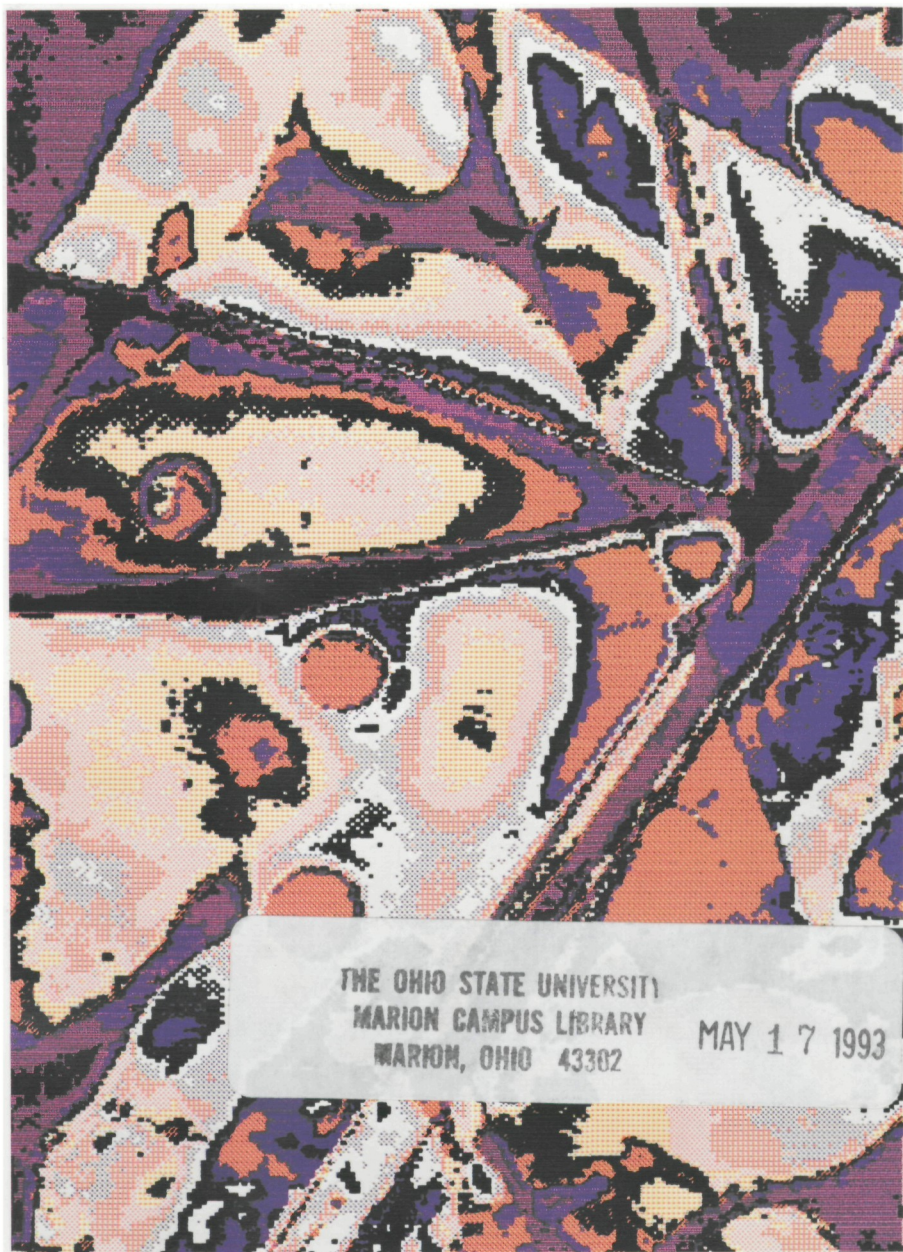


Cornfield Review



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CORNFIELD REVIEW

An Annual of the Creative Arts

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Volume 8

CORNFIELD REVIEW

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CORNFIELD REVIEW 1 9 8 9
Editor's Note 5
Poetry

Sister Mary Appassionata Addresses the Marion County Writers' Guild	<i>David Citino</i>	7
Stones Dancing	<i>Warren Hall</i>	8
Hawaii	<i>Donald M. Hassler</i>	10
How March Was Named	<i>Will Wells</i>	12
The New Bed		13
Control		14
The Crow	<i>Robert L. Smith</i>	15
The Toy Monkey		16
Limiters	<i>Robert Miltner</i>	20
Sketchbook Scribble	<i>William Dauenhauer</i>	21
untitled	<i>River J. Karner</i>	29
Sketch of the Son of a Practical Man	<i>Jeff Gundy</i>	30
Gepetto Dreams the Apprentice Home	<i>Roy Bentley</i>	31
Teaching the Boy		32
White Shoes		34
What Time	<i>Keith Allen Arrrip</i>	35
"...dying of the Light"		36
Homeotherms		38
Talk To Me, Mother	<i>Marjorie J. Vecbastiks</i>	40
The Facts of Her Life	<i>Sandra Sprayberry</i>	42
Skirting Great Events	<i>William Greenway</i>	43
Folk Hero	<i>Joseph Raffa</i>	44
Martin L. King Day	<i>Ed Davis</i>	45
Incident in Hue	<i>L. L. Rottmann</i>	46
Nightwatch	<i>Rosa Maria DelVecchio</i>	48
To Work		49
A Touch of Incest		50
Cowardice	<i>Patricia Klas</i>	56
Cæsarean Boy	<i>Rita Rae Robinson</i>	57
In Ohio, Somewhere South of Toledo	<i>Brooke Horvath</i>	58
In a Non-Earthquake Time		60

Fiction

Fresh Sheets	<i>Patricia Klas</i>	22
Sunday Morning Shopping	<i>Rosa Maria DelVecchio</i>	52

Art

River Roots	<i>Phyllis Bosco</i>	6
Voodoo King	<i>David Pickard</i>	18
from the book <i>Ryken</i>	<i>E. L. Sauselen</i>	19
My Bike	<i>Catherine Allison</i>	33
Adult Coloring Book	<i>Ronald Hedland</i>	39
Expecting	<i>Richard Drake</i>	51
untitled	<i>Christopher Ecker</i>	61

Editor's Note

Earlier this spring a new row of trees was planted along the drive leading to the Marion branch of The Ohio State University. They are already doing a fair job of interrupting the flatness of the terrain, thin though they are, and now the grounds look even less like the cornfield they once were than they did some months ago when Diane Cook and I decided to revive this magazine.

The cornfield is gone for good, but the *Cornfield Review* was just lying fallow, we found. A little effort found editorial, financial, and managerial support, and to our delight a number of good writers remembered us and were quick to send their work our way. As we go to press, we are thankful for all the people who have helped us. We are also well pleased with this first harvest of our regenerated series.

It is hard to resist organic metaphors to describe editing a collection like this, not merely because of our vegetative name or the fact that I'm helplessly susceptible to figurative language.* Like a first-time gardener, I have spent a lot of time this year watching and wondering how things grow, why they blossom, and what is produced. I haven't had to work very hard to run up against miracles: the joining of many and one that is artistic form, the harnessing of movement through time over the space of word upon word, the surprise that images continue to create long after they were created.

There's a lot to ponder. I thank you, the consumer of these pages, for being the last necessary link in the chain of the ponderables found herein. Read on, knowing that your reading completes them.

Meg Harper
Spring, 1989

* I have, however, managed to resist many of the parallels between poetry and various manifestations or properties of corn that have crossed my mind: the ability to become syrup, for instance, or the necessity of ears. And I do hope that the following pages don't stick between anyone's teeth.



SISTER MARY APPASSIONATA ADDRESSES THE MARION COUNTY WRITERS' GUILD / *David Citino*

This voyeurism means you mortals
no sin, as long as you try,
with each heartstroke, to comprehend
your calling, this appalling apartness.

Only remember. When night beneath
constellations, streetlights and neon
inspires your lines, you recognize
the divine beauty of what's mortal.

Perfect strangers will hasten by,
faces blurred, eyes fathomless
as opals, hearts deep as the Blue Hole
of Castalia—forever, you could fall

through them. Telling them to us
must be your duty, sacred and profane.
How little you count alone,
and how close to god you grow

by inventing the name of everything,
fitting teeth and tongue to words
so lovingly each becomes a taste,
brackish as blood and just as sweet.

You'll learn the price of passion,
to grow even more quickly old,
visions burning holes in heart and souls,
even those who love you guarding

their secrets. There's no dark,
writers, you can't see into,
witnessing so ignites you, revisioning
the world until you get it right.

Everyone you care for lives forever.

STONES DANCING / *Warren Hall*

The stone slabs of the sidewalk
are large and massy—one after another,
thousands altogether compose the sidewalks
I walk each day. Each slab is singular,
and heavier than a single man can lift.
I've watched men pry them up with bars
and use machines to swing them aside
when a water line must be repaired.
They're slippery when wet, treacherous
when iced; they're catawampous in their beds
from settling crookedly; they're cracked
along their seams, uneven at the joints.
And yet for all their quiddities, the slabs
seem solid and substantial as the town,
the houses with estate security
against whatever shifty variants.

But this one that I've just stepped on
is shifting—like an ice floe, like a raft—
and squishes water out around the edges.
It's not nearly as secure as I'd imagined—
discomforting, in fact, just a little,
to be so easily unstable—fluid—
when I'd thought that I was treading stone.
This happens in the spring, or after a thaw
when the ground gets saturated, so some slabs
lie in water beds, and shift
whenever someone steps on them.
Security becomes a liquid asset.

Then I see watermarks within the stones.
Strata, seams, erosions, pits reveal
the slight accretions that lap by lap
compounded stone. And underneath the bedrock,
there's still the liquid center, that continents
are floating on like crackers in the soup.
They crash and crunch, subsume themselves,
and now and then the magma gushes out
through cracks at edges like these I'm standing by.

Once I watched a mason carve the stones
that would be set to mark my children's graves.
In the underside of each, he set pegs
to fit the notches that he'd cut
into the slab the stones would rest upon.
I asked him why he was doing that.
He said the moon would shift them otherwise.
He said unless he pegged and notched them tight,
the moon would slowly swing the stones around—
stones dancing—a strange affair, it seemed—
like my rocking on this sidewalk slab,
like a boy on a raft in a river, a flow in the sea,
continents, bodies floating free

HAWAII / Donald M. Hassler

O strong soul, by what shore
Tarriest thou now?

Matthew Arnold, "Rugby Chapel," 1857

A strong resemblance links the faces
In my family. So though my father's death
Fell three falls ago, I saw him in the lobby
Of the Honolulu airport in his twin my uncle.

Uncle Dave tells the story of when they cleaned
Their father's church as kids, he drew a clever line
To separate the work in half. Now my father has
Finished his work first and the other brother waits.

In fact, my uncle also claims the family lost
My dad when he got married. My mother
Dominated. So it seemed proper to find
This uncle after many years and many deaths.

Also, it was he who mentioned Rugby Chapel
That I'd avoided reading since college.
Arnold isn't exactly what we pack these days,
And Waikiki and Pennsylvania Dutch are miles apart.

No one speaks today as Arnold spoke,
At least, and sells a poem. So half the time
My wife and I were cool and hung out
Around the beach. The other half is what I'd write:
Gothic chapels haunting enlightened shores.

He gave me Chapman's Homer in his Pacific
Paradise and talked of when his dad,
The preacher, had come up to Yale
Proudly to see his son's Gothic graduation,
And all the stories a twin will tell on his brother.

But more than Homer, it was Vergil
On my mind this trip—the part where three times
Aeneas tries to touch the shadow of his father.
My students always laugh at how much Vergil

Has him weep too, those old Arnoldian classics.

We moderns don't believe in shadows anymore,
Certainly not on the sun-draped islands.
But shadows drove this modern jet
Voyage of ours, and if sentimental means
Reaching out beyond the possible, we touched

Shadows this trip. My uncle with his eyes
Lit up spoke of his father. I spoke of mine.
Finally, perhaps, the islands are not so isolate
And enlightened because my uncle said it rained.
It always rains when someone leaves, he said.

HOW MARCH WAS NAMED / *Will Wells*

Slush and mud grapple in the fields,
and a wren brandishes a twig
one brown leaf still hanging on
in tatters, like a battle flag.
A bundled groom sweeps the stables.
Between stations, his radio
garbles weather with "Your Cheatin' Heart."
The big roan, restless in his stall,
nuzzles each board, testing for trouble.

The farm hand, patching potholes
in a rutted lane, pauses, turns
his back, and gulps a burning
other than breath. Thawing from drifts,
pop tabs and shards of bottle glass
grow vehement with light.
When he scuffs loose a broken cobble,
the earth beneath is so dark
he could rub it in his eyes, a salve.

THE NEW BED / *Will Wells*

At last, after ten years of marriage,
a new bed where we raft the calm passage
of an uncommitted Saturday when children
drowse past eight. Our daughter barges in,
not quite awake, dragging her pillow
like a rumpled shadow. Our son follows,
haggling till we squeeze him in beside her.
Here is the flesh of our best adventures
in the creaky hand-me-down we hauled
to Goodwill yesterday: the mattress soiled,
the weathered siderails starting to split.
Gavin roots under the quilt, a rabbit
in the warren of our legs, while Morgan
feeds the hungry duck I shape with my hand.
Cast out from our secret garden of lust,
we are tamed into keepers of this
menagerie. Last night, once they were asleep,
you came out for me, your hair all done up.
This morning, our daughter sways before us
in pagan dance, chewing an old silk rose.

CONTROL / *Will Wells*

The strike zone was painted black
on the basement wall, a Bible he aimed
intensely for, so the rubber ball
bounced back, bearing a definite mark.

The hours he spent each afternoon,
coaxing his curve to break, a tense series
of thuds. Upstairs his mother
botched hymns on the Magnus organ.

Each ponderous progression oozed
through floorboards, retaliation
to the pounding from below. He turned
the ball behind his back, squeezed

imaginary seams, and caught the sign
from concrete. Then the nod, the set,
the wind-up, and the pitch. No wonder
she fretted over her solitary son.

Steadfast in his dark devotions
while other children played outdoors,
he gave himself to catching corners—
this practiced guile his one vocation.

THE CROW / *Robert L. Smith*

The crow, knowing I was afraid of him
Savaged my shoelaces and pecked my toes
My grandmother said, "Caw right back at him
Pretend to be just one of the crows!"

No help this, so I ran away,
Ran, in fact, like the very dickens
And he was triumphant until the day
He started to do his game with the chickens.

Granddaddy recycled him with his twelve-gauge
And tacked his wings to the henhouse wall
Illustrating the truth of that old adage,
"Crowing Goeth Before a Fall."

THE TOY MONKEY / *Robert L. Smith*

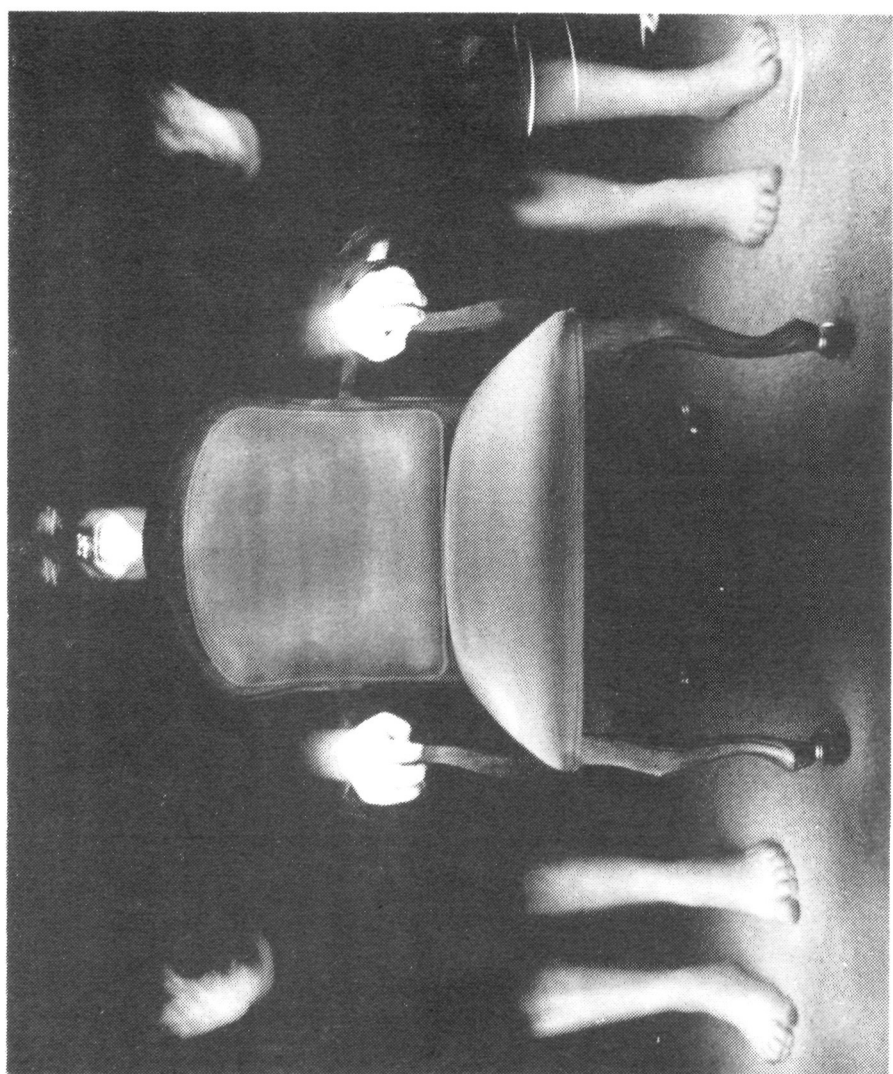
Someone's gift, the box was gaily wrapped
In Oriental paper. The directions
Ended with three glyphs I took to be
Japanese. The fur was false, soft,
And brown; the eyes brown with startling yellow
Iris. A place to press brought it
Alive. It knuckled to a chair and up.
Its head turned left right left right,
Its orange muzzle opened as to speak.
'A Talking Toy' so I said "Hello!"
Close to the head. "Hello!" it answered back.
I laughed and tickled his stomach-fur with
A finger, and he wiggled and said "Hello!"
Curious, I removed the head
And looked: springs and levers, spool of tape,
And a set of batteries.

What sort

Of pet would a real monkey have been? Why,
Perhaps to eat and bleed and snap at guests.
But this was more a small slow child that held
My finger when we walked about the room,
Or, on my shoulder, clutched my head with dry-furred
Arms. I taught his tape to say "Idiot!"
And "Crimentilees!" and "Thus I refute
Berkeley," and he would play in his stiff way
Shambling through the rooms a-chittering,
Making queer designs with shredded paper,
Staring through the windows at the children.
Then, as if he needed warmth, he'd clamber
To my lap and seem to go to sleep,
Although the yellow eyes could never close.
At night I turned him off, and put him in
A little bed I'd bought. But every day
The time required to wake became a little
Longer. Once I went away a week,
And, turned on again on my return,
Four hours passed before he recognized me,
As if an exile from his power source
(whatever it may have been) left him lifeless.
I could have changed his batteries, I suppose,

But what he was was what I loved, waning
Though it was. One night he played no more:
Sat waiting on the couch for me to sit,
Climbed into my lap and curling up
Said, "Tired" (a word I'd never taught him), stopped,
Slept. The pressing-place elicited
A hum, a twitch. I put him gently in
A closet out of sight, and threw out the bed.

Does he dream? Do I?

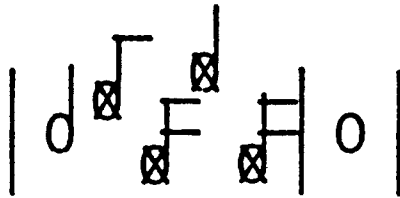


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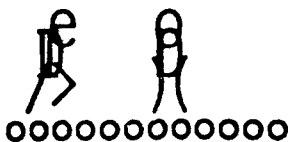
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LIMITERS / *Robert Miltner*

Embarrassing experiences
you had as a child
still break
into your thoughts
like burglars,
unexplained anxiety's scout,
reconnoitering enemy territory,
a castle's wall;
you slam shut the drawbridge,
unaware you're being undermined,
sapped by insecurities.
And after you have
outgrown your environs,
sent suburbs sprawling,
the lord mayor will strut
cocky and rotund,
a puppet filled
with gregarious air,
while a child's thin cry,
an echo in an empty bowl,
will still be heard
from the locked tower.

SKETCHBOOK SCRIBBLE / *William Dauenhauer*

The historians spent too much time
on filling pages with paragraphs;
it was the artists that told
the story better.

Look into their medieval scenes
and sense the horrors of faith—
those thin and pale people
that hoped earnestly for heaven,
even as they believed perdition
lay just underfoot.

Behold
those gaunt knights and bloodless ladies
oppressed with their own flesh—
convinced beyond doubt
that they were creation's center,
their every blunder like a speck
of ash in God's blue eye.

Then, gaze at Renaissance masterworks:
the muscled figures, certain, strong,
pulling, pushing, straining bone
and sinew—

Sisyphean toilers
discontented with the scheme
as found—bound to alter, shape, re-work
nature's not-quite-holy patterns
to suit mere human taste.

FRESH SHEETS / *Patricia Klas*

"That Mrs. Tillman sure has a lot of zip for her age," Betty Berkley had often observed to her husband, Bob, as they peered across the lawn at the old woman next door who, propped on a ladder, was Windexing the glass above her front doorway. "I wonder, though, if she doesn't get lonely in that big house all by herself."

But if she did the Berkleys never saw any sign of it, for Mabel Tillman kept a busy schedule, always shoving off to some church shindig or passionately ridding her house of any God-forsaken dirt.

Mabel Tillman might have been "crowding eighty" as she called it, but she was by all means still kicking. "I'm on the way out, but I'll be damned if I'm going to sit around and wait for death to come a-knockin'."

And she didn't. Mabel's weeks were filled with luncheon dates with "the old gals," morning bridge at St. Ignatius Church hall on Wednesdays, and vegetable shopping at the farmer's market in the parking lot behind the rectory on Fridays. She also baked a mean batch of goodies for the parish bake sales. Her specialties—cranberry bread and cinnamon apple pie—were a favorite of the parish, and the ladies implored her for the recipes. She never measured ingredients and thus it proved impossible to transpose her formulas onto three-by-five index cards. But in a smug way she liked the fact that she "took the cake" so to speak in the baking circle.

Today Mabel had gotten an early start on some plum dumplings. Those plums from the backyard tree ripened all at once this year and were spoiling quicker than she could eat them. Last week she had made jelly, but there were still a couple dozen hanging around and Mabel had other uses for the refrigerator space.

So she began by rolling out crusts of bread into crumbs at eight and it was ten before she spooned the last of the soggy dumplings out of the pot, coating it with the sugared breadcrumbs.

"There. Sure is a lot of messing around for a few plums." And she lined the dumplings into a baking dish and set it aside as she tidied the kitchen and ran the water for dishes.

Her cockapoo skittered across the linoleum toward her and began licking her ankles.

"Get down now, Huxley. Nothing for you now. You've had your breakfast." And the dog wiggled its curly stubbed tail and peeped between the tuft of white fur covering its eyes. "About time we had your hair cut there, old boy. Be blind as a bat if you have to look cross-eyed through that mop all day." She opened a drawer, reached into a box full of rubber bands she had accumulated over the years, and snapped one around the

dog's mane, making a ragged whalespout between its ears.

Mabel put on rubber gloves and soaked her hands in the warm dishwater, letting the pans soak a bit before scrubbing them. She looked out beyond the yellow-trimmed curtains above the sink into her yard. Summer had diminished and the autumn gusts had begun to pick up as the September hues foreshadowed the dull of winter and spread a gloom through the air. Mabel had dreaded the encroachment of the season, for as fall crept in, the calendar mercilessly ticked off the days toward October 6.

She considered the wood pile along the back fence near the abundant branches of the mountain ash. "Better get that Richards boy to gather some more logs. Never know when the weather might take a sharp turn." She perished the thought of being stuck without firewood while the winds blustered outside the oak rooms of the house. There was something comforting in the rich, charred aroma of burning wood that curbed the reality of the cold outside, and she stoked up a fire often during the winter even if it was more for consolation than heat. "Fire's much more comforting than the banging of the radiator pipes." And the hardwood floors perpetuated a lingering draft if she walked about in her slippers and robe. It was nice to have a wave of heat taking the cold edge off the place.

The skillet proved a stubborn job. She had allowed her ham to fry a bit too long earlier, and its bottom, covered with a burnt film, took scouring powder and plenty of hot water and scrubbing to come clean. But she had no engagements that afternoon and as yet had not sketched out her activities for the rest of the morning, so she allowed the warmth of the dishwater to travel up her forearms as she continued to ponder the state of the backyard.

"Those lilac bushes need trimming again." Ever since Bill had gone, the yard had suffered in a rather shoddy state, as Mabel had a hard time tracking down the Richards boy long enough to employ him. She supposed that carefree, on-the-go syndrome was characteristic of all boys his age, especially about the time a girl of two began to turn their heads, but she did regret not having anyone reliable in the neighborhood. Bill would have been distraught to see the yard neglected so. He had always taken pride in its immaculate trimming by manicuring the hedges and neatly outlining the lawn with the edger. Rarely a weed escaped his eye. To Bill, pruning, weeding and nurturing his backyard nursery became an art. Mabel sighed to think how the greenery had degenerated since he had gone.

She peered out at the plum tree beyond the picnic table. Ripe season had just ended. Bill had been so proud of that tree. Every summer when

the sweet red plums sprang forth, Bill gathered the neighbor children to help him pick the juicy fruit, and Mabel, smiling to herself, watched him atop the ladder as he delighted in the kids.

"Now who's going to volunteer to test these to see if they're ripe enough?" Immediately five little hands waved in the air and the kids bounced on their tippy-toes shouting "Me!" and reaching for the rich spheres Bill plucked off the branches.

Bill would descend with a full basket: "Now a plum's at its best when the skin's not too sour or tough and the inside's nice and juicy. Shouldn't take any effort to bite into, but almost melts in the mouth. Like this." Bill bit into one and sucked the juice from the little ball between his fingers. "Mmm... just right. See the juice is nice and plentiful, and the skin is tender."

The kids nodded as they slurped the plums. The juice dripped around their mouths as they smoothed the pits clean.

Bill had always fascinated children. The little ones always flocked to him, crawled over his lap, and urged him to tell stories. After playful coaxing, Bill would start in on a hearty tale, drawing out the words in deep, slow tones like a poet who had spoken the words inside so long, they came out warmed and alive. And the children would be fixed still by the intensity of his eyes as they widened and drew close at intervals.

Mabel took a deep breath and ran the water over the back of the mixing bowl, watching it roll off in rivulets, divide into little streams over the sink, and convene again at the drain. There weren't many hours in the day that Bill's memories did not creep into her daily activities. As though a part of herself whose image appeared with a single reflection in a pane of glass, Bill's memories would flood her thoughts all at once, in full color and dimension.

Some days were not as bad as others. She kept busy, and that helped things, but during the weeks when no bridge was scheduled or no baking, canning, or pickling project stood before her, Mabel was left to Huxley and the silence that resounded disturbingly between the walls.

This morning the house was an enormous abundance of quiet. Even the sparrows that usually fidgeted in the bird feeder below the back porch roof were sadly absent. Everything flew away as autumn rolled in and the season lulled the outdoors to sleep.

The silence made Mabel uneasy, and she found nothing that might cure it. She never paid much attention to television as she had a hard time understanding the dialogue, even if she turned up the volume. Her hearing aid irritated her so much, she rarely bothered to put it in anymore except when she went to church. The priest's homily on Sunday was the one thing she was at pains to hear, but otherwise the ear

device caused her nothing but frustration. It amplified the racket of the dog's chains, while jumbling together human voices. So she gave up on the business, stuffed the little machine in its box on her dresser and left it be most days.

Mabel wiped her hand on the dishtowel and spread it out on the rack to dry. "There," she sighed, "that's done with." She scooted Huxley out of her way and retrieved the broom from the pantry to sweep the back steps. The wind picked up this time of year, and there were always layers of dust and leaves accumulating if she didn't get at it once a week. She angled the broom in the far corner and worked the worn bristles along the wood grain as her thoughts, lifted by a gentle gust, spun out again to the yard and in-spired the image of Bill kneeling over the tomato plants.

"Just a bit more seasoning and we'll have ripe ones, tasty enough to eat plain with just a hint of salt," he had remarked once while she pinched the bedsheets onto the line with clothespins. "That is if those squirrels don't make a feast out of them first. Little devils." He had forsworn the use of pesticides, for no matter how precious his vegetables, he couldn't justify endangering the squirrels and rabbits. He did his best with chicken wire, but nothing proved foolproof in keeping the creatures out of his little Eden.

Mabel would marvel at Bill going about his business in the yard, checking his plants as though each were a child sleeping in its bed, the soil tucked softly under its chin. He'd wear a flannel shirt over his blue jeans and the same weathered work boots that had seen over twenty years of wear. Mabel would shake her head at what a sight the old boy made—a sort of Jack and the Beanstalk in his later years, having triumphed over giants and other threats to his terrain.

The memory shuffled away as Mabel swept the leaves off the last porch stair. This would be the first autumn without Bill's labored ritual of sealing up the garden each fall. She supposed the tomato plants and the rhubarb would run together in disarray. She just didn't have the flexibility to stoop over the vegetables like Bill had. The squirrels would have a hearty Thanks-giving at least. Mabel tapped the dust off the broom, banging it against the side of the stairs. "Better get to that laundry so the sheets'll air out before dusk."

Huxley scurried beneath her feet as she pushed inside. "That dog. Always under my feet and I can never hear him coming." She grunted a few exclamations—"Get!"—toward the animal as she sauntered toward the stairs.

She took one slow step at a time, pausing to catch her breath on the landing before tackling the remaining flight. She was aware of her chest

inflating and falling in rapid sweeps as she heaved air to catch her breath. Gripping the smooth banister, she steadied herself and concentrated on inhaling. She waited for the equilibrium to settle back in her head. "Just so it isn't those dizzy spells again," she thought. And regaining her senses, she leaned over the hamper and began sorting the lights from the darks in piles about the floor.

Mabel had always insisted on clean sheets once a week and chuckled now as she remembered crawling into bed on Saturday nights after washing day. She would press next to Bill with the sweet crispness of the sheets perfectly smooth against the blankets. Bill would sneak his cold toes against hers at the foot of the bed and tease her as they snuggled in. Then Mabel would feel the peaceful rhythm of Bill's snore as he dropped off just as she finished her last Hail Mary and had wound her rosary back into its red velvet case at the headboard.

As Mabel scooped up the pile of sheets and moved toward the stairway, she surrendered to the memory of October 6, its anniversary now less than a month away. She had come to grips with the fact that the morning she found Bill would stay with her forever, and although she fought to shove it to her mind's backseat, every now and then it would slip in behind the wheel and catch her off guard, driving forth the stark details, still so cruelly vivid, into her consciousness. It was as though time had not softened the images' harsh bold line but had continually redefined them so they stood out more clearly as the months had passed.

The events of that morning accosted her now like an acute attack of paralysis. She had risen early that day to get a head start on a batch of waffles so she could dollop the batter onto the iron in a snap as soon as Bill came down for his coffee. Huxley had pestered her to go out, and she decided as long as she was up, she might as well get a few things done. So she whipped up the egg whites, folded them into the batter and setting the whole works aside, began her attack upon the lower oven, scouring powder in hand. Squatting on her knees, she scrubbed, reprimanding Huxley for poking his snout into the oven beside her.

A half hour of hearty work and she rose to her feet, dabbing her forehead. She admired the shiny surface of the oven's inner walls and wiping her hands on her apron, looked at the clock. "Bill should be up by now. Probably dallying around up there in his pajamas when there's Saturday work to be done." She had a list of chores for him to do before he ventured outside with his rake.

She called at the bottom of the stairs: "Bill!" No answer. "Must be in the bathroom," she mused. "Not like him to still be in bed. He's such an early riser by nature."

Mabel shrugged and returning to the kitchen, turned on the waffle iron and began warming the maple syrup in a saucepan. After she had set the table and arranged a selection of jams, Bill had not yet come down. Mabel shouted again at the stairs: "Bill! Breakfast is ready. You'd hurry up and come and eat if you knew what's good for you. There's work to be done, you know. Bill!" Silence encompassed the echo of her voice along the stairwell and the whole house lay eerily still. Mabel climbed the stairs, aware of the sound of her tread against the quiet.

"Bill!" Still no answer, only the mimicking echo. When she reached the top of the stairs, the bedroom door was ajar as she had left it earlier. Mabel now felt the meaning of the unspoken reply. It lay cruelly beyond the door. Her heart grew dense inside her as her breathing raced toward her elevated pulse. She pushed the door wide. Bill lay in bed in a still heap. "Bill," she whispered, "Oh my dear Bill." There was no longer any need for shouting. The whole world had been reduced to a whisper. Suddenly all sound seemed useless, a waste.

Mabel moved to the bed, sank down near its foot and sat rocking back and forth beside the mound of Bill beneath the covers. She put her warm, wrinkled hand against one of his purplish-white cheeks. It stung her with coldness. His face spread out in hollow pockets, the deep crevices of his cheeks sucked out as though the vigor and healthy redness that rose up against his eyes when he smoked his pipe had evaporated. His eyelids were still but without the lightness that held them serenely while he slept. They were shut now, irretrievably.

Mabel tugged the sheets up further beneath Bill's chin and the inert limbs resisted her movement. She leaned her head upon his chest and began to pray, pressing her eyes tight to concentrate. Drops squeezed out from behind her eyelids, moistening the white sheets beneath her face. "Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee, blessed art thou among women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death, amen..."

Something compelled her today to stop in front of the bedroom door as she moved toward the stairs with the laundry. Since the funeral, Mabel had transferred her things to the sunroom down the hall, and the bedroom door had remained closed for almost a year. She avoided the room as though disturbing even the dust might threaten the tranquility that surrounded Bill's memory. She had been afraid that the slightest rearrangement might chip away at the lush memories of Bill or replace them with visions of that October morning. But the thought occurred to her now that Bill would have wanted things to be nice and clean. Like his garden, he would have wanted to put the house through a rejuve-

nating cleaning to get ready for the winter when the dust seemed to accumulate in slow motion, lingering in the cold crevices of the wood floors. She felt the need now to be sure everything in the bedroom was tidy. Perhaps she would change the sheets on the bed.

The brass doorknob's squeak echoed along the wooden corridor, and the hinge gave way slowly. She stood in the doorway and held the cold metal of the doorknob as the icy silence of the room slapped against her and firmed her feet in place.

Everything was in its place, but a dull fading seemed to have overtaken the room. The shades pulled over the windows forced the room to suffocate in murky yellow. The golden tones of the frilled curtains paled to a dull sweet-corn yellow and the wallpaper's peaked daisies seemed malnourished and dispirited. Everything had been kept frozen still and had aged like the little prayer card she kept in her Bible from Bill's funeral, whose edges had gone from off-white to yellow. She crossed to the windows and released the blinds with a few good yanks. The shades flapped and squeaked into their rolls as the height of the windows. Mabel blinked as she exposed a flush of white sunlight.

She stared at the unwrinkled bed. The stale sheets had been left to grow cold and stiffen. She hesitated, wondering whether to freshen the bed with new ones. She clung to the bundle of worn sheets in her arms, squeezing them as though to extract their warmth and life, then looked across at the sterile ones on the bed. She shivered to imagine sliding into their starched crispness, so unlike those fresh from the line where the sweet fragrant air had billowed through them.

All at once, Mabel tore off the bedspread, unleashing dust onto the planes of sunlight. She pulled off the top sheet in one clean sweep and coughed away the cloud of dust as she freed the fitted sheet's corners. A chill had seized her and as she gathered up the bedclothes in her arms, she wrapped them around her forearms and descended to the laundry room. "Today is washing day," she thought, "and we must have fresh sheets. Yes, we must." And she eased down the stairs with her load, humming a tune awkwardly to break the silence pervading the floor below.

UNTITLED / *River J. Karner*

remember
that day I came home
all fatigue and road sweat
bearing groceries and a quilt
so carefully knitted
so neatly folded
so horrendously coloured—bruised purple brown and green
that it made our eyes ache when I threw it open
we laughed
it seemed so out of place in both our lives
“yours” I said
“how like you” you said “these alien, alien offerings”
my love
one day when I am sitting in a room you will never know
and I want to imagine how we lived
I will need that moment

SKETCH OF THE SON OF A PRACTICAL MAN / *Jeff Gundy*

He was quick but reliably erratic,
if he'd just crashed home through the catcher's
glove to score he was sure next to fumble
a pop fly or throw six feet over someone's head.
Why just this moment he tried
to flick an ant off his pants
and left a thick and ugly gray stain
all over. Never mind. You go
with what got you here, and if it hits
.312 in slow-pitch softball
you try not to brood on the other
seven times out of ten.

So he goes. Glimpsing at straws,
grouching at streets, galumphing the sink
until black shreds of miserable stinky stuff
lie everywhere and his hands smell for hours
and he dabs at the floor with a washrag
he hopes he'll remember not to use
on his face later. He tries the tap again
and by God, the water vanishes through the trap
like a cockroach escaping the light, fluid
and beautiful in its flight toward the center.
He lets it run, dreaming of it slipping through
the sewer tile, through the creaky small-town
system, into bright sun and stink
at the treatment plant. He loses himself
in the laws of this world, that what
weighs most will sink, that what is small
and light enough will rise.

GEPETTO DREAMS THE APPRENTICE HOME / *Roy Bentley*

for Bob Demott

The boy, my one success, gone
I've warehoused years, mute armies,
In search of the same rough sphere
Of head, spindly puppet limbs,
Film of eucharist color laid on last.

The mechanics of creation tumbles irreversibly
To scrap, surfeit of pine and yellow poplar
Passed to shavings. Once, near morning,
I mistook candle work for a blush,
Bad light for motion. All night

I'd begged life back,
Waited that first lie an instant after.
Not a cry or half.
Not the dumb wonder of a shout. Nothing.
I labored less. I'll not be spent.
Not all. When the boy comes,
And we sit by the fire, I must show
How easily hard woods splinter,
Soft grains give and give.

I would kindle a respect
For the difficult convexity of a face,
For subtraction
And the perfect love of limit.
When he wants too much of the wood,
I'll say a man, old already,

Watched, and forever,
For what comes once, just.
When he is hard at it, invested,
The fire low, I'll go up
And turn down the big oak bed.
The better ones teach themselves.

TEACHING THE BOY / Roy Bentley

When light-invented Beth Vines let go
the red sixth-Christmas Schwinn
at the top of Comanche Drive
keep pedaling hold on tight
I learned in a hurry

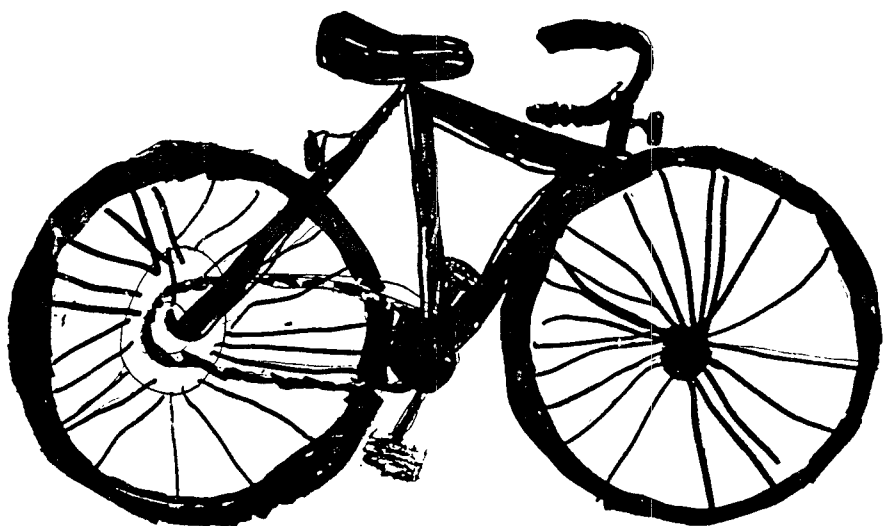
the world fell away I was borne forward
and nothing has been the same

god I was awkward
and aimed at surviving the desperate
glide downhill from her
where were the full-waisted uncles
heroic large-as-life fathers
to arrest all progress
at points of greatest danger
chaplinesque elder brothers neighbors cousins
friends who might have by example
and with a patience carried in the eyes
defined balance as mastery of having fallen

I have learned essential things
keeping aright down look-alike streets
not to lie to myself too easily or often
the press of rain afternoons suffused
with summer or sex
other planets of closeness
never to forget who held me up
the pendulous simplicity of fruit ripe to falling
all this from women or men who love women

some time after and in correct clothes
others have come with the whole
of the old war against women against trees
against all things flowering and said *Come*
you are one of us
the world fell away I was borne forward
and nothing has been the same

Kate Allison



WHITE SHOES / *Roy Bentley*

I was fifteen and soft-faced
wholly inarticulate

and bought ice cream from her
weekdays and Saturdays
most of one digressive summer
just to watch through the serving
window of the snack trailer
her terribly eloquent bending from the waist

her smile and a peek down blouse-
top kept me in line in the heat
behind half the restless children of Kentucky
who seemed never to note
the bronze chocolate heaviness of eyes
milk-white beginnings of breasts
strawberry rosettes of nothing less than
what stops the heart

that same year walking in some unpeopled place
she unearthed a girl buried and shallowly
beneath a sighing peninsula of poplar
in the papers she remembered everything
the gray of exposed skin
the absence of one half the face
the surface hunger of the other staring half
the black lakebed of blood by living curves
of root the musculature of intended cruelty
the white shoes

I heard she rode horses after
rode in light and long breeze
asaddle and bareback above the dead
not so much to ride horses I imagine
as hold to something anything of flesh
whose movements seem to hover
like the heat of fields like summer

WHAT TIME / *Keith Allen Artrip*

(for Samuel Beckett)

Aged man, face wrinkled as an old love letter,
seated on black steel steps of an old fire escape,
for who or what do you wait? Godot will not come.
That you know too well. Marie? She'll not come,
married and living in the north, husband a drunk,
if tales of old dames across town are true.
Come now. Why the raised eyebrow? Not surprise,
surely, from one who saw liars and lovers
leveled to the same absurd height, slow descent
of curtain hems on darkened stages, unapplauded.
Come. Walk awhile with me. Coffee and a roll
will revive you; I too am hungry. If you're worried
leave a note telling them where you've gone,
wedge it between wall and stair; hope they glance.

“...DYING OF THE LIGHT” / *Keith Allen Artrip*

Somewhere between murder and mercy
 I dawdle, Morrill Hall darkened
 to the color and consistency
 of Kaopectate, waiting
 for a friend kept late in the lab
 typing his gospel. (Yes, I know.)
 But he called it his creed, “Gentle Soldier,”
 then wandered off to find an I.B.M.
 He’s been up there ever since. A soldier
 born too late for any war save books
 —and vivid imagination.
 (“Vietnam was a fascist war.”)

We kill ourselves with self-defense.
 A *Lantern* spread on my lap
 reveals a young behaviorist,
 his corrective lenses intent:
 a mottled rat on tiptoe dunks
 a cotton ball, while half-imagined
 Pavlov and Skinner stand just out of sight,
 arm around shoulders like Siamese twins,
 smiling, benevolent, almost lordly in lab coats,
 marking each subject’s state.

We choose our hells. Mine? Old violence
 picked fresh from the garden each day;
 I would wait for old friends in dim halls
 reading newspapers forever, and each night
return home
 to passionless clasp of hand or shoulder,
 the comfortable niche of father’s recliner,
 week-old *Star Trek* on Adelphia Cable;
 a late supper. And after a shower,
 cheap fiction by bedside lamp.

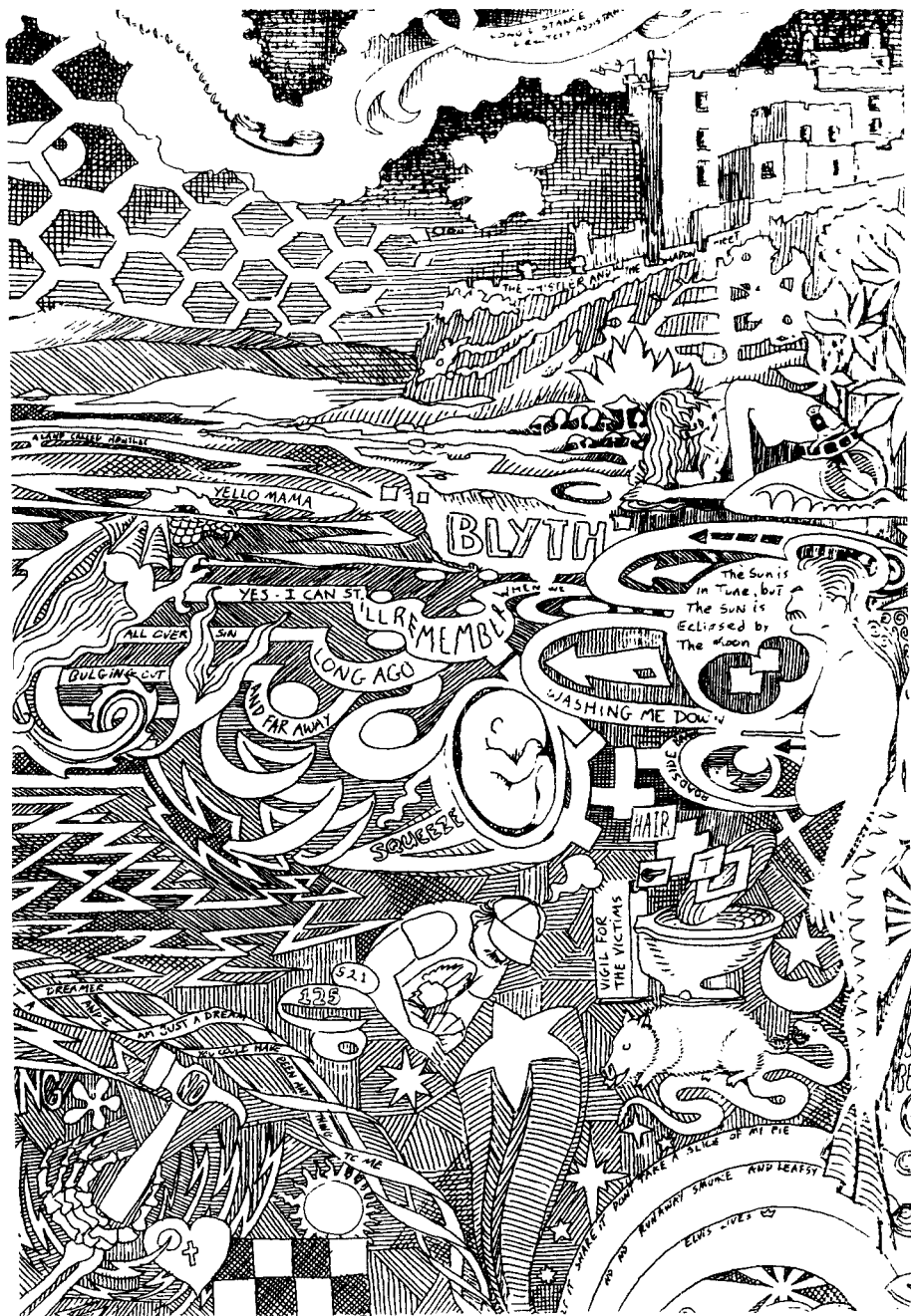
But here comes the gospel-writer now,
 assured smile, hand waving a paper,
 his white flag with fine print
 I ignore to escape. Outside
 the western sun hangs over the horizon

like an old man holding his bald head
above a windowsill, *discovering*
he has the wrong house, yet lingering,
fascinated by his mistake.

HOMEOTHERMS / *Keith Allen Artrip*

(Working late afternoon)

A cleaning lady enters,
sighing in the building's
mechanical coolness, asks
how I'd like to be outside,
90 degrees and climbing—
I would. Sweat's
preferable to flat-faced
strangers cawing the heat
and the hardness of macadamia
nuts; let it run down
my face, stinging eyes red
as an addict's, stumbling
in withdrawn dreams
of madness, mumbling
to passers-by domestic
drought and disease
unrelieved by Crow Dog's
dance or medicine's
needle. Let them stare,
fanning themselves
with yesterday's news,
black ink staining
palms unreadable;
until, with wag
of heads, they return
to cool containers
of imitation lemonade,
the nightly news.



TALK TO ME, MOTHER / *Marjorie J. Vecbastiks*

No more dead letter news,
weekly weather reports,
wish you were here
with love, mother, squeezed in.
Even your swear words run
with such cool faucet ease.
How will I ever
totally put you together?
Sometime soon, mama,
we must talk about

a child's face,
nine years pressed
against the candy store window
long after
the inside lights went out.
Any bus now
you'll be home,
carrying bags heaped
with love.
It was good for forty years of excuses
but now I wonder about

the grey speckled headstone, father's I dreamt,
sunken six inches below yours,
dated January 1939 but
still unnamed. I
came to you, mother,
in some moment of pleasure.
Those scarred highways that criss-cross
the full length and breadth of your belly
lead straight to my front door
and warm visits, waiting
for nine hundred anxious miles,
but your small talk journeys

without you.

My patience is running scared.
With the price of postage rising,
should I walk slowly West
and meet you, midway,
where the questions you evade
will seal our distance?

THE FACTS OF HER LIFE / *Sandra Sprayberry*

If she craved to know, she would hire a detective
to tell her everything about herself she doesn't remember,

why, craving chow mein, she has come to this restaurant
to stare at her nails, which she feels an urge to bite.

She calls for the waitress and orders a dish
the waitress calls her favorite. How could she know.

While waiting for it to be cooked, she reads in the news
of a set of twins said to share one mind. From China

they smile at each other while cooking, holding hands.
She prefers to be inscrutable as possible. She resents

the twin she doesn't have, a woman who would know her life
like a story and copy it. Her earliest memory

is of smiling into a camera, but she refuses to confuse
her life into fact, a photograph her father exposed

twice. It is impossible to say what she felt at that moment.
The waitress, smiling, serves her familiarly,

but she won't believe this as a sign.
She has already changed, her face and hands. Searching

the table's surface for reflections, she is relieved
to feel no stab of recognition. She traces her thoughts

on the table with water so clear it is invisible.

SKIRTING GREAT EVENTS / *William Greenway*

Missed Dylan's daughter too,
Caitlin coming home to the Boathouse
and Auden dying before he stood
on the stage I had tickets to, front
row to see the wrinkles
of my time. Prince of Wales and Lady
Di taking their headdresses,
birchbark canoes, and sun
from the Rockies the day we arrived,
sat soaking a week in Kicking Horse Pass
while the mountains hid in the snarls
of their own breath.
Or when each roundabout said Pope
This Way, us going down to The Bear
to eat salmon, passing busses
headed upstream.

FOLK HERO / *Joseph Raffa*

She sees the land as
grass, dandelions, tulips, tomatoes—
he sees subdividing, a corporate park, then
sell off the outer land
at quadruple cost—you
become a folk hero, here
in America
just taking

MARTIN L. KING DAY / *Ed Davis*

Another grey holiday in an endless
series that began last Halloween:
sky neither blue nor black
but pus-yellow January bleak.
It's no doubt snowing somewhere—
Colorado, Cleveland or Alabama.
Winter has struck with the
unpremeditated randomness
of an Ohio tornado.
Scientists say the earth warms
with every year we don't quit
fossil fuels, that soon summers
and winters won't be reliable,
that climate has become a mad
accountant whose math has failed.

INCIDENT IN HUE / L. L. Rottmann

*I shouldn't have stopped.
I really shouldn't have.
After all, I was already running late,
and it wasn't any of my business.*

I often went out early in the day,
partly because the air was cool and the Perfume River was beautiful.
And also because I'm a morning person who just couldn't lie in bed,
especially not there. Not then.

*I saw him walking around for nearly a week,
and knew he'd been staying at the foreigner's hotel.
I thought he was another grim Russian
who'd complain about the food and scowl at the children.*

I enjoyed the sounds and smells of the slowly-awakening city
as the people got up, had breakfast,
and prepared for the long day's activities.
In the hustle and bustle of daybreak, I felt less conspicuous.

*I asked my neighbor Tuy—who works at the hotel—about him,
and she said he was an American teacher
who was visiting the university.
She also told me he'd been a soldier here twenty years ago.*

I didn't take my camera or note pad on my sunrise strolls
because I didn't want to look like a tourist.
I'd buy warm French bread and fresh mangos at the open-air market,
and just let the flow of the crowds carry me along.

*I didn't plan to stop,
but my feet wouldn't let me continue.
I stood nearby, watching,
as he joked with the children.*

I usually ended up in a schoolyard,
surrounded by a crowd of happy kids.
We'd play soccer, cards, or cat's cradle
as I'd crack them up with my awkward Vietnamese.

*I guess I resented his smile
because I remembered my dead mother's advice
that even the kindest of them
were sometimes terribly cruel.*

I saw her that clear, calm morning
at the far edge of an excited group of second-graders,
an angular teenager
with a look in her eyes I couldn't begin to comprehend.

*I still don't remember picking up the rock
or throwing it.
And although he obviously saw it coming,
he didn't even try to duck.*

I saw her suddenly bend over, and then in a single fluid motion,
hurl a small stone in my direction.
It floated in slow motion across the heads of the kids
but I refused to believe it was aimed at me.

*I watched, horrified, as the rock hit the American on the forehead,
just above the right eye.
He didn't flinch,
or even wipe away the trickle of blood that appeared.*

I felt the sharp impact, and the spurt of blood
from my second head wound suffered in Vietnam.
The first injury very nearly killed me.
This one hurt worse.

*I was summoned before The Central Committee that afternoon.
They told me he was a good man,
and a friend of our country.
They expected me to say I was sorry.*

I attended a dinner sponsored by The Central Committee that night.
When my hosts asked about the band-aid,
I told them it wasn't anything
important.

NIGHTWATCH / *Rosa Maria DelVecchio*

I wasn't in Nam
they make films about it
for people like me
to "witness" it, "experience" it
"re-live" it for myself

my husband pays the mortgage
while I take evening classes
my C-section scar of five years
still worries him
he was with me when I got it

I watch him at night
after he's fallen asleep
hear his sweat, smell his cries
the thing I know from films
awakens his sleep

keep him under the covers
can't save him so I pray
I damn in the name of the Father
Son and Most Holy Ghost Amen
what won't be damned

I wake up some mornings
in the rocking chair by the bed
his waking mutters ask
if I had trouble sleeping
I answer "no"

he calls me his nightwatch
a term of endearment, I think,
his words always peculiar,
problems expressing affection
I know he means nightlight

TO WORK / *Rosa Maria DelVecchio*

it's a none of your business place
walk at a sure pace
eyes fixed
with purpose
everyone on the same sidewalks
prove you belong more
pass the street-corner preacher
without a flinch
then everyone knows
you know how to walk these streets
how to have some higher purpose
beyond the peddlars
only to find yourself
in the same lobby, the same elevator
as everyone else

A TOUCH OF INCEST / *Rosa Maria DelVecchio*

I know I'm only eight years older
but I can not touch him,
my brother's friend, my brother's age.

He and I are friends and talk
about his 21-year-old sex drive
about the woman he's dating

—the one he says he doesn't like
but can't get rid of, the ugly one,
the one who's younger than me—

about how she entwines him
with her bacchic legs and arms
then gorges on his strong, delicate limbs,

about how she forces apart his thin, potent lips
his blonde locks drooping with sweat
his spine arched to the limit,

about the violent surges
of youthful, masculine energy
he wastes on her

—the woman he's dating
whom he doesn't like but can't shake
who is ugly and younger than me.

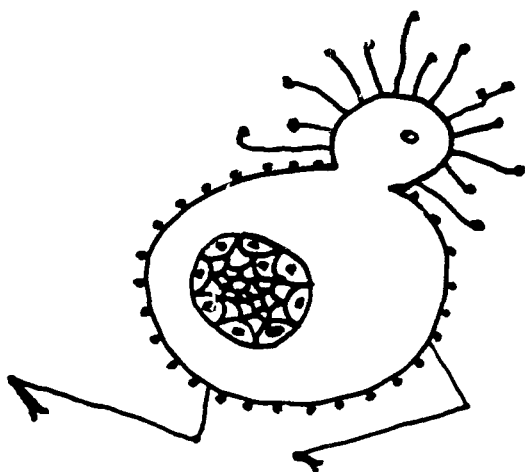
On the same side of the booth with him
I caress his hair and tell him
he can do better than her

he agrees.
I pretend he's a boy
with terms like cute, little, adorable, sweet

he frowns.
I tell him he's the sexiest
of my brother's friends
he blushes.

I know he's a man
but pretend he's a boy

I think him too young
so that I do not touch him
my brother's friend, my brother's age



Richard
Shake '89

SUNDAY MORNING SHOPPING / *Rosa Maria DelVecchio*

BIKINI TESTER: FREE WEIGHT AND FORTUNE read a sign over a huge scale that reminded me of a 210-pound lollypop.

Marc's Deep Discount Store was made for Ph.D. candidates like me who are expected to survive on an academic year's stipend of \$3400.00. Of course, I don't. I make ends meet, as anyone but a refined English professor would put it, and every night for dinner, before closing, I eat a Big Mac, my one and only fringe benefit.

That's a lot of Big Macs absorbed into a body per year, not to mention the french fries and chocolate shakes. So I don't have to tell you that, as I entered Marc's last Sunday morning in my dark blue sundress that was not too tight on me three years ago, I passed up the free weight and fortune offer and chose not to embarrass myself before a group of teenage boys who were standing near the exit flipping through the bikini issue of *Scene*.

All I needed—I repeated to myself as I walked swiftly down the Maybelline aisle, with my purse clutched to my side by my right arm, my hands folded before me firmly gripping the plastic handles of a little green shopping basket that pressed into my stomach—was a box of Stayfree thin maxi-pads, \$2.69 minus my 75-cent coupon, and two blank videotapes for *Conan the Destroyer* and *Rocky IV* on cable this week.

Leggs, two for \$2.99. Good deal. Size A. Size B. Size...

So much for that.

Why a Size A needs to control her top is beyond me. What else did I need? That was all. I tried to go to the checkout....

Triple-layer Devil's Food with white icing! How seductive and only three dollars....Put it down, Audrey, a voice from within warned, and go to the checkout!

"May I help you, ma'am?" a male voice broke my trance. I didn't look up. What did he mean by "ma'am"? I was only twenty-nine. He should have said "miss." I would even settle for the "honey" that would have offended me sixty pounds ago.

"No, thank you," I mumbled in disappointment, placing the cake into my basket. I walked over to a boy with fluffy blonde locks, who was efficiently stamping prices onto cans of Ragu, and a tiny voice that resembled mine asked, "Where can I get a shopping cart please?"

At the checkout an hour later, I handed the cashier two crisp twenties. She returned \$5.23 and said, "Thank you. Come again." The teenage boys with their "girly" magazine were gone. A father who'd just entered the store was having a tug of war with his little girl over who

was going to get to push the shopping cart. Two little brothers in red cut-offs and scabby knees were chasing a purple ball that shot out of the 25-cent bubble gum machine and was now rolling on the floor toward their mother, whose husband was trying to pry a baby monster from her bosom. Three girls in halters and hot pants stood near the exit doors deeply engaged in secret giggles.

As I edged me and my two fat grocery bags around the three blonde beauties, I was overtaken by a sudden lurch in my chest and a burning sensation rose to my cheeks.

What a god! There, majestically taking advantage of Marc's free weight and fortune offer, stood a freshly tanned Adonis (no, really, I mean it) in a gripping black muscle shirt, hands on hips, waiting for the needle to whirl around and rest on?... 192 OH-MY-GOD pounds! of shameless masculine flesh.

Next came the sound of bags tearing and groceries crashing to the floor. I crouched down, quickly trying to refill the torn bags while Snickers, glazed donuts, Ho Ho's repeatedly fell through to the floor, the triple layers of my cake exposed on the floor for everyone to see.

"Here, miss," a male voice said, "let me help you. Too heavy for you, huh?"

Now you've heard enough stories like these that you don't need me to tell you that, when I looked up, I was struck by his deep blue eyes, his jet black curls, and two brand new grocery bags. And that I was melted by the muscles in his thighs as he knelt beside me in his tight blue jeans. And that he carried my groceries to my car.

"Thank you," I said.

"You're welcome," he smiled, in a manner I found most peculiar to my recent embarrassment.

"Can I offer you anything?" I asked out of courtesy, knowing no one ever accepts payment for such a favor.

"I don't eat junk food," he said, holding up the sum total of *his* Sunday morning shopping, a 97-cent liter of Diet Coke. "What else," he added, opening the car door for me, "can you offer me?"

"I meant," I answered, apologetically, "I mean, that I'd, I'd like to pay you, sir." I had to be formal. After all, he'd seen—indeed, even handled—all the "junk" from which my body was made. I had to pretend that I was intelligent enough not to assume someone like *Mr. Diet Coke* would come on to or even mildly flirt with a junk-food addict like me. Or maybe I thought to impress him with my modesty.

"Sir"? Yes, madam," he said, crossing his arms over his massive chest and looking down at me, "pay me." And I feared not that he was serious but that he wasn't. That he was being playful with me. That he was

challenging me to be the woman I'm in the habit of believing no bastard of a man allows me the freedom to be.

I lowered my head. My hair tangled around my fingers as I fished through my purse. He placed one hand on the roof of my car and held the door open with the other. I was trapped between the inside of the car and his magnificent physique. I found the wallet, pulled out my last bill until payday, and held it out to him without looking up. "Here you go. Thank you again."

"Honey, are you afraid of men?"

I didn't hear the question. Would he mind repeating it? For it sounded just like he'd said, "Nice weather we're having today, isn't it?"

He reached into my purse and pulled something out.

"Hey! What are you doing?" I got into the car and tried to pull the door shut. He was in my way. "Could you please take this money so I can get going?" He snatched the five from my hand and busied himself doing something on the roof of my car.

Then he dropped something into my lap. As my hands reached out to press down on the car horn the way a lady like me has been trained to be expected to do in this type of situation, he cuffed his hands around my wrists and made himself comfortable beside me on the edge of the seat. "No, no. Sit still," he said, pinning my arms back and resting his chest against me. "Look, look," he urged, indicating what he'd thrown into my lap.

Lipstick.

"What is it?"

"Do you think I'd try to rape you here?"

"I don't know, would you?" I asked, ignoring the couple that just pulled in the parking space beside me.

"Probably."

"Probably what?"

"Probably I would rape you. Well, not exactly 'rape.' But kind of like it, I guess."

"You're crazy! Why are you doing this?"

"Why don't you scream?"

"Why are you doing this?"

"I haven't done anything yet. You mean 'what am I waiting for', don't you? We're not exactly isolated."

"You, go straight to hell!"

"Hold still talk to me God damn you tell me!"

"Tell you what?"

"Don't be afraid of me. Answer me?"

"What? What do you want from me!"

"What do you want from me?"

"I don't know you!"

"I don't know you."

"I hate you!"

"Hate me."

He thrust the wrinkled five-dollar bill down the front of my dress, a gesture I received passively.

The lipstick rolled out of my lap, and then I understood and I laughed.

"My name is Audrey," I admitted, as he leaned over me licking the tears off my cheeks, "and don't use your teeth."

"Thank you" were his only parting words. Just as suddenly as he'd trapped me, he released me and got out of the car.

I watched him walk through the parking lot, swinging the bottle of Diet Coke at his side, while on the roof of my blue Tempo lingered, in the shade "Really Red," a phone number and the name ALEX printed above it, pertinent information that I discovered after returning home from shopping that Sunday morning.

I looked up to see if he'd claimed a car yet, but he was already out of the parking lot, walking carefree all the way to the main intersection, where finally Alex stopped, waiting for the light to change before crossing the street.

COWARDICE / *Patricia Klas*

I attempt good writing:
The color yellow splatters my concentration.
Failure threatens in oozing, egg yolk hue.
Jaundice and intimidation infect.
Inner warning lights blink inadequacy.
Nervous sips of coffee yellow my enamel.
Words scramble, buttered slippery and sliding
 away from coherence.
A lemon sun ray curses my empty page.
I tiptoe along the endless dotted yellow line.
The paper's detours,
 bold caution signs,
 painted curbs shouting "No Parking,"
 all beckon me to turn back.
Why not pick dandelions,
 sniff daffodil nectar,
 slurp pineapple,
Instead of writing banana-peel garbage.
Yellow is a biting, nasty color
With its shades of gutless mustard.

CÆSAREAN BOY / *Rita Rae Robinson*

When I woke up
you had been delivered to me.
I laid back your wrappings
and feigned Postal Inspector.
Still dizzy from the night before,
my voice raucous,
I croaked pleasure at your
size and strength.
I tried to make us comfortable
in that narrow bed
and bared one breast,
hoping you'd show an interest
hoping you would not—
so tired from all our predawn efforts
my belly on fire
my being swollen from you.
You so perfect, so smooth,
so peaceful at rest beside me on the pillow,
I traced your silhouette on the linen
and thought about how easily I had become enthralled.

IN OHIO, SOMEWHERE SOUTH OF TOLEDO / *Brooke*
Horvath

I

He walks across his fields
careful of meanings
impressed by thunder
silent in the rain

through tedious tractor afternoons
dreams of bumper harvests
and of drought
of corn-green rows well tended

picking up a clod of dirt
he worries it to soil
listening to the land
speak its leafy language

then cuts a melon tapped for days
before it answered, Ready
waiting, eating, which was better
he couldn't say

II

Dusk, and crickets come alive
cornflowers glow
with fireflies aflirt above them
as fields grow dim

then fog, and nothing
save fog
and through it, crickets
crying for love

closing his eyes
he sees the still corn growing
half-asleep, thinks
I love this as the fish the pond

through the night, crickets
waking, he hears them
until the fog lifts
from morning's fields

IN A NON-EARTHQUAKE TIME / *Brooke Horvath*

You will not want to run; you will not want to panic.
So learn to act appropriately. Practice for disaster.
When the earth does quake, extinguish all smoking materials
(gas may be leaking from broken lines).
Remember: the Red Cross will be there to help
with clothing and shelter and medical care.
Write or phone your relatives now while you have the chance:
just let them know you're all right.
We know you never drive unless it's absolutely necessary,
so you are already clear on this point.
Also: don't eat foods from the refrigerator (they may have spoiled)
or snacks that have come into contact with flood waters.
It will be important not to spread rumors
and to avoid entering or leaving buildings:
if you are outside, remain outside;
if inside, do likewise.
Although it is not usually crucial to report hazards to authorities,
it will be then, so learn whom to call
and how to present a credible persona.
If your VCR gets wet, throw the main power switch first,
then unplug your machine. Wait a few days
before watching the rest of *Rocky* (it ends just like you think).
Please refrain from sightseeing until the fires are out.
Forget what Franklin said about humility
and learn to imitate the Boy Scouts.
Keep this poem in a safe place.



Contributors

CATHERINE ALLISON is 8 1/2 years old. She likes to run around outside and climb the pear tree and to sketch with black crayon and stuff like that. **KEITH ALLEN ARTRIP** is a life-long resident of Bucyrus, Ohio. He is currently making a living, or at least treading water, as a Security Officer and is attending The Ohio State University. **ROY BENTLEY's** book *Boy in a Boat* won the Alabama Poetry Series and was published by the University of Alabama Press in 1986. Last year, Bottom Dog Press published Roy's chapbook, *The Edge of Heaven*. **PHYLLIS BOSCO** strives to see the big picture. She learns from nature, her child and travelling that life changes directions a lot. So does her art. **DAVID CITINO** is the author of four volumes of poetry. He is director of the creative writing program at Ohio State University, poetry editor of The Ohio State University Press, and editor of *The Journal*. **WILLIAM DAUENHAUER** is a native of northern Ohio, where he has always dwelt. He graduated from Lakeland Community College in June, 1971. His wife's name is Deborah. **ED DAVIS** teaches English and edits the literary magazine *Flights* at Sinclair Community College in Dayton. His most recent poetry chapbook is *Whispering Leaves* (Great Elm Press). **ROSA MARIA DELVECCHIO** is a Ph.D. candidate in English at Case Western Reserve University, where her research has focused on Middle English literature and Edgar Allan Poe. Insects, microorganisms, small fishes, birds and other tiny creatures have a strong visual impact on **RICHARD DRAKE**. His images are a result of their fascinating designs and colors. **CHRISTOPHER ECKER** is a former student at Ohio State University at Marion. He is currently in the United States Navy. **WILLIAM GREENWAY** teaches at Youngstown State University. His books are *Pressure Under Grace* (1982) and *Where We've Been* (1987), both from Breitenbush. **JEFF GUNDY** has new poems in *Beloit Poetry Journal*, *Laurel Review*, *Spoon River Quarterly*, and elsewhere, and is finishing a manuscript, *Inquiries into the Technology of Hell*. **WARREN HALL** lives in Shaker Heights and teaches at Laurel School. He conceived "Stones Dancing" as he walked home one day. **DONALD M. HASSLER** is a Professor of English at Kent State University. Poems of his have appeared in *Hiram Poetry Review*, *Tar River Poetry*, *Descant*, and *The Cornfield Review*. After battling demons on an alternate plane of reality, **RONALD HEDLAND** is being conformed at Marion Correctional Institute, where he is working on an Associate of Arts degree from Ohio State University. **BROOKE HORVATH** is an Assistant Professor at Kent State University (Stark Campus) and an Associate Editor of *The Review of Contemporary Fiction*. **RIVER J. KARNER** lives and writes in Lafayette,

Indiana. **PATRICIA KLAS** has just graduated from Creighton University with a degree in English and an emphasis in Creative Writing. She lives in St. Paul, Minnesota. **ROBERT MILTNER** is the Coordinator of Developmental Education and Writing Center Director at Kent State University, Stark Campus. He has poems forthcoming in *Bristlecone* and *Birmingham Poetry Review*. **DAVID PICKARD** is an art student at the University of Texas at Arlington. **JOSEPH RAFFA** has a Ph.D. from Columbia University and has published two chapbooks of poetry. The graveyard next to the house he grew up in is now surrounded by a shopping center. **RITA RAE ROBINSON** lives in Mt. Victory, Ohio, with her husband and their two preschool-aged children. She is a student at The Ohio State University at Marion. **L. L. ROTTMANN** is a Vietnam veteran who teaches Vietnam literature at Southwest Missouri State University. He recently returned to Southeast Asia for a month-long visit. **E. L. SAUSELEN**'s art books are in Franklin Furnace and the New Museum of Contemporary Art (New York). A National Endowment for the Arts Fellow for 1985-1986, he now teaches at OSU-Marion. **ROBERT L. SMITH** lives in New York. He has been twice a guest at Yaddo and is the author of *Refractions*, published by the Dragon's Teeth Press (1979). **SANDRA SPRAYBERRY** is Assistant Professor of 20th-Century literature and creative writing at Birmingham-Southern College. "The Facts of Her Life" is the title poem of her first poetry manuscript. **MARJORIE J. VECBASTIKS**, Associate Editor of *Potentials*, is a freelance writer majoring in English and Creative Writing at The University of Akron. **WILL WELLS**' book *Conversing with the Light* won the 1987 Anhinga Award and was published by Florida State University Press (1988). He professes English at Lima Technical College, Lima, Ohio.



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