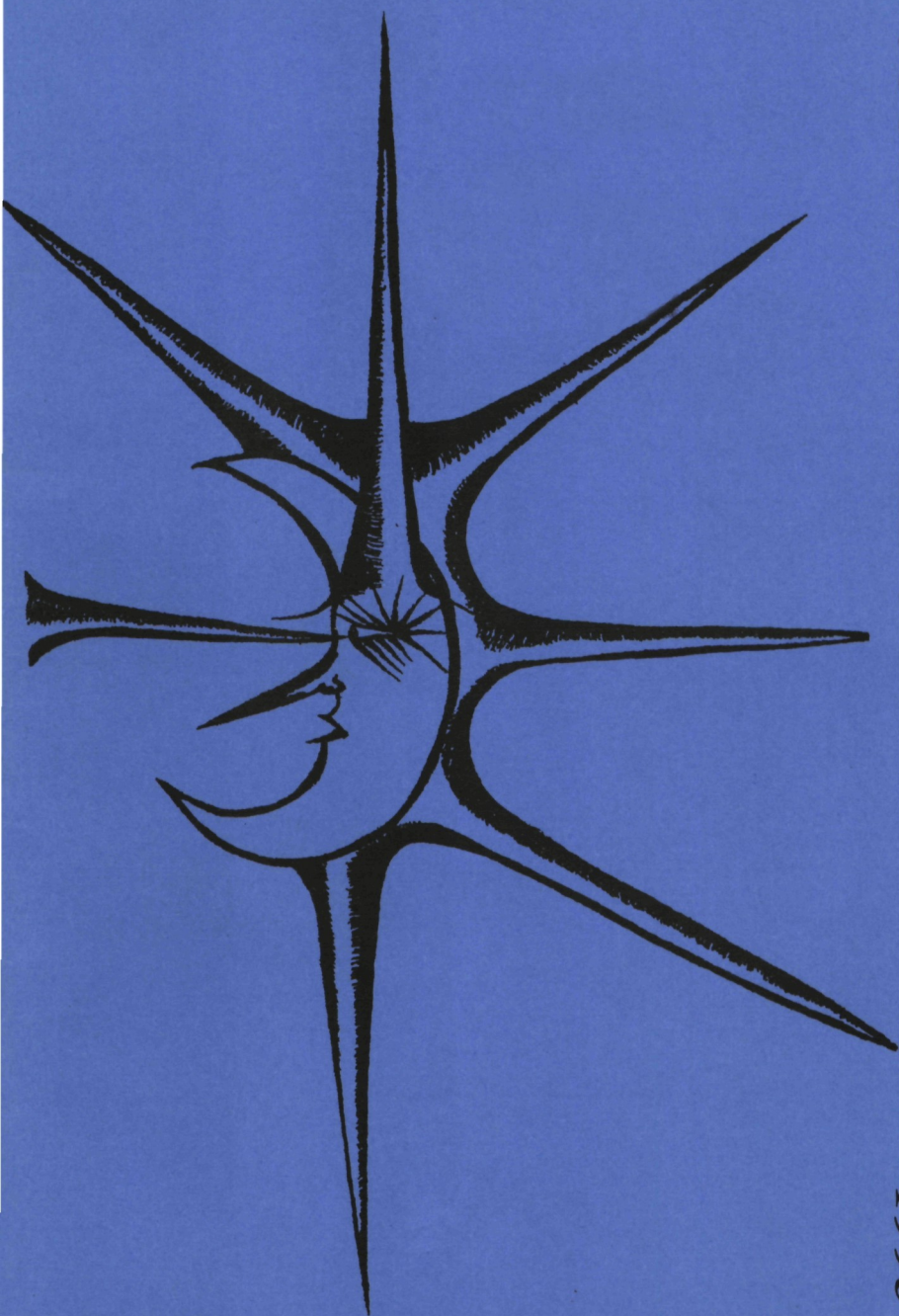


CORNFIELD REVIEW

JOURNAL OF THE CREATIVE ARTS 1995



OSU at MARION

VOL. 14

CORNFIELD REVIEW

AN ANNUAL OF THE CREATIVE ARTS

**The Ohio State University at Marion
Marion, Ohio**

Cornfield Review

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Editors' Statement

Cornfield Review began 19 years ago in an effort to give Ohio State Marion a literary tradition. And it did just that, publishing works from writers across the nation alongside works of art and literature submitted by students on this campus.

But 1995 was to be different. As the campus that sponsored CR grew and expanded its resources, the journal looked inward for writers and artists, harvesting a homegrown crop of talent. This issue is a compilation of work by OSU and MTC students plus poetry from a talented group of students who entered our First High School Poetry Contest.

The stories on these pages draw the reader on a journey through the human experience. Beginning the journey with the lessons of childhood, we move through the conflicts of midlife, to the resolution of later life.

For his work on our High School Poetry Contest, the Editors wish to extend a special thanks to David Citino.

Chris Elsasser
Carrie Mull
Katharine Studer

Cornfield Review 1995

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The Journey

Laura Smith

We all piled in
the rickety white station wagon
a tangle of arms and legs
vying for a window seat.
"Where are we going?"
"Are we there yet?"
Sharp looks dart across
"He's looking at me."
"Tell her to stop breathing."
"She's on my side."
Suddenly an arm reaches back
flailing to silence the rabble
Over potholes, speedbumps
Away from cramped, pinched houses
Out of the stagnant smell of steel
garbage and airplane buzz
Into tree lines and morning glories
climbing angels returning to heaven.
White door, brown from dusty handprints
Enter with hoots and howls.
There she sits, in the easy chair
Books, magazines, clutter everywhere
White wires poke out
sound asleep, mouth wide open, drooling.
She startles awake
dirty spectacles reflect our dirty faces

Flabby arms grabbing
scrambles to be first
pulling into flesh, one at a time.
Music from her mouth
treats from endless pockets
peppermints, cloves and old lady
permeates
Sunshine spills over windchimes
Long strolls, wrinkled skin against new
Conversation lulls, hushed tones, the
sentence drops off, dangling
"When your mother was little"
"She had curls like yours"
"She loved to draw pictures"
"Her head in the clouds"
Mother little, so hard to imagine
Never, she's so distant, cold
She couldn't have been a child
Ever, born full grown with
scolding eyes and no smiles
Drawing pictures, chasing dreams
How can that be?
Older we grow, Grandmother dies.
And I see Mother in my mirror
a bitter heirloom handed down.

Me and Reece and Jane are sitting outside the Quickie Mart, slurping some cokes. There's a railing there on the edge of the parking lot that isn't too comfortable but we get a good view of all the cars going in, out and past us on Lincoln Street. Reece says his brother's stopping by and he's keeping hawk eyes on the road.

I just walked over from my house two blocks away. I heard my mom ask me where I was going and not even listen to my answer. She's been slumped in her recliner all day on another downer buzz. Aunt Rita's got her hooked on those. She came over today on cocaine legs, said she needed to give 'em rest. Her and mom go upstairs a while and come down all red-eyed and worn. That's mom, with the slur in her voice, elegant as a tractor-pull priestess. Reece and Jane have to notice but I think they understand.

Me and Reece been friends about a year. He's a full-blooded Apache: lean, with a deep brown face. He moved from out west to our little town last spring, away from the desert. He lived on a reservation in southeast Arizona, between the Carrizo and the Canyon River, near Bear Mountain. Something happened there, I think, that sent his family running here, all their wooden chairs and clothes thrown in the back of an old pickup tied over with makeshift cords. I never asked Reece why they moved; his dad's eyes told me not to. That guy really looks thin, like he's sick of wrestling around with that piece of land he left behind him.

One of the few things Reece brought with him here was his drum. It's an old speaking drum, narrow in the middle and curving out towards both ends. There's hawk feathers twined all around the rim and its set with an engraving of an Apache chief, on horseback, crossing a river. He played it for me once. It has a deep welling sound like shackled thunder. When he hit the rim it spoke sharp little raindrops.

Reece tells me he takes this drum to the gatherings. He's played it all night before. He was fed water by women, with wooden ladles, who leaned around just right so as not to interrupt the rhythm of his arms. When he came out of his trance early in the morning, he wasn't tired. Reece said he felt the strength racing through his arms and his senses open, picking out threads of the night before, seeing things awake around him. A crow was flying a hundred feet over his head. He remembers looking up and seeing every detail: the

ragged edges of its feathers, the sharp jut of its beak. "And the eyes," he told me, "when I looked hard enough I could see a tiny reflection of myself in them, standing, staring up from that ground. And the crow's head was tilted down towards me, like he wanted me to see the reflection."

I imagine Reece's ancestors, long ago, staring up to the sky and the eyes of birds as they were slowly broken, broken by the same weight that's barreling down on us now: the weight of steel, of concrete Quickie Marts, of broken promises. If you don't follow me, look around.

Jane hangs out with me and Reece most of the time. She's one of the few girls I get on well with. Like whatever we want to talk about is fine, and whatever we plan for the night is all right by her. She doesn't expect us to be social giants.

Her parents left about a month ago for Tahiti. It was supposed to be a week's vacation. She got a letter last week, very brief, that said, "We're having the time of our lives! Wish you were here! Here's a check for bills and groceries." Nothing about being back soon, no phone number. Jane's dad had supposedly won a shitload in Vegas, enough to pay for this trip. That's what he said anyway. All Jane knows is he showed up late one night with a stack of money and she couldn't tell where he came in from.

Now she has that lofty house all to herself. The ashtrays are out and loaded and the dishes are working into a pyramid over the sink. Yesterday, Reece up and starts a wrestling match that ended when two legs broke off the sofa. Jane called us both toeheads and laughed it off. Her parents have been gone so goddam long it's like they're never coming back.

The sun is beaming down in this parking lot, withering the asphalt under our feet. Near the glass storefront there's two kids with a handful of candy. An old guy next to them is cursing as the starter turns over and over in his pickup. He keeps lifting up his dusty ball cap and wiping the sweat from his forehead. He gives up and heads for the phone. A Schwan truck pulls in. Reece has been following it with his eyes longer than me and Jane.

It comes to a stop near the kids. The driver hops out and goes to the back. He pulls a clean lever down on the silver freezer door, takes out two crates of ice cream and walks inside. And he leaves the engine running. What happens next is a mystery to me, to all of us. I don't know if one of us takes the initiative

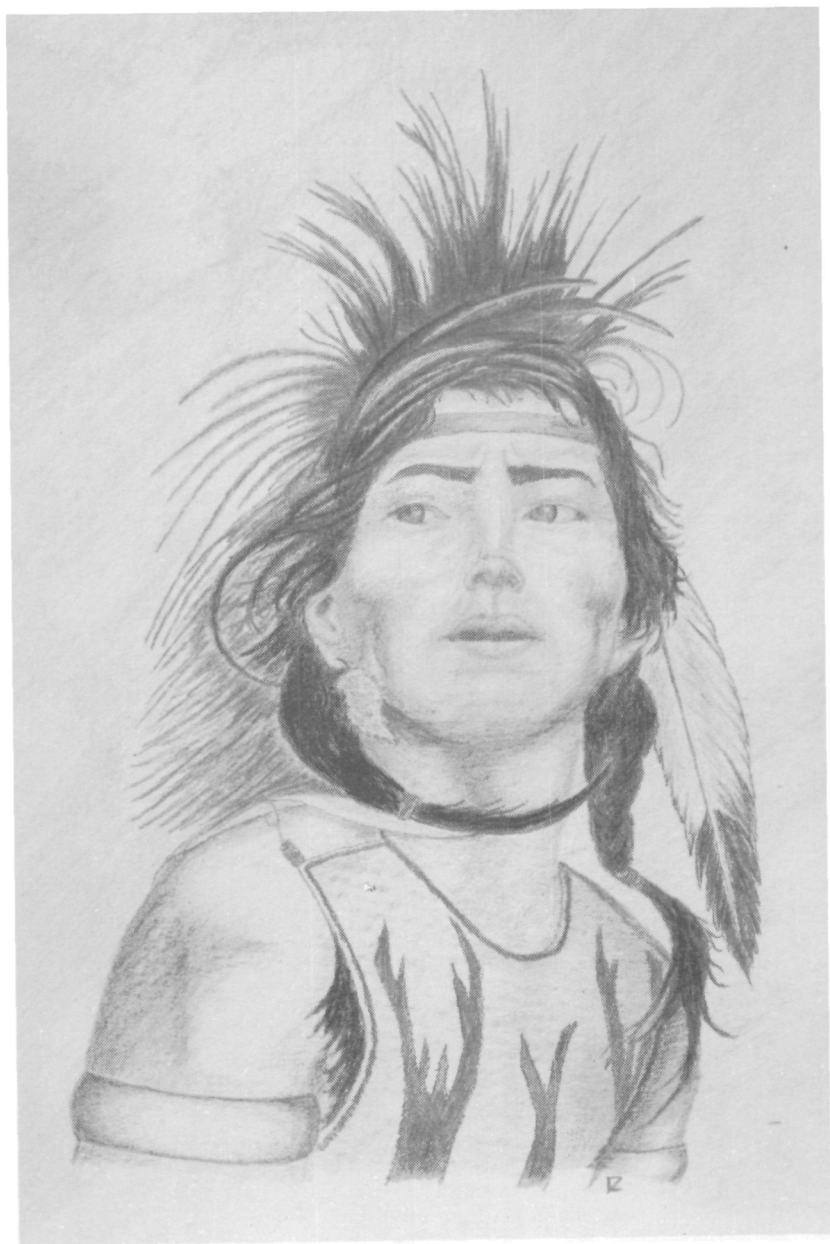
or if it's just a single, simultaneous group thought, but we all drop our cokes and go running towards the truck. I circle around the driver's side and hop in the seat. No sooner do I put it in gear than Reece and Jane are right in there beside me.

I look over at the driver, through the window into the store. He's dropped a dozen boxes of ice cream on the floor. His jaw drops down and wavers, looks like it fell out of the sockets. All his expressions just melt away for a second and the cashier is right with him, with the same kind of look, her neck jutting out over the side of the register like a turtle. When I put the truck in reverse, the driver's face slowly turns ugly. That's the last we see of him, running out the door after us, then I'm on the county road, full-throttle.

What is running through my mind are bubble gum thoughts; I'm fooling myself with some childish vision as to why I'm out here on the road, with no motive, driving a Schwan's truck at 86 miles an hour, my two friends beside me shouting and throwing the driver's shit out the window. I sweep under an ancient, overhanging elm and all its leaves stream upward with our passing, like a great branch door taking us in. In the rear view, the Quickie Mart is fading off into the green.

The air comes cool and thick through the window. It reminds me of a breathless summer when my brother set out for the Rockies. He had an old Fat Bob Harley all packed up and ready to go. Mom was crying beside him. He told me in the morning that this was his own journey and no one else could take it for him. I was still trying to figure that out as he grinned at me from behind his shades and kick-started the bike. He took off slow, disappearing to the left down Chester Street, just as the sun was beaming through the trees. And we never saw him again. He got shot in a bar in Tulsa by some old drunk. Guess the whole thing was an accident. Like what we're doing now could be an accident, or already is one. Even after the adrenaline wears off, we don't say a word to each other about a plan. I look over at Reece for some kind of answer and he turns to me with a look that says keep driving.

I imagine Reece's ancestors, long ago, staring up to the sky and the eyes of birds as they were slowly broken, broken by the same weight that's barreling down on us now: the weight of steel, of concrete Quickie Marts, of broken promises. If you don't follow me, look around.



11
Carol Zeigler

Scenes of a Winter Afternoon
Kelli Stuckey

Season of white
 snowflakes
 falling
 onto
 the ground:

Children make angels
 in the new snow,
Run through drifts and laugh-
Catching the crystals,
 letting them melt

On their tongues-
From their hands-
 The first snowballs fly

As sleds
 race
 down
 hill.

The only color in a colorless world,
Comes from evergreen trees...

And the bright coats, mittens,
Scarves, and hats
 making splashes of red, yellow,
and blue;

On a late winter afternoon

As tiny explorers

Trudge home

Happy

and

Tired.

Honorable Mention,

OSU at Marion High School Poetry Contest

Wings!

Carmon Fown

Wind sings by,
high in the sky
tension flows
along my tendons, my muscles,
my very bones.
The rush of adrenaline
as I draw to a stop
in midair
to fall a thousand feet
down, and snap out my
coppery-gold pinions,
I catch the wind,
I fly free, to feel the lift of the wind
on my wings

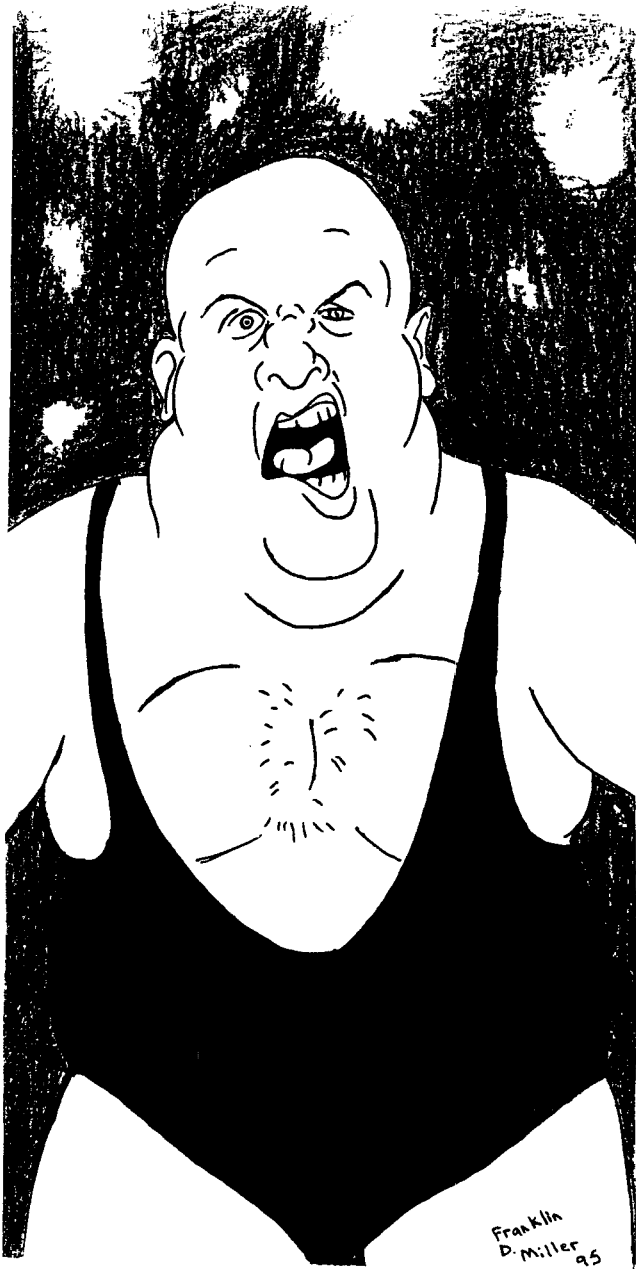
can
you
feel
it
t
f
i
l
g!
n
i

I feel its pull, I feel the lifting,
I go with the wind, I feel its
song deep in my soul, I am free!!
I fly high in the sky,
I fly! I soar!
I exult in the feel of the
wind on my body
the tug of my feathers, the stiffness
of my back,
the great span of my arched wings as I
surf my way across an ocean of sky,
And then, as my alarm screams in my ear,
I feel the first tear,
because I'm not there,
I'm here.

First Place Winner,
OSU at Marion High School Poetry Contest

The Harried Waitress's Dream
Laura Smith

Scurry around the tables swallowing empty salt and pepper shakers at the conclusion of an endless shift. An angry patron pulls on the umbilical cord of her ruffled apron so she swallows him too. Her insides will explode soon but that's all Trivial Pursuit now. All she wants is for everyone and everything to vanish like the money on the wall and the birds on the ceiling staring at her, laughing when she spilled hot coffee on the groping fingers that still remain on her butt wherever she goes. The shoelaces of her left shoe begin to fade fish eyes of todays special 3.99 all you can eat. "BRING ME MORE NOW" the fat man bellows. Could she swallow him too? She lies down on the plate before him, an apple in her snout. "HEY I DIDN'T ORDER THIS" he wails. Order up. She pulls the parsley from her hair and trudges to the counter. Her right hand missing, stuck in the cash register, fingers curled around a 20 dollar bill. Pennies pour from the heat vent filling the cracks of the broken tile. Goldfish swim in the coffee pot blowing kisses at the jukebox. She disappears into the woodwork, a fly buzzes out into the darkness as the door swings off the hinges.



15
Franklin D. Miller

Towering Smooth

Laura A. Tausch

Towering smooth
figurines
dripped tears
from
the
sky.

Sprig greenery spied
upon us.

Carrying my palms upon
his.

His eyes travelled the
paths of my mind.

I stretched my
heeding heart
out to
reach his.

I was falling.

My stomach being left

above my head.

Slowly sailing on
whispers -

- until I floated down upon
his warm body.

Will You Wait
Courtney Simpson

. . . In dedication to my grandfather Joe . . .

You asked me to answer this question one night,
I thought about it for many days,
You asked me if you had inspired me,
and now might I say, you have done so in many ways.

You told me something I had to believe,
yet it was something I'd already known,
what you told me was you had to leave.
Now I know I'll never fly, like I've already flown.

Another question that makes me cry at night in bed,
Your dreams willingly now will come true,
The words in this question you and I have both said,
Will you wait for me, now that you know I'll wait for
you?

Third Place Winner,
OSU at Marion High School
Poetry Contest

Abandoned Dream

Laura A. Tausch

The sun has misplaced its
rays. Sea of black top
spills over my shoes.

Chain-link fence swallows
the schoolyard's deserted
streets.

Porcelain figurines under
lulling trance.

Quiescent child minds
capture my eyes from a
nearby window.

Mentor speaks, but my
ears hear only gasps from
the wind.

Concealed tears cover a
small dark boy's frail
body.

Lonely, he dribbles a
silent basketball.

Stolen voices of his
life now a memory's
length away.

Why are you alone and not
with the others? His eyes
begin to fade bearing no
words.

Turning back to hold his
tranquil image now gone.

I have abandoned him like
the others.

The Devil's Path

Katie Rodabaugh

The Devil came knocking,
Eyes burning with flame.
To escort him to hell,
For a life filled with shame.

Taken away,
Loss of control,
Slow travel downward,
Felt by the soul.

Crave for obsession,
Need for a dream.
The wanting mind,
Retaining a scream.

Search for the Piper,
With money to pay.
The chances which were given
Are now taken away.

The Devil came knocking,
Eyes burning with flame.
To escort him to hell,
For a life filled with pain.

Honorable Mention,
OSU at Marion High School Poetry Contest

Wicked Life of the Undead

Robert L. Brown

All eyes were suddenly on Luther who dropped one of the large powder containers back into the earth a few feet from the location where he picked it up. The ditch accepted it back into a resting spot. Powder flew up from the crusty tops of the batteries and he was covered with a light dust, his rusty, scraggly beard, his red sweaty flannel shirt, his filthy coveralls all collected their share of the dried acid.

Then Shorty spoke up, still chiseling at the corroded tin casings that had separated the individual cells at one time. My eyes gazed down into the sulfuric pit at this stubby man with his dirty beret and short interlaced beard. He continued to chisel and chatter, the hammer against the cold steel tool, its tip parting small bits of the connected metal, his words blending in. The rusted tin was hard to separate but Shorty knew this task well, it was done every couple of years when the battery ran low and needed to be moved within the pit to find new life in its new earth spot. He chiseled as though he knew this would only be a temporary fix, that next summer he and Luther would be at it again, but he chiseled nonetheless.

There was no shade in the pit, only the promises of shade from the spindly arms of the dead oak in the middle of the open area behind them and their pit. Three old cars surrounded its base, its four foot diameter testimony to its proud heritage before progress had killed it. The rust on the old road warriors was heavy now, barely able to adhere without falling to the dusty earth below.

The grass had long since gone away from the circular opening behind the house, except for a few tall weeds nothing lived in the opening. Even the rodents abandoned this hideout years ago, no one could figure it out.

Just to the right of the pit being restructured was the phone room, the reason for all of the toil. The pit actually seemed to go right under the corner of the room itself. No one knew for sure how this contraption worked, only that it worked by using the juice produced by the earthworks. How much energy was made, nobody knew that either but it was enough to power up the old handset. The glass of the side window of the room was bumpy from what sand remained in its makings and it reflected the heat of the midday sun that beat down on the pit workers, Luther and Shorty. I could see them in the glass with the dead opening behind them, Luther always and Shorty when he moved down toward the phone room on occasion. It seemed to me that this whole place was dead--and why not, progress had brought in the phone system but it was those damn batteries and their dried acid that stunk like rotting flesh. This was progress alright. Even the wooden side of the phone room drooped towards the pit, the pit somehow sucking it into two foot depth.

The old shed to the left of the opening was in bad disrepair. Its lath sheathing was decayed and even nails could not hold it back from the never-ending battle against sag. Weeds grew nearly up to its eaves, the rusting underbelly of the metal roof seemed to beacon them but they probably sought shelter for their withering leaves from the sweltering heat of the sun.

Shorty kept on pounding the hammer against the butt end of the cold chisel. Luther dug below each corner of the battery cell until it was loosened from its tomb, then he could pick it up and drop it a couple of feet from its place within the pit. Sometimes the sound of the weeds stretching for freedom was loudest of all.

It would take a long time to finish the job of parting and then moving the ten or so cells. Then the rotten wooden top could be put back on the pit, after a few nails were put into its frame.

Luther moved another cell then loudly proclaimed that it was about to come back to life. Shorty and I met in gaze and he shrugged off Luther's cry as that of an old mindless drunk. He still had three or four more cells to separate and even if life was suddenly back into the cells, it would not be enough to power the phone, but Luther seemed happy about it. Shorty knew that he would not be able to contain Luther's celebration but also that Luther would work all the harder knowing that their drudgery was going to be fruitful.

Luther seemed stunned by the sudden rush of juice through the cells of the battery. Even the air smelled like something burning, an eery salty smell. Luther was probably right, the cells had come back to life but Shorty kept on chiseling. Now the danger came, moving the remaining cells into position next to the live ones would be risky business. They could both be shocked if they didn't drop each remaining cell into position without the tin casing ends together. They both knew this but they kept on prying and parting the fused metal hoping to quickly loosen up the next cell all the while knowing that it was burned into the earth.

In the window of the phone room I vaguely could make out the image of fingers grasping the crank on the side of the box. The fingernails struck me as odd--long and twisting like the colored glass in a crystal paperweight I once saw. The hand turned the crank around a few times, I could hear the bells inside of the unit chiming. A wickedly long chin came up close to the speaker of the box but suddenly pulled away and another hand slammed the transmitting device into its brass holder-- not working yet. Not enough juice-- not enough life around here. As the sun beat down on my flannel shirt, its heat seemed to melt my flesh beneath it, and I suddenly realized that this place was Hell. How could Shorty and Luther have made a living here? Did they sometimes think that they might have done something else or had the acid done its job on them too? I knew

when I had found a place that I did not want to stay in and this was it, but my being here somehow added life to the setting. Even the old man inside knew it when I came around. Maybe he thought I was responsible for the renewed life in his beloved battery or maybe he just knew that I didn't hinder Shorty or Luther as they worked. My blue jeans seemed to contain the sun's heat and I sweated beneath them but I knew how hot it must seem to Shorty, chiseling away at those holey and rusty cell walls. He sweated little that I could see but every drop was being soaked up by the cloud of dust in the pit. His face was covered with white clots of acid and dark spots of earth. Life for him must be misery now.

Luther at least got a few breaks from his toil. He pried up on the casings hoping that Shorty's last hit had been the one that finally busted the cell walls loose. He could rest a little between his heavy lifting and moving of the cells but he knew that dropping the tubs into place was a skill that only his hand could accomplish, and that made him proud to be there.

This is how I left them, the two grunts, working at that battery. I knew that they were going to be alright. Luther knew his job well enough and soon the pit would be covered up again. I turned to go and realized how important Luther's skill really was. Life or death--it all depended on Luther's judgement. How absurd and wicked this thought struck me. This dirty, sweaty man really held the life of Shorty, the old man, and the phone in his hands. Nothing else mattered, the opening was already dead, the oak was gone, only the battery lived here in this place. Was it Hell? Was it Luther's place to control, this burning spot on Earth? He was such a soft-spoken soul, could he be capable of evil? He only looked and smelled wicked, I thought, all the time wondering if my own life somehow mirrored Shorty's or the old man's. But I was truly alive, I could feel the heat, could they? I saw the need for repairs, did they even care? Somewhere there was an answer but I knew that this was not the place to find it, this land of the lifeless, this whirlpool of death.

In Here

Vaughn Washburn

Born in the dusk of Ragnorok,
In asphyxiating darkness,
Motivation doesn't move a muscle
Here, among busy blind mice.

They peer at me as if I were
Some monstrosity, a by-product,
Gagging at the sour sight
of their own defecation.

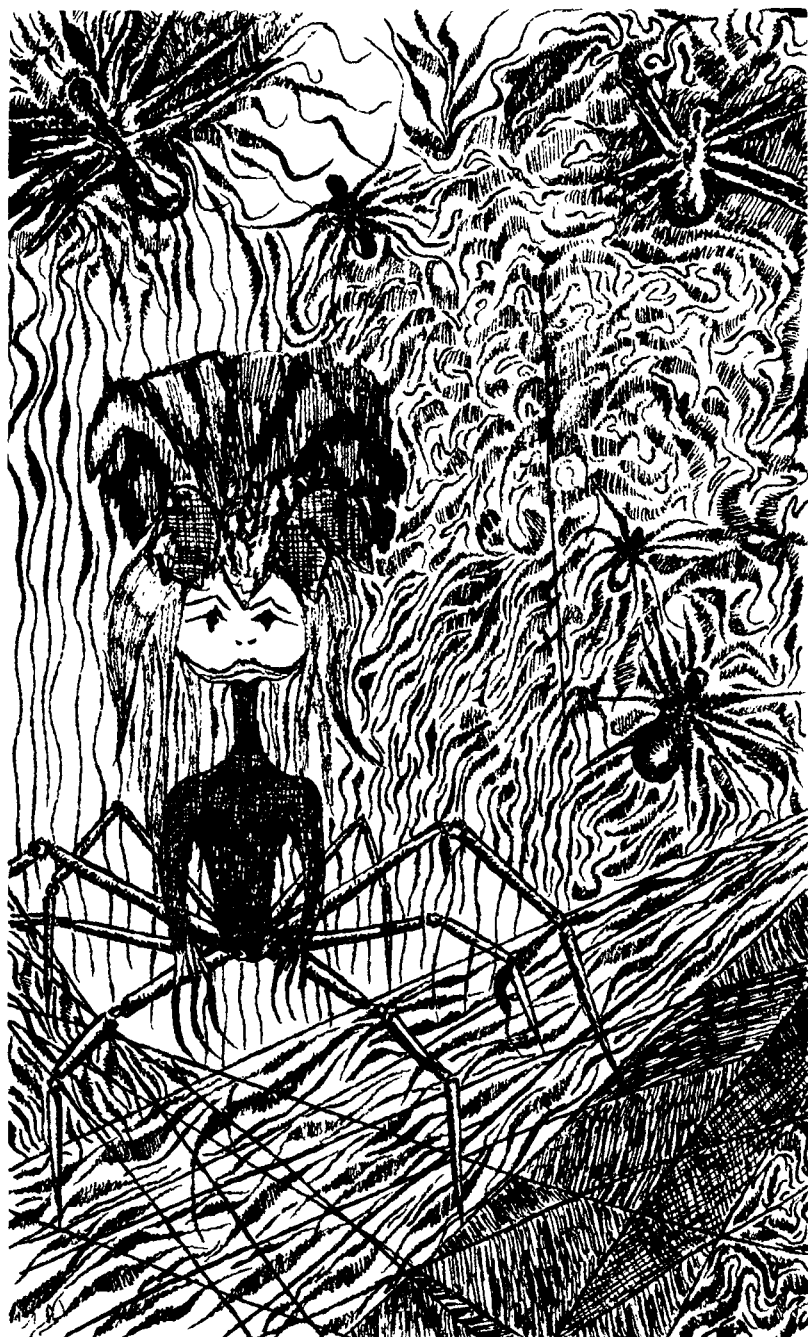
They gnaw away at awareness.
I sit here and watch they scurry
Through the bitter breeze of coke smoke,
To pick the wings off another angel.

Bound here by the frailty of flesh,
Trapped behind a madman's glare,
My skull is but a furnace here,
A bed of spiders for my brain.

The pain is here, is the emptiness,
In pleasure's ugly absence,
It tingles like a severed limb,
Like purity's teasing giggle.

Here in the throes of depression,
Gravity's crushing hydraulics,
Reality seems sick somehow,
Only boredom and bullshit.

Repeatedly raped by the senses,
Apathy awakens some imposter,
To guide me through this whimsical
 dream,
Here, my scars become my beauty mark.



Motherhood

Laura Smith

fly no mosquito no alarm clock babies
wail no they are not babies
anymore and is all this
whining absolutely necessary i
mean come on you are old enough to fix
your own breakfat find matching socks
write poetry kiss boys **WHAT DO
YOU MEAN EMILY
WAS FRENCH KISSING**
i think a nice little boarding school
with no boys within 100 miles
is in order here
you are 11 years old what do you know
about relationships
life anything you still call out for
your mommy after nightmares and painful
dental procedures besides where would
you go
you can't even drive
you don't even have a job who would hire
a 13 year old brat what color is
your hair now
**TURN OFF THAT NOISE
NOW I'M TRYING
TO WRITE
A POEM**
i don't care
i gave birth to you
didn't i you asked to be born all right
all that kicking and thumb sucking
on the sonogram
all three of you asked for it

taking and taking until there's none
left for me so yes i am
ignoring you on purpose
i'll drive you to the mall school
movies canada
later when i've unwound from work yes
i have to go you enjoy eating
and heat far too much for me
to stay and hold you
in my lap you're too big your butt
is crushing my leg get up the hospital
is on the phone everybody wants
a piece of me i wish i would
wake up
in a disney movie where the bad guy
always gets it in the end how do i
know i'm not
the bad guy
here come sit in my lap i'll find
your socks
and take you where you want
to go and live only
to serve you

I Turn Away
Sarah K. Schulze

He hits her and she cries.
She does not look defeated.
I wonder why.

I am angry with this man.
All men, maybe.
I know them.

I feel her anger, pain, pride,
The tears taste salty
Running down my cheeks.

Do they run down his cheeks?
As they embrace
I turn away.

Abort the Baby? Hell, Abort the Father!
Melissa Snyder

Where were you while I was...

OH YA!

Out runnin' around with
yur pretty little girl friend
partyin' and gettin' some.

If you think an "I'll make it up ta
the both of you" is gonna work on me,
THINK AGAIN!!!

Your sorry's 'll never do!
So cry. Just cry like a baby.
Feel the pain yet?

It ain't nothin' like what ya
put me through. You don't even know
what pain REALLY is until you've given
birth ta a baby.

And you think you're gonna see my baby?
When you couldn't be there in the
beginning?

I don't see that happenin'.
As far as I'm concerned
he doesn't need
to know who this real father is.

The Shoes

Laura A. Tausch

Night's shadow screams.

Crowded bodies float from
picture to picture.

Carcass mounds gasping
for air.

Testament breathes from
the room of shoes.

The shoes had witnessed
the whole thing.

Hollow freight cars once
travelled.

Bunks crammed filthy with
disease, soiled bedding,
infested raw wounds.

Seized from their bodies.

To be left in mounds
after the air had come
clean.

A Soldier's Greatest Sacrifice
Ellis Slone

Hear the men shout, hear the gun roar,
Soon my life will be over, my name spoken no more.

Listen to the enemy as he draws so near,
My heart cries out with sadness but I'll show no fear.

I'll go down in bravery with my head held high,
I'll fight with ever breath--I'll fight until I die.

I want everyone to know I died a proud man,
I'd give my life again for my motherland.

The government is in a war and I will pay the price,
I'm going to give my country a Soldier's Greatest Sacrifice.

Honorable Mention,
OSU at Marion High School Poetry Contest

The Story of My Castle
Mary Beth Smith

My castle overlooked a loch.
The loch, like a bonny sea.
Not even fog could blind the way
Between eternity and me....

I walked my halls
Past tapestries hung.
I sang the songs
That once were sung.
The ancient pipes
Still lingering long.
Centuries away,
Centuries gone.
Now everything
In ruins lie,
And all my dreams
Beyond them die.
As I look back
On childhood lost,
My castle once beautiful
Now lay turned and tossed.
A ghost in my castle
I wander around.
Quiet in shadows,
Not making a sound.
Walls that are crumbled,
Toppled and torn.
Floors that are rugged,
Blood-stained and worn.
A high open window
In a tower so high,
That collapses slowly
As time marches by.
Fine cloth of white linen.
A goblet of wine.
All of these riches,
That used to be mine.

Into this world we bring nothing;
With nothing we shall leave,
But I will always have Scotland,
In all of my dreams.

To The Patient in Room One Fourteen
Wendy Raymaley

When I look at you I see a stranger
with white hair
and frightened eyes.

I haven't been told what's wrong with you
or even what your name is.

But those are lovely flowers.

And would you like me to read those letters to you?

"Mrs. Eley has Alzheimer's Disease,"
I am told by the nurses.
"Such a sad thing to have."

If I could make you well, Mrs. Eley, I would.
But all you called for was someone to help you.
Here I am.

Second Place Winner,
OSU at Marion High School Poetry Contest

The Ashes of Manna
Wendy Raymaley

Understand that manna will turn to ash
and that fountains will become dry
when we turn inward.

Know that instruments will be silent
and that a dancer's grace will become a fall
when words are unspoken and minds are closed.

Know that while we build with concrete and steel palm tree and papaya forests
shrivel in the harsh glare.

Realize that gloating drowns out the cries of the starving.
Beware that though technology connects,
it does not lift our hearts or touch the weak.

Boil the water clean and do not ignore those who suffer from thirst.
Uphold the documents of just civilizations and make them strong.
Make the pits plentiful, or we will all eat the ashes of manna.

Second Place Winner,
OSU at Marion High School Poetry Contest

Refugee
Wendy Raymaley

I certainly know you well.

You have taken refuge in me for so long.

An idea came from somewhere inside of me,
a hiding place for the thoughts my mind has never thought
and feelings my soul has never felt.

Come Out!

Share your light and life with me.

Ideas form into words, lines, and meter.

Come out! so that I may see this reflection of my true self

this unedited example

of what lies within.

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Cornfield Review

Second Place Winner,
OSU at Marion High
School Poetry Contest



37
Carol Zeigler

Fishing With Richard, Early In June
Laura Smith

Escape from the
straight jacket of fried food,
stale cigars and beer
Into prisms of paper streamers
floating through trees.
Locust and katydids
grind out songs.
Grass and occasional
rocks pierce the souls
of tender feet not
accustomed to bare feet.
Stubby fingers roll
cheese and bread into
grimy bait balls
haphazardly finding the
way into hungry O-mouths
of fish and children.
Rusty metal hooks and
string form the darkest
cranny of the dungeon.
Twigs stolen from trees
bent from climbers.
Hurricanes whirl about
ankles and warm mud
squishes between toes.
See-through minnows
nibble, ancient crawdads
dart among moss-covered
rocks. Smooth white skin.
Trails of ant specks lift
upward, wild daisy blooms
strain against clover
toward sunlight.
Waterbugs skimming
the creek scatter silence.
Daylight fades into
the wallpaper over
the kitchen sink.

Remembrances

Jennifer Thompson

When I need time to think, I go outside and sit beside a lilac tree in my backyard. It must be as old as the earth; it has big gnarly branches that twist and turn in every direction. The bark is old and falls off in big scaly pieces if you touch it or a hard wind blows. The tree still blooms every spring. I have pictures of it from two years ago, before it began to dwindle. The branches are bursting with beautiful purple flowers and vibrant green leaves. Just looking at the picture, I can remember how sweet the flowers used to smell. But the flowers get more sparse and less fragrant with every year. Now that it's winter, the tree is barren, without leaves or flowers to look pretty or smell good. But I can remember. That's why I like to sit out here any time of the year--to think and remember about things.

Lately, I've been thinking about Uncle Fred. He died around this time of the year. He really enjoyed nature. He liked to hunt and fish. I remember one time when I went fishing with him. I thought it was going to be something I would enjoy. But I was wrong. He showed me how to bait the hook and use the fishing rod. That was all O.K. The bad part came when he showed me what to do when I finally caught a fish; rip him out of the water as fast as I could and throw him in a bucket with a pile of other fish, gasping for air (or water, rather). A grave in the shape of a five gallon bucket. I was not happy about this arrangement. My uncle had always told me that he fished only for fun; for "sport" he would always say. This wasn't sport, it was murder. I told him so. He grumbled, but finally said he had to agree with me, so that day we threw back all the fish we caught. And every day after that he threw back the fish he caught--so he said. But he made me happy by saying it.

You have to understand. For my uncle to bend to someone else's will was a tremendous thing. He was incredibly stubborn; cantankerous and mean for the most part and to most people, except for me it seemed--on a rare occasion when the mood hit him and the moon was full or his medication had taken effect or something. Suffice it to say that generally he was not a pleasant person. An example of his "unpleasantness" was the time that he tried to help me with rounding numbers in math. He was a whiz at mathematics, like a computer on

speed (I was like a computer on valium). He could figure out answers to problems in seconds, while it took me minutes to get the same answer. Take rounding; I couldn't understand it. He could but didn't have the patience to explain it to me. When I wanted to give up, Fred proceeded to shout a list of exactly how many things this skill would help me with. I didn't care, I wanted to quit anyway. He didn't want to hear that so he yelled even more. And I did finally learn how to round, thanks to Fred and his iron will. That's how I thought of him: indestructible. I never thought he was vulnerable in any way or susceptible to sickness. I was wrong.

He had a stroke and it was devastating. He couldn't talk, he could only hear and nod and make gestures with his hands. That was probably the only time he was silent during his whole life; it was the one time that I wished he wasn't. Whenever I looked at him lying there, unanimated in his hospital bed, I couldn't help but remember how he used to be. Where was the grouchy fisherman? Where was the demanding mathematician? I saw none of that spark now. The light had gone from his eyes and was now replaced with a quiet emotion I didn't recognize. He was a different person, someone older than his years. Someone who knows he is going to die and is O.K. with that idea.

He should have asked me; I wasn't O.K. with it at all. Just letting go of life? How could he, after he'd been so tough with me about everything? I thought he was being a hypocrite. I told everyone in my family what I thought, but they just told me to wait and see what happened. Maybe he'd get better. . . .

He died a few days after I last saw him. My family was in shock. They never thought this would happen to him. He was so strong, so full of life. They hadn't seen what I'd seen. They didn't know his life had left him long before he ever really died.

At the funeral everyone cried. My grandma couldn't even come, she was so grief-stricken. So much sadness over a man who was so mean and grumpy. He probably wouldn't have expected it. I was surprised myself at how upset everyone was. The family members who had argued with him, people he wouldn't speak to for weeks at a time--they were sobbing like water fountains. They should have spent more time talking with him instead of arguing. They would have had more good things to remember him by.

That's what helped me feel better about his death.

Remembering the good times we had together. Maybe I understood what kind of person he was better than anybody, because I made an effort to do so. He was like a tornado--all wound up and unpredictable. That was the fun of him; you never knew what he was going to do or say next. He built up my vocabulary of four-letter words. He gave me something else too: confidence. The desire to succeed. I'll always be thankful for that. It was something that only he could have taught me. I'm glad he was there to teach me, and I'm glad I got to know him the way I did. I can remember him the way that he really was, not the way everyone else thought of him.

So, as I sit beside my lilac tree, I sometimes think about Uncle Fred and smile. He's a lot like this tree. I like to think he is this tree: completely unique, rough around the edges, old as the earth (just kidding), but still able to show its beauty when the seasons call for it. The flowers may be dwindling and the fragrance may not be as sweet, but I can still remember when the tree was younger and the flowers sweeter than anything outdoors. And that's all that matters.

Growing Old

Katharine Armstrong Studer

The days of your life are racing by
years turn into days
weeks into hours
hours into seconds.

You struggle to fight off the hand
that whips you
knocks you down
then leaves its imprint upon your face.

Those glorious mornings you woke up to find
the sky so blue
if only you would have looked deeper
to see the shades of violet-- Instead
you played in the flower garden
nursing the geraniums back to life
What were you thinking
the blue skies could never turn gray?

If only you would have known.

Now the years are winning the battle
white swans sleep upon your head
and only turtles dance to the tunes
that ring in your ears.

The chimes are singing louder than ever now
year by year
day by day
hour by hour.



43
Carol Zeigler

. . . In dedication to my love, Carrie Mull . . .

Though the alarm was set for seven, the old man woke just after five and decided to make the morning coffee. Slipping the covers back, he moved his legs over the side of the bed and winced as his arthritic knees ground under the strain of supporting his body. Casting a glance at the old woman still asleep in the bed, he began to creep forward onto the crotchety old floorboard. True to form after years of use, the floor groaned softly.

"Oh cut that out," whispered the old man, "do you want to wake her up?"

He opened the door to the hall and softly trod down the hallway, passing before the pictures lining each wall. One faded photograph showed the couple playing ball with friends at a park while they were in college, and another showed them exchanging a parting kiss among a crowd of sad-faced couples just before the young man boarded the ship that carried him to war in Europe. Distant ancestors peered from cracked and fuzzy daguerreotypes in antique wooden frames, and, further down the hall, their wedding picture and photographs of young children surrounded the family portrait. The last pictures, the most recent additions to the hallway, showed the same couple, now with more gray in their hair, holding their toddler grandchildren as they vainly tried to squirm away. But this morning, the same as most others, the old man slowly shuffled past the pictures without any notice.

After descending the stairs, the old man carefully made his way through the quiet living room toward the kitchen--dark except for the orange glow of the plastic light-up Halloween decoration facing the lonely street from the far window. The battered and worn jack-o-lantern had been bought for his youngest son when he was five-years-old. He enjoyed the fact that it gave his children and grandchildren as much happiness as it gave him, and, even after his children left home to raise families of their own, he continued to put it in that window.

After stopping in the middle of the floor to pick up a small toy left overnight by his grandson, he

ambled over to the coffee machine and plugged it in before he filled it with a paper filter, the last of the ground coffee he brought home every Monday from the corner market, and a pitcher of water. With a flip of a switch, a little red light signaled the start of its routine of gurgling and slurping.

As the coffee brewed, the old man plodded across the kitchen, through the living room, to the foyer. He opened the front door and stepped outside to the morning newspaper which lay five feet down the walk.

"That kid's aim gets worse by the week," he muttered as a swift autumn breeze cut through his light cotton pajamas. He quickly scooped up the newspaper and hurried back into the warm comfort of his house, being careful not to slam the door too hard for fear of waking his wife. Leaning against the door, he wondered how often he had told his children not to slam the door, and remembered the afternoon he came home from work and found the screen-door off its hinges. Their mother, unable to get any of the children to say who was responsible, had sent them to their rooms to wait for him to get home. After setting them all down on the couch, he tried for fifteen minutes to get them to tell...but they wouldn't. He sent all three of them to bed without dinner. They never said a word except to quietly mumble "good-night" on their way up the stairs. They were covering up, he knew; but it was quite a sight to see them stick up for each other. It made him proud to see them bonding together and took the edge from his anger.

After some time he shook his head and glanced at the newspaper. He smiled at the date printed at the top of the page: October 12.

"Fifty years today," he remarked with a crooked smile--the trademark of his younger days, "I just can't believe it."

Switching on the lamp, he settled down on the living room couch with the newspaper. He enjoyed the warmth of the cushion, heated by the small floor vent just underneath. He tried to interest himself in the headlines of the day, but somehow the President's trip to Martha's Vineyard and the latest squabbling between Rwanda and Nigeria held no fascination for him. Instead his mind drifted to the old woman lying asleep upstairs.

He remembered the sweet sound of her voice as she sang at their high school's talent show so many decades ago, and recalled that, as she sang, the audience around him faded into a gray background as though in a dream so that only he and she seemed real. He remembered the smell of the crisp autumn afternoon when, as they sat in a park, he first realized how much he loved her; and he remembered how, over an overdone turkey dinner at his apartment, she had accepted his proposal to marry--showering him with happiness and untying his stomach, knotted with anticipation.

The aroma of fresh coffee brought him out of his daydream, and he slowly shuffled into the kitchen, filled an old chipped mug with coffee, and sat down at the table. He sat absentmindedly blowing on his coffee and remembering the first time he asked his wife out on a date and how the two of them acted as though they weren't particularly interested in each other, merely going through the motions because they had no one else. He thought about how that changed as they spent more time together. He thought of her sweet face, her pretty eyes hidden behind thick glasses, and the delicate curve of her little pug nose.

He tried to imagine what his life would have been like without her, but couldn't. No matter where he had been, she was there, a part of him that could not be lost. She had been with him in Europe when he was sent to fight the Nazis; and it was the thought of her, a constant in those uncertain times, that brought sanity to that insane war. When he slept, she was there; and when he spent six months in a hospital recovering from a German artillery shell, the thought of her love saved him. At that darkest time, he lived for her.

He gently touched his left shoulder and probed the old scars. She seemed to love him even more when he returned late that summer of 1944, and she gently soothed the painful memories that followed him home. With time, his recollection of the war grew dim, but his love for her never did.

Just back from the war, he had little to offer except himself. She accepted his offer and they married, a four-year interruption had put off the event. He had refused to let her marry a man who might not come home--but now the time had come. Feeling more alive than at any other time in his life, he slipped

the plain golden ring on her delicate finger and sealed together their lives.

Glancing thoughtfully around the kitchen, the old man chuckled at the memory of their first home, a cramped, two-bedroom apartment on the wrong side of the tracks. But those were the days of their youth, now they live in a fine home with a green yard, periodically overrun by neighborhood children, and the mementoes of five decades. He glanced at the vacuum cleaner standing in the corner beside the microwave oven and remembered how he and his son would rise early on Saturday mornings to surprise his wife by cleaning the house before she woke. And, with the same clarity of that memory, he remembered the last time he saw his son--when he boarded the plane that carried him to Vietnam.

After some time, he looked at the clock on the wall; it read twenty minutes of seven.

"She'll be up soon," he realized and started for the back door. Unlatching it, he stepped out into the dark dawn toward the greenhouse he kept near the back stoop. He entered and collected a handful of the remaining geraniums before going back inside the kitchen where he put them in a vase along with a cup of coffee on a small tray.

He ascended the stairs cautiously, not wanting to ruin the surprise by waking her too early, and made his way down the hall toward the bedroom. But this time the old man did notice the pictures on the wall and smiled. No one picture drew his attention, but, rather, all of them together represented all he ever really wanted out of life. It almost amused him to think about how those pictures, snapshots of his life, had melted away into the very routine of his existence.

He entered the bedroom and set the tray on the table by the bed so he could turn off that infernally loud alarm. Then he gazed fondly down on the face he loved more than any other as it slowly stirred.

Upon waking the old woman sniffed at the strong presence of the coffee on the table beside her. Her eyes opened softly and stared at the wrinkled countenance of her husband standing above, while a smile crept across her lips.

"Good morning, Sweetie," he softly whispered, "and happy anniversary."

Sunset

Kelli Stuckey

I have seen a sunset--
Colors enveloping the sky...
Once a soft blue,
Now violet, red, and
Gold.
The glow overcomes all
And makes the viewer seem
So small.

Honorable Mention,
OSU at Marion High School Poetry Contest

New Year's Resolution
Sarah K. Schulze

Cool ripples of new life
Letting me drift into their myth
Of sluggish will,
And the heart that cries
In a request to go back.
A year ago was love.
As the moon sets, and the sun
Rises in the glory of newness,
That heart cannot give in,
Must fight the letting go.
Pretend the past is in the future,
Something to look forward to
As happiness becomes a memory.

Notes on the Contributors

ROBERT L. BROWN is an MBA student at Ashland University who picks up most of his Institutional Requirements at OSUM. He loves to write short fiction and has a small collection of about twenty stories and poems. His favorite author is Edgar Allen Poe....NATHAN BURCH is an English major at OSUM and works at the local animal shelter. He likes to call himself a starving artist. On "Keep Driving" he writes, "This piece is about surviving the weight with the uncertainty of reflections."...CHRISTOPHER JOHN ELSASSER is a Political Science major attending college in his home town. Though published as a journalist and poet in high school, this is his first college writing effort. For their support of his writing, he thanks his colleagues on the Editorial Staff of Cornfield Review....FRANKLIN D. MILLER is an Art major attending OSUM. He loves to draw and is a fan of anything nostalgic....SARAH K. SCHULZE is an Environmental Science/Restoration Ecology major. Her goal is to help save endangered species from extinction....MARY BETH SMITH is a student at Marion Technical College who developed a love for poetry and began writing at a young age. She currently teaches dance classes and enjoys seeing Broadway plays and musicals....LAURA SMITH lives in Delaware, Ohio, and attends OSUM when her busy schedule as a wife, mother and registered nurse permits. This is her first publication. She would like to thank her family for their patience during her current obsession with poetry. And a special thanks to Dr. Stuart Lishan for all of the encouragement and assistance with getting the music right....MELISSA SNYDER is a Sophomore at OSUM majoring in Special Education. She writes to express her

convictions....KATHARINE ARMSTRONG STUDER lives in Bucyrus, Ohio. She attends OSU at Marion, where she is working on a Bachelor's Degree in Journalism with a minor in English. She would like to thank Stuart Lishan for his encouragement....Each of the poems provided by LAURA A. TAUSCH hold particular meaning that are very special to her. She finds herself writing about things that draw curiosity or suspense to the reader. Her artwork is simply poetry in something other than words, and through her sketches she has expressed personal poetry within each line....JENNIFER R. THOMPSON is a Sophomore at OSUM. She is interested in Music and Story Writing, but her main passion is the visual arts. She is majoring in Art Education and hopes to teach someday....VAUGHN WASHBURN is a Junior Art major. His work revolves around the idea that everything is relative....CAROLE ZIEGLER is a student at OSUM with interests in travel, gardening, the creative arts, interior design, and decorating. She is a member of MOFAS, a local art club.

Notes on the High School Poetry Contestants

CARMON FOWN is currently a Senior at Elgin High School....KATIE RODABAUGH is currently a Junior at Upper Sandusky High School....WENDY RAYMALE is currently a Senior at Upper Sandusky High School.... COURTNEY SIMPSON is currently a Junior at Ridgemont High School....ELLIS SLONE is currently a Junior at North Union High School....KELLI STUCKEY is currently a Junior at Wynford High School.

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