COTTONWOOD REVIEW

NO. 22

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Drawings for this issue are by Lois Greene.

Cottonwood Review welcomes 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:

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Trans. Kyoko Evanhoe and Robert N. Lawson

KIMIKO NISHIO

Kimiko Sengoku (Nishio) and Kyoko Takata (Evanhoe) were classmates in Tokyo's Fifth Metropolitan Girl's High School during World War II, graduating into the chaos of a defeated Japan in 1945. Ms. Nishio had already distinguished herself among her classmates for her writing ability, and remained in Japan to become a wife, mother, and prize-winning poetess, for the volume of thirty-three poems, The Cat But Seems to Sleep, from which the poems here translated are drawn.

THE CAT BUT SEEMS TO SLEEP

The cat
Likes the night
Behind closed eyelids
Motionlessly peering into the profound darkness

Then the stars
One by one one by one
Gradually appear
Pinpoints of light in the eyelid sky

The cat
Just pretends to be sleeping
Counting the faraway stars in the early afternoon

AN EVENING IN JUNE

To a glass held in my left hand
In the evening
I speak the name "Francois"

Francois
He has to be
A blue-eyed tall young man
And appear to stop still
To smile at me

I speak the name
Of this unknown young man
From a foreign country
In a whisper

And the early summer darkness
Becomes even deeper

THE END OF SUMMER

Along the front of the seaside hotel
The canna flowers bend forward
Leaning against the fence
Looking at the clouds

Fat clouds
Lounging on the horizon
With no intention of getting up

In the slanting shadow of a beach umbrella
Young girls rest their chins on their hands
Worn out by swimming and chattering

I also sit quietly watching the clouds
On a bench from which the paint is peeling
The heat of a touch of sunburn on my shoulders
The taste of the waves on my lips
A few grains of sand in my damp hair

Something far off in the distance
Slowly turns its back on us
As the flowers and the girls and I
Are looking out to sea

Jeanice Dagher

FIRST FAULT IN A SOLID FOUNDATION

we had a gala new year's eve
you and i
after five years of a sweet and considerate marriage
we danced out of our covers
and tried ourselves out
moving our hips in latin circles
against the music
against new partners

we moved out
separate doors:
i took the front
and you the back
and looking behind
only a glance
we moved out
into different streetlights and
moonlights and
told ourselves
we deserved
this
one
night
of last indulgence
and our illusions.
two old lovers
dancing parallel
through the evening,
green and orange and black wool stripes
riding all across behind me
like it was a cement street
buckling from the june heat
in brooklyn; smiling like crazy
all
the time.
i lay under a different window that night
with sheets that were scenes of contemporary sands, and

i knew
you were riding away, swimming the length
of a beautiful girl of ukrainian descent;
we were both still laughing.

at morning
we met by the front door.
you opened it with your key
and i made the coffee;
we sweetly kept distance
from the different smells and bruises,
untying the knots
at the backs of
each other's costumes
and crawling under old blankets
to sleep
till supper.

Duane Clark

SASKATCHEWAN PRAIRIE

This land is ready to rise
from the map
shake off the heavy bundles of wheat
on his back
shrug his tired shoulders
and rub up against the soft skin of stars
in gray underbelly of sky.

This land is tired
of the work, plowing, endless furrows
seeds and planters.

A traveller is what he needs to be.
Leave a place
and become again somewhere else.
Ready to pack big clumps of sod
in a suitcase
and move from this thick leaden Canada,
of men and machines and grayness.

Ready to rise from the map
and move.

Elaine V. Emans

ON DISTURBING A CLUMP OF TANSY, RAKING

The Greeks had a dignified name
for the everlastingness of your bright
    yellow buttons--
though surely Linnaeus came closer
    with T. vulgare.

Once used for bedding by Maine loggers,
you are always anathema to insects,
coarse, jaggy-fern-leaved,
long-ago understudy for pepper.

But I like Grandmother's name best.
    "Old Man," she would say,
    "you smell to high heaven today.
    Is rain on the way?"

Eileen Stratidakis

WINDOWS

There is a slowness to the days,
like box cars passing
end on end.
The only difference
is in their names.
In countless towns
along the tracks
women wait
in wooden swings
for mill whistles
to start lunch;
telling time
by the spreading stains
on tablecloths,
and the smooth skin
of infant faces
growing younger.

Carol Artman Montgomery

OVERDRAWN

Overdrawn again
nothing in the baker's bank
no insurance

If I could be in Kansas
as alone
as the last seed
in an envelope
I would swing my head
back and forth
click my heels into clay
pull each fiber out of my sweater
click and sway and pull
until coins fell
out of the Kansas sky
into my hair
on my breasts
on my plucked sweater
only then would they stop:

mother red and distorted
touching her kitchen curtains
daddy at the table
hitting bills in the faces
with the back of his hand

Chuck Guilford

OUT HERE

It's absolutely still--the pressure
Of the air and of the blood, the perfect
Pulling of the planet's core, inertia
In these wheeling constellations,
A sun bleached skull becoming
Prairie, melting
Of the apple blossom snow.

We're always at home,
Lost in the long night's calling.

Theresa Towner

THE PRINCESS AND THE PEA, VOLUME TWO (OR, BILLY FAULKNER TAKES A STAB AT GRIMM)

Perhaps it had stood there always, a memorial not so much to the sweat of the peasants that had hauled the stones or to the artisans that had cut them to the loose-boweled pigeons that now sat upon its turrets but only as incontrovertible proof that somewhere someone had known how to manipulate the minds and bodies and souls of an inferior class; tall and formidable and even impregnable as it scraped the then-medieval skyline, commanding the immediate and unfaltering allegiance of passersby; the passersby gray-colored too and with faces drawn, and sometimes even also quartered, by the lowly, subservient, demeaning quality of their own debased and debasing lives; individuals only in the sense that all men are not equal and the same only in the sense that all blades of grass are green in the summer; all subject to and subjects of its gray and rock-like presence:

Rising from, yet inextricably linked to, the ground that cradled it as it (the ground) bore its (the castle's) weight; vines creeping up from the soft and sultry earth, smothering the granite blocks in the all-embracing caresses of age much as an author will stifle his brainchild with the addition of not so much adjectives or modifiers or even descriptive doubletalk as laborious and impedimental rhetoric:

II

They talked, not so much discussing as bitterly arguing, about his future in the solid iron-gray fortress; the so-far impregnable and rock-like walls groaning under the weight of this fetal and perhaps even eventually fatal disharmony; on his part, the lack of a pink-smelling, flower-picking partner-package of womanflesh; on hers, the reversible female Oedipal hatred of the selfsame cradle-robbing bitch; he, the Prince, son: DAMN IT MOM I'M THIRTY-FOUR; she, the Queen, mother: OVER MY DEAD BODY:

III

The path, stamped into the soft and receptive earth by living things on four legs as well as two, all co-inhabitants of the not-old and not-young either cavern of plant and animal and mineral cohabitation; it (the path) running eventually to a clearing, snatched from its (the forest's) clutches by the sporadic efforts of its (the cottage's) occupant--a man whose eyes, and by this time even whose hands and hair and feet too, had taken on the greenish and sick cast of mashed

peas; indeed, they called him a pea-farmer (mainly because he looked like one, but also because he raised peas); a tall man, yes, a giant of a man whom most of the forest's co-inhabitants called jolly, not so much because he smiled a lot or ever laughed at all or even because he had a sense of humor but rather because it was his trademark and they were too little to do anything about it:

She had started from beyond there, from beyond the other end of the path (the end with the cottage and the pea-farmer), and had arrived at this end: thinking, my how a body does get around I've only been lost for fifteen years and here I am at the door of a castle that certainly does look tall and formidable and even impregnable but it is probably only an instinct or maybe even a gut feeling that I cannot ever either articulate or put into words so I had better see what fate or luck or whatever I use for god has in store for me now; knocking, eyes faintly bland and only slightly bloodshot from lack of sleep; entering:

IV

Seeing her, his eyes glowed, not so much with delight or admiration as with lust; thinking, at last the ripe and as yet unpicked fruit of all eternal and abiding sentient womanhood has dropped before me; she, unaware, asleep, as he carried her, not so much with ease as with difficulty, up the ladder to the top mattress; to the cushions, the altar and consummate pyre of his flaming passion and her semi-comatose indifference; layered there, one upon the other and vice versa, forty pads of packaged goose-down and, underneath all, the medieval and (more than likely) inaccurate test of, if not the sleeper's gentility, then at least the sensitivity of her derriere, pea:

V

She, awaking, not thinking so much where am I as where have I been and why do I have such a backache and lordy this bed sure is tall; looking down into the faces of her hosts; he thinking, yes and she is lovely and it doesn't matter if she is royalty or not; and the other thinking, how could she possibly have felt that pea through forty of my finest goose-down mattresses; the answer coming to her before she even had time to think of it: so that is it, it is not the pea that she felt but the guilt the guilt of our yes not hers or mine now but our scheming plotting and thoroughly damnable sex not really even human anymore but just woman women have an affinity for evil and there is nothing I can do about it because she is too young does not even recognize it yet it has not caught up with her oh woman woman I am woman; for they all knew that she had felt it; they did not need the green and spreading psychosomatic bruise on her backside to tell them that; and the wedding took place that afternoon.

Susan Baumann

CATCH

I keep secrets from myself;
slow fish start to school
under the ice.

With a lure, you
try to catch one

though that silver slice
with moonstone sight
always escapes with the water.

Wet running or cold solid, we
have both to tackle. Perhaps

only death dives so deep
as to come up certain
and call the catch. But

cutting my stream, you are
as sure-footed as it is

slippery. Hooking a piece
of the fish without the flesh,
you pull in a lace-thin fin.

Not a swimmer or a sinker
so to speak, you are

in this ice fishing I
describe as deeply mine.
Your barb kisses my bite;

we share a long strong
length of line.

Deborah Goodman

CHILD AND WOMAN

The lines in your face fold
over themselves, hiding
pieces of lint. Your skin
blooms like a gardenia:
bruises bud with every touch.

Ten years ago, I brought
a towel to your bath.
The sparse hair of your genitals,
the limp folds of your waist and breasts
filled me with confusion, regret.

There is no difference, or so
you said, between the child
and the woman. Only a matter
of time and use, carrying the weight
of a man, a lover, to rest.

THE SEASON

He turns thirty, and she cries for days,
afraid he won't return when he goes
for shaving cream and beer. He says
she breaks his heart with such a cold
and bitter love. It's time to leave.
He boards the Trailways in Salina
for the long ride to the coast.

Pink beach houses in Galveston
remind him of a night spent
in Indiana with a ruddy-faced whore.
He tastes her skin in the air,
and thinks of the boys waiting to hunt
pheasant in a dried stand of corn.
He knows there is nothing to return to.
He watches the shrimp boats
rising and falling on the oily water,
the gulls dipping and begging overhead.
A crab carries the orange mass
of its eggs, outside, like a deformed heart.

Elisabeth Murawski

WANTING A CURTAIN

The wreath, surfacing,
stings of mums.
Their roots are gone,
having gained the arid solitude
the body paid for.

The dead one's house
leans a welcome—
a final shade drawn,
pale yellow nun at the glass.

The drunken veteran
crashes up the scale
in a classic rendering of taps.

The audience stands
Dickensian
mottled and imported,
parrots on the grass.

Laura Glenn

ALL WEEK I WAIT FOR TOMORROW

While waiting
I introduce myself
by looking away.

I stop following
the wind's footsteps
and string myself along.

I shampoo my brain
and shake my hair out
on the willow's clothesline:

I comb flowers out of my hair.
I wait and wait.
When I see you tomorrow nothing will be clear.

Tom Moore

INDIAN PROBLEM

When we stop to rest
in South Dakota
our car's encircled
By a dozen Sioux.
As Cate and I speak
brother talk
One pulls, from a ripped
army coat
A quail with a broken wing.
Says he wants to train
it to attack
cars
But they leave us an
Indian truce.

Farther down the road
they stop a camper's van
to ask
A charge for a '48 Nash.
The man inside the cab
speaks slowly to
them of his back, the
time, and treaties, while
His woman in
a fine pink turtleneck
and dark glasses dreams
of massacre.

The man no doubt
recalls the army
once praised Custer
For leaving the Gatlings behind:
The guns
were expensive to maintain—
sensitive
to Sioux dust.

Valorie A. Breyfogle

GRANDPARENTS
to Arnold and Ella Conrad

I carry them with me:
In my small hands which echo,
in the blue veins that curl
over the tops of those hands
pumping enameled lawn chairs,
LePage's glue and crisp embroidered pillow cases
to every cell.
I squirt their maroon and gray kitchen out
of an Ivory Soap bottle
turning my Corelle Ware into pastel bowls
filled with cold, pink rhubarb.
I carry them with me in a suitcase
that has seen too many airports.
I unpack, unwrinkle, mend holes
and share them with my children
who are too young to remember,
then repack, refold, rearrange
until I can go home again.

BECAUSE MONDAY IS NEXT TO GODLINESS
"Let there be nothing on earth but laundry. . ."
Richard Wilbur

Fresh from the ringer
and Ivory Snow
and Grandmother's hands,
sheets, shirts, pillowcases
hang like Puritan prayers
above the gladiolas, until
the wind strikes a familiar chord
and the laundered flock
breaks into song and
flies away.

Valorie A. Breyfogle

POLISHED ONYX
to Matthew at age 2 1/2 months

Eyes dark and wet like polished onyx
in new snow
contemplate the glories
of Herculon in plaid
then shift
finding their mantra
temporary
in an incandescent bulb.

Elmer F. Suderman

TENDER TOILET TISSUE

"That toilet tissue you bought
is coarse, rough,
too scabrous
for my taste,"
my father overheard my brother,
home from college,
complain to mother.
"I don't know what scabrous means,"
my father said,
"but rough and coarse
I understand.
But I don't need to be educated
like you
to know that if you'd have had
to use corn cobs,
which was a little like using sand paper
or even the slick pages of the
Sears Roebuck catalog
when all the others were
already used up,
you wouldn't complain
about a little thing
like toilet paper
too rough for your
tender overeducated
ass."

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Miriam Sagan

THE BOOK OF KELLS

On page one
The animals have human hands.
S is a serpent,
O devours its own tail.
An exquisite bird
Nests in a green initial,
An indigo cat stalks
Along the top of the script.

On page two
The coracles lie drying
Like beached whales.
Fences criss-cross
Beneath soft weather.
The island women heard candles,
Water the tight fisted rows
Of kitchen gardens.

There is a hole in page three
In the shape of the rain,
Enter the weather,
Build a house of storm.
There is a hole in the woman
In the shape of a child,
A hole in the child in the shape of the wind.

At the edge of page four
We walk along the beach.
The gulls rise up in one pure startled line.
The sky above us is not a grid of gold,
No dragon nor coptic cross rises
In a frenzy of spirals.
Simply, a sailboat turns from the headland,
Tacks out into sunlight.
Yes, I am talking to you.

Laurel Speer

THE CORPSE SHOWED A HAIRLINE SCAR

My husband's the type
Who goes around
Cutting down trees
In the yard
Because they show
The slightest imperfection
In conformation
Of limbs or trunk.
He can't stand
To sit in his kitchen
And look out the window
At malformation.
His thumb twitches
Against the sharpened ax
Held loosely in his other gloved hand.

Since I had my hysterectomy
Two years ago
And though I only show
A hairline scar,
Usually covered by clothes,
He hasn't touched me
In bed.
This I don't mind so much
As he was a mediocre lover
At best,
But I do wonder
About his assessive look
And the ax blade
On his lap
As he looks from yard
To trees
To me
And waits,
Building his unrest.

L. A. Taylor

CRUMB BUNS, WHEAT GERM AND MR. PETERSEN

When I was six, every Saturday morning my mother loaded my younger brother into the scuffed blue carriage, replaced the barrettes that were sliding out of my hair, and with me holding onto the handle at the side, pushed the carriage down to Skagdorf's Bakery. There she set my brother on his feet in front of the white-painted door and pushed it open. I followed him in, past almond rings, apple pies with crumbly tops and little round cakes--a display much reduced by war time, as I was vaguely aware--up to the bread counter where Mrs. Skagdorf rested her broad elbows on the glass top.

"Yes, Mrs. Crane, and what will it be?" Mrs. Skagdorf asked each time, and each time my mother said,

"A half-dozen crumb buns, please," and Mrs. Skagdorf replied,

"Crumb buns for my little crumb buns it is." She laid the buns in a flat white box with some thin waxed paper to keep them from sliding, tied the pink and white string twice this way and twice that, and set the box down with a tap.

"And what else?"

"That will be all, thank you," my mother always said, snapping open her purse.

"And a c-o-o-k-i-e for each of the little ones?" My mother hesitated: cookies were expensive, but I knew the word.

"My treat," Mrs. Skagdorf always added, after the pause.

"Yes, thank you," my mother said. "That's very nice of you. Say thank you, Gladys."

Half a dozen crumb buns made two each for Sunday breakfast: that is, two for my mother, two for William, and two for me. Grandma never ate crumb buns. Instead, she sat at one end of the kitchen table and sniffed at us as we licked the powdered sugar from our fingers. She had whole wheat bread, toasted over the coals in the kitchen stove, spread with white margarine and sprinkled with brewer's yeast.

"Tessa, you are ruining those children's health," Grandma used to mutter.

"Only one day a week."

I savored my crumb bun, not happy at the thought of oatmeal with wheat germ the following morning.

"What my poor son would say," my grandmother then sighed, leaving my mother suddenly silent. Yet every Saturday we went to Skagdorf's Bakery and every Sunday we had crumb buns for breakfast.

My mother wiped the sugar from the waxed paper and put it away to tie over jelly jars. The string she untangled and wound up to save for the tying. Grandma's jelly, made from the hard green apples our tree showered over the back yard each September, was rather tart--a shock to the unwary friends I was bringing home from first grade that fall.

Grandma did all of our cooking and most of our baking. Before she came to live with us my mother had spent her ration points to make light, yellow cakes, pies with flaky golden crusts, sugar cookies for afternoon snacks. Grandma made whole wheat pie crust exactly like the cardboard back of a writing tablet, unreliable oatmeal cookies, and a delicious applesauce cake into which she sometimes put wheat germ, which ruined it.

Grandma also made mock veal cutlet out of beans, vegetable turkey, and lentil soup she cut with a knife to serve.

After Grandma came to live with us, my mother sometimes held furtive conversations on the tall telephone in the living room, the receiver pressed to her ear, her hand cupped around the mouthpiece. "How many points do you need?" she'd whisper. "I'll get them to you this afternoon." Even at six, I knew all about ration points, and I understood that we'd be going to Aunt Cora's for dinner. And rejoiced. I could imagine the roast beef--hard enough come by in those days--but what made my mouth water was the thought of white bread and butter, the possibility of ice cream.

On those days Grandma stayed home. "I can't eat that terrible food," she'd complain. "I know she's your sister, but I really don't see how you abide it. I'll stay home and fix myself something."

"Promise you'll eat more than a sandwich," my mother would say as she settled her hat. My grandmother's nostrils lifted as if she'd been teased, and my mother smiled faintly into the dim hall mirror.

Usually, Uncle Albert picked us up in his car. "How's the old harridan?" he'd ask, when we were in. "Sprouted leaves yet?"

My mother giggled. "No. Same as ever."

"And Richard?"

"Well, thank you." Richard was Mr. Petersen, who lived next door. His wife had died when I was little, before William was born. My father had been Mr. Petersen's best friend; when Mrs. Petersen died he'd been home on leave and had gone over to see if there was anything to do to help. He came back looking sober and dark and talked to my mother a long time. But before the funeral, my father had to put on his uniform and go away again. He never came back.

Now Mr. Petersen and my mother held long conversations from yard to yard, leaning on their rakes or against the fence. "Tessa," my grandmother said once. "Really. What will the neighbors think? People will talk!"

"Don't people usually talk?" I asked, and my mother laughed. Even Grandma chuckled the way she used to, when I was little.

And my mother laughed when Uncle Albert asked if Mr. Petersen still helped me with my adding.

"She's subtracting already, aren't you, Gladys?" she said.

The arithmetic lessons seemed to upset my grandmother most. Friday evenings, when he didn't have to work, Mr. Petersen came to help me with my arithmetic. We spread the book out on the dining room table and turned on the overhead light with its three cut-glass shades. Little worm-like rainbows drifted slowly over the papers as we worked. When I got bored, I chased them with my fingernail, trying to pin them down without getting rainbow on my finger.

"Tch," Mr Petersen said then. "You're not paying attention. Now, if I have five apples. . . ."

My mother sat in her chair just inside the living room, darning or knitting and making an occasional comment. My grandmother stayed in the kitchen with the door wide open and propped with a rubber wedge. She turned the radio very low and never hummed to herself as she did on other nights.

After the lessons were done, Mr. Petersen choked a piece of my grandmother's pie, and in a little while I'd be sent to bed. Before I fell asleep I could hear the door close behind Mr. Petersen, and soon afterward my mother and grandmother talking in low, vaguely frightening voices in the kitchen below me.

"Shall I move out? What will you live on?" my grandmother once shouted. My mother must have said shhhh, because the voices dropped.
Or again, "What will people say, have you thought of that?" from my grandmother, and a tart, indistinguishable reply from my mother. But it was winter, and too cold to climb out of bed and sneak over the squeaking boards to the grill in the floor, to try to hear better.

Eventually spring came, with endless rain. The gloom spread into our house, until my mother and grandmother barely spoke. Getting into my slicker at school, I felt as if I had pulled on a jail that I couldn't escape until the next morning, when I could hang the slicker back on my cloakroom peg and go to my desk.

One Wednesday I came home to find only my grandmother there. "Your mother wanted to get out for a bit, so she went to the matinee," she explained.

Relief surprised me, and I realized that I had feared something--other, unknown, worse. "Okay," I said.

"Don't say okay, say yes," Grandma corrected automatically, busy rummaging in the cupboard. "Oh, drat."

She turned a speculative eye on me as I thought of the fortune--thirty-five cents--my mother had spent on the matinee, and how badly I wanted a black and white notebook I had seen at the newsstand. Something I could write in all for myself, with the elegant title "Compositions" and a place for my name on the cover. I didn't dare ask for it now.

"Do you think you could run down to Tyson's for me, Sweetheart?" Grandma asked suddenly. "I'm out of cream of tartar, and I want to bake a cake for supper."

"An applesauce cake?" I asked hopefully.

"Mmmhm." She pulled her coin purse from a drawer and found a quarter. "That should be plenty. Mind you hang on to it. And don't dawdle." She sent me

on my way with a pat on the shoulder and a smile.

How important I felt asking for that cream of tartar! I counted my nine cents change under old man Tyson's approving eye and put it in one pocket, the small bag in the other, and buckled up my slicker.

"Look both ways, now," Mr. Tyson reminded, deflating my chest completely. I looked both ways before splashing across each of two streets, cutting through the back way to save time.

But back ways are always more interesting than streets. On this occasion, the stone wall at the end of our back neighbors' terrace was like a little waterfall, rivulets running out between the stones and washing the hens-and-chicks out of the crevasses. I stopped to poke some back in, noticed some well-sprouted crocus bulbs lying on the surface of the ground and tried to replant them... then there there was a drainage ditch to be dug with the heel of my boot, and--suddenly mindful of my waiting grandmother, I took off for home.

As I pelted toward our back porch the ground simply vanished from under my feet. My chest hit something hard, and I found myself kneeling in semi-dark. I wanted to cry, to scream, but my chest was like stone, and I let my head rest against the wall of the hole as I pulled for air that wouldn't come.

Doors slammed. My grandmother called, "Gladys, Gladys," but I couldn't answer. She'll be mad, I thought. Little sparkly dots flashed in the dimness.

"Oh, Richard, thank Heaven," I heard my grandmother say. "Can you reach?"

A moment later strong hands slid under my arms, gently lifting me out of a narrow, perfectly round hole. I was stupified. How could my own back yard just go and spring a hole like that?

"Easy does it," said Mr. Petersen, setting me on my feet. "Just had the wind knocked out, I think."

Grandma squatted down to peer into my face. "Dear God, she's so pale," she said. "Do you think she's all right?"

"Where did that hole come from?" I asked.

"Only an old well," Mr. Petersen said soothingly. "Your Dad filled it in when the city water came, and the fill must have settled in all this rain."

My grandmother was feeling my arms and legs. "Do you hurt anywhere, Honey?" she asked.

"I'm okay," I said, and for once she didn't tell me to say, "all right."

Mr. Petersen patted my head. "Everything's all right now," he said. "Shall we go in and see what a glass of milk will do?"

We went into the house. My grandmother hurried to stir up the fire and dry us all out. "Goodness," she said, wiping my cheeks with her apron. "What a scare!"

"She looks fine," Mr. Petersen said. "Getting her color back. How do you feel, Peanut?"

"All right."

"I'll tell you what. I've got to go change these trousers anyway, and when I come back I'll bring a pint of ice cream I've got in my ice cube compartment, and we can all have some ice cream. Chocolate. How's that?"

I looked at my grandmother. She swallowed hard and rolled her hands into

her apron. "I think that's a splendid idea," she said.

I stared at her with my mouth open. But Mr. Petersen had already gone to get the ice cream, and she turned to the sink and said nothing.

My mother came home to find us at the kitchen table, even my grandmother spooning up a taste of the rich brown ice cream from one of the good china dishes. I heard my mother suck in her breath.

"What's happened? What's wrong?"

"Gladys fell into the old well," Grandma said. "The fill settled about four feet all at once and knocked the breath out of her. But she's fine, now. We're having a little... celebration."

My mother went to the back door and looked out. "It's all those tin cans. I knew we should have flattened every one."

The three adults shared a look that shut me out. Finally Mr. Petersent said, "We saved you some ice cream, Tessa. It's in the ice cube compartment."

Later, after he had gone to work, my mother gathered up the dishes to wash them. My grandmother got up and laid a hand tentatively on her shoulder. "You know, Tessa, I was older than you when I married."

My mother said nothing.

"I'd forgotten what it is to be twenty-five, I guess. When I saw Gladys go down into that well--my heart was in my mouth, I tell you. My own--I remember Billy nearly fell off the roof once--I began remembering--other things...."

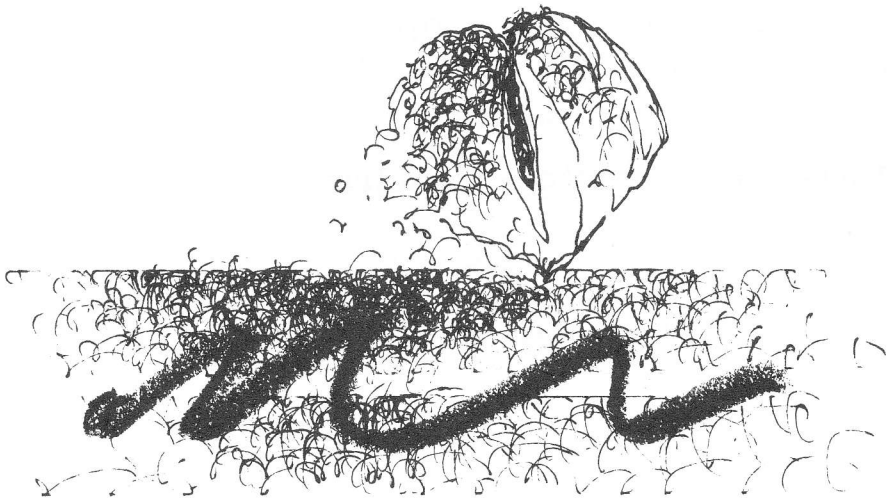
My mother still didn't move. Her hands were in the soapy water, but she seemed to have forgotten the dishes.

"It's been nearly three years." Grandma's voice was soft and sad. "I guess--you've got a lot of time left. I won't make it hard for you."

Then my mother did a strange thing. She turned and put her head on Grandma's shoulder, put her dripping arms around Grandma's waist, and began to cry.

Upstairs, William also began to cry. But my grandmother just kept rocking my mother and saying, "hush, hush," and my mother kept crying. Nobody seemed to be going to get William up from his nap, so I went and got him myself.

He was awfully hard to lift out of the crib. He was getting to be a big boy.



Ed Dorn

AN OBSERVATION ON BOULDER'S MALL

Even if one were not
of a freudian turn of mind
it would be difficult to ignore
the fact that the public
ice-cream dispensary
is separated from the public outhouse
by a mere ten feet of brick walkway.

THE HUMAN TRUCK

Asked to what end
he clomb that tedious height
Gimme a glass of gas
said the packer
as he trotted up the hill.

HARDBALL SIMILE

I figured he'd have about as much chance
getting out of there in one piece
as a pig at Armour & Company.

QUOTATION FROM KIDD, WHILE WATCHING THE GAME ON T. V.

"Bob Griese gets to the ten lard line."

A MINOR PLEA

I heartily wish
peace in the middleeast
would come
so we can get rid
of that abominable rime!

Jim Last

SURPRISED BY DEER

for Georgene

A sudden splash of bronze
she bounds toward the road
pure morning alive
in her coat
in her black eyes
filled with the pain of us
as if we were clear water
she could look down through

The bright curve of her throat
her slender legs
the cold patch of snow
that flicks in her tail
all cut so cleanly
so bloodlessly
even the leaves turn
their faces

Again
this afternoon
I find the bend of her neck
asleep on your thigh
on the almost transparent skin
of your ear
Daylight so flawless
my hands are singed
with its fire

David Kresh

INSTEAD OF AN EPITHALAMIUM

I will tell you a true story:
once upon a time, I set out

to write you an epithalamium,
and to dance at your wedding.
It was a joyous day,
I was there with my wife,
our friends, hers, mine, yours,
attended, we laughed and got drunk.

And I went about writing a poem,
wanting in it tough yo-ho-ho
(I don't think some of us knew
how tough we were or what
toughness is for), your heh-heh
and the rollick of your banjo playing,
sailors' toasts, the rich slap
and midnight magic of your own
poems, and wanting in it,
wishing you, the unnaturally
easy joy that was
in all my memories of you
from the first, in which
we find ourselves suddenly,
with no history, as in a dream,
halfway up or down a narrow
staircase and turn, into each other's arms,
and kiss gently for a long time.

The poem went badly. I worked at it
off and on for a couple of years
but finally gave it up
about the time I got married
for the second time. There was one line
I liked, although I'm not sure
how much it had to do with the rest:
the white pony runs all day in the field.
I hadn't ever actually seen

a white pony running in a field.
After a few more years,
we drifted out of the habit
of writing to each other occasionally.

Now there are no more marriages.
I am in a plane, flying to you.
We have crossed Lake Erie into the gilding
eye of the declining sun
but at the last minute
the airport waves us off.
Around the cities I know are
more cities, but around the Motor City
miraculously is countryside.
We soar away, stand on our wing,
and look straight down at October
farmland. I can make out leaves.
We turn tightly and come in again
fast and low, but everything
is going wrong and again we have to
tear off sharp. The pilot assures us
"This is not a training flight."
A lot of people look worried.
I am thinking about power, swiftness,
the golden light, how things happen
contrary to all intention,
the golden trees and fields, the deep
brown earth, all of this
tangible, the earth rubbed
between my fingers leaving some mud,
the unexpected filling my lungs,
all as tangible as my thoughts of you,
and part of them. Then I look down and, truly,
see in a barnlot, trotting along the fence,
a white horse. His head is high.
He is making tireless, wide circles.
I can see the waves of his mane.
The landscape flaps violently
out of sight, and I think
with joy too strong to breathe through
"I am going to die happy."

Susan Morgenstern

MID SHIFT

Sarah stepped outside and thrust her gloved hands deep into the pockets of her heavy parka. The cold night air smacked her face. She didn't mind the cold weather. Winter in Montana was a beautiful, exciting experience for a woman from Virginia. The Air Force had issued her ski gloves, insulated bunny pants with zippers down both sides, sturdy black boots and a large green parka with fur-trimmed hood. The parka was the kind the men wore; hers was a size small. It reached almost to her knees. Most of the women in her squadron had been forced to give up their old parkas for the new blue parkas designed specially for women. The new parkas were much lighter than the old ones and had hoods that barely covered the ears. Sarah hated the new ones and cherished her warm green one, although she knew she would inevitably lose it. Today she had found a note taped to her barracks room door: "Please report to the orderly room ASAP to exchange your old parka for a new one."

She crunched through the snow up the sidewalk to the street and thought, I almost got away with keeping it. She worked the midnight shift and sometimes managed to avoid regulations by being asleep during the day when they were enforced. But this time she had been caught. The note couldn't be ignored.

Anticipating her loss, Sarah hugged the parka close as she walked down the icy street. She enjoyed the short walk to work. It took less than 10 minutes to walk from her barracks to the low, flat building that housed the computers. The night was clear and she glanced at the stars. It was very quiet. She lived on a small base. There were no cars out that late at night.

She had allowed herself a few extra minutes because the road was slick. She walked faster over the spots of ice covered by sand and slowed down when the sand disappeared. The roads were poorly cared for because the runways always got cleared first. Sarah slipped and threw out her arms to steady herself. She walked on and smiled slightly, thinking, Keep those runways clear and those planes flying. The mission above all.

She reached her building and fumbled with the keys, hampered by her heavy gloves. She locked the door behind her and went into the front office. Off came the boots, gloves, parka and bunny pants. Her work shoes sat by the coat rack and she slipped them on. It was only 11:53 so she lingered over the deserted desks, reading notes left by and for her co-workers. No sense getting in there any earlier than I have to, she thought.

Sarah didn't particularly like being a computer operator. They made her one because she scored well on an aptitude test given in basic training. They never told her what the test was for, so she had just assumed it was another pointless training exercise. She had concentrated on the test and been careful with her answers. They sent her to computer school and her job for the next four years was determined.

A door opened somewhere and the persistent clatter of busy machines was heard. Jack walked in and threw a computer listing on one of the desks.

"Hey," he said and smiled.

"Hi," Sarah said, smiling back at him. She liked Jack. He was technically her supervisor, but really her friend. They had worked together for three months. He was very good at his job and mid shift was usually finished by 5 a. m. at the latest.

He had brown hair and eyes and was tall and thin. He was the clown of the office, always laughing and good-natured. He gave Sarah just the amount of responsibility she wanted, which meant she usually hung a few tapes and ripped a few listings off the computer before heading back to the barracks.

"I made some coffee," he said. "How was your date last night?"

"OK," Sarah said and she put her hand on his arm. "But you know it's you I'm crazy for."

Jack chuckled and they went into the computer room together. It pleased him to flirt with Sarah. She flirted with all the men in her office. It put them at ease. They were all older than her and married. They felt very protective of her. She had learned that an easy flirtatiousness made a comfortable atmosphere for them. Her compliments bolstered their egos and they in turn made her feel very desirable, like a woman of the world. She was 19 years old.

It was noisy and cold in the computer room. The temperature had to be low for the machines. Jack had already sorted the jobs waiting on the table. The challenge of running the computer was to put in a compatible combination of jobs so that they ran smoothly and quickly. Sarah went to the tape rack and put the tapes in order to match the job sheets. Jack had the computer full and running.

"How come you're the only WAF on base still wearing a man's parka?" Jack said. "The new ones are nice looking."

"I hate the new ones," she said. "Tell you what, Jack. When I have to get the women's version, I'll trade you and you can have it, if I can have yours."

"It's a deal," Jack said. He watched a tape rewinding and got up to change it.

"I gave Carlos the night off," he said. "I saw it was going to be pretty light, so I called him and told him not to come in. You can have tomorrow off if it's not too busy."

"OK," Sarah said. She was glad Carlos wasn't coming in and Jack knew it. Carlos was the only one who wanted to flirt seriously with her. He had slicked-down black hair and a snake's smile. He made Sarah very self-conscious. He spoke with a slight accent and stayed as close as possible to her when they worked together. She was much more relaxed alone with Jack.

Jack sat on a high stool in front of the computer console. He opened a can of beer. He drank a lot. No one ever visited the mid shift, so he felt safe. He always carefully disposed of his beer cans in the dumpster in the parking lot. The captain probably knew he drank, but didn't care because mid shift always got the work done right and finished early. His drinking made Sarah feel less guilty about smoking cigarettes and drinking coffee in the computer room. A sign on the wall said: "There will be no smoking, eating or drinking in this room at any time."

Sarah went out the back door to the coffee pot in the break room. She came back in with a cup of coffee and an ashtray and sat down next to the job table.

Jack sipped his beer and occasionally typed messages to the computer on the console. A bell on the console rang when a tape was needed for a job, but Jack usually anticipated the bell and asked Sarah to hang the tapes.

It was pleasant but boring work. Sarah was grateful to work mids instead of day shift, when the operators were interrupted frequently by visitors demanding to know the statuses of certain jobs.

"What have Linda and Shane been up to?" she asked.

He smiled at the mention of Shane's name. Jack was a good father. Sarah had seen him and Shane around the base, shopping for groceries or going to the Saturday afternoon children's movies. Shane was very well behaved for a five-year-old and Jack seemed at ease and happy with him.

"Not much," Jack said. "Linda finally found a pair of blue jeans to fit him. He wears them all the time. He practically sits by the washer when they get dirty and she manages to get him out of them."

Sarah grinned at him. "He's all right, that kid."

"Sure is." Jack was proud. "Jeez, look at his father."

Jack asked Sarah to take over and she moved to the stool by the console as he left the room. She typed in idle queries: what day, what time, what jobs are running. The answers came back quickly and then the console was silent. This machine is as bored as I am, she thought.

Jack came back in with a fresh can of beer and took her old seat by the job table.

"Sarah, I want to ask you a favor. You don't have to do it if you don't want to. But I think we're pretty good friends and I can trust you. It would mean a lot to me." He was staring at the top of his beer can. His face was serious.

"Sure, Jack," she said. "You know I'll do it, whatever it is." Sarah

felt glad that she would be able to repay Jack for all he had done for her--making coffee just for her, since he never drank any; keeping Carlos out of her hair; giving her frequent nights off work; carrying the burden of mid shift so she never had to work very hard or feel any pressure on the job.

"First I have to tell you something I've never told anyone else. No one knows but Linda." He wasn't looking at her. He stared at his beer can.

What's wrong with him, thought Sarah. "Hey you can trust me. You know that."

Suddenly Jack smiled and turned his large brown eyes on her. She felt relieved. This was the old joking Jack. It wasn't so serious after all.

"Well, see, when I was little, my sisters used to dress me up in their clothes a lot," he said, watching her closely. "I didn't mind. I got older and they quit doing it. Sometimes when I was alone, just for a kick, I would put on their clothes again and makeup and stuff. It was just kind of a different hobby. Then after Linda and I got married, I used to put on her stuff when she was out. I bought my own wig."

Sarah looked at him, struggling to keep her face emotionless because he was watching her. But she felt that she could not comprehend what he was saying. Her ears buzzed a little and she shook her head slightly to make the buzzing stop.

"Linda caught me one day. She was pretty upset. I tried to explain it to her, that it was just a hobby and didn't mean anything. She started to understand, I guess, but she didn't like it. Once she knew, I reserved one of the dresser drawers to keep my stuff. The only thing she asked was that I do it when she wasn't around. And after Shane was born, she made me promise not to let him see me that way."

Jack stopped talking and got up quickly to check the jobs in the computer. He typed in a few messages over her shoulder and Sarah held her breath without knowing why. He hung a tape without looking at her.

Sarah was quiet. I need to say something to him, she thought.

"I can understand. Just a hobby and all. Doesn't hurt anybody," she said. Jack looked at her. She felt compelled to ask: "What's the favor you want?"

He rubbed his fingers together. He seemed excited.

"I just need a few pictures," he said. "I brought a suitcase along with my stuff. It wouldn't take long. You could just take a few shots of me."

Sarah's words were slow. "Sure. That's not much. Sure I will."

Jack seemed to be struggling to stay calm. His voice was high. "I'll be right back. The jobs are OK. Give it a few minutes and hang the personnel tape, OK?" He touched her arm as he walked out.

So, Sarah thought. She got a cigarette our of her purse and lit it. I think we could get in a lot of trouble with this. There's a name for it I heard somewhere, but I can't remember what it is.

She tried to be stern with herself. This is no big deal and it doesn't mean

anything. Just a little kinky thing Jack likes to do. Nobody's perfect. Besides, no one ever comes in on mids.

Her palms felt sweaty. She looked at them and tried to laugh at herself. The laugh was weak.

She tried to concentrate on the computer console but her eyes drifted to the door. He would be back soon.

Sarah felt angry and she didn't know why. The feeling surprised her. He has no right to do this to me, she thought and felt better, understanding her anger. He shouldn't do this to me.

The door opened behind her and Jack walked in. He had a camera in his hand. "Here I am," he said cheerfully. "What do you think?"

He was matter-of-fact and businesslike. The voice was still Jack's voice. But a young woman was standing in front of Sarah.

She was rather pretty. She wore a short curly black wig and a long blue slinky dress. Hose showed through the tips of her silver sandals. She wore fake diamond earrings and a necklace. Her pink lipstick was smeared as if it had been applied in a hurry. It matched the pink polish on her short, stubby fingernails. Sarah looked at her brown eyes beneath heavy liner and false lashes and they were Jack's expectant eyes.

Even nail polish, Sarah thought, forcing back hysterical giggles rising in her throat. He even has nail polish.

"You look great," Sarah said. She tried to smile. She was suddenly afraid he could read her mind.

Jack seemed satisfied. He handed her the camera. "Let's just take a few shots." He walked to the table with short steps, his hips swaying a little.

What a strange walk, Sarah thought, and she was sad. He turned and leaned one hand on the table. He put his other hand on his hip. "Try this." She took the picture.

When Sarah looked through the viewfinder, she was surprised to see the young woman. When I talk to him, I know that's Jack, but when I put my eye to the camera, I see a stranger, she thought.

He posed at different places in the room--by the door, sitting on the stool, in front of the tape units. They finished the twelve pictures on the roll of film.

Jack took the camera from Sarah. "I'm going to put these in with some other film I have to be developed. I don't think anyone will even look twice at them, do you?" He seemed elated.

"No, I guess not," Sarah said.

"I thought I could start an album, sort of," he said. "I'll keep it in my drawer."

Dear God, Sarah thought, I can't do this again. Don't let him ask me.

The last job was in the computer.

"I'll change when I get home. Let me give you a lift to the barracks," he said.

"No, really, I like to walk. Thanks though." Sarah wanted to be in her room, in her bed with the blankets pulled up over her.

"You can take off if you want to. I'll finish up. And thanks for. . . thanks."

"Sure," Sarah said. She caught herself before saying "anytime."

He walked up behind her before she reached the door and put his hand on her shoulder. She turned around. "I want you to understand something. This hobby is just a kick. I mean, I only like women. As far as sex goes, I only like women."

The false eyelashes went up and down as he talked. She looked involuntarily at his polished nails.

"Of course, I know that," she said. Her ears were buzzing again.

"I feel really close to you now," he said. "Do you know what I mean? Do you mind?" He put his hand on her cheek and leaned over. He kissed her lips and waited.

She forced a smile. "Good night, Jack. See you tomorrow."

"No, you can have tomorrow off."

"Oh, yeah, I forgot. OK. See you."

Sarah was shivering. Jack looked at her thoughtfully. "Hey, Sarah," he said. She stopped again and turned.

"From now on, it just, well, it will be the same as always. You know, business as usual," he said.

"Yeah," Sarah said. She left and shut the door to the computer room softly.

She went into the front office and put on her parka. I'll trade this in first thing in the morning and get a woman's parka, she thought. She could taste his lipstick on her mouth.

W. F. Heineman

AT THE HOSPITAL

living here
i am surrounded by death
that i never see,
perhaps it is a streetsweeper's sonata
cleaning them from the sidewalks
like there never was a problem
death never really took hold--
somebody just remaking the beds.
swallowing configurations of pain.

Carol Barrett

THE SEVENTH NATIONAL FLAT PICKING CHAMPIONSHIPS

were held in Winfield, Kansas
exactly between
late summer and early fall

alcohol was not allowed:
the air was drunk
with competition

splashed with fiddles,
vibrant
with lightning

the crowd wore T-shirts
with proverbial
decals

chewed crushed ice
as the bleachers
shuddered

soft spots in the old
boards worn
with the beating

of pointed boots
(not your regular
west coast sandals)

cowboy hats
buried the performers'
eyes

until the reckoning
of applause, accompanied
by Ozark dancers

their bony knees
jumping
like wooden puppets

on the lap
the Tennessee winner
played his new guitar

sweat trickling
inside his plaid shirt,
a single drop

in slow descent
down crystal coca-cola
on the nearby billboard

young admirers
planted on the railing
like begonias

offered
their smiles
for his buttonholes

jealous crickets
complained
in the grass

trampled beneath a wagon
train
of zippered tents

LESSONS FOR FIFTY CENTS

I learned how to make love
watching the lions in the Seattle Zoo
on weekends in the afternoon
sun, smelling of popcorn and peanuts.
They talk all the while, screaming
in the mount, bringing the masses
of their bodies together in jubilant
choreography, pushing every giant muscle
into oblivion. They ignore timid
observers (Catholics after church)
come from another continent altogether.
For hours, they show off for multitudes
of peeled jackets and instamatic cameras.

If Daddy knew what I was doing
there, he would have been quite
proud (Pittsburgh has a lovely zoo.)*

That is why I am
a little noisy, don't care
if someone sees us, explosions
of movement are with me all afternoon.
Stretched out in my heat,
outrageously demanding--
it is all a matter
of how you're taught.

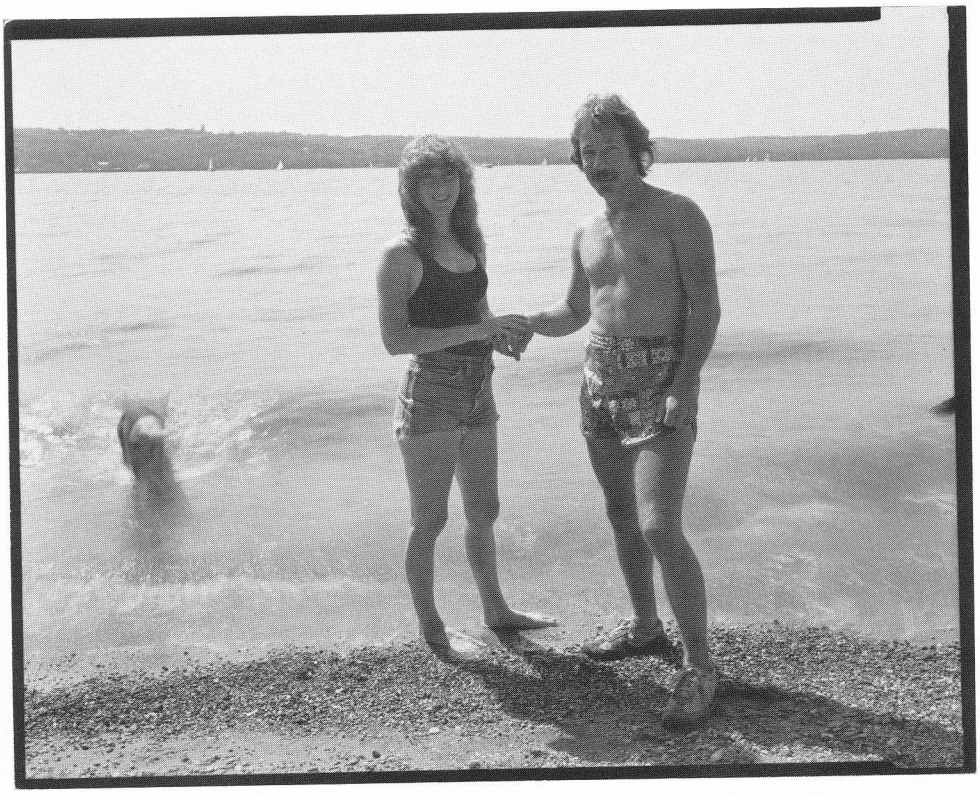
* So does San Diego.

Linda M. Hasselstrom

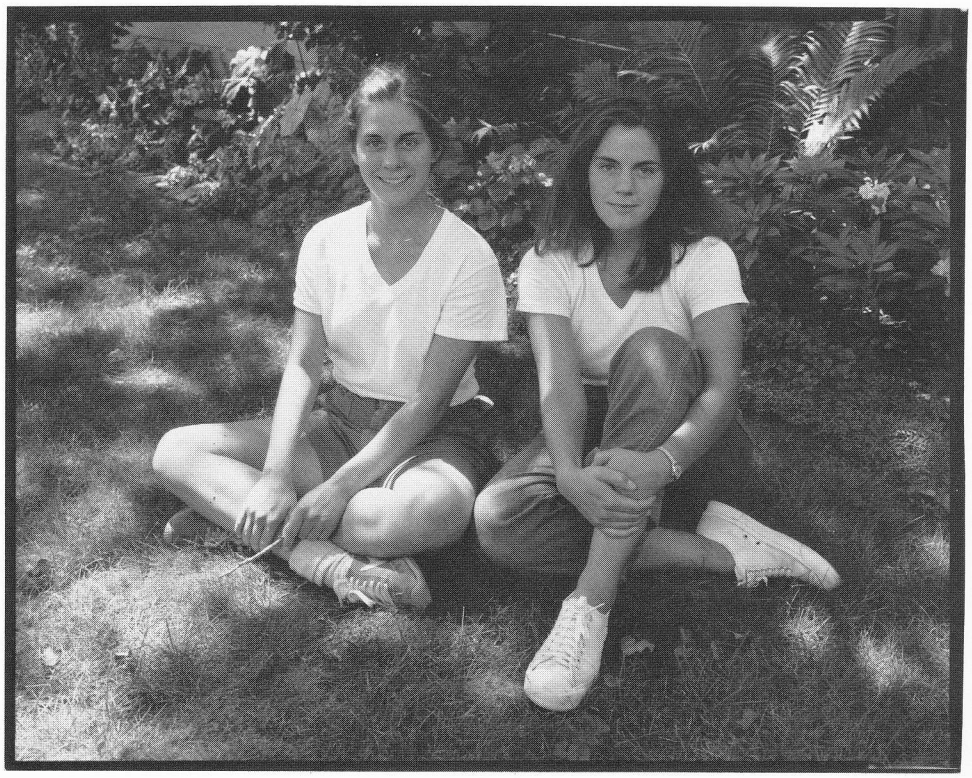
TURTLE DANCE

The turtles migrate through
Missouri in the spring, slow
claws pulling north. Cars
roll over them, paving dirt
roads in cold blood; earth
is parqueted in crushed green
shell. Nothing halts their slow
dance. I knew a girl who
couldn't stand the crunch;
she'd stop the car, carry them
one by one off the road. She
bought a bicycle finally.
Driving to the store for food
was either too much death
or too much turtle transportation.
I wonder where she is now. I know
the turtles still march north.

Diane Covert



Jon Blumb



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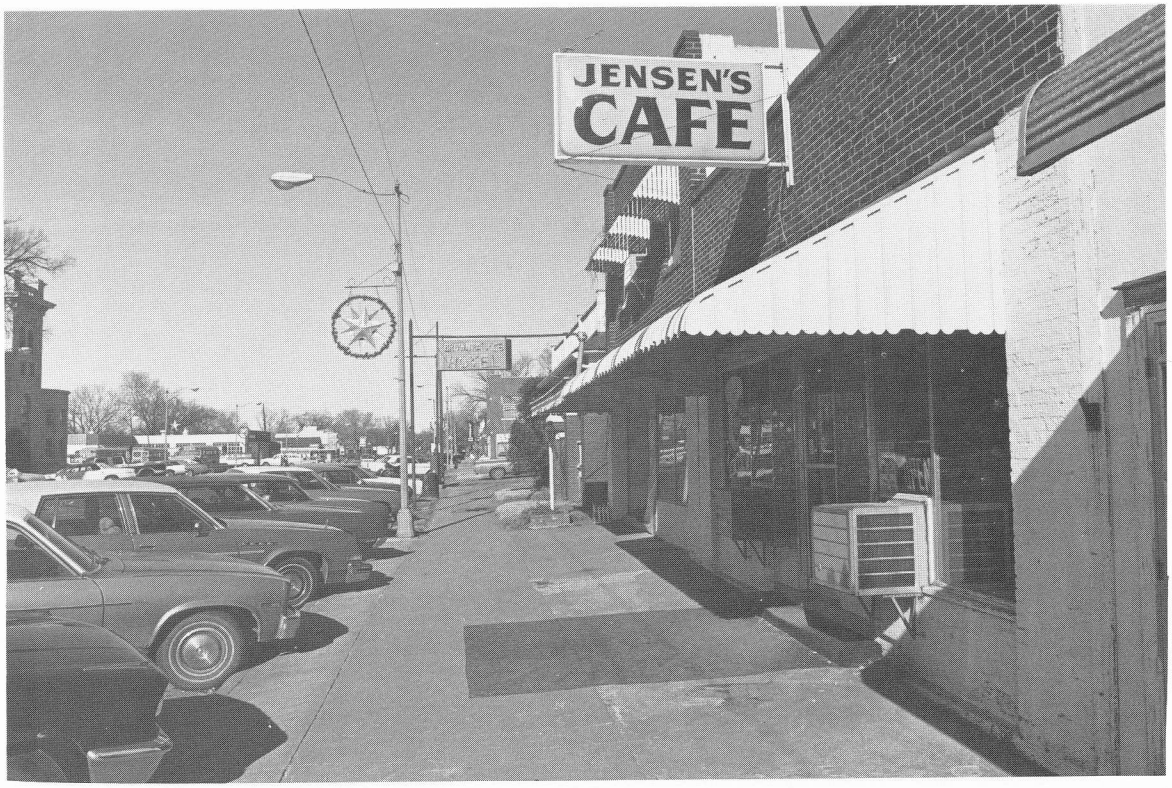
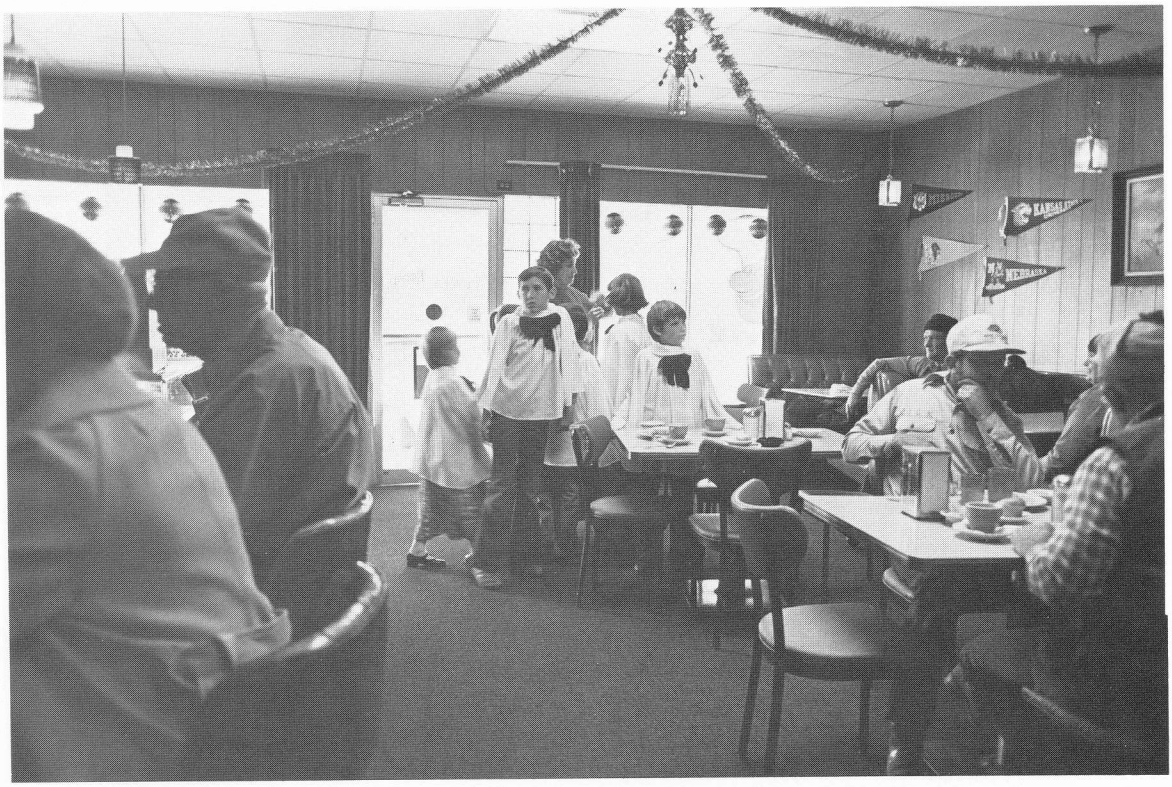


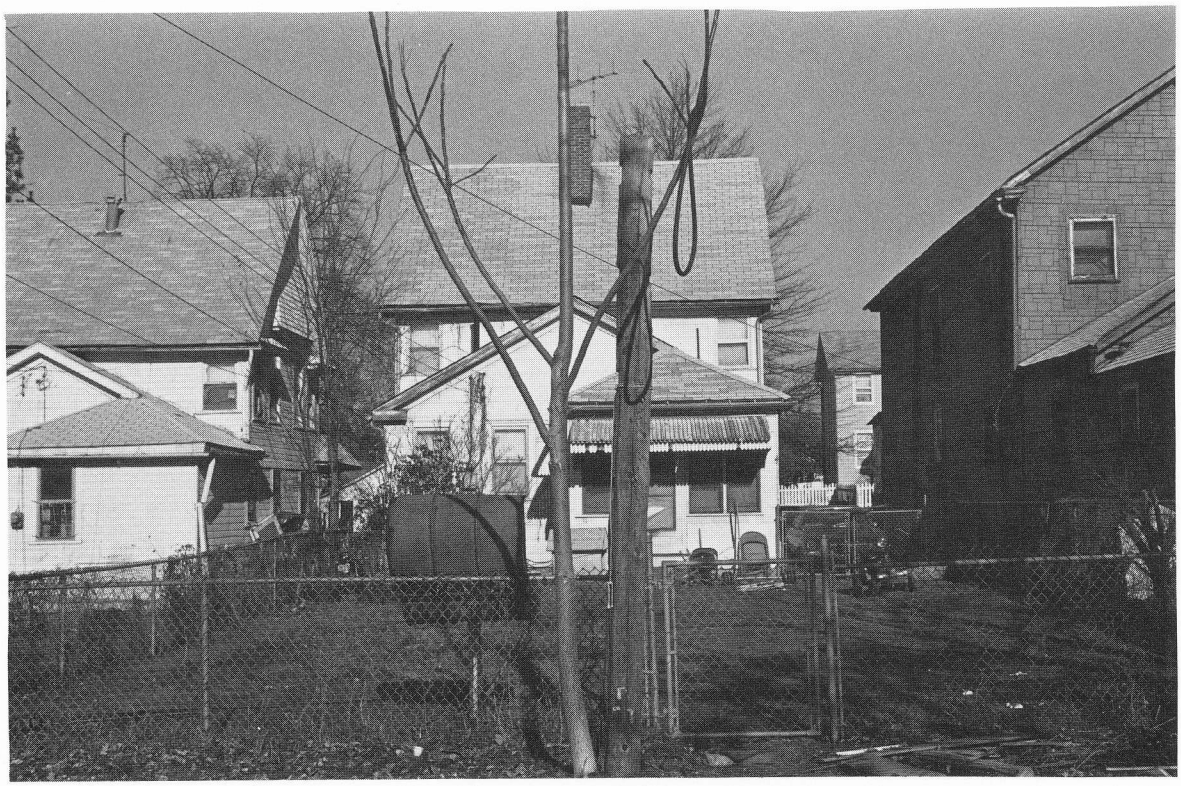


Lynn S. Swigart

Lynn S. Swigart

Sherry Sparks

Sherry Sparks



T. G. Tanowski

Denise Low and Robin Tawney

AN INTERVIEW WITH GARY SNYDER

LOW: I was reading the massive interview with you in the Ohio Review, and rereading that I began to see how much your poetry embodies some basic anthropological perspectives. Do you consciously use anthropology in your writings?

SNYDER: Well, lets get away from the word anthropology, which is okay for starters, but what anthropology means to me is a broad view of the human condition, a broad view of and acquaintance with certain necessary information as to what man has been up to and what has taken place on this planet with our species for the last 35, 40, 50 thousand years. This is not an exotic kind of information. Eventually it will become part of the lore that school children learn in our lifetime, by the third or fourth grade. It is only a special kind of information now because it hasn't been important to our view of ourselves. So it's a beginning and one that tries to move into pluralism and pluralities of cultures and diversities of value systems, cultural activity, etc., and to forge on ahead to find what peculiar rules of mind and behavior perhaps bind together and allow us to find some kind of wholeness. Anthropology as a science, of course, is concerned with those rules. And I like to think of that information sometimes in terms of my own life, my own vehicle. There are two kinds of Buddhism, Hinayana and Mahayana. Hinayana is the Buddhism of individuals who are striving toward enlightenment, and Mahayana is the Buddhism of those who commit themselves to a vision of everybody becoming enlightened together. That's the anthropological vision I envision.

LOW: That's another question I have: how does the wide cultural view tie in with Buddhism? I hadn't realized that larger social concern of Mahayana Buddhism. Hinayana is more commonly practiced, at least in Lawrence.

SNYDER: The Hinayana psychology is widespread, even though people think they follow Mahayana. "Maha" means great; "yana" means vehicle: the great vehicle. It's the big ship that everybody can get on. The Mahayana spirit is an essential spirit for these times as we realize the need to embrace the whole diversity of the community while not losing individual characteristics and specificities of places and things. It's another way of speaking of planetary vision, or what the ecological vision suggests to us.

LOW: So you're thinking of people having, in their approaches to life and in their ways of perceiving their lives, that whole history of 35 to 50 thousand years?

SNYDER: I think that, for starters, that's where poets can get to work.

LOW: Do you think this is a peculiarly American concept in poetry as opposed to British?

SNYDER: It may be, at this time, something that appeals to the American mentality because of the oddness of the American experience in the sense of the quality of being a little forward in time, perhaps. This is to say, some of our experience is the experience that some other cultures will have shortly after we do. We live in a culturally disintegrated, highly industrialized society. We experience things that they aspire to, which is nothing to be proud of, but it gives our poetics a certain validity. There are hippies in Japan now that look like our hippies from ten years ago. So it's an artist's or poet's work, I think, to be the digesters of information.

LOW: Back to the anthropology, or the "broad view of the human condition"; does that perspective give any general statements about human needs?

SNYDER: Well, they used to think they would like to find the laws of cultural dynamics as though it were a natural science. There are things to be discovered as to how things work. I don't know how much that will teach us in terms of being wise. I think it helps. I have great respect for the structuralists and their research. They are looking for patterns, the way things work.

LOW: Have you discovered any rules?

SNYDER: Maybe I have, but I haven't figured it out yet. I'm not ready to articulate them. Now, to articulate them, I might have located some things, theoretically, say; I might have located some things and put them in poetry. But the articulation of them in official academic language remains to be done. I haven't seen that yet or know how to do it. There may well be some things that cannot be stated.

TAWNEY: You mentioned the children learning all of this information very early on in their educational careers. How do you see trying to get this into a political reality?

SNYDER: What I'm talking about is not and could not be a political reality. Politics cannot make culture, just like the Supreme Court can only make

decisions that the majority of the people give assent to in the abstract. In the abstract, legal motions on the highest level are still dependent on assent, and what the people think is dependent on culture. So we work with the deep level of mind rather than with legislation to work toward a kind of transformation. It's a much slower process. It takes centuries.

TAWNEY: You work on a government's awareness through the California Arts Council. How does that help?

SNYDER: It doesn't.

LOW: It doesn't even work on the lower level of consciousness?

SNYDER: Just barely, insofar as you encourage, by whom you aid and abet, the artists who might be involved in the deeper level transformation. In that sense I suppose the California Council of Arts has moved a few tiny stones in its support of cultural diversity and especially its respectful attention to cultural and artistic standards of Chicano people and other groups, and in doing so has increased the richness of the consciousness, cultural possibilities of the future. But for me, being on the California Arts Council was largely an education in our government, in how our bureaucracy works.

TAWNEY: So this was for self-defense?

SNYDER: No, self-education.

LOW: So you're saying that briefly, through the centuries, or little by little through the centuries, we can raise up the whole cultural conciousness toward something. How does that fit in with the position that most poets find themselves in today; that is, they have no audience.

SNYDER: Well, most poets are not poets, if you want to count 5,000 American poets, of which a large percentage really have no clear sense of what they are doing and certainly no vision that is really a larger vision. So that's why I say maybe most aren't really poets. So if we hold it down to those who have a vision and who don't tend to stop what they're doing, do or die, maybe there's a hundred of those. They have audiences. And the audience is slowly and steadily growing. Not that the audience should be too huge, but we do have a whirlpool of poetry growing in the last few years. And audiences come into existence when poets think about audiences and write poems with audiences in mind, and go out and and read their poems to audiences and participate in the real world and make decisions and choices and commitments to the world. And audiences have heard. It's as simple as that. It's like a mirror. I've written a paper on this called

"Poetry in the World." It's about the public process of poetry since World War II. It will be published in Field magazine sometime this spring [1979].

LOW: What is your opinion of the small presses?

SNYDER: Fine. They're excellent, especially if the small presses try to stay small, recognize their smallness, and try to serve the regional need. When small presses all compete with each other on a national level, it's kind of a waste of energy. We talk about regionalism and decentralization in politics and and ecology. We should also understand this applies to culture. The decentralization of poetry and culture is an necessary as the decentralization of energy and bureaucracy, which means that little magazines should be responsive and responsible to their region. They should illuminate that region rather than aspiring to some kind of nationwide light that they will never achieve.

LOW: Do you publish mostly in your region of northern California?

SNYDER: In terms of magazine publications? My book publisher is New Directions, which is nationwide, so in that regard I don't practice what I preach. But, on the other hand, there is a level at which some poems do have a larger audience, and my poems do have a national audience. When I publish new poems, I publish them regionally, in the regional magazines. That's where I float them.

LOW: What is the journal you just co-edited with Ferlinghetti, McClure, and Metzler last fall [1978]? Was it a reprint of "A Visionary and Revolutionary Review" of the sixties?

SNYDER: Well, the cover is a reprint, but the journal itself is all new material: Journal for the Protection of All Beings. That's Stewart Brand's Co-Evolution Quarterly, a special fall issue.

LOW: So that's the kind of regionalism you like to participate in?

SNYDER: Well, that's not really regional because Co-Evolution Quarterly is a nationwide publication, although it is definitely West Coast and it reflects the northern California consciousness. Northern California is the center of the emerging meeting of poetry, biology, ecology, economics and science. So Co-Evolution Quarterly reflects these. Another regional magazine I publish in is called Kuksu, subtitled, "A Journal of Backcountry Writing" [Nevada City, California].

TAWNEY: Is this vision unique to this time, or do you feel it is something you've discovered because of your contact with the East?

SNYDER: Some people have discovered it by their own paths, have come to a view of biology or their own politics or their own ethnic politics. It's a place where a lot of interests intersect because it really holds the possibility of holding a large vision of the planet without losing its variety. The "global" vision of the planet, which is held by or peddled by the salesmen of the multi-national corporations, they'll say, "one world." Yes, and what they mean is one world which is all the same, in which the same government is the nation, and every little country has a role in it, and every nation is on a fossil fuel tit. So we try to distinguish between globalism and planetarian thinking, just as a matter of terminology. Planetary thinking is also one mouth, but it's a world in which biological solutions rather than technological solutions are respected and in which the ethnic and biological diversity and variety of the planet is respected for, if nothing else, scientific reasons, not to mention historical, compassionate reasons. And so that is a decentralist, appropriate technological, ecologically oriented vision of the planetary life instead of the industrial, de-evolution, one-world central government vision of the planet. It is very important to distinguish between the two, because the globalists would masquerade sometimes as though they were planetary.

LOW: This is the whole "global village" concept, which is not really planetary?

SNYDER: Yes, it's the trilateral commission. The trilateral commission is the three major industrial sectors of the village of the United States combined to promote fossil fuels, to mainline it--humanely and efficiently, right? They'll sell it to you by saying, "We can't let people starve." Of course we don't want people to starve.

LOW: What is your answer to that?

SNYDER: My answer to that is for a while, you might have increased food production, but you're riding it right to the edge. When it all collapses, when your soil fertility is wiped out, when your third world countries that have been injecting fossil fuel fertilizers cannot afford it on the balance of payments, and you can no longer afford to ship it to them free. And the answer is that we go back to, and step forward into, biologically sensitive, lower technological, higher labor intensive agricultural systems that permit people to be locally self-sufficient and not depend on expensive resources brought in from outside. And if anything needs to be rectified, it's land holding taxation and interest rate problems. You see, take India: Two solutions to the problems of the Indian farmer. The American solution is, give them pumps, tractors, chemical fertilizer and improved seed strain. They'll start growing more food.

LOW: Isn't that what they are trying to get for China now?

SNYDER: That is what China, stupidly, is asking for. So what happens is that after a while, they don't know how to maintain the pumps, they don't know how to maintain the tractors, they can't afford the fossil fuel fertilizer and the new strains of seeds deplete their soils and grow out of season. So that's one answer.

The other answer that comes in is simply the Chinese system; is, well, the top tier of the problem is we are over taxed, the interest rate is too high, so let's have some political changes for starters. Okay, so you free holders of land; you don't have debt or a tax burden. Now, without that, you can have only a social burden. Let's see if you can improve the agricultural use of the tools you have and make them more sophisticated, using tools that they already have, or if it takes new tools, using tools that can be maintained there. And in some cases the solution is not any of those. In some cases the solution has to do with over population: eliminating, say, goats, reforesting forests. Slowly we must plan this.

TAWNEY: What is needed is a unique combination of individual production and self sufficiency in an original way with the intent that it be unified in a planetary way.

SNYDER: That's what it is; that's what the intention is. And that is the way people used to live. So, without talking about going backwards, we do it by work. People are always saying, you're trying to go back to the Stone Age. David Brower, who is head of Friends of the Earth, was once accused of that by a reporter: "Well, Mr. Brower, you should go back to the Stone Age." Brower said, "Well, I'd be satisfied with the twenties." The population of the world was only half what it is now.

LOW: The other thing I wonder about, though, is what do you think about people like me, with electric typewriters? I read your interview in the Ohio Review, along these lines, and went home and looked at my dishwasher and thought, Gary Snyder would not like this.

SNYDER: Well, I don't know about electric typewriters--I get along fine with them. There is a question of appropriateness there. There are some things that only electricity can do. Only electricity can do this [taps tape recorder]: this is very appropriate. It's light, and it does a good job, and its energy cost is minimal. An electric typewriter is probably kind of a luxury. A dishwasher is a luxury if you are not working. If you are a working person, if both of you are working, then you can understand using it. Dishwashers really should be children. Children are dish washers. If you raise your children right--this may not apply in your case, but I see many families who are too Goddamned lazy to raise their children to work. So the children are standing around with their dumb

faces hanging out while the dishwasher is running. Now what way to do things is that? You've got all these suburban households where the kids feel useless. They feel of no value to the economic system. They have no role to play. What kind of self-esteem and dignity are you going to get out of having no role to play when you're ten or twelve years old? When Black Elk was twelve years old he shot a white man with a Colt revolver. He knew what he was doing. He was playing a role in his cultural life. And in former society, boys and girls knew that there is work to be done, and they love it. They get skills and they get pride. So if you have a situation in which a machine is replacing a child, how dumb. That's a double loss. On the other hand, a vacuum cleaner is a great tool, because there is nothing that will do what a vacuum cleaner can do, so that's a place where electricity is appropriate.

There is a basic laziness in the suburban life in the education of kids. It's work to raise kids to do the things. You have to pay attention, keep after them; although once they learn it, they'll do it. And a lot of people are so damn lazy they'll find machinery to do the work of the children. And that gets transmitted from generation to generation. That's really corrupt.

TAWNEY: I assume that began after the depression. Parents wanted to give their children what they didn't have. Parents of people my age just picked that up from theirs. It's become an automatic cycle.

SNYDER: The intention is often too kind.

LOW: Doesn't this go back to the breakup of the household as an economic unit? The father goes out to work and wants the woman home without an important economic role for prestige?

SNYDER: Well, that's suburban life. Obviously farm families can't live like this. And it's middle class because up until World War I and after, women of the working class still worked in factories, participated in strikes, were socialists. It is really important and interesting to develop a concept of what household economy is, and how dignity and productiveness is possible both within the house and outside of the house. There is a good book on it, called Household Economy. It's really talking about how households and economies have similar approaches, seriously. It also really comes to the point that is obviously valid that the housewife is not playing a minor role at all. It is an extremely important role. That work can be measured in dollars and cents if you want to, if you want to talk about amounts of social security, how to do that. But beyond that, children have to do work. It's alienation, just another variety of alienation that people have these machine operated, super-clean houses--which they go away from on weekends for recreation--surrounded by a well kept lawn on which and in which nothing happens. Now how would you transform that? An Asian model, a future model: here is the vision of the future, twenty years from now.

Each suburban house will have a fence around it, and part of it will be a high wall, part of it will be a low animal fence. Where the lawn is today will be a vegetable garden. It will be a very finely kept vegetable garden. Maybe that part won't be fenced; it depends on what kinds of animals are kept. But the back yard part or one corner of it will be fenced with a high fence rather than just open to the world. And that will be a private outdoor living space, because people will be outdoors as well as indoors. And there will be a greenhouse. And the greenhouse will be oriented toward the south, will have heating and hot water recycling systems, and will grow almost all the vegetables you need the year round. Part of the property, if it's large enough, will be left to grow wood. And you'll see children back there, working in the garden, maybe with a fish pond, working in the greenhouse, splitting firewood (because more of the cooking and heating will be done by wood), and generally having a great time. There may be a few goats, maybe a horse or a cow, but the children are doing some of the work.

And every little suburban household will be like this. Every one of those suburban households quite possibly could be supplying almost all of its own food. Schools will be smaller and will be moved back into the different suburban localities, so the kids will all be within bicycle or walking distance of the school. There will be smaller work bases, factories and industries locally that the men and women can walk or ride to. And there'll be community centers and churches that really serve as community centers and churches, and at which there'll be great dinners, pot lucks, dances, get-togethers every weekend because people aren't interested in or cannot afford to go long distances away, so they will turn back to their towns. And there will be poetry readings and drama and dance presentations. And it will all be within walking distance.

That's the post-fossil fuel world. Scary, isn't it?

TAWNEY: It sounds pretty nice.

SNYDER: Yes, I know.

LOW: But you're also saying we won't have to give up communications, like telephones, or all transporation...

SNYDER: I doubt that we'll have to give up telephones, but transportation and telephones are two different kettles of fish. So you do your energy cost accounting. How much energy does it take to make a phone call? How much energy does it take to fly to New York? So you can talk on the phone to New York and do a lot of business without having to fly there, as a lot of people are beginning to realize.

TAWNEY: It seems that telephones would be one of the things that would allow the decentralization of power.

SNYDER: That's a point that McLuhan made ten years ago, that electrical and electronic communications really speed the cycle of decentralization. That's really true. Computer technology is the most cost-efficient in terms of energy than anything else going. More work gets done for less energy by the computer than anything.

So we're not talking about giving up everything. Where I live we don't have telephones or electricity, but people all keep in touch with each other with C. B. radios. The amount of electricity required to talk fifteen or twenty miles across a canyon or across a forest to another household seemingly is zero. You just have to charge your car battery twice a year. And yet the information that goes back and forth saves hundreds of miles of driving. That kind of technology, more and more sophisticated, will be part of the future. But still, you've got to grow your food. There's no simple way for that.

LOW: But that's a pleasure.

SNYDER: It's a pleasure; that's the way to see it. How better for your kids to grow up to learn about biology, soil chemistry, all those things they might learn in school but probably won't, and would learn right in their own back yard. Entymology, ecology--entymology is the first thing they'd learn, and chemistry.

TAWNEY: I'm concerned about how the population is going to be tapered down. It seems that if decentralization occurs, and we are put back in an agrarian setting, that there is that added incentive to have a larger-than-two-child family for necessary work purposes. I guess I am thinking in terms of the way the setting is in Lawrence, where the husband works in town and then goes home to the farm, which would not be the case.

SNYDER: The farmers have to do that. They have to do that partly because they don't get paid well for the food they produce.

LOW: Back to more literary topics, who are some poets you follow?

SNYDER: Jim Heynen, I think he's back in the state of Washington. He has several books out, and he's got a new book coming out of what you might call real "poem stories." They are somewhere between prose and poetry and just marvelous stories.

Howard Norman has poems based on kinds of ways that Native Americans gave names to their kids.

LOW: Harley Elliottt has a notebook of real Native American names, like "The Guy Who Talks Too Much," "The One Who Passes Too Much Gas," everything from joke names to sacred names. And at a reading he will go through the notebook, John Cage style, flip the pages and read off names.

SNYDER: Norman's poems are based on stories that people told him. Actually, every name has a story, how that person got their name. The names are interesting, like "Taps a Frog."

LOW: How do you, and why do you, tap a frog?

SNYDER: The first thing about this person, he is blind. When he came down the creek, with his stick he would tap, tap, tap. As he tapped his way, the frogs would jump in. Hearing the frogs jump in, he knew where the water was.

TAWNEY: That's called working with the system.

LOW: But he's in trouble in the winter.

SNYDER: You know how fast it freezes in Montana sometimes. Sometimes they have fast freezes where it freezes up so fast that frogs try to jump in and get caught half way in the ice. So people have businesses up there of harvesting frog legs. You cut those legs off just to the right length and bundle them up solid.

LOW: This isn't a tall tale?

SNYDER: Yes, it is. I heard that from a friend from Wyoming.

Gary Snyder, the well known poet and essayist, visited the University of Kansas from Febrary 20 to Febrary 24, 1979. During his stay he participated in numerous activities. He met with Japanese Studies classes, an introduction to literature class, and the advanced poetry seminar. He held individual conferences with student writers. For the Geography Department he spoke to the Human Survival Projects class. And at the Spencer Museum of Art, he presented a paper, "Landscape Poetry and Chinese Ecology." Off campus Snyder read and discussed his work at Haskell Indian Junior College. With a visiting Russian poet, he was interviewed by the town newspaper. He participated in a sunrise meditation service with a Lawrence Buddhist group. And he presented the Nelson Gallery of art in Kansas City with four poems based on Japanese paintings in their collection.

This interview took place February 21, 1979.

STEVEN HIND

Steven Hind is a fourth generation Kansan who grew up in the Flint Hills and was educated at Emporia State University and the University of Kansas, where he received a Master of Arts in 1970. He publishes poetry in many of this region's magazines and anthologies, including Kansas Quarterly, Ark River Review, Midwest Quarterly and 30 Kansas Poets. Some of the following poems have appeared in Focus Midwest, Tellus, Midwest Quarterly. His honors as a poet include a scholarship to the University of Colorado Writers Conference and Second Award in the 1977 Kansas Quarterly poetry contest. He serves as editor of the Kansas Association of Teachers of English magazine, Young Kansas Writers, the annual collection of prose and poetry written by junior high and high school students in Kansas. Cottonwood Review Press received grants from the Kansas Arts Commission and Hutchinson Junior College to publish Hind's first collection of poetry, Familiar Ground.

CHOOSING SIDES

Look at the nail
stained houses
floating
like arks
in the wheat.
You decide
if the harvest
justifies
their grim doors.

AFTERNOON OF THE FIRST DAY

People lived here with names
like Sitting Bear (Satank),
Powder Face and Bird Chief.
I walk along the Hills, looking
up now and then, watching
the hawk stretched across
the wind's hand, running out
my hand over the long blue stems,
wanting my new name.

CONFESSION

Let me say what I can
about my last killing.
In the trees
by the river lay the cat,
stopped by the moving water
on the east bank. The fur
streaked the air and the blur
of that shooting is clear
even now. Triggers work fast.

I have a picture of that day:
I call her outside and
my grandmother holds up
the long body a moment
before its weight draws her
frail arm down again.
"I am eighty-two years old
and I've had my picture taken
with a bobcat." She said that
later as we walked back
to the house in the snow.
The miracle of her life continued
in her tone. She had stroked
the big female face, her fingers
blue-veined and thin on the delicate
ears. I did not tell her.

I have the other picture too:
the slow murmur of winter
water, crossing the stream
in the odor of gun smoke,
kneeling over her, the magic
eyes stopped, resting on
my face. The teeth set,
and her soft belly ruffled
by the wind. I could not
touch her at first, more perfect
and alone than any animal
I had ever seen. I pulled

the other cartridge from its
clean barrel, and closed my gun.
I touched her, and was owned. Never
had I felt so alone, Grandmother.
The cold wind blew in our ears.
I carried her home.

At thirty-seven I have taken
the picture of my grandmother and the cat.
The death reach of that trophy
runs almost from her shoulder
to knee. I remember the cat
reaching for life with her
wonderful feet, reaching away
from my aim. Now
I do not shoot. Then,
Grandmother, I thought the world
waited for the captured day.
I want to say it just
once: Forgive me, Grandmother.

NIGHT FISHING

The rain turns brown
in the grass
in the gullies,
turns the river dark.
Hooves knead the ground
and the rain runs the dirt
down the ruts
the fishermen cut
with their trucks to the ponds
deep in these Flint Hills.
By their fires
Men eat flesh in the dark,
throw the bones to the wind.

DROUGHT

A grasshopper's skull
hangs by its jaws
in the weeds, roughed up
under the wind's heel.
A hopeless thunder
blows its brains out
over the south hills.
Cross-legged, fixed
I watch sparks fly up
in the dark.

THE POET'S WIFE

The poet's wife from Krakow
tightens her lips
on the cigarette and talks
about 1939 and a 7-year-old witness
to public executions.

She says, "People do not learn
from their mistakes."
We huddle
under the drone of her knowledge,
hoping no one will notice.

I want to put my arm
around her shoulders
and touch the hand that flutters
over an empty plastic glass
and share my parents.

"KEEP OUT"

Behind the old sign
The field coughs up arrowheads
Under the fall moon.

GEESE WATCHING

"At least I got to see
the geese come up," he said

"The sheriff added that one car
a year manages to get into the lake."
(Hutchinson News, 12/15/78)

Kirby stood
over the geese
their swimming lint-white in the lake below,
Alive for him now in the good evening
of a seven contract day.

The plink or clink--
some one syllable plucked
on a sprocket and the car
rumbled down the slope
managing its way over the cliff,
a chance two feet from the stationary
Kirby,

The splash washing all but wheels
from his eyes--
cannisters, hoses, motors of his
demonstrators leaking air
through the line between worlds.

And up go the Geese People
to the sanctuary of the sky,
their glinting voices over Kirby:
who must be the one
who comes every year
to sacrifice The-Creature-
That-Falls.

SONG FOR RENETTA
AT MACDONALDS ON 4TH ST.

A face for shampoo
ads in Mademoiselle,
that allure of the stasis of grace
by the register. Her clean lips
parted, cliche, yet epitome of expectations.
Blue eyes, child quiet, and clear into mine:
"May I help you, sir." Oh, Renetta,
Renetta of the white-lettered tag
by your Big M. Help for this sir,
if only, and could you.

Break bans of statutory rape laws.
Send elders into guilty stooping scuttle
after ragged pages of riven statutes,
wet from Renetta's bath!

To reach with stuttering fingers
the wheat-colored hair, parted
and straight: Blossom amid hamburgers!
Princess of pickles and french fries!
Rotisserie mistress of hot apple pie!
Come to my booth. Touch my hungers.
Feed me quarter pounders; shake me
cold and fry my salt-thirsty tongue.
I'll rattle the dregs of my Dr. Pepper
from your delicate, insistent hands.
Tempt me, golden and arching,
to riotous frenzy and glut.

No. You swoop on my ticket
circling vittles in code, wheel
to the stainless bins and sack
up my hot-cartoned bun, insert
my fries, and select my stiffening
strawberry shake. You slide over my sack,
creasing the top to hold all the heat I get.
Oh, Renetta. Run away from the hamburger
clowns. Frolic in salad.
Proposition the muscle of day.

THE COINCIDENTAL PLANET

It's news
when you don't go out
on the blazing parabola of your
birthday comet, or
meet your wife
where your mother and father met,
that boardwalk in Jersey.
It's a small world;
melodies meet you mid-note,
books open to your whim,
one learns to expect surprises.
Like a number between one
and a hundred your children
will always find their way home.

FALLING APART

Awake,
less than myself,
I shake the rubbled sheets.
My razor excavates flakes.
Over cereal a pebble
gently splashes the milk.
As I kiss
the wife and children
the avalanche begins,
lips glass-
splintering,
fingers falling,
a stone rain un-
restrained by suit,
by shirt, by pants, by
watch, by tie,
by shoes and socks.

AFTER SCHOOL

The sky has a question.
The April sun answers
with a building
multiplied by red brick.
Yellow buses loaf like
bread loaves in a magic book.
It is 3 p.m. and the house-
husband arrives to prince
away his daughter. No mamas
idle in curlers, no bell rings,
no crossing guard
freezes traffic with a glare.
The double doors open
to long halls and dark rooms.
Silence blues the ever after.
His 2nd grader's painting of herself
escapes its upper left tape
and rattles in the warm breeze
like bones or rhyme or laughter.

Gayle Elen Harvey

CROSSING THE TUNDRA

after 5 years our words are a boney thicket
stretching across the tundra, going nowhere.
something like a beast tears at our hearts.
it enters us, dragging us down where we lie
in the stopped snow, not always knowing which
of us is victim...

blood spills over the ice.
we look to the night sky. it has toughened.
it reflects nothing.
months from now I will dream of this sorry
cold. someone approaches me, giving up his throat
to my loneliness. I nip at him
and spin away. even the taste of his blood
does not bring back my hunger...

Sue Ann Fredericksen

CHARLIE
ON THE FRONT STEPS

wearing yellow terry slippers

He's old, thin,
arthritis makes him
    stiff when he walks,
yellow, alcoholic skin
    draped around his eyes

Boy, he'd sure like
    to go to Tahiti,
and find himself some
    "real women"

Says schnauzers must
    have German names,
Babysits on Thursdays,
    "all the kids want Valiums"
Cooks for his "grandson"
    Rodney,
    who drives a taxi,
    prunes the hedges,
    steals the Valiums

Charlie waits nervously
    for his monthly check,
    then asks me for some money,
    (always pays it back)

A winter afternoon
he broke into my house,
    to use the phone,
and accidentally gulped my whiskey
Then felt so guilty
    he did the dishes,
    made my bed,
    shovelled snow,
and when I came home,
    offered me some Valiums,
    gave me a "Persian rug
        hand-woven in Afghanistan, "

and made me lay it facing East

He knows everyone in the neighborhood

Charlie
on the front steps
calling to his Maximillian

M. L. Hester

ANNIE'S LOVER

Annie's lover switches off the light near Annie's couch
and grabs for her. We pick her up
and move away; he clutches air
and straddles pillows. We hear him
bellow rage and chew his sleeve.

We send him to the wrong motels
while Annie sleeps and heals.
We spike his drinks with seconal
and he flounders among wet dreams.
He wrestles with his zipper, unfulfilled;
we've glued it shut. He dances
like a spider till he falls.

We slash his tires; we'd
cut his throat if we could reach.

While he broods in failure, gathering
another try, we glide over
her perfect body, smoothing out
the depressions he has made
with his rough hands.

Two Horses

Two horses
standing on a rise
have just broken
a cast of night,
are a severity
of shoulders.

The light cannot
believe itself.

It can only
follow them down
into a swale,
among the redroot,
the nimblewill.

HANDWORK

We found these things,
we rubbed them down
until their grains shone.

What was left
we looked at hard
until the vaults in them
ran off into the depths
like rocks.

Until we were too broad
to follow.

And there were times
when we came out like
miners in the sun
carrying only black centers
in our eyes.

But most of the time
we knew we had been somewhere,
we knew it by what
we held in our hands.

Which we kept putting down
on the tables of our wives
and lovers.

THE BLACK NOTE

It is another time: the one we passed in the hallway,
everyone is quick to point out as somewhat ceremonious.
What in nature they mean is difficult to define
and the horror of implication is fox-snug like chocolate.
It would be good to say that clarity has come down,
that now a section of the brain given to dreaming
has become intelligent. To begin our romance with the heart
again, because we sloughed. Every solution is false.
How to call that part good again, a moral or political issue.
For every stuck bone coughed up, I'd give a nickel
had I nickels enough. Roughing each other up about the head
until dead, it hardly sounds like a party. The color
of the drapes, questions, acts, reflections, the process is
musical, but pitted against our counterparts, there's no
end to sacrifice. Dark smoke pours out of our ears.
The heat is unbearable: one can be sure any alleviation
spells trouble on another level. Yes, it is like music,
that black note moving up and down between the lines.

HELPLESS

Lowered into her face like two white stones
her eyes adjust to the blue glaze. All morning
we spoon red soup and spear trouble, her voice
insect thin unfurling from that pale mouth.
The house is quiet, the carpet thick and sweet
as cake, the red pillow holds a pretty toy
and tiny bottles of liqueur stand at attention
on the book case. The desire to read flows
between us. And the well-behaved children shed
their laughter into the room below the stairs.
We hear a train rumble on a mile away, but the
secure windows shield us from nearer sounds
and though she has no love for talk, her need
to talk is stronger today than the mischievous
will of her dreams. And she knows I will shoulder
her right to break even and keep my eyes steady.
I haven't told her a lie, instead, I have wondered
what dogleg path has brought me to this house
and I have remained sitting quietly across the table.
I am in her debt, even in her unhappiness
she has given me this time in which to be gentle.

Michael Smetzer

END OF WINTER

Sloshing through marsh at end
of winter
in hip boots
with snow still stuck to willows
Sky above is featureless gray
and oak-covered hills are
black-gray lines
with brown tatters
To the south an angry farmer calls
his son
To the north water trickles through
dead grass
Legs and face are numb and still
Only the heart is whispering
spring

Dan Fraizer

VIRTUE

Esther sits in Sarto's bar
her mind not on the kids
(all with different names)
her mind not on Ray
(or his TV service)
her mind not even on love
(this power over me)

For a while she has decided
to dream of cool nights in
September to dream of warm
days in March
to dream of her
skin turning soft
and her eyes turning around.

FEUD

Ma says that Aunt Rose
has a mouth
like an ice cream scoop,
digs up more dirt
than a farmer,
hides her money
on a clothesline.

Aunt Rose says that Ma
is always out to lunch,
nobody home upstairs,
took the overland route
to school,
steeped her brains
in Hungaria Springs.

But on big days
I get a card in the mail
with two washed,
starched,
hung to dry dollar bills
and am glad
for Aunt Rose anyhow.

Sam Prestridge

A SUNDAY AFTERNOON IN SWAMP ALLEY

Behind a screen,
someone's found the right song
so I listen: bad
times, razor women--the kind I sing my son.

The afternoon's
a sleeping bitch,
so I want to keep things simple.
Someone's singing. There's nothing else
to do, or it's too hot here
in the August dog-days;
me across the street.

Otherwise, the afternoon is empty.
It wraps around the song
like white trash claiming kin.

Vincent Delmont Dellarocco

GRANDFATHER

dying man
old man
full of pain,

inflamed bowels
infected liver
rotten pancreas.
clear sharp mind
all will end in disarray
death will take him
and you will take his things
his watch his car
his house his wife his money
his uncashed social security check
his canned hams
his pipe his photos
his cross
he will be yours
and you will fight among yourselves for what he has

melting slowly like butter left in the sun
he will run across the counter and drip onto the floor
only to be wiped up and thrown
away in a clump of paper towels

71 yesterday
dying
we eat his birthday cake

Karl Patten

ONLY GRANDMOTHER KNOWS

The pieces of candy
Lie flat and swollen
To be chosen from the white box
With the decorated tip.

The box is handed
From person in chair
To person in chair.
All the pieces are brown
But some will be white
Inside, some pink,
Some green.

My grandmother who is going to die
Sits purple and fat
In her chair, talking
To ladies and gentlemen.

She knows what color
Is inside each piece of candy
And will not tell.

ONE THING

"I love the smell of snow."
"Nobody can smell snow."
"I can."

"I can." Carol Lombard was right.

At first the smell's distant
And you think it's when you
Were eight and hanging from
The willow branch over the brook,
But when that smell comes closer
And thicker your nostrils flare out
A little, widening to identify
A smell that's not a flower,

Not from a pot on the stove,
Not of the body or the earth,
Never from some machine or
Perfume, and you're learning
Not to confuse it with water
Or air, its elements, and
Now it's telling your nose
One thing about falling
And white, and you've travelled
Further out into the hushed
Shell of the world's doing
Than you ever thought
Possible, and you stand
Here smelling snow,
Loving to smell falling
And white, one thing.

Marilee Mallonee

WINTER SOLSTICE

December 21st.
Then the sun turns an invisible corner
and day by day
in minutes
there is more light.
This alone sustains me
on the edge of the winter's swamp of snow
There will be icicles along the roof's edge
like a picket fence
Cars will glide sideways
silently as the skaters on the pond
Snow will drift up to the windowsills
and my lungs will burn from
breathing icy air
But each day more light...

William Kloefkorn

from HONEYMOON

At the party I slip into a three-act improvisation
that Doris says should have closed
approximately nine months before it opened.
Well, I say, it knocked them out in Natchez
and up in Vicksburg, so much so that by now
little Dixie June should be about ready
to graduate from William Faulkner High School.

O tell me all about it, Doris says.

It started pretty much in the middle of things,
I say, on a furlong of rug under a chandelier
imported, I think it was, from the south of Spain.
There was not an impressive amount of physical
action, as I remember, except of course for the
multiple stabbings. Long pause, during which time
Howard, who is I, unbuttons his, which is my, shirt,
spreading it open, all the while his, which is my,
back to the audience. Size and seriousness and
number of scars can easily be inferred from Doris'
reaction. Terror, say, laced with compassion.

The butler did it, I explain, it having been
his week to shampoo the rug. He was acquitted
because, he said, he was certain at the time
that he had run his cleaner squarely into
an incidence of rape. Scarlet, moved beyond
tears, married him almost on the spot, and
the whole shebang came to an end as I was seen
waving goodbye to practically no one
from the fantail of the Mississippi Queen.

Doris pulls the curtains.
The old half-moon already has begun
to double itself
and is dropping its light
like a soft giant oblong of egg
into the bedroom. The orchestra
plays the opening half dozen bars

of in medias res. Doris agrees to attempt the role of the stowaway
as Act IV, Scene 1, begins.

*

Doris comes from the milkhouse
walking more upright than the gods
carrying two small buckets of cream,
and the smell of cream is on her
yet late at night as we lie talking
under a windowslant of quarter moon.

She does not understand why I do not
want to go with her tomorrow to the
family reunion. She does not under-
stand why I do not want to laugh
again at Uncle Elmer's story about the
bald-headed virgin and her capillary

son. She thinks I should be more
charitable, more understanding. And
no, she does not want to throw the
sheet back and move closer. She has
had a long day breathing the dust of
clover and keeping the kickers on

those two young milkcows. If there
were just an ounce or so more of moon-
light, she could show me the bruises.
Just tell me about them, I say, and
she does, each dark and tender ache
enough almost to move the lips to

pity. Well, Uncle Elmer is both
a card and a caution. I laugh
until I cry, and before the night
ends I find myself embracing
even Aunt Ruby, her mustache like a
quaint inclusive broom against the

ancient and petty dryrot of another season.

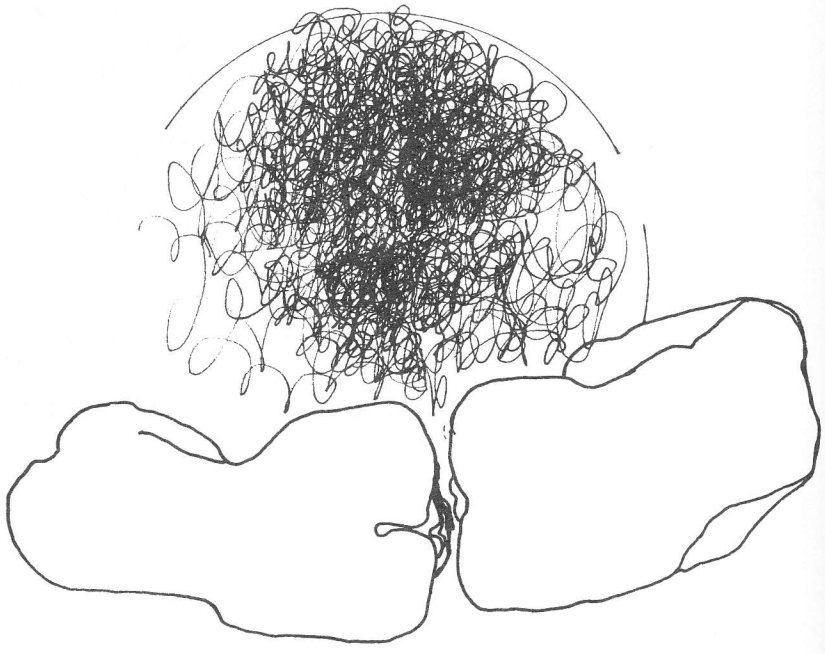
*

I wet the tip of my left forefinger,
then touch it quickly
to the center of an outstretched palm.
There is a sizzling.
The iron is hot, I say to Doris,
and more gently than leaf to water
I strike.

Through it all Doris stands
like a good soldier.
I press first her jeans,
then the soft undulations
of her blouse. At critical moments,
I tell her, you may hold your breath.

When I finish
Doris looks like something
about to ascend from a bandbox.
With her fingers then
she combs her thick dark hair,
using my least bespeckled eye as mirror.

That day we do not go
any deeper into the woods.
There is a steady breeze blowing
through the clearing,
and at every hand
the ripening of berries.



William Kloefkorn. Stocker. Wolfsong Press: Iola, Wisconsin, 1978. 20 pages. $1.25, paper.

Wolfsong, a new small press, came into existence only recently, and Stocker is its second book of poems; the first was Peter Wild's Gold Mines, released just a bit earlier than Stocker. William Kloefkorn is a "midwesterner born and bred," as the note on the back of the book says, but the poems in Stocker say it even more clearly.

Stocker is a midwestern small-town chronicler of the ways and manners of his neighbors, a "theologian" expounding a common sense philosophy, reminding us:

> don't strain yourself
> over ghost or guru or gravity,
> or over the question
> of how many pool-sharks
> can play 8-ball
> on the head of a pin.

There are more appropriate times to consider theology:

> that only when the water
> that flows under the Elm Creek bridge
> has turned to wine
> should we ponder
> either the worth or the source
> of that which puffs the vein.

Stocker tells us about Elsie Martin, a woman so indecisive, that if you "split her right down the middle, / . . . it wouldn't make a dime's worth of difference / which half you reached for," and about Mrs. Wilma Hunt, who "knew everything / there was to know / About nothing. . . ." Then there is Marvel Roderick who is herself a marvel of fecundity, who "rumor had it / . . . once. . . touched a wren's egg into life," and on whose farm, with the complicity of Stella Cleveland's husband, "in chinks and cracks and unattended doors, / children [had] sprung up full-blown, almost, / almost like flowers."

All life, according to Stocker, is reducible to "rearranging." People and things come and go: "What the wind picked up an hour ago / it'll deposit tomorrow." Even Stocker himself is part of this plan: "Stocker looked as if he had always been there / and had no intention ever of leaving." But he does--as all must:

Even in his casket he seemed larger
than those of us looking on,
as if even in death
he had been given
the last word.

Stocker is well worth any reader's time and acquaintance. In truth, Whitman's adage of "who touches this book, touches a man" can be applied to William Kloefkorn's new book of poems.

Geary Hobson

Victor Contoski. Names. St. Paul, Minnesota: New Rivers Press, 1979. 94 pages, $3.00.

Names, Victor Contoski's most recent book of poems, draws the reader into a unique and fascinating, yet often troubling world. The mood of the book is sustained by the photographs of African masks that separate sections of the book, entitled: "I," "II: Poison Mushrooms," "III: Stories of Ancient Civilizations," "IV: Exercises for the Tongue."

Contonski uses a spare, precise language. Relying on strong, active verbs and keeping the number of adjectives and adverbs to a minimum, he gives such abstract qualities as hatred, sorrow, honor and pain specific, concrete representations. One section of "Sorrow" reads:

But at night
when I'm alone

she comes
in faded pink pajamas

hair in curlers
with a bowl of popcorn.

The only woman
I'll ever love.

Emotions become people we recognize, surreal compatriots of people we know. They act, they breathe, they live.

Some of the images float easily into our minds. Years of exposure to the American culture make them familiar and accessible:

STOCK MARKET POEM

Numbers speak
in the language of numbers.

They stand waiting
like beautiful girls.

Take us, they say. We're yours.
We're innocent, all of us.
It will be the first time.

And their hands are out for money. . . .

Other images are harder to assimilate. We wonder why Contoski portrays Fate as a teddy bear, "button eyes / thread nose/ guts of cloth." We wonder why Grief carries a joy buzzer, the prankster's device for shocking the naive and unsuspecting newcomer.

We are assailed by incongruities and paradoxes. In "Dutch Elm Disease," we learn that,

Not even the elms
are above suspicion.

They sway in the wind
as if dancing,

but some may well be dead.
Come spring we will know.

Gradually, the poems stun our reactions. How can these poems be so painfully funny and sad? Is a moan, groan, or chuckle appropriate? What, in the end, does this fine language mean?

It is not possible to finally answer these questions. The important changes which occur in this book transpire not in the poetry, which is constant, but in the mutable reader. These brief poems--some only six or seven lines long--are capable of eliciting different responses at different times. We are called upon to experience this poetry, not evaluate it.

Diane Hueter

Warren Woessner. No Hiding Place. P.O. Box 1443, Peoria, IL 61655: Spoon River Poetry Press, 1979. 57 pages. $3.00. Paper.

Warren Woessner, editor of the review magazine, Abraxas, established himself as a "Midwestern" poet in his first book, Landing (Ithaca House, 1974). This second collection also has characteristics of this region's genre: smooth, informal language; specific images drawn directly from experience; a persistent presence of nature.

The lead poem, " 'Round About Midnight, " an allusion to Thelonius Monk's jazz composition, establishes the intimacy of the entire book:

> Shoes off.
> Good food and good love
> barely memories.
> Ronnie Laws' sax drifts off the speakers,
> dissolves in the humid air, cools it.
> Cirrus stretches over the sofa.
> I know he digs Trane or Dolphy better
> but he's in cat dreamland
> sweeter and deeper than human sleep.
> I turn down the volume
> to mix in the thunder and lightning.
> I want to invite the rain in for a drink.

The domestic detail--shoes, cat, stereo--intimates the poet's informal stance: he does not need to turn a poetic guise up full blast. The first person here is economical and personal, not confessional or overwrought. This poet writes to share, not relieve himself. The interplay between human experience and nature--here where thunder becomes part of a musical score--persists as a theme throughout the book. This essentially very private moment resonates through personal, social (the absent diner and lover, the jazz allusions) and natural realms.

The poem reads as smooth as rum. The words are simple, conversational, yet still evocative and musical: the lines "but he's in cat dreamland/sweeter and deeper than human sleep" use the long e's to stretch out sound as the cat lazes. Parallelism occurs unforced, as in "Good food and good love" and the beginnings of the last three sentences. Woessner states his images briefly yet specifically, and moves them with the active tense. This poem shows what a fine tool American English can be.

The rest of the book also reads as though Woessner has made you his friend. The first poems retell memories, referring back to friendships, his divorce, his father's death. The center of the book shares trip experiences, culminating with the longest poem of the book, "Range of Light." Here, in

several sections, Woessner describes the process of climbing Mt. Ranier.

> . . . Later I study the map
> of veins swollen in my ankles,
> hunt for a loophole
> in the training book,
> finally give up, know
> that on the high trail
> in the thin air
> my legs and heart
> will have the last word.

The concluding poems reenter the present and shift to a focus on the natural world as it exists, not prettied up, not with the pretenses of easy morals, filled up with all sorts of people and their paraphernalia.

Woessner's perspective remains dead pan as he records the sillinesses of our day--the juxtaposition of a McDonald's and Mt. Ranier, the taxi driver who nurses a wounded fox in his front seat until it revives ("The Fox"), and the more serious problems of nuclear power and racial stereotyping. Yet his sense of the absurd never devolves into cynicism or bitterness. His wryness is his sanity, the resigned wisdom of the long mid-life journey.

Denise Low

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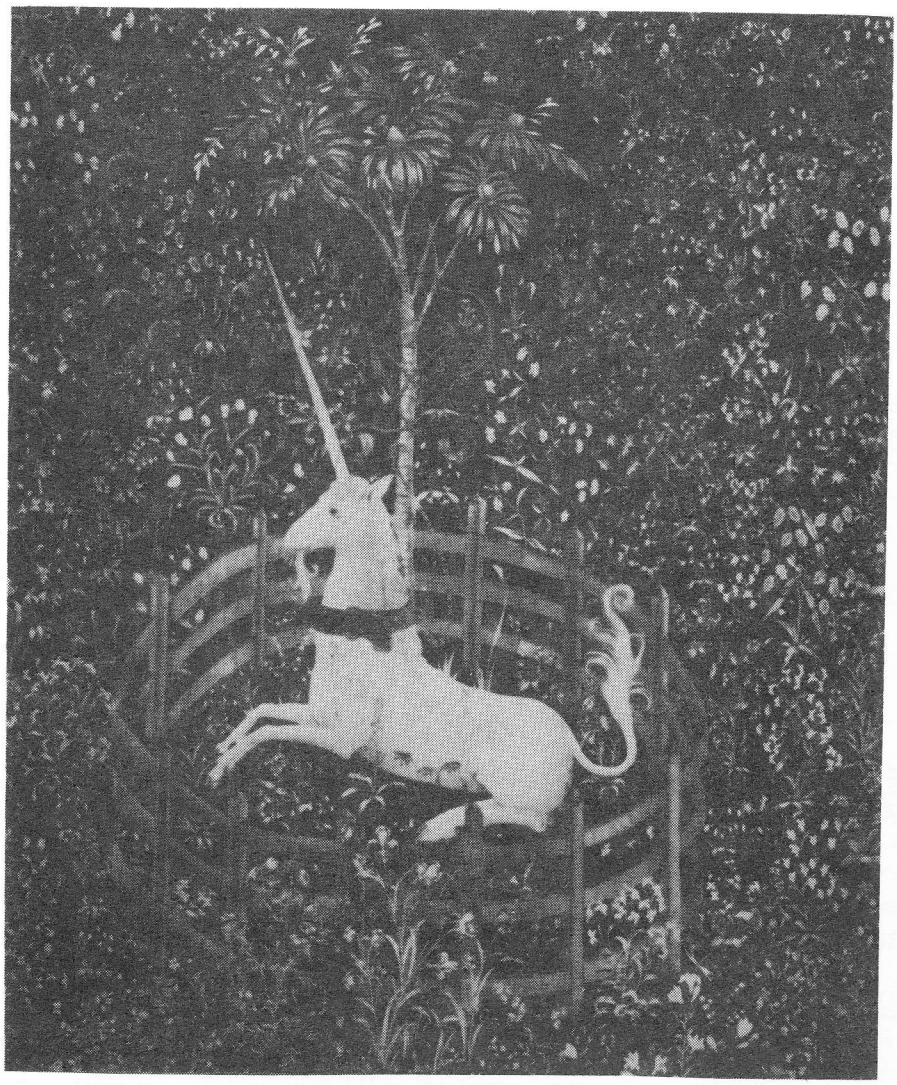
the Unicorn Captured



poems by
Michael L. Johnson

COTTONWOOD REVIEW

BOX J, KANSAS UNION, LAWRENCE, KS. 66045

COTTONWOOD REVIEW 21. Featured Poet and Interview: Ted Kooser. Fiction: John Works, Carl Adler, William Thomas. Poetry: Lyn Lifshin, Robert Hershon, Warren Woessner, George Gurley, Miriam Sagan. Photography: John Spence, Mitch Deck, Kathryn Clark, Oz Wille.

COTTONWOOD REVIEW 20. Featured Poet: William Stafford. Interview: Diane Wakoski. Fiction: George Smyth, Gary Matassarin. Poetry: Ted Schaefer, Dick Lourie, Diane Hueter, Kelly Johnson, George Wedge, Harley Elliott, Nance Van Winckel, Steve Bunch. Photography: Earl Iversen, Bill Kipp, Terry Evans, Diane Covert, Larry Schwarm, Joe Kelly.

COTTONWOOD REVIEW 19. Featured Poet: Wm. Kloefkorn. Interview: Don Finkel. Fiction: Tom Averill, Alyce Ingram, Don Bodey. Poetry: Kenneth Rosen, Michael L. Johnson, Don Sheehy, Willy Cromwell, Mike Smetzer. Photography: Bob Richards, Lawrence McFarland, Larry Schwarm.

COTTONWOOD REVIEW 18. Featured Poet: Harley Elliott. Interview: Robert Kelly. Fiction: Tom Russell, G. Janicke. Poetry: Judith Thompson, Jonathan Katz, Danny L. Rendleman, Diane Hueter. Photography: Roger Pfingston, Terry Evans, Maude Gridley, Larry Schwarm.

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ISSUES 18 - 21: $2.50. BACK ISSUES: $2.00. 2-ISSUE SUBSCRIPTION: $5.00.

30 KANSAS POETS, ed. by Denise Low. Second printing available Oct., 1979. A Kansas Arts Commission sponsored anthology of poets residing in Kansas. Bunch, Contoski, Cox, Cutler, DeGruson, Elliott, Goodman, Greene, Gross, Gurley, Heffernan, Hind, Holden, Hueter, Irby, Johnson, Klein, Levering, Low, Matherne, Moritz, Moses, O'Malley, Reiter, Skeen, Sobin, Tawney, Van Winckel, Whitehead, Wolfe. $2

KANSAS: JUST BEFORE SLEEP, by Diane Hueter. $1.25

> "The poems are solid with no wasted words. They tell us how it is to be connected; connected to two daughters, a husband, and the natural world surrounding them." Larry Bethel

DRY SEASON, by Michael L. Johnson. $1

> "The poems in Dry Season show a keen insight into basic human feelings. They express deep feelings without becoming overly sentimental." Western Poetry Quarterly

THE UNICORN CAPTURED, by Michael L. Johnson. Johnson's second book of poetry : "The descent beckons/ as the ascent beckoned./ Memory is a kind/ of accomplishment,/ a sort of renewal/ even/ an initiation. . . ." -- from the epigraph. $4.00; paper; 72 pp.

$2.50

COTTONWOOD REVIEW