


1977

et cetera

Marshall University

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et cetera
1977

This magazine is what I believe to be the best of the 1977 et cetera submissions. I only hope that it will inspire more students to submit their works in the future so that the magazine can contain a wider range of selections.

Ruth E. Napier, editor

Staff:

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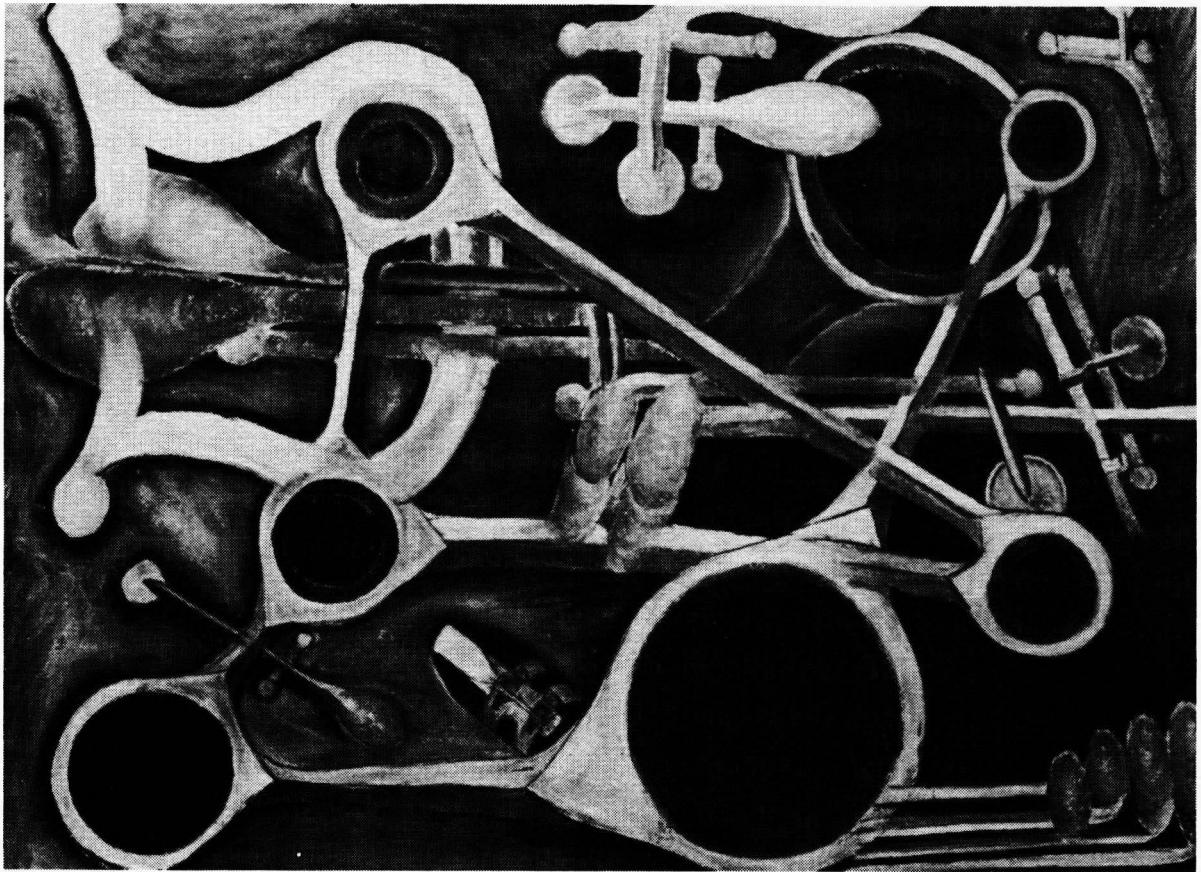
Cathi McGraw

Donna Taylor

Judy Vick

Faculty Advisor:

Elinore Taylor



logical falsey

that that is is that that is
that that isn't is that that isn't
that that is is that that isn't isn't
that that isn't is that that isn't is
that that isn't isn't that that is
is that?

-David J. Thomas

Chaos Out of Order

Anyone can tell you that
mathematicians live in an orderly world,
in their concepts
if not in their offices.

The angles of a triangle
add to 180.

Always. Be it ever so.

$2 + 2 = 4$

more reliably that tomorrow's coming.

If the sun went out,

it would take 8 minutes to even know.

Little do they know what lurks within.

Spaces going off in more dimensions

than one can ever know

Measurements of things

that have no end

Things you can get as close to as you like

but never reach

As many numbers between 0 and 1 as there are

numbers at all

All infinity of infinities

with some so small

they have no size at all

A peculiar, twisted world

with one-sided strips

and bottles with only an inside

Where a coffee cup becomes a donut

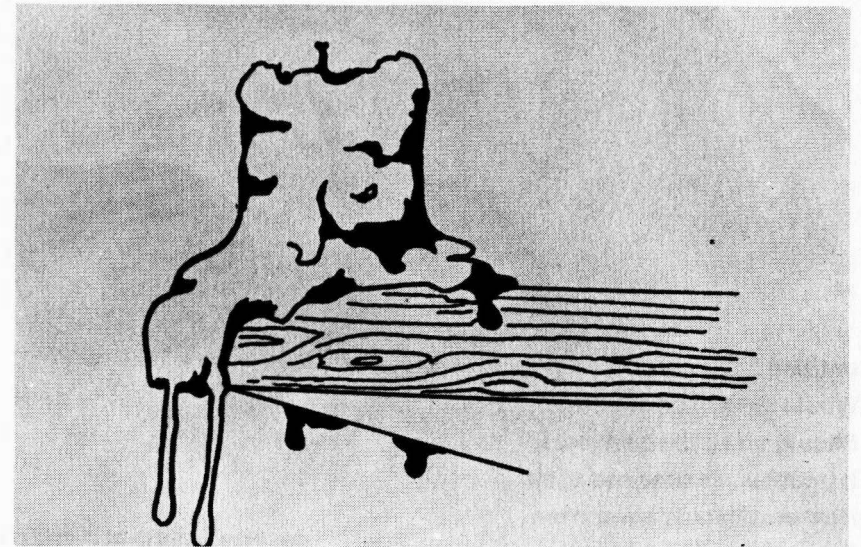
and both combine

to become a pipe

How strange to live

where people smoke their breakfast.

-Frances Stewart



Timely
I broke
My mirrored watch
Today-
Now
I'm
Seven years
Too late.

-Jackie Shockey

Insight
Some people die
With their eyes open
As if there were something
Left to see

-Elizabeth A. Morgan

untitled

Would in hell I be accepted
Should on earth I be rejected
It troubles me time and again
How cruel words are spoken
To many hearts broken
Just over the color of skin

If my history was such
That I never did much
Then its something inside that I lack
If I dropped out of school
Then cal I me a fool
But don't say because I am black

I don't feel I'm demanding
For much understanding
I feel my convictions are right
All men have their place
Regardless of race
You can't judge a man at first sight

-Clyde H. Beal

To The Not-Quite-Damned
To be damned were easier
To know the burn-caress of flame tongues
To be mouthed loingly by tormentors
 who roll you across their palates
 burning off clothes, hair and flesh
 until nothing remains but an oval smoothness
 a single pomegranate seed in size
To be spit out like some bitter stone-spent-yet free.

-Rose Cyrus

Catacombs

Carry me into a prison.
Marred by skulls and refuse.
Full of plush, archaic remnants.
And place torches by my bedside.
With gold my nearest neighbor.
Please remember to seal
The entrance with whatever keeps
The within from the without.
Lead caravans through passageways.
To view and praise with awe.
But keep out all the animals,
As they chew up milk-white bones.
Charge admission and pay a guide
To show what the future holds for all.
And remember, never touch the inhabitants,
For life is still within their grasp.
And judges stand with importance.
And the rich are arranged accordingly.
With the poor stacked vertically, forever.
Yet each meets his maker in the same,
Abrupt manner . . . by extinguishing the flame
And fastening the padlock .

JAY

John avison Rockefeller, IV,
Came to the Panhandle State from the North
In a carpetbagless Mercedes-Benz.
He cruises hollers, waves to us malcontents.

-Paul C. Steele



Empty Piers

Sailing uncharted over broken mirrors,
Sailors stare silently at bleak horizons
Endless miles of sea lay before their ship,
As it sailed across deep blue glass, alone.
A gull's cry pierces the deafening silence
and resounds off bulkheads in dark passages.
Weathered men roll from ancient hammocks,
Their tattooed skins telling exotic stories,
and climb to topside rails and bleached white decks
worn smooth by hard leather feet's swift running.
Above billowing sheets the hawk's eye stares
At the green trees and brown land growing near.
At last a crazy spider pier reaches out
Void of any sound or life; the men weep
For they are forgotten men sailing to
Long-forgotten lands in forgotten times,
Over seas made from a thousand salt tears,
Returning to silent empty piers.

-Michael Rowan

1977 "ET CETERA" POETRY AWARD

UNTITLED POEM

Into this hell that man has made
A naive boy will boldly go,
With flying flags, and flashing blade
To fight the ever-hated foe;
And so his social dues are paid.

Shipped off to some forsaken land,
Now torn by military strife;
With death held firmly in his hand
He sees his friend give up his life,
And rests his head on bloody sand.

Out of this hell that man has made
A bitter man will slowly tread,
With tattered flag and bloodied blade;
The soul within him withered, dead;
At last, his social dues are paid.

The word is out:
NO MORE WAR! ... no more;
The word is out.

-Richard Johnson

1977 "ET CETERA" ILLUSTRATION AWARD



1977 "ET CETERA" PROSE AWARD

The Scarlet Grasses, the Golden Waters

"I want to go there."

The two sat in the porch swing, the August air moving soft and warm about them. The trees whispered their rustling chant as the leaves stirred back and forth. The old chains of the porch swing moaned quietly.

"Where?" she asked.

"There. The sky," he answered, waving a hand. "The stars, the sky."

"And for what reason? Nothing is there, nothing but rocks and dust and ice and more rocks."

"You are wrong. There is everything-peoples, kingdoms, wars, new causes, new things to live and die for, to fight for, new religion, princesses to save, dragons to slay."

"You are a foolish old man, Fiorelli."

A dog barked, lonely, in the distance.

"I'm going to bed now. Will you go?"

"In a while," he answered.

He sat alone in the midnight darkness, staring into the sky. The night was alive with the stars, and he feared the icy pin-points would melt away in the summer warmth. They hung, suspended-the mobile of the universe, hung by the hand of God. They called to him-beckoned him. So near they seemed, yet they danced on the black stage far out of his reach. He could feel them-the stars, the alien planets spinning around alien suns-could see the blue clouds in the pink skies, the scarlet grasses, the golden waters.

His heart ached.

He rose and walked down the street.

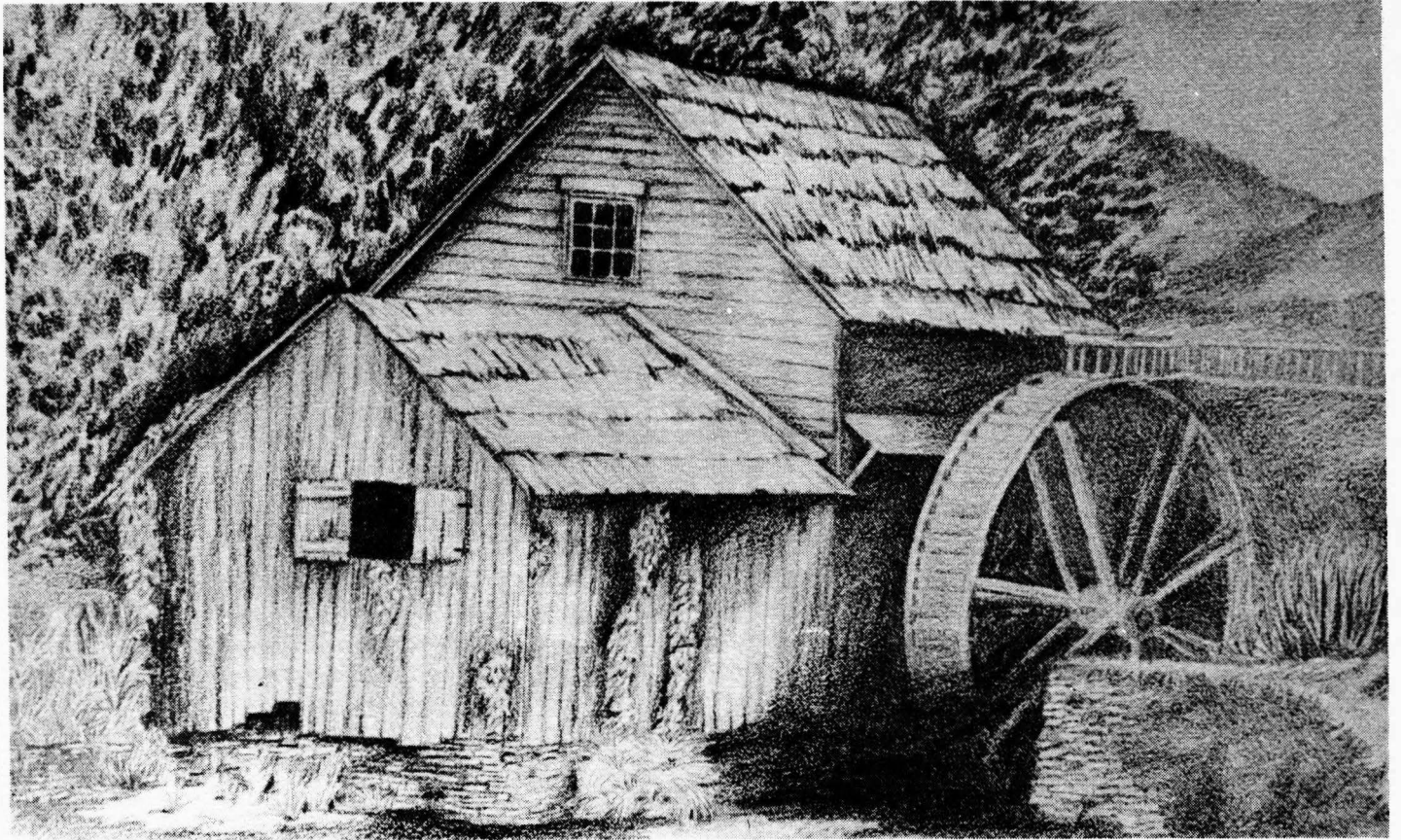
The carnival lasted all day and night in the summer months, and the lights and noise played off the shiny metal skin of the cone squatting on the wooden platform. A sign read: "First Manned Rocket To Mars! Come In And Thrill To Man's Greatest Adventure!" A smaller sign hung below: "Closed for the Day-Reopen Tomorrow."

Fiorelli came close to the capsule. It smelled of time and distance. It shone of glory, for it had been to God's doorstep-and returned, blessed. He touched the metal skin. It was warm in the summer night-warm, for it possessed a soul born of flight and adventure and freedom.

Fiorelli sighted as a star fell from its lofty shelf.

He walked back down the street.

- David Hatfield



Eddie's Place

The kid was sitting on a bar stool by the potato chip rack sipping a soda and munching on a bag of pork rinds. His little legs dangled limply from the stool. The straw had to be bent in order for him to reach it without tipping the bottle. As it was, his whole mouth was red from having missed the straw several times.

Eddie and I w're sitting down at the end of the bar sipping coffee. Eddie never touched a beer before eight o'clock and I went along with him, not because he was such a paragon, of virtue, but because he kept refilling my coffee as long as he was drinking.

Carl and Jessie were sitting in a booth playing gin rummy, and Chet Atkins picked softly from the Magnavox speakers in the corner. There were other customers in the place, but I could tell by the way they looked over at the kid when the laughter arose from the hum of conversation that they were being careful of what they said with the kid there.

It was a Friday evening, but the place was as peaceful as a Sunday

afternoon. I was just about to say something to Eddie about how quiet it was when I heard the door squeak open.

I could tell by the look in his face that he didn't have beer on his mind. He looked at the kid and then at Eddie, then let his eyes travel all around the place, taking it all in.

He was dressed like a lawyer or a banker and I could see visions of lawsuits dancing in Eddie's eyes. The corner of the man's left eye kept twitching and his mouth was set in a thin line. I gauged his size and weight and decided I could probably take him if he started to bust the place up. He couldn't have been much taller than five-eight, and must have weighed in somewhere around a hundred and fifty pounds.

Eddie slid off his stool with a 'you stay out of this, Bennett,' and stood between the man and the boy.

"Help ya, Mister?"

"You Eddie?"

"Yeah, what can I do for you?"

"Man came in my office a while ago and told me my boy was in here."

Eddie just stood there and stared at him with those blue-ice eyes of his. I could almost see lightning bolts passing between them. I would never have known there was any tension in Eddie if it hadn't been for those eyes.

Chet Atkins stopped picking and the place was quiet, except for the gurgling sounds the kid made as he tried to get the last little bit of strawberry soda. He was so busy he hadn't even noticed what was going on behind him.

The man's eyes traveled up and down Eddie, from his silver hair, down his spattered apron, coming to rest on his scuffed brogans.

"How much for the drink and chips?"

"On the house."

Every eye in the place was on him as he laid a dollar bill on the bar and walked over to where the kid was sitting. The kid was chewing on the end of the sweet paper straw, still unaware of who was standing over him. The man took the kid by the shoulders and slowly turned him around to face him. He opened his mouth like he was going to say something to the kid, but closed it when he saw Carl throw down his cards and stand up. He looked at Carl, then back at Eddie and me, and didn't say anything. Reaching in his jacket pocket he took out a monogrammed handkerchief and wiped at the kid's red mouth.

I hope no kid ever looks at me the way that kid looked at his old man when he lifted him off that bar stool and set him on the floor. It was enough to disrupt a man's stomach.

He looked at Eddie and then at me, then he took the boy by the hand and led him to the door.

Just when I was about to think we'd gotten through it without turmoil, the man turned at the door and screamed, "You keep away from my kid!" then disappeared through the door with a squeak and a bang.

-Gregory K. Norris

Charades

On the eve of my grandfather's funeral was the wake. As was customary in my family, he lay in state in the front parlor, an aging blue mohair room opened only on occasions demanding respect and even awe. It was perhaps appropriate that the open grey casket was placed beneath the deceased's oval framed parents, whose scrutiny of the arrangements was both stern and uncompromising. Grandma's straight-backed chair was positioned so that she could reach out for Grandpa's hand, a detail which she used to advantage. It was Grandpa's funeral, but as in their lives together, it was executed in Grandma's style.

She sat beside Grandpa and talked to him almost as if any minute she would discuss when to dig the potatoes or how the weather would be tomorrow. It was: "Linc, did you see all the beautiful flowers?" and "Linc, did you know they sent asters?" and "I didn't know anybody knew they were your favorites." Or it was: "I'm all alone now, Linc. I'll miss you." As if on cue, she would then raise her head to acknowledge those who had walked over to pay respect and they, in their turn would stiffen and turn the warm shades of reflected color from the pink silk-shaded lamp beside the coffin. The colors spilled out in patterns on the greying border of the rug and slid across the hardwood edging to remote corners where neighbors congregated in little knots. By rote they approached and touched her shoulder and some returned to the delegation astride the sofa and armchair, those elected few who would remain awake throughout the night with the body in the slim grey box. From my retreat beside the door I sat with also appropriate face, my silence accepted as due privilege of immediate family and not recognized as the numbness it actually was.

The clock above the mantel was as constant as the train filing in front of Grandpa, and Grandma sitting poised in her role. But the only movement that seemed to make any sense at all was the lengthening shadows across

the city of Jerusalem, a brown-etched map tacked on the wall above the mantel. Grandma rose and picked up the family Bible and resumed her state, only this time tracing the family with her finger. All my life she had pressed within me the strength of family and I knew by heart both her marriage date and the subsequent birth dates of her eight children. She had often told me these pages registered her whole being, but such registry never seemed to pass into the gilt-edged pages of the scriptures on both sides. From its pages she lifted a dried four-leaf clover and replaced it delicately. The train never ceased its mechanical response; her fingers never ceased their drumming on the Bible, except to twist a curl back into her net or to smooth the soft black knit of her skirt around her knees. Even these movements seemed timed to shadows lengthening across Jerusalem as the steady fading of pink began in the west over Orly Adams Hill. Finally the only pink that remained was refracted from the folds in the shade above Grandpa's head and in the asters draped across his chest with the glittering eulogy, "family."

Ten notes from the mantel sounded. She rose; they rose too, and nodded, faintly whispered, as she moved from the grip of his hand, head held high, into the dark walnut woodwork of the adjoining bedroom. At ten-thirty the pantomime ended and those who remained lapsed into soft chattering. Jerusalem had faded into the lamplit shadows and old Doc Martin, who perched in the chair across from Grandpa, picked up the tempo.

"Remember that time we took Little Jo \diamond , fishing and he wanted to make that sausage gravy of his. Why, when he got done, we just sliced it outa the pan." Laughter.

Floyd Haught broke into the circle with the news of an 80 percent chance of rain the next day and how he was staying up all night so he probably wouldn't feel like working in the hay before the rain came. Why,

even if he did, by the time the dew was gone, he couldn't get no more than two or three hundred bales before it was time for the funeral.

Across the room talk turned to the grave dug earlier that day and of a neighbor who just couldn't see his way clear to help dig. "Who's he think is gonna dig his grave?"

Silence left the room with me and only the closing door lifted the imposed ban. Strains of detached laughter drifted through the cracks around the facing three doors down and I recognized Ira Cox's voice: "We was hidin' behind the haystack so he wouldn't hear us laughin' at htm and ole Wilson was just beating the livin' daylights outa that gate!"

The long kitchen was deserted. Only the homemade bench pulled **away** from the table showed the effects of long food lines. Stacks of gleaming plates and soft styrofoam cups stood beside the oversized coffee urn. Apple pie and high layer cakes pointed toward covered casseroles and foil-wrapped pots. Below, the red linoleum floor was cracked by the door facing, but damp spots betrayed its cleanliness and the neighbor ladies industry. The door behind me opened to a voice thrown over a shoulder. "Hey, did anyone put out some cake and . . . "

I slipped up the back stairs. From my room upstairs the voices below came soft and muted.

"Why, old Linc was a good neighbor when he wasn't scrapping and drinking. I swear one night he came home with only the cuffs left of his shirt. The wife used to say he was little, but he sure was wiry." This time, hoots of laughter. Somehow it was not for Grandma anymore.

Morning glared through the window with fresh fierceness and not even the blinds would blot out the few hours until eleven o'clock. Grandma was moving heavily about in the next room, and I just sat where I was on the bed reading the license numbers of the cars still parked outside. It all made some sort of unfocused sense, this cataloging of numbers and

letters and colors, and it got me through until the appointed hour.

We didn't speak as we sat stiff and unnatural in our own cars, but we were grateful to Daddy for holding out against the string of hearses. He sat directly in front of me, and his neck slid into tight seams at the shoulder of his only suit. I kept waiting for Mama to pick the lint from his lapel; she didn't. Between their heads was the Methodist church and more people with awkward voices in silhouette against the sun through the windshield. A few minutes later the same sun filtered through more figures, this time in ancient robes of purple and blue and red, but the voices were that of the Methodist choir. "Come home, come home . . . "

Grandma in lead, led her captive court up a white aisle cloth to the carnation marked pews on the right front. Another voice boomed from behind Grandpa: "You may think its coming home time, but It will never be again. The movement in the night won't be him. The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away. We cannot always understand. Amen." In the back of the sanctuary, someone whispered, another stifled a sneeze. The family filed before the long box one last unending time. It seemed no longer Grandpa, no longer real.

Other waxen figures moved; mouths opened and closed under veils that distorted familiar features; and gloves patted my hands with cool soft fingers. The folded paper in my grip was in low hues of grey and ivory. I uncreased the fold and read the name, a name and date and the entire length of the twenty-third Psalm. "The Lord is my Shepherd . . . "

And then it was over and we went home-Grandma did too. And I remembered it as the summer my grandfather died-an incident demanding respect and even awe-as much or as little as did the aging blue mohair room itself.

-Marsha A. Parks

The Magician

In times when people could only rely on pointless theatre or dischordant bards for entertainment the prospect of viewing a masterwork commissioned by the church could attract many excited citizens.

On one hot summer day the masses pressed onward in ragged waves to the Pallazzo Vecchio, Florence's theological center, as it was announced a great painting was to be held in public view. Many narrow streets were choked with the curious, their damp bodies filling the filthy alley with a staeant odor.

The crowd was composed of a motley assortment of the Florentine proletariat; fishermen's wives, ragged beggars, people of the wheels. Their tongues churned the air, rumbling the tumult to echo in the heavens. The fashion of their topics were based on the painting and the painter, both being of a scandalous nature. Judgment of the painting was being reserved, but the madness of its creator was common knowledge.

"He is the illegitimate son of Ser Piero, a bastard's painting will hang in our church, a blasphemy!"

"He does the devil's work with corpses in this country tower."

"His gift of art is the devil's grant."

"The Black Wizzard . . . "

The accusations rebounded about.

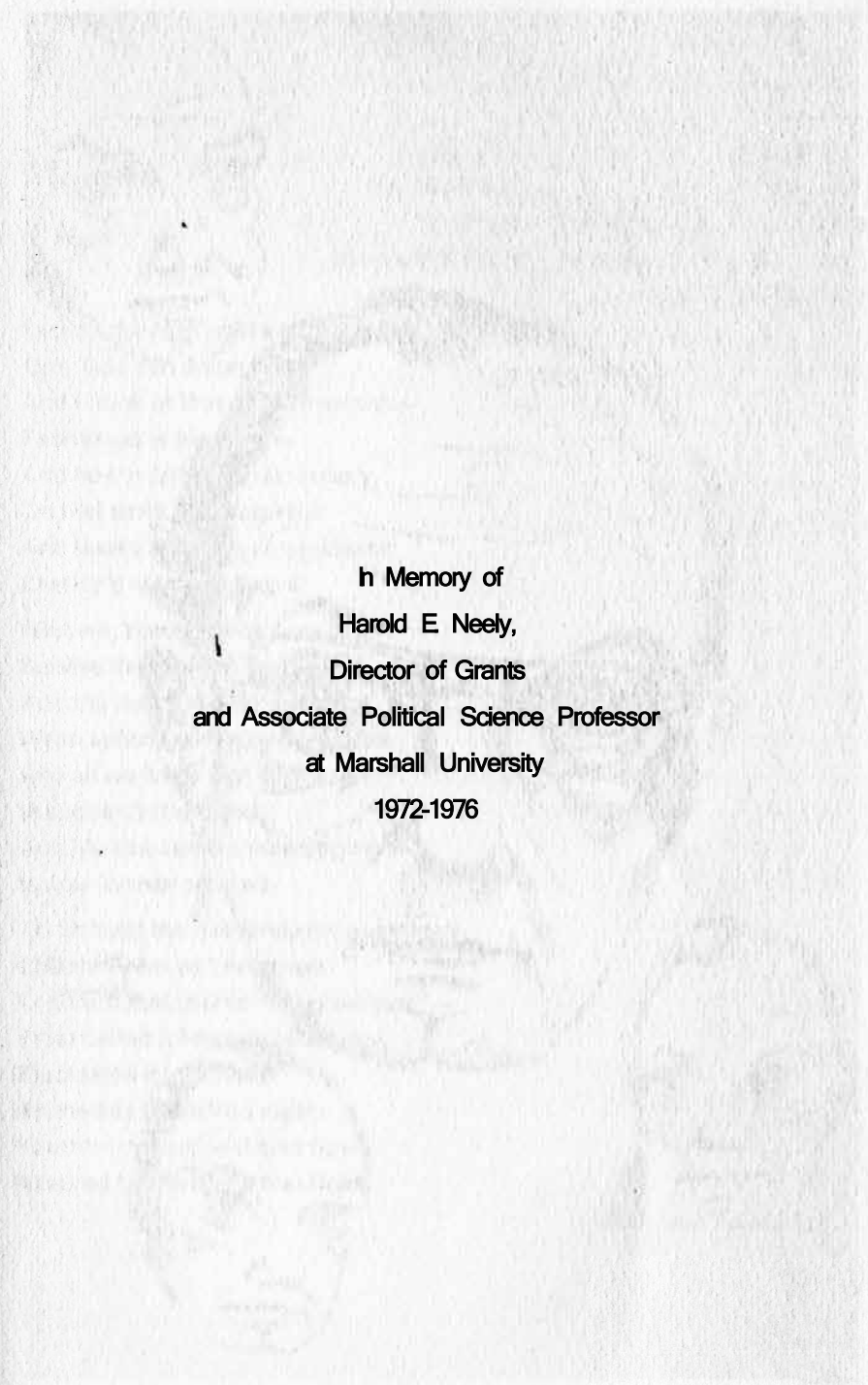
A young noblemen astride his mount listened silently and reflected upon the memory of an encounter with the brilliant artist.

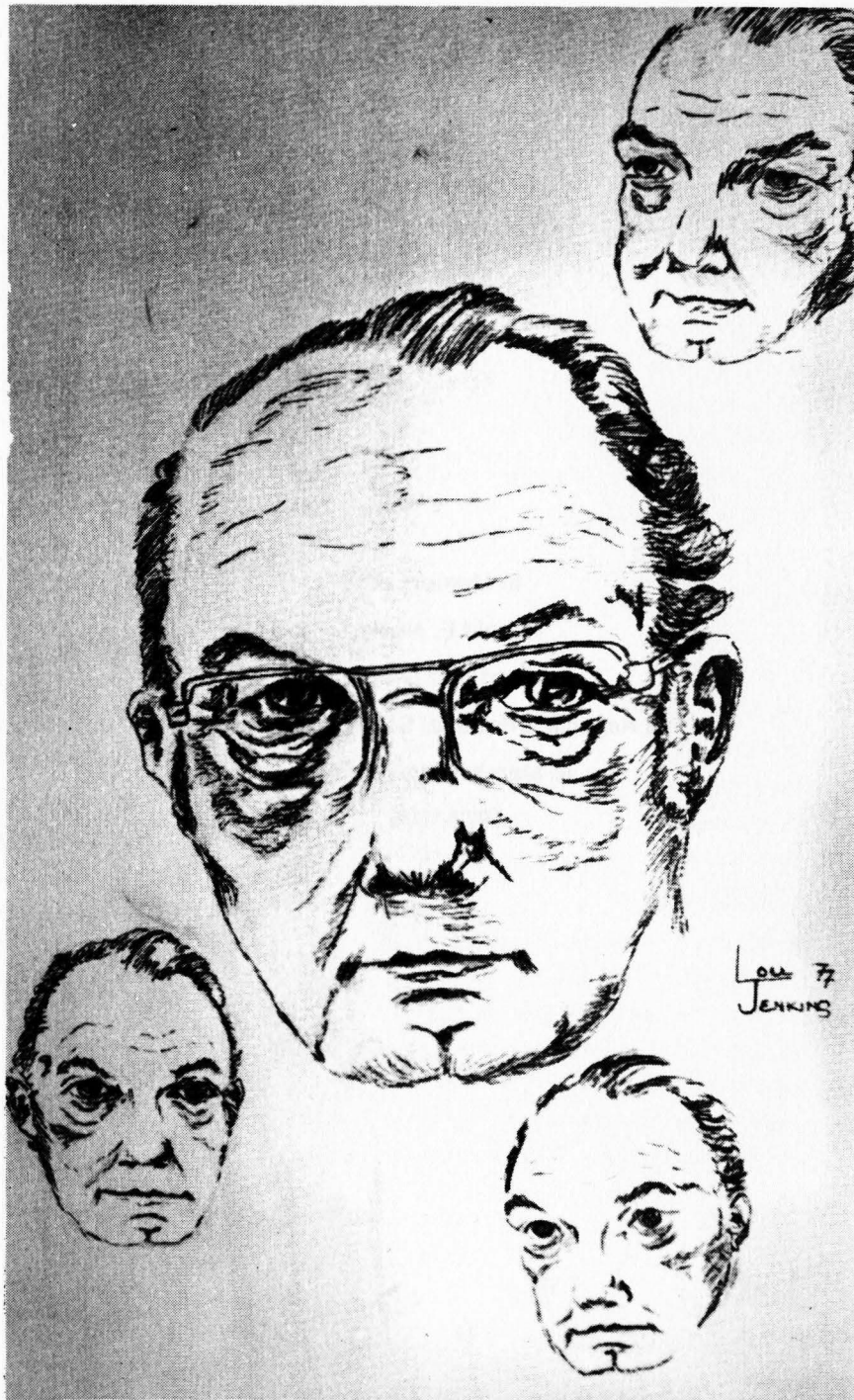
They found their way to the courtyard of the great church. Their bodies pushed as close to the restrictive grating as possible. Astonishment registered on their unwashed faces. An old man choked as a fly had flown into his gaping mouth. The nobleman whispered the title, "His Last Supper."

-David S. Rogers

Faint, illegible text, possibly bleed-through from the reverse side of the page.

In Memory of
Harold E Neely,
Director of Grants
and Associate Political Science Professor
at Marshall University
1972-1976





The Sliver Bird

"If only the problems of life would come
when we're young-when we know everything."

-H.E.N. (1918-1976)

I watch the river spill a knowledge
Only God can understand
And I think of that pure silver bird-
Fashioned in his hand-
And how it left us in our misery
On that early morning hour
And finally made us comprehend
Shelley's withered flower

"But we, though soon they fall,
Survive their joy" in tears
And the river's raging waters
Wash ashore the broken feathers
And all we knew that ever was
is suddenly distorted
And life that had no meaning once
Is now forever ordered

For though the river answers questions
Crippled men will never ask
The truth that makes "injustice just"-
Frost called it Mercy's Masque-
Elucidates itself for us
As the day fades into night:
Youthful dreams will also flow
Assured by the bird's free flight

-Richard William Roska

Bro Cat

Walking down the street eating a puffy sweet orange
Watching the trees bark at a stupid old sewer dog
Then split look there squatted by the greasy concrete curb
Big black squished up hump,
Yuk gag quease then look back for more
What is that thing?
It's a cat.
Dead black dying cat
On a stinking cruddy city sidewalk
You O.K. There Bro Cat?
Yuk, what's that?
Grey brown coiled all bloody crusted
Poor old cat's insides been busted.
You dead there Bro Cat?
Say something you stupid pet.
Somebody misses you
Don't they?
Walking down the street looking at a shriveled up orange
While an old man yells dogs off his crew cut grass.

-Frank Dllatush