

Cornfield Review

15th Anniversary Issue



Vol. 15

1997

In 1976, a tradition began at The Ohio State University at Marion that has brought opportunity and pride to the campus community; a tradition known as *The Cornfield Review*.

First conceived by Dr. David Citino in response to a large interest in literature and writing in the campus and local community, *Cornfield* provided an opportunity for students not only to be published alongside professional writers, but also gain valuable experience working with professors to publish the journal.

A growing number of students interested in writing prompted the 1995 *Cornfield* staff to look toward the future, focusing purely on aspiring writers of the OSU Marion campus as well as local high schools. With this change, *Cornfield* has given the writers of tomorrow their first chance at being recognized for their work.

Today, *Cornfield* is celebrating its 15th anniversary with a special issue combining the best of *Cornfield* past and present. We begin with a poem by our founder, David Citino, and progress to the current high school poetry contest winners. By passing the literary torch to this younger generation of artists, the flame of creation is kept alive. To quote Dr. Citino, "There will always be a need for the 'little,' or 'literary' magazine." With this intertwining of maturity with youth, we here at *Cornfield* hope to show that we are ready to keep alive the tradition Dr. Citino began for many years to come!

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Cornfield Review is published once a year at the Ohio State University at Marion. The editorial board seeks quality writing and graphic art. Submissions must be accompanied by a self addressed stamped envelope. Please send no more than five poems, and limit fiction to 3000 words or less.

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Sister Mary Appassionata Addresses The Marion County Writer's 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.

Wind- 1976*John M. Bennett*

The wind my mind is it
the sky is blue and
white its buds ex
PLOding eyeballs is a
distance cross the river WOOLCO
sign is bending under
wind is roar my sight a
coughing joy bursts out is blown
my brain its branches bare and
light and tossing whipped
around the air thrust in
my lungs cracks out a breaks these
damp and bandaged ribs my tongue

You Are Tired And Desperate: Nothing Is Working.

So You Decide to Write a Formula Poem.- 1977

Wayne Dodd

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.

Mrs. Stein's Tin Box- 1977

Shawn Miller

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. Railing 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 watch 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 combatted. 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 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 troublemaker, 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 with 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.

Mothers & Daughters-1978

Patricia Sierra

Do you see that girl, sitting in the booth there, a hamburger and Coke in front of her? She is my daughter. Thirteen. Sullen. Aware, already, she has something men want, and aware how I worry about that fact.

I follow her here, certain she has gone to meet that boy. He'll be coming soon; it's the same every time she leaves the house, wearing his ring on a chain under her sweater. She walks out, saying something about the library, Sue's house, or cheerleader's practice. She has never been, she has never wanted to be, a cheerleader. I know that she is headed out to meet that boy, to share with him the success of her lie- to parade before him my failure as a mother.

I don't know this girl, my daughter; hair, not very clean, hanging nearly to her waist; I do not know her at all. She won't allow me in her room, she stands in the doorway, blocking my eyes. But I go in there, when she isn't at home. I turn the pages of her notebook, and see how her mind jumps from $X=A$, to L.R. + J.S. I sit down on her bed, to examine the plush stuffed animals grinning with red felt mouths. I try to remember why I, too, once buried my bed in toys long after I had outgrown them.

I know my daughter is in a conspiracy with that boy; a tall, skinny, acne-ridden basketball player who touches those private places she has been hiding from me for years. She hides them whenever I walk into the bathroom, accidentally. I always apologize, tell her it was an accident, I wasn't thinking, next time I'll knock, we'll buy a lock, I'm sorry- but it's always too late. She pulls a robe or towel between us, looking at me with those terrible thirteen-year-old eyes, until I long to know what it is that's so bad about being a mother... what it is that's so bad about being me.

She is in a conspiracy with her father, too, never showing him the way she has perfected that flip of her head... never letting him hear the filthy words she knows so well... never revealing to him how terrible her eyes can be. She becomes a woman - prematurely - at the sound of his key in the door; what a shrewd and calculating rival. Watch how she curls up on his lap, as if she were a loving child, willing to be lead. Doesn't she know I am able to read such blackmail a room away? Doesn't he see what she's doing to him, what she's doing to this marriage?

I followed her here today, to reassure myself she lies; she is not worth the worry, pain, or tears. She feeds and dresses herself; there is nothing more I can do. Her destiny is written. I will tell her, on her eighteenth birthday, she is free to go. I will ask her to just take her things and go. Then I can begin my own life. I can go back to

the university, learn all I must know for a career in social work. I'll reach out to people with a darker, more twisted existence than mine. My husband will not question where I am on late winter evenings. He will not guess I am in class, he will imagine nothing. I will pay for school out of my grocery allowance, and after graduation it will be a year, two years, before he knows I have taken a job. It will puzzle him; that is all.

How Female I Am - 1978

Patricia Sierra

1.

That man talks to me about his marriage, the one he no longer has; it is defunct. He tells me about his wife, a woman busy with decoupage and creative casseroles.

He loved her, he says, and watched her as though she were a movie. The marriage survived for three maybe four years. But now it is finished, and neither of them seems to understand why.

That woman he speaks of now in such a hushed and sacred voice- I do not know her. She is a stranger to me, and yet I am that woman, half a decade later, still threatened by men, still clinging to my freedom to cut and paste and cook what I want.

2.

My lover knows things about me I did not wish to reveal... things he pulled from me against my will. I do not know how he did it, I will never understand how he did it.

He knows I do not like the collision of bodies. He pulls me into his bed. When he is finished, he apologizes.

I wish he wouldn't apologize; I must then react-admit or deny. I wish my lover had never apologized; I wish my lover were dead.

3.

There was a professor, now a transparent memory. He held my mind in his hands, as my daughter does silly putty. If you build a tower of silly putty, then leave it- it sinks, spreads out, crumbles into dust.

4.

Nine years old. A dark summer night, made darker by the bushes we hid behind.

“Show me *yours*,” he whispered, and I did, quickly. “Again,” he said, and I did. And that’s when they found us.

His mother said, “That’s boys for you.”

My mother said nothing, but she hit me until I bled from my nose and my mouth. Here is a mark, here, under my skin, to this day. It didn’t show, but it’s there; I can feel it.

5.

There is a man who lets me come to his office to tell him the truth about me- but, of course, I must pay him. My bill is current. Each week I write him a check, eager to keep our records even. I must owe him nothing; he must have no recourse against me after he has heard all I have to say.

What does he think while I talk? *What’s for dinner? Does she dye her hair? When, when, when will she be quiet?*

He is not like other men. He has a face that's, well, kind. It looks younger than I think he must be; a face protected from the erosion of all that he hears. His eyes are kind, too - looking at me with a softness I have sometimes imagined in my own eyes, a softness I have imagined while looking at men I have loved. But he looks at *all* people with those kind and accepting eyes.

I question his innocence. It can't be real, not in this time, this place, this administration. Oh, how I hope it is real.

I tell him the worst, and still he looks at me with those eyes. The kindness of his professional eyes is killing me, slowly, week by week.

He knows, I have told him so he knows, that all of my men have been evil. Why is he doing this to me: showing me a kind, loving man, like none I have ever had - like none I shall ever have? I pay him for this, I pay him well for this, my undoing.

I watch the slow, precise movements, as he adjusts his body in his chair, answers the phone, moves beside me to the door. Slow and comforting movements I am drawn to, and must escape.

His voice strokes my hair, my skin - the tones caress me into submission. I tell him things I have denied, even to myself, and he does not blink, he does not turn away, apparently he does not even hear. His voice warms me with questions about next week, lulling me into an etherized state that may last the week. I feel I am underwater, drowning; giddy with the intoxicating pleasure and comfort of drowning in his voice.

Later, when I am unable to sleep, I telephone his home, awaken him, to hear his voice once more - but I hang up, guilty, when he answers. I have not paid for that.

Every week I have this to look forward to: I shall sit, locked into a room for a full hour with a man who tortures me with this close-up look at what other people have. He has given me all of this; he has taken everything, every hope, from me.

6.

I ended my marriage with a letter, the same device I will turn to to end my therapy. I know one day I will write him a letter, whether I want to or not. Or I will call, leave a message with his secretary, unwilling to give him written proof of my weakness. I will do one of those things: I will write a letter or I will call. I shudder at how female I am.

7.

My father is an old man. People think it is butter, only butter, running down the cheek of a man too feeble to be feeding himself. But I suspect that he weeps, and I suspect that he weeps from an overwhelming disappointment. I have not been a good daughter; I have lived my life as though it were my own.

8.

I am alone in my car. It's late; in the rear-view mirror I see a man in a dark-colored Ford. I turn down a side street, but he follows. At the next corner I turn left; he turns left. I speed up; he speeds up. I circle through the narrow residential streets, back to the highway. I see a patrol car, headed toward me, stopped at the light just ahead. The man moves into passing gear, slips past me as I pull beside the patrol car.

I honk, roll down my window; the policeman is young, grinning at me as though I stopped to tell him a joke.

"A man has been following me," I tell him, surprised I sound so excited, so breathless.

"I don't blame him lady," the face smirks. The other policeman, on the passenger's side, laughs.

I speed away, fleeing the enemy, man.

I Got Back Exhausted

A poem to be read twice in succession

Hale Chatfield

I got back exhausted
and sat down and poured myself some wine.
I thought, Maybe I ought to write her a letter
saying "I did that for you; I even
did *that* for you." And then I thought,
What's the use? She knows. She was nailing
us up with kisses in the kitchen, and all
the time that kid was out there,
and it was getting harder and harder to breathe.

I poured some more wine
and decided that in fact
I *would* write you something.
Even now you are reading it.
You read: the cross was an instrument
in wide use for the purpose of executing
criminals found guilty of a variety of
crimes ranging from theft to treason.
You read: it killed by suffocation,
as the weakening victim drowned
in his own weight, and you are finding it
harder and harder to breathe.

The boy knew, you said.
He didn't look like he knew much,
but I took him out and shot him anyway.
For you. He didn't look like he knew much
when I buried him, either. But he knew enough
by then I guess. I thought maybe I'd write
asking, "Are you *sure*?"--but I should
have asked that a long time ago,
before there was anything to know:
before you took me in your arms
and kissed me as I reached for a piece of paper
to write all of this, and I began it:
I got back exhausted

1978-79, 73 Ohio Poets

Destination - 1979*Grace Butcher*

Her hands, he thinks,
are so small
they will be lost
on his body.
They will not know
where to go.

But like falling of feathers
they drift across
the singing and crying
of his skin,

wrap like roots
around the very center
of all his songs
and fears.

Her arms, he thinks,
are so slender
they will not be able
to hold his vastness.

But when, in the sullen
steel-gray gears and machinery
of the dreams he himself
does not even see,
the invisible earth
opens beneath him,

and he falls, he finds himself
held above the abyss
as easily as if
he were a child.
He burrows deeper into
that circle of love,
not knowing that he murmurs
in his sleep
all the necessary words.

Her legs, he thinks,
can never match his strides
nor anchor him contentedly
in any kind of harbor.

But strongly as he moves
over snow, over meadows
and mountains, she is there
moving steadily in her own brightness,
sometimes in her own path.
And she is the one who waits.

Amazed and glad,
he lies down over her.
Wrapped in her body,
comforted, he sleeps
and finally feels
a stillness, as of deep water.

He does not drift away.

Why Does He Hate Miro-1980

Emilie Glen

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

My Wife Jumps Crazy-1981

Scott Cairns

My wife jumps crazy into bed, still wet
and shaking from the shower.

In a very little while

she'll be warm enough to dress, dry enough
to move through a cold room. But now,
she is cold and shaking, eager
for the warmth of arms and legs together,
the warmth of close breath.

And I am glad for cold mornings, glad for the simple
shock of waking, and for the occasional gift
of a cold and shaking woman getting warm.

Light That Behaves Like Water - 1982

Deborah Burnham

We stood in the pouring moon, dressed in that light
So thick nothing could break it. It fell in curves
As whitewater throws its strong arcs over stones;
Its single stream drenched pine, oak,
And our quiet skins, refused to split.

Each night I turn into my sleep and find you
Floating in light, saying "Breathe with me."
My breasts wait for your hands
That move to me, full of light
Like cups of water swelling above the rims.

Now the oak labors under snow,
Pines bend to stones;
Light hangs on branches like the moon's blossoms
While I wait to run like water under your hands.

Missing- 1984-85, *Poetry Ohio Issue**George Looney*

In the center of Ohio is a field
covered in white with a single line
of four-toed prints almost hidden
in new snow and a hill in the center.
And in a three-street farming town
in a gray-panelled house
a woman bends over broken glass
on the kitchen floor, her hands
careful of the sharp edges,
using a vacuum for the pieces
she'd never see. In the livingroom
a small boy huddles in the dark,
tears drying on his face.
He watches snow fall out the window,
pulls at the bone-white buttons
of his shirt, hides in the fold
of his pocket one red-stained fragment,
held tight as though it might
disappear. He listens to the purr
of the sweeper, closes his eyes
and sleeps as the fields
surrounding the town get deeper.
In one, a hill gets larger
as small four-toed prints disappear.
Snow continues to fall out the windows.

Stones Dancing- 1989

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 and 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

Visiting the Underground-1990

Marcia Dickson

We're told that Persephone
had no choice but to return to Hades
every six months or so--
But she must have been able to negotiate,
after all, some winters are short,
others long.
Perhaps, she visited
for reasons other than
hierarchical compliance.
There may have been children
that bards, being men, forgot to mention,
or other less acceptable rationalizations.

Think of Aeneas, of Odysseus.
They merely journeyed down to seek advice--
happened to see a few relatives,
an old love--
gathered information and beat it out of there
faster than you could say
commitment.

The problem with the underground
is that it's interesting--
somehow familiar and alluring.

Persephone, up in her mother's green world
must have wondered how things were below.
How her husband's work progressed,
if he ever got new shoes,
whether he pined for her
or had replaced her with some new maiden.
The long term effects of pomegranate seeds
and the waters of Lethe probably blocked out
the memory of being snatched from above--
It's the only sensible explanation.

Yet, remember--
part of the year she became a queen--
one doesn't give power up easily.
On hard afternoons in the real world
a visit to the nether regions might almost
seem a return to sanctuary.
He ran Hades, after all;
Hades was not Hell.

Like Persephone,
I visit the underground--
the children most frequently bring me,
but I sometimes, forgetfully,

stumble back on my own,
looking for news of you.
After all, I loved you once,

and no legend contends that
the lord of the underworld was two-headed.

My mother claims that I am doomed,
that I am weak-willed,
and weak-willed women must serve indifferent men--
the children, the gods, decree it.

Not true.

I visit the underground
because I remember the Elysian fields
as well as I do Tartarus.

No. There's stronger truth yet.

I return to you
because I love the darkness.

Before Completion-1991

Sandra Kolankiewicz

His chariot overturned, something that has been coming, perhaps, because he has been working so hard, double shifts, and I see the things, the material things he buys with that skill in his hands, his work environment so dangerous I feel my skin peel with guilt when I kiss him off to his shift every morning. Bringing home his calloused hands, a house, car, clothes, and food is his expression of his love. And in this heat.

And the occasional sincerity that pops out whenever his ego is engaged elsewhere. When he's not busy protecting the shell I saw through when we met eight months ago.

How can I not pity him? He's struggling with my filling womb. Day after day it reproaches him. Can he Do it all, he is thinking. And I am this strange woman with green breasts who will soon be saying there is a doctor to go to, baby clothes to buy, diapers, new shoes.

Is that why yesterday he spent one hundred dollars drinking for an afternoon and evening in a bar?

Was he with someone?

It's dangerous for him to be so detached, removed, looking down at me from his safe perch; he might just float away and never be able to find his way back. Or, when he does, it will be too late.

The problem, of course, is change. Permanent change. Think of the risk: you bring a woman into your house and then this woman becomes pregnant with what might be a monster or a unicorn--(it will be a warrior and it will be a she; I can see her now in her white tunic, that

sword in the air, a white horse coming out of the sky as she stands upon boulders, wild boars and mountain goats on the stony ground below her). A daughter that will be stronger than her father.

But all he can think about is that his life has changed irrevocably. Will there be a hawk on the top of that ladder? He's full of so many colors that he doesn't want to exhale; he wants to hold his breath forever, fears the next one he takes will not be so beautiful. All the hues he is holding inside--they'll mix together and become black. So he must exhale soon, or the black will wipe out all of us.

He has just vomited for the second time in the bathroom. I set a glass of water beside him on the tile floor so he could rinse his mouth. I tip-toe through the rowhouse, pretending indifference to his hangover.

Of course he thought he had already fulfilled himself; growth was done. But he sees now that each new step reveals another and yet another step, and our feelings are never safe; they never jell unless we are sick.

He's made himself sick. With fear.

The fulfillment of his cup, overturned into his lap. His cup runs over and stains the garments I wash. He's dreaming about all the things he's wanted that now I'll keep him from getting. He drinks instead of pushing himself up to the next plane.

Can I be blamed because he was looking for a woman, the stomach that he wanted to kiss and press his face into, now the soft round belly of a woman swelling with his child? Why do women and men make love if not to have children? We sublimate it, but I am living proof that birth control pills are not infallible. If you come in me a baby might come out. That is what it means to be a woman, whether we take advantage of it or not, that is how we control or lose control of our lives. The woman draws him

home after his shift; when he walks into what used to be his own house, he steps into her. And thus I give to him.

But he makes me take from him as well, and in his black nights I am the merciless deity that robbed from him everything he thought he had. I am the moan that slips from between his lips as he lies down now in the bed and turns his face away from my kiss, the room shaded and reeking of alcohol.

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And so I will have to teach him by shock, my grand escape a final attempt at education. I will step out into the world, leaving him completely behind.

For how long should I wait for him to come around? You cannot teach those who do not want to know. And MY lesson has always been for me to be kind to myself.

I have given him up; my absence is a matter of time.

For how do you teach someone to love? By loving them or by loving yourself? How many more mornings can I wake hopefully, before I become bitter, before bitterness becomes the second nature I have always promised myself I would never adopt? Because I know there are better men than he.

So I plan my route, my escape. Soon I will know exactly how I will make my move. My girlfriend will come with her car for my clothes, only two suitcases worth, the rest I can leave behind. My pots and pans to my friend Maria; she can never leave, her feet are nailed to the trailer floor, her two daughters, the man who has had three wives and will not marry her. Yes, I will leave her my iron pots and stainless steel pans to replace her

bent aluminum. She will be cooking for the rest of her life.

And me? Not for much more will I be listening for his truck to stop outside the door; soon my world will revolve around the world revolving.

In my escape I will rent a car, borrow a tent, and drive to the ruins, Indian mounds outside the city limits, are in the hills that no one goes to except the ones who live in their trailers, their farm houses, their Vietnam veteran hideaways with no running water. I have a credit card. I have my degree. There is a job waiting for me somewhere. I will leave everything behind and start over.

Just this multiplying seed inside me I will carry as I go. I must protect her from my bile.

A doctor would tell me I was foolish, but I know that my daughter absorbs the food I eat, the oxygen, the water I drink. So how could she not know of my suffering, the bitter taste on my lips, the sweetness gone, all the dreams amounting to nothing? He is drunk again today, just enough after work to make him numb.

And so I will drive to the ruins, the Indian mounds, the caves overlooking the river before it winds its way into town. I will leave a letter and the golden band that is supposed to pass for a wedding ring, on my finger to prevent me, I suppose, from feeling humiliated.

But what do I care! If I were married, it would be to this beautiful man who is no more, suddenly a son of a bitch who looks for pretexts to shout, hiss, scream, rid himself of the frustration that is drowning him.

We have ruined his life, he thinks. Without us there would be nothing to worry about, And thus we will give to him what he thinks he wants--the freedom that used to strangle him. We will empty the house we filled by our

presence and give it back to him. He will have again the space that we took away.

For it seems to me that I was never without this child growing inside me. All my life I have been preparing for this. All of my life. My breasts swelling, nipples a deep maroon, my stomach growing round and hard like a basketball. So I will protect this daughter from bitterness though I will be alone, unwed, for the moment unemployed. I can no longer consider her father, his cruelty, the motives behind his fear. Those are problems he must resolve without me. I cannot be his whipping post.

She cannot be our whipping post.

Above all, I must be healthy. For her. And him I will not allow near me unless he is healthy as well. Yes, we will leave him what he thinks he wants, trusting that our leaving is what he has needed all along.

Without us, there is nothing, no reason. Because when a man loves, no matter how he fights it, he can never be the same. He either opens to himself or closes forever.

* * *

I make a list as he lies drunk on the bed. I sit in the next room, feeling the air pass between the front and back doors, in the antique rocking chair he bought when I first told him I was pregnant. Who knows what image he had of me then—an earth-mother rocking in an American primitive, now the great-grandmother with bad breath who perched him on her knees, always held him too tightly and wrapped him in a scratchy blanket. I creak in the hall in the breeze. Like all women, I watch a man in his sleep, hoping he will wake up and talk to me. I need to talk.

But his answer is always a silent If you don't like it, leave.

So I'm leaving. Like that, click. The invisible.

My list: walkman, address book, a few tapes and books, passport, wallet and credit cards, a few clothes (pink dress, sneakers, shorts, sandals, t-shirts, underwear), face and body creme, shampoo and rinse, vitamins. Toothbrush and toothpaste.

Who knows where I will go with my thousand dollar cash advance!

But what I really want to do is crawl in bed beside him, sure he will not turn a stiff back to me, the length of him an indifferent blade against my curved body. I no longer feel safe approaching him: he doesn't love me. The daughter inside me knows he doesn't love me.

I wrap my arms around myself and it is not enough.

And what man would not agree? What man would want to be left so that he could suffer, the strike a slap on his backside, forcing him to take a breath and yell, squawl his naked infant cry into the wilderness? Until he loves and weeps, he is his own prisoner, until he knows his own limits, he is limited.

A man prays for a woman who will give him enough rope to hang himself.

The plan in action: today when he goes off the work I am leaving; my friend is driving over in her Volkswagen bus to get me. We will rattle to the car dealership where I will lease an economy car. I will kiss and hug her goodbye and promise to write. I will leave a note propped up against the bar.

I pretend to be asleep when he turns off the alarm and lights a cigarette. He sits in the half-dawn of what will be a double shift, smoking, tapping his ashes into a bowl filled with more ashes and twisted cigarettes. He does not look at me.

I lie on my back, my stomach a slight immovable swell, fingers placidly pursed at the knuckles. Pretending to sleep, my eyes slitted, just the slightest glint of my light escaping and catching him, there, his slouched profile in the darkness giving him the hump of a burdened man.

The burdened man crawls out of bed in the half darkness and pulls on his clothes. He does not touch me before he slides away.

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Perhaps I belong here. Perhaps I have been here before, at the foot of this mound, the scratch marks of others in the earth, looking for ruins.

But I don't remember this sky so blue, so perfect with just that one cloud, hanging forever before me on the horizon, as if there had never been such a thing as wind. This land, hollows formed when the glaciers melted. They carried all the topsoil away with their rushing rivers, seeking the easiest course, eating their way through mud to the ocean.

The rivers still run, some shrunken to streams. What is left is red clay, sulphur coal. This Indian mound.

Perhaps the diggers were the professors who came here with their students from the university. Miles away, they halted construction of the new highway; someone found other Indian mounds when they were blasting through the cliffs to form their straight path. And the university professors got an injunction, made them go foot by foot while they excavated. They found spearheads and bones, Indian seed pod corn that one of them managed to germinate after it had been two hundred years in the ground, surrounded by ashes. The professor grew a field of it.

And my seed, how long has it been germinating?
Four months? A million years?

And my silly tent, with its ridiculous contents of
bread, nuts, peanut butter, prenatal vitamins. Did we just
arrive? Or have we been waiting to come here?

Perhaps the diggers were amateur archaeologists,
fascinated by the Indian nations we destroyed, here for the
artifacts.

From the top of this mound I see no where by
down and over, out over the hollows whose trees are so tall
their tops equal the height where I sit watching their swaying
back and forth in the summer heat, the yellow fields beyond
dotted with black and white dairy cattle, just the tip of a barn
roof peaking out.

Most likely all of the barn is visible in the winter.

The evening before, when I arrived, as I was setting
up my tent, fog rose from the streams below me, crawling up
through the trees, the sky beige before the blackness de-
scended.

There was no moon.

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He wonders where I am, the house cleaned before I
left. His clothes washed, ironed. The note where he can
find it, propped against a half-empty bottle that I am sure he
will finish.

I don't know how long I'll have to stay here, how
long until it will be right for me to leave. I felt this morning a
tiny bubbling, my daughter moving inside. Hawks circled
above me, round and round, a geometrical design on the
white underside of their wings.

A lone runner moves along the road, a woman,
steadily up and down the gravel inclines, the straightaways I

can see from my perch. For three mornings I have watched her appear, intent, unaware of me. I watched her back until she curved around a bend and I was alone again. On the fourth day she stopped and took the toward me. She was barely panting when she reached the top of the mound. She stood with her hands on her hips before me as I sat, not looking at me, gazing instead at the view below us, her chest rising and falling, outlined muscles in her long legs at my eye level.

After a moment she turned to me and said, "There are teenaged boys who drive around these roads to drink at night. I noticed you don't have a dog."

She insisted I go with her to the grocery store when she got back to work.

"If you want to do something," she said, "tomorrow you can cut my grass."

Cut her grass. Horizontal lines side by side, leaving little wheel marks. A job well done for one who is doing nothing.

"Call him," she says. "Let me call him."

But I shake my head.

At the supermarket she makes me pick out the vegetables.

"Lots of greens," she coaxes. "I'll go over to the fish counter." She leaves me with an empty cart and a hand full of empty plastic bags.

He liked spinach.

I choose spinach and broccoli and a dozen oranges. I eye the grapes.

"Buy them," she says. Her crucifix shines. She reached past me into the cart. "Just let me deposit these tomatoes."

I knot the purple grapes without seeds into a baggie. A man weighs everything for me.

On the way home the windows are down and Barbara's short hair flutters about her face, around the frames of her sunglasses. We pass a farm house and she honks twice at a man walking in the front yard with a white cane. He turns toward the sound of her car and waves. She downshifts at the curve, the wheels throwing up gravel. We cruise around a horseshoe-shaped ridge and she honks once more at two women digging in a garden that has sprouted between two trailers.

"I run by here every morning," she explains.

I marvel at the distance, me, whose life has stopped but whose belly grows.

* * *

She tells me nothing about God but her house is full of plants. Every morning I have been here she gets up and runs, returns lathered to what must never have seemed, even before me, an empty house. Then a long shower while I lie in the guest room in a narrow bed beside a closed sewing machine. She's in training, she says, for the city race.

"It runs the length of the river past the suburbs, out into the hills," she promises, "then circles around and comes back."

Then she says: "Call him."

It has been two weeks. My hand always stops before I pick up the receiver.

Last night Barbara and I say out on her screened porch that looks out over another screened-in porch twenty feet away. Indigestion burned under my ribs.

"It's going to pour," she said. But the rain never materialized.

When he was eighteen, his mother died of a cerebral hemorrhage. He came home from his job at a market, and there she was, lying on the kitchen table, his father, younger brothers, and sister clustered around her body. He said that her feet hung over the edge of the table at the ankles.

"I'm sure he's ashamed of himself," Barbara said over her shoulder to me that night as she dished out the spinach. "He's probably out of his mind with worry."

"What happened to your husband?" I asked.

She shrugged and set the steaming bowl in the center of the table. She sat and unfolded a napkin into her lap, then said a silent grace. I imitated her.

"It started out with exercise," she said, handing me the butter, "and ended with religion." The kitchen was full of yellow light from the evening sun. She gave a half-laugh. "He didn't want me to change without him." She sipped iced tea. "But what's marriage that can't take change? What are people who don't?"

I moved my food around on my plate.

"Call him," she said. Softly. Insistent as a nun.

"But what would I say?"

"Let him do the talking," she said. "After all, he chased you away. He was mean to you."

"Yes. Then why go back at all?"

Barbara had an appetite. She devoured carbohydrates.

"Who said anything about going back?" She asked.

* * *

A bright moon and I am alone. Barbara is out. There's a cricket in a shadowed corner of the porch, rubbing

its legs together. I have watched the lights in the surrounding houses go out, some one by one as I imagine a person passing through each room and turning them off. Others must be on a main switch: they all disappear together.

There was a photograph of him, taken on a camping trip, just out of high school. It hung on his living room wall. The day I moved in, he ticked the names of his buddies off, boys clinging riotously together with a whole river behind them.

"That's Joe with the bottle, Jim, Bart. Bart. He never made it back from Vietnam. Bill--his wife took him to the cleaners in their divorce. Smuckers--that son of a bitch got himself killed driving home from the bar six months after the picture was taken."

"Are any of them still married?" I asked.

He flopped onto the couch and put his feet up.

"No. None. Well, yes. Joe's still married. He lives in Tulsa with three kids. Joe went to college. And I guess Tom there--yeah, Tom's still married. Of course."

He named them all that day, my unpacked bags still out in the hall. He trusted me.

A car pulls into the driveway next door, a teenaged girl, her boyfriend borrowing his father's Olds. The engine turns off but they stay in the front seat for a long time, heads close together. Finally the passenger door opens, slams, and a slight figure with waist-length hair runs toward the house. The screen door springs shut behind her as she disappears into a cave of darkness, and I can hear a dead bolt thump into place.

His mother left a five-year-old baby behind when she died, and the girl grew up among men. When she started her period, her brothers teased her that she was dirty.

Finally her teacher at school noticed the red stain on the back of her dress and sent her to the nurse to have everything explained.

He and I had been lying in bed that morning, talking about the mystery of birth, how we really are animals, one foot in the heavens and one in the mud, with an aversion to both. ("I wouldn't call it 'aversion'," Barbara had told me. "I'd name it 'fear'.")

And he suddenly remembered his younger sister's first menstruation and how none of them had helped her, not even the school nurse, he guessed, because two years later she was pregnant. She lives on welfare now with three kids, all from different men. He called the men bastards, not the children, because the men had all run out on her when she needed them. "And who," he had demanded that morning in bed as he rolled away from me, "would marry her now?"

Tonight the moon is a woman sighing. Her grey eyes mourn above all passage, over the upturned faces of children gazing into the night. My daughter floats in her own ocean, moving like a ripple beneath my ribs.

Learning by Heart-1992

Mary Crow

“Boredom is the dream bird which
hatches the egg of experience.”

-Walter Benjamin, The Art of Storytelling

Bowed over the ironing board,
Mother seemed to doze
and we tiptoes past the kitchen
afraid to break the spell.
We thought that if we ran away
she would have to break out
of her dream to find us.

But what we imagined
is not what happened.
We squatted behind the bushes,
waiting, blowing on our fingers,
tired of oranges and bread,
but still she didn't come.

Dusk recreated the landscape,
a lamb cried out for its mother,
but we heard no familiar call.
At last, cold and shy, we crept
home to the warm kitchen light.

Mother was fixing supper
as if she'd never missed us.

Gold coins of carrots
multiplied on the cutting board,
and the knife blade flashed
as it fell, and fell again.
Her head bowed, Mother
stood still in her trance.

We came into that light, hushed.

The Coffee Cup Song- 1992

Catherine Francis

“How dare you!” my momma says, her voice high and screeching like a lonely fiddle. “How dare you!” She throws one two three four five coffee cups at me. Percussion smash. Tinkle of white shards on the blue linoleum. We’ll be drinking coffee out of styrofoam for a while, I think. That’s all we have, coffee cup-wise, except for a sixth one, the last thing my daddy drank out of the morning he left, and it’s sitting in the china cabinet in the front room.

She doesn’t aim to hit me, although the fifth cup comes close. It explodes on the floor and a chip dings off my guitar’s gloss. She’s never thrown anything at me before. I watch the way you might watch a television program showing animals doing something you’ve never seen them do.

“How dare you!” my mother says again. She sinks down in her chair and puts her head in her hands. Her words are muffled as they make their way past the blue sleeves of her workshirt, the one with “Candy” embroidered in red loops on the front pocket. “How dare you put me in that song?”

I don’t answer. She’ll cry for a while, and then she’ll sweep up the pieces, wipe her face with a cool rag, and go to work at the Krave-More Diner, where you can get the finest cup of coffee in this town or any other. I put my guitar in its case, go out the screen door, and head out down the road, raising puffs of red dust around my heels.

It's morning. Maybe too early to have sprung it on her, when she was still shaking off her dreams. The sky arches over me high and sweet, and I can hear the sighing of mourning doves and the wind in the telephone wires. The air's cool now, but it'll heat up later, till you don't feel much like moving more than your hand on the guitar neck as you sit on the porch swing and try to puzzle out a song or maybe just that chorus that's been eluding you, chasing it up and down the frets. Back home, my momma's washing her face. She knows I'm not going far.

I can't say how I came by my love of honkytonk music. We always listened to classical at my house, enough so I can call up some of the pieces in my mind, the big booming ones that go with the Kansas prairie. But a lot of that stuff's too tinkly and quick. When you're driving down the road, the notes fly out the window and bury themselves in the long grass. They don't stick around and keep you company, the way honkytonk music does.

I taught myself to play on my daddy's guitar, the only thing he left behind besides that coffee cup. At first my hands were too small and soft to do much more than strum, but they toughened up. I learned to pick fast and easy and the music sounded so lovely, I kept stopping to say to myself, is that me that's making those fine sounds?

My name is J.D. Daniels, Jennifer Delilah if you must know, but I go by J.D., the way my daddy did. I don't mean to make it sound like he's dead, because he isn't. My daddy sold insurance and provided for us for eight years. Then a wander itch came on him like a night fever and he packed up his things and left us without a word. Didn't take him overly far, though. He's living over in Greensborough with a woman named Amanda

who's cleaned up his act. He doesn't drink or run around any more, and wears a tie to church every Sunday.

The only present he ever gave me was that guitar, an old steel string no name brand, and I don't know if the gift was intentional. I came off better than my momma. All she has is a cup.

My momma works at the Krave-More. She brings folks coffee and smiles at them to sweeten up their day. She's slow to smile, but when she does, it could melt ice from across the room.

I'll be fourteen next month. Changes coming, my grandma tells me. I know all that stuff. We learned it in health class and there's no call for her to nod so mysteriously. But I don't tell her that. She means well by us, and helps out when she can. The house we're living in belongs to her, and every birthday, she and I dress up in our best and go down to the First Farmer's Bank and deposit my birthday check in my savings account for college. People ask me what I want to be when I grow up, and I tell them an archaeologist or a country singer or an astrophysicist, but the fact of the matter is that I don't know. But I pray every night to grow up a good woman like my momma and grandma, and not to be afflicted with a wander itch.

Three months ago I wrote a song. That's what caused all the trouble. The music teacher, Miss Mopp, told us about a contest sponsored by a radio station in Abilene, Kansas. You wrote a song and sent it in, you singing along with whatever instrument suited your fancy. The radio station would pick the best tape and the winner would come in and record it at their studio. Then they'd make 45 rpm records of it to give away to five hundred lucky souls and play it three times daily on the air.

I thought that sounded pretty easy. I've been

writing songs ever since I started playing guitar. At first I had a hard time getting them out of my head and into the strings. But I got better. I'd listen in the evenings to the songs on the radio, and I'd fool around until I figured out how so and so got that lonesome sound or how somebody else did that fancy bridge. I'd play a song over fifty, sixty times, until I got it right, but I had to play soft, because my momma hated what I was playing.

"That's trash music," she'd snort. "Learn to play something higher tone and I'll pay for guitar lessons. Better yet, we'll rent a piano, and you can play all day."

But by then, I knew enough to play the songs I loved, sad songs that crept out my window and spread across the sky like a million twinkling stars, sorrowful songs about cheating men and hearts worn out with weeping. I could make tears run down my grandma's cheeks when I played, and there's no higher tribute she could pay, but my momma stayed dry eyed.

Miss Mopp let me borrow the school tape recorder. I played three songs, then rewound and listened. My first song was about that coffee cup in our front room and it was so sad it made the soles of my feet itch.

But I wasn't sure. One time I wrote a song about being buried in white roses, because they're the most romantic things I know. I thought it was a sad song, but my grandma paid it no mind. This song seemed sad, but I couldn't test it out on my mother, seeing as how she figured in it, which might influence her judgement. My grandma wasn't handy, and I wanted to turn the song in the next day.

I went ahead and wrote my name, age and school down on a recipe card with a little drawing of jam pots and squash up in the corner, because we didn't have any index cards. I gave it to Miss Mopp. And then I forgot

about it, and that's the pure and simple truth, until yesterday when Miss Mopp told me I'd won.

I thought my momma would be pleased when I told her the news at breakfast. And she was, at first, until I fetched down my guitar and played that song for her. And that's when coffee cups started flying through the air.

I walk down the road to my grandma's house. She's up and in her kitchen.

"Sit down and play me this prize-winning song," she says when I get in the doorway. That's how I know my momma has already called her on the telephone. This is where I go when things get a little hard now and then. My grandma pours me a glass of milk and puts two chocolate doughnuts on a plate. I sit down, prop my guitar on my knee, and play her that song. She starts crying before the first verse's halfway through, stands there and dabs at her eyes with her apron when I finish.

"That's the saddest song I ever heard," she says. "I can see where it'd fetch a prize or two. But do you understand why your momma's so upset, J.D. honey?"

I shake my head.

"It's just a song."

"But it's your momma's song. It's all her sadness spread out in the air for anyone to hear," she says, blowing her nose. "And maybe there's folks she doesn't want listening."

I know she's right. But I wanted to write a song about the saddest thing I knew, and that coffee cup has always qualified.

"It's my song too," I say to my grandma. "I live there too."

My momma doesn't say anything about the song

at dinner. I figure she'll ignore it, the way she does with things she doesn't like. She doesn't say anything at all to me.

Two days later, my grandma drives me into Abilene to the radio station. We figure we'll record the song in the morning, then have lunch, go visit the Greyhound Hall of Fame and the house of Dwight D. Eisenhower was born in. It's a scorching day by the time we get there, but the radio station, WKNS, your station for Kansas country sound, is air conditioned.

They take me in a room full of fancy dials and buttons. They make me play the song on my guitar, and then play it back through headphones and I sing along with what I played. I play and sing maybe ten, twelve times before the way it sounds satisfies the man sitting up in the booth drinking coffee. He shakes my hand and congratulates me. His voice is thick and there's a little bit of water in the corners of his eyes. He says "That's the saddest song I ever heard. Thanks for letting me listen."

A secretary gives me papers to sign, which my grandma reads through first, and then a lady DJ takes me in her office to tape an intro. It's like being inside a big machine, full of toggle switches and dials. She's got pictures of singers taped up on the walls: Patsy Cline, Kitty Wells, Loretta Lynn.

"Just speak naturally, sugar," she tells me. She flips a button on her microphone. "So tell me, J.D., how old are you?"

I tell her, and she asks questions like where I go to school and what's my favorite class and how I learned to play the guitar. Then she says "How did you write that song?"

I take a minute before I answer, "It's a song about

a member of my immediate family, but if you please, I'd rather not say anything more."

She studies me, and flips the switch off, but she doesn't ask me any more about the circumstances of the song.

My grandma buys me lunch. We stroll around town and visit the Greyhound Hall of Fame. Eisenhower's house is closed, so all we do is walk around the outside and look in the windows, which is about as interesting as you'd expect. My grandma gives me a present she's made, a shirt with "J.D. Daniels: Prizewinning Songwriter" embroidered on the front pocket. I know I'll never wear it to school, but I like the way it looks, and I thank her. I wrap it up again, carefully, and keep it on my lap as we bounce our way home over dusty roads.

When I get back to our house, nothing's changed. My momma won't speak to me much. Meals are awfully quiet. She buys new coffee cups, the same as the old ones. They start playing my song on WKNS, and mail me five of the records. Some of the kids at school tell me they heard my song and say they liked it. But I don't turn the radio at home to WKNS because I'm afraid if my mother hears what I said on the radio, it'll make things worse.

Two days later, I come home from school, and there's my daddy sitting on the front porch. He stands as I come up toward the house. I squint against the sun like I can't make out who he is.

"Jennifer, is that you?" he says, and before I can nod or shake my head, he picks me up and hugs me tight. I hold myself stiff.

"It's me, baby, it's your daddy," he says and puts

me down. I look at him real hard, this being the first chance I've had in a number of years, but I don't say anything. I don't know what to say.

"I heard your song on the radio," he says. "That's the saddest song I've ever heard. It touched my heart and showed me how I done wrong by your momma. I've come back to the both of you, and you can take that coffee cup out of the cupboard, wash it out, and fill it up again for me."

That's a quote from the song, but it sounds different coming from him.

"You'll have to wait out here till Momma comes home," I tell him and his face falls, but then he smiles even bigger.

"Tell you what I'm gonna do," he says, leaning forward and whispering like we were spies in a movie. "I'm gonna buy your momma some flowers. I'll be back in half an hour."

My momma comes home before the dust from his wheels has settled. She sits down at the kitchen table and I pour her a cup of the coffee I have waiting. I don't know how to say what's happened. I study on ways to do it. She leans back in her chair and puts her feet up, kicking her shoes clear across the room. She's still not talking to me much.

He knocks before I get the chance. I follow her to the front door, and there he is on his knees, with a big bunch of red roses. He says, "Candy honey, I've come back to you."

She stares down at him through the wire squares of the screen. I don't remember his shirt so white, his blue eyes shining, his hair slicked back and shiny. The roses are full open, petals sagging in the heat, sending up

a sweet sad smell.

"Jennifer's song on the radio touched my heart and made me see how I done wrong by you and her." He smiles up at her. His hair on top is just about gone, and the sky gleams between the strands in the sunlight. He rocks a little, as though the wood under his knees was paining him.

"Does Amanda know you're here?" she asks.

"Amanda and I, we're past history," he says. He smooths his hand through the air. "Water under the bridge."

She steps back and looks over at me. I shrug, trying to say this wasn't what I wrote the song for. I wrote it for the sake of writing a song, not so he'd hear it. She shrugs back. He kneels outside in silence, watching us.

My momma looks uncertain at first, but the edges of her mouth quirk up a touch. She turns around, opens the door of the china cupboard, and takes the coffee cup, that goddamned coffee cup, out. I hold my breath.

"I believe you left this last time you were here," she says as politely as if she were on a commercial, and opens the door enough to hold out the cup. He takes it with a funny grin on his face and starts to speak. My momma closes the door on him and goes back into the kitchen. I follow her. She sits down at the table and adds more coffee to her cup to warm it up. A car door slams outside.

"J.D. honey," she says to me. "Go get your guitar and play that song for me. I believe I'm feeling more reconciled to it."

A Definition for Rape- 1993

Corina Tamalpias

We didn't call it that then.

Someone,

attractive, tall,

says

"Poetry--my place."

* * *

Fat girl of eighteen

without experience, flutter,

the swelling hope of romance,

flood of flowering words.

* * *

Not this time.

Just a few short stanzas,

then the offer: pot,

a fumbled kiss,

the groping, bleeding,

no waves breaking on a thundered shore,

a much too solid hand to neck.

The bubble breaks.

* * *

We didn't call it that though.
Instead of dinner
it was threats and beatings,
each unused orifice broken into,
left with bruises,
the neating-up after
as though cleaning off a table
sullied with crumbs,
not bones and serum.

* * *

You know the word just wasn't clear:
Memory fogged over
from the trick and tortures,
remorseless taking of innocence and hope,
The uncle, baby-sitter, family friend,
handsome youth, brutal maniac,
then sadly--husband, too many and too often.

* * *

No one called it that
until the cracks opened up,
and small slimy things crawled out over my lips,
the ugly force of words of truth
shadowed by harsh eyes,

when last
the larvae molted into graceful form,
broke free from the shells and fur
producing winged light.
Those bruised choked lips formed perfect round
words:
“No, NO, **NO!**”
and finally quiet
into which bright waters clean the wound.

Motherhood- 1995*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 breakfast 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 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

The Dream- 1996

Heidi Miller

A cool October day,
a breeze drifts across my face, the sun beats down,
snow flurries spit out of the sky.
My family is eating dinner on her coffin.
“Please pass me the salt and pepper” mama prompts.
A beautiful young lady comes to life,
a smile leaps to her innocent lips and her powdered sugar
blue
eyes jump open.
Her dark brown grassy hair ripples,
Her rose petal cheeks accent the radiance
of her milky skin as she rises.
Gliding toward me, Closer, Closer--
She becomes a seasoned woman with salt in her hair,
empty eyes, pale cheeks, mossy lips.
She is glued to the bed.
Reeking of rawness, soreness, oldness--
Visiting hours dim the flickering fluorescent lights,
Blink twice for yes,
Blink once for no,
Alphabet calculator communication, morphine junky.
Tears, Tears run down the hallway.

Screams talk to me and maybe others,
No real words, just letters in the air.
Transitions break life.
A scent of ammonia waffles up my nose,
Shadows curl in corners,
The support railing is coiling like a snake,
My toes wrinkle like a ninety-year-old woman's skin.
Up to my waist now,
Up, Up- Over my Head,
My ears are plugged, salt stings my eyes.
A wheel chair, filled by an old man paralyzed.
He gurgles, Glugg-Glugg,
Bubbles lift from his slanted mouth.
Memories stain the blanket of roses,
Miss Ethel Mick
Mrs. Jack Jacobs
Mrs. Sherman Smalley
Mrs. Jim Rich
Labeled the tomb stone,
A commercial break,
The main entree is being served.
My brother asks "Is Grandma happy now?"

Assemble My Words- 1996

Gregory D. Wilcox

I gather my words carefully
Sometimes it takes too long
By the time they reach fruition
To speak them sounds so wrong

They've tumbled dry for hours now
They're neat and clean and pressed
And if by chance I wear them out
My friends are not impressed

They see only the frilly lace
And not the complex weave
Complexity so astounding
Their minds cannot perceive

Some disassembly required
My metaphors too much
I'm left behind to fend alone
I've stumbled o'er much crutch

"Speak plain my friend" they say to me
"Your jabber drives us nuts"
"You go too deep in complex thought"
"Speak plain you stupid yutz."

Shadowdancing- 1996

Alexis Mitchell

Black gloved hand takes my own.
Arms encircle body whole. I lose
My moment in the world as the
Music stirs my soul.

I dance to the chorus of the
Wind, as stars watch in delight.
I waltz with my captor partner.
We waltz throughout the night.

Into smoke gray eyes I peer,
Unable to break away. Our
Heartbeats keep the rhythm, as
We Dance 'til the break of day.

I think not of anything, but
Dancing in the dark. My heart
Feels not the world's distress-
Its realities I do not hark.

In this moor of shadows, as I
Dance, I know I'm free.

And I silently thank my captor
For doing this to me.

I wake. I cry. I tremble
From this dream I'll have no
More. But as I look around my
Room, I find a black glove on
The floor.

mother-of-pearl- 1996*Karen Stoner*

In her white kitchen Grandma is
spreading bread with butter and I
reach out from my time to ask
why she's untouchably in mine
 her pearly hair mussed
 her stockings rolled and banded
 but we don't talk we just
 pass from her porcelain room
till her garden holds an abalone throne
with lanterns casting iridescence on us
and on its shell and alabaster walls while
sudden nakedness is nothing as we
buoy toward those gathered by a crystal cove
 cooled by a waterfall whose wave
 shapes a dancing shimmer and
 my gaze goes down but
 Grandma's calmly glistens back.

Put-In-Bay - 1996*Katharine Studer*

We named it our island,
Three months, sand in our hair.
Suffering through sleepless nights,
burning backs and peeling shoulders.
Fifteen, "Let's live" you said
so we served hash by day
at that small coffee house
on the corner, watching
boats sail in with men
who smelled like work and fish.
We watched the women with red lips
until we learned to charm
fisherman with painted smiles
that earned us a fresh dollar,
sometimes two for a pinch.
"Good girls don't allow pinches"
you said, but we decided
we were not going to be
good that day. We learned
to charm our way

through that summer of eighty-two,
we mastered the plan,
trading in our white dresses
for menstrual red bikinis
that taught us how to be
women in just a day.

A Morning In This Life Of Mine-1996

Laura Smith

A perky cheerleader invades my dreams
droning on about the traffic in Columbus
or the funny thing the latest heartthrob
said at the Oscars, Grammys or
some such far away place I could care
less about. How about some advice on how
to get out of bed in a decent mood or
what to do about the laundry that's going
to devour me. Her voice annoys me and
just before I yank the radio out of its nest
among the mismatched earrings and old pay stubs
reality checks in and I gently caress the top,
teasing it into nine more minutes of silence.
Knowing this is just going to set me up for
frustration and madness, a fitful lull settles over
me and at this moment I can truly believe in
world peace and Santa Claus. Until the screaming
begins. Wailing over who's wearing whose jeans
and what happened to the homework. The world
might have ended by the sounds blaring from

our cramped corner of home. The cat rubs against me as penance for all the wrongs. The gerbils groom with the intensity of young lovers as I watch jealously wondering what exactly happened here. A tiny pink house stands aching from neglect. The computer clicking furiously out of sync, while a loud barking cough from the television interrupts my thoughts. Tiny life preservers float in a sea of milk. Hedgehogs and two tailed foxes outwit the nemesis once again, and the world is safe from evil one more day. The stomp and shuffle begins like a junior high school dance. Dust bunnies tangle under the couch and cards teeter on the edge. Only the photographs testify to our happiness.

The Guinea Pig Roundup- 1996

Laura Smith

She tries to gather up pygmy deities,
Apollo, Zeus and Orion.
They don't cooperate,
running for the bushes and the drain pipe
instead. Carrots won't budge them.
Hands on hips, she tries reason.
She doesn't understand reluctance,
Language she can't decode, even with
the ring from Captain Crunch. They dig in,
their toenails grate against plastic. Squeaks
and scratches answer silence. Leave them alone
and they'll come home. But they have no tails.
How do I make them listen,
Come in from the cold, avoid the cat?
Desperate and out of breath, she seeks
mother, who should hold the key, but
she has never rounded up
her own charges.

The Flower Gag - 1996

Laura Smith

A woman wakes up one morning next to a clown. It must be her husband because he has the same hands, crooked little finger, tiny callus rough on her cheek, and thin gold band. The eyes vaguely familiar with golden flecks pasted to the backdrop of night, it's hard to tell sometimes with all the makeup. Now he sleeps with those big shoes on. Some days he stays in bed all day, making a tent for the cat. When the cat runs away, he polishes that big red nose. Sometimes he refuses to speak, honking a bike horn instead. She takes lessons to learn his new language. One honk for "no," two for "yes," three for "come sit by my side." She waits patiently for three honks. He insists on only coconut cream pie for dinner, so she buys a new cookbook. He traded in their station wagon for a miniature car, little people pile out leaving sawdust and dirty dishes everywhere. She doesn't match socks anymore because he wears them mismatched with the big tie and polka dot pants. Still, certain things never bothered her; the grease paint on the pillowcases, the whoopee cushions on the chairs, even an occasional pie in the face or a smell-the-pretty-flower gag. Her smile is painted on, and no amount of soap will change that.

Waiting- 1996

Tara Guenther-Wertz

As the woman sat on the patio of the little cafe her thoughts were wandering. They always seemed to do that lately, especially when she was waiting.

On the surface, the woman looked picture perfect. Her blonde hair was perfectly styled, she was classily dressed, and her nails were freshly manicured. Her face held a cool and neutral expression which gave her the appearance of being totally at ease, even in the heat the day had created. But appearances can be deceiving.

'At least it's a nice day,' she said quietly to herself as she glanced at her watch. The sun was shining brightly and there were only a few clouds in the sky. The only coolness existed where the table top umbrellas created shadows. She had her's removed when she first arrived though, preferring to feel the warmth the sun gave her.

To pass the time and to control her mind's wanderings she looked out to the walkway outside the patio cafe. The warmth of the day had brought many people outdoors; couples enjoying the day together, people feeling the need to exercise, and mothers shopping with their children.

She remembered those trips with her own mother when she was a child, especially the excitement of feeling 'grown up' when she was allowed to pick out her own things without getting her mother's approval, but all the same, still hoping for it. Her mother had always wanted so much for her. She remembered her mother telling her when she first became pregnant that she had read some-

where that the baby could hear outside the womb, and that things you read to a child could affect the way he or she developed. So, when her mother found out she was pregnant with a girl she made sure she read classics by great women writers, hoping that her daughter would be independent like them and always follow her dreams.

Her mother hadn't been the only one to encourage her as a child. Her father had contributed too. Where her mother encouraged her intellect, her father had encouraged her confidence. Even though to him she had been his 'little girl,' he always praised her when she kept up with her older brothers and told her to never let anyone tell her that she couldn't do something. At some point she had lost those lessons though, and she was afraid if her parents could see her now they would be disappointed.

The waiter interrupted her thoughts when he came over to ask her if she wanted anything. '*God yes I want something*,' she wanted to say, '*I want a life, I want to live!*' But instead she just ordered a white wine spritzer.

As she let the bubbly drink slide down her throat she continued to think back on her life, this time on her high school years. There she had discovered her true passion: writing. It had begun with a few poems, and surged ahead when her English teachers had praised the talent she had for words. From then on she wrote constantly- poetry, short stories, essays- whatever came into her mind she would put into words. She had imagined herself one day being a great writer, creating the next classic. Remembering the thrill of seeing her words on page brought a sad smile to the woman's lips. A smile which quickly vanished when she remembered she no longer felt that excitement.

Remembering those happy years she couldn't help but wonder what had happened to that idealistic girl who thought she had the world at her fingertips. She had gone to college, pursued an English degree with a passion, leaving little time for anything but homework and writing, in hopes of honing her writing skills. It was her senior year and she was getting so close to accomplishing her goals. She was editor of the school paper, and had some short stories that showed real promise of being published. She could almost feel the world in the palm of her hands.

She met him at a party and he swept her off her feet. Looking back she realized he was the typical cliché. He was handsome, rich, and said all the right things.

They got married right after graduation. He went to work at the family business, and she went to work at being the perfect wife. At first, she had thought that she could do both, write and be the charming socialite wife. But the roles just wouldn't mesh together, and when she looked in the mirror she saw the writer in her fading away. And gradually, the face in the mirror was no longer the woman she had once known herself to be, but a woman someone else had created.

After once again looking at her watch in frustration, the woman slipped a small mirror out of her purse and looked at the woman that she was. As she looked, a little voice inside of her cried out *'NO! This can't be me! This can't be my life! I want more!'* The voice faded away though when a shadow loomed over her and quickly kissed her cheek, apologizing for being late.

Gray

Kate Hageman

Gray

Purity with a mixture of hatred

So calm, yet deathly

Two colors so different

but still joined together-

A combination that fills us all.

A dark black rose

with puffy white clouds.

Who would think of joining

two such things?

1996 High School Poetry Contest

First Place Winner

My Uphill Climb

Abi Fogt

I see myself in the past
Looking back through lost time
Seeing everything I thought would last

Losing my grip on what I've grasped
As if keeping it would be a crime
I see myself in the past

The changes all came with one, big blast
Not consistent like the church bells chime
Seeing everything I thought would last

The stars have shone, the lights have flashed
As a butterfly cocoons to enter its prime
I see myself in the past

The happiness ended when my soul crashed
And I've used it in my rhyme
I see myself in the past
Seeing everything I thought would last

**1996 High School Poetry Contest,
Second Place Winner**

Interned Within Me

John Connolly

On the banks of the Shannon
Not far from the mill,
Down past Ballinasloe
And over a hill.

On the banks of the Shannon
On a cool rainy day,
In the back of a pasture
The seven maidens will sway.

Down in 'ol Moystown
Where lost souls are now found,
there lies my heart
Where memories abound.

Down in 'ol Moystown
'Neath tall withered grass,
Lie the bones of my fathers
Whose memories will last.

On the banks of the Shannon
Not far from the mill
Down past Ballinasloe
My ancestors lie still.

**1996 High School Poetry Contest,
Third Place Winner**

Cops and Robbers

Stephen Fannin

The year I turned ten
I became the sheriff of my back yard.
And my best friend Larry began a lifetime of crime.

I was a lot of fun keeping "law and order" between
our back yards.
Stopping only for lunch, I guarded the precious jewels
in the dog house,
While Larry schemed to steal them.

At dinner my badge would come off;
Larry unmasked himself too.
For the time being, I let him escape.
Until tomorrow when we would start all over again...

**1996 High School Poetry Contest,
Fourth Place Winner**

Space Explorer

Timothy Baker

I was new, a little boy.
I threw a chair over on its posterior.
I had a ruler for my steering stick.
I was a space explorer!
My parents laughed.

I ambled around the lustrous planet, Mars.
I felt the spongy soil.
I breathed in the red air.
I was a space explorer!
My parents laughed.

I was tired and hungry.
I didn't want to see aliens.
I wanted to return home.
I didn't want to be a space explorer!
My parents smiled and welcomed me back.

**1996 High School Poetry Contest
Fifth Place Winner**

Reality of Love

Shonda Dodds

Love is the strangest thing.
The feeling is the same as walking
Through a meadow one morning
In the spring.

The dew drops against your legs so bare,
The sunshine gleaming on your hair,
The pleasant sounds from everywhere,
Something sweet is in the air,
They seem to know that you are there.

Then reality plays a dirty trick.
It hits you in the head with its brick.
Depression next will come on thick.
Your heartache clings just like a tick.
Soon you will start to feel sick.

Yet your feelings seem to show,
Everywhere that you can go.
You cannot have him, but still you know--
The bonds of love tied in a bow,
Will never let this prisoner go.

1996 High School Poetry Contest,
Honorable Mention

About the authors...

According to **Heidi Miller**, “ ‘The Dream’ is my favorite poem that I have ever written. I feel that my writing has developed immensely through the guidance of the English Department of the Ohio State University at Marion.”

Alexis Mitchell is a sophomore at Ohio State at Marion, still wondering “why I decided to take three English classes and French in one quarter.” A member of the *Cornfield* staff and Undergraduate Student Government, Alexis credits being a consummate dreamer with helping her write her poetry.

Laura Smith is a part-time student at OSUM, trying to decide if she really is an English major. This is her second appearance in *The Cornfield Review*. She gives “special thanks to the poets from English 666 for all their good advice.”

Karen Stoner knows what it is like to be an OSU student... she began attending in 1977! This licensed pastor, who expects to “actually graduate in the near future,” has a husband and two kids, and enjoys “many creative outlets including writing, Internet communication, movies, travel, and cooking.”

Tara Guenther-Wertz is a senior English major at OSU. When not chanting, “Two more quarters! Two more quarters!” Tara divides her time between working on *Cornfield* and writing articles for a travel magazine.

John M. Bennett holds a Ph.D. in Latin American Literature and was the head of the Luna Bisonte Prods. of Columbus when his work was published in *Cornfield*.

Patricia Sierra published her stories "How Female am I" and "Mothers and Daughters" in the 1978 edition of *Cornfield*. She is formerly of Marion, and is a free-lance writer in the Toledo area. These stories were awarded the first prize in the 1977 OSU Marion Literary Awards Competition.

Hale Chatfield was an associate professor of English and Poet-in-Residence at Hiram College when his work was published in *Cornfield*. He is the founder of *The Hiram Poetry Review*.

Grace Butcher was an Assistant professor of English at the time her work was published.

Scott Cairns had "My Wife Jumps Crazy", 1981, is from Tacoma, Washington, and was a student in the MFA program at Bowling Green State University at the time of publication.

George Looney originally published "Missing" in the Chester H. Jones Foundation's National Poetry Competition Winners in 1983 before being published in *Cornfield*. At the time of publication, he was the poetry editor of *Mid-American Review*, and was completing his MFA in Creative Writing from Bowling Green.

Warren Hall conceived his poem “Stones Dancing” as he walked home one day. At the time the poem was published in the 1989 edition of *Cornfield*, he was living in Shaker Heights and teaching at Lural School.

Marcia Dickson lives, writes, teaches composition, and does the work of scholarship in Marion, Ohio. She acts as an Associate Professor of English at OSU-Marion, where she tells us “No one has as yet caught on to the ruse.”

Sandra Kolankowicz is a short-story writer.

Mary Crowe was a member of the English Department at Colorado State University at the time her poem was published.

Catherine Francis was living, teaching, and writing in Baltimore, Maryland when “The Coffee Cup Song” was published in *Cornfield*.

David Citino is a professor of creative writing and literature at The Ohio State University. An established poet, he is the founding editor of *The Cornfield Review*, and he continues to have his works published.

In our second annual poetry competition, we had a very surprising and unique result. All of the students who placed first through fifth in this year's competition were from English teacher Mrs. Gansheimer's tenth grade class at Marysville High School, with the honorable mention winner coming from Benjamin Logan High School. Our congratulations to all of the winners and our thanks to all who participated.

Katie Hagemen, is now a junior who is extremely anxious to attend a four year college. She juggles trying to find time to search for a school and a major with playing tennis year round and working at a 60's style fountain and pharmacy.

Abbi Fogt, is now a junior at Marysville High School.

John Connelly credits eighth grade teacher, Mrs. Conklin with helping in his early writing efforts. He is a junior and enjoys playing soccer when not writing.

Stephen Fannin, has enjoyed writing poetry from an early age. Now a junior at the high school and planning on going on to college, majoring in Musical Education, Stephen says that his poem stems from childhood memories with his best friend, Larry.

Timothy Baker began writing poetry as an assignment for his English class ("I passed the class!"). Now a junior, Timothy spends his spare time riding four wheelers and playing basketball, baseball, and football.

Shonda Dodds, is currently attending Benjamin Logan High School after going to North Union for 9 years. Writing is a hobby for her and she sits down whenever she gets a thought to write. Though she does enjoy writing, her main passion is for music and singing.

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15th Anniversary Cornfield Review

John M. Bennet
Wayne Dodd
Patricia Sierra
Hale Chatfield
Grace Butcher
Emilie Glen
Scott Cairns
Deborah Burnham
George Looney
Warren Hall
Marcia Dickson
Sandra Kolankiewicz
Mary Crowe
Corina Tamalpias
Laura Smith
Heidi Miller
Gregory Wilcox
Alexis Mitchell
Karen Stoner
Katharine Studer
David Citino

Fiction

Shawn Miller
Patricia Sierra
Catherine Francis
Tara Guenther-Wertz

Cover Art

Todd DeVries

Cornfield Review