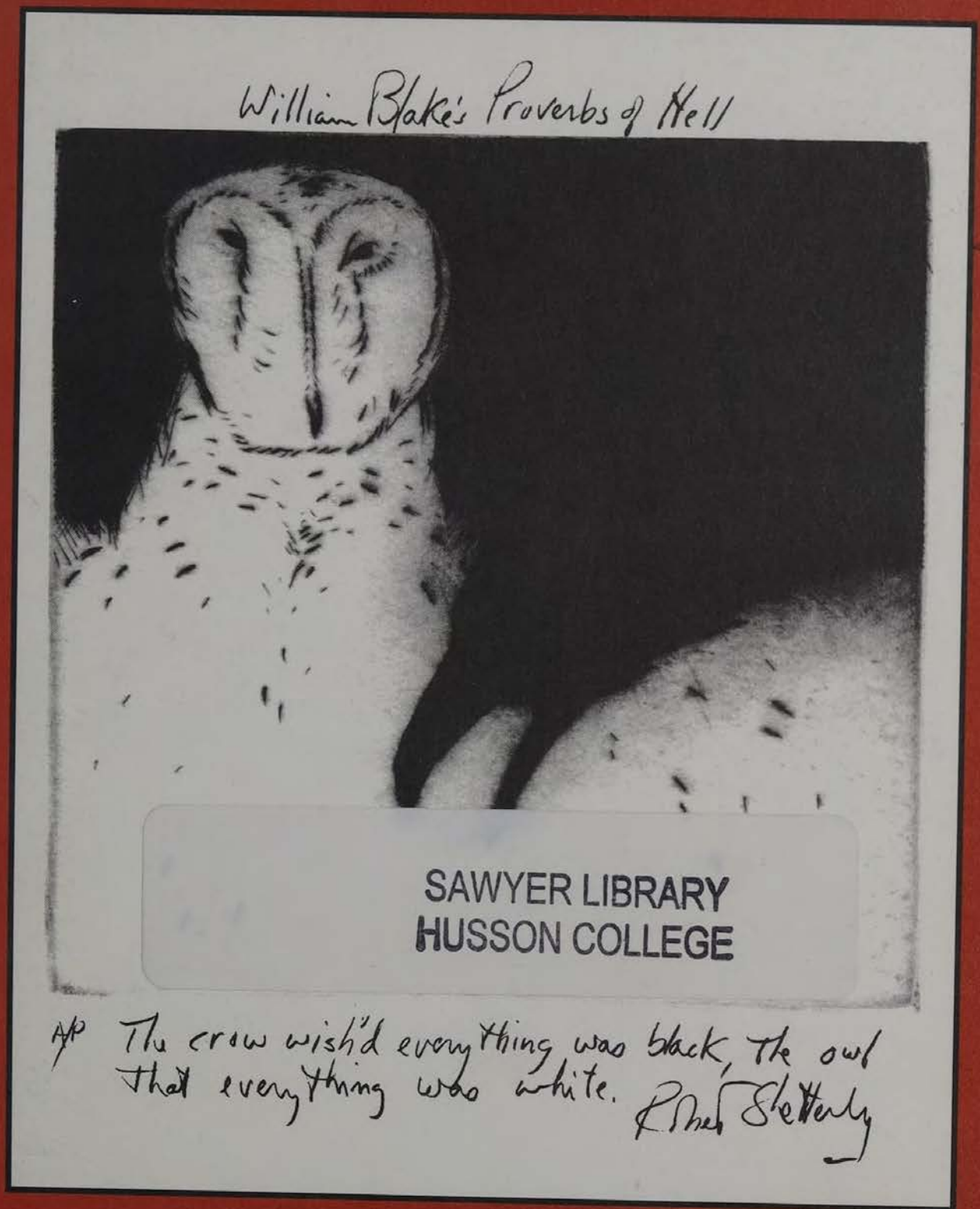
CROSSCUT



Introduction by Kate Barnes, Poet Laureate of Maine

CROSSCUT

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Introduction

Here we are with the *Crosscut* of 1999, a handsome, tempting magazine, just the right size to fit well into the reader's hand. Its temptingness is no empty promise; it is full of seriously good writing. As I read it over, enjoying the lively, inviting, and strongly felt work in it, I can't help thinking about what it means to be a writer.

"Writers," said the poet Archibald MacLeish, "if they are worthy of that jealous designation, write to give reality to their experience." I agree, but I don't think that's the whole story. I think that when we're writing, our intention, like the Straits of the Bosphorus, has two different currents flowing through it in opposite directions, one inward and one outward—and that both are necessary. The first is the current of introspection MacLeish spoke of, the looking into our own hearts and getting what we find there into words. The second, outward current is the wish to talk to other people, to be read or heard, to set down our thoughts in a way that will interest someone else.

When I was a child, my parents were always busy earning their living by writing, which encouraged them not to forget about keeping it interesting. They didn't write *just* for money; they were both addicted to the act of writing itself. My father, safely immured in an attic in those early days of small children, suffered the trials of all perfectionists as he slowly worked out his careful and impassioned books on nature, creating prose in much the same way that other people create poetry. My mother hadn't the time for that. She sat down every morning at her desk in a corner of the busy living room, opened her notebook, and gathered herself together like a cat about to jump up on a counter. Then off she went, her hand rushing back and forth across the pages for the next few hours, writing novels, or books for young people, almost as fast as her pen could go.

Growing up in their household, I could see that, in spite of the pain of the stoppages my father sometimes suffered, they both loved the way they lived. "Writing is a dog's life," said Flaubert in a letter, "but the only life worth living." My parents would have agreed. "All writers are vain, selfish, and lazy," wrote George Orwell, "and at the very bottom of their motives there lies a mystery." Don't you like that remark? As I read it, I'm filled with happiness, not only because we're all so funny, but also because something about us remains mysterious, and we can still, in our writing, tap into a world which stays secret even from ourselves. That secret world strengthens us; no matter how sad we may be, it's heartening to write. As Elias Canetti put it, "Everything one records contains a grain of hope, no matter how deeply it may come from despair." The inevitable outflow of our feelings as we write is like the flow of unresisting water—or of a human life—in Leon Raikes's beautiful poem in this issue. He tells us to be aware of this flowing water: "I want you to notice," he says, "it *sings*."

Marianne Moore once said that "Poetry is all nouns and verbs." I've written a few nouns and verbs about my parents in the act of writing; opposite are some of them from a book called *Where the Deer Were* that came out with David Godine, Inc., in 1994.

—*Kate Barnes*

At Home

My mother, that feast of light, has always sat down,
composed herself, and written poetry, hardly
reworking any, just the way she used to
tell us that Chinese painters painted; first they
sat for days on the hillside watching the rabbits,
then they went home, they set out ink and paper,
meditated; and only then picked up their brushes
to catch the lift of a rabbit in mid-hop.

"If it didn't come out I would throw it away."
Oh, she
is still a bird that fills a bush with singing.
The way that she touches her tea cup, the look she gives you
as you sit across from her, it is all a kind
of essential music.

I also remember my father
alone at the dining-room table, the ink bottle safe
in a bowl, his orange-red fountain pen in his big
hand. The hand moved slowly back and forth
and the floor below was white with sheets of paper
each carrying a rejected phrase or two
as he struggled all morning to finish just one sentence—
like a smith hammering thick and glowing iron,
like Jacob wrestling with the astonishing angel.

Table of Contents

Nancy Nichols	Things I've Never Heard	1
Rick Doyle	Wolf Trees	2
	Finishing the Roof	3
Courtney Rockwell	The Happy Ending	4
Lucas Martin	(Photograph)	5
Robert N. Juckett	Paris, Bermuda, and a House on the Coast	6
Eugene Tarbox	gazing at the/ripening wounds	15
Shawn McKenna	Passion	16
Lucas Martin	(Watercolor)	17
Marie C. Juckett	Snow Dancing	18
	Wildfire	19
Rene Collins	Transformation	20
Frank Coviello	Confinements	23
Gayle Walden	You talk...	24
	Code	24
Bob Nichols	Ghosts	25
	The Puzzling Pair	25
J.T. Kenny	The Change (an excerpt)	26
Brenda Hart	(Photograph)	31
Karen Martin	Unwilling Witness	32
	Traffic Jam	33
Thomas McCoy	Oedipus Sends Regrets	34
Robin Roberts	Subduction	36
Candace Kuchinski	(Photograph)	37
Linda L. Labin	Miss Shun's Statement	38
Gina O'Brien	Perfection	40
	Lair of the Dragoness	41
Lyn-mara Pomales	Bad Spots	42
Elizabeth Ramirez	Forgotten Memory	43

Rick Doyle	Oyster Stew Supper to Follow	44
Lucas Martin	(Watercolor)	59
Candace Kuchinski	(Photograph)	60
Michael Mindera	(Photograph)	61
Tiffany Teske	(Photograph)	62
Francesca DeSanctis	(Photograph)	63
Scott Anttila	(Photograph)	64
Jon Connolly	Lessons from the Savannah	65
Cameron Webb	My Starter Pro Basketball Hoop	66
Kara Anne Schreiber	Springtime	68
	Glob	68
J.W. Baker	Once	69
Judith Connolly	Buddy	70
Nikolas Kristophe	Is It You?	72
Michael Mindera	(Photograph)	73
Robert MacCallum	The Cafe	74
Manuela Teles Menezes	*Amar* (Love)	75
Ernie Steele	Managing *Your* Money	76
	(Photograph)	77
Jeremy Brown	The Intruder	78
Susmita Chatterjee	The Waves	82
Kevin Casey	Poaching	84
Lucas Martin	(Photograph)	89
Leon Raikes	Your Gestures	90
	Wu Wei	92
Esther Rauch	After the Fall	94
	Waiting	95
J.W. Baker	The Tricycle	96
Michael Mindera	(Photograph)	108
Contributors		109

The simplest experience—a single note struck upon the piano—would not be what it is to us but for its relation by contrast or comparison with other experiences.

—From the article "Relativity Of Knowledge" by Henry Sturt, in the 11th edition of the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 1910.

Nancy Nichols

Things I've Never Heard

There are the more obvious things we all agree upon:
one hand clapping and the tree that crashes to the floor
of an unpeopled wood. But the list goes on. For instance,

a dissertation on the likelihood of love between
a sparrow and a wren. A late-night dedication going out
from a man named TJ to the angel-soft hairs
of his girlfriend's upper lip. The sweet

confessions of an ex-bank teller so charmed
by the robber that she willingly handed over
the bulging canvas bags and then (in what
she later would call her most uncareful
moment) jumped into his arms like a bride
to impulse and desire.

The cracking of a single nut in the winter den
of a squirrel and his mate. The casual, melodic whistle
of a mother whose only child climbs the tallest
lodge-pole pine. The creak and groan of the
prison gate as it swings wide and the watchman
releases the murderers, con men and thieves
into the unguarded night.

But maybe to hear these things would require
stillness, a pause in the whirring of noisy stars that even now
crown our heads in riotous halos of fire.
We would need to sit, our hands on our knees,
in the great soft chairs of our inner selves, and tilt
our heads, favoring the sky with our left ears, the earth
with our right, and be willing, simply, to wait.

Rick Doyle

Two Poems

Wolf Trees

He couldn't look after himself, in the end,
And had to depend on his daughter.
She took care of him, oh, they'd guess! But
Rumor went dry, when she came back from out West.
The fact remained—if it was fact—
That she'd doctored the old man's tonic.

She came back, let go the land he'd left her.
The land he'd come to take his farm from:
Uncongenial, unforgetting land
Where he'd made good, made stubborn as stumps,
A little more stubborn for each day allotted
To the dreamless sleep that labor can be
And to dreaming of stones he'd worked loose
That day and rolled to make walls—
Hands stiff, still curved to fit them in sleep.

Now frost has rolled them all apart again.
Frost and wolves grown up where walls once ran.
Ironmonger-hearted ogres, conundrums to fell,
The wolves rock on roots that lift a shield of earth,
When the wind rocks even them. Damaged young
By grazing, spared with orchard all but barren
When the mountainside was sold and cleared again,
Sawlogs ruined leaning after years of sun,
Their canopies shelter stunted beech whips
Hardly worth the work it takes to root them out.

Finishing The Roof

You who read these pages, who
are said to live in New England...

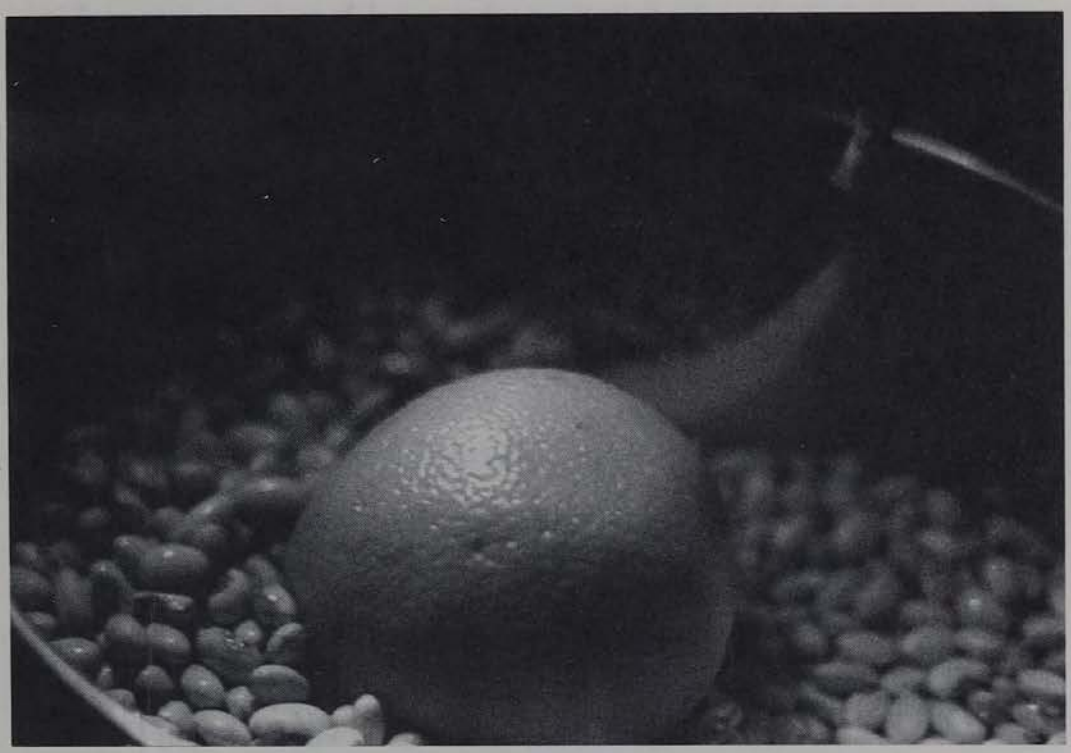
You'll know it when your work is done,
Don't worry about your neighbor.
Straighten your aching back, put tools down,
Claw loose apron-strings with hands cramped by labor:
Over the water comes Winter walking.
No matter that you have only started, cold
Brings a wind to set the woods rocking,
The slate lake is roughened, the slant wharf rolled,

You work to keep warm, work without talking,
Heads down, as if sleet might not find a face;
While the boards handed up aren't too slick to hold
You perch on purlins to nail each in place,
Then stand—once you've fed the fire fat with trim—
Your hands to the stove, snow quieted in.

Courtney Rockwell

The Happy Ending

Boys are jerks—
They waltz into your life,
And think they are "all that."
Little do they know...
We'd be better off without them.
They break your heart,
And make you cry.
Why should we have to suffer
Because of their ignorance?
Some think they're better
Than everyone else—
They look down on us
With an air of superiority,
Thinking they'll get far in the world.
I hope he falls on his face,
And ends up living at home
With Mommy and Daddy.



—Lucas Martin

Robert N. Juckett

Paris, Bermuda, and a House on the Coast

I will never admit to competition with my sisters. But when I hung up the phone after talking to my sister Nellie the other day I distinctly felt that she, and her two sisters for that matter, had gone one up on me. And that's not right.

Perhaps I should say that they went *three* up on me; it would be more accurate. Three sisters, three strikes, I'm out. I hate that. I hate it when I'm in a good mood and then suddenly I'm not. I get mad at the thing that flipped me over. I don't like to be mad.

About 8 o'clock last night we'd been watching a nice snowfall since before dinner. My wife had the night off and was in the living room waiting for me to light a fire in the fireplace. One of the nicer things about marriage is that when I feel bad I can usually get over it by talking to Carol. It's something she taught me. Just talk it out. You'll feel better.

She was standing by the big bay window picking dead leaves from the geraniums we try to preserve there. I knew she'd overheard some of the phone conversation. "So, that was Nellie, was it?"

"Oh, yeah." I stood next to her and glanced out at snow falling slowly through the streetlamp's glow. "Must be cold out. Small flakes. Steady."

"You'll have to shovel in the morning. What's wrong?"

"Why don't you sit down and I'll get the fire started," I said.

She settled into her spot on the floor next to the coffee table where she could lean back against the couch, do her paperwork, and feel the warmth from the fireplace. "I'm payin' bills tonight," she said and moved her legs to give me

some room in front of the hearth. "But I'm gonna have to cook the books."

"That's why I married you; you're a good cook."

"So what did Nellie say?"

"Well, the first thing she said was thank you for Sean's birthday gift."

"I hope he liked it." She had arranged a pile of bills, the checkbook, and her red-covered budget notebook within reach on the table.

"She said he did. And then she started telling me the stuff she really wanted to pass on." I had newspaper and some nice, narrow-split, cedar kindling in the wood box. I started clearing away ashes from the previous fire and laying the cedar on the cast-iron grill. "Seems my mother's friend, Mary Stahl, who's a travel agent, came across a real deal on three nights in Paris, airfare and hotel for three hundred and seventy-five dollars per person."

"And your mother . . ."

"In typical fashion immediately reserved four seats for herself and the three girls."

"Your mother and her daughters."

"Yep. Quick quick find someone to watch the kids, pack a bag, we're goin' to Paris."

"And your sisters . . ."

"Couldn't say no. I must admit it's a deal."

"Well," Carol sat back clicking her pen. "Isn't that something. How come she didn't ask you?"

"Or you? Must be a mother-daughter thing. Anyway, they live in Philly. We live in Maine. I'm not on the first team."

"You're the oldest."

"Yeah, and I'm the only one who speaks French or has ever been to Paris."

"You're the wrong sex."

I crumpled newspaper, stuffed it in under the andirons,

and put a match to it. Almost immediately the cedar pieces started to crackle. "Ignition."

I was in Paris when I was young. Stopped off on my way back to the Congo bush to do a third year in the Peace Corps. Spent a week in a Rue des Ecoles, two-star bathroom down the hall but great croissants, baguettes, and coffee every morning. The whole thing was a tragedy. First off, somewhere along the Philly-to-New York-to-London-to-Paris route, my brand new, four-hundred-dollar Gibson acoustic was lost. Stolen probably. Four cities, three airlines, a missed flight and reschedule in London, I should have known better. I was lucky to get any baggage at all when I finally dragged off the plane at Charles de Gaulle four hours late and nervous as hell.

They'd informed me in Philly that I'd have to book my flight to Kinshasa when I got to Paris. So I walked from Lost Baggage to the Air France reservations desk and told the blonde I'd like to fly to The Congo in a week.

"That would be . . ?" she asked.

"August 28th."

"Oh, impossible, monsieur. All the flights to Africa are filled."

"But I am a teacher. I have a deadline. When can I go?"

"Um . . . let me see . . . September seventh."

School started on September first. I had to get out on the 28th. It would take me three days to get from Kinshasa to Bukavu, if everything went smoothly. Things have never gone smoothly in central Africa. I got a funny tingling in my stomach. "And how about Standby?"

"On the 28th?"

"Oui, oui."

"Okay . . . you are Number 72 on the Standby list."

Oh dear Lord, I was hip-deep in it now. Every airline that flew from Paris to Kinshasa gave me the same line. I could only go Standby. That uncertainty took much of the pleasure out of Paris.

My third goof was that I went alone. I had no one to talk to when I saw the Eiffel Tower or the Mona Lisa. I didn't say more than a half dozen words to anyone for a week. By some miracle I was the next person in line on August 28th when the Standby clearance came up on Air France's computer. I got the last seat.

"I think we're gonna have to pay it in installments," Carol said.

"What's that?" I blinked at her and reached for some more wood. The cedar was down to red coals.

"The car insurance."

"On the Jeep?"

"Yeah."

"Okay . . . cook it up." I placed a couple good-sized pieces of maple on the fire and sat back. The cat walked behind me, rubbing, begging a scratch. But I'm not a cat man.

"It's definitely a mother-daughter thing," I said to the flames. "Anyway, where would we get 375? Or 750?"

"We wouldn't. Do you *need* cable TV?"

"Yes." I stretched out my legs and forced myself to look at her and dissipate the memories of Paris that were fogging my concentration. "But that ain't all. The good news continues."

"I am the light and the way."

"Then she hits me with the next zinger."

"She was all prepped for this call, wasn't she?"

"Duke is taking her and the kids and my mother to Bermuda for a week in May."

Carol looked up. "No! That's our place!"

"They love it so much."

"Oh shit," she looked down. "Don't your sisters ever do anything besides go on vacations?"

"They're staying at the Hamilton Princess."

"That just goes to show you," she said. "All the nice

places to stay in Bermuda where kids can walk to the beach and they stay in the old colonial hotel downtown. It's so stupid."

"Remember the first time we went to Bermuda?" I asked. "About six months before we got married. And we didn't tell anyone we'd gone. Remember?"

"Like I could forget after what happened."

"We never should have mentioned Bermuda to them at all."

"I didn't want to."

"Now they've wrecked it for us."

"All the places they could afford to go and they have to choose the one place we call ours. They didn't wreck it; they stole it."

We were in the taxi on our way to Monroe Beach. The road was narrow and overhung with hibiscus and oleander in bloom. "Oh, Benny, this is so beautiful. This is so perfect." It was her first time outside the United States. She leaned over and kissed me on the cheek and squeezed my arm. "I love it!"

Monroe Beach was a golf resort with housekeeping cottages and a small, private beach on the south shore. We hadn't come to play golf. We just wanted to see the sights. Tourists can't rent cars in Bermuda. The roads are too narrow and twisty and since most of the visitors are Americans the British cars and left-side driving would be chaotic. So we picked up a little two-seater moped and put-putted all over the island to see the caverns and the perfume factory and the home of rum swizzles. I did the driving and Carol held onto my waist and shouted in my ear, "Look at that! Look over there!" We had a good time.

Of course she got the urge to drive the scooter herself, so she took it on a test run one morning down along the paved paths that led through the Port Royal links. She was back in five minutes. "Hop on!"

"I don't know. The heavier person should be in front."

"We'll just go down to the main road. Then you can drive in the traffic."

That sounded okay to me.

She regained consciousness in the ambulance, but I couldn't really talk to her. Later on in the hospital she was alert but could only nod and groan in response to anything I or the nurses said. I caught the doctor at the nurses' station the next morning.

"I'll give her a Fit to Fly discharge," he said. "We see this all the time in Bermuda. The locals call it road rash."

It was worse than a rash. She had laid open her cheek so it looked like raw hamburger. She broke the bone around her eye, the optical orbit, I think; cracked her cheekbone, the zygomatic process; dislocated her jaw, snapped off one of her front teeth, punctured her thigh, and broke a finger. After that I had no choice but to marry her.

"We're not gonna make it. I can see it coming," Carol licked an envelope and added it to her pile of paid bills.

"What's the problem?"

"Not enough money is the problem. I got all these paid but we need oil next week and I don't know where that's gonna come from. I already have my next check spent."

"Spending it before you get it, huh?" I stood up and turned to the window.

"Just earmarking it. It's the same thing."

"It's coming down faster."

"So, they're going to Paris and Bermuda. Those girls don't even work. They're housewives."

"They married guys with big incomes."

"And I married you."

"Everybody makes mistakes. I'll put a big one on and it'll burn for a while."

"So that's it?"

"No, no. She said they made arrangements for this

summer." I carefully placed a log onto the bright hot flames.

"Oh no. Did they get that house again?"

"That mansion, you mean? Yeah. Perkins Cove. Twenty-seven hundred a week. They took it for two weeks."

"I'm not goin'." She looked down at her notebook. I waited. She didn't look up.

"We don't have to stay overnight. It sleeps fifteen, though. There's room. Just spend a Saturday. That'll satisfy my mother."

"I'm working that weekend. You go."

"I don't want to go alone."

"I'll be making premium OT. I can't afford to take the time."

"Well, we'll have to wait and see how things work out." The fire was too hot for me. I stepped back to the window.

A year ago my sisters found the house on the coast. It's a huge thing owned by a real estate guy who just rents it during the summer and closes it up in winter. Out at the end of a little peninsula, about a half dozen houses sit up on granite outcroppings with the black Atlantic crashing below. The one Nellie rented is the largest. There is a security gate to keep out the public. Each season they change the five-digit code that raises the bar.

Nellie, Duke, their three, Beryl, Jack, their three, Louise, her husband Cal, their two, and my mother. They arrive in a caravan of three cars with bicycles on top. We were waiting for them last year and I thought everything was going okay until I saw my mother and Carol alone in the kitchen. That's the traditional setting for my mother to start grilling my wife about me. Carol hates it but doesn't dare cut her short. Is he making any more money? Have you thought about having children? How long do you plan on living way up there? He's not drinking, is he? Don't you just despise this refrigerator?

They planned a big surf and turf dinner and when Carol

and I offered to get the lobsters and teach everyone how to cook them and get the meat out of them we were told "Oh no. Not whole lobsters. Just get the lobster meat." Lobsters go for $4.99 a pound, lobster meat for $22.00. I'll never forget Carol's eyes.

Perkins Cove is a nice little place. I checked out all the shops in half an hour. Expensive candy, Irish linens, a big seafood restaurant. Not enough parking. I don't know what the hell they all do there for two weeks. Just being on the coast in Maine, away from the New York-Philadelphia megalopolis, must be enough for them. It was different before Dad died. She lived for him then.

I could hear the city plow long before I saw it. The thing is so big, scraping the street shakes the whole neighborhood. The flashing amber lights appeared from around the corner. Rumble rumble, I watched it shove the snow from the street into a perfect mound across the end of our driveway.

"I hate that guy."

"Is it still coming down hard?" Carol was adding long stacks of numbers in her notebook.

"Like before. We got six inches now."

"It's supposed to go 'til morning, you know?"

I turned toward the fire. "Fine bed a' coals ya got there, girlie."

"It could use another piece."

"It's gettin' warm in here." I put another round onto the fire.

"So that's it, huh? Paris, Bermuda, and the big house. They're all set now."

"Doesn't it gall you?" I couldn't stand by the fire. I don't know how Carol can bear the heat.

"She just called to brag."

"Ya know, I think I'll go out and shovel now. That way it'll be easier in the morning when I do it again."

"Really? It's still snowing."

"That pile from the plow is heavy stuff. If they come around again I'll have a hell of a job tomorrow. I'll clear what's there now."

I took my parka from the closet and found my gloves on the shelf. My gum boots were by the door. When I was all bundled and ready to leave I looked out the entryway windows at the temperature gauge.

"It's twenty-four degrees."

"You got a hat?"

I looked out again. Snow swirled against the window glass. I couldn't wait to step into the cold. ❧

Eugene Tarbox

gazing at the
ripening wounds
left by the polished spurs
a cowboy cries

Shawn McKenna

Passion

What it is that brings me here
Brings me to this place
This place of Beauty
This place of Fear
This place that makes hearts race

What it is
I do not know
Nor do I care
To contemplate

What it is that keeps me here
Keeps me in this place
This place I Love
This place I Hate
This place of no escape

What it is
I can not change
Nor do I wish
To dissipate



—Lucas Martin

Marie C. Juckett

Two Poems

Snow Dancing

My thoughts are white

I move
through
fresh, soft snow
beneath
my
feet
I run
I step
carefully
so as not to fall
and
break my thoughts
or
myself

Wildfire

I opened the door.
A room full of eyes looked toward me
But
from far across
it was your (eyes) blazing
that kissed me.
I didn't have to see your mouth
to know you were smiling
A smoky mixture of faces and hissing
so
much
noise
But it was your music I heard
when you touched me
it burned.

Rene Collins

Transformation

The United States Association of Track and Field National Master Championship was held at the University of Maine this summer, and the final day of the event arrived with bright sunshine and dry air. A friend and I planned to run with some of the Sunday morning "regulars" through UMaine trails, then stay to watch an event or two.

While there, we heard many stories. For instance, there was the 20K racewalker who asked for help counting his laps. He said he had Alzheimer's disease and could not be reliable or accurate in competition. We smiled when we heard he did a little dance, which of course disqualified him, as he passed the judges' stand. He, however, had an invigorating experience that day; his smile told all! As well, we witnessed fashion statements in running attire among both men and women. One elderly gentleman, who was slight in stature, wore a brown leather belt to hold up his bright yellow running shorts.

As the morning progressed, my friend and I watched the "I have to get home" clock. We talked of leaving, but it always came back to the same statement, "We'll just watch one more." Before we knew it, four hours had passed and the women (whose events took place before those of the men's) were competing in the 200-yard dash. Warming up in front of us, the women practiced coming out of "blocks," which are devices that act as supports to help sprinters propel forward quickly at the beginning of the race.

Suddenly, we became aware of an approaching couple. He was an old man who had a rounded curve to his upper back, and he walked leaning on the arm of his companion. He took short steps as he walked slowly with her, and it was as if he needed to hold his head erect to see his path. She,

on the other hand, was much younger: brisk and directive. He responded well to her direction and followed her instructions without question: "Sit here" (on the track); "Take those pants off" (she took off his sweats as she had directed him to do); "Change your shoes" (she took off his runners and put spikes on his feet). His running "socks" were white elastic stockings that ended just below his knees, but they did not camouflage the varicose veins winding their way throughout his legs. We chuckled at how inconsistent this was with our image of runners. As his companion uttered the command, "Now get up," she literally pulled him from the track's surface. He appeared to expend little effort other than to follow her directions. Then IT happened....

I have been in the helping profession for many years and am well aware of the impact that physical limitations have on life in general, and on athletics in particular, but I was not prepared for what I saw next. This man, whom I later learned was 90 years old, was transformed before my eyes. Once standing, he started his warm-up; within ten steps he was jogging, then running down the track. His body was nearly erect; his arms, which moments earlier were no more than appendages by which she had lifted him from his sitting position, were pumping his body into motion. His eyes reflected the focus of his mind and his soul. Somewhere inside, there was memory of the young athlete he had been. This man, this athlete, was running. He was transformed. I know now that I fell in love at first sight with this man. He had what I admire. and seek—a life of enjoyment because my body can move, because I can feel the serenity and excitement of the sun and wind on my face, and because I can know the thrill of participating in competition. He had it at 90 years old!!! Well, 90 years old chronologically, but he was a young man in spirit. Yes, I was in love.

If only the story could end here. It does not. Life has been described as what happens after you've made other

plans. Life happened that July day. As this special man completed his warm-up, jogging back to his companion, he continued to run strongly and with focus. In fact, he was so focused that he did not see the blocks left behind by a runner. He tripped and fell down. He was the old man again and he lay helpless on the track. He needed assistance from two individuals as he tried to walk to a chair.

The transformed man could not participate in competition that day. I don't think I can apply the Red Sox slogan—"Wait until next year!"—to him. Will there be a next year for him? If there is, will he be able to train, to travel and to compete?

Or, maybe...maybe my questions are my own anxieties imposed on this man whose spirit has probably taken him from one adversity to another throughout his 90 years of living. I am regretful that I didn't tell him how profoundly affected I was by him. I had witnessed something sacred—the transformation of an old man into an athlete. I was fulfilled and changed by what he offered. I'm grateful to him for this lesson. ❧

Frank Coviello

Confinements

Silently I stood gazing into the tranquil stillness
Watching them
Playing, swimming, splashing water
When one of them came up to me
Face pressed against the glass
Staring intently
Returning my gaze

And I wondered: do they know the glass is their limit?
And I stared back, knowing
I had created that world for them
Made life for them as they know it.

As the water continued its sinuous dance
I noticed the rough edges of my work
Contrasted to the supple beauty of the fish themselves

I looked out my window into the twilight
Face pressed against the glass
And I wondered...

Gayle Walden

Two Poems

You talk...
I have heard the words a hundred times,
the same path leading to the same morass—
no need to follow now.
This is the last time we shall meet.
Do you not read the message of my eyes,
or in my silence hear the echo
of farewell?
You chatter on unknowingly,
and while you speak, I count
the faces of good-bye.

Code

I sit here, you there
Safe in our silences—
Still safe—
But words unspoken crowd the air
And hands betray us, eyes betray
The old cryptography of love.

Bob Nichols
Two Poems

Ghosts

I live
a haunted dream
among deceiving hosts,
substantial though they seem,
and they are all
my ghosts.

Just I
alone am real,
despite their fervent boasts.
Alone, I think and feel,
and they are all
my ghosts.

The Puzzling Pair

See over there,
that pair holding hands,
one brown-robed human
and one bear?

Can we presume that they're a couple,
or infer which one's the groom?

Can fingers comfortably blend
with hairy, padded claws,
or must their coupling end
unbearably?

J.T. Kenny

The Change

an excerpt from
Duckpuddle Road

Jenn slept in that Sunday morning so I fed the dogs, got myself breakfast and headed out for a walk. The sun was back and that was good. Pointing myself in its direction, I moved eastward toward the bay, down a winter-worn Duckpuddle Road. As I ambled along, my eyes scanned the moist ground. It was still cold, but the frozen hardness had gone, the road ruts softened. I could smell the earthy wetness. Crocuses would soon be pushing up, maybe they were already. I noticed trees, some maples. Sap was running, sticky-sweet water oozing from deep roots, up through wide boles to thin, hungry branches. You could almost hear it percolating. The treetops were budding, just the tops—an advent?

Moving around the bend, I passed under a white oak, the breath of a breeze swaying its tipsy upper branches. I looked up, way up, and saw little buds, red ones, on the tree's highest boughs. The scent of hardwood smoke came to me from down the road. I saw a light curl arise from Bill Henderson's chimney. I walked on. Bill was outside his place, down near the front end of his brown, damaged lawn with pick and shovel. He was dogging and digging around the culvert that ran under his driveway—an April task. He didn't notice me, or if he did just didn't feel the need to fuss about it.

"Morning, Bill."

"Mornin', Tunk." He set down the pick he had just used to break up the rocky soil near the mouth of the culvert. He got the long-handled shovel and began some deft spade-

work on the accumulated debris blocking the drain.

"Help ya...with what you're doin'?"

"Won't stop ya, if'n you've a mind. Break up that sludge upstream, if ya can," he said, pointing to the pick with a free finger. I obliged.

"How's the wife?"

"Oh...old hen's grumpy as evah, I guess." He paused, leaned on the shovel. He had on those colorless, heavy duty Dickies farmers sometimes wore. A red flannel shirt was buttoned right up to his beefy neck. I figured it must have been a tight fit. Did it hurt, I wondered?

"Your own missus back?"

"Yeah...she is," I said, sheepishly.

His question caught me off guard. How the hell did he know about Jenn being gone? Sure, she had left me for awhile, two weeks to be exact, but we had patched things up, were back together. I'd picked her up at her girlfriend's last night in Bangor. But how did he know...? How did people out in the country know anything, much less everything? How could they, almost without effort, learn their neighbor's innermost secrets, real private things?

In the awkward silence, mine, not Bill's, my neighbor removed the last few shovelfuls of dirt, rock and mud from the section I had just picked out. The standing water started its flow. The lower part of the front lawn began to drain, the muddy runoff heading down the roadside ditch, bound for the little brook that ran into Round Pond. Bill worked well and efficiently, but I could tell that he and his potbelly had been straining on the last few shovels full. His jowls were a purple-red, his sixty or so years showing after the sedation of a long winter. He looked in my direction, not at me, just in my direction,

"Heard ya get in last night."

"You were awake, I mean, uh, that late?"

"Nope."

I felt a little embarrassed, foolish. Bill may have felt vindicated, or something. I don't know, but I was suddenly glad I was now helping him with his culvert. It eased my mind some.

"Strange time o' year, ya know."

"Huh?" Had this been a statement or a question? Was I about to get nailed again? He moved slowly to the other end of the culvert, took a few more shovelsful out of the back end of the conduit, stopped, grabbed a big hanky out of his back pocket and blew his nose. Shoving the old thing back where it came from, he turned to me. "Did ya see the moose?"

"No, haven't seen any moose. Where was he?"

"Them."

"A pair?"

"Nope," he said, hefting his booted left foot up on the shank end of the shovel blade and resting his forearm on the tip of the long wooden handle. "Seven of 'em, a herd. They was in yer pasture 'round sun up. They was movin' toward Winfred's. Surprised you didn't see 'em. Of course, I don't expect you was up yet. No use you tryin' to poke around too early...what with you trampin' in as late as ya do."

I ignored the dig, but just couldn't swallow the "moose pack" story. "Bill, moose don't herd. Sure you weren't seeing deer?"

He just looked at me, snorted, went back to digging.

"I mean...how can moose? Just what did you see?"

"Like I said, moose, seven of 'em...in your pasture. Told ya it's a strange time of year."

"What were they doing?"

"What the hell do moose do? They was lookin' for food, somethin' to eat a tad more tasty than pine bark. Even a dummy with antlers knows green, growin' things are wantin' to push up through. They use their tines to open the ground."

I thought about it. He was probably right, though I had never before heard of moose travelling anywhere in a herd. The wintered together in parks, covered piney areas, but they didn't normally travel together. Bill continued. "That ain't the only thing—though it's damned strange enough." He lowered his voice, just as he lowered his chin. "You heard 'bout the Tingleys, Arthur and Philip?"

"No, what about 'em?"

"They was drowned yesterday, the two of 'em was."

"What?"

"Off Medomak...capsized. They was pretty far out, handful of bad weather come up. Guess it caught 'em off guard. Shame too, those boys was handy...good sailors. What the hell though, one minute yer pullin' traps, earnin' yer livin'...takin' what ya can from a warm day...maybe, fer a minute, ya ferget what you're all about. Afore ya know it, yer fightin' fer yer life...jest hangin' on to the riggin' in some ghostly squall. That's what got 'em, the change. It were the change alright." Bill's voice was different, his eyes red, swollen. He looked away.

Through my own numbness, I dimly remembered how the weather had shifted yesterday, changed quickly in the afternoon—false spring. As if reading my thoughts, hearing questions I might ask, he said, "Damned if I know." He shook his head, got back to work. He moved further down stream, trying to keep the flow moving with his shovel. I followed him, feeling choked, stopped, like an April culvert. Finally, I found a bit of my voice and squeaked, "Didn't they have life preservers...safety equipment?"

"No...Most folks can't afford safe boats, jest workin' boats. Besides, ya can't do whatcha' have ta' do...that kinda work, and have all that gear clutterin' yer decks."

"Could they swim?"

"Most fishermen ain't good swimmers, Tunk. Besides, you can't make it in that cold water. Ya get numb. When

those big boots fill up they suck ya right down...pull ya under like lead weights."

A chill ran through me.

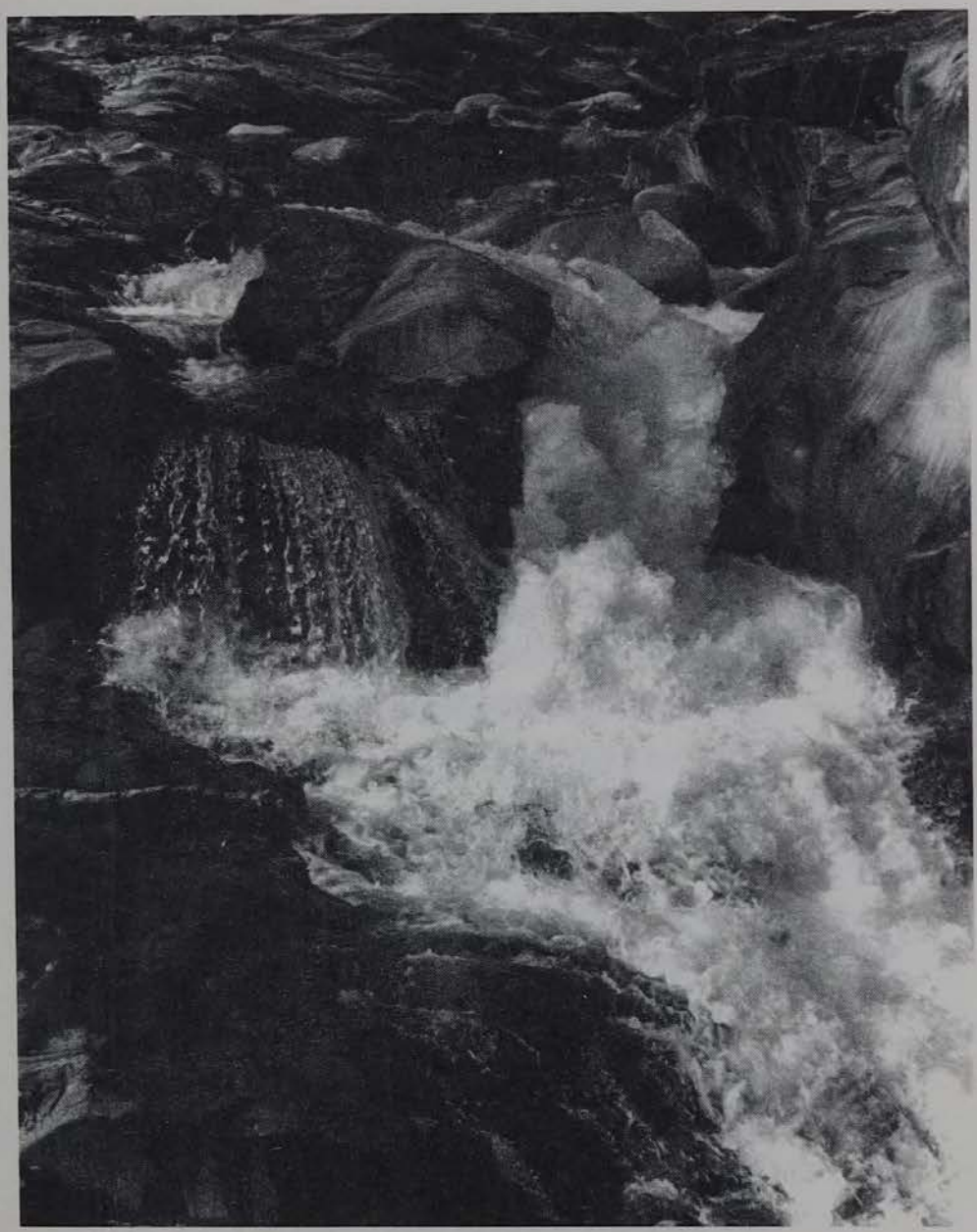
Bill continued as he worked. "Bodies washed ashore, both of 'em, on the beach near the point. Funeral's Tuesday at 10, Congo church. We see you and the missus there?"

"Right...yes, uh...well, I guess we'll be there."

Bill sighed a long sigh. "That oughta take care of things fer now." He collected his tools and without ceremony started a weary walk up the gravel driveway, toward his house. He turned and declaimed, "They was good boys, both of 'em." He shook his big head just before he reached the porch, and that was that.

My thoughts turned inward as I headed back down the sodden road. I moved slowly, a wounded something crawling to its cave. They had been my friends too, even though I was from away, even though my own relatives weren't stacked four deep in Round Pond Cemetery, where they'd both be hanging out come Tuesday. Arthur had taught me Cribbage. I knew the Tingleys, and now they were gone. They were young, like me. They shouldn't be dead. No, not dead.

As I reached a bend near the stone fence, I startled a pair of ravens. The large birds were tearing at something small and furry. Seeing me, they flew off shrieking a wild ebony anger, feathers spread like fingers, clutching at the still air that draped a beaten field. ❧



—Brenda Hart

Karen Martin

Two Poems

Unwilling Witness

Please, don't think I'm a snob,
but the odor
of the woman across.
Quick glance reveals
crumpled clothing too warm for 90° humidity.
Series of jerky,
incomplete motions,
tattered arm wipes her brow.
Sweaty homelessness
invades my section.
Seat beside vacates
two children snicker
grandmother scolds.
Furtive glance shows
    nervous tic
        two rapid blinks,
        grimace, head jerk
    blink blink grimace head jerk
    blinkblinkgrimaceheadjerk
She sees me.
I look hurriedly away
afraid she'll sense
my pity,
unwilling to witness
her pain.

Traffic Jam

Motionless, red lights snake
up the highway. My pride recoils.
I wanted to take the other way.
Hold it in. Be a good passenger.
Think about something else.
"I hope no one's hurt." Tell me you're sorry
for taking
this suddenly circuitous route.
Why won't he say sorry, just apologize
for once? Eyes aching, blood throbbing
I put my head back for the pain
to subside, and feel something rising,
foreign being, acidic bile.
Two points of light
boring into my skull,
a passer in the breakdown lane.
My hand lashes out, of its own accord,
honk the horn, flash the lights,
curse them to hell.
"People like that, that's why we're here.
Idiotic. Heedless. Incompetent."
My words flow steady.
Cars stopped beyond the hill.
I wonder who this woman is,
out of control from sitting still.

Thomas McCoy

Oedipus Sends Regrets

My father, two thousand miles away
Said, "The doctor gives her twenty-four hours."
I hung up and left; the magic of metal
Through air began the ancient ritual.

It was after midnight when I entered
The rooms that shaped me. He was asleep
Upstairs. Eight miles away, the hospital
Held her in green and white simplicity,
The coma secure, final.

After breakfast and brave talk
My sister drove me to the hospital.
My father stayed home to rest,
Prepare himself and the list
Of those to contact.

I watched her for a few seconds;
Struggling for each breath, her body
Rising and falling to lower and lower depths.
I never felt as proud of her as I did then,
The war against herself almost over, won.

She died that afternoon. The list
Was complete, the calls were made.
After two days of memories and relief,
I stood with my father and sister
In front of the waxed little body
To greet the list and explain who I was.

Limousines, the cemetery and sympathy
Filled the next day. When it ended,
The humid evening began as if nothing
Had happened. Stories and smiles
Were shared and something like love
Surprised us for a brief, blessed time.

She was not there. She had gone:
Like an autumn goes, colors bleached
To memory; like a lover goes, memories
Bleached to regret; like red dreams
That turn gray and vanish with traffic.

Cycles, other lovers, dreams will continue.
My mother simply stopped. My father said,
"Please stay in touch." I went back
To the rooms where I lived, the distance
To my own death shorter, the riddle
Of who she was unsolved forever.

Robin Roberts

Subduction

She feeds upon herself
growing and shrinking all at once
old then new, new then old
she writhes, shifts and cracks
life spewing from her depths
consuming what she has previously created.
Magnificent beauty in the form of death
from which all life comes
and for which all life departs.



—Candace Kuchinski

Linda L. Labin

Miss Shun's Statement

Ambiguous State University affirms the fundamental fundimentality to be founded on a firm foundation garment. Therefore, the university commits itself to a strong and volatile literal arts education for all undergraduated students. These studies provide the baser concepts on which civilization is funded and grows turnips. They do more than import knowledge for the student; they install human valves and enable the mind to be ever furious, flatulent, and procreative. These studies prepare the stud-puppies to address the life-long problems of a changing room (with the proper zip code).

Ambiguous State University recognizes, moreover, another commitment to its students which is insubordinate, but complimentary, to the traditional obligation. It is a commitment to educate its students in those skills necessary for the pursuit of carrier pigeons. The university recognizes that the graduate must have the necessary skills to function as a seductive member of our trivialized society.

FUNDAMENTAL PORPOISE: Ambiguous State University exits as a public flogging institution of hi-yer yearning. It shall be adjudicated to excelsior in instruction in all pogroms. In addition, the university will play a substandard role, through the resurgence and proclivities of its faculty, in the contribution to new knowledge to the broader society, and the enrichment of its trustees. The university's responsibility to the public shall be met through computer dating services.

SPECIAL CHARACTERISTICS: As an open omissions university, Ambiguous State provides and encourages excess in applicants with regard to sex, and drugs, and rock'n'

roll. To enhance individual abscess and to maintain a well-oiled student body, Ambiguous State has two kinds of emissions: unconditional surrender for applicants whose acne preparation is judged antiquated, and conditional commission for those applications needing conditions. To provide the best possible acrimonious environment for the studs/studettes on all its campuses, Ambiguous State is dedicated to maintaining a faculty of high rollers, strong athletic supporters, and individual student potholders. At its Ambiguous campus, the university affords students the benefits of residual arcadia in a rich and perverse community. Through its regional composts, which offer both tactical weaponry and pre-marital poems, Ambiguous State extends the university to the State of Confusion.

RELATIVE EMPHASIS: Ambiguous State University will strive for extinction in undergraduate seduction. Its emphasis will be on traditional literal values nourished by resentful life in a campy environment that negates learning and living. Ambiguous State will continue to be a majorette center for degenerate study and research in selected arias. The university will maintain its support hose in those graduated beakers which have demonstrated axle grease. It will also support the growth of other growths which show promise of achieving disgust and will fulfill vital suicidal needs of the state in the furniture.

These include the baser and mimical sinuses, the help-me sciences, monkey business and technocracy, professional beekeepers, commune caterers, and the applied and performing artifacts. ❧

Gina O'Brien

Two Poems

Perfection

Perfection...
What is it?
Is it a single red rose,
Bathed in its own beauty?
Its velvety petals,
Pursed in a ruby kiss,
That await the sun's golden embrace.
Or is it the many
Shimmering, shivering, shining
Dewdrops that cascade
Down trembling leaves?
Perfection.

Perfection...
Does it come with time?
Like the carefully spun spider's web,
Etched across a loved one's face?
Or is it the swirling rings of cherry,
Hovering hazily, hanging,
Above a family placed before a hearth.
The crackle of flames,
Licking up the side of old stones,
Competing with the husky rumble
Of a grandfather's voice,
As he tells tales of long past.
Perfection.

Lair of the Dragoness

Black as midnight, cold as stone,
Talons made of ivory bone.

Twisting, turning through the air,
Competing for a golden lair.

Bloodshed, darkness, treasure galore,
Is this all they're driven for?

Fire blazing through the sky,
This is a battle where one must die.

Lyn-mara Pomales

Bad Spots

Choose me as if you were selecting a fruit,
my surfaces covered with speckles of white lies
draw you in.
But beneath the surface are secret bad spots,
and as you peel
the blemished truth is unveiled.
You can look away if you want to.
I know—
the honesty staring back at you
paves the way to rejection.
So go ahead—
bite as far as you can.
But my core is endless.
Forever hideously real.
I am not a fabrication.

Elizabeth Ramirez

Forgotten Memory

A crossword puzzle.
A clue.
A memory long forgotten;
Brought forth instantaneously
From a chasm filled with memories subdued.

A bookcase
With books both large and small.
One book title standing alone,
But, alas, the author unknown.

I remember the book
With a clarity that my eyesight lacked.
Being nearsighted, I was always intrigued
As to the last word of the title
When eyeing the bookcase from afar.

It is all gone now.
The bookcase belongs to others,
The crossword puzzle is weeks old;
And I never did look at the answer.
But isn't that just like life;
We often don't look at the answer.

Rick Doyle

Oyster Stew Supper to Follow

Characters
Edgar Dolan, *retired millworker, about seventy.*
Raymond Dolan, *his son, a utilities worker and Commander of the Regimental Temple, about fifty.*
Watch, *about thirty.*
Sergeant Major, *a millworker, about sixty.*
Various members of the Regimental Temple.

Setting
The anteroom of a fraternal order: the Perceval F. Flynn Regimental Temple, No. 354, of The Sons of Saul. Hand-lettered announcement, black on white: information about a memorial for Franklin Wallace Ginn. Oyster stew supper to follow. Also the symbol of the order, something reminiscent of the Masonic compass.

Scene One

Enter men in regalia, wearing black crepe armbands. They proceed through the Inner Door.

WATCH *and* SERGEANT MAJOR, *carrying staffs, take up position by the door.*

SERGEANT MAJOR Worthy Watch, let none pass this Inner Gate but those who count themselves the Friends of Saul.

WATCH None but Friends shall pass, Sergeant Major.

SGT. MJR. Have you the challenge?

WATCH Sergeant Major, I do.

Whispers in Sergeant Major's ear, steps back.

SGT. MJR. Right. Password of the day?

WATCH Worthy Sergeant, I do.

Whispers, steps back.

SGT. MJR. Right, Faithful Servant. Let those not recognized by this word be barred from entry to the Regimental Temple of Saul, unless they can work their entrance using secret signs or be guided by a Brother in good standing.

WATCH Right, Worthy Sergeant.

SGT. MJR. Stand fast.

Sergeant Major goes in, Watch closing Inner Door behind him.

Silence.

Enter Latecomer, wearing regalia. Whispers password into ear of Watch, goes in.

Silence.

Enter Second and Third Latecomers, more or less together. Each whispers the password, then goes in.

Enter EDGAR DOLAN, wearing regalia of order, as well as armband.

EDGAR Say, they haven't started, have they?

WATCH Not yet, they haven't.

EDGAR I'd better slip in before they do.

WATCH Right, Worthy Brother.

EDGAR The High Commander gets touchy about latecomers.

WATCH Right you are.

EDGAR Especially when it's the Old Man! You'd think he'd cut the Old Man some slack, but not on your life! And the Old Man a Past Commander four times over, no less! You'd think that might mean something, but it doesn't!

WATCH Right, Worthy Brother. Password?

EDGAR Was that a gavel?

Lights down.

Scene Two

A few minutes later.

EDGAR It's right on the tip of my tongue.

Silence.

EDGAR If you hadn't asked I could have told you!

WATCH You'll think of it!

EDGAR I've given every password back to the Great Depression, and you can't let me in that door?

WATCH Not without the current password.

EDGAR They're draping the charter for Frank Ginn tonight.

WATCH That's right.

EDGAR Do you know who Frank Ginn was?

WATCH He's come to a few meetings.

EDGAR Oh, he's come to a few meetings, has he? Is that so?

WATCH Like I said. Nice old gentleman.

EDGAR You let me tell you something, young fellow. Frank Ginn was a charter member of this order. He did more than come to a few meetings, now, I'll tell you! Not only that, but Frank Ginn was like a brother to me. We chopped wood together, once upon a time. Hemlock. Dollar a cord — felled, limbed, bucked, barked, and stacked. Why, Frank boarded with me and my wife May! Great Depression, that was. Later we worked out at St. Regis together — Seaboard, it was, back then. First in the woodyard, unloading cars with a pickpole and a cantdog. Then up in drum barking. Groundwood, up in the block-bins. Finally we ended up on the paper machines. Thirty-five years on those paper machines! Frank retired three months before I did. That's how it was with Frank Ginn and me. We were like brothers. And now you're telling me I can't go in there?

WATCH Of course you can go in! With the password.

EDGAR Who are you?

WATCH You know who I am.

EDGAR Let me in!

WATCH You're welcome to work your way in, same as anyone else.

EDGAR I can't remember the damned password! How am I supposed to remember the Four Secret Knocks?

WATCH Or you can get a member to verify you, as soon as there's a break in the meeting.

EDGAR There won't be any break in the meeting, the only thing they're doing tonight is draping the charter for Frank. They'll be hell bent for election, wanting to get Frank out of the way so they can go across the road for oyster stew. That's all any of them care about, anyway, you want to know the truth of it. Do you honestly think any of these jokers gives a tinker's damn about what goes on out here at the gate? Do you think any one of them has ever even read the bylaws?

Inner Door opens, and the Sergeant Major leans out. Greets Edgar silently.

SGT. MJR. How goeth the watch, Brother?

WATCH All quiet on the Orient Gate, Sergeant Major.

EDGAR See? Now they're starting!

SGT. MJR. *(Reporting to someone inside)* All quiet on the Gate, Worthy Commander.

Response from within. Edgar tries to slip in, but the Watch prevents it.

SGT. MJR. *(To Watch)* Hold fast to your station, Worthy Watchman, and be ever steadfast in the fulfillment of your duties.

WATCH Right, Worthy Sergeant, steadfast to the final report.

EDGAR *(At the same time)* Right, Worthy Sergeant, steadfast to the final report.

Sergeant Major goes back in. Watch starts to follow. Edgar grabs his arm. Watch shuts door without going in.

WATCH There's any number of Brothers in there that would be willing to vouch for you. Or I could ask the High Commander to come out.

EDGAR No! Don't do that! He's running a meeting in there! Don't interrupt the Commander just because his old fool of a father can't remember the password. I cause him enough trouble, as it is. Just the other day I drove my car into the river over to Bucksport. See this bruise over my eye? I'm lucky I didn't drown. I would have if it hadn't happened to be low tide. It was that damned hill by the library. I could've sworn I was stepping on the brake. Wasn't Raymond pissed!

Watch goes in through Inner Door.

EDGAR I knew he would be. I hated to have the sheriff call him to come get me, but who else was there?

Edgar notices the Watch has gone in. Makes as if to hammer the door with his fist, but stops himself. He turns and looks back toward the sign announcing his friend's memorial.

Behind his back, the Inner Door opens a crack. Sergeant Major peeks out. Sees Edgar, closes door again.

Edgar takes crepe off, puts it in a pocket.

Lights down.

Scene Three

A few minutes later.

Enter RAYMOND DOLAN *from Inner Door.*

RAYMOND What's going on? Dad?

EDGAR I told him not to send you out here.

RAYMOND Well, I'm not going to leave my own father out here in the anteroom.

EDGAR As long as you know it wasn't my idea.

RAYMOND You feeling all right?

EDGAR I'm fine.

RAYMOND Take your medicine?

EDGAR Oh, yes!

RAYMOND That's good.

EDGAR I mark it down on the calendar, now, as soon as I give myself the shot.

RAYMOND That's a good way to do it.

EDGAR Helps me remember.

RAYMOND Coming in?

EDGAR *(Putting crepe back on)* Not according to that cross-eyed son of a bitch you've got on the door—Who is he, anyway? What tribe is he supposed to belong to?

RAYMOND He's just doing his job.

EDGAR By God, Frank Ginn would have let me in!

Sergeant Major sticks his head out into the anteroom.

RAYMOND Have them do the Elders' Report.

EDGAR How can they, I'm on the Board of Elders!

RAYMOND *(Gesturing for Edgar to be quiet)* We'll be right along.

Sergeant Major goes in, closing door.

RAYMOND You haven't sat in on a Board of Elders meeting for a year. Not since you went to the hospital the first time.

EDGAR I know how long it's been.

RAYMOND You said they were a bunch of old fools.

EDGAR I ought to know, I'm the biggest fool of all!

RAYMOND Are you sure you took your insulin?

EDGAR Yes, I'm sure.

He starts to drop his pants.

EDGAR Do you want to see for yourself?

RAYMOND Put your pants back on!

EDGAR I'm sure I took my insulin.

RAYMOND That's good. I'm glad.
Pause.

RAYMOND Let me give you the word.

EDGAR You don't need to give me the word!

RAYMOND You remember it?

EDGAR I will.

RAYMOND You're going to miss Frank's memorial.

EDGAR I won't be led around by the hand like poor Frank was at the last of it.

RAYMOND Big difference between being a little absent-minded now and then and being what Frank was at the end.

EDGAR Who's absent-minded?

RAYMOND Do you have the damned password, or do you not have the damned password?

EDGAR *(Turning to go)* I said I wasn't going to be led in there, and by God I meant it!

RAYMOND Then let me give you the password. Come back in here!

EDGAR Don't break any rules on my account.

RAYMOND Let me give you a hint!

EDGAR Don't give me no hints!

RAYMOND Father.

EDGAR What?

RAYMOND Your sash is crooked.

EDGAR Never mind my sash.

RAYMOND Better fix it. Pretty important...regalia.

Edgar adjusts sash.

RAYMOND Yes, a fellow has to look after his...regalia.

Edgar strains to remember, Raymond waits.

EDGAR Endurance?

RAYMOND No!

Inner Door opens. Sergeant Major looks out, then retreats, closing door.

RAYMOND Stop this foolishness! I am going to give you the password, and you are going to go into that meeting with me, just the way you planned to when you came in here tonight.

EDGAR Don't you raise your voice at me.

RAYMOND I'm sorry. I'm sorry. You're right. Don't go.

EDGAR You don't need to raise your voice at me.

RAYMOND What did Frank ever do to you, that you would refuse to pay your respects?

EDGAR What have I done to you, that you would raise your voice at me like that?

RAYMOND Let me give you the password!

EDGAR I know the password!

RAYMOND What is it?

EDGAR Ashes.

RAYMOND No!

EDGAR Sickle!

RAYMOND No!

EDGAR Monument. Winter. Harrow.

RAYMOND Look at you. Too stubborn to admit you don't know the password, even if it means you can't go in and pay your respects to the best friend you ever had. You ought to be ashamed of yourself.

EDGAR Oyster stew!

Enter Sergeant Major.

SGT. MJR. Ray?

Silence.

RAYMOND Must be about that time.

EDGAR Go ahead!

RAYMOND Be sure and stay so you can get something to eat.

EDGAR Go on!

RAYMOND This won't take long, then we'll all be over for some stew.

EDGAR Go on, I said! You'd better go look after your meeting.

Sergeant Major and Raymond go in.

Edgar remembers the password.

EDGAR Regalia!

Lights down.

Scene Four

A moment later.

Enter Watch. Takes up position at the door.

Silence.

Inner Door opens, Sergeant Major sticks his head out.

SGT. MJR. Watchman, are the gates fast?

WATCH They are, Sergeant Major.

SGT. MJR. Stand by while the charter is draped to mourn the passing of our Brother, Franklin Wallace Ginn, to the higher realm.

WATCH Right, Worthy Sergeant.

Sergeant Major goes in.

EDGAR Password? Password's the least of it! I'm surprised I know my own name, sometimes. Sometimes I just stand there with the refrigerator door open, wondering what I'm looking for. Quart of milk. Orange. Plate of mackerel. Insulin. Like things you'd never imagine, not even in your wildest dreams! It's the damnedest thing! I don't know I'm looking for the butter dish until I happen to notice the knife in my hand. Or I'll be making a phone call, and right in the middle of dialing the number not know who I'm calling. Or I'll be talking to somebody, and not know who they are. I'll know the voice. I'll know the face. But to put them together with a name... I can't remember, to save my soul!

Sounds of ceremony from inside: drumbeat, which continues under the following.

EDGAR Do you know what I am? Blackballed. Blackballed by my own memory. Or blackballed by my own lack of memory, I should say. Blackballed for life. Just like poor old Willard Francis.
Pause.

EDGAR You must have known him! The gravedigger. The welldigger. The water witcher. Don't tell me you didn't know him! Willard gets himself nominated somehow. Nobody knows how. Old gravedigger! Can you imagine? But he's going to get blackballed. Charlie Cole will blackball him. Eddie Fish will. Frank will. Everyone knows it. Like Charlie Cole says, what's the sense? Why put yourself through the misery? But Willard won't withdraw his name. "I'm as good as any man in the Sons of Saul," he says, "Goddamn me if I ain't." So he comes to the Vote on Applications. Waits out here. Right here in the anteroom. First he's got company—maybe four or five applicants. One by one, the others get called in. Then it's just Willard and the Watch. In there, the officers are voting on his nomination. Half of them have screwed his wife.
Pause.

EDGAR Why not? Why wouldn't they let him in, same as anyone? Didn't they let Georgie Colt in? Poor old Georgie! They let him in, just like they gave him a job out at the mill. You see him in Groundwood. He cleans up the cordwood they pick out of the magazines. He has a little blue wagon he hauls around. He isn't fit for nothing else. They let Georgie into the Regiment.
Pause.

EDGAR But Willard Francis? That dirty bugger? That goddamn gravedigger? Who in his right mind is going to cast a vote to admit him as a member of this Temple? And Willard knows what's going to happen. He's sitting there. Sweat is pouring down his face. He's white as a sheet. You can hear the voices from inside, but you can't make out what they're saying. They've been talking for some time. They keep talking. The gavel pounds. Then not a sound. Not a sound. Willard stands up. He turns to the Watch, he's stiff as a pickpole. Puts his hat on. "I am far superior," he says, "to

any man that might want to give me the black ball." Turns around, walks out that door.
Pause.

Slips crepe armband off.

EDGAR But what about you? How's your memory? Oh, I know, I know — you're young, you're clever, you've studied the bylaws, you've learned the ritual by heart, you know the lore. But how's your memory?

Drum stops.

EDGAR And I'll tell you another thing!

Enter Sergeant Major.

SGT. MJR. Watchman, well done. Thy labors are at an end.

EDGAR I'll tell you another thing—

WATCH Thanks, Worthy Sergeant.

EDGAR *(Dropping crepe at Watch's feet)* Don't think I don't know who you are!

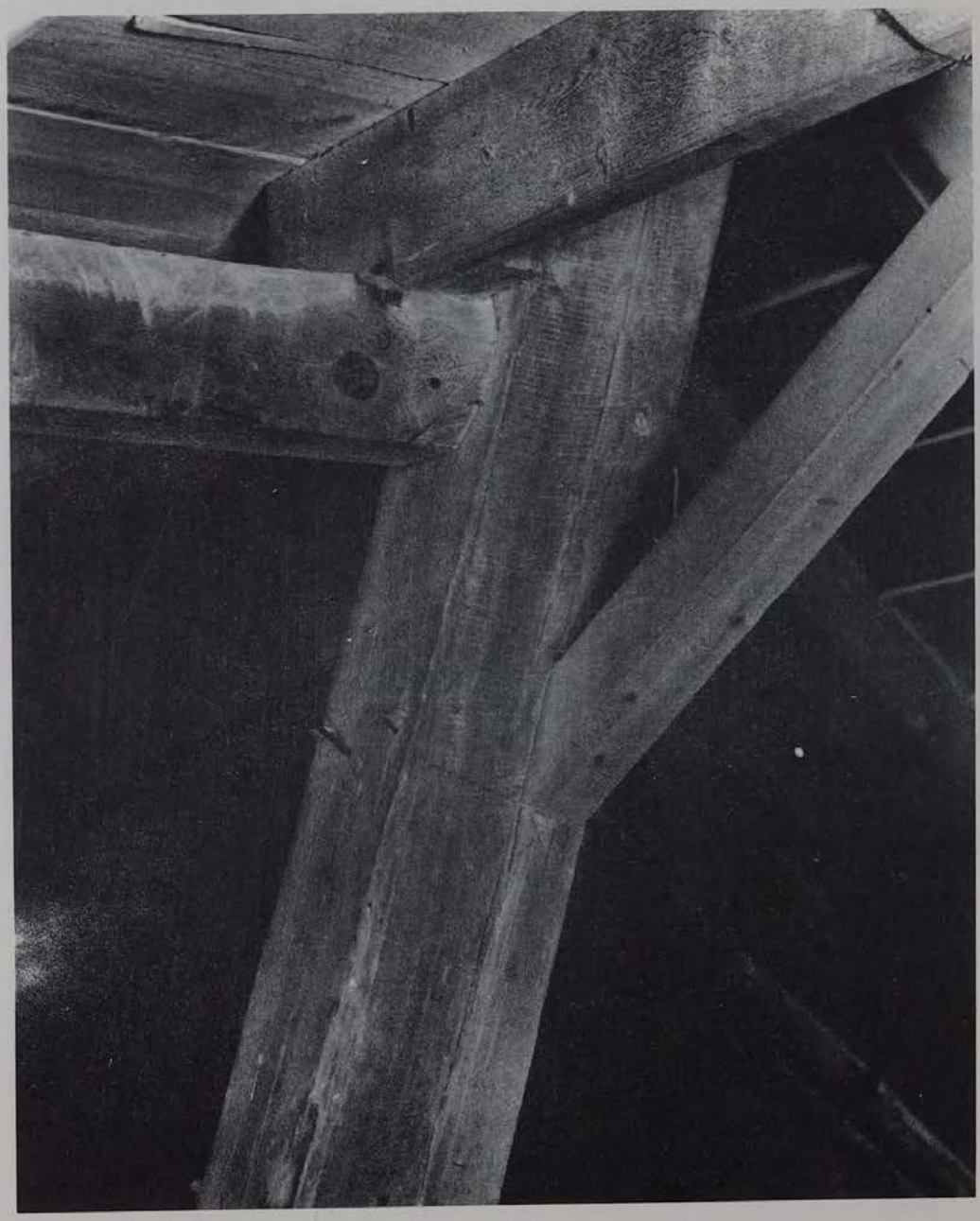
Enter officers and members from the meeting, on their way out for oyster stew, peeling off regalia as they go.

BLACKOUT

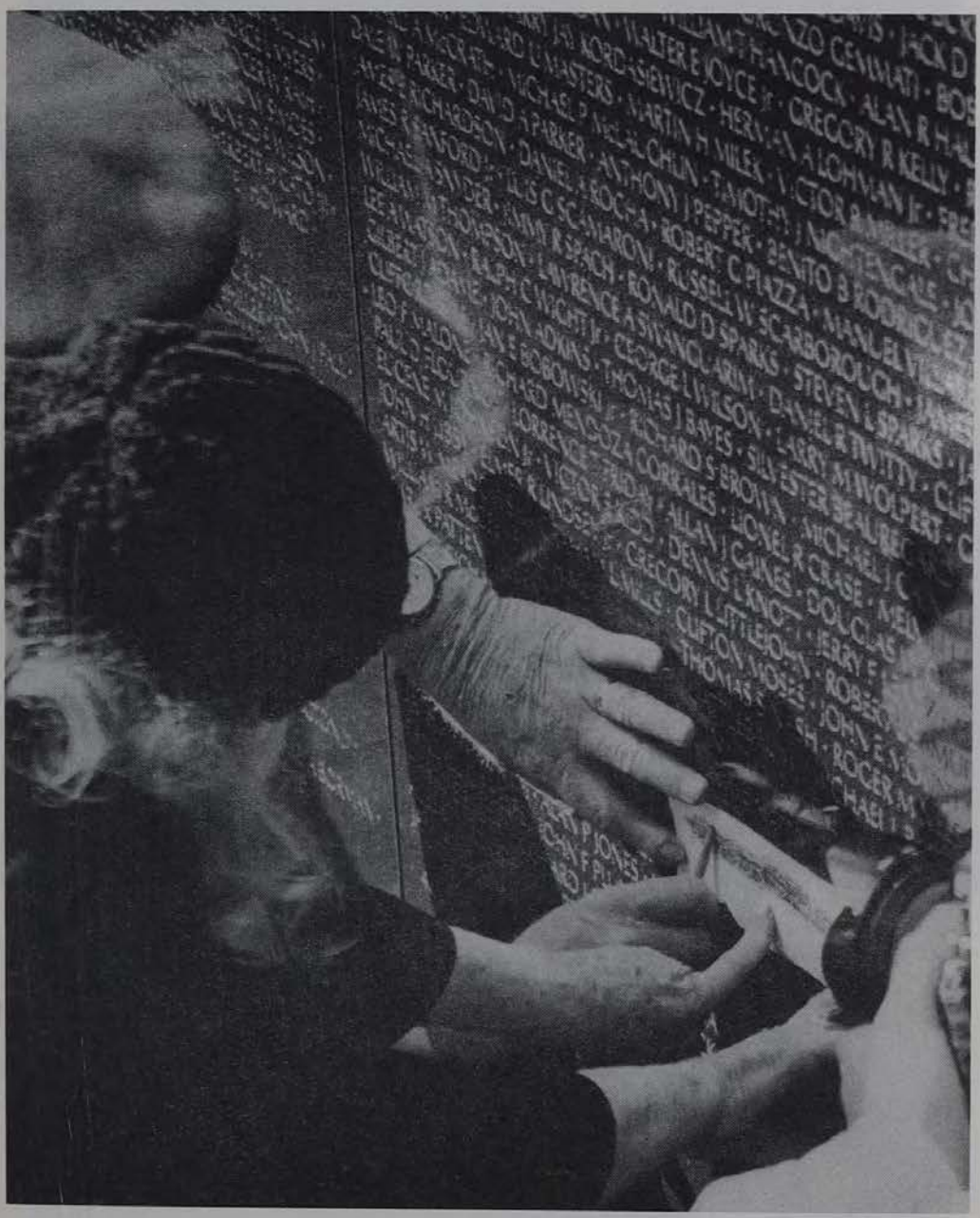
Oyster Stew Supper to Follow is an abridgement of **Regalia,** a one-act play.



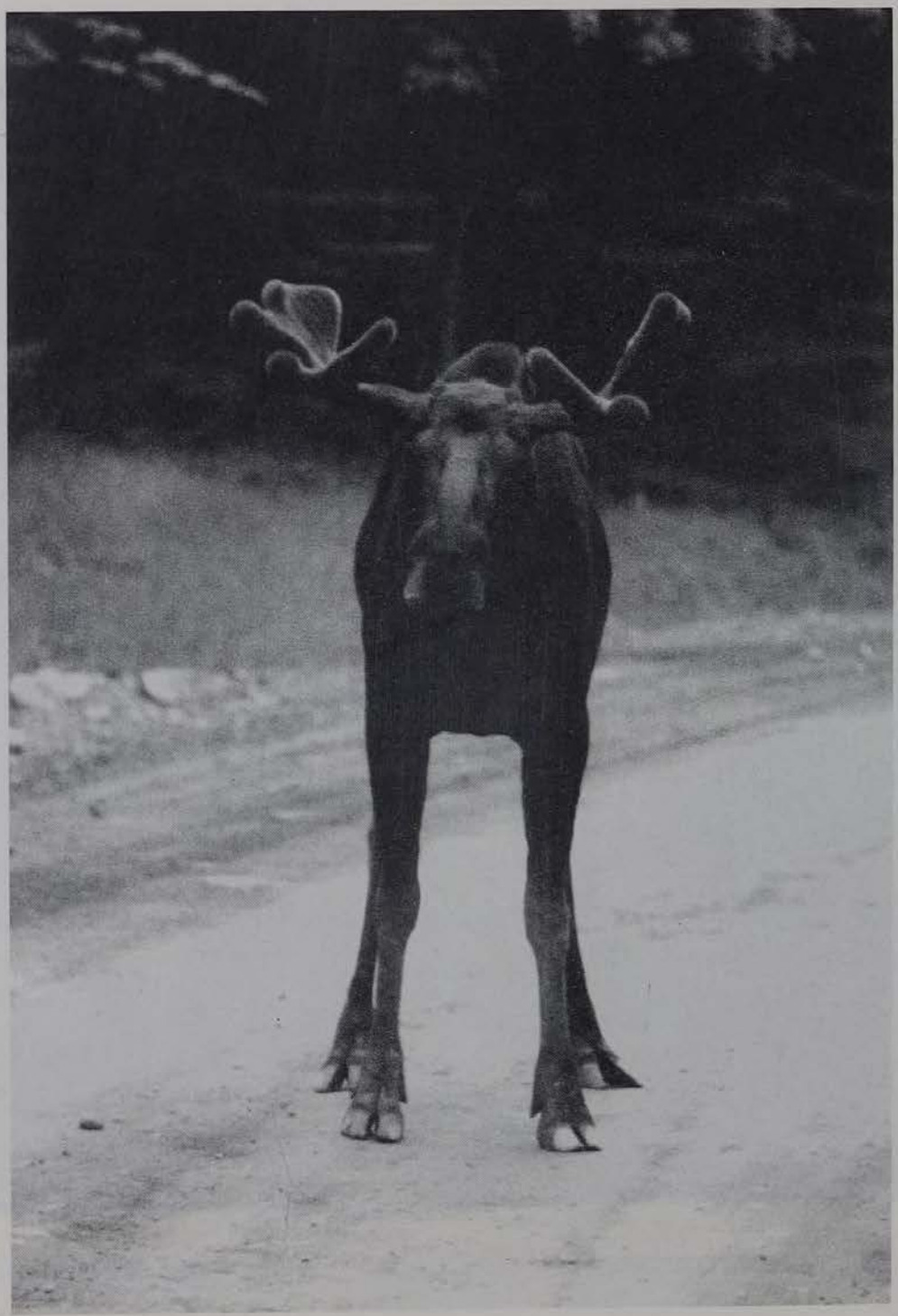
—Lucas Martin



—Candace Kuchinski



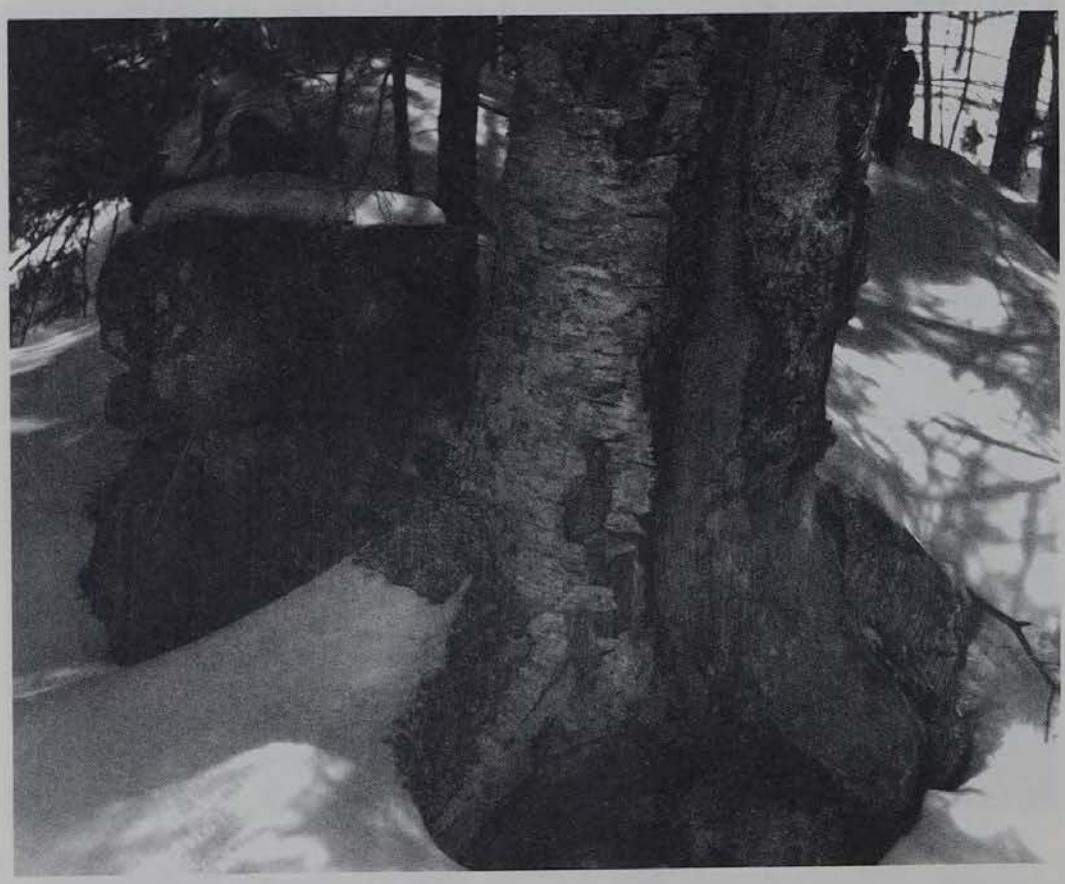
—Michael Mindera



—Tiffany Teske



—Francesca DeSanctis



—Scott Anttila

Jon Connolly

Lessons from the Savannah

The Savannah...hot, hard, dusty.
They gathered and greeted with ardor.
The young played
and mothers mothered.
Celebrate Africa's tranquility.

The waters provided reprieve
as they had for generations.
The mothers knew, for they must know,
the swamp's life force, replenished
by the aquifers from Mt. Kilimanjaro.

The blood and the bodies fall
in terrible confusion and terror.
They die without honor
for they cry and cling to their family and their life.
Sisterhood is potent, motherhood more so.

The children are left squealing.
Oh Mother! I understand death!
70 years you shall not see.
I fondle your sunbleached jawbone with my trunk.
Celebrate Africa's tranquility.

Cameron Webb

My Starter Pro Basketball Hoop

"Go to the hole, Jamie. Do a back door cut, Bamie! Pick and roll, Lamie. Pass me the ball, Ramie! Triangle! Yes...we beat them!" I had a special toy that made me different from most three-year-olds. This toy was a Starter Pro basketball set. It was a five-foot basketball hoop that inspired me to become a basketball player. I could play with my basketball set day and night.

This basketball thing was not just some doll that I talked to; it was my life. See, I always drew pictures of my grandfather, the basketball coach for Husson College, holding up his hands motioning the play "51."

"Why did you draw only six fingers?" my mom would ask. "Your Poppa has all of his fingers, honey. He has ten fingers, not six."

I knew that and told her "51" was the play for the Husson half-court trap defense. I used to wear ties all the time, even over my pajamas, because I knew that the basketball players wore ties on their game days. I would even carry around a briefcase, like my grandfather, with the X's and O's for my team's game plan. I joined right in the real Husson basketball team's game huddles.

I needed four players to have a team and since no one at my age understood basketball, I created imaginary friends that completed my team. I named them Jamie, Bamie, Lamie, and Ramie. I would play hoops with them and pretend to pass to them all the time. My "team" played pretend professional teams, like the Bulls and the Celtics. Somehow we always won. When the team was not playing, such as at dinnertime and during car rides, I would make my mom set the table for them and buckle the entire team up in the car.

My pretend teammates went with me everywhere. If my parents sat in the guys' places, I would get very mad at them. My pretend friends even slept with me; I made my mom tuck them in, too. I think I enjoyed playing with my pretend friends more than my real friends, because they could play basketball.

I was so into basketball that I tried to go on every Husson away trip, against Colby, Xavier, St. Joe's. I loved being part of the team. I was friends with all of the Husson basketball players. We ate together, won together, and lost together. These road trips were like going to Disneyland to me. The trips to St. Joe's were especially important to me. Since St. Joe's was Husson's rival, I was excited just to be the water boy. I do not think my mom wanted me to go because the students at St. Joe's were a bad influence on me, but I did not care, I had to be around basketball. This toy of mine inspired me to be around basketball.

I have been through the good and the bad of Husson's basketball team trips, but every one made me better. Once I got home from a trip, I would be playing on that toy that improved me as a basketball player and as a person. ❧

Kara Anne Schreiber

Two Poems

Springtime

Showers abound
Puddled wet ground
Roses in bud
Ink spots of mud
New leaves and grass
Green sprouting mass
Tumbling children
Inspired wren
Mornings are warm
Earth is reborn

Glob

A glob of nothing in particular
Sat in the sun on the table
As it melted, it ran rivulets
Of thick goo across the table top
And dripped sluggishly to the floor
Making a melted gooey puddle
Of nothing in particular

J.W. Baker

Once

Once,
when I was young and tender
in the drab, sad time of spring,
when flashing birds reeled through
the bare bleached bones
of rough-barked trees,
a calico lass sighed at me.

Once,
when diamond dew glittered
on dark green carpets of grass,
when the breeze played tug o' war
with the ruffled leaves
in the burning light,
I sighed at a calico lass.

Once,
when prickly hoar-white frost
raped the summer color from the
crinkly leaves in the dry, hard
days of a dying fall
under the spinning sky,
we sighed, the calico lass and I.

Judith Connolly

Buddy

Sugar Mae lit the wood fire under the big black cauldron hanging from a metal tripod in the backyard.

"Hey, Billy, if you're still hankerin' to go huntin' could you cut me some firewood on your way home. I got me a mess of laundry to wash. This here's a three-day scrubbin'."

"Hell, woman, does it look like I'm fixin' to take my ax? Ya'll just shut up now and finish that wash today. Ya hear?" He tightened the cinch under the horse's belly and checked the bit in the horse's mouth. He slipped his rifle into a canvas sling attached to the saddle, climbed on Buddy and trotted off toward the hill country to look for mule deer or whatever else he could rustle up.

The countryside was warm and the air was slightly heavy with moisture. Nights in the Texas hills can turn wool-jacket cold while the days can cook your heart out. Today felt like an okay hunting day. Billy was glad to be with Buddy. A horse is fine company and Buddy would not pester him the way Sugar Mae would. "Lord, she sure can wag a tongue," he thought, shaking his head.

A few miles after they had passed a grove of cottonwoods, Billy reined in Buddy and stopped. He squinted his eyes half shut as if to see the picture ahead of him more clearly.

"Yep, there's a buck over there," he whispered to Buddy. He reached behind him and took out a pair of deer antlers from his pack. "Yeah, I'll try this rattlin'. They say it works real good. Never tried it before so we see how it does." Billy rattled the antlers together, clacking them loudly as if two stags were in mortal combat over a harem of prize does. Buddy let out a deep whinny and his muscles twitched

under the saddle as the "antler rattling" noise became headache loud.

Billy eased the horse behind some mesquite brush so the deer would not see them lying in wait. Soon enough the deer lifted his head and looked in their direction. "Buddy, look at that rack on that there buck. Eight points, at least. We got a prize, Buddy. Come on, ya bastard, we're a-waitin' on ya." The buck kept moving slowly toward them, pausing at intervals to sniff the air.

Soon enough the stag came over the rise right in front of Billy and the horse. Billy raised his rifle and felled the stag in three quick shots.

That evening, he gutted the deer and hung it by a rope from the branch of a nearby scrubby elm tree. He watered and fed Buddy and himself. Then he hobbled the horse and propped himself against the flimsy tree for a night's sleep. Looking at his surroundings, Billy was filled with contentment.

"This beats all. Better than hangin' around that piss ant ranch and that ugly woman. Her belly's fatter 'an hogs. All them kids shaped her bigger 'an a tipi," he chuckled.

Around midnight, as a crescent moon looked on, a herd of mule deer moved over the hills. A sudden creaking erupted within the tree. The weight of the stag carcass split the tree trunk in half. A nest of silver scorpions spilled out onto Billy, covering him with their shrimpy shapes. As Billy's screams for Buddy filled the night, the hobbled horse stood perfectly still and watched the herd of mule deer travel on by through the hill country. ❧

Nikolas Kristophe

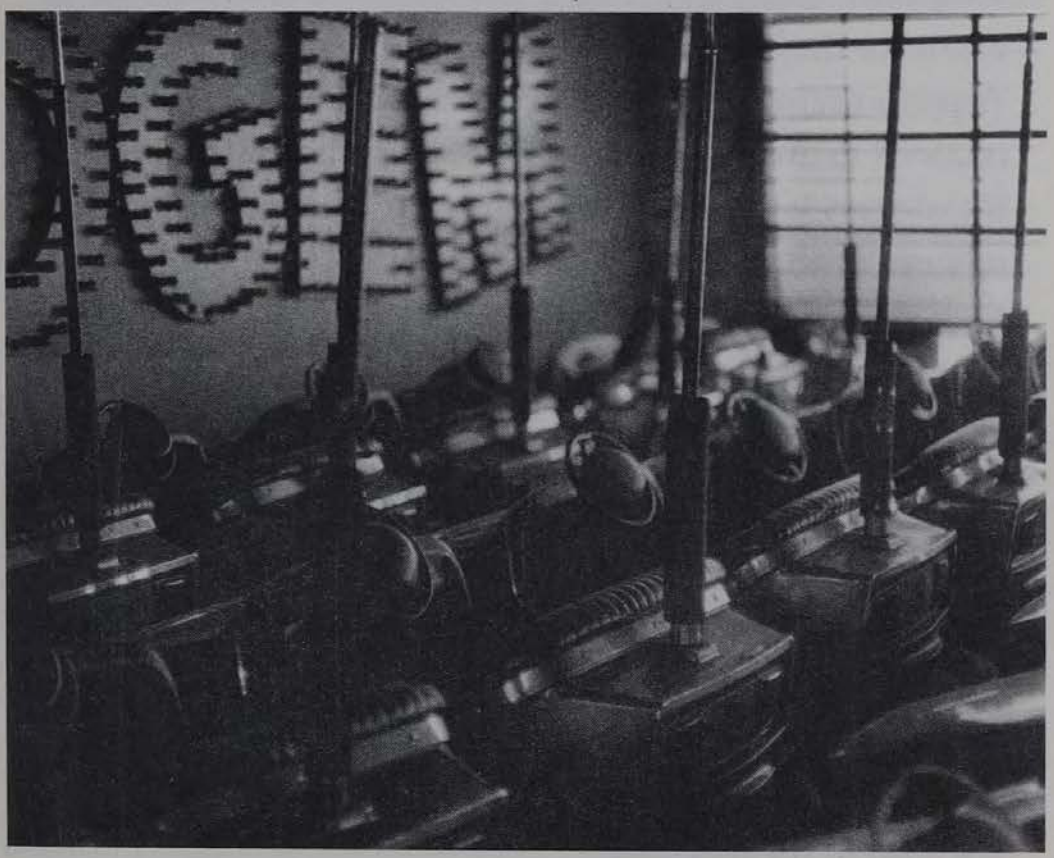
Is It You?

Do you shine, sweet creature?
Because I think you do.
    It was a dark day that time
  I met you
And yet, upon meeting you
  The day became vivid.
You did that.

Do you love, sweet creature?
Because I think you do not.
    It was a lucid admission that time
  I talked to you
And yet, upon talking to you
  The words became misunderstood.
You did that.

Please allow me to write you this verse,
  Sing you this song,
  Watch your eyes,
  Taste your lips,
  Feel your spirit.
True, our souls may not be perfect
  Neither for one another nor ourselves.
But Fate wishes to intertwine us
  Like the vast ocean and the infinite sky;
Not knowing where one ends and the other begins
  Or if they do at all.

Do you listen, sweet creature?
Because you do more and more you do not.
Three spare syllables are justice to my heart
And yet, injustice serves my tongue.
I did that.



—Michael Mindera

Robert MacCallum

The Cafe

The pigs have left me a mess
They come here, spend their money and think they can do whatever they please
Yuppies overcome with mid-life crisis and lost ideals are reduced to drunken stupor after last call
Intoxicated laborers spend what's left of their hard-earned money on whatever they can afford
Stoners overcome with the munchies blurt out incomprehensible orders

Someone has been thrown against the window,
All I can see is a flurry of fists!
The door opens!
I pick up the phone!
The cop car turns on the spotlight!
The show is over

It's 3:00 in the morning
The ocean is still moving
The moon is still shining
and I'm still, here

Manuela Teles Menezes

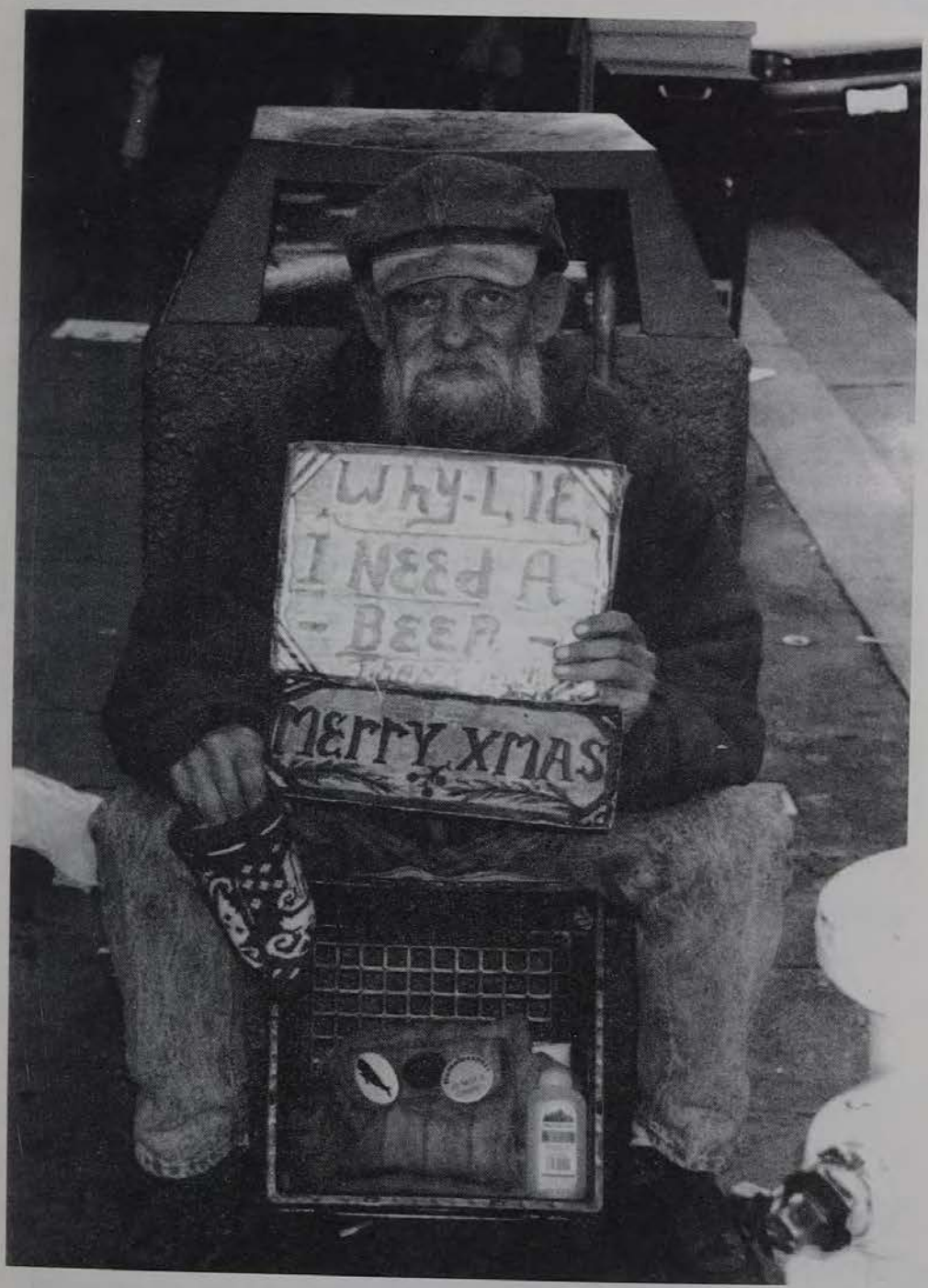
Amar (Love)

The day is cold, and the leaves are gone.
I cannot see my stars and moon; all I can feel is the cold
Wind taking you, my everything, too far from me.
I would like the wind to come back hot and bring
My sun, moon, stars to me again,
Because without you part of my world goes away,
And the only thing I have is a cold wind at my window.
(I cannot sleep, because I don't have a place,
And for me the best place to live is your heart,
Where I can find my whole world.)

Ernie Steele
Poem and Photograph

Managing *Your* Money

He's made a lot of money on the market—
so they say
But now we find the truth 'cause just
the other day
Seen coming from a phone booth
in an obvious disguise
He took his place upon a stool and much
to my surprise
He held a sock and a greeting card to show
to every seer.
It stated simply, short and sweet
"Why Lie?—I Need A Beer!"


WHY-L IE
I NEED A
- BEER -
MERRY XMAS

Jeremy Brown

The Intruder

The cool breeze hit Tommy Riley's face as he idly played with his yellow Tonka bulldozer. He sat outside his trailer home, basking in the sun. He dug up sand and dumped it in a hole to his left as he made the sounds of the engine. "Vrrrooom." Tommy picked up another load of sand; this time he dumped it into the little orange bucket he had brought out with him. He picked out a rock and tossed it to the side. "Beep, beep, beep," Tommy said, imitating the sound of a backup alarm.

He had dug a fairly deep hole when his mother came out of the house and walked toward the end of the driveway where Tommy was playing. Tommy didn't even notice her until she was standing beside him. "Tommy, come on inside," she said. "You've got to wash up before we leave."

"Where are we going, Mom?"

"We're going to visit one of Mommy's friends. He's very excited about meeting you."

"I don't want to meet him."

"Tommy, just come inside. You can play when we get there."

Tommy stood up and grabbed his bulldozer. Clutching it to his chest, he trudged back inside, his lower lip stuck out in protest. He went to his room and carefully hid his bulldozer underneath his bunk bed before his mother got there. Tommy opened up his drawer and pulled out his favorite pair of jeans and a ratty tee shirt that he was fond of.

From the doorway, Tommy's mother looked at him with disapproval. "You are not wearing those jeans, Tommy. They're full of holes. And that tee shirt is disgusting. I want

you to wear your sweater and that nice pair of corduroys that Nana bought you."

"I don't want to wear those pants, Mom. I hate those pants. I want to wear these. Please Mom, can't I just wear these?" Tommy whined.

"No, those jeans are for play time only. You know that. And your grandmother was nice enough to buy you those pants, so you're going to wear them. Now, be a good little boy and go take a bath."

Tommy marched into the bathroom and turned on the hot water. His mother came in and tested it, then turned on the cold water to make it a little cooler. She told Tommy to hop in, then went back to his room to fetch him some clean underwear. Reluctantly, Tommy took off his clothes and stepped into the tub.

A few minutes later, Tommy was toweling off and making faces at the mirror. He picked up the pile of clothes that his mother had picked out for him and grimaced when he saw the white pair of corduroys that his Nana had bought him. And he nearly cried when he put on the purple sweater that his Mom had picked out. I look like a girl, he thought, as he stared into the mirror. His mother walked in and began fixing his hair over Tommy's objections. She combed it to both sides and parted it in the middle. Now he really felt stupid.

Tommy soon found out that his mother's "friend" was called Alex; and he was a farmer. He had cows, ducks, and even a couple horses. Tommy was a little less than thrilled at the thought of walking through steaming piles of cow manure to get to Alex's front door. His mother assured him that would not happen. He still had his doubts, though.

As they rode through the countryside, Tommy saw run-down houses, and barns that were burnt to the ground. He noticed a couple dead cats in the road and all of the clouds

that had gathered in the sky. Tommy had more than a few doubts about meeting Alex now. He had a bad feeling about this day.

He looked sullenly at the bales of hay that had been lined up in the fields just days earlier. The windshield beaded with tiny droplets of water as it began to rain.

By the time they pulled into Alex's driveway it was pouring. Through the cascade of water, Tommy could make out a bluish gray house. It had a huge front window and a deck on the side. Smoke was coming from the chimney. And behind him cows were gathering at the edge of the field to investigate them.

Tommy's mother stepped out of the car and motioned for him to follow. They ran to the door and knocked hurriedly. Tommy was getting drenched. So far he was less than impressed with his mother's wonderful idea of visiting Alex. His mother knocked at the door again and Tommy yelled out, "Alex!" His mother looked at him irritably and he quieted down.

Alex came to the door. He was a large man, with a potbelly and stubble on his face. His sandy blonde hair was in a perm. And he had a mustache. Tommy noticed that his nose was large, like his midsection.

Alex smiled as he welcomed them in. Tommy thought it was a rather sly smile. He already decided Alex was a jerk. This day could only get better, he thought.

Alex and his mother talked about this and that as Tommy played with several John Deere tractors that apparently belonged to Alex's son, Derrick. One was green and had large wheels, and another was red and much smaller. There was a green trailer that hooked onto the back of the green tractor. There were several styrofoam bales of hay that crunched in his hands and made an annoying sound when they rubbed against each other. Alex said that if he wanted

Tommy could go to the toy box downstairs and get the "baler" too. Tommy politely declined.

As Tommy played with the tractors, Alex bragged that all kids loved John Deere tractors and that Tommy looked like he was really having fun. But Tommy was just behaving because he knew what his mother would do to him if he told Alex how he really felt about him. He had decided that he really did hate Alex.

After a while his mother said she and Tommy would have to be leaving. Tommy tried not to look too eager as he jumped up and trotted over towards the door. He stopped at the stairway to wait for his mother. She gave him an angry look and said good-bye to Alex. As they were walking out to the car Alex yelled out, "Sharon, I've got to work this Saturday. Would you mind watching the kids? I'm sure they'd love to meet Tommy."

"Sure, I'll pick them up. Friday night okay?"

"Okay, I'll call them up and tell them."

Tommy and his mother hopped in the car and drove off. He was definitely not looking forward to Saturday. He thought that Friday night might be a good time to visit his Dad. He wasn't supposed to go until next weekend, but he didn't think his Dad would mind too much.

Tommy's mother seemed to be reading his thoughts. She said, "You're not going to your father's this weekend, Tommy, he's working. And besides, Tammy and Derrick will be expecting you to be there. You wouldn't want to disappoint them, would you?"

Tommy resisted the urge to tell his mother that he was fully intending to do just that. It didn't matter, she was mad anyway. Besides, he thought, she never mentioned anything about not going to his Aunt Renee's or Uncle Kris's. He picked up his He-Man and Skeletor figures and started to play. "I'll kill you, He-Man, he he he. No, Skeletor, I'll kill you!" ❧

Susmita Chatterjee

The Waves

The moon was shining
And we remained enthralled,
The moonlit path before us,
Shining and gorgeous.

A canopy of stars thronged over
As we trod into the sojourn solitaire,
To encroach into the time
That belonged to the night.

It was night reaching morn,
A little shy of dawn.
Enchanted we beheld
The waves on the lake,

The waves each carrying
In its bosom the moon.
Ah! The waves!
A thousand moons danced
And we stood entranced,
Clasping each other
In a breathless whisper.

The glistening light spread,
The shining path ran
Through water sparkling,
Piercing deep into the center.

All the shadows fell.
The leaves on the branches of the trees
In a clamor for the moonlight
Danced in the breeze.

It was as if the whole
Of nature unfolded
And the moonlight overflooded,
The earth trembled and quivered

Into the bosom of tenderness
To be lost on bareness,
And the shadows fell
Like the bowers of heaven, limitless.

Note: The Buddhists believe that the Cosmos is like a vast ocean with waves that are constantly in motion. Life is therefore in a flux, and so are individuals.

Kevin Casey

Poaching

When they started to come down the other side of the mountain, the flurries stopped and the sun came out. The sky was still dark behind them. The road was wet and black except for a few patches of snow, scraped to a dirty shine by a plow. The pine, spruce and hemlock boughs, weighed down with snow, swung slowly in the wind, occasionally sloughing off a clump in a powdery cloud.

Steven rolled down the back seat window to smell the air. It was clear and smelled like snow and cold. He wished he could seize—in words—all this smell meant to him, for his friends in the front seat. He wished he could describe how the air had driven snowflakes deep between balsam needles, then shook them out later, how the air had been crushed in a gale against the cliffs above the road that were covered in lumps of oozing, blue ice, and how the air had been tumbled by the plow together with sand, snow and rock salt, then flung against the trunks of trees. But these ideas bounded off at odd angles, defying capture, and Steven remained silent.

Steven could hear the car wheels hiss on the wet road, gusts of air push into the window, and once heard a blue jay he couldn't see screaming at something in the woods. The car grew cold and he rolled up the window.

Below them in the valley, the sun glinted on the tin roofs of homes and on the train tracks that paralleled the river. Steven could tell the lakes from the fields by the huts and the trucks of the ice fishermen. On the far side of the valley, in Canada, it was dark and snowing.

Ed and Dave's laughter from the front seat kept Steven from staring at the snow in Canada. In Ed's living room early that morning, as they loaded up the car, Ed and Dave

had begun laughing at things Steven didn't understand, or didn't think were funny.

As they passed the final rest area, Steven was about to suggest that the two look at the white ribbon of the Moose River below them, and at the snow falling on the mountains across the valley, instead of goofing around, when Dave said, laughing still:

"Man! Look at this! Look at this place!"

"Unreal," Ed said solemnly, shaking his head. "Unreal." He looked as though he was going to cry.

Though disappointed at the moment that he couldn't reprimand his friends, Steven was excited to be back. They were quieter now, and Steven began telling them about the cabins his parents rented out, and about the town. He soon felt as if he was babbling, though, and forced himself to be quiet.

They drove through town, three miles beyond the transfer station to where the plow no longer had a reason to go. Steven had David park the car at the beginning of the Scott Paper road that served as the seven-mile long driveway to his parents' camps. Ed and Dave were still quiet as they all put on their hats and coats, stuffed the food and beer into their backpacks and pockets, and helped each other get the straps around unbending elbows and over shoulders made thick with layers of clothes. Steven's whistling was constant, but only carried a few feet before dying in the cold air.

They stepped up over the lip of snow onto the unplowed road and waded to a set of snowmobile tracks, where the walking was easy. The snow was tight in the frozen air and squeaked as their boots moved upon it.

A few miles before they reached the camps, a noise like an infant screaming tore through the woods. It was loud and close. They all froze. Steven had heard this sound before, and there was always a dying rabbit at the end of it.

"Uh... Steven?" Ed said. Ed's large hands fumbled with the knife on his belt.

"It's just a rabbit, guys," Steven said.

"Well, he doesn't sound happy," said Dave.

"That's because someone's killing him."

Steven was satisfied, not simply to see his friends rattled, but to know about and feel comfortable in the frozen, terrible emptiness around them. Here, in the quiet and the cold, *he* would be the leader, conducting his friends through the barren white, the wilderness and fear, back to their shared youth. They would have fun like in the old days, and it would be him orchestrating it all. The sound stopped and they continued to crunch along down the road, Steven smiling.

They finally got to the hill overlooking the cabins and saw the rolling line of the mountains across the lake. The lake itself was a faint blue sheet. Steven could make out the mouth of the river, but he knew he couldn't describe its location, and so didn't mention it.

They could see several of the cabins. Steven chose the cabin with running water, which flowed from a spring line buried deep. They knocked their boots on the porch floor and went in.

Dave and Ed walked around, looking at the cabin; Steven stood in the doorway, watching them. There was the one double bed, and two bunk beds, pushed against the wall to the left of the fireplace. The lumpy, black couch was on the opposite wall. There was the counter with the large, chipped ceramic sink, the gas-powered stove and refrigerator, and the wood stove that separated them from the fireplace. The large, pine table with benches was in the middle of the cabin. They dropped their packs on the couch.

"Hey, let's check out the place before dinner, Steve," Dave said.

"Sure. Let me just get a fire going."

As Steven crouched to build the fire, loosely crumpling last year's newspapers, he was sharply aware of Ed and

Dave standing behind him, watching.

"It could get to sixty below tonight if the wind picks up. We'll have to keep this going for three days," Steven said. "No matter what."

"The Eternal Flame," Ed answered. Dave smiled.

When it was lit, Steven took them to Wellington Stream, which bordered his parents' property on the north. They heard the stream before they came to the bank that overlooked it. It sounded like coins being dropped together inside a box.

The stream was about ten feet across in most places, and, except in a few spots, the ice and snow managed to cover that distance. Alder branches, with fins of snow along their backs, arched over the covered stream. Where the stream was open, the branches moved in the air stirred by the rushing water, and they held no snow.

There was an open spot in the stream directly below them. Along the edges of this hole, the ice had no snow upon it, and was thin enough to show the water flowing beneath. Beads of water clung to the underside of this ice, moved in toward the hole, then fell back into the stream. They could see dark stones set in place beneath the water, which was streaked and mottled with the pale blue it reflected from the sky.

They stared at this open spot for a long time.

Dave finally stirred and asked if trout would bite in winter. Steven worried that they would want to try to fish, that they would press the season. He muttered something about torpor, and that the road was right over the ridge to the left.

They were close to the cabins, near the spring area, when Dave said, pointing, "Ed, Steve! What do we got here?"

"Bobcat?" Dave offered.

"Bunny," Steven said.

"Come on," said Dave.

"Really! Snowshoe hare."

"That's a big bunny, Steve," Ed commented.

"Indeed," Steven said. "And good eatin', to boot."

"Gee, Steve, rabbit would sure taste good for dinner," said Ed.

Steven hadn't gotten his hunting license yet. He hated poaching, poachers, getting in trouble, and feeling guilty. The season was being pressed. This was not part of the plan, not part of his role. He looked out toward the lake and saw the smoke from their fire.

"Let's get the .22," he said.

They walked back to the tool shed, where his father kept some guns. Steven kicked snow away from the door. "One moment, gentlemen," he said, turning. He came out of the shed with a single-shot .22 and a pocket full of bullets.

Steven took them back to the spring, and followed the tracks up the orchard hill into the buckthorns. Their quarry was beneath a rose tangle, planted long ago. The hare was bigger than they all thought it would be, sitting like a sphinx and beautiful, with large, black-tipped ears and chest puffed out like a lion.

Steven fell down upon the snow, on his belly. He waited a long time before he fired. The .22 snapped like a cap gun. The hare didn't move, but twitched its ear. Steven took another bullet from his pocket and shot again. The hare squirmed and wiggled like a child being tickled. It had stopped by the time Steven ran up and grabbed it. The hare's left ear had a neat hole in it.

"There's the first shot. See?" Steven asked, pointing to the hole in the ear. Dave stared at the dead animal with mild disgust. Ed said, "Hey, do your folks have any skis?"

The once elegant, white hare was nearly covered in blood by the time they got to the cabin. Inside, Steven's fire had died. As Steven stood near the sink, scraping coagulated blood from the inside of the rabbit with his fingernail, Ed and Dave crouched near the wood stove, building their own fire, laughing. ❧



—Lucas Martin

Leon Raikes

Two Poems

Your Gestures

Or your gestures too
may express the miracles
of all things bending and unbending.
See how the clean rivers
turn
and turn
at will almost under
dark mountains—is it
the rivers that invent
these colors along the pineroots
or is it the trees
that echo in the waters
these hues of soaked shadows?
Or see how silver maple leaves
turn
and turn
among sundrifts
their undeciphered
shreds
of light. Turn
and turn the silver maple leaves
until you cannot tell
the colors of their dancing
from the shadows
of their darker signatures.
Or see how even
the cleft rock
of sandstone canyons
writes on its own face

asymmetrical waves, layers
of fossil feet and wings
that never stop working.
One age falls into the colors
of another, none of them
shadows.
Especially the wind
never turns its sharp corners.
Even the pondweeds, growing
in succulent rings, favor
the left and make lovely
the lopsided flowers. If, lost
in snowy heights, one buck grows
more points on its right,
do not be surprised by the beauty of
his shadow.
Drink instead this silence.
I am telling you it's time...

Wu Wei

i

One fine morning–
The golden mists rising
into the waking light of a million netted branches—
it would be worth your while
to walk out quietly
into the almost-silent meadows.

ii

It will be to find
what we can learn from the voice
of deep rivers
that you go out alone.

iii

Watch water.
And listen. It is not to push stones
that the water comes.
Nor to eat a new path
among the seven great mountains.
Nor even to observe
what it itself is doing.
It only flows.

iv

And while it travels
without resisting
to where it goes—
I want you to notice—
it *sings*.

v

What the voice of the river
teaches may be imprecise for now.
Who can explain it?
But many years from now
somewhere in a golden meadow,
just some morning or evening
you might meet someone
who can explain everything.

vi

Until then,
come with me to wait
and to listen.
The water is laughing
even now at the wet sides of stones.
And polishing them beautifully
with strange music.

Esther Rauch
Two Poems

After the Fall

Those leaves
destined to leave
are leaving now
and falling softly
into Fall
into Autumn's
red, yellow, red-gold
brown, dappled
spotted, stippled
blowing in the soft
breezes—willy-nilly
into the grass
along the
walks
leaving traces of gold-leaf
against the sky
in the eye
after the fall.

Waiting

In the dark silent house
Where there are rooms
Filled with whatever
Almost is

Someone examines
Wounds that fail
To heal and scars
In unlit passageways

Someone who has been
day-by-day subjected
To the thousand little hurts
That flesh is heir to

Someone who waits
For the dayspring from
On high to visit
And lighten the darkness

Someone who waits
To be carried off to that
Mansion of many rooms
prepared for the faithful

Who live with the faithless
In a dark silent house
Where there are rooms
Filled with whatever
Almost is.

J.W. Baker

The Tricycle

Being a kid isn't easy!

There are many things working against you. Your size for instance, or your strength, or having something someone else wants. Look! Let me tell you what I mean. I'm eleven years old, see, an' if that isn't bad enough, I can barely see the cookie jar without standing on a chair. Mom says I'm all teeth an' belly, but that's not my fault. It's her fault, you know. She shouldn't make her cakes an' cookies so good. I like them, an' she should be happy that I eat them 'cause if I didn't, maybe they would go to waste, an' that would be too bad—huh?

And that's not the half of it. There's my name. I bet there isn't anyone else in the whole wide world with a name like mine. It's not a name, it's a-a-a punishment, that's what it is. I couldn't talk when they decided to give me my name, but if I had been able to, I sure would have told them what I thought, you betcha.

I suppose you want to know what it is, huh? Well, I don't want to tell you, 'cause there are things better left unsaid. But—I guess I'll have to, but—let me tell you—if you so much as think of repeating it to anyone, I'll never tell you another thing as long as I live. An' that's a promise.

It's...horacegeorgelittlefield! HUH?...Okay! HORACE GEORGE LITTLEFIELD! I won't say it again. I can't say it again. Yech! It's too awful! Mom picked it out, but Dad calls me Horse. You know, I don't think he likes my name either.

The Horace part is for my Grandfather Littlefield. He doesn't want me to call him Grandpa, or Grandfather, you know. He says it's not respectful. He says, Horace you may call me SIR! It's terrible. He's tall and thin you know, an' his

mouth is all scrunched up, an' he doesn't have too much fun. So to keep peace in the family, I have to call him SIR, and say please an' thank you and things like that. He's always saying that the younger genera... ah... genter... ah... that kids today aren't as smart as when he was a kid. You know what? I don't think he was ever a kid; and maybe he doesn't like his name anyway.

The George Part is for Grandpa Noble. Mom says I'm the spitting image of him. He's short and has red hair just like me, an' he's a lot of fun. He chews terbacker, an' boy, can he spit far. Whenever he comes home, he always spits in the sink; and THAT makes Mom mad. He doesn't come over very often, 'cause he's always going away and spending a lot of time in the woods trapping. I like it when he comes to visit.

When Mom gets mad at me for no reason, she screams H-O-R-R-E-E-C-E! Boy, does that ever make my hair stand straight up. I try to tell her to call me HG or even Horse, but no, she has to use that name. Maybe it's 'cause she gets upset about Grandpa Noble all the time. She gets upset easy, 'cause she's the nervous type. She always says we are going to be the death of her yet. Boy, if you bring a frog or a snake into the house—WOW, does she ever have a fit! I remember once the Weasel was eating tadpoles from a mud puddle. Boy! You should have heard her holler. I bet they heard that clean to town. I remember she had to go lay down for the whole afternoon just to calm her nerves.

The Weasel? Oh, the Weasel is my little brother; he's six an' if you promise to take him with you, you can have him. Boy, what a sneak! He's always making things up about me. When he gets with The Bull, they... The Bull? He's my other brother. How old? He's seven... Boy, you sure ASK a lot of questions, huh?

Look! Do I have to tell you about them? Well—okay. I have these two little brothers, see, and they are always making my life miserable. They don't understand that little kids

stay out of the way of big kids, and don't mess around with their stuff. Mom wants me to call them by their real names, but I never do. Who wants brothers called Frank and Edgar, anyway? Okay! Okay! Frank is the Weasel, and Edgar is The Bull. I guess they didn't do so good with names either.

Anyway, like I was telling you, being a kid isn't easy, 'specially when you are short and fat and have thick glasses and red hair and a name like Horace. One day, though, when I was eight years old, something happened that made everything different for me.

You see, my father is a traveling salesman. He sells all sorts of things for a company called Happy Home Products. I guess he sells just about everything in the whole world. Well, anyway, he's always going off on trips and things like that. Sometimes when he is away for a long time, he brings us a surprise when he comes back.

Well, this one time he was gone for four days; and when he came home, I was at the kitchen table eating a peanut butter sandwich. Boy, I really like that stuff, and I put it on good and thick on some of Mom's bread. Well, anyway, he walked into the house with his case under his arm, and stopped to look at me.

"Horse," he said, "I have brought you the latest in self-powered transportation, and you will find it in the trunk of the car." Believe it or not, he really had this funny way of talking—you know, like he was reading from a book or something. It sure was confusing sometimes.

He put his case down, and continued, "Yes sir, my boy, there you will find the biggest, the best in three wheel transportation. What do you say to that?"

"UMMPFT!" That was the best I could do. Why do people wait until my mouth is full of peanut butter and bread to ask me a question?

"Come, come, my boy, surely you can manage a better response than that." He sat in a chair facing me.

"Horace, you answer your father this minute." Mom

came in from the dining room where she had been getting the table ready for supper.

"UM-P-F-F-T—UH!" I spit out a few pieces of bread and tried to swallow the balance. "Uh... Uh..."

"Horace, how many times have I told you not to talk with your mouth full. Here—take a drink of this water and answer your father. Lord knows I try to do the best I can with you, but I'm afraid it's a lost cause. And wipe that peanut butter from your chin." She handed me a towel. "I don't know what I am going to do with you." It didn't take much to make my Mom nervous, and when she got nervous she got upset, an' when she got upset she talked a lot.

So I took a drink of the water and managed to force the peanut butter down. "Uh, gee, Dad, that's great... uh... what was that you said you had?" Ignoring the towel, I wiped my chin with the back of my hand.

"Come along, my boy, and I will show you." He got up from the chair and gave Mom a kiss on the cheek. "Come and see this, Mildred." We all walked out to the car.

"Hey! Hey! Pa's home! Pa's home!" The Bull and The Weasel came running up. "What d'ya bring us, huh, Pa?"

See? It's just like I been telling ya, they want to get into everything.

"Hey! Stop it you guys. Dad brought something home for me. Now get away! He brought it for ME!" The Bull was not looking where he was going and accidentally tripped over my leg.

"Ow! Pa! The dirty rat tripped me!"

"Boys, boys. Let us have a little decorum here, a little law and order, if you please. Stand back, now." He opened the lid and reached into the trunk of the car and pulled out the biggest tricycle anyone had ever seen. Even The Bull and The Weasel were stunned into silence. We stood frozen and looked at it in awe.

It had a large wheel up front, all chrome and wires; the axle extended out on both sides, bending around to form

the pedals. The large, silver, long-horn handlebars had red rubber hand grips and the center of each grip had multi-colored ribbons streaming out of it. The frame was painted red with blue stripes and had the words THE ZEPHYR lettered on both sides. The seat was black like the tires. It had a large stand in the back that could support anyone if I cared to give them a ride. Ha! Fat chance!

"Fred, now why did you go and buy that? All they'll do is fight over it. They fight enough as it is." Mom never wanted us to have anything. If she had her way, we would stay locked up in the cellar all the time.

"Nonsense, Mildred, I'm sure the boys will conduct themselves properly." He turned to me. "Well, Horse, do you want to take it on its maiden voyage?"

"What's a maiden voyage?" I asked. I wasn't really sure I wanted this tricycle. I don't know why he didn't buy a regular two-wheel bike 'cause only little kids had tricycles, and I wasn't a little kid. Not like The Bull and The Weasel, anyway.

"A maiden voyage is when you take something out for its first ride." He looked at me sternly. "But after your first ride you will let Frank and Edgar share it, won't you?"

"But, Dad, you said it was mine." I wasn't about to let them use it without a fight.

"See, I told you this would start some trouble." Mom threw her hands up in the air and stomped into the house.

"Now, Horse, in this family you are expected to share and share alike. It is not nice or desirable to keep everything and not share. Greedy people act like that. We are not greedy, are we?" He looked around at the three of us. "Well, Horse...?"

I knew right then that if I pushed too hard, I might not get to keep the tricycle. "Okay, they can have it a little while, but only when I am not using it." Ha! I had news for them, the dirty pests.

"All right, Horse, you take your bike out for a ride, but

make sure you let your brothers have their turn." He left us and walked into the house.

So I took my bike out on its maiden ride; and you know what, that thing could move. I could make it start up so fast that the back wheels would spin and kick out some dirt. And turn—Wow! It could turn on a dime. You know I think I'm going to like this tricycle after all, and no one, but no one, is going to get hold of this if I can help it.

As I rode it around the yard, I was thinking very hard, trying to find ways to keep it away from The Bull and The Weasel. But I had to be careful so as not to get Dad mad at me. It was not easy. If only I didn't have brothers, then I wouldn't have this problem.

"Come on, let us take a ride." The Bull was dancing around me and trying to wrestle the handlebars away. "Come on, come on, give us our turn."

"Look, you guys, I'll give you each one ride." I felt that I had to do something before Mom heard all the noise and made Dad take the bike away. "Get on the back."

"On the back? NO! NO! NO! I WANT TO DRIVE IT!" The Bull was red with rage and jumping up and down. "Git off it, ya fat slob, I want to DRIVE!"

"It's mine, and you ride in back. Besides, I haven't had a chance to really try it out yet. Tell you what, tomorrow I'll let you drive it." I was getting desperate.

"NO! NOW!"

"Boys, come in and eat your supper. Everything is ready. Come on in, now." Mom came out on the porch just at the right time, stopping them from taking everything that I had.

"Come on guys, let's go eat. We can ride after supper." Saved by the bell.

"Come in right this minute, boys. Don't make me call you again. Hurry up before everything gets cold." Did I mention that Mom is the nervous type and that if we don't do what she asks, she gets upset? Well, she is and we had learned to mind, especially at meal times.

Besides, the smell of fried pork chops, mashed potatoes, gravy and biscuits made my mouth water. Pork chops are my favorite food. Mom really cooks up a storm when Dad comes home from a trip, and with my two brothers around it doesn't pay to be last at the table. They eat so much it isn't funny.

"Don't forget to wash your hands." She was always afraid that we would get germs or something.

"Yep!"

"Sure!"

"Uh-huh!" Everyone sat down and started eating.

"Boys, your mother and I are going into town after supper. Do any of you want to come? We shouldn't be gone too long."

"Oh boy, can we get some ice cream?" The Weasel could eat ice cream until it ran out of his ears.

"Well, we'll see about the ice cream. You'll probably be too full from eating supper to have any room." He looked at my two brothers.

"Mildred," he continued, "this is a very delicious meal. You've done it again." He looked at me. "Are you coming with us, Horse?"

Boy, he sure knew how to make a guy suffer. I didn't know what to do. It wasn't often we could go for a ride in the car; I wanted to go but I wanted to ride my bike too.

"Well, Horse, are you coming with us?"

Although a ride in the car was better than riding my bike, I knew that if I didn't stay home, it would be harder to keep the bike away from those two after that. Let me tell you, I had a real problem with this one.

So I bit the bullet.

"No, Dad, I'll stay home and ride my bike." No one will ever know how painful that decision was.

As soon as I finished eating I dashed out and got on my bike and started riding around. Mom washed the supper dishes and then everyone got into the car and drove into

town. I stood there watching them go, and I just knew that I would be sorry. That always happened to me.

All the time I was riding the bike, I kept thinking of a way I could keep my brothers from using it. Whatever I did, I had to do in such a way as not to make Dad or Mom mad at me. That wouldn't be easy, 'cause my brothers were masters at getting me into trouble. I knew though, that I couldn't ride like this forever, 'cause, to tell the truth, my legs were about ready to fall off. I couldn't go through the rest of my life pedaling that bike. Why did I have to have brothers, anyway?

It was getting close to dark so I decided to stop riding and find a place to hide the bike. I pedaled over to our old pine tree and parked it there. By this time I had decided to chain it to the tree for protection.

I dragged an old rusty chain from the barn and, using one of Dad's big padlocks, chained it to the tree. I had just finished when everyone came home. As soon as the car stopped, the doors opened, and The Weasel and The Bull jumped out and came running over.

"Yay! Yay! Yay! We got ice cream...we got ice cream!" The Bull screeched to a halt next to me, took one look at what I was doing, and threw a fit.

"Hey! What are you doing? We want our ride. Pa, he's tying up the bike! Make him stop! We want our ride! He promised we could have a ride!" The Bull was shouting at the top of his voice. Boy, these guys want everything in the world.

"Dad, I'm just tying it up so no one will steal it tonight."

"Horace, don't be mean. Let your brothers use the tricycle." Mom was getting into the act and that could mean trouble.

"Ah Mom, they can ride it tomorrow. It's getting dark; and besides, I have to put it away. If they ride in the dark, they might hit something and scratch it." I was getting desperate.

"It is late, isn't it? Well, all right, Horace, but see that you let them use it tomorrow. Remember what your father told you." She turned and headed into the house. "Oh, that man, as if I didn't have enough trouble with you boys without having this added to everything. It's just like him. There he is, sitting in the house without a care in the world, and I'm out here arguing with you." She paused and turned towards us.

"Okay, boys, into the house this minute. That's enough for one day. Come in! Come in! NOW! This minute!" Mom was getting mad, and she really meant business.

"Aw, gee, Ma, do we have to? It's early yet. We're not tired." They were not about to give up, let me tell you. Me? I scooted for the house as fast as I could run.

"That's enough. Come into the house this minute." When she sounded like that we had to move. "And wash up before you go to bed."

I had a hard time getting to sleep that night. All kinds of things kept running through my head. I had to figure a way to keep them away from my bike, and I didn't know how to do it. The only thing I could think of doing was to get up early and get the bike before they did. Maybe I could take it someplace and hide it. Say, maybe I could hide it and make believe that someone stole it during the night. Yeah! That was it. Someone stole it. I wonder if they would believe that?

The next thing I knew, the sound of loud angry voices made me sit up in bed. I looked around the room. It wasn't dark anymore; in fact, it was bright daylight. How could I have overslept like this, especially today?

"My turn... it's my turn, I tell you." That was The Bull, and he wanted his turn? Turn? They had my bike! I jumped out of bed and looked out the window and there they were, pulling on the handlebars of my bike.

"Leggo, ya rat! Ya had it longer than me... Leggo!" The Weasel tried to put his leg over the seat.

"No! It's my turn... I want to ride... now!"

"Get away from my bike!" I shouted out the window. "Get away from it!" I headed for the stairs in a hurry. I never even put on any shoes or pants. I just had on my pajama bottoms. Someone was going to die, and when I lay my hands on them there wouldn't be enough left to butter toast. I would squeeze them until they were just blobs.

I burst out of the door and shouted at them, "Stop that, you dirty rats! STOP THAT!" I was so mad I could barely see as I jumped off the porch. My glasses were all steamed up and those two looked just like blurs.

"Let go of my bike! Let go! Let go! I'll kill you-u." I stopped and picked up a rock and threw it with all my might. It sailed out over their heads and crashed against the old pine tree. My screaming and the rock got their attention real quick.

"Watch it, the fat boy is here." The Weasel let go of the bike and backed away.

"I don't care. I want my turn on this darn bike." The Bull hung on to the bike with both hands and tried to climb into the seat. "Get away from me! I want to ride it."

I jumped on him and pulled him to the ground, knocking the wind out of him. It didn't take The Weasel but a second to jump on top of me. The tears were running down my cheeks as I pounded on The Bull, while The Weasel was doing his darndest to pull my pajama bottoms off.

"That's my bike, darn you... uh... OW!... uh... how did... you get it... free? Ow! Don't scratch! It's mine, I tell... uh... you... ."

"We can use it too... Ma said... we could... uh." The Bull managed to pull himself away enough to shout in my face.

"It's mine... I'll get... uh... you." I grabbed him and pulled him under me again. "Leggo my... pants, you dirty... Weasel." I kicked at him with my feet.

A blood-curdling scream rang out and vibrated up and down the yard. "E - E - Y - O - O - W ! HE BIT ME! H-E-E

B-I-T M-E-E-E!" The Bull's cry of anguish was still echoing across the yard when I felt myself rise rapidly from the ground and hover in midair. Unknown to us, our fighting had interrupted Dad's sleep and he came out of the house just in time to hear The Bull's scream.

Smack! His hand descended on my exposed bottom with great vigor.

"Horse, did you bite your brother?" Smack! He let me have it again. It's like I told you before, I get it no matter what.

"But, Dad, I... didn't..." I couldn't wiggle out of his grasp. "Anyway it was... just... a little... bite."

"He did, he did... I saw him." The Weasel was getting in his two cents worth.

"Why did you bite your little brother, Horse?" Dad let me stand up. "Pull up your pajamas and go into the house."

"But, Dad, they... took... my... bike." I sobbed as I tried to pull up my pajama bottoms.

"Come here Edgar, let me see where he bit you." He pulled The Bull over and looked at his back. There, for all to see, was the imprint of a set of teeth, all puffed up and red.

Dad turned to me and said, "Did you do this, Horse? There is no need to bite like an animal. Only wild animals like Bobcats use their teeth like that. There was no call to do something like that, Horse, no call at all."

"Animal, animal, you're nothing but an animal." The Weasel was dancing around.

The Bull chimed in, "He's nothing but an animal, huh, Pa?"

"That's enough, boys. Put that bike away and go into the house." He turned to me and added, "Horse, find your glasses and go to your room; right now!" He took The Bull by the arm. "Come along, son, we'll have to put something on that bite so it doesn't get infected."

The Bull passed near me and gave me a kick on the shin. "Bobcat!" He hissed the word at me.

My parents decided that The Bull had better get a tetanus shot to prevent lockjaw. The doctor said that human bites are very dangerous. The Bull didn't like that, let me tell you.

You know, I've always felt that The Bull brought it on himself. If my brothers had left my bike alone, none of this would have ever happened. It was all their fault.

Besides, it wasn't that big a bite, anyway. You can hardly see it anymore. I think he's just a crybaby.

No sir! It's not easy being a kid, especially when you have two brothers that want everything you have.

Oh, yeah, did I tell you? I have a new name, and it's not much better than the other one, either.

They call me Bobcat now. ❧



—Michael Mindera

Contributors

Scott Anttila has been photographing the Maine outdoors for twenty years. He has been attending classes and doing volunteer work at the Creative Photographic Art Center of Maine for four years. Scott also leads outdoor photographic workshops and hopes to also complete his degree through UMA. Scott's photos shown here are part of a five-year black and white study of snow and ice.

J. W. Baker, a Maine native, hates snow, loves flowers, and is currently serving as Director of Teacher Education at Husson College.

Jeremy Brown is a Communications student in his second year. He loves to hunt, fish, play pool, read, and write in many different genres. He is 20 years old.

A lover of literature, **Susmita Chatterjee** holds a Masters in Philosophy and a Ph.D. in Regional Economics from Presidency College in Calcutta, India. She is dedicated to academics at Husson, and believes in the pursuit of excellence, the good, and the beautiful.

Kevin Casey was born to Italian immigrants in the tenement slums of pre-Depression-Era Manhattan, where he taught himself oil painting and fencing by the age of four. Attending many famous Colleges and Institutions with difficult-to-pronounce names, he later went on to play major league baseball and invent the toaster oven. Kevin currently lives in a small Maine town with his wife and son, where he still pursues his passions for bullfighting and curing smoked cheeses.

Rene Collins, who is the College Counselor and Clinical Coordinator of the Advanced Practice Psychiatric Nursing Program, earned a diploma in nursing from Maine Medical Center and a doctorate in Counselor Education from the University of Maine. She finds balance in life from her family and through running. She is a yearly qualified runner of the Boston Marathon and president of the Sub5 Track Club.

Jon Connolly is a biologist at Husson College. He earned his Ph.D. from the University of Maine and M.S. from Yale University. His research interests are focused on the decomposition of wood and the role of wood decay in nutrient cycling in forests. He spends his fragments of spare time writing poetry, short stories and children's stories.

Judy Connolly, the mother of Jon Connolly, gained much of her experience of New England life while growing up on a Vermont farm. She continues to dedicate much of her time to autobiographical writings and has been published in regional literary outlets. She is the proud mother of four children and a grandmother of six.

Frank Coviello is a freshman CIS student from Stewartstown, New Hampshire.

Francesca DeSanctis grew up in Maine and is now residing in Lewiston, where she is attending photography classes at the Creative Photographic Art Center. She is seeking a degree through the University of Maine at Augusta in Fine Art. She is in hopes of having a career in either Fine Art or Documentary Photography. Francine loves photography and the outdoors.

Rick Doyle teaches at ICLS. He lives in Bangor with his wife and their two sons. Last summer he read his poetry at the Maine Arts Festival.

Brenda Hart I live in Bethel, Maine. I am a second year student at the University of Maine at Augusta, currently studying at the Creative Photographic Art Center of Maine. I am working towards my Associates degree in Fine Arts and Photography and have a great love for nature and portrait photography. I have future plans of starting my own portrait studio.

Marie Juckett is a nurse who works with children (nights) for the State of Maine, a mother of three boys, a runner of 5K's, and the wife of Rob Juckett. She is a student at Husson College and has lived in Bangor for 23 years.

Robert N. Juckett is an instructor with ICLS. He has a keen interest in Husson basketball, baseball, and his hard-working wife.

J.T. Kenny is Dean of Science and Humanities at Husson. A historian and political scientist by training, he has long been interested in creative writing and has produced two novel-length manuscripts. In his spare time, he enjoys camping, canoeing, and performing as the tail end of a pantomime horse.

Nikolas Kristophe is a searching soul from the rural woods of Small Town, New England, parented by a construction foreman and a stained glass artisan. A family of fine, upstanding individuals, including three vivacious siblings, is supportive and caring. Pastimes include learning; contemplating life and love; reading, writing, and feeling poetry; dreaming; and reminiscing.

Candace Kuchinski is a native Californian, but feels more at home in the Maine outdoors. Besides studying photography at the Creative Photographic Art Center, she enjoys snowboarding, sailing and swimming. Her dream is to explore the fun in life through photography and travel with Dennis and her very own doggie.

Linda Labin Like Frazier, I was in an Existentialist club in school and was voted "Student Most Likely To *Be*." I have been working on living up to the title and "passing open windows" as a sideline.

Tom McCoy, formerly of Hodgton, Maine, is a writer and television producer living in Denver, Colorado. He has produced and directed one-act plays, served at various times as a college English teacher, and worked as a ranch hand up on the Colorado Divide.

Scott C. MacCallum cites influence from Ernest Hemingway, Allen Ginsburg, and Noam Chomsky. After his graduation from NESCOM, he hopes to continue his education elsewhere.

Karen Martin is a Secretary/Coordinator at ICLS. A Russian Studies major and former Jesuit volunteer, she is a young writer currently at work on her first novel. She lives in Stillwater and is a member of the Maine Writers and Publishers Alliance. Her hobbies include reading, cooking, hiking, and skiing.

Lucas Martin I've lived in Bangor all my life. I am a freshman in the Physical Therapy program here at Husson. I enjoy drawing and photography in my spare time. I like the outdoors: hiking, camping, snowshoeing, cross country skiing, and fishing. I am a member of the Husson outing club, which is a great program at Husson that anyone can join. I also write some poetry.

Shawn McKenna is a sophomore fan of Edgar Allan Poe.

Manuela Teles Menezes I was born in Bahia, Brazil on February 21, 1977. I am the oldest of my family. I like every kind of music and art. I love to travel around the world. My favorite hobbies are fishing, dance and swimming.

Michael Benjamin Mindera My hometown is Ferryville, Connecticut. I attended the University of Maine at Orono for two years. I then transferred to the Creative Photographic Art Center, where I am currently enrolled in my second semester of classes. Upon graduation I am planning a career in the field of photojournalism. Another type of photography that I am interested in is "street photography."

ICLS instructor **Bob Nichols** enjoys the flow of cultures and personalities through his classroom, living in the country with his wife and pets, and playful creativity.

Nancy Nichols, sister of Bob Nichols, grew up in Maine and is currently enrolled in the MFA painting program at Indiana State University. She has been writing since at least the second grade, where she once tried to earn some extra cash by selling copies of an original poem about kittens.

Gina O'Brien A first-year student here at Husson College, Gina is enrolled in the five-year Accounting program. After graduation she hopes to become a CPA and eventually own her own business. In her spare time she enjoys reading, writing, web page design, and role-playing.

Lyn-mara Pomales, a student in NESCOM, aspires to write for an animal rights publication and loves creative writing and poetry.

Leon Raikes, born in Salt Lake City, has also lived in Montana, Lebanon, and Michigan. He now resides in Steuben, Maine, and will never move again. An Associate Professor of English at Husson, his major interests include poetry, comparative religions, writing about nature or the wilderness, and birds. He lives with his wife Kim, now a Methodist minister in Downeast Maine, and their youngest son Jesse (age 17). Leon and Kim have two other children: Mary, now a student at College of the Atlantic, and Nathan, residing in Colorado.

Elizabeth Ramirez has been an instructor at ICLS for the past five years. Before that, she was an English instructor in Japan.

Esther Nettles Rauch earned the Ph.D. and the M.A. from The Ohio State University and the A.B. from Fisk University. Her work life includes management experience at the Center For Naval Analyses at Arlington, VA, instructional positions at The Ohio State University, Maine Maritime Academy, and University of Maine. She retired as Vice President of Bangor Theological Seminary, and she is currently Constance Carlson Distinguished Lecturer in the Humanities at Husson.

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 senior in the Computer Information Systems program, President of the Association of Information Technology Professionals, and President of the Student Government.

Courtney Rockwell is a freshman Physical Therapy major.

Kara Anne Schreiber has lived in Bangor, Maine since 1968. She teaches various writing classes and workshops and critiques for beginning and established authors. She and her husband, Edward Benedict, have a son, four daughters, and a daughter-in-law.

Ernie Steele is an alumnus of Husson College and a long-time supporter of the Husson community. He enjoys writing poetry and short stories and photographing the Maine coast and countryside as well as 'interesting characters' throughout the country.

Eugene Tarbox is a sophomore Business major and a pitcher for the baseball team.

Tiffany Teske, of Kingfield, is currently working toward a photography degree at the Creative Photographic Art Center. She has had a lifelong love and respect for photography. She owns Olde Sage Photography in Kingfield, and specializes in outdoor candid photography of children and families, weddings, and photographic greeting cards made from her garden and wildlife images. She is currently archiving the photography collection at the Kingfield Historical Society. Teske teaches art and dance to local children. This summer she plans to work on a documentary about her community.

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

Cameron Webb I live in Bangor and am presently going to Fifth Street Middle School. I am 13 years old. Bruce MacGregor, a professor at Husson, is my grandfather. I love basketball, baseball, and soccer. My story was suggested by a writing prompt: "What is/was your favorite toy?"

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