


1980

et cetera

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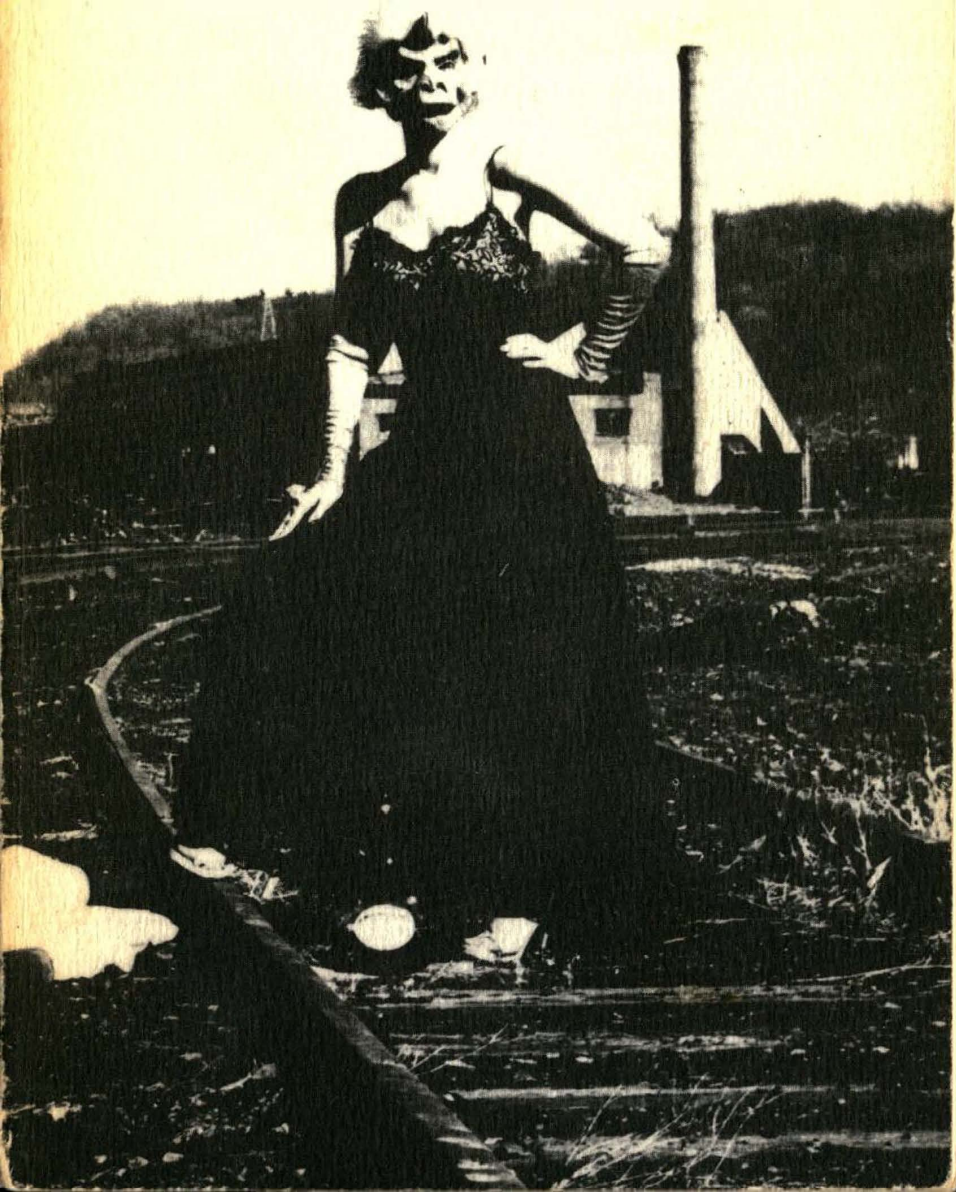
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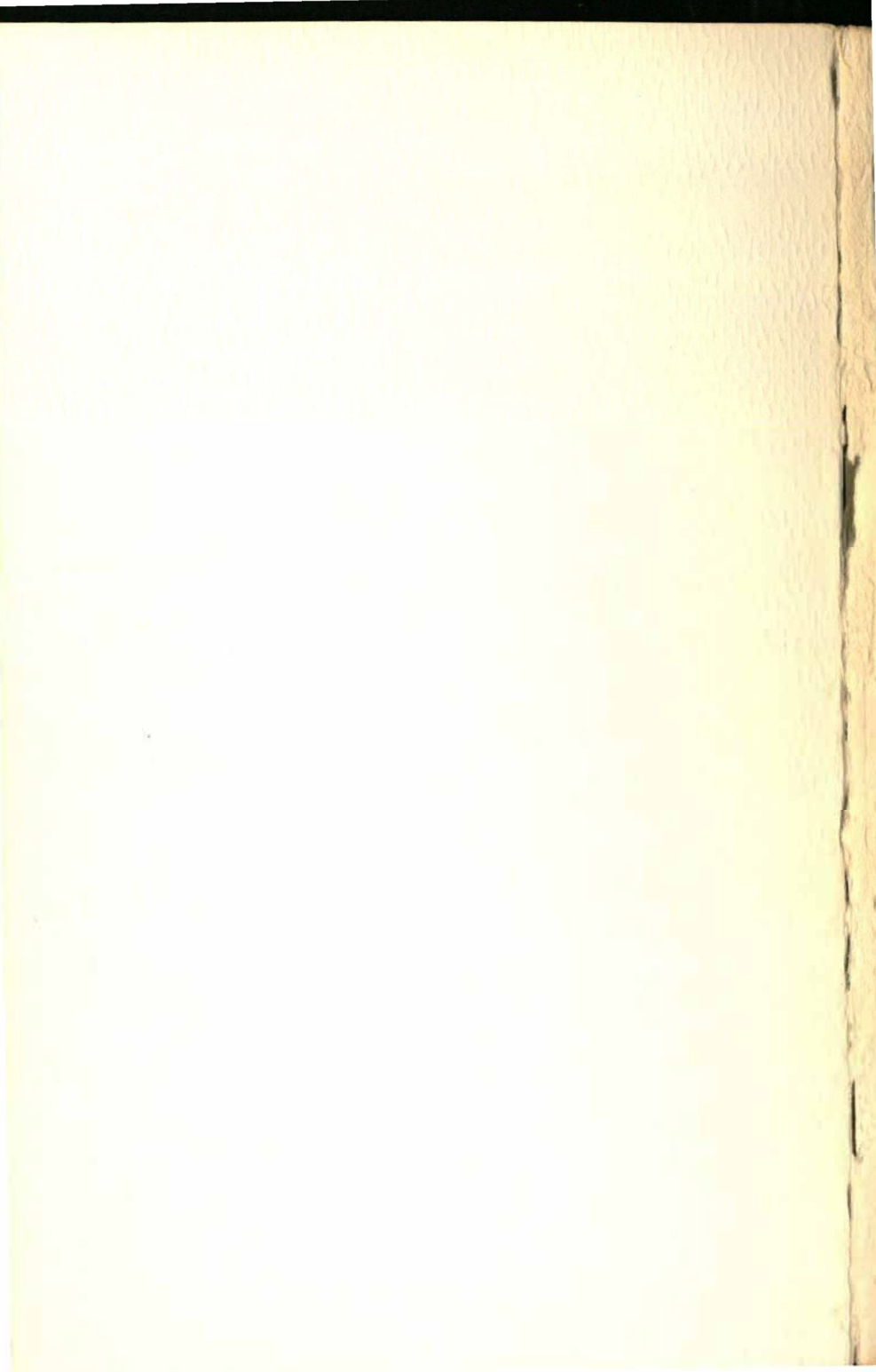
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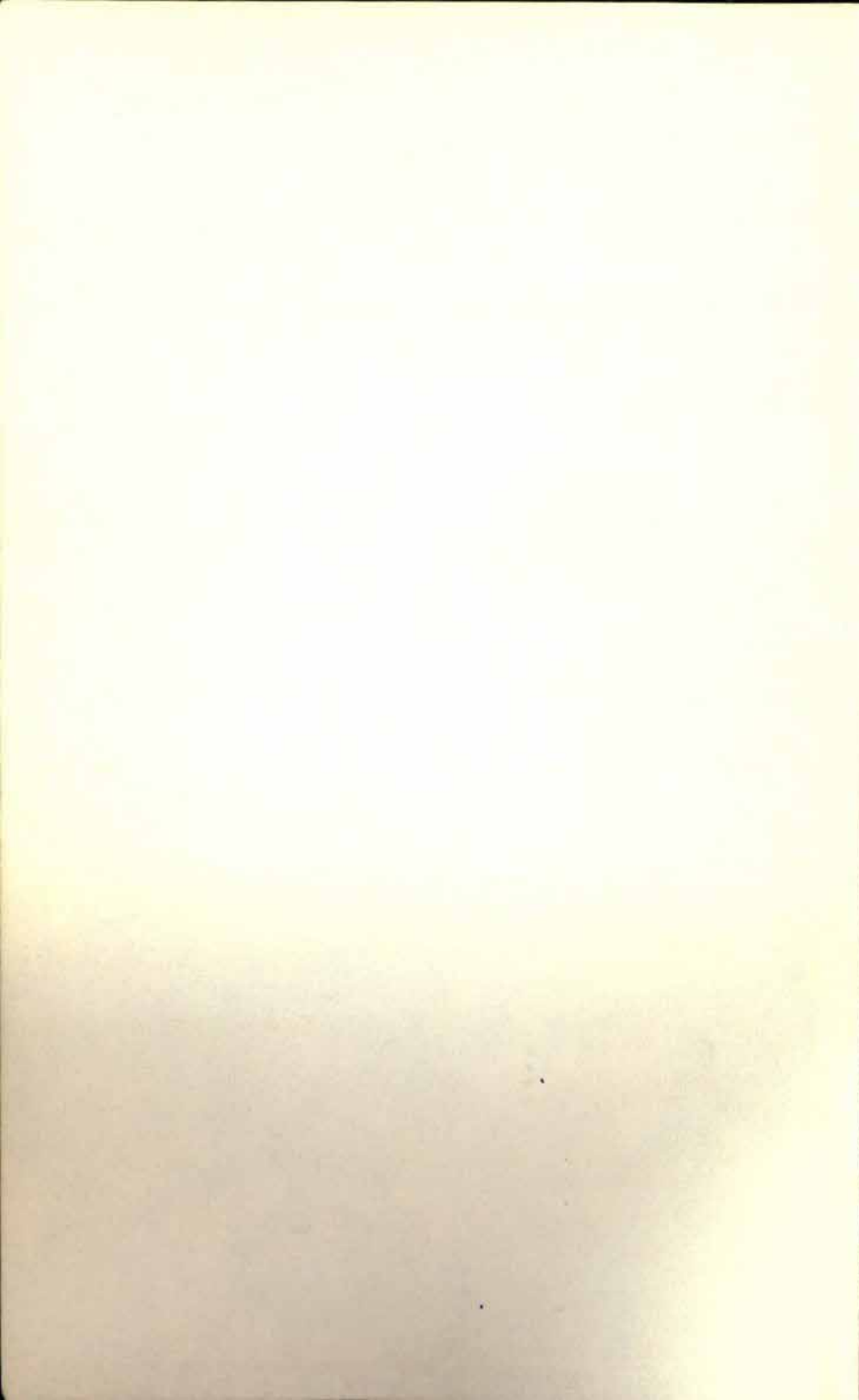


et cetera

ΤΟΥΣ ΛΑΤΟΤΟΥΣ γὰρ οἵα νῦν ΟΥΤΑΣ ἠΛΞΟΥΣ

Χοηφόροι Αἰσχύλου

For us I know how bitter have the sweet become.
from the Choephoroe of Aeschylus



et cetera

Marshall University
Huntington, W. Va.
Spring 1980



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"If Freud Could See You Now" / Ken Smith

Preface

"For us I know how bitter have the sweet become."

This quotation from Aeschylus may seem cryptic and out of place as an epigraph to a collegiate literary anthology, but I believe its use is appropriate to reflect the forces behind this edition of *et cetera*. Although it is a compilation of poems, stories and photographs by various students, the book has a definite tone - a "personality," if you will - that sets it apart as something more than a random collection of unrelated scribblings. To be sure, this year's issue is an eclectic sampling of student writing in the tried-and-true mold of past *et ceteras*, but in being such it still manages to scream, from "New Wave" cover to vituperative verse to unadulterated "fucks" and "shits," a message: Look at me! Look at me! I'm new! I'm different! What the hell do you think of that? Huh?

The above ramblings make much more sense when I place them in my own context. As a "reformed" journalism major, I've experienced firsthand the constraints of news style, so-many-words-per-lead dictums and save-the-world, better-living-through-wideisplay-terminals proclamations of professionalism. Professionalism! Anyone who writes under the auspices of that vile word - the epitome of pomposity - isn't a writer as far as I'm concerned; he's a robot, a slave to his own self-proclaimed probity. To escape from this trap, the "sweet" must become "bitter" - the naive keepers of the flame must break their literary fetters and unchain whatever churns within them. A true writer is a searcher, one who constantly seeks new means of expression, one who is not afraid to attempt something beyond commonly accepted bounds. And in that sense, the work in this anthology represents the efforts of such seekers. The poems may still be a bit ragged, the prose at times verbose. That doesn't really matter, however; the direction of the effort does.

I've referred to the 1980 *et cetera* as an anthology rather than a literary magazine. As an annual publication, an *et cetera* represents, albeit quite incompletely, a year's worth of Marshall University student writing. And as such, it deserves the permanence provided by a book format rather than that of a throw-away periodical.

As both an incentive and a reward to student writers, cash prizes have been awarded for outstanding poetry and prose submissions. The *et cetera* award winners are selected by the student staff members, who are themselves ineligible for prize money. These awards reflect a student's overall work instead of a single effort. The Maier Awards for best single poem or story are open to all students, including staffers; judges are Marshall English faculty and a local writer. No award for art was given this year. A separate *et cetera* award was planned in this category, but only a limited number of entries were received. All artwork in this edition was staff-produced.

Despite my overextended use of the first person in this preface, this book doesn't represent a one-man show. Thanks must go to the staff members who slogged through hundreds of submissions during the selection process; to the members of the Maier committees who devoted their time to the difficult task of picking the best from many; to the Sara and Pauline Maier Scholarship Foundation for providing the funds for the Maier Awards, which are new for 1980; to the Department of English for putting up with me, and to everyone who has shown an interest in student writing at Marshall.

Ken Smith
4/7/80

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Award Winners

first place, et cetera poetry awards/Cynthia Wolfe, \$50

second place, et cetera poetry awards/Simone, \$25

third place, et cetera poetry awards/Joel Brooks Ray, \$10

et cetera prose award/Lisa Keller, \$50

Maier Award for Best Poem/Cynthia Wolfe for "The Other Side of the World," \$30

Maier Award for Best Prose/Ken Smith for "Gray Suits and Big Niggers," \$50

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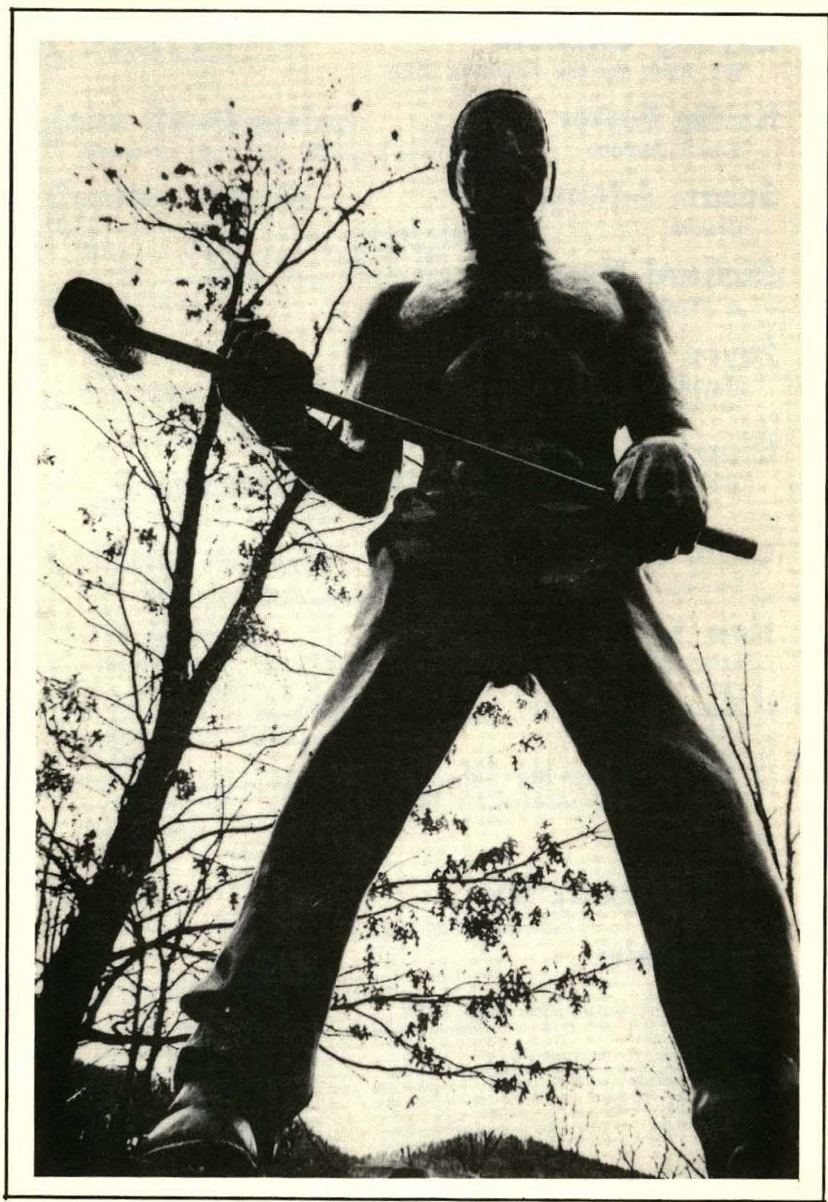
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"Effigy" / Ken Smith

John Blankenship

Stone Is The Only Thing That Makes

Stone is the only thing that makes.

Love-making cannot stay the mind.

Oh, I guess I'd rather look for arrowheads

In a field newly plowed, when, after rain

The little stones are like oyster shells

Baring themselves to the sun.

Stone is the only thing to stay.

Give me all the fields where jagged heads

Are hid, and let me while away the day

with mattock in cobwebbed hands,

Breaking clods pregnant with little stones

where some old proud Savage hid them

Or let them hide themselves. Digging in damp

Clods of clay is where I'd like to meet

Dying - digging till my arms give way

And I lie down to a long winter's sleep

Where stone and stonedigger sink in sleep.



John Blankenship, 83, holds B.A. and M.A. degrees from Marshall in English and journalism, respectively. An experienced reporter and photographer, he has worked on newspapers throughout southern West Virginia. Blankenship is a high school English and journalism instructor in Beckley.

Cynthia Wolfe

first place, et cetera poetry awards

Because While You Talk to Me On the Phone You Watch TV

Tonight my legs look almost
good, like stills of model
women. You watch
TV instead. We are distanced
by a helical invisibility, umbilically
tiring assumptions. We profess absurdity

outright, as if marionettes were
in our places, the black silk tendons
lost in the universal connections
with ruling luminaries. It costs less
than self-propulsion does. My legs
remain posed, extraneous.

Even now when I speak I hear
the tireless mimicry
of electric impulses borne
through your ear canal, charging
the non-space between us
with polarization,
forecast by a fingertip wheel
of numbers; generated
of static air, will return for losing
to a void of relativity



Cynthia Wolfe, 22, has swept this year's poetry prizes, winning a first-place et cetera award for her overall work and the Maier Award for Best Poem for "The Other Side of the World" (p. 17). The Buffalo, W. Va., classics major was the 1979 et cetera editor and has won two John Teel Writing Awards.

The Turtle

leaden shell
my palm's a
phosphorescent
moon eclipsed
containment
Flight
in the inside
of a belly
we floundered
like the untrained
blind, the world
had never been so round
and dark: self-absorbed
as a corpse we
blundered and found
salvation between
the turtle's flesh
and shell ; deified
the Turtle,
for in his vaulted world
all touch of skin is
the memory of our birth

You

I have been saying good-bye
You do not understand The months
turn on an axis You say
who is this second person singular
You do not admit to absence
I've got you believing
that you visit me in dreams
From the first time I saw you
even before *I love you* or *How's*
the weather I've been saying
good-bye I have planted my brain
in you in the dark of the moon
it grows underground I am trying
to tell you I'm leaving and taking
your children in me For generations
I'll be saying good-bye the Ghost
of what I say You are will visit
you in your sleep

Transit

You cringe when I threaten
to reveal your name
in poems. But that is all

I have: of you, of myself,
of the borrowed things
of life. We conceal

our tracks. Behind us
where we've stepped no trace,
crowded into closeness by the presence

of the season: shot air and paper
flames surround you like a martyr's aura,
as you walk the displaced tongues of fire

spell your secret name.
That is what you love,
to speak this language

of transience: the leaves that become

not fire that turns our insides
to molten gold
not air that sharpens our touches
to knife wounds
not water that calls all memory
silence

the lasting love of earth

Scape

I think of us the sand
the water one element
of betrayal-we were lost
to subliminal
waves. I do not see you,
there instead imposed a nervous
rabbit face, anemic; the sea -
full of kicking, undrownable
suffering rabbits
- has knowledge
of a shore never twice the same
like Magdalene hair lavishes
the feet, and the imprints
these have left
the white water comes to,
a solitude,
leaving a mask of absence
where the next day's light smiles on swollen corpses
and the sands inviolate gleam

The Other Side of the World

Maier Award for BeBt Poem

When they die I never say that, no,
I say they have travelled to the other
side of the world, maybe Sri Lanka
where I'll never see them again

and it doesn't matter whether they're
dead. When I drink vodka I tell
the story of Uncle Louie
the family suicide who did it

a little differently, shot himself
through the heart not the head
or mouth, crazy on vodka they said,
lay flat on his back on the couch

in the trailer just one house away
from where I slept. The first time
I'd ever been to the airport he took me
and Cathy to see the big planes

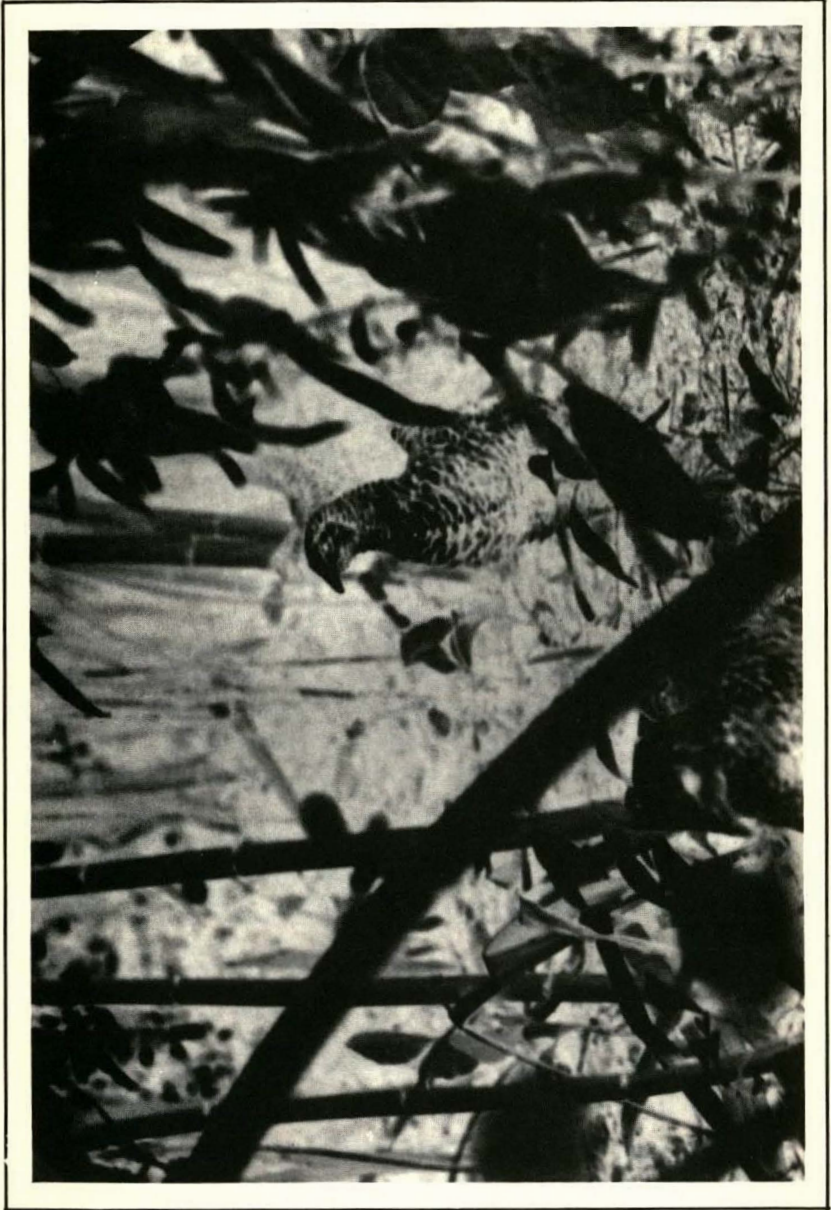
come in and bring everyone's
loved ones home. On the way he drank
beer, told jokes, the corners of his eyes
crinkled in happy fans, and I

was scared and excited, I'd never been
so close to beer before and the windows
where you watch the landings and takeoffs
opened out onto all that emptiness

it was raining the clouds roiling
the grass yellow as cat fur
I wanted to comb the hair of the dead trees
the plane rose up from the ground
flew straight and dissolved
into cloud

More Bird Dreams

Four nights in a row
I've dreamed about you
Everywhere I am you are too:
the night you were
a Yankee captain I sent
my daughter to hide
in the woods and seduced
with all my might
until your troops rebelled
and hung you Last night
I was riding a white horse
up a tangled hillside
and your watch had no hands
so we slept twenty years
in the attic without getting
older Once you rode on a bus
with the dead my dead sibyllic
high school friend
read our minds on love
and you were sad
when you left your seat
and your backpack
was heavy And then we were
walking on a long
bridge in a shining mist
as birds flew
up from the gray water
and disappeared
The trouble is awake
we won't ever look
in each other's eyes never
except once and that time
didn't we almost die



untitled/G. B. Corn

Diane McClain

Baby Animals

A long finger of light was shining just below the sleeping girl's chin, over her round shoulder, and across the green, rumpled wedding ring quilt. She burrowed deeper into the covers, to her earlobes, her straight hair spread like a yellow fan on the pillow. Shining on her closed eyelids, the ray of light woke her. She blinked, then stared at the thermal curtains which allowed only a sliver of light into the room. From under the quilt she reached for the white plastic alarm clock. Her ivory fingers were like swan's necks. She squinted at the clock, tilting it into the light.

"Dex!" She said, setting the alarm clock back on the table. "Dex, it's nearly seven o'clock!"

She rolled to her other side, facing her husband, and gently poked him in the ribs. He was still, so she took one of his tight orangey-red curls and gently tugged it. "Dex, c'mon hon, you have to go to work."

He turned over, and opened his eyes. "Leave me alone. I didn't hear the alarm."

"It didn't go off." She reached behind herself, still facing him, and deftly caught up the alarm clock, bringing it around to her face. "We never pulled the stem out."

Dexter rolled over, his back to her, and mumbled, "I hate working Saturdays."

She said nothing.

"Actually, Lorinda, I hate working. And on top of all that--" He took a tissue from the box and wrapped



Diane McClain, 19, a sophomore English major from Barboursville, has received both national and local recognition for her work. Her short story "A Perfect Day For Dogwood" appeared in the February 1980 issue of *Seventeen* and placed third in that magazine's prose competition.

it around his finger, then pushed his finger into his nose. Digging in his nostril, he turned to the girl. "On top of that-I hate it here, period."

The girl said nothing, looking over his shoulder so that she couldn't see when he extracted the tissue. "Maybe it just takes time. We're expecting too much."

"Well, I like Iowa better. At least we had friends." He rumbled the tissue and tossed it on the floor. The girl's throat tightened. Lying on his back, Dexter studied the fine crack which ran the length of the ceiling. "Even the guys at the office are barbarians!"

"Oh, Dex, really? Maybe not like us, but West Virginia isn't exactly uncivilized." The girl was surprised at her attack when she had so often felt the same. "We're just in an underdeveloped part."

He stared at the ceiling for a moment; she stared at his perfect, straight nose, graced with sculptured square nostrils. He turned on his side, and lowering his voice, said, "Do you remember the night last week I had to work overtime?"

He didn't wait for her answer. "It was nearly eight I was coming from the plant and it was really dark, but the sky was light if you looked at it. You know the narrow piece of road on 13? Well, just as I came on it, I looked up into the mountains on either side of the road, and-I swear-the mountains were leaning inward. I was so scared I floored it through that stretch of road-and when I looked up again, the mountains were leaning more--"

He stopped suddenly and rolled to his back. "Gosh-it sounds so foolish now." While he watched the ceiling for a few long minutes, she folded and unfolded the edge of the quilt.

"We'll have to get that crack fixed before we paint in here," he said. "What time is it?"

"Ten after-want me to make you eggs?" She volunteered.

"No thanks. Don't get up." The girl caught the familiar touch of self-pity in his voice. He slid out of bed and walked across the bedroom.

The girl watched him, then watched the doorway he passed through, staring until her eyelids fell. She was snoring delicately.

The light was still blocked from the room when the girl awoke. She turned over and read the alarm clock again; it was nearly nine-thirty. As she sat up, she lazily stretched. Standing on the throw rug by the bed, she put on her robe, inside out, and walked to the bathroom. The sun was shining through the high, uncurtained window above the tub, which Dexter hadn't cleaned. Little curly coarse hairs rested along the drain and the sides, shining in the sunlight.

She turned on the faucet marked "H" in the sink full force, and while waiting for the water to become warm, she looked into the medicine cabinet mirror. In the mirror, she could see the reflection of the autumn hills through the window behind her. She was surprised at their brightness and turned to look at the window, to see if the colors were real. The oranges and reds, mixed with unchanged green, looked brighter than before. She excitedly stepped into the tub and put her fingers on the window sill, pressing her face close to the window. The trees in Iowa could only be viewed a few at a time, not as a panorama on the hills. She strained to discern the patches of color as single trees, single leaves.

Something bumped against the bathroom door, opening it a few feet. The girl turned to see a coal-black puppy with enormous white paws wiggle into the bathroom.

"Dreyfus!" She stepped out of the tub and squatted on the floor. The puppy's nails clicked on the tile as he danced to her, wagging his white-tipped tail. She petted him and scratched behind his collar.

"Oh-the water-" She jumped up and walked to the sink, where the water was rushing from the spigot, sending off billows of steam. First she turned the spigot down to a slower stream, then splashed her face.

From a jar of cleansing cream, she scooped a walnut-

size portion of cream and smeared it on her thin cheeks.

"Dreyfus--do you need to be a good boy?" she asked the dog. "Did Daddy let you out this morning?"

She rinsed her face, then dried it with a new cherry pink towel, a wedding present. A brush, its bristles tangled with blond and red-orange hair, rested on the toilet tank. She picked it up, brushing her hair into shoulder length braids.

"Dreyfus-let's go be good boy," she said, walking from the bathroom, the puppy following. She opened the kitchen door to the yard, and the puppy ran out.

She put Dexter's cereal bowl in the sink, picked up the movie magazine, opened to a full color photo of Robert Redford, and wiped the crumbs off the table, angry that she had to pick up after him. She opened the cupboard and took out a box of Cocoa Krispies, slamming the door shut. She returned to the door, just as Dreyfus ran from the edge of the mown lawn up into the hill. Panicking, for he could get lost, she flung open the door and ran down the steps and across the frosted lawn in her bare feet.

"Dreyfus!" she hollered sharply. "Dreyfus - get back here!"

She ran up the soft dirt path, watching the puppy, ignoring the path. Her aqua, inside-out robe flapped behind her. "Dreyfus! Come to Mommy!"

She had hit the heavier woods now, and the path was littered with sticks and dead leaves. Dreyfus continued to run easily up the gradual slope. Watching the ground more carefully, she continued behind him, trying to keep up. Fat roots poked out of the path, like ill-planned steps.

"Dreyfus!"

The puppy ran into a pine-needled, carpeted clearing, and stopped, wagging his tail and looking at her. When she ran toward him, he ran off, thrilled by the game. Breathing heavily, she paused on the smooth, brown path and scanned the woods. Dreyfus had gone higher on the hill. She began running again, rubbing her arms as she ran to warm them.

The brown arm of a root struck above the path. Dreyfus darted into the brush, and the girl quickened her pace, catching her toe against the root. She fell, her robe twisting beneath her, landing on her hands and knees.

For a moment, she stared at a small smashed acorn on the ground between her hands, then she pulled herself up. Her knees were scraped, and a drop of blood stained her gown. "Dreyfus! If you don't come right now, Mommy will leave you up here!" She bent at the waist, lifting her gown to her thighs, and gently touched her left knee. Her icy fingers dabbed at the blood, flowing from two narrow slits.

She slowly walked up the path, the center of her calves aching. Her stomach felt shriveled from hunger, and gurgled. On the crest of the hill, she looked down and saw a one-story house with a red-floored side porch. The house was encircled by a dirt drive, on the left stood a gray, tin-roofed outhouse, and below the house the autumn-visited remnants of a garden. She caught sight of Dreyfus, a tiny speck, running toward the garden.

She started down the hill, jogging slowly, careful to not widen the wounds on her knees. She stopped once, leaning against a tree, and wiped at her knees with a leaf.

Dreyfus had run to a woman, round-backed and elderly, squatting beside a pile of pumpkins in the garden. The girl ran toward her.

"I'm so sorry-" the girl apologized to the woman as she reached her, panting. Then she looked at Dreyfus. "You're bad, Dreyfus!"

The dog cowered and put his tail down, leaning against the woman's red gingham apron, as she stroked his fuzzy back.

"That's quite all right-my, aren't you cold?" The woman looked up at her, her smile toothless, save a few bottom teeth and an eye tooth, her gums loose and hanging. The girl cringed.

The old woman half stood up, still holding Dreyfus's collar. She was barely five feet tall, wearing a hip-length, man's gray sweatshirt, generously large, over a dark green dress and a red and white gingham apron. On her feet were black rubber galoshes and off-white knee socks, one falling inside her boot. Her face was wrinkled and yellow and her gray-yellow hair was caught in a haphazard knot. She looked as if she had been rolled in corn meal. She looked at the girl's feet. "Why-your feet are pink!"

The girl looked down. They were the color of a kitten's tongue.

"Oh-when I saw the dog running away, I took off-the ticks, and he's so young-" she backed away as she explained. "C'mon, Dreyfus."

The old woman held Dreyfus' collar firmly.

"Oh, dear, and just a robe and your gown! Come in! Get warm before you go back!" she said, revealing her flapping upper gum.

"Well, it's just over the hill-I'm fine, *really* . . ." the girl insisted, now having backed almost to the edge of the garden.

"Please, I've had tea brewing since I got up-it should be ready." She peered up at the girl. "Please--just one cup."

"No--no thank you-I need to be getting home."

The old woman turned to pick up one of the pumpkins from the pile behind her, still holding Dreyfus. "Do you like pumpkins?"

"Sur "

"You hold the puppy, I'll wash some for you. They're good." Holding the dog's collar, she brought him to the girl.

"I'll wait here," the girl said, gathering Dreyfus in her arms.

The old woman selected four large pumpkins, and walked to the red-floored porch. She couldn't manage the screen door, so the girl walked over and held it open for her. The smells of baking bread and a pungent, sweet tea came through the open door. The girl saw

a big gas stove with a lidded, black bottom teapot on it. The linoleum on the floor was warped and cracked by the door. The girl let the door shut behind the woman, and through the screen she watched the old woman set the pumpkins on the counter by the sink and peek in the teapot.

"Perfect--like sassafras tea?" she asked through the screen, as she pulled one galosh off with the toe of the other.

"I've never had it."

"Wonderful-then you'll have mine first. Let the dog down-here, sit yourself by the heater." The girl couldn't see her ghastly smile clearly; it looked like a black hole. The woman motioned to the little heater in the corner, blue gas flames dancing behind its screen. She pulled a stool from under the sink and set it before the heat. "Come in here-don't be foolish."

The girl opened the door hesitantly, then came in, blanketed at once by toasty warmth. She set Dreyfus on the floor, and walked to the heater, the grit on the floor easily detected by her bare feet. The old woman walked over to the door, wearing one galosh, and closed the heavy inside door. She set down two chipped mugs and a cloth-wrapped loaf of bread on the kitchen table, then walked to the sink and took a tea strainer from a nail on the wall. "You're new around here?"

"Mm-hm." She felt uncomfortable, yet she couldn't excuse herself. Her toes and legs felt as if they were burning. She lifted her gown a little, and looked at her knees, straightened before her. "We're from Iowa."

"Iowa?" The old woman held the strainer under the spout of the kettle and poured the tea, smattered with black sticks and reddish chips.

The old woman replaced the kettle on the range.

"Would you like to eat there, or at the table?"

"I'll come to the table." She rose and sat at the table, covered with a green plastic tablecloth. The old woman tore off a corner of bread, then opened her mouth, exposing a piece of skin hanging from the center of her upper gum, as if it were freshly sliced. The girl was cer-

tain she was going to vomit, and set her bread on the tablecloth as she scooted back from the table. She stared to her left, entranced by the baited-unsnappped mouse trap in the corner.

"Do you live alone?" the girl asked suddenly, still watching the mouse trap.

"Yes, oh, but I'm not lonely-I have things to do."

"What kind of things?" The girl looked at her.

The woman spoke, the flap of skin fluttering with her breath. "Oh, my garden, cooking, the birds--"

"You raise birds?" She tried to watch only the woman's eyes, but she kept looking at her mouth.

"No-I make them. Do you like the tea?"

"Yes, sort of. How do you make birds?"

"Come into the front room." The woman stood and the girl followed her to the front room with three velvet settees, yellowed doilies on their arms. Small, dusty en tables sat in the corner beneath the window, and in the center of the room was a thick table, painted white, but dirty and chipped, the top nicked and covered with pieces of wood, wrinkled tubes of paint, and a variety of short knives and paint brushes.

On the wall above one of the settees were shelves, covered with carved wooden birds. On the bottom shelf was a hawk, beak screaming, fierce claws clutching a field mouse, wings thrust wide. Beside it were two identical, hook-beaked eagle heads resting side by side, as majestic as the busts of famous men. A black-hooded vulture, looking over its shoulder, occupied the next shelf. Two silly titmouses, balancing on a branch, snuggled together directly across from the vulture. Above, two petite wrens, one with its head forever pointing to the ceiling, shared the shelf with a graceful swan, peacefully bending its neck to drink from the wooden shelf. The rest of the shelves were filled with finished and partially finished ducks, cardinals, nesting robins, and a variety of bird the girl didn't recognize.

"These are beautiful!" the girl said, moving to the shelves. She knelt one injured knee on the settee and looked at them. "You make these?"

She nodded vigorously, smiling, the flap of skin jiggling.

"Oh-may I pick up the duckling?" the girl said, pointing to a four-inch-long mouse-brown mallard duckling with an orange-tipped beak, nestled beneath the sordid wing of a muddy-colored mother.

The girl held the duckling at eye level, admiring the detailed feathers and the gleam in its eye. "This just takes my breath away. It even looks fuzzy!"

She turned it in her hand, gently stroking its back, then cuddled it against her stomach. She looked down on its baby-round head, and touched the orange on its beak lightly with her index finger. Filled with awe, the girl smiled unabashedly. The old woman smiled in return, and in the moment of closeness, the old woman said, "I know you haven't left, but already I'm looking forward to your visiting again."

The girl was ashamed. She longed to embrace the old woman, to apologize. "Me, too," she replied, almost inaudible.

Two hours later as she came off the hill into her yard, she saw Dexter's spotless white Camaro in the driveway. When she opened the back door and stepped into the warmth, she found Dexter sitting at the kitchen table, watching the TV. A cartoon involving an erect-walking rabbit and a black, lispng duck was playing on the small screen of the portable.

"Where've you been? I've been worried sick!" he hollered. He noticed her clothes. "In your pajamas? You got blood on them. Your robe's inside out!"

"Ha! So it is-oh, dear, it's a long story," she said, setting a brown grocery bag on the table, and then reaching down to rub Dreyfus.

"I wish you had been here when I came home," he said standing up, then added sarcastically, "I crone home for you."

She stared in the grocery bag, at one of the clean, orange pumpkins, gathering her thoughts. A commercial came on the TV with four children, costumed as witches and skeletons, knocking on a door. A young, pretty mother

answered the door with a big bowl of candy corn in cellophane packets.

The girl lifted one of the pumpkins from the bag, and set it on the table. Dexter looked at it, then picked it up and held it *quit*.

"Let's carve them, Dex--do you remember how?" the girl asked.

"Probably." He stood up and gathered some newspapers, then spread them across the table. She got two of her knives, from the wedding present set, and laid them on the table.

Dexter slashed the top of the first pumpkin, and scooped the seeds and runniness out of the center into a shallow pan. Then Dexter took a shorter knife and carved triangular eyes.

"Let me do the mouth!" the girl said, taking the knife from his hand. She traced into the surface of the pumpkin an outline, then dug her knife all the way through. The smile was alarming, the only tooth, a single eye tooth. She looked up at Dexter, raising a long white finger with a string of pale pumpkin dangling, and lightly stroked his whiskered jaw.

E. Glenn Hennig

this pallid shadow, grassed

consumed, deciphered in greens
this errant breath consumed
this identity, this alive abbreviated
this body installed, this self expired,
its sigh released;
soul's precious ether exhaled . . .

for this flesh
i choose sand's perfect recess,
sand's private reception and persuasive mediations;
from this calming
to achieve the fertile chemistry,
the vigorous energy
of humus . . .
grass me from pallid shadow
fallen separation;
green my silenced animation,
my unstill atomics grass:

so, the leaves have me
equal, seasonal, herbal ;
so, privately the mother's lips savor
their moist dreamings and taste me
so too the wilderness at my soils,
the animals my scavenged edibles
and this familiar earth my favorite nutrients . . .



E. Glenn Hennig, Jr., 36, is a graduate student in clinical psychology from Orlando, Florida. His work has been published in several periodicals and anthologies, including *Florida Quarterly* and *Louisiana Review*. He also has received numerous awards for his poetry.

so, eventually the children have me
 unnoticed in their marrows,
 in their sweet flesh, in their instincts
 have me resonant
 in their intimate body voiced
 in their dreams my insistence
 drumming, secretly directing . . .
 this naked chemical, this integration
 this i
 through their innocent alive
 perfectly singing

our flesh identical,
 incorporate
 singing our involvement in this mutual body
 sounding our life,
 excitedly through the sinews, from the tongue
 our voice abandoning reservation,

abandoning caution
 to claim the airs,
 connect the myriad breaths
 and sing the self inseparable,
 sing the self briefly alive;

from that seasoning,
 the song into echoes gently
 into the sand again
 to the grass:

sing our songs consumed
 sing our songs consumed
 in that perfect green;
 perceive the soul organic
 in that flowering
 perceive the soul restored,
 utterly resumed
 differently abbreviated.



"Possum, Posthumously" / Ken Smith

Matt Morris

Atonement

The fishing gig lodged
in the dog's hind leg.
He yelped. A gaggle of geese
scattered across the lake.

The boy denied it.
Somebody cut the string
to his hook. The animal
writhed, kicked and curled into stone.
The blood forgave.

We woke to snow covering
miles of familiar woods like a tomb. And when
a sparrow flew in the door, our soldier's picture
fell and broke to crumbs on the floor.

A light burned in another house.
We counted the stars. Too many or too few.
White sheets danced like trembling bones
beneath the moon. We waited for the
instant that (or where) nobody knows.



Matt Morris, 22, is a senior English major from Huntington. A member of the et cetera staff, he has received a 1980 John Teel Writing Award and a "special mention in poetry" in the 1979 et cetera awards competition. "No matter how hard I try, everything seems to make sense," he says of writing.

The Lost Child

In this dream, my sister's four-year-old
clings like a monkey to my shoulders.
We drive past miles of farmland &
dormant yellow & green fields.
I don't know what it means.

I sit
all night by the eave with the radio.
The moonlight gleams on the lake.
I'm too drunk to speak. Miles from a phone,
I don't know where the child is.

Who can explain dreams? There are holes
children fall into the moon never shows.
(My imagination's worse than anything that
ever happened to me.)

Nothing to do but wait.
Only dogs can find her now. I make
the long walk into town & tell them.
The poor always lose their children.
I can't say I'm sorry enough.

A Flower Girl in Clearwater

After last night buying drinks for a girl
who said, "gee, mister, I'm sorry," &
left you waving money at the bartender,
you see a flower girl on the boulevard
wearing tight jeans & curled hair cropped
up to her ears. You stop.

You can still

hear the ocean, except for drownings & insomnia,
never as cruel as this morning.

A friend had told you about motels.
Never go alone. Everybody says they're
from out of town. They say "New Jersey"
as if it means something else.

You're broke & the wind
is cold on your short sleeves.
Like the girl says, "nobody buys flowers."
You're kind to everyone, but listen
how you talk to yourself. You
were never this lonely.

Reading Our Poems in Class

The professor raked a student over the coals
because he said her poem stunk.
Love is brutal, though. We cannot
distinguish between the poet and the poem.

He might as well have called her names.
I was as much to blame. I faulted her imagery.
Ridiculed her lack of episode.
All in all a good day.

A poem about a lover's spat
(a time-bomb ready to explode!).
It did no good to argue. The class fell dumb,
though she knew her Shakespeare well.

Dear, don't be concerned.
We're in the same room, you and I,
reading our poems to the echo.
And I like anyone who can talk of love
with black eyes.

Night

The moon has one good eye.
I wait for the sky to crumble
& the stars to turn to ash.

I make this house my wife,
fill the kitchen with spoons,
& sit in the cold flicker of light
watching the boats go out one by one.

I pretend the ocean is glass.
She sleeps & cries like an abused child.
Her face (like mine) could break that easily.

A thousand pieces tumble down.

Pat & Tampa, 1976

Orion's

daughters drowned in the ocean.
Obsessed and unobtainable love
led to my own myth
circulating among friends and doctors

finally landed in the hospital
with addicts and drunks.
Alcohol was only half the problem:
I couldn't flirt with nurses
indoors or out. I thought

of one I couldn't make.
Virtue, though, is its own reward
and boring as I found to be the case.
Pat kept saying "traumatic" on the phone,
the last I heard from her

before the big New Year's party
at Rick's in South Hyde Park
when the hulk of a man
broke her heart

while the moon hung dead in the sky.

Letter to Dave

Dear Dave, why haven't you written?
Renior said he painted with his penis
(which explains why he didn't take up
pottery. Or welding). Are you dead?
Drunk? What do you do in Colorado
besides be natural? West Virginia
and Colorado are said to be the two
loveliest states in America. I
wouldn't care if they served free beer,
I want the real South. The University
of Miami looks good. I want to go
back to a time (like in Tampa)
when I could really love.
I'm wasting my time in 'Arden,'
writing bad poetry to my friends.
If Shakespeare could send sonnets
to W. H. telling him to have children,
I can at least tell you to be happy.
Write me. Put it on any tree
and I'll find it. I'll be looking
for anything that resembles a note.

Beginnings

Lilies are white as teeth or stars
in the window-box of her second story flat.
She clicks off the light to the bare white bulb,
and plays Chopin serenades in the dark.
Her scholar stares at the sheets shredded
by her long red fingernails. She winks.
Arms (like urges) revert to ape.

The blue baboon swings from the ceiling.
And when the music stops, who will crawl
from the chrome-plated moon
to hear the song the dead sing? The
small-breasted doll tears through the room,
crying, "My darling, my darling, it's cold."
And when the rain falls, it falls like balloons.

Goodbye

This is the way the world ends
Not with a bang but a whimper.

T. S. Eliot, *The Hollow Men*

Ted pulled the old Ford station wagon to a stop on the gravel lot. He twisted the key with a quick flick of the wrist. The engine sputtered and died. All Ted could hear, though, was the wind coming off the ocean. Eternity, he thought. The tide comes in with the moon and goes out with the dawn: perpetual life. He clicked open the door.

"When are you leaving?" asked Mary. Ted stepped out of the car, Mary's eyes, half-hidden behind her big brown glasses, upon him, and he slammed shut the door. He walked toward the water as if hypnotized by the morning sun on the rippled waves. He did not want to, could not, hear her. She hurried behind him burdened with a blanket, a radio, and a tote bag containing all her essentials: snacks, keys, cigarettes, a thermos, and nail polish. She half-trotted. Her thongs flip-flopped on the gravels. She caught Ted on the edge of the lot.

"When are you leaving, Ted?"

"Tomorrow," he said. "I told you."

"When tomorrow?" she said.

Ted didn't answer. Instead he kept walking toward the water pretending she was not there. Finally he stood on the sand looking out as far as he could on the sea. He said to himself, "I am alone," for it was 8 a.m. and no one was on the beach besides him, save Mary, whom he said did not exist.

"Is this good enough?" Mary asked. She threw the blanket on the ground and dropped her tote bag with a thud. She began to spread the blanket, flapping it awkwardly in her hands. "Help me," she said.

Ted took the other end of the blanket and they pulled it tight, setting it down on the sand. Ted sat down and

took off his sneakers. All the while, he watched the gulls squall overhead and parade the beach looking for crumbs. They are really dumb birds, he thought.

"It's awful quiet," said Mary flipping on the radio as she sat down beside Ted. The radio blurted a song for a local merchant: When you love enough to give the best, it's diamonds from Rich Jewelers. "I mean the beach," said Mary. "It makes me kind of lonely."

Ted looked at her. She existed-he didn't. "I know," he said. "I can look at the ocean sometimes, and I begin to think I'm out there-not on a boat-but out there."

"I think it's creepy," said Mary, "to be here so early."

The past fall when Mary had pruned the roses, Ted stood in the frame of the sliding glass doors. He held a beer can in his hand and watched Mary in her white shorts and yellow top working diligently in the garden. He had never seen anyone prune roses before and he watched with fascination: she cut the roses down to the ground leaving nothing but a ludicrous pronged trunk poking through the dirt. He took a long drink and set the beer can down before he opened the door.

"Won't that kill them," he said, "cutting them down so close to the ground?"

"You'd like that, wouldn't you?" said Mary, peeking up from under her big yellow sunhat. "No. They'll grow back. If you don't cut them down like this every so often, they get too unruly."

"I just thought you were trying to kill them," Ted said. "I wouldn't want you to do that."

"Oh, I know," she said. "There's nothing you like better than a rose garden."

"I really think your flowers are beautiful." His thoughts rambled. "I seriously think your flowers are among the most beautiful flowers in the world."

"Stop it," she said. "You think I'm stupid, but I'm not."

"I don't think you're stupid," he said.

"Yes, you do," she said. "But I don't care. You can call me stupid all you want, but I know I'm not." She clipped a branch off at the trunk and delicately placed it in the neat pile behind her.

"When did I ever call you stupid?" Ted asked. "Name one time."

"Last week when I opened your letter by mistake," she said, not looking at him.

"I told you I was sorry," he said. "What do you want me to do, kill you a goat? Anyway, I was drunk."

"You're always drunk," she said. "That's what I like about you. You get drunk and say things you couldn't say otherwise. Then you can always say, 'Gosh-I'm-sorry-I-was-drunk.' Just what are you afraid of?"

"Myself," he could have said, but didn't.. Instead he leaned over and picked up the rosebush clippings and began to carry them to the trash can. He felt a sharp pain in his hand and dropped them. The pain didn't stop. A thorn had lodged in the palm of his hand. He pulled it out quickly. A thin flow of blood trickled through his palm. "I'm bleeding," he said.

"Did you prick yourself?" Mary asked without looking.

"Yes, I'm bleeding. Get me something."

"It's just a thorn, Ted. Don't get so excited."

"Get me something," he almost shouted. "Just get me something."

"What will you do when you leave?" Mary asked.

"I'm sleeping," Ted moaned.

"You haven't worked in six months," she said. "How do you suppose you'll get a job?"

"I'm trying to sleep," Ted said. "Leave me alone."

Mary picked up a cigarette and lit it. "I'm just curious," she said, taking a draw off the cigarette, "what you think you're going to do. You're living off me as

it is. It's my car, I buy the meals, I pay the rent. What do you think you can do by yourself that you can't do now?" (Ted held a finger to his head. He cocked the thumb waiting for her to speak.) "It's stupid, that's all," (Ted released his thumb as the metaphorical bullet sped through his brain), "going somewhere you don't know anybody. I don't understand. If there was someone you knew, okay, I could understand. But you don't know anybody."

Ted sat up. "Well then, maybe I won't sleep."

"Good," said Mary. "You can rub me." She searched frantically through her tote bag until finally finding her lotion. She handed it to Ted, who took it begrudgingly, squeezed a little in his hands, and rubbed them gently together before placing them on Mary's back.

The beach had become crowded. Ted would want to leave soon. Among the people who had come, two old men and their wives had taken a spot at the front of the beach. The two men sat on the ground while the women sat in lounge chairs beneath a bright red umbrella. They were arguing over something, but Ted did not know what. One of the men was bald and fat and kept saying, "That's too bad for the monkey and his grinder," much to the dismay of his wife, who when she hit him, would laugh.

Ted rubbed Mary's back. The two-piece black bathing suit fit her well, he thought. It pulled taut over the round buttocks. Her skin was smooth. Ted began to rub lotion down the length of her long white legs, the fleshy backs of her thighs.

"That's enough," said Mary. "Just undo me." Ted loosened the straps to Mary's top and they fell freely over her sides. As she laid back down, her small breasts pressed flat against the beach blanket. "God, it's hot," she moaned.

"I'm going to try the water," said Ted. Mary didn't answer. Ted walked down to the shoreline, the sand slightly damp beneath his feet. At the base of the water,

he hesitated before stepping in knee-deep. He ignored the cold and waded down the beach thinking, "This is what it comes to."

"It's too early for that," said one of the old men - the one with the bald head and round stomach - as he approached Ted. "It'll be another month or two before the water will be warm enough for swimming."

"I thought I would wade," said Ted. He was slightly embarrassed.

"It's awfully cold, isn't it?" said the old man. "Get out of there."

"It's all right. Really." Ted started to move on.

"Is that your wife?" asked the old man. He motioned with his head toward Mary.

"No, we're not married," said Ted.

"Just friends," said the old man, smiling slyly.

"I suppose," said Ted.

The old man looked deeply in Ted's eyes. "Listen," he said, "I know. If you have any self-respect left after loving a woman, leave it at that - it's the best you're going to do. You know what I mean?"

"That far from the nuthouse," said Ted holding a finger and thumb a hair-length apart.

"I know what you young kids think," said the old man. "But don't do it. That's a fine-looking woman you've got there. I wouldn't mind having a go at her myself."

"I'll tell her you said so," said Ted. "She'd enjoy it."

"I think I would, too, son," he said. "I think I would, too." The old man laughed quietly as he waddled further down the beach. A funny old man, Ted thought, a funny old man. O but did he ever know! With that, Ted threw himself into the cold waves.

"Diane stopped by today," Mary had greeted Ted with when he came through the door. He had been

sailing all day with Bob Jackson and he was drunk. He threw his jacket across the dining room table and picked up the newspaper from the floor, making his way to his easy chair.

"What did she want?" Ted asked.

"She wanted to tell me she's getting married to Benny."

Ted almost choked. "No," he gasped.

"Why? What's wrong with Benny?" Mary asked. Ted smirked and tottered his hand back and forth. "He's not queer, Ted. Not really."

"You should know," said Ted. He opened the paper to the sports page. The headline read: YAZ CALLING IT QUILTS. Ted pretended to read.

"Nothing happened between me and Benny," said Mary. "He brought me home because I was upset and you weren't here and he stayed to keep me company. We talked. That's all."

"You don't have to explain it to me," said Ted. "I believe you."

"No. Diane says he's not queer and I believe her," Mary said. "She's marrying him isn't she?"

"I'm going to take a shower," Ted said. He got out of the chair and walked down the small corridor to the bathroom. "He sure acts like one," Ted hollered back into the next room as he began undressing. He turned the shower on to drown out Mary's reply.

Ted stepped into the shower and began rubbing his head with a bar of soap. He and Diane went back a long way. One time he had even thought he loved her. And now she's marrying this Benny. Benny, there's a queer one, Ted thought. He's in theatre, smokes thin cigarettes, and will only drink dark beer. Alas, alas.

Because Ted was drunk and angry, he slipped in the tub and fell hard on his butt. The shower head continued to spray water while Ted lay in the tub unable to move. He did not know what had happened. The

next thing he remembered Mary was pounding on the door, screaming, "Are you all right? Ted, you've been there over an hour. Are you okay?"

She opened the door and found him lying naked in the tub, half asleep, with the shower still running. "I hope you know what you're doing," she said, "because I don't."

"**Mary,**" he said, "if you only knew how I suffer."

"Do you feel better now?" asked Mary. Ted dried himself with a towel. "I hope you know that was crazy. The water's too cold for swimming."

"It wasn't that bad," said Ted. He threw aside the towel and laid down, his body wet and cold against the blanket, but the sun felt good, he thought.

"What were you and that old man talking about?" asked Mary.

"What old man?" said Ted insolently.

"The old man," said Mary, "the old man."

"Oh. He said he wanted to screw you," said Ted.

"What?" exclaimed Mary.

"He said he wanted to screw you. He stood right down there on the beach and told me how pretty you were and how he'd like to take you to bed."

"Good luck," said Mary distantly.

Ted rolled over on his stomach. Behind him was a woman about ten years older than Mary. Her skin was dark and shiny with oil and sweat. She was alone, too. She ran her fingers daintily down her thigh and looked up to find Ted watching her. Unperturbed, she laid back down. "I would kill for her," said Ted. "Absolutely kill."

"I think this whole business is stupid," said **Mary**. "The last time (the gun again: 0 for real bullets!) it was California and you stayed two weeks. Two weeks, Ted. Then you call me to send you money for a bus ticket home. I fust think it's stupid."

"I won't be coming back this time," said Ted.

"You won't come back," said Mary. "That scares me, Ted. It really does."

"Shut up. I'm going and that's that."

"What is it, Ted? Do you think you're going to find a job and a nice place to live and be happy? That all your problems will be solved?"

"No," he said.

"Nothing's perfect, Ted."

"No, nothing is," said Ted. He rolled over on his back and looked up at the sun through squinted eyes until he was almost blinded. He could hear the wind again coming off the ocean. It was like a voice telling **him** where he must go. He listened deftly, then laid down his head and closed his eyes. "The bitter water we must drink," he thought. "The bitter, bitter water."

Simone

ucond place, et cetera poetry awards

Mosques

From a distance, a mosque stands solemnly-
Timeless worship
A cry of passionate delight echoes the tower ...
Innocence ...

Oh Eden ...
By the fertile rivers Arabia kneels,
Scented by the water of birth.
She has gathered fragrant lotuses
In her cupped hands,
Extended longingly to Persia!
Persia: a son of Islam-youth
In exile.

The moon dances, transfixes upon the blade-
The manhood of Persia, bleeding an affectionate
Grace.

Cradle of crescents
Dawn and evening
Scimitars glow with the unsheathing of mosque
And Sword:
Women cry
Women love
Unveiled in the name
Of the passionate.

Simone is the pseudonym used by a 19-year-old Marshall University freshman. He says he chose the pen name "just to be neuter, to be mysterious. I just want people to relate to my poem and be able to feel ~~it~~ if they wrote it themselves." Simone has received second place in the 1980 *et cetera* poetry awards competition.

Oh, making love in the streets
Of Mecca, I dream of such holiness:
 A young Janissaire,
 Wreathed in crimson and steel,
 Rides Arabia -
 The woman, the land of life :
 Ar Rub Al Khali . . .

Glory to sacred vessels . . . to mosques . . . minarets
That pierce the sky: in the name of Allah.

Joel Brooks Ray

third place, et cetera poetry awards

I Remember

When I was six my mother burned my hula-hoop.
When I was fourteen my brother tried to jump
 out our bedroom window.
When I was seventeen I drove my car straight
 into a brick wall.
I remember the wall coming toward me like a
 wave of hate;
I still remember our bedroom curtains flapping
 in the wind;
And I remember my hula-hoop burning.



Joel Brooks Ray, 18, calls himself a "third-semester freshman" from Huntington. The poems appearing here are from the collection "Backwash," which was written as a freshman English project. The theatre/English major says he tries "to take advantage of insanity" when he writes.

Tomorrow

Tomorrow

You will find that the light
at the end of the tunnel comes from
a 75 watt bulb

You will find that the candles
on the altar are frequently extinguished
when the oak door is opened

You will find yourself reaching
for the sun -

but feeling the chill of the stars

begin

begin:

the shards of silver from the mirror
are positioned on the floor like a
Burmese tiger trap.

puzzling.

the frozen faces within the larger pieces
laugh;
yet do not laugh.

begin: seven years of suffering.

I Am Weary

Shan, I am
weary of your torture.
I am weary of
ruined evenings
like popped balloons,
the excitement and meaning of the moment
escaping like helium.

I am weary of
the shallow conversation
lying in clumps on the floor
like black confetti.

I tire of your unapproachable visage;
I tire of empty friendship.

Emotion has left me.
It has shattered like a pool of
mirrored mercury;
breaking into individual mirrors
that distort the reflection.

Finale

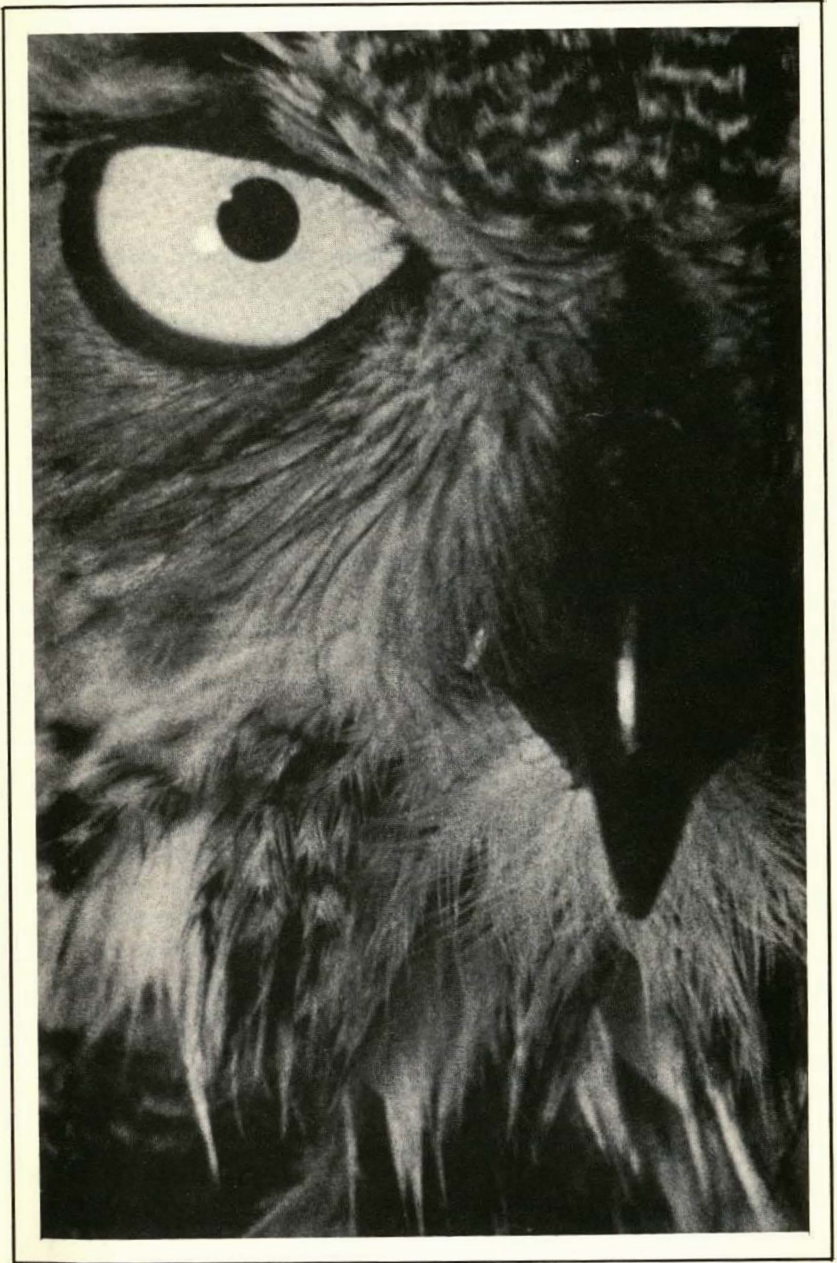
a drum roll
like toy machine-gun fire
breaks the silence of the
clear, calm air
as a pebble dropped into a pond.

reverberations
bounce out in concentric rings
growing larger; louder.
growing from the
tiny tapping of a triangle
to the booming brazen voice of
a drunk and bellowing gong.

the gong beats in my chest;
battles for recognition
over the flutes in my head and
the violins in my lungs.
all fighting to a deafening crescendo
in the final movement of the
fervent, frantic fugue.

the maddened orchestra
plays with bleeding ears and fingers:

 bloody brass and strings,
 drops of red on the ivory keys,
and the harpist, screaming his agonies
collapses at the final wave of the
conductor's wand.



untitled/ G. B. Corn

Teresa Lockhart

The Woman in a Purple Dress Across an Intersection

Surrounded by overstuffed rust
And freshly washed hair,
Factories rattle percussion
While a proclamation of inaudible despair
(probably a virginal mother of two)
Stands erect,
Like tomorrow's condemned building,
Across the sea of metallic engines
Steaming under crazed sunglasses.

Click.

The tide changes
To a rushing screech.
Her unfeeling pads
Slap the familiar pavement
Like echoes of footsteps
In an empty corridor
Approaching on strained laughter
For the advancement of decline--
Just like sounds going nowhere.



Teresa Lockhart, 20, is a senior English major from Big Chimney, W. Va., whose work has appeared in the 1979 *et cetera*. "I didn't want to be a writer," she says, "but words won't leave me alone, so I guess writing and I are stuck with each other."

Lisa Keller

winner, *et cetera* prose award

A Game of Inches

It's funny how you remember such little, insignificant things. I mean, something really terrible happens, and all you can remember is that you were wearing a striped shirt or your shoe was untied or something. The really important part of anything, the real tragedy, seems to get lost in the shuffle of ordinary details. Can you remember when something really terrible happened to you, something terrible or even so wonderful that it hurts to think about it? Can you remember the way you felt, the little tremor that ran through you like a spiked thread? I bet you can't. I bet you're like me, and the only thing you remember is that when you got home that night the cat had climbed upon the dresser and knocked over a bottle of perfume you didn't like anyway.

The thing I remember most about that night is the jukebox. Jukeboxes always remind me of little fat men. This one was more repulsive than usual, because somebody had pulled some wires out of the back and they were sticking straight up, all blue and red and frizzy. So the jukebox looked like a fat man who'd undergone a lobotomy. Not too appealing, right? Well, Nolan's is my mother's favorite restaurant, so we had to eat there anyway, in spite of a jukebox that belonged in post-op.

I guess if the jukebox had played some-thing recent I wouldn't have minded, but some old man kept pumping in quarters to hear Elvis Presley sing "Heartbreak



Lisa Keller, 18, a Huntington freshman, has had good luck with "A Game of Inches." The short story won both the *et cetera* prose award and the John Teel Award for freshman composition. A theatre major, Keller also has had work published in *Guideposts* (1979).

Hotel." It's one of Elvis' first, I think, a real '50s number. This went on and on. A couple of times my little sister, Andrea, tried to sneak in her money and save us all with Elton John or James Taylor, but this old guy would beat her to it. We were there about an hour and a half altogether (Andrea never orders anything that takes less than an hour to cook), and by the time we staggered out, we must have heard "Heartbreak Hotel" about 30 times. Normally, I don't mind Elvis, but his old stuff doesn't do a thing for me. I'm not very big on nostalgia. I like things the way they are. My English teacher says I'm not too deep. But that might be because I said *Jane Eyre* was nothing but a Gothic novel that could have used a racier title.

Since I mentioned eating at Nolan's, you might get the idea we're rich or something. Forget it. My mother is an accountant, and my father is a lawyer downtown, so we're pretty average. Nolan's is a once-a-week treat. I've got two older brothers, Larry and Pete. They're both away at college. Then there's Andrea, a nine-year-old wonder, and me. I'm sixteen. In spite of what my English teacher says, I don't think I'm all that shallow. I'm not sure about my career or anything, but I know there's more to life than high school and lip gloss. And if I didn't know it before, I found out that night at Nolan's. The "Heartbreak Hotel" night.

Like I said, you only remember the dumb things. The waitress had just seated us and Andrea started looking around for an ashtray to put her gum in. I could tell it was going to be a great night. I mean, Andrea is climbing over everybody in the place, holding this awful wad of gum out in front of her. She was halfway across the room when my mother said, "Beth, go get your sister. She's bothering those people." I gritted my teeth and went after Andrea. Most of the time I just pretend I don't know her, but it's a little hard to convince people you're dragging a complete stranger, kicking and screaming, across a crowded restaurant. And I do mean kicking and screaming. Andrea doesn't like to be bothered.

By the time I got to her, Andrea was trying to talk a young couple out of an ashtray. She had just offered to be their slave for life when I came up behind her and said, "Come on, Andrea, we're ready to order." Andrea shrugged and started to follow me

When I turned around again, she was sticking her gum to the back of the woman's chair. See what I mean, about this being a great night?

My father decided that neither Andrea nor I were getting enough vegetables, so when the waitress came around he ordered us the Steaming Vegetable Platter. I kept seeing this mammoth hamburger, and a roomful of French fries, disappearing before my eyes. But you don't argue with my father. Not if you just got your license, and you're sort of partial to driving his blue Buick.

While we waited for the food, Mother started talking about Pete. He's my older brother, remember? She hardly ever mentions Larry, because he's six-foot-five and enough to make a football coach drool, but Peter was sort of delicate as a child and Mother still worries about him. It really doesn't make sense. Pete can lift the front end of a jeep. He doesn't look as strong as Larry, but I've seen them arm-wrestle to a standoff.

Anyway, I was pretty bored by the whole conversation, so I started watching the waitress. She was having a bad time. Nolan's was filling up, and Nolan himself had come out of the kitchen to supervise. The waitress kept bumping into chairs and dropping things. Every time she made a wrong move, she'd look up at Nolan with this scared, lost expression on her face. It was really a shame, because she'd been doing fine until he started watching, and the more he watched, the worse she did.

The waitress was pretty in a bland, offhand sort of way. She had shoulder-length brown hair and a nice smile, the one time I saw her smile. She was slender, almost fragile-looking, and I guessed that she was my age or a little older. I don't know why, but I just liked her right away. It wasn't pity or anything. I did feel

sorry for her, but that had nothing to do with why I liked her. She just looked like she had a lot more class than Nolan, or anybody else in that place, was ever going to recognize.

"Well, Beth, don't you agree?"

"What?" I said, and you can imagine how intelligent that sounded.

"I asked you your opinion about Pete switching to anthropology," Mother repeated.

"To tell you the truth, Mother, I haven't given it a whole lot of thought. I mean, Pete changes majors more often than he changes socks, so I'm not too exdted by this latest bit of news."

Andrea said, "What's anthropology?"

"Don't ask me," Dad shrugged.

"Don't ask Pete, either," I said. Mother shot me a dark look.

I looked back for the waitress, but she was gone. By this time our Steaming Vegetable Platters had arrived, and the old guy was playing "Heartbreak Hotel" for the third time. It was beginning to be the kind of night I'd expected.

One bite of that stuff almost did me in. I mean, the plate itself couldn't have tasted any worse. But when I looked up, my father was giving me the eye. No brussels sprouts, no Buick. To stall for time, I asked Andrea to pass the salt.

Now, there's something you should know: about Andrea. She can never do anything in a normal way. She considers it a personal challenge to take the smallest, most ordinary task and turn it into something really daring and difficult. Pass the salt? Why, Andrea wouldn't merely pass the salt; she would roll it on its side around three water glasses, two heaped plates, and a floral centerpiece, snaking and curving its way into my waiting hand.

She almost made it. Andrea's aim was nearly perfect, until the salt shaker happened to graze the last water glass. Whose water glass? you ask. Do you really have to ask?

"Andrea! Look what you've done to Beth's skirt!" my father said. Mother was already dabbing at my lap with her napkin, and Andrea was snickering. I looked down at my skirt. The water and little nuggets of ice were running off in all directions. What interested me, though, was my silent observation that the spilled water had missed my Steaming Vegetable Platter by only an inch or so. I sighed very woefully. But then I realized that Daddy would only have ordered me another Steaming Vegetable Platter to replace the flooded one. All I would have gained were a few more brussels sprouts.

"You better go back to the restroom and wipe that dry," my mother advised.

"Can I go?" Andrea said.

"You finish your dinner," Dad commanded. "And the next time someone asks you to pass something, young lady, *pass* it. Don't roll it, throw it, or take it apart and mail it piece by piece. All right?"

Andrea swore on her solemn honor she'd never do it again as long as she took breath upon this verdant earth, which, roughly translated, meant that we could expect a good ten minutes of normal behavior.

I sort of hunched my way back to the bathroom, holding out my skirt as if it were on fire. I suppose I really should have been grateful that it was wet in the front. I'm always the one who sits down on somebody's Coke and has to spend the entire class picnic shaking my head at raised eyebrows.

When I slouched my way into the ladies' room, the first thing I saw was the waitress. She was sitting down on a little stool in front of the mirror. She was shaking with tears. I mean, really shaking, and holding her head in her hands.

I didn't know what to do, or what to say. I wasn't even sure she'd seen me. So I went over to the paper towel dispenser and I started pulling out paper towels very slowly and, I hoped, very softly. I didn't want to bother her. I remembered this time back in seventh grade when I went into the girls' restroom to cry, because Tommy Beaufort had said something nasty about

my dress, and the last thing I wanted was somebody hovering over me to ask if everything was okay. I mean, it's perfectly obvious that everything is *not* okay if you're sitting in the girl's restroom crying your eyes out, so the question seems pretty stupid to me. But what else can they do? It would take some kind of mystic to come up and ask, "Did Tommy Beaufort say something nasty about your dress?" so I guess that we can only expect, "Is everything okay?" from ordinary mortals. Anyway, the waitress was shaking so hard that whatever her problem, it was sure a lot worse than some creep like Tommy Beaufort criticizing her dress.

I'm usually pretty aloof about other people and their problems, but I couldn't help myself. She just looked so helpless, and helpless like she'd never been helpless before; which is doubly bad. Some people just thrive on misery. But this girl looked like her pastel world had just exploded into something dark and awful.

"Is everything okay?" I said.

The waitress looked up. I don't think she'd even known I was there. She really looked terrible; her mascara was running, of course, and her cheeks were all puffed and red.

"Oh, I-." She stood up very quickly, grabbing at her purse and smoothing down her skirt. But she missed her purse, and it scooted off the counter onto the floor.

This just destroyed her. She started crying again, with a real intensity. I was feeling equally bad, since I'd caused her to drop it, so I immediately bent down and started picking up all the stuff. If somebody had come into the restroom just then, the whole scene would have looked pretty weird: me on my hands and knees, scooping up lipsticks and safety pins and loose change, and the waitress sitting on that little stool, just rocking with tears, but pausing every once in a while to point out something I'd missed in the corner.

I finally finished and handed her the purse. When we looked at each other, me with my wet skirt and dirty knees, and she with her smeared face and bleary eyes, we started laughing. Plain, good, therapeutic laughter. I

guess laughing with somebody is an acceptable substitute for a formal introduction, because after we laughed, we talked.

"I'm Mary Paulson," the waitress said. "I bet I look terrible right now."

"Well, yes, you do."

We laughed some more, and then I added, "I'm Beth Akers. I really didn't mean to bother you, but you looked like you might have been hurt or something. If I can help with something ... "

"Thanks, Beth, but there's nothing you can do," Mary said with a shrug. "I guess I'm going to lose my job. And I won't be able to get another one, not with the kind of recommendation that Nolan's likely to give me."

"Maybe you could ... "

Andrea came flying through the door. She looked at the waitress, looked at me, and then said, "You're in big trouble. Mom and Dad want you back at the table right away. I told them you were stalling so you wouldn't have to face your Steaming Vegetable Platter."

"Thanks, Andrea," I said, with as much sarcasm as I could pack into two words.

"You better come," she warned, backing out of the door.

Mary smiled after her, and asked, "A little sister?"

"*The* little sister."

"I've got six brothers and sisters," Mary said. She stood up. "I guess you'd better go. And watch out for that platter."

I knew it was none of my business, but I had to find out. "Mary, I don't think you were crying about this stupid job. I mean, that might have been part of it, but there's more. If you don't want to say, I'll understand, but ... "

Mary stood in front of the mirror, fixing her apron. She didn't look at me even once while she spoke.

"I've been here about a year. Right after I graduated from high school, well, I just had to get out. My mother's dead. My father is pretty worthless. I know that's a

rotten thing to say about your own father, but it's true."

Mary still wasn't looking at me, which gave me a very strange feeling. It was like she was just talking. Not to me, not to herself, just talking. She got faster as she went along.

"I've been clumsy like that all week. I don't know what's the matter," she shrugged. "Yes, I do know what's the matter. I found out I was pregnant. I can't think about anything else, you know? I don't know where the guy is now. Anyway, even if I do get another job, I won't be able to stick with it much longer. I guess I'll go to one of those Salvation Army homes or something." Mary smoothed back her hair.

"Do you know what, Beth?" she said. "Things really could have been different. I mean, if one little thing had been changed, if something had happened, or hadn't happened or if some tiny thing had been different . . . way back there, somewhere . . ."

Mary picked up her purse and left the restroom. I finished toweling off my skirt, not thinking about what she'd said, because it was too close to me right then.

When I got back to the table, my father gave me a sympathetic look and said I could skip the Vegetable Platter. Then he ordered sodas for all of us. I had figured he'd weaken, but not in such style.

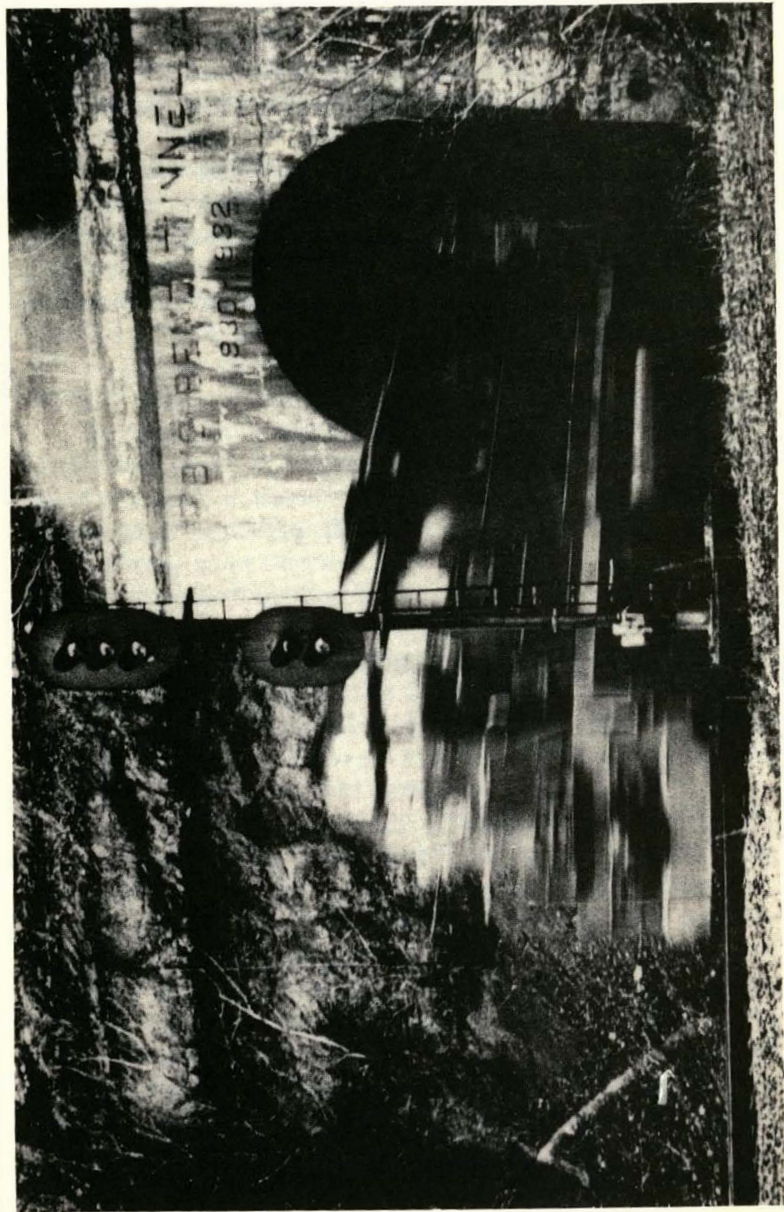
I looked around for Mary. Another waitress, though, had already taken over. It hit me very suddenly that I'd never see Mary again as long as I lived, that our chance meeting had been just that. Chance, and nothing more. The timing had been right, and for maybe ten minutes we were the only two people on earth. Then the bell rang, and we went back to our separate corners.

Afterward, Andrea kept asking me questions about the waitress and why she'd been crying. I would just start humming "Heartbreak Hotel," which sent Andrea moaning and leaping away.

I never did see Mary again. I guess she went away somewhere and had her baby, and did the best she could. I'm no philosopher, and I don't want to be one, but I think Mary was right. It's pretty much a spin of the

wheel, the deal of the cards. I'm who I am because of where I came from, what I was taught, the support I was given. One little thing might've changed all that. What little thing? That's the mystery, and the wonder, and very often the tragedy of life.

So Mary is out there somewhere, doing what she can with the hand she's been given. I'm here, and you're there. And we all do the best we can, working our way toward something we don't know, and can't control, and may hate. But still we do it. There's got to be something said for the effort.



11 **Big Bend Tunnel, 1979"/ Ken Smith**

Beverly Childers

We Park By the Crossing Now

We park by the crossing in the hollow now
because the high road fell away in the spring,
the ridge road near the house
which wound up from the point
where the road crossed the tracks.

First,
the brambles beside the road
scrambled over the bank;
Then, the gravelled edge
crumbled over the cliff;
then, the blacktop itself
heaved downward,
Disappeared.
Altogether.

So,
we climb up the mountain;
parking our car by the rails of the crossing
and loading our arms with our burdens,
our heads bowed down low,
we climb up the steps, up the mountain.

Up the stone steps
that line the backyard of a neighbor,
Up the cement blocks
that follow sagging wires to the wash house,



Beverly G. Merrick Childers, 35, describes herself as a "graduate/senior" with majors in English and journalism. "We Park By the Crossing Now" was part of her second-place showing in the 1979 Jesse Stuart Appalachian Fiction Writing Awards. Childers is editor of Monday Magazine.

Up the dirt-filled tires
that are staggered one on the other
Up and up and up.

Until at last-with our burdens
we reach the narrow ledge where the house sits
by the yawning gap which once was the high road.

Above us on a high meadow
beneath the snow sleeps a brother;
his car was hit at the crossing
while he was climbing the high road.

Parking our truck on the mountain that day
ten loaded arms up together,
heads bowed down low with our burden
we carried our boy from the high road.

We park by the crossing now
because the high road fell away in the spring.

Kathy Foster

Tenth Avenue

Brittle, damp, brown-red (but
 once-pretty yellow, before the
 prettiness wore off) linoleum
 on top of linoleum
 on top of thirty-five years of linoleum
 on top of a warped, crooked,
 wooden floor
 old

like the cheap pink paint
 on the walls (see there--
 some careless jerk dropped some
 on the woodwork!) pitted,
 peeling, uneven
 discolored in the corner where
 the now-dead steam pipe used to
 whistle and hiss and
 make a warmness in the walls that
 could be felt even from the other side
 but now rigor mortis has set in
 and the pipe is stiff and silent and
 old

like the white, round-edged
 Frigidaire with its once-bright
 chrome trim and handle and its
 humming, whirling condenser on top,
 displaying a grand, in-depth



Kathy Foster, 20, is a senior medical technology major from Point Pleasant. "Writing is lingual artistry," she says. "It is a fluid set of graphic symbols that is an extension of every individual, a connection between people who appreciate a common thought or experience."

collection of dust
old

like the ancient four-burner
gas stove with grates over the burners
like glasses over eyes (hey, eight-eyes!)
and a broiler to the side
and an oven on top of that
with broken hinges and a wired-on door
and one leg of the whole affair shorter than
the other three
old

like the window over the sink
naked to the inside, but clothed
in sooty city grime to the outside,
the sash-chains dead and the
panes paralyzed
old

like the rough-chimed, runny-eyed
antique of a man, wearing laceless
black work boots and an elbowless
brown tweed jacket and worn cotton
khaki pants with cuffs, sitting
in the one chair (missing
its flowered cushion-the
cat sleeps on it) at the table
with black enamel top and
metal trim coming up at the corners
in the center of this elephant graveyard
crying in frustration
over a fifty-one-card
game of solitaire.

Susan Adams

Cracks

Along the sidewalks the cracks are lifelines.
That one means forty-seven three-year-olds
Picking the loose gravel with their fingers.
And over there a large interruption,
A great black void where sidewalk used to be.
What would happen if they fell in that hole
Forever to hear the thud of endless feet?



Susan D. Adams, 19, is a sophomore dietetics major from Huntington. Her poem, "Cracks," was composed during a freshman English class and is her first published work.

Richard Hensley

A Walk Into Darkness

I don't think a lot about Tony Federici nowadays. That was something that happened a long time ago, and there's no sense in me always bringing it up or worrying about it. I mean, what happened would have happened even if I had never met Tony Federici - that's one thing I'm sure of - and no one can blame me for what happened to that little boy. Still, sometimes I wake up shivering in the night. I can hear in the darkness those paddles in the water and the rushing of the pump, and I can hear - and you really could that night - the terrible, aching silence of those helpless people. But most of all I can see Tony Federici sitting on that rotting log alone and I can hear him choking on those horrible, sobbing tears. But, you see, it wasn't my fault - what happened to that little boy. I mean, I didn't even know him - even afterward - only in Tony Federici's stories and his smudgy snapshots. But about the other, I don't know. That was something else, and I don't think I'm ready to figure it out yet. When it happened, I thought I knew what I was doing, but now I'm not sure. Maybe I never will be.

I first met Tony Federici at the hospital, when I was working as an assistant in personnel and he was an orderly, and that was the only place I ever knew him. That was my first job after I got out of school, and it wasn't bad, I guess. The job really was listed as assistant in personnel, but I sure didn't get to do much. I mean, I worked with a lot of pretty influential people in the



Richard Hensley, 20, is a junior English major from Barboursville. His story, "A Walk Into Darkness," originally was written as a class assignment. "I'd feel like a phony saying that I wrote for anything other than the simple pleasure of putting words on paper and seeing how they fit together," he says.

hospital, but my job was mostly just busy work. I met Tony Federici in the cafeteria, and at first he kind of shook me up a little. I always ate alone at lunch, and this one day he just came over and sat down with me. It wouldn't have been so bad, except he looked just like Lon Chaney Jr. in that movie "Of Mice and Men." I mean, he was huge and sort of lumbered around. Once I saw that movie on TV again and that really was Tony Federici. It looked exactly like him, and I had to turn it off.

Well, he just started talking, telling me about this little boy he knew and something about a red wagon and about some of the patients in the psychiatric ward, where he worked then. When he talked, he used words like "dem" and "dose" and "dese" - just like the gangsters in the movies - and I thought he must be from Chicago or somewhere. "Ya see, doctor, dere's dis kid I knows, see, an' he has dis wagon, see, an' I pull him all over de bank dere by da river, see, an' he squeals, an' I laugh, an' sometimes we both fall over laughin'." That's sort of how he talked, and as he did, he scooped up his food and practically shovelled it into his mouth. It was really sickening watching him, but I guess I was just stunned, with him suddenly appearing there across from me and then starting to jabber like that. He asked my name that first day, but he must have forgotten it or something, because always after that he called me "doctor" or "doc" or something like that. I kept telling him I wasn't even anything close to being a doctor, but he ignored that. From that moment on, I became his best friend - me and the little boy with the red wagon - and he followed me all around the hospital.

The one thing that struck me most about Tony Federici was his Goddammed sincerity. I mean, everything was so damned serious to him, I couldn't believe it. Once the nurses at the psychiatric ward told me that sometimes he got to work a half hour early, just so he wouldn't be late. And so whenever he talked to you, or you to him, there was always this really intent look on his face, and it made him look sort of dumb. I mean,

he *was* sort of dumb, but that made him look even dumber. And when you'd tell him a joke or something, he'd get real serious, so he'd always laugh a few minutes late, and you were never sure whether he really got it or not. But, like I say, we were best of friends - or, at least he said that I was his best friend. Well, I liked him, you know, but I didn't feel any kind of *responsibility* for him. I mean, he must have had a mother (I guess he had a mother), and if he needed something he could go to her, but I'd be his friend and that's all.

One time, he said to me, "Ya know, doctor, you and Robby" - that was the little boy with the red wagon - "youse guys are my best friends of all time. I mean it." And I just sat there. I mean, what do you say to that? So he went on. "Some people, ya know, dey t'ink I'm dumb or sumpin'. But youse guys, youse guys are my best friends." It was like he couldn't live without us or something. Oh, God, I wish I hadn't said that. I mean, I guess he couldn't live without us, you know? He really trusted me with everything, just like Mr. Macready.

Mr. Macready was my supervisor, and the thing I liked best about my job was how he trusted me. He even respected my opinion - he would ask me what I thought about something and I would tell him and then he would really consider that. That really impressed me about him, but, you know, Tony Federici was like that, too. He would come to me and ask for my opinion and when I would tell him, he would say, "Yeah, dat's right. Ya know, I never thought o' dat before." I guess he was a lot nicer than I gave him credit for, but it's too late for that now.

The only time I ever saw him outside the hospital was once at a movie theatre, the Cinema Village, on the East Side. I never even wondered what he was doing there, but it was some Marx Brothers movie - "At the Circus," I think. I always went to the movies on Friday nights - usually revival houses, like this one - and this time I just walked in and saw him sitting there, way up front. I sat in the back, because I didn't want to meet him here, outside the hospital, and I guess it was the first time

I ever saw him like this (and probably the only time - the other two times were different). I mean, you see someone a lot different when they're like this - when they aren't with you. You know, for a minute you don't have the - well, I guess "responsibility" is the right word - the responsibility of being their friend. So when I saw him there, laughing loud at the movie, I felt funny - it was as if I were watching him in a movie, like Lon Chaney Jr. in "Of Mice and Men." And in some places - like when Groucho was stuck upside down on the ceiling or at the end, when the orchestra floats out to sea - he would throw his head back and laugh too loud. I left right at the end of the movie, because I didn't want him to see me. But I stood across the street in the shadows and watched when he came out, still laughing, and I saw him look at the pictures outside and then sort of lope off down the street.

I guess I should tell you about his work up in the psychiatric ward at the hospital. Just about everyone liked him up there, even crazy Lennie Heisel. who they say tried to knife his own mother once and once jumped out of a hospital window. Tony Federici was just an orderly up there, but the patients treated him like a doctor. He would come in, and one of them would say, "Hey, doc, how ya doin'?" And he would sort of chuckle and maybe clumsily pat their backs and say, "Jus' fine. An' how's about youse guys?" I always thought, watching him, this must be what he was like with that little boy Robby back home. Maybe he told Robby a lot about me, I don't know, but he always talked to me about Robby. He must have just about lived for that little kid. He lived over in the poor white neighborhood (I looked up his address later) by the river, and after work he would take the bus home - sometimes with a toy he'd bought for Robby - and he'd spend the rest of the evening playing with that kid, pulling him around the river bank in a little red wagon.

Well, it must have been in August when it haopened at the hospital. I wasn't there at first, when Lennie Heisel pulled the knife on him, and I still don't know

where Lennie got that knife. It was like a steak knife, and someone said that he stole it from one of the nurse's lunch trays. I don't know, but when I got there, Lennie had the knife and had a hold on this other patient, Claude Martin. Claude didn't even know what was going on - he just sort of sat there - and there, walking toward them and talking all the way, was Tony Federici. He was really being nice and calm and making sense - I tried to tell Mr. Macready that later, but it didn't come out right. But then Lennie just let Claude fall down and sort of lunged at Tony. Tony got a hold of his wrist - the hand with the knife in it - and kind of wrestled with him for a minute. But Lennie kept pulling back and then that arm came down on the bed, and I guess it must have broken right then, because he dropped the knife and just started wailing. And Tony just stood there. He didn't even pick up the knife - he just stood there staring while the nurses tried to calm down Lennie. I really don't think he knew what was going on (you know how it is when something like this happens), so he must have been surprised when Mr. Macready called him into his office about it.

He was in there for awhile and then Mr. Macready called me in, too. I still say none of this would have happened if I hadn't had my back to Tony Federici. I couldn't see him - I just heard him breathing hard - and when I finally did, as I was leaving the office, I wanted to kill myself.

"You're a friend of Mr. Federici, I believe," Mr. Macready said.

"I don't know," I said.

And Mr. Macready sort of coughed or something. "Well, Mr. Federici seems to think that you are the best of friends. Isn't that true?"

And I said, "Well, sir, I know him - here at work, you know. But that's about all."

Mr. Macready leaned back in his chair. "Well - here at work, then - do you consider Mr. Federici a competent worker?"

I didn't say anything for a minute and then I said,

"Sir, he seems to enjoy his job and the patients really like him, I think."

Mr. Macready coughed again and said, "Well, I was under the impression that you knew Mr. Federici better than this. I'm afraid that he will no longer be with us, after the incident upstairs. I'm sorry, but it's the only thing I can do under the circumstances. Now, would you please get his file for me?"

And this is when I saw him. He was sitting in a chair way in the corner and he just started to plead with me. "Tell him. Tell him." He just kept saying it, and there were these great big tears in his eyes and I left fast. I told the secretary to get the files for Mr. Macready and then I didn't come back for another hour or so, after I was sure he was gone.

No one said anything about him after that. It was like he never even worked there. Once, though, I was picking up something in the psychiatric ward, and Lennie Heisel said, "What happened to your friend?" And I just ignored him at first and then I said, "He wasn't my friend." And he wasn't really. I mean, I knew him and talked to him and all that, but that doesn't mean I was his friend, does it? What I told Mr. Macready was the truth. I didn't know what kind of worker he was. And it wasn't my fault - what happened to him. I knew that for sure.

But then I started to wonder about him. It wasn't like I missed him - I just wondered about him. I looked up his address and it got so I would drive by his house just about every night. It was a shabby neighborhood, and I guess his house was just about the shabbiest of them all. I would park my car over in the shadows across the street, and I would see him and (I guess) little Robby playing over by the river. It made me feel sort of good and then sort of empty to see that he didn't need me after all.

One week I didn't go at all, and the next week I kind of rushed to get there, but I knew something was wrong when I got there. The lights were out everywhere. Only the street lights were lit - all the houses

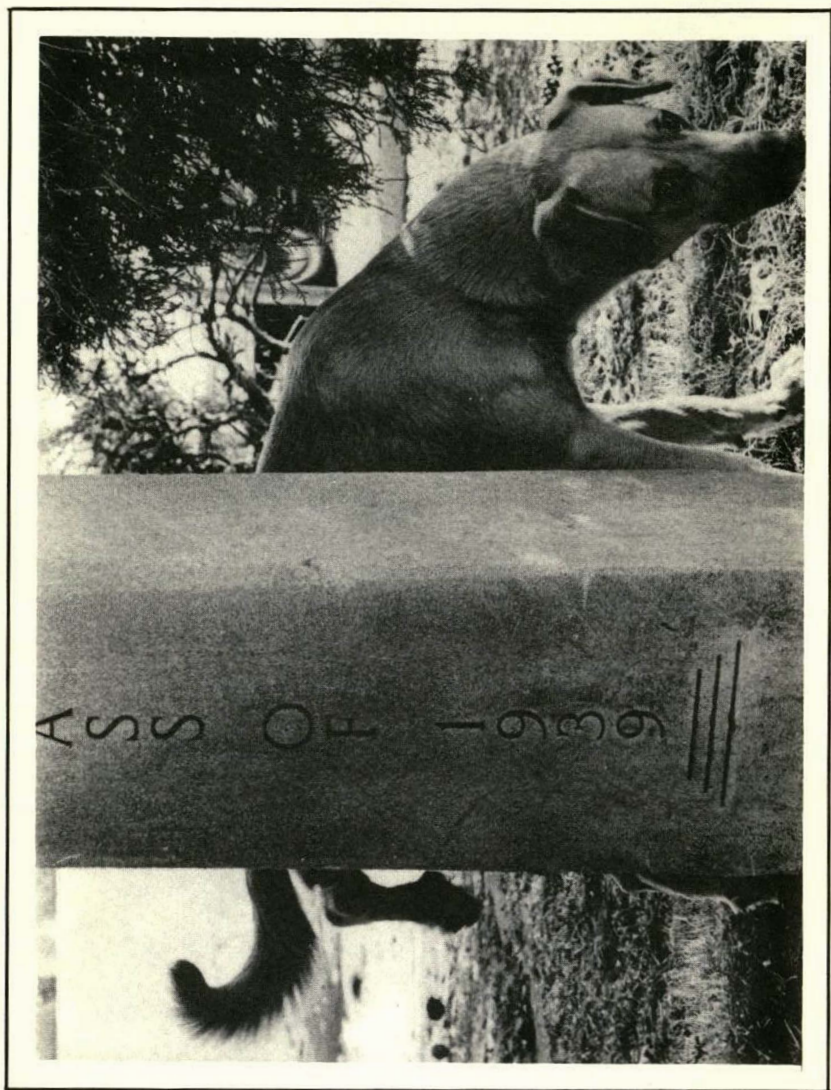
and yards were dark. So I pulled up to his house and did a funny thing: I parked and got out. It was like I knew what I was doing or something, and I guess at that time I thought I did. Ever since then I've wondered why I got out that night - why I didn't just drive on and forget it. But I got out and started to walk toward the river.

At first I didn't see or hear anything. But then came that rushing sound and then the paddles in the water and I knew what had happened. I felt sick and wanted to leave, but I couldn't. And then I began to notice all the people around me - neighbors who had been there since the afternoon and hadn't been home to turn their lights on when it got dark. They were standing along the river bank in groups of three or four, but, in a way everyone was all alone. It was scary there, with these helpless people all around in the dark and just those horrible, horrible sounds from the river, and then I saw him.

He was sitting all alone on an ugly old rotten log with his face in his hands, and he was crying. It would have been just like that time with Lennie Heisel, except this time he was so emotional. And right in front of him, like an altar or something, was the little red wagon, all covered with mud. I never knew if Tony Federici had anything to do with what happened to that little boy, but when I saw him there, it was the most terrible moment in my life. I mean, even if everyone else there was alone, at least they were alone with other people. But Tony was there on that log by himself, and it was more than I could take. I turned around and walked slowly to my car. Once I thought I heard him call me, so I walked a little faster, but I don't think he even saw me there. When I got to my car, it was funny, because the street light didn't seem to be working or something, and I still couldn't see anything. It was so dark, I had to feel around to get the door open, and then I drove off and never went back.

I never saw Tony Federici again, either, and it almost got so I forgot about him altogether. Every once

in a while I thought I saw him on the street, and sometimes my heart would almost leap when I saw them taking a patient to the morgue at the hospital. I don't know why I thought it was him, but I did. It got so I wouldn't even go up to the psychiatric ward, that's how bad it was. Finally I just quit my job at the hospital and took some classes at the university instead. That helped to sort of erase Tony Federici from my mind, but he's never completely gone. It's always at night when I see him, and he's almost always doing three things: he's there at the movies, throwing back his head and laughing a little too loud; then I see him in Mr. Macready's office and he's looking at me - looking through me - and saying, "Tell him, tell him"; and then he's sitting on that rotting log all alone. And then, it's funny, I see myself there, walking away. And then I start to cry.



"Ass of 1939" / Ken Smith

Joyce Porter

David

Ready to slay giants in their slumber,
You pose, poised, smiling at the Philistines
Surrounding your faithful King Saul.
The veins run rapid in your wrists
As you wait, ever waiting, watching.
Goliath stands beyond your gazing
Marble eyes, mirthfully mocking your
Strength, your stance, unafraid
Because you are fixed, frozen not
By your maker, but by your race.
You never struggle, but you survive
Each sunset, your slingshot thrown
Upward, ready to battle any giants
Who dare to defy your truth.



Joyce Porter, 21, a senior English major, has supplemented her creative writing career by working as a reporter/photographer for her hometown newspaper, **The Logan Banner**. An **et cetera** staff member, Porter says she tries in her writing "to create glimpses of life that are very real and close to our own."

In the Dark

Through the dark, sweet, dark,
I sit and listen to the stars
Whispering to one another.
They gossip of Andromeda,
They sign for lost Sirius.

Perhaps they are the cursed,
The doomed, the fleeting
Glimpse of life long lost,
But they are the immortal,
Locked into order and
Reason, without cause,
Without a yearning for time.

Late at night,
I hear the stars whispering.
I have never wept for them.

Chuck Hughes

Walking Along the Guyandotte River By the Floodwall I Find an Old Condom

Sitting erect in their long canoes,
Bronze braves skimmed
Upon this ruffling water
Before the white men came.

The red sun glides downstream
And paints the wide horizon
Like the face of
An Indian warrior.

He pulls his boat onto shore
And meets his dark pigtailed
Princess among the trees,
Where their shadows embrace.

The moon laughs upon the water,
And the crickets sound like
A thousand tiny hands
Beating the head of a tom-tom.



Chuck Hughes, 24, is a junior English major from Huntington. As is the case with several other works in this magazine, his poem was written for a creative writing class at Marshall. Hughes, who says he writes "to communicate with myself," also has had poetry published in a local newspaper.

Larry Osburn

Taking Me Back Home

The Car:

A cream-colored, long, sleek automobile. The occupants: an eighteen-year-old driver named Danny. His long, straight hair bears a single wave at the back of his head from wearing a rubberband at work. Beside him, with his head out the window looking in the side-view mirror, an older youth, Danny's brother Bruce, combs his hair.

Danny drives, staring ahead, his mind on other things besides driving. Bruce, not caring if the car is safe, smiles as the wind blows his hair. His hair is longer than last year; his doctors could see nothing wrong letting him grow his hair long. A statement, one of the doctors told his parents. No harm. Let him do as he wishes. Releasing the plastic comb into the wind, Bruce waves to the black object as it bounces into the air, crashing against the asphalt. Dead.

"Hey. Why did you do that?" Danny comes alive beside him.

"Watt?"

"Your comb." He stares into the rear-view mirror. "Why did you throw it out? I gave you that."

"I 'idn't 'any. Hit jumped." Bruce turns in the seat, staring at the distance where the comb, now a million miles away, lies flat beside the road. "Free, 'anny." His tongue seems too fat in his mouth and works itself out as he talks. "Hit's free."



Larry Osburn, 32, wrote the first draft of "Taking Me Back Home" for a creative writing class last spring. Currently out of school due to illness, the Ells Lynn, W. Va., resident says writing helps him to "stay within the boundaries of sanity."

In A Pleasant Split-Level, In The Suburbs, With Marigolds Growing In T^he Little Rows With Care From Caring People:

"Why in God's name did you let Danny take Bruce back by himself?"

"He wanted to."

"Oh. So, when did you start listening to anyone?"

"Shut the fuck up."

"Well, well. Aren't we poetic tonight?"

"Will you leave me alone for once?"

"By God, I wish I never started with you."

"Oh. So now it's all my fault."

"Am I blaming you? Is that it?"

"You stopped?"

"Shut up."

"Fuck you."

The Car:

Danny carefully steers the car through the parking lot; the car comes to a stop between two yellow lines. Bored attendants dressed in white idly stand or hold to wobbly human forms or push wheelchairs toward the entrance door without care for kneecaps or toes.

Bruce watches Danny out of the corners of his eyes as he stares into the confusion of return day. Always Danny is reminded of sale day at a supermarket.

"Bussy." Bruce smiles; his hand waves uncontrollably in front of his face.

"Bruce."

"Yas, 'anny?" He drops his hand to his lap. He always knows when Danny wants to talk and he tries to still himself by staring at the dashboard.

"It isn't your fault. Please believe me."

"I da."

"What I said last night, I didn't mean you." He looks at Bruce. "You believe me, don't you?"

"Yas." His tongue darts in and out his mouth.

"I don't want you to think I'm leaving because of you."

"I dant."

"But you heard me last night, didn't you?"

He stares at the cars moving between the people and it seems to him the cars are killing the people, some he remembers as his friends. "'anny?"

Danny sits with his arm resting on the steering wheel, his right leg straightened across the seat between them, his foot almost touching Bruce's leg. He says, "I don't want you to think I don't love you. I do."

"I know."

"It's something I have to do. To hell with what they think."

"Yas."

"I said all those things because I was mad."

"I dant mind 'anny."

"But I do."

"Ya da." He tilts his head, looking at his brother. "'hy?"

"Because." Danny stares out the windshield at the huge gray building and the tall evergreen trees lining the front lawn.

"Bruce, I'll see you as often as I can. Every chance I get."

"I know ya 'ill."

"No, I ... I really mean it." Then he adds, "They say if you hadn't done what you ... you did, you might be home now."

"'hey always da."

Danny reaches across the seat and hugs Bruce.

"I lave 'anny, ta."

Danny rubs his hands over the rough blue denim of Bruce's shirt, holding him tighter. Bruce increases his hug. To Danny, Bruce's embrace feels artificial. He imitates action, the doctors told them the morning after Bruce had cut the palm of his hand. One of his friends had cut both wrists and died.

"Bruce." Danny releases his hold and Bruce follows the pattern of his brother. Bruce had been in the room with his friend and had watched as the boy cut his left then his right wrist. "All these years I stood back and let Dad take out his frustrations on you. Dad's got

weird standards and anyone who doesn't come up to them is strange to him. But Mom's Just as bad as he is."

"Na."

"Yes. Yes, she is. She stands back and lets him do what he pleases, then ... but you know that, don't you."

Danny had not asked a question and Bruce stares at his hands. Two spiders mating. His friends had told him that while his hands turned red. Then his arms. He had watched as the red covered his friend, fascinated. His friend smiled up at him sitting on the floor, his face looking whiter against the red.

"You shouldn't be the one that's here."

"I dant mind 'tayin' 'ere. Fiends." Bruce tries to make his right hand point only at his building.

"Dad was wrong. He's always been wrong." Danny reaches out to touch Bruce's arm. Bruce pulls his arm away.

"Ya gain bac' 'ome naw?"

"No. I'm leaving the car at the bus station. I'm not going back to that m a -"

"Mad'ouse." Bruce smiles.

Danny laughs, reaching out and raking his fingers through Bruce's hair. Oily. "You should wash your hair more often."

"Dant want ta down."

"You won't ever drown, because I'll be there to pull you out." He stares at his brother, studying his eyes.

"I wish I could take you with me."

Bruce turns his head, looking out the window toward the gray granite building. Speaking in a whisper he says, "Soop'mark-et. Huh, 'anny?"

"What?"

"'uthin'." His hand grips the door handle and pulls upward. "I goot to ga, .naw."

Danny grabs Bruce's hand, the one with the scar. A look of bewilderment comes over Danny's faee. "Bruce?"

"I knaw 'anny." He pulls his hand free and stands outside the car.

Danny leans across the seat. "What?"

"Sowong." And his tongue swims out between his

lips. He slams the door closed on Danny's reply, leaving his fingerprints on the glass.

One Night A Long Time Ago In The House Where Marigolds Grow With Care:

The bandage was still on his hand. The stitches had long ago been removed, but he felt safe with the white bandage on. One of the doctors who took the threads out of his hand told him there would always be that scar. He didn't like to look at the palm of his hand.

His mother and Danny were celebrating (that's what they told him) his first visiting day home in over two months. But they didn't seem to be enjoying what they said they would in the car. His Dad was not home. He didn't care, but his mother and Danny seemed to, their eyes darting toward the front door every time there was a noise outside the house.

Danny said something to him; then his mother said something but he wasn't listening. He was sitting on the sofa, his bandaged hand resting in his lap, his good hand covering it. He tried to listen to them, but their words were too softly spoken. Droning, they entered inside his head, feeling like a warm blanket. He blinked his eyes and each time he blinked the room stayed darker longer.

He awoke to the pain that was zigzagging up his arm from the bandaged hand. Instinctively, his good hand reached out to protect the other hand even before his eyes opened. Voices were sounding from everywhere around him. His Dad stood over him, gripping his hand. His Dad's hand was so big he could not see the bandage.

"You want to die, do you?" The words exploded like bombs in front of his face.

"D.a'."

"Were you in love with him? Is that why you wanted to die?" His arm was jerked upward. "Tell me. Tell me why you did it. Tell me."

His Dad yanked his arm harder, bringing him off the sofa. He stood before his father; he could smell his breath. He needed to pee.

"Da'. Please." His hand was tender and raw even after the stitches were removed. The doctor told him he could wear the bandage as long as he wanted, to come to the infirmary and let the nurse change it every day. He didn't mind the long wait each morning.

"Don't look at me as if you don't know what I'm talking about." His Dad pushed his face next to his. The air smelled like old tennis shoes. "How am I to explain this?" He waved the bandaged hand before Bruce's face. "Tell me. How can I tell anyone about this?"

"Bruce." Danny's voice sounded small, coming from somewhere behind his Dad.

"Shut the fuck up." His Dad turned his head and shouted.

"Leave him alone." His mother touched his shoulders. She was behind him, her hands weighing down on him.

"It's okay, Bruce." A mosquito was inside his head sounding so loud that Danny's voice was almost lost inside the buzzing.

He tried to understand what was . . .

"Leave him be. Don't you see you're confusing him?"

"Da'." He tried to remember, then he felt the warmth spread down his legs. "Pease, Da'."

"Look at that. Dammit all to hell. **Will** you look at that?" He grabbed Bruce's arms, his fingers gripping so tightly that the pain left his hand. "You damn . . . get outta my sight."

"Mam?" His voice sounded like it was coming from the bottom of a long black tunnel. Where was she?

"What can I say?" Her hand rubbed the back of his head. He was going to be sick.

"Da'?"

"I'm ashamed of you. Do you understand that? From the very first day of your stupid life."

Danny's hand reached out from nowhere and pulled him blindly away.

"You're going to have to be more patient with him."

"Fuck you."

Bruce walks away, waving his hand behind him at the car with the occupant who stares at his back. Bruce stumbles; his sneakers make swoofing sounds on the asphalt. He waves to people who know him as he makes his way to the entrance door. He shoves his hands against the heavy glass door with its chrome handle and its sticker of a stick person in a stick wheelchair.

He walks through the cold Alaskan air wearing snowshoes, and penguins run this way and that way down narrow corridors of white with doors where people go to visit. His Mom and Dad will come to visit but Danny is gone forever.

It's quiet where he walks as he steps in line with the tiled floor, counting the doors and windows the sun shines through. *There is no room. There is no room for. There is no room for Danny.* He sings inside his head, smiling.

He presses his hands against the wooden door at the end of the corridor and watches as the door spreads the view of the room before him. He smiles when he hears someone say "Bruce is back." Looking around the huge room, he spies his friend standing, leaning against the wall with all the windows.

"Ha." He says to his friend.

"You like your visit?"

"Na."

"Glad to be back? Huh?" His friend smiles.

Bruce leans close and whispers "Yas. Gad to be bac'." He presses his face against the window glass and stares out between gray steel bars. He smiles and tries to wave as he watches his Dad's car leave the parking lot.

Ken Smith

actualization

i no longer see the demons
slinking behind my back
lurking in the periphery
taunting with tenets and edicts
of self-deception
i have beaten them down
cast out the idols
and icons
the edifices
and institutions
the concrete
and abstract
the true
and untrue
i laugh at this weedy eden
for i have met the devil
and he looks like me



Ken Smith, 21, has won the Maier Award for Best Prose, a John Teel Writing Award, and first place in the 1979 Jesse Stuart Appalachian Fiction Writing Awards for "Gray Suits and Big Niggers" (p. 96). The Beckley senior, a journalism/English education major, is the 1980 *et cetera* editor.

curls

strands of convulsing protein
stangle themselves
uniting as one into organic coils
spring back
always
with fellow follicles to girt
(quietly now)
the quarry
not vipers, constricting the head
that bears them
heedless of quaint duplicity
unmindful of beauty salon serpents
gagging one another with natural nooses
forever frozen in lacquer limbo •
hissing warning
but no one hears
the tresses slink down the shoulder
and spring
fanged furies
shampooed stealth
but remember
medusa never needed
a permanent

Rasputin

Chary aristocrats frown
upon me, counsel to the
round-eyed empress. Romanov's
royal scion, sallow, sad-
eyed brat, bleeds and brays;
I heal, ruminating chants of
orthodoxy I despise, shunning
their God, evoking myself.

Whispers hang heavy like Baltic
fog, condensing on all, dew of
royal innuendo. My will
flows unhindered, hemophilia
of intrigue, coating the empire.
It is true-he hemorrhages,
I reassure with gibberish,
farting freely in the palace.

The gentry coagulate to
destroy me, shaggy antichrist
of Petrograd, vile blasphemer.
But bloated with their venom
and rent by futile bullets I
reel into the night, chortling
in my agony, snickering
as their screams fade, all too late.

geryon exposed

I

a false messiah, i walk on water
hydroplaning over your sweat
we slither in common slime
respecting neither time nor place
(neoclassicism is o so lacking)
beguiled by bearded duplicity
victim of my pyrite mane
you lie opened, gutted meat
hamburger helper seasoned to taste

II

glari_ng, protein dishwater aflame
your bitter tongue stabs and jabs
excretion replaces adulation
i can cover no more in antipodal gloom
my sting, at last exposed, is broken
oozing venom, castrated by vengeance
i become a mute dildo
servile shade in your pungent·borgia

III

solitary under the shroud i repose
the moon waning, all effulgence gone
images writhe in dark vacuity
lamenting the price of intellect

take or be without
covet or dream not

thus content in equivocation
i cherish the day i escaped
to ascend from malebolge
then i was your incubus
and you a warm woolly thing in the night

blasphemy

hi there
lord of all creation
i'd ask, but
i know being an icon must be hard work
thought so
but tell me
for
i've often wondered just
how
you get by
like
what do you say when you cum
and
does your halo attract moths at night
(unless of course it's yellow)
and
are you a republican
(as everybody says)
and
aside to me
dear lord
what's it like being subject to millions of creators
who say
you look like a painting on a chapel ceiling
(cracked at that)
and
who say
they know your will
and
as a favor to you
enforce it
even when
you couldn't care less
so tell me
lordy
don't you get tired of
all this shit
thought so

Gray Suits and Big Niggers

Maier Award for Best Pr06e

Can of beer in hand, Jackie Boyd flipped on the television and plopped down in his favorite chair. It was the typical Tuesday and Friday night routine: come home, try to force that particular evening's debacle out of his mind, and compare other local high school basketball scores on the eleven o'clock news. It had been carried on without fail, without the slightest hint of cessation, since early December. And now in mid-February, Jackie was beginning to see the light at the end of the proverbial tunnel. But, God help him, it was still dim.

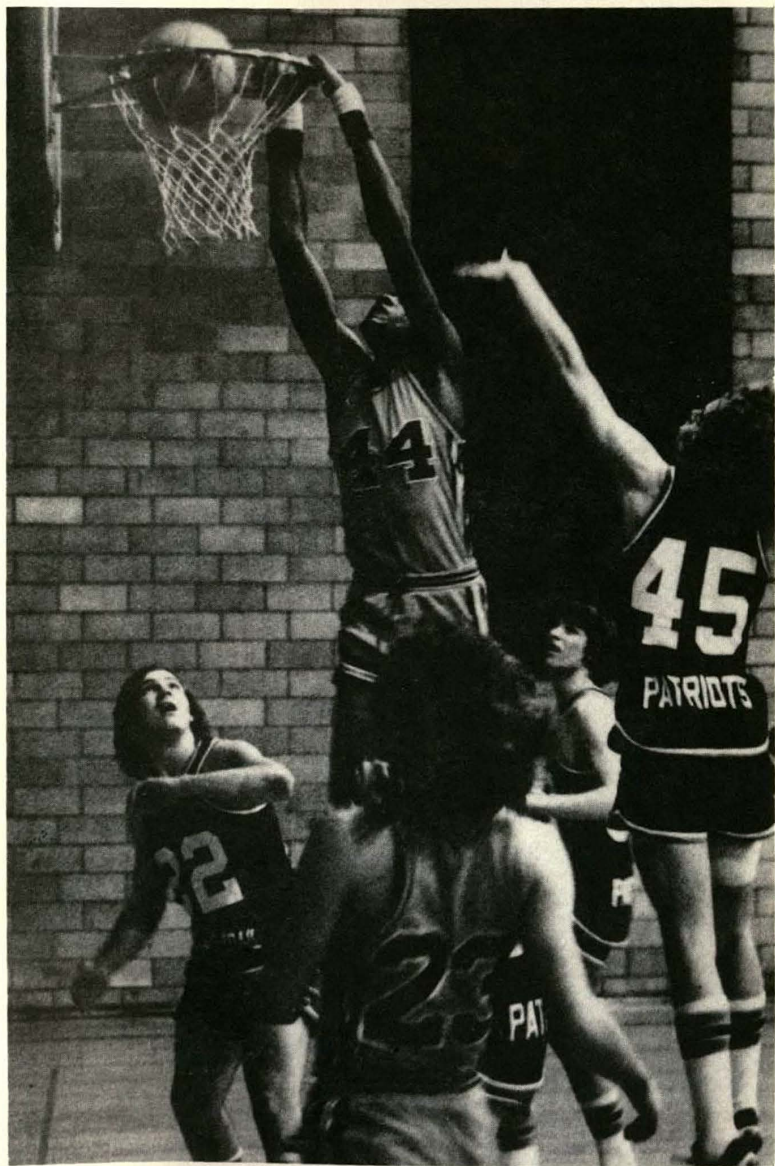
"Damn TV," he mumbled when the snowy, ghost-ridden image finally flickered on the tube. Peeved at having to leave the relatively secure confines of his recliner, he forced himself to rise and twist the rabbit-ears from side to side, vainly trying to entice some way-word signal that somehow had survived the trek through the winding hollows.

Satisfied with his efforts, he returned to his chair and took a long, deep belt of his pacifying Stroh's. Jackie knew he needed it. The time was ripe for Wade Utay and sports.

"Mullens 76, Oceana 63 ... Bluefield 59, Oak Hill 58 ... Beckley 64, Princeton 60 ... " The scores rolled on. Jackie tensed optimistically, hoping that somehow the wire services hadn't picked up the grim news of his latest disaster. Fat chance, he thought. By now, he knew better.

"And in other games this Friday night, Dry Fork kept its forty-five-game losing streak alive by bowing to Shady Spring, 95-39," Utay said coldly. Jackie slumped back into his chair and killed the rest of the beer in one gulp. The pain in his gut that had almost subsided returned in all its glory. He fumbled in his pocket for a Rolaid, a gesture that quickly was becoming a reflex.

But that night's news carried a grim reminder that caused him to reach for yet another antacid tablet. The sportscaster droned on. "Things won't get any easier



¹Prodigy¹¹ Ken Smith

for Dry Fork next Saturday when it comes to town to take on top-ranked and unbeaten Mount Zion. The Palominos, led by 6-11 high school all-America Lucius Smith's forty points, crushed Fayetteville tonight, 108-74. The game will be the nightcap of a high school basketball doubleheader at the Charleston Civic Center, and tickets are still avail - "

Jackie flipped off the television and buried his face in his hands. One week. One week until total humiliation. He wanted to cry.

"Honey, you ready yet?" his wife said as she meandered sleepily from the bedroom. "It's close to eleven-thirty. We have to go into Beckley tomorrow, remember?"

Jackie smiled and pulled her onto his lap. Through it all, Susan had been the steadying influence during their six-month marriage. With Jackie occupied with his teaching and coaching chores at the high school, afternoon basketball practices and the like, she kept the one-bedroom trailer-and her husband-on an even keel. And she still found time to attend every home game, cheering on the Fightin' Crawdads no matter how ludicrous or futile it seemed.

"C'mon, smile," she said, forcing his mouth into a reluctant grin with her fingers. "It wasn't as bad tonight. Only fifty-six points. And they didn't throw the ball away as much - "

"I'm the coach here," Jackie interrupted with mock sternness. "And the coach says we sucked cocks in hell."

"Jackie! That's no way to talk about those boys, especially when they work so hard for you!"

He bounced her on his knee, causing her breasts to jiggle beneath her official brown-and-white Dry Fork High School Athletic Boosters t-shirt. "I know they work hard," he said, smoothing back her long blonde hair. "But we still stink up any gym we play in. I never asked to be a coach. Never wanted to be. And from the looks of things, I really ain't."

She put a finger on his lips. "Hush, now. It wasn't you who lost all those games. They had a pretty good

