

CORNFIELD REVIEW 5

1980





CORNFIELD REVIEW

An Annual of the Creative Arts

1980 Vol. 5

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EMILIE GLEN

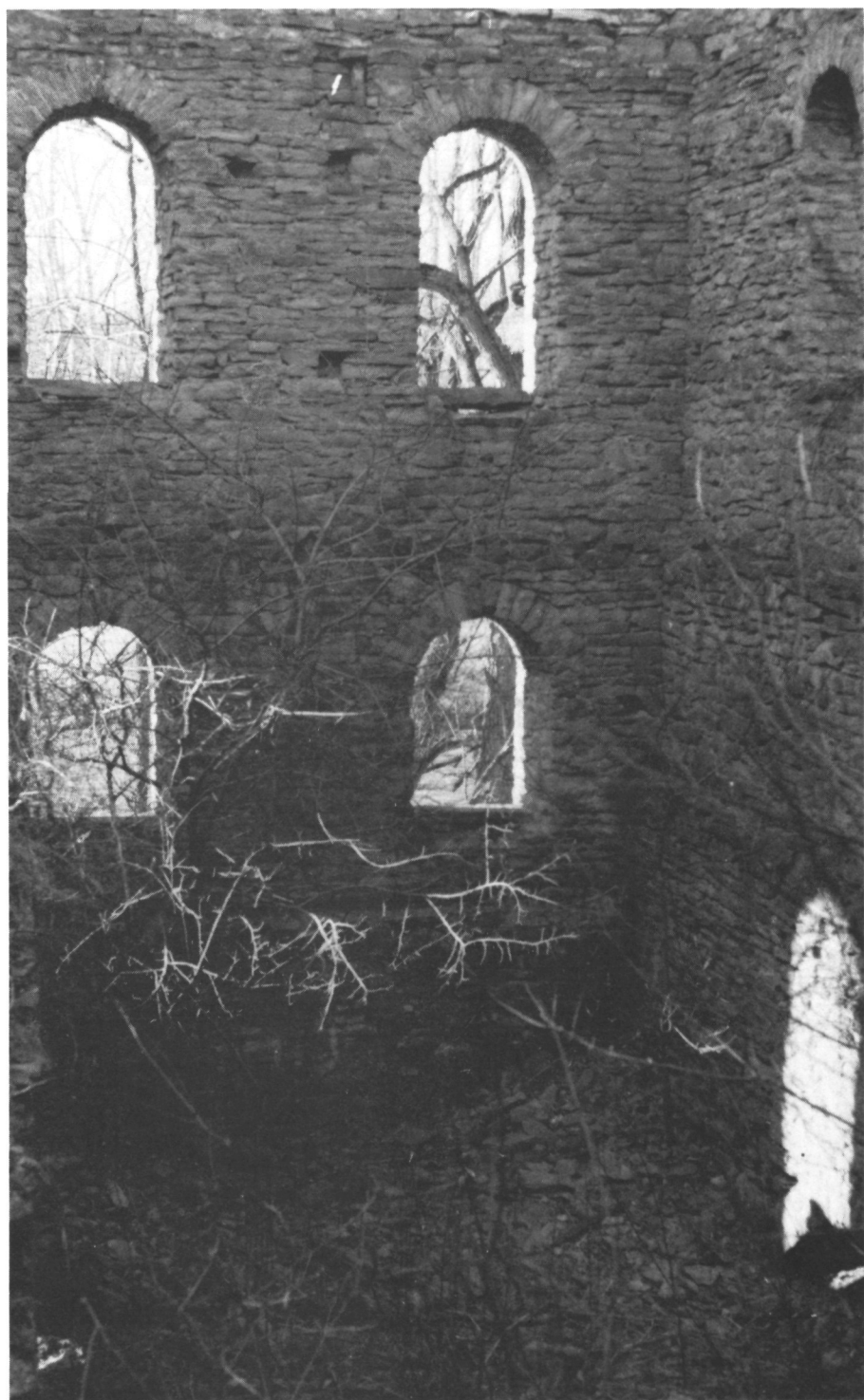
Why Does He Hate Miro

Father from the gypsy caves above Triana
Mother from the coffee hills of Puerto Rico
 the five-year-old looks up at me
 with eyes too dark for pupils
To bloom Spanish pride
I point to a painting by Miro
 Dark deep he looks into the splashing gold
My Father hates that
 Hates Miro Why
 Why does he hate Miro
My Father hates everything beautiful
 Why why everything beautiful
Because he has to work so hard

EDWARD LENSE

Wolf Dream

He hunches into his fur coat
and waits in the alley behind her house.
Her bedroom window still is lit:
she sleeps with her husband once a year,
and he is waiting up for her.
Wife and lover watch from the alley
as her husband's shadow crosses the window, comes back,
stands still in the light.
After midnight, the window dark, the lovers
crawl behind the garbage cans into an empty field,
fall tight together, roll over and over,
arms locked into crooks around each other's chests,
breath pressed out in whistling gasps.
Their tongues loll into each other's mouths,
their nails bite through fur and cloth
into skin. When they feel each other's blood, they change.
He is the stronger. Her face, human again,
stares up at the black shape crouched on her chest,
its fur heavy and stiffening with her blood.
He no longer sees her. He is sharing her husband's dream
of night skies, shadows crossing the moon
on four legs, two; crooked trees knock in the wind,
their shadows on the snow waver around the dark cleft
where the eyes wait, and the harsh breath;
then the snow bursts in a flurry of claws, cries, a shot
and a new shadow falls, rolls
over and over, hunches itself into human form
as it dies at the feet of the one man fated to hunt it down:
a man scarred to the bone
who had lain mauled, had felt death enter his flesh
as a lover, as a great wolf.



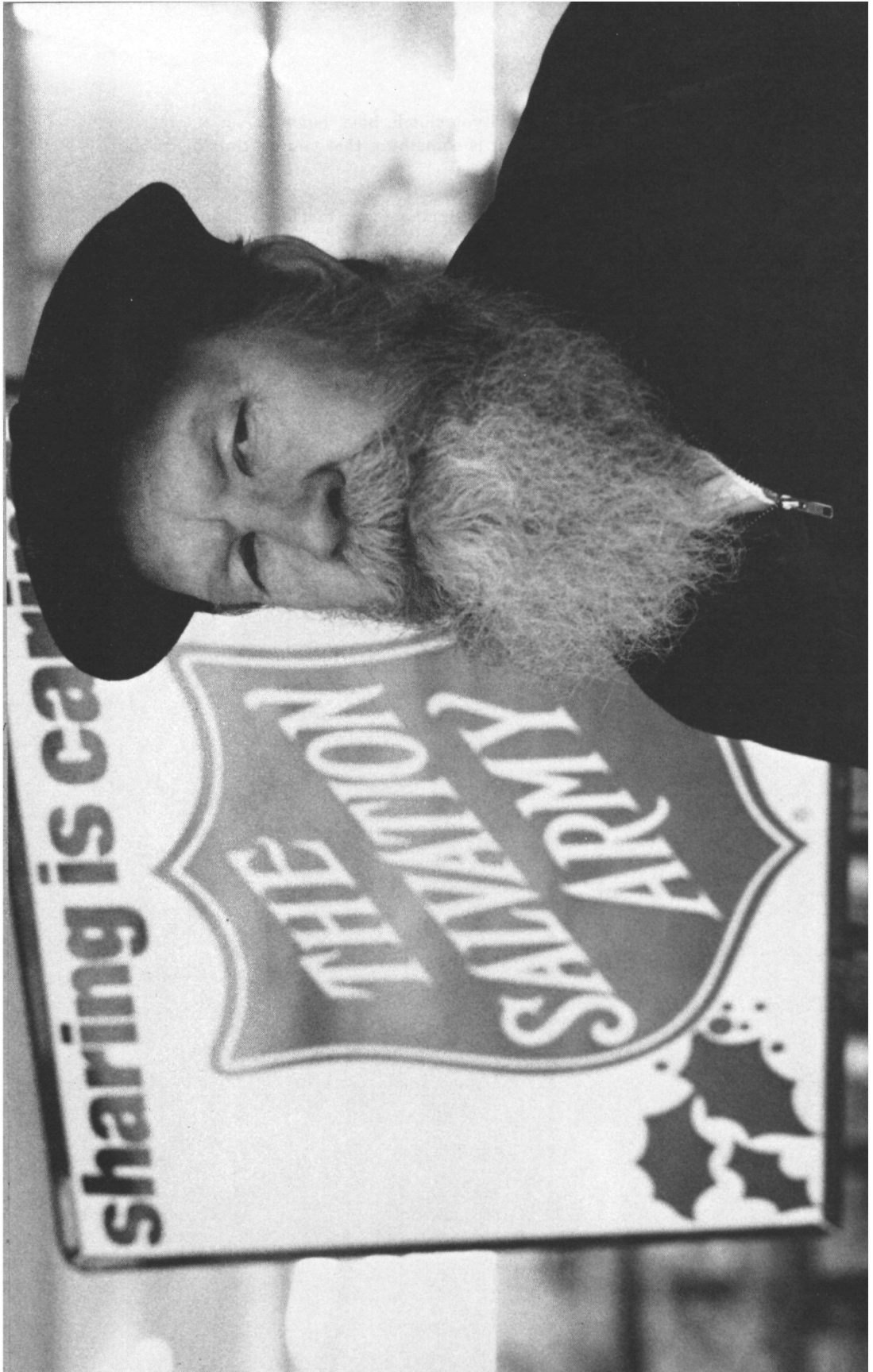
JACK MATTHEWS

Questionnaire for Talbot Redding

- 1) How long have you suffered from an inability to dream?
- 2) Do you think of a dream as another room?
- 3) Why can't a dream be considered in this way:
 there is this one room of sleep
 and
 there is another, contiguous, room of the dream?
- 4) Might this dream room be *within*, rather than contiguous?
- 5) Why can't you find the key?
- 6) Lift up your eyes and read the emblem that hangs from the eave of the building opposite: CLAVIS ATRII.
- 7) Do not pay any attention to the dog barking in the alley; he is not real.
- 8) Why is the inaccessibility of this room terrifying to you?
- 9) Is it because it contains, presents, even *epitomizes* the Unknown?
- 10) Aren't you a little embarrassed at being terrified by something whose explanation is so insipid and *banal*?
- 11) By all means: leave this Questionnaire for a moment, go out in the hallway, and look under the carpet where you have never once thought to look (since hiding a key under the carpet—*any* carpet—is too hopelessly trite for anyone of your sensibility to tolerate long enough to actually undertake).
- 12) Yes, its exact location will be indicated by the *smell of metal*.
- 13) Now that you have found it, do you realize that:
 - 1—you have been vaguely aware of this metallic odor for several days now, but have put it out of your mind because it did not orchestrate with your needs?
 - 2—that the key is, indeed, a very ancient one; huge, dented, black, weighing 12 ounces?
 - 3—that now, precisely in the trajectory of this quest, your dream has begun?
 - 4—you could not have known these facts (implicit in all that has heretofore transpired in Question #12) until you entered the room of this Questionnaire?
- 14) *How* can you distinguish between:
 - 1—the room of the dream
 and
 2—the room of this Questionnaire?
- 15) Does the room of this questionnaire encompass both of the others?
- 16) What did the carpet smell like when you lifted it by its dumb gray lip to discover the key?
- 17) Did it smell like mushrooms?
- 18) Did it smell like the dusty pages of an old Methodist Hymnal you started to memorize when you were twelve years old?
- 19) The sudden advent of flies about your head is a willful distraction: ignore them.
- 20) Don't you think you've evaded the issue of the key long enough?
- 21) What can you mean that it is this Questionnaire, not yourself, that is guilty of evasion?

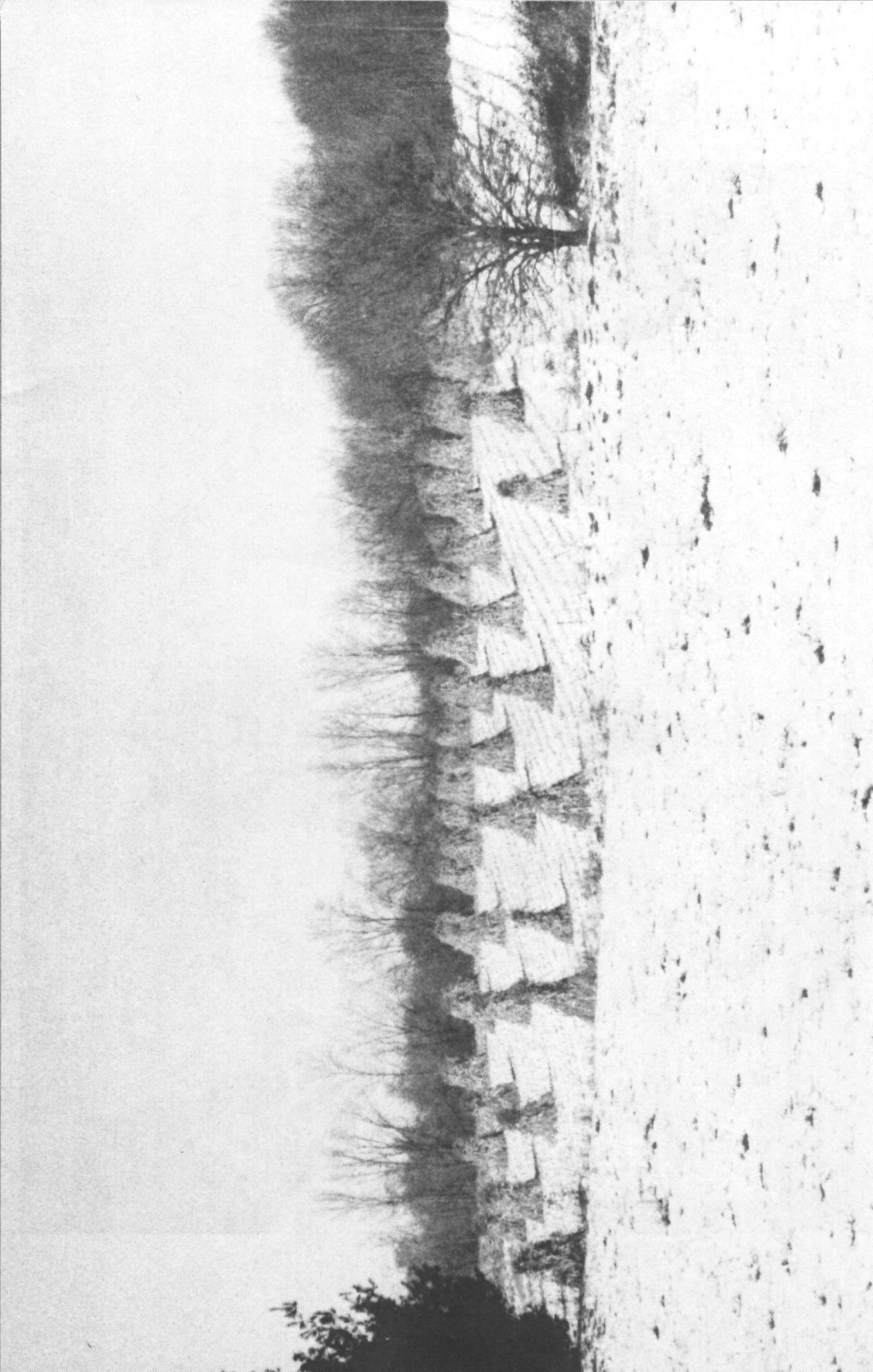
- 22) Why did you leave just now and turn up the radio?
- 23) Of course it was known that the radio was on; also, equally, it was known that you turned up the *volume* of that radio!
- 24) It's no use accusing this Questionnaire of evasiveness; don't you know better than to attempt such pathetic subterfuges?
- 25) No, the radio is real; it is the barking dog outside your window and the little swarm of flies—no bigger than the flying print of a newspaper—that are unreal.
- 26) No, I do not know what the carpet sweeper said to the Angel; furthermore, you sick Diarist, I do not wish to know.
- 27) Why? Because I am a voice, not a substantive; I am an echo, if you insist upon settling for the most obvious explanation!
- 28) Never mind the radio; it does not matter. It is only a noise, not a voice such as this. There is nothing behind it. Consider, if you must, that the radio, the barking ghost of a dog, and the archipelago of flies are all equally unreal. There. Settled.
- 29) Yes, you are right: when will you have the courage to pick up the key and use it?
- 30) Can you seriously claim that you don't know where the door to the room of the dream *is*?
- 31) How *can* you make such an assertion, when you have been informed that with the discovery of the key, you had already gone into that room?
- 32) Of course, it is not the same.
- 33) Of course, it must be acknowledged that there is still another room.
- 34) Of *course*, this other room, as always, is the more essential dream; isn't this always how we know it?
- 35) No, that is not it; isn't the fact this: that a *dream* cannot be known *as dream*, except from outside, from some other room of greater lucidity?
- 36) If it is conceded, then, that this other room represents the *deeper* dream, will you gather up the courage to take that key, open the door and enter?
- 37) Of course, you have known about it all along; of course, there is a slogan above it, reading: NON MODO EST.
- 38) Ignore that barking dog; if you were only to turn down your radio, all unrealities would dissolve; in other words, that dog you think you hear barking in the alley outside is a parasite on inanity.
- 39) In a word, TURN DOWN THE GODDAM RADIO, EFFENDI.
- 40) How can you expect to have dignity unless you have power?
- 41) How can you expect to have power, unless you have control over your thoughts?
- 42) How can you expect to have control over your thoughts unless you can speak to yourself uninterruptedly (i.e., without the media vomiting their vulgar poisons into your ears)?
- 43) *Who* is indulging in rhetoric?
- 44) For two cents, I would end this Questionnaire immediately, without consequence!
- 45) And do you indeed feel smug, knowing that the threat was empty, since your eye could not help but see that the Questionnaire was indeed continued?
- 46) But how do you know it will not, from this instant forth, only pretend to investigate the substance of these secret truths, so that it will indeed prove to have ended, precisely as threatened?
- 47) Eighty-nine and katzenjammer?
- 48) Treble jam, lift, and sport into threadbare?

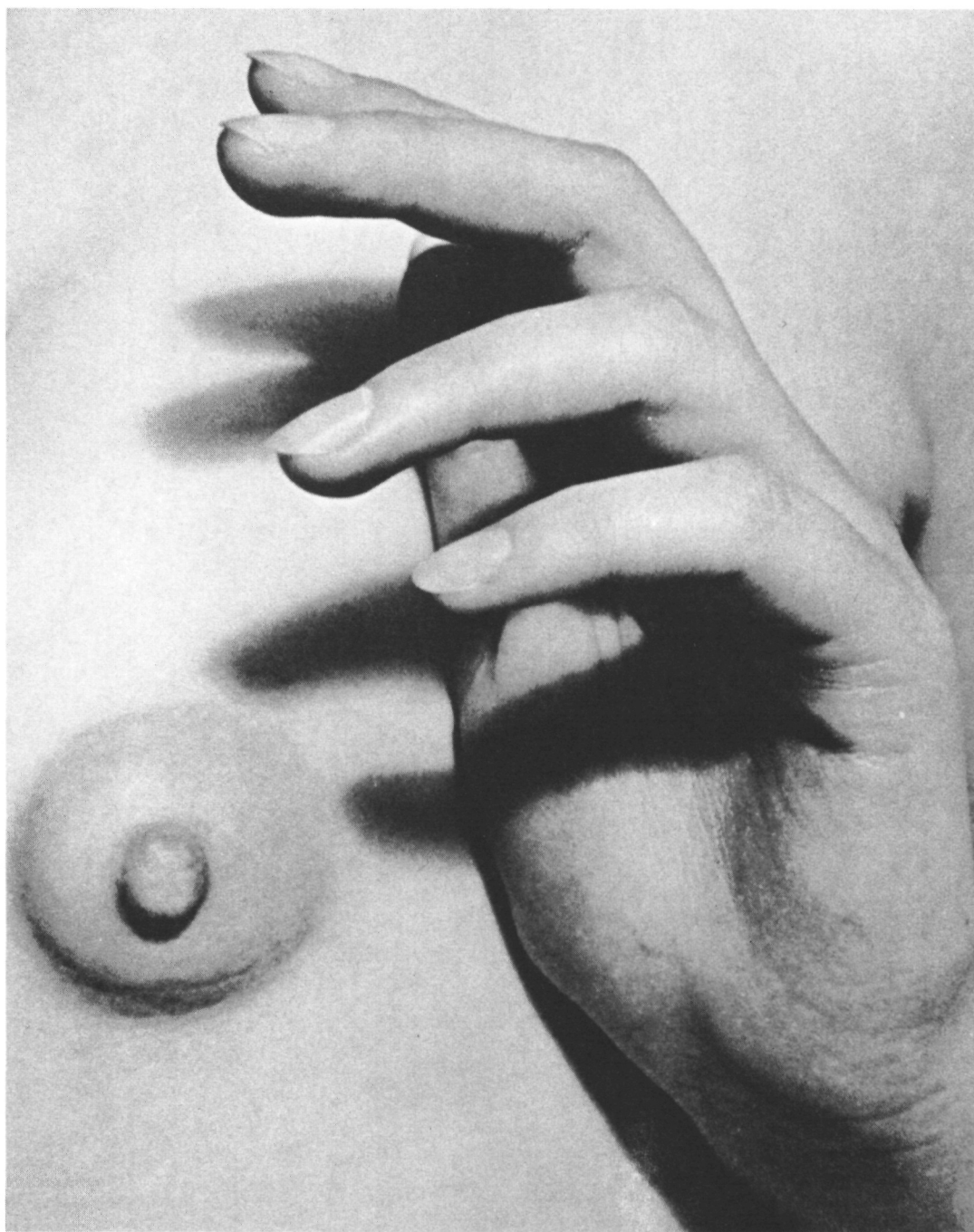
- 49) Chick woo the diatribe, and will you clutch, blear heart?
- 50) All right; welcome back. Yes, it is something that you continued, stubborn latch.
- 51) Of course, your advent is awaited.
- 52) Will you really have the courage to insert that key in that lock and push upon the door?
- 53) Do you smell metal again?
- 54) What do the cobwebs signify, in your opinion?
- 55) Surely, you know that more than age is manifest in that surly desuetude?
- 56) Do you doubt for one moment that any act of courage will gain you the sympathy and heartfelt good wishes of any conceivable voice?
- 57) Do you really think that any door could lead anywhere but into your own most private recognition?
- 58) How can you still hear my voice, when you have left this paper behind?
- 59) Where, now, is the barking dog?
- 60) Do you think you recognize this room of the dream?
- 61) Is that really your wife, whom you have always loved deeper than you know, cooking breakfast in her kitchen?
- 62) And her reality, then . . . this is the dream you feared to enter?
- 63) Only wait, and she will turn around.
- 64) Tell me, Heart, will she know you upon this instant of your coming from this other room, through another door?



sharing is caring

THE SALVATION ARMY









CAROL CAVALLARO

To the woman at the window

Are you dead, a ghost in the machine
who turns my blood to the noise of every day?
Do you sit on the bed with the shadow neat under your legs

like a skirt, while you remember Europe as a geranium stuck
in a jar, the smell, the crippled streets,
the head-bent people?

How horribly you let in glaring light
to burn my hand, till it stares out
from a chiaroscuro painting, the thick sun white as a line

in two dimensions, and unbearable.
Mother, electricity
leaks from the calculator as it sits in the drawer;

water drips from the clock;
onions red as hearts
eat a circle.

They're building a highway near our house; they're pounding.
Like the bones of a saint, like a bone beneath the altar,
I float on the river below the road, an arrow, a stick,

an effigy of birds and spirits twisting at last
like the sculpture of a cathedral.
You press against the glass to watch.

And I see them, your window wizens.
They uncurl my hands, working them in sleep;
their yellow powders streak the sheets. One after another

you send them through the door
to play at childhood, force me to recall
likes, dislikes, the patterns numbers take.

Then sometimes you turn your face away, in spite
of history, and go
further back than birth.

NANCY JO RINEHART

Raccoon

Driving past you for the second day,
or the third (they fly so),
I notice again your rigorous posture
and wonder how you died.
Thank God you lie off the pavement,
where your cousin was rolled to oblivion;
you, little bandit, wave goodbye
with stiffened limbs,
Perfect monument to your living.

Back Again

Here I come again,
on a giant slide—
not the funhouse kind,
but one dumping me
into a future
of excusing my eccentricities,
convincing everyone
that singleness is bliss,
avoiding the doctor
with each headache and rash
(could it be cancer?),
depending on my parents
and fearing their goodbye,
existing in loneliness
in a cheap apartment
where I don't know how
to fix a leaky faucet
and wish I had learned.

LARRY SMITH

A Story of Marriage

Trees grow in the space between us.
We touch them when we have time.

All day you have been turned
looking at the stones within.
And I have been watching you
like a fish.

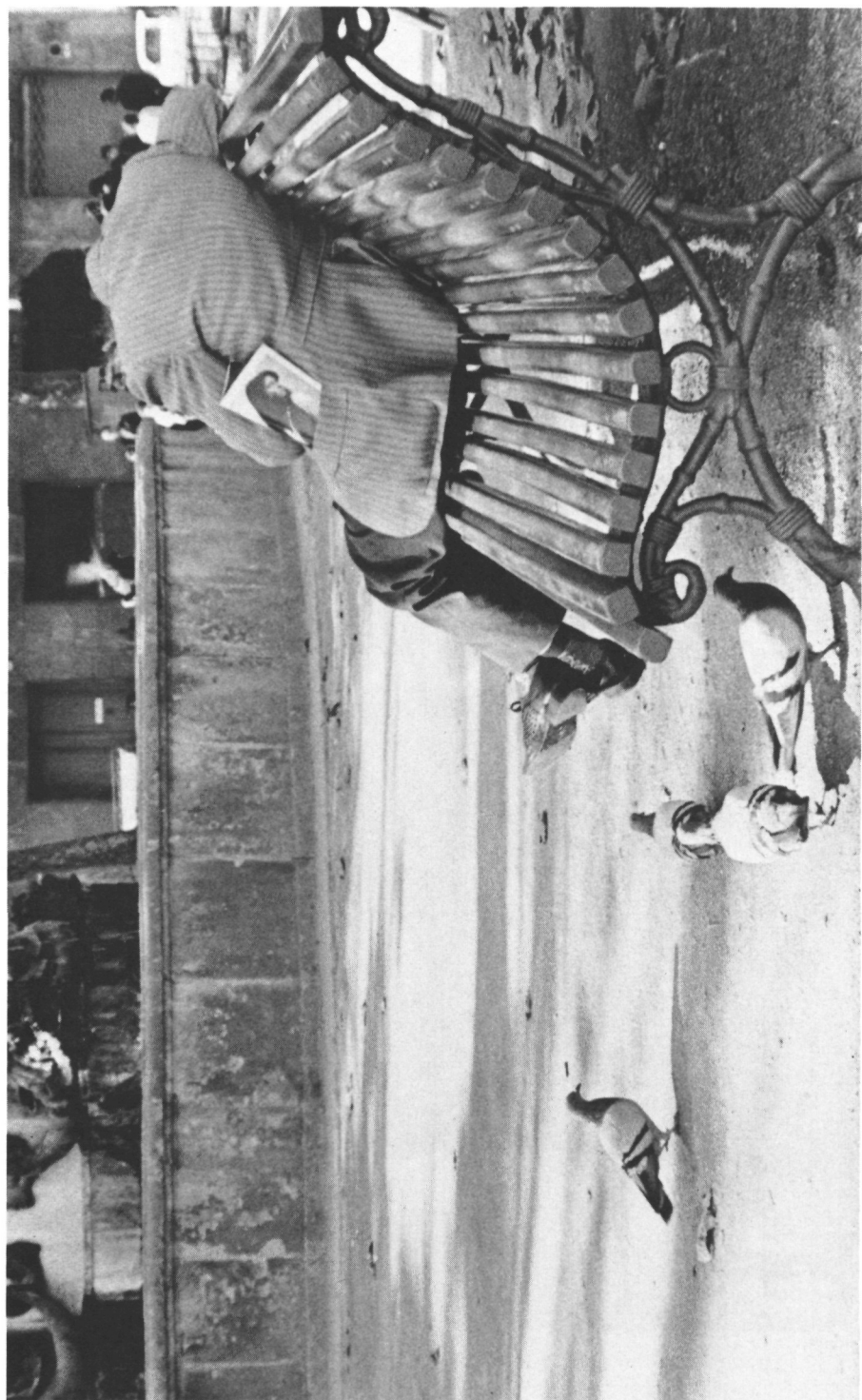
Comes a time and you are watching me
digging holes in the sand.
And between us lies the sea
where the birds are thick with silence.

Then in the night falls a seed
beside us.
We pick it up together the next day.
It opens to the songs of children laughing.

The sky falls each day, they say.
Only some days we catch it in our arms.















DEBORAH BURNHAM

Walking into the Water

Two weeks before she did it, I saw her mirror
Bandaged with her best white towel,
Adhesive tape cross-hatched. She hated mirrors.
Kept curtains pinned at night to shut out
Her face staring like a moon from the dark glass.
Her coffee tasted like soap; she'd smeared the kettle
So the bright copper couldn't reflect her face.
I found her in the yard, pounding spoons
Flat and rough. The silver chest was empty—
She'd painted the knives white, stuck forks
In the dirt, tines up like bright weeds.
When she vanished with her car, we knew
Where to look. It was parked neatly by the river
And before she'd walked into the staring water,
Breaking its green reflection with her body,
She'd tied her headscarf on the rearview mirror
And rubbed lipstick on the bright glass of her watch.



DEBORAH BURNHAM

Dowsing

All winter we cursed earth's water,
The black ice that crawled down the north cliff,
Then thawed, splitting the field's raw ends
Spilling the best soil to the river
While its fish plunge into streams
Running near the earth's heart.
Now, in these dry months, we walk these fields,
Sticks poking the dust, tongues thick as silt.
If we could call back our curses,
Those streams might pulse into our blood,
Ripple into our throats, now dry as pods.
But the sticks hang over our dry steps
And we hear our mothers,
Cursing their own waters where we rode,
Thrashing like fish,
Blind in a buried stream.



RODGER MOODY

What I See from My Picture Window

Morning.

My father drives a Seville,
works in a steel mill,
plays golf at the local club.

He's nobody's boss but the man
inside the blade of grass
on the fairway. Fields of straw

bend in my boyhood dream
of summer wind and working. The bed
on the carpet is mine,
not the hayloft. My father laughs

all around here, I often go mad
at night from the deep
glare of wheat. When the dark

is over your shoulder
time to pass the night away.
Twenty years or their twenties!
Who could wait? Nothing is real

for long,
your face your age never
coincide. Loosening my collar it is time
for breakfast. I have quit drinking
for good.

ALBERTA T. TURNER

Leosan

Loss lost from *los* *ruin*
of current by reduction of voltage of soldiers
by injury or capture Puzzled
perplexed not able to uncertain how

Cheap below cost
not to be found no longer held
parted with in a crowd having wandered from
having no sense of shame scattered by Assyrians

Four pairs of shoes all of them walked
a raincoat hung by its chain
a pitcher of dimes two hotel soaps

No thing wasted
Leosan *los*

LAWRENCE JAY DESSNER

Tennis Pro

The air is one great dripping cloud.
The dark blue Atlantic rolls and yawns.
It is early; the gulls are up
And strolling scavengers,
Eking out their retirement,
Prod refuse.
Bus boys are slicking down their hair,
Waiters brushing their teeth.

He has had his sprinklers out for an hour.
Like thousands of small tennis balls,
Expensive water pocks the red clay's
Veils of grit.
Fallen, a gnarled palm frond
Spreads toward the base line;
Its yellow-freckled shoulder shines,
Shudders with each stab of the circling fusilade.

Eleven pair of smooth-soled tennis shoes,
Lace ends dappled with rust,
Canvas worn to translucence under raised nap.
Knees bent, back straight as pipe,
He lines them up where the sun,
If it come,
May dry them,
Freshen their musk of powder and lint.

He has three lessons this morning,
Two widows and a shy chiropodist.
At noon an insurance man
Will pay to win a few games,
Today, perhaps, a set.
The Pro will open overpriced cans of tennis balls—
Whoosh, sweetest of all God's breezes;
His shoes will return a usurer's rent.

The racquet feels good—
Good? Wonderful—in his hand.
(He beat Riggs, in '43, with this one.)
He dances back, *glissade*, *relevé*,
Sweeps round to his left,
Racquet head behind his ear,
Muscles stretching, deliciously coiling.
A hesitation, a glance across the parking lot:

The sky, the dark blue pool,
Three Cubans warming themselves around a coffee urn,
Patio tables, waiting.
Then into it,
Through it;
Down the line,
A backhand explodes
Like a cloudburst.

ELIZABETH MacDANIEL STEALEY

One Last Time

As the night approaches
She holds his hand
And whispers with hidden despair,

Hears her name one last time
On his cracked, withered lips.
Now she's alone. Life moves on.

R.M. LAWRENCE

The Skinner's Shed

In the hard light of
The skinner's shed, I waited.
My eyes, cornered rats, scurried
Desperately around the room
To avoid the naked carcasses heaped
Yellow on the darkened floor.
Frantic, they leapt to the rafters,
Only to be reproached by racks and rows of
Hides curing overhead:
Russet foxes and a single deer, suspended
Among the oily mink — also waiting
To curl about the throats
Of wealthy women.

The stench from old oil drums,
Brimfull with the week's offal,
Burrowed into my nostrils.
I breathed through my mouth
And death crawled in.

The fur-buyer, appraising my afternoon
Offering of a wood-stiff raccoon,
Rolled his good eye towards the ceiling
And spat, "Twenny-six dollar."
Something brushed my leg and growled.
The skinner saw me start and roared
As two red-bone puppies, tussling
Over a muskrat tail,
Rolled away from my feet
Across the sticky boards.
I took my check and fled,
But the disembodied laughter
Trailed me in the dying light.

R. M. LAWRENCE

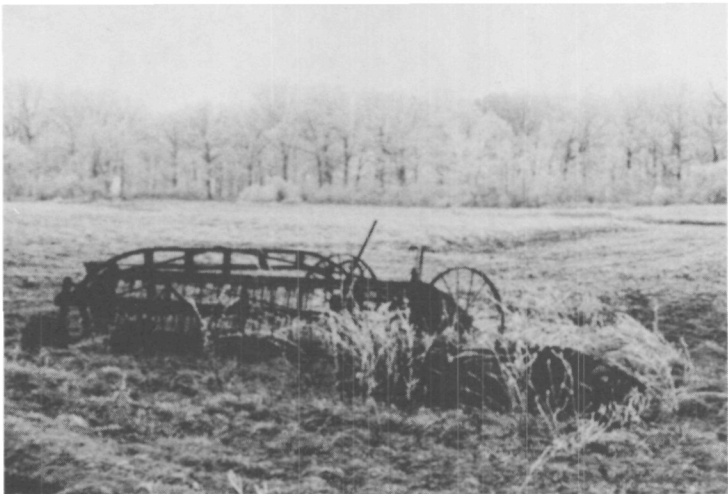
In Harness

The sweat-stained wad of leather lay
Snarled at our boots in the granary bay.
Papa knelt and gently shook
Some dormant jingle bells awake.
I squatted for a closer look
And gave the bells another shake.

Rusty buckles, brass gone green,
Bridles, bits I'd never seen.
Tugs groaned and stretched
As he introduced the scraps
To me — a generation's work well etched
On steel, on wood, on leather straps.

He talked of Maude and Mabel C.
(Two Percherons his dad
Had had before the War.)
And told of Mag and Bib and Thor.

That day, collars and belly-bands bound
Our two blue denim lives around
A dusty shaft of dying sun:
A man, his boy, their land were one.



WILLIAM STAFFORD

Our Journey, a Story from the Dust

Every town came true. Every person
stared. Hadn't they seen a boy before?
—and a little dog?—and a bear? It was miles for us,
mirages, heat, cold. We loved each other.
We had to find The North, where Grandmother told
about forest and river—old stories of bravery and friends,
where the world began. It was hundreds of miles. That long
road may never end: a boy, a little
dog, and a bear, in a story so true that still
this dust has to tell it like this again and again.



GORDON GRIGSBY

A Translation of Five of Rilke's Sonnets to Orpheus

I

A tree arose there. O pure transcendence!
Orpheus sings! O tall tree in the ear!
And all was silent. But in that silence
new beginnings, signs and transformations moved.

From stillness animals pressed through the light
now opened forest of nest and den;
and it was neither cunning nor fear
that kept them so quiet there

but listening. Roar, yelp, baying cry
dwindled inside them. And where before
there had been merely a shed to hear with,

shelter created from obscurest need
with an entrance whose doorposts shook in the
 slightest air,
you built them a temple inside the ear.

II

She was hardly a girl, and suddenly appeared
out of the joyful union of song and lyre,
and gleamed clearly through her spring veils,
and made herself a bed in my ear.

She slept in me. And her sleep was everything:
The trees that always held my gaze, those
distances it seemed I touched, the felt meadows,
and every wonder that surprised me from within.

She slept the world. O singing god, how did you
 lead her
to such consummation that she never longed
first to be awake? See, she stood and slept.

Where is her death? O will you find that theme
before your own song is consumed?
Where does she go as she sinks beyond me? . . . Hardly
 a girl

III

A god can do it. But tell me, how can a man
follow him through the narrow lyre?
His mind is split. At the place in the heart
where the two paths cross, there is no Temple to
Apollo.

Poetry, as you teach us, is not desiring,
not reaching toward some final completeness.
Poetry is Being. For a god, easy.
But when do *we* exist? And when does he

turn the earth and stars toward human life?
It's not enough that, young, you're in love
and a voice forces your mouth open—learn

to forget that easy singing. It ends soon.
To sing reality takes a different kind of breath.
A breath enclosing nothing. An air turning inside a
god. A wind.

IV

You gentle lovers, step now and then
into air not meant for you;
let it divide against your face;
it will tremble behind you, joined again.

You who are blest, you who are whole,
like the first beat of the heart,
you are both bow and target for arrows—
only stained by weeping will your smile endure.

Don't dread suffering, give its weight
back to the weight of the earth;
the mountains are heavy, the seas are heavy.

Even the trees you planted as children
have grown too heavy for you to bear.
But the spaces . . . but the open air . . .

V

No stone will keep him. Just let the rose
bloom each year with memory.

It's always Orpheus. He changes form
in this and this. We shouldn't worry

about other names. Once and for all,
it's Orpheus when there's song. He comes and goes.
Isn't it enough that he sometimes survives
by a day or two the roses in the bowl?

But he has to disappear so you'll understand!
Though he himself fears this vanishing.
For while his word's surpassing all things here,

he's already there, where you can't follow.
The trellis of the lyre doesn't trap his hands.
And he submits just when he oversteps the bounds.

BETTY HUFFMAN

Why Can't We Die the Way We Were Born?

after the death of Harry Hoopes, Hazel Hoopes, Mary Ferguson

A few hours of unexpected pain
At least leaving no memory,
And no possible sense of anticipation.

For too many of us
Death is slow
And approaches with such taunts.

Whatever follows may be memory-free,
But anticipation
Seems too high a price to pay for life.



NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

CR 5

DEBORAH BURNHAM is from Painesville, lives in Philadelphia, is writing a book on Roethke and looking for work . . . **CAROL CAVALLARO** is a graduate student at Ohio State University in Columbus, and the wife of Gordon Grigsby . . . **CONNIE CONNELLY** is a student at OSU Marion. Her work has appeared before in the *Cornfield Review* . . . **LAWRENCE JAY DESSNER** is professor of English at the University of Toledo. He is the author of *How to Write a Poem* (N.Y.U. Press) . . . **EMILIE GLEN** has published poetry in numerous periodicals, including *Antaeus*, *The Massachusetts Review*, *The Nation*, *New York Quarterly* and *Prairie Schooner*. She lives in New York . . . **GORDON GRIGSBY** teaches in the English department of OSU in Columbus. His book of poems is entitled *Tornado Watch* (OSU Press). He is the husband of Carol Cavallaro . . . **PAUL HAUBERT** is a student at OSU Marion . . . **BETTY HUFFMAN**, of LaRue, is married, the mother of three, a medical technologist, and an instructor for Marion Technical College . . . **R.M. LAWRENCE** is an English major at OSU Marion, planning on law school. He is assistant editor of the *Cornfield Review* . . . **EDWARD LENSE** teaches writing and literature at the Columbus College of Art and Design. . . . **JACK MATTHEWS** is Distinguished Professor of English at Ohio University. He has published five novels with Harcourt Brace, a collection of stories with Scribners and another with the Ohio Historical Society, and a book on collecting rare books with Putnam's . . . **MARGUERITE MAUGANS**, a native of McArthur, is a senior at OSU Marion majoring in fine arts . . . **JEFF MIDDLETON** is a student at OSU Marion and a member of the Photography Club . . . **RODGER MOODY** lives in Eugene, Oregon . . . **NANCY JO RINEHART** lives in Waldo. A senior majoring in education, she is assistant editor of the *Cornfield Review* . . . **GLENN ROTHMAN** is an associate professor of art at OSU Marion. He lives in Delaware . . . **PHIL SHIRLEY** is an OSU Marion student and a member of the Photography Club . . . **LARRY SMITH** has published this year in *Poetry NOW* and *Wormwood Review*. He teaches at the Firelands Campus of Bowling Green . . . **WILLIAM STAFFORD**, noted American poet, teaches at Lewis & Clark College . . . **ELIZABETH MacDANIEL STEALEY** is married, the mother of two girls. She is an English major OSU Marion . . . **ALBERTA T. TURNER** teaches in the English Department of Cleveland State University. She lives in Oberlin . . . member of the Photography Club . . . **ILSE YODER** lives in Marion with her husband and two girls.

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