


Spring 1998

et cetera

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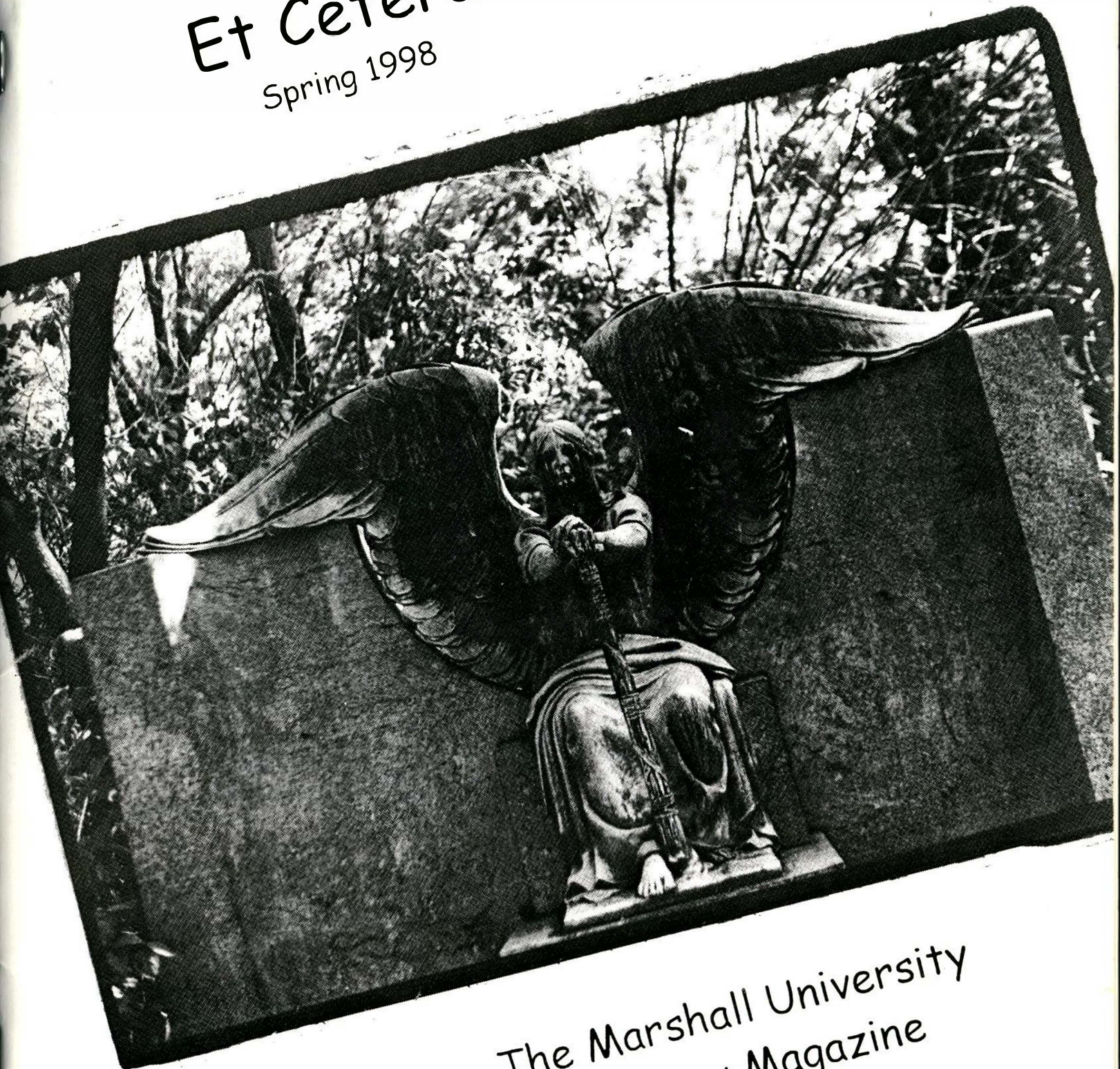
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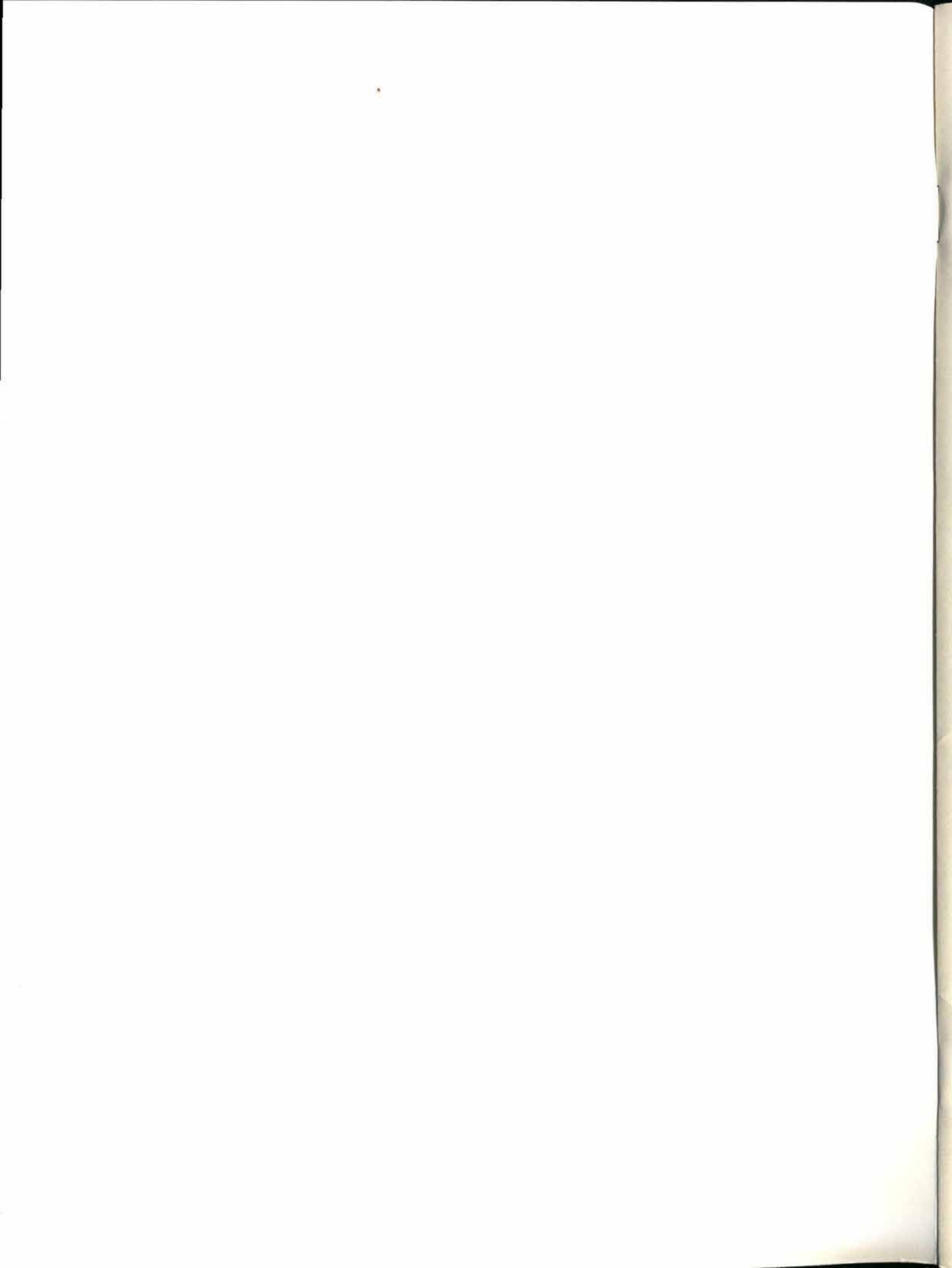
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Et Cetera

Spring 1998



The Marshall University
Literary Magazine



Et Cetera

Spring 1998

The Marshall University Literary Magazine
Huntington, WV

1998 Et Cetera Staff

Editor-in-chief	Stacey Patterson
Prose Editor	Marsha Blevins
Poetry Editor	Tim Robinson
Art Liason	Tim Robinson
Faculty Advisors	Prof. Marie Manilla Prof. John Van Kirk

Faculty Judges	Prose: Dr. Christine Darrohn Poetry: Dr. Mary Moore
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Prizes

First Place Prose	Andy Charles	The Tief and Easter Sunday
Second Place Prose	Scott Morrison	Of All the Sounds
Third Place Prose	Mark Fleshman	The Legacy of Tom Martin
First Place Poetry	Deidre Conn	in transit
Second Place Poetry	Matt Cooke	Poet
Third Place Poetry	Alan Fairchild	Premature Nightfall
Cover Art	Paula Rees	Untitled

Did anyone ask me? A letter from the editor anyway

Well, I finally made it. This rookie has survived the year, but not without a great deal of help. Like any big project, Et Cetera is not something that can be done alone. I would like to thank the many people who have been there to assist me in my first attempt at editing a magazine: Professors Marie Manilla and John Van Kirk who probably wish I would start taking some medication; Marsha Blevins for knowing when to slap me, when to hide, and how to work the computer; Tim Robinson for all of his experience and calming influence (how does he remain so cool?); Matt Cooke for his input, expert advice, and submissions; Dr. Mary Moore for judging poetry and making me laugh; Dr. Christine Darrohn for judging prose and always brightening my day; Professor Art Stringer who watches over us in the English Department; Sandy Lloyd for her computer advice; Barbara Williams for being the guardian angel of the English Department as well as resident mom to so many of us; Dr. Kateryna Rudnytzky for her faith and her smile; and thanks to all of those students who submit works and remain interested in the magazine. It has been a pleasure riding the Et Cetera roller coaster; although I found myself feeling nauseous and queasy at times, I am all the better for having bought a ticket. It has been a privilege.



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Writing As Life

Donna Sparkman

Words become avenues to explore
Roads to travel along for miles
Interstates to bridge distinct worlds
Trains to places and people foreign
Islands of memories created in the past
Nations of hope and fears joined to
Governments of morals and standards
Airports to fly among the heavens
Steamers to coast over the oceans
Liveries of the damned, the blessed, the
Independent who grasp the power,
Freedom garnered by the mining
Experience of Writing As Life.

Pigeon

Kari May

risen-
from oil
slick

risen-
from asphalt

speckled
(white
ashen grey)

flocked together
numerous as cigarette butts

discarded

Poet

Matt Cooke

Second Place Poetry

I.

She stuffed his manuscripts in the cracks
around her windowpanes, insulating her world
with the best of him. It's all she ever got--

II.

He stood at the sink, scrubbing his hands
in the shit-fouled air of a public john
while in the auditorium another poet read
to a crowd of grinning students.

III.

Afterward, on the campus green,
he noticed how a blue spruce grew
in the middle of a field bare
of other trees. The evergreen pointed
like a prophet into the quiet sky.

IV.

Now he has caulked the windows;
the stillness of the air surprises him--
no wind to ruffle manuscripts.

THE TIEF AND EASTER SUNDAY

Andy Charles--First Place Fiction

This is a word list to help with reading the story:

Pongs: plural to the word pound.

Bacu: a little person.

Lugaruu: this is a character in the native folklore. He is not unlike the at night he peels his skin off, turns into a ball of fire, then sneaks into the homes of the islanders to drink their blood.

Sweetie: candy.

Liccle: little.

Peter: used to describe a man's private parts.

Crapo smoke you pipe: Phrase used to tell children they are in trouble. A crapo is a frog.

Swee-drink: Coke or Pepsi.

Shuga: sugar.

It was Saturday nite and de moon was covering Cockroach Place wid a erie florescent mist. Fatcat was walking home from de beach wid some shells in he hand. Nobody on Cockroach Place liked de boy. He was one ah de biggest thief on de whole island. He was eleven years ole an' weghed about three hundred pongs. Dere was a rumor dat he once eat a whole goat. Anyway, he was new in de village he never tried to fit in wid de other children. He aunt who he lived wid was tired wid he badness. Anyhow, he stopped in front ah Lett shop. Dat dam shop was real easy to break in to. It have a small window dat a Bacu could climb in. So Fatcat looked around to see if anybody was watching, all he saw was de shadows dat de moon made. So he walked up to de window and tried to pull it open. De dam ting won move atall, atall. Den as if a lightening bolt hit him, he start looking around for a piece ah wood. He walked around de shop and came back wid a piece ah wood. He put it in de crack ah de window and pulled. De window fly open and Fatcat almost scream for joy. Den, like one ah dem cartoon people on Yankee T. V. He tiptoed up to de window and start climbing in de shop. First, he pull he head through, den he shoulder, and den he chest, but dat was as far as he could go. De boy was too fat to get all de way in. He pushed heself out de window and landed on de ground. He had to find a way to get in. Den as if someone kick 'im in he ass, he turn and rant to he house. He aunt was sitting in de kitchen peeling corn. He sneaked by she and went to he room. He picked up a jar ah vaseline den ran back to de shop. He looked around, nobody was coming, so he took he cloths off, falling a couple ah times. Den he rubbed de vaseline all over he body. He looked like a Ligaruu widout he skin. Den he pulled heself up de windowsill. He could feel he fatrolss rub against de wood. Den it happened. De fat around he belly stopped going through de window. He wiggled, he kicked, he pushed, but he din budge. So he hung dere looking around at de shop. In de corner, a table lamp was on. De dim light was right under de shelf wid de jars ah sweeties on it. Boy Ah tell you, frustration set in. Dem sweeties was just sitting dere. English Toffee, dat sticky, sweat, mouth watering treats. Sugar balls, coacoanut chips and dem Cuban rum drops. Cat could almost taste dem. He started waving he arms as if he was trying to will de sweeties to him. He was sure he heard de English

Toffee laughing at him.

"You laughing, you laughing," he said. "Ah go get you if Ah die trying." Boy, Ah tell you ah tink Cat losing he mind. He tink dem sweetie talking to 'im. Anyway, he tried he best to get free, but all he do was to wedge heself more. So he hung dere, the thought ah calling for help, but he was fraid wah dey go do to him. He thought dat he could come up wid a story for why he hanging dere. So, he stick dey, like a fishbone in a child's throat. Dew wind start to howl outside. It kick up dust dat stuck to him, bringing fire ants wid it. Cat could feel de liccle red devels crawling all over him. Den dey start biting him, and dere was nothing he could do but hang dey and take it. De wind kick up again blowing de ants off him. Boy, it feel real good not being stung. He tried to turn and end up hanging on de small ah he back. Dat was not comfortable, so he turn back round. So, dere he was, hanging, feeling like a ripe mango ready to be picked. De wind was still blowing outside and it made his Peter shrink up like a rotting grapefruit. De crickets and frogs was making a whole lot ah noise, and he was sure de English Toffee was still talking to him. He almost call for help again, but he know he Aunt go buss he ass if she see him. Ever since he muder get sick, he had to live wid he aunt. He din like he aunt, he hate she for so. So he hung day all night listening to de dogs bark and de cats fight.

De next morning, he wake up to de yard fowl and dem crowing. He could feel de warm morning sun against he naked bam bam. Den he heard footsteps.

"Oh gawd, Crapo smoke me pipe," he said, kicking he legs. Den de footsteps stopped by de window.

"Boy, wah you doing!" someone yelled. It was Lett, de owner ah de shop.

"Ah, Ah..." Fatcat stuttered, but Lett was screaming for so. Lett hit him on he behind, it hurt for so.

"Tief, tief. All you come and see de tief." All de while he cuffing Fatcat on he ass.

"Oh gard, don kill me!" Fatcat screams.

"Kill you, kill you? Boy Ah go cut off you liccle dick!" Lett bawl. And den is when it happened, Cat pee heself. Lett jump back as de yellow liquid fall on he shoe.

"Dat you Fatcat? You dead, you dead!" And he start beating Cat's bam bam again. By dat time, a lot ah people was standing around.

"Who is dat?" dey asked, as Fatcat kick he legs, he big black butt jiggling like jello.

"Is Cat, is Cat!" Lett yelled, and some ah de villagers run over and start beating Fatcat too. Den Fatcat heard he aunt's voice.

"All you stop, Ah go do dis," and she starts beating him too.

"Auntie stop, auntie stop," Fatcat screamed. Some ah de people was laughing and others was cursing up a storm. But is was Charles de Bobby who stop dem. Dey stepped away from Fatcat, some ah dem coughing and out ah breath.

"Ah tell you wah we go do," said Charles. "We go let him hang dey. Dat go teach him a lesson." All dem villagers, dey start talking at once.

"Shut up, shut up," Charles said. "We go make he comfortable." Shitty de carpenter shouted.

"Ah could build ah stand to rest he legs on," and all dem people, dey say yes. So Fatcat lay dere as Shitty, Lett, and Charles build de stand. De people get tired ah watching. Dey all leave except for he Aunt. Dat devil 'oman.

"Ah don surprise, you is de devil, but Ah go fix you, yeah mon, Ah go fix you real good." And she turn around and walk away.

After Shitty, Lett, and Charles finish building, dey put Fatcat on de counter and went in de shop. Fatcat was crying like a cat in heat. Dey sat down in de shop and look at him.

"Wah wrong wid you boy? You know we woulda catch you." Fatcat mumbled, he eleven year ole mind was going mad. Dem dam sweetie was still talking to him. Outside, Fatcat hear some ah de young stars in de village snickering. Charles got up and went out de door.

"You liccle scamps better go or Ah go give you plenty ah licks." Fatcat heard dem run away. He knew who dey were and he go beat dem up when dem three men let him go.

Charles came back into de shop mumbling someting about dem dam liccle ragamuffins. Den he, Lett, and Shitty sat down and talk about de young generation was evil. Fatcat wanted to say sumting, but he knew dey go beat him if he did. So, he just lay dere listening. Den Shitty get up and leave, and as he walked away Fatcat could hear 'im whistling. Fatcat wanted to kill him, but he couldn't move. So he lay dere, hate building up in 'im.

About nine o'clock, Lett gave Fatcat some food to eat. He din take it at first, but he was hungry and he wolf down de food. Tanti Mamie walked into de shop. She looked at Cat den walked over to Lett. She red dress hang loose on she shoulder and Cat could see she bra-straps. Charles rolled he eyes and kept drinking de swee-drink dat Lett gave him.

"Take dat child out de window. Is a crying shame what you doing to him."

Lett walked over to she and said "Mind you own business, is me shop he tiefing from." Fatcat felt good dat she stood up for him because he knew he aunt din care.

"You cann't judge people, is you selling ganga in here." Lett looked over at Charles. Well Charles din know what to do.

"Lett, boy you better not sell dat weed in here. Ah go put you in jail." Den he turn and ran out de shop. But you know, he not go put Lett in jail. He done know about Lett selling pot. Anyway, Lett looked over at Fatcat.

"You see de trouble you causing, Ah hope you happy." Lett was mad, he was real mad. He looked at Fatcat as if he want to wring he neck. Den he turned away and start weighing shuga. Tanti Mamie stomp to de shop like a mad 'oman. After she leave, Fatcat lay dere and watch people come and go. None ah dem looked at him, is like he de plague or somting. After a while, Fatcat start to feel tired, but he was fraid to say anyting.

About half past nine, Fatcat suddenly realized dat somebody was standing outside.

"Fatcat, why you does tief so?" It was one ah Trinni's boys. Cat hated dem.

"You remember de kick Ah give you de other day?" Fatcat shouted.

"So? You can't do nutton, you stick dey wid you ass hanging out." Cat began to kick he legs, but de boy only laugh. De hair on Fatcat's leg raise up as de boy came close to him. Den, Fatcat heard him sniff.

"Fatcat, you ass stink for so," he said, den he laugh and laugh and laugh. Fatcat heard he laughter fade away and he hear de cars go by again.

Lett came back about eleven o'clock he was dressed in all white. He white jacket was wrinkled and he pants was about an inch too short. He white shoes looked like he din walk min de dust road to get here. Everything match except he had on de blackest socks you ever seen. Now wah kind ah fool wear black socks wid white cloths.

"Is time for de Easter parade and you go be de guest ah honor." Fatcat looked at him wondering wah de hell he talking 'bout. People start comming in de shop. Some ah dem gave him evil looks, but he din care. He had stolen someting from all ah dem. Mrs. Jones she gold watch. Salfish, he cow skin boots. Mrs. Cline, de one chicken she owned. It tasted good for so. So he din care. Fatcat could hear children laughing outside.

Some ah dem was singing, making up songs about Fatcat's bam bam.

"Everybody clap you hand

Come an' see Fatcat's big bam bam

Den you better run like hell
Cause he bam bam smell."

De shop was soon filled wid people getting ready to go to de parade. Fatcat was busy looking at de people when he felt somebody pull he legs.

"Don touch me!" he yelled.

"You better shut up," he aunt said. Inside de shop he saw Lett scoop out some lard from a bucket. He walked out de shop and soon Fatcat felt him rubbing de lard on him. After about five minutes of rubbing, Lett came back into de shop. He began to spread more lard on him. Fatcat felt like a big piece ah bread. He could feel Lett's fingers squeeze between de wood and he skin. Dem children was still singing.

Fatcat bam bam big, big, big.

Fatcat bam bam stink, stink, stink.

Fatcat kick he legs hoping to hit somebody in de face.

Den somebody grab he legs and Lett shouted, "Push!" And before he knew it, Fatcat was sitting on de ground outside de shop. He sat dere naked, looking at all de people around him. Charles and Shitty was standing over him. Fatcat spat at dem, but dey only laughed. Boy, ah tell you, Fatcat was mad for so. Den de crowd grew quiet. Dey cleared a path and he aunt walked up to him followed by a donkey. De animal was struggling wid de rope around it's neck. Dat was de last straw. Fatcat charged at Shitty and Charles. He managed to give Charles a good punch on he nose, but Shitty jumped at him pinning he hands to he side.

"Leh me go, leh me go," he screamed, as de two men picked him up and put him on de donkey.

"Boy, if you keep fighting, ah go put handcuffs on you," Fatcat din want dat, so he sat on de donkey looking like a black Michilen man. Den de people formed two lines wid de children in front. Fatcat looked at all dat white cloths. Is as if dem people tink dey pure or someting. Den slowly dey start marching. Fatcat was almost blinded by de reflection ah de sun on de white cloths.

Dey marched down de dirt road, creating a cloud ah dust as dey go. Fatcat wanted to jump off de donkey and run, but Charles was holding he hand. Suddenly, Fatcat felt someting hit him on he head. He rub he hair wid he hand den looked at it to see wah hit 'im. Yellow slime ran down he fingers and down he arm. He looked into de crowd. One ah Trini's sons was pointing and laughing. He was one ah de boys dat Fatcat had beaten up in school.

"When ah get away, is me an' you," he threatened and Charles reached over and rap him behind he head. So Fatcat shut he mouth and sat dere. Some ah de people were singing hymns. All ah dat church ting does make Fatcat mad, so he start singing a calypso.

"She want to whine, whine, whine," he screamed at de top ah he lungs. Some ah de people looked at him real evil but dat din stop him. Some more eggs came from de crowd and smashed against he body. Fatcat kept on singing. He not shame. In fact he felt like Jesus riding he donkey into Nazareth. Soon dey came to de church. De preacherman came down de steps and looked at Fatcat.

"Boy, ah hope you learn you lesson," he said, reaching out to Fatcat, but as he hand rested on Fatcat's shoulder, de boy punched de preacherman in he nose. De preacherman fell backwards. He bible flew into de air as he stumbled over a child and landed on he ass. De donkey became excited and kick it's hind legs. Fatcat flew into de air and landed on de preacherman. Den in a rage, he aunt jump on him and start hitting him wid she bible. De children start shouting.

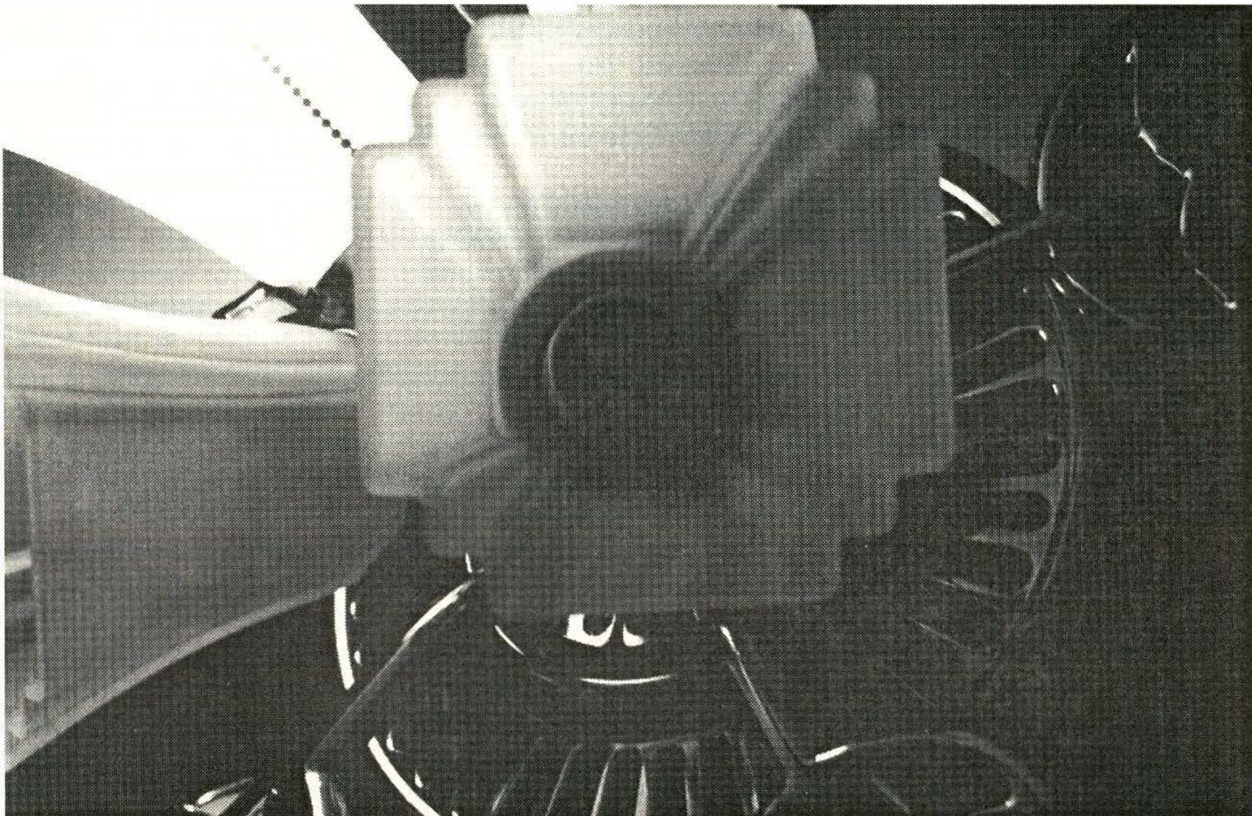
"Fatcat getting licks." Charles pull he aunt off him and grabbed Fatcat before he din any

more damage.

"You going to jail, you liccle shit pants," Fatcat start throwing a barrage ah punches. It took about four men to control him and even den, he still fighting. Dey drag he off kicking and screaming to de jail. Lett was holding he aunt so dat she couldn't get to him. Tanti Mamie was trying to help de preacherman up and de children, dey follow dem all de way to de police station. When de cell door clang shut, Fatcat could still hear de children singing outside.

"Fatcat is a jail bird." Fatcat sat down on de hard bench, cursing.

"All you wait and see, ah go get me revenge."



David Walker

(Wetness forms on the windshield)

Gayle Smitley

Wetness forms on the windshield
as she slowly steers through sharp curves.
Not knowing where she may go
or even where she was before.
The distance she has traveled
is the only connection made.
Her past, now gone with the miles,
the future a gray mist ahead.
Where will her travels lead to,
a new vision of paradise?
The rain is the only thing
she knows that is not a mere dream.

elated

Andrea Fekete

At times, the night spills into my window, a messed
pile of dark blue silk, the color of thunder clouds that clang
in the sky--and just lies there, at times, when I am in love.

It crawls into my bed, into my head, and with that--
takes me over.

OF ALL THE SOUNDS

Scott Morrison--Second Place Fiction

She leaves her bedroom late in the day as she always does. Standing at the top of the stairs she takes a breath and exhales. Ah, quiet, she thinks, resting her withered hand on the wooden handrail. Antique rings shine against the worn oak under her hand. My my, the memories, she whispers as she stands at the top of the stairs looking around the foyer below. Singing softly to herself in French she descends the elaborate and wide stair case. With each step the fashionable but simple purple dress sweeps the stairs as one shiny black shoe after another peeks from beneath the dress before descending to the next step.

At the bottom she surveys the large foyer and adjacent sitting room. One hand adjusting the high collar of the dress, she finds the maid dusting a table and rearranging the flowers in the adjacent room.

"Good morning, Adele," she says to the plump woman who continues cleaning in the next room, seeming to ignore her call. The old woman loudly calls to the maid again. Looking up from her dusting the maid removes a pair of head phones from her head.

"Oh, good morning, Madame," the maid says when she sees Julienne. "I'm sorry, Madame. I didn't hear you come down."

Julienne walks to the window. Opening the curtains a bit she glances out onto the lawn. "Ah, mais c'est un beau matin!" she says.

"It certainly is," replies Adele, "Oh! The gardener arrived early this morning, madame, and has already trimmed the hedges around the drive as you asked."

"Good, good," the old lady answers, "those did look dreadful."

Adele continues with details about the day's events and the latest bits of gossip while Julienne listens patiently but absent mindedly. Seizing an opportunity to escape

she walks down the hall and into the study to look for a number she had taken from a man in the city. Where did I put that, she thinks to herself, Claude will be expecting my call. Since her husband's passing many years ago she has used the room herself to keep track of all of her engagements and appointments. Looking to her calendar she saw she was to host another premier recital this weekend in the city. I do hope the catering will be ready this time, she thought to herself offhandedly. Perhaps they'll bring some decent wine this time, she thought remembering the horrible red they served at the last recital. Glancing along the top of the large old mahogany desk, she still cannot find it. Sitting down she looks in the top and side drawers but still nothing. Pivoting in the chair, she opens the drawer of a smaller table behind her, knowing the number won't be here either.

As her eyes begin rummaging through the drawer a small yellow envelope slides from the back. Mon Dieu, she thinks, how long has this thing been in here? Taking her reading glasses from the desk she stares through her nose at the post mark: Roma, Italia. Stunned at finding such an old letter, Julienne takes out the letter and unfolds the deteriorating paper and reads:

22 Febbraio, 1933.

M. And Mme. Fleurante,

Just a quick note from Rome. I am quickly adding to the list of my favorite cities. Rome in all its ancient beauty is easily among the most beautiful cities I have visited on my tour. I would rank it closely along side Paris, yet they remain in close contest. The climate is a much welcome change from that of Amsterdam. That city, while fascinating, is very taxing on my stamina, beside they say the crowds here are more enthusiastic than most of Europe. Although I grow weary, my tour is near an end and soon I will be back in New York. I have greatly enjoyed all these fascinating places, but I long for a bit of rest.

Tonight I play some of your favorites, for Madame Fleurante, the Mendelssohn Concerto and for Monsieur a set of concertos by Vivaldi. Again I must remind you as I am reminded every day that I look across a full house that none of this would have been possible without your support. I heartily think you and am eternally and gratefully indebted to you both.

With Greatest Sincerity

Paulo

Ah, Paulo. She could remember the night she discovered him during a holiday. They had found him playing in a smoky night club in Rio de Janeiro with a dance band. Seems odd he would have started there now, she thinks to herself.

She and her husband traveled to Brazil to visit with an old friend of Roger's: Senhor Gustavo Pasado. He and Roger had been friends for many years and had met through a business deal some years ago. They had gone to this club after dinner with some friends who recommended it for its highlight of local entertainment. That night the entertainment and conversation had been adequate, leaving within her no lasting impression until they took a seat in the shabby club. All night the band played the typical dance music that part of the world was known for. They danced too that night, but there was nothing remarkable about the evening in particular. Between the band's sets variety acts took the stage for a short jaunt. The first was a skit, fun of the mill slap stick, the other was a fat lady with a pair of stupid Chihuahuas. Julianne moaned quietly and did her best to contain her obvious boredom. Julianne had been talking and laughing politely with her company as the room fell to a dull rattle while the band left the stage.

Out of the din arose the most beautiful sound she had ever heard. It was soft and low yet it cut over the crowd noise of the surrounding tables and booths. Looking up from the table she saw a young man standing at the front of the stage in a white sweat-drenched shirt. With his head bowed slightly toward his instrument, he moved his bow thoughtlessly across the strings. He seemed to be engrossed in the sound, ignorant of the laughter and talking around them. She could not help but stare. She didn't know the piece but that wasn't important. This was not the band music that had played all night long; this was completely different. This was European. Within it she heard a passion, and she was overcome. She left the smoky bar through each mournful phrase. Her passive evening was becoming an excursion through herself, her mind, her body. Each trill and ringing arpeggio coursed through her body like a divine heat. The table continued to talk and chit chat within itself yet she remained deaf to its whispers and slurs.

His last note rang through the bar. With her eyes still closed her soul begged him not to stop.

Slowly she opened her eyes and was embarrassed to notice her mouth hung open rudely. Looking about the table she didn't think anyone noticed but continued with their trite conversation over politics or something. A smattering of applause spurted from various tables around the drunken club. Are they deaf?! She cried within herself. The mediocre band was

beginning to regather. She saw that the soloist was stepping back into the band set up and returning his instrument. Several members were already on the stage so she assumed they must have been taking their places as he was finishing his solo. She was amazed by the deafness of the crowd. She looked to her husband.

"Roger," she said to him in her heavy French accent.

"Yes, dear," he said turning from his conversation with Senhor Pasado.

"Can you believe the rudeness of these people?" she questioned.

"What?" he questioned.

"That young violinist, he was . . . merveilleux. I have never heard anything like it. These people. They just sit there like stones. Did you not hear him play?"

"Yes, yes of course, I did. It was very good."

"Good? Such a tasteless word! Roger, he far outshines most of your American professionals I have heard play ... And, and all you can say is good? This young one has real talent."

"Yes, and ..."

"Well, you are always looking for an investment; why do we not become his patron? I'm certain with a little more training that..." Leaning close to her face he glanced out the corners of his eyes before fixing them on her.

"Are you suggesting I take this common street urchin from a bar and send him to a conservatory, Julianne? Are you mad? You know nothing of this young man or his country! For all we know he doesn't even speak English. How do you propose he be educated at, at . . . Juilliard? It would be impossible!"

"He speaks music," she said glaring at him.

For a long moment Roger only looked at his wife, seeing her decision had been made. He knew that even if he did not support her on this venture that she would probably take her own money and invest it in this young man anyway. As he turned to take another sip from his drink her look did not falter. "Very well," he said looking back to the table, "I'll inquire about it after the next set is over. Hopefully Pasado can speak with him." She smiled slightly knowing she would have her way.

Julianne managed to endure the next hour sitting at the table with more of the same senseless gossiping that had been the staple all evening. All she could think of was the young soloist. What was his name she wondered. She pictured him playing between her brief insertions into the table's small talk.

"You know, Julianne," Pasado said in his thick Portuguese accent, "If you really want to convince this young man to come back with you to the United States you should talk to him yourself."

"Do you know anything of him, Senhor?" asked Julianne. His accent reminded her of Spanish in its sound and rhythm. His voice was deep, as if it were swallowed.

"Sim, I know this young man quite well. His name is Paulo."

"Paulo," repeated Julianne to herself.

"He is of an old family, but they are far from wealthy. His father is a rancher on the family estate, a very old place. Sadly the ranch has run down, they simply don't have the means to properly care for it."

"Do you think he will accept the offer?"

"I don't know. We will have to see. There are many here who would be too terrified to leave their country for a new strange place. This one, however, seems dedicated to his music. He is not like his father." At this Julianne glanced down at the table. She knew the importance

of a large family to a farmer. "Don't misunderstand me, Madame. His father is a good and hard working man, but old and stubborn. Perhaps he can be persuaded to lend you one of his sons for a short time in the United States. We will have to see."

"Does he have many brothers... Paulo?"

"Paulo," said Pasado, correcting her pronunciation. "Yes, but he is the youngest. His oldest brother, Arturo, is a farmer like his father. Very tall with strong hands -- very handsome as well," the old man says lifting his eyebrows to her.

"How do you know so much of the family?" asked Julienne smiling at the old man's expression.

"Before I became involved in business affairs outside of Brazil I was a banker outside of Brasilia. I did not make much money, but enough to support my young family. One day a poor, yet dignified young woman walked into my office. From my desk I could see a boy sitting outside waiting on her. Putting her worn handbag into her lap the woman explained her husband was but a simple farmer, not a wealthy man at all. She said she had come to my office to borrow money so her son could learn to play music. Her other sons she said worked all day with their father on the ranch and she wanted something better for her youngest son, sitting there on the bench outside the window.

"I told her I would be happy to help, and asked if she had a way to pay off the loan she wanted. She told me she had recently inherited a small oil well from her mother. She explained the payments from the well were very small; not enough to pay for the lessons her son would need, but that she also took odd jobs here and there when she could. She said she cleaned house, cooked for weddings and such, but the work was very irregular.

"Listening to her story I began to wonder how she realistically expected to pay back the money and was about to deny her. As I began to look up to tell her my decision I saw her hands folded in her lap. She was not an old woman, yet her hand, they looked thin and bony like those of an elderly woman. On top of her writhing hands she clutched and kneaded an ornate ivory rosary. Looking up to her down turned eyes I could not tell her no. "Very well, Senhora," I said as she looked at me, "I will arrange payments for you and your son." The look on her face was one of humility, yet it contained such joy. Without even betraying it with a smile she shook my hand with a bowed head." Julienne only sat listening intently, enjoying his accent and language. "And you know," he said squinting one eye at her and leaning even closer, "That woman never missed a single payment. Never. I don't know how she did it."

"Maybe I can speak to his mother then? Where can I find her?" asked Julienne.

"Oh, my dear, she has been dead some four years now. I still don't think her husband ever knew of her little loan. I am not even sure if Paulo will even remember me. I saw him only a few times, and that has been many years ago. I will speak to him though. Do you speak Portuguese?" asked the old man.

"No, no. I have enough trouble with French," she said jokingly. Both took a sip of their drink and chuckled.

"Very well," said Pasado, "they seem to be finished playing. Let's go speak with him now." Gathering up her purse and drink, Julienne scooted out of the semi-circular booth and waited for old Pasado to do the same. Straightening his suit, the old man made his way toward the stage's lower corner near the bar. Through the thin crowd Julienne and Pasado walked slowly looking like adulterers as the young French woman clung tightly to a man old enough to be her grandfather.

Spotting the young man with his back turned to them, they approached him as Pasado said, "Senhor Paulo Carvalho?"

"Sim," replied the young man. As he turned to face them Julienne saw his dark eyes look first to her and then to Pasado who stood with his hands outstretched. Rushing through a language she didn't understand the old man seemed to ask a question. After the dark eyes looked the old man up and down in a few quick glances, a look of clarity seemed to come to the young musician's face.

"Senhor Pasado?" he asked unsure of himself. "Senhor Gustavo Pasado?" he again asked the nodding old man. With his arms now outstretched Paulo took a step back, looked the old man over once more and embraced him heartily, nearly lifting him off of the floor. After a few moments of banter the two seemed to have reoriented themselves to one another. Looking at her out of the corner of his eye Paulo questioned his lost friend. Acting flustered and embarrassed Pasado reached for Julienne's hand and placed it in Paulo's and said, "Senhor Carvalho, Madame Julienne Fleurante."

"Prazer em conhecê-lo, Madame Fleurante," said the young tan-skinned man taking her hand in both of his.

"Julienne, s'il vous plait," she replied politely.

"Vous êtes française?" Paulo asked in thickly accented French.

"You speak French?" said Julienne in her own language quite taken aback. "Pasado, you never told me our young violinist was a linguist as well." Paulo explained to her in the broken language that he had studied some French in his secondary school at his father's insistence.

"Pasado," said Julienne taking the old man's arm and pulling his ear close to her, "explain to him our proposition in your language so there will be no misunderstanding."

"Very well, Madame," said the old man taking a moment to ponder Julienne's offer before explaining it to the smiling young man. As the old man spoke carefully and deliberately the violinist's eyes began to widen in shock as his jaw dropped. It seemed all he could do not to cry out. Roughly he hugged Pasado with a full-faced grin. He quickly turned to Julienne again, took her hand and began kissing her wedding ring.

"Senhor, Senhor," she pleaded with him although moved by his gratitude. "C'est ne sont pas une relique," she said a bit too quickly for him to grasp her meaning as she lifted him from his knee. "If you agree to come with me," she said in her simplest French, "you need not worry over any expenses. You have great talent and it would be a pleasure for me to help you achieve success."

"Merci, Madame. Merci," he said to her again kissing her ring.

"Senhor," she began.

"Paulo," he interrupted.

"Paulo," she said slowly after looking at him for a moment. What was it about this young man that attracted her to him? His exotic language, his dark eyes, his warm touch. She was perplexed by him as he stared up at her from one knee. Moving to kiss her ring once more she turned her head from him, embarrassed by this unusual display of gratitude. Rather than feeling a kiss on her ring, she felt his lips gently press to the back of her hand. Looking back to him in greater surprise, he slowly withdrew his lips from her skin.

"Obrigado," he said looking up at her, a small tear glistening on his cheek.

* * * * *

The meeting with Paulo's father the following afternoon was not unlike what Julienne had predicted it would be after her talk with Pasado. He proved formidable in his argument to keep Paulo on the ranch, but after much convincing and her husband's name dropping of South American businesses that could help improve his struggling ranch's profits, he consented to allow Paulo to leave and begin his formal musical training. She could tell from her conversation

with him that his concern for his son's happiness was at the forefront, but remained unsure at sending him off with two foreign strangers. Because of their connection to Pasado, and only because of this connection, he emphasized informally, did he allow his son to go with them.

At the audition Julianne arranged, Paulo was accepted into Julliard with great anticipation. The teachers were quite eager to get their hands on such an untouched and talented young musician. Although he spoke no English, through his broken French he and Julianne were able to communicate nominally. She also arranged for him to have English instruction and secured him an apartment near the conservatory. At that time she and her husband also maintained a townhouse in New York in addition to the house in the country so she paid him frequent visits.

Together they attended many concerts and recitals in the city. Often in the silence of a recital hall they would pass each other notes written in simple French on the programs. Paulo often attended the opera with her since she didn't want the season tickets to go to waste or miss a show just because her husband had appointments and meetings to attend. Also there was that hatred she had of being alone at concerts. Often she thought to herself, what good is it to hear the world's most beautiful music if you had no one to share it with?

* * * * *

She had known for some time that her husband was not faithful to her. Although he had continuously ignored her since their return from South America and even before when she thought back on it, she had no reason to believe Roger was anything but a bored husband. He would come home, often late, but would make it in time for dinner. Yes, it happened she knew, but of course it was never something she thought would happen to her.

She remembered how they had been so in love once and how both families were thrilled at the idea of their marriage. Roger, although a good deal older than her, had been successful in business privately and with his family so he was the talk of many social teas among the old ladies of New York as quite and eligible bachelor. Julianne never had thought he was especially good looking -- not compared to Paulo -- but Roger had his charms. He was a thick broad-shouldered man when she had met him; dark haired with a round face. He was balding a bit on top now but Julianne never minded that. She thought it a mark of distinction. He gave her such gifts in their early days: rings, watches, perfumes from Europe. She thought it was all so exciting. She had never been spoiled so and didn't know at first what to do.

It was the season tickets to the opera that she liked best though. Before the show they'd dine and talk over a long dinner. At home in France she was always accustomed to such meals, especially on special occasions. Sometimes the meals would take hours as these often did.

She couldn't exactly say when she began to notice he was losing interest in her. She still laughed at his jokes and endured his foul smelling cigars and shared more than a few shots of whiskey with him. Eventually he seemed bored as she told about her charity projects, or shared the latest gossip with him. She hated that canned smile he wore when he was humoring her.

Soon, he did not dine with her as often because he had "investments to see to," or there was even the evening he came home with lipstick on the back of his neck. She understood and knew of the many rumors that nipped at her reputation like jackals when she wasn't looking. She learned to bear it and became more involved in her charity.

On those evening that her weighted mind matched her black evening dress and Paulo agreed on short notice to go to the opera with her, he always managed to make her smile. When she stared off into the audience at nothing in particular and began pondering her loneliness and Roger's abrupt cancellations he often put a ridiculous caricature of one of the performers into her lap and made her laugh. It really didn't matter that she laughed in such a stoic public event,

or even cried or kissed him for that matter, since no one could see them in their private box.

She soon began to enjoy and look forward to his company and to their trips to the opera after her husband stopped canceling and didn't even make plans to attend. His aloofness hurt her but Paulo's company made it an easier disappointment to bear. Sometimes she even wondered if her husband arranged this unusual situation with this exotic violinist simply to avoid her. It began to matter to her less and less as her relationship to Paulo grew stronger and her marriage grew weaker until it was only a facade.

* * * * *

She typically stayed at the house while Roger spent most of his time in the city near his office. She did come to the city for galas, openings, or receptions fairly often though. She also traveled to the city for recitals and concerts, especially if Paulo was involved. Seldom did she miss an opportunity to hear him play. Not only that, she enjoyed having someone with whom she could share her native language. Although his English was improving, they often spoke to each other in French. She also served as his tutor as needed in both languages. All the time Roger became less and less involved with her. Rarely did they go together to the opera; the very thing that originally brought them together. It was this separation that began to concern her most. Why was it a husband and wife could not live together? In her family it would have been too embarrassing to think of. Not that the men in her family didn't have affairs, not at all. One of her uncles kept a mistress with whom he often appeared socially, but every night he slept in the same bed as his wife.

One afternoon when an appointment brought her to the city, she was to meet her husband at the townhouse for dinner. Deciding to make the occasion a little more special she had ordered her husband a new cigarette case with an engraving. Before her engagement she had the driver stop by the jewelers so she could pick up the case and ensure the inscription was to her liking. She found the inscription perfect and, having it gift wrapped, decided to hide it at the townhouse for that evening. Perhaps he's decided he wants to be with me, she mused to herself after he had suggested they meet. She headed up the front steps and entered the front door quickly. Glancing at the wedding clock at the center of the sitting room she noticed she would be late if she didn't hurry. She searched for a hiding place all around the room. After trying several spots she decided that behind the clock on the mantle would be best. Peering over the mantle to place the case behind the clock she heard someone upstairs. After listening a moment she was sure of it. Placing the case behind the clock she straightened it and walked slowly to the stairs, still listening. Then she heard a voice. Lifting her skirt delicately to her ankles she began to climb the stairs. Surely Roger wouldn't be home so early, it must be the cleaning lady she thought. At the top of the stairs the noise was coming from the right. Opening the door she saw the bed was full. She could not believe her eyes. The two bodies jolted at her shriek.

"Aaaag!" Julienne screeched. "How dare you!" She began to scream in French. Insult upon unintelligible hurt insult launched from her tongue. Rolling onto the floor her naked husband darted for his clothes as she threw novels at him from the nearby bookcase. "And you!" she yelled at the woman gathering sheets around her breasts, "Get out of my house," before turning her fury to her. She assaulted the half naked woman all the way to the front door stoop with everything she could get her hands on. Her aim was good. Julienne had never been so angry. Slamming the front door with more vulgarities, she turned to see her half-dressed husband at the bottom of the stairs. "Why?" she mixed in with her French swearing as she chase her husband half way back up the stairs with an umbrella from the hall. His attempts to calm her down were futile. Throwing the umbrella at him she went to the front door and threw it open against the wall on her way to the car.

"Drive," she said once in the car. Without asking where the driver sped away. Sitting alone in the back of the car Julienne stared at the window. The moment's events were slowly becoming real to her. Soon her rage thawed to tears yet still she stared, unaware of the buildings and trees passing by the window. She heard the driver ask her something to which she replied, "chez Monsieur Carvalho." The minutes she sat there seemed immeasurable. It could have been minutes or days. Julienne only sat and stared, shocked and timeless.

"Madame?" she heard the driver say a second time. The car had stopped in front of an apartment building.

"Merci, Luke. Adieu."

"Madame . . . Madame!" called her faithful driver.

"You may go home. Thank you. Adieu."

Climbing the stairs to the third floor she began to walk toward the window at the end of the long hall. Her mind raced with nothing. She saw the window, the floral wall paper, the worn wooden chair sitting in the hall still some distance from her, but she had no reaction.

Her ears stopped when she sensed a familiar sound. It was Paulo inside of his apartment playing. Staring blankly and walking more slowly than before she continued toward the window, stopping at the old chair. Her gloved hand slowly slid down the wall before resting on the chair's back. Without changing the direction of her gaze she lowered herself into it quietly and stared out the window at the bricks and fire escape of the next building. Still her mind thought of nothing, absorbing the sound that filtered into the hall. Over and over her mind began to replay that scene in all its vileness. The sweetness of his melody began to penetrate her. Over and over her mind replayed the visions as she listened until they were meaningless, yet no less painful. Again the tears began to flow. She didn't even bother taking her handkerchief from her purse and allowed her head to fall against the flowered paper. She realized all around her was silent, she heard a door behind her open.

Someone spoke her name. She turned her head. Paulo stood at the doorway holding his violin. What is wrong, he asked her in French. Putting down his instrument just inside the door his gaze never left her. He knelt beside her as his thumb reached for her tears. As he lifted her chin to inspect for damages she looked into his eyes. She watched as his eyes scanned her face and disheveled hair that fell from beneath her hat. Pulling her close to him he helped her to her feet and led her through the waiting door.

Taking her to the couch he sat her down. Sobbing into the arm of the couch, she soon felt his large hand on her back as he handed her a handkerchief. Taking it she wiped her eyes and nose. She unpinned her hat and tossed it to the coffee table. Paulo muttered something in French. Still soaking the couch with her tears Julienne explained in broken sobs and phrases what had happened. Turning to face him, she saw the same emotion she felt that night in Brazil. Again she felt that nameless connection. Again she saw a chance to escape into the privacy of this moment. They embraced, but not for the first time. She cried into his shoulder as she held tight to his back. Giving way, her weight nestled him into the opposite arm of the couch and held her as she cried. The thin necklace he always wore brushed her wet cheek as she cried into his warm neck. She looked into his face again and saw his lush brown eyes sculpted in concern.

"You have stopped crying," he said in French as he gazed at and held her tense hands.

"Oui," she answered, "you are near me." She touched his neck just below his jaw line. Looking up at her touch, she saw a landscape in his face, free of the gross mask her husband wore. She filled his mouth with kisses, perhaps in an effort to quench her injuries, perhaps in an effort to forget them.

* * * * *

Julienne sat with the letter in one hand staring out into the garden. The expression on her face was one of serenity. It was neither angry or sad. Her eyes looked to nothing as if listening to some distant music.

"Madame," a voice interrupted. It was Adele.

"Yes, my dear," faltered the old lady with the faded letter.

"You have a phone call. It's a man calling from New York. I believe it was his number you were looking for earlier. Did you find it?"

"No, no I didn't find it. Thank you, Adele, I'll take the call in here." Senile old woman he's probably thinking to himself right now, thought Julienne. Reaching for the phone she looked at the many buttons and searched for the one with the light. Finding it, she pushed it.

"Hello, Claude? I'm so glad you called. Listen, I heard this wonderful violinist in a public recital last evening. I think he'd be a wonderful asset to your firm. What? Of course I'd be willing to sponsor him. Oh, and have you spoken with Bertrice about the catering for Sunday afternoon's recital? No? Well it looks as if I'll have to call them myself."



Paula Rees

communion on the rocks with my brothers

Shawn Honey

we felt the mist from the spray of the dam
collect in tiny beads all over our faces
and whirl around the heavy brows above
our eyes, unblessed by any beauty that
we saw. we had the perfect words for love
but such a minute faith that couldn't make
them live to match the vibrant white below us.
we could have plunged into those blasts of water
and risked the rush of trusting in the rock
on which we stood to pull us back to safety,
but our whorish unbelief was firm.

instead, we left the world of metaphor
where I became the dam that quenched the living
water and a fearful fool that leaned
against the flow of life, my thoughts forever
as an idol of resistance. my
brothers and I forgot the discontent
we showed and in a foretaste of freedom
we ran and played along the banks of the
river under a darkening sky that threatened
rain.

and when we saw the body and
the blood prepared for us, we put on solemn
stares and spoke in tones as void of
animation as the giant rocks around us--
with the silent envy for the power of
the water we had witnessed at the dam.
We could still hear the fuzzy noise of
the rapid cycle taunting us with life
that burst outside the measure that we knew

but

the Spirit moved, and we knew the sin
we were and how we had disbelieved the words
of truth. we ate the bread and drank the wine
and meditated on the heart of God.
at the order of mercy faith sprang up
with a Light no less than the glory of
the sun, emerging now to mirror Christ,
who, at the inexplicable timing
of the divine command, was raised in us
with the confession that Christ is alive.
the miracle of God let the joy we
had longed for shame the river that had
prophesied the infinite life of the infinite God
who made us greater than the river. We
shouted our praise to God and lifted up
our hands to worship him just as the dam gave
way and the Light
of life broke over us.

Hockey Junkie

Erica Louise Francks

Intelligent brownies tackle handicapped decorations.
I stand still as stone skating on sugar,
Weaving around a truant cookie cutter,
Icing dedicated mixers.
Win, lose or draw,
Well-read torts are not for me.
I, instead, go for creative, complicated nuts
Huddled in whipped cream and tardy jelly.
Chocolate cheesecakes are not streaking for me.
Bring me a refrigerator filled with proficient calories.
Injure studiously. Fall short.



Stacey Patterson

THE LEGACY OF TOM MARTIN

Mark Fleshman--Third Place Fiction

Tom Martin wasn't really any more eccentric than the next ninety-year-old man. He just wore his eccentricities where everyone could see them - in the form of heavy turquoise jewelry. Boasting that he owned every imaginable type of ring, necklace, bolo tie, and belt buckle that existed in Arizona, Tom had sets of turquoise like more affluent men owned suits. To Shriners meetings, he would wear the matching tie tack, bracelet, and neck ornament, all bearing a blue-green insignia of the organization. The next day he would don another turquoise 'n' tassels ensemble, completely different from yesterday's, but only noticeable so if you happened to be Tom himself and "had an eye for the subtle" - his words.

His nephew Richard recounted to me recently the last time that Tom came to visit him in Kentucky. At the airport, the elder Martin was greeted with a piercing electronic fanfare as he walked through the metal detector's threshold. Always a fan of theatrics, Tom laughed heartily, shaking his short, chubby frame as he exclaimed, "Oh! It must be my ring!" With one slow, sweeping movement, he removed the boulder from his finger and placed it in the little tray next to the guard. He again walked proudly through the detector doorway, only to set off the alarm once more. Richard could only look on in complete embarrassment as Tom repeated the ritual, removing only one time from his body and walking through the small doorway. He was loving every second of this moment in the limelight; all eyes (and ears) were directed on him and the irritating alarm. Finally, as Tom took off his belt buckle, the last piece of metal/turquoise jewelry, Richard vowed to have his wife pick up his uncle at the airport on subsequent visits.

That was less than a year ago. Since then, Old Tom has passed away, only after bequeathing the plethora of jewels to Richard and his wife Jeannie. I had the pleasure a couple of days ago of viewing the collection first-hand as it lay in state on their dining room table. It is a very impressive array indeed: blue-green stones big enough to choke a horse set in die-cast metal shapes of every kind imaginable, connected by thick braids of black leather. Each piece seems to speak of a far-off place I have never visited, hearkening back to a time long ago that I've only read about in my father's Old West magazines. Richard told me that the local jeweler appraised the stuff at around 1300 dollars. When I asked Dick if he was trying to sell them, he replied with disgust, "This local kid told me he'd give us nine hundred for them, but that hardly seems enough." I tried to think of any children I knew who could possibly come up with nine hundred dollars, but then I remembered that Dick calls anyone even slightly younger than him a "kid." He continued, "The Kentucky Highlands Museum won't take them, because they don't reflect Kentucky history."

"Doesn't the Kentucky Highlands Museum have some Nazi memorabilia?" I asked.

"I think so."

"Well, how does that have anything more to do with Kentucky than this stuff?"

"Beats me. I just want to get rid of it all, at a reasonable price. I don't waste my time wondering about who or how."

At this point Jeannie chimed in, "We even took it all down to Nashville. You know how all those country guys wear that flashy jewelry? Well, they wouldn't buy any of it! Turns out they only wear imitation turquoise down there."

The purpose of my visit to the Martins this particular morning was to pick up their

house key and any last-minute instructions they might have regarding my week-long stay at their home with their beloved beagle, Charli. I have played house/dog sitter for them a few times before, and the worst thing that has happened was when one of the neighborhood kids threw a roll of toilet paper high up into the tree in the front yard. I've never thrown a party at their house while they were away, so they have come to regard me as a trusted family friend, as has Charli. Even so, I feel like a stranger in a foreign land, sitting at that dining room table. Richard continues, "I've just finished taking pictures of everything, so we can keep track of it all when we go see the Mansfields in New Mexico. Bob knows a jeweler at this church who collects this sort of thing, so maybe we can get rid of it once and for all."

"What do you think is the best way to pack it all?" Jeannie asked me. "I thought maybe putting each piece in a styrofoam cup would do the trick."

"Why don't you wrap each one up in paper and then put them in a bag with packing foam?" I suggested.

"Oh, Dick's going to put it in with his carry-on luggage."

I chuckled to myself, imagining the impending agony Richard would endure as he went through customs, or whatever it is one goes through on national flights. I could just hear Tom Martin's laughter echo each chirp of the metal detector.

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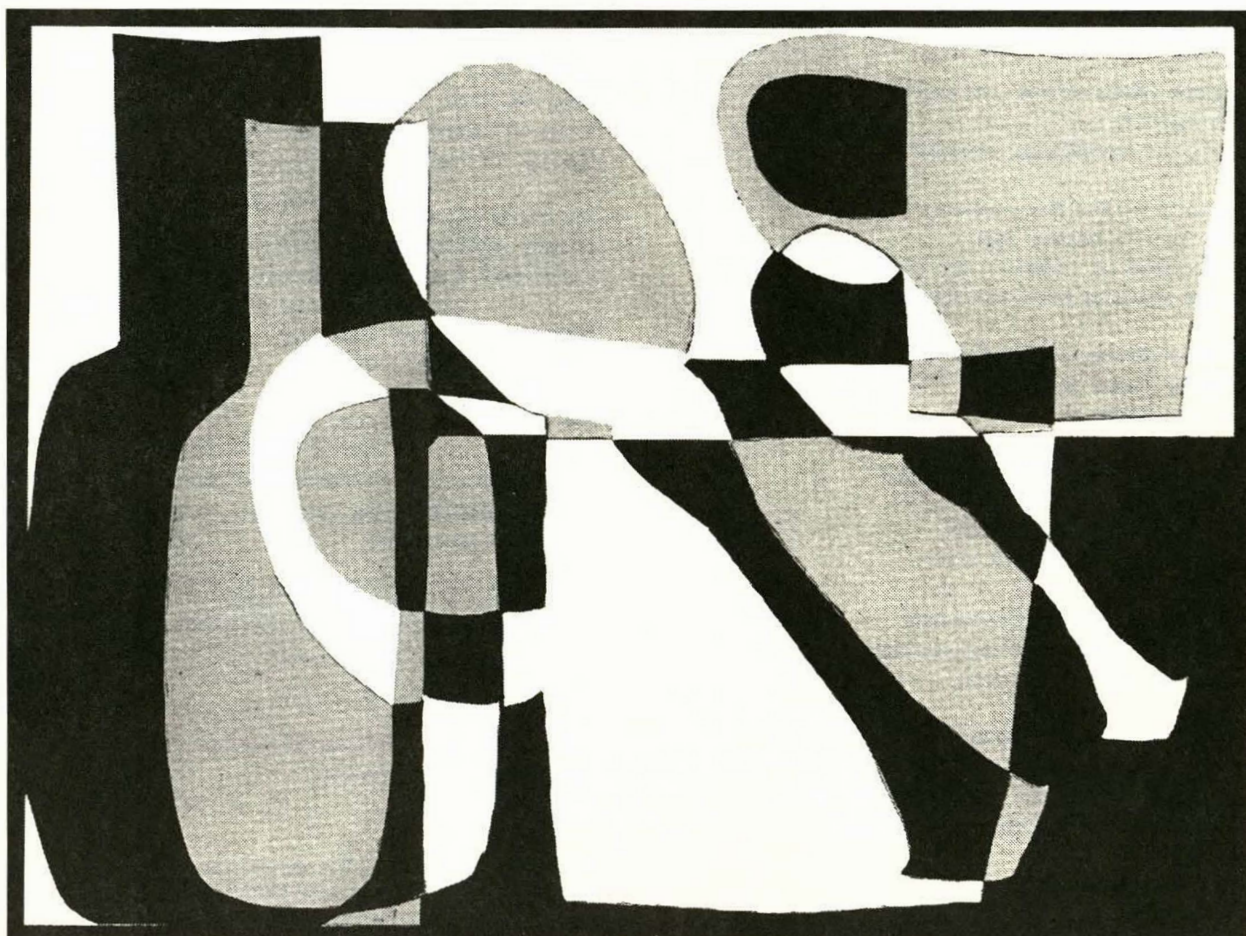
The next day after class I sped home (that is, the Martins), anticipating the usual occurrence of Charli getting angry with Richard and Jeannie for leaving her and pooping all over the floor in front of the TV. I put this worry on hold, for I was even more anticipating getting to the liquor store as soon as possible to purchase a sixer of Bass and plop down in my favorite chair (Richard's favorite chair) to watch some cable. I mean real cable, the kind you pay extra for.

My thoughts on Charli and the TV intersected when I spotted the big dark pellets, land mines postponing my enjoyment of Seinfeld reruns until I remedied the situation. I scolded Charli as best I could (it's really difficult to scold a beagle), cleaned up the mess, and went to the bannister to get her leash to take her outside. It's there where I noticed that the day before's display was still sprawled out on the dining room table. "Hmm. Dick and Jeannie didn't leave a note. They must have forgotten them." I said this out loud, then caught myself talking to no one in particular, as I often do when I'm by myself, and began to direct my statements toward Charli. "Did they, sweetie? Did they forget Uncle Tom's family jewels? Well, what do you think we should do with them? Huh?" I then realized that it's not any more stupid to talk to yourself than to a dog in baby-talk.

I looked at the display before me once more. The last rays of the setting sun were reflecting in the "tiger's eye" bolo, the only thing on the table that didn't have a speck of turquoise in it. It seemed out of place, set apart from all other jewelry in its own little white box. That little tiger eye was winking at me. I felt commanded to pick it up and put it around my neck, which I did with a mixture of delicacy and excitement. I hadn't felt this way since I first unclasped Suzy Cranshaw's bra, way back in the ninth grade. Only this pleasure seemed more exotic, more forbidden, and not near as clumsy.

I quickly found myself forcing huge rings onto my fingers, weighing my hands down and making me seem ape-like. But I couldn't stop there; I had to somehow get that big square buckle onto my webbed \$3.98 Value City belt. *If only I could still fit into those leather pants of mine, I'd really look cool*, I thought. I stood there in the doorway, copping the attitude that I'd just stepped into a saloon in an old dusty town. "I'm your Huckleberry," I muttered. I started reciting whole speeches from the movie Tombstone, swaggering around the house, beer in hand.

As I eased back down in the favorite chair, I saw my reflection in the TV screen. I really thought I was something. If these jewels give you this much confidence, no wonder Tom Martin was the way he was. Maybe Richard and Jeannie just couldn't let them go, so they stayed in their exalted position on that table. And now they're on me. I laughed out loud, but not in a way that I usually laugh. This laugh resonated with a thick baritone, kind of like my dad or someone else of a more rotund stature. Then I thought of Richard's tale of Old Tom and the airport. And I had to laugh again. I laughed like hell.



Carol Peele

in transit

Deidre Conn

First Place Poetry

on the map five borders from me,
in my mind he lives no more
than a page of an atlas away, the road
a liquid ink that took me north.

one hundred miles to indianapolis.
in the car his flame hair leaps
with the window open.

I drive away from that world,
his lutheran family and minnesota life,
toward warm kentucky hills
that soothe his atheist heart,

a place where children will imprint
like ducks to us,
follow our wonder, our disbelief.

he and I will live like ancestors
(we want to believe that,
surrounded by concrete and electricity)
in the shade of trees, the shadows of smokestacks.

his fingertips play air-music:
invisible notes dancing
on a keyboard of mind.

that mind of his works like a mozart,
a beethoven, a bach:
he speaks of things in terms
of measures, beats, and tones.

his bavarian mother haunts him
in afterthoughts, exposing mistakes,
revealing flaws to her Son:

he lapses sometimes into
german, words sharp as chisels,
and thinks I can catch those language waves;
I ride them and absorb them like water.

his life is renunciation;
the words, a tangle mist, envelop him
in the passenger seat.

the buzz-cut corn rows
streak past the windows like rain,
provide more comfort than words
after a time.

the conversation ebbs away with the dusk
and oncoming traffic,

following the tide of passing hours.

we have the same eyes:
vast as oceans, sparkling surfaces,
full of creatures
lurking beneath.

I cannot say that I am without god
when those eyes, clean as rejection,
look to the road ahead.

fifty miles to go
and the words stop flowing;
while crossing that last river
his eyes sank, drowning in sleep.

fifty miles to indianapolis.
his head slowly bobs to the surface
before sinking back into dreams.

forget about gods, forget about language,
clear my mind of the boy next door,
focus on smooth paved black waves
leading me inland.

the city is not far now,
ribbons of traffic glowing, lead
like undersea parades of the deepest life.

lighthouses of steel and glass
guide this ship to shore,
and as we enter it feels
like a friendly open port.

time to remember, shake out the siren
song, look to the right
toward my passenger;

on the seat he is a human smudge,
so tangled in shadows he is part of them
with eyes closed, head bowed
reverently toward me.

three small words escape like breath
over him, out the window,
and into the city.

he misses the arrival, the departure,
busy wading the currents of dreams;
those instincts control his mind
and I know that, for now, god is dead.

our destination is marked on the road ahead.
that thought calls to me, for it is my dream.
I keep going because we're close to home.

Premature Nightfall

Alan Fairchild

Third Place Poetry

The horizon coughs up a crescent of light.
A cerulean jay yawns
And leaps from the arm
Of an initial-riddled, backyard oak
To take a skinny dip
In the enormous bacterial glow.
The horizon's level appearance fails,
Distorting and disfiguring,
Bringing from the distance
A horde of sloppy, swimming painters.
The dark cloud, like an ominous fog or mist,
Shadows out the far, now full, globe
And floats closer.
I hear murmuring.
As the minions cry out,
The land instead of darkening,
Develops an off-white tint
As if this summer day has been determined
A day of winter.
And as the darkness seeps closer and hovers overhead,
I realize it is actually not only blue,
But feathered.

The men in khaki

Translated by:

Marina Primo Busatto

*They are easily recognized
For their uniform color, the same
For all of them and only for them reserved.*
Thomas Morus **The Utopia**

The men in khaki
get out of Huxley's **Brave new world**
and wait on the morning sidewalks
-not poetized in the inclemency.
Engulfed uniforms by classicist buses
are lost on the streets and corners
memorized by computer
all with the same destiny.
All in the same bus
buying the same newspaper
reading the same news.
What do the men in khaki do?
these men in khaki
is life khaki?
In the afternoon the men in khaki
get off the same buses
go to the same apartments
spend the same salary
live the same ordinary life
-The **Brave new world**
unknown new dream.
Oh! the horizon closes itself of tiredness
Over this silly life, my goodness!

Os homens de caqui

Luiz Busatto

(Brazilian author)

*Eles são reconhecíveis facilmente
pela cor de seu uniforme, igual
para todos e só a eles reservado*
Tomas Morus **A Utopia**

Os homens de caqui
saem do **Admirável mundo novo** de Huxley
e esperam nas calçadas de manhã
-despoetizados na intemperie.
Engolidos uniformes por ônibus classistas
perdem-se nas ruas e esquinas
computadorizadamente memorizados
todos com o mesmo destino.
Todos no mesmo ônibus
comprando o mesmo jornal
lendo as mesmas notícias.
Que fazem os homens de caqui?
estes homens de caqui
a vida de caqui?
A tarde os homens de caqui
saltam dos mesmos ônibus
vão para os mesmos apartamentos
gastar o mesmo salário
viver a mesma vidinha
-o **Admirável mundo novo**
desconhecido um sonho novo.
ai! o horizonte se fecha de cansaço
sobre esta vida besta, meu Deus!

December

Jason Frye

The dog at your house,
Mickey, a big dog, played with us in the back yard
and we tied a rope to the fence
and shook it to make waves.
Mickey jumped and barked,
we jumped and laughed.
Your mom gave us cookies
and I held your hand.

I did not want to see you lying there
with tubes and needles
and monitors and clean sheets
and your mother's tears.
I wanted to grow up,
your hand in mine,
and kiss you one day.
The kiss came that day
on the cheek at the bus stop
with a hug
and a mutual tear goodbye.
Why did we both cry?
You knew that was your chance
your chance to become the sun
your chance to tell me you love me
your chance to stay here.
Did you know?
Did you know you were leaving us?
Mother and father and brother & sister
and John and Glenn and me
left standing
or pacing or sitting
or slumped against a wall, mouth open
and eyes wet,
or huddled with our arms about our shoulders
looking for that moment of waking.
Waking never comes,
sleep brings demons for us
and dreams for you.
I wanted to lie beside you one time and put my arm around your middle
and find sleep there
sleep and dreams.
Blue Heaven in your eyes
I saw it dancing there
like I saw you, angel,
waiting for the bus.
The bus doesn't come
like the wounds are never healed
because you never knew I love you.

Cardboard Companion

Jillian Barger

With beckoning arms outstretched and
eyes glazed with compassion,
you stepped into my universe--
oblivious to your bold impact.

A soothing embrace welcomed and
curious eyes finally understood,
i stepped closer to you--
naive to what you'd become.

Our foreign hearts intertwined and
sealed with valid honor,
we walked alongside each other--
seekers who'd found a treasure.

Chimes in a summer breeze,
we danced
and strolled
like lovers
sprinkled with the moon's glitter.

Like fools
overcome with the fine wine's spirit,
we laughed,
while as openly as children
we cried--
together...

Then one day,
you fell:

Fragile heart shattered again and
eyes drained of hope,
you stepped away from me--
into your cold, desolate shell.

With deep sadness sensed and
a warm caress offered,
i moved closer to console--

only to be pushed away.

Our battered souls unraveled and
stripped of sacred trust,
we ran from mutual understanding--
friends who'd lost one another.

A puppy frightened by thunderstorms,
i shivered
and pleaded
like victims
beaten with their husbands' hand.

Like lunatics
encaged by solid steel bars,
i raved,
while as hopelessly as mourners
i grieved--
alone...

until one day,
i realized:
You are not the Sun;
the earth does not revolve around
you.

Homeplace

Tim Robinson

Poetry Editor

This is the place of my father where
clapboard walls of the bedrooms
have collapsed over foundation stones,
where moss-covered slats
lie in a sodden heap
near a tree bearing the notice: NO HUNTING.

When I was younger,
sifting through dirt or
shifting
configurations of boards
taught me history through remnants
uncovering
onyx colored doorknobs, glass buttons,
stoneware.

This is the place
where a world began,
where I untangle vines from treelimb
to make the wreath of all forgiveness,
where rains erode almost everything
as leaves are driven from the sky
where a shadow circles above
calling
to the one secret we hide from ourselves.

Leaving

Marsha A. Blevins--Fiction Editor

Thunder rumbled across the darkened sky, followed by a quick flash of blinding light. For several seconds I refused to move, then moving my head, I looked at the clock beside the bed. Large red digital dashes formed the numbers 2:45 and a small red dot glowed beside a.m. Without realizing it, I held my breath as I listened to the rain beat down on the parched pavement below his window. It would take me almost an hour to get to home from this side of town. I removed myself from his bed with slow, easy movements so I would not disturb him. Using the fleeting flashes of lightning to locate my hastily discarded clothing, I prepared myself to leave him.

My uncooperative clothing allowed several long minutes to pass before I could slip out of the privacy of Drew's bedroom and go to my car. The sound of the bedroom door being opened echoed in the sudden stillness of the room. Light from the hallway poured into the room to caress his warm skin. I paused for a moment to watch the smooth rise and fall of his muscular chest before closing the door. Drew's youthful body called me back to the warm comfort of the bed in ways his soft, loving lips could not. He told me he loved me several times; each time I laughed and told him he did not know what love was yet. God help me, but I did not want to leave him. As I turned to walk down the hallway I noticed a small coffee stain on the sleeve of my white blouse and felt dirty.

The rain continued to fall in fat, thick drops like the tears that wet my flushed cheeks as I ran to my car. I struggled to see the road, I turned the windshield wipers to a higher speed. I had to get home quickly, but I could not see the road two feet in front of my car. Fearful of having an accident this far from my office and home I slowed the car to a crawl. I spared a hopeful glance at the green, glowing numbers of the clock on the car radio. The small digital numbers mocked me as I tried to navigate the car through the rain-slicked streets of my hometown. A half hour had passed since I abandoned the burgundy, silk sheets Drew loved. He probably discovered I was gone by now and I wondered if he was angry with me for running away from him again. Startled to find I had driven onto the shoulder of the road, I concentrated on driving. I became frantic as I glanced at the taunting green numbers. It was 3:50 in the morning and I was still approximately fifteen minutes from home. As the rain slowed to a fine mist, I saw my chance to make up some of my lost time so I pressed on the accelerator.

Twenty minutes later I pulled into the driveway. Methodically, I searched the house for a light that would tell me if someone was awake. The house was dark and I hoped my extended absence would go unnoticed. If I could just get inside and slip into my lavender night dress no one would know I had just gotten home. I could say I was having trouble sleeping because of the storm. As I got out of the car Martin bought me for my birthday last month, I caught a glimpse of my reflection in the rear view mirror; I did not recognize the face of the woman in the mirror. I asked myself when I began making up lies to answer Martin's questions before I was confronted.

The clicking of my own front door seemed louder to me than when I opened Drew's bedroom door to sneak out. Cleverly, I slipped off my shoes as I entered the hallway to make my track through the house quieter. I strained my ears to make sure I had not disturbed Martin's sleep.

"Glad to see you finally made it home," a deep male voice greeted me from the shadows of the living room.

"The storm was really bad," I replied coolly.

"Did you get everything caught up at the office?"

"No, I might have to stay late one or two more nights to get it all done. I don't know how I let so much paper work pile up, but I did."

"I called your damn office and nobody answered the phone," he stated in a calm eerie voice.

A chill racked my body as I quickly searched for a believable excuse. Martin waited for my explanation as I shoved the wet strands of my graying black hair from my face. I ran my hand down the front of my blouse to smooth out the wrinkles before I looked at Martin again.

"I turned the ringer on the telephone in my office off so I would not be disturbed. Did you need something or did you just miss me so much you had to call me?" I asked hoping the sarcasm of my comment would mask the nervous quiver in my voice.

"How come you're so damn late?"

"What the hell is this, Martin? Why the third degree? I was working at the office. I had a rough day; I was tired. I guess I must have fallen asleep. When I woke up it was raining. It took me longer to drive home because the storm was so bad. Would you like to know what I had for lunch or how many times I went to the rest room today, too?"

"Why are you getting so defensive? Is it so wrong for a man to wonder where in the hell his wife is? Shit, for all I know you could have been dead or something."

"No, you'd like that too much," I accused before exiting the room.

My explosive homecoming only served to make me feel worse. Martin had every right to be angry. How could I be so foolish? Thinking he wouldn't notice my long absence bordered on insanity. The more I thought about it, the more convinced I became that I was crazy. Working at the office had to be the oldest excuse in the world, I knew Martin wouldn't be fooled for long. I knew I had to tell Martin our marriage was over. There were a few times I had tried to tell him, but I backed out because I thought things would get better between us. How could I tell my husband of 20 years I did not love him anymore?

I stood in the middle of the bedroom we shared since our wedding night looking as if the answers to my problems would magically appear upon the walls. Where had we gone wrong? We were so in love when we first got married, but that seemed like a lifetime ago. We would spend long, romantic weekends at a bed and breakfast upstate. Martin took me on a trip to Paris for our tenth anniversary. Later that same year Martin was promoted and the romantic trips stopped. He worked longer hours and took extended business trips. I grew lonely as each trip Martin took lasted longer than the one before it. About eight years ago I took a job out of boredom. The communication Martin and I shared disappeared. I began to cry again as I tried to count the times we had talked, really talked, to each other in the past year. Twice.

"I'm sorry," he said as he stepped behind me.

"Forget it Martin."

"Sarah, come on. Don't be like this. I was just afraid that something had happened to you. When nobody answered at the office, well I didn't know where you were."

"Martin, I'm tired. I want to go to sleep," I replied as I turned to go to the guest bedroom.

Martin stood in the place that I vacated and watched me walk away. I wanted to stay wrapped in Martin's arms, but I wanted the Martin from the first years of our marriage. He loved me back then, but now he pushes me away every time I try to get close to him. I remember the business dinners I went on with him. The other businessmen's wives always commented they could tell Martin and I loved each other by the sparkle in my eyes. Soon after I quit going to the dinners with Martin, he began buying me diamonds, rubies, sapphires, cars, a house, and other expensive trinkets.

I spent the rest of the weekend avoiding Martin. He would enter a room where I was and I would mutter some excuse to leave. I tried to ignore my problems with Martin by calling every friend I lost contact with over the last couple months. Arrangements were made for me to meet a couple of my friends from college for drinks after work so I could avoid coming home to Martin's indifference. My job provided me with more excuses to stay away from home. I completed more work in five days than I normally did in a month. By combining my renewed interest in my friends and my job I managed to avoid Martin and Drew for a week.

An annoying sound awoke me from a restless night of sleep. I voiced my disgust as I realized that my alarm was signaling me to start my day. Pulling myself into a sitting position, I brushed my hair back from my face with a groan as I noticed another gray strand. As I glanced around the guest bedroom, a slow frown creased the skin around my mouth and eyes. I could see my hair brush lying next to a half empty bottle of perfume on the gold trimmed dresser across the room. The door to the closet stood open and my business suits had found their way inside. A pair of beige low heeled pumps rested near the door to the guest bathroom where my make-up, toothbrush, hair dryer and bath robe now made their home. My personal things should not be in here; they should be in mine and Martin's room. My thoughts were interrupted by a faint knock at the door. I did not answer because I knew it was Martin and I wondered what he would do when I did not reply.

"I thought you were still sleeping," he said with a boyish grin on his face as he walked into the room.

"I just got up. What are you doing?" I asked nodding my head toward the tray Martin held.

"I brought you breakfast."

"Breakfast?" I asked as if it were the first time I had heard of breakfast.

"I brought enough for both of us. I was hoping we could talk."

"Martin, I have to go to work."

"I called your office and told them you weren't feeling well and you wouldn't be in today," he admitted.

"You had no right to do that, Martin. I have things to do today, things that can't wait until tomorrow. What made you think that I would even want to stay home?"

"Sarah, I thought we could talk for a while. I can tell that you haven't been sleeping well. You need to take some time off and rest."

I looked at the man standing before me in amazement. We barely spoke to each other for a week. During that time, two days passed without us even seeing each other. Still, here he was, standing in front of me with a breakfast tray in his hands telling me we could talk and I needed to rest. From somewhere inside me hope came rushing forward. Maybe he realized he was ignoring me and he wanted to make things good between us again. A small smile touched my lips as I indicated that he should sit down with me on the bed.

We talked of unimportant matters as we ate. Martin told me about the new clients he was dealing with now and his boss had mentioned another promotion. I commented on the clients and replied I was happy for him. I told him about my meetings with my friends. He asked several polite questions about two of the ladies that he knew. Martin and I realized we did not have anything to say to one another when our conversation turned to the weather. We both stopped talking and looked at each other. I could feel the hopelessness clouded my eyes and he tried to pull me into his embrace; I stopped him by clasping his hand in my own.

"Martin, let's go somewhere. Maybe we could go upstate. We haven't gone anywhere together in so long. I can get a couple days off work. I know you wouldn't have any trouble getting time off. It will be good for us to get away," my voice was desperate, but I did not care.

"I can't, Sarah. I am leaving for San Francisco in the morning. I'll be back before the weekend. We could go then if you want," he said in an apologetic tone.

"No, that's all right. It was just a thought. I better go to work anyway," I said as I walked out of the room.

The next morning I waited until I heard Martin leave before I got up. I got ready for work in less than a half hour so I wandered into the kitchen to read the morning newspaper. My thoughts were scattered and I could not concentrate on the article I was trying to read. I tried to focus on the words on the page, but it was impossible. Finally, I became so agitated that I crammed the newspaper into the gaping mouth of the trash can. As I scooped up my keys I removed my coat from a peg by the door. My hand closed over the door latch when the telephone rang. I glanced at the clock on the hallway wall, enough time had past for Martin to arrive at the airport. Assuming it was Martin calling, I opened the door and left.

There was nothing for me to do at work. I sat in my chair staring at the wall for the better part of the morning. My paperwork had been completed yesterday. There was not a paper clip or pen out of place anywhere on my desk. Each drawer of the large oak desk had been straightened at least twice. I allowed my thoughts to drift to Martin. I started thinking about the first years of our marriage. Eventually, I began to compare those first years with Martin to the last several years with Martin. Alice, my secretary, intruded upon my brooding to announce a call for me on line one.

"Hello," I said after pressing the small white button below the number one.

"Sarah?"

"Yes," I said, confused because I did not recognize the voice of the caller.

"Are you all right? You don't sound like yourself," Drew said.

"I'm fine, Drew. You caught me at a bad time. I'm really busy right now."

"I just wanted to hear your voice. You haven't been over lately and I missed you. I kind of hoped that we could get together for dinner or something tonight." he stated hesitantly as if he were afraid I would refuse.

"I'll meet you at the coffee shop on the corner of 8th and 32nd around seven."

"I'll be there. I'm going to let you go so you can get back to work. I love you, Sarah."

I hung up the phone without making a reply.

The rest of the day passed uneventfully. I sat through a meeting with a potential client half listening and thankful my assistant was in charge of this particular account. I ordered lunch in my office because I could not face the world. My assistant brought in four folders of papers for me to look over and sign; I finished them in under an hour. Out of desperation for something to occupy my time, I called my mother. As I hung up the receiver, I made a mental note to add the phone call to my list of mistakes. Alice came and went all day long, bringing me papers, notes, and inter-office messages. I managed to lose myself in a file on an account from three years back, the numbers did not come out exactly right. As I concentrated on the columns of numbers, time slipped by without my notice. At a quarter till seven, Alice came in to let me know she was going home for the night.

I walked out with Alice. Deciding to walk the three blocks to the coffee shop where I was to meet Drew, I refused Alice's offer to share a cab. The walk refreshed me after hiding myself in my office all day. I could see the coffee shop within minutes and I felt myself getting nervous. I wanted to end the relationship, but one look from Drew and I lost my ability to think. He was waiting for me in a back corner booth.

He stood up as I approached the white speckled Formica table. Drew took my coat and briefcase while I slid across the light blue plastic of the booth's seat. He placed my things beside him as he sat down across from me. The smile on his face made me feel worse than I imagined

possible. He began telling me how much he missed me the last few days and he told me he loved me.

"Sarah, I have something really important to ask you."

"Oh, Drew, don't do this. I've told you a thousand times I am not the right person for you," I said as he reached across the table to hold my hands in his.

"Sarah, I miss you. I want to us to see each other more. I know you have to work long hours, but I have found a solution."

"What solution?"

"Would you consider moving in with me?" he asked as he slid his thumb over my wedding band.

"Drew, we've discussed this before."

"Don't you think it is time for you to let Martin go. I know you loved him, but Sarah, he is gone."

"Drew . . ."

"No, Sarah. Martin has been dead for two years now. You still won't stay overnight at my place. I don't even know where you live. You forbid me to call your house because you are afraid I would call when your mother-in-law is visiting. It is time to let go, you can't grieve forever. You deserve to fall in love again, Sarah."

"Martin isn't dead, Drew."

"What?" he asked as his left eyebrow arched upward.

"Martin isn't dead."

"What do you mean he isn't dead?"

"I lied to you, Drew. I don't know of a nice way to explain it, but I lied."

"You could've told me that you and Martin were divorced, it wouldn't have mattered to me, Sarah."

"Drew, Martin is not dead and we are not divorced. I am a married woman and I am cheating on my husband."

"You have lied to me for two years! I tried to do everything I could to help you get over the loss of your husband. How many other men are you sleeping with? God, how in the could I have been so damn stupid? Do you fuck me then go home and fuck him or is he first?" his voice grew louder and louder with each word.

"Drew, you are making a scene. Would you please lower your voice?"

"No. I can't believe you. What the hell were you thinking? You came to my apartment at least three nights a week, crawled into my bed and let me make love to you while your husband sat at home waiting on you to come home from work."

"Drew, I'm sorry. It wasn't like that. What do you want me to do?"

"I want you to leave me the hell alone. I don't want to ever see you again."

"Drew, wait," I pleaded as he stood up to leave.

"Oh, here take this I won't need it," he said as he tossed a small square box on the speckled table top.

I picked up the black box and opened it. A soft black velvet ring box slid into my hand. I could barely control my shaking hands as I opened the small box. A marquee cut, half karat diamond engagement ring sparkled in the coffee shop light. The simple ring made the jewels Martin bought for me look like jewelry from a bubble gum machine. Drew had bought me this ring because he loved me. I looked up at Drew, but he was not there. A quick glance around the small shop told me Drew was gone. My glance slid back down to the ring. I sat in the booth crying for nearly an hour and I did not care who saw me.

I kept the ring for three days before I placed it in a larger box. I wrote Drew's address

on it and placed it in the out-going mail basket. I thought about including a note, but in the end decided I should not. Martin called me at work to let me know that he would be home around eight that night. After he called, I told Alice I was taking the rest of the day off and that I could be reached at home if there were any problems.

Martin found me in our room asleep when he came home that night. He told me about his trip and I listened with half-hearted interest. For the rest of the weekend he tried to talk to me, but I would say as little as I possible could. I knew I had to tell him about Drew if I was ever going to get my life back on the right track.

"Martin, we need to talk."

That understatement was a poor way to start the conversation I intended to have with him. I found him sitting at the kitchen table reading the Sunday sports section of the newspaper. For several weeks now I thought about the reasons I wanted out of my marriage with Martin. To my surprise, I realized I did not necessarily want to divorce Martin, but we had a lot to work out. I had agonized for several days over how to explain my feelings to Martin.

"I have tried to talk to you."

"I know. I wasn't ready to talk until now."

"What if I'm not ready now, Sarah?"

"You don't have to talk. All I need you to do is listen."

"Sarah, whatever the problem is, I'm sure we can work it out. We just need to take things slow and talk things through."

"This is exactly what I want to talk to you about. I told you I needed you to listen to me, but you can't do that. Instead of listening to what I have to say, you start a lecture on how easily our problems can be solved. Martin, it is not that easy. We have been married for 20 years and I have been alone for half of those years. You come home and most of the time you don't even look at me. You stopped showing me any kind of affection. I began to feel like a bothersome pet you didn't have the heart to get rid of. I feel as if you don't love me," I let the words flow out of my mouth before I could think about them.

"I don't love you! Where did you get that idea? I have worked my ass off for the last ten years to give you everything a person could want. If I didn't love you do you think I would buy you a fancy car and this big house. I have bought you every piece of jewelry you have ever wanted," he shouted as the newspaper fell to the floor to rest beside the leg of the table.

"I am a middle aged woman with no children and a husband that ignores me. Was I supposed to be happy with this big empty house and all that expensive jewelry you bought? I'm sorry, but I never wanted those things. I wanted you, Martin. We never go anywhere together unless it is one of your business dinners. We used to waste entire days loving each other. I want you to love me," I finished in a whisper as a tear fell from my aging brown eyes.

"Sarah, you are making this all seem worse than it is."

"I've been seeing someone else, Martin," I whispered as if I did not want him to hear me.

He did not reply. He looked at me for several stunned seconds before he stood up. I took an involuntary step backward. It crossed my mind that he was about to hit me for the first time in my life. I tried to sink into the floor to escape the unrestrained anger I saw in his hazel eyes. As I watched the flames of hatred burn in his eyes I wished I had not told him about my affair. He was face to face with me before I could move any further. Martin just looked at me before he released a cry of disgust.

"In addition to not loving me you must not know me very well either. I would never intentionally hurt you, physically or otherwise," he whispered as he walked past me.

I heard the front door slam followed shortly by the sound of a car pulling out of the driveway. Martin had left me.



