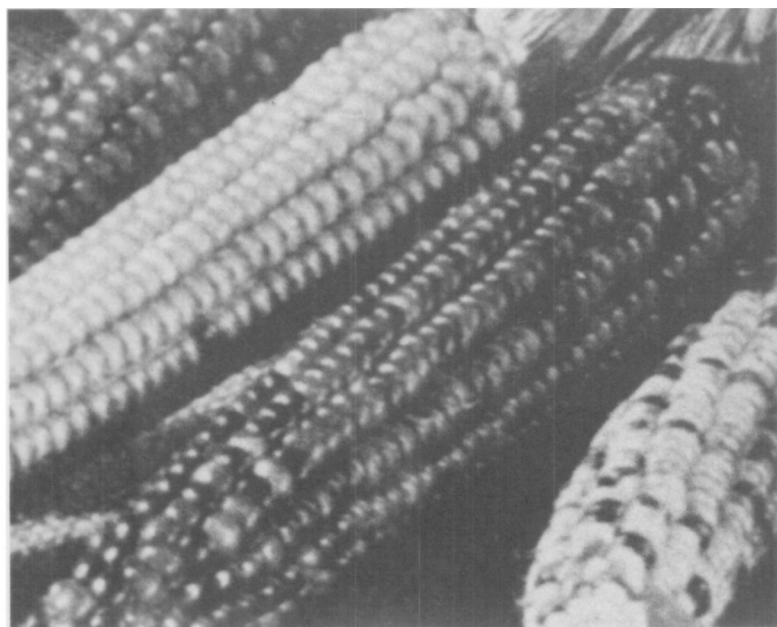


# CORNFIELD REVIEW 2

1977



**ONE  
DOLLAR**



# CORNFIELD REVIEW

*An Annual of the Creative Arts*

1977 Vol. 2

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1977

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# PAUL BENNETT

## *Fine Arts Festival*

A stone's throw from memorials to  
McKinley, Garfield, Harding, Grant,  
We gathered on capitol grounds  
Smelling of legislators and lobbyists,  
A businessman's government,  
To hear writers read their poetry.  
You followed me (thank God!)  
Barefooted, clothed in fine-spun cloth,  
African as sunlight,  
With water-carved head, eyes and smile.

You said, as you were introduced,  
"My mother would never understand  
My way of saying goodbye  
To Columbus, Ohio."

When you came to your poem  
"Is It Art," your escort's  
Long fingers lifted a tucked fold  
Of your one-piece gown, and unwrapped slowly,  
As Bougainvillia leaves might be pulled aside.

"Oh, my God!" exclaimed a woman,  
Attempting to block her husband's view.  
"Police! Where are the police?"  
Called an old man on the outer edge  
Of your applauding audience.

"And is it art?" you asked,  
Turning as a leaf upon its axis.

No one answered that I heard,  
But marble statues of Ohio's dead  
Gave assent with staring eyes.

## THOMAS DORSETT

### *Delivery*

Guilt, innocence, loaned light *and* dark,  
life's package emerges; gift-wrapped  
uniquely in live litmus paper, flesh;

it's blue now. Then the first breath;  
after air takes his first walk  
down the new passage, it's pink—

As the new road opens up to live traffic  
both planners lean over the bedside  
thrilled with dust's latest arrival;

through ecstatic meeting of clay  
plus nature's abracadabra,  
flash! now someone who's never been

is— Through live bread and water  
over a framework of bones  
again light announces *I am*

and the dark? New face means new fate:  
for both parents, growth *and* decay,  
life's plant on death's trellis, Thank God

## LISA SHARP

### *Sunset*

A core of bronze  
extinguished by  
vermillion, purple.  
A brush of black fir  
etched against  
a glowing sky.  
A trail of fire  
smoulders in the  
darkness of the lake.  
Color ushers in the  
coolness of night.

## BETTY M. DIETSCH

### *Silence*

Silence is a silver coin  
to be spent  
or squandered.  
It buys boredom,  
long hours of loneliness,  
OR  
peaceful solitude,  
a respite from billows of talk,  
a ride on the swells of thought.





# PAT WHITING

## *Robert in the Barnhouse*

Across all distance your darkness  
Reaches out, slipping like a shadow  
Between the golden mountain sunrise  
And my complacent activity;

And when rain raps with measured  
Inconstancy upon the roof and shutters,  
Your darkness settles in the chair  
Across from mine, gathering form

And finality, until your laughter  
Rolls away through the night  
In distant thunder. I see  
You clearly then, your legs

Stretched out along the hearth,  
The fire dancing in your boots:  
You wear the guises of many  
Pasts. You smile, and

The world's frail courage, trapped  
For centuries between God and  
The ridgepole, comes falling  
Down, an old sun casting

Its last wise light onto our  
Faces; burning on the rafters;  
Coming at last to rest in  
The ashes of the age to which

We must belong. Born of the  
Chilly ashes is yet your darkness,  
Giving rise to cacophony  
There in the cavernous silence.

## *Town Road Forty-Five*

*for Bill Jerome*

In good-natured parody to  
The flashy cascade of Furnace Brook,  
    The old town road  
    Worries along in  
    Modesty and potholes  
The length of the ridge above the village.

Through the valley where everywhere  
Half-risen from the ground like tombstones,  
    The long-abandoned  
    Implements of pioneers  
    Rust and crumble  
In the bright corrosive autumn air,

To the last stubborn farmhouse standing  
Cracked and resolute at its conclusion,  
    The road unwinds  
    In quiet persistence  
    Among the wood-ferns,  
Translucent skeletons on the forest floor.

Beneath the night's pavilion,  
The road's a dusty platform where  
    The wizened spirits  
    Of the early settlers  
    Dance ghostly quadrilles  
To the clicking of the wind in naked birch;

But by day, overhung with the lively colors  
Of obstinate saplings, town road forty-five  
    Makes a gentle inroad  
    To the soul of earth  
    Laid bare for an instant  
In the certain light of the white October afternoon.

## **RICHARD F. FLECK**

### *Fruit of the Wilderness*

Mossy green spruce  
stand in fog  
spreading arms  
above a bog  
where glowing blackberries  
wild and sour  
drip in heavy mist  
of the noontday hour  
forming seeds  
in lines of verse.

## **PHIL WRIGHT**

### *Liberation*

Into the sun  
yellow fire  
heat wave.

Out the other end  
damp air  
cool darkness.

Sudden change  
too brittle  
body breaks.

## **MARGIE WRIGHT**

### *The Child Within*

take what you want and  
then be gone  
i'll not be long with your heart  
i'll see inside and  
then go hide  
to sort the papers one by one

the child within must search for truth  
too young to know it lies inside

the child within will seek for youth  
till death finds the awareness life implies

# KATHY KEGELMEYER

## *Puddles*

glassy, gleaming, reflecting  
mirrors of varied shapes and sizes serve as  
looking glasses for the vain and gaudy trees dressed  
heavily in gem-like rain drops. How the trees smile with  
satisfaction as they gaze at their reflections that are  
stirred by the fingers of Ms. Wind. How their heads  
reel from the intoxicating smell of the damp  
earth. Then the sun comes and dries  
the dew and raindrops. The magic  
goes to sleep until the next rain  
pretty much the way Las Vegas  
sleeps during the day.

# SHERRI DEAVER

## *Fourth Position, Please*

Thundering taffeta skirts,  
surrounded by blaring lights  
burdensome oily paint pulling down your smile.

. . . .whispering parents. . . .  
bored little brothers. . . .  
dance little girl  
tonight is your night!

# MARCIA HURLOW

## *Mohican Youth Camp*

Each summer they come on home hewn rafts,  
float down rolling hills of mothers  
whining be good and good bye—  
the aching children of this season  
press the greased sack of momma's womb,  
pull through bars of women's hands,  
ask a light for newly opened eyes.  
The Mohican flows unreflecting.  
None but a child who skipped stones  
bright over to its far bank  
knew any flash of sky  
before farewell around the campfire  
burning into their faces,  
blotting the stars with their ash.

## AMY JO SCHOONOVER

### *Mathematical Metaphor*

Love is an expression  
of non-Euclidian mathematics:  
function, operation,  
series, set, primes,  
fittings-together, unknowns,  
the male and female principle,  
and eventual completion,

Like a difficult puzzle  
every child learns  
and then can work forever.

You have been my puzzle  
of love and learning.

I try all theories, paradoxes  
against the constant of you,  
continuing a norm,  
making (though I never look back)  
a perfect bell-curve.

When the last proof is given  
and we have completed  
the mythical architecture,

We shall have lived—  
we will be old indeed.

## VERA WHITMER

### *Grief*

Mirror, help me fix a careful smile  
with color-muted lipstick on frozen face.  
I'll wear it just as bravely as I can.

Grief, that formless predatory cat,  
crouches and licks his bloodied claws,  
endlessly occupied in shredding my essence.

Grief, you are forever and ever,  
but where is your Amen?

## KELLI BAER

### *Untitled*

chain smoking cigarettes  
Lost she sits  
in the seedy all-night diner  
drinking cheap wine in dixie cups  
While Fred, the bartender gently  
    present, almost there  
serves sympathy in bottles and kegs  
She finds the nights forever  
unless diluted by the wine.

Walking  
streets empty  
till dawn.  
Lesser days tease  
    yesterdays gone by  
as captured in picture frames  
and shreds of memories.

Half a pair is never one  
Wedding band sits without a finger on  
She burns his pipe tobacco  
    in the ashtray by his chair  
    and wears his after shave to bed.  
Pouring herself some solace  
    she dreams to wake up with him by  
    her side.

### *The Crop Duster*

Shaving low along dusty earthskin  
over blighted fields he  
sprays dry chemicals  
for farmers pleading for rain.

Cessna's underbelly  
    whispers against  
    cornstalks  
        wheat  
        and fence rows.  
He climbs the sky abruptly  
    always knowing where to find  
split-second lift  
    somewhere in his fingertips.  
Like a marionette on a string, she jumps  
to dance over an ivy-clad barn.

*The Skydevil and I: My First Flight*

Wing-over-wing  
He gives the 150 a flop  
    belly up    belly down  
We nose dive  
pressure takes everything and  
    leaves me suctioned to the seat.  
Down  
    down  
    ridgepole rushes in  
shingle-count is ten and then some  
but then he catches a good drift  
up  
gives the roof the kiss-off  
and leaves it far behind.

Throbbing with the rush  
I see my neighbors grounded far below  
playing  
fliptongue just for The Skydevil  
and I.

Master of every drift—he brings her down again  
Sky pretzels curled under an older thumb  
tickle me inside  
and leave me wanting more.  
I've got the fever,    now  
and when I get my wings together  
    nothing will be able  
    to bring me down again.

**JACK WRIGHT**

*Blank Pages*

Blank pages  
Totally full of things we cannot see  
Blank faces  
Totally full of looks of non-belief  
Shallow pools  
So we can see everything therein  
Shallow feelings  
That keep us from learning how to swim

## JAMES C. KILGORE

### *Not Too Much to Carry*

*(February 2nd)*

I pack hurriedly;  
I don't know why:  
I have come to love the people  
    who heard my voice  
    in deep baritone pain.  
I am careful with my flowers  
    and the cards that filled the snowy days.  
For me they are Christmas and New Year's  
    and Valentine presents.  
For me they are Thanksgiving.

I search the sky for the sun;  
It is in hiding,  
But beyond the gray screen,  
Light blooms,  
Scenting the quiet room.

The Warrensville Heights Black Oak has been a companion  
    for forty days and forty nights.  
She has stood by me through the flood.

She has always been there when I needed her:  
I have compared my surgery to hers,  
    the cold which screamed against her black chest  
    to the pain which caused my black trunk to tremble;  
I have seen her endure the terrible lashes  
    of a bleak North American winter.

★ ★ ★

She stands there now, near the parking lot;  
I pause to say good-bye.  
I tell her I'm leaving,  
I tell her I'll be back to see her,  
That some warm day I'll pack a lunch  
And spend at least an afternoon  
    at her feet when she is young again.



## MARY JUNE MOORE

### *Riddles, Racers and Roses: A Children's Story*

Doug was a boy who liked riddles. Some riddles came from books. These were funny and good. Like, "Why is a cook mean?" And, of course, the answer was, "He beats the eggs." But some riddles — the best ones — seemed to appear out of nowhere. They came at the oddest times. In the strangest places. This riddle began in the supermarket.

"Look out, Mom!" yelled Doug. "Mary Alice has an orange."

She didn't have it long. For a baby, Mary Alice had a good arm. She heaved the orange. Splat! The check-out girl laughed. Doug's mother laughed and picked the orange off the floor.

"Wow! What a tomboy!" said Mom. She moved the oranges where Mary Alice couldn't reach them. "Did you pick out a toy?" she asked Doug.

He smiled and held out a card of jewelry — three gold rings with stones — three shiny bracelets.

"Yuk!" his mother frowned. "Jewelry? Take it back, Doug. Do you want people to call you a sissy? Hurry!"

Doug returned the jewelry to the rack. He chose a small car. It was red and racy. It had a hood that opened and closed. But it was not as shiny and different as the rings and bracelets.

This was a hurry day. They hurried to the car. Sacks in the trunk. Slam! Mary Alice in the car seat in front. Doug stood up in back. Lights blinked. Horns honked. Tires squealed. Mary Alice heaved a rattle on the floor. For a baby, Mary Alice had a good arm. For a boy, Doug had a good riddle.

"Why is it all right for a girl to be a tomboy," he asked, "but not all right for a boy to be a sissy?"

"God only knows," said Mom.

"He didn't tell anyone else?" asked Doug.

"Don't ask me," said his mother.

So Doug asked God . . . silently. God was in a quiet mood. He didn't answer.

Mom jerked the car to a stop in front of their apartment building. She lifted Mary Alice from the car seat and hurried to the door. From the front, the apartments all looked alike. Inside they were different. Many different people lived in Doug's apartment house. Doug was glad. He had many questions. When God was being quiet, and Mom was in a hurry, sometimes different people could answer his questions.

When the groceries were in, Doug went to the garage. He watched Miss Brown fix her car. It was red and racy with a hood that opened and shut.

"Why is it all right for a girl to be a tomboy," he asked, "but not all right for a boy to be a sissy?"

"God only knows," said Miss Brown. "Hand me that wrench, would you please?"

“What is it like under there?” he asked her.

“Come and see,” she said.

He lay on the creeper beside her. Vroom! They rolled under her car. Doug looked up. A light hung on a pipe. Squares and circles. Cylinders and boxes.

“What is that?” he pointed.

“The differential,” she said.

“What does it do?”

“When the car goes around a corner,” she said, “it lets one wheel go faster than the other. It lets one wheel be different.”

She wiped the grease from her hands.

“My mother doesn’t fix our car,” said Doug. “My Dad does.”

“We’re not all alike,” she said. “That’s our differential.”

“I’m glad,” said Doug. He had many questions. It took different people to answer them.

He walked to the gardens behind the building. Mr. Fisher, with his handlebar moustache and shark tooth necklace, was tending his roses.

“Why is it all right for a girl to be a tomboy,” asked Doug, “but not all right for a boy to be a sissy?”

“God only knows,” said Mr. Fisher, picking leaves.

A single dark red blossom sparkled with water drops.

“What is that?” asked Doug.

“Crimson Glory,” said Mr. Fisher.

Another bush held clusters of deep pink.

“These roses grow in a bunch,” said Doug.

“Floribunda,” said Mr. Fisher. “These roses are different. They grow in bunches.” He picked a leaf. “OUCH!” he said. “The blasted thorns grow in bunches, too.”

“My father doesn’t grow roses,” said Doug. “My mother does.”

“Your father doesn’t have a green thumb?”

“I’ve never noticed,” said Doug. “I’ll have to go check and see.”

He went back to the apartment. Dad was in the nursery. On the dressing table, Mary Alice waved her fat legs. The thumbs that fastened her diaper were just the same color as Doug’s — certainly not very green.

“Why is it all right for a girl to be a tomboy,” asked Doug, “But not all right for a boy to be a sissy?”

“God only knows,” said Dad. “Hand me the powder, would you, please?”

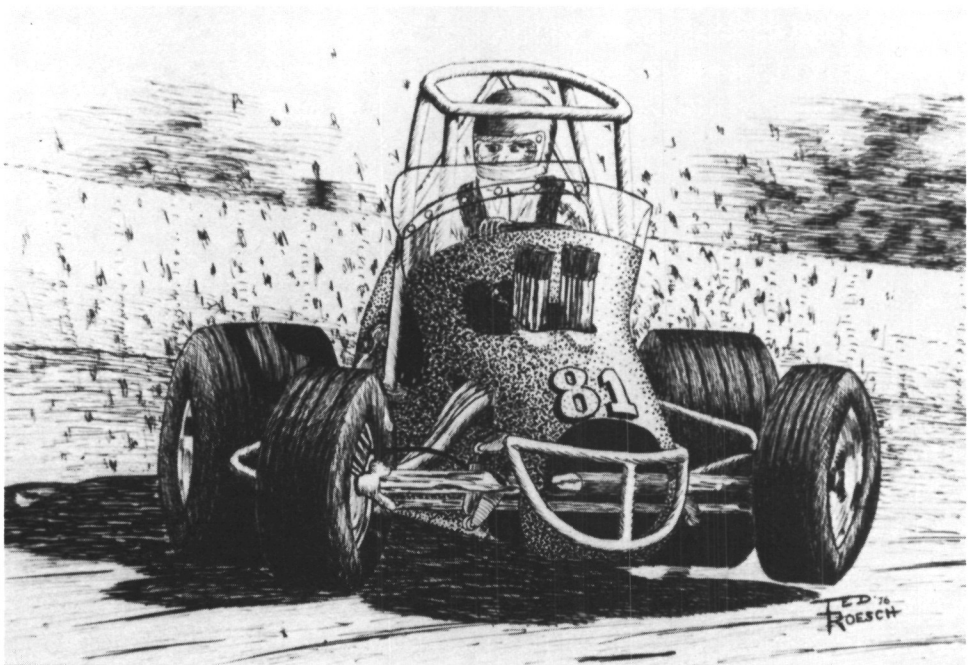
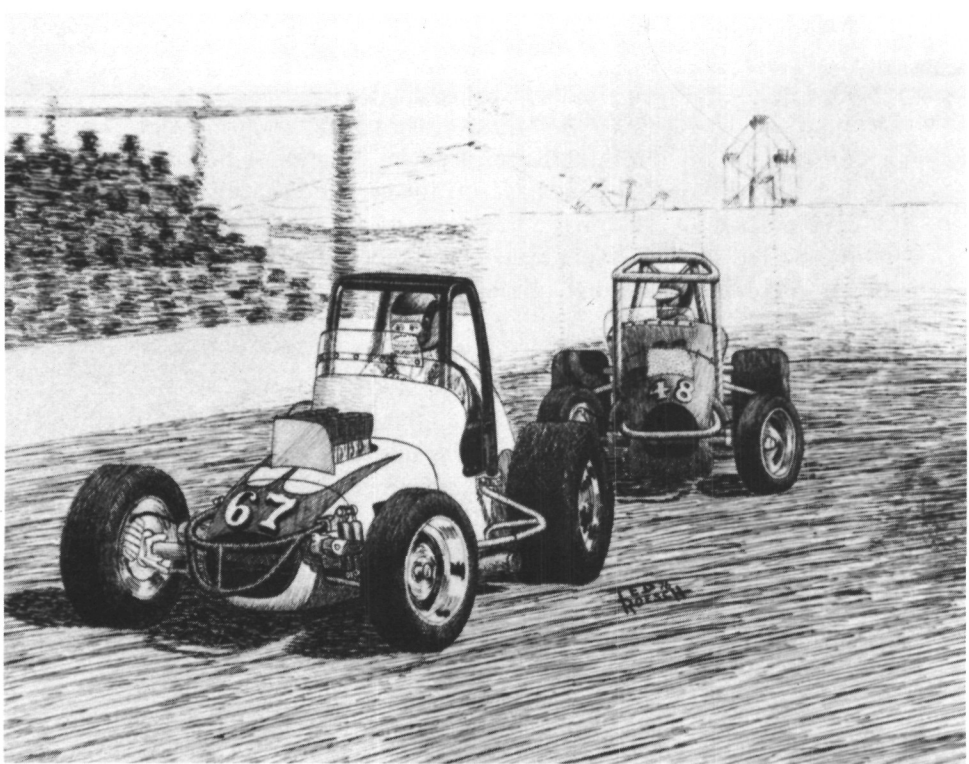
Doug handed the can to his Dad.

“Why are you dressing Mary Alice?” he asked.

“You’re going to the college with me,” said Dad. “Your mother had to go out of town on business.”

“I hope Mary Alice doesn’t cry a lot,” said Doug.

“Me too,” said his father. “We have a lot of work to do. Sometimes she cries just to get attention. That’s not the kind of crying we need. We don’t want her to be a sissy, do we?”



“Nobody wants to be called a sissy, do they?” asked Doug. “Not even girls.”

“Does that solve your riddle?” asked his father.

“I think so,” said Doug. “Being a sissy isn’t a matter of rings or bracelets or cars or the color of your thumbs. It isn’t even a matter of girls or boys. It’s simply a matter of howling your head off for no good reason.”

“Very profound,” said his father.

Doug picked up the diaper bag. His father carried Mary Alice. They climbed into the car. His father turned on the key. Rumm! Rumm! The car would not start.

“Now what’s the matter with the car?” said Dad.

“It’s probably the floribunda differential,” said Doug.

“That could be,” said his father, “but I think we’re out of gas. Look! The gas tank is empty!” He scowled. “Why doesn’t your mother ever fill the gas tank when she has the car?”

“God only knows,” said Doug, “but if you ask around he may have spread the word.”

“Very profound,” said Dad. “Let’s go see if Miss Brown has a spare bit of gas.”

## GARRETT W. FOX

### *The Importance of Being Lazy*

I once knew two men, neighbors, with very different life styles; in good weather both could be seen in their back yards engaged in varying activities. The first prided himself on being a hard worker: painting the house, washing the car, mowing and watering the lawn, maintenance that once done had to be begun again. The second had natural siding on his house and took his car to an automatic wash; his yard was somewhat shabbier looking but he seemed to enjoy it more: lying in his hammock reading a book, playing croquet with the kids and tossing horseshoes with the neighbors.

Conventional wisdom would describe the first man as “hard working, industrious” and the second as “lazy,” as if there were some innate virtue in work no matter what it yields. Look closer: you may just find that work, far from having any intrinsic reward, is rather neutral, obtaining meaning only from its resultant product. Of value is the “work” that yields a useful object, creates something of beauty, thought or pleasure, or that benefits another. But what of the work most of us do, the routine of the conveyor belt or the mind-numbing cleaning, cooking, polishing of the housewife. True, we can never fully escape such chores but more creative use could be made of our lives with a radical rejection of the Protestant Ethic: hard work is not its own reward; laziness is.

Radical, right? But think about it; if you divide the world into the lazy people (LP) and the non-lazy people (NLP), who has contributed the most toward that mixed blessing we call progress? If you think it's the NLP's then read on; if you correctly said the LP's then open another beer, shift your body in the hammock and read on anyway — you have the time to spare.

Look at the history of the world, of thought and achievement; its best aspects are a product of the LP's. For example, that high priest of the sciences, yet most practical of tools, mathematics, is an LP achievement. Today most people can balance a check book, make change or calculate the best buy of two containers holding different amounts. If it had been left up to the NLP's we'd still be counting with our fingers and toes or, when the number became too great, counting pebbles or chipping marks on a stone (and forget about multiplying or dividing). Even the Roman system was that of an NLP; it was the Arabian LP, tired of making scratches and counting pebbles, who discovered the zero, the base of ten and founded mathematics.

And what about the elevator, automobile and typewriter—clearly all LP inventions; philosophy, literature, science, music and art are all LP achievements. True, some LP products, like the pop top can and aerosol spray, are examples of a good thing gone too far. But how would you live today if it had not been for the LP's: hunting your food on the hoof, cooking it over a fire (if you could find an LP to light one for you) and, yes, Virginia, indoor plumbing is yet another LP invention.

Further, NLP mentality fosters a dictatorial, restrictive society. If the pharaohs had toiled with the pyramids' stones they would have settled for a simple marker and the world would be no poorer. If the generals had to police the camp grounds by hand or if the bureaucrats had to deal with their own red tape, what then?

Moreover the NLP is a petty and rigid person whose favorite phrase is "it's always been done that way." They are comfortable with the tyranny of the time clock and the eight hour day. They find further comfort in the repetitious and meaningless, as in the scene from a Marx Brothers movie: Chico digging a hole but making no progress because Harpo is dumping the dirt from his own hole into his brother's.

Several years ago, on the first day of a new job, I discovered that it took me only one hour of paper pushing to finish my work. I asked my supervisor for more and he told me that each person had his own task and there was nothing else for me to do. I went back to my desk, propped up my feet and opened a magazine. Walking by and seeing me, the supervisor said that I must *look* like I was working. Naively, I asked why: "It's always been done that way."

Some progress is being made; a few LP's, well disguised, are slipping up the corporate ladder. In Denver, an insurance company's office workers are allowed to complete their assignments at any hour of the day and to work for any length of time they wish. Some still work the traditional day, some come in at night, some work three marathon days while others just come in when they feel like it. A little progress is being made in industry: several have given up the traditional assembly line in favor of letting an individual or small team assemble the product from beginning to end.

In business, bureaucracies and whole societies we can see the repressive forces of the NLP's at work (no pun intended) like Chico, shoveling and shoveling and not making any progress. And we can see that for most of what is good, both material and spiritual, we must thank the LP's. Christ, Ghandi, Thoreau and Edison, LP's all.

So let the dust accumulate, the grass grow; find a lazier way to do something, make love, play with your children, read a good book, enjoy!

## WILLIAM THOMAS

### *Ballade of Vagabonds Long Gone*

Where are Villon and his thieving crew  
That robbed by night and hid of day,  
Or roistered in a Paris stew?  
Where are the friends so bold and gay?  
Did each of them come to blacken and sway,  
At Montfaucan to strangle and hang?  
Did all of them go the luckless way?  
But where are the hearts that laughed and sang?

Where is the bargeman Jehan le Loup?  
The poacher of ducks, Casin Cholet?  
—That picker of locks, Colin de Cayeux,  
And Montigny, they called René:  
We know these two had a price to pay.  
But Jehan le Petit and Jehan Mautaint?  
Dogis, Pichart, de Moustier?  
Oh, Where are the hearts that laughed and sang?

Where are the women the poet knew,  
La Belle Heaulmière, lamenting her May,  
And darkeyed Kathryn who brought him rue?  
The fat Margot and little Macée?  
The heirs of the Testaments, where are they?  
Where are *La Vache* and *La Pomme de Pin*?  
*L'Espée de Bois* and *Le Grant Godet*?  
And where are the hearts that laughed and sang?

Oh Prince of Poets, the crown of bay  
Ill fits the heads of most of your gang;  
*You* wear it, François de Montcorbier!  
But where are the hearts that laughed and sang?

## SHAWN MILLER

### *Mrs. Stein's Tin Box*

The sky was in a golden blaze from the setting sun. Its fading rays gave the last direct light against the colored leaves of autumn. The last shafts of sunlight had already left the large sitting room of the home. The sound of birds, soon to leave, could be heard through the large screened windows. Not far away, a boy was hurriedly cutting a lawn before he lost all light. Occasionally, a gentle breeze drifted in, carrying the scent of freshly cut grass. There was a nip to the air, not felt since winter. It concealed itself in the warm breeze that drifted into the room. Somewhere in the crowded room, a man moaned softly in an attempt to speak. A woman, dressed in white, drifted noiselessly across the room on white crepe-soled shoes. She went to the window and, with some effort, closed it. Now that the sounds of the world had been hushed everyone became more aware of the dry music that had been playing ceaselessly since morning. Speakers were located in the ceilings over congregation points. The room was furnished with plush chairs and couches. Huge, ornate lamps provided little light where they sat on cumbersome tables. A few personal touches were added to the room or hung on the institution-green walls to give things a homey look. Railings protruded from the walls on all four sides. One old woman, a giddy mirror of her former self, stood clutching the railing for minutes, her dress only half buttoned. She had a purposeless look as she slowly turned her head from side to side, methodically licking her lips. One of the younger women, dressed in white, approached the old woman.

“Come, Mrs. Sacks, we must get ready. Our visitors are coming. Now let’s button up.” The old woman, almost as if she were in slow motion, looked down at her dress. She began to raise her arm, but the younger woman buttoned her dress. “There,” she said. She smiled and walked away. The old woman, with an uneasy sway, returned to the railing and clutched it again.

The music softened a little as a voice said, “Ladies and gentlemen, our visitors will soon be arriving. If you are having any difficulty, raise your hand and one of the nurses will be glad to help you.” The music again filled the room. Many of the residents talked quietly, laughing at funny stories and the men joked about the nurses they could never enjoy. Others listlessly gazed at the sunset or passively watched the nurses. As they sat there, suddenly, men, women and children entered the room. With nervous laughs they greeted aunts, uncles and parents, many of whom they had had committed. All added hesitant phrases like, “You’re looking good” or “what beautiful color you have in your cheeks!” An old man moaned angrily as his son wheeled him away from his place, while another woman giggled senselessly at the sight of her grandchildren. Boys and girls, too young to understand, cried or ran, in fright, from grandparents. The room was thrown into the confusion that occurred every visiting hour. The nurses patrolled the room for signs of abuse. Unattended children pulled at clothing or played noisily with toys they had



concealed. Residents would convulse or try to eat foods without removing the wrappings. The confused visitors would look pleadingly for a nurse. One of the circulating nurses went among the residents tucking blankets and straightening robes. Near the large window sat a majestic old woman. Her figure, though slight, was still trim. Her face still possessed the fine features of a younger woman and her gray-blue eyes sparkled with life.

“Hello, Mrs. Stein, are you comfortable?”

“Yes,” she replied tucking her blanket closer around herself. The nurse, seeing a small tin box in her lap asked, “Would you like me to take that box and put it in a safe place?”

“No, I brought it out because I want it.”

“All right, Mrs. Stein, but I hope you don’t lose it.”

“No, I won’t,” was her determined reply.

The nurse walked away shaking her head. Most of the nurses considered Mrs. Stein one of the difficult persons to handle, but all treated her with a respect that only a few residents enjoyed. Most patients had become senile, losing part or most of their sanity. The few who hadn’t were respected and dreaded. They knew too well how their bodies, once strong and active, were slowly giving way. The senile were afflicted with their child-like life. In many cases, they had submitted to voluntary mental suicide that let them tolerate parties with nursery rhymes and heavy sedatives. A few, like Mrs. Stein, sat patiently talking about their lives and their very uncertain future. The apathy of old age took its toll as these individuals drifted into senility. Mrs. Stein turned slowly and scanned the room with her ancient eyes. Old men sat in their wheel chairs, dull-eyed with heavy heads propped up by one arm. An old woman, her face a grotesque sag, sat quietly. Martha Whitman sat in a corner with a small group of children playing around her. Mrs. Stein wished she could talk to her. She almost raised her hand to summon a nurse when, with great disappointment, she saw the same lost expression on Martha’s face. She had seen other friends who had changed over the past few months. Only a few remained alert, among them, many newcomers she had not met. She had noted how many newcomers would drift into senility soon after arriving. Mrs. Stein knew that she, too, would succumb. She had experienced lapses of memory, while at other times, she recalled things that had happened to her as a very young child; all of which, she thought she had forgotten. The present, at times, seemed nonexistent; names and faces were harder to remember.

“Mrs. Stein,” a nurse said, disturbing her thoughts, “would you like to sit somewhere else?”

She turned to the nurse and said, “No, I’m fine.”

“I thought you might like to talk to Mrs. Danby.” She motioned to the woman in the wheel chair that she was pushing.

“Oh, hello, Dorothy,” Mrs. Stein said with surprise. “How do you feel after your trip to the hospital?”

Mrs. Danby turned her head and with an absent look returned the greeting.

“Nurse, I’d like to sit alone for a while.”

“All right, dear, but you shouldn’t be by yourself too much. Can I take care of that box for you, honey?”

“I told the other nurse I want the box with me.”

“All right,” the nurse said, “But I hope you don’t forget it.” Mrs. Danby was gone too, she thought. They had been good friends for a long time. Dorothy Danby had entered the home not long after Mrs. Stein. It had been Dorothy who had convinced her that staying in her home alone for the rest of her life was bad. She had enjoyed the company of an old friend. Lately, Dorothy had been in the hospital and, now, she was gone, too.

As the evening wore on, Mrs. Stein became tired. She overheard a boy tell his mother, “I can’t imagine that these old people were ever young.” Mrs. Stein smiled when she heard him. She looked down at her box. She was feeling weaker and finally she had to be brought to her room. While visiting hours continued, Audrey Stein died.

The home was quiet now with all residents in bed. The music that played endlessly was off now. All that could be heard was the quiet rumbling of the air system. One of the nurses sat at her station filling out the death report of Mrs. Stein. She was a new staff member and felt uneasy filling out the report of a dead woman; she checked the short list of possessions. A few clothes, some mementos and a tin box were all she owned. The nurse took the box and opened it carefully. The box smelled musty. Inside were several papers and other items. Leafing through them she found a lock of brown hair bound with a red string, several old stamps and coins and a locket with the engraving, “Beauty Contest Winner — 1920 — Atlantic City.” The nurse opened the locket and found a tiny picture of a beautiful woman with dark brown hair and a solid chin. Putting the locket aside, she took from the box several photographs. Fascinated with the old pictures, she looked at the faces. One photograph caught her eye. It was of a family standing in front of a stately old house. She recognized the youthful figure of Mrs. Stein. On the back was printed, “The family —1935.” Several photographs showed the children at different ages. Other pictures were of grandchildren. The nurse saw the figure of Mrs. Stein posing at many places around the world. The final photograph, dated 1965, was another family portrait taken in front of the same house as before. The nurse compared it to the earlier picture. The trees were much larger in the second picture and the house showed some wear, but it was the same house. Now, instead of four children with parents, there were ten couples with fourteen children. In the center stood Mr. and Mrs. Stein. The proud older woman was radiant. Her expression caused the nurse to think: “A trouble maker, proud and stubborn.” The nurse could recall snatches of Mrs. Stein’s biography. Remembering it, she went to the file where all residents’ biographies were kept and found the one she wanted. Mrs. Stein was admitted in 1970, a year after the death of her husband. She had four children, twelve grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. The cities in which her children lived ranged from Phoenix to Paris. The nurse put the biography aside and

began to write the next-of-kin notification when she noticed a paper she had missed in Mrs. Stein's tin box. She opened it and read:

June 24, 1915

My life lies ahead of me now with so much to see and do. I feel I want to travel. A fifteen year old girl doesn't stand much chance to leave her state or town. But, someday when I read this letter again, I hope my dreams will come true, to travel, be known, live a long, happy life and even though it's hard to imagine, so far off, die in dignity, like my grandmother did, as she slept. I can only pray God will be good; I will find a good man and I will have good children.

Sincerely,  
Audrey

P.S.: I got my first bathing suit today! I hope it doesn't look too bad.

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## WAYNE DODD

*You Are Tired and Desperate: Nothing Is Working.  
So You Decide to Write a Formula Poem.*

First, forget everything important.

Try to remember something from highschool chemistry class, say a moment of total incompatibility.

Let this stand for the beginning of a new solution.

Here you may discover that you are good at arithmetic. Divide and conquer, multiply and possess the earth. At this point draw a line down the middle of the page, like a lawyer in divorce court.

You must assume your life and writing are getting better with every move.

None of this, you say, adds up.

Now you are ready for the next step.

Take away everything left over, especially former times and familiar places.

This is very important.

You will not be given another chance.

Listen carefully to rain in early morning.

Try not to think of endings.

## ROXIE LUSK SMITH

### *Night Song*

The cricket sings from brush and thicket,  
unconcerned that burgeons of cold  
will rout to other quarters . . .  
Birds chatter in their hotels among the leaves;  
their noisome gatherings announcing  
their soon-to-be flight  
toward warmer climes.  
The leaf spins upon the branch . . .  
giving no thought it will be withered and old  
to fall from parent limb . . .  
The flower holds its cheek to summer suns,  
fastly slipping from its prime;  
though not to weep from seeded pod.  
The day bows to the night, yet never settles down  
in massive darkness . . . from its womb  
comes another dawn.  
Time has no mercy of its own . . . yet I am not  
numbed by fleeting things, though numbered  
with them all.

## RACHEL MARIE WARNER

### *Silent Song*

Lord, love is so painful sometimes,  
sometimes so painful I wonder why  
we ask for it,  
yet, we do ask for it.  
such aches and pains I never anticipated.  
hold me O Lord,  
next to your side  
lest I faint with fear. . .  
for love and I never seem to meet  
on the same note or in the same key.  
sing me a lullaby, O Lord,  
sing me to sleep, O love. . .  
and instead of singing,  
I will just listen to your song.

## PETER COOLEY

### *The Dolls*

Chalk-white in moonlight,  
this house, our children's before dark,  
is almost theirs now  
their eyes say, blinking back  
at my sleeplessness prowling around them.  
Exhibit A: rising underfoot  
a rabbit, the spine cracked  
to stiffen in my step, the rug  
strung out with intestines; B:  
on the windowsill lifting her skirt,  
legs spread wide like her smile  
opening, impenetrable, opening.  
Or C: a thumb extended, hidden  
in philodendrons: an invitation  
to join her? a member severed clean?  
I wander alone here  
turned out, by mummy eyes  
transfixed, by bodies that plastic  
catches in gestures a human  
throws off, moving on, moving.  
Until suddenly I am dancing  
before a mirror with something held up  
in both my fists, my grip  
on the jugular strangling a small cry  
drowned by the voice box—  
dancing the dance they dance,  
static, but stumbling, falling,  
while the others look on,  
witnesses, unmoved.

### *Masques, Thirtieth Birthday*

Old age is the name of each face  
today puts on me, their features close  
where I sink in them, Peter surfacing  
with high tides at the extremities.

Myself at 40: balding, fat,  
a face that snaps his girls  
like flies; 50: the toad complete,  
fly-sodden, faces going down

swelling his girth but still wriggling  
to prick the next decade, alive.  
60: the faces reach my thighs,  
I stagger, run St. Vitus' dance

through whirlpools: calves, knees' quiver,  
garters they fall to, shins,  
ankles, the reflections that I wade  
into my 70's, watching while they rise

shrunken to meet me, rhythms  
of the pond each morning occupies  
where we swim smaller at the mirror,  
this last face I have reached to face him.



In our time,  
we rode the bridge over that ragged rill,  
ascended the winter hill  
and saw her rise from the snow,  
red as a stormbroken sun, saw this misted  
by the plumes of our breath.  
She rocked in our sight as we approached.  
She meant the loosed weight of our weapons,  
wine, friends,  
fires to draw the warm stink from our furs,  
and sleep  
while the sharp stars plunged  
in our time.

★ ★ ★

We clashed in the tilting yard to celebrate the seasons,  
as pennants cracked in the wind.  
The grass was never so green as on those afternoons,  
never as rich without the thunder of the gallop,  
and flashes of silver.  
The trumpets soared,  
and seemed to pull the sound from our throats,  
  
and we, the combatants,  
sat heavily on nervous horses,  
hearts and breath booming in our helmets,  
staring,  
waiting over our slit of ground,  
locked in that same visible moment  
before the jugglers's ball  
descends.

★ ★ ★

We lords proposed and eluded treachery,  
and carefully judged our allegiances  
among the staggering shadows  
of lantern flame.

We soldiers auctioned off our loyalty,  
and repaid it at the streams  
in horrible arcs,  
often sagging in our saddles as our limbs  
splashed,  
and settled under.

And we, the others,  
our fingers numb to the touch of all  
but naked skin,  
wondered who would be next,  
who would then claim or kill us,  
and endured.



We sat noisily around heaped tables  
until we reeled and vomited,  
our lungs and eyes burning with firesmoke,  
a pageant of lieges and ladies,  
lovers, soldiers and sons.  
We could see without knowing  
the transience of this holy place.  
We could hear without remembering  
the hollowness of our fealty.

And we could laugh without crying  
at the truth of the jesters, insane with colors,  
who came and went with the music,  
dancing in,  
dancing on

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## NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

**KELLI BAER**, of Marion, is a student at O.S.U.'s Marion Campus. These are her first published poems.

**PAUL BENNETT**, a professional gardener and orchardist, teaches at Denison University. His most recent book of poetry is *The Eye of Reason* (Orchard Press).

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**SELDEN DODGE** teaches accounting at Marion Technical College.

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The late **GARRETT W. FOX**'s essay "The Importance of Being Lazy" won first prize in the Marion Campus Literary Awards Competition for 1976.

**ANN GREASHABER** is a student at O.S.U.'s Marion Campus.

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**MARY JUNE MOORE**, of Waldo, is a free-lance writer.

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**PAT WHITING**, a native of Marion, is a student at Franconia College, in New Hampshire. She is working on a biography of Willa Cather.

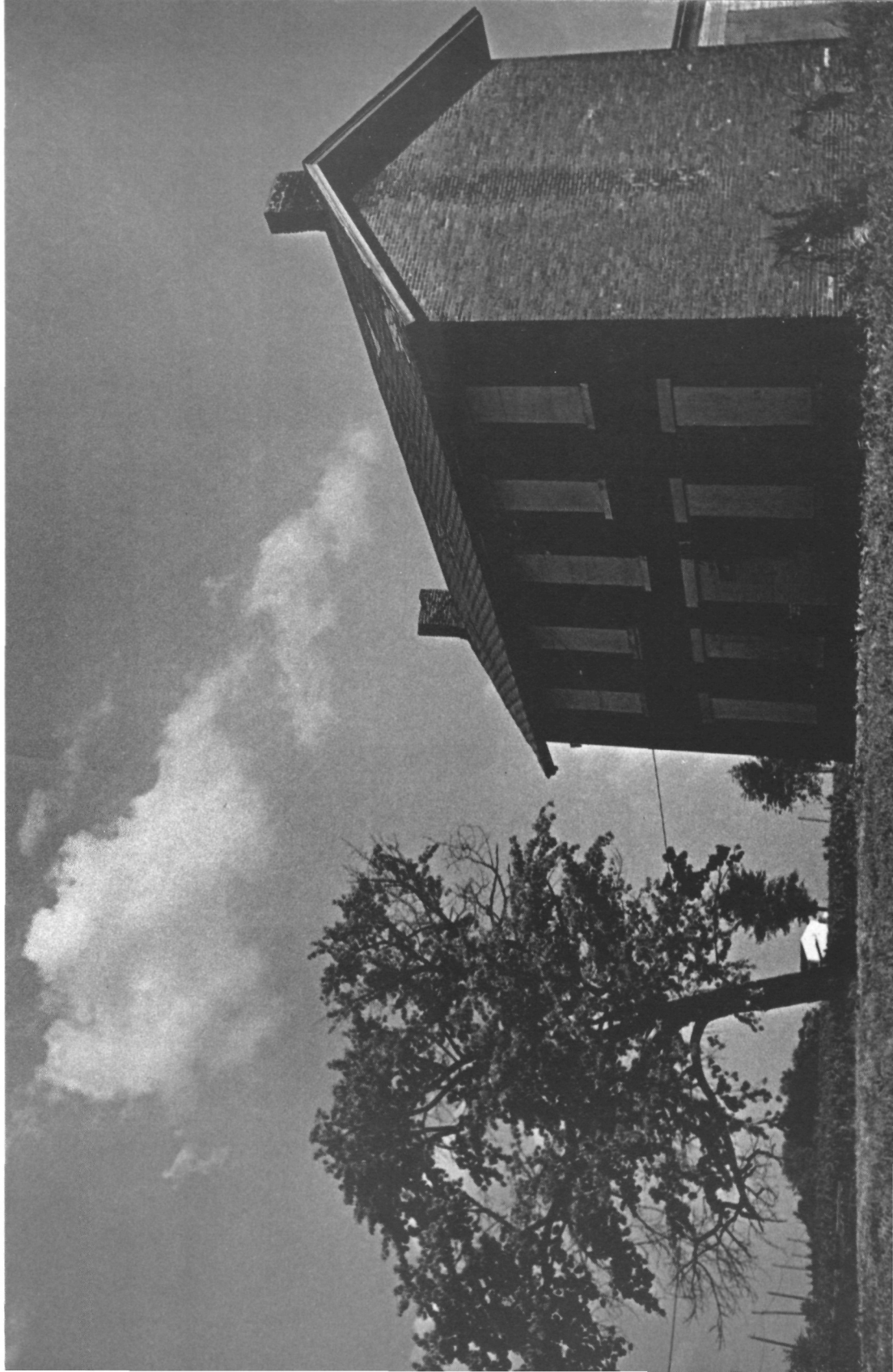
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