COTTONWOOD REVIEW

NO. 18

COTTONWOOD REVIEW

NO. 18

EDITORS	Editor in Chief:	Mike Smetzer
	Poetry:	Robert Greene, David Alleyne, Barbara Ballard, Susan Brower, Donna Baier, Alan Howard
	Fiction:	Jim Carothers, Tom Russell, John Kessel, Bill Oliver, Phil Wagner, Brent Schlender
	Photography:	Larry Schwarm
	Advisory:	Richard Colyer

Cottonwood Review is a national literary magazine with its home at the University of Kansas. Our goal is to make national poetry, fiction, and photography available to readers in our area of the country and, at the same time, to make the best writing and photography in our area available to a national audience.

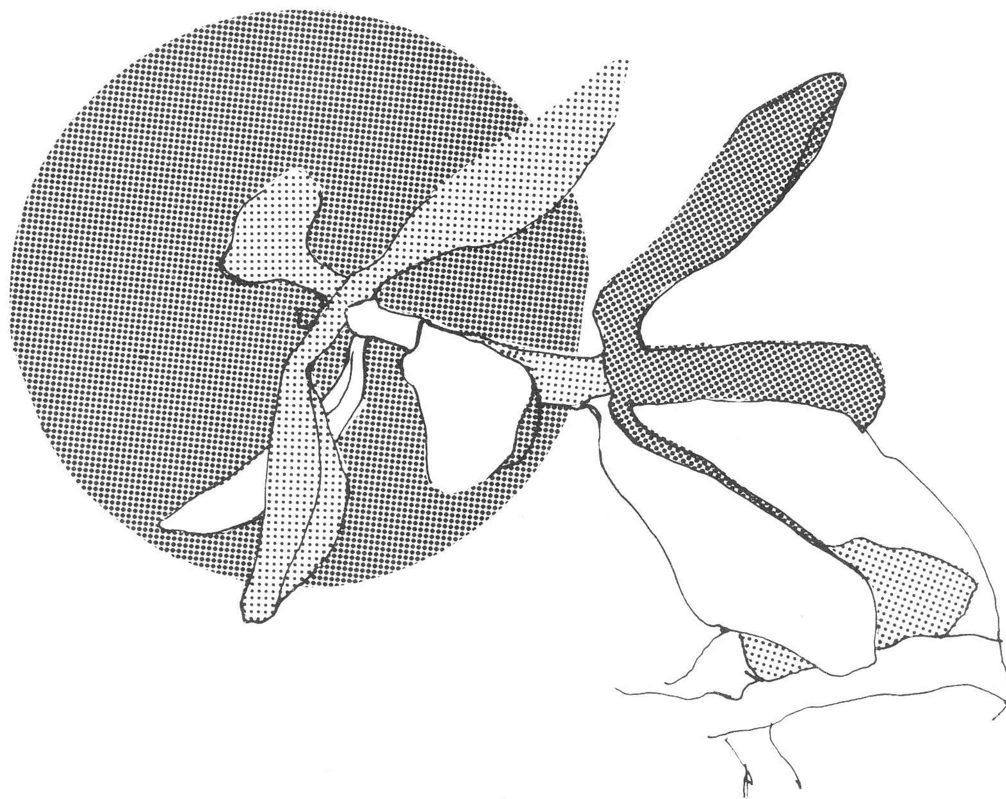
Since Cottonwood Review has no regular source of funding, we depend heavily on the interest and support of our subscribers. We have recently received the additional support of grants from the University of Kansas and the Coordinating Council of Literary Magazines. Cottonwood Review is a member of COSMEP.

Cottonwood Review generally appears twice yearly. Subscriptions are $4.25 for two issues of the magazine plus the issues of our irregular tabloid *Open House* and any chapbooks published during the period. Each issue of *Cottonwood Review* includes a featured poet from the Kansas Midwest and reviews of books published by writers living in or writing about the Kansas Midwest.

We welcome submissions of poetry, fiction, graphics, and photography, both from local and national writers and artists. Poetry submissions should generally be limited to the five best. Please include a stamped, self-addressed envelope for return. Our address is

Cottonwood Review
Box J, Kansas Union
University of Kansas
Lawrence, Kansas 66045

Copyright © 1976 by Cottonwood Review



POETRY	Dianne Hueter	5
	Danny L. Rendleman	6, 7
	Ray Cosseboom	10
	Jonathan Katz	11
	Pattiann Rogers	12
	Michael Smetzer	28
	Andrew Hudgins	29
	Toni O. Zimmerman	30
	G. E. Murray	32
	David Jaffin	33
	Judith Thompson	34
	L. H. Butrick	35
	Nadine Estroff	36, 37
	Wladyslaw Cieszynski	38
	Nicholas Christopher	39
	M. Truman Cooper	74
	Lisa Bitel	75
	Jnana-Devanandashram	76
	Jeanice Dagher	77
FEATURED POET	Harley Elliott	60
TRANSLATION	Kim Chi-ha, trans. David McCann	70
	Bartolo Cattafi, trans. Ruth Feldman and Brian Swann	72
	Antonio Machado, trans. Justin Vitiello	73
INTERVIEW	Robert Kelly, by John Nelson	40
NARRATIVE	Marne Marcus	57
FICTION	G. Janicke	13
	Tom Russell	78
PHOTOGRAPHY	Earl Iversen	front cover, 50, 51
	Roger Pfingston	49
	Terry Evans	52, 53
	Tom Tarnowski	54, 55
	Larry Schwarm	56
	Maude Gridley	back cover
DRAWINGS	Lois Greene	2, 4, 9, 31
	Kathryn Ekstrom	39, 102
REVIEWS	Mike Smetzer	67
	Notes on Contributors	103

Diane Hueter

RITUAL AND CHANT

As he chops
He stops now and then
To hold the wood and smell it
To count the rings
Picking wet years from dry
He likes the fine bright yellow
Of hedgewood
And all the popping it makes
While burning

Bones of fingers
Bones of toes
Suck them out
Heave them out like kindling for a fire
The legs the arms the skull
They burn all night
Nothing to stop our loving
Nothing to break our sleep

Danny L. Rendleman

THE DEATH OF THE TERRARIUM

Something unnatural
here

you can't
spell it

the air ain't
in
it

the tiny goat-breath
maiden
fondled by

thirty petticoats
muslin
and a blue staff

is not
having any
of this porcelain
within glass
shit

and anyway
ferns

are for eating
or pissing on
not art

SAVOR

1 Something you once
kept bound
in twine and wrapping paper

now sings outside,
an electric cat
in the rain.

Or is it not rain?
The neighbor again
watering the grass all the night

—it must be four feet high
—and no crickets.
How strange!

Every night they sang in waves,
wavering
layer on layer. . .

And now nothing,
although summer
has not ended quite.

The air is warm.
Something else sings
Or is it rain?

2 I pull the poor lax
covers over my belly

—-on the underside
of clouds

the city glows like gold,
like half-heard laughter.

3 As pink and blonde
and the same

as these flowers
on my wallpaper—

the water where
it edges slowly

into the lake
shuffles in yellow foam—

you the least worst
of a dream cannot say no.

How casually ten fingers
know the west from east

and build ships from debris.

4 You are somehow
always barefoot
and in the middle of the lawn

in a short floral dress
in short flowers—
clover

that is best cut
when the heavy purple
balls curve to earth.

The traffic down the hill
goes on all night,
one wailing city after another

out of earshot,
inside the square Mack trucks
every man

thinks: condoms,
flash, lawns, flash,
my hand under round thighs,

flash, the girder motor
going round as,
hot as time.

You don't rub my ass anymore.

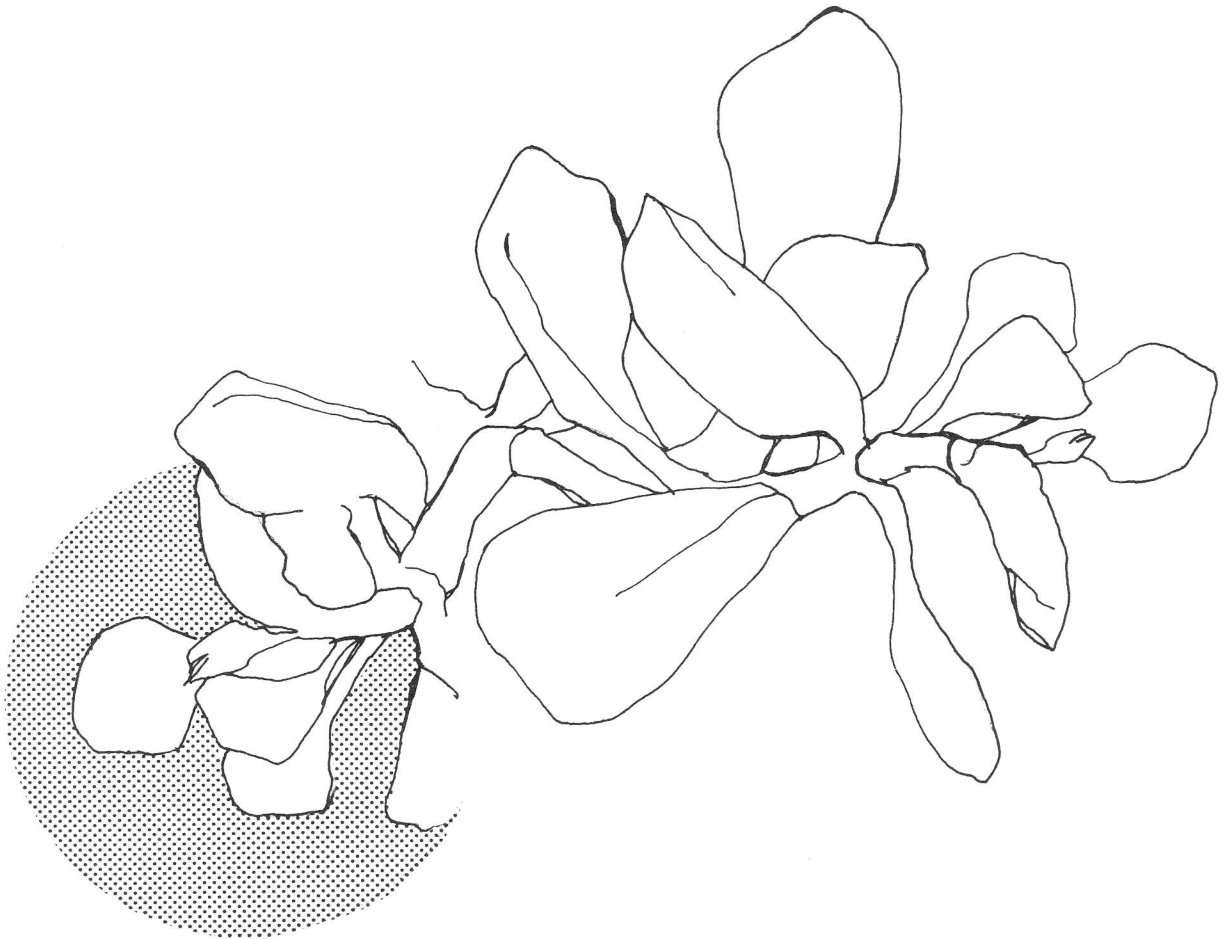
5 You are the tiny
brown-edged leaves
over and over

on the near wall,
from the First War,
matched almost perfectly

at each peeling seam.
Intrusion, at last,
of the few crickets,

wrenching their slim legs
in sorrow and want,
over and over,

while the water falling
talks to itself,
laps the cool air the night long.



Ray Cosseboom

AN UNHITCHED WISH

When I walked down Pioneer Avenue this morning, I saw a pad-locked door unlocked.

There is a pioneer in everything unlocked. It begins like a covered-wagon and arrives as a new idea.

Unlocked finally, this idea went so far West it found me one Saturday in the sun. Some unhitched wish walked with it.

Saturday from that time on always remained unlocked. I could walk in and choose any way I wanted to arrive. Ideas became avenues, tiny places left partly open.

I was beginning to push as far West as Saturday can: an unhitched wish.

THIS NEW WOMAN

This New Woman and I sat on Fort Sewall for hours in a howling rain storm once, and watched lightning bouncing off the water between Marblehead and Glouchester, and it seemed Charles Olson was bobbing out there, and wild lilac smells came through the air as if they were purple and white raindrops blossoming among the waves.

That night was so much a part of This New Woman then the salt air entered her dreams, the storm flag turned into a person, and tiny gray ghosts kept bobbing at the end of ropes lobster boats were tied up to the wharf to.

Even the buoys grew between the cracks in the sidewalks, and hollyhocks swayed as they waved to the tourists. An iris had a sailboat in it.

And after that storm for days This New Woman and I saw the ivy growing along the walks in a new way, bicycles on our walks reseeded, played with children, and disappeared near Selman Street.

And everything we did after that had a way of going out with the tide, and when it came in the lightning storm did, too, and This New Woman smiled, and mentioned Charles Olson again.

Jonathan Katz

ELVIS SERENADES DYING GIRL

The terminal nature of her disease proved
no impediment. She was escorted backstage
at intermission of the Presley show and to
a trailer parked just outside Wednesday night.
Her mother, eyes burning bright with emotion,
lifted her inside the trailer and there
was Presley, described by the mother
as the girl's favorite singer. He said,
"Hello, sweetheart. What's your name?"

YOU DON'T WANT TO WHEN WE MEET AGAIN

In silent, empty shoes the nights come running up.
We used to walk along the river counting in the current
and the dark sky innumerable lights by which you see each other
These quiver and stick now in the pin-cushions you are
drawing from the back of a musty cupboard we discover.
We feel through our feet the scurrying of what we have
disturbed and we are disgusted at the quick, sharp teeth
we know are crawling in the walls. Our many matches
are streaming along cracks in the window panes as we find
the old radio cabinet with the sun and the moon, their faces
painted on, a smile and a frown. As my hand comes near
its smooth mahogany we hear the static of all the programs
sitting inside. A glistening spider web flickers near
the on-off knob. When I brush that away boards groan in rooms
we cannot see. Our matches are running out. When at last
I turn the radio on, the door crashes open against the wall,
the wind rushes in like crooked old peasants with raised sticks
and beats out the light.

Pattiann Rogers

THUMB

The thumb was crucial--
Not the knuckles,
Calloused joints scraping rough ground,
Or the mossy brows hanging like ledges
Over cavernous eyes,
The protruding teeth, flat forehead;
Not the chance children born dead,
Wet lumps twisted like cypress
Over and over;
Or the weather,
Stripped trunks and withered leaves,
Cold winds around shallow niches
In cliffs facing south,
Rains stringing icicles through leaking trees.

These were mere incidents--
The stumble alone in the grass,
Hooves finding the skull,
Thin shell splitting under rock;
The cruel hook of the horn
Ripping occasionally
Spilling red centers in dry fields.

Even raw blood eaten quickly on cold rocks
Was endured
And fear like a single white mouth sucking.

But the short thumb was crucial,
Dwarfed claw
Lying flat against the palm,
Isolated,
A budless stump stopping
At the edge of the wrist
Far from the fingers.

G. Janicke

SILENT CHILDREN

The landscape, a shimmering blur of hills and honeycolored prairies, swept past us; the gravel road snarled and popped beneath the racing slash of auto tires. I sat up front, between my father who was driving and grandmother, who sat holding a stale graham cracker in her hand. The wind through the open window blew frizzy grey hairs across her face, but the old woman didn't seem to care. She slept, head tilted back.

Joanie was in the middle seat quietly counting telephone poles as they flashed by, watching the strands of cable as they slid past in long concave arcs, her voice marking time to the growling cloud of gravel dust. She was angry with Russell for awakening her at four in the morning. He had pushed the girl through the house, supporting her thin, dazed body by the arms, and carried her outside and into the station wagon where Joanie had been sleeping stretched out across the seat until the car jerked to avoid an accident. Since then she had been doing spiteful things, singing in grandmother's ears, asking Russell how many miles we had to go to the airport. Sometimes she moaned as if kicked in the stomach.

Chubbs sat peacefully, or was more likely resigned to being trapped in a cardboard box in the back seat. He could barely raise his head up over the edge to see out. No one really knew what went on in his mind: Chubbs was mute. There was no difference between the child hurting with pain or laughing—his eyes looked big and watery green, his mouth would open wide but emit only a weak groan. Russell had put him in a box to keep my brother from crawling around and injuring himself.

At home the child had once sat unnoticed in a cupboard under the kitchen sink for hours until Joanie heard strange sounds like an injured puppy and found him. Russell picked him up and shook Chubbs, to drive some sense into him, to make the boy cry. Father cursed and shouted, said he hated the baby. I did, too. I wanted Chubbs to scream, make some kind of noise, learn how to help himself. Joanie said it was like owning a dog—all he did was eat and make a mess. Once, I was tempted to put a lit match to his fingers and see what would happen—but Chubbs, when he wasn't asleep or involved with his toes or a bag of cat's eye marbles, looked sad: his flat forehead pinched and wrinkled, mouth slightly opened and his tongue resting on the lower lip, chin shiny with drool, eyes squinting, as if afraid that I only wanted to hurt him. Several times I ran tests: threw rubber balls at Chubbs, popped paper bags, dragged him across the front room by his legs, but either he smiled in an ugly, twisted way or gave that pathetic look. Joanie tried a more sane approach with picture books and crayons; she used the glass beads of a broken necklace for counting, but Chubbs would fall on his back, spit, or stare at his feet.

Particles of dust came floating through the car window and stung my eyes. Joanie pushed hair from her face and talked at Russell.

"The baby's smothering in that box."

"No, he's safe back there."

"Chuckie, it's bad for him."

"He'll be all right," I agreed.

Russell was not patient. When Ruth, our mother, was pregnant with Chubbs, her mother had moved in to help the daughter care for us, feed us. Ruth died in childbirth after a horrible, pained pregnancy. The family held together well, we didn't know of any dangers and were told Ruth was on vacation and were too excited about the new baby. Russell announced at supper one night that mother was dead, some foolish euphemism that she had gone on a long holiday. I cried because grandmother did, but the sad feeling, as if I had seen Chubbs fall from a table or Joanie with a deep cut in her leg, was confined to the brief, frail shell of my attention and memory. Joanie kept asking when mother would return, but Russell was silent; grandmother looked down at her plate and mumbled something about the 'mother of God'; the baby sat and smeared the orange pulp of crushed carrots on his face.

After a few days we recovered, or forgot about Ruth: it was difficult to remember someone who was away at a factory all day, whose hazy appearance at night before sleep effected slight friendships, nothing else. Not that we were drawn to grandmother, or Russell. Father's business in town, industrial light fixtures, had gone under once; his time was enmeshed with doubting creditors and legal documents to remortgage the house. His crude talent for business, the fragmented knowledge of handling money, the urgings fostered by his successful brothers or by an insistant spark of wasted hope within him drove Russell to fail and muddle through consecutive failures. But somehow we always ate well; had nice clothes; slept in comfortable rooms. Russell's weak attempts at management were as remote from us as Ruth's 'vacation': our lives were confined to the glowing ball of Salda Creek, the town surrounding our young energies. The mysteries of an old, abandoned Baptist church: one small room of dust-covered pews, sheets of music scattered about as if the people had suddenly raced outside, the rotted, useless piano. A wet smell of decaying wood. We explored the school for runaway girls and boys, peeked through dirt-crusted windows in curious pursuit of the rumors that nuns tortured the children in the basement---we saw filmy grey spider webs that trapped the morning sunlight, but nothing else.

Ran experiments on Chubbs: pulling his tongue, moving his lips with our fingers.

Or we simply watched the woman next door lie in the hot sun and suck on peaches.

Grandmother called out 'Ave Maria' as we sped past the state hospital, a jumbled array of red brick buildings and grey barracks, out

in the woods and surrounded with barbed wire, where old women and men wandered aimlessly, ghostlike.

"Amen," Joanie concluded with a smile. "You're not going there, for sure!"

Chubbs's tiny fist banged at the cardboard. I turned to look, but nothing seemed wrong.

It wasn't until grandmother got sick that the family had started to come apart. While Ruth was alive, grandmother had been quietly earnest about tending to our needs; acted the same toward us as chairs, tables, the desk, we were parts of the house—when Joanie skinned her knee, the woman inspected the cut, washed it, bandaged the wound, but never cheered her up or offered a word of caution. When Ruth died, grandmother's numb disposition failed in an angry, bitter light, her measured movements now impassioned gestures of the arms, hands. If any of us remotely blocked her passage into another room, she would pinch our arms, slap at our heads. She especially hated Chubbs: his tiny body, the quiet little face must have frightened her—he had killed her daughter, she must have thought that. When Joanie and I approached Russell about her, he responded in a vacant, mysterious way, saying grandmother's crippled old mind, what was left of it, had been prepared to die—but a sudden pain of heart, the loss of her own daughter, had spoken to her like the sharp cut of a knife. Father took Joanie on his lap for a moment, the only moment I could ever recall, looked at the girl, then pushed her aside.

The old woman's condition fell in rapid stages: the animate fight she waged against terrifying secrets only she understood wore her down. On Saturday, the day of her horrible attack, she spoke to us, to me, frightening words that made me want to strike her harder than anything I had imagined for Chubbs. 'None of you, no good. You should die.' Her ugly face stared at me, she reached to hold my arm. I ran off.

The car moved slowly along the steep ridge of a hill. Father looked tense, as if afraid we would slip off into the trees, his fingers tight against the steering wheel. Joanie tugged at his collar.

"When do we get to California?"

"Florida."

"It's Hollywood, California. Right? Not Hollywood, Florida. Who ever heard of that?" She was not to be outsmarted.

Grandmother wanted to stop, get out: one hand held onto the door handle, the other snapped at rosary beads like a sparrow pecking at seed. While we curved up to level ground she continued to mumble. The woman didn't know we were safe. I almost told her so. But she frightened me.

Our mother had not died—we saw no pained look on her face, no wrinkles like tiny scars—she had merely disappeared from sight,

the blink of a dream. But that one Saturday when grandmother had cried out to us in the thick sweep of a hot August night and whimpered until she fell unconscious, that horrid old voice broke the fragile bonds within our family. Joanie and I hid under the sheets, thinking an alley cat had snagged its leg in a fence and was crazy with pain, or that someone had broken into the house. Chubbs slept. I looked out from the covers to see a yellow slit of light appear along the bottom edge of the door; heard the rattle of feet, squeaking of floorboards. My father calling out 'Jesus, Jesus Christ.' Joanie thought that he might be praying aloud with the old lady. Chubbs suddenly rolled off his floor mattress, crawled to the door, and through the crack of an opening looked out into the hallway brightness—he also had heard the alley cat. I pushed him back into bed, trapped him in a tangle of sheets, and crawled out of the room, down the corridor, to grandmother's room. I saw only her face in the swirls and folds of bedsheets and pink blanket. Father was moving about from dresser to bed, and back. Grandmother's head was propped gently on a pillow stripped of its case, and she looked calm, too calm—after a night's sleep and silent battles Joanie and I would find ourselves contorted and sprawled across the bed; Chubbs would be lying with one leg bent, another straight, an arm over his face. But never flat on our backs, heads cocked in a position like cold stone. Her neck appeared from a white curl of cloth; the chin, rough and undefined in sagging folds of grey flesh; mouth parted slightly; her long beak of a nose pointed up in the air, as if trying to inhale deeply; eyes shut and lost in hundreds of wrinkles; the forehead shiny with sweat. As if she had been frozen in the middle of a prayer to the Blessed Virgin. But then, in a nervous twitch or release of a muscle, the head suddenly turned toward me. And in the strange, ugly shadows that blended with the childish fears of night and dark illusion of nightmares, I could have believed that her head was a creature, disjointed from the body, which fell to the floor and followed me back through the long corridors to my room.

The next day we had acted as if nothing happened. Grandmother had been taken to the hospital in town. Russell cooked breakfast and left early, leaving us to explore the house and silvery folds of our imaginations. Joanie tied Chubbs to a rocking chair so we could do our chores with ease: clean the kitchen, bathroom, and bedrooms—we avoided grandmother's.

"Chuckie, is grandmother dead and buried?"

"No. She's very sick. A problem with her heart."

"Will she be okay?"

"I don't think so. I don't know."

Which was all we spoke of her. That day we arm wrestled, smoked three of Russell's cigarettes, and celebrated Mass on the roof of the house with Joanie performing as high priest draped in a white sheet.

Chubbs didn't realize the importance of the occasion and sat in the kitchen all day chewing on a wooden table leg.

But we lost control over the night. Chubbs kept crawling from his mattress to the door, to be prepared for any frightening reoccurrence; I slept with pillow held tightly over my head. Joanie shivered in the sticky August heat. By morning she had wet the bed, and was terrified— she had never done that before. The woman's old voice seemed to echo though the grey corridors and attach itself to the natural sounds of night: crickets, the rustle of tree leaves, water dripping in the sink, the creaking and unaccounted bangs like pebbles dropping from the ceiling. In the muffled crush of a pillow against my face I heard private sounds, apart from the motions of the house, shrieking, like the shrill wail of a siren, and wanted to smother myself into sleep.

*

Blue fields, dark, twisted oak trees, pastures with cows sitting like large black rocks drifted by the car, a flat band of tar whipped beneath; the tires crackled as if on fire. Russell flicked cigarette ashes out the front window, which swung back and stung Joanie's arm like tiny needles.

"Ow, hey watch that."

"I think grandmother's sick."

Russell stared at the road. "I know, Charles, that's why we're taking her south to Florida. So she can heal in the sun."

"No, I mean really sick. Her mouth is bubbling."

"All right, all right. We'll stop in West Appelton. The airport is an hour away."

"How long to go?"

"I said, Joan, another hour."

"One hundred miles? Two?"

"About sixty."

"That many?"

"Be quiet."

We stopped at a cafe in the middle of town. Joanie and I unloaded Chubbs from his box. He smiled for a moment. Russell took grandmother inside for a milk shake, we were left to wander through the neighboring blocks of West Appelton.

Sunday morning. The bright sun was scattered in a lavender haze that seemed to cling like fog to the rooftops. Streets were empty. We heard the brassy clang of a steeple bell down the road, but saw no one entering or leaving the church. The cobblestone streets were a reddish brown, the color of dried blood. We sat by the curb watching a filmy white line of water trickle through wads of paper into the sewer hole. Chubbs was flicking small stones at the station wagon fender, and Joanie and I got up to investigate the town. Chubbs wore that hurt look of his,

so we picked up his rubbery little body and hurried him along with us. He wore a pair of red and white pin-striped shorts and yellow sunglasses with a white frame and looked like a vacationer rather than someone taking a sick old lady hundreds of miles away from home for a rest.

"I can't wait until we get to Hollywood, Chuckie. Father says it's a glamorous town and that miracles will happen down there. Grandmother will get better, she'll love being with her son. That's Uncle Mike. There are palm trees and sunshine and the ocean! Chubbs will be so struck with wonder maybe he'll start to talk about it." She spoke softly, as if afraid of offending someone by raising her voice.

The assembly of buildings, the grocery stores with their meat and vegetable sales, restaurants humming with neon, the taverns with dark, smoky windows, the one-pump gas stations in West Appelton bore little difference to Salda Creek. But a smell of burnt wood, the misty glaze of the West Appelton sky, the odd quiet of Sunday morning made me feel as if cautious eyes watched us from behind curtains, from under the dead husks of automobiles, from the sharp, angular shadows cast by large wooden houses, their proches, jutting roofs. As if we had walked totally naked down center aisle in church.

Chubbs saw a black ball of fur by a garbage can in the alley behind the cafe and poked it with a stick. Two slits of green appeared and the fur jumped at Chubbs: a cat—its small head oddly out of proportion with its large body. Joanie threw a cinder at the animal and chased it away. Chubbs sat in the dirt, hands cupped over his sunglasses. Always so helpless.

"Don't worry, Chubbs," Joanie assured, "it'll be all right in Hollywood. Okay? You can climb palm trees and eat grapefruits. It's where they make movies and everybody loves everybody, lots of hugging and kisses. You'll want to talk about it."

We dusted Chubbs's seat and headed down the alley armed with rocks. Flies buzzed around a brown, syrupy puddle that had oozed from a pile of shattered glass, dried pieces of meat, tin cans, curls of eggshell. Blackbirds sat on telephone wires above, their tiny heads jerking back and forth, watching as we passed below. We felt more relaxed behind the stores, surrounded by flat walls of brick, windows guarded with iron bars, where familiar odors, strong and bitter, shifted to sweet aromas, which again grew sour: rotten apples and vinegar, then something like pine, or burning leaves; dung, gasoline fumes. A wild skunk odor, as if the animal had run the length of the alley. The damp green fragrance of a willow tree. As if unseen flowers, or weeds, were rising up from the cinders in sharp waves of heat and bursting as we stepped by.

Chubbs had forgotten about the cat and squatted down by a garbage can to arrange broken soda pop bottles in neat rows. A tall man dressed in baggy overalls and a white undershirt appeared from one of

the walkways between buildings and approached us. He had no left arm.

Joanie smiled and said hello.

"Say, you're a cute one, aren't you? And who have we here? You straightening up the alley, son?"

The man's hair was short and dark, his face looked tight and bony except for the eyes, puffed and black, as if someone had struck him. The right arm stretched to pat Chubbs on his head, fingers curled and looped through his soft brown hair like a tiny flock of birds. In a sudden, white spark of fear I grabbed for a broken bottle. Joanie bent over and took the child by the hand and said we had to go find father, that he would come running if we were gone too long.

"Okay. You kids stay out of trouble, all right? I'll be seeing you." He smiled, right arm dangling limp at his side.

We came back around the front. The man followed behind, half a block away.

Our car was gone.

Joanie ran into the cafe first and found grandmother by herself drinking a chocolate milk shake in a corner booth. The man stood outside of the cafe window looking in at us, his hand pressed flat against the pane. I felt frightened and alone, as if the dark walls, the roof, the tables covered with red cloths had fallen away and that the stranger and I were the only two people on earth, that I alone had to protect an old woman and two children from his touch.

Before the man entered, Russell walked in with a waitress who sat with us at the table. Her hair was oily, and came down around her face in long, blonde locks; she looked bony and pale, perhaps the sister of the man outside.

"Where were you? Where's the car?" Joanie was anxious to know.

"We took it to the gas station. We're staying overnight here in West Appelton."

"No."

"Joan, grandmother's sick, she needs rest from all this travelling, and that's that."

Ever since grandmother's attack I had lost any sense of understanding in Russell's actions: he spoke to us with failing assurance, as if we crossed the paths of his desperate concentration by accident. Father could no longer afford to keep grandmother in the quiet conditions of a semi-private hospital room, and told his brother-in-law, Mike, in several long, emotional phone calls that he refused to have her 'just put away somewhere,' said that he might even try starting up business in Hollywood. For moments, I could have loved him for the deep concern he showed for someone, and did not think to question how he suddenly

could afford to fly five people across the nation after the litany of poverty he had sung to Uncle Mike.

But he had awoken us from the most peaceful night in a long time, raced across the countryside in the station wagon, and now wanted to spend the day in a hot, half dead town. Joanie badgered him with questions—why we were staying, with whom, how long— to which he finally responded by slapping her wrists. He had never done that before.

We spent the afternoon in the blonde girl's apartment, a dirty two-room flat on the second floor of an old house with a white face, three pink sides, and dark blue window shutters. Chubbs played with a butter knife out in the backyard, Joanie and I remained indoors, looking through the kitchen window to see if the man from the alley had followed us. Father disappeared with the waitress; Joanie went in the other room and sat by grandmother on the couch, taking care not to touch the old woman. They watched Mass for Shut-ins on television. I kept an eye on Chubbs.

The boy had dug several small holes in the ground and smoothed dirt back into them with a sweep of the hand, as if he were at play back home in his own, silent world. Chubbs neatly wiped mud from the knife with pinched fingertips; stood up, waved a tiny arm in the air, shook his head back and forth; moved his lips in a quick, twisted way as if trying to chase a fly from his teeth. And in the burning afternoon light that shone on glowing, abandoned sidewalks, with Chubbs being, perhaps, the only person awake or alive in West Appelton, I could have sworn for an instant that he was talking with himself.

*

Russell had cancelled our plane flight from Sunday afternoon to Monday night, so when we ascended from the ground we saw not the airport and surrounding city reduced to the size of doll houses but the dark wash of sky and thousands of pinhead lights which formed neat patterns of lines, circles, and curves, a curtain of glass beads floating atop a smooth black ocean. Joanie and I sat next to grandmother, Russell sat behind with Chubbs and was talking with the air stewardess, a nice-looking young woman dressed in a navy blue suit. Being aloft thousands of feet above the earth, drifting in a silvery white airliner for the first time was not as exciting as we had imagined.

We had considered the possibilities of flight many times, standing on the rooftop back home, just shy of the edge. We ran tests by jumping off the porch with an open umbrella, felt the pained shock of impact, and decided our bones were too brittle for a wild leap from the roof. At school Joanie had seen a science experiment, a chicken bone soaked in vinegar until it became rubbery, and suggested that we could so the same to our bones by drinking two cups of vinegar a day for one week. The smell made her sick and we abandoned the idea.

I overheard the stewardess telling Russell that we would be stopping in St. Louis for an hour, and again in Atlanta. Joanie spoke to me in a whisper.

"Chuckie, are we going to Atlantis? Like in the movie? It's an underwater city. Maybe the plane flies right down into the Pacific Ocean."

"Don't talk silly. We're going to Atlanta, in Georgia. Down south."

"South? No, we're going west. Over the Rockies. There are mountains down below us."

I told her father knew what he was doing, but Joanie was not convinced---she seemed to no longer trust any judgement but her own.

"Father, are we going to Atlantis, the Lost City?"

"What? No. Don't be ridiculous. Go back to sleep."

"I wasn't sleeping. Aren't we going west to Hollywood?"

"No, I told you before Mike lives in Hollywood, Florida. Near Miami."

"Hollywood is in California."

Joanie slid back into her seat and told grandmother that everyone was going crazy. The old woman smiled, her lips struggled to form a word, but she was panting as if out of breath and lost control of her speech. 'Not sick,' or 'I'm sick,' was all she said.

Joanie remained silent through St. Louis, through Atlanta, and spoke only to the stewardess when the plane dipped and rose in high tailwinds, as if a giant hand had snatched the jet by its nose and was swinging it up and down. Grandmother was looking out the small window at sudden white bursts of lightening that sprayed across the surrounding clouds. Joanie held tightly to my wrist. The lights over the middle aisle had been snapped off; only a few dots of light, the reading lamps, glowed above the seats. We fastened safety belts. My mind wandered to pictures of the plane falling, cracking in half on the Rockie Mountains, or the dark green and black ocean, wherever we were, until I heard grandmother, or the baby, whimper. I unbuckled the seat belt, stretched around behind to see if father was holding Chubbs close to him: but Russell slept, his mouth dangled open and he snored, Chubbs looked out the window and back at me with that pained expression of fear as if holding me responsible for the motions of the airplane.

"Ave Maria," grandmother blurted out.

The stewardess came by and passed out small white pillows and blankets, smiling as she leaned over Russell to prop up Chubbs and cushion his head.

I wanted to strike her, or somebody—we were heading in the wrong direction and trapped in a rainstorm. I felt warm, and sick, as if a hot cinder had burst in my stomach, as if Joanie, Chubbs, and I secretly knew that a crazy, sick old woman and a man lost in a thousand dark folds of sleep would be the last two people we would ever see.

The jet sliced through the bottom layer of cloud and I again saw the glittering brocade of city lights below—yet perhaps we had capsized and I was looking at stars. The rain spattered and cut across the airplane wing in long pins of silver; the dotted red and yellow pattern of landing strip rose up and slapped against the bottom of the plane. Grandmother was still, we thought she was dead, but the rocking of the jet had lulled her to sleep.

As we stepped out the airplane exit the stewardess smiled politely and wished everyone a pleasant stay at Fort Lauderdale.

"This isn't Hollywood? Are we lost? Did we crash?"

The woman told Joanie that Hollywood was not far away. Russell pushed us along. We paused at the top of the metal landing ramp to see where we had set down. A man in a grey raincoat stood at the bottom of the stairway and distributed umbrellas to the travellers. The rain, wind blew in our faces. Russell urged us to keep moving. The airport terminal looked huge; dark, shadowy bodies watched us from the corridor inside; and I heard only the loud drone of jet engines, not Joanie's voice crying out for me to grab the baby, nor the rattle of his tiny body as he slipped and fell down the bottom three stairs, nor his muffled squeak of pain. When the grey man with umbrellas bent over to the ground I turned to see Chubbs on his side, one leg touching the bottom step, Joanie squatted down beside him; my father and grandmother and a cluster of passengers behind them, hovering over us in a swarm of curious faces. Chubbs' eyes were tightly shut, and I didn't know if I was seeing him cry for the first time or if beads of rain were dripping on his cheeks. I looked up and saw a wild flash on Russell's face, his thick eyebrows, dark, squinted eyes, mouth parted and teeth clenched, his large, strong hand tightened in a fist, and it may have been a sign of deep concern.

Or that in an impulse of anger he had pushed Chubbs down the metal staircase without a thought.

*

We arrived at Uncle Mike's by taxi at one in the morning. The house was dark and quiet; Russell pounded his fist on the door and rang the bell, but one one answered.

"We'll have to wait here. I thought they'd be awake. Haven't got anywhere else to go."

Home, Joanie said, and I suggested a motel, but he muttered something about money and started pounding the door again. Grandmother, Joanie, and Chubbs had seated themselves on the porch lawn chairs and rested their feet on suitcases.

"Father, I think we're going to be arrested. Only spooks and burglars are out this late. I saw one across the street."

"You did not."

"Is this the right house?"

He ignored her and stepped around the front, looking for a light, or a place to break in. The rain had softened to a drizzle, then stopped. Chubbs was rubbing his ankle.

We waited half an hour.

All at once Joanie sneezed, we heard the door chime, a dog barked from inside the house, and a yellow porch light flashed on. A woman's voice from behind the door asked who it was.

"Me. Russell. And the kids. And grandmother."

"Are you here? Come in." A pleasant-looking young woman dressed in a soft pink robe opened the door.

"I thought you were coming tomorrow night."

"No. I said Tuesday at twelve AM."

"Oh. I thought you meant Tuesday night, not Monday."

"No."

"Well, come in and we'll get everyone to bed. We'll put the kids on the fold-away in the den, grandmother in the extra room, you on the couch."

"Is that extra bed soft?"

"Like a baby's butt." She smiled.

"Grandmother needs a hard bed. Why not put her on the couch. Or put a board under that bedroom matress." The old woman was stretched out on the sofa and asleep before any decision could be made.

When I awoke the next morning I was startled by what we had overlooked in the darkness of the night before: the floor was covered with a thick, burgundy carpet; to my left was an adjoining room of brick, with a stereo console against the far wall, an energetic painting of sunflowers above it, and a parrot in one corner scratching at its gold cage. To my immediate left was a bulging leather chair and an end table with a lamp in the shape of a naked woman. Chubbs was sitting up and I turned to see what agitated him so much: a huge sailfish with a large, aqua blue fin and long, pointed snout was mounted on the wall. Its right eye was glassy white with speckles of green and seemed to be looking directly at us. The eye watched us from every point in the room. I told Chubbs that it was not a real fish, and after a time he seemed more fascinated than afraid of the strange creature. One evening he tugged at me and pointed, insisting I pick him up and let him touch the smooth, shining eye.

Uncle Mike, Louise, and Russell dissolved into conversation beyond our interest so Joanie and I took the baby outside to explore the neighborhood and to convince ourselves that we were in Hollywood, California. The streets were as we had pictured them: rows of one-story houses, some pink, light green, yellow, or creamy blue, shingled roofs from which stood the metal spines of TV antennas; sidewalks lined with palm trees, their large grey trunks looking more like steel than wood, which burst at the top into fans of green leaves; banyan trees, with branches that sank into the ground forming extra trunks, a forest within

one tree; we saw bananas and grapefruits growing wild; umbrella trees with long, rubbery leaves that shook in the breeze, sounding like rainfall. A lizard that shot across the sidewalk like a small green dart. Chubbs tried lifting a fallen coconut.

The tepid smell of green that blew in the faint trickle of wind.

And Louise said we could swim in the ocean.

The neighborhood seemed warm and inviting. Joanie wanted to see a motion picture studio.

"Chubbs, isn't this exciting? Isn't it everything I said it would be? Doesn't it make you want to talk? Sure." She wiped dirt from his face with her hand; the baby smiled, squinted, shook his head back and forth, and exhaled a grunt; and Joanie, in the stupefied joy of a travelled dream come to life, in the dazzling, fertile world that rose up about her, insisted that he had spoken a word.

For moments we had forgotten that Russell had lied to us about Hollywood.

As we again circled the block Russell came from the house to order us inside.

"Grandmother's had another attack, we have to get her to a hospital. I want you three around where I can find you."

"She's sick? From what? Will she live?"

He did not answer, and left us in a flurry of motion: running in and out of the house; grandmother's body, so small and limp, wrapped in a stretcher, carried away into the ambulance; Mike, slamming doors and starting the car engine; Louise shouted at me to take care of the kids; the parade of two cars slipping away from the curb. The sprawling, relaxed atmosphere suddenly compressed into a tight ball of fears and confusion by the failure of the old woman's heart.

We sad, in quiet ignorance, through the afternoon: Chubbs played with his toes, or stared at the sailfish, Joanie drew pictures of the naked woman lamp. We waited patiently, while the hot morning hours blended with the white afternoon sky, not for word of grandmother's recovery or death, but in anxious desire to take Chubbs outside and see if, in fact, we could teach him to speak.

"Let's go out back, Chubbs. Uncle Mike's got an umbrella tree and grapefruit tree and the grass is probably crawling with bugs and lizards. Ooh, do you hear that bird singing? Aunt Louise says it's a mockingbird. They have all sorts of great things like that in Hollywood. Not like back home. Okay?"

She took the child out to the backyard, and I watched from an enclosed patio as she gave him a tour of the yard: they squatted down to inspect the grass, the clover; poked their fingers at a cactus plant in the garden; and chewed on leaves from the umbrella tree. Chubbs pointed to the green melons dangling from the grapefruit tree, and Joanie climbed

up to pick one, but as she descended with her prize, her knees suddenly buckled, she fell through the branches and hit the ground.

My sister was cold silent. Motionless.

I ran out to the yard. Joanie's legs, arms, and face were scratched with tiny slits of red; her eyes shut, mouth opened wide, stringy brown hairs scattered about her forehead. Chubbs sat and watched as I carried her back into the house; called the hospital; awaited my father, who returned in the wild scream of an ambulance. His eyes looked red and ugly, trapped in the dark wrinkles of surrounding flesh, his face was unshaven. As Joanie was taken away on a stretcher, Russell grabbed Chubbs by the waist, carried him into a bedroom, and shut the door. He turned to me and said he would beat me when he returned for letting Joanie out of the house.

"But I was watching them. And Joanie's a good climber. You let her go up on the roof at home."

"This isn't home. I don't want back-talk. You're irresponsible! Wait until I get back, I'll hit you down when you least expect." His hand grabbed at my shirt, but I pulled away and ran into the bedroom with Chubbs.

Where we sat, for what must have been hours.

Russell had never hit or touched me, but now I felt he might do anything, slap my face in the middle of the night, twist an arm, throw me from a speeding car. Chubbs, Joanie, and I were lost—our command of the strange, quiet mysteries that left Salda Creek in the deeper shades of memory, our noble response to a new world that flashed by in glittering balls of crystal had shattered in the failing light of sick, injured bodies, hidden deceits—Russell had tricked us, lied and pushed. In cruel faithfulness to shallow dreams of hope which entwined his energies with bitterness, aggression.

I felt small and tight trapped in the room with my brother, too frightened to run and hide, too fearful of the silent, sweeping power that radiated from the dark corners of my father's eyes.

*

Joanie was recovering well from a slight brain concussion. I visited her several times at the hospital, but we spoke very little, and only in private. She was in the children's ward, a dormitory room of young, ailing bodies, victims of accident. A nun in a crisp white dress would hover over Joanie and smile, as if she had arranged for my visit. And then say Joanie was in God's hands.

"How's Chubbs? Oh, I feel sick. Father stopped in earlier today. He said I was stupid."

"That's what he said to me. Said he's going to beat me when I least expect."

"Oh. You know, maybe I just should drink vinegar. Then my bones wouldn't hurt so much. Wonder why the nurse doesn't give me any."

"I don't know. Look, I've got to go see grandmother."

"Sure. Maybe falling from the tree did me good. I don't wet the bed anymore. Not here!"

I left.

Grandmother was strapped in a bed similar to Joanie's, with its back slightly elevated, near a shaded window. A thin plastic tube ran from an oxygen tank up into her nose and back again. A trickle of white beads, her rosary, was wound about her right hand. The woman in the next bed was lying on her side, staring at me. Grandmother's face looked greyish yellow. Her lips parted in an attempt to speak, but she gasped for air and the tube in her nose gurgled and popped in a mix of fluid and oxygen. I came closer, stood next to her, and she turned to look: her eyes were grey and misty. The old woman watched me not as if she recognized a friend or an enemy, but as if I were a stranger, or not there at all. I tried to smile but felt it didn't matter. Her fingers fluttered in the air and I took her left hand—she spoke, or perhaps the tube hissed from a tiny leak. The fearful, screaming head that filled our last nights in Salda Creek with so much horror now shivered a bit, rested back on the pillow, and fell to sleep. A nurse came into the room wheeling a tall white bar from which hung a plastic sac filled with a strange, clear fluid. She poked a needle into grandmother's arm and the fluid streamed down the tube into her. The nurse tended to the old woman with detached authority.

She turned to me and smiled. "It's feeding time. Your grandmother can't chew for herself. We give her glucose."

"But she's asleep. What are the straps around her for?"

"This lady's a fighter—jumps around a lot, sometimes jerks the needle right out of her arm. We have to keep her tied down. For her own good."

"Oh." The bitter smell of medicine and antiseptics made me sick, I said good-bye to grandmother and left.

*

Joanie finally recuperated and returned to Mike's house, but was advised by Louise to remain inside, at least for a while, to completely recover. Joanie would scream and lock herself in the bathroom.

Louise convinced Russell to take Chubbs and me to the ocean—which I still believed to be the Pacific—for a peaceful day in the sun. Father's rapid agreement surprised me, and for a second I honestly felt he was going to drown me in the water as fulfillment of his threat.

We arrived at the hot, white stretch of sand along the ocean and saw hundreds of people, grandmother's age, dressed in swimsuits and wearing sunglasses. Joanie would have called them movie stars. The sand was burning against our feet. Fat, greasy men sucked on cans of beer, tanned women wearing floppy white hats sat in lawn chairs facing the sun and read pocketbooks. A big woman in a one-piece, lime-colored

outfit warned Chubbs to watch out for man-of-wars, little balls of blue jelly that could sting his leg and poison him to death.

We spread our blanket by the endless trail of shells, algae, and pebbles along the shoreline. Green waves with lips of white foam spilled and rolled on the surface in repeated sweeps, smelling clean and fresh. Russell sat, rubbed lotion on his skin, and left us to get some refreshments.

"I wish Joanie was here."

Chubbs looked at me and smiled. He loved the water.

After fifteen minutes I saw Russell, a few yards away down the shoreline, talking to a slim girl with long brown hair pulled back behind her head with a clip, skin shiny with tanning oils. He touched the girl's shoulder, held her arm.

I wiped sand from Chubb's mouth and gestured for him to go play by the water. He stood by the line of tiny shells along the beach, took handfuls, inspected each one. A strong wave slid along the ground, tagged his feet, and slipped back into the ocean. A gull, like a sudden flake of snow, swooped by.

Chubbs collected pebbles, hoarding the multi-colored rocks into a pile as if they were gold nuggets. He grabbed some of the treasure, saw his father standing not far away, and ran, his legs bouncing and rubbery, to present the man with small gifts from the sea. Russell shook his hand at the child as if chasing away a fly. Chubbs ran up to the water and tossed the rocks away with a jerking, overhand throw; picked up more rocks, and returned to Russell's side. The girl in the bathing suit patted Chubbs on the head, but father pointed toward the ocean and gave him a light push on the shoulders.

A large black dog jumped about in the water; a fat man emerged from the waves and sprawled out on his blanket. People lay motionless in the sharp, white heat. Chubbs went back to his mound of pebbles, squatted over them, and this time carefully selected one yellow rock, holding it delicately with his fingertips as if he had captured a tiny, golden butterfly. Chubbs moved his lips, the insistent spasm we had mistaken for his trying to speak, but Russell ignored the child; turned him away, patted his rear, and pointed at me. In the brilliance of sunlight reflecting on sand, with his eyes, dark and shadowy, his nose, the lips, cheeks, jutting chin stark in the midday glare, I saw on Russell that same look of disgust as I had seen before; and I suddenly felt the raw urge to strike my father, not await his punishment, or to run widly down the beach past the old people lying in the sun. But knew I could not run without Chubbs, Joanie, without grandmother, realized the fool's effort in lying to myself.

Chubbs threw the yellow rock into the ocean, but suddenly ran after it, to retrieve it; and his tiny body fell to the pounding force of the waves. For a second, he was entirely under water—as if he had never been on the beach at all—his mute scream blended with the foamy

crashing of the tide; Russell stood, his hands locked to either side of the girl's waist, unconcerned—and for one brief moment, I paused before racing into the water, perhaps feeling deep inside how terrifying and wonderful it was to be invisible, nothing.

Michael Smetzer

THE WAIT

Days draw out like hot glass
without end.
Time waits action
and night birds cry no peace.
I trickle around buildings,
wincing before the light,
or, shadow in the night,
I haunt the streets
beneath the van Gogh sky.
Organic time salamanders
over the earth in me,
while eyes flick out
against dead buildings
and all about
stupid traffic lights blink
incomprehension.

Andrew Hudgins

CALLING HOME

The shoebox bulging with letters,
tempting me to re-read them,
I hang the expense and almost
always call—How ya doing?
And everyone else, how are they? Fine?
Me too. Grandmother get her flowers?
Yeah, we got the peanut brittle--
With the phone I don't have
to ask, Did you get the packet
of words I sent last week?
The trifles reduce the distance
between father and son, making
it seem nothing much,
though it's a thousand miles of mostly forest,
pine closer to him, hardwood
closer to me. If we could
get off the ground, higher
than the trees, we'd see
the forests splashed with lakes,
long, stretching hands of water
that reach toward one another
merely because they are water.
On the far side of him is a beach
I haven't seen for several years
and know only by memory.
Memory is left to letters:
one parent dead, you save
the other's letters as if he were too;
the shoebox is just about full,
so I almost always call.

Toni O. Zimmerman

LOVE POEM TO A FRIEND

I do not know what to make
of
your words
telling the same tale over and over again
whenever we meet

words only about men
how you hate them
what they did to you this time
how even a big Negro man of forty
would not hold your hand
while that infernal machine at the abortion mill
was punching your uterus a hundred times a minute
how a man who was a sadist must have
invented it

your words only about men
about how much you wanted one to share your life
how he wouldn't even give you enough space in his house
to keep a trunk filled with a washcloth and toothbrush

how much you hate all of them
yet how much you need them in your bed
when you are horny
isn't it interesting
how five men just happen to come over those nights
as if they'd automatically picked up the scent
of a bitch in heat

someday you say they will invent
a neat way
to grow babies in test tubes and free women
from all this shit
if enough women demand it

your curse is your fertility

then silence
floats between us
a white jewel
untouched untouchable

I speak of the tenderness of women to other women
how love is such a terrible risk
but one cannot live in a glass house forever
you are so absolutely beautiful
distant and aloof
bruised by stranger's rough calloused hands

thinking of the wholeness you never had a chance to grow into
I want to hold your face like a delicate lotus flower in my hands
sing songs weep dance
(you thinking it's too bad I am only a woman)

even though the terrible black days of a Mexican
abortion in summer
the long dusty rides in cars on backroads which twisted
into strange unfathomable ways you never bargained for
even on jet planes fleeing from the man you love who does not love
you
& the woman you might have loved you cannot bring yourself to touch

something remains inviolate

gleaming in the hours of dawn
a rare jewel
which can only be seen by a few
and those
probably women
like me.

G. E. Murray

A POETRY

1. When you witness a deer being eaten over by packs of happy dogs, act like a poem. Move closer to the carcus; examine its one black eye for alliterative possibilities, observing all metaphors on the partly chewed tongue. Now taste that the dogs have left.

2. As a poem you will want to study traits of the assasin, convict and priest. Be fitted for their singular robes. Then take a job disguised as an insurance salesman.

3. Or, accept a position in a prosthetics warehouse. Take stock of things along the shelves according to your understanding of replacement parts and human tentacles.

4. If you become lonelier than a turtle, dance the mazurka of ungodly dreams. Marry a gypsy; bury his special herbs in an East Texas swamp; sleep between he and his wife like a rattle in the hand of their drowned child.

5. Each day accept a shortness of breath for what it is. Ignite sunsets. Dwell in selected mine shafts. Kick the teeth out from every smile.

6. Later on, travel to a local orphanage and foster an insurrection. Chanting the code of burglars, steal in among the naked children to shave their heads with a useable cliche. This corruption must be your answer to soft-spoken eulogies.

7. Speak like a ball. Or develop your own alphabet. God will still be sailing his dinghy in the bloodstream of ants.

8. At first hint of rejection, rent a flat in Brooklyn. Furnish it with lemon trees and quill pens and gallons of dried saliva. Now mail yourself to any post office in San Francisco to wait among the faces of wanted criminals.

9. Reject revisions; resist translation; say nothing more than that which is understood by animals who hunt their young.

10. Dogs have picked up the scent of your stunning couplets, so the dream is almost done. Read yourself again in final version from the pages of a popular gardening manual. Then quick, disolve from memory like a war-time loan.

David Jaffin

TONE

Music touches sound

the fingers there were
heard feeling to

their place
of the keys turned

to where the reflec-
tions of thought

is

I see you so,
distinct as if only the

light could be
this appearance of sound,

the key, and
where your fingers

touched.

Judith Thompson

LISTENING

the whole being bends
like a shell
to the sound of its own
rise and fall

a dark place, airless
training the hand
to breathe with the ear

drawing long strokes
down into language
where all is unspoken

hoping   to surface
                                    shining
                                    and spare
                                    as a bone

                                    bearing
                                    silence.

L. H. Butrick

LISTEN XIX

Listen she said when they started
to beat down the bathroom door
Listen we're in this together
      Right up to our necks I
said and looks like we'll have
      to come clean
            But she pulled out
the plug and
dove down the drain
Hey wait I said as the
door popped like a cork and
her husband the neighbors two cops and the
grocery boy all fell in a
            heap
      Jesus I said standing up
in the tub maybe now you believe
I ain't got nothing to hide

Nadine F. Estroff

NAVIGATIONS

I remember
swallowing a moth
the first time I
had something
important to say
how
my mother wouldn't
let me suck
my thumb and I
wore braces like
she said I would
how
she went to work
to pay for them
typed her fingers
crooked and wore
me like her birth
in South Africa
how
my father snored
and how
I never did the
right thing until
I married
a rich man
oh God
sacrifice
is an
unnatural
sex act.

CROSSPIECES

It is in the morning
the primal word escapes.
The death dream left me
warm but the blankets
need washing and
then there's breakfast.

I understand the law
of gravity; brushing
my teeth, I watch
the water snakeslide
down the documental
throat of Newton.

My hands are parchment
ancient pages of white
veins, sucked-out strings
trembling with a thirst
for seraphic drippings.

All is concealed in the
woodcut; the light and
the fire, the fire and
the light circle my soul
but the burning flesh is

disguised in scrambled
eggs; served hot behind
centurion smiles, swallowed
by children imagining
I am their real mother.

Wladyslaw Cieszynski

SPRING UNDOUBLED

after JA

Deeper nights, the endless hours, intruded
With clenching jaws
The teeth as winters tearing at collars.
Every winter past I thought this way
And now real torpor. The wind erupts
Batters down these words.

Certainly there are men in furs and spears
In those landscapes
Their presence is granted
As we must trudge the snow
Heavy boots puncturing it
And still a song can't not be shistled
As our feet drop in line one behind the other
The dogs yelped as you jarred the sled. How ladden the runners
They sheared away short tails of snow
Into the moon night. So we move
And find our paths in the dream. Did ice
Beneath this crust
Determine the entire continent, boundaries ragged with teeth?
Of course whiteness led everywhere
And returned upon itself
Trapped, without the lines of shadows
Being anywhere a goal.

So here with leaning planes
Edging across the sky the clouds solidify
Burdening their grey victory onto your shoulders
Like so many bundles of dirtied wool.
Spring is undoubled in the dream
And the temperature sharpens its stars.

Nicholas Christopher

SATURDAY OFF BROADWAY

Oh sugar, them buildin's is growin' humans
Outta windows wid real hair
An' open mouths --- do they talk in their sleep
And in daylight dream among themselves?
Red and green fruit stands
Weigh the wind down with smells,
You wear that papery dress and glass smile
While clouds accumulate and nightfall
Approaches, eased on with grey oil
Like a common timepiece; your hands
Lie flat, dead translucent fish
In front of a television.

John Nelson

A CONVERSATION WITH ROBERT KELLY

The morning is very bright and lush, washed clean by last night's thunderstorm. Last evening, Kelly gave a reading as part of his stay as KU's Poet-in-Residence. He is the author of some thirty books of poetry, the last three being Flesh:Dream:Book (1972), The Mill of Particulars (1974), and The Loom (1975). Now, in the morning, Kelly, his wife Helen, and myself are situated on a balcony overlooking Lawrence and the Wakarusa valley to the southeast. It is the end of April, and the world is beginning to bloom.

NELSON: I've been thinking for some time now about the Task—as it is for each one of us as we go through the world, but especially as it is for the Poet. What kind of notions does the word evoke for you?

KELLY: I'm wondering if that's a pre-scriptive or a de-scriptive question.

NELSON: Your choice. We have all morning.

KELLY: The Task—for the Poet I feel that he must be the wholistic scientist, the scientist of the whole. But more than that, I've been thinking about this since coming to Lawrence, he must be an opener of doors; concerning himself with openings, finding them first, and then making them known to those who might share his direction of travel. In the continual renewal of life, the opening must be found and gone through. And it is the peculiar nature of poetry to be able to make that event tangible for others. Let me say that the poet has some difficulty in the process of going through—I know I do—simply because there are so many many openings constantly presenting themselves for discovery.

And so much depends on the quality of one's attention to the openings. The poem can be a great conveyance for a multitude of things, but unless you put yourself to the pain of reading it, you might never know it's even there.

NELSON: The Task including, say, a perfection of attention?

KELLY: I think it aims at perfection, but it's the quality that must be nurtured, that it be able to remain focused and unwavering for as long as it needs, or for as long as what it's focused on demands.

NELSON: I've always thought that maybe more so than any other poet writing today—in the way you write and the amount of energy you convey plus the amazing openings you present—that you are very demanding.

Somewhere you say that as a reader, you have to come to the place of the poem—and I think that frightens and disturbs a good many people. They have poetry they feel comfortable with. . .

KELLY: But that isn't going to provide them with, or seldom will provide them with, much opening. So whether they're comfortable with it, it isn't doing them much good. It's rather like aspirin.

I think others make more demands than I do. I was thinking last night as I was reading in the union that really my poems are very simple, that they are much easier to understand than, say, Olson, or even than Duncan, who is much more romantic than I am. Olson in particular requires not just that you bring yourself to the poem but that you pick up the poem and pack it into you, and carry it in yourself some other distance, as yet undetermined, through a landscape as yet to be worked out until one day you find it opening in your hands to a meaning. Don't you find that so?

NELSON: Yeah, I do. I think that with him, as well as with yourself, it comes back, keeps coming back, to expressions of consciousness—that the form of a piece of work is an expression of what generated it, of consciousness. . .

KELLY: And that's where I feel most at home in his work in that in those instances, what is happening in the passage is the fact to <u>be</u> conscious. It isn't an artifact presented of which one may or may not be conscious: it isn't an artifact imposed on a wall to which one brings oneself with some degree of attention. To perceive it at all is to be conscious <u>in</u> it; and that's interesting.

NELSON: The thing about a poem becoming comfortable, both in its reading and in confronting its energies; do you think that's the same as making it familiar and thus losing something very immediate?

KELLY: Sometimes, but then they can come back to life. Do you know a poem of mine called "The Alchemist"? That was a tremendously important poem to me when I wrote it—it seemed to be the watershed for a number of things—it seemed to get over the sticky places and the high points and was ready to move on. Well, at the time I wrote that, I was very full of its presence and loved it. But with all the readings I gave then in the early sixties, still living in New York, a reading every week, I ended up reading it alot, and it did become very familiar to me. Then, of course, it laid waste for awhile, almost a couple of years before I came to it again. And in that time, I did rekindle an attentiveness to it. But by and large, I can't stand poets that go around and read the same thing.

I've noticed now, and I would "warn the world" that a number of younger poets moved by some older ones, Galway Kinnell comes to mind, go around reciting their poetry. Which was all right in Homer's time, but in our time is an outrageous treachery to the lyric poem because for one thing, they're wasting the space of their time and mind. I haven't heard Kinnell do that—I'm told he does that—though maybe the people that told me misinformed me. This is terribly dangerous because you are losing the immediacy of the hour, because if I'm reading a poem aloud, I can be writing one at the same moment. And that often happens at a reading. But if I were reciting it, I don't think I'd have much chance to listen to that Voice, or change a word. It would be like rote enterprise. . . [Here we were interrupted for a few seconds by a loud blast from a steam whistle, known to KU students as the signal for the end of an hour class]

KELLY: Ocean voyages are very short here, aren't they?

NELSON: It always sounds like one of the shifts at the factory has been finally set free.

KELLY: That's true, but I grew up near the ocean and it's like going on board and leaving: the fifty minute cruise. Gosh, the kids here are very programmed. I was worried about that this morning. I couldn't understand what was happening when yesterday, I was in a class talking and suddenly, as if I was talking about my sexual problems, the kids became terrifically uneasy as if I had violated some unspeakable Jayhawk taboo. And then it turns out that the hooter had gone off and they had half heard it and it all ended. It's not their fault, it's not anyone's fault, but somehow the take is restricted.

And that seems to be the ultimate possibility of poetry: to build the attention span. Olson talks some about "bridgework." I think he was working with a model of "from this to that" and it seemed to me that the "this/that" part was less important than the fact of "bridge": that we be <u>able</u> to get from anything <u>to</u> anything else even if it does take fifteen minutes, which is a fantastically long time. How many people have ever heard of a twenty minute poem? Say, is there a name for those ridges over the Wakarusa River?

NELSON: Probably in ancient Indian times there was, but it's lost to me now, or to us. When you get up in the morning, rub sleep from your eyes and walk out on this balcony, would you say that what you see is the field of event or that you yourself are the field where things happen?

KELLY: I think I'm the field of event, and the event spreads out around me, including that which seems to lie fallow, and, like many fallow things, there is alot of nutrient embedded in that soil. I think a great source, and I'm that much of a romantic, is that the world is continually enterprising the ways for us to conduct its business to its proper ends. Thus the concession of mine in Los Angeles, where I was for a whole year, that there was little in that whole city that made any appreciable use of the vast amount of energy available. And the minute anybody, poet, composer or whatever, who knew how to use energy and had begun to tap it—that is, that was there already and needed it—they would think of themselves as cattle in a herd that had come to a water hole, and though the water was muddy, ended up staying for weeks or years or lifetimes.

I think one sometimes comes to a place and finds energy there in which no one around in the vicinity is able to make any sense of, or use. I've noticed people coming to Los Angeles and thinking "Ah, here's where the action is," and of course there's none of that to the city. The city's energy is profoundly intuitive, beginning, infantlike, massive, like Blake's Orc, and if you're willing to take it at that level then you have some other form of that energy bouncing down, just focused, as if I was sitting at a parabolically known place where it could all come in. And I think it's here, for some precise reason, that the people who show up in Lawrence are so energetic as compared to people in other universities in what would look like the same place.

NELSON: I tend to think of cities as being a high intensity focus for economic, political, social and even psychic energy of a populus—but it seems that in so many American cities today, they've become a negation of everything human: destroying or misusing the energies of its people.

KELLY: I don't think it destroys it, but it can be misdirected. But yet I felt that in Los Angeles the earth was constantly, gently, chidingly, remonstrating the people who were trying to misuse it or ignore it. It's an interesting situation. The city spreads out hugely with somewhat the same degree of irritation that this campus spreads out, and for a person like myself, there's no place you can walk. It's 950 acres and seems very much more space than what is needed, and in that respect, is somewhat like L. A. Still, there is a beauty about this because Los Angeles is green and everything around it is desert, and so you come to the city to find the green. The way things are spread out is very striking to me, as if the land tries to insist on its own dimensionality—being implicitly larger than we want it to be. It's like a town painted on a balloon, and the balloon is expanding and everything gets further and further away from itself. Suddenly something will be twenty miles out in the desert, but the in-between is not filled up. It's hard to talk about that without seeming to be raving about it and it's nothing to rave about in an ordinary way.

It's a city where you do your work and that's what impressed me—be a swinger, or a worker, or a dope fiend, or a surfer, or an old person or a pensioner, though there are different kinds of pensions.

NELSON: Do you ever get the feeling your poetry does that? That twenty miles out ahead of everything else there is greenery and oasis, but that in-between there is still very little—and that we who are still behind must bridge that gap and someday join you. Ever get the sense of feeling very much alone out there?

KELLY: Sure, sure—looking out and seeing the carcasses of dead cattle, the bleached skull, (Laughter) There are things in my work that I've reached and feel very lonely but I should think that would be true of any artist who keeps working.

NELSON: You said, somewhere, that "Life is for taking leave of the work", and I've always wondered about the specifics of that, because now you're talking about the work as something that separates you from others, by its own nature.

KELLY: It doesn't separate me from people any further than I'd be separated anyway. So in that sense, one who is romantic about the lonliness of the artist is foolish. I think that in any way, it is art that is associated. And that is an issue that has interested me a great deal. I was told an anecdote about a young man who went to see a great Russian cellist, Rostropovich, and happened to sneak in one afternoon at a small recital. It ended marked by a celebration going out into the night after a brilliant performance. And then later, in hearing Ted Enslin read poetry, this same young man felt compelled to rush up at the end of the reading and embrace him. And I began wondering, why is it necessary to embrace the poet but not necessary to embrace the cellist? Why is it not necessary to go up and kiss Horowitz to make the recital happen full, happen perfect? And yet somehow so many people feel that unless there is an additional contact, social or whatever, at the end of the reading, that the poetry hasn't really been there. Is it something radical in the nature of poetry as a verbal, that is, associative art or is something far more defective in the poet's own attention to his craft? Is he really standing there saying "Come fuck me" or "Let me fuck you" or "Let me touch. . ."; that plea embedded in the work which audiences necessarily, even in unconscious ways, hear and react to and then flood up or flood away at the end of the reading. When the recital is done, the man packs up his fiddle and goes away, and you don't see him again unless you wait by the stage door; or, at the end of a reading, some head out the door and some cluster to the front as if, with the last poem, I had thrown a grenade.

I wonder about that. What is the nature of the art that it so attracts and so disturbs? Certainly I would like readings to be like the concert, that is, what is given is given fully and authentically by the work and its presentation. I'm not saying coldly that there shouldn't be people around interested in me, or me interested in them but I do have the feeling that in no poetry reading does the audience leave utterly full of the event. Yet, I think I used to. When I finally got to the point of being willing to hear other poets read, which was pretty late in my life, I would go and feel tremendously full of whatever happened. It's a puzzle—the answer to which I think I know, but would rather leave it as a puzzle.

You talk about points of distance between units of the work. I like to think that I can fill up some of those, sometime, or rather that it is like the outrider that goes up ahead of the main body of settlers. I wrote a couple of prose pieces last year, one called "Piano Tuning" and the other called "The Plucked Flute" which seem to me about twenty years beyond any kind of statement you can now read. The people who normally are most interested in my work could make nothing of it. Which puzzles me—pleased me too—[Laughs]. It's nice to think that you've gotten somewhere, even if it is a bad place where no one can follow you for awhile.

NELSON: Well, do you think that the nature of poetry will be to become harder? Do you think that's the course it must travel?

KELLY: Harder and simpler both. Do you mean socially, or within any person's work?

NELSON: Within any person's work.

KELLY: Sure, but I think the hardness also has a, develops a more and more, presentable—that's a funny word to use—pre-sent/present-able surface in that it can be presented, it is a present, it is a gift, and that it occurs in the present tense. But even as it gets more and more difficult, if that's what you mean by "hard" rather than "stony", though that's true too, even as it gets harder it gets more present of surface so that it can be read, can be understood, long before it's eventually understood. You think of the late poems of Yeats, or Wallace Stevens, or Olson's *Maximus* poems: the intensity of the internal order is matched by a surface. I like to say that beauty is only skin deep and to keep remembering that we have first of all to deal with the surfaces of the world, and then go through. Years ago, I wrote a manifesto that ended: "The Gateway is the Visible," hitting on Vision as that prime American sense. The Gateway is the Visible, but we must go through—still thinking about gates, and openings, and going through. And I think that I have opened, like other poets, an extraordinarily large number of doors which is not

to say they all lead to places I would urge any particular person to go through. And not that they are all doors. My idea of bliss, in a terrestrial/social/economic way, would be living in a house with very many rooms. Rooms for which I didn't have any use, but that were there anyway. I've always felt crowded in my life, in a purely physical way, but have such a house now. And it does feel very good to go walking about knowing I could turn a part of it into the Orange Room or a room filled with hydroponic plants or install a pizza oven or a wine cellar.

So part of this business of opening doors is simply to enlarge domestic space, that is, habitable space. I'm impressed by how little land in America is much used, or how much lies fallow. The sense of immense lusciousness that isn't grown over, or harvested, but that just stands there. So that's habitable space too. I like to think of work as enlarging habitable space in times of crisis. And crisis I do not see particularly in the mode of ecology, but in the mode of spiritual decision. It seems to me that a number of people have supposed that a particular kind of spiritual crisis or last judgement occurs, or is occurring, or will occur in our time. A crisis means something like a decision or a separation, between people to whom it matters and people to whom it does not matter.

NELSON: I feel that. It's pressing me.

KELLY: And that's getting faster isn't it? There are a lot of people to whom it does not seem to matter, and one wonders if, in the moment of crisis, the gulf opens—maybe that never happens, or maybe those to whom it does not matter can learn to have it matter or, sadly, those to whom it does can forget and lose interest.

I should think that you, in a college or around one, the most obvious and conspicuous thing must be the way in which the people you see when you are a freshman, who seem to be about on the verge of being people to whom things matter, by the time they're seniors have resolved to have no such truck with it. And then again, when they are 28 perhaps it opens and they change, and go along until they're 43 and then close down again—and who knows? Whenever death finds them, they are what they have become at that moment. The "Doctrine of Final Repentance" I suppose? That you can be whatever you want to be as long as you are there to do it. [Laughter] Here I am with one second to live and I'm resolved to become a Rosicrucian, and die a good Rosicrucian. Why not? And that's habitable space.

Colleges are sad to me for that reason—the sense of the crystallizing. The aging faculty are not as sad to me as the crystallizing Junior or aged pre-med student.

[Here, some coffee gets spilled and we take a break, throw ice cubes off

the balcony, listen to a nearby cardinal, and eye a demon lawnmower that will eventually drive us indoors.]

NELSON: Back to the thing about college. Or maybe not college, but consciousness in general and college as a place where some work is done on it. I'm thinking of what Olson said about people being instruments of discovery and definition. The process of discovery goes on all the time, which to me, seems to place an incredible burden on language to deal with it all.

KELLY: No, I don't think the burden is ever on language but on the person. That language is exactly in our hands—our mouths—look, I've been thinking lately about those two interesting places: the back of the mind and the tip of the tongue. The distance from the back of the mind, where I might have a habit that expresses itself, to the tip of the tongue, where a word might be, is not expressible in inches, as most people think the mind is the brain. But the mind isn't the brain.

What is discovered, who discovers it? What defines? Language accomplishes the definition but is hard. The harder it gets the better the definition, I think. That's what math, et cetera, logic, et cetra have tried to tell men and women that the harder the better. Of course, logic and mathematics committ terrible mistakes by providing, not just that information but various alternatives and easy systems for being hard—and when you provide an easy system for being hard, that consistent truth table proposition, you've lost it, there's nothing left. So we're forced back to poetry. That's the situation I live constantly, no matter what I do, I'm called back to poetry. Everything else seems sloppy, indulgent, and that's terrible. The harder the poem gets, the more it avoids the easy chair of the reader and the more hope there is in it. You see, there are a lot of poets around in America whose work does not seem immediately compelling or exciting to me, but where I'm full of respect because of the arduousness of the struggle. I don't mean the "lusty-lifey" sort of thing, but the struggle implicit in the language itself. As people who are working for something, God knows what, as opposed to those who do finally strive to be easy. So I'm interested in that surface, that it be present-able in the mind of the reader, able to be present rather than just manipulated. I'm thinking of that poem of Olson's "Veda Upanishad Edda Than." Supremely presentable, yes? The mind can do nothing with it but hold it.

I used to say, at workshops or at the end of readings, when people would ask me, "Say there, what do you take the point of poetry to be?" The only answer I could honestly give was Complexity. That as art, as any art embraces more and more complex relations, it gets more interesting. If it fumbles or foils itself, and then settles for less than complexity,

it is uninteresting. And people are curiously frightened of that word "complex". They would think of mathematics as complex rather than complicated, or tricky, or intricate.
[Through the trees comes the lawnmower, shifts our focus, then leaves.]

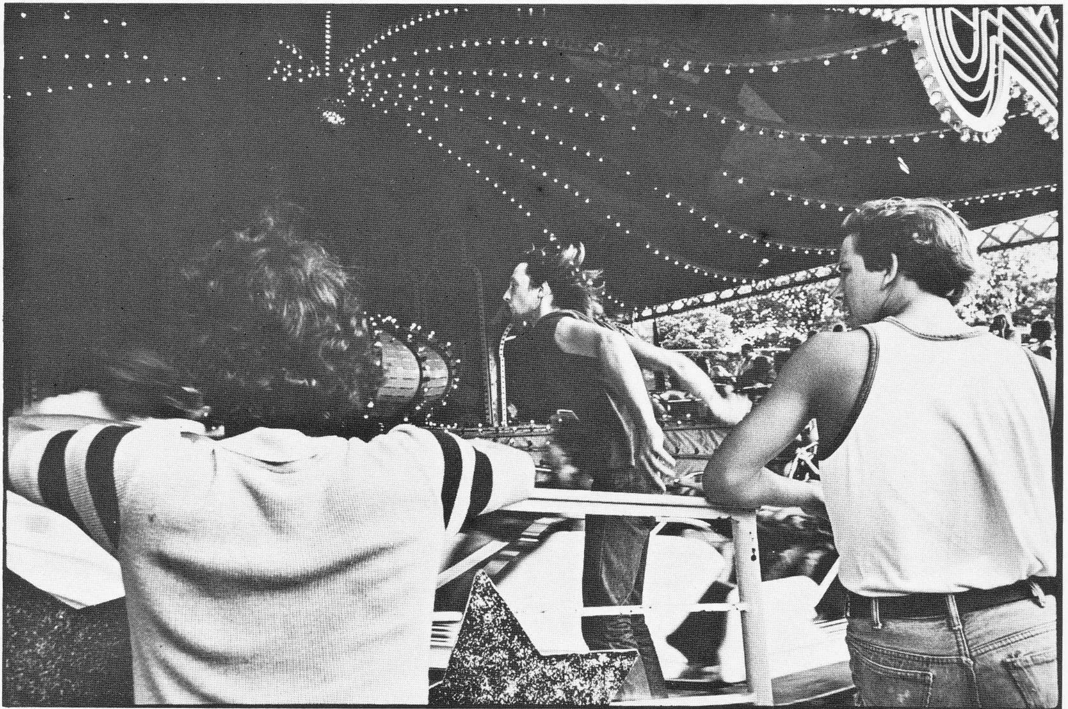
NELSON: When you go into a country, or into the country, can you sense in a way subconsciously or even deeper, through your body, the spirit of a place?

KELLY: Surely. But I say surely because I think we all do. I think it's that which we know in a place and then gets confused with historic and sociological analyses, and then gets us lost. I'm not saying there's anything wrong with the historic analysis, I'm quite interested in that, but I would explain history in terms of place rather than the other way around. Place is Primary. "Where" is Primary. You locate your "when" through your "where", in the kind of space—our three dimensional space as it is, or as we understand it to be—and consensus we have of it. I could imagine a kind of space where the "when" is before the "where" but then one would live in a different dimension and enter our space, or a space like ours.

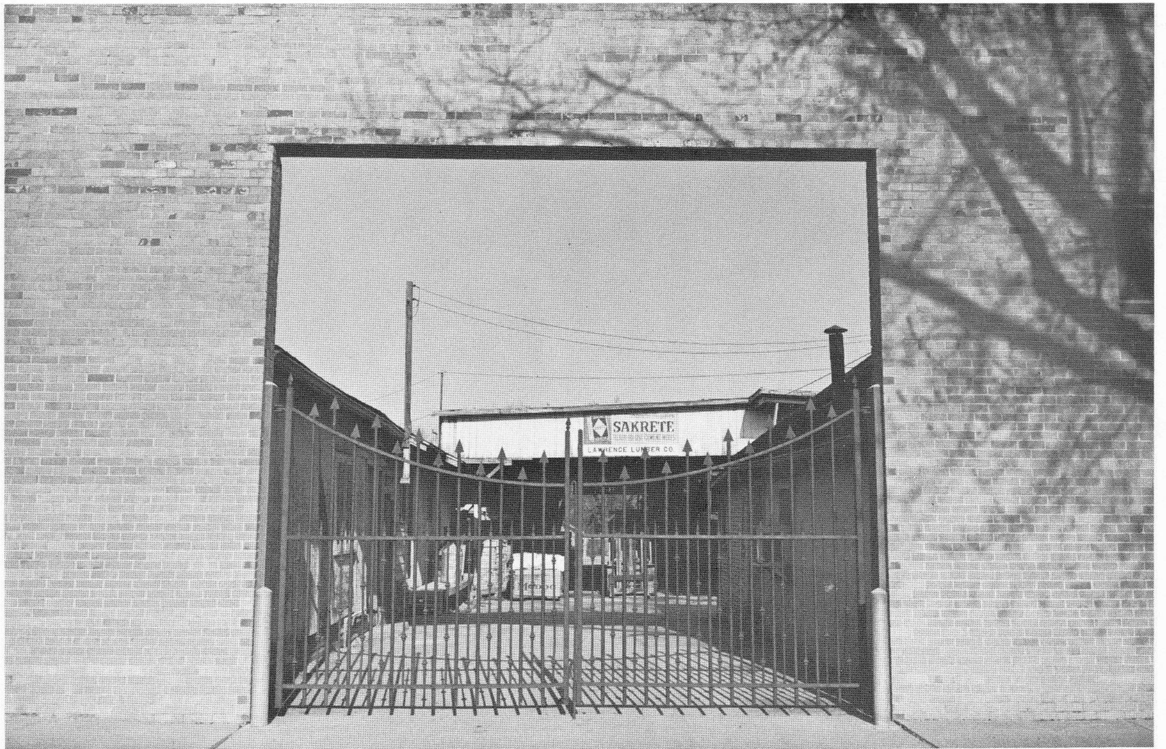
Maybe that is the kind of space an insect inhabits. There are so many insects in our biosphere, that many of them don't seem to live here, exist here without taking cognisance of the place. Perhaps they live in a "when" sort of world.

Most of ourselves, and our relatives, tend to live long, long years on the surface of the planet—but we can't occupy much space. Consider the size of a fly and how in a second it can go from here to the other side of that wall which would be the same as one of us going down to that building [a distance of about two hundred yards]. They can occupy space, but have no purchase on time. We have immense purchase on time but very little grasp of space. So much of our technology is involved in moving us from place to place. Space is still our conundrum, our enigma. And we have, by knowing place and space—"Place" is the name of "Space" once you are there—an ability to find your "when" and get into time. We have to find the Spot, rather than master space, but we mistake in that a mastery of everything.

April 24, 1975



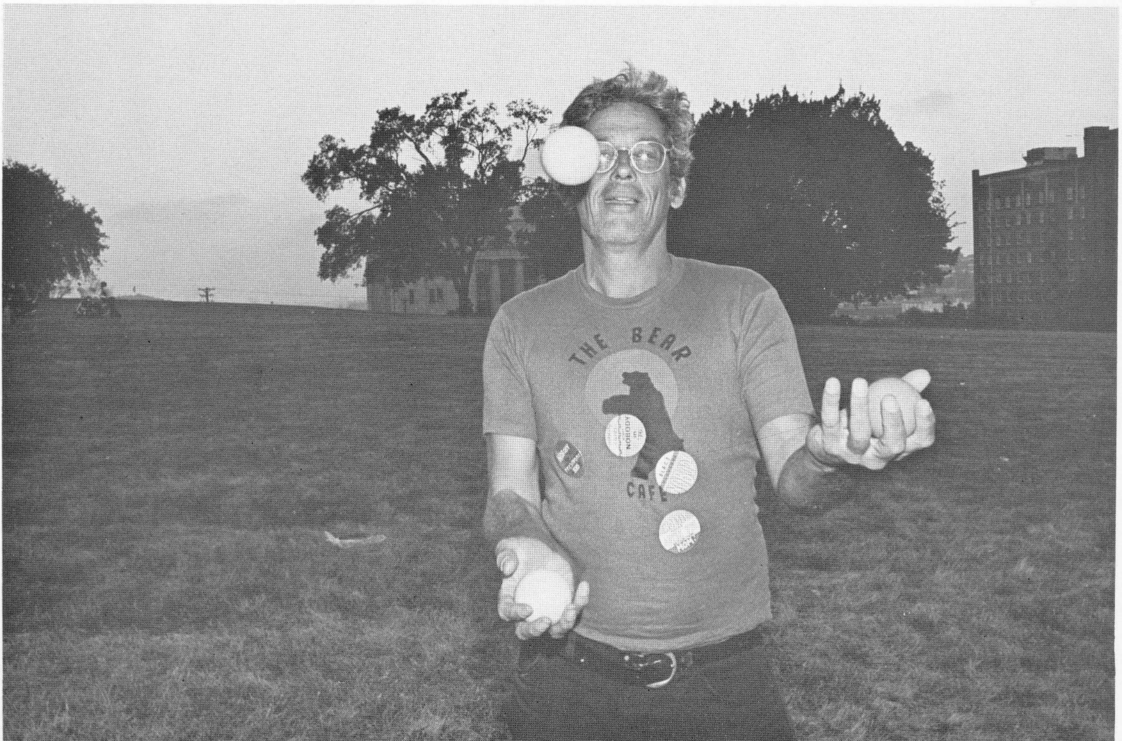
Roger Pfingston



Earl Iversen

Earl Iversen

Terry Evans



Terry Evans

Tom Tarnowski

Tom Tarnowski

Larry Schwarm

Marne Marcus

PLAY CHESTNUTS

See the chestnut. Round and smooth and brown and shiny.

If that's the way you picture a chestnut it's been awhile since you picked up the real thing and tossed it from hand to hand back and forth before your eyes reflecting the peaceful changes of the season.

A chestnut isn't round but rounded. Squat against one side. And that dull tan marking that looks like the bleached decal of a warped heart isn't always on the flat part.

If you are quick enough to catch a chestnut dropping out of a tree you'll notice a chestnut can be very lumpy. Some are so lumpy they don't even look like a chestnut.

Another thing about chestnuts is the way they gleam so luxuriously. A chestnut is like fine furniture which is like grand stringed instruments like pianos and chelloes. That dark rich gleam of Omar Sharif's eyes smiling at you. Brown and shiny doesn't get it.

How do I know so much about chestnuts? My first of the season showed up last night.

It was gleaming in the gutter. At first I thought it was a mahogany mushroom. That's what a surprise that chestnut was. Gleaming in the gutter where it had been kicked or fumbled by a sprawling squirrel or had bounced naturally.

As soon as I touched the chestnut that luxurious feeling tickled my neck. There were visions of a table heavy as a baby elephant on which sat an enormous inter-galactic glass plate heaped with all the chestnuts I was going to find. I am at the table writing about chestnuts. I can feel the lick of a fire from the fireplace where some of the chestnuts are roasting.

Chestnuts always give me this smoky settled feeling.

I walked very slowly toward the tree. I didn't want to miss the next chestnut.

There were more and more. I kept the chestnuts in my hand till I had to drop some in my coat pocket there were so many. I always

held a couple in my hand squeezing them and knocking them together.

The squirrels had left a lot of chestnuts. It was perfect chestnut-hunting weather. The air was moist and close the way it gets behind those straw Halloween masks. A cloudy sky was cut by the masked smile of a crescent moon. Wind kept driving leaves over asphalt and concrete producing a wonderfully monstrous voice like Boris Karloff gnawing on a microphone.

My mind was empty as a dead cornfield. Black cats squirted now and then out of the bone dry, feathery stalks. Underneath my dry silky hair.

Actually any kind of weather is good for finding chestnuts. Just so the rain isn't beating on your head too hard. And it's after 3 in the morning so there's nobody to get in your way and there aren't any cars prowling around so you can hear the claws of the leaves drag.

Kicking into the leaves I knocked out hidden chestnuts. I could always tell which were chestnuts and which were just rocks. The chestnuts rolled farther.

If I picked up a stone by mistake I couldn't drop it fast enough it felt so cold. Ghostly with the dust of its own body a stone felt cold as the moon in my hand.

Give me these brand-new chestnuts. Large clean kernels I can sink my hands into.

While I was poking through the leaves a chestnut bombed out of the tree. I didn't get to it in time to nab it in the air. It bounced into the shadows but I found it.

I couldn't stop picking up chestnuts. The pocket of my great flapping overcoat practically dragged on the ground and the chestnuts put in just fell out again.

The other pocket couldn't be used. My pipe was in there and I didn't want to bury it. Tantalizing as the thought of smoked wood buried under chestnuts was.

I was getting chestnut fever. I thought, If I'd worn more coats I could have gotten them all. It was time to slink out of the shadows.

My bulging pocket hung low. I was rich!

And having fun at the same time. I was just flappin' along, spilling out energy like the stars, flappin' along a bit unsteadily wondering what to do with a pocketfull of chestnuts, like the stars, wasting energy.

I came to the top of a hill and my problems were solved. I got out a chestnut and threw it right down in front of me. The chestnut went bouncing down the hill.

Bouncing higher and higher. Every time it bounced the chestnut hit harder and jumped higher. Springier than a lot of rubber balls.

And springing not at all straight. Remember how lumpy a chestnut can be. Cracks threw it off more. The chestnut was knocked off course and back on a couple of times before getting muffled under a parked car. None of my first chestnut bombs got far. One bounced once then sailed over a fence.

I started smacking them down as smack-dab in the center of the street as possible. Some were almost making it to the bottom now.

One after another, chestnuts skipping goofily down the street.

This is for all you ex-kids who thought you could never have fun without money again.

Again and again chestnuts hopped down the hill, some staying on the street gaining independence with each slam, jumping higher and farther and crazier, raining noiselessly through the deserted intersection into the shadows of the opposite incline.

I like to imagine the end of the trip, the chestnut setting down gradually in lighter and lighter springs and landing with a frisky roll. Stopping, the chestnut turns and rolls back a bit, settling in another gutter.

HARLEY ELLIOTT

Harley Elliott was born in 1940 and has lived most of his life in the midwest. He is both a poet and a painter. He presently lives in Salina, Kansas, where he teaches art at Marymount College. He has five books of poetry published: Dark Country (Crossing Press, 1971), Six Eyes Open, with Kenn Kwint and Jeff Woodward (Shore Publishing, 1971), All Beautyfull & Foolish Souls (Crossing Press, 1971), The Resident Stranger (Juniper Books, 1974), and Sky Heart (Pentagram Press, 1975). Four new books are scheduled to appear in 1976: Animals that Stand in Dreams (Hanging Loose), The Citizen Game (Basilisk Press), The Secret Lover Poems (Emerald City Press), and The Tiger's Spots (Crossing Press).

Of the following poems, "Dark Country" is from Dark Country (Crossing Press, Trumansburg, N. Y.); "Taking a Walk As If" and "Man Takes Out Garbage" are from The Resident Stranger (Juniper Books, LaCrosse, Wisconsin); "After Picking Rosehips," "A Girl Who Smells Like Marshmallows," "The Children," and "Closing Time" are from All Beautyfull & Foolish Souls (Crossing Press, Trumansburg, N. Y.); and "The Ladies In My Life" is from Sky Heart (Pentagram Press, Milwaukee, Wisconsin).

TAKING A WALK AS IF

Taking a walk as if
I were off on some important mission

what's the difference
the thin elm flowers wash in the gutter
and the sparrows continue
giving each other what for
within the still sparse trees

I might be looking for my head
yawning up out of the tulips
I might be on the
trail of runaway hands

The trees seem to shudder
with tiny green arrows

And if I speak my heart
might perch on my teeth
and fly off
like some dark flashing bird.

AFTER PICKING ROSEHIPS

With every soft gush of my feet
walking in tall pasture grass
the rosehips at my belt rub together
an old rosebush song.

    The moon rings. The clouds
are forzen full of geese

and I can feel the darkness
growing on my skin.
The world ends tonight

    It is so
beautiful   this time
I have decided
to move here forever. Even after
reaching that yellow square of light
drinking soup
and going to bed
I am only another man there

lost in the covers and quilts.
    I am only dreaming
moving still in that space
of grass and goldenrod

a man with rosehips
walking in the speechless night.

A GIRL WHO SMELLS LIKE MARSHMALLOWS

Now we are shaking hands
and instead of the cinnamon
ginger or clove
your long red hair suggests

I inhale the powdery
whiff of marshmallows.

Now I am shaking
hands with your husband
who has lived
with the aura of marshmallows
and forgotten it

He smells
like cinnamon ginger or cloves

Now you are leaving
but not fast enough

your cheeks   your buttocks
your breasts   I am
popping them into my mouth
woop   there goes your nose

your ultimate marshmallow
fingers and toes.

Your husband dreams
while escorting
your bones to the door

long dreams of girls
with chocolate skin.

THE CHILDREN

The problem is more and more
in the eyes how to understand
the beautiful issue
of children moving on the earth

as the old masters did
when they painted children
and virgins their faces
are all newly fleshed the eyes
barely settled in

as if coming into this new dimension
each cell of their bodies
turned its opposite side.

The problem is more and more
in the mind how to see
the mystery of children
as they move into their spaces

with the old wisdom now gone
that a child grew
in the eye of each rose
there is nothing
left to know.

The problem is more and more
what is not understood:
the astral loveliness singing in their blood

the light at the soft
blurred edges of the moon
collecting in luminous circles
around the eyes of infants.

CLOSING TIME

Our throats a beery velvet
we seem to be
a herd of pale horses
breaking out into the street

to shrink beneath the sudden stars
coughing and punching
our way into the night.

Suddenly we think
we know what is beyond the
shadow blue tips of trees
and what history lies
in each dark root heart.

Indians are turning in the
gravel of old glaciers.
Flowers arise in our faces.
O Christ what tense joy it is
to know even the invisible pull
of the moon on our bodies.

Yet even as the moment
closes around us   our sudsy smiles
disappear into the neighbors silver lilac bush
and we are slowly
falling back into our bodies.

Suddenly we think
we have understood nothing.

MAN TAKES OUT GARBAGE

Such a simple thing
yet I am falling
one foot on the step
and the other flying up behind

and what a lovely explosion
of yesterdays wreckage in the moonlight:
crisp margins of forgotten fried eggs
hang in the air like snow

a galaxy of coffee grounds
balled up newspapers   eggshells
matchbooks   a hovering catsup bottle
beneath my nose.

Not my life
but the life of my garbage
unrolls before my eyes.
The entire history of artifacts
shoots   through me.
I am falling.

Let us rise up
and love our garbage.
The dogs are barking
for garbage all around
the town tonight. Microscopic
garbage moves upon us   there is
even garbage on the moon.

Garbage waits like a lover
in the heart of the rose
and our blood sings on toward garbage.

Let us rise up and love
what is left of everything.
We are falling
and even the dark fields of flowers
outside of town
are preparing for our bodies.

DARK COUNTRY

The pioneers are
leaving narrow beds

appearing at the exits of county museums
they are returning
in the shape of dreams.

The prairie wind
rises pure as crystal. In dark fields
the horses run again.
Their hooves are yellow flint.

The pioneers unfold
their minds like treaties.
They have called back
the names put on the land.

They are waiting on night porches
shirts open at wrists and throat
eyes wild
with a memory of earth

that lay asleep
too long in that dark country.

THE LADIES IN MY LIFE

I meant to write a poem about
the ladies in my life

but the sky rose up:
all day gold finches
were blazing
in the purple chicory.

Mike Smetzer

REVIEWS

James P. Girard. Changing All Those Changes. Berkeley: Yardbird Wing Editions, 1976. 52 pages. $3.95.

James Girard's first novel provides the reader with such an intense, personal contact with the main character's awareness that it seems to have been drawn directly from the author's own experience as a teenager growing up in the late 1950's. In Changing All Those Changes, the narrative voice seems to be trying to search back into the late teenage years in order to re-establish the bond of family that the changes of growing up destroyed. The book is an attempt to undo spiritually physical changes that cannot be undone in their physical reality. This attempt gives the narrative a sad, ruminative mood that holds the reader's awareness of the overriding atmosphere of loss. Yet the novel is not sentimental. It seems to be told in the third person in order to give the author enough distance to present his story with both detachment and sympathy. Throughout, the book is characterized by economy of action and by clear, precise, and often lyrical description.

Just as the novel as a whole seems to be the narrator's search back into his past, so Jordan as the central character repeatedly searches back into his earlier childhood to find the changes that have led to his present. In the opening section we see Jordan walking his morning paper route two years before the main action of the book: ". . . he would sometimes pause in the circle made by the overhead lamp, holding his hands palm down to study their unfamiliarity, trying to pick out the details by which he might prove to himself that he was still himself" (p. 9). The details he picks out are the injuries his hands have suffered, and the injuries lead him to search-back into the incidents of his past. He remembers in particular the day the end of one finger was smashed in a door and the sense of permanent loss he experienced looking at it: ". . . a part of it [his body] had been torn or broken so badly, so brutally, that he knew in that instant there would be no way to restore it, that it would be changed ever after, that this mutilation, metaphorizing the pain in the flesh, would never, ever quite go away" (p. 10). Jordan's examination of these physical injuries in the first four pages of the novel sets out in physical terms the theme of change and loss that is developed in terms of his emotional life in the rest of the book.

Each brief section of the novel is a carefully placed fragment of Jordan's experience, containing either a search-back into his past or a focal point in the on-going action. The emphasis in each scene is on revealing the character of Jordan's relationships with those around him.

The overt action is muted to allow us to better follow Jordan's inner responses to his world. These responses are immediate, perceptual, and undirected. We are told:

> He. . . could never imagine closing shots, never see how things might come out—far less the nuts and bolts between; dialogue, action, plot; there was none—just Samuelsohn and himself and the street-lights and the night and the radio and the forgotten vibration of wheels beneath, cruising up and down a world that might someday prove to have some sense after all, or might only turn out to be the backdrop for the pointless scenarios they spun inside themselves, teased by the songs, cruising in and out of seasons, in and out of lives that passed like the other microcosms cruising all around them. . . (p. 45).

The shifting prose of such passages reflects the indirection of Jordan's life, a life that has no order beyond what the tunes on the radio and cruising can give it.

The central problem of Jordan's life is a loss of family. His father is dead and he has been responsible for breaking up his mother's second marriage. Since his stepfather left, he has drifted apart from his mother and half sister, who have more recently had a series of problems with the law. The main action of the book follows the final steps of the family's breakdown. At one point Samuelsohn, Jordan's best friend and good counselor, advises him, "Listen. . . your mother and sister aren't the best family in the world, but they're still your family" (p. 27). Near the end of the book, Jordan himself admits to Samuelsohn, "You're probably right. I should try to figure out some way to help them, instead of just letting them go their way. But things can't be like they used to be. Too much has changed" (p. 50). The Jordan of the book lacks the control of his life he would need to reclaim his family. Instead he yearns to establish a new family relationship with his girl friend, Cheryl.

But at the end of the book Jordan is left without any bonds of family. His relationship with Cheryl has been broken off by her parents, leaving him with no clear future. Then he returns home one night to find his house deserted. His mother and sister have violated their parole and gone to another state. With them they have taken the car and its radio, his last principles of order. The physical separation of Jordan from his family is complete. Only through the voice of the narrator can the connection be re-established.

BOOKS OF INTEREST

Jack Anderson. City Joys. 200 Carroll St., Brooklyn, NY 11231:
Release Press, 1975. 56 pages. $2.00.
Poems and prose poems that often have a very fine quality as a whole, despite the general mildness of the individual lines.

Harley Elliott. Sky Heart. P.O. Box 11609, Milwaukee, WI 53211:
Pentagram Press, 1975. 35 pages. $2.00/$4.00 signed.
Good poems and drawings by the author and Elaine Elliott. See the featured poet for this issue.

Doug Flaherty. Near the Bone. P.O. Box 11609, Milwaukee, WI 53211:
Pentagram Press, 1975. 54 pages. $3.00/$5.00 signed.
Poems with a good sense of sound that often lose themselves in the romantic commonplaces of female anatomy, esp. the womb.

Carl Larsen. Ol' Peckerhead. 508 South 11th St., San Jose, CA 95112:
Samisdat, 1975. 16 pages. $1.00.
Three 2-page stories and a tall tale. All are bizzare and perhaps disgusting, but also tight, fast moving, and effective.

Steven Osterlund. Twenty Love Poems. P.O. Box 82213, Lincoln, NE 68501: Windflower Press, 1976. 48 pages. $2.95.
Love poems with an appetite and good erotic drawings.

Henry H. Roth. Jackdaw. 1639 W. Washington Blvd., Venice, CA 90291:
Beyond Baroque Foundation, 1976. 25 pages. No price.
The basic situation: A Jewish small-press writer with sex/family problems undergoes personal disintegration and artistic failure against a background of middle class mania. The too familiar situation put me off at the beginning, but the short novel becomes interesting as it shifts emphasis from a caricature of suburban life to the writer's interior problems. Impressive technical control.

Miriam Sagan. Dangerous Body. 508 South 11th St., San Jose, CA 95112:
Samisdat, 1976. 16 pages. $1.00.
A good first chapbook of poems, most of them concerned with woman awareness.

Trans. David McCann

KIM CHI-HA

Kim Chi Ha is widely known as a dissident poet; he is presently in prison in South Korea, under a sentence of life imprisonment. About his poetry, Kim Chi Ha said in a conversation on December 20, 1973, that its language tends to be more "classical" than modern—traditional words used in connection with modern settings and subjects. He observed that this style was perhaps due to his upbringing, in a small town near the seacoast where people were more traditional, and the atmosphere, "more classical."

TOMORROW'S BRIDE

Cry out
        when you feel alone.
When troubled, no tears—
                        yell out!

Tomorrow's bride
returning from the factory
through the night, tears, the long sighs
let your voice sound!
Sing out your songs!

You, eighteen-year-old
with large hands,
thick-waisted, coarse-mouthed,
tomorrow's bride.

LAND'S END

On the stone Buddha's tight-shut lips
that fiercely joyous day
he spat out disobedience,
a fountain of moss, a
deep-dreaming fountain of moss.
Graceful, clear
sulphur flames sink down,
and while my eyes stare
through the long, long night,
upon my forehead wander ceaselessly
the soft screams of the falsely accused,
to sink into the sea.
In the weight of stones suspended
at the bottom of gape-mouthed fields,
and in those wires they wander
to sink down.
Red October moon as well sinks down.
Persistent,
the stone Buddha's sneering laughter
and the night sea.
On that day the boat
was to return at last,
a fountain of moss, a
deep-dreaming fountain of moss.

Trans. Ruth Feldman
Brian Swann

BARTOLO CATTAFI

Bartolo Cattafi was born in Sicilian Barcellona in 1922. His poems reflect the roving life he has led, traveling from country to country in Europe and Africa. Some of his more recent books are _L'aria secca del fuoco_ (1972), _Il buio_ (1973), and _La discesa del trono_ (1975).

FROM NYHAVN

I don't have much to tell you, at nine P. M.
the world starts to get beautiful
like the globe that hangs on the door.
You can drink, dance,
talk dirty,
kiss the colored statues,
inside there I really boil, in the brothel
of music and libations. No one
knows what contraband I achieve
with the tattooed chest, what treasure
burns in the grotto
and what gray
cartridge, what fuse in the hands.
I forget the prow,
tomorrow I will steer the exact course,
now I have the example, the gut,
the straight dry hunger of the gulls.

(Copenhagen, 1952)

Trans. Justin Vitiello

ANTONIO MACHADO

The poetry of Antonio Machado (1875-1939) ranges from an early "twilight" romanticism to an existential sense of human emotion, objects, and the word in temporal flux to a gently ironic and profoundly skeptical view of human-kind's capacity for rational thought and action. Machado, who will also hopefully be soon known for his poignant political poems and essays, left Spain as the Republic was falling to Franco's Juggernaut and died in a French concentration camp for refugees.

FROM SOLEDADES (1899-1907)

I go along dreaming
roads past noontide. . .
the golden hills, the
green pines, the dusty
live oaks. . .
Where will the road end?
I go along singing,
traveler by the wayside. . .
The afternoon declines. . .
"In my heart the thorn
of a certain passion—
I tore it out one day—
I no longer feel my heart."
One moment all the land
is still—mute and somber—
meditating. The wind sounds
the river poplars.
The afternoon becomes dusk
and the road that writhes
and slowly pales
clouds up and disappears.
My song is again a plaint:
"Sharp golden thorn,
If I could only feel you
fixed in my heart."

M. Truman Cooper

tomorrow men

come to cut
the grass long
hairs of winter
will die in
heaps the air
will be rancid
with plant
blood we have
only today
the field grows
waist high i
will make tea
and bread and
sweet marmalade
from grandma's
oranges i'll
take my best
cups thin as
eggshells you
make a nest
below the wind
that blows up a
sea of green
waves i'll pour
tea for fluid
breathing bees
and spread jam
for butterflies
then i'll ask
you to love me
you will hunt
for new honey
and find it
in the morning
you'll send the
mowers away

Lisa Bitel

annunciation

once an angel
lean as an athenian boy
crisp
and naked
and bouncing on the balls of his feet
shivered his wings
spread his precious lips
and made to deliver a halo
to a petalled virgin
    her glance
round and blue as an egyptian glass bottle
curved at him with an incredulous no
he beat air with his showering wings
and suffered a mortal astonished
impotence
    in a blue heat
he lost hold of his brass ring
let it slip down his face
and dissolve into myth
while he
goldenboy lips and thighs
frowned at her like jehovah
and scratched at his crotch

Jnana-Devanandashram

GO-BETWEEN (III)

Two-pound child / Old woman /
Afternoon / Shoebox / Skulls
Winter sun / Wood stove / Legs / Troops
Rich land / Nipple-sucker / / Sleep
Burning / Loaf of bread / Farmer / Baptism
Cross-roads / Infants
Butternut / Fiddler / Wife / Screams
The bride / Ninety-three / Hammer / Flames
Grandparents / Head of hair / Stairs
Indians / Pappy
Mason Jars / Two horses / / Songs
Flesh
Awkward eyes / Gold / Blood / Buttermilk
Unwritten news / Raiders / Black Swamp / Tongue
Ancestral blood / Eighteen-ten / Honor / Recluse
Sacred flesh / Sausage / Breath /
Disgrace
Saw teeth / Jewelers daughter / Neighbors
Straight trees / Mat / Hand bell
Sheep. Clouds / Stubble / Depression glass
Concealed seed / Flint piece / Calling cards
Granary
Dream. Spels / Death / Wash tub / Rust
Turning stone / Head / Granny knot
Old womb / Tail / Barn
Wheel / Turtle / Smoke
Quiver teeth / Plow meat / Rocking chair

Jeanice Dagher

poem for maureen b., who lives in the apartment directly beneath

you are the woman downstairs
under the frame of my bed.
most nights we mirror each other
in parallel movements—
skaters from the same city
performing clear figures
on two sides of the wooden floor;
riding away with separate moonmen
at the same time on thursday.

the one time you came upstairs
to this place with the same dimensions,
same front window placement
and hallway arches
you wore mexican sandals, prescription sunglasses,
and each eyelash
was individually placed.
looking over the bookshelves
you said you liked hesse,
that you didn't want your doctorate,
that the floors were perfect for oriental rugs,
and that once you had a baby in buffalo that died.

that was july. now, in december
we continue through the season program.
your partner is persian and mine's from ohio.
still the precision is good—
like rockettes, we kick smiling.
like cheerleaders in the back yard before supper
we keep it oiled
and moving

yet rarely converse on the staircase
that runs between.

Tom Russell

LYCEUM*

a

This lady walking on Maple with a leashed dachshund disappears behind Bobbi Northquist's blooming lilac bush. The smell is indescribable, perhaps too indescribable: No one, as yet, whether it be Miss Northquist's southern neighbor Starvos Holbein, whose father the Greek shipping magnet purchased a modest house on Maple for his son while the boy journeyed through local university ranks for a degree in Fizz Ed and an eventual coaching position in his father's firm, or the lady pulling her dog behind her into the bush could say with any humorless certainty that the indescribable smell of lilacs was a cause for their actions. Probably Bobbi Northquist herself thought something of the bush: Afterall, she was going to wait till the blooms faded before having the smelly nuisance removed. But, of course, this is only an educated guess.

It would not be uncommon in a story like this to have the dachshund only be a disguised apparatus in the shape of a dog, something like a walkie talkie receiver or a foldup sonic detector with four legs. This would demonstrate a kind of modern learning, dependent on bringing to bay with technological magic the sins of Bobbi Northquist and revealing them to grateful patriots, who need constantly to be told how far we have come and whether our kids are being taught winning things in school. But Bobbi Northquist is not at home. She is attending a teacher's meeting at Calhoun Junior High School. Consequently, the weenie shape of dark color with the clever mechanical noise is really a dog. And the woman holding his leash is a secretary to Mr. Paul, the principal at Calhoun, and not a rival of Miss Northquist's in the ordinary sense.

For the moment, let's just say that the secretary has heard about Miss Northquist and is more than a little curious. What she has heard specifically we don't know yet—a good story is always a surprise unto itself—but whatever it is has enticed Mrs. Eunice Slank, which is a secretary's name completely, to see for herself whether there are any telltale signs which could confirm her very important suspicions about Miss Northquist. The grass has not been cut. <u>Hmmmm.</u> It might also

---

*The Indian tradition, on which this somewhat extravagant tale is founded, is both too wild and too beautiful to be adequately wrought up in prose. Ellis, in his <u>History of Education,</u> written since New Math, remarks that even then the existence of the Fabulous Thought was not entirely discredited. [Author's note.]

help Mrs. Slank to know that this lilac bush which hides her is doomed like many young minds. Then, again, if Mrs. Slank were to creep up to the house and peek through the kitchen window, she might gather some revealing information about how Miss Northquist starts her day: there is no paper of current events or heavy tome about educational break-throughs on the kitchen table, no exhuberant egg encrusted plate, no refined marmelade, no hint of what has become the new teacher's coat of arms, the blender full of health foods on a field of wheat sprouts, crossed by the swords of sunshine and travel. On Bobbi Northquist's table is a heavy green ashtray filled with cigarette butts—half with shocking pink lipstick marks, half without—and a depressingly empty coffee perculator, still warm with grounds. And two cheap coffee mugs. Hmmmm.

But Mrs. Slank has seen enough from the bush of whatever it is she has seen. Her dog growls low and Mrs. Slank nods quietly in agreement as they sneak out of the lilacs and pass openly, just an ordinary woman walking her dog now, in front of Miss Northquist's house. Perhaps this episode puts Mrs. Slank in a bad light. She is not a gossipy woman. She will not take any special pride in her new knowledge that Miss Northquist does not mow her grass. This would verge on the ludicrous, and there is nothing ludicrous about Mrs. Slank, despite what seems to be irrefutable evidence to the contrary. Mrs. Slank is driven by some single-minded passion, and for any associate of a junior high to be driven anywhere except crazy is tantamount to a traitorous desertion of junior high principles and ideals. Top this off with the cold and brutal fact that Mrs. Slank has been a small-fry secretary for the last 16 years she has been driven and you have the makings of a modern tragedy, small potatoes though it is.

Where can a secretary, who is privy to the constant flatulant sounds of a junior high principal, be driven? Up the wall? Out to the farm? Into the squirrel bin? It is her delicate footing near madness hat has distinguished Mrs. Slank at Calhoun. Mr. Paul thinks he has the word for it—her competence, being so sickeningly thorough and careful, taking her job too seriously. One could easily make the mistake while listening to Mr. Paul go on about his wonderful secretary and how she runs a tight ship and how he could not get along without her, that Mr. Paul does not believe Mrs. Slank is a horrible abberrance of nature, something akin to a two-headed donkey he read about when he was a boy but never got to see; or the perverted, inferior products he sees everyday now at Calhoun of the ill-fated couplings of parents in the school district, especially on those days of lyceum entertainment when he discovers the little tykes have been at it again and covered his car with rotten eggs and tomatoes instead of being inside learning about the world. It makes him similarly uncomfortable and helpless to discover Mrs.

Slank, in the throes of her competence, filing away his comments, his thoughts for the day, his memoes, his vagrant and throw-away ideas on education, until the busy sounds of her efficient wedgies outside his office door begin to resemble less the squeak of soled rubber on waxed tile floors and more the clank of iron against iron, like a chain being dragged across the penitential floor with his name on it. Some will say that all this was in his head, the product of an overworked imagination, and to a degree it was; but so are genuine ideas, and no one ever accused Mr. Paul of imagining any of those things in his head.

To know morosely that proof of his mediocrities lies ordered in a filing cabinet, like the sinking feeling he has constantly that most people may get the wrong ideas about him just because of the way students at Calhoun act, creates in Mr. Paul a reticence to do his principalling at all. He wishes only to stay in his office, keep it closed from Mrs. Slank's directional ear and counsel quietly every member of the ninth grade motorcycle gang, or the eighth grade karate club, or the seventh grade wrestling team. The door only opens to release a smirking, engineer-booted deliquent, and Mrs. Paul at such times cannot refrain from needling Mrs. Slank just a little. "You treat them as productive members of society, Mrs. Slank," he says, overflowing with the counsellor's patter, "and they'll want to behave like any. . ." Just then one of the seventh grade spies rushes in to tell Mrs. Slank that the principal's car is being leaped over out in the parking lot by that gang on motorcycles. Mrs. Slank has got it all down, he knows, every word, every embarrassment. She takes shorthand too; any effort to suck it all in. Why does there always happen to be these unfortunate coincidences every time he is making a point? He did not want Mrs. Slank knowing that he even wondered about this. He didn't know why, but it sounded stupid. Why did he always want to say stupid things? Afterall, if he were suddenly to be struck dead in two minutes and he knew how little time he had left, Mr. Paul's last wish would be not to have a single dying thought that his secretary could get a hold of, not a single, solitary chance for him to say something else stupid. He would want to be remembered as the principal who held out to the last from Mrs. Slank, from her special brand of torture, and said nothing at all worthwhile.

Mrs. Slank was made quite happy in her early years at Calhoun simply because of her devotion to Mr. Paul's foolishness and to the justice of those coincidences which foiled Mr. Paul's every move and kept him harmless. She had not expected much from life, but she had grown accustomed, in her way, to the quiet, steady orderliness of her surroundings. Part of that orderliness was Mr. Paul, who could not harm a fly, it might aptly be said, without discovering painfully that the fly was a wasp, which then proceeded to keep him pinned down and hiding in his office all day with a red, bulbous nose. Magnify that "fly" under

the powerful optics of philosophy, as Mrs. Slank did, and one could not help noticing the remarkable resemblances of it to certain members of the Calhoun Junior High student body. It was as if suddenly the fly had metamorphosed in Mr. Paul's office, beyond mere wasp into a creature still capable on occasions (one being an aimless rumble of the motorcycle club) of flying through the air and buzzing Mr. Paul. But it was also more than capable of not doing anything more provacative than sitting in Mr. Paul's presence while he counselled and slowly picking its nose or peeling back a scab or making little barking sounds, indicating it had eaten that day in the cafeteria. Mr. Paul found himself unable to concentrate on the helpful advice he felt compelled to give these creatures; also he occasionally heard what he was really saying. In any case, he had to adjourn the counselling for the day. Mr. Paul was not the first principal to lay his head down on his desk in the middle of the afternoon and dream of six hundred squealing, malevolent giants chasing him about the gym with flyswatters. He may have been the first to have the likes of a Mrs. Slank contentedly resigned to her position under him, as though there could be no finer reward in life than to be in the presence of the truely helpless.

How she had come upon such a philosophy—if we may call it that—may never be known. Mrs. Slank had no sudden reservations about Hitler, Stalin or Mussolini when she was in the seventh grade and had to read about these men in the newspaper. It was all very pure and simple. These men were rotten to the core, maybe beyond. She did not want to understand them and how they got to be the way they were. That was one thing she did not want to know. How could she be taught to believe that people could learn to be evil, to kill millions, any more than she could be taught that people learn to be genuinely good? Of course, Mr. Paul was not a little league Mussolini. He wanted to be good like nobody's business and he was good, but always despite himself. His problem was he never recognized his goodness because it always looked so much like badness.

During her early years at Calhoun, Mrs. Slank fondly recalls there was English, Math, Social Studies and Mr. Paul. She saw to it that every student be subjected to at least half an hour alone every year with their principal. The kids called it being in solitary. But also Mrs. Slank wanted Mr. Paul to be in solitary with his students, to constantly feel his God-given futility, to be reminded that he was caged, but quite comfortably, by the world or nature or life or whatever you want to call it. Is it surprising then that Mr. Paul was so popular among students that he felt he could not leave Calhoun now that he was truely in a position where he mattered? Things had a way of working out that way. It wasn't surprising to Mrs. Slank at all, if you think how much delusion is like a piece of flypaper: it is so painless if you're a fly, and obviously beats the flyswatter hands down.

b

Who can fathom one excuse for putting Bobbi Northquist, a young, innocent, unmarried girl herself in charge of little Robin and sweet Janeen as they are educated in the rigorous realities of life? One day during her first year at Calhoun, poor Miss Northquist imagined she could go at any time, unfulfilled and unremembered. This is not a peculiar thought at Calhoun. Not anymore. Now it is quite common and quite popular to think of going. Mrs. Delamar, who is robust and moves among students without a single notion of hazard pay, teaches two hugh sections of Dead, a word that has strangely become a euphemism to describe Mrs. Delamar's frightening idea of the Ultimate Passing. She thinks of going constantly. She revels in the idea of an old-fashioned diaster which can bring her points home. She says there is a wonderful, old fatalism about life still alive in the Orient but which for the most part we have lost. In Hong Kong, she says enthused, just think, those people are going right and left, and people your age, she tells her classes, are lucky to get to be your age. Occasionally, some student will feel thankful, but Mrs. Delamar does not push thankfulness among her students as much as the joyful realization of their grinding, stupid mortality, until by the end of their junior high years whole classes from Calhoun have irresistable urges to suffer from the meaninglessness of death by being drawn into high-speed automobile accidents or dangerous crash diets. Any survivors making it into high school see the finger of guilt motioning to them from the porcelined and tiled tombs of Calhoun to remember, remember.

Now there are legions at Calhoun who hover around thirteen years of age and beg to tell everyone that they are going to go at home when they go. They wish to go without pain killers for a while to be able to know the "reality" of their situation. When they can no longer stand the reality, they want to personally administer their own pain killers, an overdose if necessary in front of the family, which must also be separated from any illusion it may have about going. But, sure, if some poor devil who needs a kidney in St. Louis says he does not really want to go even though he threatens to go if nobody will help him, then arrange to have your kidneys packed in ice, which will be some more reality for you, even though you are gone. They are very informed and articulate on the subject because it has all been discussed thoroughly in Dead classes. What a puny, childish thing of Miss Northquist to suddenly fear that she could go at anytime; certainly she will go, and why not? The saddest thing is that Miss Northquist might have some trouble getting her family to watch her go; it's not anything serious, such as might occur if her family had been totally wiped out in a car-train collision when Bobbi was sleeping over night at a friend's, but it seems that Bobbi does not get along very well with her Dad, and it's just easier for them to

avoid each other. Anyway, one way or another something can be worked out so that the truth will free the Northquist family.

What this does show is that there are certain disciplines at Calhoun which Bobbi Northquist is not qualified to teach. Dead, for one, is out of her league.

When she arrived at Calhoun, Bobbi had come on the rebound from a college romance. She wanted a new start, the flush of bloom again. It is an old story, not worth repeating, except by way of revealing the actual preparedness of our teachers as they enter into the mainstream of their usefulness. In Bobbi's case, after being quiet for the longest time one afternoon in the Spring of her senior year, she leaped upon her boyfriend's back, raking her thermos against his right ear (they were eating sack lunches in a leafy, Socratic grove) and taking out his hair like crabgrass. It was not pretty. A total stranger pried them apart. The boyfriend wanted some affable explanation. He was dumbfounded. Bobbi was inelegant. "You stupid prick," she said. Was the boyfriend secretely thankful that Bobbi had given him an out? Afterall it's one thing to get into the daily habit of going with a girl like Bobbi, but it's another to imagine anything coming of it. Would the nearness of graduation make Bobbi desperate to say things to her boyfriend she had never said before? Wouldn't it just be easier to end things now? But no one could possibly know what was on the boyfriend's mind. He was so oblivious to having drawn himself into a set of rules governing the attachments between human beings, which even includes the simple sharing of harmless hickeys, that Bobbi never got any further under his skin than being described as "this fantastic chick I know." This was a compliment, not a committment.

Suddenly, Bobbi saw a real need to retool her thinking. How could I love him? How could I? she asked herself in the thrall of her stereo, as it pumped out drooling musical confessions about inconstant love almost as fast as Bobbi could come up with her own. It seemed that her problems all of a sudden were very strange, mysterious and lifelike, but just the proper kind of strange, mysterious and lifelike that belongs in a classroom, where education is usually taken too literally to be understood for the sake of a greater knowledge of good and evil. (At Calhoun that same Spring Bobbi was trying to scratch out her boyfriend's eyes, there was barely a blink when Mrs. Slank picked up Macbeth, Penguin edition, during her coffee break, with a rage focusing on her own delinquencies, and suddenly blurted out to her fellow workers, "Here's a son-of-a-bitch no one ever told me about." Her fellow workers, all part-time secretarial aids, who did not want good sense but longer coffee breaks, giggled, but that was by way of saying, "If you're so smart, Mrs. Slank, go talk with Mr. Paul.")

Bobbi had never read Macbeth either, and she was graduating from a university with a degree in Education. What this means—getting a degree in Education, not having not read Macbeth—cannot be talked about with any sense of awe and wonder, which leaves one genuinely speechless and as near to the old idea of what an education should do, as imagining a human sprouting wings and becoming as free as he was meant to be. In all her classes Bobbi could not be still, and Bobbi's boyfriend was far less still than Bobbi. This is why he was the best student in Education and Bobbi was just typical. This criterion of difference between Bobbi and her boyfriend may be difficult to fathom sensibly, but it is nothing like trying to figure out if the best student in Education says anything more important than the average student. It was such a shock to Bobbi, basking in her boyfriend's incredible glibness, to find that he could not say anything of importance, meaning he could say plenty but never what Bobbi wanted him to say. He could tell her most carefully about meaningful relationships, or complex relationships, or comparative relationships, or free relationships. He subscribed to eight magazines, all of which were so gripped by the popularity of the female experience as a topic of endless articulateness that males who make up most of their readership imagine the women who live around them to be vaguely unreal, much like a theme topic or a diagram of a sentence. Bobbi's boyfriend had seven opinions about the character of Macbeth (most of these had to do with what kind of a person he would have been if he hadn't been Macbeth), three about himself, and one about Bobbi. As it ended up, Bobbi was speechless and to such a degree that she could no longer talk pleasantly about the situation of their relationship. She simply went for his head with the empty thermos in an effort to make him speechless. Of course, he wanted to talk some more, nevertheless; so Bobbi packed up her life, cartoon-drawn as it was, peeled back a swath of free, open country between herself and Education and found Calhoun Junior High.

What she learned in her first year at Calhoun was how much farther she had come than she intended. On several occasions, while fighting off the highly-educated advances of Ted Bruno, vice-principal at Calhoun, Bobbi knew she had gone so far that it seemed she was returning full circle, and her escape had really been the crudest kind of joke. Mr. Bruno saw no reason not to interpret Bobbi's glowering silences (she had found herself saying less and snickering more) in response to his constant talk about his hypothetical feelings and administrative charms as the rapt attention of a very shy girl. He had gone out with a lot of girls who did not even let him get a word in edgewise, and he had to listen to the most inane drivel about setting hair and how to get rid of cold sores and who is the best dressed eighth-grader for her age and how nobody can say what you're really thinking if you don't want them to. He also had gone out with a few girls who never even gave him a

chance to talk and told him to get lost, even as he sat next to them in his own car, or said they would scream rape if he said one thing more. One girl he took out three or four times and had some difficulty getting over slammed his head against the steering wheel twice when they were parked up on Mervin's point. But Mr. Bruno had never come across a girl who was as silent as Bobbi, who knew what he was talking about, he felt, like no one else he had ever met. When he gave her his theories about Education, she had such a look of painfully intense thought that he could tell she did not just respect his position, she respected his mind. She made him feel like he was the only man alive, like he wasn't just a vice-principal at a podunk junior high but a man of vision, the silver-tongued devil himself. It was hard to put into words, and, as he did for that girl who surprised him up on Mervin's point and didn't want to talk about it afterwards, he felt for Bobbi something really deep and basic.

Bruno was compelled to tell Bobbi, as he tried to snake his arm around the shy girl, that he could get her the two sections of Dead. It seems Mrs. Delamar had been struck down over the Christmas holiday with a mysterious tropical disease, quite unusual, the Drs. agreed, for someone who had never been out of the midwest. Only Mrs. Slank had ideas about its origin. Mrs. Delamar is not dead, but she will be soon, her students thought. But she was back for the beginning of second semester, sporting a nervous tick below her left eye and a frightening smile, capable of terrifying the biggest hoods on the back row. It was the hoods during the second semester who began to complain to Mr. Paul, like serious scholars, that Mrs. Delamar was going for weeks now without ever mentioning what the course was supposed to be about. They knew what the course was supposed to be about because they had taken it before; it was the easiest course they had ever flunked, and it was always about what it was supposed to be about. But now Mrs. Delamar was cheating them and making them take vocabulary tests to learn how to spell dorky, irrelevant words like "ritechus" and to develop a new ear, whatever Mrs. Delamar meant by that, for the experience of meanings for which words are made. Mr. Paul did not know what this meant either, so he and the hoods talked about Dead in his office, and he learned which hood let the air out of his tires and which one put rocks in his carburator. After one of these jovial meetings in which Mr. Paul came out of his office, laughing in Mrs. Slank's direction because one of the boys had lifted his paperweight which he had been trying to give away for three years, Mr. Paul suddenly went confidential with Mrs. Slank, one of those rare occasions when he challenged his secretary to find fault with his opinions. It was his feeling, he said, that Mrs. Delamar was not doing a bad job at all, if she compelled the underachievers to complain like everybody else; at least their complaints showed that they took an interest in education. It was usually at a point

like this when a whining student would rush in and say something critical and unnecessary about the innocent behavior of a bunch of hoods with a paperweight and the retarded janitor in the men's restroom. So Mr. Paul looked around quickly, preparing to be humbled once again in front of his secretary. But when there was no sign, no sign at all, of a frenzied, malicious tattle-tail, he hurried on and told Mrs. Slank in the steadiest voice he could muster that this entire episode over Mrs. Delamar signalled perhaps a new period at Calhoun, when the traditional schism between administration and faculty would disappear in his own new capacity as philosopher-principal to malcontented students. Just then a sallow-faced little spy zipped in to tell Mrs. Slank about the kinds of fruity refreshment available at the eighth-grade class party on Friday, but Mr. Paul without explanation had already disappeared into his office like a whipped dog, where he stayed the rest of the day without relief.

Now Mr. Bruno really had no power to get Bobbi Northquist those two sections of Dead, even if Mrs. Delamar had not returned from her sickness. He had promised them to her after he had taken Bobbi to see a triple drive-in feature (Dracula, in the first, stalks the halls of an all-girl high school, looking for the luscious editor of the yearbook The Banshee. The handsome physics teacher, with the help of an entire home economics class, makes his move against the fiend, using simple principles of applied science involving ramps, pulleys and screws). Bobbi would not sit in the same car at the drive-in with Mr. Bruno but insisted, without saying a word, that she would sit in a lawnchair back in the light of the concession stand. To Mr. Bruno, seeing his girl, the shy one who respected his thoughts and not his elevated position, slipping away from him out the car door, Dead was the only bribe he could make under the circumstances. He thought it might make a difference in the way the evening was turning out. He had offered to other, less well-endowed new teachers Soul, the course restricted to ninth-grade ethnics, Nugs, the required course on sexual neuroses and fly-by-night thrills, and Rap, a course on consciousness-raising, in which the best students had father's who were chronically brutal and unemployed and mother's who were hard-luck waitresses with silly streaks. Those kids in Rap who had parents with ordinary jobs and mortgages learned from the best students that they were deprived of poverty and slum privileges and, therefore, did not know what they were talking about—even though, after finding they were deprived of life's pain and degradation, they never talked at all.

Now Bruno could not imagine anyone, even a shy someone right out of Education school, being able to turn down Dead. But Bobbi Northquist turned it down. There she was, still demure and withdrawn, in the lawnchair by the hotdog rotisserie. What a woman, thought Bruno, looking up at Bobbi in his rearview mirror just as the vampire rushed at dawn to the safety of his coffin, which was hidden in a broom closet

just around the corner from the all-girl school cafeteria. Bruno's complement to Bobbi was an accolade signifying nothing. He was not thinking he had grievously repelled his date with insubstantial offers of Dead. In fact, he decided immediately, as he looked upon her distant form in the mirror, that he had not offered enough. Perhaps Dead alone was too insubstantial, and she was really holding out for both Dead and Nugs.

Mr. Bruno had a blind fool's fear of himself, meaning he had no fear at all of the consequences of his deeds, only a terrible desire to appear enthusiastic like a trained neurotic. Consequently, he could hardly help himself from dittoing streams of memos to teachers so they would prod students to return books, to clean off lunchroom tables, to not congregate in the halls and giggle. He was so busy trying to appear enthusiastic about his concern that suddenly, without his even realizing it, memoing became his passion, until he blended with the ditto machine in much the same way an artist becomes his canvas. All conversations—even on dates—reminded him in small ways of some memo he had forgotten to make, and so he was never quite aware of the real meaning of what was being said or thought in his presence. That Bobbi went off to sit by herself reminded him to fix a memo Monday morning, but the memo was not concerned at all with his broken heart. If he ever had a broken heart it was maybe once when the ditto machine broke down without a word, and education at Calhoun reminded him of a lunch table being covered higher and higher with leftover sloppy Joes and melting jello salads, until he could stand it no longer and personally monitored the cafeteria like a grim sentry, waiting for just one milk carton to be left behind.

When Mrs. Oakley was backed over by her husband's Buick outside their home, was it due to Mr. Bruno's wishful thinking or was there something of Mrs. Slank's humble divinations involved? Mrs. Oakley filed for divorce from the hospital bed, and, as it turned out, Bobbi Northquist, very single, was assigned on the spur of the moment and late in the semester to take over Mrs. Oakley's seventh grade Modern Marital Relationships and Human Situational and Subsequent Attitudinal Cross-Sectional Sensibilities class, nicknamed Nort by students for no other reason than the name Nort, like Nugs, Rap and Soul, seemed to make perfect junior high sense.

Mr. Bruno felt elated. Had he indeed been responsible for Bobbi's new position, just as he had promised her? Truely, he was flabberghasted and almost speechless, but nothing like the speechless Bobbi, who, being taken away from the safe morals of Silas Marner and the proper spellings of state capitals, suddenly found her voice. She drafted a memo, which, incidentally, was lying under a coffee mug on her kitchen table like a suicide note the day Mrs. Slank, halfheartedly walking her dog, went to check out the new Nort teacher. The memo was

addressed to all parents and was entitled, "Are Your Children in Proper Hands?"

Much of it is aimless and strangely dispassionate, like the numb castigations of a professional victim looking for a good diaster. Nort is good enough and seems to invite a sudden articulate invective from Miss Northquist. But the sarcasm cannot belie the thrill she recognizes in herself at being invited to participate in her own victimlessness. There is only the slightest hint that she enjoys Nort immensely, a subtlety for which Mr. Quigley, superintendent of the school district, is not paid any extra to recognize in the little pile of crank mail he finds on his desk each morning. He received his copy of the memo from Pago Pago later than did most parents of students who were in Miss Northquist's Nort class. Some parents were slightly enraged and one or two got so wound up as to demand from Mr. Quigley some explanation. According to the well-known lawyer Mr. Quigley retained, there is no record that the Office of the Superintendent ever received such a note, and consequently it must be regarded as a harmless little prank, perhaps a well-meaning experiment engineered by a group of good students in one of the more progressive creative writing courses being administered this Spring to test and guage the reaction of parents to the written word (do you think it's dead?), no matter what is said.

Memo: Are Your Children in Proper Hands?

Yes, there is a harmless story going around the halls of school (The Calhoun Black Jack and Switchblade Junior High) that your sweet child's seventh grade teacher, Miss Bobbi Northquist, has spurned all relationships with big-wheel vice-principal of Black Jack, Mr. Ted Bruno. Do not be deeply concerned for your child. There was only a tiff, and a tiff is like a tethered doggy, as I tell your beloved daughter in class: he can still growl ferociously, but he is so funny-looking trying to chase and bite you. Ted—may I address him as your son does?—tells me how reasonable he could be if I would only be reasonable. But, he says, I put him on my level. Could anything be more untrue? Ted, I said, screw yourself please. You will notice I did not say all deals are off, although I can see how a little impressionable human being like your Kathie, bright beyond her years, would jump to such a logical conclusion. Our marvelous Marital Relations class had just finished discussing the innocent notion of the diseased merger. But as you certainly know disease

is only the passing fancy leading toward death. And don't we all die in some sense every day? Even at Black Jack? It is so silly to worry. Right? But you can see how your children, who are getting their first taste of disease in the public school system (unless you are wonderfully open and have been holding up examples of disease to sonny since age two), would tend to forget all the gradual and painful steps between the first symptoms and the final result, which sonny gets in the ninth grade when we pair him up in mock marriage and he learns very quickly that nothing has to last. We can't hurry these things or skip all the grades simply because your Gina with her enormous brainpan reads five symbolic books a week and wants to inhale the psychology of the Russian worker this summer, while dreamer Bud is content sitting under an elm, sampling dog-do. There is an equally important emotional development involved here, and while your angel-faced Becky, with enormous chestpan, has learned a great deal after school among the lilac bushes behind the gym with Stan Becker, who likes the course so much he is taking it again, we must not underestimate Becky's real passions, squealing in the halls and shouting "nerd bait" and "dork".

c

Mrs. Slank and I have never had any children of our own. Plans were hatched to adopt, but one thing led to another and nothing as simple and normal as a child came of it. Whether this abused Mrs. Slank of the notion completely, I really can't say for sure. There appears to be something vaguely traitorous about the whole subject—we don't press it at least, without finally pretending silently that the whole thing will go away. But of course if things had gone as we once expected, then Colleen Paulette, which is only one name we had discussed, would have been in the seventh grade this year. I am reminded of this each time I see Eunice's purebred dachshund stud. She breeds him like a rabbit and has a separate account in his name—her mad money.

Several ingenious neighbors of ours with children to burn send their little darlings over to our yard to play catch or throw tantrums. Eunice is always flushed out from wherever she is in the house to arbitrate their disputes, such like a trained principal or lawyer, not a meddling, childless secretary. Consequently, neighbors think of me as the guilty party, the one who kept poor Mrs. Slank from fulfilling her mothering urge.

When I'm not working, I stick close to several hobbies and Eunice has never gotten out of the habit of bringing down to my basement workshop chocolate chip cookies or a piece of angel food cake when I'm busy in the late evening on a woodworking project.

I met my wife through a mutual acquaintance. I was working for a legal aid foundation, which enjoyed placing the obviously guilty in the hands of idealists like myself, then explaining, quite calmly, that it can make no difference whether a client is guilty or not. It was a little like warming your hands over the hot coals of your client, just burned at the stake; I was all toasty thinking what I had done for him in his defense and how every civilized system must function more on faith and trust in an invisible impartial justice, than on a selfish moral responsibility to oneself. This is especially true of the guilty client, who must believe he is being dealt with fairly and impartially, has every chance for justice, or else he would begin to feel singled out for punishment and not really as free as the next fellow to do what he likes to do any day of the week.

Eunice's brother, who was our mutual acquaintance, had shop-lifted a woman's brassiere, three doilies and an aqua-green leotard outfit. I was assigned the case and in a little less than two months had pursued and conquered with impunity my real objective: marrying my client's beautiful sister. As for Brian, her brother, a nice kid basically, who confused a lawyer's passion for his defense (he never understood that when I questioned him repeatedly about the brassiere, I was asking about his sweet sister) with an eventual dismissal of all charges, he was remanded to a psychiatric agency filled with young idealists, one of which saw Brian acting out complicated hostilities against his family (he could explain all but the taking of the third doily). Just to make sure his diagnosis fit, he wanted to take Brian's sister out himself and talk to her. Sorry, too late, this idealist saw her first.

From the very beginning, Eunice was my perfect compliment. I wanted to drift down into Southern California and set up my own practice. I had responsibilities now, and the laws of greed were attractively localized around the sunny southern reaches in the area of divorce proceedings and subsequent settlements. While Eunice had seen to it that her parents—third generation removed from the hills of Albania—were supplied with glowing reports on the healthy conditions of their adopted country's rights and freedoms in the hands of public servants like myself, there was no real need for her to carry her false pride to ridiculous lengths. It was bound to come out that I was thinking of trafficing in broken promises and was helping ultimately to dispense babies into private and military schools because their separated parents did not know what else to do with them.

Mr. Stuet, Eunice's father (from the Albanian Stuetopolochev) had a flawless chatter about the grocery business and his uncomfortable dependency on fresh produce picked by wetbacks. Eunice was not really

worried about what her father would think of my plans, she told me. But her mother, that would be another story. Her mother still spoke in a thick accent, dressed in a pale, formless sack dress and combed back her short black hair like a man, until she telegraphed a kind of nostalgically despondent brillantine smell of wintergreen and goulash, which old Americans many generations off the boat still vaguely sense means betrayal because any longer they only find such comforting smells in funeral homes at the precise moment the crypt is opened. Mrs. Stuet had this look of absolute, remorseless certainty, and I believe if she had not said a word I could understand, only stared at me solemnly and severely, I might have succumbed to the exalted disgust for myself of which Eunice thinks I am truely capable. But Mrs. Stuet began talking so fast and carelessly about the patriotic joy of new citizenship now that I was there (your regular American settler, your legal tender) and about monied possibilities in grocery dreams that even in her inexpressible loquacities it was clear that mother was not resisting change so much as universalizing it, slumming among the ancient notions of a new greed and a delicious envy, until the purity and quilelessness of her old world dress and speech made her seem less the picture of raw innocence than a carnival poster made to entice the locals to the naked charms of the gypsy lady.

Eunice did her best to explain my immoral position to her mother, but while it was impossible to do, it was also unnecessary. Everything was fine with mother. She was so proud. Would we buy a house by the sea? But mother, Eunice kept saying. But mother. . .

Eunice almost went to tears, and I went puttering between my in-laws, admitting with such fervency that I was a weak man (I began beating my palm against my chest as is common among Eastern Europeans making a point about an empty soul) that both parents sent out peals of laughter and held me like an Albanian lodge brother. The evening ended with Eunice's father giving me a cigar in the tiny foreign port of the living room after Eunice and her mother went sullenly off to do the dish-washing. Finally father grunted in the pleasant silence, and when I looked over, he was motioning hopelessly with his cigar at the ceiling, which I took to be Albanian sign language for the mysterious inevitable moods of mothers and daughters. Women.

After that, the newly weds moved to the midwest—the small town, the rooted strength, the blind righteousness. It was all very sudden, but it was what Eunice wanted beyond everything else, had wanted all her life, she said.

She immediately took her position at Calhoun, as though the lull in the wake of our move might prove more sensless and yawning than it was. A friend of mine, who had gone to school with me and had apprenticed him-self on the indigent on the East coast, wrote to tell us to get in touch with a fraternity brother of his who lived out in my area, meaning my state.

I toyed with the idea of starting my own practice here, but there was something too permanently frail and tired, like the indelible murmurings of dying crickets which you don't find as noticeable in California.

I went into the fraternity brother's firm, which had offices all across the state like a chicken-eating franchise. Occasionally the financial mood of the country dictated the flow of clients to my door and the alarm of their complaints, business contracts being the fulcrum of my newly honorable trade. But for the most part the grip of some confused, rankling bitterness would boil up across my desk irrespective of the times in the form of an angry confession to a priest of infidelity or guilty misjudgement or convenient shortsightedness, and I would suitably advise an approach to best protect the client's feelings. Amazing how the confidential ear hears the worst without ever going deaf.

I did not think it necessary to tell Eunice of my unique position among the local corporate community as moral and legal counsel. There is a certain anthropological delight in suddenly coming across unusual nervous mannerisms and all the varied kinds of guilty behavior. Looking across the desk into the strange native faces of that breed of men called clients suggests how innocent I am and utterly incorruptible. Eunice sometimes fails to remember how interested I was in her brother, another specimen of the aboriginal crook, and how infinitely helpless the facts of a case can be once you have gathered them. The facts are all looking for a face and voice, your face and voice, to be the only, true genuine shameless fact.

Since I gave up for love the simple dreams of handling a mass of little suburban divorcements, quietly and efficiently, I have become the firm's colorful representative from "out there". What this means, aside from the big city, calculated provincialism about my particular franchise (I wonder if at the firm's main office they speak of me as their Kit Carson, blazing legal trials among the savages, who sign in blood and pay in pigs.), is that I have inherited—and to a surprising degree without real effort—what is known as country savey, as though I have soaked up from the friendly heartland air the born cleverness of the fox and the quick gregarious urge of the otter. I have bought into a herd of cattle and nothing could be more right for my image.

Even citizens who have been out here all their lives, whose grandparents and greater grandparents settled this area in wagon trains, use my name, (as though I were the boyhood friend who went on to greatness), to endorse their own worth, to give that langorous impression to a citified cousin of dumb like a fox. And this after years of feeling dumb like a cluck for not making the escape when they were younger and they first began smelling their own decay coming up around them from the compost heap of promises. Why had they been placed out here in this desolate hell of missed opportunity? Was it a test to see when they would break and what they would learn before they did? Were they to learn

acceptance, the slow resignation to death with only enough property and pride to make their waking hours as narrow and bitter as a switch? This is not what they wanted to learn. They wanted to learn how not to feel guilty for staying and how to be as free as their stupid ancestors, who didn't have to get off the stupid wagon train out here, out in nowhere land, but could have had just a little trust, a little faith in themselves and where they were going to go and what it would mean for their children.

If they had stayed for the ride, how would our history, as taught at Calhoun, been changed? The wagon train would have slithered west across the country like a great winding snake, gathering speed, faster and faster, putting settling land and roots behind it. . . until it came to the place where the big water hissed back. But it couldn't stop cleanly. It didn't want to stop. It wanted more. From its head to its tail it wanted more. It put on its brakes though angry as a cornered rattler, reared up off its whispering belly till its head reached back in perfect vengeance and bit its neck called Californee and bit the length of its spine in a million places all the way back across the Mississip. Its tail rattled lastly in its throat, and the big fella rolled over and over, coming to a dead agreement with itself out in the woods and prairie that were everywhere. People are now seen driving up in rivulets of trailers, pine-scented inside. They park in the skeleton. Where the bones crumble, hot dogs and peanuts are sold. And ice cold beer.

No doubt you are familiar with my recent fame. It has been rather a surprise to Eunice because of her peculiar vision of life as a judgement made clear. But if it is a judgement, I have accepted it gratefully, humbly almost, and feel little of the surprised awe and wonder which Eunice can muster now at the drop of a hat. This morning I left the new issue of _Sports Illustrated_ open on the breakfast table. There I was, standing like a shy moose with my arm around Croaker Phillips, that little ole dumb country boy from the coast with an arm like a howitzer. I had just helped his professional baseball team to arrive at some judgement of Croaker's worth. That's all. I don't suppose Eunice will be much interested in the magazine's description of hubby as a fiercely competitive codger, crafty and righteous, the new breed stock being introduced into an old game, a shrewd blend of John Brown on the Mount and a used car salesman from Encino. Her interest may be tickled when she finds that I have accepted Mr. Paul's gracious invitation to speak at a lyceum in the near future. My topic? asked Mr. Paul, reminding me not to underestimate the maturity of today's younger audience. Does Crime Pay? I said without hesitation. Uh huh uh huh, very fine, said Mr. Paul.

d

Mr. Paul has received a number of complaints from parents about Calhoun's recent lyceum programs, especially after that Marimba band, made up of rapists from the Federal prison, was allowed to perform just before the Christmas break. Mr. Paul was affably persuasive at the P. T. A. special meeting. He said he hoped he would be able to counsel parents about the dangers that erupt when children are not given access to all the differing points of view, all the facts presented objectively. Many parents were calmed somewhat to discover that the prisoners were performing on a federal grant. But in the end a father, speaking for the angry complaintants, wondered aloud how many little girls like his daughter were thinking at the time about the glories of Caribbean music. Eunice looked tired.

The father went on to say he tends not to want to know. Mr. Paul eagerly applauded the man's right to speak his views and to stand behind them. He agreed, nodding like a cork in the Gulf Stream, to be more careful in his program selections for the future, but privately, as Mrs. Slank could report, he is bitter; and perhaps in the end we will lose another dedicated educator to the more progressive California school system. Not a single parent has said anything bad about Mr. Paul's lyceum selections of Theo Pepe Armitage, the South African clarivoyant, or Phillip Hyerhang from New Jersey, whose ability to memorize the locker combinations of the ninth graders was an astounding feat of learning. So Mr. Paul cannot, in fairness, be called a completely incompetent administrator. He simply believes that every bit of knowledge is equally important, and parents must come to realize that all knowledge good and bad builds the foundations of our freedoms. The sons and daughters accept this without hesitation, and, perhaps, muses Mr. Paul to Mrs. Slank for her file, this perspective will rub off on poor unfortunate fathers, who complain about lyceum programs and modern teaching methods. Anyway, whether it rubs off or not, he says, Calhoun's students will be the fathers and mothers of tomorrow.

e

Mr. Frequently Jones turned out to be a small balding man with a gap between his front teeth. Mr. Paul heard from his sources that Mr. Jones did dramatic readings from all the great religious writings, without pushing any one religion, and that he had some kind of slide show along with the readings, probably slides of your various holy rites around the world. One of Mr. Paul's sources was Mrs. Ross Etheltit, an elderly lady who had raised four outstanding young boys in the fifties to go on to successful practices around the country. She sat on the school board, from where she gazed without any immediate recognition upon a paunchy hairless man, who introduced himself late one afternoon to the board. He said he was

a traveller stepped in the lore of the world and had been booked into Calhoun by a Mr. Paul.

It is quite unusual for the lyceum entertainment to be previewed before the board, said Mrs. Etheltit. But Mr. Jones assured them that it was very common at other schools across the nation in the face of so many questionable programs presented to boys and girls in the name of educational entertainment. In no way would he consider it an imposition to be grilled by such an eminent group. Didn't they want to know exactly what their young charges would be getting day after tomorrow? There was a long silence. World traveller, Mrs. Etheltit thought to herself. She might ask him to name four countries that begin with G. But instead she asked Mr. Jones, point blank, if he had ever been to Pago Pago. Yes, said Mr. Jones. Wonderful experience. Many natives. Blue waters.

So it was set. Mr. Frequently Jones was memoed to the teachers as the widely travelled scholar with actual experiences among many of the world's oddities. There was sure to be three or four classes the morning before the lyceum which could avail themselves of Mr. Jones' wordly patter by breaking into groups of five to eight and discussing their bubbly enthusiasms about the world while Mr. Jones went from group to group, listening and taking notes.

Miss Northquist volunterred to take Mr. Jones around and introduce him to the Calhoun faculty and staff. This was a great relief to Mr. Bruno, who saw the possibilities in himself of creating from nothing a dynamic speaker on the after-dinner circuit and had jumped at the chance, since he had been at Calhoun, of attaching himself to performers like Pepe Armitage. He vaguely hoped that they could give him some idea of what to say when he was sought after to speak. But in the case of Pepe, the clairavoyant was a cantankerous man in private; and privately he was from Houston, not South Africa. He told Bruno, more as a joke than educated advice, not to get hemorrhoids if he could avoid them and, more educated advice than a joke, not to trust a kid past the second grade and only then if you were prepared to face your Maker with the same surprised look you gave to a loud fart at a Christmas party. Bruno had a sudden foreboding about his forensic possibilities when Pepe went quiet as a tomb an hour before lyceum. Bruno was sure Pepe was reading his mind and did not have a single thing to say about such a reading that was not obvious to a second grader immediately.

When Mrs. Slank came home for lunch the day of the lyceum, she told her famous lawyer-husband (who was fixing an egg salad sandwich despite having his picture in Sport's Illustrated) that Mr. Paul had arrived late this morning all out of breath. She did not say why, if a dog had chased him around the school before allowing him to enter, or if he was counselling his family late into the night and had overslept. That he was out of breath and late was enough: the automatic notetaker's automatic eye, no longer feeding from the incensed heart. Eunice has grown capable of the half-fact while at Calhoun.

I offer to make her a sandwich. She is wearing her typing costume, a green sleeveless efficiency bag. Was it five years ago that she cut off all that beautiful black hair, those dark Eastern European follicles with healthy Indo-European roots? Was it the year Bruno came to Calhoun? Or Dead sneaked into the curriculum like a starved puppy? To look at Eunice—I cannot help from expressing myself as an anthropologist—is to see a certain grossly interesting betrayal of resolve, a displacement of bitter disappointment or any other heated feeling by a weighted mass of years and more than a few little sinking beliefs in her inviolability.

She is loony, she is crazy, and whatever else educators say about her in the teacher's lounge because she depends on their fatuities, observing and recording them, almost as much as they do when they manufacture them for use among students. They once talked about her as the conspiratorial half-wit in the main office, but now they invite her opinions, if she has any, in hopes that hers are different. They are anxious to appear casual, normally unconcerned, as though they would have it no other way than to be involved with minor disagreements in order to arrive at the salad bowl decision that everyone can agree to. It is called a form of respect. They would like an honorable but painless way of learning.

"Did you use all the mayonaise?" Mrs. Slank asks. She never had the accent her mother enunciates daily, the thickly clotted, consistent flow of innocuous hungry charm, like bottled spring water from a tourist's shop which is purchased for its name, not its curative powers. But Eunice's voice has been growing a tinny calm, an empty painless curricular oration, calling up deathly subtractions of oranges and apples and the statistical muteness of graphs and charts.

When she bends across the table for the mayonaise, there is a glint of adolescent down on her forearm, such a softness waiting by the edge of age. Has it been sixteen years? She must say we should go again. Leave here. We have paid our dues. She must scream from the cleverly disguised pastures of anguish and pain, where all the passionless little minds look quizzical and hurt and are about to say, "but what did I do? I didn't do anything." She must not coddle them in her files, in those huge green efficiency boxes grown respectably alphabetical and no longer ordered by disgust and the irredeemably cantankorous charm of hostility. She must begin compiling to care and cure again until the shame of Mr. Paul puts on helmet and goggles and boots and lets the air out of his thoughts and soaps his gall and generally behaves badly in front of himself.

"What's the lyceum today?" the lawyer asks.

"I met him this morning. Somebody Jones. Looks very stupid. Our Miss Northquist seems impressed anyway."

"What does he do? Yodel the Star Spangled Banner?"

Eunice looks up cynical and bored from the final act of her Penguin edition of Othello. It is commendable how the secretary to the

principal has nearly eliminated the cannon of Shakespeare from her list of required readings. (Is it this Spring or next Fall that she finishes her degree in Education?)

I am very close to blows, feeling I should flail out for balance, for the complemental guilt again that makes me toe the line for my own mortal soul.

"Is she old?" I ask.

"Who whose whom?" Mrs. Slank remarks, yawning. She has gotten up and gone over to baby her plants on the sill of the kitchen window.

"Why, did you know, for example, that Mr. Paul has been almost rejuvinated since his secretary's husband became so famous?" she says, learning to whine in this affectionate and effortless manner from the endless parade of the tardy and truant whose excuses she has ciphered for the file one after the other for 16 years.

"I'm the same gentle soul. Maybe more gentle than famous?"

"Mr. Paul has been asking the girls in the office what kind of pizza they like. Pizzas they know forewards and backwards. It's highly stimulating. Their conversation. That picture in the magazine made you look bloaty. My girls all say, 'but you didn't tell us he was so bloaty.'"

"I am bloaty. I'm a goddamn slob."

"I have to explain to the girls how photography works. If I don't, they'll just jump to any old silly conclusion about my famous husband. So I tell them that photographers know how to wait to get the picture they want. They want you to look bad so they. . ." She is tipped foreward over the sink, looking out the window.

"Well, que sera sera, there's the Taylor's dog again. Right on my roses. Would you do something for me? Never mind. Get out. Scat." She raps against the window several times, beating on her own reflection. Finally she stops, goes over, opens the kitchen door and strides out into the backyard. The Taylor dog lopes off without fear into the Beasley's lawn. Eunice stands by her defiled roses, glaring past them. She is the frontier wife, waiting at dusk for her husband to return. The slow, grinding pace as she circles her rose bed in secretarial green, weeping for all her lost sons and departed daughters. The signature of her wedgies upon the tailored Bermuda, and the frying heat like woolen blankets against her cheek. If she placed her ear to the ground now, she would hear the Taylor dog patting down his territory in a hundred new developments like Birch Tree Estates and Falling Willow Heights and Rabbit Warren. Then she would look up and see her husband, grown strong by his long ride through the desperate straights, standing in the doorway at the back of the ranch house, big as a horse, safe at last. Somebody should make up some legends about him.

"That Taylor dog," she mumbles almost apologetic, as if this forelorn detachment from her man were generated by forces she could not

avoid. The menace of the Taylor dog for one. The provider should gather his family together somehow. Strengthen their holds with stories of arduous tasks they've overcome and how the morning will dawn sweet and clean as a newborn fawn.

"There's a wind coming up," she says as she comes back to the house.

I have her by the arm and say. . . I say nothing. The wind is coming up, a fact through which the anchor of the world is bound. And Eunice Slank, my wife, so avidly calm these days, so burdened by the deadweight of her filings and the moral dealings for a degree, gathers up her Shakespeare and fidgeting dachshund before stalking out into the elements again to stand her ground.

f

"Learning occurs in very dark places," begins Mr. Frequently Jones, with the same slow steady voice that has gently punctuated twenty minutes of slides. There is a slide of the smokey desolate peaks of Tibet with their unearthly calm; one of the jungle encampment in the remote rain forests of the Philipines where ten recently discovered men eat their first cornflakes and worship a two-man helicopter; another of a fallen, primitive idol with broken arms being hauled away from its mother the Amazon in an old Ford pickup.

"Dull minds are very dark places, aren't they?" he asks evenly. "Have you heard that one before?"

Yes, they had heard that one. Mr. Bruno was taking notes in a dancing abbreviated style familiar to memoes.

"Good," said Mr. Jones. "I have a very dull mind. It is very dark. But when I let education in, I am reminded of a story. That is what a real education does. It makes a story. Can I depend on you to listen to a story?"

Yes, he could depend on them.

"Good," said Mr. Jones. "Now, before I begin, you must imagine an apple. An apple is easy to imagine. Why is that? But I want you to imagine a blue apple. Does it taste good?" Mr. Jones looks over in the dim light at Mr. Paul who politely dozes against the waterfountain near the door. "Yes, like no other apple you have ever tasted. And if someone asks you what it tastes like, you say it tastes like a blue apple. That is not hard to remember because it is the only answer there is. No, excuse me, I'm very sorry. There is another answer, of course. If you have eaten a lot of blue apples, there is no reason not to say, 'I was thinking just such and such when I had my ninth blue apple. I try to get it out of my mind but I just can't.' Or you say, 'I was doing this or that while I ate my seventeenth, and it is so embarrassing I could die.' There is something about the blue apple: it loses in taste what it allows in choice. That is very

hard to understand, but it means that you can get very tired of eating blue apples; although each one is the only thing you have ever eaten. There is no other choice. You will always eat them as though you are starving. And each blue apple follows you around afterward like a lost pup you can't shake. Then it follows you home until it belongs to you again like a brand new toy. And this is where our story begins."

"Once upon a time. . . I see you giggle, Miss Northquist. You have heard this story maybe? Or one like it?"

Mr. Frequently Jones walked to the front bleachers in the gym. The slides were still being flipped on the screen: pictures of dark shapes like sharks or their stubby shadows, with dangling men in their jaws; pictures of what looked to be folded babies in specimen jars next to tiny fawns trussed up for science; pictures of green ooze against the sky, and cracked mirrors full of faceless men in tears with smiles drawn over the reflections in the dust on the glass. The slides automatically replaced themselves in the machine, steady and remote.

Mr. Jones knelt at the knee of a tiny fragile looking girl. From the microphone came the sound of chewing and biting, like cellophane crumpling in a flame.

"You want to take a pup home, don't you honey?" said Mr. Jones to the girl. "Would you like a bite of this blue apple? Me, yes, I have already had three today. Delicious, believe you me."

Miss Northquist was broken over, gasping for breath in painful laughter.

"This one is for you, honey. Don't you believe me? Listen, can you hear Miss Northquist eating hers? See, it's all right. You cannot really tell in the dark but it is very very blue. All your teachers eat blue apples before they come to school. Then they snack on them while they're here."

Mr. Paul suddenly came awake to the amplified cracks from the speakers. He thought Mr. Jones was doing impressions of galloping horses or the clamorous sounds at a convention and now was waiting for a bright student to shout out the correct answer. Mr. Paul turned to Mrs. Slank with a beatific grin of a quiz show winner. He could definitely hear hundreds of horses stampeding into a box canyon. It was wonderfully educational, he thought, until he noticed that Mrs. Slank's teeth were two inches from his nose, pressing around her face ear to ear like a horrible mocking skull lit up from the inside. It took him only three fairly long moments to understand that Mrs. Slank was being practically frightened to death. He held out his arms and said, "If someone will get the lights, if someone will get the lights."

Mr. Jones was helping the little girl to stand up. "This girl has eaten the blue apple," he shouted. "She has taken a bite of the blue apple. She says it is indescribable. She says it is an experience she wouldn't have missed. She says we live in dangerous times but personally she

wouldn't have it any other way. She says, yes, life is terribly interesting."

"Would someone please get the lights?"

The lights flashed on, and Mr. Paul gave the sign to the teachers to move the students back to their classes as quickly as possible. The school nurse, Mrs. Burgess Hodges, helped Mr. Paul get Mrs. Slank into the gym coach's office next to the locker room so as not to upset the giggling students. In no time the secretary was back on her feet like old times, giving Mr. Paul a vaguely insolent look, which he took immediately to be signs of the recent flu.

Mr. Jones seemed unperturbed at Mr. Paul's sudden interruption. He bounded up in front of the screen, letting the images from the remaining slides flash over his face like a chameleon's blush. Mr. Paul came out of the coach's office and looked around hesitantly. He politely applauded before going over to shake Mr. Jones' hand and offer his deep apologies for having an emergency. They went off to Mr. Paul's office like reunited brothers, with Mr. Paul making little bird chirps in his throat to impress any impressionist.

Annie Bates, the little girl who ate the blue apple, was shuffling herself into a line of girl friends. She was working a finger gingerly into the back of her mouth where a bit of fruit lay deeply lodged in a budding molar. It was Annie, who next hour in Bobbi Northquist's Nort class, started general discussion by asking her teacher to get for the class a one-armed bisexual, or a black wino, or a paralyzed disc jockey, or a brutalized deaf mute, or just any real person like her big sister got in senior high, when she learned the most about life and hangups and stuff like that than she ever did before.

g

Eunice was on the trail of Bobbi Northquist from that day on. It was not a maliciously petty harassment from behind Miss Northquist's lilacs, as it may have looked to Starvos Holbein, the young Greek neighbor who had come to understand in the new community college he was attending that in a democracy you are free to do what you like, without harassment, regardless of the truth.

In many ways it was the happiest time of my life, although we rarely spoke calmly, and Eunice found enough venom in her righteousness to accuse me of having the most ludicrous thoughts. One of my most ludicrous thoughts, she said, was my chatter about returning to California, to the heart of the mooing beast, and setting up a different kind of private practice. What's wrong with here? she asked. I could not say. Partly, I knew, my talk of change was based on the inflateable and contagious euphoria of Eunice's new involvement. But somehow, I felt, it could not last. One of these days Mr. Paul would be receiving a cynical note from Bobbi Northquist, telling him what he could do with her contract for the

next Fall, now that she was off to Pago Pago to be with the man she loved, the only soul who ever understood her, the world traveller and lyceum speaker, Mr. Frequently Jones.

Then what? Mr. Paul is loose in the world also; and despite his naivety, he has those urges which seem stronger everyday to gather his counselling into the big rag pile of Deads and Norts and Raps, a smoldering mass, until he can not help but eventually feel the overwhelming pall of his dead presence, sullen as a stone, and how much more he could do with it than pretending he was alive and cursed by the guilt of his own good intentions. When this happens, Mrs. Slank the secretary might file till the edge of doom and never catch up with Mr. Paul, never see the light in the tunnel again. There would only be the vague and uncertain smell of tender flesh burning from under his door and in the far distances of the school corridors.

For an uneducated secretary, who learned to trust her nose and her instincts and the fatal orderliness of faithful certainties that moved the world of Mr. Paul for him, because he could not do it himself, she would be less and less inclined to grind her teeth and puff herself up angrily and scream, "Fire!" Mr. Paul would step out of his office with a smokey blue smile and look right into his secretary's confused, flushed face and say, steady as calm water and warm as thick blood, "Yes, Mrs. Slank, did you say something?" We had to leave. To where idiocy was so much clearer, maybe, like a new toy, before children got old and settled and began playing with themselves.

On the day I was to entertain at lyceum, I went to school early with Eunice. The corridors were empty, a glistening tiled shell in which the desolate ocean sounds from unseen slamming doors came whoshing upon you from around corners, looking for a way out. Eunice was unperturbed, busy at her desk in the glassed-in main office. I wandered in the direction of the teacher's lounge, passing four minature women in lipstick and rouge as they marched single file like a centipede into the restroom. They did not look at me and giggle, nor did they change their expression in anyway, as if to signal to each other as little girls do that a foolish, glum, dirty old man was trespassing in their territory. They held their hall passes like legacies or heirlooms. I had stopped cold in the middle of the hall, waiting for their sounds, anything shrill, even an unadvised and thrillingly perverse cigarette cough.

Slowly, like a lifeguard who counts ten children in the water then a frantic nine a moment later, I carefully inched my way to the outside doorway of the little girl's room. A lifeguard would blow his whistle and order them out of the water, counting each one over and over until the last one paddled out. Then the surface would be like glass, the waves would disapate like melting butter, and in only two feet of water, where a baby could stand, like a blue towel or blue shirt or blue pair of pants or blue

smudge in the corner of the pool, would be. . .

My palm was against the door when Mr. Paul's voice cracked over the intercom to open another official day of school. His voice steadied me, made me feel even jovial. It was a voice that could never disguise its foolish owner. Suddenly, I knew Mr. Paul was an excellent principal. He could do nothing. Eunice was right; I was ludicrous to even think. . . She never changed. I did. I did. I. . .

The door was pushing against my hand. I jumped back very embarrassed and the door swung open. The tiny figures popped out, one by one, three in red cloth, one in blue, marching by me silently and holding up four separate excuse passes for me to see. I watched them in single file, one two three four one two three. . . They were walking into the black calm of a deep pool. I did not see if they went around a corner or into a room. It was as if they were gradually melted down like ice in a glass of warm tepid tea, and the halls were empty again. Empty.

Except for Mr. Paul's thought for the day: "The price of freedom (the words were bouncing off the walls like trapped birds) is infernal vengeance. . .er. . .uh. . .I mean eternal vigilance. Thank you."

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

LISA BITEL is a freshman at Smith College in Massachusetts . . . . L. H. BUTRICK lives in West Bend, Wisconsin. . . . NICHOLAS CHRISTOPHER has recently appeared in Ploughshares, The Beloit Poetry Journal, The Little Magazine, and Rapport. . . . WLADYSLAW CIESZYNSKI is one of the editors of Cream City Review. . . . M. TRUMAN COOPER has recently appeared in The Chowder Review, Nausea, Bitterroot, and The Smith. . . . RAY COSSEBOOM has recently been published in The Texas Quarterly, Maine Review, West Coast Poetry Review, Stonecloud, and The Christian Science Monitor.

JEANICE DAGHER has work appearing in Centering, Squeezebox, Sunshine Review, and Stone Country and is presently at Michigan State Univ. . . . KATHRYN EKSTROM is a senior in fine arts at the University of Kansas. . . . NADINE F. ESTROFF is co-director of the Atlanta Poets Workshop and has had work recently in The Miscellany, The Wisconsin Review, and Poetry Venture. . . . TERRY EVANS lives in Salina, Kansas. She recently organized and co-directed a state-wide project to photograph Kansas for the Kansas Bankers Assn. . . . RUTH FELDMAN has had work published in The New York Times, The Nation, The Michigan Quarterly Review, and Malahat Review. . . . LOIS GREENE is co-editor of Aux Arcs and teaches in the design department at the University of Kansas.

MAUDE GRIDLEY is a graphic arts major at the University of Kansas. . . . ANDREW HUDGINS has appeared in Mississippi Review, Green River Review, and Andover Review and is working on a master's in creative writing at Syracuse University. . . . DIANE HUETER is a Lawrence area poet who has appeared in a number of little magazines. . . . EARL IVERSEN is from Chicago, Rhode Island, and Boston and currently teaches photography at the University of Kansas. . . . G. JANICKE is a writer living in Lawrence. . . . DAVID JAFFIN's third and fourth collections of verse appeared in 1975: In the Glass of Winter (Abelard-Schuman) and As One (The Elizabeth Press).

JNANA-DEVANANDASHRAM is co-editor of Stoney Lonesome and has published in Wind, Windless Orchard, Blackberry, En Passant, and Inlet. . . . JONATHAN KATZ is editor of The Ark River Review and serves on the Theatre Advisory Panel of the National Endowment for the Arts. He has recently published in Beloit Poetry Journal, The Midwest Quarterly, and Granite. . . . MARNE MARCUS has published in Samisdat and Quoin . . . . DAVID McCANN has published several translations of Kim Chi-ha in American Pen Quarterly. . . . G. E. MURRAY is a contributing editor of Fiction International and works as a fiction and poetry critic for the Chicago Daily News, Chicago Sun-Times, and The Milwaukee Journal. He has two books: A Mile Called Timothy (Ironwood, 1972) and Holding Fast (Bonewhistle, 1973). . . . JOHN NELSON is a graduate of the University of Kansas and a former poetry editor with Cottonwood Review.

He is presently teaching English in Japan. . . . ROGER PFINGSTON has appeared previously in Cottonwood Review and in Big Moon, Voyages, and Remington Review.

DANNY L. RENDLEMAN has two books from Ithaca House: Signals to the Blind (1972) and Winter Rooms (1975). Two 1976 anthologies that include his work are The Third Coast and Unexpected. . . . PATTIANN ROGERS has published in Texas Quarterly, Wisconsin Review, Southern Poetry Review, and Thirteenth Moon. . . . BRIAN SWANN is co-editor and translator of The Collected Poems of Lucio Piccolo, Selected Poems of Andrea Zanzotto, and Selected Poems of Tudor Arghezi, all with Princeton Press, and of Shema: Poems of Primo Levi (Menard). He is author of The Whale's Scars (New Rivers) and is editor of Chelsea . . . . TOM TARNOWSKI did his master's work at The Rhode Island School of Design and is currently living in Kansas City. . . . JUDITH THOMPSON is a Lawrence poet who has appeared in previous issues of Cottonwood and Open House. . . . JUSTIN VITIELLO teaches Italian language and literature at Temple University. . . . TONI O. ZIMMERMAN is editor of Connections and has two books of poetry: Woman In Search of Herself (Know Inc.) and To An Imaginary Lover (Morgan Press).