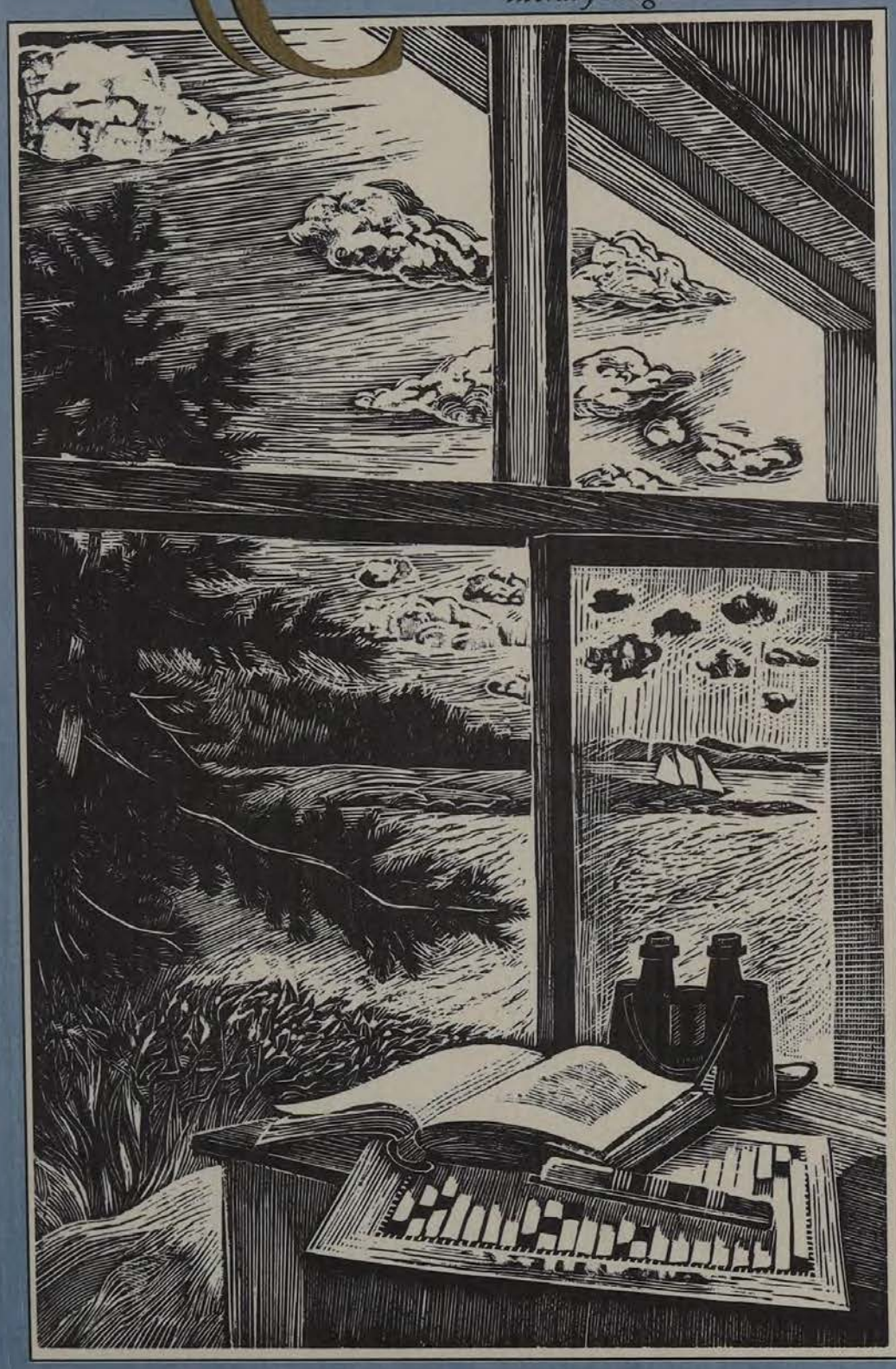
Crosscut

literary magazine



Introduction by Stephen King

Crosscut

Literary Magazine

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Preface

Nineteen ninety-eight marks the centennial of Husson College, and it is fitting that this year's edition of *Crosscut* includes contributions from our entire community: students, faculty, administration, staff, alumni, faculty emeriti, family members, and supporters. The interest in creative writing, photography, and art at Husson is evidenced by the record number of submissions we received this year, and the quality of the work. There is a vital stream of creativity running beneath the surface of our college, and it deserves this opportunity and many others to emerge.

From the start, *Crosscut* has been a collaborative effort, and we would like to thank the people who have helped shape this year's edition: Lisa Hand for her design work; Jim Kenny and Kevin Casey for their strategic input; and Rick Doyle, Judith Musser, and Vicky Thayer for their sound judgment and sharp eyes.

– Tom Batt, Bob Nichols

Introduction

It's the spring of 1967, okay? I'm a second semester freshman at the University of Maine, nineteen years old, on my way to an eight o'clock class with one eye open and a Pall Mall stuck in the corner of my mouth (this was in an ancient age when even doctors smoked enthusiastically). I'm not thinking about much except whether or not I'll get home that weekend to see my girlfriend when this guy walks up beside me, some guy I've never seen before. He says, "Liked your story, man."

I draw a complete blank–what in the world can he be talking about? I show my stories to my friends, my relatives, and sometimes, if an assignment's due, to English teachers. I don't as a rule show them to total strangers.

He sees I don't get him, so he says, "The literary magazine, man. *Ubris*. I bought a copy in the Union because my sister's got a poem in it. Like her poem. Also liked your story." And off he goes, headed for the library or maybe the University Barns.

I stand where I am for a moment, totally freaked. I have just received my first review–a favorable one, too–for a short story called "Cain Rose Up." In it, a student who has just lost his girlfriend (a good deal of student writing tends to be about student loving, and the loss of same) goes bonkers and starts shooting people from the window of his dorm room. It wasn't a very good story–and since the victims were on their way to the caff when the shooting started, their deaths might have been deemed mercy killings–but this kid I've never seen before had not only read it but *liked* it. *He liked my story!* I think that was where my career actually began.

On one level you always write for yourself–that's a given. But eventually that's not enough. Unless he/she's an Emily Dickenson type, the writer starts to show his/her work. When a writer shows it to a friend or relative and says, "Tell me what you think," he or she is really saying, "Tell me something nice." And although it's nice to be nice, it's not always helpful to the developing writer.

A step beyond this, when he or she begins showing his/her work to a teacher, the writer hopefully prepares for a more honest assessment...yet still, any composition teacher or creative writing teacher will tell you that writing for class–writing for *grades*–isn't the same as publishing in a magazine or a collection. The teacher is a captive audience, after all, paid (although never enough) to read what you put on paper and react to it. As someone who has taught both comp and creative writing, I can tell you it changes the way you read. Not for the better, either. A teacher reading student work is rarely a teacher having fun; he or she is usually wearing the mental equivalent of combat boots and a flak-jacket, prepared as well as possible for the endless assaults on the English language that students mount. "His eyes slid down her dress," one of my students wrote. "The news hit

him like a bomb filled with fish-hooks and other small jagged things," wrote another. "I can't tell you how the stink of that man ripped thru me," wrote a third. Or how about these two, gleaned from the internet? "Her vocabulary was as bad as, like, whatever." And "The little boat gently drifted across the still pond exactly the way a bowling ball wouldn't."

For the teacher, contempt or dismissal is not an option when faced with these or even more flagrant atrocities. He or she must try to teach and guide, to open head and heart and give the best he or she can–a giving which always boils down to four words: *Tell the damn truth.*

If the writer goes on beyond the classroom level–as the writers in the compilation which follows are now doing–he or she then enters the world of the publishing writer. The experience is like an amateur athlete for the first time putting on the uniform of a pro or semi-pro player and discovering that up here they play the game for real; no one calls time if you get the wind knocked out of you, no one warns the pitcher if he brushes you back from the plate.

The poems, stories, and essays in *Crosscut* will be read by friends and relatives, of course (without enthusiastic friends and relatives, most lit magazines would probably fold in short order), but copies of it will also reach a wider audience. Somewhere–maybe on a bus between Bangor and Montreal–a woodsman on his way to visit his brother could find a forgotten copy of *Crosscut* (one with a big muddy foot-track on the cover, maybe, or a missing back page) and spend at least part of his ride reading Julianna Herrick on fudge or Ann Fellows on the care and feeding of pythons... or maybe Gayle Walden on woodsmen.

A copy might wind up in a dentist's waiting room or the back seat of someone's car or lying amid the copies of *Elle* and *Vogue* and *Shape* in a beauty parlor. Or in another country, where some student trying to learn English may pick it

up and agree with Teresa and Ernie Steele, who begin "A Toast to Aomori" by saying, "Words have different meanings/in many foreign lands/and so you must be careful/or risk censure's demands."

Crosscut is where the work starts going out to people who will read it or not read it, like it or not like it, based on their desire, curiosity, and interest, and not because reading the work means their paycheck or because it's a family obligation.

This is a very good literary compilation, indeed. The work is uneven and much of it is flawed, but there is also unexpected beauty and toughness of expression–a clear thread of plain unvarnished Yankee diction. I think a good many of these writers may be surprised by how positive the reaction to their work is going to be, and I hope they will have the kindness to say, when complimented, that they have a good editor and strong faculty support. (But be sure, Constant Writer, to hog the rest of the praise for yourself; writers need a lot of love.)

Magazines like *Crosscut* provide a crucial link for the writer; they are often the means of that first step outside of the classroom and toward the audience that waits for that Holy Grail of the literate society: **SOMETHING GOOD TO READ.** It doesn't have to be *The Iliad, Gone with the Wind,* or *The Grapes of Wrath;* just something to lighten up that long bus ride to Montreal. If the writer provides that, someone will notice.

Believe me, I know. ▪

– Stephen King

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To live in Maine, not necessarily to have been born in Maine, and to write, not necessarily about Maine, is to be permitted a freehold in what is essentially an alien place. The climate is inhospitable, the growing season is short, the psychological and economic pressures are considerable, the denizens stubbornly, sometimes tragically, sometimes comically individualistic; eccentric, borealistic. The rest of the world can often go hang. So it is in Maine; so it is with art. Hence, in this alien place we feel, as artists, always tenuously, at home. Oddly, diffidently, perennially, exiles at home.

—From *The Experience of Art: Selected Essays and Interviews* by Constance Hunting, Puckerbrush Press

Karen Ann Bay

Summer Sisters

Reflection that is my sister,
Other half of my most whole self
We devoured wild strawberries
With the sun on our backs,
Weight of a thousand summers.

Heady promise of rain in late afternoon,
Air buzzing with the aliveness
Of mid-July and we,
Reveling. Laughing as juice ran
From no-longer-child fingers,
Crushed berries beneath not-child feet.
Laugh, because the moment and we
Were alive, brimming to overflow
With the wordless joy of
summer sisters in endless green.

Our laughter, ringing,
Crashed into the heavy ripeness
Like a mantra—
Persist, persist.

Rick Doyle

October

October. Stones are sleeping underground.

What can redeem them? The snakeskin found
on land burned clean of puckerbrush and slash?
A desolate tract of wind-sifted ash
and black snags—silken, glossed with Biocide Five—
where only this, besides some birds, seems live?
Shed skin, translucent, dry, and lightly blown.

But who will redeem them? Chokecherry stones
asleep in the earth and scattered like tears
with an art one's left no choice but to believe

in, since they may lie dormant for a hundred years
before new burn suffers the life of leaves.

Mary Dumont

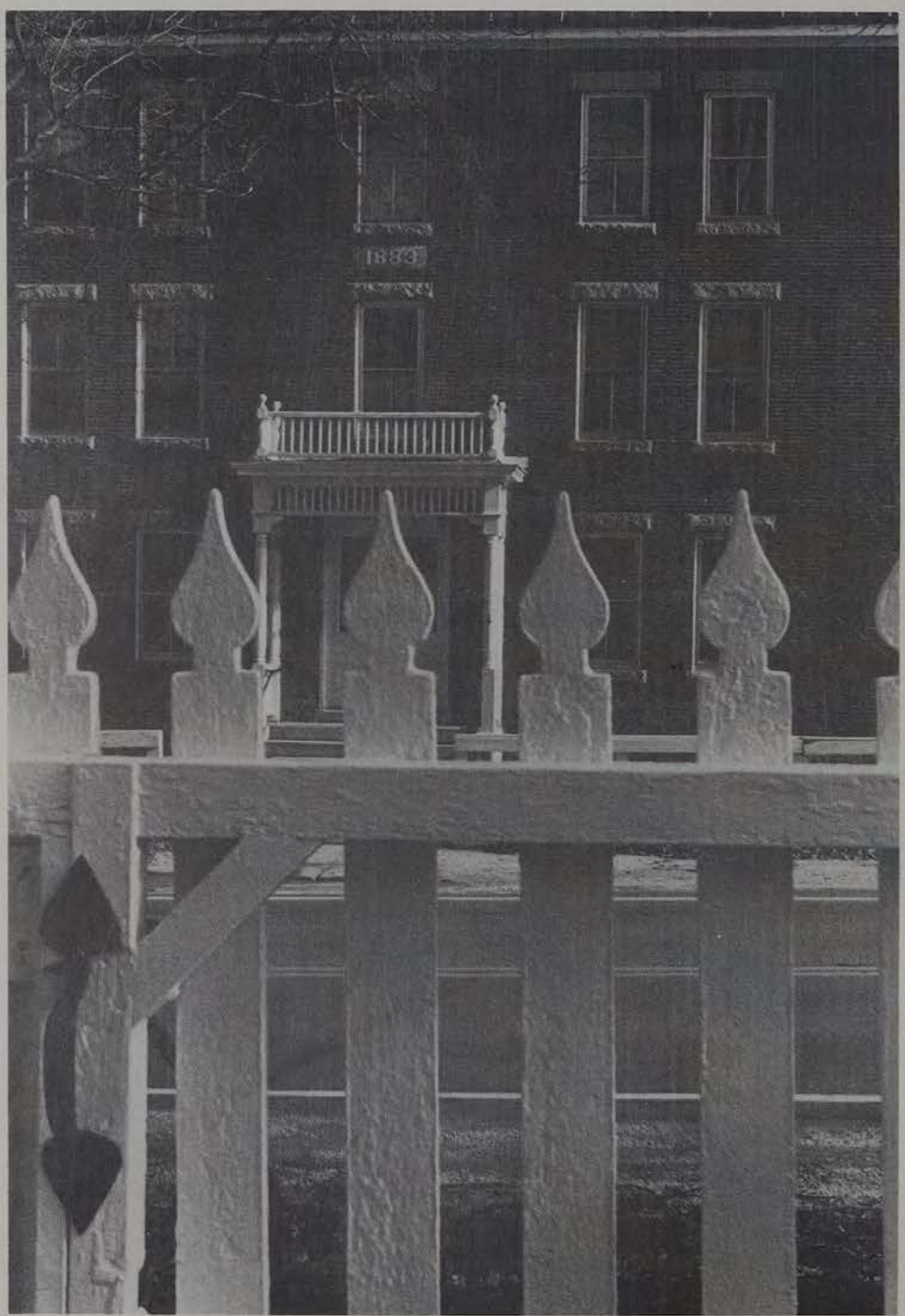
Last Curtain

Flashes race through my mind
Emotions swell over
Mounds of fire reach up in my throat
Feeling the heat haze the clearness

Nothing but a sea of blackness awaits
A force holds me here
Faint melody rises in the distance
my body floats in its entrancing song

Burning pain of excellence darts through my body
but is pushed to the far corner of my mind
Nothing will vitiate this prance
no cough or baby's cry

Fear comes forth through the flashes
Not bearing what may lie behind
At long last I stand in fixedness
and have been released from this tense cage



– Robin LaRochelle

Julianna Herrick

Traitor

"What's 'fudge'?"

One of my earliest memories is of sitting in a decaying classroom with nineteen other pungent six-year olds, precariously balancing a violin between my chin and collarbone. Mr. Antonopolous, a man whose health matched the condition of the classroom, was trying to teach us the notes on a staff by using one of those quirky mnemonic devices especially invented so children will remember the notes on a staff. The phrase he used was, "Every Good Boy Deserves Fudge." My six-year-old brain struggled to discern the meaning of this word Fudge. It was a curious word, a strange hiss of air made with the lip against the teeth followed by a guttural groan, "Fuuuudge."

Frustrated, I raised my hand and asked Mr. Antonopolous what fudge was. The response was overwhelming. Twenty incredulous stares pointed themselves in my direction. "She doesn't know what fudge is," floated in a murmur across the moldy room. I ran away from those blistering susurrations, a yellow stain spreading between my legs. I hid in the bathroom until I heard my mother's voice outside.

My mother was full of phrases. One of her favorites was, "Eat your breakfast yourself, share your lunch with a friend and give your dinner to an enemy." Needless to say, each new day of my childhood was welcomed with a monstrous breakfast. My mother made red eggs. She would smother the shameful yellow color of the eggs with paprika, completely drowning out their weak taste. My mother didn't sprinkle paprika like you see on the televised cooking shows; sprinkling was a foreign concept to my mother. She dumped

paprika on everything. "Paprika is a strong spice," she told me. "It is a reminder of the strength needed to vow allegiance to a flat country. The redness is to remind us of the blood shed to the Russians and the Germans."

As a child I would listen to my grandfather's tales of bravery as I watched cartoons. His trembling hands would struggle to scoop eggs on a spoon as he told me about the time he had led a company of young men on horseback against a fleet of German tanks in a desperate attempt to defend his small village, a cluster of whitewashed houses and a flurry of chickens. I used to imagine the shadows of the cold, metal tanks immersing my grandfather like the shadow of the falling anvil engulfed Wile E. Coyote whenever he tried to catch the RoadRunner. My grandfather's men, no match against the mechanical iron horses the Germans possessed, began to starve. My grandfather ordered that his beloved horses be killed to feed his small and struggling army. When his superiors learned that my grandfather had slaughtered members of the equine race, they labeled him a traitor to the mother country and scheduled his death by firing squad the next morning. "Trained war horses," they said, "are very hard to find. We can always enlist more men." My grandfather quietly slipped through the cracks in the American immigration offices.

My grandfather often ate coarse oatmeal with his eggs. I liked oatmeal, but only the weak sugary kind with artificially colored strawberry swirls that I saw on television. He used to say to me, "Horses eat oats, and look how strong they are."

My mother and I went back to her home once, while it was politically placid and safe to travel in foreign waters. Her family saw me as a hybrid organism and did not approve of the American strain. Americans were spoiled, ate too much sugar and watched too much TV. American tourists were coldly ignored while they vainly stumbled over German and

Russian words, languages that have too many hurtful memories attached to their accents for anyone to admit that they understand. Americans rudely expressed a squeamish distaste for the pickled pigs' feet that were proudly presented before them, a national delicacy. My mother only opened the Mason canning jar stuffed full of salty pork as a treat when I had earned a good grade on a math test, which was not often.

It seems to me that as soon as my passport picture got slapped with that red American stamp from the customs agent in JFK International, I started high school. Suddenly, all the girls around me were on diets. I began to go jogging every day and to eat lettuce and eggs at every meal so I would not stand out. My mother did not understand why I would want to be so skinny. According to my mother, to be thin was to be weak, ugly, and undernourished. She often said to me, with distaste dripping in her voice, that I looked like I had been in a war.

What happened is that all this running made me as swift as a horse. I was enlisted in my high school cross-country team. I remember the pride that I felt holding my own in the midst of bigger girls, who had longer legs and better shoes, and the feel of grime and sweat that would stick to my skin, get in my hair and lodge itself under my fingernails. The iron spikes strapped to my feet would gouge out hunks of fleshy earth, ripping the imported Jamaican grass out by the roots. My mother came to see me run only once. I would often vomit after races and the fact that I enjoyed an activity that ended with purging myself of the red eggs I had consumed for breakfast upset her terribly.

When you are so hungry, you have terrible dreams. I dreamt of Bugs Bunny gnawing on pickled pigs' feet and staring at me with incredulous eyes. I would run away from the characters animated by the California Technicolor labs,

but Marvin the Martian would always catch me with one of his gadgets from Mars and split me in two with his Acme Atom O Ray gun. I would wake up with blood in my mouth. My mother combated these symptoms with voodoo teas, bitter teas, and sticky, sickly-sour teas with lemon. Peppermint sprigs disappeared from the kitchen windowsill, ginger roots crackled when boiling water scalded them. I gulped these magical potions with skepticism. My mother grudgingly admitted me to the George Washington Hospital in December, 1993. I was cured on sugary red cherry Jello and green lime Jello, a whole wriggling Christmas feast of my own that tasted like neither cherries nor limes.

My grandfather would not speak to me when I married a Chinese man in college. My husband grew up in Cleveland and did not understand when I remained intravenously attached to CNN's coverage of the riots. Shuddering hollowly on the screen was an iron statue, an ancient conqueror with sword raised over the horizon of a far-away land. "I used to play on William the Great," I said to my husband. "I used to crawl into the crooks and folds of his outstretched arms, I used to hang upside down on his sword." Masses rushed by, toppling this symbol of the past, my old jungle gym.

I stand here now, older, baking bread in my little kitchen in Ohio, center of America. I smell the aroma of baking yeast in the air and I can taste the hot, thick slices of black bread burning the roof of my mouth as the strong molasses taste courses through my veins. My mother learned how to conjure up loaves from her mother, who learned it from her mother, who learned it from her mother, and so on until the beginning of time. We have all learned this magic by watching our mothers mix handfuls of yeast, sugar and flour together until life rises out of the dough in the sun. I like the feel of the ingredients in my hands.

One of my husband's friends has asked me to share with her this secret recipe. I am teaching her to bake bread the way my mother taught me years ago. She has a confused look on her face so I am not surprised when she interrupts me rudely.

"Can you write this recipe down on paper? Can you translate handfuls and pinches into cups, tablespoons and teaspoons?"

I do not know if I will do this for her. ▪



– Joe Flynn

J.T. Kenny

The Chair

I haven't moved, not for some time. Just sitting here. But then I guess there's no need for me to be paddling about like some nervous Nellie. Besides, I can't seem to get myself in motion. Feeling drained. Maybe it's this crazy weather. I need to blame something, guess it'll be the weather. Down here on the Peninsula it's been queer, just not right. In fact, this past week hasn't even seemed like Winter. From where I'm perched on my recliner near the window, looks like January thaw's poking a slushy hole through the middle of what started out as a damned cold month.

The mercury started jumping around near the end of last week. There was a light dusting of snow followed by a warm-up and two days of wind-driven rain. The rain moved in off the ocean. It came fast, a wild, blowy thing. It was sea rain, which old timers will tell you isn't like land rain. It angled, driving in soaking torrents, like some abyssal beast gnawing on land's end. Gusts shook the house at night, setting ancient oaks to childish moaning.

The storm scared my Golden Retriever, Saxon. He's been staying inside. On the windiest nights, I found myself startled by sudden bursts of barkery, his terror echoing in darkened, high-ceilinged rooms.

It's Tuesday, or is it Wednesday? The rain seems to have ended. We're getting an additional covering of snow and a sky that weighs on the land like something molten. Still, I think the storm must have run its course. Fog moves in and I know that warmer air is brushing up against our cold-water Gulf of Maine. What drifts in with the fog is a subtle change, less a weather event than a mood. The atmosphere seems

odd, a difference sensed as much as seen. Maybe it's just me. Been feeling poorly lately, weak too, but I don't complain. Besides, when you're a widower who's there to complain to? The folks on deck during my watch, including my wife, Fiona, are mostly somewhere else–that other place, all gone. These days I sometimes feel like an old orphan. I get sad when I remember someone's poem about the last leaf of Spring. I get sadder still thinking of her.

The envelopment of fog is the thing that bothers me. As the haze thickens, it blots out all that's familiar. I look out with an odd sense that the elements are shifting, some new alignment, a conspiracy of gray quiet. I don't know whether I'm hot or cold. In the seamless wall of mist and snow, sourceless light and vapor become one. It's impenetrable, as if nature is trying to cover up some new and freakish event.

I've heard from no one, not a jingle, not a soul, and now I'm sure the entire coast is socked-in;·immured, a better word, I reckon.

I think it's Thursday, and I'm scared. I can't see the shed from the house, can barely make out the mailbox. Time and place seem all out of kilter. As day melts into day, I watch helplessly, slipping deeper and deeper into depression. Seasonal Affective Disorder, isn't that what they call it nowadays? I've become house-bound, my mind rigid. I've lost all my "get up and go." Besides, my own dooryard has become a spook place, a halcyon light-world where mist smothers with the authority of a shroud.

It's now late in the week. I'm unsure of the day, but I am sure of one thing. The noises I've been hearing are real. They're not imaginary. They started sometime last night and scare the tar out of me. I hear them, and they're getting louder. I want to believe it's someone crying, but it isn't crying, couldn't be, because crying's much too human a sound for what comes from out there. Maybe it's a neighbor's lamb, a

snared rabbit? Whatever, it's hideously unreal, a screeching. A thought crowds my mind, a line from Arthur Miller's *The Crucible*: "There is a prodigious fear abroad."

I'm not eating or sleeping and time has the consistency of cold pitch. I feel uneasy in the big easy chair. Looking up through tired eyes, I catch a fleeting something. Where the shed should be, a shape is moving. A blue chill runs the length of me. I look more closely, but see nothing, no one. It's lunacy, but I can't shake this sense of daylight haunting and nearly visible things. I imagine pale phantoms taking form in shadowless steam, growing, gaining cold energy. The doors are locked, all of them. I remember that. Still, I shudder. I need normalcy, something familiar to cling to. I crave human companionship. I'd accept as a substitute the return of Winter, real Winter with its crisp, cirrus-streaked blue; the Winter and the world I know.

I glance at the clock. Its hands haven't moved, not in days, nor have mine, it seems, and I am puzzled. Mostly, I'm dazed. Still, I try for control, the great mental-health balancing act, but as I look again I sense that none of this is right. It's all wrong. I can't move a muscle and understand that really I haven't stirred for some time.

Terror should well in me and somehow doesn't. Maybe it's too rational a response to my predicament. For the answer to all this is clear. I hear my own noiseless voice telling me I'm not really here. I've checked out; am no longer one of life's citizens.

In an anxious calm, I struggle to wrap my mind around this evolution, this ultimate fact. I try, but can't move. I can only wait, inert and rigored in my chair. Eyes cloudy, they begin to dry and harden as my soul gently cries to itself in this in-between place, this pallid passageway. ▪

Susmita Chatterjee

Where Dost Thou Seek Me

ਮੀ ਕੀ ਕ ਏਂ ਟੈ ਮੀ ਟੈ ਕ-ਦੁ

(After Sant Kabir)

Where dost thou seek me
My friend, I am not far away
I am just next to your heart
For there I find myself

I am not any different
I am in the unity of things
Just there I find myself
I am yours just as you are mine

And that is the Truth that
I know and you shall know too
For we are bound by the Spiritual
Bond, that is everlastingly true

Sant Kabir, the medieval saint poet of India, wrote thousands of "dohans" (couplets) that gave vent to this philosophy and his spiritual perspective of life.

Kevin O'Toole

A Reflection

The skies turn red tonight
One meets one
with the smell of flowers in the air

In the distance
the mountains are snow-capped
but the bay is calm
with purple and red reflecting off the water

All this and more in the globe
in the hand of the man
sitting at his desk
in his office

Sight

Sight from my eyes
Or is it not so
Some say it is some say not
Hindsight it could be called
Because foresight it's not
What I have seen has told me so

Amanda Gerrish

Fat Cat

To lie in the sun
Till the workday is done

To play with shoestrings
and unforgivable things

To have an attitude
and eat all the food

To be loved by my owner
and not be a loner

To rule the home
and disconnect the phone

To chase mice
is my life

Robin Katherine Wilson

The Vermilion Flycatcher

Karen stood on the curb with a suitcase and backpack. "I worked all night," she said, climbing into the car. "Don't expect witty conversation until we reach Arizona."

Karen fell asleep instantly. Ann turned on the radio and drove out of Pasadena for Tucson, toward a week of birdwatching and relaxation.

Karen slept until Ann stopped for gas in Riverside. While Ann pumped, Karen fetched coffee, but she did not speak until they returned to Route 10.

"Esther died last night," she said.

"I'm sorry."

"She'd been in a lot of pain this month. She was ready. We'd just asked her to move into Hospice House, but she didn't want to leave her home."

Karen stared at passing trucks for a few minutes and then shuddered violently. Ann thought she would start crying. Instead, she reached into the back seat and pulled a tape recorder out of her backpack.

"Listen," she said, pushing the play button.

A phone rang. An old woman answered, confused and half-shouting.

"Hello? Please speak loudly."

A strong male voice followed with the cheerful eagerness of a young businessman.

"Is this Mrs. Roberts?"

"Yes."

"Ken Davis again. Wanted to see if you'd made a decision about that investment opportunity we discussed yesterday. I can guarantee a ten-fold profit, but you need to act

today. My boss didn't want to give you a second chance. I insisted."

"Why are you calling me?"

"I want to offer the chance to enjoy your final days as a rich woman. If you're ready for wealth, Mrs. Roberts, give me your credit card number so we can set you up as an investor. The faster you act, the faster the payback. If you don't decide today my boss will force me to move on to other clients. What do you say, Mrs. Roberts?"

"I don't understand. You need my credit card number?"

"I want to make you a rich lady. To make gains, you must take risks. It's your decision. You can decide to be a rich lady or a loser. Your choice."

The woman started to cry.

"Too fast," she said. "Wait. Explain again."

The male voice shifted in tone, from friendliness to bullying.

"Are you going to be a loser, Mrs. Roberts? You won't get another chance. You're going to die a loser. You'll go to your grave a loser just because you can't make a simple choice."

The woman was crying so hard she could no longer speak coherently.

"I'm not going to call you back, Mrs. Roberts. You are a loser. You'll always be a loser. You deserve to die. I hope you die in pain." He slammed the phone down. Karen turned the tape player off.

"Who was that?" Ann asked. She caught herself shuddering as Karen had.

"The woman was Nancy Roberts, a new Hospice House resident from Glendale. I happened to be at her house helping her pack when the first call came through, so I set up the tape player and she recorded this second call the next day. I explained the scam, but it still upset her. I don't know the

identity of the man. As far as I can tell, he's hit on nine of my clients. I've contacted friends at several agencies for the elderly, and they had all heard rumors of this scam. I've even met two women who gave credit card numbers. I'm sure he's burned others who are too embarrassed to tell me."

By now they had entered the desert. It had rained during the preceding weeks. Red flowers covered the tall sticks of ocotillo. They automatically scanned for birds.

"Karen, what the man said to Nancy before he hung up was worse than taking her money."

Karen fell silent, lost in thought for the next twenty miles.

"I've had a hard time gathering information and making recordings," she finally said. "The man never calls anyone more than twice, and he won't stay on the line long. Fortunately, I've been able to anticipate who he'll call. I think he uses the lists that identify potential clients for Hospice House. He targets dying women who live alone. I've asked all the women I can reach to sound interested if he calls but to give no information and then to call me as soon as he hangs up. I've caught four second calls. Esther, bless her soul, caught the first call and the second. Every few days her grandchildren phoned from Kansas, and she taped all her conversations on an answering machine so she could listen over and over. She kept him on the line as long as possible, tried to sound interested, and called me the moment he broke the connection."

She turned on the recorder again. Karen's eyes filled with tears when she heard Esther's voice.

"Hello?"

"May I speak to Mrs. Kelly?"

"Speaking."

"Good morning, Mrs. Kelly. Today is your lucky day! This is Thomas Smallton of Lawrence Associates. Due to your excellent credit history, we've selected you as a potential

investor." The conversation continued for several minutes. Though Esther sounded genuinely interested, Smallton—or Davis, or whatever his name was—couldn't pin her down. Smallton ended on an upbeat note: "Don't forget, Mrs. Kelly, to make gains, you must take risks. I'll call back soon."

"She did an excellent job," said Ann with admiration.

"Esther acted in dozens of commercials before she became sick. She's a talented lady. I mean, she was a talented lady."

Karen reached back and pulled a map out of her backpack. "In about ten miles, I'd like you to take a short detour. There's an abandoned ranch up here that may have some standing water after the rains. We'll find some owls."

Karen directed Ann to an unmarked dirt road at the foot of a billboard. "The road isn't great, but it's passable. Drive for six miles, and we'll come to a broken gate."

Ann reviewed the safety supplies she'd packed in the car. Water, camping gear, food, CB radio, extra keys hidden around her neck and under the left rear wheel well. They'd survive. They bumped along past broken fences and a few abandoned appliances. On these desert treks, Ann kept a list of notable trash in addition to her bird list: three refrigerators, two stoves, and a washing machine. They crested a ridge and arrived in a grove of poplars surrounding the remains of a large house. This had once been a beautiful farm. Karen directed her to a spur road and asked her to park the car behind a barn.

"This is the best spot," she said, glancing at her watch. "We'll have shade for an hour or two. Let's walk around first and then return for lunch."

Looking up into the trees, Ann saw faces staring back—a nest of young Great Horned Owls. They found Barn Owls in the barn and a Crissal Thrasher digging in an old garden.

After twenty minutes Ann found a jewel. A tiny, blood-

red ball of feathers flitted from tree to tree catching insects.

"Karen," she said, just loud enough for her to hear. "A Vermilion Flycatcher!" Karen seemed too distracted to look through her binoculars, but finally she obliged.

"That's a life bird for me," she said. "I've never seen one."

"You don't sound very excited. This is one of the prettiest birds in California. I remember you leaping up and down when you spotted your first stupid Bronzed Cowbird."

"I'm just tired today. I promise I'll recover by tomorrow."

"I hope so. Otherwise, I'm not going to enjoy our trip much."

Ann started to walk on, but Karen grabbed her arm. "We need to go eat lunch now. I'm not quite ready. I'd like to follow that Flycatcher for awhile. I'll be hungry in twenty minutes."

Karen held on to her. "Ann, I'm serious. We need to go to the car and eat lunch. Now!"

Ann paused, slightly alarmed. During the several years they'd traveled together, Karen always followed Ann. Karen had never ordered her or even directed her. Ann let Karen lead her back to the car.

Karen opened the car and removed the cooler and a folding chair. She placed her hands on Ann's shoulders and looked into her eyes.

"Ann, you must sit here for the next twenty minutes, no matter what happens. Eat your lunch." Ann sat down. Karen reached into her backpack to retrieve something that she hid against her body. She walked to the corner of the barn and lifted her binoculars with one hand.

"You will hear a car drive to the house in a few minutes. Stay here." Karen disappeared into the barn.

Ann sat frozen in the folding chair. She heard a car drive

up. She heard a car door open and close. Silence for a few moments; then the rattle of a Roadrunner. A single gunshot. The tiny, blood-red Vermilion Flycatcher flew past, landing four feet away from her chair. Their eyes locked.

"Ann, we can go now. Let me have your keys." Karen, with the skill of an experienced nurse, lifted Ann to her feet and led her to the passenger seat. She buckled Ann's seatbelt, loaded the gear and herself into the car, adjusted the driver's seat, and started the engine. Once they reached the main road, Karen reached over and pushed the play button on the tape recorder.

"Hello?"

"Mrs. Kelly? This is Thomas Smallton calling again about our investment offer. Have you made a decision?"

"Yes, Mr. Smallton. I've thought about this carefully, and I'd really like to leave as much money as possible to my grandchildren. I love my grandchildren. .You can help retrieve some funds I've lost control of. I can't drive anymore, and frankly, I don't have a lot of friends who can drive. I don't think my children always have my grandchildren's interests in mind, so I don't want to tell them.

"I grew up on a beautiful ranch between Palm Springs and the Salton Sea. We sold the ranch when my father died years ago, and just last summer I read through his diaries and learned where he'd hid our silver after my mother died. Apparently, he just didn't want to see it. An elderly caretaker lives on the ranch now, but otherwise it has more or less gone to ruin. I'm certain the silver is still there. I expect he added other items to his stash before he died. At least, other valuable pieces were missing when we cleared the estate. Does any of this interest you, Mr. Smallton?"

"Go on, Mrs. Kelly."

"The caretaker's there all the time except Sunday afternoons. I can give you directions to the house and the hiding

place. You'd just need to walk in, find the stuff, and I'll invest it."

"Give me the directions, Mrs. Kelly."

Ann listened as Esther described the farm they'd just left. "But why would he fall for the trap?"

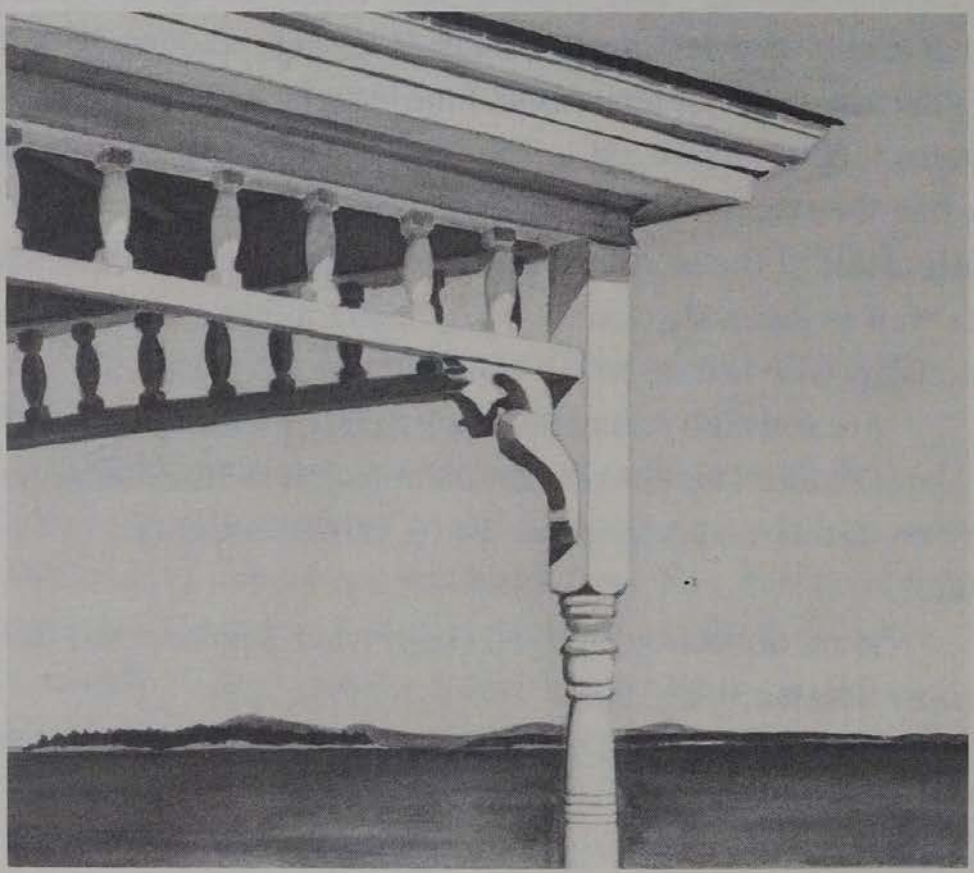
"I'm sure he verified the details. Esther did grow up on that ranch. Her family had a lot of money, and when her father died, her sisters never found many of the valuable items they remembered in the house. There was a scandal when they blamed the local man who organized the estate sale. Most of the story made the newspapers in Los Angeles as well as Riverside County. Plus, Smallton initiated the relationship with Esther, so he wouldn't have expected a trap.

"Are you sure that wasn't the caretaker returning home?"

"Certain. There is no caretaker. No one's lived there for years. Esther maintained her acting career to the end of her life."

"How do you know you really shot Smallton and not some assistant?"

"Don't forget, Ann, to make gains, you must take risks." ▪



– Galen Davis

Amanda Foye (age 10)

Space Shuttle

I'd like to go in space, I'd love the place!
If you went into space, you could wear a funky suit
along with funky boots.
You can control....But wait!
Don't go into that black hole!!

You can see grasslands from up above,
and oceans and forests filled with animals I love.

You can see planets and stars so bright—
you can see them without any light.

The ride up to space is bumpy;
the food is kind of lumpy.
In orbit you go round and round
to planets that have never been found

Landing is really fun—
You soar and soar down from the stars and the sun.

Chris Birmingham

A Request

You are here only in body
My far away friend.
Your mind is in another place
and in another time perhaps.
Where do you go, in your mind?
Is it a place where you are happy?
I hope so,
because there is sadness
in your eyes so often.
I wonder what you see,
feel,
do.
Bring yourself back to me my friend,
I want to be with you.

Al Weymouth

The Spirit of Moose Point

I looked out on the bay, today,
And saw a sunlit sea.
The cloudless sky and warmth of sun
Brought a message to me from thee
Only nature's sound of birds and bees,
No noisy people there...
While gentle breezes swayed the trees
Bringing fragrance of salty air;
I closed my eyes, and saw you there,
Through the vision of my mind.
And I felt your closeness to me, dear,
With our spirits now entwined.

Nicole M. Chase

Undeniable Dilemma

In each family there are some things that are not discussed in public or even within the home. For my family there are many such things, but the two that affect us the most are my father's alcoholism and his silence. Each of us has been affected in different ways, but no one has been left untouched.

As a child, I often heard my mother making excuses for my father's alcoholism, his behavior, and the wall that separated him from us. When I was old enough to realize what was really going on, I became angry about these lies. I suppose the things I was told were at the time justifiable, if only to prevent my brothers and me from growing up hating our father, or feeling ashamed and embarrassed by him. Sometimes I think my mother was making excuses so as not to hate him herself. I can recall times when my brother Marcus had basketball games or practices to attend and was unable to because my father was either drunk or passed out. My mother didn't get her driver's license until last year, so my father was our only means of transportation. Marcus would be upset because basketball was very important to him. My mother would tell him that dad had had a very hard day at work and frantically call relatives to get him a ride on time. This kind of thing happened on more than one occasion, and we missed a lot of school-related activities and functions. For my brothers and me it was embarrassing having to explain to our friends and teachers why we never showed up. My mother felt guilty about this, I know. She wanted more for us; she wanted us to participate in sports, after-school activities, clubs and such things, but she knew we wouldn't be able to. It wasn't her fault or even my father's

fault that we couldn't always do these things, but at the time it was hard to understand that.

We were fortunate enough to be raised by a quiet drunk. My father never abused me, my brothers or my mother; however, his silence was abuse enough and left many scars on my family. My parents have been married for 25 years, but I pretty much grew up without a father. I can't say he was never there to help my mother because he was. He worked and provided for us, he loved us all very much, he took us anyplace we needed to go when he could, he was very understanding, and he is a great father.

He did these things then and he does these things now. But his silence separated him from the family, and when we were children my brothers needed a father to look up to. For some reason my father didn't talk to my brothers and me all that often, but he would talk to my mother for hours on end. To this day, I have never had a conversation with my father that consisted of more than a dozen words. Basically, he provided for us while my mother took on the role of mother and father. Anything that involved my brothers and me was my mother's responsibility, any problems we had, any discipline we needed....Almost all decisions concerning us kids she made. After a while my brothers and I just avoided taking things to our dad and went straight to mom. Occasionally, she would discuss a request from us with our father and then give us a decision. His concern for our well-being was great; he just had different ways of showing it than our mother did. We were often unaware of his part in the decision-making until later on.

As a child, I had my mother to look up to for guidance and support. However, my brothers desperately needed a male to look up to, and my father couldn't give that to them. Instead, they found guidance from others and the effect upon them has been astounding. My younger brother looked up

to my Uncle Tim, who is just nine years older than Marcus. They spent a lot of time together and Marcus picked up Tim's attitudes and behavior quickly. Tim has an incredibly short temper, an alcohol problem, and many other undesirable traits found in men. Not only is he obsessed with his appearance, but he is incredibly spoiled, being the youngest of ten children. Marcus learned all of this from Tim, and now the two of them are like two peas in a pod.

At some point, Marcus grew to dislike our father and decided not to talk to any of us anymore. No one is really sure why, but he seems to dislike the whole family. I'm sure one could psychoanalyze his failed relationships and dealings with the law, but to me it comes down to one thing: his feelings of being unwanted by our father. But that is clearly not how it was, or is. Our father expresses himself differently, but his love for us was obvious, even if his participation in our lives was not always evident. He was, more or less, the "silent partner in the business."

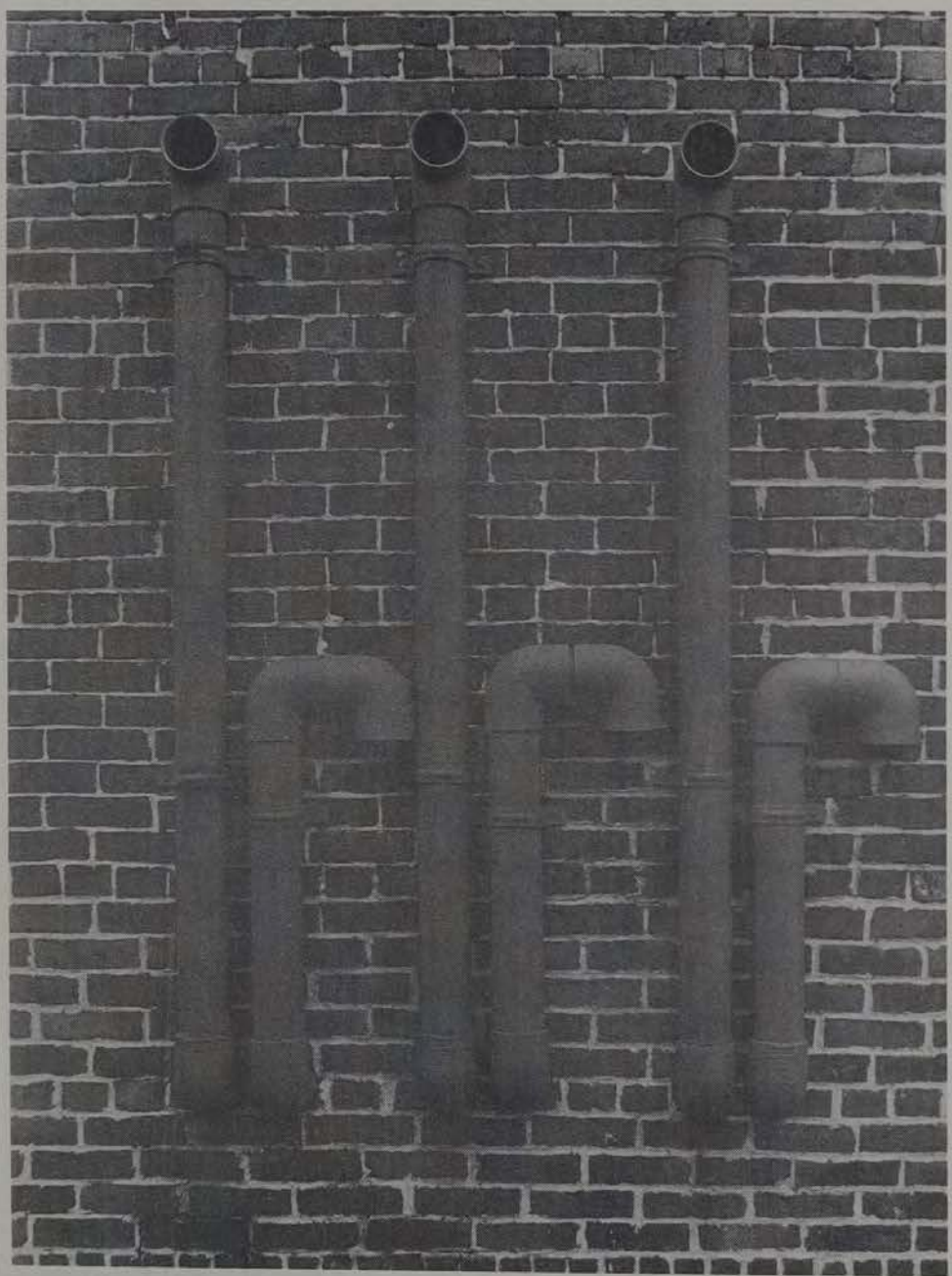
My oldest brother David is the one who is obviously the most affected by my father's alcoholism and silence. He tries hard to have conversations with my dad. He learned my father's trade so that they could spend time together, and he became interested in the same sports. It seems as though David is trying to be our dad's friend, as well as his son. As a child, David looked up to my Uncle Brent, who is also just nine years older than my brother, as a role model and now acts a little like him, although not entirely. Fortunately, my Uncle Brent was, at the time, a responsible person and somewhat well behaved. David took what he learned from Brent and built his own personality, unlike Marcus. David actually tries to have conversations with the family; and even though it's often hard to find something to talk about, he still makes an effort.

As for me, I suppose I accepted my father's problems

years ago. I didn't have to seek guidance from someone else, as my mother was always there; she helped me deal with my father just as I helped her deal with him. In a lot of ways I act just like her, which is probably the reason why we don't always get along. But I love my mother dearly, as I love my father. When my father did show his love and concern for my brothers and me it was almost always in my favor. I've always been "daddy's little girl," and this caused my brothers to loathe me, because they wanted and needed the attention most of all. I think the reason why I am so understanding of his problems is because I know him best. If my father wanted to sit down with a beer and watch a game on television, I sat down with him and asked as many questions as I could. Anything that he did I tried to involve myself in so that we could spend some time together. When my dad was a truck driver, I used to take time off from school to travel with him and my mom. My dad and I understand each other, and I have learned that even though he is quiet and spends most of the time under the influence, he still loves us. I understand that he has an addiction and that his behavior sometimes stems from that. He just finds it hard to express himself, as does the whole family, truthfully.

Another reason why I can understand my father so well is because I see him act the same way around his own father as David does around him. My grandfather is the type of man who just wants to be left alone. When we go over to visit him and my grandmother, I see my father trying to have conversations with him and trying to become involved with his life. My dad was one of the oldest of ten children, as was my mother, so attention was rationed, in a sense. I can only make the assumption that my father acts the way he does now because of the way my grandfather treated him when he was a kid. My dad and his father share many of the same characteristics, and without even realizing it he probably picked them up over the years.

Whatever the cause may be, there is a problem within my family that needs to be discussed and remedied. But because of the lack of communication throughout the years, I don't see an end to this dilemma. ▪



– Lori Ann Crossley

Elizabeth Ramirez

Earlier Times

I read a poem the other day
Which recalled memories from bygone days,
Of picking and eating rhubarb
From behind my grandfather's workshop.

Rhubarb and roses....
The rosebush beside my grandparents' house
Which bloomed beautiful white roses each year.
And the rhubarb patch behind my grandfather's workshop
Where I would pick and eat the sour delicacy.

Those wonderful memories were stirred within me only to find
That I could not think those things.
For what was a rose or rhubarb
But metaphors for other things;
Things loftier than I had deemed to imagine.

The rose speaks of love,
Rhubarb of controversy and argumentation.
However, the love for that rose bush and its sweet-smelling
blossoms
Which came forth each spring,
Is love enough for this time.
And the rhubarb argument was always from my grandmother
Who thought I should wash the stalk before I ate.

But still the poem met at least one goal,
Though maybe not so noble;
It made me think of passions long forgotten
Of a love of roses (and rhubarb)
For which another time like those will not return.
Oh, that life could always be that idyllic.

Christopher Randall

A Memory

The unlimited shapes you create, from just being
And this one, for me,
For us.

You dance with the light,
And you lead.

Become the night,
Become what you will, in a time where you shouldn't be,
Own it.

This was a good night.

Thomas Rice

Renaissance Beginning

I'm gonna make it simple, so you can understand
it don't come from up above
this ain't the promised land
You don't need a guru to show you the inner light
don't need a preacher man
to tell you what's wrong or right

You went down to the river, fell in over your head
they should've hung you out to dry
but they cut you down instead
You search for direction, trying to find yourself
but you're lost in the clouds
and you feel like hell

All you've gotta know, is how to let it flow
and find the essence from within
If you lose control at least you've still got soul
so let the Renaissance begin

Your heart's in the right place, your mind is on the past
the future's creeping up
on you much too fast
You've wasted precious time, now you want it back
you'd better get your mind
back on the track

With Healing in His Wings

The voice was filled with emotion, grief and thunder. It resounded in the skies with all power and majesty.

"Take this cup to him," the voice said. This was going to be the assignment of a lifetime.

I looked at the cup. It was filled with a liquid I had never seen before. It had all the different colors of a rainbow.

"Quick," the Father said, "Take this cup and have him drink from it. Stay with him awhile, comfort him and tell him all shall be well."

I, Gabriel, took the cup and placed it on my wings and sped forth to Gethsemane. I found him there in the garden.

He was in a prostrate position. I could see his face—it was filled with anguish and grief. His hands were clutched together, his hair and body were wet with sweat. His tunic was filled with the dust of the earth. Though he looked fatigued, there was an aura of majesty around him. I was immediately drawn to him. There were tears in his eyes. It looked as if he had been in this position for a long time. I could feel the wet grass under my feet and the chill of the night. As I approached him, I saw it—blood. He was sweating blood. It had streaked down his face and body, and I could see that he was exhausted and drained. He looked up and remembered me from days of old and said, "I must press on, I have a mission to accomplish, everything depends on it."

I gave him the cup, as I had been instructed. "Take and drink," I said. He took it and drank from it. Immediately, he was serene. The bloody sweat dried up. Strength came back

in his body. His clothes seemed to be radiant with his dignity. I stayed on for a short while until he got up, looked at me and said, "I am ready!"

As I flew away, I looked down again and saw a multitude of soldiers coming for him from the furthest part of the garden, but he had a renewed strength about him, and I knew that whatever happened...he would be up to the task. ▪



– *Robert Nichols*

Robert N. Juckett

The Guy Thing

It was a little after nine at night, the third day of the big ice storm, and my wife and I were trying to dig through the pile of slushy ice and sleet that the plow had just shoved into the end of our driveway. It was about a foot and a half high, full of big chunks of ice, and every shovelful was heavy as sin. The trees in our front yard were glassed with ice and bent over double, like an old man incapable of carrying such a load. The gray birches on the one side of the driveway were arched down onto the roof of the house. I'd seen them like that once or twice before; this was not the first ice storm to hit central Maine, but it was the biggest I'd ever seen. 'Course I've only lived in Maine for twenty years. I stopped digging and stared up at the birches.

"Good thing birches are such flexible trees," I said. "Don't have to worry about the branches snapping off."

"Yeah, well, this tree makes up for them." My wife nodded toward the big white poplar on the other side of the driveway.

"I hate that tree." I dug my shovel in and lifted another deadweight load, tossing it with a grunt onto the six-foot pile beside the street.

A thick limb had snapped off the poplar during the afternoon and come crashing down into the driveway next door. Luckily, the house is vacant, for sale, and no vehicles were parked underneath. The storm had revealed which trees are the dangerous ones, the ones likely to snap off. Willows are bad and so are elms. The maples and oaks survived fairly well. Spruces did better than pines. Young trees suffered; some were bent to the ground. And old trees, the ones that

tend to have a lot of dead branches, were hit hard. That white poplar isn't terribly old, probably planted about 25 or 30 years ago by the contractors or by the first owners of the house. But it's a junk tree; grows fast and sheds dirty every spring and fall. Dumps dead branches in the yard every time there's a little wind. It overhangs my driveway, my house, and the neighbor's driveway. The roots run close to the surface and bulge up, exposed in places, making it a pain to mow the surrounding lawn. I hate that tree.

"I'm gonna have to come out here with the saw tomorrow and clear that away," I said.

"I think more will come down during the night."

From the yard across the street we heard a snapping and cracking and looked up just in time to see another willow limb hit the ground, ice chips flying.

"Must be a black willow," I said. "A weeping willow is naturally droopy."

"You and your trees." She leaned on her shovel. Her breath puffed out in lingering clouds, slowly dissipating up and behind her. "It's such a guy thing."

"What?"

"This tree is flexible, that one is droopy. Here I am worrying whether we'll lose the electricity during the night and you're teaching... tree identification!"

"It's a talent," I grinned.

"It's a guy thing. Just like this morning when you got mad 'cause I wanted to put salt on the front steps."

"They're the pre-cast kind of steps. I was telling you about it. The salt is okay on the walkway and the driveway. They're just blacktop, but the steps are cement. If they crack they're ruined. The ice eats away at them and..."

"See? A guy thing. I worry about people falling and breaking their necks and you worry about the health of the front steps."

"Actually, I think the thing that has you the most worried is the possibility that the mall will be closed tomorrow."

"Yeah. The big sidewalk sale. I'm all ready for it."

A pickup truck with a plow was coming down the street and slowed almost to a stop in front of our house. I could tell the driver was looking for the house number. He slowly rolled past and stopped just beyond us. I watched him cutting the wheel and shifting into reverse to get an angle on the driveway of the house next door.

"My god, he's gonna plow the empty house."

My wife turned to watch. "He can't do that. The tree's down in the middle of the driveway."

"I think he's gonna try."

When the pickup was in position the driver revved the engine and started forward, dropping the plow just as the truck entered the driveway. He barreled forward until the dangling branches of the poplar struck his hood, then stopped and backed up. On he came again at a slightly different angle, piling ice and snow in front and gouging out a large piece of turf from the lawn. He was positioning himself to go again when I waved and trotted over. My wife followed me. The fella rolled down his window. "Hi ya!"

"Hi." I looked from him to the shattered limb of the tree lying just off to the side. "Ya know, this tree came down this afternoon. I'd hate for you to have more of it crash down on you." My wife and I peered into the cab.

"Oh, hell. I'm done here anyway. Say, you know where the corner of Grove and Stillwater is? Does Grove intersect?" Beside him sat another man smoking a cigarette and fiddling with the radio dial. We could hear country music as he decided on his station.

"Sure," I said. "That's the corner with the Neighborhood Market. You know, down here a couple blocks, just up from Broadway and Essex?"

"Oh, yeah. I know it."

"Sure," the other fella said. "That's what I was tellin' ya."

"I seen ya diggin' yourself out there," the driver said. My hopes rose. "Love to do it for ya, but I got five or six more calls tonight." Damn. "Thanks for the directions."

We stepped back and watched as he gave it one more go with enough gas to make the rear wheels of the truck lift up, spinning like mad as the momentum of the plow pitched the whole rig forward. Then they backed out and drove away.

"Well, doesn't that take the cake," my wife said. "You wanted to see the guy thing? There it was. Right in front of you. Big as life."

"What do you mean? Just a couple guys out plowing."

"Yeah. Him and his buddy. Guys always have to do stuff with their buddies. Drivin' around, probably for twenty dollars a pop, rammin' the plow into snow banks, sittin' in the truck smokin' cigarettes and listenin' to country music, him and his buddy. You see the McDonald's papers on the floor and the cups of coffee? So typical. Couldn't give us a hand for one minute, but just had to ram that plow into the snow pile one more time. It's always just one more time. At a house where no one lives, for cryin' out loud. Such a guy thing."

"They were having a good time, weren't they?" I managed.

"Oh, yeah. They were havin' an outin'."

"Well, we're not gonna make much more progress here," I said. "You can go in if you want."

"What are you gonna do?" She started back toward the garage to stow her shovel.

"Gonna bang my shovel down on this snow pile until the shovel breaks...or my back gives out."

"Or both?" was her final word.

"Yeah, the guy thing."

I watched her go in. I knew she'd put on some fresh coffee and have something all ready for me. I abandoned the driveway and walked over to the front door. My boots crunched. The ice was thick and solid on all four steps, but I saw one or two spots where I thought maybe I could chip a bit away. ▪

Eleody Mills

Dixie Beach

The rays of the sun filtered through the generous leaves of the ancient oaks that surrounded the damp, sun-warmed trail we had followed so many years ago. The woods were filled with soft shades of green, brown and tan, which transformed the ordinary forest into a place of comfort, love, and security. I paused to pick a dew-ridden wild flower and to listen to the orchestra of unseen birds perched within the bent limbs of the magnificent trees. The air was perfumed with a delicate mixture of humid soil from the depths of the wood, fragrant flowers, and the unforgettable aroma of the sea.

I walked barefoot down the path, and my toes became heavy with the dark, cool mud hidden beneath knobby twigs and dry, decayed leaves. Nearing the end of the passage, the shadows filtering through the thick foliage began to diminish, and the glow of the high sun shone into the tunnel. When I stepped out of the wood, I could feel the warmth of the afternoon sun as it beat intensely on my face and body. Gazing upward at the shimmering, cloud-puffed blue sky, I watched as a flock of graceful, brown- and black-speckled sandpipers flew by. Their small wings turned in unison, as if they had rehearsed the flight for a rated performance, and they quickly disappeared behind the tall grasses of the sandy bar.

The small bridge, part of what once was a great wharf, creaked as I passed over it. I saw a cluster of wild roses growing beneath the forgotten pier and longed to have them as my own. Taking my time so as not to slip or step into a decayed hole, I reached the other side of the beaten bridge and found myself on the stable footing of the enormous rocks of the beach.

I looked across the rocky shore to the bed where water drains and returns from the inlet and saw the remains of the old smokehouse. The paint, formerly a bright red, had faded to a rusty brown. The sliding doors, which had contained the curing smoke of hickory chips, were forever opened. As I entered the structure, a frayed rope hanging from the dirty charcoal boards swayed gently in the breeze. Sticks that had held bushels of curing herring now only served as a perch for weary birds. The odor of smoke still lingered in the air. I smiled and remembered the fun we used to have in this place: the games we used to play, the stories we told, the dreams we were destined to achieve. I heard a gull cry. Its screech turned my attention to the beach across the shallow waterbed: the playground of my youth.

I carefully stepped over the mussels congregated in clumps on the rocks of the salty river. Brilliant colors reflected off their blue and silver shells and into my eyes. I remembered the times we had built a fire, gathered mounds of unsuspecting shellfish, and cooked them in the fire-hot sand, only to eat so many we became sick. Each task was accomplished in harmony and fun. Each one of us knew what we were to do; there were no leaders among us, only close friends with a mission. It was a part of our summer vacation. It was a part of our roots.

Rocks scraped my feet when I reached the other side of the now slow-filling waterway. Impressions of the jagged stones faded from my soles as I walked toward the sandy beach. Years of wearing only my skin as protection against the elements allowed me to ignore the sharp knives created by the pounding surf. The wet mud quickly turned into hot, champagne-colored sand. It surrounded my feet like a thousand tiny beads searching for a thread so they could be strung. I walked between the stumps of yet another lost dock. They were soft in texture, beaten smooth from years of constant salt, sand and water hurled upon them, day after day. I then

lay down in the caressing, coarse sand, closed my eyes, and let my thoughts roam.

Pictures of sandcastles built, destroyed from our own feet or the ocean and rebuilt again danced through my mind. Images of us as children running with buckets of water and sand to and from the sea made me smile. Piles of crab shells, driftwood, pieces of lost rope and glass, smooth as velvet, were our daily catch. Contests to determine the best sand-built creation, the fastest runner, and who could stay under the icy water the longest made me laugh out loud. How I love this place and the memories it brings forth.

When I opened my eyes, the water had grown nearer. I could see the waves had gathered strength and whitecaps had risen in the harbor that resided beyond the sandy beach. The clear, blue-gray ocean never seemed to change, yet changed every second. A gull flew by, and dropped what appeared to be a clam onto a large rock that dominated the west side of the shore. Instantly, four more birds emerged from nowhere and began to fight with the gull and each other for the contents of the freshly opened shell. The sun was setting. A vivid fusion of red, blue, pink, orange and purple transformed the clear blue sky into an unforgettable scene. The water became more powerful in force and sound; I knew it was once again time to go.

As I trudged through the urgent current of the filling inlet, I recalled the numerous occasions we stretched out in the salty water and rode with it into the cove. I now wonder why we never got hurt. How did we bear swimming in the Atlantic Ocean, with water so cold it brought on headaches thirty seconds after we went in? I remembered the time when I was a child and purposely stepped into a honey pot, just to see if it really would entrap me. My best friend's mother dug me out with a clam hoe. I lost a boot and the desire to tempt Mother Nature again.

When I again entered the coolness of the forest, I looked back to the place where I used to roam. This was where I grew up, where I realized life could be beautiful and harsh, and where my dreams began. It will always be there, and I will always hold it dear in my heart. ▪

Stefanie Bellerive

The Sway of Feelings

The figure is peaceful
as she rocks in constant motion
her face shows nothing at all
all you see are her thoughts and dreams
as they slowly sway from side to side

The rocking and feeling have become one
like the sunset and the horizon
so peaceful and poised is she
not a care in the world
except the feelings that sway from side to side

Is it love, is it longing
is it a happiness, or a hunger—
why does she need to know
nothing can come between her and her world
and as she awakens and leaves the rocking behind
you still can see the feelings that were trapped inside
because you see, her mind was the chair
and her heart the feelings
that so gently and delicately sway from side to side



– Marni Morin

Bethany Harrington

The Girl

She believes on her problems
As she suffers, she hates
There's no understanding in the world
People may tell her lies
But she knows no difference
Confused by actions
Her days become nights
She wonders if there's justice
Probably wouldn't know the difference
Bright and bold on the outside
No one knows for sure on the inside
She's not sure
If there could be more wrong
She couldn't recognize a difference
Living under a cold rock
Nothing special lately
Confused by emotions
Pouring onto her floor
The laugh in the face of sympathy
It's time to take control

Shawn McKenna

Freezing

The Cold, Cold, Cold
That resides outside
Cold but forgiving
For it only lasts a few months
Then returns the warm air

The Cold, Cold, Cold
That resides inside
Cold and unforgiving
The Cold weather here
I fear
Will never disappear

Like the icy cube
Steals heat
From everything it touches
So too does my heart
For *nothing* can warm it

William H. Beardsley

On the Road to Entebbe

With late morning came heat. Every day, rain at sunrise, then heat. The equator. Uganda.

Uninhabited, vined, snaked forests greeted us as we climbed down from the bus on the road to Entebbe. The others were families. We were students. They were going to a revival. We were bored.

A typical weekend. Local classmates went home. That left Solomon, a Kikuyu from Mt. Kenya, good runner, religious, too. Robert, a Black from Newark, good talker, intellectual, came to find his roots, but they called him a "European." All foreigners were "Europeans." Robert had never been to Europe. I was there to save the world, at least I hoped to once I got used to the food and learned to use a scrub board. This outing was not my idea. I hate snakes. But Robert said, "What else do we have to do?" So we tagged along with Solomon.

The Kikuyu sang in Swahili as we climbed the red-dust path to the plantation. Strange and lyrical melodies, then one I knew by heart: "In the Garden." I had learned it from my grandmother, Robert too. Solomon too. No one knew us, so Robert and I sang, and the cluster of families we walked with began to hum and sway. Mothers with splayed toes, banana-leaf bundles on their heads, near-naked children darting, men behind, men in worn white shirts and baggy trousers deep in conversation.

Stucco was peeling off the villa walls, fruit trees needed pruning. Someone said the expatriates had left soon after Independence Day. The uncut lawn, however, served the revival well. The leaf bundles were opened in the shade to

expose steaming mounds of plantains—like mashed potatoes with no butter or salt. We ate with our hands. We laughed and smiled.

Preachers wandered, tending their flocks. One took my hand—you get used to that in Uganda—and led me to a toothless, tattered old man, a witchdoctor-turned-Christian, I was told. It was hard to tell. The crowd was pressing in. Through clicks and ticks and spits I heard the story as a translator whispered in my ear.

"I was a witchdoctor," the old man said. "My old faith was as a bush fire on the veldt at night. The fire warmed me. It burned so bright my body cast a shadow on the earth. Then dawn came in the sky with the end of the night at the edge of the forest. The earliest glow told me my life had changed forever. Christ entered me as the sun burst forth over the trees, so bright the bush fires now cast shadows on the earth. And I believed."

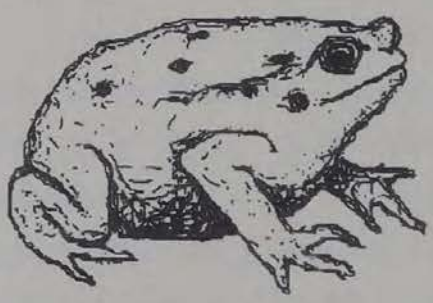
A hum spread through the crowd and evolved into a harmony. Children grew quiet. We wandered away, gathered our things and moved as one down the red-dust path to the bus stop. On the road to Entebbe. ▪

James Dull
Illustrations by Jessica Bay

Tum and Greenful Forest

The sun was just starting to show over the evershade trees on the far side of the pond. Tum swallowed and slowly stretched his large back legs, one at a time, as he tidied up his sandy spot. This was a great time of day, a time when he did not mind being alone. It was quiet with only the occasional whine from a passing mosquito. It was cool. To Tum, there was nothing more refreshing than the coolness of a summer morning. It looked like it might be a wonderful day.

Tum pushed toward the cattails in the marshy spot at the edge of the pond. This was his favorite spot. He would glide among the roots of the cattails and cover himself in the delicious mud. He would drink his fill and nab a few pesky bugs. This summer, his second, he hadn't been able to do as much nabbing as he liked. The dryness was lasting a long time.



After the toad drank he looked about the forest that surrounded and sheltered his pond. Tum called it Greenful Forest because it was so colorful and exciting. The other animals simply called it "The Trees." Tum wondered if he could ever make friends with the others.

The squirrels that lived in the large oaks near the glen were always cheerful when they visited the pond. Tum watched them eagerly. These giddy creatures raced about pulling tails and climbing trees. They never seemed to rest. They chittered and chatted small talk, ignoring Tum when he approached. Tum understood. Why would these lightning-

quick creatures waste their time waiting for a slow, clumsy toad? It was hard for Tum to jump through the grass without losing his balance or snagging a slimy toe.

The rabbits weren't as kind. The entire evershade rabbit colony would come to drink from the pond each night. There were so many kits that Tum nearly lost sight of his pond as they passed. It was during these times Tum would squeeze his eyes shut tightly and try to ignore the young rabbits as they made thunder in the hollow log above his home. These furry, warm, and wicked creatures were terrible to Tum. In fact, Thomas Percival Toad's nickname was given to him by a kit early last season. This fellow noticed that young Thomas Toad made a "tum" sound as he swallowed an unlucky mosquito. The name stuck. Now, Thomas merely tolerated their presence and tried ignoring them when they kicked sand at the "warty thing under the rock" or laughed as he moved awkwardly about.

The field mice that lived under the glen grass were Tum's favorite. These timid creatures rarely showed themselves, and the others in The Trees mostly ignored them. Tum knew how they felt. Tum thought they were pleasant, for they never bothered him in the least. Perhaps they could be friends?



Just then, Tum noticed a flash of white against the dark green of the lilac leaves. "Perhaps it won't be so wonderful," he groaned. Only one animal in The Trees would daringly show white for all to see. Surely, it must be Bags. Bags was a fox. His full name was Bagels N. Fox, but everyone simply called him Bags. He had a slender, toothful face and shiny black eyes that seemed to add to

the meaning of his smile. He also had a full, bushy tail that looked like it had been dipped in the whitest snow of winter. Bags loved practical jokes. He would often hide in the dark bushes, or among the oak and maple leaves, or even bury himself among the fallen needles near the evershades. Then he would wait. He would leap out from seemingly nowhere to frighten the young rabbits or squirrels. He would play his pranks on just about anyone. Anyone, that is, but the skunks. Bags learned in his youth that it isn't smart to surprise a skunk. And if there was one thing Bags was, he was smart.

Bags was handsome, clever, and quick. Tum was just a toad with a broad mouth that was always kept tightly closed and turned downward, making him look forever sad. He had brown and gray, warty skin that blended with his sandy home at Great Green Stone. White slivers above his eyelids were his only untoad-like feature. He was slow of foot and Bags would say he was slow of mind. In short, Bags was everything that the others admired and Tum was everything the others thought funny.

Tum knew Bags would be there shortly, so he hopped and dragged himself back to his rock and waited.

Bags quickly arrived with his forever smile and pushed his nose into the water. "So, how is Mr. Thomas Percival Toad this fine morning?"

"I am good, Bags."

"Tum, you must smile. Oh, you can't smile? My, that is too bad," Bags smirked.

Tum swallowed slowly and pushed back further into his home. He knew that Bags was just starting his name-calling. It was always the same. Maybe it will be short today, Tum thought. Tum shifted the sand to either side as he dug in for the day. This helped him keep cool during the long days. Then Tum waited. But he heard no "warts and all" or "with a tail like mine." This was curious. Tum looked every-

where for the fox and found him on top of the knoll behind the log looking toward the stand of old oak.

Tum could barely see the ominous small wisps of white floating lazily above the trees. He knew that Bags could see much more, for he had a fox's sight. Was that Fire? What was going to happen? To me? To the others? Tum was afraid. Bags sprinted down the knoll, mumbling something about warning the squirrels and telling everyone to head toward the pond. He flew toward the glen, his white tail winking through the leaves. Tum turned to follow but sailed tail-over-toad into a tuft of grass near the door of his home. All he should do is wait. He wasn't fast and fearless. He was slow. He was so slow.

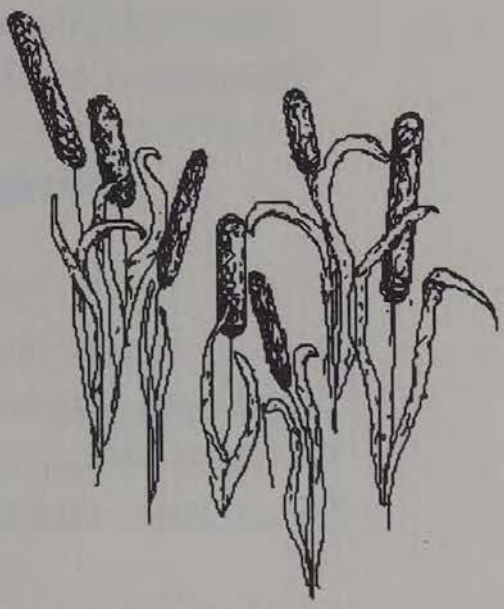
As evening came, the smell of burning wood and dying green was everywhere. Most of the other animals were crowded near the cattails and around the log. As usual, the young rabbits were in the hollow, but they weren't making thunder tonight. They were snuggled together, quivering and sniffing the air, their ears bent low over their backs. Bags was amazing. He was limping slightly as he attended to the young mice he had saved earlier before the fire had raced through their dry grass home. His fur was singed and covered with fire ash. His tail tip, of which he was so proud, had been burned badly and was now mostly black. He had covered all of Greenful, shouting for everyone to gather at the pond. The mice had thanked him a dozen times for saving their young. The younger rabbits followed him about the edge of the marsh as he paced in the night. The rabbits, all of the rabbits, thought him a hero. He was a hero and should surely be honored.

As day broke, the lonely dark of night was replaced by the lighter dark of a cloudy sky. Tum was thankful that the fire had not been worse. He could no longer see the oaks and maples and surely the glen had been destroyed. He could

still see the evershades and most of the bushes near the pond. It appeared that many had reached the pond haven. Tum knew it was going to be difficult for those left without a home. Perhaps he might help, a little, as Bags had done earlier. But how? Oh, how he wished he could help.

As Tum moved slowly from his home the others were just starting to stir. They pulled away from him with looks of disgust. Tum made his way forlornly to the edge of the pond for his morning drink. He gazed at the reflection of the young, wart-faced toad staring back at him. It was no use. He had not the craft of the fox or the speed of the squirrels. The others were right. He was ugly. He was slow.

Quietly, Tum moved toward the scarred wood. All that had once been green was now black. He heard murmuring from behind, but he closed his eyes and tried to ignore them. He had to do something! The others had always treated him cruelly, but Tum felt badly that they were left homeless and hungry. He squatted and slowly rocked. Back and forth, back and forth. He felt a strange tingling in his back legs that made him jump suddenly. Looking back, Tum saw a patch of sparkling green. He hopped again—more sparkles lay on the ground where his slimy tracks should be. With every step sparkles rose from his ungainly feet. Where the sparkles landed small green shoots of grass and flowers and bushes emerged from the ground. The pale green of the new grass stood out against the black of the charred ground surrounding them. The small, odd, white and lavender flowers that grew gave off an aroma that smelled like newness and happiness. All around Tum the green rose. He hopped faster. The faster Tum hopped the faster the sparkles flew. This was fun. Tum jumped faster and faster, and the green grew in leaps and bounds wherever he went. The others only stared. They didn't know what to think of this odd toad jumping wildly in The Trees. He looked almost dangerous.



As the sky lightened, Tum tiredly returned to the pond. He was giddy and a little dizzy from all the activity. He couldn't believe what he had done. He knew the rabbits would be fine; their homes were still intact. The evershades were merely singed and had withstood the heat of the fire. The mice would soon have grass to make a new home. (He had made it grow!) Everyone could help the squirrels find new homes while the oak and maple saplings grew. Only Bags would have any permanent damage. His wonderful white tail had probably been changed forever. Tum slowly sipped water and eyed his own reflection with curiosity. While he drank the others gathered cautiously around him. They didn't know what to say. They had treated Tum so badly and now he had given them their homes back. Bags looked at Tum as if to say, "I am glad you showed us!"

Tum returned to his hole and scratched the sand to the side as he settled in. He noticed the others gathering about Great Green Stone. They were waiting for an explanation, but Tum had none. He didn't know what happened. He only wanted to help and he did! The young rabbits sniffed and muttered "how" and "who." The squirrels chittered, "Mr. Thomas Toad" among themselves. Some younger field mice were being shushed while words like "wizard" and "mage" were being squeaked rather loudly.

"Maybe I am somebody?" Tum thought as he shut his eyes to sleep. ▪

Gérard de Nerval (1808-1855)
Translated by Boubacar Thiam

Fantaisie

Il est un air pour qui je donnerais
Tout Rossini, tout Mozart, tout Weber,
Un air très vieux, languissant et funèbre,
Qui pour moi seul a des charmes secrets.

Or, chaque fois que je viens à l'entendre,
De deux cents ans mon âme rajeunit;
C'est sous Louis treize...et je crois voir s'étendre
Un coteau vert que le couchant jaunit.

Puis un château de brique à coins de pierres,
Aux vitraux teints de rougeâtres couleurs,
Ceint de grands parcs, avec une rivière
Baignant ses pieds, qui coule entre les fleurs.

Puis une dame à sa haute fenêtre,
Blonde, aux yeux noirs, en ses habits anciens...
Que dans une autre existence, peut-être,
J'ai déjà vue!...et dont je me souviens.

Fantasy

There is an air for which I'd give
All of Rossini, all of Mozart, all of Weber,
A very old air, languishing, funereal,
Which has for me a secret charm.

Whenever I happen to hear it,
My soul goes back two centuries;
It is under Louis XIII...and I seem to see
A hillside, green, going yellow.

Then a chateau of brick, corners of stone,
Windows dyed red,
And a grand encircling park, river
Bathing its feet, flowing among flowers.

Then a woman at an upper window—
Blonde, dark-eyed, in the clothes of that time—
Whom in another life, perhaps,
I've seen!...and I remember.



– Jami Bradshaw

Linda Gover

The Unwanted Child

The Unwanted child
The Unwanted friend
The freak-geek
Who cares about her?
"No one, she doesn't even have real parents."
Always outside looking in
Behind the brick wall that surrounds her
Always alone, loner
Hides in her room
Never goes out
Never does anything with her friends
"What friends? She doesn't have any friends!"
Always locked away where people can't reach her
She's cold, quiet
She doesn't care anymore
"Friends" drive her insane: what's the point
"Family" doesn't exist: has problems of its own
"School" drives her to tears: can't do anything right
They all drive her to the edge
Death



– Nancy Traiser

Heidi Shields

Twelve Hours in January

I woke to Peter Frampton's voice blaring on the clock radio, "I'm in you. You're in me...." It was 6 a.m. I reached over to turn the radio off. The glass of water I had left on the bedside table last night was frozen solid. A soft dusting of snow formed a powdery mound on the dark wooden floor underneath a crack in the corner of the window. I snuggled in next to my twin sister. Sound asleep. She hadn't budged with the blasting of the radio. Typical. The towel that was wrapped around the soapstone at the bottom of the bed had slipped off during the night. I recoiled spontaneously as my bare toe accidentally brushed its smooth, ice-cold surface. It was pitch black outside.

I took a deep breath and jumped out of bed into my slippers. The cold air stung my nostrils and my fingertips were already tingling by the time I grabbed some clothes and quickly darted through the living room to my grandparents' room. The only good thing about this weather was that it dulled the smell of cat excrement that pervaded the living room from decades past when Grandma had allowed the cats to defecate freely. Grandpa had cried when he found the body of the last surviving cat flattened by the side of the road last summer. With time and cold, the odor was beginning to dissipate.

I tiptoed past the old double bed where my grandparents slept soundly, and rounded the corner behind the gas stove. Carefully, I lifted the wooden lid of the indoor commode. It squeaked on its hinges. I stopped briefly and glanced over my shoulder to make sure I hadn't disturbed my grandparents. Grandpa would yell at me if he caught me using the

indoor commode. Good, still sound asleep. My nose told me before my eyes did that no one had emptied the chamber pot last night. Damn.

The top of the gas stove was warmed perfectly. I quietly sat on top of it with my full bladder and draped my clothes out beside me. Suddenly, the fan kicked in and I jumped, banging my heel against the metal frame of the stove. Grandpa gave a "Haarumph," and tossed his covers aside. I held my breath. Just enough of the early morning light was coming through the window for me to make out the bony silhouette of his shoulders underneath his yellowed long-john shirt. If I got off quietly enough, he wouldn't know that I had been sitting on top of the stove, and I could quickly sneak into the rocking chair, as if I had been there all along. Slowly, he reached under the bed to pick up the Mason jar. Oh, God! I slipped off the stove and was at the door to the kitchen in two strides. I swung the door open quickly, not caring if he heard or not. I just got the door closed when I heard the rush of urine into the Mason jar, followed by the shuffle of his stocking feet towards the bedside chamber pot, which I knew to be full, or nearly so. I heard him say, "Ho-Ho."

I busied myself choosing kindling and paper to start the fire in the wood stove. It was beginning to look light enough to venture to the outhouse by myself. Just as I was contemplating that, Mom walked in. We gave each other the same look, and without a word, put on our snow boots and overcoats and hurried out the door. It was a two-seater.

By the time we returned, Grandpa was in the kitchen sitting down to his usual plain yogurt, dark molasses, and wheat germ. It was now safe for me to return to the clothes I had laid on the stove, which should be nicely warmed by now. I shut the door behind me.

Grandma was lying in bed sleeping quietly. I studied the top of her red knit hat as I got dressed. I noticed she had

gone to bed wearing the old, matted, fur coat we had found in the attic several years ago over the same type of white women's cotton long-johns with little pink flowers that I also favored for sleeping. I was glad that she was still asleep. Usually at this time of morning she would have made any one of several comments, including, "My children never left the house without breakfast," or "Did you make your bed? Why, when your cousins Howard and David visit, I never have to ask them if they made their bed. They just do it." I walked over to her bedside and peered down at her slightly flushed cheeks. Her long, fine, gray and white hair, which was usually neatly pinned into a bun on the back of her head with fifty bobby pins, feathered loosely over her deeply wrinkled brown skin. There seemed little risk of her venturing into our room this morning to check on a possibly unmade bed, or to make any comments on our "devil's music."

I hurried into our room, where my sister was still sound asleep. With a satisfied smirk, I turned on our "devil's music" and sang loudly along with the Eagles into her ear, "Welcome to the Hotel California. Such a lovely place. Such a lovely place." She groaned and rolled over.

"Wake up, Klara! It's almost 7 o'clock! Grandma's still asleep and Grandpa is eating breakfast. Hurry up, you're gonna be late."

It was too cold to mess with her, so I hurried back into the kitchen with Mom and Grandpa.

"Is Klara awake?" Mom said.

"Yeah, I just woke her up."

Klara joined us in the kitchen shortly. "Good morning, Grandpa," she said, kissing him on his stubbled cheek.

"Well, well," he said, smiling.

She threw on her coat and boots and ran out the back door.

I grabbed a cup and dipped it into one of the gallon-

sized buckets of water against the back kitchen wall. At least it was cold. Grandpa must have walked out to the pump while we were in the outhouse. Half a cup was all I could stand, even cold. I meticulously scanned the glass for any particulate matter that I did not wish to ingest or swish across my teeth. The water had a sulfur smell and a metallic taste that was difficult to describe, as well as a distinct discoloration, all of which my grandparents frequently reassured me was "perfectly all right," even "good for you." I quickly brushed my teeth and spat as much of the water out as I could.

7:25 a.m.

With the trees thinned in the winter, it was easy to see the flashing red lights of the school bus half a mile down the road as it stopped to pick up our neighbors. In the early morning light, they looked like two red eyes winking alternately as a signal to prepare for departure. Mom shoved toast in our mouths as we ran out the door. Shoot, nowhere to ditch it between the door and the bus without Mom seeing us. Why didn't she just shut the door after we walked out? Like, what is going to happen in the fifty-yard walk down the driveway? I hoped no one saw that my mother was watching me until I got on the school bus. I gulped down the toast as fast as I could so that no one on the bus would see me eating it. Yellow lights flashing, then red, as the bus screeched to a halt and waited for us on the road.

Most of the kids looked without interest out the window. If someone was looking out the window, it meant that they weren't interested in having you sit next to them. Eye contact could mean, "Sit next to me," or "DON'T sit next to me." I prayed that there would be enough seats for Klara and me to sit together and that there would not be a seat empty next to Dwayne McCabe.

"What did Heidi and Klara's mom say when they were born?" a voice boomed out from the back of the bus. "Well,

HeidiKlair. A-HA-HA-HA-HA-hee-hee-hee-hee!"

"God, that joke is four weeks old! Give it up!" I thought, as I scanned the bus for two seats—ANY two seats. We were forced to move to the back of the bus, where Dwayne sat grinning next to his sister, Weiner. Responding to him would only encourage him to comment further. He still had a mildly pinkish scar between his eyebrows in the shape of the swastika he had carved into his skin with the tip of a compass after watching "Helter Skelter." He was now trying to grow his greasy black hair long enough to cover it up, when he discovered that no one else thought it was cool.

"Go sit next to Scott, Dwayne!" Weiner ordered.

"I don't have to," Dwayne said.

"Dwayne, go sit next to Scott!" Marylou yelled authoritatively.

Reluctantly, Dwayne moved forward. The pungent odor of stale marijuana and cigarettes drifted behind him. Marylou allowed me the window seat. This enabled her to get off the bus fast enough to smoke a cigarette before class. Not that where she sat mattered. Everyone knew that Marylou was the first one off the bus, and they waited for her to get up anyway. Klara sat next to Weiner.

The bus started as Dwayne sat down. "Beth, I hear you callin'..." began on the radio.

"Crank it up, Mrs. D!" someone yelled.

The bus driver rolled her eyes. "I didn't hear the magic word!"

"PLEASE!" the bus chorused.

"BUT I CAN'T COME HOME TONIGHT...." *KISS* continued.

Luckily, people had stopped gawking in disbelief when the bus stopped at the farmhouse. There were no more comments of, "Geez, I didn't know anybody lived here," along with the long stares from the front to the back of the bus.

The farmhouse actually looked nice under the thick blanket of snow. You couldn't tell that the grass was never mowed. Grandma preferred the wildflowers that grew unattended, which passersby frequently stopped to pick, thinking the house was abandoned. She apparently also preferred unattended houses, as the farmhouse had never received any external or internal repair, including paint, that I was aware of at least in the last half-century.

Klara met her best friend, Betsy, who was waiting for her when the bus arrived. She told Betsy how Grandma had not let us play any of the records Betsy had loaned us for the weekend. What a cruel and heartless witch! Ha, we were glad she was sick in bed. Served her right! "Yeah, what a witch!" Betsy said, "Wicked witch of the west."

"Ding dong, the witch is dead," someone began, "WICKED witch, the witch is DEAD! Ding dong the wicked witch is dead!" we all chorused. We ran off to class, and giggled and sang the song to each other when we passed in the hallway and at lunch hour, where we spent the change Mom and Grandma had scraped together between them for our lunch money on pizza and ice cream that we never would see at home. We sang the song while we showered after gym class, where Klara and I were the only girls in junior high who WANTED to shower. We were the first ones in and the last ones out, singing, "Ding dong the witch is dead," over and over. Everyone thought we were weird, and of course we loved it and sang even louder. We were still technically the "new kids" in school, and beginning to enjoy it as a sort of notoriety rather than an embarrassment.

2:30 p.m.

Finally it was time to go home. It got dark so early this time of year. The snow was already coming down heavily, and we were glad to be among the first ones off the bus. There was supposed to be a big blizzard tonight. If we were

lucky, maybe school would be called off for the following day. At least now we had the clock radio as a Christmas gift from our older sister, who was away at school. We wouldn't have to rely on someone remembering to call us up to tell us school was canceled. With Grandma being sick, we might even be able to get away with playing it in the kitchen, where it was warm, since Grandpa was nearly deaf. There was no TV to watch, so we occupied a great deal of our time with writing extensive letters to our friends from home, who were fascinated with our adventure of traveling far away from home and living in a primitive farmhouse. Even classmates we hardly knew from home wrote letters occasionally. We raced each other to the door to be the first one to grab the mail. Mom had it laid out for us on the kitchen table—a letter from Kelly and Cathy to me, and a letter from Vicki and Teresa to Klara. We each ripped ours open.

"Well, Mother seemed a little brighter, today," Mom began.

Sensing the tone of her voice, I reluctantly laid my letter down, as did Klara. I felt slightly guilty. "Did she get up?" I said, glancing into her bedroom, where I could see the top of the red knit cap in the same position on the bed that it was in this morning when I left.

"Well, no, but she asked to have her mail read, and she hasn't done that in several days, so I think she's feeling better. She also wanted to listen to the *Mikado*." She hesitated. "But I don't think she can see."

Mildly alarmed, I said, "What? Why?"

"Well, she asked for her checkbook. She wanted to write out a check for the offering for last Sunday since she was too sick to go, but you really can't read her handwriting, and....I had to show her where the paper was."

"Does she need to go to the doctor?"

"Oh no! You know mother! She won't have anything to

do with any doctors! She forbade me to call them. Well, I guess I better see what there is for dinner."

4:30 p.m.

We ate a quiet early dinner in the kitchen with Mom and Grandpa, then proceeded into Grandma's room, which usually also functioned as the dining room. The wind was blowing loudly, and it was again pitch black outside. I looked outside to see the snow swirling and blowing in gusts across the lawn. Klara and I sat down to do our homework and answer our letters. I was busy replying to my best friend, Cathy, when Klara and I heard a loud, "Aaaaaaaaah," coming from Grandma's bed. We looked once at the red knit cap, and once at each other, and got up.

Moving closer to the bedside, we heard it again, only louder, "Aaaaaaaaaah."

"Grandma?" I half-whispered near her ear. "Are you O.K?" She did look a little pale, and did not respond. Klara and I looked at each other. With a quick deep breath we were in the kitchen next to Mom, who was doing the dishes.

"Mom, I think something's wrong with Grandma," we said in unison.

"What?"

"Umm, I think something's wrong with Grandma. Just come."

Mom rushed past us into Grandma's bedroom. Grandpa sat at the kitchen table reading his *Reader's Digest*. "Oh, Mother!" she choked, and lifted Grandma up off the bed by her shoulders with one hand, while scooping out her dentures with the other.

"What are you doing!" I yelled.

"Well, I'm taking out her dentures. I thought she might have choked. Oh, dear."

Grandma lay limp on the bed, unmoving.

Klara and I backed slowly away from the bed, clutching

each other as terror gripped our hearts and wrapped tightly around our throats, making it impossible to speak or make any noise. We dared not see each other's eyes.

"Wha-wha-what's wrong with her?" I stammered.

"Oh, dear," Mom said. "Well, I'm afraid...." She didn't finish her sentence, and hurried into the living room, closing the door behind her.

I flung the door back open. She was sitting down next to the phone. "What are you doing?" I yelled again.

"I'm calling the minister," she said quietly, speaking as if she routinely called the minister at this time of night, although I could detect a little nervousness still in her voice.

I left the door to the living room open, where I could see and hear her, although the breeze was quite cool coming from the other room.

"Yes, it's my mother," I could hear her saying. "I'm afraid she's passed away." She actually said it! A new wave of nausea and terror rendered me immobile. "A mirror? O.K."

Mom came back into the room. The phone was off the hook. "Where is Grandma's mirror?" Mom said calmly. Before I could form the question that was on my lips, I knew with sudden certainty what she would do with the mirror. It further horrified me when she did. She went back to the phone. "No, nothing there." Again, so calm. "Oh no, you mustn't come out in this storm! There's no way you could even get into the driveway." Silence, again, as she listened, "Oh, why, no, you mustn't! It can wait until morning." Hesitation again. "Well, we do have a couch in the living room."

Overwhelming images rushed through my head. I saw Grandpa sleeping next to his dead wife in the warm room and forgetting she was dead in the middle of the night. How long did it take a dead body to start smelling, anyway? Couch? What was she talking about the couch for? Grandpa certainly couldn't sleep out on the couch with no heat in the room.

Besides, he'd probably fall off anyway and break something. Who then, did she mean for the couch in the living room? Oh. And how would that be accomplished? Oh, wait a minute. Oh, no!

Instantly, I found the voice that had been choked back. "NO!" I screamed. "They are coming out here! She is not staying here tonight! They are coming out here!"

I released Klara and ran into the living room with tears streaming down my face. The minister must have heard me. Mom gave me a disgusted look, said, "O.K." softly into the receiver, and hung up the phone. "I guess we better get Grandpa," she said.

Oh my God. I had forgotten Grandpa. We all clung to each other and passed by Grandma's bed into the kitchen. Grandpa sat reading his *Reader's Digest.* He told us a joke out of it. "Papa, I think you better come see Mama."

"What? Is something the matter? Does she need something?"

"Papa, I think Mama is dead."

"Dead? What the devil?" He shuffled into their room and took Grandma's hand. "Cornelia?" He patted her hand as he spoke. "Cornelia? Oh, dear. Oh, pet." He patted her hand.

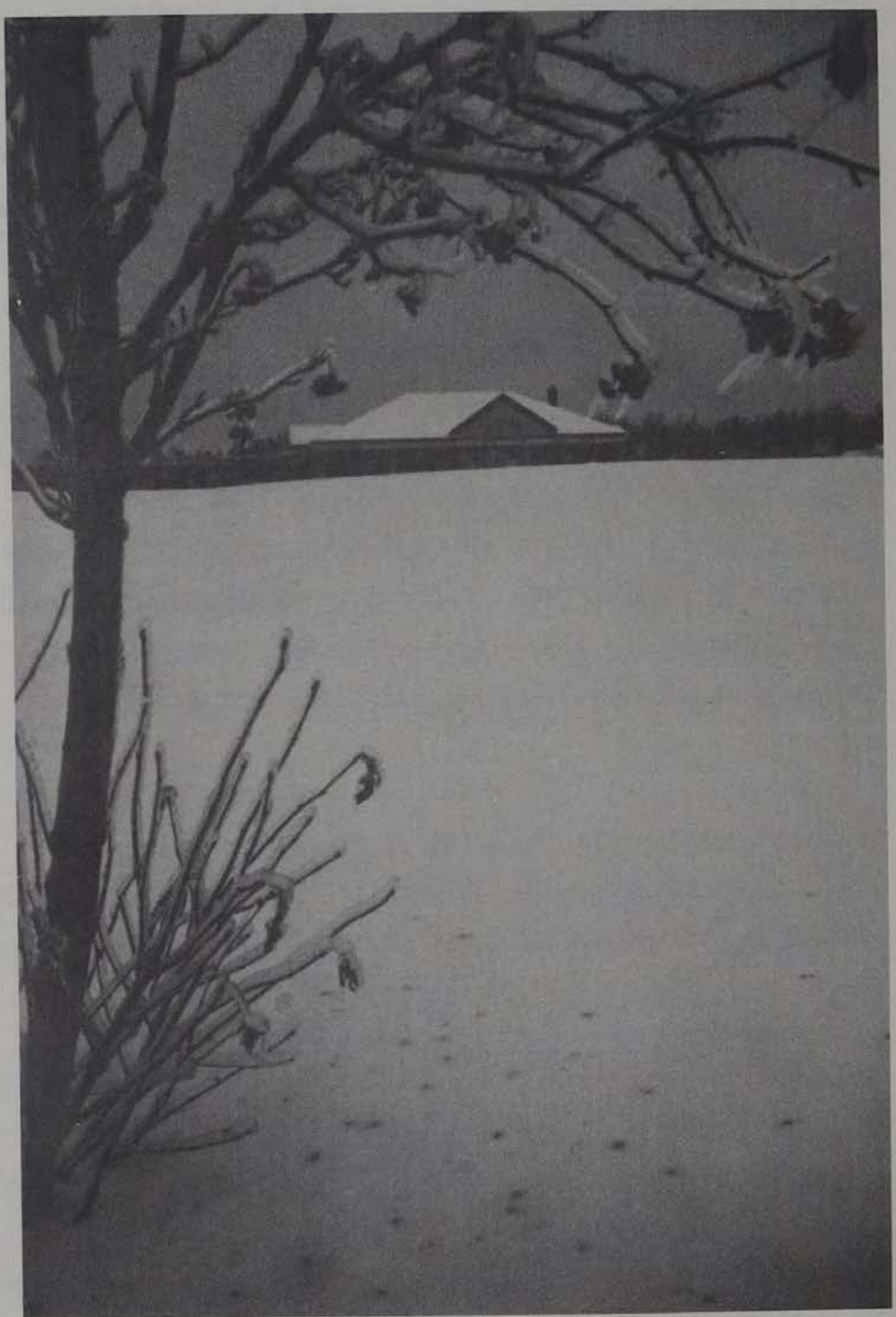
6:00 p.m.

It seemed instantly there was a knock on the back door. No. Wait. Not yet.

The minister came in with two men in black overcoats whom I didn't recognize. Swiftly, they laid a long, black, plastic bag next to her in the bed. They took off her matted fur coat. I wondered what they thought. I wanted to say, "No, don't! She'll be cold!" but somehow I had lost my voice again. I watched in horror as they easily picked up her petite frame and laid it in the bag. I didn't remember her being that small. They zipped her up quite neatly and hoisted her onto the stretcher someone had brought in. How would she breathe in that thing? Where were they taking her?

Grandpa said, "My wife is dead."

I watched them carry her out the door. The white snow contrasted sharply with the black sky as it swirled in circles around the domed black bag and overcoats. Bright red tail-lights pierced the blackness with an intense stare, guiding the steady approach of the two figures supporting a third horizontally between them. I hoped she wasn't cold. I watched as they walked all the way up the driveway to the hearse waiting on the road. ▪



– Thomas Kessenich

Robin Roberts

The Deadly Jewel

How cruel can a mother be by killing her own creations?
She binds her tall soldiers in freezing crystal, beautiful but deadly,
Life-giving water against the cold encases them in a death shroud.
Sparkling like a diamond in the sunshine, but she isn't a jewel at all.
Hanging their bodies in mourning for lost arms, legs, and lives,
Crying for warmth and resurrection, rebirth and new life,
Weak, heavy limbs begging for spring, and all they have is hope
That one day death will end and life will begin.

Teresa and Ernie Steele

A Toast to Aomori

Words have different meanings
in many foreign lands
and so you must be careful
or risk censure's demands
We know a certain Doctor (who is a PhD)
who offered up a "toast" of sorts
in Japan's Aomori
At first the hosts were silent,
then some began to sigh
some told the cook to toast the bread,
others muttered, "oh me oh my"
It looked like all was hopeless
she wished that she would die
till someone figured out that "toast"
was really their "kanpai"

Gayle Walden

Hey Woodsman!

Hey woodsman!
I see you there,
wearing your coat and tie
without conviction.
You belong outside in flannel
under the sky.

You are beautiful, like a tree,
your heart delicate as marsh-pink
and as wild.

How can I learn you,
how move into those thoughts
white-water swift?
How touch that secret heart?

Should I shoot the rapids,
swirl down the rocks and bruise my soul?
Should I hold you like a flower
and bend the petals back until I see gold?
Or should I only watch you unfold
and you never know?

Jeremy Brown

The One That Got Away

I was thirteen at the time. I was in the seventh grade and had no idea that the most memorable moment of my life was about to take place. I hadn't even begun shaving, and I still watched Saturday morning cartoons. I ate Lucky Charms because I liked the little leprechaun on the box. How was I supposed to know that the defining moment of my young life was upon me?

My father and I sat at the dinner table, discussing our plans for the next day. It was the first time that year that we would hunt together, and we wanted to have a game plan. We had decided that we were going to hunt the woods behind my grandfather's house, working our way back towards the bog. This way, we could push the deer onto each other and they could not double back on us. It seemed like a good plan to me. My number had been drawn for an "any deer" permit, so I was able to shoot a doe. I was extremely excited at the prospect of shooting my first deer. I was thirteen and had yet to see a deer in the woods. My father had gotten his deer in all of the previous years, and he wanted me to have a good chance at one. I went to bed that night with visions of white-tail bucks prancing about in my head. My dreams drifted off to the next day, when I hoped to bag my first buck.

I awoke that morning with a sick feeling in the pit of my stomach and began to vomit. My dad asked me if I still wanted to hunt, considering how I was feeling. I told him I thought I would be okay; so we loaded our gear into his '78 Chevy Silverado and headed for my grandfather's house.

When we got there I was feeling horrendous, but I in-

sisted that we at least try for a couple of hours. I was intent on shooting my first deer, and no flu bug was going to stop me from accomplishing what I set out to do. My father and I pressed on, not knowing for sure if we were on the right track; we had not seen any fresh signs since we entered the woods half an hour earlier. Suddenly, my stomach began to knot and churn, and I felt deathly ill. My father knew that I should not be wandering around in the woods feeling as I did; however, I did not want to leave yet. I was on a mission, and I was sure that this was my big day. So my father decided that we would change our plan slightly. He took me up onto a nearby hill and told me to sit there and wait while he tried to stir something up.

Unbeknownst to me, my father stumbled across some fresh tracks while I was sitting upon the large rock where he had left me. As I daydreamed about what I would be doing when I went back to school the following Monday, my father stalked the deer only fifty yards away from me. He worked in a circle and kept the deer's attention as I sat there idly playing with my hair and trying to remember what I was assigned for Algebra homework.

Suddenly, I heard the leaves begin to rustle and a twig snap. I became very alert to the noises around me. I heard the rhythmic pitter-patter of the deer's footsteps as I sat there listening. I had never heard a deer walking before, but I was sure that it wasn't my dad out there. So I shifted slightly on the rock, readying my gun and waiting for my first deer to arrive.

I waited for what seemed like an hour as it circled around the hill, avoiding my father. Then a shadow appeared behind a nearby fir tree. It looked as if a demon were hiding behind it, and my heart began to pound rapidly. I became aware of how loud my breathing sounded as the huge creature slowly walked into the clearing, completely unaware of

my presence. I swallowed as carefully as I could; yet it seemed as if a cannon went off in my throat.

The massive buck was a twelve-pointer and weighed somewhere in the vicinity of 350 pounds. I could tell this because my father had shot a 250-pounder one week before, and this mammoth creature that stood before me dwarfed that deer. The magnificent creature had a shiny brown coat and a barrel chest. Every muscle in his body rippled as he gracefully walked along the ridge. His keen ears twitched, trying to pick up any hint of a noise. He walked with confidence, as if he were king of the forest.

The buck had his head to the ground and was looking underneath the trees, trying to catch a glimpse of my father. I took this opportunity to raise my rifle, and began to aim for the point just behind his shoulder blade where his heart lay. Then I readjusted my aim for his head because of his close proximity to me; I did not want to damage this deer more than I had to. The buck raised its head and looked over towards where he knew my father was. I slowly took a breath and pulled back the hammer of my Winchester .30-30. The buck's keen ears picked up on the slight click, and he took a few quick steps forward as I squeezed the trigger.

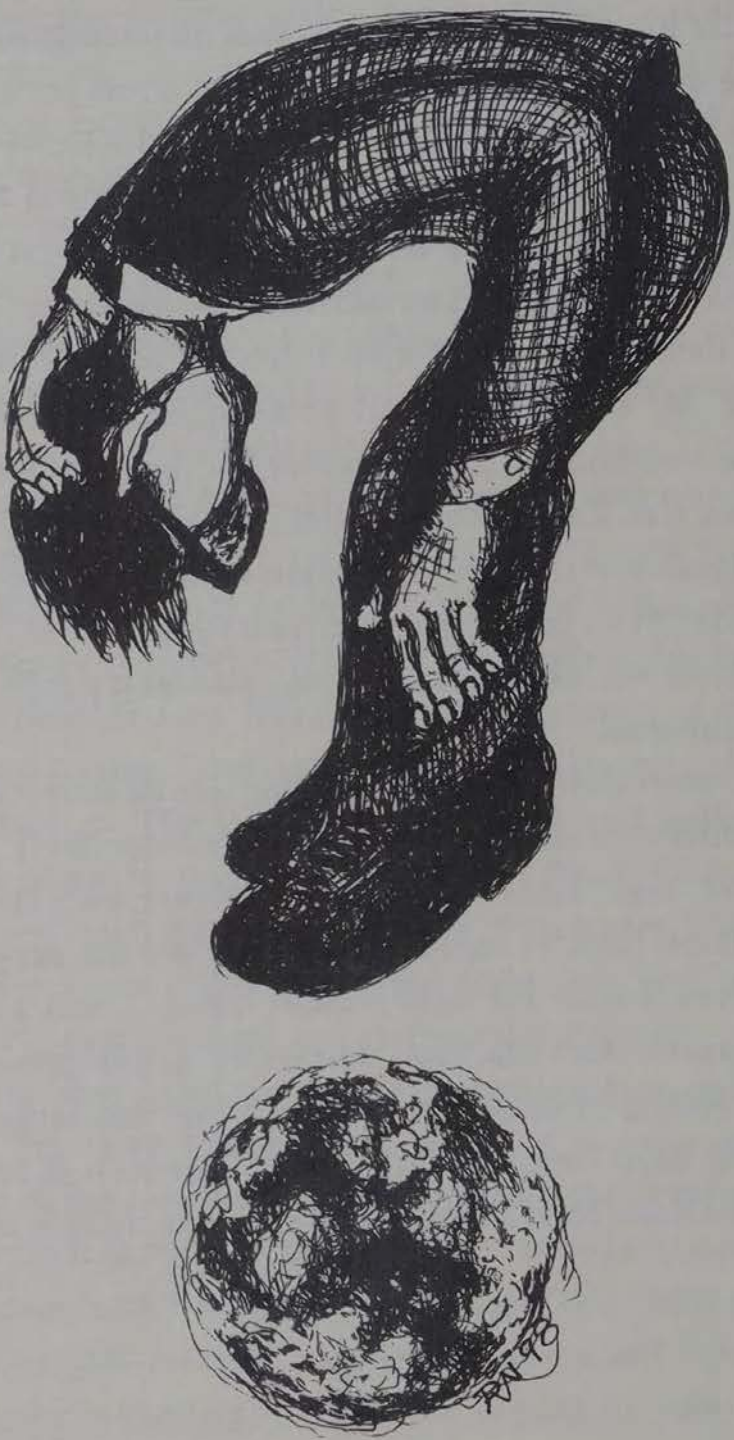
Bark flew from the pine tree behind him as my rifle roared. His heart jumped into his throat as mine sank. He quickly dashed over the hill as I cocked the lever and leveled the gun in his direction. But he was already gone without a trace, and I was left there, alone, and with no deer. Adrenaline still pumped through my veins as I stood there waiting for something to happen, hoping in vain that the massive buck would return.

My father hurried to the spot where he had left me, expecting to see a nice buck lying on the ground and me standing over him. All he saw was his son standing next to a pine tree with rifle in hand, staring down at the forest below

him. He looked around for the deer and quickly came to the conclusion that I had missed. He sent me off in one direction as he went in another, as intent as I was on finding that buck.

The adrenaline rush had seemingly cured my sickness because I felt alive and energetic, although the heavy feeling of failure weighed my shoulders down. I traipsed through the woods, thinking about how closely I had come at the age of thirteen to accomplishing what few hunters ever accomplish in their lifetime. And then I thought about how I had blown it. My one chance had gone up in smoke when I made the youthful mistake of aiming for the head when the body shot was a sure thing. I thought about how this massive, magnificent creature had come within fifty feet of me and I hadn't even grazed him. I prided myself on my marksmanship and was devastated in a way that most people could not comprehend.

We never did see that deer again. We do know that no other hunter ever shot him. The deer has most likely passed on by now, and I have shot my share of deer since then, but when I think back to that day I can still see the scene perfectly. Now, I wait for next season, when I will start the process again. And this time, hopefully, I will come away with the feeling of pride that you get when you bring home the largest, most beautiful buck you've ever seen. If I don't, I can always think back and remember the one that got away. ▪



– *Robert Nichols*

Julianna Herrick

Hanging from a Tree

Mountain Ash,
Life escapes you like your red berries,
Fleeing horses, equus of equus,
In restrained bark you sleep, roots sucking up water,
Quiet and Heavy.
Through the salt iron ground you clutch with wooden claws.
The world has turned and you have traced its orbit in your grain.
You have passed the years quietly and have become wise.
You have grown old while thickets around you have grown young.
What did you see amongst the rose hips where you stood so tall?
I stood in rose hips with a lopsided smile, an innocent, crooked smile, reaching towards the carved rivets of time in your gnarled branches.
My footprints waited frozen in the snow.

Marcia Towle

Love

What happened?
Why did we turn out like this?
We were so close
Everything was perfect
But now we are distant
Afraid to return to the past
Afraid of our feelings
Now I am so alone
Despite my many friends
I miss the special friend
The one who made everything fine
My best friend
What happened?
Where did you go?
Why are we so distant?
I want the past to come alive
I want to feel alive once again.

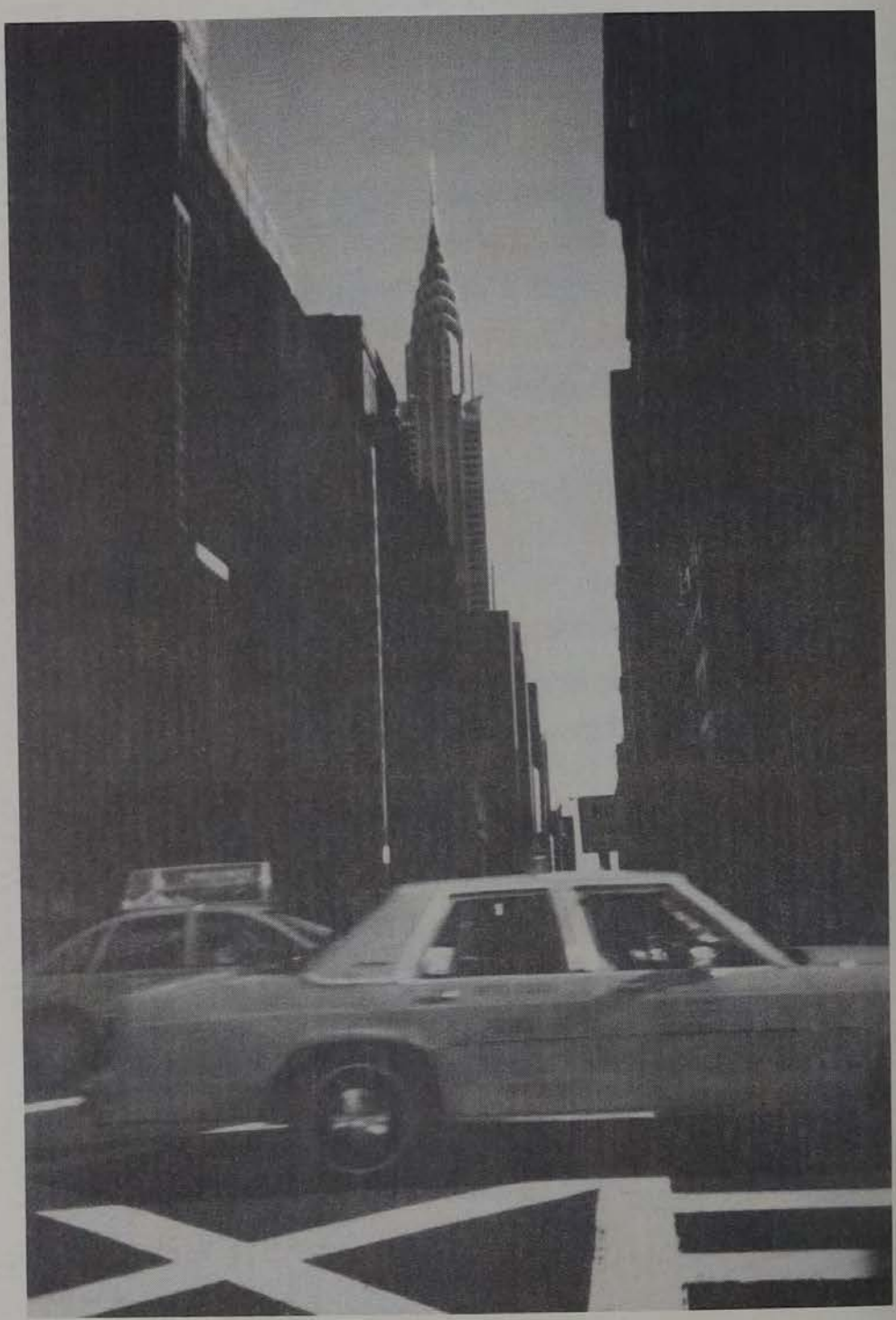
Matthew Hunt

Sweet Refrain

I'm going insane, what's left to gain?
My life's whirling with the winds of the hurricane.
The storm that blows sings my name,
But the only gift it gives is pain.
Though miles apart
The debris batters my broken heart...

Wishing only for that sweet refrain,
The peaceful cool of the falling rain
On those summer nights, spent in your embrace...
Laughing, smiling, I touch your face,
Lost in your eyes, perfumed scent of your hair,
Hourglass figure... with skin so fair...

Oh, but your beauty is not just for me to see,
It's that radiant glow from within that truly reaches me.
If only I could grasp that moment in time...
And stay there till the storm passes me by.



– Lisa Caruso

Ann Fellows

Cold-blooded Killer

"It wouldn't *really* be murder," he thought. "Uncle George is past enjoying life anyway. Asthmatic, thirty pounds overweight, his only joy those Peppermint Patties and Vegetable Thins with onion dip. He admitted that to me—in so many words."

Timothy Thomas Fling was thus ruminating on the worth of his Uncle George's life. Timothy was now forty-seven, and ever since he was twenty-three he had had great expectations. Wifeless, childless, funless Uncle George had ponderously sat him down for what he had called a pow-wow. Timothy had just married Debbie.

But way back then in the ancient days of optimistic youth and romantic love, Timothy had given little thought to the distant promise of wealth, not even on the unseasonably warm September day when Uncle George revealed his intention of leaving him his considerable estate upon his death.

"Never the marrying kind, young Timothy," Uncle George had wheezed, sounding like a Dickens character. Really *looking* like a Dickens character, all florid and sideburned.

Young Timothy, now beyond middle-aged Timothy, had never been fond of Uncle George. In one of life's charming little ironies, the colorful, Dickensian facade was not enough to hide the dull man within. There was nothing tangible to dislike, but the man was too bland and too much of a nonentity to put the effort into liking him.

And the optimism of his youth and the romantic love had many years since drowned in the river of cynicism. Deborah (he stopped calling her Debbie after eight months of illusion-shattering matrimony) had become what he considered a most unnecessary encumbrance. Not that they fought

much anymore; they didn't care enough for fighting, but there was nearly always the tinge of malevolent tension in the atmosphere. The fact was that Deborah and Timothy no longer even liked each other, and they resented the symbiotic relationship they were too afraid to get out of. One or the other of them initiated perfunctory sex once every two months or so, only to try in vain to prove to themselves that theirs fell into the desired category of the "happy, healthy marriage."

Timothy confronted the truth: he could not afford a divorce, at least and still live in the style to which he would like to become accustomed. His earnings as one of two assistant managers at the local Ames store would be adequate if he didn't have to support Deborah, useless Deborah, who had no job training, education or any ambitions beyond binging on expensive Pepperidge Farms pastries and watching game shows and soap operas. Once upon a time, many moons ago, Timothy had been delighted to have a woman who wanted only to stay home and "do for her man," until he found out how little that actually was.

Lazy, useless Deborah would require alimony, and that meant that poor Timothy would be strapped and strained financially to an intolerable degree.

The obvious *did* occur to Timothy—murdering Deborah—but he quickly dismissed the idea, on two counts: 1. He knew he wasn't clever enough to orchestrate the perfect crime, complete with alibi and the accidental disappearance; and 2. He was not the murdering type.

But scaring Uncle George to death with his pet African Python, Peter, would be just the ticket. How could it be considered murder? It was not *his* fault that Uncle George had such a notoriously bad ticker; it ran on nitroglycerin alone. He had already been hospitalized twice for what the doctors called "minor attacks." All he needed, in Timothy's view, was a major attack.

Neither was it his fault that Uncle George had such an absurd phobia about snakes. It wasn't his fault that as an asthmatic boy of eight, little George had been set upon by the neighborhood gang of bullies with a writhing collection of garter, grass and green snakes. Uncle George had once remarked to Timothy, "Can't even bear to watch the things on television." He had taken an early interest in gardening, only to depart from it swiftly when a neighbor happened to mention spotting a pretty milk snake, a mere four or five inches long, near his zucchini bed. And Uncle George had not set foot in Timothy's mobile home since he had acquired Peter, even though Timothy promised both to cover his terrarium with a sheet and to conceal the entire unit in a shut-up room.

"The fact is," Uncle George began, sounding uncharacteristically assertive, "the thing would be there and I'd know it." This proclamation was accompanied by a case of bodily and facial squirms conveying his overwhelming antipathy. Timothy feared for his inheritance, and so never mentioned Peter nor his species again.

Timothy could not understand why everybody didn't want a pet python of his very own. He was so thrilled with Peter that the pleasure of his first few weeks of ownership were tinged with the fear that someone, perhaps not by nature a thief but an insanely envious reptile lover, would manage to enter his house and easily steal away with his handsome, spotted pet via a pillowcase. Nothing would be easier.

But soon it crept into Timothy's consciousness that others did not necessarily hold the same reverence for this remarkable product of four hundred million years of evolution. He met with some who were at least curious: "Interesting creature, but I don't know as I'd like to have one in my living room." Some were in Uncle George's category: "I give the garden a wide berth." Others were openly hostile: "Once

I threatened to hit a guy in a pet store if he didn't put the snake away."

Timothy felt superior to them all, and contemptuous; he could not see why pythons had not replaced the family cat and dog throughout the households of America. He had his speech down pat. It included, "He is the perfect pet! Quiet, except for the occasional hiss, fun to watch—oh, look now—he's coiling! Cheap to keep once you've got them set up. I throw him a mouse once a month, and he strikes, squeezes, and swallows it. And the best thing is that they have only one bowel movement every three months or so!" This last was ever a source of wonderment. In his seven and one-half months of ownership, Peter had "done his business" only twice.

Timothy found himself especially contemptuous of Uncle George, and from this contempt came forth pleasant thoughts of torture, something as unsubtle as wrapping Peter directly around Uncle George's neck, the latter bug-eyed, mouth gaping and closing like a fish in its death throes. This fantasy gave birth to an idea more subtle and realistic. Timothy was quite struck with its perfection and simplicity.

Why not arrange an accidental meeting between Uncle George and Peter? Such a meeting would have to happen once only. It would be a huge risk. If Uncle George were not sporting enough to croak when urged to, then Timothy would be disinherited and possibly prosecuted. Timothy's was not the kind of mind that goes with anything like lightning speed from problem to possible solutions, but a simple plan did emerge rather quickly and without much effort; his murderous plot was formulated while executing his mundane floor duties as an Ames Assistant Manager.

Used to the confines of his terrarium, the African Royal Python, also known as the Ball Python because of the position they habitually roll themselves into, appeared uncertain

of what to do with his unaccustomed freedom. The creature's thick five and one-half feet looked much more elongated on the plush, cream-colored carpeting of George Fling's generically suburban home to which Timothy had a key. He snapped out of his usual coiled stance and gently zig-zagged across the room, his handsome brown-spotted design an impressive relief figure against the subtle carpeting. His instinct, unfortunately from Timothy's point of view, would be to seek out a shadowy, inconspicuous corner and hide out there indefinitely. Timothy reflected, not for the first time, on how the evil snake stereotype would be more suited for this assignment. The evil snake stereotype would swing on the chandelier, only to drop hissing with perfect timing, vampire fangs poised directly over the victim's juicy throat. Pity. Pythons are timid creatures; they have no fangs and kill only when and what they eat. Still, Timothy was heady with confidence that just the sight of his precious Peter would be enough for old George's ticker.

The intended victim was due at any minute from his weekly genealogy meeting at the public library. Timothy's heart was beating so wildly that it occurred to him what a dreadful irony it would be if he should keel over dead rather than Uncle George.

Timothy's plan consisted of his hiding in the closet until Uncle George and Peter became informally introduced. The former was known to keep nitroglycerin tablets in his medicine cabinet. These were now at the bottom of Timothy's pants pocket, to be kept from his uncle should he come lunging after them.

Twice now he had gathered up his mass of snake, preventing him from slipping under the sofa. "You won't be able to scare anybody to death that way," he cooed. Timothy enjoyed his conversations with his reptile, despite knowing that snakes have no ears.

Uncle George had arrived. There was the unmistakable sound of his spiteful little economy car in the driveway. As the car door slammed and the crunch of plodding, sensible shoes was heard on gravel, a frantic Timothy with his writhing bundle (Peter sensed his master's uneasiness) stood in the middle of the living room, unable for the moment to take decisive action. Desperation breaking his inertia, Timothy quickly spread Peter across the back of the sofa and scrambled madly down the hall to his vantage point in the closet.

He waited as Uncle George stood outside fiddling with his keys. Even from the closet he could tell that dear Uncle's breathing was labored. The door was opened, and the harsh sounds of Uncle George's breathing came in with him. Timothy's excitement peaked when he noticed his python tentatively attempt to negotiate the wall above the sofa, not three feet from his victim. "But not really a victim, because this isn't really murder," Timothy litanized feverishly.

Later, it would seem to Timothy that the moment when Uncle George turned and confronted Peter, whose flicking, forked tongue almost reached his nose, was suspended in time; he should have taken a picture. With what grace did the terrorized man clutch and claw at his chest, his whole gray face frozen in ridiculous, wide-opened surprise. With what grace did Uncle George, without even a chance of taking a breath, catapult dead to the sofa. "And with what grace," Timothy later reflected fondly, "did my darling Peter maneuver himself over the corpse and disappear under the sofa." Still in the closet savoring his victory, Timothy remembered a hilarious joke: A crocodile on the witness stand says to the prosecuting attorney, "Of course I did it in cold blood—I'm a reptile!"

Timothy had three days of glowing complacency, inheritance, divorce and slender-women fantasies before two police officers arrived at his mobile home with unsettling questions.

Tangible evidence had been found and later analyzed. Death by natural causes was now being questioned.

His dear python, Peter, who had not bothered his master with a nasty bowel movement for almost three months, had left a sizable dropping under Uncle George's sofa. ▪

Contributors

Karen Ann Bay is a senior English major and Spanish minor at Brandeis University in Massachusetts. Because she loves her sister, she disregards her paranoid phobia about submitting her work and sends this poem. It is her first publication in the entire universe.

Jessica Bay is a third-year Physical Therapy student with an interest in art. Her major keeps her very busy with both research and course work. In addition, she works as a Physics laboratory assistant. In her precious spare time, she draws silly pictures for her very demanding Physics instructor.

William H. Beardsley holds a BA from Earlham College and a PhD from Johns Hopkins University. He completed graduate course work for his Masters at the University of East Africa and has also studied at Harvard and McGill Universities. His articles appeared in such publications as *The Journal of Forestry*, *Yankee Magazine*, and the *Journal of the Canadian Pulp & Paper Association*. He also has an unpublished manuscript, *Sheep Boy*, a children's historical novel of the War of 1812. Dr. Beardsley is President of Husson College and resides in Bangor.

Lillian Begin grew up in Lewiston and attended St. Peter's parochial school and St. Dominic High School. Between 1978 and 1980, she was a part-time religious education teacher at John Bapst High School. Over the years, she has been involved in different groups at her church and has taught the faith to both young people and adults. She is the mother of three grown children and has four grandchildren. She speaks and writes French fluently. Lillian is the Executive Adminis-

trative Assistant to President Beardsley at Husson College and resides in Brewer with her husband, Roger.

Stefanie Bellerive I grew up in Webster, Massachusetts. I started to write poetry as a junior in high school for my Literature and Myth class. Ever since then I have been hooked!

Chris Birmingham is a junior Business major.

Jami Bradshaw, the niece of Science and Humanities Dean Jim Kenny, is an artist and writer living in Glenburn.

Jeremy Brown is nineteen years old and is a full-time student at NESCOM. He is majoring in Multimedia and is in the process of writing several novels in the fantasy/sci-fi genre. An avid outdoorsman, Jeremy has been hunting since he was ten years old and went along with his father for many years before that. Jeremy also has a love for fishing.

Lisa Caruso's hobbies include ceramics, photographing scenic landscapes, traveling, and reading. She is currently pursuing a Masters degree in Business at Husson College.

Nicole M. Chase I am a freshman majoring in Executive Administration with a concentration in the medical field. I was raised in Burnham and graduated from Maine Central Institute in 1995. For me, my family is one of the few constant things in my life, and I know that no matter what happens, they'll always be there.

A lover of literature, **Susmita Chatterjee** holds a Masters in Philosophy and PhD in Regional Economics from Presidency College in Calcutta, India. She believes in the pursuit of excellence, the good, and the beautiful.

A member of the Creative Photographic Arts Center, **Lori Ann Crossley** has a BS in Social Work from USM and is pursuing a degree in photography from UMA. She has taken workshops and courses in ceramics at SALT and the Anderson Ranch in Colorado, but photography is her first love.

Galen Davis lives on a sheep farm in Blue Hill with her husband, English instructor Tom Batt, and their son Finn.

Rick Doyle is an ICLS instructor and teaches writing in the English Department. He lives in Bangor with his wife and two sons. His poems have been published in several journals, including *Puckerbrush Review*, *Chicago Literary Review*, and *Kennebec: A Portfolio of Maine Writing*.

James Dull I teach physics and mathematics at Husson. In my spare time, my children and I make up stories.

Mary Dumont is a freshman Physical Therapy major from Auburn.

A former python owner, **Ann Fellows** teaches English at Husson and Education at UMO. A native of Maine, she appreciates irony and hopes readers do, too.

Joe Flynn is from southern California but has lived in Auburn since 1985. He's been an amateur photographer for years, trying to take better pictures through trial and error. He's very excited about having such a tremendous resource as the Creative Photographic Arts Center close enough to his work that he can take classes to learn the craft of making fine images.

Amanda Foye I'm in the fifth grade, I love science, I love scary movies, and of course I love writing!

Amanda Gerrish I graduated from Mattanawcook Academy in 1992 and will graduate from Husson College, hopefully, in 1999. I have a wonderful husband, a great son, and five unique cats who inspired me to write "Fat Cat." They all sleep in the sun or on my waterbed (which they think is theirs). When they are not sleeping they are eating. I actually do have a cat that disconnects the phone. If the phone rings, he will attack it and usually ends up disconnecting the person on the other end.

Linda Gover's high school career began in Great Falls, Montana. After my freshman year, my family and I returned to Caribou. I am now a freshman Physical Therapy major.

Bethany Harrington I am originally from Chelsea but graduated from Foxcroft Academy in Dover-Foxcroft. I am 18 and a freshman at Husson College majoring in Business Administration. I love sports, music, traveling, dancing and spending time with my friends.

Julianna Herrick is a freshman majoring in Paralegal Studies.

Matthew Hunt I'm a NESCOM student, focusing on audio engineering. I grew up in Waldoboro. I love to write songs and poems and hope to someday have my own Christian record label and recording studio. The poem "Sweet Refrain" is dedicated to my beautiful fiancee, Marion Meservey, for being the best friend I could ever ask for, my sweet refrain.

A Pennsylvania coalcracker by birth, longtime ICLS instructor and Red Sox fan **Robert N. Juckett** came to Maine in 1977 and has been known to shovel snow on occasion.

J.T. Kenny is Interim Dean of Science and Humanities at Husson College. Prior to coming to Bangor, he served as Vice Chancellor of Research and Development at Auburn University/Montgomery, where he supervised the work of seven of Auburn's organized research units and a university-affiliated research park, the Alabama TechnaCenter. While at Auburn, he also served as executive director of the Montgomery Area Community Health Science Institute. His non-academic interests includes writing, fly fishing, camping, and idle chatter.

Thomas Kessenich I am the spouse of one of Husson's stellar Nursing faculty. I'm a CED student majoring in MIS. In addition to working full-time and taking classes at Husson, I am second in command for the Coast Guard Auxiliary covering the coast of Maine from Port Clyde to Eastport. Besides strong interests in boating safety and search and rescue, I enjoy salt-water fishing, photography, and computers.

Robin Larochelle's hometown is Poland Springs. Her interests include photography, travel, antiques, and gardening. She is a student at the Creative Photographic Arts Center.

Shawn McKenna is a freshman who loves Edgar Allan Poe.

Eleody Mills is a Business major. Most of her writings have been inspired by the ocean geography that surrounds her home town, Lubec. She currently resides in Bangor with her fiance, Jeff.

Marni Morin I grew up in Bath, currently live in Brunswick, and have been married for three years. I graduated from USM with a BA in History. I am the Member Services Manager at BIW Five County Credit Union. I've always been interested in photography and finally decided to pursue it by enrolling in the photography program at UMA. Black and White Photography 101 was my first class. I enjoyed it and look forward to future classes.

Raised on a dairy farm in Alaska (no, he never saw an igloo but did have a pet wolf), ICLS instructor **Robert Nichols** has dabbled lifelong in several creative arts.

Kevin O'Toole, from Enfield, Connecticut, is a first-year Nursing student.

Elizabeth Ramirez I received a BA from Hawaii Pacific University and an MA from Indiana University both in East Asian Studies. I have lived and traveled in Europe, Hawaii, and Asia; with the longest period of time—five years—in Japan.

Christopher Randall I am a finance major who has transferred here from various colleges throughout the state. After being in and out of college life for nine years, I am now a junior. I began writing poetry in 1989 as a way to make sense of my thoughts; it was also a way for me to easily look at things with different eyes.

Thomas Rice is a self-taught musician and songwriter whose travels have led him from New York to Florida and back again. In and out of bands, both recording and managing, Tom has two LPs to his credit as well as a publishing contract.

Robin Roberts In 1989 I was diagnosed with rheumatoid arthritis, which put a great strain on my marriage. I divorced in 1991, and by 1994 I was unable to work. The way that I saw life, sitting idle was not productive, so in 1995 I applied to Husson College. I am presently a junior in the Computer Information Systems program, President of the Association of Information Technology Professionals, and Interim Secretary to the Husson College Student Government.

Heidi Shields lives in Belfast with her husband, Dr. Jim Dull, an assistant professor of Physics at Husson, and their two children, Josh and Edie. She works full time at the Walker Health Center in Liberty, as a family practitioner.

Ernie Steele is an alumnus of Husson.

Teresa Steele is a professor and director of the Advanced Practice Psychiatric Nursing Program. She was one of the three faculty members to visit Aomori, Japan, in January, 1998. She found that words definitely have differing meanings: As she gave a toast, the Japanese initially searched for a piece of toast rather than accept the "kanpai" as offered.

Boubacar Thiam is an ICLS student who came to Husson to study sports management, because he loves sports. He speaks French, English and Wolof, a Senegalese language. His parents are from Senegal, and his family has lived in many different countries, most recently in Japan.

Marcia Towle, age 19, is from Bangor. She is an Executive Administration major.

Nancy Traiser of the Creative Photographic Arts Center, is originally from Boston and now lives in Freeport. She re-

cently retired from Proctor and Gamble, where she worked as a Human Resource Manager, and is starting a new career as a photographer.

Gayle Walden is a writer and a friend of Husson College living in Montgomery, Alabama, where she serves as Editor in the Office of University Relations at Auburn University. Among her interests are creative writing and amateur astronomy.

Al Weymouth taught in the English Department of Husson College for 33 years and served a year in the administration before retiring in 1996. Previously, he taught in two secondary schools: Bar Harbor High School and Crosby High School in Belfast, where he now resides.

Robin Katherine Wilson saw her first Vermilion Flycatcher behind an abandoned barn in the Mojave Desert. When not playing the concertina, she teaches Microbiology, Cell Biology, and Nutrition at Husson College. Dr. Wilson earned a BS at CalTech and a PhD in genetics at Cornell University.

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