Spring 1982

et cetera

Marshall University

ET CETERA

"Soutine in His Studio"
by Barbara Roush

Marshall University
Student Anthology

et cetera

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Editor's Foreward

Et cetera is a sampling of student writings compiled and selected by students primarily for students. **Et cetera** has been published with the assistance of the English Department since 1953, and is currently funded through student fees. The works represented in **et cetera** are by writers who have only begun organizing and defining their talent, and are a representation of the potential in each of these writers.

The selections in **et cetera** are chosen on the basis of the writer's understanding and use of the genre, and his originality. Awards of $75.00 and $50.00 have been established to encourage submissions, and this year two awards in poetry and two awards in prose were presented. No awards were given in the art catagory due to a small response. Judging for the awards is done by faculty members of the English Department, and the editor of **et cetera,** so that all students, including staff members, are eligible.

I would like to extend warmest thanks to those who made the 1981-82 **et cetera** possible: the **et cetera** staff, especially Paula and Barbara, for their volume of energy and time, Dr. John McKernan and Dr. Barbara Brown for their constant encouragement, and the students of Marshall for their interest, support, and contributions.

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AWARDS

poetry judges:

Dr. John McKernan, Director of Writing and **et cetera** faculty advisor
Dr. William Sullivan, Chairman, Department of English

First place poetry: Paula Wells
Second place poetry: Barbara Roush

prose judges:

Marilyn Putz, associate professor of English
Dr. Stephen Pett, assistant professor of English
Diane McClain, editor of **et cetera** and English major

First place prose: Maureen Salamat
Second place prose: Debbie Matthews

CONTENTS

TAUBE MARIE CYRUS

A Plague of Progress

On Monday with the pie-baked sky
Dangling on horizon's windowshade,
We watched the workmen tamping out a road;
Undershirts framed on the altering green.
Subdued by distance, the hammers
Sang some money-clink melody spent
From the mayor's coffee spoon.
We smiled and sipped the shadows in our cups,
Eclipsed by the bird's routings
And nature's indifference.

S. A. HALL

First Tuesday after the first Monday in November
I woke at nine.
I voted.
Carter conceded to Reagan.
I cut my hair.

FRED HAYS

All About

About Punk Rockers
Are you real Nazis?
And you who threw the lions
to the Christians
Are you happy now?
Are you happy with all your fat
myths on all your sweet hilltops?
Like a coffee machine
out of order,
Like a naked woman
with four week old
onion skin,
Like mildew hiding
under the edge of a
hot tin roof . . .
Like . . . Silence. . .

FRED HAYS

Title

Blue was the sky with Cinderella cheeks
Funky Rutt was being chased by a dead dog
The dog just lay there cropping the yellow line
His entrails in less exposed areas
Still had the original blue-green-gray-white-pink-color
As I walked on I realized
Funky Rutt was still running
This made me wonder: is cancer so bad after all?
The sky changing, Cinderella's breasts were now shown
in a re-run
I had already seen all of Cinderella and had come
to the conclusion that Cinderella is a very poor fall sky
I refused to accept this sky
just because there are those
people who do like Cinderella
Who needs people who like Cinderella?
Funky Rutt is too busy running to even notice
I would rather **accept** someone
like Funky Rutt instead of those
people?
Well, how does it feel, those
people?
Revenge is not usually carried out in my shoes
but I claimed to have laid Cinderella on
several occasions
This was just to clear the yellow line
It had drawn flies
I went on through the market place
Funky Rutt said it was my imagination killing flies.

DEBBIE JACKSON

Spirit of Christmas

Fat, wet flakes of snow were swirling madly toward the slushy pavement. Men and women hurried up and down the sidewalks, their collars pulled up and their sodden scarves wrapped miserably around their necks, dodging each other, emitting occasional "excuse me's" from between layers of wraps. Tired little children were being tugged along with impatient mothers. It was December 23rd, and getting late; stores were laden with wall-to-wall people anxiously searching for last-minute gifts, closing in on picked-over items and dashing to the cashiers before they closed. Red, green and white lights flickered everywhere. Tinsel was trampled underneath on the mud-streaked floors.

Outside, the falling snow had increased. The sidewalks were dusted white only to be darkened again by shopper's rushed footsteps.

The girl, of about nineteen or so, was hurrying through the crowd. Dressed in a white blouse and gray pants under a deep red winter coat, she appeared less preoccupied than the rest. Dark curls peeked out from beneath her matching tam, and her blue eyes considered every window. She needed something badly, but she couldn't settle for a boring gift like socks or after-shave. She needed something unconventional for her older brother, who had helped her through everything from growing up to making it on her own. After her parent's divorce, he had practically raised her.

She could still see his feathered brown hair being lifted in the wind on that spring day when she left; see his tan skin, his smile and wave.

"Give me a call if anything goes wrong. And remember," he said, "be friendly to people. But be careful."

Warm memories flooded her as she searched for his gift. She peered in windows, lit up brightly, gaily. She paused at the bookstore. Not that he liked reading much, but--

There he was, sitting in the half-light, a tiny, wrinkled shell of a man. She gasped--she had almost stepped on him. She stepped back and looked at him, her eyes wide with alarm. He was bare-headed, and his thin hair was plastered wetly to his scalp. His hands were tight balls in the thin coat pockets. Bony elbows jutted out from his sides, and his legs were drawn up to his stomach. He looked at her, and she opened her mouth, protesting. His eyes stared blankly. Even in the darkness she could see the sadness in them.

Someone jolted her and she stumbled, off balance. She looked around, noting that the snow had trickled off into a drizzle. People bustled by, hunched over, hands in their pockets, silently curs-

ing the weather. She glanced back at the old man, huddled under the eaves on the sidewalk. He had his head down, dejected. It was as if he were a statue. Suddenly frightened, she hurried around him, past the darkened bakery and the jewelry store, and stepped into a department store.

The warm air stung and brought a flush to her face. Eyes sparkling, fear forgotten, she tucked her purse beneath her arm and headed toward the escalator. Wiping her feet on the sodden mat, she began to daydream. How many people had come in here tonight, searching for a bit of momentary happiness? yesterday? since last year? What were their lives like: dull carefree, tragic? She stared at the ties on the men's clothing rack across the aisle, not really seeing them. Her eyes sharply focused.

The time—a glance at her watch showed it to be 8:15, and she still had the other side of the street to go, and tomorrow was Christmas Eve. . .

She had found the ideal present. A ceramic gnome, about the size of a large bookend, had caught her eye as she was passing a novelty store. Hobbins Knickknacks and Potpourri, the sign had said. Actually, the place was an antique shop with a fancy name tacked on. But merchandise sold there was repaired first by the proprietor, and occasionally, commercial items were sold. The cashier had just flipped the sign to "Sorry, We're Closed," when she stopped.

The statue was perfect; a bearded, overalled little elf, with his big hands on his knees and his blue eyes crinkling at some secret pleasure. She had to have him. She knocked on the door, and the cashier, a middle-aged brunette wearing a tan clerk coat, turned around. Painted eyebrows raised, she pointed to the sign.

"Closed," were the words, and the clerk turned around to count her drawer.

The girl's brow furrowed. She raised her hand, poised to knock, and hesitated. She thought a moment, got her checkbook out, and rapped the pane. Frowning, the cashier turned. The girl smiled and crooked her finger, holding up the checkbook. The clerk sighed and resignedly walked to the door.

Stepping outside a few minutes later, the girl figured if she made it to Andrew Street in time, she could catch the 9:07 bus home. If she hurried. Then she saw that face. Those haunting, empty eyes. What kind of Christmas did he have to look forward to? She could have at least spoken; given him a kind word.

Her mind was made up. She splattered across the street. While walking, she contemplated her plan. She would walk up to him, smile warmly, and say—

But he wasn't there. She looked around wanderingly. The sidewalk was crisscrossed with footprints; there was no way to tell where he had gone.

He must have gone home, she thought. But where was home? By the looks of him, he didn't have much of a place to go home to.

She glanced at her watch. She had four minutes to catch the bus. She took one last look around, searching the shadows. No, he was gone. She shivered and shifted her package, holding her purse so she could reach her money easier. She began to run, past the lights, and the fat men in red, still ringing their bells. Tonight would make a nice one for sleeping. She could pack in the morning.

The girl was in bed asleep. She had set her package down in the cramped hall outside her bedroom and gone straight in to undress. She was dreaming of music and lots of people, and she couldn't find who she was looking for. An old man? She couldn't remember.

Late that night, on the edge of the city, an old man walked beside the highway. The wind, bitter and strong, blew his icy coat open. With numb hands he pulled it close and folded his arms across his stomach. He came to the bridge and stopped. Lights rippled on the water, cars drove by.

Looking over the city, he could see the foggy light above the buildings. He looked at the dark sky above him and felt the rain sting his eyes and skin. Blinking, he watched a lone car go by, its headlights forming a glowing arc as it went around a curve, then he turned and walked slowly up the bridge, hands in his pockets, head bowed. He came over the river and paused for a long moment, eyes closed. With a sudden strength he sprinted over the rail and jerkily pushed away from the bridge. The last thing he saw was a girl, lovely and warm, standing beside the bookstore.

BRENDA L. KNIGHT

The White Snake

Once, a loutish fod of a peasant
took a bite of a white snake
and was given knowledge of
the language of animals
In true fairy tale style,
this oaf used his gift
to get a wife who didn't want him,
leaving us only what sense
we can make of the beating of our own hearts.

IMTIAZ AHMAD MARAIKAYER

The Dreamer

This is a song of a dreamer
This is the song that he dreamt.

He says: The world, I see; The people I feel
But my heart, lives too far.
The Ocean, I seek; but no water.
I am hoping someone will read my mind.
The farther I see, the smaller I am.
So, the knowledge in me is so small.
The universe, I think, is smaller itself.
Ant the Life I dream is not far.
The higher I go, the farther I see.
But the farthest to see is "What am I?"
The killer I see is desire in me.
But the fellow who seeks is too low.
The veil in my mind torn up by heart.
It's future, I believe, is Love.
I look up at stars, for the beauty they are.
But the farthest I want, is too small.
Pain in the hearts, tears in the eyes.
No one can tear them apart

The Gossip

I don't understand some people. It seems they spend their whole life nosing in other people's business, and most of the time it gets them into trouble. Not me, though, I don't care what other people are doing, and I stay out of trouble. I always say, "Mind your own business and you'll stay out of trouble," and that's what I do, I mind my own business. You'll never catch me sticking my nose where it doesn't belong, but there are some people in this building who can't wait to talk about you behind your back.

It seems so strange, but some people's whole world revolves around other people's lives, as if they didn't have a life of their own and they had to borrow one.

Take Mrs. Walters for example. She's what you'd call an inveterate gossip. She's sixty-five years old, with a grandmotherly bun of grey hair on the top of her head, and nothing to do all day except spy on people.

What she does is she comes out of her room about nine every morning, dressed in the same black dress that she wears everyday with a tattered red shawl draped across her shoulders, walks her little dog up and down the stairs all day, from one end of the hall to the other, picking up little bits of gossip by listening through keyholes. She knows more about the people in this building than they know about themselves.

Just the other day she was telling me I had better be careful around Francine Edwards. She said Francine was baiting a trap for a husband, but I don't put much stock in what she tells me because of what a gossip she is. I just let what she says go in one ear and out the other, so to speak.

Francine is a cute, neat girl, with long, dark hair, green eyes, smooth complexion and a soft voice. She invites me across the hall to her room for dinner on Thursdays, and on Fridays we play cards.

Francine treats me as if I were her little boy with the big appetite. She calls me Jerry (which no one else does because my name's Charles) because she doesn't like the name Charles. She encourages me to stretch out on the sofa with my head on her lap while she runs her fingers through my hair. It's funny how pleasant such a simple gesture can become.

No, I don't think Francine's trying to trap a husband. If anyone's trying to trap a husband it's Loretta Wilcox.

Loretta lives downstairs in room 210. She's not such a bad looking girl, but she wears this silly looking blonde wig that always looks like it needs combing, and she shaves her eyebrows and paints fake ones on with something that looks like black shoe polish.

Loretta strolls the halls dressed in short shorts and a halter top that's about two sizes too small for her; it's not quite holding all of her in, if you know what I mean. All the men in the building look at her as if she were some sort of sex goddess, and she loves it. I guess that's why she dresses like she does..

She had a husband once, but he's gone now. He walked in front of a taxi. She said he never was bright, but he was bright enough to keep an insurance policy and that's what she's living on now. I wonder if she thinks about her poor dead husband while she's boozing it up in her room every night? I suppose it won't be long until she finds herself a new husband. I wonder if she'll set a trap and catch Eric? I think they'd make a perfect couple.

Eric lives right across the hall from Loretta. He's forty years old, but he tells everyone that he's only thirty-two. I've known him for almost three years and the day we met he told me he was thirty-two.

Eric wears a rug and he thinks no one can tell, but on a hot day the back of it kind of rolls up and you can see what's left of his real hair sticking out from underneath. I guess the heat must loosen the glue he uses to keep it in place.

Eric always wears blue jeans and a T-shirt with different designs and sayings on the front. He tries to dress up like the college kids that live across the street. Everyone laughs at him behind his back, except me, of course. I mind my own business.

I hear Mrs. Walters coming down the hall, it must be two o'clock. She's here to drink tea and to bore me with her idle gossip. I'll never know what she gets from gossiping. For me, the less I know about someone the better I feel.

PAULA WELLS

Ward

"It is now dead midnight.
Cold fearful drops stand on my trembling flesh.
What do I fear? Myself? There's none else by."

Richard III, V, iii.

To walk into this room, she thought.

Emily presses open palms against the black enamelled door.
They leave clouded prints. The door is silent.
Her heels make no sound as she crosses brittle tiles.

If a tree falls in a forest, she thought.

Marky sits in a rocking chair, as still as his eyes.
Pale photographs of the moon. He faces the window.
Satin drapes meet and fall to the floor.

All dark and confortless, she thought.

Emily grasps the headrest, her hands growing white,
lilies for an open grave. She cannot touch him.
The shaven head pivots like a mechanical toy—

By any other name would smell, she thought.

Showing violet veins scarcely under a frost of skin.
The rocker moves slightly; the head returns to place.
There is the sound of creaking wood that moves the silence.

Only a year, she thought.

Emily laughs. The sounds now are discordant.
Emily sings in her head. The rocker moves faster.
Emily laughs. The rocker is a blur. It floats in the air.

He will always live here, she thought.

Emily laughs. The rocker swings, free of weight.
Emily toes the frosted globe. Emily laughs.
Emily is a blur. Emily laughs. Emily laughs.

PAULA WELLS

Ohio

The poet laughed about living in the Ohio River,
but he doesn't have to live there. He thinks only of fish.
I sleep in the river. The dead trees caught in currents
poke my head, make my sleep there swifter.

I have no windows, I only try to make walls
out of the water. My feet are tucked under the floor.
Inch-long children drift by and thoughts slip out of my
fingers.
They touch me before the river drags them down.

Then come the older, bloated bodies, concerned faces.
They sit on tires playing spades; they ride bicycles by me,
waving, with broken bottles stuck in their sides,
and letting their hair flow upward, upward.

PAULA WELLS

Thurs Oct 19

Rusting wrought-iron pickets,
abandoned fruits, passing crows.
The roads of Nebraska are black tongues
stuck out from strangled towns.
These fields are too prolific. They are forced
to devour themselves.

Headstones rise beyond the black tongues.
This is the search for my son.

I never wanted these waves.
I have been to a place where kind words
are kept,
(green rooms with sterile instruments
for the dead)
popular wallets and carless keys.

My womb is dry.
I cannot give again.

PAULA WELLS

Manual

The room is never dusted, but the dust never settles,
and if you walked the room at night,
you would trip over the lamp cords
that lead to a hundred unlit lamps.

During the human day, when everywhere else is light,
if you would rub the dust off the window,
you could see the family pictures have fallen,
and that the walls were white, and are white no longer.

And you could see the old woman, sitting in the chair,
the one that is woven in old blues and pinks,
the one that has lost its stuff,
and is covered with cobwebs and the dust,

not unlike her dress, not unlike her shoes,
not unlike the carpet, nor the drapes,
nor the wrinkles that crowd those blinded eyes
on what children kissed when they must have.

And if you are very quiet, you can wait until dark,
hear her humming a song that was never written,
see her rise, and dance upon the splintered floor,
where I sit smiling as if you and I both understood.

It's Not My Fault

It's not my fault. Honest. And if anyone says one more thing to me, I'm gonna bust 'em in the mouth. It's like I'm some sorta criminal or something. I lost my allowance, the $5.75 I was saving for that MacGregor baseball glove in the window of the Sporting Goods store, and I can't watch TV for a month. Not even "The Hulk". I mean, it's really dumb. Especially since it's not even my fault.

My name's Andy Jackson. I'm in the fourth grade at Chester Intermediate School. I have a little brother, Timmy, who's sometimes pretty neat, but mostly he's a pest. Mom makes me take him with me a lot of times and that's not fair, because he's scared of lots of things and gets tired easy. My best friends in the whole world are Petie Jansen and Mikey Locke. They live near me, and we walk around together at lunchtime and walk home together after school.

I live about five blocks from school. About four blocks from school, or one block from me, is this big old yellow brick house. It's got grey around the windows and old wicker furniture on the porch. It's Mrs. Fowler's house. She's awful old, maybe even a hundred. Petie says he thinks she's 150. I told him he was really dumb. Only people in the olden days ever lived to be that old. Anyways, she's really crabby. You're not allowed to cut through her yard or anything. If you do, she comes out and yells at you. Freddy Rogers told me once she even threatened to call the cops on him. She's really weird. I know because one time I had to sell peanuts for Cub Scouts, and my dad took me there. She was real nice to us and invited us in. She kept talking and talking to my dad, and I got bored. She has this big, brown mole on her neck that kept moving up and down when she talked. And her house smelled bad — I tried to hold my breath for as long as I could — it smelled like dust and Bactine and Ben-Gay. My dad said later he felt sorry for her. I told him she oughta be nicer to kids. He said we oughta be nicer to her. Grown-ups always blame us for everything.

Anyway, we walk past her house on the way home from school everyday. There's a big window in front and Puddy Fowler would be sleeping on the inside. Puddy was Mrs. Fowler's cat. He was the stupidest and ugliest cat I ever knew. Cats are dumb anyway. All they do is rub against your legs and then they get cat hair all over you so that you get bawled out by your mom. Like Mikey said, they don't chase sticks and you can't sic them on anybody. Who'd want a silly ole' cat? Puddy was big and old — just like Mrs. Fowler. He had long hair which was mostly white on his stomach, but brown and yellow on his back. He had spots

on his face and real long whiskers. Jack Jorden and Bill Withers, who are in high school and real creeps, [they like girls and they're always combing their hair and looking in mirrors], caught Puddy outside once and cut-off his whiskers on one side. Puddy wasn't allowed outside after that.

Anyway, Puddy'd be asleep, so we'd throw gravel on the porch to wake him up. We never broke anything. He'd look out the window kinda lazy like. Then we'd rush toward him with our hands in front of us and hiss real loud. That dumb cat would arch his back and hiss back. Sometimes we'd run up on the porch and hiss some more. Then ole' Mrs. Fowler'd come out and holler at us, saying things like we didn't have no respect for older people, and that our dads ought to take a strap to us. Just for teasing her old cat!

We walked home one day and Puddy wasn't in the window. Petie crawled on his hands and knees around the porch to the back (he didn't want to, but we double dared him), but he said he didn't see him. We all decided to meet later to play wiffleball. Mikey wanted to play Cowboys and Indians, but Petie and I aren't allowed to play that anymore since we tied up Abigail Hissom. She and Debbie Taylor wanted to play, so they let us tie them up. Then Abigail started acting real snobby and telling us how to play. We untied Debbie, (she's neat, she catches frogs and stuff), but not Abigail. She's a big cry baby anyway, and a tattle tale. We got in trouble.

I went home and watched "Tom and Jerry" until supper time. We had icky cooked carrots. I tried to scoop them off the plate, but Mom saw, and said, "Andrew Brandon Jackson!" That's my full name, and it means trouble. I swallowed them whole—she stood behind me—with my glass of milk. Timmy smeared his on his placemat and didn't have to eat them. I wish I were four. He never has to do anything.

It was a crummy day already. I started out the door and Timmy started bawling. I told him to shut up, but Mom'd heard and started yelling. She asked if I even remembered I had a little brother, and that he liked to play too. I left to meet Petie and Mikey, Timmy tagging along.

We were all walking down the street toward City Park, which is six blocks away, but we're allowed to walk in daylight. Petie pointed. "Hey look! There's Puddy Fowler!" Puddy was coming up the sidewalk toward us, his tail sticking straight up. We all started giggling and looking at each other. Puddy stopped and crouched low to the ground his tail twitching. We ran at him, hissing. He jumped back and humped his back, all his hair standing on end. Mikey rolled around on the ground laughing and kicking his feet in the air. Puddy just twitched his tail and made funny, low noises. Then Timmy, who'd been standing behind us and

watching, ran up and waved a stick at Puddy, yelling. I grabbed it, but Puddy ran right into the street. Mr. Johnson tried to stop—there were skid marks—but Puddy just stood there. The tires made a screeching sound and then there was a funny sound. He parked the car at the side of the road. Puddy was lying in the road, his head turned to the side, his mouth and eyes open. Then I saw the blood and didn't look anymore. Mikey started to get sick. Mr. O'Malley, whose house Mr. Johnson pulled in front of, came running out. He spoke to Mr. Johnson, then went back inside and brought out some newspapers. They covered Puddy up. Timmy was screaming now, and Mr. O'Malley looked over and told me to take him home.

Mom was on the phone, but when I shut the door, she hung up and looked at me hard. Timmy ran to her, hiccupping, his nose runny. She hugged him, and then looked at me again. "How could you? How on earth could . . . what could you have been thinking of?" She was yelling at **me!** "Mrs. Simpson just called me and told me what you did—teasing and tormenting that poor cat, then chasing it into the street to be killed!" She was shaking and it scared me. Timmy hung onto her leg.

"I didn't!" I started crying. "Timmy did."

"And who was responsible? Who set the example by teasing that cat? That cat was all that Mrs. Fowler had. He never bothered you. I thought I raised you better." She pointed upstairs and I went. I felt like stomping, but that makes her mad anyways. I mean, I didn't do it. I Didn't tell Timmy to throw that stupid stick. It's not fair. He does something and I get blamed.

I slammed the door and laid on my bed. Timmy tried to come in, and I yelled if he didn't go away, I was going to bust his face in. I heard Dad come in the front door. I felt sick. He came into my room a few minutes later. He told me to take the money out of my bank because we were going downtown. I started to tell him what happened, but he said, "Be still." When Dad says be still, you be still. Otherwise, he'll give you a whipping.

That night I rang Mrs. Fowler's doorbell, trying to keep the kitten from crawling out of my arms. She took a long time answering the door. She squinted out at me and the kitten, then opened the door to let me in. The stupid kitten kept getting his claws caught in my shirt.

Did I need any help, she wanted to know. I stood there feeling very nervous and wishing my dad had come inside. I told her the kitten was for her. She seemed surprised. "You heard." She smiled a kinda sad smile. I kidn't know what she meant, so I told her the kitten was for her on account of her cat getting hit. She took it from me and hugged it. She started talking about God's children hearing about the misfortunes of an old lady. It started getting awfully hot in there, and when she thanked me and started

to cry, I began to feel funny in the stomach. I said I had to go, and went outside. My dad walked me home. We didn't say anything.

Sometimes we see Mrs. Fowler on her porch when we're walking home from school. She always says hello and starts to talk, but I usually pretend I'm busy. Sometimes I cross the street before I get to her house. Daddy said something the other day about feeling guilty. I don't understand why he said that. It wasn't my fault.

My Mother's Kitchen

Mom's kitchen's for everyone
provided of course
you wipe your shoes clean
and forget your last lunch.

She has no need of tricks.
There's temptation in tzimas
caresses of chicken soup.
Gefilte fish is an agent
out to capture your soul.
Better no to beat it.
Just sit down and eat it.

Mom's food is friendly.
Don't be proud.
The egg chalah twist
will put you at ease.
Hold her two minutes straight
in a glass of whole milk.
Mom guarantees
she won't be put out.

The lox and bagel
you think might object?
Mom says to tell you
think nothing of it.

Mom's proud of her kitchen.
She belives the world saved
the faithless enlighted
children subdued
by a bowl of bananas
bathed in whipped cream.

This domain is her Bible.
It was she who discovered
blintzes could speak
a most rich awesome tongue
that borscht is none other than
oracle of truth
mouthpiece of Moses

Mom's kitchen is waiting
Even now
things
are
stewing

Celebration

Around Thanksgiving
ambient traces of winter death
and heavy clouds shadowed the small town;

the naked trees and faded greens,
the sallow faces at the B&B.
Woodpiles like backyard barricades
and smouldering leaves, the smoke
barely visible against a charcoal sky.

Around the corner, shaven hedges
hide a dying, but tidy front lawn
and Sheila's canary yellow home,

I pull in the cracked, but spotless driveway.

The last of the marigolds uprooted,
crisp buds piled upon loose soil
like a fresh grave beside the mailbox.

She pointed a rake towards stuffed
garbage bags beside the house;
her aching back—the price she pays
for shade trees every summer.

Under the carport
hung a huge deer.

Strung up taut, its neck stretched
strangled skin beneath a puckering
double noose of hairy rope; its head
carrying the dead weight of the body,
dropping like a sinker on a fishing line.

It should have moved, or swayed,
pivoting in a groaning circle
the creaking strain of the ceiling,
the twisting hook bored through
two feet of wood and metal just for him.

Graceful corpse, a gaunt, stiff body;
front legs out and bent, feet splayed inward,
hind legs strong and delicate, reaching upward,
tiny hooves pointed, ballerina toes;

muscles, tendons, bones in marvelous design
Frozen in mid-run, mid-flight, useless
now, carrying absolutely no weight
hanging four feet off the ground.

Skin in the middle of seasonal change,
turning from brown to gray drained, dry
white streaks—the little tail stuck
straight and proud from behind.

Features as sharp as broken antlers,
dignity in every angle except his eyes;
they refused to close.
A piece of a dead leaf clung
to an eyelash; it fluttered.
Staring toward some place beyond
the driveway, the hedges, the house
across the street; above the moved-down
spruced-up neighborhood far from any forest.

Hauled down from Snyder Knob,
Sheila's husband bounced his bleeding trophy
home in his longbed Chevy over 119.

Displayed in front, and the wastes were
too ugly to be buried as close
as the used-up garden in back.
The useless parts, save the head
taken away with other garbage to a dumpy
hillside, where strays wander in the brush.

Tired Sheila would sleep that night,
dead deer pulling at a noose hanging
ten feet below her bedroom window.

Away from that house, the streets,
on a road heading home, the sight;
Deer hang in carports, garages, doorways
of houses blurring into gray-white stripes.

A brown eye, superimposition
on my windshield,
blinks one more time
as splatters of rain appear.

BARBARA ROUSH

Madwoman

(a painting by Chaim Soutine—1920)

A madwoman trembles
beneath a crumpled green toboggan
and a screaming red dress.

Like fire, the red glows in her
wiry black hair, her twisted
face and boneless fingers; her
rashy skin stretches and crawls.

The hot color flows and pulls
around skinny shrugged shoulders;
her head and tepid face lurch forward,
and her spineless body is lost
in the formless thick billows of red.

She clutches one arm
with a weathered hand
as though her limbs are separate
beings, aching to fly.

Her depthless eyes leer,
and syrupy lips smear to form
a one-sided smile, a shaky smirk.
One eye looks hopeful in a daydream,
the other rests tiredly in the distance.
She waits for a soul with whom she can
share a secret, or a huge holy coat
she can hide in and peep through,
away from the cold.

BARBARA ROUSH

On the River

> "Where go we now? I guess we wash towards death.
> May I hold your hand?"
>
> —Fred Chappell
> from "The River Seeks Again the Sea"

Like children on the drying bank
with broken branches in our hands, drawing
voodoo faces on stick bodies
stretched out in the mud—
strangled skeletons washed ashore
in the game of hangman.

High on the river, watching
spreading pattern in the wakes
and flashing streams of dying light—
the sun across the water; wavering
drone of a boat gone forever
and its splashing echoes, waves
waiting like souls to rise from the water
at dusk; misty, floating, calm.

"Boats are ladies—she's not he's
but they're named for captains," I said.

Our fire on the bank, foggy flicker
for the pilots behind high smoky windows
in harbourless boats with black barges
crawling, **remembering** the channel's banks.
Eternal flare for the quiet captain
two-thirds of my life on the river,
and gone before I knew why
we both love and hate distance.

You kicked a dented can;
I dropped a heavy pebble
on the glowing smoulder, for the night
boats that never stop.

Our hanged men, carried home
in the next boat's haunted waves,
will finally rest at sea.

MAUREEN SALAMAT

In The Land of Opportunity

"Eat your spaghetti," Jimmy's mother always used to say. Jimmy was not fond of spaghetti, in spite of his Italian heritage.

Early in his life it was established that Jimmy should be given opportunities which had been denied his father. The family put aside a sum of money every year until the boy reached eighteen, whereupon it was decided that he would attend a prominent north-eastern university.

His first two years at the university passed inconsequentially. His classmates would later remark that he was a quiet, serious, and somewhat aloof student during this period.

During his third year Jimmy experienced women for the first time, having previously ignored or self-administered to his carnal urges. He found that the more he could have women, the more he desired them and their favors.

All through the second half of his third year Jimmy enjoyed his ever increasing popularity with women. He wore tight trousers and platform boots. He grew a moustache, which endeared him even more to the freshman coeds. He smoothed back his hair and said "Come home with me baby" to women he met in bars, adoring women who couldn't resist his dark, brash manners.

He was feeling rather fortunate about his success with the opposite sex, so that he began to neglect his studies. He spent more time grooming and frequently caught glimpses of himself in mirrors and store windows.

The summer before his last year at the university he attended day classes that he had failed the previous semester. At night he met more women.

One of these was Doris, a single, well-built woman. She invited him up to her apartment one evening for a glass of wine. He found her charming and quite willing to please him, so he spent the night. Yet when he called her the next day she said, "Sorry honey, I just wanted a piece of ass," and hung up the phone.

Jimmy was hurt at first but then he thought about what Doris had said. That one rude remark decided the course of action which he would pursue. He wooed and won Doris over to the idea that they belonged together. She had been involved with a married man and said that she wanted a more stable arrangement; Jimmy had agreed that perhaps he needed the same. Two weeks before the start of fall classes, Jimmy moved in with her.

Jimmy's family met this decision with raised eyebrows. His father had demanded an engagement, while his mother simply

inquired whether or not the girl could cook. "Make good pasta, Jimmy?" she would ask of Doris.

If there was anyone who hated the sight of spaghetti more than Jimmy, it was Doris, this being on account of her dog having worms once. The veterinary medication had resulted in the deposit of worms throughout her apartment, and thus, Doris had a general aversion to anything long and cylindrical in shape.

Jimmy now shared household chores which included walking the dog and washing the dishes. At first he performed such menial tasks with an eagerness to please his companion. Besides, their sex life was highly satisfactory to him and indeed, he met everything about the new experience with a true enthusiasm.

But the two were not destined for a life of domestic transquility together. As his social life became more and more centered around Doris, Jimmy grew increasingly sullen. He nagged her for not doing the dishes when he failed to find a clean glass in the house. In response, she washed one for him with great fury.

"Here, sit on it and rotate!" she exclaimed, slamming the clean glass into the empty dish rack.

"But that would only make it dirty again," Jimmy replied in an attempt to ease the tension.

Very quickly Jimmy perceived that Doris was restless. He tried everything to make her happy. He bought her flowers. He ordered a cordless vibrator from the back of a magazine. He even changed his appearance to suit his newly adopted carefree attitude. He grew a beard, and retired his tight pants in favor of baggy khakis and tennis shoes. He let his hair become long and nonchalantly unkempt.

But Doris did not seem pleased. She merely told him to take a bath. Then one day she announced she was going to visit a friend in a nearby city.

"I need some space," she said while Jimmy pouted and implored her to stay.

After she left, Jimmy sulked for a week. Then, in rebellion, he dusted off and polished his leather boots and squeezed himself into his tight pants. After a week of manually consoling himself, he was ready again for a warm human form.

He rationalized his infidelity by adhering to the notion that Doris was probably being unfaithful in the other place. But now, when he made love to a Debbie or a Cindy, he imagined that Doris was making it with a Bill or a Stan at the exact same moment. He would concentrate on his partner, as if he were the other man and she were Doris. He often wondered how another man might make love to Doris, and if she would be different for him.

And so Jimmy found that he no longer had fun with women. They were trifles; he wanted Doris. On the one hand he resented

her for making him care so much about her. This form of conscience was new to him. Yet he had an overwhelming desire to have her with him, especially now that she was out of his reach.

He gave up women. He gave up at the university, too, and took a job waiting tables in an Italian restaurant. His father wouldn't hear of it, and visited Jimmy with a mission.

"Talk sense to him," Jimmy's mother had instructed her husband.

But Jimmy was content to serve pasta, collect his tips, and spend a quiet evening at home with the dog. He refused to return home with his father and wouldn't be talked out of living in Doris' apartment in her absence.

He settled into a reclusive lifestyle and thought constantly of Doris and how different their life together would be if and when she returned. He was asleep in his jockey shorts one evening when she let herself into the apartment. He awoke with a start to find her breathless and flushed before him.

"I knew you would be here. Oh Jimmy, I missed you so!" she said. And after they made love she said "Let's get married or something."

Jimmy's enthusiasm at work the next day prompted questions and then congratulations. His manager even offered to throw him a bachelor party. All Jimmy could think about was how happy he was. He was going to marry a beautiful woman who loved him and was all his. What's more, he looked forward to finally winning the approval and pride of his parents.

It came as a shock to Jimmy when returning home from work that he was met at the door by a piece of flying metal. He picked it up off the floor while Doris paced the room, issuing obscenities at him. The piece of metal in Jimmy's hand was a gold chain and heart-shaped locket bearing an engraved name on one side.

"It belongs to Lisa, or Linda, or something," Doris caustically informed him.

Jimmy frantically tried to recall the face that matched the name. He went to Doris and put his arms around her, intending to fully confess his spree of affairs and his renunciation of meaningless sex.

"I love you, Doris," he said, but she shrugged him off.

"Oh, you're pretty slick. Did you have fun while I was away?" she snapped.

"Well, what did you expect?" he said in an angry voice, grabbing her by the arm as she made a move to walk away.

"Don't touch me, you greasy Coney Island wave!" she screamed, and her expression conveyed to him a sense of utter revulsion.

Jimmy stood there dumbfounded.

"Where was the locket?" he asked quietly.

"Under the bed. Now get out!" Doris said, still trembling with rage.

For several moments he remained there in silence. He tried to tell her that he had changed, that he loved her, that she was the only one he wanted. Each time he opened his mouth the words stuck in his throat, and all the while Doris glared at him.

"Here, I'll help you pack," she said, going into the bedroom. Gathering a handful of underwear from the drawer, she flung it at him. Jimmy slowly approached her as she searched for something else to hurl at him.

"What about you, did you?" he blurted out. She whirled around, holding the vibrator he had ordered.

"I masturbated," she replied, and brushed by him.

"She was lying," Jimmy would recall to his parents when his qualms about discussing the matter had abated. He went to work in the family furniture business and lived a comfortable life. He had an occasional letter from Doris; the latest and last one described her marriage to the lieutenant governor of Arkansas.

"I wish you all the best," the letter had said.

Jimmy carried it with him at all times; the smudges in the corners attested to the fact that he sometimes reread the letter over a plate of pasta. Lately, he had acquired a taste for spaghetti, perhaps from his days at the restaurant. Days, he remembered, that were full of quiet anticipation.

LEE SMITH

Washing Windows for Aunt Elizabeth

The peach sun at 6:30 floats an inch above
the dark mountains on a powder sky and illuminates
the gray film on the wide square windows.

A white cotton pajama top smears a spray
of ammonia, water, and vinegar. Iridescent streaks
glow from the fire of a weak sun. Glass becomes grayer.

Another yellow shower skates across the warm ice
under a revolving pajama top. The black hill eats
the peach sun. Smoky gray fills the clean window.

The pajama top sails faster, faster on the smooth clear sea.
The sky absorbs the mountain's black.
The peach rots to black.

The window reflects black. The glass sucks
the colors from the white cotton pajama top.
In the pane it is black.

LEE SMITH

Washing the Mirror at Grandma's House

The rag bleeds gray soap down the mirror's face.
Circles, arches, waves, curves of foam hide reflections.

Beside the mirror, a lady in a gold frame,
my grandmother when she was twenty-two,
smiles at my scrubbing. Her black hair
folded up, hiding under a huge-brimmed
brown felt Sunday-go-to-meeting hat;
her dark eyes glow on sixty-year-old paper;
yellowed ruffles crawl around her throat
and down her brown jacket.

"A, , , wipe it good," she calls from the doorway,
her short, thin gray hair reaching out from her head;
tired eyes behind folds of thick, dry skin;
a baggy checkered shirt hanging from sick little arms.

The lady in the gold frame still smiles at me.
A fresh rag cleans the dried soap-blood
from the mirror and now the lady in the
gold frame smiles at me from the mirror.

I heard some music today.
Sounded like November.

You're the only one who explored my depths and found that the tides flow backwards.

If you are ever going too fast,
Don't worry.
You'll soon hit something and
    Stop.

GREG PAKSTIS
DARLENE FARMER
CHRIS SURBER

JEANNIE SPARKS

Prom Night

I can only remember
the momentary pain
as the top comes off
the passionate sloe gin.
Perfumed flowers bend
with the pressure.
Turning the key,
you try to escape
by pumping your accelerator.
I can only consume so much.
So the hell with you
and the plastic cushions
you call dates.

Razor Sharp

Like the slash marks
on the highway
my wrist is
divided by a red
line that beads
and drips off my fingertips
forming a stop sign
on the tile.

CHRIS SURBER

Autumn trees are such skeletal dread.
Dark bark forms like old witches fingers,
Defying the Cold.
See the one on the right.
What is that up in the branches?
It hangs so precariously
I think it may fall
At a whisper of the wandering winds.
Is it a paper, a package?
Maybe.
No, now closer I see It.
It's somebody's baby!
Lord, it's somebody's baby!
Flung up in a tree!
And closer I look
And see that it bleeds.
oh, poor baby.
Free you I would
If I could just climb,
But age has made me
Such a weak man.
It has made me deaf too.
For though I see your lips moving
I can't hear the hoarse,
rusty gate screams
Which leap from your dry
baby lungs.

B. W. THORNTON

Saturday Night at the "Blue Goose"

It's Saturday night,
The rednecks are anxious.
Hair slicked sweet,
Knuckles popped,
Ready for the war.

Four wheel drives
With gunracks and foglights
Lined up along the street.
Getaway cars
For the survivors.

Inside a beer joint,
The jukebox cries out
That good ole country music.
Another broken heart;
Another train to Nashville.

Scratch on the eight ball,
Cuss and swarp.
Pump another quarter, redneck.
Keep right on bangin'
Those pleasure machines.

Big argument:
"Tastes great" versus "less filling."
Cheers go up
As the war breaks out.
Damn, what fun!

At the bar
Sits the wife of a coal miner.
She works the night shift too.
And smiles as she climbs
Into a redneck's truck.

Kermit, W. Va.
August '81

Peaches

Shelly pulled two fleshy peaches from the tree and dropped them into one of the bushel baskets at the base of the tree. Already the baskets were too full for her to carry; she'd have to get Paul to put them in the laundry room when he got home. She had a picture of Paul carrying the baskets across the lawn, too weak to pick them up, struggling as they brushed the high grass. But that wasn't so, Shelly realized. Paul had broad arms like thick, tight ropes.

She picked up two small wicker baskets of peaches to carry in for a cobbler. Paul had been eating restaurant food all week while selling strip mining equipment in Pennsylvania. He'd want a homemade cobbler and her garden fresh spaghetti sauce.

She opened the back door and walked into the laundry room. Beside the washer and dryer were several sets of steel shelving filled with the bounty of the summer: canned beans, corn, and tomatoes, eight newly ripened pumpkins, three net bags of onions, strawberry jam, beets, and pickles. Two bushels of early apples needed to be put away before they sat much longer. Shelly took off her tennis shoes and walked into the kitchen where the pot of spaghetti sauce simmered.

Paul hadn't called the last two days, and she wasn't sure just where he was. She had heard from the doctor the beginning of the first day, and after her initial plunge, she decided it would be best to tell Paul in person. She began to wash the peaches, rubbing their sunwarmed fuzz under the cool water and feeling their heavy fullness in her hands. Paul would be relieved to see that she had picked most of them.

The peach tree hadn't begun to bear yet when they moved to the country seven years ago, but the last two years the harvest produced heavy, sweet fruit in amounts that took all day to can. Shelly loved peaches, so did Paul. After dessert she'd tell Paul what the doctor said.

She sliced the peaches in half, putting the grooved, nut-like pits on a paper towel. A pit slid into the sink, around the drain, and down the damp rubber flap into the garbage disposal. Shelly frowned--the pit would ruin the disposal. She slid her hand in between the rubber flaps and around the sharp, unyielding blade. She couldn't find the pit with her fingers, and withdrew her hand, the rubber flap making a popping noise. When Paul came home, she'd tell him about it.

After putting the cobbler in the oven, she took the jar of iced tea off of the porch step, where it was brewing in the sun, and put it in the refrigerator. She put out two antique plates and

her good silver on the small table on the porch, and then ran some water in the bathtub.

She undressed for her bath. Her muscles became pliable as wax in the warm water. She looked at her abdomen, and her long legs. She thought her body looked like a child's, with gangly, fawn legs at the end. She bathed herself, and then dried and put on white slacks and a plaid cotton blouse.

She heard Paul's car on the gravel drive as she stirred the spaghetti sauce. She smoothed her hair and walked out onto the porch with two glasses of ice.

"Hi, honey!" she said, as she set the glasses on the little table, then walked down the steps. Paul opened the car door and stood up. He seemed frailer.

"Shelly, Shelly," was all he said. He kissed her. "Mmmm, something smells good."

She helped him carry in his luggage and a brown paper bag. She set the bag on the kitchen counter. "That bag is for you. Just a little something."

"How sweet!" He had never brought her a gift from a trip before. She opened the bag, and took out a rag doll in a green checked dress. The doll's lips were two straight embroidered lines and her eyes were like little dead seeds.

"That's homemade, by a little old lady. She still owns a general store." Paul took off his brown dress shoes and pleasantly moved his toes. "She's really something. She had 13 children--married at 14 years old."

"Oh, really?" Shelly laid the doll carefully on the counter and stirred the sauce. Paul went to the bathroom to wash. She wondered what they'd ever do with a doll. She could set it on the bed in the guest room; it would look nice on the white antique quilt.

She sliced some french bread and laid it on a platter, and poured the tea from a jar into a pitcher. She set the cobbler on a rack to cool.

Paul came into the kitchen in a white undershirt and a pair of jeans. "Dinner looks delicious. Need any help?"

"There's a pit in the garbage disposal--I'll need it out after dinner. Will you carry out the tea and bread?"

Paul picked up the plate and pitcher and walked out on the porch. Shelly followed, and they sat down. She filled their plates with spaghetti, and he poured the tea.

"I picked most of the peaches, but I couldn't lift the baskets. You'll have to carry them in." Shelly chewed. "And there's some pumpkins ripe already. I made our first peach cobbler, too."

"For tonight? That'll hit the spot." Paul chewed contentedly, leaning back against his chair, surveying their land. "I missed this place. I like our trees better than any I've seen."

Shelly saw the soft blue-gray blur of rabbits running from one bush to another at the far edge of the lawn. "Oh, Paul! Did you see the rabbits?"

"No-where?"

"Oh, they just ran into the bush by that old hickory." Shelly leaned forward. They were both excited by wild things. "There they are again! Why, one's a baby!"

"I see it! Aren't they brazen? We aren't 30 feet from them."

They watched in silence, leaning forward, their forks abandoned in their spaghetti. The rabbits didn't appear again, and Paul began to eat.

"That reminds me, did you get the test results?" Paul asked, gathering spaghetti on his fork.

Shelly felt her stomach lurch. She didn't have the cobbler on yet. This was not the way she had planned it. She debated on whether to eat another bite of spaghetti.

"Did you call the doctor?" Paul asked.

Shelly laid down her fork. "Yes." She turned and looked at Paul's nut-brown, fragile face. He looked at her eyes.

"Not good, huh?" he said.

The lush greenness and the fragrance of peaches washed over Shelly, and her stomach lurched again. What could she say? How could she ease it? She felt the blood pulse behind her eyes.

"Paul--I'm sorry."

"Oh, honey." He reached out to her and hugged her. He rocked her lightly in his arms, and she could smell the ivory soap he had washed his face and neck with. He held her close, unselfishly, as if to obliterate some tightness within her.

"We'll make do. We can adopt. That's okay. It really is. We'll make do. We will." He rocked her, pulling her chair closer to him. His face looked flat like the rag doll's as Shelly peered up from beneath his chin.

She leaned against his chest, and looked at the garden. Most of the plants were chopped and lying in blackened heaps, waiting to be tilled into the soil. Paul could believe as he did.

He rocked her and then they were still. The ice melted in their tea. Paul rubbed Shelly's back and they talked about making applesauce and pumpkin pies. They ate the cobbler in the darkening kitchen without turning on the light, and went to bed.