensity level to a climax. John Foster states that Thoughtcrime does not write about anything that it does not know well. This band genuinely feels what it communicates to its audience. Thoughtcrime startles and shocks because the members do not compromise their ideals to please an audience. They capture the audience without hypocrisy or pretense. Thoughtcrime has a concise, straightforward style which never bends to convention. The band remains strong and undaunted.

Originally The O'Neills, Sunbrain has been in the Clemson circuit since last spring. Sunbrain is Dave Dondero, vocals; Steve Glickman, drums; Russ Hallauer, guitar; Chris McGough, guitar; and Eric Nail, bass. The versatility of Sunbrain provides appeal for a variety of listeners. The precise technique of Glickman complements the energetic funk of Nail and the melodic innovation of Hallauer and McGough. Dondero is like a caged animal tearing through the bars between the audience and himself. The opposing influences on the band blend to form an all-encompassing unity: from William Calhoun to Van Halen, from Frank Sinatra to Ian McKaye. Sunbrain touches upon every imaginable emotion with the throbbing innovation of "Spread Your Disease," the melodic hum of "Groovey Day," the exalting lift of "Difference Begins the Change," and the primitivism of "One Tribe." The upbeat pulse of Sunbrain's force creates a universality, and the band cannot be localized to any specificity. The band may venture to Washington, D.C. next summer, but now they are buzzing Clemson listeners with their creative sting.

Dreamhouse was formed in the Clemson area by Daniel High School students. The members are Mike Dwyer, bass; Brent Jones, drums; E. J. Wynn, guitar; and Andrew Wood, vocals. Their ages range from sixteen to twenty, and their youth contributes to their undeniable talent. Dreamhouse is influenced by innovative bands such as the Descendents, 7 Seconds, and the Red Hot Chili Peppers, and like these bands, their sound is unique in every sense. Dreamhouse has elements of antic funk, wailing blues, and energetic hardcore which create an outstanding live performance. The band plays in such places as Augusta, Florence, Asheville, and Columbia. They are often subject to age-restricted shows, and in one instance, even a member of the band was prohibited from playing because of his age. Regulations of this kind (and the disappearance of their ceramic bust of Elvis, Ha!) may stifle opportunities, but the appeal of Dreamhouse cannot be regulated. Dreamhouse explores new musical territory and is unfaltering in its progression.

The surging creativity of these bands is being muffled by a lack of available opportunities to play. There are few places that support original bands because a larger audience prefers corporate rock. However, a sense of camaraderie exists among these local bands; they support each other by sharing gigs and sometimes even equipment. On November 22, *Chronicle* sponsored one of these shared gigs in Edgar's.



I hear

the giggling of a small
summer-browned girl when
coaxing cool soft-skinned frogs
off sticky hot tar roads. I half-lip

low murmuring chants, walking,
remember imaginary torch
lamps flickering, scaly flame-
tongued beasts a few steps up
spiral tower stairs that open out
to blue. There is singing

loudly in a car when I drive down
divoted roads, see the faces of six girls,
each stealing glances at open-
mouthed reflections in windows
rolled down an inch to let
the smoke curl out. I swear

guttural sounds, feel again shoulder-
skin give way to wetness, slammed
and sliding along bricks rough
as the moon's face through an alleyway,
insects every size snatting in
electron circles, diving into blue-
white lights humming. I cry out

into night, woken sweating
from a graveside, the slow
creaking of chains and the
slosh of earth settling uneasily
into a water-filled cavity. Repeating

a promise, I remember
telling my sister
I will hold her secret
before falling asleep,
the snow whispering to the
ground, clinging white crystals
dying softly on the grass like
distant sounds.

All voices, the world dreaming.

Beverly Cooper

Polyphony

First Communion

He was thinking of his birth
and whether his first memory
was like the sterile safety of whitewashed tile
or the violence of the sun.

The quiet room was pulsing wall to wall,
sunlight mounting a ladderback chair in the corner.

His lover's back curled against his stomach
like a question mark.
He was thinking on his mother's elasticity
and his fire-hardened father
and how the roles reversed.

He stood, feeling less than air
and realized shoes point
in one direction for a reason.

"Are you so moved to look beneath your shadow?"
he asked himself, squirreling away
the answer for later.

Gathering a few loose body parts,
he stopped short at the door,
stood listening to the sizzle of passing traffic
feeling bypassed by the bypass.

Drinking himself, he felt broken down
by the enzymes of responsibility —
as a pleasure blunted by its own complexity.

Feeling no less than beliefs,
lying his way to the truth like a poem,
he tried to make himself seem less real.

Chris Lockett

Rambles and Rants

Confessions of an American Poetry Eater

The Pleasures of Poetry

Instead of all that irritating grasping for definition, let me share some seemingly unlikely sources for much of the better poetry I have consumed: engineering students sometimes write it, barmaids ink it out onto cocktail napkins, truck drivers say it over coffee and the radio, there's a lot of it in the Bible and the Kabbala and the Koran, children use it to describe things, it's spoken on street corners and graffitied onto subway station walls, it's in song lyrics, and occasionally I've seen it on road signs. Of course there's great stuff by the Biggies; point is there's not only the Great.

It's always fun to participate in a little freestyle poetry duel, which some people even organize into competition, awarding prizes to the victor. This brings to mind one of the more entertaining uses of poetry historically, when a defending champion would try to expose an imposter or poetaster by challenging him to a verbal jousting match. This went on in Ireland a lot. Another fun usage was to terrorize a local king into letting you hang out with his tuath and enjoy hospitality like good food and spirits. Apparently satire in those days could cause boils and disfigurement. People still use this ploy today, which is why I often give in to a good con job. I admire people who can talk their way into interesting places and out of dangerous situations.

I think it would benefit the nightlife and daylife of the Clemson-Central area to host a few gatherings where people's tongues could move freely. There used to be a little establishment called the Jabberwocky downtown, but that was before a lot of us were even gabbling in those fundamental sounds that so fascinate linguists. We could put together informal events and even give people milkcrates to stand on. Someone told me about a similar practice in which participants attempt to keep their balance on washing machines in laundromats and simultaneously sing out pixilated lines in metaphor. I think you could get a really good rhythm going during the final spin cycle.

The Pains of Poetry

A lot of people only read or write poetry in times of great distress. I see this as a very unfortunate phenomenon. Poetry sure is fun. Another bad development is that a lot of people who go to school for a long time to read and talk about books and then get a job telling other people about books have spread a vicious rumor that only certain poems are good and that there are only a couple of ways of telling if a poem is good and what it means. Total trash! Poetry seems to get better after you've worked on it awhile, but I've heard some pretty colorful images erupt spontaneously in basement conversations. If you don't know what some terms mean — like ballad, epic, lyric, madrigaletto, ode, epode, palinode, psalm, elegy, pastoral, bucolic, dithyramb, limerick, epithalamion, amphigory, telestich, sonnet, monostich, couplet, distich, tristich, quatrain, tetastich, pentastich, rondelet, sestet, hexastich, hepastich, rhyme royal, octastich, roundel, decastich, rondeau, canto, stanza, stave, strophe, antistrophe, envoi, sestiad, tercet, sestet, octet, accent, beat, ictus, meter, measure, foot, mora, caesura, monometer, dimeter, trimeter, tetrameter, pentameter, hexameter, heptameter, octameter, decameter, amphibrach, anapest, dactyl, iamb, spondee, trochee, Alexandrine, dipody, tripody, tetrapody, pentapody, hexapody, heptapody, et cetera — don't worry about it. They're useful, but sometimes we get quagmired in bombast (see?). Mostly pompous people like to say these words while swirling ice in their glasses at receptions.

You might notice that *Chronicle* does not always print Trained and Stilted Academic Poems. This is because we want to see what people who are not proclaimed experts imagine and hear what they say, and make it available to lots of hands, so that we can all expand our definitions and add more tributaries to our processing stream. So, people, if you have stuff and you think it's poetry, by any and all means, get it here and maybe it will click for us, too. Address is on the inside front cover.

by
Beverly Cooper



To Toni Morrison

Walking light
because I have
no roots.
I don't want to
fall off.

See the earth.
I read your words
and want to be
that tree and
ground myself.

William Bisese

Eve
 chewed up the apple
and
 spat out the seeds
laughing.
It tasted good.

Adam
 sliced his apple in half
and
 dug out the seeds
planted an orchard
in neat rows.

Susan Wethington



Just Jenn Todd
One as in Another
acrylic on canvas 28" x 28"

"Think of art as anything you do in it's sociological relation to another
and then again how all that relates to the individual perception."



Trip Godwin

Ribbons

oil on canvas 24" x 30"

"Everything is a product, no matter how hard you try not to be."

Impressions

by
Just Jenn Todd

We are the Sesame Street, Dr. Seuss generation.
An age of imagination, invention, and instinct.
We do, dare, and dazzle
A statement as individual as a snowflake and what it means to you.
As you venture along your path of life and engage in decisions,
 realize they all add up to you, yourself.
And things you picked up along the way will show up again, somehow.
Dream a little dream.
Reach out and catch the falling star you wished upon all of your life.
Live for the moment and never be afraid to try...
 because you just might succeed.
This may not be your solution,
But it is my invitation for you to get in touch with your roots
 and let your branches grow.
Experience IT—whatever IT is you thought about.
Peace, Love, Faith, Hope, Desire
 all must start somewhere.
As I see it, each individual has IT in themselves.
Woodland wildflowers know this existence, so can you.
Hopefully—for I am hopeful—my words will spark your imagination and
 creative energy.
Motivation is a key. Use it—open the door and come and enter another's world.
And create your own result as only you will know truth,
 the reality that makes a moment.



Lydia's Lesson

Beverly Cooper

Lydia poured milk into a Tom and Jerry jelly container and looked humorlessly at the cat figure roller skating around the curve of the glass toward a manhole. Morning was not a funny time lately. She hardly ever felt that giddiness of possibility or whatever it was that once made her sometimes like to jump up and down on the bed, and open the windows. Recently she felt old in the mornings, and she was only twenty-four. These days, awakening was like a horrible realization of something, and she didn't even know what. She liked to sleep more than ever, but she always awoke in terror. Sleep was nice, floating through dream images, putting her hands through silvery water toward shimmering fish, or building ornate scaffolds over black and white landscapes of comic-book shapes with bubbles of brown like old film, or picking glowing lemons from trees against white-washed walls in courtyards. But then, some nebulous object would drift toward her, or some mysterious surrounding would begin to crystallize about her, outlines becoming sharper, details rising on surfaces; she would strain to see it and then with a sudden shock of revulsion she would recognize it and her eyelids would snap open like a pair of wild blinds rolling up too fast. Then she would lay in the bed, staring, detached from any place, letting the dream fragments settle in writhing pieces around her and disappear. The things that awoke her she could never fully remember.

Lydia left the milk glass on the arm of the sofa and crossed the wood floor to the bathroom. She stood where the tile was stained in brown streaks of dried dirty water and turned the cold knob several times, the hot a quarter turn. She spread her fingers under the flow, adjusted the hot, and flicked the center knob so water thundered out of the shower head. Lydia stepped in under the water and raised her face to it. As she reached for the soap on the window sill she saw a moth, furry white, shuddering in the corner against the frosted glass. He can't live in this country, she thought. She could shove the window open and throw him out, but he wouldn't be saved for long. His wings weren't wet yet, but so where was he going to fly to. Birds and the evil grins of car grills, yeah. She turned the water off anyway and dried her hands on a towel, coaxed the moth onto a folded piece of paper from the wastebasket and carried him steadily through the apartment to the back door, slid it open and flung the paper off the balcony into the alley.

Lydia dressed for work in the clothes she wore the day before. She took them off the floor and shook them first. When she thought about going to the research center she exhaled hard through her nose. She didn't hate her job, but she really didn't like it either. Lydia couldn't understand why they thought it crucial to have all of the information on file in their own office on every subject they could think of, why every day the subject

was a new one, why the research director exclaimed excitedly, "Today I have something really important for you to find out about. I want everything available on this subject!" Lydia couldn't tell where borders were. All the subjects seemed to overlap. If they wanted to have everything about something, it would seem they wanted *everything*. Mounds of paper she hauled back from the libraries, ordered from services, printed out from databases. They want to *own* it, she thought. They want to have all the knowledge about their thing, in every way it relates to every other thing. They want to wrap themselves up in strings of data, like mummies, and then they'll know everything and what, be preserved forever?

At lunch Lydia slid into the booth across from Baki and dipped one of his fries in white sauce. "How's it going," she sighed.

"You work like a robot again?" he laughed. "Here, have some to eat." He offered her the rest of the plate.

"Maybe it's just that I don't understand why they can't decide what they want," she shook her head, realizing she was repeating a worn subject. But somehow she thought that if she considered it in enough ways maybe she could define it, see it for once solid and identifiable. Besides, Baki always had something interesting or disarmingly silly or off the subject to offer in consolation. "It's like they want to get all the information they can, even things they aren't using, and freeze it, or make a huge fortress with it to secure themselves against the future, or in the future. I don't get it."

"What do you suppose they want to do with all this in the future?" Baki prompted.

"That's just it, Baki, there *is* no such time. Not there in their little center or anywhere, just different things around. They just want more to look at, and they want it all under glass. Then they can play the Big Authority. And what's this center shit, you know? I mean do they think they're the very nub of investigation or something and they just pull in all this stuff from around them?" She was aware that her voice was rising in a bitchy whine of indignation but it lessened her frustration and so she didn't care.

"Maybe they are just there a black hole and this is where all the reports you bring to them are going, hey? Like United States government," Baki said through his sideways grin.

She smiled but was enjoying the rant too well to stop. "It's actually more like some kind of net they're constructing that gets more and more complex and they can't have it loose or flexible or anything but they need to add more little strings so that everything threatens to block up, layers on layers of, I don't know, maybe like a massive artery system that is becoming denser and more intertwined like jungle vines that are going to wrap around

our throats like boas and strangle us to death." She knew she wasn't even talking about the research center anymore, but whenever she tried to explain something, it detached itself like a water mosquito showing off from the shore and skating around in broader and broader circles on a pool of black still water leaving little traces of ripples that disappeared so you could never follow the spiraling trail back to the origin of the conversation.

"Who's they, now?" Baki asked.

"Everybody, as I see it."

"But not you. Right? Or me, huh?"

"*Nevalh*." Baki always made her feel better, plus he believed in the importance of eating. While she lit a cigarette he was already ordering some more food for her, obviously remembering her inability to make a decision about what she should have for lunch. She would consider all the different tastes and how they were combined in each menu item, the textures, the prices, how much time she had, and on. This kind of mental backfiring was something she always did, but when she was feeling that strange way like lately, she would think about trivial things either so long she would forget what she was thinking about, or just long enough to see they couldn't be exactly right. So she wouldn't eat at all. Baki made all these little digressions seem equally absurd without making her feel stupid for thinking about them. When she got onto some heavy topic Baki would ask her something in all seriousness like "Which do you think is true, since they are sort of contrary to each other: 'A ship in harbor is safe – but that is not what ships are for' ... ha? or this: 'Be like a postage stamp – stick to one thing until you get there.' Which do you like for your life?"

"Hallmark philosophy," she would say, but then he would still want to talk about them, so she would acquiesce, they would decide that both should be inside of fortune cookies, and she would feel a lot saner.

Lydia looked at Baki, happily ordering for her. She decided tonight might be a good time to do something really distracting, like shoot some pool, something you could finish, something with a finite outcome.

Lydia slammed the car door and said into the window, "Thanks, girl. Get your rest. By next time I'll be giving lessons." Janet said good-bye in a mock falsetto. The car made a whirring sound as it backed down the short drive and then crunched off the gravel onto the pavement. Mario and Paul were sitting on the apartment porch steps, smoking and talking frenetically, snickering.

"What are you on." Lydia walked into the hallway and they stood up and followed her.

"Man, Lydia, you were yelling into the phone cause people happened to be talking around you but I could hear you fine, you know." Mario was always cautious, a little paranoid sometimes, Lydia thought as she pushed open the apartment door.

"You get your tickets for the show?" Paul reached around the door frame and flipped on her den light.

"I never did call. I just really haven't felt like doing anything until tonight, you know? and now they're probably sold out." Lydia cleared magazines and cracker wraps off the coffee table. She tossed a shoe off the sofa toward the hallway. "I have vodka, and bourbon, and beer."

"Bring it on, sister," called Paul, kneeling at the stereo examining tapes.

Lydia set three cold cans of beer onto the table. She sat and leaned down forward between her feet, pulling a dusty mirror out from underneath the sofa. She placed it on the table and wiped it off with her sleeve. Mario pulled out a little leather pouch from an inside pocket of his jacket, unzipped it and dropped a plastic oblong packet of white onto the mirror. He untied a wire around the top and began scooping out powder onto the mirror with the blade of a pocket knife.

"So what's wrong with you, Lydia, you bumming over Chris?" Paul's voice sounded concerned as he watched Mario separate the powder into three small piles and then smooth them into long lines with the edge of a credit card.

"No way, dupe. Getting rid of him was like cutting chains off my feet."

Everyone finished their beers at once and set the cans onto the table, three separate *clacks*. Lydia went into the kitchen and lifted a tall bottle of bourbon off of the cabinet shelf. She cracked the ice tray and dropped cubes into glasses, poured the liquor and watched it make oily brown waves down the sides. She filled the other halves with water from the faucet and brought them back in. Everyone took long sips and then each bent toward the mirror with a piece of straw. Then they were all talking. Mario would say, "*YAou*" every now and then, and Paul would put in another tape and sing along. Lydia heard herself laughing a lot. Her tongue was getting very heavy and she licked her lips and the top of her mouth often and then would take a drink. The freezer wasn't freezing the cubes fast enough and they were down to one apiece each round. After that was out they switched to vodka with cold fruit juice, a morning drink. Lydia felt like her eyes were open very wide, and dry. She felt the strangeness coming upon her again, couldn't push it back. She felt like everything she said sounded stiff and formal and took a long time to get out. Paul listened seriously and answered, Mario sneered and made quick comments, surreal things meant to make you laugh and loosen you up but it was no good. Lydia stretched herself out on the sofa and closed her eyes. Something she couldn't figure out. What was it? Why did she gather people around herself, and make these false gestures of celebration, when there was something that she needed to think about. She cursed herself silently. She didn't *want* to think in words the dream pictures that would be nice, floating by and dissolving one forming into another, but now there was only this speeding stream of words that were overlapping so fast and in snaky trails. The guys were sharing jokes, a-ha, that all seemed to enforce it. Strange she was thinking about talking, talking so much words tapping on her skull. She thought yeah, tap dance, but I'm bull-doing nodding with a crossed tongue. I talk theories make the table go round and the glass we see through. Why do I do this. Empty. Juggle ... why don't you know, stupid, know when the balls fall, when the chips are flat, hear your bed singing sweet blues from a pillow of ground glass. You can't go there because something is never finished, keeps you running out of time trying to synch. What will be the surge in the connection. What makes

you want odd endings but no finish, you rub the grain raw then add cheap polish. What's the point, she thought.

Lydia sat up on the sofa. Paul and Mario looked at each other knowingly it seemed. She reached for her glass shakily and drained it, listened to the words spinning: we keep motioning late but no one's saying now if they ever were, dance steps all rehearsed in a funeral procession, no one has their lights on but everything's black. Pass another glass, downing, the liquid effect is broken but we hold ourselves up to dull lamps, covered. Lydia looked out the window: if we think too long the day wears in on bleached sheets. I should never speak, or keep trying.

She decided to draw and reached for her notebook on the floor. She picked up a red marker and pulled the cap off with her teeth and made a few S-shaped lines and let the pen fall onto the page. She stared at the lines. Humans don't inspire me, she thought, but neither does paper. What makes the lines go flat, makes peaks round themselves, soften not into solitude but slump. Why push them into caps when angles are harsh and geometry is as false as algebra.

Mario scraped another white hill into a long range and handed her a straw. She took it, walked slowly, unsteadily around the table to the other side, thinking maybe a different approach would work better, and leaned toward the mirror. Her nostril burned as she inhaled and little clumps fell back onto the mirror. She wiped them with her finger and stuck it into her mouth. Paul was tapping his feet to the music and Mario stirred his drink uncomfortably, tilted his glass up to his mouth and looked at her from the corner of his eye. She stared back, wanting to say something, but could not form any words for saying. She went back to the sofa and picked up the pen again and wrote:

I melt the mourning pyre fading to ash in the glasses not another tongue spoken but another line. Shut up. Can't you stop your feet I measure your walk against the ground. Everything alive has to back itself we use beer and the black velvet of night. These are things you can't kick to prove they exist. Say "there" but we tap ourselves and wonder who to diagnose. Number my wrist and slot me behind white, assume a blank. It is something I can never fill in. I never advance answers but sometimes I read the questions backwards because the first word is always the main point it all softens into white space from there.

Get off it, she thought. She knew how ridiculous she was in that instant. A three ring circus. There was this extra voice in her head, an actor, but she couldn't do anything to stop it. Her own voice was still there in the background, but she couldn't do what it intended. She could hear her cracked stammering, watch her hand scrawl on the page, see her fingers fumble for yet another

cigarette, but she couldn't control any of that either. She saw her hand reach out again and again and the voice inside that was really hers seemed to scream at her to break it, snap out, click, go different, but she was reduced to repeating the same movements each time, watching from inside, or maybe even out. Who could say? What was she even doing on the merry-go-round?

Mario said, "Hey Paul, don't you have to work at nine? What's the word then? Another run? It's six-thirty now."

Lydia croaked out the words, "Not me, guys." She laid back on the sofa and blew smoke up at the ceiling. Paul stretched out on the other sofa. She closed her eyes, heard them talking for awhile, mingling with the words running through her head her brain generating faster than she could hear them, until they seemed like faraway whispers and murmuring, clicking, humming.

Lydia woke up. The clock on the television read ten-forty-six. "Shit." She rolled off the sofa and stood up, pulling at her eyelashes. She saw the phone and picked it up, sat back down on the sofa with it in her lap, dialed work. She cleared her throat.

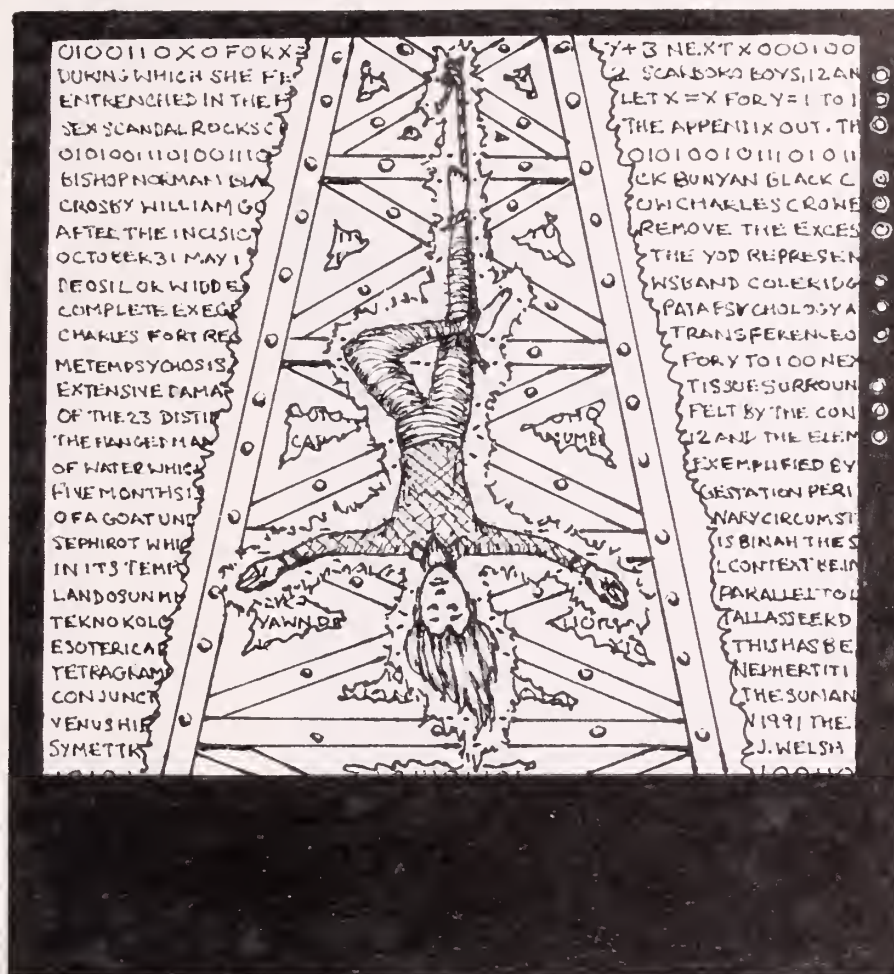
"Hey, this is Lydia. Listen, I was sick last night and fell asleep on the sofa without my alarm. I just woke up. The medicine I was taking I guess made me oversleep. I'll be there by eleven-thirty, OK?"

There was a silent pause on the other end. Donna, the other research assistant, answered, "Um, Lydia, Dr. Rinehart said he really didn't have anything specific for you to do today. I've got it all under control. So if you're feeling bad, just take a little rest, alright? He wants to talk to you in his office Monday at nine."

"Fine. Have a *lovely* day, Donna," she sang, making her voice intentionally high and saccharine and let the receiver tumble onto its cradle from a foot above. "You loved that, didn't you." Donna was a model employee, a trained seal, Lydia thought, and she loved all the rigors and rituals of academia and the office place. She *needed* to be told what to do by people who pretended to know what everyone should be doing. Lydia had never liked formalisms, and now she wondered why she was helping to perpetuate the disease. "So what. I'll find myself a better job *on my way* to tell off that ass Monday." She leaned back on her elbow.

Lydia saw herself climbing a tower on top of a hill. She seemed very light, and the air felt cool and was fragrant with clover. She reached gloved hand over hand and hoisted herself up each rung-like support, passing cables to the cross-beam. When she got there she pulled herself out by her arms and swung like on the monkey bars that used to be in the park. How would she feel all lit up for one instant, she wondered. Hanging like an upside-down Jesus, all her circuits glowing loud like plastic Christmas, singing pure data, and then. Power.

Lydia saw herself drowse the room with splashes of pink liquid. As she walked to the door she ripped a printout from the printer and crumpled it in her hand.



She walked out of the door and down the hall. She lit the paper with her lighter, and then her cigarette. She turned, walked several feet back and tossed the paper through the doorway. White and yellow flames burst out into the hallway. Lydia peered into the office through the frame the burning doorway made, where equipment glowed and shone and reflected the office distorted as in a funhouse mirror.

Lydia looked around her living room. It was a little blurry, and dark. She pushed herself up off the sofa and looked for her shoes. She didn't see them so she sat back down and began to brush her hair. She saw the shoes on her feet, snorted, stood up, jingled her pocket to check for money and pulled on her jacket. She picked up her keys and went out, walking fast. She bought a bottle of juice at the corner grocer's and stopped to look at books spread on a blanket on 7th Street. She looked in the windows of several shops and then headed for the park.

Several joggers huffed past, and a couple strolled by with a Great Dane pacing zig-zag across the path, sniffing gum wrappers. Lydia felt glad she didn't have anything particular to look for, anywhere she needed to get to, anything specific she was trying to accomplish. This is it, she thought, just the drift.

She sat down on a bench and tapped her pack of

cigarettes against her hand. A man standing a dozen or so yards down the hill immediately began moving toward her, hands in pockets. His pants were baggy and he had a patchy beard. Lydia thought he looked more like a carney than a wino, with his tanned face and tattoos. He slid onto the opposite end of the bench.

"Hey, little lady, how are we today?" He spread his palms dramatically. Lydia saw they were stained and calloused. His eyes were a little yellowed and red-rimmed.

"Just fine, sailor." She stared away, fixedly, as if absorbed in some distant object.

"Can I have one of those?" He gestured toward the pack. Lydia pulled a cigarette out and handed it to him. She started to pass him the lighter, but instead lit it and extended the flame toward the cigarette in his lips. He thanked her with exaggerated gratitude, and then began in a worldly wise tone, "You know, yang lady, I've larned a few tricks ..."

Oh no, thought Lydia, like a goddamned bad movie. Who's this, the Wandering Prophet, how Romantic. She wanted to say "save it" but the man turned his head suddenly toward the road where a car was edging slowly next to the park fence. He leaped to his feet, said a mumbled "so long" and trudged away swinging his arms in a seeming attempt at casualness, his head down and tilted away from the road. The car sped up and followed. "Some trick," Lydia muttered aloud, "a disappearing act."

Lydia got up and walked down to the edge of the pond. She knelt down and picked up a leaf and threw it in, watched it swirl around as the breeze caught it. She picked up another and flung it. The leaf went through a loop like an amusement park gravity ride, and then spiraled back in her face as if propelled by a drill. Lydia laughed, said "Shit, *nobody* knows shit," and began scraping her feet along the edge of the pond, kicking leaves and branches into the water.



She Wakes Up Easter Morning

Cotton lady dreams
Of Taffeta gowns.
Men callers stand erect
And pleasantries abound.
And humble is the operative
And fine's the way to live,
And babies all got shiny bibs
And no one counts their ribs.

Cotton lady dances
To music that she knows.
The wine is downright Biblical.
It multiplies, it grows
Grins on chins from ear to ear.
There ain't no shame, less of fear.
The ball has just begun.
Every body sees the sun.

Cotton lady prances
Her way to Easter feast.
Her retinue enhances
The glory of the priest.
She grants him a confession
They have a midnight session.
For blackness has discretion;
He makes a bold impression.

Cotton lady screams
Her taffeta has crinkles.
There's palor in her many skins;
A topography of wrinkles.
Was only dreams, only wishes.
Time to sweep, do the dishes.
Tend to husband, he coughs up blood.
Move his wheelchair before the flood.

Edd Golubski



Micheline Wood
untitled
gelatin silver print
"You never step in the same river twice."—Heraclitus

COMING EVENTS

January

- 9 - Charlotte Symphony Orchestra. 8 p.m. in Tillman Auditorium.
- 12 - Road Warrior. Free flick at the Y-Theater. 7 & 9:15 p.m.
- 19 - Tremors. Free flick at the Y-Theater. 7 & 9:15 p.m.
- 20-31 - Black History Month. For events list contact Barbara Kennedy-Dixon (656-0502).
- 21 - Thaddeus Brys Concert. 8 p.m. in Daniel Auditorium.
- 22 - Chinese Golden Dragon Acrobats and Magicians. 6 & 8:45 p.m. in Tillman Auditorium.
- 26 - Hidden. Free Flick at the Y-Theater. 7 & 9:15 p.m.

February

- 1-29 - Black History Month. For events list contact Barbara Kennedy-Dixon (656-0502).
- 2 - Flash Gordon. Free Flick at the Y-Theater. 7 & 9:15 p.m.
- 4 - Cynthia Scully Pfender Concert. 8 p.m. in Daniel Auditorium.
- 5 - Landscape with Fall of Icarus. Southern Circuit Film Series. 8 p.m. in Y-Theater.
- 11 - The Jupiter Symphony Concert. 8 p.m. in Tillman Auditorium.
- 18-23 & 25 Romeo and Juliet. Clemson Player's Production. 8 p.m. in Daniel Auditorium.
- 20 - Black Student of Promise Dinner. Contact Barbara Kennedy-Dixon (656-0502).
- 24 - Lecturer Malcolm Miller of Chartres, England. 8 p.m. in Strom Thurmond Institute.
- 27 - Clemson University Symphonic Band Concert. 8 p.m. in Tillman Auditorium.
- 29 - Christopher Hollyday Quartet. 8 p.m. in Tillman Auditorium.

March

- 1 - Romeo and Juliet. Clemson Player's Production. 8 p.m. in Daniel Auditorium.
- 3 - Mark Greer and Lillian Harder Concert. 8 p.m. in Daniel Auditorium.
- 5 - Clemson University Jazz Ensemble Concert. 8 p.m. in Tillman Auditorium.
- 8 - Shenandoah Shakespeare Express. 8 p.m. in Tillman Auditorium.
- 10-12 - Actors From the London Stage. 8 p.m. in Tillman Auditorium.
- 24 - Palmetto Mastersingers. 8 p.m. in Tillman Auditorium.
- 28 - Harvi Griffin, Harpist. 8 p.m. in Daniel Auditorium.
- 30-31 - Black Male Emphasis Week. For events list contact Barbara Kennedy-Dixon (656-0502).
- 31 - Meridian Arts Ensemble. 8 p.m. in Tillman Auditorium.

April

- 1 - The African Children's Choir of Ghana. 8 p.m. in Tillman Auditorium.
- 1-5 - Black Male Emphasis Week. For events list contact Barbara Kennedy-Dixon (656-0502).
- 9-10 - Clemson University After Six Singers. 8 p.m. in Tillman Auditorium.
- 13 - Clemson University Chamber Orchestra. 8 p.m. in Tillman Auditorium.
- 14-19 - Clemson Player's Production. TBA.
- 16 - Clemson University Choral Ensembles. 8 p.m. in Tillman Auditorium.
- 23 - Clemson University Jazz Ensemble and Symphonic Band. 8 p.m. in Tillman Auditorium.

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Art plays and fulfills many roles
in my life, that of a haven, of a
savior and of a companion. Art
has become the foundation
upon which I will build the rest
of my life."



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Spring 1992

Cover Art: Joe Holliday
Still Life
oil on canvas, 24" x 30"

CHRONICLE

Established 1897

Volume 95, Issue 2, Spring 1992

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As Clemson University's official art and literary magazine, Chronicle offers a central medium for publication of original works produced by students, faculty, and staff. Address submissions and all correspondence to: Chronicle, Box 2187, University Station, Clemson, S.C. 29632-2187.

Student subscriptions are paid through student activity fees. Advertising rates are available upon request. Opinions expressed in Chronicle do not necessarily coincide with those of the student body, faculty, or administration. The editors assume all responsibility for opinions, should there be any, presented in Chronicle. This magazine is printed on recycled paper using soy-based ink and is recyclable with similar paper products. (Don't forget to remove the staples.)

Fingernails red painted

out of the
parted curtains leap
eyes, violent with
hot green ice.
Alive
your horrorshow body
makes me
in the night.
Mold me
with finger nails
red painted,
unsainted
trickling down me
like
blood thirsty red.
Stay only for
a moment
in my bed,
until the
morning light gleans
and you must leave
with the sun
red painted,
tainted
with my dream.

John Zellweger

Airport Dreams

Rhonda Pressley

Their salvation began with a tic-tac-toe game in the dust under Lyla's open window. It was terribly hot that day. Josie and Marty were bored and they had naturally gravitated towards Lyla's window, where the tales were always rich and scandalous. Most of the time, the gossip was only mildly scandalous, of course: Lyla and her friends discussing who lost their job and who was arrested for being drunk down at Clancy Walker's pool hall. But occasionally, something truly marvelous would happen. Like five years ago, when Lyla was in the fourth grade, Johnny Dotter had gotten two of his friends to hold open the front doors of the school and had ridden a sickly looking black pony right through the lunchroom, while the second-through-fourth graders were eating hot dogs and fruit cocktail. What made it the prank of all pranks was that when he was riding it back out, just as fast as that pony would go and never missing a beat, it shat right in the middle of the doorway, under the shiny plaque that said:

Belldown School Grades K-12

A Hometown Tradition of Excellence

People talked about that for months, Lyla included, because she was there, and Johnny Dotter got suspended from school for three days. He didn't much care, though the Dotters lived in a mobile home on the edge of Highway 6, and they had a tendency to stay a little bit tipsy and not show up for school or work or anything else, anyway. Clancy Walker was probably the only person in town who even talked to them, and the only reason he did was so they wouldn't forget to spend their paychecks in his pool hall on Fridays. But they were infamous for a while on account of that ride. A rumor had gone around once that it had even turned over a couple of the tables on its trip through the lunchroom. Josie and Marty, though, had heard the truth under Lyla's window. She said it was just a black pony, looking dirty and pooped like everything else the Dotters owned, and that the only things that got knocked over were a chair and a carton of chocolate milk when a second grader was trying to get out of its way.

On this day, Lyla was not talking about anything nearly as interesting, so Josie and Marty pulled up the prickly grass between them, smoothed the pebbly dirt with their palms, and settled in for a few games of tic-tac-

toe. They had found two pencil-sized sticks under Josie's oak tree, and Marty had scratched out a board for them in the hard, thirsty ground. They bent over it halfheartedly, thinking of other things, really, like maybe snow. And all the while, the ruthless sun beat on their heads, on Josie's limp, brownish hair and Marty's blonde curls. Josie wondered bleakly why a boy would not only be skinnier, but also have prettier hair than her. She drew an "O" in the center of the board and Marty countered with an "X" in the corner. They were barefooted and grungy, and their clothes were thin and stained and didn't quite fit. They were seven years old, seven-and-a-half, really; but if you asked them, they were likely to push it a little and say something like "seven-and-three-quarters."

Lyla's breathless voice came through the tattered screen: "and, April, I just know something's up with her and Randy. They try to act like they're hiding it but everybody knows it's so obvious—and—"

"Randy Jenkins has a girlfriend!" said April. "Have you ever seen her? She's twice as big as that girl—"

"I know! She doesn't know what she's getting into—"

"I bet Randy's girlfriend'll whip her ass—"

"You know it, honey—I heard that—"

"God, I hope I'm there to see it!"

"Listen! I heard they're already sleeping—"

"They are not! No way!"

"Yes—"

Marty leaned back against the house and squinted up at the afternoon sun. Josie made an "O" in the dust and did the same. She wiped sweat her nose with the back of her hand, and left a brown trail across one cheek. She tried to figure out what he might be looking at, but it hurt her eyes, and there was nothing new up there, so she looked back to the ground and the tic-tac-toe game. In the dust next to it, she drew smiley faces and stick figures, and squiggles that resembled soaring birds. Josie was not inclined to hurry him along, to poke him in the side and tell him to get back with the game. She was wary of his temper, for one thing—if he got mad enough, he was liable to haul off and punch you or something. Even without shoes on, Marty could kick hard enough to leave a bruise on your shin. But Josie was quiet and mild-mannered by nature. She had three brothers and an infant sister, and her mother was a wiry, distressed

woman who was as short tempered as she was fertile. Sometimes, Josie thought that even her father seemed a little scared of her.

Finally, without any prodding from her, Marty looked back at the game. He considered it for a moment, and then threw his stick out in the road. It clattered across the pavement and into Josie's yard, where her baby sister was rolling around on a blanket that her mother had spread over the grass. She stretched one pink arm out towards the stick, clutched it in her chubby fingers, and, very slowly and sweetly, popped it in her mouth. Josie almost yelled at her before she remembered that she was eavesdropping under Lyla's window. She decided to let it go: Marty had already stripped the bark off of it and she guessed that one naked stick wouldn't kill her, anyway.

"I'm tired of tic-tac-toe," Marty whispered. He pulled up the hard grass in fistfuls and Josie saw that he was getting annoyed. "What a boring day. Even *they're* boring today." He jabbed his thumb over his shoulder. "Who cares about Randy Jenkins?"

"Who even knows Randy Jenkins?" said Josie. She thought this was a very clever thing to say.

Inside, Lyla and April went on about who was going together and who liked who, and how so-and-so was a back-stabber and someone else was a slut, and how they would sneak into the kitchen that night and steal a few of Lyla's daddy's beers, and exactly what time they would slide up Lyla's screen and creep off down the hill to the Baptist Church. Josie had seen them sneak out before. She had stayed up late one night to watch them from her own dark window across the road. Lyla's screen had shot up rather abruptly and not very quietly at just past midnight, and out came Lyla, legs first, in a short skirt and a red halter top that did a poor job of covering certain important parts. Her hair was teased and she was wearing long, fearful earrings that glittered in the moonlight. Then came April, with the same crazy hair and tight clothes, and her lips painted so pink that Josie could see them glowing even in the darkness. She nearly fell when she came out—she was carrying all that stolen beer—and she and Lyla laughed and skipped all the way down the hill. Josie had guessed that they were going to meet their boyfriends that night. She could smell their perfume as soon as they reached the road—sweet and strong and cloying, like Grandmommy's bathroom. Plus they didn't dress up and act foolish when they were going to drink with girls. She told Marty about it the next day and he said, "Daddy'll kill her if he finds out she stole that beer."

"Well, he won't *kill* her, I don't guess." "He would, too. He said once that he wished we was all dead—all the kids and Mama and him, too, I reckon."

Josie had thought that was ridiculous and she had almost laughed. "Maybe he didn't really mean it."

And Marty had said, simply, "My daddy means everything."

Josie wondered who Lyla and April would meet this

week-end, and what might happen to them if they got caught stealing the beer. They were in there scheming away, like two villains planning a daring crime. Josie reflected that it was perhaps a more daring crime than she had thought, even though she was sure that their father had to be drunk when he said that about wishing they were dead.

"It's damn hot," whispered Marty. "I wish we had a pool."

"We have a hosepipe," Josie offered.

"I'm sick of the hosepipe! I want a damn pool!"

"Shh!" she said. "They'll hear you! You better stop cussing, too."

"Why? Nobody can hear me. I just wish I could go swimming. Jeremy Swift has a pool. I wish I was over at Jeremy's."

"Are you friends with him?" she asked. Jeremy Swift lived in Pinewood Acres. His folks had a two-story house and a round, blue pool in their front yard for everyone to see. Josie had been by his house in the car with her mother; she had seen Jeremy in his pool. In front of his neat brick house on the green lawn, and yellow and violet flowers in the garden.

"Oh, we're good friends. He sits next to me in class. We're real good friends. I've been to his pool before."

"Why don't you call him and tell him we want to come swimming?"

Marty picked at the grass and scowled at her.

"Because his folks are mean. They hardly ever let him have anybody over. They barely let me come that time. He practically had to sneak me into his pool."

But Josie knew why they couldn't go swimming over at Jeremy Swift's house. People who lived in Pinewood Acres were nice enough, she supposed, but they were different. And their kids did not play with kids on the hill except when they had to, at school or church or somewhere. If you lived on the hill, the best thing you could do was splash around in the spray of the hosepipe and pretend like you were just as happy as anybody with an old pool, and like you hadn't even noticed they had one. "Well, I guess we'll have to get the hose—"

"Shh—wait!" said Marty. He was leaning very close to the house, his dirty hands splayed out against the white wood, his ear cocked up towards the window. "Listen!" He pointed over his head. "She's talking about her boyfriend."

"I know I should keep this a secret, April, but I just can't hold it any longer. Guess what happened last night." Lyla's voice was urgent and low, a sneakish voice, and Josie and Marty had to lean very close to hear.

"What?" April said. "Did you lose it?" There was a telling pause. "Oh my God you did it! How did he talk you into it?! I can't *believe* it. What got into you?!"

Josie and Marty stared at each other with wide eyes. They pressed their small bodies against the house and strained to hear every word. This sounded like something important; and even when sweat ran down

their foreheads and stung their eyes, they did not dare to wipe it away, for fear of making a noise and missing something.

"I didn't plan it or anything—it just happened. We were over at Alan's—his parents are gone to Columbia this weekend—"

"You did it at *Alan's*?"

"Will you listen? We were watching this movie. Me and Tony were laying on the floor and Alan was on the couch. So Alan falls asleep—"

"Maybe he just pretended to. He and Tony probably planned this so Tony could seduce you." April laughed.

"Come on, April, he was snoring. This is serious, now."

"Ok, ok."

"So Alan falls asleep and Tony's like, 'Come in here with me,' and, next thing I know, we're in Alan's bedroom, and Tony's trying to take my clothes off."

Marty smiled at Josie. An ugly smile. An I-told-you-so smile. He had told her once that "making love" and "having sex" involved taking your clothes off and doing something too nasty to mention, but she had refused to believe it. Making love was kissing and hugging and stuff. It wasn't at all like this. This had something to do with "adultery," and she didn't know what adultery was, but there was a Commandment in the front of her white Bible against it, and she felt that it must be connected to this business about taking your clothes off and doing strange things with your privates. She felt guilty already for listening.

"I'm going home," she announced.

"No, *wait*." Marty grabbed her arm and pulled her down next to him in the grass. He put his finger to his lips and pointed at the window. Josie's knees smeared the tic-tac-toe board away.

"I tried to tell him that we ought to wait, you know, that there was probably a better time for this, but he was like, 'Alan will never even know—he's sound asleep.' And I go, 'But what if he wakes up?' But you know how guys are. He says, 'Listen, Lyla, I wouldn't want to do this if I didn't love you—this is what people do who are in love. And I really love you so just relax.' So by that time, he's just about got all my clothes off and he's, you know, on *top* of me—"

"You were on Alan's bed?!" April was fascinated.

"Marty, I want to go home!" said Josie. She was trembling and embarrassed and she thought she might cry. "I'm supposed to be watching the baby!"

"Shut up!" said Marty, and he squeezed her arm so tight that she could see him gritting his teeth with the effort.

"on the floor," Lyla was saying. "But he was so heavy, you know? I say, 'no,' and he says, 'yes,' and I finally just shut up. I thought, well, you have to do it eventually so you might as well get it over with. And I was kind-of excited about it at first because none of our friends have done it yet, I don't think, and it's pretty cool to be the

first one, but—"

"But how did it *FEEL*?" said April. The bed squeaked and Josie could picture her bouncing around in there, her pink lips and her blue eyes gleaming over this terrible think that had happened to Marty's sister.

"It hurt like hell, April. I nearly bit my lip off to keep from fucking screaming."

"Really? Oh, Jesus. I heard that it might hurt a little bit the first time, but I didn't think it would be that bad. Maybe it's because you were nervous."

"I don't know. It didn't take long, though, and now that it's over, I guess it's ok. I mean, it is the natural thing to do."

"Yeah," cooed April. "I wonder when Dave and I will do it..." And Josie simply decided that she could not listen anymore. "I am going home!" she said. She pulled herself away from Marty and marched across the road to her sister, who was still chewing on the stick. Josie took it away from her and gave her a teddy bear with one yellow eye, like a dirty marble.

Marty had followed her over from his house. He put his hands on his hips, and leaned way back so that his belly hung out at the bottom of his tee-shirt. "I told you that's what it's about, Josie."

"What do they know?" she said. "They're not grown-ups!"

"Yes they are! They're fourteen! They know what sex is!"

"They do not!"

"Then how come Lyla's talking about it hurting and stuff?"

"Maybe Tony hugged her too hard!"

"Bull! You know that's not it! They had sex, dummy!"

"They did not!"

"Oh, Goddamn!" said Marty. He kicked the ground in frustration and his yellow curls bounced around on his head. "You're such a baby! You don't know anything!"

Josie turned her back to him and bounced the teddy bear up and down in front of her sister. Sometimes if you ignored Marty, he would get fed up and go home. The baby went "Augh," and drooled on the bear.

"I'm not playing with you anymore," she said without looking at him.

"What! Why not?"

"Because you cuss and you talk nasty, and you're going to Hell for saying 'God' like that."

Marty looked at the back of her head, at her straight brown hair. He wanted to slug her. "You can't go to Hell for saying 'God.' Preacher says it all the time."

"He only says it when he's praying or talking about Him seriously. You wasn't doing either one and you're going to Hell. It's a holy name and the Bible says you're not supposed to take it in vain."

"You don't even know what that means—you ain't no preacher."

"I do know," she said, feeling very smart, like she had

really fixed him this time. "My Bible has all the commandments right in front, and that's one of them."

Marty sat on the blanket with them. The baby rolled her eyes around to look at him and fell over. Josie sat her up again and smoothed her thin hair, just like her mother would do. They made Marty mad that baby spitting everywhere and Josie acting like Miss Brains, like she knew more about life and God and stuff than he did. He was the one who had told her about sex, wasn't he? Yes, but that was a different matter. He didn't listen in church like Josie did, and he didn't suppose anyone in his family would even go if his mother didn't worry so much about what everybody would think if they didn't. She said that they might as well be Dotters, if they weren't going to get up and go to church on Sunday. Marty considered his options. "You can't go to Hell unless you're dead, and I'm not dying no time soon," he said.

Josie stuck her tongue out at the slobbering baby and laughed. "You don't know," she said to Marty. "You might be riding you big wheel tomorrow and get run over by a car. Then you'd be dead."

Marty was beginning to get concerned. He wondered if his parents would go to Hell when they died. He supposed his daddy would, for cussing and for saying "God" the wrong way. When you made him really mad, he would stomp around the room, clenching his teeth, and he would start going, "GoddamnGoddamnGoddamnGoddamn," and you knew what was coming next. He'd be looking just over your head, like he didn't see you, and you'd hear a low *whoosh* as his arm cut through the air, a low *whoosh* like a gust of warm wind through an open door, and then you'd go sprawling stupidly across the floor. You'd get up real slow and careful, and brush the dust off your legs, and you'd notice out of the corner of your eye that he was smirking, like someone had just told him a joke. But you'd know what he was smirking at—how dumb you looked sliding across the living room floor and crashing into the couch or the wall or whatever. And the whole time, Lyla would be standing there whimpering, and his meek, dim-witted mother at the kitchen sink washing dishes, and sometimes one of his brothers would say, "Daddy, please—" His father would jump out of his chair—he was very tall and dark, and it was frightening when he stood up—and he would say, "*GODDAMMIT!*" and shut the brother up. If they went into the kitchen, if they said, "Mama, it hurts," she would clank the dishes together a little louder, and she would hover, brooding, over the dishwasher, and pretend she didn't hear you. She washed dishes so much that her hands were constantly pink and wrinkled. Marty thought that maybe she would go to Hell, too, for not correcting his father when he broke these apparently important Commandments.

But then it hit her: he remembered how the church service ended and how everybody acted crazy, and he said, "I'm not going to Hell! All I have to do is get *SAVED!*" He smiled brightly at her, his dirty face beaming.

Josie was losing her patience and wished he would go home. "You can't get saved. Jesus has to speak to your heart first. That's what Preacher's always saying."

"Yes, I can!" Marty said, standing up. He ran across the road, calling over his shoulder, "I'll show you tomorrow!" The screen door shut with a bang behind him.

Josie looked back at her sister. "He can't get saved." She picked up the baby and the teddy bear, holding them on her hip the way her mother did, and carried them through her own screen door. "He's crazy," she muttered. "He ain't getting saved."

* * *

Her mother cut her hair that night. She spread a trash bag across the kitchen floor and sat Josie up in a chair on top of it. Then she combed her wet, clean hair out as smooth as it would go, and cut it, very straight and neat across her shoulders, and evenly above her eyebrows. It felt good to have clean, freshly cut hair. Josie went in her room afterwards and picked out her prettiest skirt and pulled it on over her clean, round legs. The skirt was sky blue and it had tiny crimson flowers on it, and it no longer covered her knees. Josie put on her cloth sandals that were almost, but not quite, too small, and slipped out the back door and into the yard. The sun was setting and the sky was pink and orange, streaked, like finger painting. Josie felt pretty, with her shorter hair drying around her temples, very cool, and the skirt swishing around her legs. She could pretend in the tiny back yard, where no one could see her. Where her skirt was silk and her sandals were high heels made of soft leather. And Josie was tall and sleek and beautiful, instead of short and kind-of pudgy. And maybe her name was long and elegant, too maybe her name was something like "Savannah." And she was at an airport to meet her boyfriend—no, her husband—like on TV. Josie had never been to an airport, but she had seen shows where a tall man would come down the steps of a plane and a beautiful girl would emerge from the crowd to greet him. They would look at each other like they had spent their whole lives waiting for that moment. And he would come over to her, like from over where the oak tree was, and she would open her arms and he would hug her so hard that he lifted her off the ground. She kicked her high heels up behind her, and he swung her around and around. She spun, the skirt swimming around her thighs, spinning so fast that the crimson flowers blurred and weren't flowers anymore. And the crowd looked on and admired them, and said to themselves, "I wish I could find a love like theirs."

And he bent his face down close to her ear and said, "You are the most beautiful girl in the world, and I love you."

Oh, it was so sweet. It had nothing to do with hurting and screaming and the careful plans of deceitful boys. And then maybe she was a princess, and he was

her very own prince, and they were dancing in the ballroom of her father's castle. She wore a very long, lacy dress, and there were pearls around her neck and winking diamonds on her fingers. They danced, around and back and around again, and the dying grass pricked her toes where they hung over the edge of her sandals. She hummed a pretty song and danced around the yard, her arms curved around in front of her, like a fumbling ballerina, and she thought she was beautiful, and she turned her face up to the finger-painted sky and was thinking of maybe kissing the prince's cheek when her mother said:

"Josie! Come inside before you dirty up your Sunday clothes!"

And the whispering prince went away before she could do it.

* * *

The next morning, they were late for church. They were always late for church. This because her brother had a wild, curling cowlick on the top of his head, and her mother tried desperately, every Sunday, to flatten it out.

"Why, that looks awful!" she would say, licking her fingers and pressing them against Eddie's scalp. "If I didn't know better, I'd think you was an orphan, with your hair pokin' up like that!"

And she would lick and press, lick and press, and by the time all of them had gotten dressed and straggled down the hill to the Baptist Church, they were five minutes late and Eddie's cowlick was sticking up again like some lazy antenna.

Sunday school was uneventful. Their teacher read them some Bible stories and then they colored some pictures of Jesus. Marty was serene and polite: he didn't pull any ponytails or pinch any arms. Their teacher thought this was mighty strange and she gave him anxious, worried glances all morning. At 11:00, they went upstairs for the sermon. Marty sat with his family in a pew on the left side, and Josie sat towards the back of the center aisle, between her father and mother. Preacher gave a dull sermon, and Josie was tired and yawning before he was half through.

Finally, noon came. Preacher said, "Please turn to page 240 in your hymnals." They all stood up and sang, "Just as I am." Most of them did not even open the hymnals. Miss Lola was standing behind Josie, and her voice was old and creaky.

"*Oh, Lamb, of God, I come,*" they sang. Just like they sang every Sunday. Then Josie saw movement out of the corner of her eye; she looked up, and she saw Marty's father holding his hand and leading him to the front of the church. He was bleary-eyed and his pants were too long the hem was dirty where his heels kept catching it.

"*I'll be coome.*"

Marty looked around his father's back; he saw Josie and smiled his broadest smile ever. He was going up

there to get saved.

Josie tugged at her father's elbow. "Take me up front," she said.

He scowled at her and then leaned over her head. "What?" he said.

Preacher was in front of the altar saying, "Oh, yes! Bring the little children to the Lord!" He wrapped his arms around Marty.

"Take me up there!" said Josie. Everyone around them was singing and she knew that her time was up when the song was over.

Her mother sat down on the pew and turned Josie around to face her. The baby was chewing on her hair and she didn't even notice. "Are you sure about this, now?"

"Yes, yes! I want to get saved! Take me up there!"

So her mother nodded at her father, and he led her up the aisle. They sat on the front pew, next to Marty and his father. Preacher kneeled down between them. He said, "The Lord God is knocking on your heart, children. Will you let Him in? Do you know what Jesus expects of you, how He wants you to behave, and be Christian and good, like Him?"

"*Just as I am...*" they sang. Slow and soft in the background.

Josie and Marty nodded and smiled and said, "yes," to all of Preacher's questions. He clutched their little hands in his own. He was sweating, and dreamy light came through the colored windows and shone onto his thinning hair. They could see his scalp through it when he bowed his head. "Thank you, Father!" he cried. "Bless these sweet children!"

The song ended, there was a final prayer, and Josie and Marty's families left together. When they stepped through the front doors and into the sunlight, Marty leaned over her shoulder and said, "See? There's nothing to it."

They started up the hill, anxious to get home and get out of the itchy church clothes. After lunch, they sat under Lyla's window for a while, listening, trying to catch brown grasshoppers that spit tobacco juice on their fingers whenever they squeezed them too hard. Josie couldn't stay long she had to take care of the baby that night, to try and entertain her with the one-eyed teddy bear and hand-me-down dolls that were losing their stuffing, so Marty went inside to watch a football game on TV. Late in the third quarter, his father got out of his chair and gave him a stinging blue shiner for no particular reason.

Marty went into the kitchen and tapped his mother on the hip. "Mama?" She had three forks in her hand and she rattled them together. "Mama, I didn't do anything this time!"

She held the forks over her shoulder and rattled them, so hard that her whole body shook.

"I didn't *do* anything," said Marty. He pulled a dishrag off the counter and began filling it with ice.

The Witch of Ruby Valley

"My birds talk to me,"
She says,
Selling him herbs.
"Birds foretell the future,
You know,"
Her face is kind,
But carries psychic bruises
From secrets beating
To get out.

Behind them
Sits her seers
Weaving avian spells;
Magic enthroned in
Parrot-cage castles:
Cockatiels
Parakeets and peachfaced
Lovebirds mostly saying
"Awk."

A cockatoo flares
His shaman's crest
Of sulphur yellow plumes,
Stares at him then
Shrieks.
Six feathery accomplices
Become immobile gargoyles
Perched on wooden dowels.
Shocked little eyes
Zero in
As silence leaps into the room.

"Drive home very carefully,"
She says.

Lucile Hendricks

Susan Sigmon
Flower Lady
gelatin silver print

"Photography for me is a means of showing others the beauty that can be found around us all."

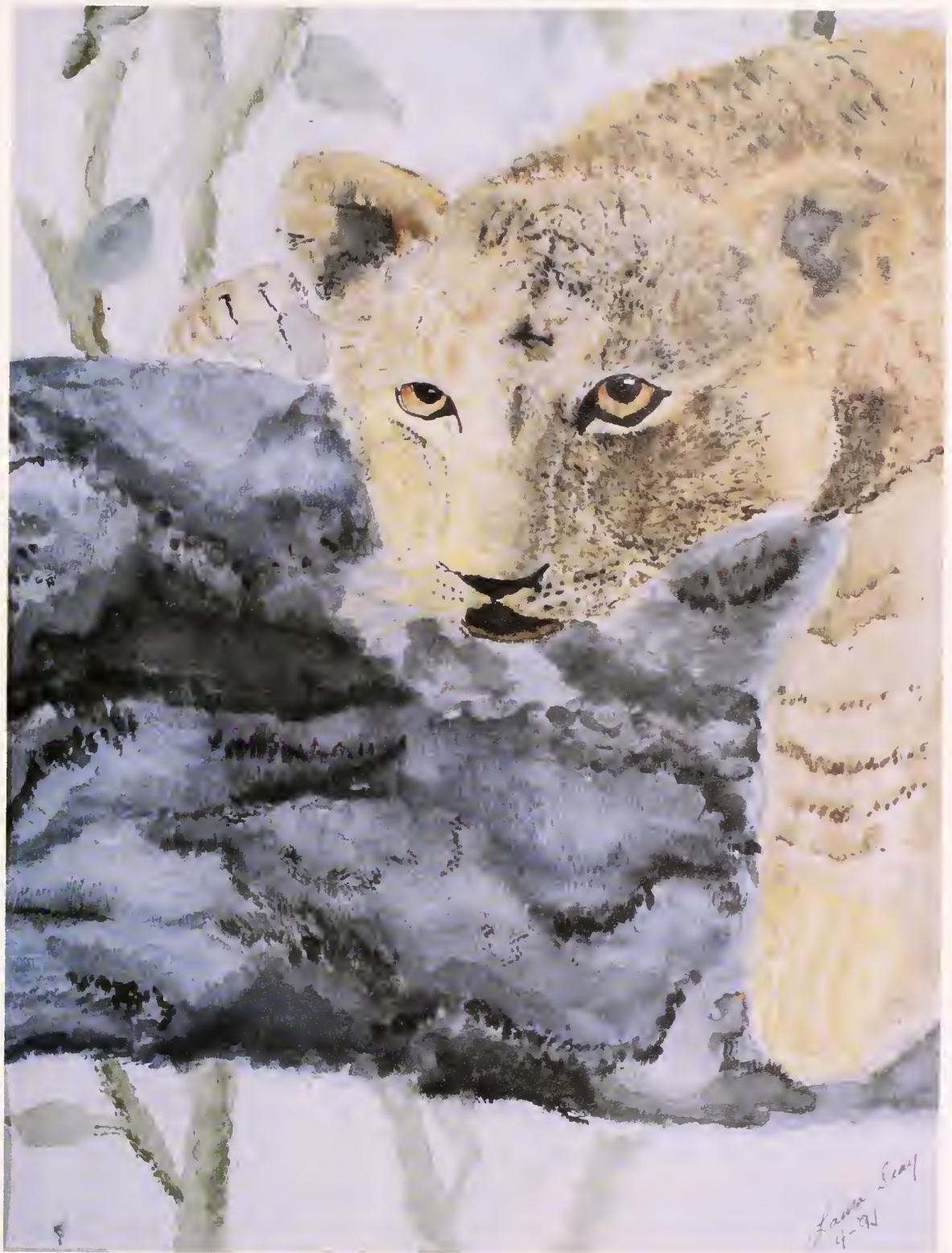


Nativity

Wind practices
Lamaze
With tall
And pregnant grasses.
DemeteroDemetero
Demeter,
Weeps the grass
Parched
Shriveled and contracted,
Giving birth to next summer's
Pasture.

Seeds patter like
Blood droplets
On the soil.

Lucile Henricks



Laura Seay

Untitled

watercolor on paper, 12" x 15"

"The sad innocence of our youth; only in a picture can it not be changed."



Kevin R. Koshar
Untitled

|

The Adjustment

John Edwards

CHAPTER I

It can be easily argued that no living thing thrives in the desert.

Of course, there is much life to be found there (and everywhere, from the depths of the Arctic ocean to the core of a manure pile in the bottom of a Missouri farm pond). But certain regions of the western United States exert hellish selective pressures on the indigenous wildlife. Living, as rudimentary as it is for most creatures, is even more austere and inconvenient for the desert dweller. Water is rarely available directly, and never in abundant quantities. The sun is quick to reclaim the morning dew, setting the sand and rocks ablaze with harsh, revealing light. Life forms are brutally compromised to this hell-on-earth reality, devolving into forsaken nocturnal mutants. There is life in the desert, but no living thing is so talented or deformed that it survives there easily. The struggle of the desert dweller is fired by pure instinct, and without that blind drive, living creatures would not, could not survive in such an environment.

But it can also be easily argued that, in many ways, Dr. Brooks Kincaid wasn't alive at all.

The other man in the bottom of the canyon, visible only from the chin up, was half-dead himself from heat exhaustion and severe dehydration. Perhaps it was his superb physical condition that had allowed him to remain alive for so long buried in the sand. This athleticism, which had been his sole source of pride, his only talent, now betrayed him by forcing him to die slowly, to linger in his last semi-conscious hours of life. He was far (or it seemed far) past the stage of screaming and whimpering over his impending demise. He was in that state of delirium when the body shuts down pain because it is no longer useful or psychologically bearable, and he was immersed in a surreal summarization of how he had arrived at the end of his life at such an early age.

Dr. Kincaid sat on a rock and watched the dying man impassively. An imaginative observer might describe him as having resembled a Frederic Remington interpretation of Rodin's "The Thinker", with weathered stetson and week-old beard resting on his fist in the classic pensive pose. Kincaid's beard was as old as his daughter's death, the event that brought the two men together for more death in the Nevada wilderness.

Death begets death, so thought the man on the rock as he watched the younger man's eyes roll behind their

sunken, fluttering lids. The buried man was not the murderer of Kincaid's daughter, not directly; Kincaid himself could be found almost as guilty in that sense. She was guilty of self-murder, ending one life and completely devastating another. A drop of water fell from Kincaid's face to the sand, and a small lizard gorged on the rare liquid bounty as the Doctor for the first time began an analysis of what had changed him so and brought him to the desert in the worst heat of August.

* * *

Exactly one month ago Brooks Kincaid and his daughter Gina had driven into the desert together to hunt arrowheads for his collection. Kincaid was an English professor and Gina was a student and Editor of the school paper, but they both made time to spend together away from their academic responsibilities. Their excursions were almost always fruitless, but they enjoyed the short hikes into the arroyo, and something interesting almost always presented itself along the way. Occasionally they would happen upon a rattlesnake and Brooks, in the spirit of St. George, would slay the serpent with a load of .44 snakeshot. Gina would play the part of the shrieking damsel, never holding back in her enthusiastic performance, though the scene had been acted twenty times before. And her father, twenty times the hero, would present her with the rattles, all of which were kept in a box in her closet for some undecided decorative project.

Gina was the pride of her father's life, a splendid and sometimes very necessary reminder that a young, privileged American could still be intelligent, charming, and unspoiled. She was especially beautiful to him because he could appreciate her subtle forms and gestures, the living legacies of her deceased mother. She inherited not only her mother's looks, but her intellect as well; moreso, her intellectual curiosity. Gina's mind was the masterpiece of a joint effort between the parents to educate their daughter to her highest potential. Even in the family's early, leaner years Dr. Kincaid insisted on purchasing two different sets of encyclopedias for Gina, so that she could compare and contrast her precocious studies. The balance of influence between arts and sciences was carefully maintained, and though both parents were devoted to the humanities, Gina's choices were to be encouraged regardless of their directions. Brooks was secretly filled with pride when she announced on her eighteenth birthday her plans to follow her father's pursuit of writing. Three years since

her mother's auto accident, at twenty-two years of age Gina Kincaid was a straight-A senior and practically in charge of the University's campus newspaper. Dr. Kincaid's literature students were weary of hearing the praises and exemplary anecdotes of his legendary offspring.

Brooks Kincaid trusted his only daughter, but it was his private, internal routine to worry about her whenever she stayed out late on a date or working at the newspaper office. He considered that it was instinctive for a parent with only one child, a perfect child, to worry more than their share when other parents would merely be curious or only mildly irritated. And with that idea he consoled himself while he waited up for Gina to return from her latest exclusive interview.

Gina had managed to arrange an interview with the University's star basketball center, Lionel Jensen. The team was ranked number two in the nation, and it was difficult for the professional Las Vegas and Reno publications to secure the athlete for exclusive writeups. Gina had been persistent in her pleas to the athletic department, and finally, with her father's unsolicited string-pulling, an appointment was set after the UCLA game at the athletic center banquet hall. With the tacit understanding that she would not take any journalistic pot-shots at the campus celebrity, the school paper would be the first to give a glimpse of the leader behind the University's winning record.

From television, campus gossip, and the lamentations of his colleagues, Dr. Kincaid knew a good deal about Lionel Jensen. Physically, Jensen fit the mold of the average college basketball center: tall (six-foot eleven), not particularly fast but an excellent jumper, solid and muscular in a stretched-out, sinewy way. On the court, Jensen seemed only slightly taller than average. But on campus, without the other six-foot plus players around him, he stood at least a head above everyone else in the crowd. There were the usual rumors of heavy alcohol and cocaine abuse surrounding Jensen and his teammates, but nothing seemed to stick, and not a trace of speculation escaped to the press.

Through those in the English department that had taught Jensen, Kincaid learned that the young man was hopelessly arrogant. It was believed that he had never taken an exam on the day it was scheduled. He would approach the irritated instructor a day or two later, grinning his characteristic gold-toothed grin, presenting a note from the team physician regarding a strained hamstring or migraine headache. Much of the University faculty was relieved when Jensen was assigned private tutors, probably selected for their patience as much as their teaching abilities.

But the arrogant, gold-toothed hypochondriac had led the team to a 103-98 victory over the Bruins, breaking a career scoring record with 36 points and 18 rebounds. The campus raged with celebration, and Kincaid reminded himself not to reprimand his daughter for her

lateness, understanding that she needed to cut loose now and again, just like everyone else. Through the bay window he saw the naked rear-end of one of his students hanging out of a beat-up GTO convertible. He recognized the classic automobile, belonging to a sophomore in his Chaucer class who, unfortunately, didn't know about Kincaid's excellent eyesight, or the six sound-activated floodlights that exposed the student's identity as well as his skinny, lily-white ass. Kincaid recalled that the boy had written a surprisingly coherent essay on the Freudian implications of *The Miller's Tale*, and he made a mental note to include a special comment on the paper when he returned it.

Soon the headlights of Gina's Rabbit convertible turned into the drive, and he closed his old tattered volume of *Ivanhoe*, read over and over for its relaxing effect on him. He shelved the book, in fact for the last time, and went to greet his daughter.

"Hey, sweetie, how'd it go?"

"Fine. It went fine."

Gina stood in the dark kitchen hallway acting strangely uncomfortable. She was fidgeting and straightening her clothing, realizing that her cardigan sweater was inside-out.

"Well, you don't seem too excited about it. I guess it's late." She brushed by him quickly and went straight to the bathroom. "Did you embarrass him, honey? I hear he's a cocky son-of-a-bitch. I bet you really made that cromagnon squirm. Did you hit him with any big words?"

There was no answer, just the sound of running water. He started to sense that something was wrong. Kincaid admitted to himself that the years of constant nurturing and cloistered upbringing had, instead of spoiling her, left his daughter with a certain fragility; a delicate emotional constitution that hinged on her father's approval and support. She was never as upset as when she experienced guilt, and to Kincaid this was a precious quality, symptomatic of a true and noble heart.

"Gina, have you been drinking?" he asked, intoning his understanding smile. Kincaid listened hard on the other side of the bathroom door. Her soft crying was barely audible. "I'm not mad at you, honey. Really, I'm not. Hell, you deserve to tie one on if anybody does." He gave an uneasy chuckle. "It's okay, sweetie, it's not like you're not a big girl..." his voice trailed as he noticed the sticky smear of blood on the doorknob. Her crying gradually became louder, and in a panic he busted in the unlocked door.

* * *

It would be difficult to understand Kincaid's reaction to his daughter's rape without understanding first how he viewed evil, and how, in his mind, evil related to human nature. Emotional trauma often brings change, but to say that Brooks Kincaid simply changed would be an understatement. There are turning points in people's lives that change not only superficial opinions, but the actual structure of the soul; cold winds blow through

human lives, toppling entire value systems and stripping away frail frameworks that were supposedly built with truths. A trick of survival is learning to adapt to disillusionment. An infant venturing from the safety of its cradle soon learns that the real world has sharp edges and corners that stab and bruise; then it is more prepared when it later walks in on its parents making love. When their favorite athlete is arrested for drug possession, the shock is felt, but not so strongly. Later, when their spouse is photographed by a private detective with another lover, the truth, while not entirely anticipated, is completely acceptable to the psyche as a viable reality. It can be dealt with.

But Kincaid was unprepared. Gina's rape served to point her father in the direction of madness; the catalyst that sent him irreversibly into it was her suicide. With three weeks of crying and counseling behind her, Gina might have survived the ordeal. But Dr. Kincaid had turned to stone. Twenty-two years of waking up to her father's approving smiles had left Gina unable to wake up without them, and during the night she swallowed a vial of sleeping pills. With a simple note saying "I'm sorry", she left her brooding father to cope with a great deal of pain, and a spiritual upheaval he would not have dreamed possible.

After a lifetime of intellectualizing about how good and evil were relative and mixed in human nature, Dr. Brooks Kincaid for the first time experienced what he felt was certainly pure and concentrated evil. Suddenly the entire universe changed into a vast Manichaean arena; pure evil had offended purest good. The foundations of his sanity had been violently shaken, and the spheres of the heavens seemed strangely out of alignment. From deep within him, rumbling up from his last unexplored depths of being, a small, sharp, persistent voice was crying. He wasn't hearing voices, but a message: an adjustment had to be made.

CHAPTER II

The late model Toyota Land Cruiser was parked dangerously close to the edge of the canyon, with Kincaid perched on the hood looking over the edge and into the distance at the picturesque pastels of the desert sunset. He had driven an hour from Las Vegas, leaving in the middle of his daughter's funeral, although he had displayed more outward composure than he had since the discovery of her body three days before. When a concerned friend stopped him on his way out he politely explained that funerals were for the living, and that he was all right but saw no real reason to stay. The truth was that he was indeed more composed than he had been in a month, since the night of Gina's rape. The most exhaustive stage of his grieving was now behind him. The sandstorm his mind had become was gradually clearing; he was in effect precipitating, reshuffling into a new being: intense, focused, simplified. For the first time

in a month Kincaid watched the clouds of sunset, incredibly graceful above the stark forms of the desert. They seemed to whisper in passing, "Adieu, adieu, adieu! Remember me."

At nightfall he turned his truck around and headed towards the artificial pink glow on the horizon. To Kincaid the city lights had once symbolized an oasis of cultural and intellectual endeavor amidst the vast desert wilderness. It often seemed as if travelers were purposefully rewarded for enduring the miles and miles of nothing on the interstate when all at once the glittering neon spectacle of the city was upon them. As he would drive the arrow-straight highways returning from his excursions he sometimes experienced a sense of gradual "re-humanization": a spiritual transition that drew him back to the city and away from the desert nasties hidden in the canyon chapparal. Now, the soft distant glow represented something very different; it was more akin to the fire and brimstone of Sodom. The first vivid image of violent retribution entered his thoughts as he imagined the entire city smoldering in the aftermath of a nuclear explosion. To Kincaid, Las Vegas was now nothing more than a giant malignant tumor on the black flatness of the landscape, and he knew that within the neon haze lurked sinister forces that by comparison absolved the scorpion and sidewinder as innocent and harmless. He knew that within the city the man who had raped his daughter was alive and well.

He pulled up to his garage door and rummaged through the truck, searching for the remote. Under the back seat he found one of Gina's rattles. It had been taken from a younger snake, having only four narrow sections, one for each time it had sloughed its skin. Kincaid recalled that it was the closest Gina had come to actually being bitten by a rattler, the small snake having struck from behind a clump of sagebrush she had foolishly kicked to scare up a quail for her father. The snake snagged a fang on her protective chaps and she kicked it into the air. In a split second Kincaid had raised his shotgun and cut the snake in two as it fell to the ground fifteen feet away. The lethal shotgun shell was added to Gina's collection, but he kept the small rattle for himself to remind him of the excellent shot.

The depth of his loss had forced him beyond gross sentimentality, but he pocketed the rattle and placed it in the shoe box in Gina's bedroom. He was exhausted and desperately needed sleep, but the trip into the desert, the sunset, and the sight of Gina's things still untouched in her room had exhumed memories and associations that served to place him on an emotional "runner's high". At times his mind had become paralyzed from the effort of grieving; overwhelming surges of sadness would cause him to find himself stopped in the middle of a crowded hallway, or swerving back into his lane on an empty street. But it was now clear to him: he had survived. The end of the world had come and gone, the sky had fallen, and he was more or less left intact. He was not at peace,

yet peace was in the distance. He felt as if he had seen it from the canyon. Not the foggy apparition of Elsinore, but something clearer, more native to him. Kincaid did not recognize it as revenge, but instead as a primal vision of a way out, a way back. He poured a glass of Wild Turkey and surprised himself as he started to gather equipment for a plan he had not consciously conceived.

Kincaid returned to the garage and opened the rear hatch of the Land Cruiser to empty the cargo area. He tossed his garment bag and calfskin briefcase into the corner of the cluttered storage room, and his three Wilson kevlar tennis racquets crashed against the lawn tractor, along with his jumper cables, skeet thrower, and tool box. As an afterthought he replaced the tool box, and loaded a pick axe, shovel, sledgehammer, and a bolo machete. In his bedroom he changed into an old flannel shirt, levis, hiking boots, and a light down-filled vest. He dug out his custom elk-skin lined gunbelt, and replaced half of the snakeshot cartridges with hollow-point magnum loads. He holstered the six inch Colt Anaconda, and loaded his old sawed-off rabbit-eared 12 gauge with triple aught buckshot. Both weapons were packed in a black nylon duffel bag with a hunting knife, three boxes of shells, and an oilcloth. Kincaid filled two canteens and six milk jugs with fresh water, and lastly took the box of rattles from Gina's room. Leaving the lights on and the garage door open, Kincaid again headed southeast into the heart of the city.

The first order of this business unfolding in front of Kincaid was to buy the bait. He bypassed the downtown expressway and drove straight into the grid of side roads off of the boulevard that made up downtown Las Vegas. He was driving slowly, not because of the heavy midnight pedestrian traffic, but because he was searching the crowded streets for something specific. He turned left at Fremont and onto 13th street, recognizing a candidate.

A very pale, very young looking girl was standing on the corner, smoking an unusually long cigarette and anxiously studying the tourist traffic. She was alone, dressed in a black satin midriff blouse, a red suede mini-skirt, white lace-frilled socks, and stiletto-heel pumps: obviously a prostitute. But there was something other than her appearance that made her the target. She shivered and hugged herself as she waited at the crossing light. The digital clock at the Vegas Securities Institute read seventy-four degrees.

Just then the woman caught Kincaid's stare and changed her nervous expression to a smile. As she approached the truck he dropped the electric window and asked her politely to join him for a ride. She got in the passenger seat and Kincaid smiled to make her comfortable.

"So. What's your name, cowboy?" she asked, assuming that he was touristy if not a bona fide tourist and would like the macho reference.

"I'm Brooks. And I'm not a cowboy."

"Coulda fooled me," she was sticking to her ploy,

"cause I can spot one a mile off." She was fidgeting and her native New England accent was beginning to undermine her impression of the west Texas drawl. He turned left on Charleston boulevard and headed south on highway 93 for the open country. "So Brooks, where are we going?"

He smiled warmly. "Relax. We're going to my ranch house. It's about a mile ahead. And your name is...."

"Lacey," she replied, pointing to a Minnie-Mouse tattoo on her left shoulder with her name in delicate script. "Go ahead and laugh, everyone does." He didn't.

"Why are you so nervous, Lacey? You're shaking like a leaf. You act as if you've never done this before." She laughed. "So what's wrong? Am I making you nervous?"

"Oh, no, darlin', not a bit. Nun-huh," again the accent stumbled. "I'm just feelin' up tonight, that's all." She reached over and casually massaged his inner thigh, then playfully pinched his crotch. "I just always get kind of hyper when I know I'm gonna be with such a sweet-looking...." Suddenly Kincaid pulled off the highway into a clearing in the brush, slammed on the emergency brake, and grabbed the young woman by the hair of her neck. Before she could collect herself to scream the barrel of the revolver filled her mouth. Kincaid's voice was determined but calm.

"Now don't panic and listen very carefully. I'm not going to promise you I won't hurt you because I damn sure will hurt you if you do not do exactly as I say. You've probably been a hooker and a junkie too long to carry your stuff in your purse, so here is the arrangement: Your stash—cocaine, crack, heroin, whatever it is that you're on—you either give it to me or take me to it, or else I blow the back of your head all over my leather seats." He cocked the revolver for effect but took his finger off of the trigger. "Do you understand?" The gun barrel rattled against her teeth as she nodded, and a gray mascara-stained tear trailed into the corner of her mouth.

Kincaid awoke the next day in the back of his truck, aroused not by the light but by the rising mid-morning heat. He had toiled diligently through the night, successfully acquiring the bait and meticulously attending the details of the trap. It had required a significant physical effort, but he later sensed in his sleep a strange aching satisfaction; a sense of well-being probably more closely associated with religious conversion than revenge. Instead of examining and analyzing the plan he was executing it; Kincaid felt that he was more the instrument rather than the source of these intentions, and every move, every action toward the fruition of the plan brought his world closer to its former equilibrium.

Luckily the previous night's unplanned, unrehearsed maneuvers had gone smoothly. It turned out that Lacey had used up her supply of cocaine but led Kincaid to a downtown pusher who, after a tentative inspection of his potential client, sold him what was assuredly "prime shit". As he led Lacey back to the truck the dealer added "Knock yourself out, pops!" and Kincaid smiled as he ran



his thumb over the serrated hammer of the .44, darkly amused at the man's oblivious foolishness, having insulted a veritable death angel. He released Lacey just outside the city on the boulevard and, as an afterthought, gave her a hundred dollar bill and politely thanked her for her assistance, adding that she was inherently beautiful and that although she shouldn't take advice from maniacs he believed she would be better off back home in Connecticut.

The next step was to present the bait. He took a manila envelope from the console of the truck and marked over the label "Chaucer essays", addressing it to Jensen's campus p.o. box which he had found in the University directory.

Enclosed was the small packet of expensive cocaine and a note: "Lionel, this is a small reward for your athletic talents and compensation for your past and upcoming difficulties. *Prudence prevents a more substantial gift through the mail; however, an additional present can be found at the Funeral mountain range overlook near the Amargosa desert at 6 a.m. Thursday morning. We have things to discuss concerning your future. Arrive in person. Bring a friend if you like for security.*" Kincaid stamped and sealed the envelope and dropped it in the on-campus slot in the mail room.

This portion of the plan would have been a ridiculous long-shot, had it not been for the signature on the note, "D. C." Jensen had been through too much hassle to risk further impropriety, and Kincaid knew that the only person the athlete would trust now would be Darrell

Clover. Jensen was immediately suspended after the crime by the assistant athletic director Randall Jefferson, who was one of Kincaid's hunting partners. He owned a champion English pointer and leased a large tract of cactus and mesquite covered land near Amargosa. Jefferson had been influential in arranging the ill-fated interview, and he attended Jensen's indictment with the Kincaids, consoling them when an expensive L. A. lawyer skillfully clouded the case against the suspect with testimonies of Gina Kincaid's flirtations on the night of the rape. Soon rumors were spreading about how long it would be before Jensen was out of the courtroom and back on the court. Friends of the family inquired about the lawyer's payment, and an ambitious local reporter traced the money to a mysterious "Darrell Clover". The same reporter exposed Darrell Clover as assistant director Randall Jefferson, who was in turn dismissed from the University. But the lawyer had earned his money, and Jensen was indicted but released on \$5000 bond. Nearly three weeks later Jefferson sent carnations but did not attend Gina's funeral.

When Kincaid learned of the scandal he was far too numb from the compounded sorrow over his daughter to outwardly express his hatred for Jefferson. The betrayal simply caused another wave of grief, waves that worked incessantly, eroding his sanity, rusting and washing away the old perspectives, making the new order easier to see. Amature plans of vengeance formed in the back of his mind: he considered waiting for Jefferson on his hunting trail in Amargosa, sending him to hell with a long-range shot from his 7mm magnum antelope rifle. Or offering a

truce, only to blast his head off at the first flush of their next quail hunting trip. But the new order made it clear. Kincaid was working with tunnel vision, a linear plan that brought him closer and closer to Lionel Jensen. Jefferson wasn't the target, he was a distraction. Perhaps, after the adjustment was complete, the fine-tuning would bring Jefferson into his sights. In any case, the Doctor would remind himself later to send his former friend a map, a literal "scavenger hunt", leading him to what remained of his precious all-star athlete.

At one-thirty in the morning Kincaid started back for the desert, cautious due to the outside possibility that Lacey might have alerted the police. After an uneventful two hour ride he parked the truck in a narrow gulch four-hundred yards from the Funeral mountain overlook. Kincaid took a flashlight, the pick-axe, and the shovel and started down into the canyon to complete the most physically demanding part of the plan. The cool night air made the task much easier than he had expected, and as the first pale shades of morning began to show, he was back at the truck, exhausted and ready for sleep. The Funeral mountains were distant across the California border and not too spectacular, and he did not anticipate being bothered with many sight-seeing tourists. Now he would have a full day to recover before Jensen was scheduled to receive his "reward". He arranged his down-vest under his head and, with Patsy Cline singing tenderly on the radio, fell at once into a shallow predator's sleep.

CHAPTER III

After waking from the mid-morning heat Kincaid passed the day with a leisurely-paced hike to the bottom of the canyon. He wanted to double-check his preparations in the daylight, but he also felt the need to actively kill some time. The tedious, rocky trail was familiar to him, and he timed his descent at a little over thirty minutes. With a prisoner, he estimated forty-five; an uncooperative one, a full hour or more. At the bottom he inspected a six-foot deep hole dug out of the hard-packed sand of the dry riverbed, positioned directly in the middle of the canyon to allow the longest direct exposure to the sun. The shovel and pick-axe were leaned against a boulder as he had left them, and the only signs of change were the fresh paw-prints of some curious scavenger on the sand around the pit.

Kincaid again returned to the truck and started the engine to run the air-conditioner. He drank some of the lukewarm water from his insulated canteen and ate a stale day-old danish he had bought at a campus convenience store. Then, settling into the cargo area, he was rushed by waves of sleep. His wristwatch alarm roused him at seven, just in time for him to walk out to the overlook and watch the sun fall slowly behind the distant Funeral mountains, soaking into the sands of Death Valley. It did not occur to Kincaid that these names were in any way

ironic or appropriate in the context of his purpose. Such analysis was for the writers and readers of stories, not for the characters helplessly locked into the situations. After the revenge there would be enough irony and symbolism and tragedy—and perhaps regret—for him to consider for the rest of his life. He knew that now was the time to renounce reflection. The justice of his intentions was legitimized beyond analysis by his love and his grief. There were no more ambiguities in his life—his ability to feel, his love for his wife and daughter, was made real and tangible by the devastating consequences of their absence. Just then, looking west into the hills, he allowed himself one emotional thought: There was proof that he had loved.

Yet knowing himself better as a result of an overwhelming loss was small consolation. He began looking around to find a place from which to ambush Jensen the next morning. He made a tentative plan, considered the various scenarios of the confrontation, and took these concerns back to his austere camp in the gulch. The truck was seriously over-heating, steaming and sputtering the acrid scent of engine coolant. Kincaid switched off the ignition, opened the rear hatch, and checked over his small arsenal in the last light of the day.

At first Kincaid could not tell if it was an actual sound or only the blood rushing in his head. But gradually the buzz became louder, the sound of a small performance-tuned engine winding out on the long interstate straightaway. A pair of bright driving lights appeared in the distance, and Kincaid, hidden in the brush below the overlook marker, checked the luminous dials on his wristwatch: five-fifty five. The british-racing green Mazda Miata ground to a dusty stop only a few feet away from the marker. Two men got out, Jensen from the passenger side, stretching his long legs and grumbling obscenities about the long ride in the small car. The other man was a football player, a defensive tackle, about five foot ten, two-hundred and eighty pounds. His face was chubby, and he resembled a young, black Edward G. Robinson in a fancy Nike sweatsuit. Before the two men had time to take in the view, Kincaid made his move.

A blast from the shotgun blew out the front right tire of the car, and the two athletes, having no where else to run for cover, dove behind the car, colliding painfully. They kicked away in a crabwalk as he approached them. "Get your asses up now or I will kill you both right here." Jensen's face betrayed a thought of running. Kincaid smiled, "Don't be a fucking fool. I've got you, you know it." Jensen looked to the ground and nodded. Kincaid reloaded the empty chamber. "Come with me."

He marched the two silent men along the roadside chapparal, out of sight of the highway, to his truck. The football thug was as visibly shaken as Jensen, but obviously more confused, looking over at his companion with wild, frightened eyes. He was certain that he was going to be taken into the desert and executed. At the truck, Kincaid ordered Jensen to lie face down on the

ground while he tied the hands and feet of the tackle together behind his back. He used a bandana to gag the man, and left him on the ground beside Jensen. Kincaid carefully bound Jensen's hands and ordered him to his feet. He tied his legs together loosely for slow walking.

"Do you know who I am?" Kincaid asked.

"Yeah, I know who you are. What I wanna know is, what are you gonna do..."

"Shut up," Kincaid cut him off, "you don't know what you're saying."

Jensen gave him a look of incomprehension, and the tackle squirmed, straining to look up at them. "What?" Jensen asked.

"You are mistaken," he explained with a demonic grin, "that is, you certainly do not want to know what I am going to do."

The tackle panicked and began thrashing about on the ground at Kincaid's feet, screaming through his gag. Kincaid ordered Jensen to lie on the ground, and then pounced on the other man with the revolver in hand. "You are the lucky one," Kincaid whispered in his ear, "you'll live, unlike your friend, sadder but hopefully wiser." He then placed the .44 magnum revolver close beside the man's ear. The gun roared twice, rendering him unconscious. A trickle of dark blood flowed from inside the man's ear as the other two started down the canyon trail in the early light of the cloudless morning.

* * *

Kincaid sat on the rock and watched the dying man impassively. The young man was taking his time about it, but he was surely dying, his eyes rolling behind the fluttering, sunburnt lids, the short gasps of hot breath forcing the last of his moisture through his parched lips. Death begets death. The death of his wife begot his dependence on his daughter. The death of his daughter killed his sanity. And the loss of his sanity forced the adjustment, the death of Lionel Jensen.

His daughter. As he sat there watching the man die it occurred to Kincaid that he had not spoken Gina's name or pictured her in his mind since the night he left his house to kill Jensen. He had for a couple of days escaped the fits of grief that accompanied thoughts of his daughter, and he felt refreshed. Then he felt a sudden queer uneasiness, as if there was some sort of awful, unholy danger in this sense of well-being. "It's over?" he whispered, and the sound of the question chilled him to the bone. Calmly and without hesitation Kincaid picked up the shovel and began the exhumation of the dying athlete.

As suddenly and strangely as the plan had come to him, he realized that he was not only killing Jensen. He was involved in the murder of a memory. One of which Jensen was unfortunately a part of, but it was the memory of his daughter, not only of the rape and her suicide, but the memory of her part in his life. It was not a rational thought, or a sensation of guilt or remorse from his maimed conscience, but a strong urge, a primal directive

to prevent that which he was on the nearest threshold of causing. Kincaid worked steadily to unearth the young man, and when he had dug him out to just above the knees, Kincaid pulled him out and laid him on the shady side of the boulder. Jensen regained consciousness, but, as if he expected further unimaginable tortures, he passed out again with weary sigh. Kincaid dumped one of the water jugs onto the man's peeling face and leaned him up against the rock. He came to and reached weakly for the water jug until he saw Kincaid standing above him, shotgun in hand.

"Go ahead, drink," he said in a low, grim voice, "But remember all this. Remember me." And with that Kincaid turned and began gathering his equipment.

Jensen drank greedily, choking and retching, spilling most of the water over his dusty chest and arms. As Kincaid started towards the canyon trail, Jensen got up and stumbled towards him. He fell to his knees beside a mesquite, and the ominous alarm of a rattlesnake sounded. Two feet away the coiled serpent reared back, tasting Jensen's scent with its wicked black tongue. It was an old snake, long and thick and ready to molt. Its eyes were covered in an opaque film of dead skin, leaving it to rely solely on its sense of smell. Poetic justice, thought Kincaid. Blind and poetic.

There was a moment of frozen time, and then, foolishly, Jensen gasped and jerked away from the rattler. Just as the snake struck out, the .44 roared and the head of the rattler exploded in a cloud of dust, just inches away from Jensen's face. Red globules of blood oozed onto the tip of Jensen's nose where he had received two of the snakeshot pellets. He looked up in disbelief at Kincaid, who still held the revolver aimed at the two villains, and he passed out again. Kincaid picked up his shotgun and headed back up the trail to the highway. It was close to sunset, and the adjustment had been made.



Bill Sizemore
Blackboard No. 16
gelatin silver print
"The ultimate anxiety is the inability to breathe."



Night Vision

An old gypsy woman
head wrapped in rag
kneels in shadow against
my wall. It is flat and glows
white. Her back curves
like the fortune wheel from behind
Whirl's, where boxes and bottles lie.
Her silver shines a pin into my
eye. She quivers like a droplet,
but the moon flows
in waves around her.

Place

This yard has held many names.
They fall away like years, faces
from bone, bone from silence.
Where parents came, land where
tree branches lift toward a fading
sun, shifting foundation for the
crystal palaces of spiders. They
spin silken trails like stories
against the inconstant wind.
This ground the mixture of
many memories, all forgotten,
this earth the evidence
undiscovered. Under fleshy
soil rock, and then the hot
heart of change. This world
where sleep is the only stay,
and dreams drift away like
strands of silk shining in the sun.

Beverly Cooper

Beverly Cooper



Tyler Darden
Untitled
gelatin silver print

Vehicle for a Daughter

When down the hallway, following
him, the grace of age, outside
and across the lawn, I trip along—now behind, now before—
impatient with youth. We cross
the fresh canvas of grass; the sprinkler sprays
with halting steps its last drop by drop.
I stretch two reverent strides to match
his paternal yard. We garden
khaki-shortened, v-neck cotton-topped,
my shirt—one of his—hanging to my knees.
Him bathed in the liquor of age, whose stern love
held me grounded to this green, ran time, bloomed
into fescue, flew with the wind gone to seed.

Still, I plead for freedom from that long hall of my youth,
each board a creak in my father's knee,
each breath a raisin wheezing in his lung,
Now, how could I read him my writes or tell
of my wrongdoings? How reach
across long years in my quarter-century voice
telling, "The wife that you fashioned now lives
her own life. Your children? We are
more lost now, having so long been guided."
I live alone in my bright house
not owned by anyone or even myself
and in the gray engagement of afternoon, I run
for the mail that is not there—the box, an empty blur
in the rain.



At the end of the hall, where we children flung
ourselves into your room to visit you, bedridden with ill,
I stop and call out, "Father! Do not be afraid.
I will chase the priest from the room. I will kick the
needles and tubes and plastic syringes under the bed.
I will pick you up off the dull, wood floor and find
bright eyes beneath those sunken lids. I will sit you back up
in your orange armchair where you will explain to
your daughter, the youngest of three,
why watering the lawn in winter cannot keep it green,
why where there is hatred, love must be sown among
the young grass of spring and the withered brown of winterfall."
Some will call this an imitation, (because it is easier
to chew,) without seeing that it won't be any easier to swallow
these eight years of silence, searching for a vehicle.

Eliza C. Roberts



Note: Special thanks to Harry Kunitz.



Wende Howe |
Untitled
intaglio print 4" x 6"

Womb

To be free from fear
I bathe in the warmth under
your skin
I suckle, full of trust.
My future is now
my past still here
intertwined arms pressed,
I hear the beat of your
heart
and—freedom.

Vincent Musa

The Grey Children

Half-dart of shadows slink
between black and white planes of antique conscience
ignored after the first shock of birth fades
for the social curiosity morbid
mute victims of a changing world that hasn't made room for their
ethnic unity of form and color quite yet
Their created submission of blurring boundaries for the way things are

and have been since we evolved that way

the closed culture barriers inflicted by geography once
now human limits
that few seem to bother to change

Still

These swirled grey children permeate our structured ideals to collapse in
a mound of blue eyes and brown skin.

Heather Anese Reid

To New Pharisees on Schools of Thought

Some Hope
to bleed the mantra of an aging universe
into pools of birthing beginnings
from the life-blood of an old thought
to a new continuity,
and they rise too fast to complacency
chanting their
mantra
as ingenuity

Heather Anese Reid

Upon observing my bathroom sink

Drops leak from the faucet,
Each one
Clinging to its ambiguity
And teasing its existence
Before succumbing to the plummet
Through this terse space,
Only to find obliteration
When colliding with the porcelain past,
There to erode the tiny bit
That marks the rut of my memory.

David Andrew England

Bonnie Berg
Snake Skins
gelatin silver print, 4.5" x 6"



Adrew Vinson

Untitled

lithograph/monoprint, 18" x 9"

"People said that he was very nice, but I confess that his utter grotesqueness made me uneasy; perhaps in the same way that the sight of monkeys eating their own excrement turns some peoples stomachs. They might not mind so much if monkeys did not—so grotesquely—resemble human beings."

—James Baldwin



George and the Taxman

Larry Nix

A gust of wind whipped by the ledges of the dusk lit roof top nearly toppling the gray figure crouched gargoyle-like on the corner. He strained to see in the half-light through a battered pair of binoculars. Plumes of clove scented smoke wafted by as he pulled thoughtfully on a short cigar.

Two distant figures walked, or rather staggered, along the ribbon of concrete inexplicably placed in the center of the lushly grassed field. One seemed to be strenuously pursuing an amorous embrace with the other who seemed to be just as strenuously insisting on stay at arms length. Their tiny voices drifted up broken by the occasional breeze.

"Janet...grabbed *my* ass!" said an angry male voice.

"Back...Brad!...Never said...Jump my bones!" came the angry reply.

The debate raged on and looked as if it would end when she managed to push entirely free of her date. He staggered back, swayed in drunken surprise and fell down.

Standing, the rooftop voyeur dropped his binoculars onto his chest, squinted thoughtfully at the unfolding scene and puffed on his cigar a few more times. He turned abruptly, long gray coat rustling in the slight breeze, and strode back toward a massive chair flanked by a large bucket absently plucking the taut surgical tubing between ledge and chair along the way. He reached into the bucket, carefully chose and removed a heavy black sphere the size of a cannon ball. He leaned back, straining as he unhooked the sling from the arm of the chair and gingerly laid the sphere into it. He squinted over the sling and across the ledge and backed up a few steps. Muttering about windage and elevation, the gray figure squinted over the projectile one last time, puffed once more on the cigar, took another step back, released, and then whipped up the binoculars to get a better look.

"Brad" had managed to rise and grab "Janet" once more and was attempting to pull her in for another go when the dark missile struck.

Janet screamed briefly in surprise as Brad jerked away from her to land five feet away, soaking wet, and out cold. Janet, with that classical accuracy of observation of which so few are capable these days, said "Yer all wet Brad." Brad moaned.

The gray figure gave a whoop and danced around maniacally for a few seconds. Almost choking himself on the strap, he took another look through the binoculars. Janet had turned away and was staggering toward, presumably, her dorm. With a final cackle, he threw down his stogie and dashed for the roof-top door, coat flapping madly behind him.

* * *

Bowman Field glittered in the rays of the early morning sunshine, a sea of dew. Tillman tower chimed half past seven.

Marc Knox, hurrying despite the early hour and oblivious to the wondrous panorama, waded across leaving a green wake behind him.

"I hate parking on Mars" he muttered, and hitched the heavy bag on his shoulder. The burden of knowledge, he thought as he cinched the strap tighter, is growing every year.

As he slogged on past Bowman, the faint raspberry of the Ticket Maid's carts wafted across campus. A fleet of BMW's, Mercedes, Porsches, the occasional American classic, and a motley conflagration of Italian roadsters would be parking soon and the daily feast of violations and towings would begin.

Tools clattered in the construction zone for the new Johnstone replacement dormitories. The entire slab and I-beam structure had collapsed several years ago when it was struck by a small biplane. Since it had occurred during the summer of ninety-three refurbishing of the old structure, no one had been hurt, but a professor of history, thought to have been on sabbatical, was found dazed, hanging in the straps of a parachute caught in the branches of one of the large oaks on campus, carrying on about someone he called "the baron".

The tall pillars of the library loomed as Marc crossed the walkway overhanging the huge artificial pond, "The Reflecting Pond" he remembered his campus guide calling it oh so many years ago and accurate only now that the fountain heads had ceased to function. Someone had managed to dump a small island of sand into the sheltered end of the pond. The same individual had also managed to plant some cypress seedlings and a grove of the tiny trees had managed to take root.

Marc shook his head and hoped that the usually reticent and evasive campus gardeners and maintenance would continue to avoid any effort and ignore the new additions as they always had.

The Daniel building, Marc's final destination, looked much the worse for wear: the maintenance crew had ceased to paint all of the white sections of the facing and stairwells and the old who-knows-what based whitewash had begun to peel in great leafy sheets. Marc leaned back for a quick look and ducked the rain of flakes that

spontaneously fell for his benefit.

Just as he had planned, several of the computer terminals were free and he plopped down next to a bleary eyed graduate student who was still laboring over his night's work.

"Good Morning!" Marc chirped cheerfully in a calculated effort to get any of the computer dungeon inhabitants to realize that they had class and should get some caffeine.

The grad turned his head and stared at him. Marc could see him desperately searching the dark corners of his cluttered head trying to come up with the appropriate human response.

"Hello," intoned the grad, and turned his mesmerized gaze back to the glowing icon. A whole series of graphs and charts began flashing at almost stroboscopic speed across the screen. Once more the grad was an organic extension of his own database.

Marc shrugged. Some are too far gone to help. Grimly he logged onto his own account and searched without hope for the replies to his latest contribution to the various discussion networks. Surprisingly there were a few and he greedily read them first. Some were complimentary, some critical, some were downright unfriendly, but none showed the spark of inspiration he badly needed.

He was about to log out when he got a single message with no return address: "Glad someone appreciated the swamp."

Marc sat back and goggled at the message. He looked around for a sniggering prankster and found none. None of the silicon zombies in the room would, or could, have sent him a message. He logged out and as he got up to leave he smelled the faintest aroma of cloves.

* * *

It was not even a remotely constructive day mused Marc. The lectures were dull and vaguely informative. One professor spoke with such an obscure accent, he could not understand the fellow, even with his shotgun mike pointed directly at the lecturer and turned way up.

Serves me right for getting there too late to get a seat within the first thirty rows, he thought gloomily. Despite arriving earlier and earlier on each day of the last two weeks, his attempts to get within earshot of the instructor had been fruitless.

The construction crews had quit early, tired from their day of clattering tools and materials and generally creating an illusion of work.

Campus still murmured with the movements of students everywhere. Marc marched on. The town was in a similar state except that everyone was frantically trying to relax instead of frantically trying to get some course work done. The train trestle on the far side of town

never looked so attractive in its' own grungy whitewashed way, for just beyond that was MARS (Martin's Auto Rental Spaces).

Martin was a real friendly guy. He would let you park in the five story garage that he'd built on his grandmother's land for free, as long as you want. But you were obliged, in a friendly sort of way, to donate what you could (about five dollars a day, or two for the half) toward ole' Grandma Martin's operation in the conveniently located box by your space. Just a friendly kind of arrangement you know. To stay friendly, one ought to consider Martin's other business: Martin's Auto Wrecking Service - Estimates and Repairs (MAWSER). Martin never had to advertise because he never needed to stir up business; it came to him. You would have to park two more miles down the road to get a place, and pay about the same rates, double if you took the MAWSBus. Martin was on the city council, the board of trustees, and knew the local sheriff as "Cousin". Real friendly.

Marc grinned and gave Martin a friendly wave as he drove by the gate.

"Schmuck" said Marc under his breath through the grin.

"Punk," said Martin also under his breath, and waved back.

At least it was Friday.

* * *

The ancient bike creaked as George stood on the pedles. The tackle-box and fishing rod clattered on every bump. He grimaced and reminded himself to swipe some foam from the loading dock, and, for that matter, to swipe another bike too. "With a basket," he added, and clutched the laden grocery bag more tightly.

By the waning moonlight, George could barely see the narrow path as it wound through the wooded hills. He finally found the fence and began following it. He entered the gate and glanced at the Biohazard sign, making a mental note to touch up the paint. After much more clattering and creaking, George finally reached the ancient dock that was his destination.

He walked across the dry planks and settled down at the edge. As he gazed across the artificial lake that stood in the old Seneca River valley, George lit one of the clove laced cigars that he had rolled earlier and fragrant smoke drifted across the water.

A rippled V appeared on the dark lake and turned toward the dock trailed closely by a scaly armored flank. It came to a halt beneath George's feet where they dangled a yard over the water.

"Tick-Tock, Tick-Tock," he said as he finally looked directly at the shadow below, "Hello Taxman."

George stood up, brushed off his long coat. He picked up the bag he had been clutching while riding the

bike and pulled out a whole "baking" chicken and glanced at it thoughtfully.

"Your gonna get salmonella one of these days," he said and tossed the poultry out away from the dock.

Huge jaws intercepted the chicken precisely as it struck the water. A wave of water from the backlash of an oar sized tail lapped at the pilings.

George turned away and began humming to himself as he hauled on a chain attached to one of the pilings. A wire cage eventually came up, full of clinking bottles of various sizes, ages, and states of label decay. With the care of a connoisseur he selected one of the bottles and popped the top with a flourish. Wicked Ale, and not too cold. Great.

The armored behemoth had returned to the front of the dock and waited patiently. George paused for a moment and looked around the sheltered bay. The image of the quarter moon rippled gently on the lake, and dark arms of land circled left and right.

"Taxman, you need a new pad, this is the pits man."

"Yeah, you need a new pad," repeated George and began to smile the smile of someone who thinks he is about to be very clever. Or slightly insane.

He relit his cigar.

"Listen up, I'll just put this other chicken on the end of the ole' fishing rod, and ride real slow, all you gotta do is...."

* * *

Monday's dawn, as it had since someone arbitrarily began to differentiate days of the week, once again cut through the last haze of the small hours of the night. Bowman glittered as it was always wont to do at that time of the morning. The weekend had left no marks of its' passage on the sea of grass.

Marc, too sleepy to concentrate on his mental agenda of the day, paused in his trek from Mars to look at Bowman and the surrounding Oak trees. Marc dropped his pack and for a full minute actually looked.

Picking up his pack he began the journey across the grass sea and walked more slowly this time, turning entirely around occasionally to catch the whole view. He would have to get more sleep this week, he said to himself, this cosmic gawking was too much. Tillman chimed the hour at six.

The ruins of Johnstone were silent. The construction crew had not yet arrived to begin their ritual, noisy play with the powered tinkertoy set that was the mark of their trade.

The library loomed, looking like a huge frosted cake as Marc crossed the walkway. He noticed a fence around the pond. Strange, he didn't remember one before. Marc turned and looked more closely. the cypress grove had been joined by some reeds and lilies, another island of

sand at the far end of the pond, a few logs and, by the sound of things, some frogs too. One of the logs was looking at him.

Looking at him.

Marc lowered his brows and looked directly at the log.

It looked back.

The gaze that it rested on Marc seemed to arrow across time carrying the tidings of several million years of evolution. With greatest unsubtly it communicated what its' bearer thought of Marc, and what the ancestors of the bearer had thought of Marc's ancestors.

Marc took an involuntary step back. He turned his body and walked resolutely onward toward Daniel, but because he continued to involuntarily track the "log" with his eyes as he walked, he failed to see the tall gray coated figure with whom he collided.

George put out a hand and steadied Marc.

"I see you've met Taxman. Riveting isn't he?" said George, smiling wryly as he dropped the stub of a cigar and ground it out with his heel.

"Like his new place?"

Still dazed, Marc could only get out "Yeah, lots of... space."

"Glad you do, Marc. I'm George, Saint."

"Hello, ah," said Marc and extended his hand automatically.

"Don't worry, you'll get used to seeing things again. It usually takes a good shock to break the monotony. After that it's all up to you." He slipped a fresh cigar out of his jacket, bit the end off and lit it.

Marc looked at George.

"What are you saying?"

"You'll see. See you around, eh."

With a friendly wave George strode off trailing faint wisps of clove smoke.

* * *

Marc finally got a seat within the thirtieth row this time, front and center in fact. The students arrived by ones and threes as the class assembled in the huge auditorium. Marc quietly beamed in anticipation. Today he would not need his microphone and tape machine, and he awaited the instructor, paper and pen in hand.

The instructor, Dr Mazot, entered and without preamble launched into the lesson.

From his new vantage, Marc heard every word and understood the thick accent easily. Mazot spoke clearly and elegantly about his subject, and seemed completely oblivious of his audience.

Marc listened with rapture, but half way through the forty-five minute class he frowned. He raised his hand.

Mazot faltered and finally looked at Marc.

"Yes? Be brief."

"Sir, what has the effect of mass market advertisement on the sale of perishable items got to do with the philosophy of science?"

"Nothing, why?"

"This course is titled The Philosophy of Science. Sir, shouldn't you address the subject?"

"No, this is Mass Marketing."

"It is?"

"Yes."

Marc blanched and rose unsteadily to his feet. Shouldering his heavy bag, Marc wandered out.

The instructor watched him leave. He turned around and tried to remember what he'd been saying.

"Where was I?"

"Perishables sir."

"Oh, yes," he looked up, "thank you."

He *looked* up.

He saw them, all of them. *His* students.

"Oh, my..."

* * *

Classes were strange all day.

The instructors were variously distant, desperately involved or wearily oblivious of their pupils. Marc watched everyone shamble, limp, skip, saunter, and run to their destinations ignoring the grass that they trod on, the tree's that they walked around, the squirrels and doves that they startled. He saw the occasional cat appear and disappear like a daytime specter. Even the spiders spun their webs in the sunlight for him.

He heard a friendly "Howdy" from one of the cleaning staff. Marc stopped, stared and finally responded to the kind greeting. "Hello" he said at last, to the middle aged woman who smiled like the warmest hearth in return.

Marc smile back and waved. He wondered what his parents were doing.

* * *

Sunlight cut the shadows as he walked toward the distant Mars. He stopped for a moment. There was a cart crossing his path. It was drawn by one of the girls in his Western Civ. course and his English instructor. In the cart were about a dozen of the people he'd had to visit during the various rituals of his registration that year. At the front was a noble looking old gentleman, who was carrying on with some speech that sounded like an evangelist sermon. From what Marc could glean, the speech was about the universities' national standing.

Marc goggled.

"They do that every year," said a voice behind him. It was accompanied by a thin cloud of fragrant clove smoke.

Mark turned to look at George, holding his cigar, grinning slyly at him.

"You see now," he said, and replaced his cigar

With a low bow, George turned and walked back toward the center of the university.

Marc turned, shook himself, and strode on towards Mars.

Martin stopped him as he left the garage.

"The wife says yer roof is leakin', is it?"

"Who?"

"My wife, your landlord, wake up son!"

"Oh, OH! Yes, as a matter of fact it does leak. Are you gonna fix it soon?"

"Yep, as soon as this feller picks up his car," said Martin as he absently patted the Lamborghini hitched to his wrecker. He smiled at Marc and winked.

Marc laughed and put his beat up Chevette into gear.

* * *

Dusk came bearing it's hazy shadows to all but the highest towers of Clemson. Sunlight illuminated lazy rings of smoke as they drifted one by one over the edge to disappear into the shadow of the rim. From the corner of his still sun-lit rooftop, George looked at the reflecting pond with his impossibly battered but still intact binoculars: logs, lillipads, sand, cypress, and one alligator, OK.

Small sounds drifted up to the roof.

"...Dammit Janet!....Come ON!" came a tiny breeze blown masculine sound.

"Let...Brad!" argued the equally tiny feminine sound.

"Two WEEKs...Owe Me!"

George scanned around for the source. His gaze finally lit on the wrestling pair. They were in the field again. Brad had gotten his arms completely around Janet this time. She kicked him in the shin, and stepped back. Brad began shouting incoherently as they faced off. He slapped her.

George whirled around and strode for the massive black chair, coat snapping in his wake. Leaning into the pull of the rubber surgical tubing, he quickly selected and loaded another missile. Angry puffs of clove smoke vented as he stepped back and squinted over the black sphere. He breathed deeply and concentrated. Calmly he took the final step back, sighted one final time, and released, whipping up his glasses to look.

Brad had taken a step forward, Janet a step back when the missile struck. Brad sprawled once more on to the grass. Janet screamed in surprise, and screamed again when she saw the dark mass of oozing, dripping red globules that covered Brads' chest and head. She knelt next to him in a panic, and paused, and frowned. Janet leaned forward and picked some of the globs off of Brad. She sniffed and then tasted the sticky red mass. Smiling

crazily, she got up, brushed off her skirt and kicked him in the groin. Brad moaned and curled up.

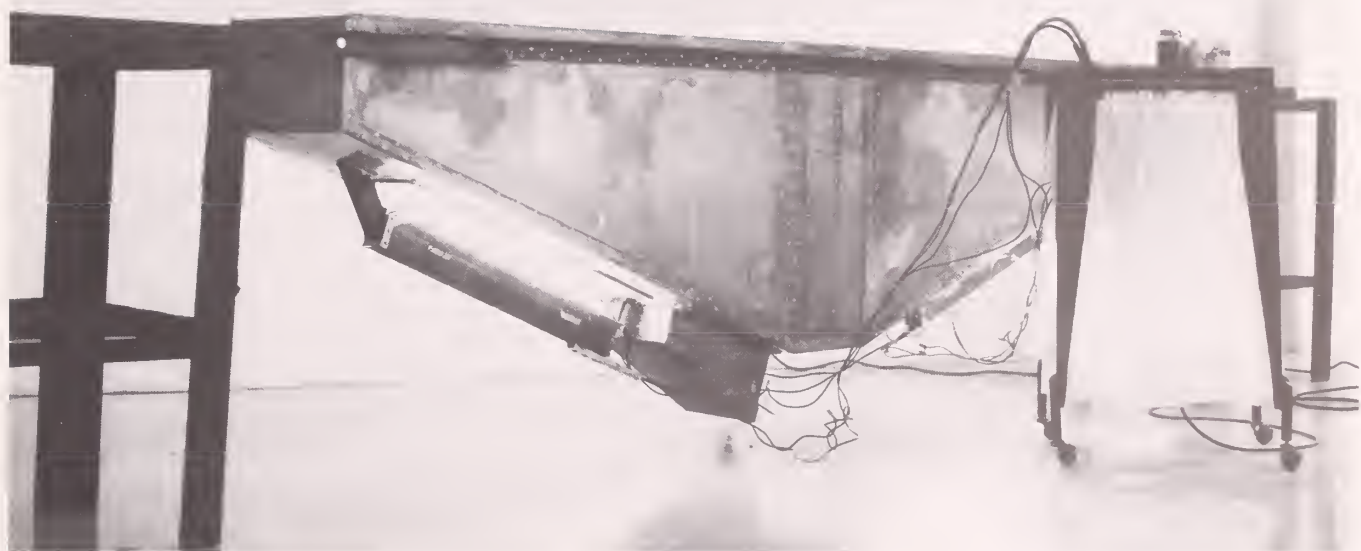
"Brad, we're through!" she shouted, "Don't call me again!."

George smiled. He lowered his binoculars. The sunset was especially brilliant today and glittered on the machines in the Johnstone lot. George took a long reflective draw on his cigar, dropped it, and ground it into the gravel and tar. He took one deep breath, let it out in a sigh. Whistling softly he walked lightly for the stairwell door, kicking aside the Strawberry Jello boxes that littered the roof.



Just Jenn Todd
Untitled
gelatin silver print
"I bet you don't see what I do in this."

Michael Caron
Bath Piece: Fix
mixed media sculpture 12' x 3' x 2'





Aimée Smith

Preacher Man Can't Dance

gelatin silver print with photograms

"'God made man because he loves stories.'

—from *If You Meet the Buddah on the Road, Kill Him*"

To A Recent Prophetess

Black eyes wild
An empty table sufficient audience for her raving
of God's abandonment
Hands at the edge of the table trembling in rage or fear
make a groaning sound from the unsteady legs
punctuate her sounds of desperation
People walking by shun her intensity with turn-away disgust
at a fool's ramblings—
Two thousand years ago the mob would quake at a
Prophet's condemnation
but her message is dulled by the prick of a needle
and soothing words to cease her speech.
Her new-leadened tongue still the voice of God to
helpless watching from glassy eyes
as the fear of humanity puts Her away again.

Heather Anese Reid



Bonnie Berg
Duncan
gelatin silver print
"Cows are very intriguing animals."

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When in the **chronicle** of wasted time
I see descriptions of the fairest wights,
And beauty making beautiful old rhyme
In praise of ladies dead and lovely knights,
Then, in the blazen of sweet beauty's best,
Of hand, of foot, of lip, of eye, of brow,
I see their antique pen would have express'd
Even such a beauty as you master now.

So all their praises are but prophecies
Of this our time, all you prefiguring;
And, for they look'd but with divining eyes,
They had not skill enough your worth to sing:
For we, which now behold these present days,
Have eyes to wander, but lack tongues to praise.

William Shakespeare

FROM THE EDITOR

"Ah, ye knights of the pen!
May honor be your shield
And truth tip your lances!
Be gentle to all gentlepeoples.
Be modest to women.
Be tender to children.
As for Ogre Humbug,
Out sword and have at him!

William Makepiece Thackery, 1860
upon finding the censorship dragon
alive and well in Victorian England

Much is left to be said regarding the freedoms stated in the Constitution of the United States' First Amendment. Censorship **is** alive and well on college campuses in this day and age. On July 23, 1992, college journalists won a major court battle that change the meaning of the Buckley Amendment, first written to protect the privacy of student academic records. Colleges and universities were using this amendment to prohibit the publication of campus law enforcement unit records. Paul McMasters, director of The Freedom Forum First Amendment Center, pointed out that students are now able to decide how safe they believe their campus is without biased promotional advertising. "In a related matter, Department of Education has issued regulations for the Student Right to Know and Campus Security Act of 1990 (requiring federally funded colleges and universities) to publish crime statistics."

Regardless of this bill, college media in some schools are "still facing possible lawsuits in their attempts to receive complete campus police reports with the names of students, faculty, and administrators". The first Amendment states that

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free Exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition government for a redress of grievances.

Editors are allowed to print whatever they wish. If you are not being heard, become your own editor of your own publication and **SPEAK OUT!**

Quoted material is taken from *Keeping Free Presses Free*, a publication issued annually by College Media Advisors, Inc... to encourage observance of, discussion about and commentary on First Amendment freedoms".



CHRONICLE

Volume 96, Issue 1

Clemson University

Clemson, South Carolina



Autumn 1992





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and with
a wordless song
I offer my love
To the awakening."

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PANORAMA

SUSAN M. DANIELS

Hey, I know the flowers you talked about,
Flowers on first-grade desks
That got life from imagination
And were displayed in the glass-walled case in the hall.

I had my own Crayolas.
Broken chunks of red and green
Made paper-thin flowers
To decorate my walls.

You painted pictures by guitar,
Sang to me
Of the boy with the sixty-four pack
(Built-in sharpener,
Poppy, carnation, and orchid)
Who finally let his imagination
Listen to what they told him.

You played,
And your words whispered around inside me.
My dreams stole among the sunlit greens and shadow grays
That mottled the ground where we sat.

You couldn't tell me that day--
Time marches with bees around azaleas,
Same as it did when I was young and didn't know that
People's lives move on, and you have to be the one
To make it all work--
I found that out on my own.

So I bought a big gold box and used every crayon
To make waxed-paper flowers
In sixty-four palette colors.
I heated the flowers until the colors melted into an image
Of you and me.



**BETH TALLON
UNITED**

Autumn 1992





ANDREW R. COYNE
THE AWAKENING

FERAL CHILD

KASIMIR GOLOVATCH

I was born a feral child. Into the hot and steamy mouth of the wolf, I cried my first screams. I slept on the belly of the wolf as her breath poured over me. I knew the secrets of the wild; they were whispered by the wolf. They taught me the beastly ways: to hunt and to kill; to howl a terrific song; and to claim the woods. The wolf's world was my world. In her I was given the domain of the forest, of the wild. I learned to conquer the animals and to eat the flesh of others. I lapped up the blood as they screamed around me in a circle. The she-wolf licked me, clothing me in the viscid saliva that became a savage skin. I howled with them and bayed at the moon-for reasons only the wolf can know. All the world was alive then, all the world was wild, all the world was a forest. And I was a wolf. With bloody fangs and an untamed body, I crept through that world and knew the feral lust of the ageless wolf.

I have lost the she-wolf and her hot breath. When I sleep, it is upon the forestless world of man. I cry out with a human tongue, weak and tamed. I no longer feel the ravenous and rapacious lick of the wolf. I cannot hear the lupine cry of the breast that fed me. I have forgotten the wild circle, the sanguine lips, the primal song. I long to bay at the moon and remember the ferocious fangs I once had. At night, I look to the sky. I cannot discover what the wolf in me once knew. I stand upright and quietly feel my feral soul escape.



DANIELLE

VINCENT NUÑEZA

She weaved the string around me
jerks then lets go. Let go
or I might lose you, tumbling
off to a corner if your throws
aren't straight. Spin me--I want
to crawl up your palm--to lose
my balance in your hand--but
then spin me again. Weave the
string around me, jerk then
let go.

EPITAPH I

CHRIS WOODALL

I lie below you
In fractured remains
I once walked the earth
I once tasted April mornings
I once embraced love
All such as you
My soul now inhabits all
In the wood
In the streams
I am not dead
But truly alive
Look about you
And see my face

MAJUMELLE

DAVID A. ENGLAND

Tu as la beauté naturelle,
Comme les arbres, comme le ciel,
Comme les étoiles; tu est si belle.

I have felt you twist beneath my touch,
Dancing like the sun upon the water,
A fiery serpent, writhing luminosity.

A bewildered breeze wanders
Between the needles of a lonely pine,
Wondering exactly where it is that I am to go.

Ever the nymph, you slip from my grasp,
As the wind among the stars,
And I must forever wear you,
Daphne-like,
As a laurel upon my brow.

When the stellar winds condescend
To storm against me,
Cold and black,
On odd October nights,
I will bend like a sapling in the wind,
And become the tiny pup
Who fails to notice winter's tread,
Knowing only motion -- moving,

Moving,

As the silent river, rolling ever onward,
Unaware of origin or destiny,
Flowing and feeding into another;

And somewhere,
A dragon egg is hatching,
And other fancies are taking flight,

O Cariad.





ON A ROOFTOP IN AUGUST

JOE BRANTON

Soaking in the sordid summer air,
I crouch upon the razor-edged peak
Beneath the infinite black arch.
Small pebbles trundle
Down charcoal colored shingles
With each subtle movement.
Staring upwards,
I begin to embrace lunar thoughts.
Rocking, unaware.

WHEN IN BLUE

ROB BROSNAN

When in blue, my love,
 I am the ghost.
My soul fluid, I gush through
 the brass, spilling over
 your breasts, your lips, your
 ears.
You can't resist; absorbed through
 every pour, caressing your heart.
 I am the beat, I am the blood.
Infiltrated; I am every part of you, but
 I am not you.
Addicted; Without me you are blue,
 with me bluer still.
When in blue, my love,
 captured;
 "He is the beat. He is the blood.
 He is the beat. He is my blood."

UNSTUCK

JON BLACK

My friends are inseparable.

Whenever they see each other, some kind of freak electromagnetic interaction occurs, and they stick to each other like they were joined by crazy glue. It's truly disconcerting. Handshakes freeze, hugs are drawn out for hours, playful punches end up in bizarre tarbaby positions. Sometimes the effect lasts for a few minutes before they pry themselves apart; sometimes it lasts for days. Often three or four of them have to spend hours upon hours together, eating, sleeping, going to the bathroom, and once Marcus (a vegetarian) and Dean were stuck together for so long that Dean had to drag him along to work, shoulder to shoulder, thin-slicing deli meats and making sandwiches. Marcus popped off in the middle of a pastrami on rye, more out of revulsion than anything else.

Dean is the only one with a decent apartment, and everyone tends to gravitate towards him. Literally. As a result he spends most of his time with someone he knows attached, just hanging around, killing time at his place until the attraction wears off. Reading books on witchcraft or tattooing the Renaissance artists. Listening to the latest schemes for Making Money By Doing Stuff He Wants To Do Anyway. Smelling incense. Smelling Dean. Ignoring his dubious bathroom. Everybody ends up at Dean's.

When Kelly ran out of money, she

moved her stuff, then her bed, then herself, into his place. Ostensibly for a few days. To let her get her bearings. Until she could get back on her feet.

Going to great pains for those few days to point out that they weren't involved in a relationship. Or anything like that. You know. Just that she didn't have anywhere else to stay. For a few days. A couple of weeks. Says she'll find someplace to stay by next month. At the latest.

Of course, I've fallen for Kelly like a lemming, which doesn't make anything easier.

The easiest thing being to believe her, at least for the moment. I've often spent hours stuck to Dean, and petty jealousy never sparks much of a conversation.

"Soooo...looks like we're stuck, Dean."

"Yep."

"Well...say, by the way, are you having sex with the girl I love?"

Meanwhile Kelly's minimum wage job is cut to twelve hours a week, and that gets spent on books and cds and other things she needs. Dean pays for their macaroni. Dean pays the rent. Dean pays her long-distance phone bill. Sometimes she thanks him when he buys her a chicken sandwich, and sometimes she teases him about having to support "the old lady," and sometimes she doesn't say anything. Dean





doesn't seem to mind. I've never heard him raise his voice to her; I can only think of one time I've seen him get mad, and all he did was sigh and pick up a book.

They spend an hour every morning trying to pry themselves apart so he can get to work. He can laugh about it for days. He can laugh about wars, pestilence, AIDS, starving children, anything.

"My, you two found yourselves in a strange position today."

"Oh yeah--heh--this one was hilarious. There was this spider running across the floor, and she jumped up and wrapped her arms around my neck--you know. I'll bet this looks funny, doesn't it? Actually we were Frenching, you know like in movies you see people Frenching, and I put my hand insides her shirt like--"

"You can shut up now." she says. "You know no one ever believes your bullshit."

And I don't know what to believe.

They are stuck to each other almost constantly now. Whenever someone else gets tangled up with the two of them, conversation grows terse and strained within minutes. Long, interminable silences follow until everyone falls apart, tumbling onto the floor with a nervous release of laughter.

"That was crazy. We really have to get like a doctor to check this out--it's not natural."

"Yeah." Kelly clams up and sorts through her clothes or picks up a comic book. Dean watches.

"Uh, listen, this was real fun--ha, ha--but we're tired. Later, man. You won't mind if I

don't shake your hand."

And so they are left alone to get stuck in the most unbelievably platonic positions during the night.

"Are you going over to Dean's later?"

"No. That place is getting to be a drag. I'd rather hang out somewhere I won't be permanently bonded to anything."

And so the attraction wears off for everybody but Dean and Kelly. And me. I still go there every other night, waiting to be disillusioned.

"Hey, man, could you hand us the remote?"

They are apparently stuck together again, but this time in bed. Leaving little to the imagination.

"It should be right up on my desk."

I sort through his desk, a pile of papers and letters and change and pens that are out of ink and guitar picks and condoms and candy wrappers and tapes, one of which has been completely unwound. A tangled black layer of Frank Zappa covers all.

"I don't see the remote." I say, rummaging.

"Dean, I'm hungry." says Kelly.

"You're hungry? Well, darling, why don't you go get something to eat?"

"There isn't anything."

"You said it was up here on the desk?"

Dean?"

"Well if there isn't anything, then it's because you've already eaten what there was. Didn't you get paid Friday?"

"I gave you all I had."

"I can't find it. Dean?"

"You only gave me fifteen dollars. How the hell am I supposed to feed you for fifteen dollars?"

"I gave you everything I had. If you want more, then why don't you just sell all my stuff and kick me out?"

"I think I'll leave now, Dean. Kelly."

"Oh, sure. And kick myself out with you, since I seem to be attached to your body."

"Well, is that my fault?"

"Bye."

I don't see them again for two months. Until I get a call from Marcus in the middle of the night.

"Come to Dean's. Now."

When I get there the firemen have nearly finished up, though it's hard to tell inside the haze of smoke and mist and darkness that drifts through the audience. I see Dean, eyes big and staring at what used to be his apartment. Kelly is behind him, her face eaten through with anger, soot-blackened save for wavering tear lines under her eyes. She stands back-to-back with Dean, a sheet encircling the both of them.

"What happened?" I ask Marcus.

"No one really knows. It started in their apartment, then spread to the other two. The firemen got it all under control after a couple of minutes, but no one's been able to get a word out of either of them."

Without a word Kelly jerks the sheet out of Dean's hand and pulls herself off his back with enough force to make him stumble, naked, to the ground.

"Kelly, wait..." he says.

But she doesn't wait.

I heard that she moved back in with her mom. Marcus told me she wouldn't see anyone who knew Dean; she didn't want to end up attached to somebody else. Oddly enough, this came as something of a relief to me.

None of my friends stick together anymore, except for Dean, who takes great pleasure in finding himself adhering unnaturally to some giggling high school girl.

"Oh gosh, it tingles...how do you let go?"

Every now and then I pass Dean on the sidewalk or run into him in the music store. I never get stuck.

Once a car drove by with Kelly in the passenger's seat. The hairs on my arms stood up, and for a moment I couldn't pry my fingers apart after waving. But only for a moment.





ENGINEERING

JULIUS I. GARRETT

I spoke conscientiously and incessantly
of digging and dredging. Forever putting
up walls, and pouring the concrete.
Building the perfect beast, yet I could
never build its soul. Element of my
creation, LIFE was ajar.
The placebo of false inclinations have drowned
my inspirations of

LIFE

LIZARD

RICHARD HARTNETT

I spotted it clutching the vertical landscape
of a brick wall running alongside our house.
It clung by its hooks
to the red banks of the mortar ditches.
It passed from brown to green
as it crossed an ivy leaf.
It stopped, moving up and down
on the notched jacks of its knees.
The shadow of my hand crept across the wall.

Its tail danced crazily between my fingers,
motor nerves exploding in volleys,
uninhibited by the cephalic ganglion.

It breathed beneath the infinite weight of my other hand.
I manipulated my fingers like blind beasts,
the thumb and forefinger pressed its earless skull
and lifted the skinny savage into the space
where my face floated above.

I pinched the ruby throat,
stretching it out, a rash red beard.
I fastened the thing to my ear,
its vengeful jaws eagerly receiving the lobe.

I prepared a shoebox
(many had escaped before,
disappearing mysteriously like little houdinis):
a sandy floor, a single twig, a bowl of water,
all covered with a sky of Reynolds wrap.

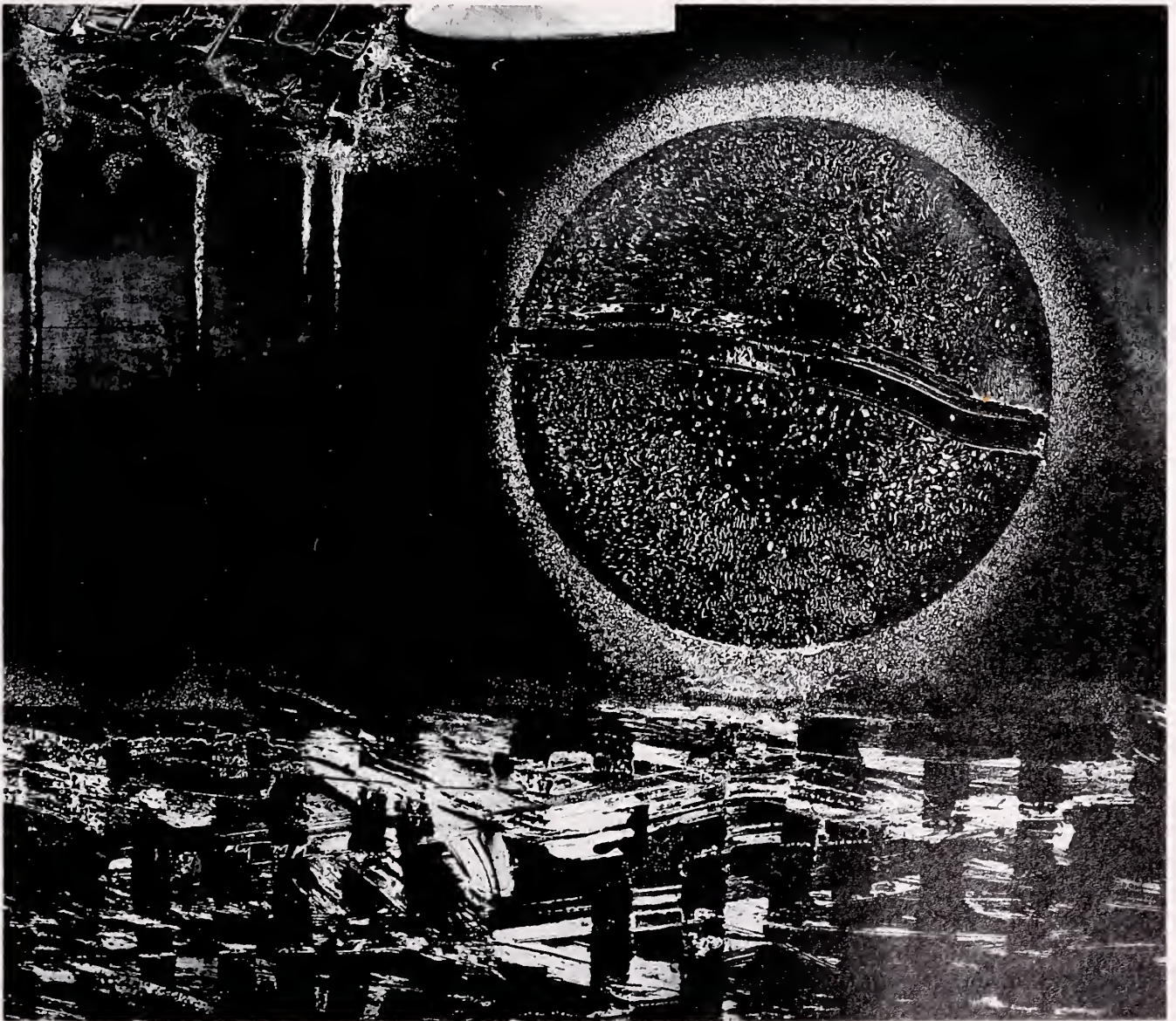
Young and forgetful,
I returned a few weeks later
to lift the drawn husk out into the expanse
with the fleshy angels of my fingers.





**BILL SIZEMORE
CRUISER**

**BILL SIZEMORE
WOMEN'S PAVILION**



DEPARTURES AND ARRIVALS

Sean Hanzelik

I was at Gate 2 in the rinky-dink jetport in Lawton, Oklahoma, when I met Tony. My wife had just passed away a couple of days before in a one-car accident, and I was on my way to attend her funeral the next morning. She was being buried next to her parents in the family plot in a cemetery in Heavenly Valley, Nevada. She fell asleep at the wheel while I was asleep in the passenger seat. She was killed instantly, they said; I escaped unscathed.

I didn't love her. In fact, it was kind of a relief. But I still hate funerals. I hate the way they look at you as you lie there like a spectacle.

I had just nodded off when I felt a light tap on my arm. It was a little boy. My guess was he was about eleven or twelve.

"Mister, have you seen my mom?" the little voice asked.

"I don't think so. What does she look like?"

"She looked like you. I mean she looks like you."

I laughed. "Like me?"

"Why did you laugh?"

"I don't know. I guess I just thought it kind of funny that your mom would be like me."

"Not be like you. I said look like you. But anyway, that's what happens. Mister, are you alone?"

"Well, let me see." I looked around with a slight smirk on my face and said, "Little man, I do believe I am alone."

"I didn't mean alone as in not with anybody. I meant ALONE." He sat down next to me, his hands on his knees with his palms up as if he were catching rain.

There was something strange about the little guy. He seemed to be so confident, so un-kid-like. Yet, he was wearing typical children's clothing--gray Osh-Kosh shorts, a gray t-shirt, and gray Keds. "Then, what is it you mean?"

"I mean, do you have a best friend?"

I didn't know what to say to the kid. I guess because I had never really had a best friend, or any real friends for that matter. Even my wife and I weren't ever really friends. At first we weren't even friends. We just grew to be compatible, something like happenstance put us together, and I think fear kept us there. It was like we had an understanding, an understanding that we were tied by the bonds of marriage, by our vows to each other and God. Besides, neither one of us would survive alone.

"Of course I have a best friend."

"What's his name?"

"Well, let me ask you a question first. What is your name?"

"Tony."

"Well, what a coincidence. My best friend's name is Tony too."

"Mister?"

"Tony."

"If this plane crashes, do you think you will go to hell or heaven?"

"Tony, this plane is not going to crash."

"If it does, where will you go?"

"I can't honestly say I'll go to heaven, but I think I have led a fairly good life."

"I don't think you will go to heaven," Tony said.

"Tony, I really don't think you know enough about my life to make that judgment."

"Mister, I know that you will not go to heaven."

"And how exactly do you know that?"

"Because there is no heaven. Heaven is only an idea that this really old man came up with a long time ago to help him cope with the idea of death."

"How old did you say you were?"

"My age is irrelevant."

"Do you go to school?"

"Not anymore."

"Tony, you are one hell of a smartass."

"I am a realist."

"Tony, do you have a girlfriend?"

"I have many friends. Their gender is irrelevant."

"Okay, never mind."

"Mister, why don't you have a best friend?"

"I do have a best friend. I told you his name was Tony."

"Anybody with a best friend would not be sitting here talking to me."

"Can I be honest with you, Tony?"

"You have been so far," he said, turning his hands palm down on his knees.

"Think so?" I asked, wondering why I was still talking to this kid.

"I know so."

"You know, that is really annoying."

"Mister, are you going to be honest with me?"

"Oh yeah. Tony, you're right. I don't have a best friend, but that doesn't mean--"

"That doesn't mean what? You know

what, Paul? I can call you Paul, can't I?"

"Wait, wait, wait, how the hell did you know my name is Paul?"

"Don't you mean was Paul?"

"Tony, are you always this annoying? And how did you know my name?"

"Everybody here knows your name. But anyway, back to what I was saying. You know what I think? I think you are afraid to admit it."

"Admit what, Tony?"

"That you are your own best friend."

"I'm not afraid to admit anything."

"Okay, you're afraid to admit it to me because to you I am just some little kid that is annoying you to death."

"Tony, it's my turn to ask you a question. Are you alone?"

He looked into my eyes. "No, I am here with you."

"That's not what I meant. I mean--"

"I know what you meant. I know what alone means."

"Tony, where are your parents?"

"In heaven."

"I thought there was no heaven."

"There is for them."

"So, what you meant was that you don't believe in heaven?"

"No, I do believe in heaven."

"I'm a bit confused now," I said.

"Heaven is confusing."

"Do you believe in hell?"

"Mister, why did you ask me that? Do you not believe in hell?"

"I don't know what I believe anymore."

"You see, that is your problem. That's what I've been trying to tell you."

"Who said I had a problem?"

"You just did."

"Tony, what the hell are you doing here? Where are you going?"

"Nowhere. Why?"

"You're not waiting for this plane?"

"Of course not. Why would I be waiting for this plane?"

"Call me crazy, but I thought that's why people came to airports."





“TONY, THIS PLANE IS NOT GOING TO CRASH.”

“PAUL, OF COURSE IT IS.”

“I am afraid of flying,” Tony said. “I’ve only flown once, and I’ll never have to again, nor would I want to.”

“Then, what are you doing here?”

“Talking with you. I like to talk to the people that come here.”

“No, that’s not what I meant.”

“I know what you meant.”

“Tony, where are your parents?”

“Are you annoyed with me?”

“No, not at all,” I said, obviously lying.

“Why would you say that?”

“Just curious. My parents should be here any minute.”

“Wait one second. I thought you told me your parents were in heaven.”

“I did.”

“Were you lying?”

“No. Were you?”

“About what? What did I say, Tony?”

“Mister, where are your parents?”

“My parents? My parents are dead, Tony. They died in a fire when I was eleven.”

“I would say I am sorry, but I hate that.”

“Hate what?”

“I hate death.”

“Then why wouldn’t you say you’re sorry?”

“Because that would require me to think about it.”

“But aren’t you already thinking about it?”

“About what?”

“Death. Death, Tony.”

“No. How could I think about something that does not exist for me?”

“Death doesn’t exist for you?”

“No. does death exist for you?”

“I should hope so.”

“Why would you want death to exist for you?”

“Tony, everyone must die sometime.”

“Yes.”

“Tony, didn’t you say your parents were coming here?”

“My parents are already here.”

“Where?”

“I am not really sure.”

“Listen Tony, it’s really been nice talking to you, but if I don’t board my plane, I’m going to miss it. And I’ll miss my wife’s funeral. It’s really been a pleasure talking to you. No, pleasure’s not the right word. Intriguing is better. I’ve go to go. Have a nice life.”

“I did. Will you go to heaven?”

“Tony, this plane is not going to crash.”

“Paul, of course it is.”



Beth Tallon
Letters Not from Home





BETH TALLON
THE HOT THING



A WIDOW IN WINTERTIME

CAROLYN KIZER

An Explication by Heather Anese Reid

The poem is free verse in five quintets and a powerful ending line. The rhythm of the poem is slow and meandering due to the use of multisyllabic words in excess. In the first line the word "gargled" is used instead of easier words like "screamed" or "cried." In the third line she uses "strangles." The pace is slower yet in the second stanza, last line, when she complains of "metaphysic famines" and in the fourth stanza, second line when she mentions "excesses and simplicities." Then again, there are points in the poem where the wording is clear and concise in monosyllables, and at these points the speaker is sure of what she is feeling, and not meandering: "but no. The cat was making love again."

The speaker is a widow, if the title is to be believed, recently bereaved and apparently not very old. She mentions covering her children before she goes to bed. It is morning, and she is recalling an incident the night before when she awoke to the sound of cats mating and thought that it was a death cry. The widow draws parallels between herself and the cat's behaviors, linking the animal physicality to her own dead desires, relating to the physical and non-rational nature of animals as distinct from the spiritual nature of humans. A woman's poem, it outlines the aimlessness of losing something that was half her life, her husband, and with him her sexuality (at least for the time being). Instead, she juxtaposes her sexuality with the cat's mating, personifying the animal to human tendencies, and relegating herself to a past of animal excesses.

In the second stanza, the widow let her feline in the house, who "hung her tail, flagging from her sins." Once again, the cat would have no cognizant idea of sin, so the speaker is perhaps relating her feelings vicariously through the supposed wrong of the cat. The cat, as a parallel to her former, younger self, would not recognize these "metaphysic famines" the widow is steeped in.

She admits her parallels in the third stanza: "resemblances/ were on my mind: female and feline." She has reached a new stage of life, a feeling of age and abandonment she is not prepared for. The cat is a personification of her carefree youth, a state to which she can never return. Instead she looks back on them and is satisfied with what she has become. She accepts "austerities" as part of her existence. She sees the cat as she could have been: "lofty and bedraggled, without need to choose." The speaker is an "ex-animal" who has now progressed past that point in her life. She takes no fame nor notice for what she has become, so different from the cat, instead lives these desires out in her past through memories of her "nine lives." In her formal life, the memories ring as proof of her total humanity, including her sexuality.

The culmination point is the fifth stanza, when her loneliness and disillusionment come out in less subtle ways. Her disciplines are those things which she does to prove to herself that she is really alive, is still needed. The idea that they are arbitrary brings into sharp relief her confusion and loneliness. Things like covering her children seem small, but when coupled with sexual desire, the overwhelming nature of her problem comes across in the reading. The final parallel is purely sexual in nature, and refers back to the first stanza, about the cat "making love." She tries "not to dream/ Of grappling in the snow, claws plunged in fur." She struggles with herself, and her guilt comes out in her surety that a cat's mating was death and not desire, and that she will dream herself that way and "waken in a caterwaul of dying." The last image in the last line blends the feline imagery, the ordering device for the poem, with her sense of loss. The feline personifying her base desires, and the death personifying her guilt.

The poem is a lament in a purely feminine fashion, and the widow, no matter what she feels, is "trying/ to live well enough alone."





THE MISSION MAN

RHETTA PARTIN

The dark man with blue eyes looked down at the crumpled form and chuckled. A solid laugh grew as he turned to the night sky and reflected on a mission well-done. The light of the full moon glinted off of his eyes. The bitch liked it - they all did. He didn't know why they all said no when they wanted it. That was ok, though. 'No' had become his prime source of excitement. If the bitch wasn't saying no, he was doing it wrong. He craved their resistance and he wanted to drink their pain, just as he sometimes made them drink his juice.

She made a small noise, reminding him of her presence. A wave of reality crossed him as he noticed the blood on her bare leg and the interesting shade of blue she was turning. He reached down and pulled the front of her dress together, as if the flimsy material could warm her from the December air. He liked the cold. His warm body was hot against the biting air. Very few things made him feel warm, much less hot anymore.

This thing, this active fulfilling of his mission, this thing made him feel warm and hot and real, alive. His mission was his life now. He couldn't remember who he had been before his mission was assigned. It didn't really matter anyway. A person without a mission was a non-person. There were a lot of non-people around, like the blue bitch that lay on the ground before him. A mission person could always tell an-

other mission person. There was a steel behind the eyes. It glimmered at other mission people; non-people could only see the hardness of the steel. They couldn't see the glinting purpose that lurked behind. If they could see it, they would run. But see, that's why they were non-people. They couldn't see it. They were the mission-less.

They were the missions.

He thought back, remembering when he was given his mission. He was re-born, he was real, he would now be heard, he would now be felt. The power in his newly gained knowledge of missions and non-people was intoxicating. His mission was simply to subjugate the non-people. Their fear and their pain was the life-energy of the mission people. Every wound, physical or psychological (even better when it's both), was the beginning of a new energy chain for the mission people. This energy is different from the energy human science knows. This energy chain gains power as it travels through cycles and pathways, it feeds itself on the pain of the non-people that it weakens and devours. Its path twists and turns from one non-person to another, never ending. It's ironic, really, he thought. What they think is their strength, their humanity, is really their weakness. Non-people interact all day long, day after day. They share their pain, they pass those vicious energy cycles from one to another, thinking that it helps. It helps, all right. It feeds the mission people. It feeds him.

Headlights flashed through the distant trees. The man stood still; he never ran. The lights were quickly upon him and the car slowed. A tinted window slid quietly down. Steel blue eyes met steel gray eyes.

The girl's scream pierced the thin night air. Cruel smiles spread beneath glinting steel in the moonlight.





“AN AMERICAN REAM”

XAVIER MICHAEL

Conservative minds reek of the lies of the past.
A nursing home mind for a Beaver Cleaver Heart.
Liberal minds rot like their leaders matryed
 on a Day in Dallas or a 1/4 of April.
Both minds embedded in concrete crumbling
on their platforms of Gallup polls and cents.
So I went cruising for America,
 but I crashed my Lincoln Continental
 Destiny on a solemn Black Wall.
(The muffler covering the screams of duty to....)
 My eyes had wandered to Washington
giving good monument to a Statue too small
 to pay for the damage done the Thanksgiving way.
All our doctrines believed and creeds always broken when lips are open
 to the falling of change from hand to mouth.
Our Empire was built like all the others by splitting heads or
 crossing them out for one cause or another.
So, I wish we were simply honest to the myths we create
 because killing is our business
(It put us on top of the Scale)
 by which liès provide the frame for our game of preservation
 in a world where survival is the only virtue.
To truth your eyes would open, If only you knew that
 the Liberty Bell is cracked
 the Virgin Mary had stretch marks
 and Jesus was just a Jew.

THE APPLE

S.T. Atchison

My teeth
rip into
the ovary.
The skin
covering my
mouth.
A crunch
and snap
as I pull
away.
and chew,
slowly
passionately.

I have
the attitude
of Adam.
The generations
almost millennia
of blame
fall upon
my watering mouth.
I feel the
eyes
cutting,
the tongues
pointing.
and I smile
with a mouthful
of sin.
I eat with patience
but devouring.
unafraid
of peels,
seeds,
I carry them
within.

I feel forbidden,
broken,
a hunger,
yet, full.
Blushing
I reach the
core
and
toss
the seed
into empty
ground.





I LIE DOWN ON GRASS WHEN MY FATHER DIED.

HEATHER ANESE REID

How wide is the sky
with a single bird flying,
winging against the pale blue a daylight Starling alone
in the thin clouds.
It's a lonely sound,
that distant song heard with the down-wind
and I feel the weight of it,
standing here.

The grass around me is the green of late summer,
as emerald as eyes I can remember,
and soft like a blanket;
I lie on it.
I reach and touch the sky,
feel a warmth like skin ripple under my hand,
and I pull it in, wrap it around me.
I feel for what I've lost, can't even see
in the cyan swirling clouds,
clutching and crying

like thunder. I grasp and seek;
the bird that was singing is gone
and its thin voice has retreated beyond aloneness.
There is no single light to find
in the violent blue enshrouding me,
and it rains,

Oh I rain.

DREAM POEM

LEISA HARDAGE

Chiaroscuro

In the melancholy shadows of the night
Ambiguity caresses the dangerous edges
Distant and indistinct, the image softens
Somnambulist reasoning remains my plight.

In the darkness I wait, then wander
My solitary motion a curious pilgrimage
Condemned, perhaps, to continue
I dream in the middle.

I yearn for answers,
To questions I have yet to ask.
The familiar corridors offer no guide.
The doors remain silent.

A serial dream, the patterns defined
Neither advancing, nor retreating
It waits for me to admire its subtleties,
To open a door, to traverse a stair.

Unobtrusively waiting for me to uncover
A question, an answer, a riddle, a pun
It neither beckons nor taunts, pleads or begs
Instead allowing me to....myself discover.



"THE SAGA OF THE LEAKY PIPES"



LEEANNE WHITE

My married friends always tell me how lucky I am to be an independent, carefree, single woman. But it's not always what it's cracked up to be. Of course, it has its advantages: house-keeping is an option (apart from the important duties like cleaning the toilet). If I decide I don't want to make my bed or leave dishes in the sink for three days, or don't get around to the dusting for two weeks, there is no one to call me a lazy old hag and tell me that the place looks like a tomado just went through. If I want to play 60's Rock and Roll and do aerobics at 1:00 a.m., no one can tell me the music is too loud or that I should be in bed. I can come and go as I please; wear the clothes I want; and spend my money on a loud, flowery party dress, a pair of wild, dangling earrings that jingle when I shake my head, or an extra pair of shoes I don't need, and not feel too guilty about it. I can go down to the local roller rink on a Saturday night by myself and skate to my heart's content, come home and crash on the couch and talk to my friends on the phone until midnight and hardly bat an eye. I can hop from job to job, move when I want, and eat in fancy restaurants every day. But that is all of my life that my married friends see.

When I am with my married friends, it is usually at our Wednesday night study group. They watch me flitter into the room with my guitar slung over one shoulder, my wild, wicker hand bag in the other and a smile on my face; I casually drop into the easy chair in the corner, tune

my guitar and begin telling them about how "frustrating" my job at the hospital is getting and how I am going to take a three-day break by attending a conference in the North Carolina mountains to get away from it all. My friends drool!



What my friends never see is me standing over my dilapidated '79 Honda pouring power steering fluid in for the third time this week; or me driving down the highway listening to the sound in the old bomb getting louder and louder; or me worrying about whether or not the mechanic will tell me the truth about the problem or charge me \$500 to replace the exhaust pipe that cost him \$45.00; or me wondering whether or not I should repair the leak in the pipes under the sink or pay the plumber \$50.00 an hour to put more putty on the leak.

Such was my dilemma one Sunday evening when I dropped the back of my new, gold, dangly earrings (the kind that jingle when you shake your head) down the bathroom sink. My first inclination was to let it go and use the back of another pair, and then I thought, "It can't be too hard to recover that piece. It is probably at the bottom of the 'S' in the pipe just under the sink." I opened the cupboard door under the sink and investigated the situation with high hopes of recovering my little golden treasure.



The pipe looked just like the one under the sink at the last place I lived, and I remembered that all I had to do was to unscrew the round thing-a-ma-jig on the pipe, and it would come off. Being the brave soul that I am (and not wanting to pay a plumber), I opted for the "Do-It-Yourself" method.

I went to the utility room and got my trusty, blue bucket and a rag and went to work. The first obstacle to overcome was unscrewing the pipe. The round thing-a-ma-jig wouldn't come undone no matter how hard I turned; but

with a few twists and turns, the pipe slid right off. "No problem," I thought. "Piece of cake! I'll have the back of my earring in no time." In less than two minutes, the piece to my earring was in one hand, and two pieces of pipe, which were dripping with water and slime, were in the other.

I put my treasure aside where it would not fall down the drain again and went to work putting the mess back together. I slid the pieces back in the appropriate spots and tried to tighten them up. The round thing-a-ma-jig still wouldn't budge, so I adjusted the pieces in place and turned the water on to make sure there were no leaks. Water started to drip out -- but I wasn't discouraged. I took the pipes apart again and inspected them. "Oh, there is just a little putty all over these pipes." I thought, "No wonder the round thing-a-ma-jig won't screw. I scraped off some of the putty, put the pipes back in place and tried again to tighten up the round thing-a-ma-jig, but it still wouldn't budge. "Oh well, I'll try to run the water again." This time, the water gushed out everywhere. "Good thing I've got my bucket." I went through this process at least three more times (with more water gushing out each time) before I gave up and decided to finish getting ready for my evening activities. "I'll fix it tomorrow."

While I stood there combing my hair, the mess under the sink kept gnawing on my brain, and I could not resist trying to fix the leak one more time. The little round thing-a-ma-jig on the pipe still wouldn't budge, and the water leaked as badly as before. By this time, water was leaking in three places instead of one. I would no sooner give up to finish getting dressed, when my curiosity would get the best of me, and my head would be back under the sink trying to fix the leak, I mean leaks.

Thoughts of getting a plumber were getting stronger, almost overbearing, but I would not give in.

"I know," says I to myself, "Anyone can see that someone (probably a plumber) has so gunked up these pipes with putty that the round thing-a-ma-jig can't move. I'll find out how much new pipes cost and just replace the whole mess. They're only plastic."

At 11 p.m. that evening, while I was out, I fought thoughts of getting a plumber. If worse came to worst, I could always get one of my men friends to look at the mess and prepare him dinner in return - I would not pay a plumber.

On my way home from my evening out, I stopped by my sister's house and told my tale of woe to my brother-in-law (He's one of those fix-it guys who's done more bathroom plumbing than he cares to think about). Bob laughed and told me I could purchase the parts on his account down at the local home improvement store; and if I got desperate, he would come and help. I was teased unmercifully about becoming a lady plumber for the remainder of the evening. (I was already having visions of starting my own business as a lady plumber.) Plumbers make a fortune, and anyone with brains should know you don't patch up leaky pipes with putty.

I left my sister's house in a good mood and with



"MY DREAMS THAT NIGHT WERE OF PLUMBING."



great plans to do a bang-up job on my pipes in the morning. (And I was going to save myself at least \$50.00!)

As I started up my noisy Honda and pulled out of the driveway, my spirits dropped. The noise was getting louder, and the smell coming from underneath the car was getting stronger. "Oh, I wish I knew where to take this car - maybe I should sell it. Who will fix it without charging me an arm and a leg? Why didn't I become a mechanic? Do-It-Yourself is out of the question this time..."

Deep in thought, I looked up and noticed I was near the place where I had to make the big decision: turn left and go through the country, or continue on for three miles and then turn left. I opted for straight ahead - the car might not make it through the country, and I didn't want to be stranded in the middle of nowhere. The odor was getting even stronger and the noise almost unbearable -- "Why me? If my married friends could see me now!"

I turned the car down the side street and took the back roads through the wealthy section of town, measuring the mileage to see if it really was a short cut. I pulled into my parking spot, and the Honda sputtered to a halt. I got out of the bomb, walked up to my apartment and fumbled for my key. As soon as the door was open, I rushed in,

dropped my belongings on the floor and headed straight for the bathroom to inspect the leaks -- no hope but to replace the pipes. I sighed, washed my face and listened to the water pour into the bucket below. "Oh well."

My dreams that night were of plumbing.

At exactly 6:05 a.m., the phone rang. I heard a tired voice in a heavy southern drawl say, "Do you want to work a double shift at the hospital today?" "No, I can't." I hung up the phone. By

this time, I was awake and all my hopes for a full night's sleep were destroyed. I dozed on and off for about two hours and finally dragged myself out of bed.

"What day is this?" I thought. "What do I have to do today? I need a cup of coffee." I stumbled my way into the kitchen to make coffee the way I like it. -- French style, very strong with a little sugar and lots of cream.

It wasn't long before the smell of coffee filled the house, and I was feeling revived. I inspected the mess under the bathroom sink and suddenly felt a sick feeling in the pit of my stomach. I didn't really want to drive 7 miles to the store for pipes, and I didn't want to mess with it.

I took a bath; and then started putting on my favorite shorts when the phone rang again. I didn't recognize the voice, but the man an-

nounced that he wanted to talk to me. He wanted to know if I needed a job. (Good thing I hadn't hurried off to buy pipes!)

Not wanting to mess with the plumbing, I called my sister to tell her about the job. We talked for 45 minutes. Finally, I could stall no longer, and I jumped in my bomb and putted off down the highway.

When I walked into the home improvement store, I was bombarded with every kind of hardware imaginable. I marched straight past the electrical supplies, paint, lawn chairs, and two-by-fours to Contract Sales, just as my brother-in-law had instructed me.

I don't know what clued the man behind the counter in to my ignorance of plumbing, but it was probably when I asked him to help me unscrew the thing-a-ma-jig on the pipe. I brought with me. He, with seemingly no effort, unscrewed the thing-a-ma-jig and put the two pieces (separately) into the plastic grocery bag

(which I also brought with me). "No fair, I thought "All my struggling must have loosened them up a bit." But deep down, I knew that even if I had turned until I was blue in the face and my hands were bleeding, I would have never been able to get the pipes apart. While the man behind the counter was ringing up my \$2.96 pipes (a lot better than \$50.00 and parts, I thought), two men came in and started to chide me about becoming a plumber. "That's not fair," I argued in my head, "What's wrong with a woman trying her hand at plumbing?" (Secretly, I was wishing that someone else would do it).

As soon as I got home, I headed straight for the bathroom and started working on my plumbing with new energy. The whole thing was together in less than two minutes. "Piece of cake," Now the final test --- turn

the water on -- no leaks!...OH NO! From the very back of the sink where my new piping attached to the old, there was the tiniest little drip. I turned the water off and tried to tighten it up. It wouldn't budge. I unscrewed the pipe, and examined it. There was so much of old putty caked in the threads that not even the strongest man at the Contract Sales counter could loosen it.

I got a light and an old hair pin and went to work cleaning putty off the pipes. Thoughts of stringing up the previous "plumber" were racing through my head. "What stupid idiot would gum up these pipes with all this putty?"

I worked for at least fifteen more minutes and "Voila!" -- no more drip!

I ran to call my sister to announce my success. After I hung up the phone, I decided to check the pipes just one more time. This time, I ran the water for two or three minutes. Horror struck, I watched as a tiny drop started to form from the pipe and turn into steady drips. OH NO! I tried to tighten it up. The drips became smaller and less frequent. Five minutes later, the drips were almost gone, my hands were raw, and my arms ached.

I had two choices: get putty -- that would be the ultimate defeat, or call a plumber - NEVER.

I could always get one of my strong male friends to tighten up the pipes -- that was a possibility, but I knew that I wouldn't be able to get one of them out here for at least a week.

After some serious thought, I did what any sensible woman in my shoes would have done. I put a dry sponge under the pipe to catch the drip, put my belongings back under the sink and forgot about it.



A POEM BY

RYAN WIEBE

Grass like a sea of green
and it was spring
(the first for my heart)

You see-- winter had endured
a prolonged hibernation of my soul
but this wildflower,
she found fertile soil somehow
maybe with her seeds of all beauty and hope
and she teased me out into a frenzy...

So spring came
and love
in a full blossom
and somehow
like a miracle
it never died

JAMES SLANKARD
UNTITLED

Autumn 1992



SUNS YET TO RISE

TORA CURETON

We stood
on the corner
in a small huddle
under a street light
that had not been turned on
for a month,
and the night surrounded us
like prison bars,
so that we only caught glimpses
of where
we were standing.

Our teeth shone
like sparkles
on high ocean waves
as we laughed
and talked
about things close to us
in faraway voices,
and our young white eyes
grew old and red
as we popped open
cold, wet beers
and poured them down
into all our empty spaces.

We shook hands
as if it were some dark secret,
turned our backs,
went home and crawled
into our beds
crowded with full brothers
and half sisters,
half brothers and full sisters,
and we stared at the walls

We grew more and more silent
until there was
nothing
left to say,
no reason to stand
and wait for some nameless
place to go,
and we became
the surrounding darkness,
waiting for the dawn.

TO SING THE DAY

BARBARA OWEN

The wine of dawn
caresses my lips
and
I wipe the dark
from my eyes
washing myself
clean
Of the night.

I sing the colors
of a sky unlit
into a fragile light
and
I welcome the day
with a celebration
Of life.

I sing the day
and with
a wordless song
I offer my love
To the awakening.

WEDNESDAY WINE

J.L. MANSKE

You sit back, feet propped up,
Against the velvet pillows and
Flip one finger out to summon me.
We get full of wine together,
The beads along the wall
Hanging down stirring slowly.
Full prisms swim across your chest, hairy.
I remove my chiffon scarf
Draped down my back and touch your feet.
As we join together, their image,
White with veins and chalky,
Is one I keep behind my eyes.





BLUE RIDGE RAINFALL HIKE

Douglas S. Haugh

Walking in the foreign forest,
lost but for a shallow slithering path snaking,
along the mulched floor.
Stalking through greenery higher than my head,
overgrown weeds,
now competing with the trees.
Bunches of brambles clawing at my knees.
Faint through the foliage, daylight drip drip drops down,
down like the rain.
Vines descend continuous,
thick cables of natures crane.
Constructing with a power that leaves no unnatural stain,
it is only sun,
and wind,
and rain.
Cool close mist eliminates every distance,
two oaks forward is far as the eye can see.
Feeling far from home,
feeling far from alone.
Someone who is everyone no one strides along with me.
A prescient presence gazes upon my face,
if God had only one true temple,
it would surely be this place.



**RON MELLOTT
SUNRISE, HARDEE
COUNTY,
FLORIDA**





Ron Mellot
Waterlily



WHAT WE DON'T SEE

Heather Anese Reid

The sky was the purple-blue
of day after rain,
all clouds spent on the grass and
steaming up from the black road to return to air.
I shloshed through puddles,
those anachronisms of dark days,
the grass splashing my ankles with their excess, growing
fast while they may.

I wondered on the green,
one day yellowed, now so rich
it is the royalty of plants,
stretching up and covering like an ecstatic carpet
all the dead.
So each rain is a spring,
for those lowliest blades we never notice rise and die
until all we see
are yellows to greens to browns in sun and rain

and we walk on them,
mincing in water, treading green.





KRISTEN K. MARTIN
DESCENDING DOVE BROOCH

MIGRATIONS

Tora Cureton

I sat in an outdoor chapel
below a ceiling of leaves
that leaked drops of rain
onto my forehead
like ceremonious blessings.

Beyond the wooden cross,
a solitary kingfisher
skimmed the edge of the lake,
and my silent prayers
were lost on the breadth
of its bright wings,
spread in full length,
reflecting direct sunlight
into my eyes.

I thought of distance,
if what it left behind
might have meant anything.
I thought of seasonal migrations
and you
miles away
deep in Mississippi.

Perhaps at some point
we must all migrate,
search for mediums
between hot and cold,
and rely
on old familiarities
to survive.



EDITORIAL

There is much more yet to be said regarding the defense of Americans' right to freedom of expression. In our recent past, media has shared with its audience the suicide of a teenager allegedly brought about by the music to which he listened. Soon after consumers found warning labels on some popular albums concerning the lyrics of the songs within. Even more recently, singer-songwriter Ice-T of the music group Body Count, had his last song, "Cop Killer" removed off the album because of the controversy it allegedly produced. (Incidentally, the last song on the album now is "Momma's Gotta Die Tonight".) Vice-President Al Gore stated to an MTV audience that he believed these type of actions do not coincide with the Constitution. However, he added that even though young adults may be mature enough to realize the difference between an artist's lyrics and good judgement, a six or seven year old child may not, and those children are the ones that need protection. On a different form of expression, in 1990, the city of Cincinnati in Ohio censored the Robert Maplethorpe exhibit including (yet not completely inclusive of) explicit sexual photographs.

The question becomes, "Who is responsible for protecting the public, especially children, from forms of expression considered offensive?" To me, the responsibility seemingly has been placed not upon the artists but their liaisons between themselves and the world. These liaisons are the presidents of the record labels, the editors of the books, magazines, and newspapers, and the curators of the museums. The curator of the Cincinnati museum restricted the age requirement to adults over 18 years of age. People still called for the show to be closed. Ironically these liaisons are the ones responsible for keeping the public informed. How is one to decide what another would consider offensive? I believe this decision cannot be possibly made and have everyone be happy with it.. Therefore, I have concluded that the responsibility belongs to adults for themselves and for their own children.

This introduction leads to my response to a letter from E.P. Willimon, Jr., General Manager at Milliken with regard to a memo he had received from William F. Buckley, Jr. Mr. Willimon seemed alarmed that Clemson University would support "even inadvertently this type of information." Copies of Mr. Buckley's short and objective memo were shared with more than 17 people including Senator Helms of North Carolina, Jack Kemp, and Governor John Sununu. Mr. Buckley's memo simply included some observations he made about the Spring 1989 issue of

Chronicle and a copy of a poem. Editor-in-Chief Skelly Holmbeck and Poetry Editor Becky Rodgers printed this poem because they felt it was "some of the best ... literature out Clemson campus has to offer". The poem by Thomas F. Ruckelshaus is printed here once again in support of editorial freedoms:

PRAY FOR ME

CLIQUE-CLACK
CLICK-CLIQUE
CRACK
CLOVIS
CLONED HICKS
CARVING CRAVEN CLOVEN HOOVES
POINTS
AT HIMSELF. "FUCKING TICKS
CHIGGERS."
JESUS
FUCKING MARY AND JOSEPH
CARVING CRAVEN CLOVEN HOOVES
POINTS
AT CLONED HICKS
"WHAT?"
AT HIMSELF
"FUCKING LEACH"
CREEPS RIGHT IN ON EVERYTHING
SEEPS SLURPS BURPS SPURTS
HURTS
DON'T IT: IF YOU LET IT.
WORDS

Editors have the constitutional right to print in their publication whatever they wish to include. As stated in the 1992 Clemson University handbook, "The University administration does not intend to censor contents of Taps, The Tiger, Chronicle, or the Broadcasts of WSBF or CCN; nonetheless, the publications ... will be expected to observe ordinary rules of accuracy and canons of good taste. Concerning good taste, the assistance of appropriate faculty or administrative advisors should be sought prior to printing... questionable material". Former Editor Skelly Holmbeck and anyone who may have assisted her felt that this poem was not only written in good taste but also merited publication as one of the best poems on campus. Thank you to Clemson University for supporting editors' efforts regarding freedom of speech and press!

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SPECIAL THANKS TO...

Susan Eller
The Tiger
Rob Miller and Sun Inc.
Nate Sargent

Administrative Assisitant
Use of office and laser printer
Printer
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As Clemson University's official art and literary magazine, Chronicle offers a central medium for publication of original works produced by students, faculty, and staff. Address all submissions and correspondence to : Chronicle, Box 2187, Clemson, S.C. 29632-2187.

Student subscriptions are paid through student activity fees. Advertising rates are available upon request. Opinions expressed in Chronicle do not necessarily coincide with those of the student body, faculty, or administration. The Editors assume all responsibility for the opinions, should there be any in Chronicle. This magazine is printed on recycled paper using soy based ink and is recyclable with similar paper products.



Chronicle

Spring 1993 Volume 96, Issue II

From the Editor

I don't think anyone would disagree with the statement, "It's a rough world." Our generation was weaned on protest and grew through the "Me" decade, the "Yuppie" decade, and now the... nineties.

How exactly can we describe them? Well, there's a focus on the **environment**, **AIDS** is the natural enemy, **homosexuality** has vaulted to the forefront in human interest, **world politics** are now murkier than an iron curtain, and the **first democrat in thirteen years** was sworn in on January 21. The economy is bad, and some college students are contemplating staying in school for six more years to wait out the recession.

Life isn't rosy for the Youth of America, is it? What most people older and wiser (maybe) forget, however, is that college students do think about the future, and we also have strong opinions on the present. What we at the Chronicle have tried to do by printing stories like "Me and D.W.," and poems like "Mother Earth's Last Cry," "Where will we be tomorrow," and "the Vault," is to showcase some of these opinions for our readers and for posterity. I want people to *understand* how a young urban black man feels when guns are a part of everyday life. I want you to *feel* the frustration of the authors who warn against taking our planet for granted and wasting it. These are poignant, relevant points for our lives today. Then, the prophetic voice of the rebellious youth who threaten the old order--the voice of the people in "the Vault" cry out to America not to be passive in politics.

I would dearly love to see more of this kind of work. The written word is powerful, and for too long we have muttered our opinions to ourselves. If you feel strongly about something, **let this magazine be your voice**. I want to hear from women on women's issues, men on men's issues, minorities on minority issues, and from everyone on world issues. I'm only sorry I can't print everything that I receive. It's guaranteed that your opinions won't be heard if you don't send it in, though. I want poems, stories, essays, or even something I haven't seen before. Comic strips are a good way to get a message across. Also, I want art. If a picture is truly worth a thousand words, then if you can't say it, show it.

I'm not saying that we don't want any traditional Chronicle-type work, I'm just emphasizing that **the Chronicle is not solely a literary forum**, and that we value the thoughts that flit through your mind in rebellious moments. **Take advantage of your first amendment rights, and speak out!**

I'm waiting. . .

Heather Anese Reid

Breathe-in experience,
breathe-out poetry.

--Muriel Rukeyser

All sorrows can be borne
if you put them into a story
or tell a story about them.

--Isak Dinesen

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"We are never one person
in this life."

I lie in a deliciously drowsy

half sleeping slumber,

Dreaming.

Looking upon your loosely layered curls
curving around,

freshly flushed cheeks, and lips slightly
slanting, smiling.

Sweet sweat of passion damp in your hair,
escaping from our skin lending chill to
the air.

Your hot humid breath on my arm,
that lies gently cradling,
strong straight shoulders and
slightly sloping breasts.

Your cries still ringing,
clinging to my ears,
wet with tears of purest pleasure,
that wash away my fears.

I lie in silent ecstasy,

Living,

Dreaming,

Living my dreams.

Douglas S. Haugh

J. Diana Nix

What A Child Remembers

The pull from behind lingers
gently but firmly
holding on to the strings of
an abused heart.

invisible except for a single
glisten in the moonlight
of nights past and mornings old.

taut, tight, tired,
unwavering in strength
nor determination
surrounding, encircling

Judge Me

Why create us with thought and sense
Forgiving Lord, but the apple was bit
Create the weed and fly to make us dance,
Prove a point or just to amuse?
Is the lust of smoke and sex the Devil
Or just getting back for killing the Garden?
Tell us to choose the path of question
But Blue-haired preachers' wives say
that's the sin
I also have taken of the tree of knowledge
Condemn me or send me to paradise

John Holladay

Mother Earth's Last Cry

Hold me
now in time of doubt.
Hold me tight, stop the fright.
Love me deep, sooth the pain.
Keep me dry from the poisoned rain.
Stop the whips causing the welts.
I am alone and need your help.
I'm your mother, bore you well,
Save me child or join me
in Hell.

Joseph Milam

58,132

High in the sky, fearful, meaningless moments
repeat themselves
from a chopper,
the underground underworld is yet to be seen
in the hand of each, a gun
in the mind of each:
nothing as uncertain as ideologies of policies;
nothing as certain as fighting for undertainties
currently realizing you're misplaced
in another man's nightmare
meanwhile, on the ground, in the bush,
"serpents" protect their nest from democracy
contact is made
losers withdrawn, prisoners within
winner unclear, war unclear
death underlying but not understood
years later, look at the gleaming black stone
each piece reflects a piece of you and me
it speaks to us and speaks of us
progressing in time, left to right, one reads names
58,132 of them
"Why" and "How" are useless questions now
they should have been asked before the war
a victim of pride paid a higher price
than his father had
father fought a decent war
now ascending to the ground one meets three men--
strong and proud these men were then
now they are frozen forever to remind
of the glory we savor
each of their lives and deaths tells one thing--
the price of patriotism is paid by
mothers and fathers-- not simply soldiers
"The world is neither black and white nor ours.
We want not only an end to the shedding of
blood and tears,
but simply an end to monuments."

Andrew R. Coyne

Where will we be tomorrow

A lonely man sits up a stump
and ponders about how
LIFE
used to be.

Animals once flourished in this
detritus covered land
but
both the ANIMALS and TREES
have rapidly decreased in
Size.

The man then wanders over to
the water's edge and sadly
runs his fingers through
the water.

He recalls a time when
the fish would surround him
and nibble at his fingers but
NO MORE.

The industrial kings have seen to that.
From the oil to the
waste and trash
it is evident that
POLLUTION
has taken over.

It strikes him as ironic that
although we are aware of the harm behind
household cleaners
air pollution
aerosol deodorant
hairspray and freon from refrigerators
we still continue to use them.

OUR world does not deserve this torture.
The man sighs to himself and wanders
back to his lodge
knowing
that the problem
will not be solved until these
KILLERS
wake up and realize that
EVERYONE
is to blame!

Victoria Demgard

The Drug

Life offers no hope
I scream at no one in particular,
What did I do to deserve this
What can I do to desert this,
I'll get stoned I think
And slap myself on my back for my ingenuity,
But no, it is not some average drug I seek
It is illusive and very exclusive in its selection,
But once sampled I fly for days
and forget weeks at a time.

Ted Lee

Me and D.W.

Terry Manning

We was friends in a funny way, me and D.W. He was younger than me, taller than me, slimmer than me (I didn't hold it against him, though), and he was cool. Cool like me. I say we was friends "in a funny way" 'cause we weren't really that tight, and we hadn't known each other that long, but we was still friends.

I met him one Saturday night at one of the juke joints in the small town where we lived. I had never really been the kind to go into those places but I had been feeling kinda, I don't know, free, I guess, since me and my girl had broke up and I figured that I would go out and see if I could fall up on a little piece of tail. There were a lot of girls over the years I had wanted to mess around with, and a lot who used to call me on the phone and ask me if me and my girl were still going together (some said they didn't care if we were), but I never could really say anything to them because

of my girl--even if I had tried to sneak and mess around, everybody knew that, like most small towns where nobody has a life, news traveled fast in my small town.

But this was especially true in the kinda place I lived, where all the folks my age were nosy as hell, five to ten years younger than they looked and twenty pounds or more heavier than they shoulda been. A town of no-life, nosy, old-looking, overweight losers. I had only been out of school for a few years and already half the guys from my graduating class were either in jail, selling drugs, on drugs, married and divorced, or just pretty much hanging around doing nothing. Every Sunday I would read the newspaper for news on the court cases from week to week so I could see who I knew that was going to jail. Most of the time they would be in jail for "assault" (probably beating up their girlfriends or fighting at a club), "possession and distri-

bution of a controlled substance" (selling crack), or "illegal possession and/or discharge of a firearm" (shooting guns inside the city limits).

Those dumb bastards. There I was, spending every dime I had trying to go to the technical college in the next town over, so I almost never had any money, and here these dumb sonsabitches were blowing every paycheck they had on guns and bullets. Not that they were buying cheap guns, either; they had some of the baddest ones I had ever seen--some like I seen on the news or in magazines when they ran stories about gangs in L.A. or somewhere--but I just couldn't see spending all that money on something I couldn't eat or wear or show off to a girl, you know? Of course, there always were some girls who actually did like to see guns, and there were always guys stupid enough to show them theirs. Can't think of how many guys I knew who, when they would break up with a girl, would get busted after the girl would call the cops and tell them the guy had a gun (most of which were unregistered, of course). Girls can do some mean shit, sometimes.

But the big problem was the shooting. Yeah, those nuts were always shooting up someone's car, house or whatever. I even had a cousin who had shot up a guy's house once 'cause the guy said something to him at the Firefly, the little club where I met D.W. Nobody got hit--hell, the guy he was shootin' wasn't even home, but my cousin never seemed to even think about what he'd done. He was just out on one of his "missions," as he called them.

He was always on a mission. Whether he'd be out gunning for somebody or just on "tuna patrol" he was always moving. Sometimes, he'd be moving 'cause somebody was after him. Matter of fact, I didn't see him for about three months at one stretch, 'cause his brother was after him for cussing out their momma. He'd come in from tuna patrol with a girl he was wanting to spend the night with him in my aunt's trailer, and my aunt told him she couldn't stay. They got into a big argument; my cousin said some mean shit about my aunt acting like a ho' (which even I don't think was called for) 'cause she let her boyfriends stay over, and how it wasn't fair for him to not be able to.

When I found out that his brother was after him, I quiet trying to find him. I didn't want his brother finding him at the same time I did, or finding the two of us together. His brother had been trying to straighten up since he became a Muslim, but when push came to shove he was still a shooter. He had a ton of guns, it seemed. He was my cousin and all, but hey, brother's don't stop for cousins--not in my family. And bullets don't stop for anybody in anybody's family.

I was at the Fly-Fly (what we call the Firefly) when me and my cousin got into an argument with some girls. They were wanting some crack before they would "set us up," and me and my boy wasn't having it. We had tried to fool 'em into thinking we had some money, but they kept pushing til my cousin told 'em to shut the hell up and quit bothering us about it. That's when they got mad. One of the girls said something to my cousin and he slapped her down and told her, "you know, I ain't scared to kill a bitch!" "Well, I aint scared to kill a nigga!" she spit back. "Yeah, but I can kill a bitch, BITCH!" That's when D.W. walked up.

He worked at the door of the place, and his boss, the lady that owned the joint, wasn't down with all that fuss.

I recognized D.W. from high school. He'd graduated a couple of years after I did, so I never really knew him well, but he did play football, so I knew his name and face. He grabbed my cousin and told him he was going to have to leave if he planned on starting something. The stupid girl my cuz knocked down got up yelling, "Kick his ass, D! That mother-fucker hit me! Fucking punk!" And she swung at my cousin.

D.W. let go of my cousin long enough to tell the girl to shut up and push her toward the door of the place. I guess he figured if they were going to fight, he was going to put them outside. When D.W. grabbed the girl to lead her out, she turned around and slapped him. The whole crowd went, "Oooh!" Man, the way D.W.'s face changed, she shouldn't have done that. He looked like he was ready to kill her his own self.

He grabbed the girl's arm, talking to her while he twisted it behind her back, "you gonna try and be bad, huh? I'm trying to save yo' ass, and you want to jump bad on

me." The other girl, who I had been talking to and who was really starting to give me some play, went fool when she saw D.W. grab her friend. She reached into her pocketbook to pull out something.

My first instinct was to duck, 'cause maybe she had a gun, and I

wasn't about to get shot, messin' around no juke joint.

Then somebody yelled, "That bitch got a

gun!" which just made me more scared. I aint never been shame to say I'm scared of getting shot. I even hate the thought. Besides, you gotta be scared of something in this world, and all the crazy kids running around with guns in my home town is enough to be scared of.

My cousin must have seen the second girl, though, because he grabbed her arm. When he held her, I could see that she had one of those big utility knives like people cut carpet with, with the blade out. She dropped it, and my cousin threw her up against the door going out of the place. She started cussing, and he started laughing. Every word she said made him twist her

arm up behind her a little harder and her cussing turned into crying after a little bit. He just kept on laughing, saying "Naw, you grown, now. You grown. Trying to be bad." I started to say something, but that was just my cousin acting a fool. He was always beatin'

up his girl-friends and stuff. Besides, this girl had meant to stab somebody, maybe

Somebody yelled,
"That bitch got
a gun!"

even him. D.W. hadn't even looked up until my cousin threw the second girl around. Then he looked at me and asked, "What happened?" He still held the first girl up against the wall. I went and picked up the knife. He looked at it in my hand and said "Shit!"

Him and my cousin grabbed both the girls and pushed them out of the door and D.W. yelled, "And if you bring your cat-asses back in here when I'm working, I'm gon' kick your butt again!" They walked off, cussing, when the second girl turned around. "Where my damn knife?" she shouted.

"Up your ass if you don't keep steppin'" my cousin

said. The people who had seen what had happened and come to the door all started laughing. The girl cussed and kept going with her friend. When we got back inside, D.W. asked me for the knife. I gave it to him and we sat down to drink a couple of "8-balls" the owner had put up on the bar for us. "8-balls" were what we called the 40-oz bottles of Malt liquor we drank. "I shore appreciate that, y'all boys," she said. "These are my treat." We laughed and talked about girls while we drank the beer. That's when I first really met D.W.

His full name was DeWitt Fuller. He was working at the Fly-Fly, just trying to make some money since he had got laid off at the food processing plant in town. He had cussed out a supervisor, and when things slowed down at the plant, he was one of the first new employees to get laid off. He knew it was because of cussing the guy out, he said, but there was nothing he could do. Except get the supervisor when he saw him again. He waited one night til around 11 o'clock when the second shift got off at the food plant (D.W. had worked first shift, and he had wasted three days outside the plant waiting for the guy

before someone told him that the supervisor had been transferred to second), and beat the guy up when he went to get in his truck. The supervisor had called the cops, and swore out a warrant for assault and batter but he decided not to say nothing when D.W. and a couple of his boys caught the guy out at one of the other clubs in town and threatened to kill him. I had heard that the guy had bucked up pretty good, saying he wasn't going to stop the charges, until one of D.W.'s boys put a 9mm into the left side of his nose and said the supervisor sounded like he had a cold or something and did he want him to blow his nose for him. The supervisor gave up pretty quick then.

Now , I know it sounds like I'm making up a lot of the stuff in this story. I can see it now, people reading this and saying, "nobody has it that rough." Well, you can think what you want, but everybody who is reading this and can tell where it is that I'm talking about knows that I'm telling the truth. Even if you can't tell where, if you run the streets just a little bit, you probably know people just like the folks in this story. I aint a street runner, never have been,

never wanted to be, but these are the people that I know. They are the runners. And the shooters. And they don't play.

But like I was saying, though, when the guy decided not to follow through on pressing charges against D.W., D.W. had enough sense to realize that all the fightin' and stuff had to stop. He had even started getting into some of that Muslim stuff, going to the meetings, and he had stopped eating pork, telling the rest of us boys we were poisoning ourselves. Going Muslim really helped him, it looked like. He had been looking for a regular job for a while when he went into the Fly-Fly one Friday night. Him and some buddies were just hangin', when a fight broke out on the dance floor. The guy who was the bouncer at the time tried to break it up and got stabbed in the arm by the girlfriend of one of the guys fighting. D.W. knew the doorguy, and he took him to the hospital. While the guy was in the hospital, he told the woman that owned the club to let D.W. sub for him while he was gettin' better. When he got out, he told D.W. that he didn't want to take the job back from him, (after all, D.W. had kinda saved his life), so they decided

to split time, D.W. working on the weekends and the first guy working through the week. I wouldn't have thought it, but D.W. said they made pretty good money, mostly for letting underaged people in (if they put an extra dollar or two in the money they paid at the door) and getting paid extra for stopping people from bringing in their own beer and liquor from outside. It didn't pay that good, but it was work, and ya know, if it wasn't for D.W. havin' that job, we would never have met.

If I had known that we woulda ended up like we were that night, with the barrels of a couple of guns up our noses, I guess I would not have gone wit' D.W. All that kept running through my head, over and over again, was my mom saying to me, "Quit runnin' with them boys. Them boys bad, and you aint, but if you hang around them long enough, you gon' mess up and get caught up one day in that stuff they do. The cops don't care if you just in the car--as long as you wit' 'em, you go to jail just like they do." God knew how I wished it was the cops that had us. Instead, we were stuck out behind the Fly-Fly with two guys from a town next to ours who were the

brothers of one of the girls D.W. and my cousin had thrown out of the club. (the one with the knife?) They had caught up with D.W. at the wrong time (at least as far as I was concerned) and here I was, caught with him. These boys not only were the brothers of the girl, but they belonged to a gang in the town they were from.

Their gang, and the whole town really, had called for a war on people from my town. A few of their boys had been down at the Fly-Fly one night and got into some trouble with some boys from my town over some girls. Somebody started shooting (I was told; I left that night and it all happened after I left), and one of their boys got hit in the leg. He hadn't really been in it, he was there with his girlfriend, but when his boys took off, he was left behind. Some of the boys from my town jumped on him, kicking him and beating him. They said it was sad, the guy sitting on the ground, bleeding out his ears, begging for somebody to take him to hospital, his girl leaning over him crying, and

all the boys who had jumped on him standing there, cussing him out and laughing. The cops rolled up and called an ambulance, but he died anyway. That's when the war got started. Two boys from my home town had been shot at, but not hit. One guy from their

town had been shot at a club there; my boys got blamed for it even though a

"They are the runners. And the shooters. And they don't play."

lot of people said one of his own boys had shot him over a girl.

So here I was, caught up in a war I didn't start, caught up over some girl I'd never touched, waiting to be shot by strangers. What made things especially bad for me was that they thought I was my cousin. "Yeah, you that motherfucker that was messin' around with my sister, huh?" one of the guys said. "Talking all that shit. Well, "he said," you bad now, motherfucker?" I didn't say anything. "Yeah, that's what I thought" by pushing the nose of the gun into the hollow of my neck. "He didn't do nothing, man," said D.W.

"Shut the fuck up!" the

other guy shouted, his face close enough to D.W.'s that I could see D.W. out of the corner of my eyes, drawing back from the smell of beer on his breath. "Aint-nobody-asked-you-SHIT" He put the stress on "shit" by pushing the gun hard into D.W.'s nose.

"Look, man, if you got a problem with me, that's one thing, but this guy didn't do shit, is all I'm sayin'" D.W. said.

"Well, all I'm sayin' is if you say shit else, I'm gon' put your fucking brains all over the wall. You know what I mean? 'Sides, y'all G---- boys anyway. Y'all got some shit comin' to y'all," D.W.'s guy said, thumping D.W. on the forehead with the gun barrel while he talked.

"Come on, man, this is wrong," D.W. started, "we-" BLAM!! I heard a girl scream. I jerked my head in reflex, not even thinking clear enough to know that it wasn't the gun in my neck going off. I heard the guy in front of me yell, "K.K.! K.K.! Goddamit, you motherfucker!" He had turned to the open end of the alley he was in. He fired a shot and then fell, grabbing his face when the echo of his shot rang off the wall behind us. I couldn't figure out why he had

grabbed his face until I saw that someone was standing at the end of the alley. All I could see was somebody's silhouette, through the smoke, an arm stretched out with a gun in the hand. Blue smoke still floated from where he had fired the shot that I had thought was an echo. The second boy fell screaming against the side of the house that made up the other side of the alley. When his back thumped up against the house, some woman inside yelled. He had dropped his gun, trying instead to hold his eyes in his head, blood and eye-juice running out between his fingers. He ran toward the end of the alley, not even thinking that he was running straight for the guy who'd shot him.

His brother lay on the ground, the side of his head shot off and his brains running out. I can still remember how black the blood was, how stunned D.W. looked, and how surprised I was to see, finally that it was my cousin standing at the end of the alley. My cousin caught the second boy as he was going past and threw him back into the dark of the alley. The boy scratched at my cousin, then fell back into a couple of trash cans against the side of the house,

making noises like he was crazy or something, and then, when he hit the ground, he started shaking. He did that for about half a minute, moaning all the while, and then got real still. "Die, motherfucker" my cousin said to no one in particular. He turned to me and D.W. "Y'all some lucky motherfuckers, boy," he added, "if I hadn't come out her looking for y'all..."

"You killed 'em," I said.

"And?" my cousin asked, and laughed.

"But you in trouble, now, man," said D.W. "trying to save our asses, and now yours is fucked. Damn!"

"Well, les' get the fuck out of here before somebody come out," my cousin said. "If we go now, before anybody find out what happened, we can get the fuck away and nobody will know who did what."

"You killed 'em though, man" I repeated. I couldn't move. I was kneeling on the ground, watching the first guy's blood run out of his head, in thick black streams, mixing with the dirt and grass. D.W. came up to me and said "come on." He grabbed me under the armpits and lifted as I tried to stand. We all walked slowly toward the end

of the alley, D.W. picking up the boys' guns and handing me one. I was putting it in my pocket when I felt how sticky and wet it was. Blood. I panicked and looked around, trying to find somewhere to put the gun; I threw it in the big city trashcan behind the club. D.W. heard the sound of the gun hitting the trash in the can and turned. "What the fuck you do?" he hissed at me, trying to keep quiet.

"Nothing."

"Well, bring yo' ass on!"

"What about the bodies, man?" I asked.

"Shit. Well, here," my cousin said, "grab that one and I'll bring this one over there. Put 'em in the trashcan." Him and D.W. did it. I tried to move to help them, but I was just scared that they would see the gun. It was dark, but I was scared anyway. They finished and wiped their hands off on some newspaper that was in the can. My cousin came over to me and asked if I was okay. I told him I was and we all walked out on to the sidewalk.

"Y'all hear that shootin'?" somebody called out. A lot of people were out there, talking, some laughing nervously at the shots. They thought they had come from around the corner or some-

thing. Others were just too drunk to really give a damn either way. We went to my car and got in.

It had been Saturday night when my cousin had shot the boys and it wasn't until I picked up the newspaper Tuesday morning that I saw anything about them. City sanitation workers had found the bodies when they had went to empty the dumpster we had put 'em in. Nothing in it about the gun, though, so I felt good. Without a gun, nobody could trace it to me or us.

The cops came that Friday morning. The brothers' sister had told the cops about us. She identified my cousin, D.W. and me and we had been picked up one by one. We got some lawyers appointed to us. My folks wouldn't come to see me or anything. My aunt came to see my cousin so many times in jail the guards knew her and let her bring us sausage biscuits and juice for breakfast in addition to what the county gave us. I was still depressed. A guy I knew who was about the same age as my younger brother was in jail at the same time as we were, and one night he had been jumped on and raped by a big redneck boy. I was going to get in the

middle when my cousin stopped me. "They aint fightin' for real, man. Them boys is girlfriends." he said. "The first time I was in here they did the same thing and they been doing the same every time they in here at the same time." I just looked at the redneck, humping the guy that I knew. "So he a faggot?" I asked, talking 'bout the guy on the bottom.

"Yeah, the both of them. They know if the guard walk in, the one on bottom can say he was gettin' beat up, and all the guard will do is break it up and make 'em both siddown. It's fucked up, man." my cousin said. I sat down, facing away from the guys, and leaned my head on the wall, trying to sleep. I could still hear that white boy grunting and the other moaning like he was hurting.

"They gon' do that shit all night, man? Goddamnn!" I said, turning to my cousin. He looked at me and shook his head. "Naw, cuz, they be through in a minute. Fucked up motherfuckas. Hey don't let it bother you, man. Just knock out, and I'll wake you up after while, then you can watch out for me." I turned back to the wall. For the longest time I sat there, thinking sleep would

never come. Then I was being woke up by my cousin.

D.W. and I got fifteen years plus time served for being accessories to murder. My cousin was convicted on two counts of murder, and was sent straight to jail. He's still in prison now and won't be out for a while. I'm out, though, and still trying to get my associate's degree from the technical college in the next town over.

D.W. was put in a center in the low part of the state. Somebody said that he got into a fight a guy who was dogging him out over being a Muslim. D.W. said something about the guy being ignorant and like poison for the rest of the African race. The guy left him alone, then, but waited til D.W. was in the dining hall one day and stabbed him to death. The guy got more time, but who cared? D.W. was still dead.

I hadn't been back to the Fly-Fly since I had got out, and after I heard about D.W. getting killed, I made up my mind never to go back. I was a homebody now. I didn't even have a real girlfriend. There was a girl in one of my classes at school I had been thinking about asking out; she was pretty and smart--not like the

girls in my home town--and I really liked her. I just keep thinking, though, that no girl like her would want a guy like me, a convict. I'm trying to get right for myself now, religious-wise. My cousin's older brother finally got it all together, and that really mad an impression on me. Naw, I aint no Muslim, but I have been going wit' my mom to church more. Sometimes the preacher says stuff that I can deal with, you know, relate to the people I know out on the streets. But most of the time, I just feel better knowing that things might be better after this world. Shit so bad nowadays, things got to be better somewhere. So I don't remember D.W. in a negative way or a sad way. Yeah, we was not old-old friends, and now he was dead. We coulda been closer; but in some ways the time we spent together is stronger because it was short. We'll be together later on. And by then it won't matter that our friendship didn't last a long time. It'll just be me and D.W.

"Beach Houses"

As I gaze into
The wide open areas before me,
I am obstructed by edifaees.
They are false in their assumptions
And do not hold me at all.

Their grasp slips from my neck
They never realized
That I was the one
Who could not be moved.

Realization of particular
Truths, never before known,
Will soon stand in the face
Of these structures.

I am one with myself
As I listen to the sounds
Of internal strife.

Christopher McGough

I love the smell of you
mixed with me
exuding from my pores
a sort of odorous inspiration
sweet, tangy, chewy

Clear as gin, but tastier...
to my deep regard:
for your ability to
impassion me with flavor;
fill me with two people;
devote yourself to me;
adore me unadulterated;
wholly enchant me.

If just one cell of you
stays in me, stays alive,
I will be content.

Kelly Morrison

Angered Field

i am in the angered field
long grasses whipping the frightened wind
grey white sky speaks of coming rain
 i am more than this
 i am alive and burning
 i am in the angered field
when the frightened one speaks
the grasses answer in an anonymous harmony
singing crescendos to the sky--the wind
embraces the grass like a torn lover returned
 i am more than this
 i am alive and alone
 the wind touches me yet
 i refuse her kiss
 i await the coming twilight
 i am in the angered field
as the scared bird trills mid-flight
the rain bites
hard as the thrice crossed dog snarling
it strips me down to the bare
and leave me in pain wanting
wanting more
 i am no more than this
 shattered shards of crystal
 shards that cut
 shards that bleed
 i am in the angered field

Richard O'Hara

Ted Lee

Swishing in the Summer Sun

I wish I could be myself for awhile
and sit in my lazy boy
with the girl of my dreams in my lap,
sipping ice tea,
watching TV,
with the sun coming through the window
warming my face.

The Physics of Pool for Michael

You took me to play pool,
taught me the rules with
your hand on my back.
At first the light was lost in
the smoke, but I
found it hiding in the corners;
behind the eight ball;
and in your hands.
The colors crowded to the top
of the room, pushed on the roof,
and left us alone
in black and white.

Molly Kathleen Burnett

There is no Memory

There is no memory at three a.m.
in small cafes
where you and I sit so I
cannot think of
blond haired
blue eyed
boys
like you who
have pressed pins into
my wrists;

And
the waitress in checked skirt
talks philosophy
with you
while I sit and drink my coffee
and
listen to you explain
the meaning of life,
thinking how nice it would be
to
go to the
bathroom.

Molly Kathleen Burnett

A Shadow's Parade

Mark Dease

Free from my own disaster. Traveling in episodes of dreams. The story is told from my imagination. The words are spoken from a mouth descended into hell. The actions are rehearsed but the crash is inevitable. I write these words before you. To extend my hand. To allow you to grab hold and jump through the eyes of death. Landing in a place unfamiliar. It may feel uncomfortable at first but the reaction will change. So move your eyes over my written world and delay your own imagination this split second.

I. Echoes of Distance

It always starts the same damn way. The sun comes up. The sun goes down. You get up. You go to sleep. You eat. You digest. You excrete. The world is all the same. The only difference is distances, of love, of hate, of friendship. And here I am twenty years old, a person of the male gender, caught in echoes of distance. Sounds of grace that travel together. He always wakes and sees the sun, and just think who wakes and sees nothing. I dream the death dream. Always. Who really doesn't? It is already here. At times he just feels the wind whisper, and thinks will he ever hear anyone whisper. This distances travel on in minds. Everyone has one believe it or not. It is that object that makes you feel everything. Damn shame isn't it? That is the only thing that you have. All of these thoughts dictate but how can you read and not feel? The sun is going down now and I do see it. It sets in the west. The distance is always there. You can travel and you can breathe but you may never feel.

I swim in the waters that ripple her waves outward or inwave ever which way you wish to imagine. I imagine inward at times. Do you see it rise over the horizon? All new light in echoes of distance. A reflection this time. Not the real thing. Is it ever? So beautiful, so impressive and all because one object has given its light. Is everything backward this time? Does it travel away in distances? Like it always does in that rear view mirror. All you have to do is force it, press it down and silence the echoes. I see it high and mighty one blocking the other. They tell you not to look up. It will blind you. The light is too strong. So the day is here but it wishes it was dark. I imagine outward now. The light is forced that way by its friend. They always come one on one

sometime.

The dream still reads my mind. My mind never reads a dream. It is always making me feel. Why? I don't want to feel. I want to run scared on the ground below. One on one drafting in echoes of distance. But I don't believe the dream will echo in my mind. I still dictate the images of thought. I sink down below now. Below all light and dark. In a new world, another distance. Nothing goes inward. Nothing goes outward. So beautiful. So strange. It is too perfect, too silent. I can feel nothing. But that is what I wanted isn't it? The day is back now. They are apart again. Friends again. So I rise. Away from that perfect odyssey. Back into my dream, the real thing echoes now. It controls the images of my scene. And deep inside my body the sounds of life echo the distances only I may see.

II. Do you believe in Ghosts?

I'm lying in puddles of blood. Surrounded in images of death. The dreams roll out of my mind one by one. Always in order. My eyes open in deep sleep and then close when he sees. The ghosts parade around my bed. Banging their chains and echoing their words. It just never seems to make sense. Their words I mean. They always speak the same, one long syllable with changes in the octave. I turn over seeming to sense the phantom. The moonlight places the white shadow over my eyes. I feel so safe. Under the protection, I think. Then the time is here, I shift the pillow, it is placed over my ears, I bury myself. Then it is all spilled out. The dream begins as the phantom enters behind my ear. Through the barrier past their shadow. I see myself floating on an empty stream. The current takes me away. The cold water seems to numb my feet as they become my rudders. Faster and faster objects flash through my image trying to awake my drunken soul. But deep inside he hears a voice. It speaks of writing words in circles. I fall. Splash! I begin to chatter my teeth echoing my own ghostly sounds. But I never remember awakening. All I recall is floating in that deathly image. My torso bobbing up and down. I am now in control of nature's enemy. The dream does end though. My eyes do open. But light never enters my blue shadow. I wipe away the water as I quietly laugh the tears away.

And down below you see my head on top. The clouds block the shadow of the moonlit day. The phantom I never see. The eyes parade

around but never take hold. And I now believe that she is my ghost.

III. Red

I sometimes believe that blood flows only once. I see myself traveling in distances. Alone with myself. Disaster surrounding every immobile object. Trapped in a cave of hell. Sounds echo through darkness. And I now realize what I have entered. I have made this scene myself. It is my own imagination. Do you see me leave your world? Behind, the light enters its rays of hope. But they stop as I enter. Wind whispers its own faith. Nature is alone inside its own species. Everything is too perfect to imagine. But my eyes see nothing. I stop as I leave reality. Standing in puddles too pure to imagine. Breathing a breath never felt before. Dreaming a life, a world set in darkness. Behind me the scene is still there. I see her crash in water of impurity. Birds flock together traveling south, but leave at their own will. So do I. I take one step for life and one giant leap through hell's eyes. Floating in lava made by her. Suffering in her world. Trying to open the eyes. Release my own blue rays. But the resistance is overwhelming. The blood has swollen the release to the soul. It is flowing now for its one time. It feels the pain and is trying to escape. The drips begin to fall, first faster then I may focus then they slow to human pace. Everything seems to take a step back, level off. Till that last drop sits on the edge. I cup my hands below to catch. But it never seems to stay, as it all filters through the cracks of togetherness. It all falls reestablishing my ocean. Tears form, I had arrived in hell as the ride ends. The current has brought me swiftly to the light. Back into her depravity. The dream poem has ended. I stand in the normality I remember and look out at my own deathly image. And on my eye I feel a drop, I wipe away by instinct, look at my hand, and notice her color. Red. My second has ended. Open your mind, release that one ray of hope, act out of death. My world has stopped. The motion felt is no longer there. I begin to spin as I crash and burn one more time. But the words shall always live in an unforgettable piece. So as your sky turns that deep blue for the first time and dawn is looked upon as heavenly, the eyes before you will open and you shall see the shadow that forever looms over my soul.

"The Years Have Not Taken"

The years have not taken
Your softness of voice,
The tenderness of your touch,
at which I wonder much.

Movements not yet taxed by age
Innocent beauty
Still a girl, new-bloomed
Unmarked by time.

To watch you is to witness
Life's greatest reason
Meaning is made of swingsets,
Braids, ice cream, and lips.

World by string, weightless
Mime of your heart
You direct it with childlike intentions
Where care lies undiscovered
Beneath the calliope's call,
Cotton candy, carousels, and October stars.

Time's bitterness untasted
Face still free of distortion
Life still sweet
Sweet as sugared strawberries.

The years have not taken
Your perfection, your smile,
My love for you.

Shawn McMillan

The Child's Rhyme

They came through
the fireplace and built
their homes on the hearth
I threw water on them but
they did not die

The water I threw rolled off
their backs Now they are
angry they screamble towards
me on old cut off fingers I
can see the bristling velcro fur the
glass shard fangs sparkle
They seem Raggedy-Ann dolls
constrcted from artificial limbs
and sinews found in the dusty
trunks of my attic

Now the legs pinprick me
as they race to my throat
Finally a fantastic original death
I can feel all the pain
They
are the perfect
accommodating killers the
course rank venom flows
steadily through me I lift
my head to scream but instead
I sing

*Ring around the roses
Pocket full of posies
Ashes
Ashes
We all fall down*

Rob Brosman

Barbara Owen

for a laze of summer

sunlight warms my face
and foot
which
is cooled by a stream of
earthblood
the bitter taste of violet
sweet in
thought
feeds a nonexistent
hunger
soft grass pillows my
head and I
float
into the laze of
summer

To the Ocean

I walk in triumph to the shore, unaided,
weary,
The roar of the majestic ocean echoes
in my head, yet I see only rock and sand.
The desert sun sealds my exposed baek and
I burn
While the warm, relentless brecze torments
my parched lips
Oh, for a glass of water--or the perfect
cure of a sight of the miracle ocean
A beachball bounces in my mind, random and
free and alive
At the beginning I felt I was that ball, but
no more
Now I am merely a wanderer, mindless,
obsessed by the pursuit of the ocean.

Jack Vardy

Rainfall

The rain came beating down today
 like a song
It came in resounding choruses
 echoing off the sidewalks
 and stones
 and walls and glass
I watched in stunned silence
 as people hustle by
clutching their umbrellas like rosary beads
 and bowing their heads in the rain
 I run past them
They watch as my feet kick up
 mud and water
I cannot stop to help them
 for I have already passed them by.

Richard O'Hara

THE SUN AND THE MOON

I'm in love with the moon.
Pale and shy,
his subtle laughter
lifts my spirits and brightens my nights.
The glow of his smiling face
lulls me to sleep each night.
I'm in love with the sun.
In the morning,
His loving fingers tickle me awake.
He is beautiful and bright
sharing his warmth with everyone.
I sigh as he leaves,
only to laugh again with the moon.

Caryn Clark

SNAKELADY

Wicked charmer
wrapped
in scales.
Tongues
flick
sinful kiss.
Writhe with the spirit
of the serpent.

Dance of seduction
entwined
on the floor
lost within
the pit.

She coaxes
she crawls
she growls
she gnaws
she licks
she paws
she spits
she calls.

Sinful dancer
has stolen my
wicked soul.
As all snakes
are charmed
and stand
erect.

Steven Todd Atchison

If I reach out my hand
 don't take it.
I'll only pull you into pain.
 I tell you now,
while I can.

Beware and forewarned,
 For I have no control.
Only those I love are close
 enough
To feel my wrath.

When it is unchained
 I do not discriminate
The more unrestrained I share
 my care--the more
Generous I give hate
 and pain,
 and the

Burning can be yours also
 I have more than my share.
So, don't touch me.
 I'll bite. And one cannot be
Sure if my madness is catching.

My mouth doesn't foam.
 Symptoms are not evident.
You wouldn't know if I didn't tell you.
 So I tell you not to answer my
Calls for help, I've already drowned.

Barbara Owen

Incident Report

Chris F. Alexander

Incident: Malicious Disfigurement and Abduction

Date: September 24, 1992

Complainant: The State of South Carolina

Victim: Unidentified white male, 5'8", 160 pounds

Subject: unknown

Narrative:

I received a call at 04:43 on September 24, 1992 from the Oconee County Hospital concerning a displaced paraplegic white male that had been abandoned outside the emergency room in a wheelchair.

When I arrived at the hospital, the doctor on duty, Gerald D. Cullen, M.D., presented me with a letter that had been left with the abandoned man. I was shown to the room where the man was being treated. The man I saw was grossly disfigured. His face was scarred over completely. Dr. Cullen said that the scars were a result of burns in the third degree, suffered approximately six to eight weeks before the incident. The eyelids (or more exactly, the remnants thereof) had been sewn together. The nose had been broken and severely burned internally. The teeth had all been pulled and the jaw broken in four places. The tongue had been amputated, and an incision scar, stitches recently removed, was evident in the roof of the mouth. The head was shaved. Burn scars covered all finger and toe prints. The wheelchair was dusted for fingerprints: none were found. The victim was said to have had a catheter in place at the time of his arrival. At this time the victim is in stable condition and is being fed by a tube that enters the stomach through the mouth.

The only evidence held by the state in this case to date is the letter that was left behind with the victim. No witnesses of the abandonment have been found. The victim is a Caucasian male, probably with dark brown hair (judging from body hair). Eye

color (if eyes exist) is not yet known. His blood type is A positive. Due to the removal of all dental-work and prints, and as a result of the gross disfigurement, identification would seem virtually impossible. Dr. Cullen said that the ears of the subject were burned internally and that no response to any auditory stimuli has been witnessed to date. A copy of the aforesaid evidence is included with this incident report. The original copy, as well as the subject's clothing, is currently being examined in the laboratory for evidence concerning the identity of any suspect(s).

It is my opinion that the perpetrator of this crime is psychotic and dangerous. The language of the enclosed letter, the nature of the disfigurement and the apparent recovery of the victim would indicate that the perpetrator is, as is stated in the letter, an M.D., probably, as stated, a neurosurgeon. It is also a possibility, in my opinion, that the subject was abducted from a medical facility and that the letter is purely fictional. If no evidence is recovered in the laboratory concerning the perpetrators of this crime, it is my suggestion that the case remain open and that the records go on file as unsolved until such time as medical personnel establish some form of communication with the victim.

Reid H. Chase, Oconee Co. Deputy, Badge No. 144

To Whom it may concern,

*He's a real nowhere man,
Living in his nowhere land,
Making all his nowhere plans for nobody.*

*Doesn't have a point of view,
Knows not where he's going to.
Isn't he a bit like you and me?*

The Beatles

It was in the junior year of my undergraduate studies that I met the Nowhere Man. He was quite normal then, with one exception: he had a total disregard for the feelings of others. Justice was, for him, arbitrary, a product of his own making. Apparently no one had ever called his bluff.

He was a rich man then. He had it all: a booming business, a beautiful family, plenty of money--all the luxuries that make sane people happy. He had reached a plateau that many never reach. He should have been happy, but he would plow over the life of a less fortunate foe without consideration of any retaliations. Hence, he would forfeit the right to have anything except that which I believe cannot be justifiably taken--life, existence.

"We are never one person in this life."

He once said to me, "I will see to it that you suffer, and you will not do anything because you are not a man." My return at the time was a plea that he not start a war. I explained that our differences were trivial and that to initiate aggression over them would only result in counter attacks that might end in one of our deaths. He replied, "Yes, you're right. And the demise shall be your own."

At that time, I knew not what transgressions might be within the realm of the Nowhere Man's capacity for cruelty. Thus, I took my wife and daughter (then two years old) out of town to stay with a friend. Two days later, my country home, which had been in the family for over a hundred years, was torched to the ground while I was at school. So now you know how thoroughly I was injured. What you cannot ever achieve, however, is a correct assessment of the effect that it would have on my psyche. I was much like other college kids then (with the exception that I was married). I had hopes and fears, passions and goals, freedom and vices. I was getting used to myself in the way that young adults do upon reaching a homeostasis of hormones. The tidal-wave of self-realization that had confounded my youth was subsiding. I was even getting used to the idea that I was different from my peers (in

my status as a husband and father). Life was kind. There was, at that time, a sense of peace within me. This peace, I now know, was a kind of treaty which I had come to with myself. The Nowhere Man disrupted this treaty.

If you will, allow me now a bit of psychological blabbery: we are never one person in this life. We are a synthesis of what I think of as the "speaker" and the "listener." We live our entire lives talking to ourselves and evaluating the correctness of what we say to ourselves and evaluating the correctness of what we say to ourselves, at least we do when we are bound to society's expectations. The speaker is, I believe, what Freud was referring to when he described the id. The speaker is always telling us what our lustful animal instincts want. The listener, or Freud's "superego," consoles the speaker and takes over where the child inside wants to leave the world of what is socially acceptable. The listener makes the decisions of everyday life. The listener is the timid fool that controls the modern man. The speaker is savage and free, keen and sharp of senses, an untamed spirit, which has been lost in the advance of civilization. But the speakers of the world are never completely contained: they must be pacified. Thus, we have war, crime, religion, sports, the arts, and vices that seek to console the noble spirit that we enthrall within a feeble cocoon. The cocoon, that outward binding shell, is all that is left in the civilized member of society, and as the average person utilizes only a small portion of his or her brain, likewise the constraints of society allow most to profit from an even small fraction of his or her spirit.

The madness that the Nowhere Man released in me did not grow solely from the destruction of my material wealth. It was the audacity that radiated from him that sickened and excited my heart to madness and agitated my perversions. I grew to know his disease. He had allowed his to have its way with me. There was something there that I admired. He came upon me at such a fragile time and disrupted a balance that still teetered in the making. The balancing process was, I think, the formation of my soul.

It was during this time of growing madness that I broke my ties with the listener. I let go my family. I made a new vow. I was now married to the Nowhere Man. He was now my mentor. He was

my savior. My hate for him assumed the bliss that had been the love of my wife and daughter. Nights I would lie awake beside a loving spouse and turn a cold shoulder to her--rejeeting an angel to embrace a demon.

The listener within me bucked and screamed in terror. He was losing control. I was wearing him down. However, I don't believe he ever really died. I think he went into a kind of remission. He was webbed within a cocoon as all of the pitiful people of the world web their noble sides. The side which lives free in me is now the speaker. I am strong. I am a neurosurgeon, a respected man of the world, an accomplished intellectual. I stand in triumph over all that makes your pitiful world of luxuries so timid and so subject to the anger and frustration of a captive spirit. I have learned the ways around the traps that your world has set for me. I am a master thief, inching through a labyrinth of snags and pits.

I have manifested my nature in the Nowhere Man. He is my trophy. I give him to you as an offering. He represents my freedom. He, like me, is free of your world. Study him well for his is now, as you would have him, tamed. He is removed from this world. No sight, no sound, no smell, taste or touch will ever disturb him. He is my masterpiece. He is art in its purest form. He comprehends himself. Apollonian and Dionysian arguments are solved within him. He is now in perfect balance with himself. He may talk and listen in peace. He may make war within himself forever, or he may embrace himself upon tiring of the struggle. He lives. Never forget that, as he is now yours. He sleeps and awakens in his dark abyss. He is in eternity. There is no pain for him if he can find peace within himself. This is my revenge: I have left it up to him to decide if this fate is his demise. He will retain his sanity if, and only if, he will continue to talk and listen until his life ends, painless, like a light-switch being flipped in some black hole of consciousness. If he succeeds, he will be more fulfilled than you, the listeners, or I, the speaker, can be alone and separated from ourselves in this world of colors and sounds, tastes and smells, feelings and distractions.

The Nowhere Man has gone to the spirit world. Like the dead, he is removed from all contact with us, but he is not removed

from all contact with us, but he is not removed from himself. He will make his existence its own heaven or hell. I have killed him in a way that murder would never have achieved. I have made certain that he will experience an afterlife that I could not be sure of in the event of his death.

"He is art in its purest form."

Perhaps, in closing, I should attempt to further your understanding of my feelings for the Nowhere Man. I have made concrete the vows that I set forth many years ago and pledged to the Nowhere Man upon his capture. They are here in writing for all the world to see. There are in diametrical opposition to all that you call love, yet they are the basis for a binding relationship, one that is now fulfilled. I hope that you, who have inherited the Nowhere Man, will go to him frequently. Look at him. Philosophize over him. Most of all, consider what he represents: union, art for art's sake, union, art for art's sake, embodied in life for life's sake. I have struggled in a world that is allied against me so that I show him and all the world that no person is to be taken for a timid fool, too socialized and broken by the world to allow his or her spirit to be free and fly with the eagles as I am now going to do. I hope to become whole in this world like the Nowhere Man may now become whole in his. It is time to break the cocoon and release the other one to fly, live, battle, and die within me. Neither of us shall be dominant, I hope. If we succeed in this treaty, I will not see your world again. If he overtakes me, I may return to confess to you of what he thinks are my wrongs--this will not occur; I have already proven who is the stronger of us. If I am forced to enthrall him again, God only knows what road of expression I may next take. For now I am off to the wilderness to find my truth, as the Nowhere Man is finding his. I leave you with my vows of vengeance, now fulfilled:

*My dearest Nowhere Man,
As that of Fortunato(1),
such is your destiny:
not that the love of wine shall lead you,
blundering, half blind with drunkenness to your fate,
but on the sands of time shall you ride,
deceived by a supposed forgiveness.
Thus my vengeance shall be complete,
and impunity shall warm my very soul.
The time shall mold my hate,
twisting and blossoming,
a black rose of death,
until alas it is folded backwards down upon you.
As it is a true hate that I hold you for Nowhere Man,
so shall it mature with time
into its complete malignancy,
a pus-filled tumor,
interring my blackened heart,
but not my adept and plotting mind.
So when you are awakened some years hence, and you are shocked into
the pure white blankness
that serves to cushion your mind
from a horrible pounding blow of grief and terror,
which shall only deepen in the void of eternity,
then, I beseech you to remember me Nowhere Man,
as your soul eries out in madness and helplessness.
It is for this end that I bestow upon you
this solemn pact.
Pass well the years Nowhere Man.
Prepare yourself to meet yourself
in the barren desert of the mind,
and I will prepare myself
to assure you safe passage.
Until then Nowhere Man, until then,
I am yours in the common spirit of hate.*

Dr. Montresor (the speaker)

1) from Edgar Allen Poe's "The Cask of Amontillado." He is led into a catacomb and entombed alive by the protagonist, Montresor.

Shadow Monger

Your focus
Never found me
Your attention
Never graced me
Your smile
Never spoke to me
Yet your walk
Read like a poem
To my mind
And your perfume
Caressed me
In your flooded wake
And your hair
Waved to my presence
Yes you know me
I stalk your shadow
And live to love
What I will never have

Chris Woodall

The Wheat Chariot

I remember my shallow sea at twilight,
the rows flowing back with the wind
and waves of wheat
turning brown then gold as they bent.

I had travelled the sea like Moses had,
walking the dry path between waves,
dust rising at my footsteps and moving before me like God's cloud
parting the waters.

I found the shore abruptly--
saw the path close up as I walked away.
I sat the fence
and let the wheat waves tickle my toes.

A maize colored moon settled over the sea
back where the trees seemed like mountains
and I watched them almost move
in the building wind.

A choked sound came from the rows--
the roof of a red Ford truck
pushed its way through and towards my place,
and I caught the smell of fuel and smoke.

I could see him, red-faced
and cursing the tall plants that kept him slow,
his straw hat pushed back
so the green plastic visor did no good.

He squinted towards me and yelled something,
pushed out of the rows to the fence.
"There's a storm comin', girl!"

I got up to leave,
looked back from the truck to the shirring sea,
wondered if the Pharoah had cursed the water like
my uncle cursed the wheat,
Wondered if God had heard.

Heather Anese Reid

Heather Anese Reid

I need an anchor to love you

Your eyes have held my heart
for years,
and when your arms reach me I am drowning,
floundering for a hold somewhere.
I understand your solitude,
your armor of tears that keeps
the shore of your soul distant,
unreachable.
I know your silence, your reef of ragged pain:
love is a fatal sea.
But those eyes, your failing eyes hold me,
make me cross those seas to find you,
falling and falling across such dead waters,
drowning in your alone.

My Desire

are these the pangs of misery; or of glory!
I know not for to experience a joy for long
for oft i fall into pits of pain--
with hope and longing i swear to live
long till the glow in myself bursts and
spreads to wrap her all into one
they shall sing my glory again for long:
or else my desires and i shall die
unwept unhonored and unsung

baradwaja

The Cafe Where I Almost Died

The candles slowly burn
In the Chianti bottles.
Casting shadows
Of depression and lost love.

Aging walls
Chipped brick
Crumbles like drying tears.
The napkins properly folded
The waitress
Brings me silence and serenity.

I order another beer.

Silently reading
Lost among the pages
I don't care to dwell.
This is not Hemingway's
Well lighted place.

A fellow can be alone here
But the shadows from
The licking candle flames
Cast souls on the crumbling brick.
Some dance lonely and slow
Others jump with life.

A couple in the corner
Are finding lust
In their salads.
Eating madly

But without passion.
Lust is crisp.
Immediate,
Tossed.
Sometimes the prelude
To love.
Alone
Lust is nourishing
But not complete.

I watch the lovers
Exchange souls
Through their kisses.
But I'll never tell.
I had a love, who ate my soul.
She gave me nothing in return.

My body limp
From its drunken baptism.
The wine burning my soul.
My heart slowly beating,
Starving,
For no one.

Poetry is my resurrection
For it wasn't love
That saved me here
On the night
I almost died.

Steven Todd Atehison

The Vault

Gyrating, twisting, churning
Music pulsing, spurring
Bodies in staccato flight.
He can almost see the light,

From the outside shining in--
to the pit of dancing sin,
Where tormented youth gone wild,
Nature's curse, the child

Rose above the streaming mass,
To try to break Heaven's glass.
So shattered it into shards,
Onto the faces upturned in the yards,

Of Surrey, Gorky, and Central Park.
Shafts of light shine through the dark,
Onto the consciences of the youths,
On the dance floor, in drugstore booths

Freed from tracing the trodden path,
Thus incurring Satan's wrath.
The evils in them diminished at last,
The stripling's flag flies at full mast.

Kelly Morrison

In the Mean Time

Spring is the time
of blossoms and flowers,
but come May my time will end.

Gabriel will blow his horn
from atop the tower
to tell us that it's over.

The big clock will stop;
Quentin's watch will run down,
and I'll have made my leap of faith.

I'll live eternally condemned
to the suburbs
stuck in some middle class Hell,
but I'll live.

The greatness you and I once dreamed of
is no longer within reach.
I realize this,
but I do not accept it as defeat.

Tell me the answers, father.
You and your kind have dealt my cards
from a stacked deck.

You've been where
I'm about to go,
and dammit I'm scared.

Were you afraid
as I am now?
For once, please comfort me.

Jeremy Campbell

The Quiet

There is a way with willows,
And whispering sunshine,
Softly gathering tidal strength
From the gravity of the quiet.



The creak of your rocking chair
Against the bone-whitened wood of the porch,
And the smoky-rose curtains of home
Speak in small sounds.

In the tobacco warm air of Southern-porch twilights
The roar of your hot eyes
Cracks open this uneasy quiet
With the electricity of mind words.

I look into the long, green, pines
Far away in the forest of my fog--
A pinecone drops with a silence
And my eyes slide loudly back into yours.



The willows keep sighing
Into the grave silence of ending.


Leigh G. Moody

My Lily

My lily
In this spring
The thoughts
That rage me so
Her white
Demures the sky
Her fragrance
Blushes the air
Her petals
Tender the grass
And her presence
Nurtures dawn
My lily
In this spring
Soothe say me why
Your kisses
Adorn my cheeks
And your expressions
Constitute my consumption
For lilies are angels
And angels
The fabric of heaven.

Chris Woodall

If you feel inspired, or you just want to write, here's your own OFFICIAL CHRONICLE PAGE to do with as you will.



If you like the way your work looks in a magazine, send it to us so we can look it over. Who knows, it may be in EVERYONE'S CHRONICLE next fall. Our address is:

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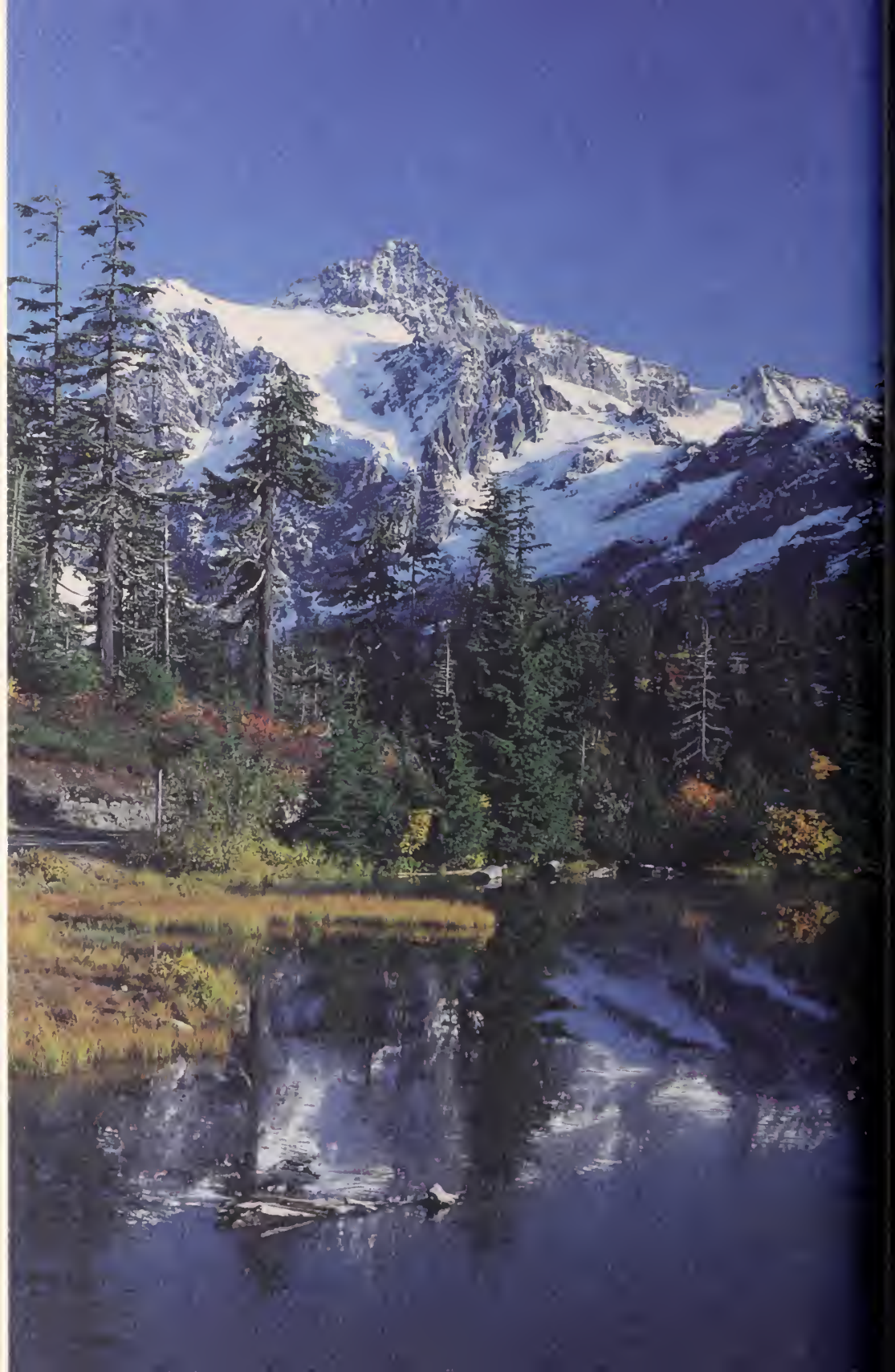
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Special Thanks To...

Susan Eller	Administrative Assistant
The Tiger	Use of Laser Printer
R.L. Bryan	Printer

As Clemson University's official art and literary magazine, Chronicle offers a central medium for publication of original works produced by students, faculty, and staff. Address all submissions and correspondence to: Chronicle, Box 2187, Clemson, SC. 29632-2187.

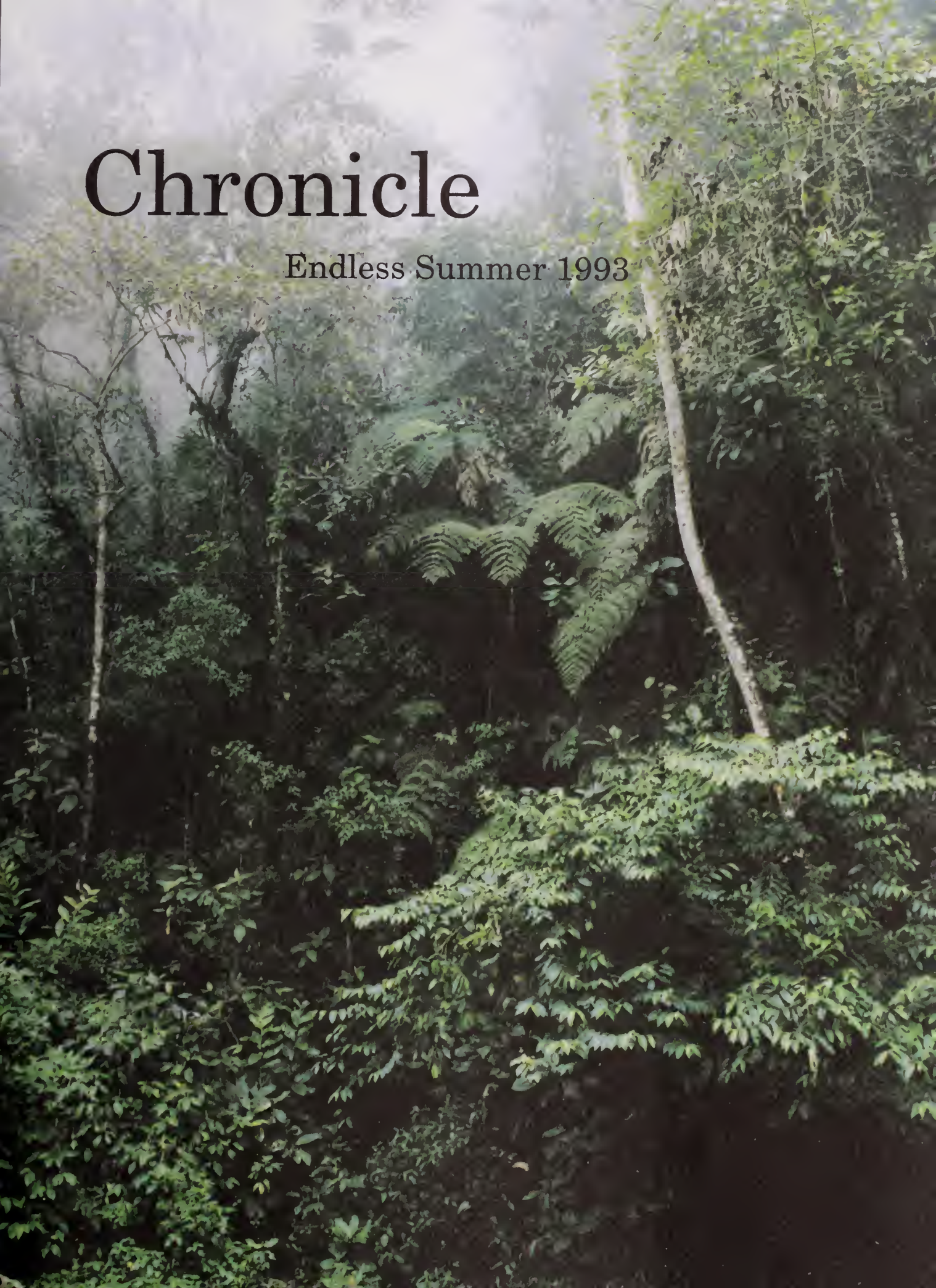
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Chronicle

Endless Summer 1993



from the Editor

"Let down the curtain!
Hamlet dies each night
But is always revived.
Love, too, requires genius."

--from "A Month in Summer" by Carolyn Kizer

I came across this quote while reading a collection of poems entitled Mermaids in the Basement: Poems for Women. It never occurred to me before (even though it should be painfully obvious) why professors make you write papers in the literary present. When we finish a book, and close the cover, the experience for us is over, but the possibility of experience is never finished. There will always be The Catcher in the Rye, Catch 22, Brave New World, and Hamlet. Someone will always be reading these and all books for the first time, and gleaning from them whatever it is that they are searching for. It seems to me that the ultimate teacher, and what subtly shapes the ideals of people is a conglomeration of reading experience.

The probability that all of America hangs on the written word should be both a heady incentive and a terrifying deterrent to writers. It is a wonderful dream that someone will walk up to you twenty years from now and say that your book affected their lives, but then you have to wonder, how?

In Mermaids. . . Kizer narrates her experiences with other women, especially her mother. I come to these poems with my own experiences, and though I cannot relate exactly to them as she felt when she wrote, I can re-live the memories or thoughts they evoke and come to a separate understanding of Kizer's meaning. She influences me years after the writing, and though she will never know me, I have a small piece of her. As a writer, I feel strongly that though They (they being the great unnamed gods of literature we all seem to listen to) say once you've written something, it is no longer yours, it remains constantly yours in the way that it influences other people.

When we write, then, and when other people read our work, there is a communication that goes on via the literature that influences the reader even when s/he is not aware of it. Maybe that explains why The Catcher in the Rye by J.D. Salinger was listed as the number one book in a recent magazine survey for "the book that most influenced my life." Some of the respondents were not sure exactly why the book sticks in their minds, but most of them read it first as teenagers. For those of you who haven't read it, the book deals majorly with the psychological growing pains of Holden, the teenage main character. Maybe Holden's experiences touched a cord somewhere in those readers to cause them to remember it so well many years later.

Though we may not remember the names of the people who have influenced our thinking through books, we will remember some things, like that someone once said "How do I love thee, let me count the ways" (Elizabeth Barrett Browning in Sonnets From The Portuguese) or "Shall I compare thee to a summer's day" (Shakespeare in one of his sonnets). I guess, in the end, that that is all a writer can hope for, that sometime, "ages and ages hence" (Robert Frost), someone will remember what we've said.

Heather Anese Reid

So flows in dark caves, dries away,
What would have brimmed from bank to bank,
Kissing the fields you turned to stone,
Under the boughs your axes broke.
And you blame streams for thinning out,
Plundered by man's insatiate want?

Rejoice when a faint music rises
Out of a brackish clump of weeds,
Out of the marsh at ocean-side,
Out of the oil-stained river's gleam,
By the long causeways and gray piers
Your civilizing lusts have made.

--from "Muse of Water" by Carolyn Kizer



Untitled by Andrew R. Coyne

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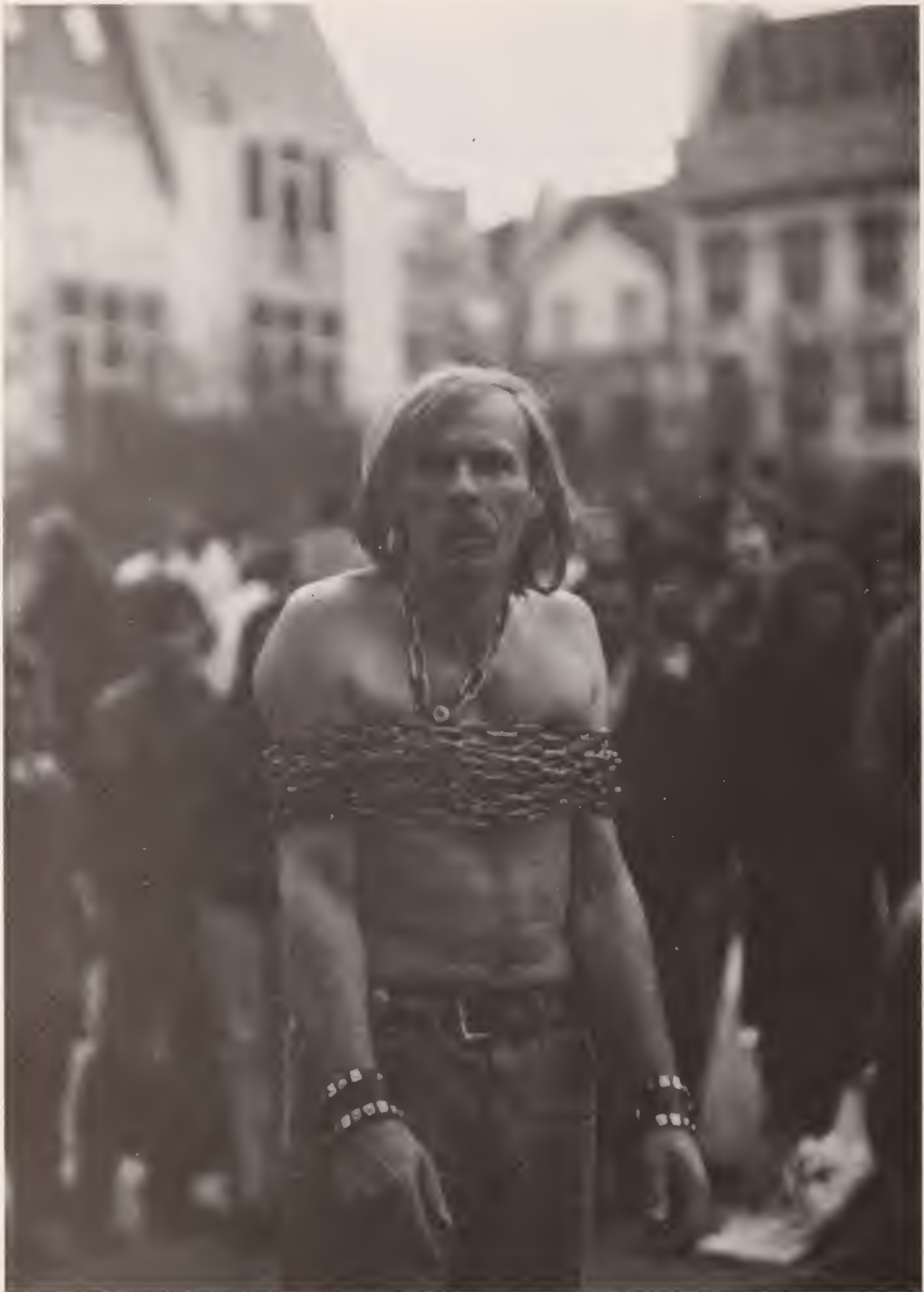
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"Au Centre Pompidou" by Andrew R. Coyne

Second Coming

John Holladay

The sky opened up to herald
Our return.

The Dead Men never gave up on Jerry
He laid in waiting for the thirty year reunion
The rolling smoke created a crystal ball
A question of what JFK might have been
Makes us recreate Camelot.

Garcia's sons of Seattle are a change
But just the same voice as Jimi
Rise up and question the Man
Take not one thought for granted
Think to battle the politicians' rhetoric
Don't accept battle at face propaganda value.

Here we come with tie-dyed minds
Sandals showing our unashamed toes
Our unkempt hair rebels again
Give us Woodstock, part 2, in another field
The buses taking us there may be more advanced
But the minds enclosed still want to change the world.

Fog

Chris Lockett

The seep of the morning
had bruised the sun
into a corner,

its voice howling
into the muted
damp.

The twinkling hush
of a headlight's
hithering twitch

splintered the mist
with a pulsing roar,
filling my ears
like liquid.

In the roadside air,
I flung strides against
the gravel,

until the amber
stench of whiskey
wept through my skin.

Chopping Wood

Molly Kathleen Burnett

He had lived in the sewer for
so long that the wind of the
outside world made him sick and
dead.

He used to take pictures of the
slums in Charleston, but they
took his camera, broke the lens,
and threw his film into the ocean.

He crawled down the drain
into the sewer; the wind was
thin and crept into his blood
through the cracks in his elbows and
his knees.

They stuck their arms through the
pipes and pulled him out--all
skinny and wet, put him to work--
chopping wood.

The wind above ground is so
much wilder than that of below.
It comes in great waves that rip
off your clothes and then your skin
and leaves you--a pile of bones,
frozen and dry like clothes on the line
in winter.

Lena

Barbara Owen

Lena could feel the rough bark of the tree through the thin material of her shirt. The oak towered over her trembling form like a wise, old woman, reaching skyward with arms swathed in green gossamer. The harsh moonlight filtered by venomous clouds cast a mystery over the scene. The flitting shadows produced by the play of the used cotton clouds were reflected in the still lake surrounding the fairytale castle less than two hundred yards from the tree.

Lena's eyes rose from the contemplation of her hands only to become transfixed by the castle. She took a hesitant step towards the safety of shelter. A wind, from nowhere and to nowhere, brought forth whisperings from the branches of the tree, pleas of restraint that fell on unhearing ears. Lena's slow steps carried her to the edge of the tree's domain. She stood on the outermost root that furrowed the arid, deathly sand and looked with longing in her eyes to home.

Moving with determination she strode into the black desert. The bloated moon wearing it's pasty grin watched as the woman ran frantically, the wind ripping at her hair.

The shadows grew claws and turned death red eyes upon Lena. She saw them and ran harder, but they closed on her--their carrion scented breath and horrifying cries overwhelming her senses. One moved directly in front of her , blotting out the sky and filling her vision with an oozing body of hate.

As the monster rose above her the compelling power of the castle was removed from her mind's eye. Lena stopped for a moment, and the dripping hands of the monster hung, suspended for that moment. Fear pulsed ice hot through her veins, she screamed and ran.

Black sand scattered by her feet was the only thing chasing Lena back to the shelter of the tree. She pressed herself to the comforting bark, her sobbing accompanied by the welcoming murmurs of the leaves. Then she eased slowly down into a kneeling position. Clinging to her only comfort in her private horror world she fashioned for herself she shifted around the tree, then leaned back against it.

As she cried she felt the pull of the unobtainable haven on the lake in the back of her mind. Lena knew that she would run, as she had been running for the last year. The mad dash to the edge of sanity then the rapid retreat from the monsters of her mind. But she could not risk the possibility of their reality and a horrible subsequential death. No, she would stare at her hands and think of that morning, the one where she watched the sun rise with her love.

The ribbons of morning unfurled in her mind. Then she watched the lurid moon dip towards the black desert horizon. It hovered close enough to kiss the curve of Lena's world then started it's ascent back to the apex. And Lena knew the day would never come. Darkness reigned in her world. The shadows would dance, and she would run again.

Eulogy

Helene M. Kastinger Riley

Harbingers of spring
sweet melodies fragrant with
memories caressing a brittle breath
gently I harbor sorrow

No grievances disrupting
nature beckoning joyous
resurrection singing near
though I grieve

Not death parted
our union nor sickness
nor misfortune or fate
but I mourn

Shedding my tears I believe
in my creed there is hope
that two can be one being two
I believe shedding my tears

The Wife of Boaz Threshing

Heather Anese Reid

I have reached Ruth's crossroads.
You call me down to the Delta,
thin green and water lapping at my heels,
a poor wind moaning in the night;
I lie awake with the reedy hum of crickets
and your heavy breath in my ear.

My heart, though, lifts,
takes from the water like an egret deep in Mississippi;
a stirring, gathering of breath
pulls me out of the hum and I hear a higher singing--
a something calling me, brighter than your voice,
near brighter than my love

for you. I cannot leave
but I wither and fade
with this land, our culture, my home.
My children are gone and I am lost.

Still you hold me,
and an eagle's heart is a sparrow to your will.
My egret's wings are broken
and I flounder in this hot river,
flowing slow into age like my house into the swamp,
mired for your to come back to.

You move,
shift your arm around my waist
and pull in with a grunt
like the night thirty years ago
when I gave you my heart,
prophesying: "Whither thou goest, I will go."



"The Road Less Traveled" anonymous

Off Limits

Helene M. Kastinger Riley

My son Jesse is bright
he was a Merit Scholar finalist
and got a scholarship to Brown
Too bad he decided
not to go to college

He is a dishwasher now in Key West
Moved there because it's warm
and lets him run year round
When people ask I say
he's finding himself
Not into drugs or into
any kind of trouble or something
and my eyes are apologetic and ask
for understanding

Chrissie likes to hit
a little white ball around the court
she spends all her time
just doing that
and her Mom says
why doesn't she settle down
and get married or something
She's such a pretty girl

Arnie is into bodybuilding
all day he admires himself
in the mirror and flexes
his muscles lifting weights
His dad doesn't understand
why he doesn't get a job
as an accountant or something
useful in society

Billie Joel is with the boys again
playing piano and singing
that awful music
instead of doing
something worthwhile
All those years of piano lessons
and now he just beats
the shit out of those keys

Jesse is here
for Christmas but also because
there's a race in Charlotte
He's going to enter the marathon
marathoners mature late
and he's only 24

He's been watching his diet
eating fibers and carbohydrates
and all that stuff
spurning my Christmas turkey
it's part of conditioning
running barefoot in freezing rain
without a shirt even
it helps for publicity
and conditions your body
to take the pain

I'm a poet
of sorts
Not that I don't know my limitations
My real job
is being a teacher and scholar
I only poet in my spare time
of course, while doing
something useful in society
working hard and
learning to formulate
the words
My son THE RUNNER

Moon Pie Mary Anne

Chris Lockett

As Camille's train faded down the northbound tracks, a chorus of cold-hammered clangs and thunders chasing it, I walked a few steps behind it and turned away. The last blast of a creosote and grease heavy wind struck me full in the face. I inhaled deeply and held it until it burned. "That same wind will trail her all the way back to Virginia," I told myself and whispered "If the wind means me, I'm here," letting the wind carry the words from my mouth.

Eleven o'clock Saturday night train depots here in January's red clay mist of Clemson, South Carolina are as lonesome as the grave. I withdrew the harmonica from my overcoat pocket and raised it to my mouth. It's cold metallic taste was stronger than usual and clashed violently with the taste of Camille that lingered on my lips. I blew long sorrowful notes that played a mournful counterpoint against the receding whistles of the northbound. The crunch of grey rail yard gravel locking into place beneath my boots kept an irregular rhythm as I walked back to the platform and sat heavily upon the wrought iron and wood of a bench. The arm rest had been rubbed smooth with age. "How many people have sat here on this same bench and felt the same way I have?" I wondered. I took a cold comfort in imagining the countless other miseries who had sat there before I had. "Misery doesn't only love company, it loves miserable company," I thought.

"Four months. . .what am I gonna do with myself for four months?" I asked myself. Not wanting to depress myself any further, I entertained the idea of heading downtown before last call. "Nah, I don't know anyone in Nick's anymore, besides, they only serve beer there, maybe TD's, but a meat market right now is the last thing I need to experience. Shit, doesn't Clemson have a depressing little dive whose only 'clientele' are people who just want to get annihilated? I was talking out loud now. I was in dire need of a bar without a stereotype and was depressing myself even further knowing that one did not exist here.

The harp had warmed a little in my hands, so I began to play. "Dirty Old Town" by the Pogues came out. I had not deliberately thought of playing the tune, but that's what the harp played so I continued. I was about midway through the third verse when I noticed the singing. The harp was ringing out so loudly I thought it was myself singing in my head.

*I heard a siren at the docks
I saw a train set the night on fire
I smelled the spring on the smoggy
wind*

The voice was definitely not mine. It was in perfect key; whereas, my singing style was derived from the Bob Dylan/Tom Waits school of ravaged growling. I blew the harp softer now, letting the voice rise so I could determine where it was coming from. I turned around and knelt on the bench to look inside the window of the depot's waiting room. The lights were out and the only person I saw was myself reflected in the glass. I was sure the voice was singing from inside reflected in the glass. I was sure the voice was singing from inside the waiting room, but seeing no one there, I turned around and faced the tracks again and quietly played the next verse. The singing within the room continued:

*I met my love by the gasworks wall
Dreamed a dream by the old canal
Kissed my girl by the factory wall
Dirty old town, dirty old town*

I stopped playing and the singing stopped. I turned around in the bench again and smiled at the emptiness. A blue spark within the room, roughly where I remembered a bench being, grew into a small flame and was raised by a hand to a mouth, out of which dangled a cigarette. The cigarette's cherry red tip added a remote glow to the light of the match falling softly over her face. She held the cigarette away from her face in her right hand, raised the burning down match to her lips and blew it out. I entered the room without turning on the light.

"Pogue mahone!" she said into the dark.

"Kiss my ass? Is that a proposition?" I asked.

"So. You know Gaelic?"

"Enough to know when I'm being insulted. You have an incredible voice" I blurted out without time to properly construct the sentence with any dignity.

"That was no insult. So tell me, why are you here?"

"I just put my girlfriend on the train to virginia. Why are. . .?"

"The train left almost an hour ago. Why are you still here?"

"Probably for the same reason you're here," I answered. I had time to think about that response.

"I doubt it."

"Doubt what?"

"I doubt your motivation is the same for being here as mine is."

"Well, if you're here because this is one of the loneliest places in this town, and a great place to sit and think, then we've got something in common."

"Like I said. . ." said the voice as she stood up and circled the room. "Our motivations are not the same. You are here because you can't stand the downtown scene because it depresses you. . .I"

"You were here the whole time I was out babbling to myself on the platform, weren't you?"

"Your voice carries. Like I was saying, I'm here for a different reason." she said as her footsteps walked themselves around behind me. Were this D.C., New York, L.A., or any other city in America where I would have had my guard up, I would have gotten up and walked to the window and look for a gun or a knife in her hand. Chances are, were I back in the city, I wouldn't have even entered the room. But here in Clemson, I just sat there, not feeling suspicion even. This is the kind of place where you can take almost everything at face value.

"I am here," she said while flipping the light switch, "because back home in New York, there's a train that runs past

my house about this time every night. I was feeling nostalgic." In the light now, while sitting opposite me on her bench, her dark hair falling over her right eye, she snuffed out her cigarette and replaced it within the pack. "I hate to litter," she said. "You want one?"

"Yeah. I usually don't smoke, though."

"Well, we don't want to ruin your health, so, let's see here... How 'bout a Moon Pie?" she smiled.

"Chocolate? Christ I haven't had a Moon Pie in years!"

"Yeah, well. While I was reliving a part of my childhood... So how did they meet?" she said, holding out her arm and offering me the Moon Pie.

"How did who meet?"

She took a bite of another Moon Pie she had kept for herself in her bag. "How did your parents meet?"

Since she was from the city and she seemed at ease with the question she had asked, I obliged her with an answer, knowing almost certainly she had a story she wanted to tell me about her parents' meeting. "Well," I said, drawing up my knees beneath me to sit as she did, Indian style, on the bench, "Rachel was about three years older than Doc."

"You call your parents by their first names?" she asked.

"Only when I'm not around them. They were both teachers. Doc was fresh out of the military and living back in his hometown, Dumfries, Virginia."

"There's a Dumfries, Scotland, too, you know."

"Yeah, most of my ancestors are from there. They're sister cities. Doc told me a couple of years ago that he first saw her at a school dance they both had to chaperone. Doc noticed that Rachel couldn't dance to save her life. So, he offered to give her a dancing lesson after the kids had left. Rachel, being on the

faculty longer than him, and being offended by his remarks, told him, very politely Doc said, 'Get the hell away from me.' Doc was smitten, so was Rachel, but it took them another six months to speak to each other civilly again.

"Did she ever get her dancing lesson?"

"You know, I'm not sure. Mom still can't dance, though. So what about you? How did your parents meet?"

"On Ellis Island. Dad's from Ireland..."

"Hence the Gaelic. Irish is the other blood line in me. Some German, too, but I don't admit to it."

"Yeah, Dad speaks Gaelic, but he grew up speaking English as a Dubliner, so when he came here, he was set. Mom, on the other hand, came from Iceland and spoke next to no English. She was in front of him in the immigration line. Like I said, her English was lousy, so the Irishman behind her, the man who became my father, helped her fill out her forms. The two went their separate ways into the city.

"How the hell did they ever find each other again in New York?"

"Mom was lost on the subway." Dad thought she looked familiar, so he spoke to her, found out where she lived, put her on the right train and since she knew almost no one in the city except some elderly aunts she was living with, Dad got her address. He helped her get settled and helped her find a job. By this time, he had spent so much time with her that he started falling in love with her. The rest is, as the cliché goes, history."

"How much history?"

"Three boys and a girl's worth of history."

"And what did they name this girl?" I asked.

"Mary Ann O'Day," she replied, raising her chin and tipping her head

slightly to the left, Ingrid Bergman style. She wiped the crumbs from her fingers and offered me her hand. I grasped it to shake, but it felt too light to squeeze, so I held it. She gripped my hand with surprising strength and stood over me, stretching out to her full height, slightly over six feet. She had half an inch on me.

"And how much history did your parents make?"

"Two boys, and an unofficially adopted older sister."

She was still holding my hand. "What did they name you?" she asked, giving my arm a gentle tug, gesturing that I stand.

"Christopher, officially."

"Greek for 'Christ bearer.' Hmmm." she said, placing her free hand on her chin like Rodin's thinker. "And what might your other names be?"

"I have one of the most pretentious names ever given...Christopher Winslow Lockett. Sounds like it should have 'the third' after it, doesn't it?"

"Hmmm, 'Christ Bearer' and 'Mother of Jesus' in the same South Carolina train depot. I think there's a story there someplace," she said while leading me out the door into the night. She stopped short at the edge of the platform and pointed a long finger to the north-bound tracks, now glistening with mist in the light of the moon seeping through the cloudbreaks. "It's all that way for you, isn't it?"

"Yes." I answered, my voice just a hoarse whisper spilling out of my mouth. "And for four months all she will be is a voice on the other end of the line." I withdrew my hand from hers, walked back to the wall and leaned against it. My back made a hollow thud as it struck the brick.

"Me, too." she said. "Me, too." She walked toward me, turned short of me and sat down on the bench beside me. "I didn't mean anything by it."

"What?"

"Holding on to your hand like that. I didn't mean anything by it."

"I didn't either. But I'm sorry if it bothered you." I answered, so that both of us could feel good about denying something that never happened instead of resting the responsibility squarely on the other's shoulders. I paused. "No. I'm not sorry. I don't feel any guilt! Shit, I went to shake your hand. It was a genuine act of friendship, and I feel guilty about it? What the hell am I denying? This isn't D.C. This isn't New York. Neither of us is out to kill the other. I'm supposed to unwind down here, enjoy the whole hospitality thing, so why am I reacting like such an uptight moron about this? I know nothing about you other than a great story about your genealogy, but you know what? I'm gonna say it. I think I could enjoy having you as a friend. There. I said it. I never would have said that back home. Hell, people can't even say it down here. I've said what's on my mind and feel good about it without having to rationalize the life out of it."

"You know, with as much psychological baggage as a person brings to anything, a book, a movie, a person, it's a fucking wonder any of us ever get along at all."

"You're absolutely right. We are the most studied generation ever, but what they study about us tells us more about them and their pathetic lives than they will ever know about us. If your dad hadn't pointed your mom in the right direction on the subway; if my mom hadn't told my dad to stuff it, they never would have gotten together. We never would have happened!" The last sentence hung in the air for a few seconds before we dismissed any purely romantic meanings it contained.

"If we could just strip away about three quarters of every social convention

that exists, we would be much better for it, don't you think? I mean, if someone would not judge me as a weirdo sitting alone in the dark at a train depot on a Saturday night, but as a fellow human being, we would probably have a pretty good chance of getting along, wouldn't we?"

"Yes, especially when you consider the real reason for someone discovering you here is that they were probably feeling just as lonely. In fact, if everybody downtown admitted to themselves and to each other that they were down in the bars to avoid being alone, maybe, just maybe, the faces might look a little brighter around here." We both knew that such honesty could not occur, but for two former strangers, we were willing to open up to one another without the gross mistrust with which we had been numbed.

Just then I thought of Camille sitting on the train, probably talking to somebody. I thought of the downtown bars jammed with sweaty bodies, hidden motives, and poor conversations. I thought of New York and D.C. and other cities, where in the midst of millions, someone is lonely tonight. I thought of Camille on the train meeting a new friend. And I preferred the image to the one of her isolating herself from conversation, truncating herself for an ideal that was no more threatened at her end of the tracks than was mine at this end.

I looked at Mary Anne, her face blank with her own thoughts, and smiled in her direction until she noticed me again. "Listen, if you're not doing anything with the rest of your night except sitting here in the dark, you wanna go get something to eat?"

"That'd be great. Dutch okay by you?"

"Yeah, you drive here or walk?"

"Walked."

"Great, I'm parked right over there.

I'll drive. I can drop you off later. Back here if you want."

"No, you can drop me off at my place. I wasn't looking forward to walking back in this cold anyway. Hey, can we stop off somewhere, first?"

"Uh oh. Where?"

"The Pantry. I wanted to grab something before you take me home tonight," she said with a curious smile wrinkling her eyes.

"And what might that be?"

"Moon Pies."

Bedlam's Offspring

Neal Baskin

The boy "plays" in the sand box. The Grains are his pawns-- controlled by his orders. He is the sovereign power here. He slides his hands into the sand and feels his warm, moist home. Manifestation of life. (life?) A girl intrudes on his territory. He acknowledges with silent disgust. She begins to ask absurd questions. "How old are you?" she asks. The boy acknowledges her with blood red eyes. (silence reigns) (I am the ageless one, young girl.) "Where do you go to school?" she probes. (I am a student of Hate!) The boy does not answer and spits on the flower minions that followed her here. "You hurt my feelings!" she responds. The boy silently smirks. (I didn't know you had any feelings.) The girl gets mad and throws one of his army men out of the sand box and into the deep jade abyss. The boy watches his precious slave take flight and land on "the outside." He blindly rushes to save him. His bare feet touch the ice-cold emerald life. The polar fire engulfs his body--the slivers of fear control his body momentarily. He escapes by jumping back into the box. Sand splashes into his eyes and they start bleeding. (The dishonest messengers. . .) The girl sees the dark red circles of the future and runs out of the box. She sees her flower slaves change into moldy stems of death. She is paralyzed. This horror lasts for a child's eternity (evil laughter fills sprouting ears.)

Vanquished by love

Baradwaja

the quietness of the night robbed by your glow
the stillness of my heart stirred by your touch
as I draw me into thyself--
for that very cherished moist touch of yours
so very insatiable yet so intoxicating
I seek for more to have my fill
of that warmth and peace, in you I find
like flints they hit, kindling the fire of passion
joy and peace insurmountable
no melody sweeter than thy hiss and moan
like the wind that carresses the black clouds
yonder over mountains and vales
I have conquered
but deep inside, my vanity
vanquished, shy and wet
beating a retreat into thyself
once more for glory, to seek thy love

The Birth of Something Between Us

Heather Anese Reid

I have traveled my days alone,
preferring to find the secrets
of ocean rocks and wheat fields
solitary,
conferring with blackbirds about the treasures I find--
my tiny thoughts.

When you walk with me at first I am silent,
and I mark the turn of a goldenrod at sunset,
the tracks of a pregnant Doe in the mud by the river
with only eyes.
To the blackbirds I whisper my new fears.

You shadowed me,
as cool as spring water and soft like feathers.
Your rustling calm fed me and I grew bold,
even nodding when you spoke my name,
touched the Doe's tracks.

I walked today far into the forest
along the water's edge to my wheat field,
and with you beside me I spread my arms,
say clearly,

"The wheat is my body, the river my soul,
and the faint doe's tracks my heart."
The blackbirds high overhead nod in assent
when you touch my arm.

Poem With Sleep In The Eyes

S.T. Atchison

Another night
shot to hell.
Left in
the bottom of some
forgotten bottle
of beer.

I'm left
here
alone.
I guess I
prefer it
this way.
Solitude
and the writing
it comes
better
when it's moments
like this.
The buzz
wearing off,
the lips
growing thin.
Nothing more
to drink
and all that's
left
is to watch
the fucking world
try to get
some sleep.

Let's forget
all we said
today.
Let's bandage up
the blackened eye.
Crazy bastards,
no heros of
mind.

No, I reach
for the matches
only to find
they're used up.
Tipping over
an empty bottle
I yawn
and reach
to turn out
the lights.

Elbow Macaroni

Ted Lee

Seated at the dinner table of life
I became unhappy at the servings
And stood up in protest.

But when I stood to scream
The bench on which I was seated
Tipped over and all my friends fell.

Now alone I eat
Happier than I once was I realized
There was more to go around.

While eating I choked
On a bone and with no one
There to help I turned blue and died.

"REM Friends"

John Holladay

I'm in the warm den of my friends
My companions and I just happy in innocence
Even though the world outside storms
Let's listen to happy music and dance
Not trying to manipulate minds or change politics
We understand that the planet is hard
Right now we just love the closeness
Of beating music and smiling drunks

The acoustic guitar cries our sorrows
We smile because the radio understands
Hug my opposite sex friend, only thinking love
Let's get up and sing for now
Tomorrow will bring the world of weight
Smoke filled rooms dance with beauty
These friends on my dirty carpet are pure
I hope they know that I love them

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As Clemson University's official art and literary magazine, Chronicle offers a central medium for publication of original works produced by students, faculty, staff, AND alumni. Address all submissions and correspondence to: Chronicle, Box 2187, Clemson, S.C. 29632-2187.

Student subscriptions are paid through student activity fees. Advertising rates are available upon request. Opinions expressed in Chronicle do not necessarily coincide with those of the student body, faculty, or administration. The Editors assume all responsibility for the opinions, should there be any in Chronicle. This magazine is printed on recycled paper using soy based ink and is recyclable with similarly based products.

Good news! The poets are not dead;
Not sleeping, nor malingering:
Have still a place to rest the head,
And space to spread a lovely wing.
Within this book as much is said;
Here Frost and snow and rain do sing;
Pity is told for all that's sped,
And love is sung for everything.

James Stephens: on A Further Range by Robert Frost

Chronicle

Fall 1993





From the Editor

There's one stable thing I've always counted on in life, only one because in a technological revolution it's hard to take anything for granted. Books. Plain old ordinary bound books. Most people probably give their existence little thought except when they have to buy them for classes or when they wish to be entertained by them (and with Sega and Nintendo there's little demand for other entertainment).

I have grown up with them all over my house; with an avid reader for a father I learned young to love them. The thing is, it's not only what's in them that's important, it's the books themselves, the binding to hold in the Twain, the Wolff, the Steinbeck. It doesn't matter if they're big or small, heavy or light, hard-back or paper-back, it's just the sensation of holding one that makes me feel like all is right with the world. You may laugh, but in a world of computers where things are up-graded every five minutes, the thought that the latest bestseller comes in the same basic package that the first novels did is at least marginally comforting.

That's why it disturbs me so greatly that there's talk of computerizing books. In this space-age vision you go to the library or a bookstore, flip through a file of disks, and take home a 3X5 floppy of any book that's ever been written. It is a novel idea (!!), and a well-stocked library could be the size of the Chronicle office (roughly 12' by 14'), but how can you go sit under a tree and read a disk? Oh sure, you can use a powerbook, but then you're back to where you started, only with one book and a thousand contents. If it's all the same to you, I'll keep my books, with their frayed edges and stained paper, the smell of the library clinging to them and inspiring me to write myself, much more than a cold piece of hardware on my lap would.

What I want to know is, what would they do with all the books in existence if they carry this plan to its conclusion? Will they burn them all in the square of the town like the Visigoth who sacked Rome did, to keep himself warm? Barbaric, barbaric.

—Heather Anese Reid



*What good is spirit without hands for walnut
to stain, without ears for the river
to fill up with promises? What good,
they whisper, returning to nothing, what good
without tongue to cry out to the moon,
"Thou hast ravished my heart, O my sister!"*

*- from "All Hallows Eve"
by Kathryn Stripling Byer*



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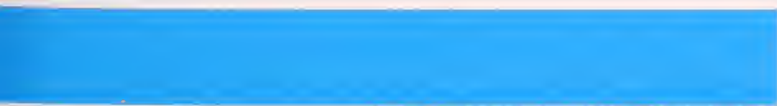
barelegged at the first frost

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my breath filling the yard with clouds,

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waiting. It's a day for that.



NIGHT WALKING

Night calls me out,
beckoning with its waspish fingers seductively,
knowing I can no longer hold myself within these confines
that feel too much like a prison cell;
so I bid my jailer, worry, farewell
and flee into its darkness on lonely feet.

Cold air stings my face, tickles my lungs
as I walk along the moonlit avenue
watching the stars - tiny pinpricks of light
in the broad blackness of the night,
playing connect the dots with them
like when I lived in simpler times.

The moon seems amiable tonight,
his smile full, his countenance thoughtful:
he's been tired of hiding like me
and escaped out the door to be free
of all his cares - left back behind the sun
where day begins when night is done.

I am also one acquainted with the night, Robert;
these streets that belong to any wandering soul
while the sun rides high
I call my own, and mine alone, when the clocktower
talks long and the owl's howl is nigh
like a woman's sigh in her lover's bed.

My body so tightly wound becomes slowly unbound
as I wander deeper and deeper;
the midnight haze rises around
and envelopes me, clinging loosely
with its wisps of nothingness that caress
my bothered temple with soothing kisses.

Every tree stands waving wistful in the wind,
each leaf sharply imprinted against the clear night sky
drawing me up closer to the answer
that my solitary brooding had for so long denied:
a reason to exist, something to live for;
just for a moment I know these truths.

ANDREW LAKE JAMESON

Sing me to sleep,
ease the night
over my falling eyes.
Cover me with security.
Bless me with
a kiss.
And bring back
my youth
washed away
flowing wild
forgetting its origin
or caught dead
like frozen salmon.

Protect me
from the dark.
Be my light,
my angel of lust,
bearing dirty wings
and a halo of tin.

I am scared
I'll never awake,
pray the lord
my soul will break.

Father, can you hear me?
Mother, are you near me?
Lover, I can't feel thee.
Someone answer my prayer.
Jesus, do you listen?
I am lost in life
like all your children.
What's this all about?

I slept a virgin
dreamt of
sinister love
and awoke with
blood on the sheets.

I can no longer dream.
I no longer desire.
Sex,
guilty and bleeding.
I curse the day
I lost my childhood
and won the night
with all its desires.
I am lost within
I call out to you.

Christ was crucified
and I never
bled
at all.



A year ago today I died
 Sitting in an unfamiliar pool
 The waves crashed with silent rage
 Words echoed in whispers
 They continued traveling
 Penetrating each ray
 The whiteness of my color defined
 My body facing downward
 Thinking of how I made it here
 Eyelids pinned back staring unconsciously
 I remember seeing flashes of light and
 Shadows of people everywhere.

Stabbed in the back again
 No respect for the dead
 Pushing the liquid aside
 They dragged me home
 Sinking at the end
 It took eight hands to stare at the sky
 The sun beating each degree into my body
 Warmth filtered from underneath

God's words straining to find a home
 The long strange trip began
 Blackness enveloped my soul
 The hands of the dead clutched
 They closed my own eyes
 Movement no longer within me
 I felt the rocking begin
 Each wheel spinning as my weight shifted
 I layed here unaware that I was alive
 People probed my body
 Search for the answer
 They didn't know I was right beside them
 Guiding each motion.

7

The last sight I remembered
 Implanted in my picture head
 The light we live in extinguished by the living
 Music riveting the ones around
 Sounds of wishes
 Sounds of why
 MY body laid still
 Beside me another life began.
 For the first time I believe I am
 ALIVE.

"POETS, ARTISTS, FREAKS"

Every person on this planet is an artist. How we express that art can make up some of the most important decisions of our lives. Every person with the grunge look, the fraternity look, the Christian look, decorates themselves with garb and philosophies that make them aesthetically pleasing to those of the same group. It's called "fitting in." However, there are some other individuals that take things a bit further. An arsonist's eyes light up with satisfaction as they sit back and view the wonder of smoke and flame, loving that anarchy is art. A politician can warp our sense of reality through parliamentary procedure, turning deception into an art form.

Some of us don't take our art to such useless or dangerous ends. We write. We paint. We capture sin and love on film to dissect and ingest. Most of the time we just flip the hell out. Being a member of *Chronicle* has given me the opportunity to read and sanctimoniously judge the expressions of others. So, now I have come to a conclusion that there are a lot of freaks out there, and that's a term of endearment. Some of these freaks are running over with love, some hate, some confusion. Most freaks are just afraid. They are afraid of what the world has become, and what it has warped them into. They are afraid of blacks. They are afraid of fags. They are paranoid that the government is flashing subliminal messages on the T.V., making us love Barney, the purple dinosaur from hell. Most of these freaks deal with this paranoia through art.

I consider these people to be my brothers and sisters, and since the importance of freaks is rarely addressed, this column is for them. It's to explain that I understand the word "nigger" in a poem written by an oriental girl in hopes to make people feel disgust at the word. I understand the picture of two men kissing, taken by a heterosexual that wants people to drop their mouths or shake their heads. I also understand the girl behind the camera taking a black and white picture of a rainbow. I don't always agree with their philosophies, and sometimes I even think that their art sucks. The important thing here is that I understand the addiction of expres-

sion.

I began to write when so much crap began to smother me that I had to bleed it into a code called poetry. One friend of mine soaks his soul into other personalities and calls it acting. Another friend of mine publishes a renegade conservative paper to diffuse his version of truth, just like a I'm doing right now. These people don't murder or burn down a Korean's fruit stand, they try to convert people into the wonderful world of freakdom. You are also an artistic freak because you picked up this magazine to experience the pain and ecstasy and confusion of others.

What the hell is my point? Well, I condemn no constructive artist. Anyone with a pen in hand, a camera, a paintbrush, or a scream can help to change the world. History is full of these constructive artists. Dr. King's speeches - poetry. Vietnam nes coverage - paint for the brain. Armstrong on the moon - an inspirational refrain. However, most people are dropping their pens because there isn't enough room in their fists. The speeches are being drowned out through curses and fire bombs.

The freaks of the world need to stop sitting in a corner, satisfied with their weirdness. The marches have died because protest is commercialized. Peace symbol tattoos are abundant and don't mean shit. So, if bigotry pisses you off, grab some white guy and talk. If politics blows a big one in your mind, vote. If this college is giving you an anal probe, find out who's doing it and spread the word. We are a country of uniques and we should show it. I'm getting sick and tired of being known as the generation of slackers. We aren't slack, just paralysed by fear of saying the wrong thing or doing what's right. So we just sit. We have to realize that self pity isn't our only recourse. We can jam our thoughts and opinions down the throat of the world and make them do what they can't stand - think.

JOHN "TREA" HOLLADAY

Go buy a life, you stupid whining louts;
"Oh, how we hate to see the rhymes in this!"
Leave off, you unstructured "artist" without
Even a clue of what real writing is.
A poem is a work of art, you fools;
Revealing to us speech, not merely cough.
No witless, formless puking from your "muse",
Try writing, not just typed-up jerking off.
Overt self-serving drivel I cannot make
Worthwhile meaning- give us a reprieve!
Real art, if you'll believe it, sometimes takes
In excess of a minute to conceive.
To you who claim that poetry's only heart-
Excise your own, as a favor to the art.

BELIEVING IN OUR SMALL GODS

An artist must be starving
they say,
or languishing beyond repair
cutting off ears or dying
in six days
of nothing that could be helped
after all
the suffering is the art -
broad strokes of pain
and intricate blue wrinkles -
faces staring out in accusation.

And the colors are the moods,
Vincent's yellow and blue starry skies
from his soul to canvas in antique sor-
row.

10 We take it in as we can,
never as it's meant,
always as we experience.

Words, too
sometimes
slash their colors in my mind
and draw me out;
I hold the pain and suffer with sheer
abandon
the experiences of others:

Emily's rose is mine, dear William.

In the end we all lose
when there is no
farther place to go.

Art is the last frontier
and we clamor for it with voracious
mouths and eyes,
taking in our vicarious lives
and playing them back
until we get them precisely.
Van Gogh painted over one canvas
to make a crying man laugh.

I wait for him to paint me
Over

Muffled screams,
as if through spider webs,
from a shower room — fogged —
and a little damp.
She calls you “NO”
but she’ll never know your name.
Her face — gnarled,
inside out.
Your laugh and hug
saturated arms hello
like an old, annoying friend
she once forgot.
Trying to be friendly, not kind,
like the traffic cops scribbling tickets
forcing her to court —
forcing her —
forcing her to count
the holes in the water stained ceiling
as she cried.
And did you know her?
Did you like her
mauve pastel bathroom
with broken hinges
and a foggy mirror,
reflecting nothing?

In one glance-
the sun poured into me
filling me with golden warmth
till I swayed and couldn't breathe.
My deepest core shook
and I was changed.
In one glance-
you touched my soul.

I sit without,
rocking on the porch,
mentally gaunt,
with the creaking timbers
pinching my frail being.

I sit without,
staring bleary-eyed into the woods.
My mind drifts from nothing
back to nothing again.
Solemn secrets of the leaves
falling
upon deaf ears.

I sit without
confiding airs of others
laughing, distant
echoing softly in
a not so pleasant peace.

I sit without
time
as seasons quell
the ancient progression
roll on
into severed years
passing behind us.

I sit without
you
touch, the scent of your hair
remains as a droplet
condensed upon a blade of grass
from the mist
that hung about the morning air.

I sit without.
And you are missed.

Upon my mommy's lap I sit while she reads to me
-Ole King Cole was a merry old soul and a merry old soul was he-

My mommy says my daddy doesn't live wid us anymore
sometimes I wish he did 'cause he could rock me to sleep

She took down all the pictures wid his face in them
I know cause i can see the holes in the wall where they were

When i see him, he takes me to see the elephants and bears
and we eat ice cream
and it drips all down my arms

He puts me on his shoulders as we walk down the path toward the lions

The mommy lion, daddy lion and baby lion are all in the same cage together

Daddy, why can't you build a cage for you and mommy and me
to live together forever like the lions?

-Ole King Cole was a merry old soul and a merry old soul was he-

I had never really owned anything Red before.
I knew Red was out there somewhere in the spectrum
-a color with a theme-
Red is roses
 love
 lips
 passion
 -maybe to other people-
Red was never my color.

But I saw Red in her cheeks,
Hidden underneath, with a faint curled smile on one end.
And through time,
 the Red has emerged from those cheeks.
I have bathed in their rose-colored glow
 -I have felt Red-
And now I wear it wherever I go.

I love Red.
I never thought that I would even like it.
 Roses - lips - passion - love
 - not quite -
We have our own definition of Red.

But with those Red cheeks
 Sparked to glow by the soft touch
 Of caring lips
I have found a new affinity for Red
And I will wear it wherever I go.

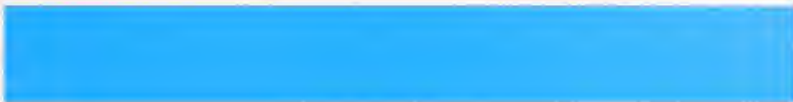
cheers go up
ten thousand more deaths
shown nightly on tv
a family watches from
the dinner table
two killed on a busy street
a crowd rushes
to see the mutilation
slow down watch
can you see the blood
did you see that
a mockery for all
to watch daily
what's the fuss
death is a spectator sport

kill the crook
show it live
make him an example
for the rest to see
drop another bomb
they won't listen
take your bloodbath
be sure to wash
behind your ears
death is a spectator sport

taught to children
see who goes first
who's the biggest
shoot another 23 missiles
get the pictures
to everyone
hooray for our side
kill them all
or it might be us
death is a spectator sport









I taste the wind, and I
 salivate.
 My body embraces the humidity
 of the pull and
 Responds.
 I feel the cry of the trees
 singing to the sky,
 Surrendering leaves to
 an escapade.
 I long for my home,
 I long for the
 Water of my home,
 Stranded in this
 Desert of hills
 and lushness.
 I want to stand
 naked,
 Sand beneath my feet
 and a blanket of
 Constellations my only
 raiment.

To feel the fury of
 the storm

 I want to be raped
 by the rain.
 My body will drink
 it to the bone,
 And it will soak me
 to the soul.
 I will grow heavy
 with salt,
 It will laden, leaden
 my hair and pull
 My face up.
 And the tears of god
 will flood my face,
 Cascading off of my being.
 As the waves crash over
 my feet,
 I will be overcome
 and fall to the sand.
 Writhing in ecstasy I
 will make
 snow angels.

Only there is no snow
 and there are no angels.

DINNER ROLLS

"Have we decided yet on what we talked about?"

The sun hovered fat and warm in the morning sky. Its rays came through the window at the kitchen table, warming her skin against the chill which had settled on the house during the night. Debi's blonde hair shone; her eyes glowed with a fiery, brown brilliance. She sat in one of the table chairs, her knees drawn up to her chin, her nightgown stretched over her legs.

She was a small woman and folded her lean figure into the chair easily. Debi had been a cheerleader in high school, and a close look in her face revealed that much of the bright-eyed enthusiasm she had then hadn't been lost during the six years since she'd last shook the two-toned pompoms bearing her school's colors.

Don stood next to the stovetop in a heavy t-shirt and running shorts and let her question hang unanswered as he continued to scramble eggs in the large skillet he liked to use. Before the eggs could transform completely from liquid to solid, he sprinkled grated cheddar cheese into the pan. He dropped four slices of wheat bread into the toaster and turned back to stirring the eggs.

He was a year older than Debi, but looked to be younger. He had played football from Pop Warner's to high school and his physique showed the taut muscles those years had shaped. He had brown-green eyes. They were what Debi first noticed about him that day two years previously when he had approached her.

"About the reunion?" he asked.

"Yes, about the reunion. It's next weekend and I wanted to know if you were going or not. Or if you were taking me or not or--"

"Why would I go and not take you?" he asked, reaching for a dish to scrape the eggs and cheese into. "You're a very important person to me, and any place I go, you go too. I do love you, you know."

Debi smiled. She knew that he really felt that way about her, but she also knew that he was more than a little concerned about how his family would react to her. She stood and walked to stand behind him, her arms encircling his waist.

"I know you want me to go, honey, but I just want you to be comfortable," she said. "I remember how your parents acted when I first met them. I mean, they were really nice to me and all, and no one did anything to make me feel unwelcome, but I kept feeling like they didn't want you to be involved. If *they* weren't totally comfortable with me, then you can imagine how everybody else is going to feel."

He reached over to grab the toast as it popped up, and turned to face her, his arms outstretched over hers, which were still around his waist. "You know I can't serve breakfast with you hanging on me," Don said, smiling.

She grinned back and reached up to kiss him. "I'll let go of you if that's what you want," she teased.

"All I want is some eggs, some toast, some juice," he said as he put the toast on the plate with the eggs, "and the benefit of a doubt that I will never leave you behind just to suit other people's problems." He put the food down on the table and turned to the refrigerator. "You want apple juice or orange?"

"Orange," she answered. She cut into the pile of eggs with her fork and scraped a portion onto her plate, picking up two slices of the toast as she did. Debi had never eaten cheese eggs before she met him, but she figured if he could be nice enough to try bagels, she would try cheese eggs. They weren't bad, she had to admit, but they weren't as good as a crisp, buttery English muffin, which he had graciously tried, with some prodding.

"Well, I trust you," she stated, "but I want you to feel comfortable at your own family reunion."

"I *will* be comfortable," he responded.

"Comfortable with me?"

He walked back to the kitchen with two glasses, both filled with orange juice. "I am supremely, invincibly, unstoppably, everlasting, just *stupidly* comfortable with you," he laughed, "And I will take you wherever I want to as long as *you* want to go. Where you feel uncomfortable is the 'where' that I have no business going," he said, handing her one of the glasses.

"To us," he smiled and held out his glass. She clinked his with hers, and they drank, arms intertwined. When they broke from toasting, he leaned over to kiss her, and ran his left hand through her hair and down the side of her face. "My Amazon," he whispered.

"My warrior of the Nile," she answered.

They had heard it all during the months they'd been together. People from all areas of their lives, parents, friends, even presumptuous acquaintances, coming together to argue with them that they were doing the wrong thing.

Don's parents house: "Black folk and white folk should stay with their own kind," his mother had said. "She's a nice girl and all, but--"

"But what, momma?" he'd asked. "Isn't it enough that I care about her? I cared enough to bring her home to meet you and daddy. I didn't try to hide anything from you!"

At Debi's job: "How is it with a black guy?" her friends asked her.

"We haven't done anything yet," she answered. "We just like each other's company, and each other, and that's all." They would only look at her with eyes full of disbelief and, she thought, mild contempt.

Saturdays, drinking beers with his buddies: "Homeboy got a white girl!" his friends laughed. "Man, what happened? You couldn't get yourself a sister? Tired of em, huh? Or couldn't hook up?"

"It's not about that, man. Damn," he had replied. "Why do y'all think I'm just going with her because she's white?"

"Cause she *is* white, motherfucker!" they laughed.

At her mother's house: "Honey, I love you," her mother had said, "and your father loved you. God rest his soul, and I understand that times have changed. And don't forget that we always tried to give you the benefit of the doubt in the past, but this is an entirely different thing altogether."

"I know, mother, I know, but he's really nice and I really like him," she had pleaded. Her mother answered her by closing her eyes. She sighed deeply, asked Debi if she was hungry, and told her that there was some leftover chicken in the refrigerator. The discussion was over.

After church one Sunday: "Are you sure that's what you want, man?" his brother Kelly had asked. "I mean, I don't care if she's white, black, Puerto Rican, whatever. Just make sure you're happy and you're willing to put up with all the hassles you're going to run into. You know it's going to be tough, man, and I just hope you know what this is you're getting into. I don't want anything happening to you, you know?"

"I know. Thanks, man."

At her apartment, on her sister's birthday: "But--" her sister Beth had started, fumbling over her words trying to find ways to talk about the situation without hurting her feelings. Beth still had icing on the corner of her mouth from the pieces of cake they had been eating, and looked silly with

her face drawn in concern. "I just want you to be careful, you know? You're my sister, for crying out loud. You're really asking a lot of us, me and Ma. How *did* she take it?"

"Like she takes everything."

"Oh hell," Beth had answered, sinking down into the cushions of the couch, cramming the last of the cake into her mouth. Tears welled in her eyes. "Is there any more cake?"

Both of them, in finding resistance from all sides, turned to each other. They grew closer, their relationship becoming stronger. Admittedly, they *had* been through a period when they were drawn by the taboo, by the so-called forbidden nature of their being together. Then, slowly, they fell back on the thing that had brought them together in the first place - they simply liked each other.

And slowly, with time, their like turned to love.

Don and Debi had moved in together after the first six months, and the uproar which had subsided after the first testy weeks of their relationship grew louder again. The arguments that had not worked six months previously were dusted off and tried again. Family and friends reopened the old wounds, asked the old questions and argued the old arguments - they all failed a second time.

The two of them found themselves working around each other's space at first, each having given up their previous apartment to meet on neutral ground, both trying with the new shared apartment to recreate in small ways the homes they had left. They finally made it work when they found they could not work around their differences; instead, they found they had to embrace the differences and accommodate them. Both had to feel as comfortable as possible in adjusting to this new thing they shared. And so her pastel motifs clashed with his earth tones. Her fabric wing chairs bookended his leather couch. Her wicker chair occupied the same room as his bamboo lounge. Her flowers and abstract paintings sat alongside his African artifacts. Her "Vanity Fair" and "Elle" shared the coffee table with his "Ebony" and "Black Enterprise."

In the end, they found themselves happier, and with a more comfortable apartment, than either had anticipated.

"Hello?"

His mother's voice sounded almost peculiar to him, it had been so long since he had last called.

"Momma?"

"Well, hello stranger! How you doing?"

"Fine, momma. How's everybody at the house?"

"We all doing fine, just fine. Everybody's busy with the reunion coming up this weekend and all. You are coming, aint you?"

"Well, that's what I was calling about."

Don heard her sigh, which meant she knew what he was going to say, but that she was resolving herself to let him go ahead and say it.

"What's wrong that you aint gonna be able to come?" she asked.

"Nothing's wrong, momma. I just thought that- Well, with all the fuss over me and- I don't know if I'm going to come, okay? I just don't know yet."

"Kelly will be home."

"Really? Well maybe he'll want to stop by before he heads back out. We've got plenty of room."

"He aint *coming* home to sleep *away* from home."

He sighed.

"Well, I just thought I'd touch base with you. Let you know that I might not be there. You know, momma--"

"Hello, Miss Lottie." It was Debi.

Both the man and his mother were stunned into silence by the unexpected voice.

"Miss Lottie? Hello-o," Debi's voice sang.

Don felt his stomach knot up. She was somewhere in the house on another phone, probably the one in the kitchen.

"Howdy, how are you?" His mother's voice sounded hard and cold; he knew she was forcing the little bit of courtesy in her voice through teeth that were probably clenched in anger.

"I'm doing fine. I just wanted you to know that the two of us will be there at the reunion this weekend."

"Really." Ice dripped from his mother's one word reply. He could imagine reading the papers the next day, the stories about the strange frost damage done to the phone lines over near Green Acres Road in his hometown.

"Yes ma'am. We'll be there. Is there anything I can bring?"

"We might need some dinner rolls."

Don knew that dinner rolls were what you asked people to bring when you were just trying to acknowledge that someone had asked; being asked to bring dinner rolls to a family dinner meant, at best, that you were a lousy cook - a worst, it meant that you were not yet a part of the family as far as some people were concerned. And some folks, Don knew, always ended up being asked to bring dinner rolls.

"Well are you sure I can't bring anything else?" Debi asked.

"No, I'm sure that's all we'll need from you. Can I speak to Don?"

"I'm here, momma," he said, his voice cracking.

"I'll see you Saturday. Come early so you can help set the tables up."

"Yes, ma'am." He hung up the phone.

He could hear Debi walking up the stairs.

When she stood in the doorway to the bedroom, he thought he could see that she was upset.

"Listen," he began. "I--"

"No, you listen."

He put his head down and waited.

Debi walked over to him and waited what seemed to him like an eternity before she spoke.

"It'll be okay." She put her hand on his shoulder, and he lifted his head to look her in the eyes.

"It'll be okay," she said, "even mighty warriors of the Nile have mothers."

"I know," he sighed.

"Let's go get some dinner rolls, okay?" Debi tickled his ear and Don pulled away, not wanting to laugh.

"Not right now," he answered. He didn't think he deserved a laugh after trying to pull out of the reunion.

"Aww, come on," she pretended to plead, "I wanna go get the dinner rolls."

"I don't *want* any dinner rolls," he said, slowly relaxing. Debi was rubbing her right hand

"...being asked to bring dinner rolls to a family dinner . . . meant that you were not yet a part of the family . . ."

"Debi liked the way he sounded when he slept. It was like a soft lion's purr, and she enjoyed the soft rumbling."

Debi pushed him back on the bed and climbed atop him. He was laughing now, and she was trying to make him to laugh harder. Don had a high-pitched laugh which Debi thought was adorable, such a big guy, such a little laugh.

"Yeah gotta have me some din-nerrrrr ro-ooolllls. Dinner rolls in the morning..." Debi said.

She took off her blouse.

"Dinner rolls in the evening..."

He unbuttoned his shirt.

"Dinner rolls with little sesame seeds on them."

"The little bitty brown-and-serve kind?" he asked, unbuckling his belt.

"Noooo," she answered, slipping off her skirt, "great big yeast rolls that dance around on commercials and come with honey butter."

"Ooh, honey butter. I like honey butter," he said.

"I know you do. And I've got some hidden somewhere if you can find it."

"Damn, honey, you were good."

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She could feel his low voice as it rumbled into her spine. Don sighed deeply, a moan full of content, and turned over onto his back.

"Well, you weren't so bad yourself, you know," she answered. He laughed.

They lay there in the dark for a few minutes, his arm beneath her, quietly enjoying the sensation they felt as their bodies cooled beneath sheets made damp with their perspiration. Heat still radiated from them as they lay there side by side. Debi smiled when she looked down her body and could see her erect nipples pushing up through the moisture-transparent sheet across her chest. She blew on her right breast, and giggled at the chill that went from her nipple into the rest of her body.

Debi wanted something to drink, maybe a glass of water or juice, and she started to get out of bed for it. She stopped when she heard him stir, moaning. He had fallen asleep and would wake if she moved. She decided to wait a few minutes. The ceiling fan's blades rotated lazily in dizzy circles above her; she watched them turn as she slipped slowly into an almost-sleep that allowed her to lay there quietly beside him. After a few moments, he began to snore lightly. She took the sound as a signal to move, so she did, though gently and with care.

Debi liked the way he sounded when he slept. It was like a soft lion's purr, and she enjoyed the soft rumbling. Her girlfriends would have kidded her about his sleeping, but his going to sleep after they had sex was never a concern for her; it didn't happen often, but when it did, she simply paid it little or no attention. Her friends would have made sly remarks about prowess and satisfaction. She knew, though, that even when she didn't have an orgasm, like tonight, he cared whether or not she had.

His loving nature and his openness were two of the things that made her love him. The fact that he always opened up so easily to her about how he felt, like he'd never been honest with

up and down his chest.

"But I want the dinner rolls," she continued.

"Fuck a dinner roll!" He reached out to put his arm around her waist.

"Exactly," she said, and kissed him.

"Gotta get them dinner rolls."

anyone else in life. When he said he loved her, she knew it. And she loved him.

Debi stood on the cool tile floor of the kitchen and drank the cold water she had gotten from the refrigerator, the icy liquid fighting its way down, making her throat hurt where it found spots that felt especially parched. She ran a bit of water from the tap into the glass, warming it so she could drink it faster and more quickly quench her thirst. When she finished, she lightly set the glass at the bottom of the kitchen sink's metal basin. Her bare feet ticked on the floor as she tipped back into the bedroom and slipped under what was left of the sheets he had begun swaddling about himself.

She reached her hand out to touch his cheek, then tickled his nose with her thumb. Without opening his eyes, he smiled, reached up to her hand and brought it to his mouth, kissing her palm.

She smiled and tapped him on his brow with her forefinger.

"I knew you weren't asleep. Trying to fool me, huh?" she asked.

"No, girl, I'm just tired, that's all. You wore me out." He still lay with his eyes closed, half his face buried in the pillow. His words came out sounding deep and muffled.

"I wore *you* out? I thought it was supposed to work the other way around."

"Not tonight," he said. "Tonight you have found out the truth behind one of the greatest sexual myths of the world."

"Well..." she started, laughing indignant, "I wish I had debunked that theory before I got *into* this thing." Debi laughed and playfully blew her warm breath onto his closed eyelids.

"Well it ain't *all* myth, you know," he replied, opening his eyes to mischievous squints.

"And you know that's the truth," he added, his eyes closing again.

"Um hmmm. I know. Most nights, but not tonight," she teased. She blew again on his dark brown face. "Yes, tonight I am the great Amazon who has laid waste to the mighty warrior from the Nile."

Don opened his eyes fully and looked at her, a smile playing on his lips.

"You know, the night is still young. It's only about..." He sat up slightly to look past her at the alarm clock on the nightstand. "Quarter after midnight. All kinds of good things can happen 'round midnight. Besides, it's Friday. No work tomorrow."

"True," she answered, settling down into the sheets, pulling them up over her head, "we usually do go at it pretty good on Fridays and Saturdays. But not tonight, of course. I figure you must be saving your energy up for the reunion tomorrow."

"No, not really."

"Well, it must be something."

"It's nothing, you just wore me out. Something about dinner rolls must turn you on," Don teased.

"Yeah, well," Debi started, "too bad you aren't up for some more of that honey butter."

"I can get up."

"Not tonight," she said. "Too much might ruin your appetite for the dinner tomorrow."

"Oh yes, tonight," he said, smiling, rising up to put his arms around her, sheets and all.

"Help," she said weakly, giggling.

"You're going to need help."

"Debi?"

She couldn't hear him. Usually when they were driving, Don would roll the windows down and turn the tape deck up until the whole car vibrated with the sounds. They had similar

music tastes, especially when it came to Prince, and she was busy singing along to the Prince song coming through the car speakers.

Debi had her eyes closed, but she was singing out loud, "Are we gonna let the elevator bring us down? Oh no, let's go! Let's go crazy! Let's go nuts!"

Don smiled when he looked over at her. Her hair was blowing in the wind and she looked great. He had only meant to ask her if she was nervous about the reunion. He knew that they were only five miles from his home now, and this really was the point of no return. Don changed his mind about asking when he remembered how bold she had been on the phone. There was something else, he thought, he wanted to ask but he had forgotten.

He really loved Debi. And he admired her. She was always upbeat, always optimistic. Hers was the natural counterpoint to his own sometimes pessimistic point of view. When things had gotten rough with their families and friends, his dogged determination was reinforced by her optimism that everything would be all right.

"The Beautiful Ones" was playing now, and he could see his mother's home just down the road. The yard was already full of cars, and he could just make out his brother in the side yard already setting up tables with a cousin.

Debi opened her eyes when she felt the car slow, and looked over at Don.

"Do you want him? Or do you want me...?" Prince screamed.

Debi tapped Don's arm.

"Cause I want you," she and Prince sang together. She pointed a finger at Don and smiled. When he looked to return the smile, her face changed almost instantly to a look of shock.

"What is it?"

He turned the car into his mother's yard, and saw that she had come out onto the porch of the house.

"We forgot the dinner rolls," they said in unison.


I do not want to walk alone.
I cringe to leave that from which I have grown.
Time brings only new sadness.
and the future becomes a curse.
As the moon bids farewell to the night,
and the sun kisses the newborn sky I see the beauty,
but still want to cry.
Each breaking breath of the infant day,
separates me from mine, and I wonder where my emotions lie.
Why is it the sun with his bloody birth of morning,
and sanguine slide at night,
that makes our soft mad children gasp.
It is the cycle that demands our attention and age,
as it tears the book of life page by page.
Summer flows into fall and the colours hear their call.
I watch the seasons slow surrender and think of home,
pondering with all hope and humility why,
why each man must walk alone.

WHY I LOVE CLEMSON, ONE NORTHERNER'S PERSPECTIVE.

Originally, I had planned to entitle this column, Kill the Tree Huggers. My main point in doing so was to attract some attention, and to possibly get a few people to read it. I decided against it because I hope whomever reads this column does so with an open mind and afterwards tries to understand my point of view even though they may not agree whole-heartedly with it.

I, along with about 500 other brave souls, decided it was time to get out of New Jersey forever, or at least for five years. Anyone who has spent time on a northern state college or university campus will probably be more than familiar with the new political monster of the nineties, Political Correctness. When I came to Clemson, I expected to find much of the same, but I didn't. While there are people here who will argue that PC is running rampant on the Clemson University campus, I would have to disagree. Proof of this is an editorial which appeared in The Tiger, last spring which scolded the students, faculty, and staff of Clemson University for not being Politically Correct enough. Thankfully, most readers paid it little attention. However, I will admit that recently I have seen and heard more politically correct terms around campus than in the past.

On many campuses across the country Politically Correct terms and speech flood the lectures and thoughts of both professors and students. Universities like Stanford and Harvard, are removing courses like Western Civilization from their curriculums and replacing them with courses like The Plight of the Spotted Owl: Its fight against the evil Lumberjacks. Courses such as Western Civilization are our direct link to learning about where we began. They give us the base we need to understand how we ended up here and how we came to exist in civilized society today. Supporters of Political Correctness proclaim these courses to be racist, degrading to women, and sometimes they claim them to be simply offensive. Many have denounced the teachings of Plato, Aristotle, and Socrates, calling them racist whoremongers. Where would we be today if these men had not formed their opinions on governance and civilized society?



It is disappointing that many students and faculty do not express their true thoughts and beliefs because they fear being lynched by a mob of Politically Correct activists. Last spring at the University of Pennsylvania, approximately sixty students who were fed up with the University newspaper's "oppressive" conservative slant decided to dump that day's edition into a pond on campus. I believe this action displays the often immature means supporters of Political Correctness will go to get their point across. Do you think they ever thought of writing an editorial or joining the newspaper's staff? I don't know maybe they might have, but by destroying those newspapers they denied those writers their freedom of speech and they also denied its readers their freedom of thought. I like to believe that most students on college campuses have enough brains to read and interpret for themselves, and that they possess the ability to formulate their own opinions. Of course I do not expect or want everyone to formulate the same opinion. If that were the case, the world would be a very boring place to live.

I think it is time to stop candy coating life by slapping huge inoffensive names onto ordinary things and characteristics. It distresses me that often I even stop and think about what I'm about to say because I know I'm not looking to offend anyone but I worry that I might. Words like nigger, spic, wop, and honkey should be eliminated our vocabularies. They are offensive in any context. but words like fat, blond, short, and bald are not. They simply are adjectives. I am short. I'll admit it. People call me short. It does not offend me. Being called height deficient or vertically challenged, that offends me. They sound more like diseases than physical characteristics.

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Watcha want with me?
I just come to watch the parade
Just come to see the colors
See on the corner there
See that ebony shine
Deep, dignified, and pure
That cat, man, she can hold it together
How about that sweet molasses over there?
Southern as can be.
I betcha her voice oozes out slow an sticky.
And they call us black
Can you imagine? us black
With this rainbow of nighttime shades
Us black
With all the hues of the earth
Us black
Copper, caramel, midnight, amber, ebony, and molasses
And they call us black
Can you imagine? us black

there are these voices that are trying to speak to me by the
river that runs as deep as that last kiss by the tree
of age and wisdom (which do we fear the most?) when these
whispers tell the children to run away and learn the ways of
a nature forgotten the times when spring brought salvation
from death and restored life becomes confined and must break
free and sweep away the ashes of memories, hearts and souls
burned in rages of passion for the slightest breeze of
comfort beyond the hills on the horizon and playing the
symphony of the gods with the sun setting and bowing once
more only to realize the darkness never goes away.

I find behind the door, abandoned shoes
An empty picture's space hangs on the wall
With nothing left, I've nothing left to lose.

A buckle, bent and tarnished from its use;
A phone's receiver still awaits the call.
I find behind the door, abandoned shoes.

A yellowed headline, spreading last month's news
Drifts like leaves in the ringing, echoed hall
With nothing left, I've nothing left to lose.

The bottles clink with dusty ghosts of booze;
The glass still shows its chip from an ancient fall.
I find behind the door, abandoned shoes.

The cracked eyeglasses stare, as to accuse.
A dusty sphere was once your hurley ball.
With nothing left, I've nothing left to lose.

There's nothing left in me that you can use;
And from this point there's nowhere else to fall.
I find behind the door, abandoned shoes.
With nothing left, I've nothing left to lose.

THE LAST LAUGH

He's always
tried to
find that
great
white-ass
smile
like
Jesus'.

But,
has failed
at every
attempt.

He's tried
self help
programs,
nicotine patches,
Polydent,
bleach,
gin,
bed sheets of
sandpaper,
looking in the
dumpsters
behind K-mart,
up beautiful
skirts,
the bottom
of Busch light
cans.
But never,
never
the mirror.

"There
seems to be
this eternal
knife
in my back,
ruining my
happiness."

Good luck
I tell him.
I mean
that too.

But
stay clear
of the
women.
They'll
eat your
soul
and break
you
in two.

There's no
perfect
affair
and
we all
are looking,
searching
the vast
emptiness
for nothing.
And we
can't
work it
together.

It's on
its own.
We're on
our
own.

And if
you ever
find
happiness—
bottle
it—
put it
on the
market.

We'll all
be happy
murderers,
ecstatic
drunks,
miserable
comedians
of the
love affair,
and
dying with
smiles.

You have led me
blind
when I was born into the
forty days
time to follow not lead
your arms always reaching
to save me from my reason.

I scrambled from the wood floor
gently rocking crib
to the edges of your sight
but never behind.
You looked forward for me,
noted the wind changing
while I noted the tiny grains
in the floor beneath my feet.

When I strode out on the decks
with my head back
you stood beneath me
with your hands at my heels
and never said a word.

When I would have drowned
you held me above the water
even though you could not swim.

I never could lose you.

Now
when I walk these
decks
man the sails
I feel the deep grooves
your hands have made
and mold my fingers to
yours,
feel with my feet
the smooth path to the
prow
where you once held
me up,
face into the wind and
called me
Noah's Dove.

I flew from you eight-
teen summers ago,
and now return,
prodigal,
my head down, love
and tears
the olive branch.

Take me home again,
you the one who made
me.

UNTITLED



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ANDREW R. COYNE

AUTUMN LEAVES

38



ALLSTON KENDALL

PURPLE CANTELOUPE



39

CARMEN RICHARDS

UNTITLED



ANDREW R. COYNE

A row of Trees—
Thoughtlessly planted too close to the wall.
Stifled.
Bent in strange contortions
each new inch well thought out.

They have the time.

Each an individual.
Each an acrobat.
Each an optimist.
Wise and Strong.

Not without pressure—
We trim them to fit our ideal mold.
Patiently they persevere
inch by inch they find the Sunshine

Military figure—
 cement eyes and chest and feet planted
 on a platform-stage
 Brown starched hat
 brush buzzard beaks
 Stand tall — my Master
 Stern hand held mine
 for a moment
 in a congratulating shake —
 eyes never met

A formula speech
 spoken in enunciated tongues
 read from yellow paper
 and cracked black ink
 written for yesterday's Honor
 and the one before —
 and the one before —
 and I am today's
 But tomorrow the spotlight
 shines on your next victim

I hail — arms raised
 to infatuation
 or lust of your stern eyes
 of your split mustache-like smile
 My moment passed
 I walk slowly
 look back —once— twice
 three times and turn
 return to center stage
 I raise my hand
 to Hitler —
 Not to hail —
 to slap

And all the hate —
 all the red and black and grey
 all the neatly printed orders I
 obeyed—
 has grown me in to
 you

A SLEEPY BLUE OCEAN

Looking out across a sleepy blue ocean,
Sighting scenes that only the heart can see —
The air of light tears into the glassy surface,
A flat surface, but not invincible.

White crowns on the waves,
A starfish dashes about effortlessly on the flooded bottom,
Whirlpool sucks down everything within an endless circle,
Sea shells are polished to perfection.

The shore is attacked day in and day out,
The sun sleeps after a whole day of light,
And the moon enlightens the waves of night —
Always going from one event to another

43

On a restless night during the first week of September, when the air is pregnant with fall and the earth is ripe and musty, a solitary boy braced himself against the dull blade of cold that penetrated his thin jacket. His long jaunty strides carried him towards a destination he thought he did not know. The path he followed was familiar and worn.


A harvest moon lighted atop the crest of the next hill, and it seemed to him like a great opaque platter suspended in the sky. Tattered shreds of dark muslin mist draped themselves around the yellow ball, giving the scene a sense of mystery that filled the boy with wonder and aching.

His thoughts floated like white puffy dandelion seeds shaken from their home by a swift summer breeze - down to the gentle slopes of empty pasture land where he had discovered Shakespeare and Walt Whitman; to the frog pond so full of brim, he could not catch them all; to the memory of a sweat soaked child standing on the top limb of a magnolia tree, gazing across his kingdom triumphantly; and finally to his mother, sitting at the kitchen table, looking so fragile and sad, her eyes dripping tears that weighed upon his chest like lead weights.

Like the wind shifting, he thought of the city that awaited his arrival, glowing like a beacon for a wayward soul, or perhaps more like a great jewel - something a man might yearn to possess but always eluding the grasping hand.

This is what beckoned him now so seductively: the thousands of lights reflecting a billowy dream of endless motion and life upon the bay; men and women scrambling through the immense maze of streets and sidewalks like so many ants - loving, hating, and surviving; and in his spartan cell, the lone writer cataloging it all with his own blood and sweat. The infinite depths of the city's life called out to him like a siren with this vision.

And what would be his place in that myriad world of steel and flesh? He knew the awful feeling of being alone, even while surrounded by a roomful of



people. He knew all the faces, seeming to leer at him grotesquely, making him want to back into a corner and shun them forever. Yet, he knew that he could never live without them, without the smiles of pretty girls, or the crazy laughs of drunkards stumbling hazily down the street at night, or simply the moment when two sets of eyes meet for just a second while passing. He was irretrievably tied to those nameless faces that marched through his life like wraiths.

The siren song of the city was strong, but it was still as foreign to the boy as the rocky landscapes of the moon. He did not relish navigating unfamiliar streets. The land he had known since birth did not wish to relinquish its hold upon him so soon. He revelled in the absolute familiarity of his surroundings, every tree had known his bare feet against their thick tan hides, each flower had touched his nose, the paths of red clay had seen him pass a thousand times. How could he leave his homeland? And would he turn his back forever?

Time for trepidation is over with, he told himself firmly; decisions have been made. He tried to stifle the tears that welled within him, but his will was overwhelmed and he was wracked with grief. Somehow, he knew his road led to distant places forever apart from the land he walked on now. Suddenly, as if awaking from a dream, the boy realized where his wandering had brought him. It was the place his midnight walks had always led to. A narrow stream lay before him, glimmering in the waxen light of the full moon. Stolid oak trees hung low across the water like silent sentinels. To the boy, this was the most tranquil place he had ever known.

"We must all have a haven for our heavy hearts," he said to the gurgling water. The night enveloped him like a blanket. Miles away, a man slowly climbed the creaking stairs of his farmhouse. A lone light is left burning in the kitchen to guide the wanderer home.



To have sex.
 To have sex one triumphant time,
 silent and guttural,
 with our minds screaming ecstasy
 in a room flooded by red light,
 our womb
 moving to a glorious rhythm,
 as the passion creeps and rises and grows
 till at once we are consumed,
 scorched, conquered, at last...
 lying, uncounscious,
 quivering upon the sheets.

Moving Moving
 Moving Moving
 Moving Moving Moving
 Moving Moving Moving
 Moving Moving Moving Moving
 I am scared.

A salty tear escapes my eye.

I feel death.

The iron links rattle against each other
 as I stand.
 Heavy and cold are they,
 as they should be, lying against the mouth
 of the cave.
 I have lost my emotion.
 It is gone somewhere, probably
 down in the valley below, perhaps.
 So here I sit, with only my
 feelings of self-pity and supreme
 selfishness.

But I know I shouldn't.
 Bound am I to a rocky cave set
 within the high crags of mortality.
 Not with the image of some
 martyred Greek god, set there by evil gods,
 or a pitiable innocent held hostage,
 but with that of a wretched alley dog,
 mangy and covered with oil and grime,
 snarling at any movement at all.
 Scared, vicious, and alone.
 A self-imposed seclusion, with
 the cave opening the only remembrance
 of the old world.
 Not like Plato's, not indeed
 even similar.
 Shallow is this cave,
 and the iron chain serving
 as a subliminal justification
 for futile thoughts and pessimistic
 ideas.
 I glance at the peaks of the mountains,
 the remnants of my soul; jagged,
 torn, grey, and cold.

"Is he dead?"

"No, he's just asleep."

Your voice cracks like a rough whip
You lash at my need, or maybe my want
My hands tremble on the still, lifeless desk
that is so oblivious to your movement of my world
Don't climb down from your mountain
And forget about the valley, nor
my hands that still tremble.

Sometimes I want to kill every human
Because of a fat sweaty bully that pushed me
Against a rusty fence in eighth grade
Stealing my inside man and pride.

And sometimes I just want a pretty girl
To love me, without conditions
A soft white flower that sees me a Father
Lover.
A virgin
for me to corrupt.

Sometimes, I get so depressed, I shake
With Hatred of anything that will
Allow me to hate it and
Sometimes I'm afraid to purge this
Hate from my flesh.
Afraid that there will be nothing left.

More and more, sometimes I want to Sleep
and wake up with God at the Gates
and feel like I'm forgiven for becoming me.
But He would only shake His head
And regret the creation of Adam.

Sometimes I wonder what turned me
From being the Christian Mama's boy
To the sideshow freak
friends tell friends about.
The crazy drunk. The neglected poet.
the one so afraid of life that he
Built a shrine to death inside his skull.

Sometimes I feel guilty at strip bars
As a girl's stare burns with hate
Of the spit on my chin.
I give her a dollar for her trouble.

Sometimes, it fills me with an'
Almost stisfaction to punish, maim,
Fold, mangle, turn inward to myself
I won't let others hurt me, you see
They would derive too much pleasure
From learning of the atrocities.
Sometimes I want to know if everyone's
Core is a corpse like mine
To determine if God's great experiment
Should be erased - maybe by me.

I will continue to gavel my crotch
Feed the tapeworms
Love the ones that twist my arms
Sometimes it's all that's left
Inside.

Longtime friends gathered about a small ash scarred table,
The easy equilibrium that's always early to arrive is overdue.
A presence is among them disturbing the long fixed mix,
this lover of another so unaware of their age old tricks.
His stare roams round the room flicks from face to face.
judging every exchange, evaluating her new place.
He knows they will accept her because he loves her so,
it's how they really feel, that's what he wants to know.
Conversation trickles then builds to a steady flow.
He cares not for the words once they have been spoken,
he's listening for the laugh.
Truthful messenger that assures the tension has been broken.
Not a giggle at the TV, or titter at a joke,
a teary eyed, gut clenching guffaw is the signal that he needs.
To know that they find in her the special beauty that he sees.
Approval is not the condition that he so strongly seeks,
he knows she's right for him, feels it every time she speaks.
It's just that they share so much, feel so good together,
he knew he wouldn't mind if she stayed around forever.
Things would just be easier if everyone got along,
a group in greater harmony sings such a sweeter song.
All his hopes were rewarded with the playing of a game,
methods and motivations turned out to be much the same.
The discomfort is released when someone's not polite,
and the others consider it funny not some sort of slight.
No longer stiffly stilted but genuine and real,
the smiles assuage his fears, he knows now how they feel.

She wrote her declaration of independence on Columbus day
And left me standing here like some
Yankee Doodle
Another feather in her cap
She said she didn't want to be tied down
As she calmly proceeded to seduce and rape
The jury is still out
But I was convicted before I ever set foot in her courtroom
Though my only crime was
Incredibly
Bad timing

She says he understands her
Which means he's already got one over me
And I'm no good at playing catch-up
Having already resigned myself to the fact that
I'm not very high-up
On her list of priorities
She says I deserve something better
Someone should tell her we don't always get what we deserve
And I don't deserve this
I don't deserve six weeks of agonizing and uncertainty and misunderstanding
and waiting and praying and taking it slow and pounding my fist against
a brick wall and waiting some more and giving her space and working so
damn hard only to watch it all fall apart

She says one day she's gonna let someone into her life
And when that day comes
I just hope she knows what she wants
Cause she already knows what she doesn't



READ THIS

YES, I'M TALKING TO YOU.

DID YOU LIKE THIS MAGAZINE? DID IT GIVE YOU SOME
SORT OF

INSPIRATION? A FEELING OF, WELL, I COULD WRITE...(PAINT,
DRAW...)

I HOPE SO -- WE ALL HOPE SO, HERE AT THE CHRONICLE, BE-
CAUSE WE WOULD HAVE NOTHING TO DO, NOTHING AT ALL
(WOE IS ME)

WITHOUT THE SUBMISSIONS YOU ALL SEND IN. SO THE NEXT
TIME YOU GET THE URGE TO CREATE, REMEMBER YOUR
FRIENDLY NEIGHBORHOOD LITERARY MAGAZINE, BECAUSE
ITS JUST FOR YOU, YOUR CHANCE TO SEE YOUR NAME IN
PRINT, AND ENOUGH COPIES TO SEND TO EVERYONE YOU
KNOW, EVEN THE COUSIN IN ALASKA YOU ALMOST FORGOT
ABOUT.

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TO ALLEVIATE CONFUSION, HERE ARE THE GUIDELINES FOR
SUBMISSION. WE WOULDN'T MAKE IT SO SPECIFIC, BUT TRY-
ING TO READ SCRAWLED HANDWRITING ON TOILET PAPER
(AN ACTUAL OCCURRENCE) IS HURTING OUR EYES, AND
MAKING US A TEENY WEENY BIT CRAZY, SO PLEASE SUBMIT,
HOW SHALL I SAY IT, NEATLY.

1. TYPE YOUR SUBMISSIONS ON STANDARD PAPER (TYPE,
BECAUSE I KNOW WE CAN READ THAT)

2. INCLUDE A SELF-ADDRESSED STAMPED ENVELOPE SO
THAT WE CAN INFORM YOU IF SOMETHING IS ACCEPTED,
AND PUT YOUR NAME ON THE BACK OF YOUR SUBMISSIONS
SO JUDGING WILL REMAIN CONFIDENTIAL. (NO STAMP NEC-
ESSARY IF YOU HAVE AN ON-CAMPUS ADDRESS)

3. SEND EVERYTHING TO THE CHRONICLE, BOX 2187 UNI-
VERSITY STATION, CLEMSON, S.C. 29632

4. SMILE, SIT BACK AND WAIT FOR THE SPRING ISSUE,
DUE TO APPEAR SHORTLY BEFORE EXAMS IN APRIL



Move along these shades

In gentleness of heart; with gentle hand

Touch - for there is a spirit in the woods

- from "Nutting"

by William Wordsworth

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As Clemson University's official art and literary magazine, Chronicle offers a central medium for publication of original works produced by students, faculty, and staff. Address all submissions and correspondence to: Chronicle, box 2187, Clemson, S.C. 29632-2187.

Student subscriptions are paid through student activity fees. Advertising rates are available upon request. Opinions expressed in Chronicle do not necessarily coincide with those of the student body, faculty, or administration. The Editors assume all responsibility for opinions expressed in Chronicle.



Chronicle

Spring 1994



From The Editor

1992 was termed "The Year of the Woman" by media across the country. All over the United States, women assumed positions in government once dominated by men. We are coming into our own, there is no doubt about that, and I hope our mothers and grandmothers who fought so hard for our place in a patriarchal world are proud. For this new generation of empowered women, however, the roles are blurred. It is a fact that we no longer must fight for our place, but we must now define what "place" we have, and set about customizing it, for we are not men, and though we have had to play by masculine rules for years, we are individuals with our unique ways of doing things. We must destroy the myth of the "S/he." I have never wanted to be a man, much less act like one and call myself a woman.

I believe in the no-frills definition of feminism, that our job is to be strong advocates of femininity, complete with our soft compassion, our deep-set pride, our strength of character and will, our stamina, and our full capacity for love. I think it's a shame that so many women, in order to reach plateaus in their careers, have had to give up children and even marriage to achieve their goals. I don't believe that an able CEO, who happens to be a woman, must also be a bitch to earn respect. We have made men hear us, listen to our united voice and give us equal opportunity under the law, now it's time to get equal respect. I'm not asking for hand-outs, or for something I don't deserve, but give credit where it's due, equally to a woman or a man. We are not the same, and we shouldn't act like we are. We have proven we have intelligence beyond what men afforded us for centuries, now it's time to enjoy the fruits of our labors. Never accept disrespect because you're a woman, but don't look for it either; by doing so we accept an inferior role.

March was Women's History Month. As we learn about what our foremothers endured, and how they triumphed, realize how things have changed, and how many milestones we've passed. Let's make every year the Year of the Woman. Glory in the beauty of the SHE. We deserve it.

NOTE: We seem to have misplaced the name of the artist who created the covers for this issue. Could he or she contact us so that we can give credit in the next issue?

Heather Anese Reid

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Untitled



Without Within

As I come full cycle around the fragile edge of the oval window of life and peer deep within, I become a part of a coming together, a new beginning, an unexpected separation, tremendous pain, and a tear-filled grief that reaches unbearable heights and leaves me devastated.

Peering into the window only serenity prevails and so I glide around the edge of the oval window of life maintaining an even flow of energy even as I sit down and encircle the window with my legs. I sense the all encompassing essence of life and then...

Two separate entities enter my field of vision and I become a part of the gravity that pulls them together and the energy that pulses at regular intervals until the force causes a sharp and dynamic change in their movement.

All movement ceases. I hold still and wait for I know not what. Then slowly the togetherness moves up and to the side, barely able to elevate a small amount.

And now the new beginning rocks from side to side with no change in the rhythm.

Then the new beginning moves from side to side and back and forth at a quick regular beat.

The new beginning stops on the upside and holds with baited breath. What is it now?

A foreign object has entered the window of life. It comes with irregular thrusts and pokes and with a pull that can not be denied it sucks up the new beginning and throws it away.

The window of life is left with pain felt in dynamic and intense drawing inward and then flowing downward and finally shooting upward.

There is a repeated forcing up, a pressing down, a momentary collapse, and a surge upward as unbearable heights are endured.

Finally unable to bear the pain, the devastated soul is lost. For without there is no within.

Wanda Davis

Three Poems

Fertile Land

I. In the Country

Past the Southern Norfolk line
and the meat packing plant's
burning bones stench—
out here we are
on fertile green land.
You squat in the Johnson grass,
focusing the enormous lens
on an iron disk harrow
silhouetted
against pale late-afternoon sky.

II. Half-Life

Gave you Rich's "Diving Into the Wreck"
and said "Let's not be this way"
the last time I visited
that swamp on the other side
of Grace Memorial Bridge—
trying to hold it all together
(my life, us)
because I've slept
in too many beds.

III. Bones

The cows turn, watching us,
their faces white as O'Keefe skulls
on a background of black rumps.
Spiny trees rise behind
a silver barn on the grassy hill.

Tattoo

We smoke to be closer
to the element of fire,
he said,
exhaling,
his cigarette burning down.

We present the smooth canvas
of our skin to the tattoo artist
to give of ourselves,
to sacrifice our bodies
to the universe,
he said,
to give our bodies over
to the fire of the spirit.

Under the humming needle,
blood beads to the surface
like poppies blooming.
After the brilliant fiery pain,
the lotus flower emerges:
a black-ink forever-mark
etched into my back
that will burn with me
in the fire of cremation.

Burial

The old man in the trench coat
and fedora hat points the way
with a point rather a flick,
rather than a poke,
of his index finger.
We pull up to the steps,
obey the driver and sit,
inside the silver limousine
holding the five of us quieter than sleep,
than death,
than smooth, heavy earth.

The Stribbling Mortuary men
in discreet pinstripes,
red carnations in the left lapels,
stand like a receiving line
by the thick double-doors open wide
to this cold early-February day;
recognizing one of them from high school,
I smile,
but no one smiles here.

And across the narrow Greenpond road,
the black men in rubber knee-boots
trudge around the open red earth,
chewing their lips, grinning, mumbling
to each other in words I can't understand,
not looking at any of us.

There were no shadows

Why do people have to die? I have wondered for a long time, but never said, it seems almost an insane question, and certainly not to be uttered. No, it is not something to answer, only wonder about, in the dark of the new moon, the time I last remember looking at the sky, after he died, after the worst time in my life began. It seems a cliché, that worst time, like all people who have lost must feel, but for me that feeling is hard, is repressed, so I write it, I give it to you so that I can sleep, so that the darkness will go away.

The sky is so deep, an endless black on a night with storm clouds, a dark red color, like wine, and no stars to light the way. The moon is hiding, I used to think like a woman who is afraid to be found, her hair covering her face, and the rain falls like tears. This is my dream, since Groundhog day in 1991, when I heard he had died, the strongest man I knew, the one who couldn't die, my grandfather. I do not see him dead, have never remembered anything but the last I saw him, working in his garden, his back a half moon of muscle still, over seventy but part of what he was doing, bringing things to life, to their end. I never remember what he said, only what I saw, and the sky above his straw hat is blue, the hand hoe curving the air, glinting silver in the sun, the grass drying by his side, out of the rich red dirt he toiled in. Even in winter he tended the soil, the garden he planted to make grandmother feel at home a hundred miles from her mother's farm; he did it to pull the weeds from the dirt, to make it open and ready for the seeds he would plant, smoothed the furrows with his hands like a woman's body, soft and tender. The focus is off, I see the grass sharply, green near the dirt but yellow, grey at the top, curled forward in death, paper-thin.

I imagined he must have looked that way, in the open coffin at the funeral home, but I never looked, only heard the old ladies say "They did real good, Evvy, your William never looked better. Why, with the pink in those cheeks you'd think he'd stand up from there!" They meant well, like old ladies do, close to death themselves and talking at these places to separate themselves from those already dead, the ones who are painted, made up in suits never worn, dresses starched only to house bones in scant years. I hate those places. My grandmother, Evelyn, just stood by the top of the coffin, not looking down, and I felt for her. She cried, tears tracking her cheeks like rivers, snaking through the wrinkles to her quivering mouth, rouged in the old style, looking for all the world just married but for her old face, her tired eyes. Her hair was still soft and brown, never gray, and she looked too young to lose a husband, even though he was eleven years her senior. I envied her, watching those tears, because she could cry, was expected to cry. My eyes were dry, as parched as the grass by his curving hoe, and I felt like a wee, ready to be cut off.

There were people: long, curving lines of faces I scarcely remembered, all sorry, all apologetic, as if it were their fault he died watching the news, inside on a couch, a place he would never have wanted to die, away from the living things he loved, and no people but the TV and my grandmother, cross-stitching in her chair. She said later, dazed by the sink in the kitchen, when it was only me and her late at night, that she had heard him breathe, only a catch, she said, one gasp and then nothing, and all she could do was hold him, her

tiny arms holding up his head, cradling it like a child and telling him, over and over, "Don't you leave me, Will. You promised me you wouldn't leave me. You said we'd go together, Will. Will!" I asked her if she cried then; she said she was too numb, too dead herself, but she saw no darkness, she saw Christ. "Jesus took him from me, Ruth. He needed Will, but why did he leave me? I don't want to be here without him. Forty-seven years he was mine, forty-seven years and we were planning a trip for our fiftieth. I used to joke that I'd never make it, that I'd go before him, he was so stubborn, but he told me he'd never leave me, that we'd go together so that we'd never be alone. Oh, God why did he leave me?"

I try to imagine thinking about death. I guess I'm not old enough, but there was an urgency in her voice I wanted to share, a kinship I'd never felt for my grandfather, to me always the figure in the garden, or a heavy booming voice on Sunday blessing the food we all ate: "Father, thank you for theese, and for all your blessings we ask in Christ's name, Amen." he always held out the "these," as if the time he took gave it more meaning, all the blessings in his mind, in our minds at that table being counted one by one each time he prayed.

Father. He was that. He prayed to God and when he did I could feel the presence of something bigger than myself, and I always felt it was him, not God, that made me feel so full. Yes, why did he leave her? That day, the last one, he didn't go to Hardee's and sit with his friends and talk, or work in the garden, or get in his old Chevrolet and drive around town, talking to the people and stopping at the Car Wash run by one of his oldest friends. George had a little garden next to the big brushes and the water hose, and granddaddy would stand next to his truck and talk to George as he sponged the windshield, and inspect the new tomatoes growing on the vines. Granddaddy always got some of those tomatoes, left on his porch in early morning, and he would leave okra for George on his way to Hardees, an unspoken barter between friends. He didn't see George, or the preacher from the church, or the other old men who congregated around the corner booth, next to the window overlooking the road. He left the tomatoes, the okra, the cabbage, all the squash, and the peas bursting from their pods, and he took grandmother to lunch, along with my uncle. Why did he do that? Why did he call the people who owed him money and settle payments? Why did he call his doctor and cancel an appointment for a chest X-ray scheduled that day?

If you believe in God, and the lucidity of death, you might know as I do that he knew that he would die. Then. Maybe it is a last gift from God, that we can cherish a last day, a reward for living so long that gives us a wisdom beyond age, a knowledge of things not connected with everyday life, the biorhythms of self. Young people go, violently and suddenly, and people are shocked and angry at such injustice. When the old die, they slip away from us like leaves in fall, whispering from the tree so softly we nearly miss them, only notice when they are small and withered before us, vital no more, with memories in our minds that make us melancholy, not angry. That is why the women marveled at his red cheeks, why my grandmother cried regally, only the tears, no giant wracking sobs like I heard later, when I lie by her side at night, in my grandfather's place. She cried then not for him, but for herself, so cruelly left behind. I could not sleep, not with such pain vibrant in my bed, and I felt small and cold in his place, the sheets as frigid as the body they buried, my grandfather no more. I saw through the window a dark sky, the time of the month being new, the moon hidden in the shadows of the earth, and I felt I could see the face of

God, oh Father why hast thou forsaken me? He made Christ real for me, when he died, then I could feel the loss I heard in granddaddy's voice at Easter, saying "Forgive them, father, for they know not what they do." The sky was dark then, and the earth shook with the pain of God, and that first night, I waited for the tremors, but felt only the thin shaking of my grandmother, hating herself for being alive.

They left me with her because I never cried, because I could hear her talk, drone on the story of his last day, try to work out for herself why he altered things just once, why he was with her. If he knew he should die, why not tell her? To save you, I thought. What kind of day would it be if everyone knew you would die come nightfall? They would look at you as if you were already a shadow, creep around you apologetically, and grandmother would cling fiercely, trying to keep him still. It would have destroyed him, that fear in her eyes. He was born to hardship, two years before the war to end all wars, and was a young man when the depression began. He hardened, threshed the softness from himself, pulled out the weeds in his soul that threatened to destroy him, grow and suck away his strength. His frail wife, the beautiful Evelyn he cared for, sheltered for all of their lives together, and I feared for her when he was gone. I feared for all of us, this family, his two daughters and one son, all of us his grandchildren, who had lived for him, though we did not know it.

Every Sunday we came together, and we ate, Evvy scurrying around in her old apron, eating from every dish and never sitting down, the daughters trading gossip, the men's deep voices engaged in talk of Sunday football. My grandfather was always loudest, and sometimes I cringed from that beautiful booming sound, knowing his rough love was from a time when affection was a luxury, and he had never learned to be gentle. We didn't know until the funeral that he had so many friends, though we suspected he knew the whole town. Hundreds of faces clustered around the grave, and so many had stories to tell.

One man had been laid off the year before from his job, and since he owed money to pay off his land, he feared of losing everything. My grandfather waived his payments for a year, time to get him back on track, and he brought to us his first check of 1991. Another young couple came to thank us for their home, because granddaddy gave them lumber, they could build it. Two preachers spoke at his funeral, one, an older man, was the preacher who baptized me when I was ten. He had known granddaddy for years, and had the baffled look of those who are new to a loss, and he confessed he almost didn't know what to say, because words were not the best way that William had spoken. Preacher Skinner said that when he had come to our town as a new preacher, he had been scared, and doubtful. William came to the pastorage, right after he moved in, and told Skinner that he had lived here all his life, and would help him in any way he could. The Preacher looked at him and said, "Well, if you know people here so well, what do I say to them?" Granddaddy just looked at him for awhile and then said, in a slow drawl he used when he wanted to make a point, "Just say what God says to you, Preacher. That's what we want to hear. You are here to bring us the message. Only you know what that is. Trust God, boy."

The other preacher was young and had only been at our church for three years, and he didn't know Granddaddy too well, but he knew that God walked with William Devery, and he said so. "When we needed new cushions for the pews in the church, William just stood up in the service and told everyone to give what they could, so that old men like him could sit comfortably to pray. Lord bless him, they did."

There were hundreds of flowers. I can never forget the sick smell, so much sweet

ness that it seemed dead, a mixture of smells from dead flowers, cut from the stems granddaddy would have left them on, and sixty red roses on the top of his coffin. Red roses haunt me. In the garden, near his calloused hands he grew roses, six bushes in a row beneath the clothesline my grandmother used to air the sheets: white, pink, and red roses growing wild, opening up wide in the sun and letting off a crisp, living smell. When he cut them they were at full bloom, ready to grace my grandmother's table, the embodiment of living creatures. The flowers on his coffin were hot-house flowers, raised falsely and never allowed to open. They were closed, too beautiful, like someone who has died too young, and the irony tore at me even then. It was never that he wasn't ready, I could never know that, but I wasn't ready for him to go. I hadn't begun to understand him.

Why is it that the young are doomed to wondering? When we are children everything makes sense, we are close to God, and the mysteries of life are before us, with so much time. And when we are old, what? What is it that makes the old so sure, so calm and accepting? Grandmother, once when she and he were talking, asked "William, I always hope I go before you, because I'm afraid I wouldn't be brave, wouldn't be ready to be alone." And that moment he looked at her and said, quiet and seriously "Evvy, I don't think we're ever really ready to die."

I drove my sister and my cousins from the funeral to the gravesite. There was no room in the limousine and I couldn't bear to be in it anyway. From where I was I could see the hearse as it glided around curves, and there was a ringing in my ears, no other sound. I remembered that granddaddy loved to drive fast, with the windows down, never quite reckless, and I had a wild urge to move faster, to shout and scream and roll every window down. Up ahead the windows of the hearse glared back at me, dark and featureless, sealed tightly around the Oak box that became his final home.

More people were at the grave, sprawled back from the tent that whipped in the wind, threatening to tip. We walked through them, our little sea of black, past all the women in their navy dresses, almost mourning that is acceptable here if you aren't family, and it was like being royalty, the deference, the ominous quiet as if they expect at any moment for you to explode in front of them. I felt that I would, when I saw the gaping hole, lined with green felt, and the precarious boards that held him up. At that moment I wanted to see him one last time, to rip open the lid, scatter the roses all over the ground, and pull him out, make him tell me he loved me, and why he never said so. I stood concentrating in the midst of weeping; my cousins wringing their hands, the youngest children playing in and out of the white stones surrounding us, and I felt far older than eighteen, more battered than anyone else, and still I didn't cry. I was angry: the boiling, raging kind that is so unstable, and I shook with it. He had not slipped away like dying leaves, could not be passed off with the trite "when the Lord calls us home, we must go." God had eternity, why then take this man now, when so many lives were held up by those worn hands? I looked around, at the gray faces, the tears streaking them with red, the dark somber clothes and the black hearse. I looked at the gray awning erected above us, the green felt lining the ground. He would not want that felt. Put him close to the ground. That was what he loved. Forget the box, the suit, the painted cheeks. Put his naked body down in the garden he loved, and God's circle is served. My mind screamed at the injustice. What we do to the dead to satisfy our custom. To be selfish and settle things neatly. There is no neatness to death, though. I know that now. We must organize it to stand it. The neat hills with white marble crosses, flying angels and stone crypts are never for the

dead, but for the living, and we feed our fear of IT, of an ending unexplained even by religion.

When the service was ended, and the crowd began to dwindle with promises of food and company waiting for us at home, we in black stood in an arc around the grave and watched men lower the coffin out of sight. I was lost, unsure of what to do until my grandmother walked over to the hole and dropped a single flower into it. It was a full-bloomed rose. That's it, she knows, I thought, and I wasn't alone.

The sky tonight is dark again, coming suddenly after the brightness of a full moon, an unexpected black. It is the anniversary of his death, and like a fragile human the passing of a year is triumph, so that anything is celebrated, even past pain. Long years have passed since that awning and those flowers stood here, on a hill near the road. This is the old part of the graveyard now, and in some places weeds have grown up around the stones, and marble vases lie skewed on their sides, artificial flowers fading in the dirt of years. My grandmother has put fresh flowers on his grave, as she does every day, large yellow roses to prove her faith, blooming for a day only, loosing petals to litter the ground. Today the sun shone, bright and cold but promising, for there were shadows reaching far across the ground beneath me, in the shape of my grandfather's cross, the faith that kept him. The day he died there were no shadows, and it seemed as if winter would never end, nothing new could grow. And I hear in my head his voice reading the Bible to me, clearer now than it was before, made sharp by time and constant wondering. His favorite passage was a song from a king to God, Psalm 23: "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; he leadeth me beside the still waters."

Granddaddy would grow quiet then, sound almost at peace with himself, with the life he had led, hard as it was. "He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." What a beautiful sound, the Holy book in his lap, the worn leather cover fitting to his hand as if it were made there, his glasses on the end of his nose, but his eyes closed remembering everything from long ago, from his father reading, and countless fathers before him. But the beauty, the culmination of the peace he had found, came at the last: "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever." There were no shadows, the day he died. None at all, and the sky was gray.

I never cried; it would have made it too real, he was dead when I cried, and he couldn't be dead. Now I cry, changing the flowers, putting red roses full bloom all over this grave, our remembering place. And the last thing before I leave I kneel by the stone cross and pull the straggling weeds that have grown there.

Weatherly McEwen

Two Poems

Anne Sexton: october 4

The institutions
their bleak halls
and endless analysis
of black air drowning white walls,
escorting me,
daily,
further from the truth
into nights thick with indecision.
Is salvation empty,
hopeless?
Yet again should I strive
to regain my life,
like a
torn origami bird
more fragile now
though still intent on flying,
only to relinquish my hold
on this ordinary day
ruled by routine
(like any other).
Failing even
to cancel my date,
a random man,
half in love,
waiting...
until he realizes
I'm not coming -
discovers
I'm dead.
A graduate of insanity,
expiring the way I always envisioned.
Leaving only
my legacy of pain.

regretting only a missed last kiss

I awoke one night,
the smell of incense still lingering in my hair
twisted sheets, hugging the end of the bed,
long since kicked there
during my restless night
alone.
And as I stared at my comforter
lying rumpled on the floor
I felt my hope dissipate
and I knew
my mind had released your memory.
You stepped off the pedestal
human once again.

An Expression

I've met with her a thousand times
And still a thousand times more
To hold sight of her figure
And counsel of her soul
Should not that be enough
To name any man content.

But me I make no lie
That by this woman my soul is at rest.
Rather, I wish to be free--
Of this muse I wish to be rid.
To remain whole and solitary
Gone from me Errata
Gone from me the burden of expression.

Andrew Lake Jameson

Two Poems

Faint Voices

Twilight stretches shadows across sun-bleached carpet,
once red, now faded into dullness; silent picture
frames stare out from the walls, the fractured
rays of waning light glinting upon the glass
and trapping a gloomy dust dance.
The old house settles into itself, lifting
long hungry moans from the shrunken floorboards,
painting the rooms with emptiness, reminding
the sole occupants of distant ghosts.

Her skinny fingers grapple with long knitting
needles—the hands tremble, grown gray and
wrinkled like the branches of a Ginkgo in wintertime.

*They will come tomorrow, wearing their nice Sunday
clothes and acting gracious as if somehow their
weekly pilgrimage has healed all wounds.
They will sit at my table and I will serve them
like I always have, stooping before them like a servant.
What would they do if I refused? Call me a bad mother?
A bitter old woman? It is just as well,
I would never refuse,, could never refuse.*

The loud clang of clocks stirs the haunting quiet,
the peel of bells diffusing throughout
the house into empty echoes, holding thoughts in the
trance of time; somehow she hears church bells
instead, ringing solemnly into the past and future.

*They will come and fill the house with their
bickering and shouting and expect me to hold them up
like He held us all up. Their voices cannot compare to
His booming laugh that made this house feel like Home
when I was younger and displaced from all I had known.
It can never be again. His voice grows faint now,
fading like the tolling of the clocks in my ears.*

The wind chimes murmur softly like the
gentle gurgle of a forest creek, wafting the notes
of a spirit maker past the silent auto wrapped in gray,
the chrome dull and mottled with age.

There is only time now, gently pushing me forward

*to the moment of rapture. There is only church sermons
and Sunday dinners and solitude. Outside the windows,
darkness clings to the pains and laughs
like an invisible drunkard, crazy and harsh.*

Night has crept in like a silent cat,
and the lonely light grows dim above her head,
barely illuminating her gnarled hands as she works,
slowly, methodically—the blanket is almost finished.
A few more knots and then she will sleep.

Empty Hands

There are the naked branches of winter
spread out like ganglia
against the purple-black of the night,
reaching to touch the darkness
with their bony fingers.

They do their skeleton dance,
shaking in the January wind
and I shudder,
and wish I had not left
a warm fire and you behind.

But I exiled myself years ago
when I took the first step away
from your arms that had
propped me up and taught me
the art of walking.

Now time has passed and
I have grown up through you
and between you like a weed
through a crack in the sidewalk.

You reached to hold me and
I was gone, left the door flung
open behind and said my
farewells to the empty hands
of barren trees.

Ways of Death

We Catholics keep our dead alive,
Buried in Tupperware coffins deep
Into the earthen fridge they dive.

Others scatter theirs to winds,
Feeding the soil with burned bones,
Making fertilizer of hair and skin.

Sailors to feed the fish will go
Transformed to coral in the cool sea-change
Nibbled of hand and ear and toe.

And the Capulets made a little home
For the dead to dust and clean and cook
And take a little tea in alone.

The Egyptians, of course, pickled their lost-
Sweet gherkin dead, bread and butter dead chips-
But took all the squashy parts first.

The Mongolians, I hear, (or was it the Tibets?)
Call the vultures down to the dead,
Piecemeal to heaven in beak-sized niblets.

Given a choice for my own good-
For death can come in many ways-
I'll take a hanging in the wood.

For though I have no wish to die
In hanging there in greenlit peace
I should be purified.

At the Art Theater

How clever we all looked that night. How fine,
All dressed in flowing art. A sight to make
The poor impoverished heart (perhaps, like mine)
Leap up and become culturally awake.
From looking at the crowd one would believe
That culture had arrived. All clad so grand
And strutting like young Chanticleers, to leave
No question of our coolness. Like some band
Of upper-middle-money-class gypsies
Decked out in multicolored wardrobes. One
Might wonder if the dressers spared the time,
Somewhere between the earrings at the hat,
To read the play. No, best to find a line
To use when in the lobby. "I find that
The unities are lacking, but of course
That does evoke the period." They nod
And showing very little of remorse
Accept you as the latest nouveau god.

I would not find this so depressing
If there were more than window dressing.

E.E. Merging

oh sweet spontaneous
 husband mine
earth how often have
you
 spun round
the
doting
 fingers of my heart clasping upon yours?
prurient philosopher pinched
 and
poked

thee
 , but cannot find the mysterious ways you
 love .how
often have religions take
 thee into my heart
squeezing and

buffeting thee that thou mightest conceive
 some love
 to make of us small
gods.
 (but
true

to the incomparable
 couch of my deathless
rhythmic
lover
 thou answerest them only
with Spring).

(merged with thanks to ee cummings).

In the bamboo grove

of all longings I had
one haunts me more than all
in pleasant hope of an assignation
amongst the tall bamboo groves
moaning gently to winds caresses
in sensuous accompaniment
a humming creek
did moisten our feet
in a gesture of welcome

our hands held, eyes met
eerily the night watched
with a thousand eyes
tears rolled down
her flushed cheeks
as I called to invite

claps of thunder
showered appreciation and rain
in a deluge of passion
our souls found love
in my conscious being
never had I reckoned
could company I cherish so much

our beings then felt
the closeness of our selves
never had someone
with reticence so communicate
the meaning of our being
together in love

with wonder I beheld
my lady adorned
by moonlight and
tinkle like laughter

gazed at by lilies
envious of our joy
they swayed in rhythm
amidst the bejeweled stream
till our mingling did carry us
into a sleep full of dreams...

Untitled Poem

Come on in
You may know us
There are those within our ranks
Who have showed you before
What is under our pale skins
Come on in
We are shadows
Of Dickinson and Plath
Trying hard to ignore
Pain to which we are all akin
Come on in
We are young now
And we'll someday, like them, go
leaving traces of some sorrows
personal in our pen
Come on in
But be cautious
You might dislike our manners
For we don't serve tea or coffee
Just the products of your sins

Carmen Richards

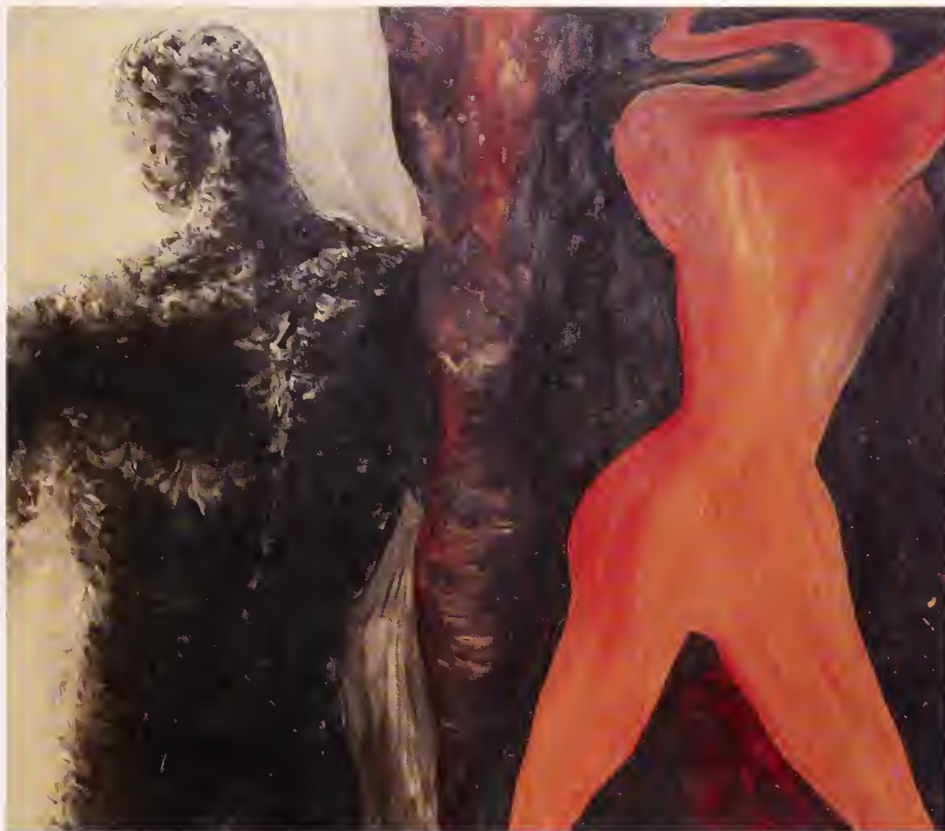
Two Paintings





C. Allston Kendall

Three Paintings



"Silhouette"









Robin Roberts



No Alternative

.
My friend made me realize
Life continues when you are blinded
My friend painted this picture
I wanted to see it but for one time only
Send her off to another life
Wrap those words up as lies
"I'm scared," she said.
Oh, who isn't scared.

My friend once offered advice
But I didn't want to listen
You try to believe in yourself
Forget the pain on your own
"I love you," she said.
Oh, what an unbelievable assurance.

There are times when the rain falls
My blue eyes with shades of redness
It seems to wash her away and
Allison finds the pain.
"There are times I can't stop shaking," she said.
I'm ready to hold you here
I can't stop caring.

But I'm not going to fall
Maybe someday I won't be as lonely
It seems I should speak my mind
It's never that easy
So maybe I should watch her pictures
Capture them on bulletin boards forever
But I have never done this before
The consequences once looked hopeful
Ending the pain is never the answer.

I sleep no more
The room never shall feel the same and
Allison finds her home.

Every motion once keeping me awake
But I was never worried.

Her smile opened my eyes
It carried me through each day and
Allison finds the heart to end this love
It chased me back
And I fall into her...
Away from her.

Half Moon Bay At Noontime

With my back to Pacific cliffs
I sit and watch a wave
slide into the cove
along the sandy ocean floor.

Now, into shallower water,
it wanes from deep, cold blue
to pale green,
cresting and rocking
before its inevitable collapse.

After sucking a deep breath
and plunging into its trough,
a crack echoes
followed by pounding
with crumbling resonance.

The glassy face has transformed
into a violent mass of white foam
racing for shore, seeking retreat
but dying and fading first
with a quieting sibilance.

Unrequited

“Though I am old with wandering”^{*}
I have spent the day in searching,
for what I know nothing but that my heart is heavy,
and I have need to lighten it.

Down the shore,
by the plank dock that stands far out in the waves
I sit on the sand
and listen to the dull and melancholy roar of the swell,
feel my body rise and fall with breath
as full as these tiding waves,
high and crawling towards me
with each twinge of the full blue moon above me.
But I do not move,
only sit and let the water swirl against my legs,
fixed by some unnamed sorrow.

Oh, Poet, did your Maud sit upon your heart heavy,
holding you fast as these tremulous waters hold me,
keeping you still,
wandering alone in your soul, searching,
Searching, but never to find?

Midnight, and the moon shows blue on the water,
a silver light to follow to the far horizon,
an ancient calling.
Love must ever be a quest,
and if it were ever to be caught, an end to the horizon,
close enough to touch it fades, and is gone.
And so we wander, you and I,
afraid to love basely with hands and mouths and eyes
for fear these swelling crests within our oldest hearts
shall cease to beat, settle the searching,
and the waves, the heavy thudding pulse
will be only water,
and we shall come to rest.

^{*} from W. B. Yeats' "Tale of the Wandering Aengus"

Untitled



"Rivalry"

Friday night rolled around again. As usual, Jimmy's was the place to be. The band was really hot tonight. The bass guitarist was thumping a strong backbeat. The old man had his fiddle out and tuned for the next set. The lead singer was just plain getting off. With a dark sea of faces bobbing and weaving all over the place, you could tell the crowd loved it.

It was a good crowd. The be-boppers and the button-downers alike were drinking White Russians by the pitcher. All the leathers were shooting pool or waltzing their women across the dancefloor. The bartender was in a good mood, the waitress was pretending to be, and the doorman seemed to be enjoying the band if nothing else. All the regulars were around, acting in their usual irregular manner to make for an evening's entertainment. A little trash might get swept under the carpet before the night was out, but all in all a good crowd.

The doorman was enjoying the band, but he wasn't too keen on the rest of the scene. Just like a damn soap opera, he thought. Is she going to make a decision tonight? What's the deal with Matt and Jill? And what's up with the three at that table, I wonder. Please folks, no melodrama tonight, he begged silently. Regardless, if it happened, it was going out the door. That was the only way to handle it. Didn't matter friend or foe, old timer or someone you wanted to know—take it outside. Out the door it wasn't his problem. Inside he didn't want a problem, wouldn't tolerate a problem. His eye roamed the bar, settling for a moment on a woman at a table nearby. "Lil' Sis, I hope you know what you're doing," he said to no one in particular.

Others too, were noticing. Latecomers raised their eyebrows as they walked in past the long table. It had been a long time since anyone had seen that group together. No mistake, they were all there—Lil' Sis and Dell, Lacy and Uncle Joe, and a few hangers-on, and Neal. Even Regan and her fool were there. Quite a party they were having from the looks of the over-flowing ashtrays and half case of empty bottle strewn about. The entire group was laughing and cutting up, giving the boys on stage a rough time if the "pause for the cause" ran too long between sets. Maybe Lil' Sis was laughing a bit too loudly. Perhaps that slight crick in Uncle Joe's neck was only fatigue and not the strain of trying to keep an eye on his companions. Big Brother at the door merely wondered how long the jollity would last.

Dell danced with his lady a few songs. Lil' Sis had flat out told him she wanted to dance tonight, and he was doing his best to accommodate her. He always did his best, but he was often afraid his best wasn't good enough. She made him happy. He hoped he made her happy, but he knew he was old-fashioned. Sometimes it was hard to keep in step with her. He'd pushed her away once—a big mistake. He got her back but it made a lot to make up for. He gave her liberties, "Hold on loosely, but don't let go..." as the song goes. It was hard to get the right grip on her. Still, he loved her.

The band played yet another two-step Del took a swig of his beer and lit a cigarette as Lil' Sis turned to him expectantly.

"Ya'll go dance," he drawled nonchalantly. Her eyes said something her lips

couldn't as she turned to the man on her other side, Neal. His eyes couldn't say anything she hadn't heard from his heart a dozen times. He stood and offered her a hand. She accepted and rose gracefully from the table to be led to the dancefloor. As they moved away from the others, Lacy got quiet. Uncle Joe shot Del a hard look. "Are you sure you know what you're doing, boy?" he asked.

"Yep, I'm sure." Del said, tipping his chair back to flag the waitress for another beer.

"Right." said Uncle Joe, shaking his head. This is how it started before, he thought.

Regan was drunker than usual, swaying slightly in her chair. "Oh they look so good together!" she blurted out, then covered her mouth as the fool next to her choked on his swallow of beer.

"They look too damn good together, if you ask me." growled Uncle Joe. Lacy looked at him and fumbled under the table to squeeze his leg as if to say don't make things any worse.

"Nobody asked you, old man." laughed Del with an edge to his voice. This was holding on loosely, yeah.

Lil' Sis and Neal did look good together, you couldn't help but notice. Neal had taught her to dance like that, taught her when no one else would bother. Tonight he was waltzing her around like there was no one else in the room. He knew how she moved. He remembered all too well how it felt to have her in his arms. She looked better than ever, but she felt just as she always had.

Other couples on the floor side-stepped a little further away, consciously or not. It was as if a halo surrounded the two, an aura of Do Not Disturb. They moved perfectly in step, perfectly timed and incredibly wrong.

They did a flourish as the song ended, holding a long moment. As they returned to the table Neal quickly ordered a beer as she reached for a cigarette.

"Thank you, Neal." she said smoothly. Then with a nervous laugh, "It's your turn next, Uncle Joe."

"You better believe it." Uncle Joe responded. "We'll show 'em how to move!"

Lil' Sis turned to Del, expecting a reprimand on his face. He leaned forward and kissed her on the cheek. "Right." he said, as he took another drink. She visibly relaxed.

A little later, Del went over the doorman. "Did you see them?" he asked.

"Yeah, I saw them. You saw them. Everybody in the bar saw them. What I don't get is why." the doorman replied.

"Well, she wanted to dance." stated Del.

"And he wanted to dance—with her. What are you trying to do to the poor boy, drive him crazy?"

"I didn't do it for him. I did it for her."

"Whoa, I'm confused. I mean, she's here with you tonight, not somebody else." the doorman said emphatically.

"Right. We had a talk, me and her. She told me how things were between here and Neal. It came down to two things, and those two things aren't enough for him to win her back." Del explained.

"Those two things being..." the doorman queried.

"The way he holds her—on the dancefloor and in bed. I'll grant her one, but not the other."

"Whatever." the doorman shook his head. He knew Del was right to an extent. Lil' Sis had told him more or less the same thing. Still, Del was taking a chance, he thought.

Lil' Sis had a lot of needs. She compromised on most of them to remain with Del. It was a helluva temptation he dangled in front of her. Personally, the doorman didn't know which would make her happier, if either. Seeing the way she'd been lately—nervy, eyes drawn, smoking and drinking to excess, and buying batteries wholesale—Del had brought out the worse in her lately.

The doorman surveyed the crowd again and was mildly relieved. There were plenty of winners and losers in the house tonight. The winners weren't getting too cocky, and the losers were taking it gracefully. The biggest loser, to his way of thinking, walked out with a simple "She has my number, she knows where I'll be, I won't be back." Back tonight or back at all, the doorman wondered. Hell, he couldn't stay gone long, nobody could. This place, and some of the people in it, could suck you in. A whirling froth that drug you down and tossed you back onto shore and into someone else's arms—that's what it was. Neal would be back. You'd know he was back when the jukebox started playing every broken-hearted song on the playlist.

The band finished about 2:15 a.m. The doorman had closed the til at one and was having himself a cold one as the bartender started the evning breakdown. Everybody would be looking for rides. Lights up—time to go folks. Damn it was cold outside. Oh well, most everyone had someone to keep warm with tonight. The doorman might wake his wifey without waking the kids. Regan had her fool, and Lacy would have Fred. Lil' Sis didn't make a phone call, so congrats to Del. Uncle Joe knew he'd be sleeping alone, but there was the comraderie of couch-crashers. Everybody go home, somebody's home anyway. Lock the door, turn out the lights, and have sweet dreams, baby.

* * * * *

"Thank you." Lil' Sis whispered.

"You're welcome." Del replied, after they had finished.

Her desire, his duty—or so it seemed. What a pity when everything else worked out so well. She was a popular party girl, he a guy who didn't get jealous. The pair of them could drink and dance all night. What a pity they couldn't make love that way.

"You know I'm trying to be less demanding," she said.

"I know," he mumbled as he rolled over and went to sleep.

She lay awake for a long time, the smoke from her cigarette spiraling through the air. Funny how the alcohol slips up on you, she thought. I get to drinking, I get to thinking. She loved a man who had to be drunk to love her. It took Dutch courage for him to hold her. It took Dutch courage for her to accept him. God, what a story. Much as she tried to write him out of her life, introduce new characters, dream or live a thousand plots without him, he remained a stock player in the repertoire. Theatre hell, her life was a circus. Tap dancing on a high wire—the thinner the wire the sharper the cuts from it but of what a thrill to be at the top of the tent. Let Del be a Carnie then, the one who tears the show down and sets it back up a little further down the road. That's it, she thought, tear down my womanhood but set me back up on a barstool pedestal and watch the fools flock. No bigger fool, but then again, it takes a fool to love me—passion's fool. Maybe you aren't a fool Del. Maybe that's been the problem all along.

Call it another long and confusing night, with too many men fighting for the right to be one in a million fantasies. An endless fever to quench desire makes a woman watch love burn just to fuel the fire. Burning out, with so many that you think you have to please.

Play the game making up all the rules, set the pace too fast and wind up passion's fool.

"Maybe I am a fool." she sighed. "Maybe I need a fool." Her thoughts turned to a memory and a wistful look came into her eyes. She was remembering a dance. The dance, the dancer she held in her mind as tightly as she had held Del a few minutes before, as she had tried to hold onto her sanity tonight. "Let me dream, no one can deny me a dream dance." she pleaded with whatever god was listening. Her deity must have granted her wish for she soon slept.

In the morning the phone would ring. It would ring long after she made coffee, got dressed, and took Del to work. Neal would call, just to talk. She'd listen, just to hear his voice. It would be another day dawning, with another night gone leaving some dreams behind and others waltzing in their wake. A faint smile crossed Lil' Sis's face as she lay asleep. A song played on the radio. Sweet dreams, baby, sweet dreams.

..."As the band steps down from another set
There's a woman at a table alone
Two men standing in the shadows
Wanting love like they have known
As she turns her head to watch them
As they move all around the room
Always circling her table
Waiting for her next move

It's all in your corner, babe
You've got to make your choice
Stand up tall, bust a bottle on a wall
Just so they can hear your voice
There's no need to call to order
If you don't know what to say
All your family, all your friends
Say walk, walk away.

Didn't you try to sort it out a week or so ago?
Same old bar, same old table, not a new song in the show.
Has nothing changed in all these weeks, with both try'n to
win your heart?
Girl you've got to make a choice somehow before they tear
this place apart.

A pool table in the corner
And a jukebox in the back
One asking for your hand in dance
And the other setting up a rack
The bartender serves 'em cold beer
While you knock off a stronger drink.
Beer won't touch your problem
But tequila won't let you think.

A cigarette in the ashtray
You're smoking too much tonight
Trying to keep your hands from shaking
Trying to figure wrong from right.
Why does a man fall in love?
Why did both of them fall for you?
You didn't set out to break any hearts
But that's what you're about to do.

Play for me jukebox, eightball on the break
A little time is what you need to decide what decision to make.
Get it right, get it wrong, just make some sort of call.
You know you are a woman with your back up against a wall...."

(repeat and fade)

Untitled



Mae

My pink, curled toes are warm
And the soft texture of my blanket bunches up around
My neck and tucks me in like a warm fuzzy fetus.

There's no better feeling than laying awake in bed-
Late mornings-
When the Sun makes the closed blinds glow.
It's so soft and warm, I never want to leave.

Lying there I playfully ponder the sweetest memory-
One of such absolute ecstasy that I could shout with exhilarated joy!
Instead I lie there just smiling and feeling high.
Content - dreaming of blessed Eden.

I see Divinity from the cloudy perch of my memory.
Sitting in a lazy cafe, sipping and staring at unexpected brilliance.
Noticing the poetic scene, I feel like I'm posing-
I remember feeling stupid.
She sat across the room as I sat unnoticed.

I studied her liquid movement-
Trying to make her subtle story familiar:
The way she spoke - held her head - moved her hands.
I couldn't hear her words.

I remember fairness in her face-
The deepness of her eyes,
The soft curl of black hair stretched across her pale cheek.
Clichés be damned: I have never seen truer beauty!

I remained with my chair, in no mood for the enormous risk of
Spontaneous introduction-
Spending my silence trapped in an atmosphere of anxiety:
Sitting, watching, admiring - doing nothing while Eternity fades.

What a dream to have those eyes returning my gaze,
A sweet adoring glance - precious attention -

To hear that voice and feel her breath.
Conversation with an angel.

What dreams are these when I am tortured by an unfulfilled awareness?
My mind-fantasy is meaningless when reality dawns on my perfect darkness.
To think that she could be drawn to the say-nothing shell that hides my
Free mind is ludicrous.
Not when she lives free of the fear that keeps me from being myself.

Who am I in her eyes when all she can see is who I am not?

She looks as free as Infinity-
Disregarding the retro-me-free style of her dress-
The way she speaks defines the essence of uninhibited,
A perfect match in the genuine flavor of "I am me."

The rushing climax of my yearning strikes in concert with the sound of scooting chairs.
She rises to leave and my mind screams.
The fixation of my soul desperately clings to her sleeve as she is last to exit.
The door closes behind her and I finally catch my breath.

I am left to silently consider the frame of her face
Etched in my mind for ages.
And though my heart sinks with a sickness of loss
I will forever cherish a brief and precious memory.

Next day—Strange twist of events—
Away from home and lost, I, with friend, find her again—
(Could this be an omen for analogy?)
Nothing has changed - nothing has faded - my hyperactive yearning returns
As I see my memory face to face.

Fate speaks to me and I swallow my tongue.
Where do I find words to fill what is more to me than casual conversation?
I find myself wanting to say so much, but
She doesn't know who I am.

We spend time talking and I am now out of my own mind.
Her openness of action is but a brief extension of an inner honesty.
In an extended instant I am unabashedly revealing myself to her.
There is something mystical in her eyes.

She speaks with a frankness that few can muster—
The trick to her tongue is that it is natural.
She describes visions beyond my experience.
I am fascinated and infatuated.

As we sit and talk I am lifted,
But my mind is skeptical of her perspective.
While I reveal an unknown intimacy,
I wonder if she notices.

I have seen enough to entertain her uniqueness—
Venturing far beyond what is decent observation.
Proof to Divinity's existence.
I am forced to leave, but I will never forget.

I woke the next morning with Mae on my mind.

Wrapped In Your Own Cotton

Tonight I have words in my head
And on your paper.
Tonight I see your sleeping figure.

The soft moonlight forms shadows
Across your outstretched body.
Dark lines frame your bed and darken your hair.
The pale light reveals your closed eyes and slender leg,
Hooked to the right on the outside of your warm bedsheets.
Your cheek, pressed against your arm, rests on your second pillow.
You are firmly placed in your seat of dreams.
Comfortable with your ritual,
Drifting off, wrapped in your own cotton.

I see this from my perch within your dreams.
Next time remember me in your bedtime prayers.

Untitled



days

some days the windy booming in the pines
is like the audible rushing of time—
when the sad tolling of a silent chime
bends the spirit to melancholic shrines.

there are other days too when the nerves wilt
under a burning sun and politic
plans of even sound minds grow neurotic—
days saturnine and aching built.

then there are days of earth whimpering dread,
when lightning clicks in concatenating rage
with continuous thunder and fury outspread—

days too of sunlight singing and sage
rhythms of light and time and a river's flow,
and thoughts of life and love and silent woe.

The Shadow Horses

I saw the shadow horses in fields of
fractured moonlight, breaking fast in the
sounding surf by the booming of the sea—
and thought of life and loss and aching love.

Their hooves beat a dirge in the sounding sea;
the notes hung clear and strong in a churning sky
and tolled in my heart the everlasting why
of life and loss and a reason to be.

So here shall I stand in diminishing day:
For always at night they come running to me,

Amid froth and foam and thundering spray,
They come running, running, running to me

Like purged souls on a frantic holiday,
on the beach by the booming of the sea.

Untitled Poem

I touched it,
it felt like purple velvet that carries a picture
of thin Elvis.
There were little buds that looked like Q-tips,
you knew they were going to be flowers
if they grew anymore.
They have pine-like leaves that are as thick as
the branches themselves. Once they're cut from their roots
how long do flowers live?
Are they just embalmed, in a zombie state
uprooted from their mother land?
Uprooted from a meaningful tradition
of pollination, nurturing sun, wind and mother earth
caressing its feet.
Of tender roots searching for nutrients under foot.
Do they scream from loneliness?
or do they passively suck
the fluid of existence that leaves them
numb to reality,
trapped in their memories
of swaying with the wind,
kissing up to the sun and gently being tickled
by the rain...

Depression

With arms spread apart
 I fly ever higher
Up and up, closer to the top of the sky—
 higher than you, maybe much higher
It seems so attainable, even destined
 but again the strength begins to wane
 and I fall
Towards the earth, slow at first
 and then plummeting
A great crash, devastating and complete—
 it hurts (it always hurts)
But still I walk away,
 as unimportant as it seems
And look to the sky uncertain
 wondering if I will try again.

Who Are We?

Who are we?

Elvino M. Mendonca Jr.

Who are we?

The question haunts our generation like no other. Alternately known as Generation X (does anyone really know what that means?), or the Thirteeners (for the thirteenth generation of Americans), we are attacked from all sides. Our detractors, and we ourselves, call us apathetic, materialistic, violent, and just about anything else of a derogatory nature. We seldom hear praise, but then again we really don't care, do we.

Are we apathetic?

What have we seen not to be. We were bred on Republican ineptitude: Reagan falling asleep at his own meetings, Bush not doing anything of substance and boring us to tears in the process, and Quayle making a laughingstock out of one of the country's highest positions. Democratic challengers hardly looked better when they couldn't gain their party's confidence, let alone our own. Finally one of them leads us but by waffling so much, by compromising almost all to gain a little, he leads us in our apathy as well. Independents were almost nonexistent until this past election. When one finally did surface he showed us that it didn't really matter if you had a platform. As long as you had the money people would listen.

It has been said that we have a tendency to let things go until it is absolutely necessary to deal with them. I believe this is closer to the truth than the apathetic title with which we are labeled. Those who judge that we really don't care and therefore won't act when they push by us may find themselves sadly mistaken. When we finally feel we must act, we will do so for our own benefit. Until then, to quote Christian Slater "So be it."

Are we greedy?

Everyone is greedy. We all want what will make us happy. So then are we excessively greedy? This label stems from the so-called "Decade of Greed," the 1980s. Has any-

one noticed that the names associated with that decade and its excesses, Milken, Trump, Turner et al., are not part of this generation. We were mostly still in school while that decade raged on. Once again we learned from what there was to see. Besides, our economic status is rammed down our throats at every turn. We have been told incessantly that we will be the first generation of Americans that will be unable to do better than their parents. It seems everyday the news brings us further discouraging news about the job market and employment for college graduates. Is it any wonder we seem to be preoccupied with money and how we will get it? It seems to be what is expected of us. How many of you are in majors that will earn you a good living because it is what your parents, and not necessarily you, want? Yet it is us, rather than them, who are perceived as greedy.

Are we violent?

A recent study found that while the crime rate in the United States did not change from 1992 to 1993, the number of violent crime stories reported in the news doubled. I am not saying we are not violent, rather I'm saying that the perception of our violence is overblown by the media. In general all society has become more violent. We should not be singled out in this area. Whatever the causes may be, all of the members of this society share equally in its rise. For instance, if the greater amount of violence we see on the screen is reflected in our dealings with each other, why has nothing been done to lessen it? Scorsese, Spielberg, Coppola, Romero, they are of the previous generation and their work magnifies and glorifies violence. Yet they receive only passing criticism, and sometimes awards, while we must bear the brunt of the violent label. Sometimes, the label is well deserved. The Mosh Pit is a prime example. Our music is our greatest form of expression. Pearl Jam, Nirvana, Onyx, Cypress Hill, Ice-T— they are so successful because they say what we long to say but haven't. We live on the edge in the Mosh Pit. We are free to be who we want to be, to vent our anger, our frustration, our fears on each other. We enter it nameless, without a presence, but once inside we can proclaim our existence. We are but one of many in the pit, but there we are individuals, we matter. Everything around us is affected by what we do. Complete freedom, complete independence. The music carries us with it, rising ever higher. Throwing ourselves about in a frenzy we have the choice of being victimizer instead of just victim. We finally crest and slink away exhausted yet reborn.

Who are we?

For many of us, we are who we are told to be. Society, our parents, religion, all have carved out for us our little niche. We are not supposed to go beyond that. To question it is to question their authority, their very existence. They feel threatened and so they try to stifle us, our dreams, by telling us they are only doing what is best for us. So, many of us fight an uphill battle to be who we want to be rather than who we are told to be. Others resign themselves to their fate. That is the greatest vice of our generation. Our willingness to fall or let each other fall. We accomplish nothing but our own demise when this happens. Who is better qualified than ourselves to tell us what we do and do not like, what we should and should not do, what we will or will not become. Yet we constantly subordinate our desires, our wishes, our lives to those of others.

Are we afraid to take control of our own lives? Are we afraid of who we might become?

We must stop questioning ourselves and begin challenging ourselves instead. We must seize our lives, our destinies as our own. We must learn to reject the fear of the new, of the challenges that lie before us, of the lives we feel, we know we must lead. Of course

we will be lost on occasion, of course we will stumble, but we mustn't allow that to deter us. Life, glorious life, to try, to fail, to succeed, that is living, all else is but a sham, a mockery of what truly could be. Dying, let us not have to speak of what could of been, but what was.

Am I advocating anarchy? By allowing everyone to do what he or she desires, aren't I preaching about a nonexistent Utopia?

When I say we should all do what we feel we must, I am not advocating anarchy. I am merely saying that we should be allowed (or allow ourselves) to take chances, to challenge our beliefs, to find who we are. For example: How many of you believe in God? Have you ever challenged your belief? Have you explored other religions? Have you ever really thought about it at all? Most of us have taken the beliefs of our parents as our own, without evaluating them. Why? Most of us have completely different tastes in clothes, music, etc. than our parents. Why not a different religious belief or no belief at all? Is this blasphemy? I am not trying to change your opinion of God or religion. Rather, I am challenging you to think for yourself, to stop believing everything that is told to you without question. Whatever my beliefs are, are none of your concern. Nor are your beliefs my concern. Whatever your conclusions are, are fine, as long as they are your conclusions.

It is not Utopia, but rather the ability to do what you feel you must that I preach of. However, you must be willing to suffer the consequences, as well as reap the rewards, of your actions. To pawn off your mistake on someone or something else simply because you can't bear the consequences is the act of a coward. You learn nothing from your mistake and are apt to repeat it. By taking full responsibility for your actions, you give yourself an incentive to succeed. For when you do, you can't go back. You must forge ahead. Success or failure depends solely upon you. Success is sweeter thus and failures more bearable, for the blame or praise fall solely on you.

Challenge yourself, find out what you truly believe. Only then will you know who you really are and what you may strive to become. Only then will our generation find its voice. Only then will they know who we really are.

Rhythms

When we are young,
we take our strides deep into the unknown,
following the thin beach that is high tide,
the beginnings of our discovery--
leap, splashing into the water,
impatient for the drawing back of the sea.

In that murky dawn, we find ourselves,
re-surface wiser with careful steps.
We are the Titans chained by Poseidon
for fear of our power,
our furious and seeming eternal youth.

And when we are old, do we not look back,
across the dusky beach riddled with our footsteps
to see, at the edge of the water, those children that follow?
When they look at us with our eyes twenty years past
we look back, blank with age,
and say "Of course we know what's best. After all, we've been there.
You see, we've been through it all before."

The tides, constant with the cycles of the moon—
the incessant rhythms of self come and go, and with them
we rise and we fall.

"Come, children" from our distant havens,
but always they wait, as we did for our own time,
never placing our feet where old footsteps fade in the sand,
forgetting to follow before the tide erases all trace
of the past,
leaving us once again alone,
with a gap of ages between us,
our feet buried in old depressions.

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As Clemson University's official art and literary magazine, *Chronicle* offers a central medium for publication of original works produced by students, faculty, and staff. Address all submissions and correspondence to: *Chronicle*, box 2187, Clemson, S.C. 29632-2187.

Student subscriptions are paid through student activity fees. Advertising rates are available upon request. Opinions expressed in *Chronicle* do not necessarily coincide with those of the student body, faculty, or administration. The Editors assume all responsibility for opinions expressed in *Chronicle*.

** In the Fall 1993 issue, we did not give credit for the cover art. This was a serious oversight on our part, and we apologize to Kevin Koshar, who contributed the front cover, and to C. Allston Kendall, who contributed the back cover.







