

1983

et cetera

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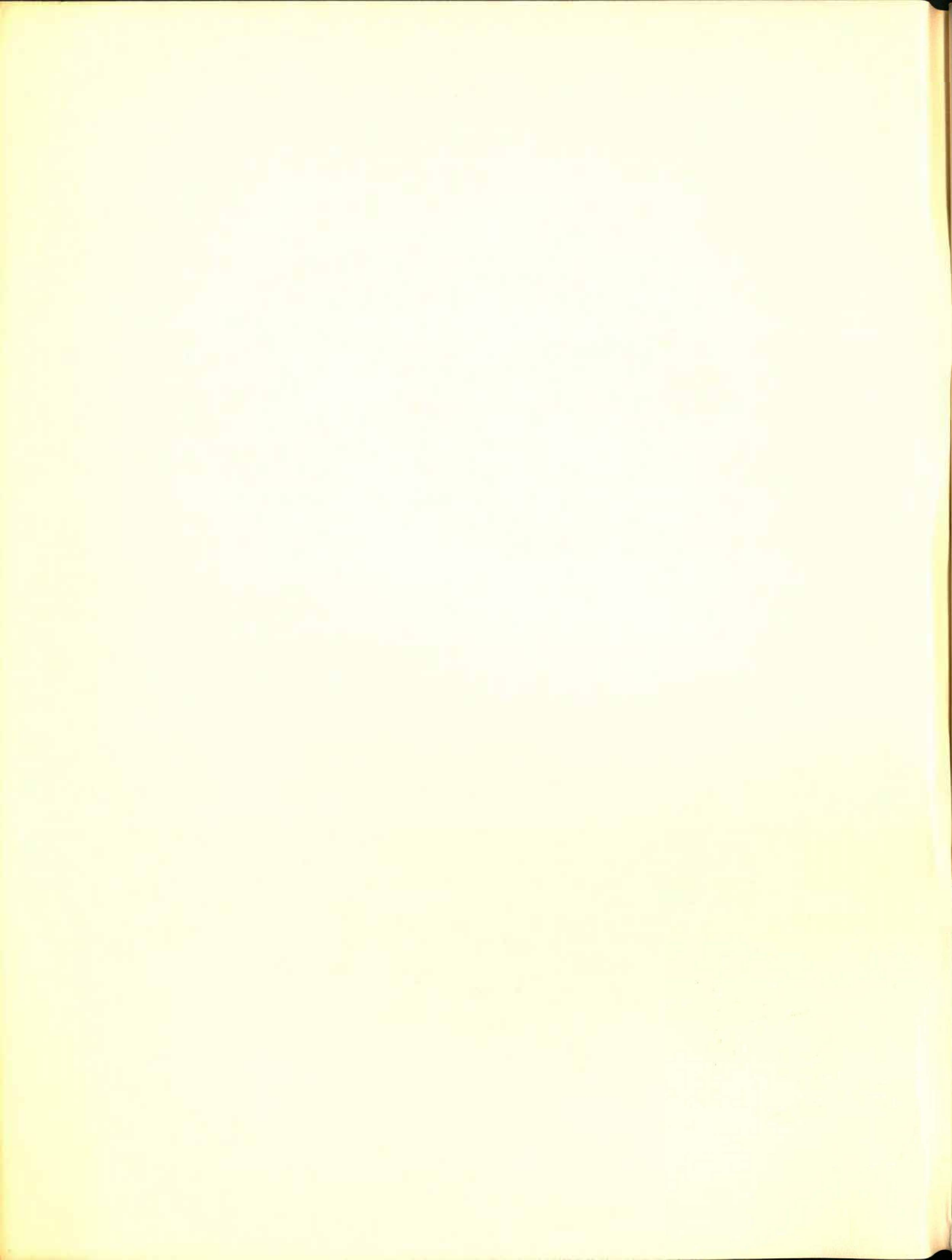
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**ET CETERA**



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## Editor's Note

THANKS: to Sam and David, J. McK. and S. Pett, for putting up with my hysterics; Big Dave and the kids, for living with me in spite of it; Dr. Robert Gerke (twice), Dora (thrice), and Eric Thorn, for helping lots; Ann, and Shirley; and to Esther Freeman and Ruthie at Wiggins' for allowing us to invade their space for the back cover photo (by Tony Seaton). And most especially to Tony Fitzgerald, without whom this would still be a mass of papers lying in my desk drawer.

## 1982-83 Et Cetera Staff

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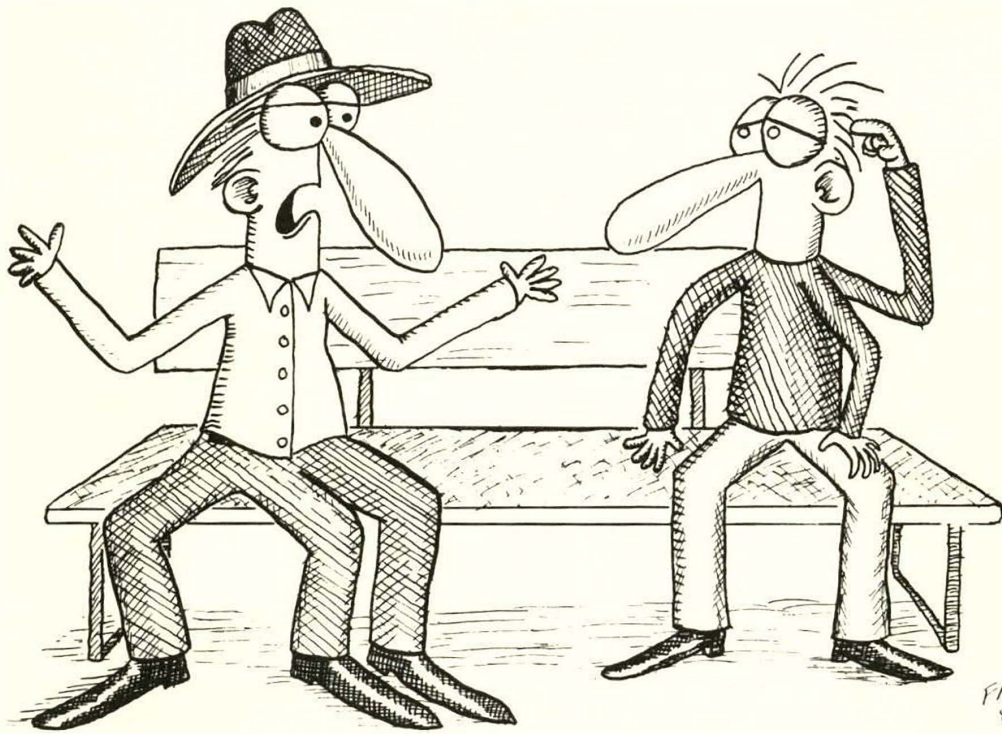
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FHC  
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"LISTEN... YOU THINK YOU GOT PROBLEMS..."

## PROJECTION

Teresa Harrold  
Graduate Student

I threw a pebble in the water  
then and there a thought took form  
you stood unabashed in nakedness  
(like Venus unveiled)  
I laughed  
then got caught up in your cloudy sensorium

We spun 'round one another  
two peacocks armed in rainbow plummage  
singing, strutting  
alien beings

faces melting into slime and earth  
the stars, floodlights to our re-enactment  
the sun, a monument to such passion  
sweet bread and sacred wine  
ours is the holy eucharist  
spun of ethereal rays  
limitless light  
thought  
thinking itself into matter

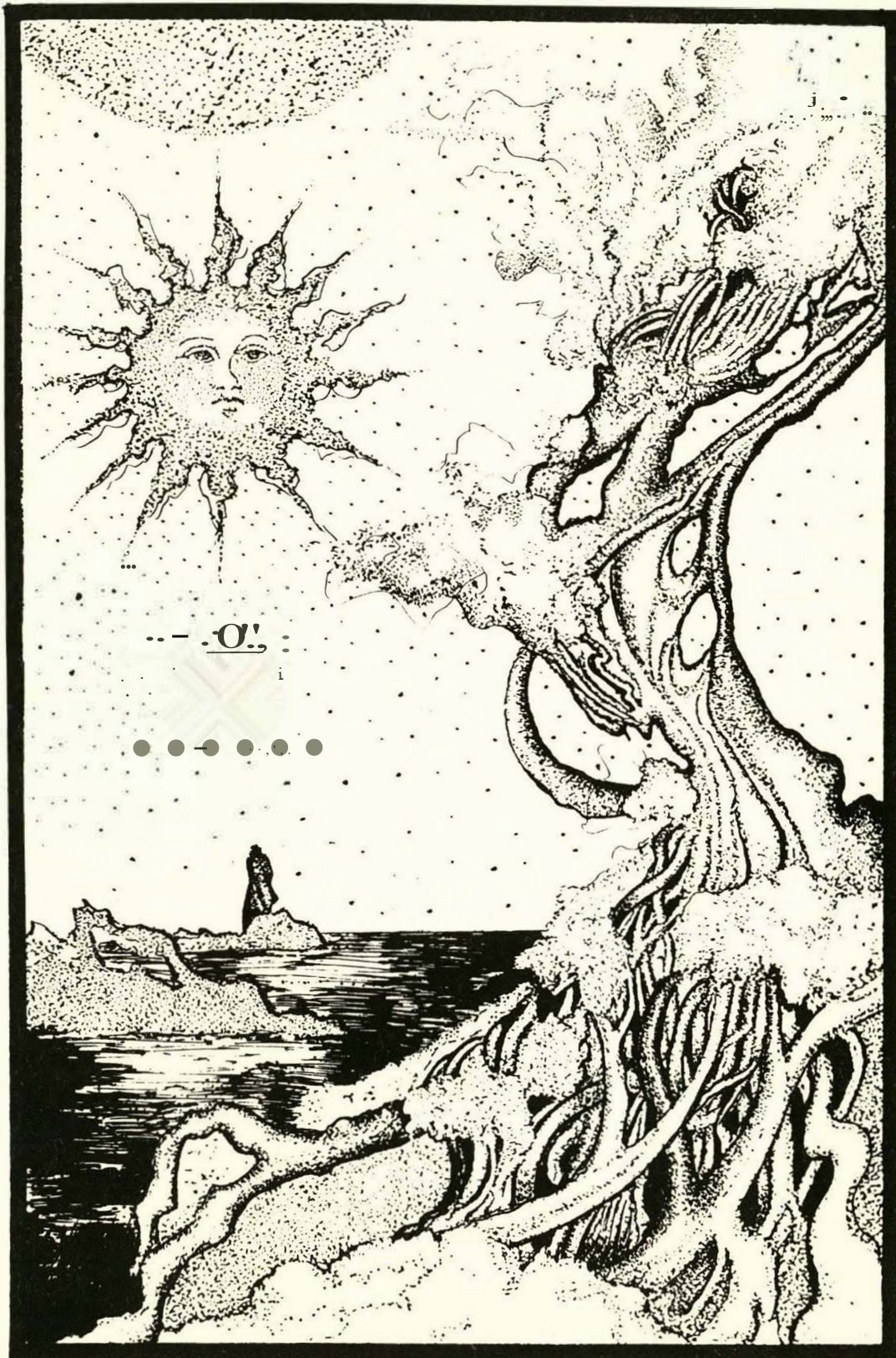
in time, a moment loses life  
it was so long ago  
memory slips into fleeting images  
but, how can a thought form tell me a thing?  
How can salt be sweet?

then I heard you speak  
you said that the sun shone magic through my hair  
again the instant passed  
the vitality dead  
moving on to another place  
I settled in the valley of wakeful remembering  
you dissolved like an aborted dream

thinking I saw you  
... no  
an illusion  
there was no you  
only my reflection  
-nd I had no eyes  
only circular pools radiating outward  
where I had thrown a pebble which was no more

Teresa Harrold

EDITOR'S AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING ARTWORK (TIE)





## AN EVEN TRADE

Sam Pritchard  
Senior

The fallen, hand-painted sign rested, as it had for the last twenty years, against the side of the shop. It said: "HONEST JOHN'S. Tractors & Implements. BUY. SELL. TRADE." It was the same sign that John had put out when he had started in business nearly fifty years ago. He had taken it down and painted the word "Tractors" over the word "Horses," and never got around to putting it back up.

The Cunningham's house and barn stood behind a thin grove of trees a short distance from the shop. Stacks of used tires, irreparable equipment, rusted pickups, piles of decaying manure, a fallen corn crib, and a sunken three-sided shed surrounded the barn. The barn creaked and groaned, but it remained standing. The house was circled by tires that had long ago been painted white. Petunias bloomed.

Over the years, additions had sprung from the house at assorted angles until it looked like something a child had built. Victoria had said, "The least we might do is cover it with the same style clapboard, and have it painted." John didn't think much of her idea, but they had it done anyway.

Behind the house was the garden, and in the center stood a gnarled apple tree. Beyond that were the hills. Eroded cattle tracks cut circular paths, and dead chestnut trees stood like monuments in the deep ravines.

John was watching his horses from the kitchen window. His head was twitching. It always twitched. And he cleared his throat as he thought. It was as if he were about to speak, but as often as not, he just went on clearing his throat,

and never said a word. He had thought of telling Victoria about his plans to trade one of his new tractors for a team of horses, but as he watched his horses move through her flower garden, he thought it'd be better to wait.

John went on clearing his throat, and thought, as he had at least once a day for the last forty years, about his plan to hand the business over to his son Johnny. John was convinced that his son would never amount to a thing. "He won't listen to a word of what I tell him. It's hard work that got me where I am. If it was up to him, he'd no doubt be givin' everything away. Tried to tell him there's no such thing as cheatin' a man who ain't but cheated himself first. It takes two to trade. But he ain't interested in trading. I tried to tell him, if you want to stay in business, you've got to be will in' to trade the old for the new. And what's he say? It's just a job. Just a job." A deep guttural sound came out of his mouth. It kind of startled him a bit, and he qui clearing his throat.

John shifted his eyes and saw a lone russet that had been left hanging on a distant branch. "And to think them apples won first prize at the Calhoun County Fair. How many years has that been? Been a long time. But they still make good sauce." John looked at his reflection in the window. "Damm if I don't look like a wrinkled russet myself." He pulled at his buttoned shirt collar, and hoped that Victoria wouldn't see his horses eating her flowers.

Victoria was moving about the kitchen fixing breakfast. She was almost fifteen years younger than John, and it pleased her to think

that she might find an attractive, more sensible man - should anything happen. "After all," she reasoned, "we have to prepare ourselves for the future. There's no sense kidding myself. Women live longer than men. And he's already past his four score an' ten. Doc Price told him to take it easy, but there's no changing an ole stubborn mule like John." Victoria smiled to herself, and stopped to stir the corn mush.

She had stopped thinking about leaving him many years ago. But she still thought about trying to change him. She stirred as she thought. "There's no sense in it. We've got enough money to retire. And Johnny could run the business." The spoon stopped. "Of course he don't have half the instinct for makin' a dollar as his father." She stirred. "But he'll have to take over sooner or later anyway. What he hasn't learned by now, he never will. There's nothing hard about selling farm equipment. Johnny just talks too much to get any work done. He'd do just fine if John would retire and let him alone." The mush had thickened. Victoria stirred her thoughts. She'd heard it often.

He'll say just what he always says when I ask him to retire.

By God, nothing will ever come to a man who ain't will in' to work.

Work. Is that all you can think about?

Who'll run the business? and the farm? I can't get Johnny to put in a day's work at the shop, let alone do some farm work.

It's not his place to do farm chores. He's got a life of his own.

By God, there's no sense even thinking about it. We haven't got

the money.

Money. If you're so doggone worried about spending a little money, how's come you keep those useless horses? I suppose it don't cost nothin' to feed 'em?

A man's got to keep somethin' to remind him of what was. And I like to look at 'em.

Reminders. Haven't you got enough junk settin' around here? You an' your good ole days. I get tired a hearin' it. They're gone. Cone. Can't you understand that?

By Cod...

Victoria felt her own head begin to twitch. She snapped her eyes open wide and lifted the scorched mush off the burner, striking the spoon against the side of the pan. "Mush!" she said sharply.

John was still standing at the window, still hoping his horses would get out of the flowers. The sound of her voice startled him. He turned abruptly, sending half his coffee to the floor. They looked at each other for a long moment.

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## A man's got to keep somethin' to remind him of what was.

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"Well," said John, standing with his back to the window. He began to clear his throat.

"Well what? I swear if sometimes you ain't worse than a kid."

John just stood there, his head twitching, and that deep guttural sound rolling in his throat.

"Co on and get out of the way so I can clean it up!" She paused, and glanced out the window. "Gosh Neds! If you insist on keepin' them horses right here next to my garden, the least. . ." She heard the door close, and shouted, "The least you might do is build some decent fence."

Victoria watched from the window. John was waving his cap, running first in one direction and then the other. The horses had scattered. He stopped to brush back his white hair, and motioned to Victoria. "Get out here and help!" She waved back. John looked at her in disbelief, and twisting his body in frustration, he threw his

cap to the ground.

Victoria went outside. "There's no sense gettin' excited. It ain't nothing new. If you'd build a decent fence for once in your life... "

"I ain't got time to be chasin' these horses all mornin'. There's work to be done!"

"I ain't got time neither."

"By Cod!" said John, his head shaking, and his trembling hands held out before him, "I don't know why you plant flowers next to the house anyway."

She laughed. "Let 'em be. They can't do any more damage than what's already been done. No, sir. I'm through chasin' those inbreds." She surprised herself with the tone of her voice. "The least you might do, if you insist on keeping some stupid reminder... "

"Hem... hem... A-hem!"

"I ain't through yet! The least you might do is get some decent stock. Somethin' that didn't hurt your eyes to look at."

John started walking towards the shop. "Where in the devil's Clarence and Ralph?" He looked at his watch. 8:05. "I sure would like to have workers get here on time for once." He stopped, and turned back towards the garden. "I reckon it'll be ten o'clock before Johnny ever gets here." Then he stopped and turned towards the shop again. Clarence and Ralph were arriving. "Hey! Over here!" said John, and he started waving his cap as he moved behind two of the horses.

"I'm gettin' tired a chasin' them damm horses," said Clarence.

"It all pays the same," said Ralph.

Clarence stopped to roll a cigarette. Standing still, Clarence looked as if he were tied in knots. He still carried shrapnel from the Great War in his hips and shoulders, and arthritis plagued the rest of his joints. When he walked, his legs swung outwards, and his stooped shoulders swayed with each step. "I'm gettin' kinda slow," he liked to say, "but I can still roll my own cigarettes, and I can still roll Ma over in bed." Clarence was the mechanic. He was better at taking things apart than putting them back together, but he got the job done. When he didn't know what else to say, he walked about the shop saying, as if to remind himself, "Ain't this a

helluva way to hafta make 3 livin'?"

Ralph was an alcoholic who dreamed of going to California to pick fruit for a living. "That'd be the life for me," he would say. Every Friday he made plans to leave, but come Monday morning, if his hangover permitted, he was back working for John. "Ne( week," he'd say, "next week y<sup>o</sup>u won't be seein' me a breakin' my fool back for nothin'. I'll be go<sup>ne</sup> to Cal-i-forn-i-a." He'd smile, sh<sup>o</sup>1; ing the few rotten teeth he had le<sup>t</sup> and the chew of Elephant But<sup>t</sup> tobacco that swelled in his jafci Ralph's job was to clean up the <sup>o</sup> equipment and then paint it red. John wanted everything paint, It red. It didn't matter to Ralph. all pays the same," he'd say. e didn't work much even when e was sober. "For twelve dollars day, I can't afford to do too mu<sup>ck</sup> work." Ralph had come to 1<sup>o</sup> like the cheap whiskey that fed him. He twisted off the cap, to<sup>o</sup> k long swallow, and offered it t Clarence.

"Too early in the day," s<sup>id</sup> Clarence.

"Aaahh," said Ralph, "this is breakfast."

"I ain't got all day!" said Jo<sup>h</sup> e They walked on towards t<sup>t</sup> house. Clarence paused ab<sup>o</sup>1; t every third step t? cough and t e<sup>y</sup> a drag on his cigarette. As t<sup>5</sup> passed the row of new tractor; Ralph said, "Ain't ole. wha<sup>t's</sup> f- name bringin' his team in this f; nin' to trade for a new tractor."

"Ole Woody Everly?"

"Yeah," said Ralph. "Now <sup>o</sup> that oughta be a real tradin' sessi<sup>re</sup> Why I'll betcha a bottle a this hen,, cheap whiskey that Honest Jo<sup>o</sup> gets the best of him."

"Shit," said Clarence, as he p<sup>3</sup> us- ed in the thin grove of trees wh<sup>ere</sup> the used equipment was scatt<sup>ed</sup> about, "that ain't no bet a-t<sup>3</sup> ; ... been here goin' on forty years, st I've yet to see any man get the be<sup>o</sup> of John Cunningham."

"Ole Everly's pretty sl<sup>ck</sup>;" S<<sup>3</sup> id Ralph.

"Then you take him. I m<sup>igh</sup> t be dumb, but I ain't stupid."

"It's a deal," said Ralph. i<sup>es</sup>

As they passed the assorted<sup>r, S</sup> of junk, Clarence took a cou<sup>r</sup> spell. "There's somethin' ro<sup>gh</sup> around here. It'll make me co<sup>o</sup> every time."

John crossed the small strip of lawn. "Come on. We ain't got all mornin'."

The three of them spent the better part of an hour chasing the horses. Clarence mostly just stood there. When he wasn't coughing, he was shouting. "Yee - haa! Yee - haa!"

"This ain't no rodeo," said Ralph.

John was running about, with his red cap in one hand and his white handkerchief in the other, waving and shouting directions. "Get over that way. No. This way. Hurry up, Ralph. Don't let 'em get out towards the road. Stop 'em, Clarence. Drive 'em back. That's it. This way."

Victoria laughed as she watched through the window. Clarence kept hollering, "Yee - haa! Yee - haa!" Ralph finally got five of them cornered and drove them back into the lot. The sixth one followed.

Mr. Everly was sitting on his haunches, about midway between his horses and the new tractor. He had picked up a piece of scrap wood, and, slowly, flecks of wood flew from his pen-knife. He heard John clearing his throat. Mr. Everly lifted his eyes and watched John as he examined the team, and then the buggy. But he never raised his head until he saw John's feet moving towards him. He rose.

"How ya do this mornin', Mr. Everly?"

"I do just like I always do."

"And the good ones twice," said John.

Mr. Everly returned to his haunches. John cleared his throat. Clarence and Ralph watched from the shade of the nearest tree.

"I told ya he was a slick one," said Ralph.

"Hush," said Clarence. "Ole John ain't even got started yet. Just wait till he gets done clearin' his throat."

John walked back over to the team. He felt the supple harness, and stroked their strong, slick necks. His head following their twitching tails. "Now they're even pretty to look at," he thought. "Sure would make Victoria happy. Get shed a them others, and just keep these two. Maybe I'll retire an' take her for buggy rides."

"Them horses ain't bad," said John, "but I thought you were bringin' your finest."

"Ain't none finer," said Mr. Everly.

Ralph nudged Clarence. "Looks like you're gonna be a buyin' that bottle."

"Hush," said Clarence.

Mr. Everly was still resting on his haunches, and still slowly shaving at his piece of wood. He paused for a moment and pushed up the bill of his cap with the tip of his knife blade. He looked first at the tractor and then at his team, and, slowly, he turned his head until his eyes met John's. "Well, Mr. Cunningham, we might set about here doin' nothin' all mornin'. But I for one has got work to do. How ya trade yonder tractor for them horses?"

"I'll take a thousand dollars to boot."

Without so much as a sideways glance, Mr. Everly rose, walked to his team, and said, "Come on, gals. We might as well go home. There's no tradin' to be done here today."

John trembled as he thought. "He's crazy. That's already givin' it away." He fought the urge to speak. "Maybe Victoria's right. It'd be nice to take it easy. Maybe even build some fence. Sure would make her happy."

"Wait a minute," said John. "I might be able to do you a little better. They are a fine team."

"What'd I tell ya," said Ralph.

Clarence was silent.

"I'll take five hundred to boot, and that's my final offer," said John.

"It's a deal," said Mr. Everly. "Did you want the buggy, too?"

"The buggy?" said John choking on his words.

"You win," said Clarence. "But there must be somethin' powerful wrong with John. I never seen the likes."

Mr. Everly smiled. "Them's fine horses. Mighty fine. I raised 'em myself. Worked with 'em everyday till they knew by the sound of my voice and the touch of my hand just what was expected of 'em. Fine horses," he repeated. "'Course that ain't sayin' nothin' about the buggy. It's an antique."

"So an I," said John.

"What's that, ya say?"

"I say, you throw in the buggy, and we'll call it an even trade."

"An even trade. Yes, it's an even trade. Now, if you'll excuse me, I best be on my way."

"Did you need any implements?" said John.

"Don't reckon. Not unless you wanna trade for some more horses."

"Not today," said John as he stood gazing at the twitching tails. He took a step towards the buggy, and then he turned and said, "I want you all to fix that fence before the day's over. Go on an' get what you need. An' tell Johnny, if an' when he ever shows up, that he's on his own. I'm goin' for a buggy ride."

He heard Clarence and Ralph laughing as they started the pick-up.

"Maybe we best get that bottle, 'fore you forget," said Ralph.

"I won't forget," said Clarence. "I don't reckon I'll ever forget that trade."

John stepped onto the buggy, and lifted the reins. The team began to fidget. He tried to speak softly, but the more he tried, the more they fidgeted. His hands were trembling, and his voice made that deep guttural sound. They started to neigh. They were moving, dancing, first backwards, and as they started to lunge forward, John grasped the reins tightly, jerked back and shouted, "Whoa! Whoa!" They reared. Their front legs rose and danced in the air. When they touched the ground, the hind legs flew back, crashing into the buggy. "Whoa! Whoa!" They rose again. And again, the hind legs came smashing into the buggy. And they kicked still a third time.

Mr. Everly looked back as he topped the hill. "I thought he had more sense than that." He reached into his pocket, pulled out the crude wooden horse that he had carved, and cast it into the roadside brush. "Horses are a thing of the past. A man's got to keep up with the times." He opened the throttle and watched the black smoke filter into the air.

Slowly, and painfully, John made his way to the house. He ascended the stairs, pausing on each step. Victoria followed behind him.

"Dear God! What's happened?"

"I just need to lie down for a spell."

"Should I call Doc Price? Where are the workers? Is Johnny here? Dear God, what's happened?"

"It's them horses," said John in a

clear cold voice. "Now will ya just let me sleep for a spell?"

Victoria descended the stairs and ran to the shop. She was running about in circles when Johnny arrived. He was doubled over with laughter.

"You'll never guess what I saw on my way here. It was the durndest sight I've ever seen... "

"Quiet, Johnny. There's been an accident."

"An Accident? Ha! That ain't nothin' compared to what I seen. You know Woody Everly from out there on Breakneck Ridge?"

"Please, would you be quiet a minute and listen to me... "

"Wait a minute, let me tell you this. I couldn't believe it. I'm comin' to work, right? And what do I see... "

"Johnny... "

"What do I see but Ole man Everly comin' down the road like a blue streak. He had that tractor runnin' wide open, and I mean

wide open. The smoke was just a rollin' outta... "

"Listen to me, Johnny... will you just... "

"Wait a minute, Ma, I'm just gettin' to the best part. Anyways, he was laughing just as hard as a tella could laugh. Well, no sooner than I passed him, than here comes his team a horses runnin' like their tails was on fire. And they was draggin'. . . you ready for this? They was draggin' what looked to me like the remains of a buggy."

"Johnny, your father's been hurt."

"Boy, I'll tell ya, a fella don't hardly know from one minute to the next. Now does he?"

"John Charles Cunningham Junior!"

"Hey, what is it Ma? Where's Dad?"

"He's asleep."

"Where's Clarence and Ralph?"

"I was hoping you'd be able to help me figure out what happened.

Let's go to the house."

Johnny turned the sign on the front door to the shop. "Sorry, We're Closed."

John slept. The morning became a stampede. Thundering hooves of a thousand horses ran before him. Then it was quiet. He saw himself riding in his new buggy, with Victoria beside him. He was stricken with joy. "I've done it. I've done it." Then he turned, and his head lay motionless on the pillow.

Clarence and Ralph spent the afternoon in the shade of an oak. They drank whiskey, and laughed at the day, until night overtook them.

"You reckon JoHn will ever change his ways?" said Ralph.

"How's that?"

"Well, you think he'll still want us to build that fence in the mornin'?"

"It ain't likely," said Clarence.

"It ain't likely." ,

## SPENCE MILLER'S STORE

**Deanna Armour  
Senior**

Spencer Miller's Store  
is very old. The front steps are  
oiled wood, worn and cracked.  
Dirt has settled into the grain  
and streaked the boards  
smooth.  
Old Men in overalls and billed caps  
sit on those steps,  
chew tobacco,  
and talk about used to be.  
I pass. They smile and nod and speak  
and so do I I know them all.  
Years ago they bought me  
candy  
for a dime  
from Spence Miller's store.

## LITTLE ONE

**Jan Curry  
Freshman**

Little one . . .  
You have brought such joy  
to my life.

Little girl. . .  
So much wonder in your large  
blue eyes.

With the single charm and your  
loving arms,  
you share your snacks with the  
family dog. (Scamp not a hog?)

The warmth of your laughter,  
I find a family is what I'm after.  
You have shown me why.

Tender joy came from your toys,  
you have grown up so fast.  
I am afraid you have put them in the past.

Special "Hi's" and soft "good-byes"  
have filled my heart with love.  
you are five now nine soon way above.

Listen to the sounds and look up at  
the clouds, for you Annie are my  
special friend forever.

## Lynn Thomas

On waking up. . .

My  
dreams  
drift and swoop  
in  
maddening maze  
and then  
pause  
on  
uptilted  
daffodil  
smiles  
moments  
before

they prance away, just out  
of reach.

## The Farm

**Debbie Jackson  
Senior**

My earliest memories are of a farm in Nicholas County:  
When I was scared in the night Pap-pap held me, warm.  
Mam-ma sang, washing dishes; the kitchen light smiled  
me to sleep.

The sunflower plants were much taller than me;  
We saved the gourd til the seeds rattled, dry.  
And cows licked the grass from upturned baby hands.

The iron-water pump gave forth cold, metallic water.  
The yellow-topped kitchen table offered raisins and  
cheese  
As curious hands reached up at Mam-ma's prompting.

Baths were in the front yard in a tub full of sunshine.  
My brother found a rattler and Pap-pap shot it in the  
garden.  
I showed Mam-ma wild violets under the storybook tree.

Mam-ma pulled our red wagons on the coal-sprinkled  
road:  
"Are you taking us all the way to Charleston?"  
And we ate vanilla ice cream cones from J.P.'s store.

## THE BOND

Sarah Leaberry

I guess it happened the summer my sister moved out and before my junior year of college. I can't pinpoint it exactly. It was not a radical or drastic change, but rather a gradual, all-encompassing change. Reality hit me one evening as I stepped out of the shower and hung up my bath towel. No more of that reaching for a half-length towel. No siree! Now there were two towel hooks. The shower cap was dry, too. I looked over my shoulder and noticed a ring in the bathtub. There was no longer a question of whose turn it was to clean the tub. All the turns were mine, now.

I stepped out into the hallway and glanced into Ann's room. Ann's "old" room. The brilliance of the clean fire-engine red carpet struck me as being odd. That stupid carpet! How we had argued ten years ago over a color and finally settled on something we both later regretted.

There was something else different: the furniture was all neatly dusted and newly arranged, like a small child's room. It no longer resembled a twenty-two year-old's room, with pictures of the fiance, dried flowers from past dances, and sorority paddles. The walls were shouting a new theme, one I could not comprehend.

Suddenly I felt out of place, like an intruder. It both shocked and depressed me. I quickly turned and entered my own room. I gazed around at my worldly possessions. Somehow they seemed so trivial: a cat calendar, a music box, and sorority paddles on the wall. An uneasy feeling washed over me as I wondered how long it would be before my day would come. Would I return one day to discover a spotless room and an empty closet? With that thought in mind I flipped on the stereo and became absorbed in the sounds, shutting out all else.

### AN EPISTLE

My dear C-,

You ask how anyone can be afraid of a seventy-eight year old child. I will try to explain. This ancient man-child likes to play with sharp knives and loaded guns. The shotgun stands in readiness by the back door. The neighbors wince at its frequent roar, and rush to check on dogs, cats, or any other pets that might be executed for presuming to cross the path of one of the old man's chickens. The pistol goes inside the old terror's waistband, underneath his jacket or shirt, unsuspected by passing motorists until its crack warns them not to use his clearing to make a U-turn. The knife nestles in his pocket, razor keen. Its blade glistens in his gnarled hand when one of the grandchildren, delighted with the overgrown playmate, begins to tire him. There has been no blood yet, but small arms made red from twisting and blue from pinching make the parents' eyes grow anxious, and perhaps a little desperate. They don't come around often, now. And me? I speak softly, walk in wide circles, and lie awake nights.

As always,  
J.B.

## Editor's Award for Outstanding Poetry

### CRADLES AND CODAS

**Taube Marie Cyrus**  
Freshman

My nerves are bad, knotted in Boy Scout puzzlements.  
And here, in my pill-box of sugary treats, the  
Rainbow of sherbets digestable as placebo  
Metaphors. It's enough to keep a clock busy.  
When I chew one, drawing on the dry chalk  
Artillery, it keeps washing up,  
An unstrung bottom fighting to disappear,  
Fearing death by soda water.

I should not speak of it, this ventriloquist trick  
Of swallowing lean green balloons.  
While the lips smack their chicken livers'  
My tongue clacks like a train track.  
Clickety-clack, d ickety-clack.  
Now quiet, pretending to be the pancake  
Face ironed flat on a T.V. screen.  
The puffer fish sag in and out.

Mad will, the doctor's incantations crawl  
Through my cool tubes-the sluggy plumbing.  
I blink and wait. I fold inward like hands.  
Patty cake, patty cake and all that.  
Gate-crashers and the pity-party  
Pump me back from my repose.  
Heads shake, mouths frown.  
Something bad's happened, I suppose.

## MUD

**Lee Smith**

I used to eat whatever my friend gave me  
until she gave me mud and told me it was a cookie.  
When I told my mother, she said,  
"Friends will feed it to you  
as long as you'll eat it."

## AQUA DREAM

**Lee Smith**  
Senior

When I become a writer  
I'll write about living  
fathoms below sea level  
and bouncing water  
with the iridescent shine of fish scales, with  
one hundred year old turtles  
and showers of minuscule minnows  
feeding on rainbows of seaweed '  
my air bubbles and foam  
flowing over my head  
to the feet of baked tourists  
who will never appreciate  
the luxury of gills.

## SENILE

**Taube Marie Cyrus**

Nanny May has gone blank as a picture tube, again.  
She is wilting hand and foot, old orchid,  
A strung glove with prune-dried breasts  
The saggy edges taped flat on a brassiere.  
At night we hear her chicken soup sigh  
Fading across the shutters like a violin.  
Moths gather at the windowpane  
Their O-mouths eating on the curtains:  
Hand-loomed linens Opa picked up  
In Germersheim on an impulse.  
She was so young back then, jingling  
Her skirts, loving the beer and pretzels,  
Dancing the Danube and saying  
I do, I do.  
She thought she had it made.  
But what do you do when Nanny's in Pampers?  
Do you say Ponce de Leon ain't no Santa Claus  
Or do you suck your thumb?



## NIGHT AS SEEN BY AN INDIAN

**dedicated to  
Or. Robert Sawrey**

**Lee Smith**

If you stand in any cornfield  
in Sylvatus, Virginia,  
facing Hiawasse, at sunset,  
and half-close your eyes, you can see  
a hump on the mountain that looks like a tee pee.  
The tee pee is big enough  
for only a single Indian.

That Indian builds a fire at  
about 5:30 every night  
to roast the rabbit he hunted  
in the afternoon. Then he  
sits by a smouldering fire  
and watches the sky.

The sun sets in his blood.  
The blue-black sky is his  
magnified eye-an eye  
that saw the land hundreds of years  
before those who blinded that eye.  
The moon becomes less and less  
transparent in the eye  
and reflects his face.  
Stars turn over on their bright sides  
to sparkle for him. He reaches  
up to take one so he  
can remember the sky  
the way he sees it tonight.

## NO SWEAT

Alan Benjamin  
Senior

A siren sounded in the distance, growing louder as his mind raced toward consciousness. A flat, dull pain spread across the left side of his face as the siren died. The pain was sharp and quick near his cheekbone and eye. He could feel moisture around his temple, slowly oozing towards the back of his head, drenching his scalp along the way. Most of his left side was numb, his right leg hurt relatively little. After keeping his body healthy and in good shape for twenty-two years he suddenly found it battered and broken.

He thought hard to remember what happened, the screaming tires, a long burgundy hood, a thump, his own legs silhouetted against the sky, and the dark pavement suddenly rising up to catch him. That explained the massive bandage on his face; the pavement's kiss had not been sweet.

Movement was impossible; so was speech. It was all he could do to open his right eye. Just as he had thought: an ambulance; fire extinguisher hanging in the corner, "To Operate Hold Upright, Pull Pin, Squeeze Handles, Discharge at base of flames." How did he know that? A portable EKG lay on the cot across from him, electrode-tipped wires still hanging loose. He remembered a burning pain in his chest, accompanied by flashes of light.

"Get that piece of shit out of my way!" came a shout from the front, followed by another short blast from the siren.

A broken-out face swung into view. Just a kid, he thought, a scared kid. The unmistakable look of anxiety frozen in his eyes, beads of sweat dotted his forehead. He felt his own sweat. The sheets were soaked.

"Don't die on me. No one's ever died on me before," the kid said.

I won't, he thought. His sister was somewhere. Where? Far away, he knew. He wondered if she'd

make it to his funeral.

"How much further?" the kid paramedic shouted to the front. No answer.

"Not much further now," the kid said to him.

Each bump summoned pain from his body. A sharp right turn; it hurt even more as his body swayed to the left. He thought of Judy. She'd cry when she heard about this. He could see her now, standing there with her handkerchief to her face. She was a real crier.

"Johnny! Get down out of that tree, you're going to fall and break your neck!" his mother shouted. He was high in the maple tree in his front yard, a tree made for climbing. Dad promised to help him build a tree-fort in it someday. He tried to tell her that he was doing some surveying; she didn't buy it. He also climbed the tree to look at the clouds, the white clouds, white like the inside of the ambulance.

He wondered how often they had to clean the insides of these things to keep them so white. The neon lights must last forever. Neon, neon.

"Neon, atomic number: 10, atomic weight: 20.179, a colorless, odorless primarily inert gas found in minute amounts in air and used in electric lamps," Mr. Jones was saying. Nice fellow, but a lousy chemistry teacher. A severe bump and John Henry drove a spike of pain into his lower back.

He began to enjoy this. Billy Pilgrim would be proud of him right now, so would the Tralfamadorians. The pain slowly diminished, no longer caused by the turns of the ambulance, but by another person's hand.

Susan Pinwell dug the fingernails of her right hand deep into his left hip. He writhed in pain but couldn't escape her white-knuckled grip. Susan was the first girl he ever laid. Technically, she laid him. At her suggestion they drove straight to his house after

school while his parents were out of town. Also at her suggestion they went straight to bed. More than anything else he remembered the sweat that covered them both, the drops that fell from his nose and forehead to her face. He was sweating now. Some sweat beneath his bandage seeped through a crevice of his swollen face into his left eye socket. It stung like hell but there was nothing he could do.

"Now, this won't hurt a bit," the huge black nurse told him. She was at least fifty pounds overweight. "We just need to fill these two tiny vials for samples. You probably won't even feel it." Bullshit, he felt it plenty. There was something psychologically painful about metal protruding from the body. He'd hated needles ever since.

Blood on the paramedic's pant leg. Blood is so dark, he suddenly realized, much darker than in the movies, almost black. Even dried it isn't red. A reddish-brown at best. This blood isn't dry yet, still soaking into the pressed white uniform. White, white.

Ice skating. The flat, cold rink beneath the steel of his shoes. Falling. The cool white ice much more forgiving than the asphalt. His dad made him wear a hockey helmet after that; he could imagine what his parents would say this time.

Another blast of the siren brought him back into the ambulance. They weren't supposed to blow off their sirens unless the traffic was thick or they came to an intersection.

In his chest, he felt a massive growing-pain. Suddenly he was very tired. The paramedic was saying "No," in a pleading whisper, but he only wanted to sleep the rest of the way. His eye closed by itself. The pain subsided. In the distance the siren slowly faded, and in the darkness he could feel no sweat.

## EIGHT MINUTES

Gary D. Hall  
Junior

His mouth fell open when he heard the news. Nothing else moved, just his mouth. He didn't freak out, though many other people would have. His first thought was that this could not be happening. He had never expected to die so soon. He felt like running, but there was no place to go. All he could do was accept it and wait.

After what felt like hours he turned off the television and got up from his seat. Slow with shock, he looked out the window. It was a beautiful fall day, the wind chilly but refreshing. The sun was gleaming and warmed the skin. The trees were alive with bright colors. It was all so wonderful, but of course this would be the last time he would see it.

He turned from the view and walked across the room to the bar. He found almost half a bottle of bourbon and drank it down, as quickly as he could. He remembered when he was a young boy his teacher had told the class that someday this could possibly happen. He and his friends half believed her, though at the time they made jokes and laughed. Now those jokes weren't funny. They haunted him. It wouldn't matter soon.

The alcohol was beginning to numb his body, but he couldn't relax. He wished he weren't alone. He began to think about his friends; he wished he could see some of them before it happened. He began hoping furiously that someone, anyone, would show up; deep down he knew no one would. There wouldn't be time for that.

He especially wanted to see his best friend. He thought about the times they had gone camping together. Some of their best times

had been in the woods, but they never camped too far from a beer carry-out. Before dark they would hike to the small dirty gas station and buy enough beer to keep them busy for a couple of hours. These were his favorite memories: being huddled around the light from a campfire, talking about everything from music to why crickets make such loud noises.

Half of his time was gone now, he knew that. He began to tremble with the realization that it would soon be over. The waiting seemed to make time stretch to alarming lengths. He began to believe that Time was stretching for him rather than against him; stretching to give him time to think about all that had happened in his life. His thoughts raced, and he was surprised at the things he remembered, things he hadn't thought of in years, while Time kept playing with his mind.

He knew he didn't have much longer. The TV announcer had said it would happen in about eight minutes. He estimated that about six had passed.

He walked back to the window and looked out. No one could be seen in the streets; funny, he thought, why isn't there mass chaos? Everyone's too shocked to move, he figured. Like me. He saw birds flying overhead, but nothing else was in the sky. It was a beautiful day, so he decided to stay by the window. He knew these would be his last looks at a lovely world. Tears began to burn in his eyes. It was all so silly, but it was going to be settled now. He began to cry.

The cloud swelled into a tremendous mushroom.

There was no one left to cry.

## INSPIRATION

**David Clark**  
**Sophomore**

I fell away from the trail  
It's a long walk now  
I'm waiting for the sail  
to fill with inspiration  
    I'll know it when it hits  
    but it cannot pass my lips  
    without changing into bits  
    of utter nonsense  
I'll grasp and hold and think  
to try to cheat the flash  
as it passes in a wink  
of inspiration  
    I know it can't be shared  
    or held or spoke or dared  
    but still I try to hold  
    this inspiration  
Here it is again  
flowing like the wind  
inspiring me again  
to share  
to care  
to hold without grasping  
to tell without gasping  
my inspiration

## TRANSITION

**Jennifer E. Smith**  
**Junior**

To Punkin:  
Who can't wait for his miraculous change.  
Silver moons don't shine alone,  
    even if from a million miles  
    away you can see their blinding  
    sparkle.  
  
Grasping up its treasures don't wipe  
    away no misery,  
  
    and you know, love don't do no  
    heroic deeds.  
  
Florida don't make your soul shine,  
  
    because treasures corrode, and  
    become corrupt in a bit of time.  
Young boys go bouncing off everywhere,  
    looking for a way to capture their  
    manhood,  
  
    but beware, growth don't come, my  
    son, by material things, but by how  
    well you cultivate your precious  
    temple and master your sacred land.  
  
Manchild looking to blossom with the summer's  
    sun, may have to wait seasons before  
    this comes.  
  
    so relax, my son, don't rush your  
    rebirth, because in time the change  
    will miraculously occur, and be done.

## A WINTER'S ANTICIPATION

**Carla Seamonds  
Graduate Student**

Crickets singing the summer to sleep,  
dark feathered wings beat  
in a rhythmic cloud to the south.

The wind's temperament changes quickly now  
with all the comings and goings,  
as the grass lies deep and green  
from the muggy days and sultry nights past  
waiting to fill the air one last time  
with its scent.

The waves of the lake,  
tinted gray from the shoreline shale,  
no longer reflect a bright blue sky  
but one darker from the confusion  
of whether to let the sun in or out  
at its own will.

A small bass  
tosses ringlets in the water,  
as it swallows one of the last June bugs  
that had mistaken the lake  
for a continuation of the sky.

The sand's wrinkled face  
speaks of web-footed geese,  
sleeping silently among the rushes.

Mist rises from the lowlands.  
The sunset softly promises  
no rain for tomorrow  
to the pines, stretching long black fingers  
across the water's edge.

## UNTITLED POEMS

**Rondalyn Varney  
Senior**

When I think of him I guess  
I'll always think of toothpowder under  
a foggy mirror and  
the smell of his pillowcase and rumpled  
bedsheets and  
his boyish excitement with old, discarded  
items,  
    midnight prowls in the rain,  
    kitchen talks of former heartaches,  
    present loves,  
    and vegetarian diets in the  
    meat-market world.  
Even now when I wear his rugby socks  
I re-feel the pain of excessive laughter and  
I still recall the songs his guitar cried  
for the girl in Texas.  
But most of all, when I think of him,  
I'll remember that he never touched me  
until we said goody-by and  
    how I loved him for that.

**Rondalyn Varney**

Ink pens  
    have been my tongue  
    when the one in my mouth  
    stuttered.  
And a scratchpad  
    my ally when shoulders  
    collapsed  
Button-Eyed animals  
    and soft pillows  
    have been my encouragement;  
    cruel hearts and insensitive laughter  
my inspiration.  
  
So laugh,  
    you bastards,  
and scream your thoughtless words.  
I challenge you to a battle  
    armed with my pen.

## GHOSTS

David Hatfield  
Graduate Student

Ghosts on Hemlock Street stare down  
Glassy eyed from the third floor  
Of the old grey house.  
"Haunted since I was a boy,"  
My father used to tell me.  
Dusks spent as a boy  
Under the streetlamp on the far corner,  
Watching the ghost house, waiting  
For the ghost children to rise  
From the cold earth and dance and play  
Across the front lawn.  
"Don't get your shrouds dirty,"  
Their ghost mother would call to them,  
Sticking her head right through  
The closed front door.

Casper the Friendly Ghost,  
Who wanted only to remain  
Forever a child,  
Was all I knew of ghosts; Casper  
And terrible stories my brother told me  
While we lay awake in bed on hot summer nights.  
After he stripped the sheets from his bed  
To stay cool, holding them up high  
By the corners to carefully fold them,  
The streetlamp shining through  
The open window.

At two in the morning I cross  
The dark room, stare out the open window,  
Across the empty street to the puddle  
Of light beneath the streetlamp,  
Imagine a small boy staring back,  
Half hidden behind the lamppost, waiting,  
Watching, then suddenly turning and running away  
Down a twilight street.  
My brother is gone, forever leaving me  
To smell summer airs of freshly mown grass  
And honeysuckle blossoms through open windows  
By myself.

Now I know.  
Casper is a little dead boy  
Who belongs in a tomb, buried  
Stone cold in the cool, damp earth  
With all the other ghosts who don't understand  
And rise to leave behind empty graves.

Lord, if I were a ghost  
What poetry I would write. What verse  
Would float from my ectoplasmic head  
In words fully conceived and land on paper.  
I would write a billion names  
Of a billion ghosts on paper  
And read them aloud under the streetlamp  
On the far corner of Hemlock Street,  
And Casper and my brother  
And all the ghost children would join me,  
To dance and play once more  
Across the cool night lawns of summer,  
And my brother and I  
Would smell damp grasses and apple blossoms  
And I would forget about empty graves.

## TOBACCO JAR

David Hatfield

I have a bag of dreams  
Hidden in the tobacco jar  
In my den, and late at night  
As my wife lay sleeping,  
And the children sleep  
A child's peaceful sleep,  
I creep down the darkened stairs,  
Silent as a thief,  
Put some dreams in my pipe  
And smoke them.

In the dim light of the desk lamp,  
In the wisps of blue air  
Floating from my pipe and drifting  
From my mouth, the dreams  
Take form:  
Sitting naked on the roof  
At night in a terrible storm,  
Forks of lightning crackling  
Around my head, and thunder  
Rumbling deep inside me;  
Making love in a deep summer forest  
To a dark haired woman  
On a cool, green bed of moss;  
Running my bare hand  
Along the rough wood of the ocean pier;  
Touching the smooth cheek  
Of my wife as she lay sleeping  
Without fear of **waking** her;  
Walking through an orange grove  
On a wet summer morning,  
Air heavy with the scent of blossoms.

And when the tobacco is gone,  
And the smoke is gone,  
I put away my pipe, press  
The door of the den so carefully closed,  
And return to bed.



## DR. RUBELLA

**Tony Fitzgerald  
Senior**

It was becoming too cold for flies to live. But there was one in my room, battering himself against the window again and again. It careened in buzzing loops and crashed its tiny head into the windowpane. Then the fly would shudder on the sill for a moment before beginning another crazed series of loops.

The fly, I thought, clearly suffered from a bad case of amnesia. It snapped into the glass again and again until it finally bounced to the floor like a marble. Kindly old Dr. Hitchcock stepped on the fly and continued talking.

"The very fact that you placed yourself in our care three months ago shows that you are willing to help yourself," he said. "We are making progress in your case, but we cannot cure your frequent attacks of amnesia, or the schizophrenia which causes them, without your help."

I told kindly old Dr. Hitchcock about the way my mind changed channels. I would be sitting in my living room when a sensation came over me, a rising and strobing feeling which began a three or four day blackout. My mind would go "klik, buzz, klik, klik" and it would suddenly be next week.

"I don't enjoy them," I said of the attacks. "I can't stop them either."

Kindly old Dr. Hitchcock explained calmly that these were caused by repression.

"You must face whatever it is that you are repressing," he said. "We can do this through hypnosis or . . ."

His voice droned on as I became engulfed in the sensation of my body rising. The room blinked on and off like a strobe light. And my head went "klik, buzz, klik, klik . . ."

\* \* \* \*

My first sensation was the pungent odor of fried institutional fish filets. I realized that I was in the dining room with several other patients. I sat alone at a table.

Three days had elapsed. I could tell because the hospital cafeteria always served fish on Friday.

While picking at the filet's breaching with my fork, I became aware of a large older man sitting next to me. He was in his early fifties, I guessed, and he had a coarse mane of white hair. Over his mouth was draped a shining white moustache which caught the crumbs of the bun he was eating.

We ate in silence. Becoming nervous, I summoned the courage to introduce myself.

"Hello. I'm Charles Jankal. What's your name, sir?" Straightforward. Respectful. I was proud of myself. My self-confidence swelled in my chest.

"What does it matter?" he snarled, squinting at me as if I were a dead roach floating in his soup. My chest deflated.

A few moments later he asked me if I was ever going to eat my fish.

"No," I said. "Fish revolts me."

"Fine, I'll eat it, then." He speared the filet with his fork.

The ice thus broken, we began to

converse. I told him about my disgustingly wealthy family who were not only paying for my hospital stay, but slipping me some money besides.

"I have quite a bit of money myself," the old man said. "I was a practicing physician, so I, too, am 'disgustingly wealthy' ."

Recklessly, I rambled on. I needed someone to talk to, badly. I told him that I often compulsively counted objects.

"There are 295 blue tiles in my room," I said. "I had to move the rug to count them."

"Once I read about a man who compulsively followed cars," he interrupted. "You know how license plates have numbers such as '2N-5385'? His mind would change the dash into an equals sign. The poor fool would follow cars around all day, trying to solve the equations on their bumpers."

"Well, listen to this," I said, leaning forward. "My mind changes channels."

Although he seemed rather disinterested, I felt that since I had told him so much about myself, he should share some of his secrets with me. Also, I had let him eat most of my dinner, which entitled me to something, I thought.

"So what about you. Tell me about yourself," I said.

"Not much to tell," he said brusquely. "My name is Dr. Rubella."

"My friends call me Hank," I said. "What do your friends call you?"

"Dr. Rubella," he replied.

At that instant, kindly old Dr. Hitchcock stuck his head between

us.

"Are you feeling better today, Hank?" he said.

Before I could answer, Dr. Rubella grabbed him by the collar and pulled the psychiatrist close to his contorted face.

"Where are my mallomars?" he demanded.

"What? What mallomars?" sputtered kindly old Dr. Hitchcock.

"The ones I requested. Why am I being denied these mallomars?" said Dr. Rubella. "I tell you, you just can't get decent service anymore. It's all beurocracy. Why, I remember that we used to have five-cent stamps, and now we have twenty-five cent stamps. And do you know why?" he continued, peppering the psychiatrist's face with tiny droplets of saliva, "it's all because of that Socialist Jew bastard Roosevelt, whose name was actually Rosenfeldt. He let the bankers take over and now even the police officer don't know what buttons to push."

"Let go of me. You're becoming violent again," said kindly old Dr. Hitchcock. "Please don't make me send you back to your room."

"Very well," said Dr. Rubella. "But the New Dealers sold this country down the river, and no one seems to care. However, if you bring my mallomars, I shall gladly share them with you."

The psychiatrist observed us for a time, but grew tired of waiting for another outburst. As he walked away, Dr. Rubella winked at me.

"You've got to do that once in a while," he said. "It keeps them on their toes."

It was days later, while taking a walk through the hallway, that I saw Dr. Rubella again. He was staring at the wall, appreciating it like a Van Gogh painting.

"These walls," he said, "aren't they white?"

"Yes, and they're always so clean," I said.

"White walls," he said.

"Yes. White walls," I said.

"Lovely white walls."

"Yes. Yes. Very lovely."

"Lovely white walls to write 'shit' on," he said, producing a red magic marker.

I wished I had thought of that. I would never have had the courage to do it in a thousand years.

In the next two weeks, it snowed three times and my mind changed

channels the same number of times. One day following one of these attacks, the hospital broke into a raving panic. Orderlies and psychiatrists were running about like headless chickens. There was a lot of shouting going on. I stopped an orderly to find out what the trouble was.

"Water main broke." he said. "Goddam cold..."

Breaking free of my grasp, he disappeared down the corridor. I turned to see the figure of Dr. Rubella lurking in a doorway.

"Did you hear?" he asked. "The whole main floor is filled with several inches of water."

He grabbed my arm and pulled me down the hall.

"We're going downstairs. Quick," he said.

We proceeded down the stairs. On the main floor, we saw a crew of doctors, orderlies and administrators working side by side to help salvage furniture and carpeting. One orderly stood in water up to his ankles, carefully unplugging electrical appliances. Dr. Rubella strutted up to him in a most official manner.

"The medical records are on this floor, aren't they?" he asked the orderly.

"Yes, I guess they are," he said.

"Well, don't just stand there. Those records are being destroyed," said Dr. Rubella. "They must be taken to an upper floor immediately."

"Yes, sir," said the orderly. Summoning help, he led some men into the medical records library. Dr. Rubella looked around the large corridor with alarm.

"Look at these electrical sockets. Water is pouring out of them," he said loudly. "We must clear the lobby and turn off the electricity, or run the risk of electrocution. Where is the fuse box?" he asked a passing maintenance man.

The man showed us the fuse box's location. We stood before it, pondering the myriad of switches.

"What the hell?" said Dr. Rubella. "We'll turn 'em all off." Within an instant, he had darkened the whole floor. Muffled, panicked voices came from the library.

"Quick," Dr. Rubella said, "see those two coats on that chair? Give them to me.

I grabbed the coats, noticing

that one of them belonged to kindly old Dr. Hitchcock. Dr. Rubella put that one on.

"Why do we need these?" I asked.

"Because it's cold outside," he said, grabbing my arm and pulling me through the big double doors of the hospital.

Outside, we hailed a cab. He pushed me, protesting, into the cab and sat on the seat beside me. He plopped the other coat in my lap and leaned forward.

"Driver, take us downtown," he said as we pulled away from the curb. "Third and Market Street would be fine."

I watched the compound disappear from view through the rear window.

"Goddamn it! I'm going to be in trouble now," I said. "And you are, too. We're not supposed to leave the grounds."

"Cool your jets, boy," said Dr. Rubella. "We're just going out for a night on the town. It'll be good therapy."

I stared out the back window, saying nothing.

"Aw, c'mon," he said. "You like Big Time Wrestling, don't you?"

"Yes," I said, wondering how he knew this about me. Perhaps I had told him the night he ate my fish.

"Look. I have two tickets to see Swede Olafson versus Abdul the Enforcer tonight at the Colosseum. They're having female midget tag-team wrestling, too. You wouldn't want to miss that," he said.

"Where did you get those tickets, Dr. Rubella?" I asked.

"I have connections," he said. "But listen. We'll go out to a nice restaurant, and go watch the matches. We can get back to the hospital before we're even missed.

"Even if we get caught, we aren't considered dangerous loonies," he continued. "They may watch us a little more closely, but they won't punish us. Wrestling is worth it, don't you think?"

I had to admit that he was right. Anyway, the damage was already done; we had left the hospital.

"Hey, buddy, what are you talking about back there?" the cab driver said. We had completely forgotten about him.

"Ask me no questions, and I'll tell you no lies. Keep your mouth shut and you won't catch no flies," said Dr. Rubella.

We arrived at our destination, a fine steak house called The Steer. Dr. Rubella had no sooner walked in the door than we were accosted by the Head Waiter.

"I'm sorry, gentlemen, you must be wearing a tie to enter here," he said.

"Yes. We know, sir," said Dr. Rubella, pulling a pair of ties from his pants pocket. I would swear that they were my ties. He handed one to me and we put them on.

"Very good, sir," said the Head Waiter. "Table for two? Follow me, please."

We walked to a table in a fairly secluded corner. My shoes were still damp from the flood in the hospital and make a squishing sound as I walked. The people sitting next to us stared at me as we seated ourselves.

Waiters attired in formal tuxedos brought us delicious salads and cheeses. I ate and drank like a ravenous fiend. It had been weeks since I had eaten such delicious food, but it seemed like years.

Soon, the waiters brought the steaks, sizzling in their metal plates surrounded by big golden french fries. The steak was wonderful, and it melted in my mouth like butter.

I was placidly chomping at the last few french fries when I heard a strange noise coming from the next table.

"Lhhk! Lhhk! Lhhk!" went the noise.

I turned in time to see a sack of rocks hit the floor: a lady who had stared at me fell from her chair.

"My wife! She's choking to death! Help!" cried a man.

"Lhhn! Lhhk! Lhhk!" said his wife.

"Move aside! I'm a doctor," said a voice. A large crowd was gathering. Dr. Rubella streaked past me.

"This woman is choking to death," he said. "I must have room."

Dr. Rubella raised the woman to an upright position, bent slightly from the waist, and hugged her from behind. His hands meeting over her diaphragm. He squeezed her hard, many times, in quick succession.

"Lhhk! Lhhk! WOOF!" said the woman as a small piece of damp meat hurled from her mouth.

"Oh... Oh... I almost died," she said, grasping for breath.

"You aren't out of danger yet,

ma'am," said Dr. Rubella. "Lay back down on the floor, please."

She obeyed. Dr. Rubella explained that he was going to treat her further.

"This is to prevent infection and relapse," he said.

He reached over to a nearby table and grabbed a handful of chocolate mousse. He smeared this liberally over her breasts, stomach and legs.

"And this is to ease the pain in your throat," said Dr. Rubella, inserting two carrots in her nostrils.

"Uhh, Doc... I think you've done about all you can," I said.

"Ambulance is here," called a voice from the kitchen.

"How long should I keep these cawotts up my dos, Doctor?" the woman asked.

"About ten minutes. Tap root therapy works very quickly," said Dr. Rubella. "The ambulance attendants can remove them for you."

"How can we ever repay you? You saved her life," said the husband.

"Thanks for a job well done is enough," said Dr. Rubella as we walked out the front door without paying our bill.

"Way to go, Dr. Rubella," I said.

"Remind me to tell you about the time in the Canary Islands when I performed open heart surgery using nothing but a rusty butter knife," he said.

It was a cold but pleasant walk to the Colosseum. We presented our tickets and merged with the milling throng of wrestling fans.

We bought candy bars, M&M's, and Cokes and found our seats.

"Damn! Ringside seats!" I said.

My admiration for Dr. Rubella was growing in quantum leaps.

The female midget tag teams were climbing into the ring. We cheered. We shouted. We screamed like maniacs, like madmen, like the rest of the crowd.

Tag team wrestling has always been one of my favorites. When one wrestler becomes too tired to continue, she tags her partner, who continues the match. A lot of cheating goes on, and sometimes both members of a team will be in the ring at the same time. It is dishonest and dirty. I love it.

The first round began and the two diminutive females circled each other, looking for an opening.

The larger of the two, a frowzy blonde dressed in a leopard skin, grabbed the legs of her opponent, who was dressed in campy Nazi regalia. The leopard girl lifted her nemesis bodily from the canvas.

She spun the screaming Nazi around like a propeller, and hurled her back to the canvas with a bone shaking 'thwaaap."

I had been lost in the action, but then I noticed a small army of police officers at the door of the arena.

"Dr. Rubella! At the door," I said, "the cops."

"Don't worry," he said. "They'll never see us. They're probably looking for someone else."

The entire crowd booed and hissed as the Nazi tagged her partner, who entered the ring. She was also a Nazi. With a savage cry, she fell upon the leopard girl. The policemen dispersed into the crowd.

The leopard girl straightened her mighty legs, sending her opponent flying into the ropes.

"Get that damn Nazi!" Dr. Rubella shouted.

I looked to my right. A black policeman pointed his finger at me. He shouted instructions to his fellow officers. Six or seven of them began fighting their way through the throng, surging towards us like salmon swimming upstream.

"They saw us! The cops saw me!" I yelled.

But Dr. Rubella did not hear. Dr. Rubella was gone.

"Dr. Rubella! Dr. Rubella! Help me!" I yelled.

I scanned the crowd for his mane of white hair, but to no avail. The police were getting closer. I scanned the crowd again, in increasing panic. The faces of the wrestling fans began to blink. I could feel my body rising and spinning. And them... klik, buzz, klik, klik.

\* \* \*

Reverberating footsteps and echoing voices rang in my ears. I opened my eyes. I was not in jail. It was some sort of a bus station.

"It's a Greyhound bus station, Hank," said a voice to my right. It was Dr. Rubella.

"By the way," said Dr. Rubella, "you may have set a new land

speed record while running from the cops. You should have seen the looks on their faces."

"But how did I get here?" I asked. "Why am I here?"

"I brought you here, and I bought you this bus ticket. You're going to Chicago until the heat's off."

"Chicago? Why me?"

"The cops know you escaped the hospital. They think that you assaulted that woman in the restaurant while impersonating a doctor. Also, we neglected to pay the check."

"But why me? How about you?"

"I have a confession to make, Hank," said Dr. Rubella. "I'm not Dr. Rubella."

"What? Then, who are you?" I asked.

"I'm you," he said.

"What?????"

"Did you ever see the movie 'The Three Faces of Eve'?!"

"No."

"Well, never mind then. You're scared and confused. You probably wouldn't comprehend right now," he said.

"Try me," I said.

"Suffice it to say that I don't exist. 'N'existe pas', as the French say," said Dr. Rubella.

I said nothing.

"This ticket will buy you some time," he said. "When things cool off here, you can return to the hospital. I am certain that they will readmit you with a minimum of fanfare. They don't like bad publicity, especially kindly old Dr. Hitchcock."

"That bastard," I said.

"And here's some cash. About \$300," he said, stuffing the cash into my pocket. "Besides, you'll need this."

"Okay. You're right. Thanks," I said.

"And I'm sorry about this mess I got you into," he said, standing up. "However, I'm sure that things will work out fine."

"I hope."

"Perhaps we'll meet again," he said, "but under better circumstances."

I turned to watch the bus to Chicago slow to a moaning halt at the gate. I had a feeling that when I looked back, Dr. Rubella would be gone. And I was right.

"What can you expect from someone who says that he doesn't exist?" I thought, boarding the bus and moving to the seat in the very back.

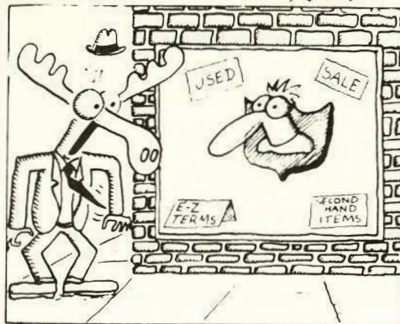
The bus lurched into motion. The seat vibrated. Snow surrounded the moving vehicle like a wet shroud as it careened around the corners of the city.

We rolled past the Colosseum. Throngs of people straggled from the exits, pulling their coats around them against the wind and snow. A crowd of policemen stood by the door. I saw the black policeman who had spotted me, shaking his head in disgust.

The Colosseum grew smaller in the green-tinted rear window. I turned around in my seat, enjoying the heated air that blew on me from the vent above. I thought of Chicago. I could stay in a cheap hotel for a week, I thought, or even longer... I certainly couldn't spend the week sleeping outdoors on a park bench or something. It would be cold in Chicago. It would be too cold for a fly to live.

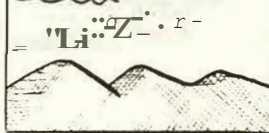
MOOSTORY.

by FITZ



JUST A BILL; -----,  
 EACH INDIVIDUAL IS  
 A UNIVERSE IN HIM/HER  
 SELF, AND THIS IS  
 CAPABLE OF ONLY  
 ONE SET OF PERCEPTIONS  
 AND EXPERIENCES —

SO, IT IS LOGICAL TO  
 ASSUME THAT THE  
 ONLY PURPOSE FOR  
 EXISTING IS EXISTENCE  
 ITSELF AND ...



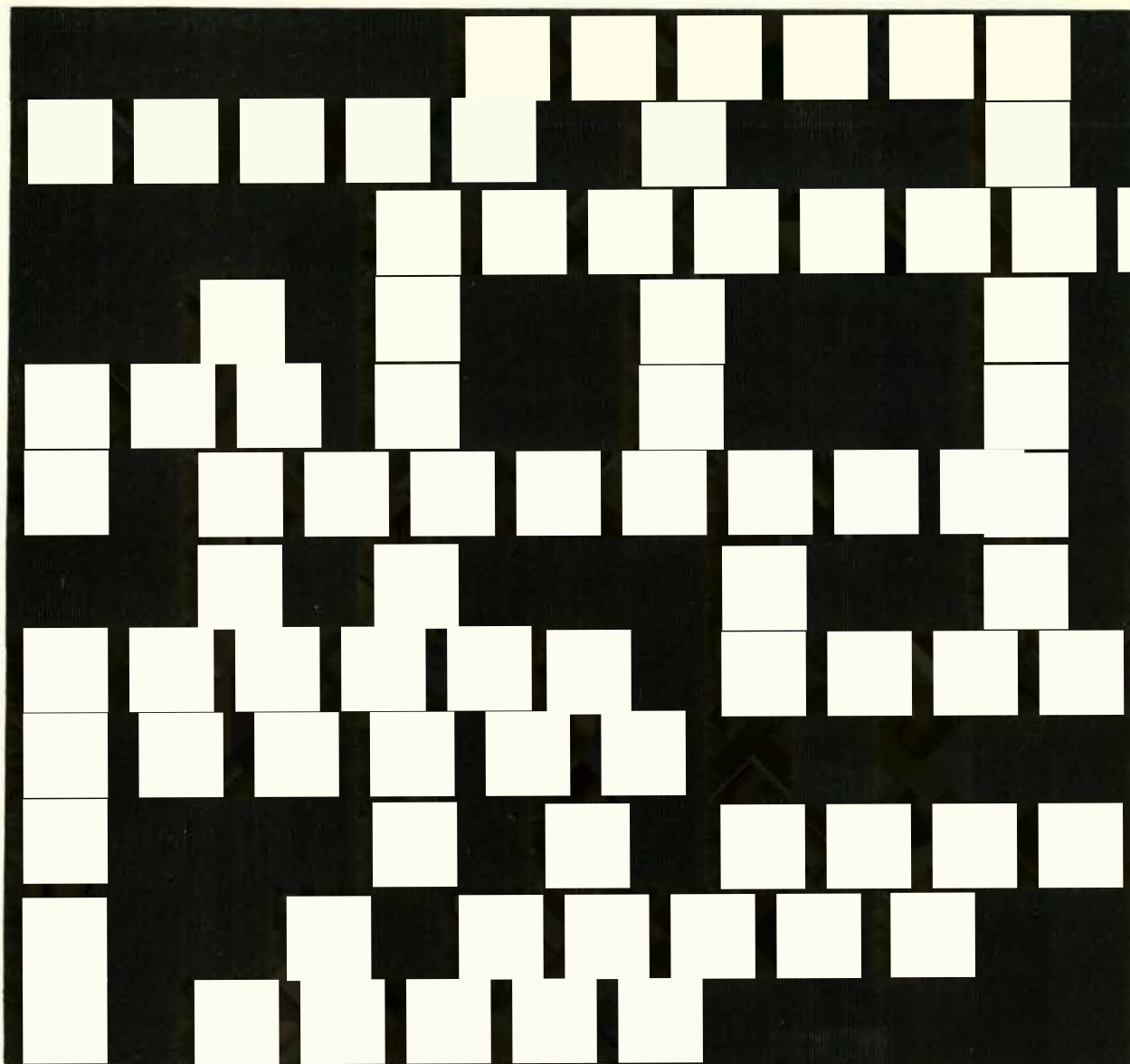
## WORD - FINDER

Designed By  
Christine Delea

M	O	T	W	L	E	V	E	R	T	O	V
O	C	K	R	A	J	O	N	I	O	L	S
D	U	N	I	I	C	X	B	H	J	G	H
E	T	O	G	I	O	V	A	N	N	I	D
R	I	C	H	T	A	S	R	K	I	N	G
N	C	A	T	X	K	B	A	R	K	S	T
U	N	V	A	W	R	I	K	H	T	B	I
S	E	R	L	E	D	K	A	B	L	E	S
p	L	A	T	H	U	E	K	R	O	R	T
O	C	O	A	B	N	K	J	O	N	G	R
E	N	W	G	A	C	O	N	O	C	T	A
T	A	B	E	A	A	R	p	K	E	H	N
S	E	X	T	O	N	N	V	S	G	D	D

To find out what the subject of this Word Finder is, read the first down column. There are seventeen of them somewhere . . .

They are: Alta, Baraka, Brooks, Duncan, Ginsberg, Giovanni, Jong, King, Koch, Levertov, Logan, Plath, Rich, Rios, Sexton, Strand, Wright



**LIT-LOVER'S CROSSWORD**

**Designed by Tony Fitzgerald**

**ACROSS**

- 1. Wrote the play **A Doll's House**
- 4. Eighteenth century Scottish poet
- 6. Alfred, Lord \_ \_ \_ \_
- 8. Tolkien's initials
- 9. Author of *Cat's Cradle*
- 11. Created a character named Mr. Dooley
- 13. Wrote **Ignatius his Conclave, Juvenilla**
- 15. Poet, wrote **Ode to a Nightingale**
- 17. Early eighteenth century poet, writer and moralist
- 18. Author of **Siddhartha, Steppenwolf**

-Solution to be found elsewhere in this issue-

**DOWN**

- 2. Author Susan \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. Author \_\_\_\_\_ Swift
- 5. Wrote **The Grapes of Wrath**
- 7. **Garp** author
- 8. \_\_\_\_\_ Salinger
- 10. Wrote **Rabbit, Run**
- 11. Sherlock Holmes' creator
- 12. Wrote **Robinson Crusoe**
- 14. \_\_\_\_\_ Cassidy, in Kerouac novel
- 16. \_\_\_\_\_ Cummings, whimsical poet
- 17. Postscript

## HOMECOMING

Ralph Wadkins

**The sharp salty taste of the blood running from the corners of my eyes and nose along with the fecal smell of spilled intestines made me gag.**

I shifted my foot slowly along the bottom of the hole, trying to keep from stepping on Jordan's guts. I felt my boot step in something soft, something from Jordan's abdomen.

My eyes still retained the after image of the blast, seemingly etched on my retinas for good. There was no sound to my deafened ears except a loud ringing.

I leaned my shotgun against the side of the hole. I didn't dare use it or I'd give my position away; the gooks thought they'd eliminated both of us. Instead, Jordan fell on the grenade clasping it tightly to himself when it exploded. Jordan had been a brave man; now he was dog meat.

I pulled my Gerber knife from my boot, and slowly crawled over the lip of the hole. I rolled next to a fallen palm tree, where I waited, crouching. I smelled the hot pepper-charcoal-foreign sweat before I caught a movement on the edge of my peripheral vision.

A Viet Cong snapper, wearing only a pair of dark shorts, his body greased, and a satchel charge over his shoulder, crawled by me.

Holding my Gerber in my hand, blade up, I jumped onto the snapper's back. I threw my left forearm around his neck, effectively stifling any cry he might make. I thrust the knife into his back, trying to come up under the scapula into the heart. But, I missed and struck the spinal column, the blade snapping in my hand. He tried to throw me off, but I held on as best I could, my sweaty hand sliding on his greased flesh. He gave a twist and, managing to get my arm from his neck, he twisted to face me. I jammed the fingers of my left hand into his eye sockets, hooking and

tearing, while I fumbled for a grenade at my belt. I threw my knee across his throat and began bashing his head in with the grenade, while I kept tearing at his eyes.

Finally, when only a wet thudding came from him, the red rage in my mind began to recede. I flung myself off the corpse and rolled back to my hole. My hearing had partially returned, and I listened carefully, as I tried to slow my adrenaline-fueled breathing, my hands beginning to shake.

I had to get out of there. The grenade had destroyed the radio, so I couldn't tell the bunker line I was coming in. I could hear the distant explosions from that direction. They were getting hit hard. The only way left to me was deeper into the jungle; with luck I could lay low until daylight and then go in.

I finally crawled into the edge of a dense bamboo thicket, going to sleep almost immediately. The adrenaline high had given way to an almost "hung-over" feeling, as though I was coming off a three-day drunk.

Just before first light I was awakened by the sounds of a V.C. Mortar Squad digging in. I backed deeper into the bamboo until I was about fifty feet from their nearest hole. I checked my shotgun and found that the grenade blast had bent the trigger until it was useless. That only left me with two grenades and a garrote for weapons. All I could do was lay low and hope they didn't find me before they moved out. I had a feeling it would be a long day.

Yeah, it was a long day; it was a long three days. For three days the mortar squad lounged around cleaning their weapons and smoking opium. For three days I lay in my own filth, not moving except to sip from the collapsible canteen by my mouth. I craved a cigarette so bad I was tempted to try to take out the gooks, but I could never catch enough of them in one group to get them all. I couldn't go any

deeper into the bamboo without a machete. I was like a badger backed into a hole, waiting for the hounds to find me.

Finally, the gooks pulled out, and I made my way back to the Fire Base's perimeter after booby trapping the mortar rounds the gooks cached. They'd sure have a surprise when those two grenades went off in their mortar rounds.

"Hello the gate. Sergeant Davis coming in," I yelled at the guard bunker by the gate. I dove into a hole as a burst of fire sprayed the area where I'd been standing.

Hugging the bottom of the hole I yelled, "Get the Sergeant of The Guard."

This time there was no fire. Still I stayed in the hole. I didn't trust whatever cherry was on the gate. In a few minutes, I heard the gate open. Raising my hands over my head, I slowly stood up.

"Sergeant Davis, C.R.I.P. Team," I yelled.

"Yeah, right Sarge, come on in," the Guard Sergeant called.

When I reached the gate I lowered my hands and took the lit cigarette he was offering me. I heard a shout, and looking up, I saw Murray hurrying across the compound, a grin on his sunburned face.

"Damn! We thought you were dead," he said clapping me on the arm. "Division's already listed you as M.I.A.-Believed Dead."

I grinned, "Like the man said, 'The reports of my death are greatly exaggerated.' I'm too mean to die."

"How about getting me a cold one while I report to the old man?" I asked, already thinking of that first cold Adam's-apple-bobbing drink.

"Roger that," Murray said as he started off. "Oh, by the way, your D.E.R.O.S. orders came in three days ago. You should have been stateside today."

D.E.R.O.S., Date of Estimated Return. Over-Seas. Uamn, what a lovely phrase. Home! The land of the big P.X. I was really excited, my



mind running wild as I walked towards the Company C.P.

We stood in front of the grizzled Master Sergeant behind the podium, every appropriate ribbon and patch in place on our just-issued-dress uniforms. In various attitudes of impatience, we listened to his boring, monotonous briefing.

"And Men," he said. "You're not going to find the states like you remember. The states have changed in the year you've been gone and so have you. Especially you guys wearing a Combat Infantry Badge (C.I.B.). You're going to find out in a stateside line unit you'll not have the freedom you had in 'The Nam.' So, for any of you who have orders to units stateside you don't want to go to, you can always go back to 'The Nam.' We have the authority here to cut new orders."

Laughter and snickers filled the room. The big Sergeant drew himself taller and yelled, "Attention." Everything got quiet again and he continued.

"We are open here 24 hours a day processing guys just like you, so if any of you decide you want to go back, come and see us. That's all! Dismissed!"

Every "returnee" was entitled to a free steak dinner before he left Oakland Army Terminal. I decided to skip mine. I shared a cab to San Francisco International Airport with a talkative, rear echelon Major. Seeing he didn't have a C.I.B., I wasn't interested in his war stories. I just politely nodded in the right places while my mind was on what to do with my leave.

At the airport it turned out that I had an eighteen-hour wait before I could get the connections I needed. It took longer to get to West Virginia from San Francisco than to San Francisco from Vietnam. I'd been wanting a beer since I'd landed. A cold beer, in a glass, not from a rusty can.

I found the Cocktail Lounge and stepped up to the bar. "Give me a Bud and a glass of ice," I asked the blonde behind the bar.

"I'll have to see your I.D. Card first, sir," she said.

I opened my new wallet and took out my I.D. and handed it to her.

"I'm sorry, sir," she said handing me back the card, "but I can't

serve you, you're not twenty-one."

I looked at her like she was crazy. "You mean I'm old enough to spend a year in Vietnam, get shot, lead men in combat, but I'm not old enough to drink a beer?"

"I'm sorry, sir. I don't make the laws."

I felt someone grab my arm and as I turned from the bar I saw an airport cop.

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## **My face burning with humiliation, the red rage hovering just inside the edges of my mind, I walked out of the concourse.**

---

"Let's go soldier; we don't need your kind in here," he said, as he propelled me to the door.

My face burning with humiliation, the red rage hovering just inside the edges of my mind, I walked out of the concourse. I flagged down a passing taxi and told the driver:

"Look man, here's twenty bucks over the fare if you'll take me to a bar where I can get served."

Looking at me in the mirror, he said. "If you got time I'll take you to North Beach. I don't know nothing closer."

"I've got the time," I said settling back on the warm seat.

I got out of the cab in front of Big Al's Place in North Beach. The place was lit up with what seemed to be miles of neon lights. The streets were filled from curb to wall with people. Mostly flower children, blacks with panther berets, obvious gays, and here and there a uniform made up the crowd.

I went into Big Al's and started drinking. None of that I.D. Card crap there. I drank and moved from bar to bar, feeling the tension slowly leaving me. The alcohol dissolved the rage from my mind. I began to enjoy watching the street people, to groove on the sights, sounds, and smells of North Beach.

I started, as I felt someone pull my sleeve. I turned and saw a small willowy girl with long, ironed

brown hair contrasting with the yellow dandelion perched over one ear. A high-necked "granny" dress made her look like someone from an old picture.

"Can I sit here?" she asked as she pointed to the empty stool crowded in next to mine. Her voice was soft and shy, completely different from the strident voices of the Vietnamese bar girls I had become accustomed to.

"Sure," I muttered. "Why not?"

She took the dandelion from her hair and handed it to me. "You've just come from over there, haven't you?" she asked me.

"Yeah, how'd you know," I replied.

"I watched you; you watch everyone's movements. Up close I can tell by your eyes," she said, looking deep into my eyes. "Besides, you wear that silver rifle over your ribbons and I know enough about the Army to know you only get it for fighting."

"I just got back a few hours ago," I said. "Do you observe all men like that?"

"No, only the ones I want. Do you want me?"

Here it comes, I thought cynically, the pitch. "Sure, I wouldn't mind. How much?" I asked, affecting a bored tone.

In reality it didn't matter. I wanted her and would pay whatever she asked.

"Nothing, I'm not a hooker. I'm just lonely and you look lonely is all," she said very softly. "Would you like to get a bottle and go around the corner to my place?"

"What's your name?" I asked.

"Flower," she said. When she saw me smile, she said, "No, it really is."

I knew she was tripping on something, but it had been so long since I'd been with anyone who spoke English that I didn't care. I had an ace in the hole if she had a boyfriend or pimp at her place waiting to roll me. I had my new Gerber boot knife strapped to my calf under my blouse and trousers.

We got a bottle at a carryout and walked a couple of blocks from the main street. We climbed three flights of dimly lit stairs smelling of stale marijuana and fresh urine.

The apartment was dark when she unlocked the door, so I let her go in first. Bending, I unsnapped

my knife sheath and put the blade behind my back in my belt out of sight. I heard the sound of a match being struck, and the soft glow of candle light illuminated the room. I moved in cautiously, one hand on my knife hilt.

There was no furniture in the single room except a mattress and rumped-stained sleeping bag on the floor. A few wine bottles served for candle holders. I moved to the only other door in the room. I felt excitement course through me, whether from the impending sex or the possibility of action I didn't know or care.

Cockroaches scuttled under the filthy, old-fashioned tub as I opened the door. The smell coming from the stained commode almost made me gag. I hastily shut the door and walked over to where Flower knelt on the mattress lighting a joint. The light from the candle, making her dress almost transparent, intensified my desire. It had been a long time since my last pass to Saigon.

She handed me the joint, and I passed it back shaking my head no.

"I thought all you guys were into stuff," she said.

"No," I said, bending over and replacing my knife and sheath.

"Unbutton me," she said, getting to her knees and turning her back to me.

I knelt on the dirty mattress and began to fumblingly open the row of tiny buttons. When I had the dress open to the waist, she shrugged it to her hips. Her narrow-shouldered back was covered with scars and scabbed over places.

Squirming to face me, she revealed the small slightly grubby breasts. Crabbing them with both hands she squeezed until I could see the pressure marks around her fingers.

"Take your belt off," she said in a husky voice.

I stood and, unbuttoning my coat, pulled the metal-tipped belt ron, my pants

"Now beat e with it," she said. S lay back and pulled the bunch- edle fro her hips, baring her hair, bruised, scarred groin.

Co ahead, I like it. All you com- bat guys like to hurt people, so hurtm " she taunted me, stroking herse it' b'tween the legs.

So dtd. I beat her with my belt, Until' I could hardly raise my arm

anymore. I took out my frustration and rage on her willing body.

"Now, screw me!" she begged when I finally stopped hitting her.

"You're not good enough," I said as I turned and started from the room.

"Bastard! Don't leave me like this," she screamed.

I kicked a wine bottle at her, "Here, use this bitch; maybe it'll satisfy you."

I slammed the door on her curses and replaced my belt as I slowly descended the stairs. I stopped on the ground floor and squared away my uniform and cap.

As I came out onto the street, I saw an old black man sitting in an adjacent doorway, drinking from a bottle in a brown paper sack. He called out to me, "Did you beat her, boy?"

I felt the red rage coming over me, and had him pinned to the wall by the throat before I knew what I was doing. I eased off on him as his eyes began to bulge.

He coughed, and said, "Hey, man, easy, easy. I didn't mean no harm. She takes all the soldier boys up there and has them beat her. Then she gives them sex."

I released him and stepped back. "So, what's the deal? Is she nuts or what?" I asked him.

"In a way, man. She's eat up with the syph. The Army killed her brother in a riot, and this is her way of getting back at yo all."

I handed him a five and walked off down the dim street. I couldn't believe this madness was home, what I'd dreamed of for a year. I felt like an alien in my own country.

I went into the first bar I came to, and began drinking seriously. Whiskey with a beer chaser, putting them down fast, waiting for the first numbness to hit me. Praying for the welcome release alcohol would give me.

Looking out the plate of glass window of the bar I watched the kaleidoscopic street scenes. The tourists had thinned out by now, leaving the junkies, lost (and maybe-still-believing-in-something) flower children, the pimps and hookers and the other street people. I found myself wondering why I had even bothered to come stateside. I thought with longing of the uncomplicated pay-for-play Saigon bar girls. I thought of

Flower and, with disgust, of my own brutality. Maybe she was right; maybe I liked hurting people.

I bar hopped and rode cabs from one after-hours bar to another in a blur of alcohol-induced excitement. I didn't give a damn any more. I was looking for something, but I didn't really know or care what. A fight, a woman, another drink, somewhere in San Francisco I'd find it.

As the sun was pushing back the night, I found myself in an alley next to an after-hours club, vomiting up coffee (I'd tried to sober up on) and stale whiskey. Before I could leave, two figures blocked the mouth of the alley.

"Well, well, the Nazi baby killer's sick, Charley," the biggest one said, nudging his friend.

I bent over into a crouch and came up with my knife in my hand. I looked at the two long-haired bearded men, peace signs scrawled on their Levi vests.

"I'm going out where you're standing," I said, the red rage gathering at the edge of my mind ready to be released like a rabid dog.

The shorter one hacked a gob of phlegm from the back of his throat and spit at me. Instead of trying to dodge his spit as he expected, I came directly at him. The red rage ruled my mind and the adrenaline my body.

I went for his eyes in a backhand swipe with the double-edged knife. I missed but laid his cheek open to the bone. He screamed like a woman and grabbed for his face. His friend dropped the broken bottle he held and both men ran from the alley.

"Fuck it," I screamed with my disappearing rage.

I stepped from the alley and walked down the street to a parked cab. I slid into the back seat. "Oakland Army Terminal," I told the driver.

Two days later, as the military charter flight banked over Ton-Son-Nhut Air Base, I looked out over the distant, green checker-boarded rice paddies, and knew that soon I'd be back in the bush among my own kind. The war had changed me. I was now back where I belonged. Curiously, I felt a sense of homecoming.

## **Jewel Drop**

**Rose Davis  
Sophomore**

The velvet sky  
diamonds against  
backdrop  
A gem silently  
falls,  
in all  
its splendor  
forever lost  
at sea

## **The Dune**

They crawl  
like ants  
across the shifting  
crest  
silhouetted in  
a circle of flame.

## **A PUZZLE**

**Jeannie Burdette  
Junior**

You are just like a jigsaw puzzle,  
Keeping me confused and befuddled,  
Each time I think I have you figured out,  
Another piece appears with completely  
different edges.

## **NEW HOME IN THE CITY**

**Kim Mullins  
Senior**

Hard concrete pavement has taken the place  
of daisy-filled meadows  
I knew as a kid  
and the sounds of nature  
have been replaced by  
honking cars and supersonic jets.  
Tonight,  
from my window  
I watched the sun set,  
climbing  
down  
one telephone wire  
at a time.

## THE FURNACE ROOM

Jonathan Schulze  
Graduate Student

I was helping Billy Johnson load some drums on a forklift pallet when in comes Mr. Straight with a pale little man trailing behind him. I went about my business. I'm not in the habit of paying much attention to bosses. I do my job the best I know how. The hell with the bosses. A lot of guys stop everything when one of those whiteshirts walks through the plant. They'll look at the boss with a friendly grin like "Hi, Mr. Buddy my friend sir. How is your wife and golf swing and Lincoln Continental doing today?" Shit on that.

Anyway, Mr. Straight walks right up to me and taps my shoulder. He's wearing his bossman white shirt and tie and double knit pants. I swear most of these bosses were born in their offices wearing white shirts and smelling like they just had a bath in Aqua Velva. Well, Mr. Straight motions for this little guy to come over by us, and he introduces me as the group leader of the tungsten powder furnace room. Then he says, "Dan, this is our new employee, Richard Whitehead."

Whitehead. Well if that didn't nearly blow me over. My second grade teacher. I'd forgotten all about that bastard.

Straight reached out and shook Whitehead's hand. "Dan will take care of you and put you to work. Welcome to CDJ." Then he whips around and marches off as if he's got something important to do.

I didn't let on that I knew Whitehead. I just showed him around the ovens. "We have 10 high temperature furnaces here. We heat-treat tungsten powder so it can be pressed and fired into metal rods. Then they make wire out of it for light bulb filaments." I led him to furnace #2. "See those tubes that run clear through the

furnace? There's 8 of 'em. Now, you take these trays and you fill them with powder and you push them through the tubes with this rod, kind of like a ramrod. See?" I took a scoop and filled and leveled a tray with one smooth motion, opened the latch on one of the tubes, and placed the tray inside. "Now you push the tray in as far as it'll go. There's a guard on the rod. See? At any time, there are 5 sets of trays in the tubes. You push all 8 tubes every 15 minutes."

As I loaded the trays and pushed them in, I had to laugh to myself because I knew I was making it look easy. But those trays are heavy. Even strong men have trouble pushing those tubes the first couple of days on the job. It takes some getting used to. And everyone gets blisters. The tubes are damn hot, and the room itself is always about 100 degrees.

I led Whitehead around the oven. "When you've done that you've pushed a set of trays out the other side. Empty the powder into these drums. When you've filled a drum, clamp a lid on it and put a label on it with your name, furnace number, and the date. Understand?"

"Yes."

I'll bet you do, I thought, but just wait until you try it. Before I walked away, I said, "You remember me?"

"No."

"Well, I remember you. I had you in school. You told me to get a haircut. That I looked like a girl." I'm 6'4", but felt about 8 feet tall as I looked down at old Whitehead. He kind of shrank and turned even paler.

"That wasn't me, son." He sounded as if he meant it. But I wasn't going to stand there and

argue. I had work to do. Besides, I knew damn well it was him.

I went over to oven #5. It was shut down because the gauges needed replacing. But I kept my eye on Whitehead. He was putting his whole body into pushing those trays. I knew that would tucker him out in a hurry. I was surprised they'd let an old fart push furnaces. These bosses don't know a thing, anyways. They were born in their offices.

When I'd been in Whitehead's class, I'd thought he was already old. But he looked a grey 65 now, so he must have been only 30 or so then. The more I remembered about him, the madder I got. He was a real uprichtskin. He had a crewcut and black rimmed glasses. He was always talking about the USA's space program and bringing in pictures of Gemini rockets, and he was always cutting up Russia, saying how lucky we were to live in America where we weren't controlled and were free and didn't have submachine guns pointed at our temples when we went to vote.

One day a whimpy, orange haired kid came into school with a crewcut, and I thought old Whitehead was going to turn cartwheels. He said now that was a real haircut and all the boys should have crewcuts. Well, by God, before the week was over just about all the boys did have one. By the end of the week, I had the longest hair left of any boy. It was then that he told me I looked like a girl. I felt like I didn't belong at John G. Morgan Grade School anymore. Well, I got a trim, but I didn't get any crewcut. My mom cut my hair, and she said she didn't want any skin-headed son.

Most new workers only push the furnace for about an hour. but I let

old Whitehead work right up to lunchtime. He was grunting and sweating and had black powder on his nose and forehead where he'd tried to wipe off the sweat. His checkered, button-down shirt was soaked, and he'd somehow torn a hole in the leg of his green work pants. I led him to the company lunchroom and then went to sit with a couple of my buddies, group leaders from up in the **wire-drawing** division. Old Whitehead sat by himself, chewing slowly on a thin white bread sandwich, not looking around, but just staring at his table.

"See that old coot over there?" I said.

"Yeah. What about him?"

"He was my second grade teacher, Mr. Whitehead. Now I'm telling him what to do. They sent him to me this morning."

"To the furnaces?"

"Yeah."

"What in the hell'd he do to deserve that?"

"I dunno. Got to start somewhere."

"I think I heard about him. He got fired a couple years ago after he hit some politician's kid or something."

"Well, he screwed me good a few times."

I got to thinking about once when we were coloring. Whitehead was always giving us these little handouts with pictures on them that we were supposed to color in

with crayons. Well, this picture was of a car with a stupid looking man in it driving down a road next to a field full of cows. It was a stupid picture. I could have drawn a better one myself. Anyway, I started in on that car and colored one fender green and the other one orange. Then I made the door yellow and the hood purple. I was just getting ready to make the cows blue when I smelled old Whitehead peering over my shoulder - he smelled like a big bar of deodorant soap - and he snatches my picture off my desk and says, "How come you did that?" Then he gets a picture from one of the crewcutted boys, marches to the front of the room, and says, "Class, which car would you choose? This nice red one or this dreadful green and orange and yellow and purple one?"

Well, hell, after he said it that way, what did he think? That kids are stupid? Everybody in the class said "the nice red one" and I just sat there getting all red. The hell with him and his nice red car.

I had planned on **giving** old Whitehead an easy job after lunch, but I put him right back on the furnace, instead. His hair **was caked** by dried sweat. He'd washed his face in the men's room, but it took him about five minutes to get filthy **again**.

I have to give him credit. He was fighting that furnace like a bulldog. He'd push and his feet

would slide backwards until it seemed like he was going to slide right down on his face. But he always finally pushed that rod in and would go on to the next tube.

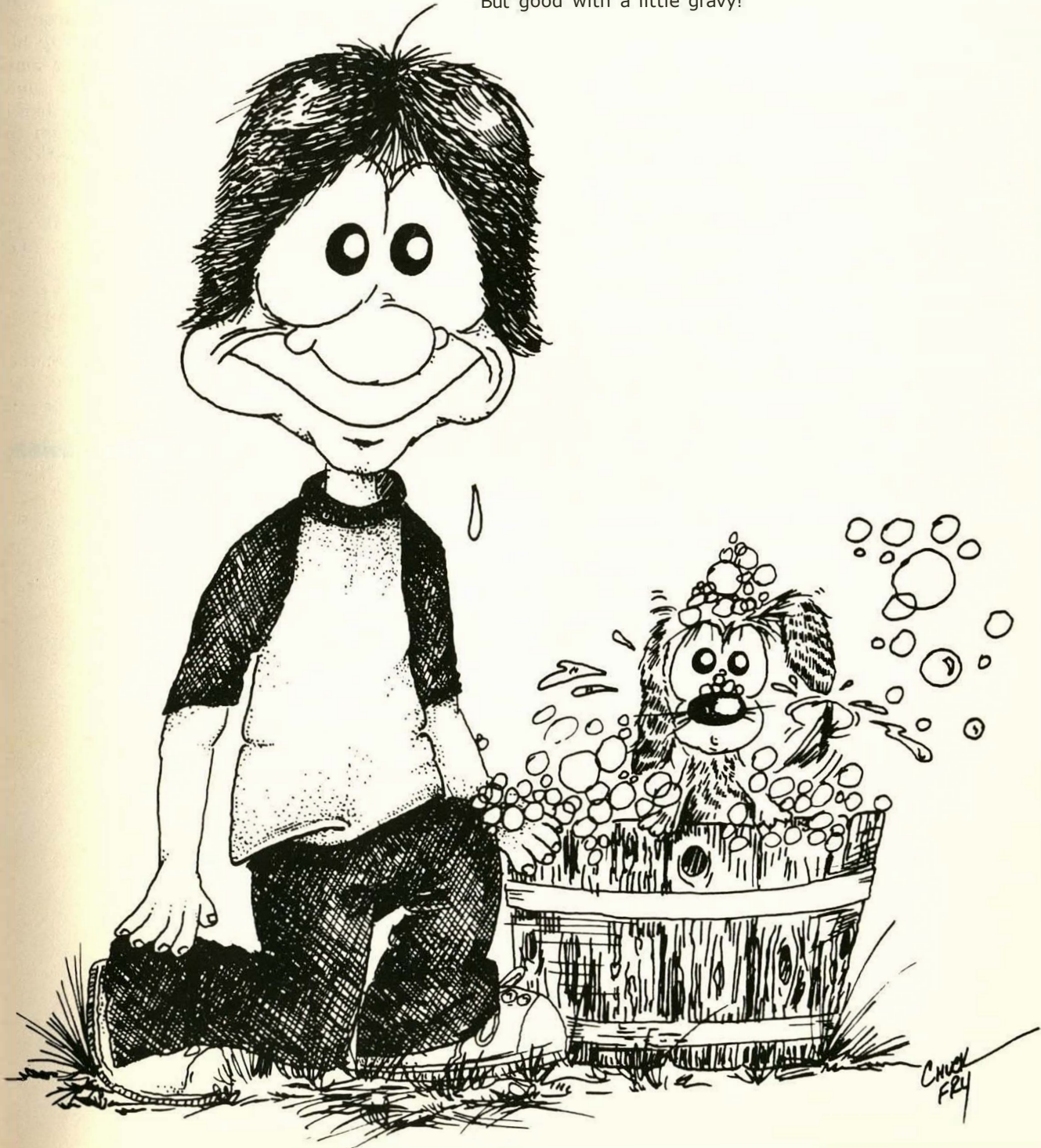
I was still working on #5 an hour later when I looked up and saw him pushing. Nothing was happening. He was leaning on the rod with all his weight, but it wasn't moving. As I watched, his black rimmed glasses slid right down his sweaty nose and fell to the floor. I was scared he was going to collapse, so I walked over and picked up his glasses and handed them to him. He stood back, panting and sweating and looking at me like I had betrayed him. I told him to grab a broom and sweep the floor, and that I'd take over. I like to push furnaces every once in a while, anyway. It's a good workout, and I don't want to forget how, like the whiteshirts.

I pushed the furnace the rest of the day and old Whitehead swept. I felt damn funny by the time I got home, and when I walked in the house I felt like kicking the dog and yelling at my wife, but I knew better, so I just went out in my shop and started to sand a shelf that I'd been working on. My wife came out and asked me what was wrong, but I told her "nothing" so she went away. I just sat there sanding and feeling angry and ashamed and thinking about old Whitehead's glasses sliding off his nose.

## DOG GONE

Eric Spurlock

I had a real big dog  
My canine's name was Davy  
He was a bad, bad dog  
But good with a little gravy!



## Misunderstandings

christine delea  
Senior

It is Ash Wednesday tomorrow  
and he is worried about his pot belly and his sisters and  
his poverty  
and half a billion other things  
that he feels he does not understand  
as much as he thinks he should be able to  
Perhaps i will go to mass tomorrow and pray for him  
Maybe i will call him and say reassuring words  
Can i write a letter that will carry his fears as an  
autumn rain takes leaves from the gutter and  
deposits them down the block?

Although i am not there i know he is worried  
talking to himself and cursing fate and fat alike  
and all i can do  
is write a poem  
and when i am in mass tomorrow  
receiving ash on my forehead for things i don't  
understand  
i will pray for the kind of rain it takes  
to carry away his fears of things he does not understand

And everyone knows when it rains it pours  
Ashes to ashes  
All the leaves end up down the block when all is said and  
done

## Lost

christine delea

amongst souvenirs  
are promises and lies.  
i meant to give neither to you.

it was all there. it only got

lost

in the crazy dancing, the clash of pool balls,  
the chiming songs of drunkeners,  
two breaths turning into one.  
it was plenty there. it just got

lost

amongst souvenirs.  
and for all the things i never said, all the words  
that somehow got

lost

i'm sorry. i never expected you  
to find yourself so

lost

in me me,  
a souvenir i gave you at the end of winter.  
a postcard of february

lost  
among your souvenirs.

## SON OF THE LIVING

Betty Jane Brogan Rickman  
Graduate Student

At first, for Ren Setchel, the discoveries that illuminated his ancestry evoked only a passing interest. Dead ancestors, long buried; what power had they over his life? But as the centuries began to roll back, he became intrigued. The search for geneological records became first a game, then a challenge, and finally an obsession.

By the time he reached the Revolutionary War, Ren's plunge into the past began to interfere with his performance in the present. His wife, Nadine, no longer held any charm for him, and his job as computer analyst was an irritation that bound him to the dullness of his existence.

He was only slightly disturbed when he discovered a seemingly disproportionate number of insanities among his ancestors. Nadine took this information more seriously. "That's the umpteenth nut you've uncovered so far. Some forms of insanity are hereditary, you know." Ren ignored the meaningful glance she cast at him across the paper-strewn breakfast table. He hardly noticed when she moved out less than a week later.

When the search for his progenitors led him to England, Ren felt no regret at leaving his home, his job, and his country. In London, he spent two years deciphering old records and crumbling manuscripts. By the fourteenth century, a clear pattern to the madness that kept recurring among his ancestors emerged.

Every first-born son of every seventh generation son died a raving lunatic before reaching the age of thirty-five.

Finding a new source of records, Ren often forgot to eat or shave, and made love to Margaret only out of necessity. Margaret was the unloved librarian whom he screwed twice a week in a little alcove of the library. In exchange for these semi-romantic trysts, he was permitted to pore over ancient and musty records that were closed to the public. When he finished with the records, he finished with Margaret. The librarian was left by then with a living reminder of those brief sessions, but this was no concern of Ren's. He had never been particular about where he planted his seed, or what became of it afterwards.

Before he left England, he knew he was being followed. Some taller shadow stalked his own, but when he turned suddenly, there was nothing, no one. He didn't really care. He was back to the twelfth century now, and obsessed with the need to fill in every piece of the bewildering puzzle of births and deaths that led forwards to him and backwards to what? He had to know where that haunting pattern of madness would lead.

In the middle of the eleventh century the thread to the past broke, and he could find no clues to continue his search. Long, fruitless months passed, emptying his pockets. He sheltered in the streets, eating when he could. He looked into alleyways in search of



elusive shadows. and muttered snatches of geneological lore to himself. Once, he wired home to a friend for money, but forgot to pick it up when it arrived. The tall shadow was always behind him now, and one afternoon when he turned around it materialized. Ren looked into a stern, gray face all but obscured by the cowl of a monk's habit.

"Are you one of my ancestors?" Ren demanded, and caught the involuntary shudder that coursed through the monk's body. "No, you wouldn't be like me. The first-born son of the seventh son, that's who I am." Ren laughed bitterly. "But I won't go like the others. Not me. I'm tracking it down. A curse, that's what it is. The first-born son..." Babbling, he would have fallen but for the strong arms that caught and held him.

He awakened in a monastery, where the monks bribed him into staying by giving him some age-worn manuscripts to read. During moments of lucidity, Ren traced in these volumes the unbroken chain of his lineage, never once considering the improbability of such records being at the disposal of the monks. He sensed the nearness of the end of his quest, but the time he had left was compressed into too short a space. He went completely mad without ever knowing that he lived because once, in a moment of human weakness, a young Jew had used a set of genitals never meant for the act of procreation.

A year passed. They chained him to a narrow, austere bed. Carrying out the ancient charge laid on their order, the monks watched over him with compassion mixed with a kind of revulsion. One evening when they came to feed him, the bed lay empty, the chains unbroken and unlocked. They searched for him anxiously until they realized where he must be. In a hidden chapel, a plain and unlovely altar cradled his lifeless body. They looked with horror at the wooden chest that should be on the altar, but now lay overturned on the rough floor. Slowly, murmuring prayers, they approached the corpse. Coming closer, they saw that the hairy chest was partially covered with tatters of white cloth. The monks knew well the secret history of those ancient cloths. The babe who was Ren Setchell's most famous ancestor had worn them as swaddling clothes over two thousand years before.

The tall-shadowed monk reverently lifted the pieces of white and replaced them in the coffin-like chest. Gently, he passed his hand over the face of the dead man, blotting out the tortured stare. "The first-born son of the seventh son." The monk shook his head and voiced the feeling they all shared. "It's over. May God grant there will never be another."

At that moment, in a small apartment facing one of the dingier streets of London, a fatherless little boy wakened from a troubled sleep, and, filled with some unknown terror, screamed.

*Editor's Award for Outstanding Artwork (Tie)*

**Kris Hackleman  
Graduate Student**



## THE BLUE SUN

- Trying to Explain to others  
What they can neither see nor touch,  
Is impossible for the teacher, but  
The learner gains so much. -

The sun came down to kiss the clouds. In return, they constantly evolved fingers with which to touch and caress it before they glowed a brilliant red, which trailed away into gray. Jealously, they monopolized its powerful rays, some of which were able to escape their grasp and trickle to the planet where they molded themselves to the shifting curves of the waters. In an effort to rid itself of the blinding light, the water tried to push it on to the pink shoreline in rigorous poundings. It was there that the light lay waiting for someone to come along and scoop it up in bared hands. Indeed, it looked as if someone had succeeded, for running parallel to each other were two sets of black impressions in the sand: one pair of human origin, one not.

"Tell me," the alien said, his dented translator rattling, "explain. Of emotions. All about."

"Well," the human began, "emotions are how you feel about a particular person or thing."

"In the way that the blind attempt to see more clearly? Through touch?"

"In a way, I guess." The human picked up a flat, deep-blue rock. It was the bluest rock he had ever seen; made entirely of the color one found only in the deepest part of this strange world's seas. "I'm touching this rock externally with my hands, but emotions are an inner form of touch. If I were to, say, enjoy picking up rocks, I would try to do so as often as I could. But if I didn't enjoy it, I would avoid picking rocks up. You understand?"

"I am not sure. If, as another example, you did not enjoy someone, you would avoid picking them up?"

"No," the human laughed. "But if you disliked someone, you would probably avoid seeing them or maybe even wish harm upon

## Penny Booth Freshman

them."

"What do you do?"

"This? Oh, I'm just laughing. Another aspect of emotions."

"Is it good?"

"Yes."

"Why harm someone you dislike? Explain."

"Hate is a type of extroverted thing. You . . ."

"I thought you said emotions were to be found on the inside."

"They are. But the **amount** of the hatred may grow so large that it sort of overflows. The person can hold the hatred in no longer, so he does something he thinks will get rid of it. By harming whatever it is he hates, he attempts to get rid of the hatred."

"What takes the place the hatred leaves?"

"Usually guilt or something like that."

"Then, if someone purposely did not avoid someone or did not hate someone, what would that be? How would they rid themselves of this emotion? And what would take its place? Please Explain."

"In the first place, nobody wants to rid themselves of caring for someone. If two people love each other, they tend to stay together."

"Are you referring to the male and female of your race?"

"Yes and no. People can care for others without marrying them. No, as a general rule, that's the way it is. But sometimes two people find that they care for each other more than they do for any others. What's that old saying? Poet said it once though I can't remember which one. Uh . . . something about two lost halves of a soul being reunited into one."

"Is this when you shed your skin? To reunite with another of your kind?"

"No. That's when someone dies."

"Then what happens to you when you die?"

The human looked at the rock that he had been holding in his hand during the conversation. It

burned coldly, so he tossed it a few times. Then, after watching the burning red sun, he flung the blue object as hard as he could toward the illuminated mass which had by now rested itself firmly on the edge of the ocean. The insubstantial clouds drifted about the sun, still trying to catch it with their fingers. They would almost have it until it would slowly slide from between them into the sea, like a sinking ship on the horizon. The noise of the rock breaking the surface could not be heard over the soft, pulsating rhythm of the waves tearing into the shore. The young human turned to the alien.

"Most of us humans disagree on what becomes of us, but just about all of us feel that, once we've thrown away the 'pleasures of life,' we go to some place of greater happiness. That we live where there are no problems, discontent, or even hatred."

"Then, why do you allow hatred here if you each plan to go where it is not?"

"We can't help it. It's something out of our control."

"In this place, are all good things there?"

"Yes, only good things."

"How do you know when to shed your skin and go there?"

"We don't. Our organs may age

until they can function no longer, we may be harmed so much that our bodies cannot be repaired, lots of reasons. But we normally don't decide ourselves. We let our surroundings decide."

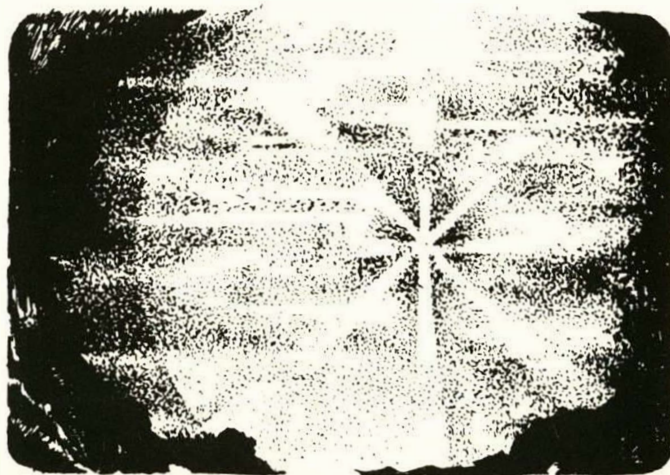
"Is it the wish of every human to go there?"

"Yes." The human turned to face the sea again, gazing at the area where the rock had landed a few moments ago.

"I did good once before. I showed you laugh. But it lasted not long. Now I shall bring good upon you once more." With that, the alien drew the long ceremonial sword he had been presented with only that day and plunged it deeply into the back of the human. The human dropped to the beach, dead.

"Your troubles are gone now. Only through this separation may you be good. Be happy in death." The alien saluted sharply before he walked the rest of the beachline. Only one set of depressions marked the sand now. The waves lashed at the rocks. Sunlight cast long shadows of the alien as the remaining portion of the sun fell in the sky. Then it was gone.

- And where dwells this Alien,  
He lies within our heart;  
He is our logic, questioning,  
Which tears us all apart.



TERESA HARROLD

## ROAR

Steve Ambrose  
Senior

From the dance floor everything was dark except the band; not that it was a dance floor just an area of dark tile formed from pushing back chairs and tables. Me and the girl were shakin' it; I was heavy into oxygen debt but the girl she was a flower her dark face was dry ringed in black hair that flew away from her head while I was sweating bigtime.

The band they were getting down playing originals and Devo and oldies. Their first appearance in town; Razor and the Blades. New Wave and we rode it like a river and we were styrofoam cups but broken and cracked you could tell by the way the floor filled with arms and heads and legs flinging every which way.

The stage was white lights that careened into blues and golds and greens and reds. Razor ripped the songs out of his lungs up there dressed in black no sleeves with dark hair washed out with light but still looking like a used Brillo pad. The Blades backed him up in polka dots and stripes and drums and guitars. The place was well who cared we were only there for the music and we got it; the fever of Razor and the Blades left our ears ringing and our faces crying for more flushed faces drinking too much beer and talking too loud hell even screaming but it was cool everyone was having a good time and nobody had even got into a fight.

Razor announced a break thank God I thought I was having a heart attack and me and the girl sat down and talked about Razor and Devo and the Beatles and drank beer and the band came back and we were on the floor again begging the Blades to tell us where it's at:

"... Weary faces in the crowd they say the music's much too loud but I like ears

that ring and ring and can't hear anything except the music..."

And we jumped and bumped and twisted and shook and rattled our bones and I had to sit down I'm not eighteen anymore but there were plenty who were out on the dance floor contorting bodies into unreal gyrations. I gasped for breath again and held my side and gulped beer.

"... only if you're sleazy baby only if you want it bad can't waste my time on goody-goodies can't be sad be sad be sad..."

"Having a good time?" I got out.

"Sure. They're great." She lit a cigarette and I couldn't figure out how she could smoke and dance like that or how she could sit there without breathing not even sweating or how she could drink so much beer and stay sober.

"... if you're gonna do it do it right make it last the night the night use your head use your mind use your body anytime..."

She leaned back and looked at me. I flashed the old white prides and scooted closer and took another drink of beer that I just noticed was a little flat.

"Almost tripped over those wires out there. Did you see me hit the stage?"

She laughed. "Yeah, that was great. You know you stepped on some guy's foot who was sitting next to the floor three or four times. I thought he was going to slug you."

"That's okay, you can protect me."

She stubbed the cigarette into the ashtray. "Let's dance!" I groaned and followed her out on the floor and started it all over again. My face wasn't even dry yet.

My hearing faded maybe from

inner ear evaporation but I still heard the beat so it was cool. When the music stopped it was like listening to a shell, a dull roar and we went back to the table and the thumpthumpthump of the old ribcage. She lit a cigarette. I gulped some beer. "Where do you live?"

"Northside. A little apartment. Small, but cheap."

"What are you doin' after this?"

She leaned forward and puffed and flashed the whites and said, "Gonna go home to the old man," and her hand came up to prop her chin and I noticed the ring for the first time and tried not to act disgusted.

"Oh, you're married."

"Yep. Got a kid, too. This is my night out."

"Great." I tried to sound sincere and edge away to the other side of the table and felt ridiculous.

After I could breathe again I got up and decided to disappear it was going to be a long night I thought so I might as well head home I'd had enough beer and dancing anyway.

My side felt like someone was twisting a knife into it so I walked slow through the cold air and only stumbled twice and found my alley and sat on the steps. I leaned my head against my knees but the lines of brick started to waver and jump so I looked up. It was cloudy-no stars-and the telephone pole on the other side of the alley looked like it was holding up wires to ten thousand lives so I looked away like maybe I was prying or eavesdropping.

I got up and went through the door and tripped over the bike I've been meaning to move for two weeks or so and fell onto the carpet. Everything was still roaring like that sea shell and the carpet it smelled like old age.

## Oyster Stew

**Patricia Jordan  
Senior**

What if they discover  
that this girl  
is just a speck of sand  
and not a pearl?

## Riddle

**Patricia Jordan  
Senior**

(Why everyone wants Sheila's body)  
She asks with her eyes  
dropping invitations here and there  
and then rejecting any positive replies  
a full force pullaway  
touched red hot  
but she never says no in her mind.

## UNTITLED POEM

**Jerry Keene  
Freshman**

I drank the bug floating in my drink  
Thought about life, death, survival. . . .  
Survival in strange worlds.  
Perhaps she is pregnant in my stomach;  
Resilience, adaptation, bugs' hopes  
I considered, generations and evolution.  
There's the climate of potentiality in  
my stomach.

## SPONTANEOUS COMBUSTION

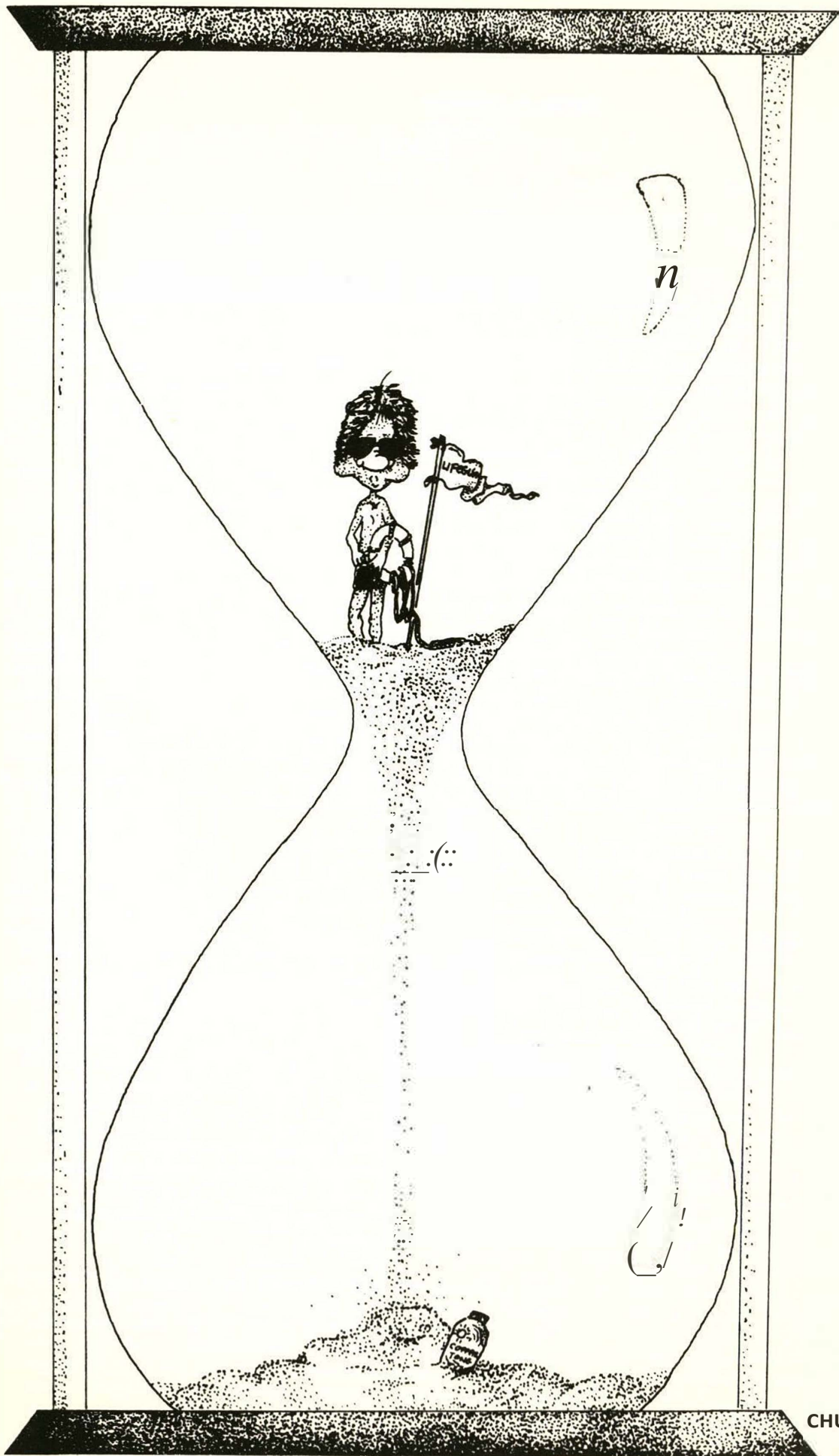
**Alan Benjamin  
Senior**

Friday's paper:

"Strolling woman bursts into flames." (Headline)  
"Burned beyond recognition," police spokeswoman  
said.  
No cause, no reason, and the one witness didn't see  
much.

Saturday's paper:

"Autopsy questions report of woman bursting into  
flames."  
Cook County Medical Examiner said she was dead  
twelve hours before.  
Lt. James Moore said lab tests indicated the presence  
of an accelerant, possibly gasoline.  
I didn't get to see Sunday's paper.



CHUCK FRY

## "Death of a Lover"

**Terry De Estenssoro  
Senior**

You were but a fire work in my life.  
With a thunderous boom you entered it  
I held my breath... & watched... & listened  
Your colors exploded before me  
I was in awe of your brilliance  
I became happy, elated, excited -  
Still I held my breath  
I know not why.  
Then suddenly your burst of colors  
divided - into a million sparkles  
Like mercury spilt on marble.  
You crackled and crackled, fainter and fainter  
Till no sound was heard  
and your colors were quenched by the darkness.

## HOUSES

**B.W. Thornton  
Senior**

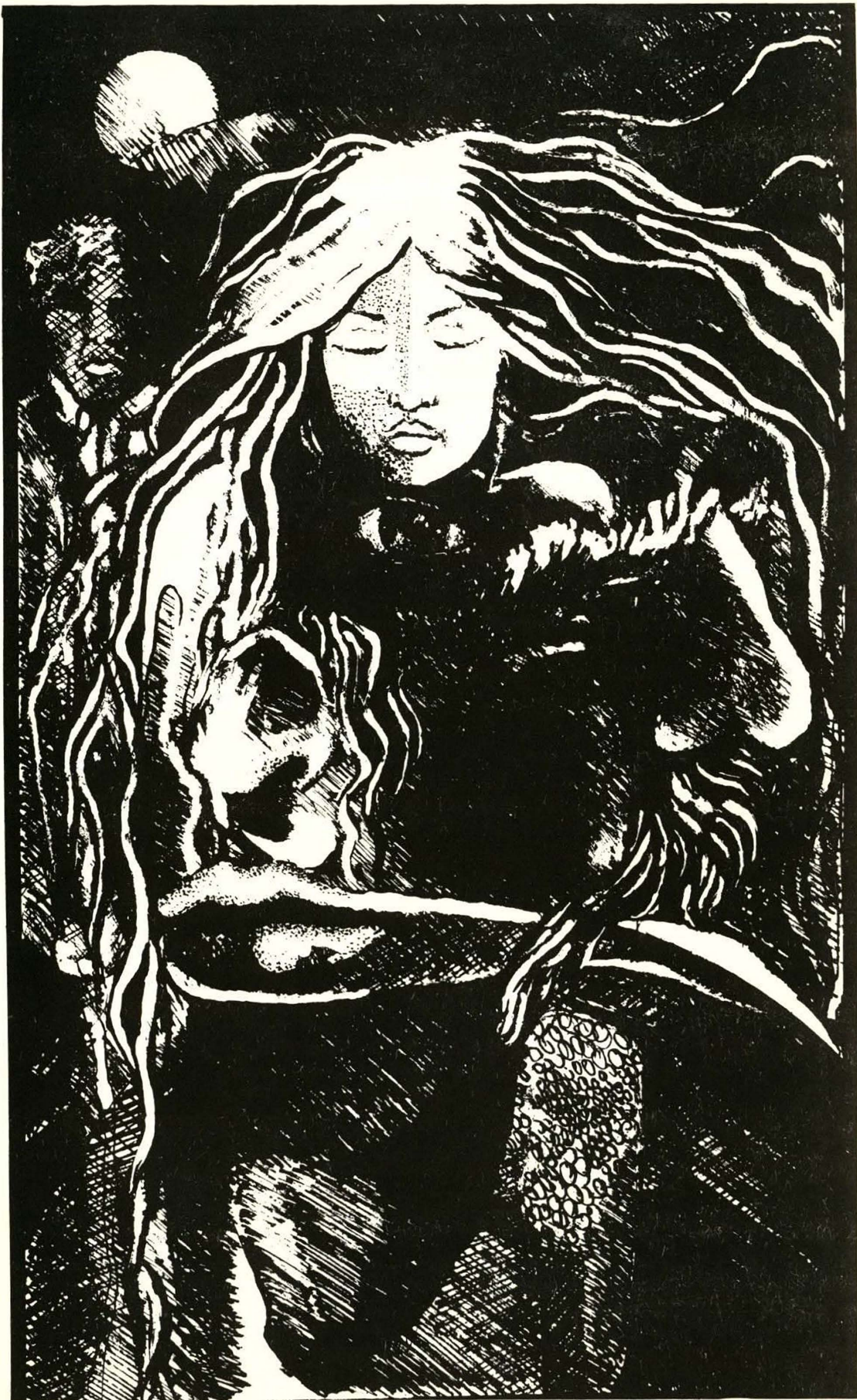
Inside live painted ladies  
Their cheeks aglow with supple oil  
Casting reflections invisible  
Except to those pledged as loyal.

Symbols of this loyalty  
Above the doorway have been raised  
And decorate their garments  
To be recognized and praised.

Brothers come from a house down the street  
For their weekly "Preppy" convention  
Like gendarmes the boys stand straight and tall  
Protecting their female extentions.

They raise a toast to loyalty  
Lifting high their holy names  
Like ancient gods and goddesses  
They play their mythical games.







Aqualung

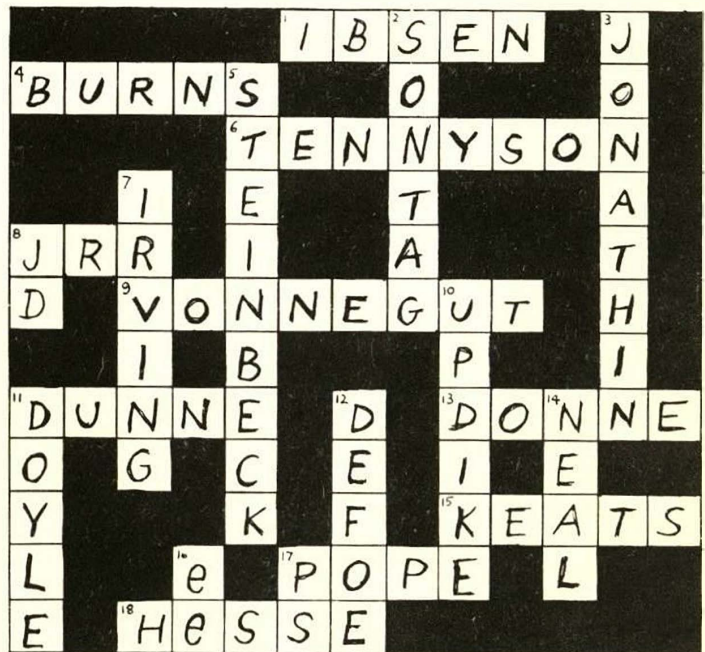
PHOTOS  
BY  
MOLLY  
COOK



American Cranes



"What, no John?"



Puzzle Solution

## A VICIOUS TALE

Thom Houghton

They tell me that Christ  
lies, bones in a box,  
waiting on nature  
just like the rest

His carpenter's death, I've heard  
was nailed to a dream tree;

they say when I speak of Him,  
sanity splinters

## NEGATION

Thom Houghton

Her raven hair itself  
says no to me.  
I know to inquire  
is a stillborn dream

The ghosts of her princes  
eclipsed at the drawbridge  
remind me of diamonds  
that froze at her fingertips.

## ode to a sleeping child

andrea christensen  
Junior

good night, my son  
sleep so well  
tomorrow will be better

picked the cotton  
all day long  
and learned the 14th letter

mammy was in the  
field all day  
was toilin' in the sun-0

fell down hard in the  
southern sun  
shot by the master's gun-0

so good night, my son  
sleep so well  
we'll be free in the mornin'

the bread we ate  
here tonight  
was more than halfway poison.

246 HAL GREER  
andrea christensen

the green parrot is bowing to the Stones,  
and the white water glass catches the  
lonely lights' shadow on the match filled  
fiery filled  
ashtray.

Newton-John stares intently at The Wall  
and smoke flows toward the guitar.  
it finds strumming fingers as he sits  
cross-legged on the orange fringed chair.  
the little finger left-hand ring dances on the neck.  
his shadow rests on her blond hair as  
Capote tells her of cold blood and  
violence slaying minds.

tom threads reach to the red frayed blanket,  
and flesh presses on.  
crumbs drop; lie softly on blue denim.  
laughter shrieks and faces fall.

the hands circle the clock.

the green parrot sleeps while the Stones rest  
under cover. the lonely lights' shadow  
diminishes and  
the ashtray burns.

the standing guitar supports the wall.  
little finger left-hand ring dances no more -  
his shadow rests. blond hair is gone. ambers die.

but Capote tells of cold blood and violence  
slaying minds  
and Newton-John jumps The Wall

daily i see pain

christine delea

you've come a long way, baby.

then why are you still calling me 'baby'?  
i'm nobody's baby.  
i'm no baby.

"Want a ride somewhere, baby?"

the weaker sex.  
i bleed monthly but i don't die.  
i am raped and beaten and harrassed and  
daily i see pain.

"Can i buy you a drink, baby?"

my children.  
those who are alive and  
those who never were.  
my babies see the pain.

"Need a place to stay tonight, baby?"

our education.  
womens studies, womens literature, womens guy.  
separate but equal.  
but we know better for we have seen the pain.

"Can't you take a joke, baby?"

Sure.

Tell me when you say something funny.

## THE HEAD OF THE CREEK

Drema Skaggs-Redd  
Senior

Adam spread peanut butter thickly over the bread and then carefully sprinkled sugar on top. He placed the top slice of bread on his sandwich and crammed it into a baggie, then dropped it into his knapsack with some cookies and a banana. He was eight years old, and he and Tommy, his ten-year-old cousin, were going on an adventure.

Adam's mother watched from the doorway; he thought he had the prettiest mother around. She smiled at him. "You did a good job for a change," she said. "You didn't get peanut butter all over the counter. You must be growing up, right?"

Adam nodded. "Me and Tommy's going exploring, like Daniel Boone." Tommy had told him about Daniel Boone, how he had explored this area when there were still lots of Indians. It thrilled Adam to think that the very woods he played in every day had once been dangerous wild country.

"Oh? Where will you explore?" his mother asked.

"We're going to follow the creek to where it starts. We're taking our lunch with us and might not be back till dark." Adam wasn't afraid of the woods. His mother encouraged his playing among the trees, building 'cabins' of fallen brush.

"We used to play up there when I was a kid. One time Lucy Hanshaw, Sarah's mother, and I followed the creek almost all the way up. My Grandpa had told us there were bears up there, and we got scared and came back."

"Bears?"

"Well, so he said. We didn't see any, but we did see a copperhead. After we got home that night, mama told me that Grandpa used to scare her with stories about some crazy old ladies who lived at the head of the creek."

"Jim-Bob Walls told Tommy there's some crazy ladies there, too! Said he's seen them at the grocery store lots of times, even been to their place."

"You stay away from Jim-Bob Walls. He's a drunk."

"Jim-Bob told Tommy that they run a farm. Said they had no men on the place, just run it themselves. You think it's true, Mom?"

"I think Jim-Bob is trying to scare Tommy. Those stories have been flyin' for ages. I don't believe it, myself. Now you be sure and be back here before dark, mister, or you and I will have a confrontation. And you two be careful! Does Tommy have a snake-bite kit?"

"Aw, mom! You know it's too late in the year for snakes. You worry too much. See ya!" Adam darted out the back door, across the yard, and through the hedge that separated his house from Tommy's. Tommy was sitting on his back steps, waiting, his knapsack in place. When he saw Adam, he stood up. "Let's go," he said, and Adam followed. They went around the house to the front yard and across the bridge to the paved road that ran parallel to the creek. They hurried up the road, eager to get to where the paved road ended and the woods began. The houses of their neighbors nestled beside the creek up to the end of the road—the hollow's point and the mountain's foot.

Without hesitation, Tommy started first up the footpath that began a short distance from the blacktop. Adam stopped and looked ahead into the trees. He had never gone very far along this particular path, only to the foot of the hill. He remembered uncomfortably that the state animal of West Virginia is the black bear. Secretly hoping that bears hibernate in September, he hurried after his cousin.

The climb was easy at first, and pleasant. Soon the boys were playing at Daniel Boone. Tommy had the lead, since he was the oldest, while Adam had to be contented with being the Indian scout. Cardinals streaked from tree to tree, red slashes against a dark backdrop. Bluejays chattered

down at the boys from their perches. Along the banks of the creek, ferns grew thick among the rhododendron.

The going soon became rough; the path grew steeper. The creek bed was clotted with huge boulders, and the stream was smaller and thinner than it was along the road, so far below.

On a large boulder splotched with moss, they ate their lunch. Adam chewed his sandwich and listened to the birds. Tommy was sprawled out on the rock, trying to unravel the lacy pattern of intermingled tree branches against the sky.

"Wonder how they keep from growing into one another?" Tommy said dreamily. Adam didn't answer; he was by now finishing off the banana. He tossed the peel into the brush for the ants.

"How much farther till we get to the head of the creek?"

"How should I know?" said Tommy. "Probably not much farther. I think we're more than halfway up, so I guess about another hour up and then a couple of hours or more to get down. Why? Getting chicken?"

Adam made a face. "Sure. Who was it who just about fell down the hill when we startled that deer out of the brush? Not me. You looked like you'd seen a bobcat."

Tommy pouted. "Well, I didn't know. It could have been a bobcat, from the sound of it."

"Bobcats probably don't even make noise. They probably just jump out at you all of a sudden, from a tree limb or behind a bush." Adam poked Tommy in the ribs and growled. "You'd never even know he was there..."

"Aw, shut up," Tommy said, scrambling to his feet. "If I ain't home for supper, my mom'll ground me. Let's get a move on."

The stream was only a trickle now and the boulders larger. There was no longer a path; thick brush hid sticker bushes along the creek bed. The boys' progress was slow, and they were soon hot and swea-

ty. After a while the ground leveled out. Adam, who was ahead, said, "There it is." They stopped. In front of them was a large cliff, and from a crack in its foot trickled a bubbling stream of water. The boys whooped with delight. "All right!" Tommy yelled, "We did it!"

"Let's leave a sign that we were here," Adam said. "Then someday we'll come back and find it." After some debate, they agreed to carve their initials into the face of the cliff with a sharp rock. They scrambled down the last boulder to the sandy floor and dipped their hands in the water, delighting in its coolness. They drank deeply from their hands, and then, refreshed, they made their mark in the cliff with a piece of quartz.

They noticed a small path leading through a grove of pines to their right. Adam was curious. "Let's see where this goes!"

"I dunno, Adam. We gotta get back."

"Oh, come on. It'll only take a minute." He dashed out of sight among the trees; Tommy followed him reluctantly.

Past the pine grove there was a large clearing. The path skirted along the edge, but Adam was heading for something in the middle of the field. Tommy hurried to catch up. The boys stopped in front of a rough stone object.

"It's a bench," Adam said, "or a picnic table for elves."

Tommy snorted. "Why would anybody want a bench all the way up here? What's that stuff?" There were dark stains on the bench, some trailing down the sides. On the ground were a few little pieces of bone.

"It's paint," Adam said bravely, though he was beginning to doubt it.

"That ain't paint, that's blood," Tommy whispered. "And these are bones. Somebody's been making sacrifices up here."

"What's sacrifices?"

"That's when you kill something, for the devil."

"You're giving me the creeps. Who'd want to do that? Let's go see where this path goes. Look, I can see it going through the trees on the other side. I don't wanna hang around this thing."

"I'm going home," Tommy said.

"Okay, I'll go alone."

"The hell. Your mom would skin

me alive. You're coming back with me."

"You're just chicken!" Adam shouted. He was already running across the field. Tommy sprinted after him, caught him, and had Adam pinned to the ground in no time. Adam had wrestled with his cousin before, but this felt different to him. Tommy was really scared, and Adam could sense it in the way he was being held down.

"Let's go!" Tommy cried out. "I'm tired of your foolishness! This place is spooky, and we've got to be home before dark! Ain't you got any sense?" Tommy was shouting, his voice sounded far away to his own ears.

Adam started to cry. "Let me go! So we'll leave, okay?" Tommy got up, looking ashamed of his sudden panic. He helped Adam to his feet.

"Only let's just look a little ways," Adam pleaded. "We'll just see if there's anything past those trees."

"Jesus Christ," Tommy muttered. "You'll just whine all the way home if we don't, I guess. Come on." He trudged toward the path. Adam ran ahead; when he reached the path he stopped and waited for his cousin. They started through the trees together.

The pine thicket extended for only a few yards, the path once again opening onto a clearing. Here was a well-kept farmhouse, a couple of outbuildings, and a dozen or so cats milling about. A large woman was seated on an up-turned washtub in the yard, a freshly-killed chicken draining into another tub in front of her. She called out, without looking up from her work, "Y'all sounded like Coxeys' Army, comin' across that field. Come out from behind them bushes and act like you got some sense."

The boys came forward without feeling their feet move. The woman sat calmly cleaning her chicken. When the boys stopped in front of her, she looked at them both, in the eyes, for a long moment. Then she grinned, just slightly. Her eyes were deep brown, and grim. "Y'all hungry?" Neither boy could say a word. "Talkative lot," she sniffed. She finished cleaning the chicken in silence, while the boys watched.

Adam felt a little sick. The people in the hollow weren't farmers;

Adam's dad worked in town, at the electric company. Tommy's dad drove a coal truck. Their moms bought chicken at the store; he'd never seen one being cleaned.

When the woman finished she leaned back and took the boys in with her gaze, majestically wiping the blood off her hands onto her apron. "What's your name?" she asked them. They told her. "Mine's Elanor," she said. She got up; she did not look at Tommy again. Adam had the feeling that she was particularly interested in him; that she had picked him as her favorite of the two boys.

"If you boys want something to eat, come on in. I made some doughnuts today."

Adam and Tommy looked at one another and shrugged. They had to follow. The woman led them up onto the porch, cats mewling and winding around her feet, eyes on the dead chicken she carried. The boys entered a dark, cool passageway and followed Elanor to the kitchen. It was huge. There was a large wooden table in the center of the room, with eight or nine chairs around it. One wall was almost entirely windows, facing east. Pots of wild ferns grew beneath the windows. The opposite wall contained a large stone hearth. A small blond girl sat by the fire, at the feet of an old, old woman. The woman seemed to be reading or teaching something to the girl from an old musty book.

"What's this?" the old woman said.

"Got two lost boys," Elanor said. "This is Adam," she touched him on the shoulder, softly and briefly, "and Tommy. Thought I'd get them a bit to eat."

The old woman nodded, her eyes on Adam. "Come here, boys, and get warm," she said. "We've got a little fire going."

The boys obeyed. They stood silently by the fire. The old woman put down her book and lit a pipe. Adam looked her over, carefully. Her face was a thousand wrinkles, like those little dried-apple dolls he had seen at an arts and crafts fair. Her hair, thick and white, was worn in a single long braid falling over her shoulder and into her lap. She puffed at a pipe and looked into the fire. The little girl just stared.

Elanor set a plate of doughnuts on the table, and three glasses of

milk. "Y'all come on," she said. The boys went to the table, suddenly aware of how hungry they were. The little girl followed, and the three ate and drank in silence. Elanor joined the old woman by the fire. They exchanged a few quiet words, and waited. When the children had finished their snack, Elanor called them to the fire.

"Go put the cow in the barn," she said as they approached, and Adam didn't realize at first that she wasn't talking to him.

Then the little girl spoke for the first time. "Yes, Mama. Want me to milk her?"

"If you please, ma'am," said Elanor, and the little girl went out the back door.

"You boys live down in the holler?" Elanor asked. They nodded. "How'd you get up here?"

Tommy spoke. "We followed the creek." Elanor was looking at Adam.

The old woman spat into the fire, saying, "You've got a long hike back down. You'd better get along if you want to be home by dark."

Adam shook himself into speech. "What's your name?" he asked of the old woman. It was all he could think of to say.

"Innanna," the old woman replied.

Sounds like "banana", Adam thought. He said aloud, "That's a funny name."

"It's real old," said Innanna.

"Thanks for the doughnuts, ma'am. They were great," Adam said. "We've got to be going."

"Suit yourself," said Elanor. She rose to lead them to the door.

"Goodbye, Innanna," Adam said shyly.

"Y'all come back," said Innanna.

Elanor closed the door behind them. They saw that the sun was already beginning to go down.

"We've only got about an hour of good light left. We'd better hurry!" Tommy jumped easily over the porch steps and landed in the yard, on his feet like a cat.

The two boys ran down the path, across the field where the bench was, and scrambled furiously over the rocks. Adam couldn't wait to get home and tell his mother that the story about the ladies was true.

\* \* \*

Adam stepped to the face of the

cliff. It was still there, scratched into the rock: "AS". Tommy's mark, "TP", had worn almost completely away. That's strange, Adam thought, I guess Tom just didn't carve hard enough that day. But after twelve years, Adam's initials were still easily read.

Adam was home from the University for the weekend. It was September 21st, the day of the first home football game. Adam hated football, and as an upperclassman he knew well that campus would be a riotous madhouse all weekend. So he had decided to escape, come home, do his laundry, and enjoy the autumn scenery. A letter from Tom, working oil rigs in Texas, had prompted him to remember their expedition up the mountain when they were kids. He hadn't thought of that journey in years; he decided to re-explore. It became an obsession with him, so that he could hardly wait to get there. He kept imagining himself in the large kitchen with ferns on one side of him and a stone hearth on the other. First thing that morning, right after breakfast, he had left without saying where he was going.

Adam glanced through the treetops at the gray sky. The storm-clouds were moving in fast. He had first noticed them halfway in the climb up the dry creek bed. He'd be lucky to get home without being drenched, but he didn't want to leave yet. He wanted to visit the old farmhouse, and see if the women still lived there. He followed the path leading through the pine grove on the right.

When Adam reached the clearing, he noticed immediately that there was something lying on the stone bench. When he got closer, he saw that it was the carcass of a cat, its entrails laid in a curious pattern around it. Adam stared, trying to make some sense of it all. There was a rumble of thunder from far off. He realized that he should seek shelter at the farmhouse; the storm was just hitting the mountain. He shook his head at the cat, attributing it to a cruel prank by some local children. A bolt of lightning streaked across the sky, and Adam ran across the field, toward the path to the house. He stopped running when he found himself in the yard, the house unchanged since his last visit. An herb garden flourished on one side,

and a few chickens pecked around in the yard. Cats slept everywhere.

Suddenly, silently, the rain began. The chickens dashed clucking toward their coop; cats darted under the porch as Adam ran up to the door and knocked loudly. The door opened, and Adam instantly recognized Elanor. Her dark hair was beginning to gray, but she still looked as strong as a man.

"Come in, Adam."

Adam was astonished. "You remember me?" he asked.

Elanor smiled. She stepped back, and Adam entered. "I made doughnuts today," she said.

The entry hall was cool and dark. Adam followed Elanor to the kitchen. A single oil lamp burned on the table. It and the roaring fire in the fireplace were the only light. The storm began to rage furiously; a clap of thunder shook the windowpanes. The ceiling and corners of the room were bathed in shadows like giant cobwebs. A faint sweet smell permeated the room, and Adam slowly realized that the scent came from the apple wood on the fire.

"Please, sit down" Elanor said. She brought a plate of doughnuts to the table.

"Where's Innanna?" Adam asked. "And the little girl, your daughter?"

"Innanna died last year. Lilith is here." Elanor moved to leave the room. "Wait here," she said.

Adam felt sorry about Innanna. He would have liked to see the old lady again. He was beginning to feel sleepy and warm. Innanna's face floated before him as he closed his eyes. The apple scent. .. the room seemed heavy with smoke, though he had not noticed it upon entering. Rain beat against the windows and the wind through the trees sounded like women chanting. He began to nod.

"Hello, Adam." Adam jumped at the sound of his name. He looked up and saw before him a beautiful vision of a girl, the most exquisite creature he had ever seen. Her hair was in a thick braid hanging over one shoulder, reaching past her waist-spun gold in the firelight. She wore a long, loose white robe tied with a red cord around her slender waist. "Do you remember me?" she asked.

Adam could only stare. She laughed, a sweet tinkling sound,

and knelt at his feet. "You're the little girl," he said. She laughed again. He thought he could never hear enough of her laugh.

"Well, I was. you were pretty little then, yourself. I knew you'd be back, you know."

"How?"

"Innanna told me. The day you were here, I asked her why you didn't stay to play with me, and she said you'd come back when I grew up." She rose regally, like a wisp of smoke, slipping her hand into his. "Come with me."

He followed her without question. There was nothing else he could do. He had no control, and didn't want any. He followed without wondering where they were going, or why.

In her bedroom two large red candles burned on the

mantlepiece, one on each side of a graceful hanging mirror. Lilith held out her arms to him. Gazing deeply into her green eyes, he slowly untied the cord holding her robe. It dropped to the floor, and they lay down together on the bed.

Adam wakened to daylight streaming through lace curtains. He felt groggy, but at the same time pleased, as though he had fulfilled some great purpose. Lilith was nowhere to be seen. He called her name once; he had the odd feeling that it would be somehow improper to seek her out. He dressed and left the room.

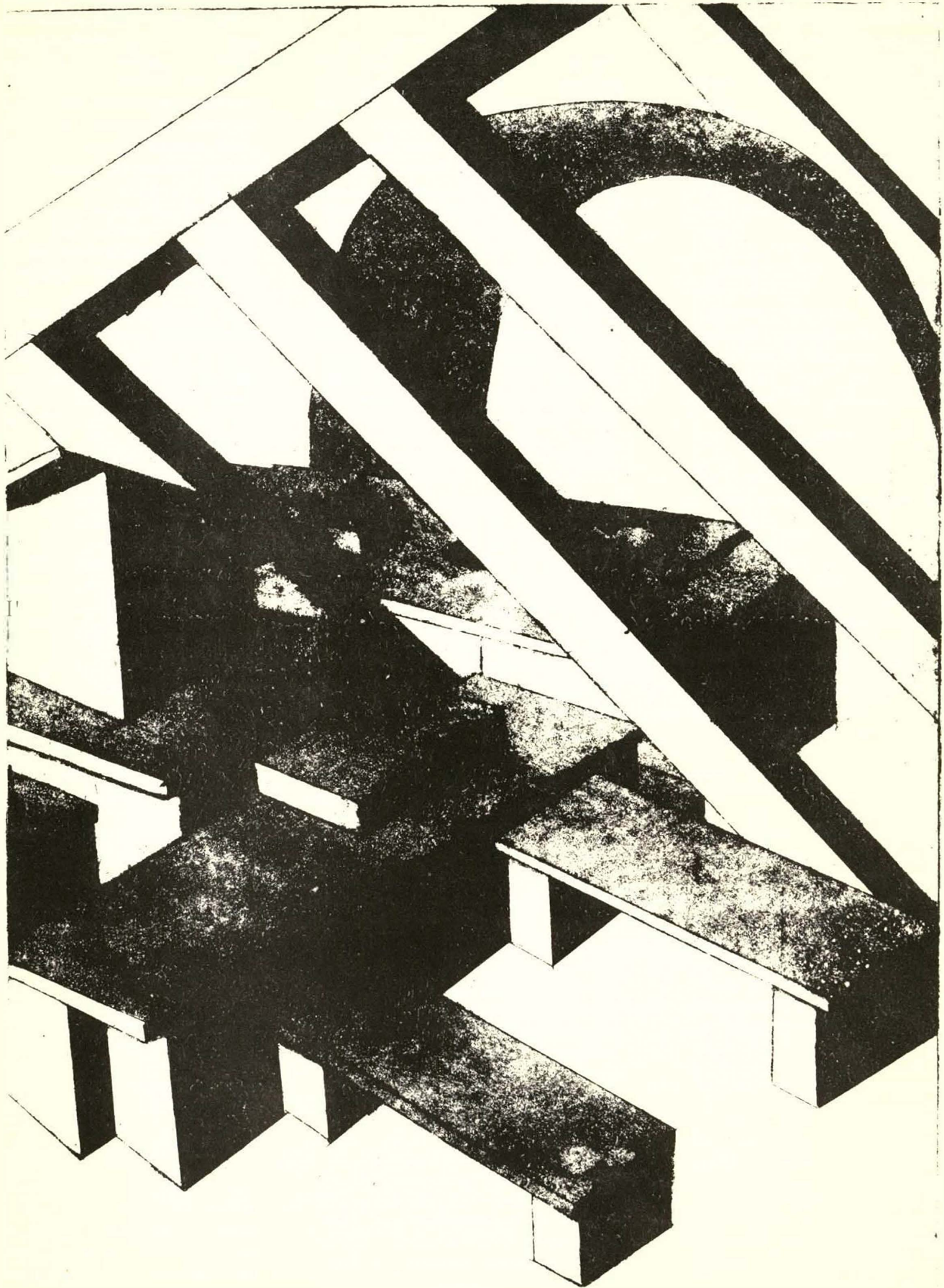
The house was empty. Adam went out into the sunshine- there was no one in the front yard, so he went through the woods to the field. The dead cat had been removed from the bench. The

creek was swollen with the last night's rain, so Adam picked his way carefully along its banks. down the mountain to his home.

Adam's mother looked at him strangely when he came in. She assumed that he had stayed with a girlfriend the night before, but asked no questions. Adam moped around the house the rest of the weekend, and it was three months before he came home again. It didn't occur to him to visit Lilith again; the memories faded quickly. After a few weeks, there was nothing more than an occasional vivid golden dream.

Nine months later a girl child was born to Lilith of the mountain. Elanor sacrificed a cat to insure the child's fertility. Lilith named her child Rain.





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# Create for Yourself

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*Create for Yourself*

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