This book is a cooperative effort of the staff and the contributors. The goal of this issue was to include a variety of forms and contents by a variety of artists and authors, to attempt a representation of the thought and creativity of Marshall University at this time. I think we've been successful, I'm happy with the book, and I offer it up to the reader with my blessings.

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TIME

What has been
Will always be,
And what will be
Has always been

So don't forget to feed the horses.

Flash Bazbo
'75
The Paradox of Man

Haunted,
now in varied days,
my thoughts of you,
confused like a maze:
Presented perplexities of enlightened bliss.
Suprised in style,
this archer's miss
flies whiles of miles toward the moon,
always to soon,
to think in times tables.

With intended words and rippled dreams,
in ruppled emotions,
my heart screams protest
of undigested desires;
Trapped in understanding that I can't understand--
the paradox of man.

Written,
somehow in unreadable lines,
my words for you,
diffused throughout my mind;
Represented regularities in entangled meaning.
Compared with compassion
my soul's cleaning
dies near to here before the day,
ever a way,
to write on space's scrolls.

Richard Collins
FRIENDSHIP

A true friendship
needs no declarations
no reading of scripts
--only a mutual
understanding
that no two snowflakes are
alike

Terri C. Miller
BUTTERFLY WINGS

You gave to me butterfly wings and silken bands.
In our childhood we shared bright golden days and youth
Brought softly silver nights. Joyously raise your hands
And cup the liquid light. A panaceous draught
Awaits your wish. From out of strangely foreign lands
I bring the grail and share hesperidean fruit.
Into your life I fly on the butterfly wings.

David Pauley
The narrow dirt road that led to and circumscribed the hollow meandered serpentlike through the park, cutting through patches of virgin verdure and passing barren brown areas whose trees and other types of vegetation had been cleared away in order to make room for picnic sites. The hollow itself, which was roughly circular in shape and had gently sloped sides, lay nestled near the center of the park, surrounded by an intricate network of dirt roads and footpaths. The hollow drowsed mute and motionless, seemingly anesthetized by the thick, oppressive atmosphere that filled and overflowed it, or perhaps merely mesmerized by the endless parade of storm clouds rolling ever eastward across a lead gray sky.

The hollow's fragile silence was pierced and shattered by the ominous rumble of the car as it approached in the distance. The intruders were inside: she drove while he sat slouched down in the seat and gazed through the window at the blurred scenery.

The car turned off the dirt road onto an even narrower gravel driveway that led to a picnic site. At the site, they parked the car, got a colorful patchwork quilt out of the back seat, and, arm-in-arm, began their trek to the hollow on a winding footpath. The path, which ran parallel to, and in places intersected, another similar path, curved down toward the woods in a kind of double helix and led eventually to a wide gulley that contained a sluggish, almost stagnant, stream which was spanned by a slippery moss-covered log. She crossed the log on her tip-toes, keeping her balance with outstretched arms. He jumped across, having first thrown the quilt over to her. They resumed their journey on the other side, following the now overgrown path up the side of a small hill. Reaching the summit, they found themselves on the rim of the hollow. It was full
of scattered clumps of bushes and small trees and had on its floor a thick, unbroken carpet of dead leaves and twigs. It yawned drowsily, ready to receive them.

"Ready?" he asked, breaking a silence they had maintained since their entrance into the park.
"I guess so," she sighed.
"Let's go."
They descended into the hollow, spread out the quilt behind a clump of bushes, and looked around nervously. The carpet of leaves and twigs seemed to muffle rather than magnify their footsteps.
"Well, here we are," he said in an effort to put her at ease.
"Do you really think we should...do it out here?" she whined.
"Why not? It's safer here than at your parents' house."
"Sometimes the cops patrol the park."
"I haven't seen any cops around."
"I feel funny. What if somebody sees us?"
"Nobody'll see us."
Silence. They stretched out on the quilt and embraced each other, their limbs intertwined.
"I have an idea," he suggested. "Let's play a game."
"A game?" she blurted, springing up to a sitting position. "What kind of game?"
"Strip poker," he replied.
"How can we play strip poker without a deck of cards?"
"We'll improvise and play strip-flip-the-coin."
"Strip-flip-the-coin?" she giggled. "Are you serious?"
"Sure. Why not? We'll use this," he said, drawing a nickel out of his pants pocket.
"You are serious, aren't you?"
"Of course I am. Ready?"
"All right," she giggled. "Why not?"
"Which do you prefer, heads or tails?"
"Either one, it doesn't matter."
"Pick one."
"Oh, all right...tails."
"It seems appropriate somehow," he noted, patting her wide hips.
"Ha, ha."
"Ready?"
"Ready."
The first flip came down heads, causing her to lose her right sandal. The next two flips, one heads one tails, resulted in the removal of her other sandal and of his right boot. The fourth, fifth, and sixth flips all came down heads and stripped her of her belt, blouse, and jeans. Tails again, and off came his other boot. Each remaining flip, however, was heads, and she finished her agonizingly slow (so it seemed to him) strip-tease. Now totally nude, her pale white body stood out in sharp contrast with the dull grays and browns of the surrounding carpet of leaves and twigs. She leaned back on the quilt, resting on her elbows,
and crooked her finger at him. Aroused, he quickly removed the rest of his clothing and, after a few minutes of perfunctory foreplay, crawled atop her.

His moves were quick, efficient, perhaps a bit mechanical. His hands and mouth moved systematically from one erogenous zone to another, never lingering in one area longer than he felt was necessary. After only a few minutes they had both worked up a strong, steady sweat that coated their bodies with a thin film, lubricating their limbs as oil lubricates machine parts. They continued their lovemaking steadily, eventually coming to a sudden, almost explosive, climax. They lay together in the sweet, sweaty afterglow of their act of love, a bit out of breath, all passion spent.

She fell into a deep slumber almost immediately. He lay back, lit a cigarette, and watched its smoke spiral upward and disappear like thin, scentless incense to an unknown god. The looked up at the still overcast sky and noted how closely it reflected his own mind: a gray, incoherent mass of jumbled, jarring elements, pregnant with meaning and turbulent with motion yet paradoxically sterile and static. A passing cloud, amorphous and vaguely amoeboid, captured his imagination. If only it were possible to turn back and descend the ladder of life down the double helix through the labyrinths of genes and chromosomes regress in a series of molecular metamorphoses from man to ape to rodent to reptile to fish to mindless amoeba swimming unfeelingly in the furious steam of unconsciousness of the slimy primeval soup to drift and slide through the draft and slime to grasp and devour with pseudohands to reproduce by fission to receive but not feel or understand the synthetic spark of electrical creation to swim to slide to drift to glide through the oceans of oblivion forever mute and immutable to swim forever no choices no changes no voices no dangers no genetic coin flips no GOD no up no down no GOD no east no west no GOD no hot no cold no GOD no light no dark no GOD no good no bad no GOD no GOD NO GOD NO GOD NO GOD!

The amoeba cloud overhead began to change its shape and drift off, thus putting an end to his reverie. He kept his gaze skyward for a while, looking for a sign of some kind, a brief glimpse of the sun, an apocalyptic flash of lightning, anything. Nothing. Nothing but the lead sky weighing him down, suffocating him, draining him of energy. He scanned the hollow and noticed for the first time that it was indeed a hollow, a depression, a hole in the ground. An absence. Gazing out over the hollow's edge, he spotted another similar depression and was struck by the thought that viewed from above the two hollows might resemble the eyesockets of some immense skull. He turned to look at her. She was still sound asleep on the quilt, her arms stretched out like a cross. He gazed at her with X-ray eyes, penetrating the pale white skin for an imaginary glimpse of the skeleton underneath. He nudged her gently and she started out of her slumber.

"Well, good morning," he said.
"Good after ... noooooon," she yawned.
"How do you feel?"
"Icky and sticky."
"Yeah."
"Aren't you tired?"
"A little."
She lit a cigarette and surveyed the surrounding woods.

"I had a dream while I was asleep."

"Really? Tell me about it."

"Well, let me see. You and I were rabbits, and all we did for a long time was make love and have tons and tons of baby rabbits. After that, we went for a long walk through the woods and met all different kinds of animals, some good, some bad. I remember one time a raccoon stopped us and stole all our food. Another time a bear was chasing us around a tree, but a friendly beaver helped us and took us to a hiding place. The last part is the worst, or maybe the best. We were running through an open field when all of a sudden these two tremendous hawks swooped down out of nowhere and grabbed us. They killed us, then dropped our bodies, but as we fell our souls flew straight up to the sky and became beautiful pink and white clouds shaped like rabbits."

"I had a dream too."

"What about?"

"oh, nothing. Nothing very important."

"Oh."

"I like your dream better. Ready to go?"

"Sure."

"Let's get out of this place; I don't like it."

"Neither do I."
Lost Thoughts

Tell her she is wise
For her wisdom flows in many
forgotten ways

Tell her she is kind
For her understanding caresses
all sore hearts

Tell her she is radiant
For her beauty glows from the
hidden meadows of her soul

Tell her all this and more
Or tell her one thing

Tell her she is loved
For love so satisfies that her
happiness may be treasured

Billy Goad
Happy Anniversary

For years we've perfected this art,
This disabling.
Dismemberment.

I've taken your eyes.
I've devoured your spine—
Now face the world without me!
You've gobbled my brain.
You've eaten my feet.
I can't walk without you.

So we sit
Looking with disgust
At what's left of each other,
Disappointed
That we're not
The people we married.

Donna Umbach Stohr
sometimes, i feel like a
small microscopic speck of
insignifia, sitting in a
nest of uncertainty
trying to hatch a hope
into a reality

Pia Cummings
In the eye of the Island

The sun never sits, but stands on the bare back

Of an Indian elephant.

In the soul of the Island

God isn't just love.

he's trees, and Sky, and the patter of baby wombats before they are even a glint

In the Lion's eye.

C.S. Grize/1
Union Avenue is one of those streets you drive on when you're going someplace. Four lanes of east-west traffic are marked out so that cars move quickly to their final destination. Riders seldom notice the old, moldy buildings, dirty with age and decay, that line the street. Stores begin to dot the landscape of Union Avenue around 115th St. About every other building has a storefront, often abandoned. The cars could be headed to the downtown district. This area is the business district's outermost fringe.

Three blocks east is Avalon Blvd: it's the main thoroughfare of the business district. At one end of Avalon is the government housing projects, then the railroad crossing and this, the first signs of commerce. The stores in this area—pawnshops, bars, liquor stores, and discount everything stores—cater to the lower-income customers with high prices and convenient credit plans. Most of these shoppers never make it to the city park where AVALON Blvd, finally ends. Between them and the park are the main business area, municipal and county government buildings, and office and high-rise apartment buildings. The city park stretched 60 acres to the south of the business district and had been developed to contain the downtown from gobbling up the residential developments south and west.

Union Ave. was muggy after a scorching August day. The concrete was exhaling the day's accumulated heat, trying to suck in the faint breeze that was blowing. Near the middle of the block walked Gabriel Pope and Lada Young. Gabriel's shirt hung unbuttoned, his dark chest glistening with beads of sweat. Lada walked gracefully and slowly, her white uniform accenting the creamed coffee color of her skin. At ten o'clock Gabriel had stopped by the restaurant to walk Lada home from work. During the walk Gabe had narrated the night's occurrence, pausing only to hear Lada's comments and questions. Two guys had been arrested, a scuffle had ensued; there were clubs used and rocks thrown. Sadie Frye had been wrestled to a patrol car by a redneck bike cop who said she'd spit on him. Lada had heard these happenings before. Gabe said no, this time it was different. He had watched the crowd as it had grown; rage and anger competing to control it. It was like a thick molasses boiling-bubbling up, almost over the pan. Gabriel felt something big might happen, that the blood might finally stand up to the man that had sucked them. He told her quietly, proudly.

"Looting had started; he'd seen it as he had walked to the restaurant.
"Looting don't do it, Lada."

Gabriel wore the face of a chameleon. Lada was still trying to read it, in all its various colorings. She had watched his nose flare as he'd described the arrests, his body jerking out the action. Then his frame had tensed, his eyes widening as he saw again the crowd as he'd painted it for her, shading in its growing size and darkening in its outline. Now he stood at the corner of 115th St., watching a long column of smoke rise from the top of an abandoned tenement. His ace was hazy and distant.
His looting remark was an accurate reflection of Gabriel's growing theory of the blood's situation. He had decided that racism and economics were the tools of a power-structure that grew rich off the poor. The blood needed to rise up from the dirt and refuse the man; refuse his low-paying jobs; refuse his credit terms and his goods. To loot was to grovel for crumbs. Gabriel wanted attitudes changed rather than the blood's growing immersion into the buy-on-credit syndrome. If attitudes needed to be attacked, burning delivered the message. Better to burn the stores than to loot them.

Lada did not understand Gabriel's thirst for violence. They were blacks from different cultures: Lada was from an old established family, Gabriel was a drop-out whose mother drew welfare. Lada had not had it so bad. She had been an honor student in high school and would have gone to college. But her father had lost his trucking job and now worked as a parking lot attendant, the only job he could find. Her mother, a domestic, went to the suburbs six days instead of five. Lada wanted to help out. She had looked for a job in several business offices. She had to settle for waiting tables. School would come after work, in the fall at night.

Gabriel had never finished school, dropping out when wanting to take auto repair he'd been told there weren't enough tools for everyone. He would have had to buy his own. His father had left his mother ten years ago so she could receive welfare for the kids. Gabe had been stopped, frisked, harassed and refused all his life. Lada knew this but could not understand. Her parents dismissed him as a troublemaker; Lada found him sensitive. She did not correct his pronunciation; it was his mouth. He peaked with life-with soul-and for that reason Gabriel Pope was more stimulating than any man she'd known before. She grabbed his hand playfully to divert his eyes from the smoke.

"Come on, Gabriel, you're supposed to be walking me home."

They crossed 115th St. On the corner was a looted store. The glass window had been shattered and the door broken in. Inside at the cash register-now on the floor-were chrome railings to keep the customers in line. They walked on. The street looked like it was giving a party. People mingled together, stooping to pick over merchandise that someone else had dropped. One woman sorted through a pile of socks laying in a doorway across the street. A skinny kid was aiming rocks at a street light. One hit its mark, the street darkened to the accompaniment of a crack, a shower of glass and a fizzle. Gabe and Lada walked on, stopping to look in a REX Drugs. A voice called them.

"May I help you?" Gabriel recognized Dandy Diggs, imitating the manager of the store. He grinned at the joke. Dandy emerged from the store with a cardboard box of merchandise. It contained three bottles of scotch, one rum and two vodka; five cartons of cigarettes, a paperback novel, a carton of cigarette papers and several Reese's Cups. Dandy swept off his purple-plumed hat-his trademark, revealing a short cropped head of black wiry hair.

"Brother Gabriel," Dandy intoned in the preacher style, "How are you and this fine lady on such a burning night?" Gabriel regarded him curiously on the word burning. Lada smiled her part but Gabriel noticed her worried glance.

"What you want that junk for? That's white man's trash." Dandy's frame filled out and went erect.
"I ain't often had the money to buy my friends a drink. Tonight I give'em one."

"Pigs! It's the pigs!" The hoarse yell caught everyone by surprise. A police car careened around the corner from Washington Ave. Rocks showered it. Dandy moved quick; he was already gone. Lada froze as thoughts and images collided—her expected future with a hand slashing red across it, "you have the right to" droned in her ear as bars appeared, then a soft repetitious sound faded in her ear, of wood hitting clothed skin. Gabriel jerked her hand and ran, dragging her. Three policemen had jumped from the car, their uniform buttons and guns gleaming under the neon glare. A shot interrupted the mindless chaos. "Sniper!"

Gabriel pushed Lada between the drugstore and a tenement. He moved to follow her, but she grasped and fell from his hold. She seemed caught and her position blocked his entrance. He ran to the doorway of the tenement. He knew he could not stay in the doorway. One of the police had remained near the cover of the car and was methodically shooting out the street lights. The other two had melted into safety when the first shot had fired. Gabriel waited; he had to move. As the last lamp sizzled out Gabriel leaped silently across Union Avenue, then crept into an abandoned corner tenement.

Lada's eyes adjusted slowly to the neonless dark. She remained crouched between the two buildings. Her hand touched a warm sweet liquid. She groped her hand along her sprawled out leg, then was satisfied that the blood came from a long deep scrape on her left shin. She stood up uneasily and peered around the corner of the building: another patrol car with four officers had joined the rock-battered patrol car. Several bodies lay spread-eagle on the asphalt, a shotgun held over them. She moved back from the spinning red lights. They made her dizzy. She poked through the garbage-lined pathway, deciding to avoid the cops. She was determined not to have her ways hampered by an arrest.

It took her several minutes to pick herself a path through the litter, garbage and excrement. Reaching the alley she stifled her reaction to the comingled odor of liquor, rotting food and shit. She gagged instead. Her hand attempted to arrange her hair but the dark silky hair lay in a tangled, tossed mess. She walked quickly, then slowly as her shin began to ache. She reached the end of the alley, and stopped, hidden in the twilight world of the alley. 116th St. crossed the alley. Lada debated which way to turn, imaging the paper maze games she still played with her younger brother. How would she decide if she could see the city laid out, on paper. You started here and had to end there and you went where? The city lay before her, with all its paths there. She need simply choose. She looked to Washington Ave. that ran parallel to Union; she knew she did not want to return to Union. Washington Ave., however, was closer to the actual riot area, which was spreading slow and thick into the south. She wanted to find Gabriel, but did not know what he might do. Before he had run, he had whispered; "This place need burning." She had hoped to get Gabe to her house and keep him there. He had so much potential—but she feared bars before his face. She also
should call home. Best she thought to make her way to the government housing project, Booker Downs, where Gabe lived. She could call home and then leave word for Gabriel. She crossed 116th St., deciding to follow the alleys into the city's dark places. This street was a poorly lit one with one silent street light not yet rocked or shot out. Lada leaned against the unpainted pole that posted like a weary war veteran, and checked the cut. The blood had dried, leaving a sticky, crumbling texture. She entered the next alley waiting for her eyes to shrink off the neon glow. As her eyes enlarged she slowly made out a tiny neighborhood of tenements and shacks. Two ramshackle houses leaned together like old women huddled together in winter. Catty-corner to one house was a shanty, a dim light flickering inside. She heard laughter. From the street passersby in cars caught only hurried glances of peeling buildings. They never knew of the alley ways-only for rats and roaches, drunks and junkies. They were never told of the people who lived there.

Lada walked on. As she neared the coming street she heard distant voices-shouts and a wail that rose above the metal, steel and brick, sinking down. Sirens replaced the wail and seemed to stop a few blocks south. Lada thought to avoid 117th St.; she could smell the smoke. She retraced her steps, searching and finding a pathway between a tenement and a boarded-up liquor store. She crashed into a row of garbage cans, clattering a lid to the brick walkway. Panic gripped her; felt a cop's nightstick between her legs. She ran twisted, stopping where the buildings reached the sidewalk. She glanced over her shoulder expecting-she admonished herself over such alarmist behavior. Catching her breath she surveyed the scene. She was back on Union Street but it was deserted except to an old man walking a mongrel on a leash. Lada moved to the corner street sign, and decided to walk on 117th St. to Corey Road, cross the tracks and move through the shoebox-as Gabriel called Booker Downs.

"Lada." She turned to see a man cross from a doorway across the street.

"Officer Benton?" She had not recognized her father's friend in civilian clothes. Benton was the only policeman she knew and one of the few black men on the force. He was dressed in a plaid shirt and brown pants.

"Are you off-duty, Mr. Benton?" Lada knew he did not live around here.

"No, I'm on special assignment; watching the movement of the crowd."

"To report it?" Gabriel would call this man a Judas, she thought.

Benton smiled ironically. "I blend in well. What are you doing out? The streets are no place for anybody."

Lada explained to Mac Benton where she was walking, then asked about the riot. It had grown he said. The police had backed off at first and the crowd had been swelled by the apparent victory. The center was Avalon and Jefferson. Now the police were moving in, determined to knock the riot out.

They turned as they heard the engine of a car. It was a patrol car and Benton fumbled for his badge. The car slowed as the driver saw the approaching man. Benton reached the car to "What do you want you jigaboo?" As the word lashed out the driver recognized Benton. He lowered his head and muttered something in response to Benton. Benton grasped the car handle and before he climbed in he looked to Lada. She could not see his eyes and was glad. He told her to go home and be careful.
Lada stood there numb as the car crawled away. She had heard that word only once before and her hand lay against her cheek in remembrance. An olive-skinned saleswoman had slapped her and called her jigaboo when she had been ten, and alone in a department store. Her anger was taking form, molding in her breast a rage. It was liquid and flowed into her hands. Jigaboo! She grabbed a beer bottle from a gutter. Nigger! She ran across the street, to the opposite corner. Spade! She aimed at the WE HAVE E-Z TERMS sign and saw a pink smiling face saying "I'm sorry, but you have a speech impediment. You slur your r's. You see we couldn't hire you to greet the public." The face cracked into a thousand glittering pieces. An alarm was ringing. Lada grabbed another bottle and ran toward Corey Road.

Gabriel had waited, his body snapping as it moved. He had watched, hoping to find Lada, but he had seen the cops regroup and radio for assistance. They would search the buildings, looking for the sniper and any incidentals they might find. They would search the building he was in-an embarrassed, condemned brick frame that had once greeted immigrants as "Bernstein's Boarding House." He found a back door, slipped the lock and escaped into the seamy night. He took his shirt off; it was pale blue. An easy target. Gabe laid it on a pile of trash and looked wistfully at it. A present from Lada. It had a nice cool touch. But if he carried it, some pig could pick him up for looting.

He turned on his heel, walking quickly through a gravel lot to the alley. He paced the alley. Reaching 116th St., he paused to check out the street. Nothing. It was cool. He turned in the direction of Corey Road. He would feel safe there. He would walk along this street, reaching Corey he would head east. He could dig walkin them tracks. Gabriel's neck jerked as he caught himself. What you planning for, he muttered. He was used to running, planning his route. It saved him time; his body homing in, running tight. His mind traveled a different path.

He was restless, like a spring-coiled tight. He sniffed the air. Faintly smoke mingled and tangled with the air. He breathed, and thought of Lada. She was fine. Nice! At first he thought she read too much. But then he had watched her struggle around after jobs. She tried for good jobs-secretary, assistant- and she could have done them. They turned her down. Said they had been filled and she was not qualified. Can't talk. Lada took it. She took a waitress job. Lada who could go to college. And she would, after slinging steak and grits all day. He jerked himself into a stance. Shit. It made him mad. Itchy. His hand opened and shut as though to grab something. A cocktail. He would make a firebomb to light this town like hell. The big cheap liquor bottles were quick and surefire. The kind you found in this neighborhood. He started to turn back, to search the alley. Thought he'd wait and look near the tracks. Keep on, he repeated. He felt good. He could see the coming blaze. Feel its heat.

He reached the corner and made a sharp turn. Gabe liked Corey Road. The track ran beside it after having run through the backyard of a one-time Irish neighborhood. The houses had stopped at 115th St. There the tracks broke away, past Booker Downs and then turned to run along the river. Gabriel had
been fascinated by rivers in an early geography class before he'd lost interest in school. He would walk the tracks to the river. His tributary. But as he grew older, he noticed the garbage and the winos. He dropped out of school because his clothes were old. He sold reefers and could buy sharp new ones.

In the middle of the block Gabriel crossed the street to the tracks, past a broken metal cord that ran on both sides of the track. He'd maybe spot a bottle. As his eyes scanned the gravel and coal he heard the low rumble of a prowling engine. He saw the dome on the roof. Shit. He could be gone. The car rolled slowly past. It stopped. Shit. Not another arrest. A man, the cop, got out of the car. Gabe's spine felt like someone had pulled the shooter of a pinball machine. A shiny metal ball zinged across and over his ribs. He thought to run but the cops carried shotguns. He stood waiting, tense, controlled, Lada would have called it. The cop approached him.

"What are you doing out? There's a curfew tonight."

Gabriel looked at him. He felt his neck strain. "Thought I'd walk the tracks. Used to alot as a kid." The two men gazed at one another. Neither flinched. The policeman waved his arm.

"My grandparents lived in a house near here. It got torn down." The cop removed his hat and fanned himself with it.

"It's hot." Gabriel said. "Could get hotter." The cop fit the blue cap back on his head. "Go home. If we see you again I'll have to book you on something." He turned to leave. Another ball ricocheted off Gabriel's spine. His fingers flexed an imaginary button. "Why?"

The cop looked back at Gabriel, his eyes searching Gabe's face for some answer he could give. Finally he said, "You're equal under the law. Not before it." He stood there, looking off toward where the tracks finally ran by the river.

"People are getting killed tonight." The cop's voice was flat; dull. He walked over to the patrol car and hollered back.

"Don't let me see you again." The uniformed man climbed into the car and it pulled away. Gabriel watched the car for a long time, till it disappeared. He felt odd-like the pinball machine had just tilted. He found a bottle, held it close to his face and then flung it on the rail. He began to breath slowly. Traffic could be heard faintly. A siren. It wailed, like some rock musician's guitar. Maybe that was what was wrong. All that noise; tonight he could feel the heartbeat of the city because most of the noise had been scared into being quiet. Usually all you could hear was sirens, clangs, whistles and alarms, but underneath a slow melody lingered under the human jazz.

Gabriel was near the corner. A cool bottle of soda might quench his thirst. The Carry-Out seemed tentative but open. It looked inviting.

Lada sat in the corner of the store, regarding a cactus on the counter. It sat in a clay pot of dry sand and grew long and flat. To reach the sun its body had contorted like an Egyptian dancer. She had come into the store 15 minutes ago. The second beer bottle had been broken and had cut her hand when she'd grabbed it. The Puerto Rican woman who ran the Carry-Out had given her some iodine for her cuts. Lada had sat mute, listening to the heavy-built, full-breasted woman talk about the riot. Most stores had closed. But she had had neighbors call asking her to open the store-to buy milk, some bread for the children. She
said she'd decided to stay open, business as usual. Maybe since she lived in the neighborhood they wouldn't loot the Carry-Out.

She talked in a short, brisk Spanish accent as she waited on the customers who walked in slowly and left quickly. She talked of the curfew; she'd heard it on the radio. The woman offered Lada a soda, then got out two. They drank the sodas together during the lulls. Lada had finished the bottle when Gabriel walked in. They looked at one another: Lada at Gabe's strong dark chest, Gabe at Lada's tangled hair. A slow smile spread open his mouth.

"How are you?" He moved to her side to examine her cuts but she stopped him with a wave of her hand. "I'm fine."

He smiled and asked for a soda. He drank it in two gulps as the woman watched them curiously, smoking a stubby cigarette. He paid for the soda, noticing the price of it. High.

"Hey Lady, I got to get you home." They slipped out the door, walking Avalon Blvd. Gabriel was listening to a distant siren.

"I almost got arrested." Lada was watching the unbroken skyline of the city. "I threw a rock, Gabe. At a sign that said WE HAVE E-Z TERMS."
OLD AGE

Love I have known
Like I know the fluttering of my heart

Hate I have known
Like I know the torment in my eyes

Health I have known
Like I once knew the virility in my soul

Sickness I do know
Like I know the tick of my clock

Life I have known
Like I knew the elation of younger days

Death I soon will know
Like I know the erosion of the given life.

Billy Goad
If I Was Old

If I was old,
I'd surround myself with magazines,
Never lonely with the thoughts they'd bring--
Even though they're not real.

If I was old,
I'd never think about the days to come.
I'd just drift from minute to minute--
Trying to understand why I was still here.

If I was old,
I'd cry only once,
And it would be for the things I'd never done.
Sadness is for the adolescent--
Who fears the unknown things to come.

Valerie Saville
DREAMS
Sleeping
Dreaming
Thoughts
Running
Jumbled
In My
Head.
Peace
Reigns
Solemnly.
My soul is
Bled.
Images
Merge
Revealing
And
Extending
Thought.
Sleeping
Beauty
Smiling
At who knows
What.

Richard Bruce

Debbie Creighton
POETISM: The Spontaneous Philosophy

By Charles Beadles
INTRODUCTION

To write about man as a collective agency requires study and the historical perspective is usually given astute consideration, man being the culmination of history preceding him; the past can then be used as a predating variable in the contingency of the present as a frame of reference—and with a modicum of value. Too much emphasis placed on prior events in retrospect however, can cloud the joys of discovery, particularly among the areas of performance classified as being "traditional" to the extent of eliminating most of what would under normal unrehearsed circumstances be creditable factors of probability. To learn, one must first un-learn and detach himself from conceptualizing prematurely, devoid of contrivances obstructing the induction.

Concentrating on this state of un-learning—disorientation, which is based on existentialism, is the descriptive approach to an unthinking process of awareness, or poetism, to act as an aid in deconditioning the individual from the cultural programming, if not in fact, in theory—but in either case to open subjects to environmental experience fulfilled, as being essentially fit for productivity released from doubts of bad faith, formidable positive and equipped to occur, themselves, among all tangible and intangible occurrences totally aware of their spiritual freedom and the option of assertion, should at any given moment they care to exercise prerogative of the agency—the choice always being the individual's under no obligatory influence at no time; he alone may control his decisions with spontaneous flair and living continuity.

I cry a lot; when I'm happy...sad...in the sun on a beautiful day...I'm alive without a rear-view mirror in which to look backward—I don't look; I see more clearly without looking. This is both frightening and exciting because I don't know where I'm going: a kind of traversing the present without direction or reason, and the unexpected lingers just around the corner surprising me—it's confusing. Bewilderment forces me to grow in an unbelievable disorder of events and I learn, It's fun. Learning becomes fun, without effort, save a natural rhythm and grace.

Life becomes delightful in contingency with its passions and dispassions. Failure and reward are seen to be equally inconsequential in a society where "consequences" are meant to be believed. No event is significant—save grace. And by grace I mean symmetry of motion, a motion without effort, a motion that is unpremeditated and unqualified. To be present, to be warm, to be now, to be here—the possibilities are legion. Grace is a perfection there can be no mistakes.

You are undefinable, unexplained. No one knows how you feel so don't bother to define and explain; no one can define you, no one can explain you, not even yourself. Time is wasted analyzing so be impulsive: confirm yourself now, unhesitatingly. What do you feel? now. I don't analyze the properties of water as I swim.

Non-reasons allow us to live in the present. Fun without restrictions is a premise to be considered in life. My desire for fun commands me to challenge: I
challenge you; to perceive what I see as your essence--to hold it--become you--how you are. I flatter and cajole you, testing, probing, prying in a desultory attempt to perceive you, to fathom that essence.

Being essentially curious about behavior, I study it as it happens rather than try to anticipate it: I'm looking for trouble when I expect something; if it's not in my grasp it's inaccessibly out of my immediate proximity and I avoid it. I enjoy you, here, now, without unnecessary anxiety. Let's fly. Make it yours. Make no concessions or adjustments to anything--you can fly! No one can do your act, flop and fly, do anything with yourself--everything; it's convenient, it's yours and it doesn't have to be contrived. Listen! the world belongs to those who can listen.

Without a "me" there's no "you" of any specific substance. What if I believed you? or if I thought you were who you walk around like who you think you are? I like you because you're as much a narcissist as I am and that's why you like me--I see you. Yes, I do see you and delight in you; your presence reeks of a vibrant, undeniable intensity. An intensity of "purpose" (I deny purpose) that becomes my medium for studying you each moment because you're always just short of being a concrete fact. Let's laugh at the times I think I "handle" you; the common denominator is I like you. I see you clearly and I'm caught in the charisma of your essence, consumed in it. The "me" I thought I knew is absent now; I'm gone as your apparition takes charge of my inadequacies stumbling in delirium.

Seduction entails flattery and nearly everyone is somewhat covert in the areas of their attentions. It's difficult to make overtures designed to elicit response. It's contrived. We tend to nurture pre-commitments and give special "reasons" for our interests, pretending our egos aren't involved. I disregard it and offer total attention, lost in it, becoming the subject in my intensity. My silence is comparably religious: I wouldn't expect or seek or want anything--I wouldn't think or do anything; my mind is without center, functioning without motivation or what the psychology of motivation imposes. Only spontaneous delight is left, no analysis, no criticism, no perversity. I study and become the subject as I watch, trying not to gawk. I can't act, nor do I remember not to act. I can't even remember to be attentive--I can't work at it. I am attentive but I don't think about it--it happens. It just happens. When the mind is silent, alone, it can come upon something new in repose: clarity. In my absence the moments are executed in animation, flexibly and with more conviction as an artistic statement. My investment is my vulnerability--exposure--accessibly presented, stripped of defenses. I become an "opening" to the experience, taking from it or being deprived, without respect or disrespect, yesterdays or tomorrows.

Yesterdays were executed then, they've deceased. Tomorrow never comes. Today is a new loveliness still uncharted and we are the culmination of history. The moment is a comfort without dimensions or continuity, and without spontaneity it becomes anguish.

Without spontaneity your being is fragmented into part-past, part-present and part-future, half-dead, half-alive and merely pedestrian, maintaining balance at reasonable speeds, erratic, and resigned to harried pressures. It's possible, within the momentum of grace--without searching or striving for it--to have fun, with
no ax to grind, through nonsense.

There's a universe of dreams and expectations, anticipating future plans, that can be junketed with the world of memorabilia (for all the good that does us). Those things we've cherished in the past: all those hopes were always inaccessible to the immediate grasp. By inaccessible I mean that they have no meaning any more than "justice" or "reward" have meaning. The potential of the present is limitless; let the strains of the past be eradicated.

Dreams, that is to say expectations, are illusions on which we get caught and then hang on for dear life until our essence drains away and we are no longer living; the web contains us until we are decimated into an obsession for memories, which become the fuel for a wasted life of non-existence. It's hard to unfetter yourself from the syndrome of non-existence if it means your values were false to begin with and you must undergo self-admonishment. To admit you were hexed requires a total sacrifice of who you thought you were, who you think you are, and who you think you could be or should be in place of just being yourself in perpetual change. You are not even now who you thought you were a moment ago when you last appraised yourself. In retrospect the time was wasted.

To perform a valid act requires total detachment from one's "self", a concept of identity that you've been familiar with, that you have for those who've been familiar with you. You're a sensitive instrument; an acute, many faceted, multi-complexed individual equipped to harness the heavens. Yet you deny this position by imposing on yourself a "concept" about yourself. You are beguiled! Extemporaneous action defies conceptualization. Any concept you may have regarding your "true-self" is far short of being substantially adequate and better left alone; presumably its suspect.

So what is it about this web; this quick-silver of identity you strive so hard to grasp and which you regard so highly? You fight tenaciously to "retain" this phantom solely because it gives you "security". It is a protective armour to camouflage that shoddy "self" in mint condition, laminated in plastic (your own secret process), a classic on display to be viewed by you alone--factory condition now and always, still unfeeling, still indifferent, apathetically unused. It's lonely and it's cold.

Do you have any idea that it is actually possible to be totally and selfishly motivated? Have you ever, once in your life, known this feeling? Can you imagine, even vaguely, how it feels to act with speed and grace spontaneously without thought?

Your self-actualization is merely a cliched polemic you bandy about as a character "expert". It wears thin from repeated usage (if it ever had any validity). The constant evokation of this absurd concept makes it shop-worn and hackneyed. To simplify the predicament of your complexities is ludicrous: a trite attempt to be sensational through insipid labelling and ideation is a mechanical catch-all to occupy your time as you entertain the delusion it will keep you "unsullied" as you gather dust, alone, self-imprisoned in the cloister of your own choice.

Try this: shed all your expectations and self-actualizations; deny all your mechanical directions for living and try it for once without hesitation. Be
impulsive! your ideals and your preconceived mores are obscenities! They are confectioned these ideals of yours; a cultural depravity that reeks of fantasy and old-wives' tales, designed to have others take notice of you. If your self is ever actualized, it must...be...out of your hands and control in order to be genuine and any account coming from you on the subject is suspect, for as an observer of yourself you ring hollow. You reveal a gross self-consciousness finding yourself interesting enough to merit viewing, notwithstanding that you would go through lengthy ordeals in the process. You have an evident regard for your value.

What signal triumph is achieved travelling through the maze without such encumberment, unrestricted, to relish the production, savoring it to the core--full of the festivities and merriment in its entirety. I offer you an invitation: I summon you, your entire non-sentient being, and the hell with your concepts.

To those who fed the tenor of my words didactic with "how to" instructions, by the position of their stance and attitude dictate my "platform" is to influence: I give you yourselves, as you always were, whether sacred, profane, both or neither; the poetic grace was always there and society has hoodwinked many into striving to achieve what they are not in the Grand Race--it's absurd to believe the characterization forced upon you, and poetism has been lost because of it. Poetism is your private moment as a functioning organism fulfilled rather than "becoming", "improving"--anything you are not, for you are yourself and it doesn't require being anything if you are, whether assertively adult or unconcerned.

Poetism is not analytical in the discipline of dialectical reasoning that works out so well on paper and not in practice subsequently because of countless factors, as variables, operating in opposition. To many, systems of dialectic order are made to be broken the same as pie-crust. Poetism offers natural creatures themselves, finally, back to themselves, apolitically. The evolved organism has outgrown political childishness, as witness to the "tongue-in-cheek" governmental structures satirically represented today and the cognizant could never really take them seriously again after the current imbroglies of outrageous performance. Today the individual has only himself to draw from as a source for a given reference-point. There is no "goal" in poetism but the warmth of one's self, free from designs, in a self-renewing perpetuation of continuance, given man, among given "sets", devoid of dialectical "solution", choosing to live in productive enjoyment at his fullest capability of simply having fun with his experience moment to moment in the presented context as it occurs, as he himself occurs in his context, of himself--each relying on the other, mutually substantiated, as this page depends on you the reader for its confirmation.

The superfluities of existence are but the cake's icing and never to transcend the value of an individual's essential facticity of himself or there's remiss: men and women, males and females...punctuating each living experience with their own personal hallmark. "Finding yourself" is anachronism: your'e already here and good luck--have fun!
Mark Mott
SNOW

Casting a strange stillness over the land,
   It came with stiffling immobility.
A peaceful hush filled the atmosphere
   As the snow fell from the unrelenting sky.

Soon everything was covered with the silver
   Blanket of purification,
And things gleamed
   As though illuminated by the distant moon.

Icycles that hung from the branches of trees
Were tasted with innocent delight
   By children in the night.

Donna Finch
The following and enclosed, if not attached, (or affixed) poems, etc. Herein rendered, or what-have-you, are expressly proffered by the hereaftermentioned foundations and individuals, to wit (and wisdom):

The Johann Johannson Kallegeschoen Collection
Mrs. Ann Odvacado
Ms. Margaret Margarette Muskpak
Dr. and Mrs. Arthur I. Tess
Ms. B. Gotten-Dammerung
The American Standard Flush Fund
All the "good al' boys" down at Ethyl's Sia-Go Grill ("Cold Beer - Good Food")
Waxbottom Society News
Literary Guild of the Ladies Auxiliary to the "WEATHERMEN"
THE JUGGLER’S CHILDREN

-Cher Cropper

A Juggler's Child, all my life/
Thru jungle trek and village strange/
Never knew, my blood or why/
I came

Every river is the same for a traveler

The green calls me, out, beyond/
All former trails and well-known doors/
Faces ask, Will it be long/
before...?

Every mountain touches heaven to a wanderer

(each line to be read in a different voice- or perhaps three)

—Who is that man over there?
—Haven’t seen him around here before.
—A stranger.
—He doesn’t look dangerous. I mean, he carries no weapons.
—I gave him directions the other day. He’s a nice enough fellow
—He must be a good man See? He has children with him and they
seem to like him—very much.
—Yes, we spoke and he appears to be straight forward and kind
to his little companions.
—Look how odd he’s dressed and the children too.

Then the man and his brood, in costume with painted face,
toss things from hand to hand, very quickly. Following a
pyramid, he begins throwing each of the children spinning high
over his head. Suddenly one of the children, the littlest, is
thrust nearly out of sight—and comes crashing to earth,
a dozen paces behind the man! The onlookers are petrified!

Then laughter: It’s only a doll!!

—And where is their mother?
Juggler: Wastrels, foundlings, orphans—their mother was the earth
and (‘twas not I who sired them) the sky, their father was.

—How came they to your care?
Juggler: As lost things in the wilderness, for all such are mine.

And the Juggler’s children become Jugglers,

And this is so because:

Love is written on every face/If only we take time
to look for it.

notes:
11 "slowly and deeply read" Am. Standard
16 thou mayst render this last as "fella" if it comforteth thee
My Dream

by Linda Hands

I was editor-poetry editor for Good Housekeeping.

Mr. McCracken at the store was hung up like one of his rabbits, upside down on a hook.

...and ...and ...and ...and, uh, and ...and ...and ...and ...and ...and ...and ...

Daddy was playing his old ukelele and singing those songs Momma always got mad about.

Mom was inside and outside at the same time.

Dandy was still alive and the parrot sounded just like Harry von Zell.

...and ...and ...and ...and ...and ...and ...

flowers that glowed like jewels and made a sound like music

were growing in the garden, garden in the valley, valley of the jolly, ho, ho, ho

"Valley intelesting, Miss Hand," quoth the oriental slueth and my captor.

"Malt?" "Double Malt." "Chocolate?" "You know it." "Where's Ernie?"

"Who am I, my brother's zookeeper?" "Don't answer a question with a question." "Why not?" "Don't answer a statement with a question, either."

"You're no fun at all. Be DEAD Again."

And grandma fell through the floor, but the Indian rug covered the hole.

The velvet mole laughed at my needle-point and said,

"Aha ha ha ha haha. Aha haha. Now be good or I'll eat your socks."


Clang! Ka wump! Thud, thud, thud, thud, thunk.

My floor, all out.

Thanky-ou and Good Night-Kiss
I had a potato on a string
   I taught it things beyond my understanding
      We were close, that old spud and me.
Then, one day, my potato became a stranger unto me.
   thinking unmentionable thoughts (abominations!)
      taking the wrong path.
      We no longer saw eye to eye.
My heart was as broken as a barren tooth brush.
   Suddenly, the obscene potato went blind,
perhaps payment for a life of threadbare
   philanthropy.
THE RIDDLE

by D. Falt

And verily did this happen upon a London street long ago.

B. JOHNSON: Come thee now, and riddle me this: If... ah, me, no...
I have it now! What two paltry things hand-in-hand do plod ever onward, seeking to stride forth into the world, and yet advanceth not?

WILLIAMS: Prithee, wouldst thou repeat?

B. JOHNSON: Very well then, but 'twill not be to thy avail. What two paltry things do hand in hand ever onward plod, and yet advanceth not, 'tho' seeking to stride forth into the world?

WILLIAMS: 'Tis most easily ciphered, even for such an upstart crow as meself. The two "paltry" things are thy wit and thy wisdom.

B. JOHNSON: Varlet! Thou hast copped my notes, again! I
Say there, don't I know you? Yes, I recall the face.

What are you doing here, my friend (besides looking so out of place),

A person of your former stature with all these feather-weights?

   Oh, I was once an Academic, now fallen so . . .
   Hanging out in hang-outs where the professors never go
   And if you see me there, rest assured, the brows are low.

Say, there don't I know you? Yes, I recall the face.

What are you doing here, my friend, etc.?

They called me Apollo, champion, competitor, Athlete,
When I could move just like the wind and never taste defeat.
Now ashamed to say that I was once what I could not help to be.

Say there don't I know you? Yes, I recall the, etc.

Thespian was I, then, Actor. My talent was secure.
I gleaned each scene for meaning; they all bit
the cutting room floor.
That millions heard my voice and will never know,
matters nothing any more.

Say there don't I etc.?

Artist, that is what I was and I expressed my self so well;
Never failed what I had promised, needing no one else's help.
Now, the light is gone, the promise lost, with no more tales to tell.

Say there, don't I know yes? You, I recall the face.

What are you doing here?
Normally, the Positive,  
and the Diplomaiden’s Tale of Woe

by Mr. N.B. Twain

No love to change the world  
Don’t want to break my back  
Don’t need migraines or blaines  
No greed for heart-attack

Worry nothing for your state or mine  
All up inside a game of hook and bind

I’m going where I will  
Not on my way to be  
Somebody I’m not now  
Someone I’ll never see

Don’t give me tales from other worlds  
No place for salesmanship or cures

Don’t long to dance on strings  
No wish to tow some line  
Not fond of juggling things  
Inside the formulae

Please spare me talk of style and grace  
Walking softly by my sleeping space

Two souls inside me inside me two souls  
One wants to fly  
The other to flow

One wants to hide someplace quiet to go  
And the other wants the bright lights and gold

Long since did I decide  
I’m not prepared to lead  
A life of mindless grind  
Unconscious parody

Distraught, distress, pressured, yes, annoyed  
So soon forgotten life is to enjoy
It Happened One Hot and Dusty

T: The abnegation crew will be down here from Roaring score on Tuesday . . . You will be ready, I assume?

B. Don't count on my being here.

T. After going thru the . . . Preparation? Have you lost all sense of horizon?

B. Things just don't set square with me, Mr. Tool. You saw Jasper trying to hammer-head his point. It was plain to me that I'm in no condition to fool with some back-bag game like that. Let me go!

T: Deserting your calling for some peer group pressure point spread eagle eyed floozle of a pretender - that's where your hash is settling!

B: So what if it is? I'm up to here with polytrychs, and anodynamic slurs, fish-butt! Shove on, is my bid - double hoop, or no!

NARRATOR: What hope now for Billy's career? The authorities will leave it to the experts to decide on a course of action to direct the force of public opinion onto itself, where it rightly belongs..

And, certainly, what less can they do, in their never ending search not to impede the lack of non-productive and pseudo-quasi-unenlightening pursuits. It is not the case that our nobly dressed leaders are following a non-plussed but dogged electorate's merest infantile whims as a substitute for genuine service to the common good. (It just looks that way.)

No, fellow voteless, their tirelessly fatiguing guise of masquing a benevolent facade in lieu of ineptly but openly eluding escape goes unnoticed, unseen, and camouflaged as "the Usual".

The fires at Olympus Levant dulled, then . . .

R: (filtered) "We have a twin-alpha, low-form, westerly, no specs, but there's a high roll-off. Over."

K: Got'em on the screen: central quad, and bustin' ass. TTG.

S: Ken, it would appear to be 'sunrise time'.

K: You are only correct, my dear Stephen.

NARRATOR: The security vehicle lept from its place of chameleon repose, invisible beneath the shadows, to field a display of unbearable brilliance. Glowing with a blind radiance equal 1000 candle-power per square inch, moving at four times legal civilian velocity, it was a meteor. The overall effect was that of plucking a diamond from its cache in a glass of water and thrusting it into a beam of noon-slay sun.

T: Believing is seeing, no regard for your seniors, but getting mighty tired of charcoal every day. They know you inside out, 'tho' you've no care in the world. (Pause) You think a man could, I mean if he really wanted to, might he be able, that is capable of, meaning, he has real desire?
Woodstock

They came from far and wide and lived in tents
To hear and watch, beneath a web of stars,
Electric whirling dervishes, incensed
With sex and cannabis, torture their guitars
And rend the Dionysian atmosphere.
Their monolithic amps blared out the bars
Of mangled music ravishing to hear.
Towers of babble, musical stonedhenge.
The children of Aquaquaquarius
Adored their deities in weekend binge.
Their act of poetry vicarious
Produced a proteanic kinema.
Their self-induced catharsis was made thus
A travesty, a mental enema.

C. Spissu
Went for a whirl on a dollar bill;
Played and partied 'till I had my fill
Comes the question, "Where's the bread?"
Burning, burning, in my head.

Ah--money, money it's alright;
Buys you things without a fight.
Got to get it when you can,
Search'ing for the Promised land.

I tried and tried, but can't get ahead.
Seems to be the life I've led.
I want to go, but where can I run?
No escape from the ugly one.

I want to leave, but no reprieve;
Nothing left but eternal grief.
I want to go, nowhere to run;
Soon today--Electricution.

Robert H. Adams
Think back to your days as a wild child of eight or ten and remember those frightful cliches that your mother used so often. One of the worst I can remember always came when somebody else's kid did something horrible. "Young man, if I ever catch you pulling one of those wild shenanigans..." At that ripe old age of eight, I had no idea what a "shenanigan" was, but I assumed that it was a rather large and ferocious beast which devoured children like M&M's. There was never mention of a "tame shenanigan" only wild ones, which meant they must be very difficult to domesticate. The thing that confused me was why would I want to pull one? She always warned me about pulling them, but I never actually saw one.

Another fear I had was losing my "rooney". In the winter, before going outside, a deafening cry was always heard: "You'll freeze your rooney off!" Fact was, I had never seen a frozen rooney lying in the snow where some poor devil had not heeded the warning of his mother. As a result I discounted this cliche somewhat.

However, there was a phrase which made a "frozen rooney" much more probable. "It's colder than a whangdang out there, you'll freeze your...." well, you know the rest. The Whangdang evidently originated in the high country of Siberia and grew icicles down his chin. No other living thing could survive as "cold as a whangdang." I often wondered if the whangdang still had his rooney.

Mom was not the only one with a knack for a strange cliche. On occasion while she was lecturing me for some misdemeanor, my father would say, "Dear, the boy just had a little hooliganism in him." For a while I thought it was terminal until I found out Dad just used it to keep Mom from beating me to a frazzle...A frazzle? I haven't figured that one out yet.
FOR J

You play so well
And life seems gay
When the show is going strong.
But when the lights go down
As the audience leaves,
Don't the nights become strangely long?

Do you say a prayer
With an empty stare
Or call momma
To say you were wrong?

The applause just faded,
The songs seem jaded,
All you want is to find your way home?

You've replaced the jeers
With thousands of cheers
But somehow the ending has changed.

You're still alone
With an unlisted phone
And the throb of your neon name.

You better laugh, baby, laugh!
Enjoy your fame
And save those pitiful tears.
For when the stardust settles,
You'll need them to cry
As the word "has-been"
Becomes painfully clear.

Yeah, you play so well
And life seems gay
When the show is going strong.
But when the lights go down
As the audience leaves,
Do you sing a different song?

E. Morgan
The paradox of the typical university cafeteria—too clean and orderly for a
good honky-tonk beer joint, too dim and filthy to eat in. However it's a
wonderful on-the-scene laboratory for those individuals studying behavioral
sciences.

A cigarette, a slurp of coffee. A cigarette, a slurp of coffee, a cigarette, a
slurp of coffee.

The vats of "jumper cable" coffee are slowly being drained by the
unsuspecting addicts. Two cups of this brew and a person is good for anything.
The nerves of steel have been reinforced by the strength of the caffeine. The
mornings are slow, but the pace is tripled by afternoon ...a legal high.

Typical conversation.
"What's going on?"
"Nothin'.'
"What are you up to?"
"Well, Vicki wanted me to come down and see her. I guess I will. There's
nothin' better to do."
"Yeah."
"Well, I guess I better mosy on down the street."

The cafeteria is a place you can take notes on the bodies' reactions to food
poisoning. Or study the local masochists feeding their well-earned quarters into
the "slimebox", to be assaulted with last month's Top-40 regurgitations and so
many other manifestations of abnormal behavior.

A cafeteria employee drops some change into the jukebox. "Bee-hiiind
clowowsed dooors." Two caucasian- males are performing a parody of soul
music. "Awright! Clap your hands!"

"Ayend if it mayeens anynthin' ta you tanoe I cayer fo' you. Cayen't you
see? Ooooh. Canyen't you see?"

There is a 10-second moratorium as the jukebox slips another disc. "Ain't
no sunshine when she's gone. And I know, ino, wino, wino, wino, wino, wino,
ain't no sunshine . . ."

Ah-hem. If one can assume that musical lyrics reflect the consciousness of
society, it appears that everyone is heartbroken, depressed, waiting for a train,
one toke over the line, behind closed doors, in and out of love, movin' on down
the highway, makin' up just to break up, and at the same time making
affirmations that it's alright, over now, but I love you like never before.
Incognito.

Meanwhile, at the cafeteria, Paul J. Werquephoerce, Manager-Director of
the university's cafeteria facilities, today said, "The only problem we've ever had
here was when a few students mistook the refuse conveyor belt for the cafeteria
line. However, this is understandable since the majority of the students live in
the dorms."

Thomas H. Talleurance, Big Ridge, West Virginia junior and Student Body
President, contends that the dorm's food services are inhuman. "Things are . .
bad down there that you have to drink your coffee with a spoon and arm-wrestle the cockroaches for your salad." he said.

Werquephoerce continued, "As chief administrator of the student cafeteria, I am fully aware that some students think of the cafeteria food as an equivalent to a 48-hour enema. However, you must consider the important fact that nowhere else can a student buy a cheaper, more economical meal." He said that problems do exist at the cafeteria, but that a "long (longer, longest?) and careful consideration of all the facts and alternatives should take place before any solutions are put into action."

Unfortunately, Jack Sludd, Box, West Virginia sophomore says he cannot wait too long for a decision concerning the health standards for the cafeteria. Sludd's physician informed him last Friday that he had contracted a viral fungus from some unknown food source. The fungus, which has never before been observed in the field of medicine, is considered untreatable and is apparently fatal.

"The doctor originally thought that I'd picked up one of those Vietnam-era syph infections," Sludd said. "But he changed his mind when I told him there ain't a toilet on campus that I had the guts enough to use." After intense medical research and a series of biopsies of Sludd's stomach lining, the doctor concluded that Sludd contracted the disease from a contaminated food source. After reading the doctor's medical report, University President Roget C. Czaris announced that Sludd is eligible for a partial refund of his meal ticket.

Yet, life goes on at the cafeteria. Students walk in the door and search for a familiar face. They then approach the nearest table of common mentality. One student pops his lips after applying lip balm. The cigarette no longer sticks to his lips. A bearded fellow gulps down chunks of food as he reads the Parthenon. He takes a bite of food, looks at The Parthenon, a bite of food, The Parthenon, a bite of food, The Parthenon. Which will he finish first? The food or The Parthenon. Five minutes later, the food has vanished and the print media prevails.

A table of three people looks as if they have run out of conversation material. They look at each other for a few seconds. "Tell meee someth in' 9000dl"

As a last resort, one of the trio picks up a paper. The other two begin to read over the shoulder of the third. "Ha, ha, ha!" They forget the paper and begin talking again.

A young, attractive female passes through the cafeteria. "Did you see that?!"

An Army recruiter walks into the room, wipes his nose with a hanky, and darts for a cup of coffee. He finds a table in the back and studies the crowd as he drops sugar into the coffee. He takes a sip, looks at the crowd, and picks up a paper. The print prevails.

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The room, the house, the world was throbbing to the beat of bebop, Charlie Parker and Miles Davis. Chairs, lamps, tables, stools all blended into the walls, like a beautiful four-part harmony. The music came from the center of the room, from a stereo. The speakers bulged with sheer power.

A plastic potted plant sat in the corner—and music was coming from it, too.

A flash of light.
Movement.
Almost imperceptible, a boy sat in the shadows of the foliage.
A boy with a brass nose.
A boy with a saxophone.

The world ended—no, only the record. A click, a dull thump, another click, and Charlie Parker became John Coltrane, Miles Davis aged 15 years.

The bass quietly picked up the beat, gradually becoming louder, louder, then quiet again. Like a man testing his footing, the piano entered on the off-beat.

Gingerly. Plunk...chinck...plunk.

A wave of sound. Cymbals.
Beauty...Coltrane.
But from the plant, a counterpoint began. Softly at first, like the rustling of the non-existent life in the moribund bush.
Crescendo.
His whole body swaying, the boy poured his heart, his soul, his life into the horn.

His music swallowed the air. It swallowed the room. It swallowed life.
The record had ejected, the vinyl band had ended its set, but the music continued.

It was more than just music. It had become more than Coltrane's beauty. Reality...spirit...truth.
Wailing, shouting screaming through his horn, playing notes unheard of.
Suddenly, a finger slipped from a key, then another.
What chord next? G or F minor?
Another finger slipped. Searching for notes that would never come.
The music stopped.
The horn was put back in the case, and the boy turned on the T.V.
PRELUDE TO AN ASKING: and...
ABOUT WOMEN’S LIBERATION some silent madness

I asked a friend how he felt about Women's Liberation and he stated, spontaneously—at that! "I don't care, one way or the other, it doesn't matter to me." I asked another and he said the same thing, then—asking myself this same question, i found to my astonishment!! That i cared enough, not to care too much...The conclusion it would seem, is, i am personable not personal and want somehow rejudiciacally to coincide; not, go inside.

by David S. Jefferson

Some, silent madness...

With cold realization,
Like a bet that had been lost
in the same manner i stand, asking for an answer
that is needed now...At all cost!!!

It is needed in such a way,

that,

It,

baits your touch...

and, fortunately, it weights my heart in a manner
that is nothing but near...At one time or another
To avoid this massive state of imbroglio,
we crawl back to the room, that sanctions our
fettished discipline, and, drawl the blinds.
The one thing is in their...

That,
Did not leave you behind...

And it is!!!
Like silent madness
Swimming in a tear.

What am i to this opposite that-so-0ften,
I am confused with...Even seperately together,
We are to be mistaken and constantly reminded
of our alikeness.
Here
and
now! Tangled at stance with indignity.

i ask...
what
am
I!!!
on my needs?

Please I
I feel like running, so fast, so hard to the answer but, I am afraid... maybe afraid only, to see more of the same things it would seem.

Perhaps...
Dreams of other too many times schemed within ourselves frightens me?
If it's fear at all!

Damn it all!
Damn
being

Tucked away neatly upon some... some neighbors shelves. I mean Really!!!

What am i to this opposite i am constantly confused with...
Proclaimed to be,

so

much

alike!

It,
It's driving me insane, and it is like...
silent madness,

swimming in a tear...

my tear!!!

Yes,
silent madness

silent madness...

silent madness.
inbetween lives of;
queens,
mandolin playing at dawn,
ruffles and lace
under your skirt,
radio shows predicting doom,
gatherings of contemplation,
come rustled strained voices
emitted by a box with lights and dials.

Other girls
Past experiences
Serious plans, i know nothing of
glimpses of feeoing
glaring emotions
gaudy dreams
are all you present
so what can my view of you be.

chilled
a mood encountered
when winter overpowers
the big black gas heater
simmering in the corner

Virginia Bicknell
I cup promise
  in a hand
suddenly over-sized,
smooth innocence
  along your straight spine,
touch my cheek
  to feathers
too naive
to lie orderly,
feel the sticky warmth
  of you grasping life,
whispering rhythm
  on my neck,
hold you close
  in the circle of love
formed by arms
aching
with all my fears for you.

Donna Umbach Stohr
you are holding onto a rock
of great significance
And that rock is in your head
It is between you and yourself
And you are holding it very tight
because you wouldn't want to lose it
But you are also kicking it
and it won't budge
The world built it
how could you lay the blame on the world
it wasn't it's fault
Time is a jet plane
Bob Dylan said that.
I believe him.
I believe everybody.
Usually because I don't know them well enough.
If I knew them as well as I know myself
I'd know better--Anyway
So much for the world.
If we can't answer why?
Who's going to answer why not?
Tony Fiore had always hated churches. Even as a little child, he would put up a weekly fight when his mother began her preparations to drag him to early mass.

It's not that Tony hated God or anything like that, he was just afraid of churches. The cold, dark and foreboding atmosphere of the great buildings just set him on edge. He always felt that there was someone watching. Not a benevolent god, but rather some unknown sinister force.

It had been years since he had set foot in a sanctuary. When he found himself in St. Patrick's that Monday morning, he was certainly surprised with his surroundings.

It was in the spring, during his final year at the Department of Public Relations and Advertising at Harvard College. Spring Break had offered him a few days respite from the difficulties of academic life, so Tony decided to take a short trip to the City for a bit of rest and relaxation.

School was going quite well for him. At least academically. There was a good chance that Tony was going to graduate from the Department in the upper five percent of his class. His profs spoke encouragingly of his future. "A real go-getter," they said, "ready to make a mint selling ads."

His fellow students kept a distance from him. Tony really didn't know why. He liked to tell himself that they were maybe in awe of him. That's what he liked to tell himself, but he knew it was a lie.

Tony came from a family that was neither rich nor disadvantaged. His father worked in a nearby oil refinery as a quality analyst. His mother was an elementary school teacher when she wasn't pregnant. (He had five younger sisters.) Tony had never been able to have the best things of life, but he knew that they existed and were, at least, within his reach if he worked hard enough to attain them.

He even had a pretty decent sex life. His life at college had been more than carnally gratifying. There always seemed to be some chick who would gladly oblige an up-and-coming Harvard man.

Still, there was something lacking in Tony's life. That's one of the main reasons for his trip to the City. He thought that if he could get out of Boston for a few days, away from familiar surroundings, that he could, at least, get a better look at himself.

He had been just walking around the streets that day. He had done the toloisty things that are normally done when one visits New York. But he couldn't find what he was looking for.

While walking down the street towards St. Pat's, he suddenly realized that he was just like everybody else. Now, that's not a very unusual revelation, but to Tony, who had always been outstanding in just about everything that he did, the feeling came as quite a shock.

He was no different. There were thousands of people just about to graduate from college that spring. He was just one in that great number. Maybe
he had a slight edge (coming from Harvard and all that), but essentially, he was no different.

So, the next question that arose in Tony's fast thinking mind was: O.K. now, what do I do to make myself different? What do I to to make myself different from everybody else?

His train of thought continued: How does one become different? By doing something that no one has done before. What is there that hasn't been done before?

He thought on that last question for a while and then came up with this answer: Give the people what they want. And what do they want? Happiness, joy and bliss. An escape from everyday life with its hassles and anxieties.

Just about then, he looked up and there was St. Patrick's looming before him. He went in and thus, started The Church of the Apostles of the Second Coming.

It really wasn't that simple, but that was the beginning. Tony did nothing about his idea for years, but the thought was often in his mind. He just had to find a method to utilize the basic things that are within every human being. "That" being superstition, or as it is called in some circles, religion.

Later in the spring of 1987, Alfred Anthony Fiore graduated from the Department of Public Relations and Advertising at Harvard College. He was third in his class and voted "Most Likely to Succeed" by his classmates.

He went to New York to work, and after seven years with a Madison Avenue firm, quit to become a member of a think-tank that was being formed by the large company that owned most of the telephone and audiophone networks in the country. He was in charge of popular thinking and was very good at his work. He could almost always predict how the population was going to think on any particular matter.

Work with this group led to some rather depressing realizations for many of the members. There were quite a few astute scholars in the group who were predicting an economic and social collapse of the modern world if mankind kept on the (then) present course. Many members pointed to population control as the key to the problem. The basic premise was that if man is causing the problem, no solution will arise until man, himself, is changed. And this change necessitated control. Maybe not total control of the population, but enough to guide the trends of things.

Nine months into the project, a doctor at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore came to the attention of the members of the think-tank. The doctor's name was David Brentwood. He had been working on behavior control for many Years, using rhesus monkeys as subjects. Brentwood had been successful, so the group decided to study his work. They were impressed.

It was at this time that Fiore mentioned his idea of using religion as a tool for control to the rest of the group. At first, they scoffed, but later, after Fiore explained further, they became interested. Especially after Fiore conjected that Brentwood's work with behavioral control could be used on humans in conjunction with "religious" mass control.

So the group studied the theory.

A few years later, this was the scene on a Sunday morning.
The throng filed into the vast auditorium and found their seats as the sound of tinkling bells echoed back and forth, bounced from the shiny plastic walls. Intermingled with those dressed in street clothes were many wearing white robes that billowed in the streams of air-conditioned coolness.

Then, as if a signal had been given, the white-robed ones raised their arms and shouted out in chorus, "Blessed is He, Blessed is the Lamb of God. His is the Power and the Glory, forever and forever. Amen.

From the heights of the great hall came the sound of trumpets as if Gabriel were calling his own to battle. The horns started in fugue and then began to mingle until there song ended in a chorus of unison. After a moment of silence, a great organ began the introduction to The Doxology, and, in a moment, the throng joined in praise.

"...praise, Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen."

The lights in the auditorium dimmed. The stage which had been bare was suddenly filled with a great choir as hydraulic lifts brought them out of the basement. "Bless be the Tie that Binds" was the song that they were singing as a solitary figure behind a pulpit ascended onto the state. Gasp were heard throughout the audience as many who had never seen the world's newest religious figure choked back their astonishment at his radiant appearance.

His robe was white, his hands were covered with white gloves, his pulpit was white, his hair was long, wavy and white. He was so white that he sparkled. He stood, staring at his flock.

Finally, the man behind the pulpit lifted his arms and in a voice that shook the pews he called the mass to worship. "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost. As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be. World without end. Amen."

"Amen," said the audience.

He continued, "You have come to me today for many different reasons. Some of you believe. Some want to believe, and some are just curious. Remember, this is the House of God. When you come here, seek Him, not me. I can do nothing for you. Praise be the Lord."

"Praise be the Lord," the people repeated.

The man in white, picking up pace, continued speaking for about an hour. He talked of Jesus. He talked about the President. He talked about hunger. He talked about rich people. (He even stopped talking to pray for them.)

Ocassionally, his monologue was broken by a hymn or two, but he always returned to his sermon. He continued for another hour. He called for world-wide acceptance of Jesus Christ as the one and only Savior. He called for the return of "God's People" to the Wisdom of the Word. He called for massive and all-encompassing unity among the various denominations and ramifications of the "universal, catholic Church." He pleaded for a revulsion of the "satanic, immoral and non-American" way of life. He begged for the reconciliation of the forgotten bond between God and his "chosen." He prayed for forgiveness. He talked, spoke, pleaded, screamed, begged. The audience sat in rapture.

Finally, after about two-and-a-half hours, the man in white made the announcement that everyone had been waiting for. "Now is the time for those among you to profess your belief in the Lord." A deep, throbbing beat began. It
It throbbed and throbbed. The audience rose to its feet. The people swayed and linked arms.

They swayed to the left, they swayed to the right. The beat got louder. They alternated swaying, one row this way, the other row that way.

Louder and louder the beat throbbed. People began to cry. People began to scream. Heavenly sounding music spilled from the walls. At first, the music was off-beat from the floor's throb, but soon the two sounds were in unison.

Those in the audience who were wearing white robes began to leave their places and walk towards the front of the hall. They screamed and danced as they approached the high stage. Once again, as if without signal, they proclaimed, "Blessed is He, Blessed is the Lamb of God. His is the Power and the Glory, forever and forever, Amen."

The man on the stage leaned towards his mike and asked the audience, "Who among you is the messenger for today? Who among you will give us God's Word today? Who is the messenger? How will we hear your voice Lord? Give us your wisdom... Spread your light."

Within the group of white robed figures who were assembled at the front of the hall, a loud piercing scream shattered the silence. Quickly, the figures created a space within their midst. In the middle of the space was a young man writhing in the floor.

He rolled, and writhed. Eventually, he stood and started yelling in a gibberish. He proclaimed for about two minutes and then fell to the floor and once again started writhing.

The man of the stage spoke in his mike, "Praise be to God."

"Praise be to God," said the audience.

"We have heard your voice, Lord," the man said, "We have heard your wisdom."

The other robed figures went to their falled comrade and lifted him up to the stage. The speaker took the man in his arms, embraced him and then laid the young man on the floor of the stage. Those in the front rows of the audience could see the stain that covered the young man's robe. They knew what it was. In the midst of his jubilation, he had experienced a massive orgasm.

The audience began to return to their seats. After a moment, the man on the stage recited a benediction and closed the service, as he, along with the choir, disappeared into the basement. Once again, bells rang and the audience began to leave the auditorium.

Tony Fiore's dream had come true.

Following the service...

The office was large and well-furnished. One side was covered with copper-colored glass; the other three were in white paneling with golden highlights. The office was immaculate. Behind the desk, near the windows, sat a man in a white robe. He was sweating, quenching his thirst from a Chevas and Seven-up that he gulped from a large stein.

They called him Job Day, but he had been born Alfred Anthony Fiore in Hackensack, New Jersey. After sitting for a few moments, Day pulled off the robe, unstrapped the girdle that retained his paunch, put his feet on the desk and
sighed in boxer-short comfort. He pressed a button on one of the phones that sat
upon his desk. Soon, a tall redhead entered the office.

"Yes, Teacher," she said, "Do you require my services?"

"Yeah, doll" he said as he stood up behind the desk and slid his
boxer-shorts to the floor. "Those meetings take a lot out of me. They're
beginning to get boring. I need some of your goodness to help me forget my
troubles. You know, it's not easy being a prophet." They both laughed.

He pushed another button at his desk. A bed appeared from one of the
walls and twinkling music filled the office. Soon, he entered her and apparently
forgot his troubles. For the moment.

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Those in street-clothes who had heard Job Day that morning were
confronted by two doors as they left the auditorium. One was marked "Saved"
and the other was marked "Of the World." When the people reached this point,
they usually stood for a moment's indecision and they stalked into the door that
was marked "Saved."

Through this door, was another auditorium. This one was, however,
smaller and more intimate. Lining the walls and the stage were white-robed
figures who hummed "Amazing Grace" as those seekers filed into the seats.
Eventually, the lights dimmed and one of the figures on the stage began to
speak, "Praise be the Lord. Praise be to the Lamb of God. More have been saved
today. More will enter into the Kingdom of the Lord. Praise the Lord."

"Praise the Lord," said the others in white standing around the room.

Once again, the figure on the stage addressed those in the seats. "Do you
want to be saved? Do you want to be an instrument of the Lord? Do you want
to share your heavenly reward with the Savior? If so, raise your hands, and one
of our brethren here in the hall will come over and talk with you. They know
how to be with the Lord!!! They have been saved and can help you too."

Many hands went up. White figures mingled with the audience and shortly,
two-by-two, the audience emptied onto the stage which, without signal sank into
the basement. On the way down, nitrous oxide filled the atmosphere.

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As the unsuspecting future converts were being lowered to the basement,
the man who had been one of the most respected surgeons and an expert in
behavior control at Johns Hopkins University was about to begin his weekly
session with interns who he had been training for a long while.

"Good Morning, brethren," Dr. Brentwood said as he entered the lecture
room. He addressed the fifty-or-so interns that sat in the rows of seats that rose
in front of him. "Today, is the second lesson in the Lord’s Indoctrination.
Today, you will learn how to aid the helpless masses to know the Lord. You
have been prepared for five years for this role and I know that you will fulfill it
well. Now, let us begin."

Brentwood started a lecture. "As you know, there's a region on either side
of the pituitary that is more scientifically referred to as the Lateral Hypothalamic Nucleus. Of course, any beginning scholar in psychology knows the region as the "Pleasure Center." That is the area that we're concerned with today. Last week, we worked with the mastoid, but now we will be working with the sensual part of the Lord's work.

"Here in my hand is one of the electrodes that we will be using. This will be implanted in the top of the subject's neck. Right at the base of the skull. This implant is the control, platinum wires run from it into the mastoid and to the pleasure center. They are really actually a very simple gadget. Just a radio-controlled rheostat that regulates the frequency and wattage of stimulating pulse."

The wall behind Brentwood slid to the side. Inside were white-robed figures with gas masks standing over many unconscious people who were lying on the floor. Brentwood turned and looked at his subjects for that day. There were about two hundred of them and he was pleased. "Today, students," he said, we get plenty of practice."

He motioned for one of the unconscious ones to be laid on the table before him. He lowered three closed-circuit cameras that were hanging from the ceiling and turned them on so the students could get a good view of what he was about to do. He gave the patient an injection and soon was cutting a small hole at the base of the subject's skull. He worked quickly and deftly. The interns hastily took notes. After twenty minutes, Brentwood looked up from the inert subject and said, "Okay, brethren, now it's your turn."

The interns walked out of the room and soon returned rolling operating tables in front of them. They went over to the unconscious figures, picked a subject, put her or him on the table, and left the room to go to one of the private operating rooms that lined the hall outside the lecture room.

Brentwood went to his nearby office where he could watch his students on the closed-circuit. As he sat at his desk, he occasionally lifted a microphone and spoke to a student who needed guidance during the operation. After a few hours, all subjects had been successfully implanted. They were taken to the Gardens.

The next morning in the Gardens...

"Good Morning, Brother Mosely," said the young lady as she noticed her Patient awakening. "How do you feel today?"

The man suddenly sat up, but immediately returned to the prone position. He had a very pained and lost look on his face. "Where am I," he asked.

"Brother Mosely!! Don't you remember?" said the cherubic young lady. "You were in the Saved room and passed out when the power of the Lord took You over. Be joyous, man. You've been saved!!"

The next Sunday, Bob Mosely was carried out of the service with seminal stains all over his white robe.

***************

Yes, Tony Fiore did well. Better than he had expected, in fact. He had just wanted to be known as somebody different. That goal he certainly achieved,
"I can remember beginning every line with a capital letter," I say, and am amazed.

I can also remember sitting on the porch watching cars go by, eating pears or drinking spiced tea. I wore a yellow tank top, jeans, and light blue cotton shirt. At fifteen, I tried to be faded.

Three years! My God, it's been three years since I wrote of the things I'm doing now, since you proclaimed to your counsellor that I was good. You began to write. Often we wanted to eat each other's poems from greed.

It began when you picked up a still life and hurled it at a canvas. The canvas became a page and your sandalled feet ground the fruit into the paper. I was vastly pleased and proud.

You had girls embroider daisies on your jeans and directed one-act plays about people named Laura. You loved my mother's name, and said my father was a handsome man.

Your mother was a lady and your father part Italian. I wrote a musical
about the westward movement.
You were always amused and once demanded to know
if I had aspirations to be a female Zane Grey.

    in gradeschool you were
    the class expert on breeds of dogs
    we married our horses &
    along with Danny were the most beautiful

    Spring butterfly and tulips bulletin board
    circus

    later you were in love with
    my best friend's back & I listened
    to how you longed to open her mouth
    and how you had to go because someone
    pulled into the station for gas

You played piano over the phone.
I read you "Ryan" and together
we'd made a song. You colored my dream girls beige.
I wanted to kill your rabbits and carry their back feet
as a lucky charm.

I was a girl and until at graduation time
when you gave me the book of poems by a girl,
I didn't realize that although girls were not great
they certainly could be fun. You taught me
things you liked to know.
You mentioned existentialism, Vonnegut,
meters, and "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner."

Once you asked me to write a poem
about goldfish.

    Cynthia Wolfe
"Hey, Buddy!" Darvon heard a voice from behind a drift. A travelling Eskimo salesman emerged from behind the drift, carrying seven guitar cases strapped about his body.

"Hey, I've got some mighty fine instruments here; make you a real nice offer. Right here, for instance, this here model. . ."

Darvon promptly thrust his knife thusly into the Eskimo's nose. Guitars and salesman fell promptly to the snow.

Darvon replaced the frosty cover and headed back for the warmth of the shelter.

The lights in the sky were very dim. The gray-greens and dim reddish-violets barely lit the snow enough for Darvon to find his way to the weather station. His coat was covered with blood and his revolver was still warm. He was the only one left in camp. Even the penguins were nowhere to be seen.

He proceeded to find a rock and beat the instrument case with it, and the panel opposite fell to the snow. Quickly he recorded the readings: 0045 Wind 9mph S, Humidity 14%, Barometer Pressure 30.35, Temperature 138°F.

Suddenly he noticed that the cactus was gone, but a message was laying in the corner of the cabinet. He hurriedly unfolded and read it.

Darvon-

Help! I've been kidnapped by the penguins. Eat Me.

Captain Cactus

Darvon replaced the frosty cover and headed into the twilight of the Aurora Borealis.
BREATHTAKING...

by

Robert Butterworth
Hanging out in a Greyhound bus terminal wasn't the type of thing I had planned for the accentuation of my spine, especially on a night directly between Christmas and New Year's Day. I hinged my elbow on the counter and asked for a one-way ticket to Huntington, W. Va. As the clerk prepared the token sheet of paper I submitted to the hypnosis of the media machine behind the counter. The show was an NFL playoff that looked like all the rest—bonk! crash!—I decided there was nothing on the screen to interest me so I broke the electronic spell.

After 15 minutes of avoiding eye contact with the other customers in the station, I spotted the Huntington coach in the distance. I bundled the Christmas packages in my left arm, grabbed my luggage with my right hand and scooted out to the waiting bus.

"There's standing room only," warned the driver. So what? If it meant hanging on to the bumper I would do it—1 was bored with the place—had to get away. I nodded and said, "That's o.k.; I don't mind."

The night seemed an unfortunate one as I clung to the baggage racks above the seats. The dieisel swung the vertically abrupt curves on the Princeton-Beckley segment of the West Virginia Turnpike. My stale mind and fatigued body sensed reprieve as the Beckley terminal appeared up ahead. Several seats emptied as I searched for a desirable seating partner. A middle-age man who appeared to be under the influence of alcohol, age, or both, motioned me to an empty seat beside him. I accepted his invitation and settled down in the cushions.

It was good to be sitting, but not good enough. I searched for a pretty face or interesting profile in the back of the bus. I spotted an attractive face and excused myself from the man's company.

"Is this seat taken?" I inquired of the young girl.

A pair of inspecting brown eyes scanned my form, a smile beamed from below and an effeminate voice answered, "No, have a seat."

The new passengers compressed into the remaining seats and finally into the aisle. I considered offering my seat to some older or wearier person than myself, but decided, after the grueling ride from Princeton, that this didn't seem to be a reasonable instance for chivalry. Besides, I felt I was in good company.

The girl and I exchanged questions concerning our origins and destinations and discovered that we were both en route to Huntington. She said she was going to get married.

I pondered her statement and interpreted it as information given to males other than her fiancee—sort of a preliminary briefing before any conversation takes place. I turned and began talking to a blond-haired Chicagoan in the aisle beside my seat.

A lengthy historical account of car accidents caused by "bad roads in West Virginia" was the subject introduced by the energetic story teller. Bad luck with a car was his reason for being on the bus. I became bored after 15 minutes of "mishaps" and extricated my concern from his situation.

I wriggled around in my seat and peeped at the girl as she purported a deep sleep. She sensed my observation and windowed her eyes. I asked for a cigarette as she lit her own. I had given up the chance to purchase a pack at the Beckley
terminal for fear of not regaining my seat. She handed me a smoke.
"So you're going to Huntington to get married," I prodded.
"Well, my boyfriend and I have been talking about it."
"I wish you luck."

For the following thirty miles we small-talked about our past experiences and present situations. The bus trundled into the Charleston, West Virginia area as the conversation shifted to the gloomy subject of the Kanawha County environment. Both of us strongly complained of the odors and the apparently dying vegetation.

The bus arrived in Charleston where we were notified of an hour-long layover there. The circumstances were pleasant enough to make the layover more than tolerable and we resumed our conversation in the terminal cafeteria. It was then I told her I was a writer.
"I have a story for you," she said. "Are you interested?"
"Yes, what is it?"

It was a story about a 26-year-old man from North Carolina who sought 16-year-old girls for seemingly bizarre reasons. She said the man chose only virgins. I naively asked why and was told that a girl, especially when very young, usually falls in love with the man with whom she shares her first sexual encounter. She said this man in particular used this to gain psychological advantage over his mates. He could then easily dictate her life.

After the initial "falling in love" scene, the man used guilt tactics to coerce the girl into giving him money, doing his work and rendering intimate physical services.

"Did you know any of the girls?" I asked.
"Yes," she replied, "I was one of them."

She continued. The man obviously employed his first control tactic, consciously or not, and she ended up on a cross-country dominance escapade. She said she was repeatedly beaten, raped and forced to contribute money and work to him.
"It was his cop-out society," she said. "He couldn't face his own responsibilities and used me as an escape."

She said she eventually breached the nightmarish affinity after she received much persuasion from her friends. It was a tarot card reading that began to influence her decision to leave him. She said, "After that, it was just a matter of time before I split."

"Where is the man now?" I asked.
"I heard he is with another 16-year-old girl, a good friend of mine."

She began telling me about the rest of her life. It was not long after her abduction that she was vacationing at Myrtle Beach, South Carolina in August, 1975. There she met a 21-year-old man from Huntington. The two were at a party on the beach and sensed a strong attraction for each other. They knew little of each other's lives but were both sure they were "right" for each other. They took a chance.

"I know it sounds like a fairy tale," she interjected, "But it was love at first sight."

In a few weeks she moved from her home town of Winston-Salem, North
Carolina to live with her boyfriend in Huntington. They shared a house adjacent to Marshall University with three other male roommates. She said she felt she was well received by her boyfriend's acquaintances and adjusted to the community easily. Her fiancee was working as a short-order cook to save money to return to school at Marshall. He had completed three years of academic work by this time. She worked also as a short-order cook in another restaurant.

After living together for four months they unofficially decided to marry in June, 1976. The girl gave much credit to her fiancee for her recovery from the past year's incidents. She also allowed herself some credit. "I'm a strong person," she affirmed.

She finished telling her story at the time the bus arrived in Huntington. She invited me to visit her and her fiancee. I accepted the invitation and asked her to bring her fiancee to a New Year's party I had planned to have at my apartment. She accepted. We said goodbye, checked out our luggage and parted for our respective homes.

I walked home with a warm feeling of friendship. After all, she trusted me enough to tell her life story. She had mentioned that I was the only person in Huntington aware of her experiences with the older man, except for her fiancee.

JANUARY 1, 1976--

The New Year's party at my apartment was fading out and I began wondering why the girl and her fiancee didn't show up. I was a little disappointed.

It was two hours after the celebration of the beginning of 1976. The party had diffused as everyone left to explore other active gatherings around town. I decided to go for a walk and considered looking for something to eat. I stepped out the front door of the building and listened to the sounds in the air.

The sirens and flashers of police patrol cars and fire trucks permeated the damp and chilly January air, producing an eerie sound and light show in the streets of Huntington.

It was widely known through an extensive radio advertising effort that a local sandwich shop was remaining open all night for the New Year's festivities. For many people, the action was there. I walked in that direction.

I peered in the glass front door of the restaurant and eyed a crowd of about 60 people. Party hats, crepe paper and other party paraphernalia was strewn across the floor. The crowd was jovial and seemed to be, for the most part, acutely intoxicated.

The thought of food suddenly became unappealing for some strange reason. I turned and walked into the adjoining delicatessen, where I bought a candy bar and package of cigarettes. I left the store and walked a half block's length when I saw four police cruisers converge in front of the sandwich shop. I turned back to see what was happening.

I walked in the restaurant and saw a young male with his foot propped on an eating table. The foot was bound with rags and was bleeding very heavily. I asked some bystanders what had happened and was told that a fight had occurred and ended up in a shooting. The wounded man had been hit by accident. I lost
interest and returned home.

Two hours later I joined a friend for a late-night breakfast on the East end of Huntington. We finished eating around 4:00 a.m. and headed for home. As we rode by the sandwich shop we noticed more patrol cars in front, only this time there was a mobile crime unit in front.

I asked my friend to stop the car. I got out and walked to the front door of the shop. I wasn't allowed inside this time. It looked serious enough to wait out.

Several minutes later some of the people who had been retained inside by the police walked beside where I was standing. "What happened this time?" I asked.

"____ was shot," one replied in a choked voice.
"Is he o.k.?
"He was killed."

I was stunned. The girl I had met on the bus had once mentioned that her fiancee, was an employee at that sandwich shop.

It was hard to breathe.
A moment without words
Is a bare stage full of dreams

-C. Whitaker Lahn