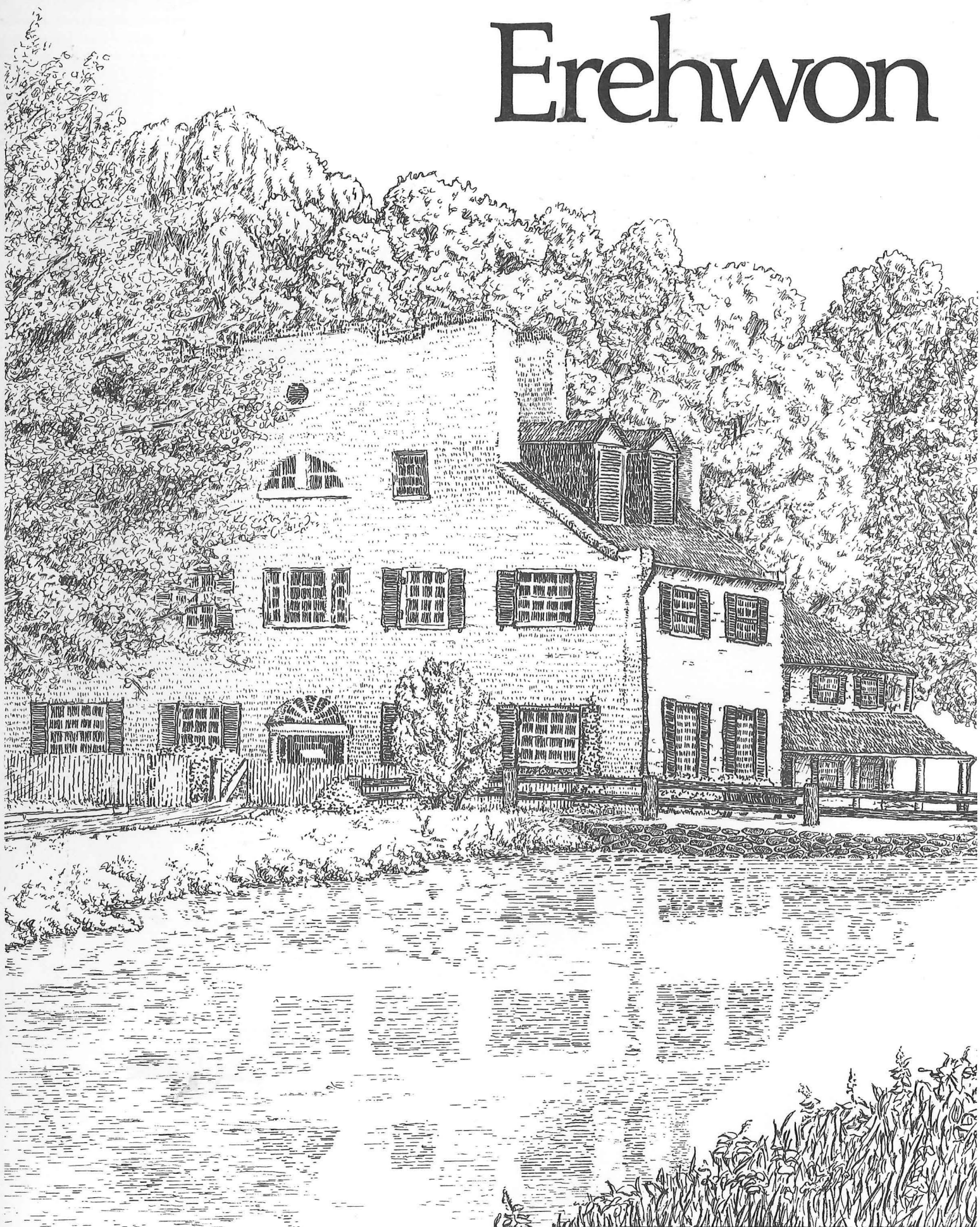
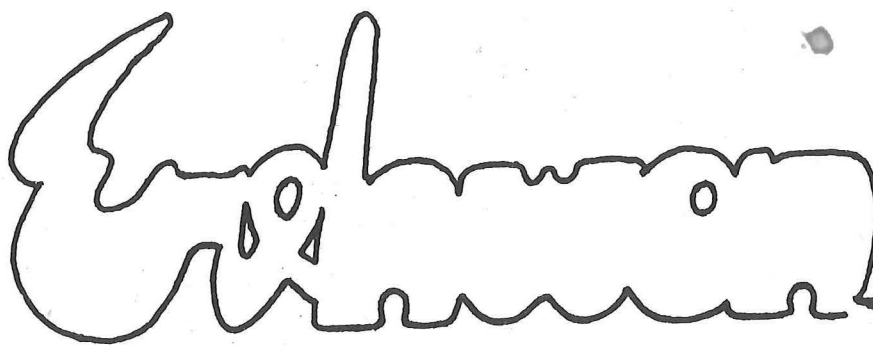
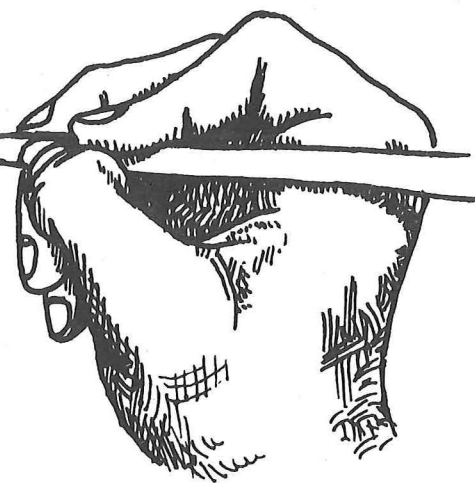


Erehwon





Literary Magazine of Winston Churchill High School, 1982



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Gregg Van Vranken

Advisor: Peggy Pfeiffer

1982 PTSA Writing Awards

Poetry

First: Marti Leimbach
Second: Tom Forman
Third: American Protestant Punctuation
Honorable Mention: Rachel Mann
Hensin Tsao
Pascale Bonnefoy

Short Story

First: Susan Mitchell
Second: Arlynn Unger
Third: M.C. Kentoff
Honorable Mention: Marti Leimbach
Brenda Way
Ricardo Ferreira

Essay

First: Gregg Van Vranken
Second: Susan Mitchell
Third: Marti Leimbach

Peter Porosky judged the fiction contest. He is currently a lecturer at the University of Maryland and the Glen Echo Writing Center. He has published short stories, poems and articles in literary journals. Presently, he is working on a book called *How to Find Your Voice: Styles in Fiction Writing* to come out this fall.

Edward Gold judged the poetry submissions. He is a poet who is currently supporting himself through free lance writing. His most interesting client, currently, is a company that insures space satellites. His most recent poetry appears in *Poet Lore* and *Puerto del Sol*.



Perhaps the true meaning of
Enlightenment is
Answered in the
Conquest of
Existence

Lenny Leimbach

Free Verse

free verse is
a unique type of
poetry

a line can
be
 only
 one
 word
 long
and words can be jammed together

rime,
rhythm and
form are ignored

a
long with spelling and
CAPITALIZATION

imagination is king
and rules are its
slaves

a free verse poem might
start off

 v e r y
 s l o w l y
 b u t
g r a d u a l l y i n c r e a s e
in speed until
one can read
onetwothreefourfivesixseven words
justlikethat

one more thing about free verse,
it can begin from nowhere and
quite suddenly

end

Hensin Tsao

A Mornings Thoughts

You were in my dreams last night.
You were taking me to a village in your car.
Driving I could tell it was you,
I've seen the angle of your face so many times
and I think of the car seat next to you as mine.
We were going somewhere old,
some ancient clay-housed town —
the kind you and I shared a likeness for
and talked about while laughing deep into the morning.

What would happen
if we reinstated all the wildlife
that once jeweled the country
and filled this state until it echoed
with pumas, bobcats, and wild turkeys?
We might never have to come across
mother deer broken and starved from overpopulation.
Rats might not be around to eat babies, you said,
your arm heavy around my belly,
our thoughts both filled with
the animals whose place we've stolen.

The evening without you is steady and alone,
a candle burning slowly.
I should relish this time
or write until the day turns
just to have conquered the night.
I know you sleep easily.
You do everything easily — your own familiar pace
makes you comfortable in your solitude.
You are a poet.
You won't realize this until you understand
that the poet's origin is not in the writing
but in the feeling.

The morning falls into place, it's all my own.
The slow rising of the sun, the diminishing blackness.
Daybreak wipes yesterdays slate clean
offering promises and new beginnings.
I watch each episode unfold.
You will come to me again.
I will see you approach my doorway to knock.
It's my confession that when it is morning
I don't mind your absence.
The new day wraps around me like a soft blanket
and I'm in love in a different way.

Marti Leimbach

April Showers

Descending tears fall on
His sordid society,
weeping for the good.

Michele Turner

Butterflies take arms
Against Dragonfly soldiers
Colorful carnage

Gregg Van Vranken

Repetition can be fun with the ones you love

She came to me softly and I awoke her eyes as fiery as red crimson yet possessing a subliminal stare. She asked for a massage I replied then we ate and drank and smoked and drank once again I kissed her cheek she opened a new bottle and we ate and drank and smoked and drank once again By this time we both grew tired lovingly she held me in her arms and we slept softly. The moon fell and the sun rose once again I came to her softly offering coffee or tea she kissed my cheek and asked for me I responded with scrambled eggs, she pouted, I explained that they were fresh and not powdered eggs, still she pouted once again she showered and then I we descended down the elevator shaft and kissed goodbye A late afternoon breeze carried me home, I slept, two hours later a taxi cab carried her home She came to me softly and I awoke her eyes as fiery as red crimson.

Tom Forman

Dawn

With the morn's rays
illuminating the skies,
your eyes close to never again
see the stars.
You lay in tranquil sleep,
eyes closed,
no breath.
In harmony with the dawn,
singing birds cradle your soul to rest.
Go gently into the heavens,
for you have reached
the peaceful end on earth.

Marcela Olivares

Coppertone Reflections

My gray three-legged image collapsed,
Resting on memories of the straw wrappers bent wrong
With stroller tracks of the new,
And the whurring lights turned expressions about
As thoughts rambled of yesterdays,
My cotton clouds were now sticky-hard on cheek.
They cracked as smiles spoke with me.
I shared some handfuls with the ruffled gulls,
They seemed satisfied for a moment.
I was discontent when being the master of a dogless leash;
At least until my bikini fit.
We shared starfish walks
And I kept wondering
If he wasn't going to stop I was Taffy-hungry
My dentures remembered the wrinkles
No taffy

Rachel Mann



Aaron's House

The sun was sinking behind the horizon, and the fire of autumn glowed on the trees. Red light crept across the sky, through the yellow-brown fields and found its way into his eyes. He was well-hidden behind the dry stalks, and he waited patiently, looking up to the house doors, knowing they would soon open. She would come out and run her dusk routine of herding the chickens into the henhouse, and he would watch her from his hiding-place behind the corn rows, as he had done for two years. The chill of autumn swirled around him but didn't touch him; nothing touched him except the sight before his eyes—the old white farmhouse which, strangely, had become so familiar and so real to him.

The door opened, and a slight figure emerged from within. He shifted his weight onto his knees and strained his eyes.

“Next stop, Hanfield!”

Aaron looked up with a start, just in time to catch sight of the conductor exiting his car and heading back up to the front of the train. It took Aaron a moment to gather and organize his thoughts, then he moved slowly, retrieving his suitcase from the baggage rack above his head.

He was going home again, back to Hanfield. It was always nice to leave the academy at Coldridge. That school was too stuffy and pompous for Aaron—too restrictive. His parents had assured him he'd love it there. He could still hear their voices, resounding faintly in his ears:

“Aaron, Coldridge is a very notable school, the best in the state. You'll love it there, dear. Private schools offer the best possible education.”

Aaron smiled to think they actually believed their trickery had worked. He knew their real reasons for wanting him to go away to school. Ever since the day he turned five, Aaron had caused them grief and trouble with his blankets of silence. He became withdrawn and would go for days without uttering a single word. Then, when he turned twelve, he began disappearing after school for hours late into the evening, and nobody knew where to. After two years of the disappearing act, his parents, not knowing how to deal with the problem, decided it was perhaps best to enroll Aaron in a private school in an attempt to teach him some discipline. The decision proved to be a wise one; Aaron emerged from his private world of silence and, on monthly visits back home, he would sit down and talk liberally. The desire to return to the cold fields around the old farmhouse had taken a place in the back of his mind; however, he had never forgotten the days he spent there, and he knew he never would.

Now, he was coming home for his eighteenth birthday—a trip he had awaited anxiously. The train slowed to a stop. He stood up, took his suitcase in his hand and stepped down off the train.

The air was cold and moist under a grey sky of continuous clouds. Rain was on the way, but that hardly concerned Aaron at the moment. His brown eyes surveyed the surroundings, taking it all in; the crowd around him, trading the same news they had been trading yesterday, the day before, years before; the gentle hills, the leaden sky, the familiar part of Wyoming he had always known. The scene filled him with exuberance, and he set off, on foot, for home.

The road from town was dusty and empty. No wagons were out that day. The silence worked upon his mind, and suddenly, somewhere in the distance, he could see her in her dull pink dress with the same white apron he had always seen her in. She was playing with the kittens in the yard. Her face was pale and round, her hair brown and worn in a bun behind her head. Aaron's mind worked furiously; where had he seen her before? If at all?

He looked up, knowing it was behind the field. The desire returned and burned with necessity; he had to see that house one more time. He knew that whatever had drawn him there when he was young was still there, and now, it was within his grasp. But why, then? Why did he hesitate to go back there, behind the tall fields? But he had to go—just once more.

It was still the same—the house, the barn, the henhouse, everything. It was as if the four years Aaron had been away hadn't even passed there yet. He found his old hiding-place in the field and sat there for a moment, thinking back, remembering how it had felt to sit there in the cold of autumn, the warmth of summer. He laughed softly, remembering how, during spring and winter, when the fields were bare, he would perch himself high in the old oak tree out in the middle of one of the fields, and though he couldn't see a thing in detail, he would stay there until dusk and simply stare at the house, loving it more every minute. He laughed even more to think he had never been caught.

Then, unexpectedly, the door opened, and she came outside. She filled Aaron's eyes — not as a woman of twenty-four, but as a little girl about six years old. And with her was a little boy, perhaps five. They were playing tag, chasing each other through the yard and into the barn. Aaron emerged from his hiding place as the two children came dashing out of the barn. They ran right past him, as though he wasn't even there, and chased each other down the wagon-trail toward the main road.

Aaron followed them. Through their shrill laughter, they couldn't hear the jangling bridles and pounding hooves. Aaron screamed out a warning as the little boy ran into the road, but it was too late. There was a flash of hooves and spinning wheels, then Aaron found himself staring at a deserted road, darkened here and there by droplets of rain. There was no boy, no girl, no wagon—only an empty road and a threatening sky.

He turned back up the wagon-trail and walked to get his bag. Taking it in his hand, he walked up to the base of the porch steps and stopped, contemplating his actions. He took a deep breath, walked up the steps and knocked. He could hear footsteps inside; the door opened and there she was, smiling kindly.

"Yes?" Her voice was soft and pretty like that of a village swallow.

"My name is Aaron McKeerson. I live out by Canbecka Creek, and I still have a pretty long way to go, and it's getting ready to rain. I . . . was wondering if I could wait in your barn or out here on your porch till the rain passes," Aaron asked.

"Oh, why certainly. You look like a nice fellow to me. Here, come in. I can say I trust you," she replied and invited him in.

Aaron thanked her and entered the house. Once inside, he felt a tremendous familiarity—the walls, the stairs, the furniture, and the sound of a little boy laughing upstairs.

“Here, let me take your coat. Sit down, sit down. I’ll make some tea. Do you like tea?”

“Huh? Oh, yes! Thank you.”

She smiled and disappeared into the kitchen.

Aaron was filled with awe, almost to the point of fear. He had seen it all before. The crack in the wall by the wood-burning stove was still there. Cold air was still creeping in through the gaps in the wooden floor. Even the same slightly warped glass was in the window by the door.

“Catch me, Jeannie! Catch me!”

The voice was familiar. A little boy came bounding down the stairs, into the room in which Aaron was sitting, and then, out the front door, with a little girl following close behind. They were the same two children he had seen before, playing out in the yard.

“I put the water on.”

Aaron looked up. It was the young woman. She sat down on the couch across from him.

“I see you have a suitcase. Where are you coming from?” she asked.

“I go to school at the Coldridge Academy. I’m coming home for my birthday.”

“Oh, that’s nice.”

They sat in silence for awhile, then Aaron decided to break the quiet.

“You have a nice house,” he said, looking around him.

“Thank you. It’s been the family’s house for ninety-eight years.”

“It’s beautiful.”

She smiled her appreciation.

“Oh, there’s the kettle whistling. Excuse me,” she said and stood up.

When she was out of sight, Aaron got up and looked around at the baubles covering the table and shelves, then something caught his eye—a picture on the mantle. He moved to the fireplace and looked closely at the picture. It was a little boy and a little girl—the same two.

When she re-entered, carrying a silver tea service, Aaron immediately inquired about the picture. “Who are the two children?”

“Oh, that’s me when I was six, and that’s my little brother, Aaron. He died when he was five,” she told him.

It took him a moment to find his voice.

“I’m sorry,” he said in a mechanical whisper.

“Me, too,” she replied then quickly changed the subject. “By the way, my name’s Jeannie.”

“I know,” Aaron replied in a quiet voice, and he looked out the window at the two children playing in the yard.

Susan Mitchell



Great GrandDaddy's Violin

He could make that old guitar sing
Like a satisfied woman
And his banjo would stomp
Like a jamboree
The music from the mandolin that he played
To the moonlit river
Danced like a ballerina
And when his gnarled hands
Picked up the bow of his great granddaddy's violin
Only the river could match his song

His eyes would shine when he lifted her
The smile ridges would etch their way in below his eyes
His pearly whites
Would make a guest appearance
As he lifted the violin
To sing to him
Slowly
He'd bring her up to his chin
And with the bow he'd make love
With her
To the river bed and sky
To the silver mine

And for her and himself he'd play
'Til pink crept into black
And taking her from his chin
He'd shake his silver head
And return great granddaddy's violin
To her case

The Existention

Some people. . .
Enter our world,
They chide all greed
They're the good mans deed
Entwined in their cellophane seal.
They've faces of stone
Graven gargoyles alone,
Yet the bittersweet truth they reveal.
Polishes of ochre
And an omnipotent mind
Boundless as where their eyes can find,
They seek their endeavors,
Through this diaphanous view
Mid-winterous hearts
Still their grievances few.
And Alas, comes the moment
Or the jubilant day,
When they stealthily,
Unwillingly
Slip away
To their apocalypse
Of glancing back
When they disappear
Only to see
They never were here.

Sandy Shapiro

The Last Survivor

A single blade of grass
Standing patriotically at attention
Yet a prisoner of war in his own land.
Silenced only by his own awe
of the bare eroding land.
For thousands of miles around him
He, the last survivor, unable to cry out
And tell the whole world
Then, he is no more,
Uprooted by a deadly, faraway gust of wind
The last survivor.

Abraham Schuchman

Uncle Samuel and Me

My Uncle Samuel
took me on a walk through the forest
when I was just a boy

though it struck me as a jungle
my imagination could destroy
a sunday afternoon

lions and tigers and guerillas
a squirt gun could it be
a machine gun
that frightened me

but my imagination could destroy
a warm winter breeze
and my Uncle Samuel said
it had taken over me

Tom Forman

New York Subway Station

8:45 Thursday morning. Love! Attar of libido in the air. The IRT subway station at 50th Street and Broadway and already two kids are hung up in a kind of herringbone weave of arms and legs, which proves that love is not confined to Sunday in New York. Still, the odds! All the faces come popping in clots out of the Seventh Avenue local, past the King Size Ice Cream machine, and the turnstiles start whacking away as if the world were breaking up on the reefs. Four steps past the turnstiles everybody is already backed up haunch to paunch for the climb up the ramp and the stairs to the surface—a great funnel of flesh, wool, felt, leather, rubber, and steaming alumicron, with the blood squeezing through old sclerotic arteries in hopped-up spurts from too much coffee and the effort of surfacing from the subway at the rush hour. Yet there on the landing are a boy and a girl, both about eighteen, in one of those utter, My Sin, backbreaking embraces.

Robins Spades



Letting Go

She walked the familiar path, tightly huddled in her coat to combat early March's cold. The woods around her awakened. Wind whipped the trees like music moves the dancer. Shriveled leaves blew by her and were caught by a clump of dead branches. Winter's weeds at the edges of the path shuffled and swayed to the inaudible music. She followed the path to the bank of a stream and crossed to an island of rocks. She picked one up and began rubbing it as if it were a magic lamp. She dropped it and crisscrossed her way to a massive rock in the middle of the stream. Here, they had battled the water dragons. Jelssie and Chris had fought from atop the rock, while she and Mick guarded the pebbles — their ammunition — that lay behind a tree. The battle was even when a dragon's dart found Chris' side. He had moved in front of its path to save Jelssie. Now, she alone fought to save the fortress.

"Hold on, Jelssie, I'm coming." Mick grabbed a vine and swung to a rock, then dove into the dragon-infested river. Chris lay stretched out on his back, gasping in pretended pain, when Mick reached him. "Hold on, Chris." He picked up a sling shot and climbed next to Jelssie.

"We've got to hold on," she whispered.

The dragons now had the vantage. Their victory lay in stealing the battle-winning pebbles. She grabbed one and threaded the sling. "Hold on," she gasped as she drew the pebble back. Courage released her fingers and the pebble flew.

An acorn fell to the water, rippling the calm stream. She looked around her. The wind had died and the woods, her timeless playground, had fallen silent. The acorn floated towards her. She leaned over and grabbed it, letting the water drip on her hands. Contemplating its smooth and round end, she heard fading whispers of "hold on"; then she let it go.

Terry Kelleher

Character Exploration

he followed Her to Her attic
like a lonely dog craving affection.
he climbed higher,
as She smiled wider,
and he took in all he saw
to store in his memory
for constant reference.
She showed him all She owned,
from Her adolescent secrets She tried hard to hide,
to Her most worthy possessions She needed to share.
then he descended to the heart of the matter,
only to find himself in the middle.

Pascale Bonnefoy

Moon

When the Inca's golden god
Begins to step down
From his throne,
She arises.

Her dark eyes are shadows
On her fair skin.
Slowly, she climbs the stairway
Made of stars.

She is shy.
She hides behind the clouds.
Then, she washes her face
In the lake.

When she decides to show
Her silky visage to the world,
She is lofty,
Like a queen, in her throne.

Marcela Olivares

Dear Old Man

As he sat a-pondering,
His old mind slowly wandering
through the ruins of things long past.

His head began a-reeling
for I'll say that he was feeling
that pretty soon the day would be his last.

Dear old man whose eyes are dim,
I'll dare say that your future's grim
but after all, life is just a play.

And you, you are no actor
You're not an important factor
So I believe that we'll send you away.

I couldn't be more heartless
but you, dear sir, are careless,
and little do I care of your sad fate.

I'll mail you with a stamp
in the early morning damp
And hope that you arrive at Heaven's Gate.

Susan Mitchell

A New Friend

Steven, only fifteen, was a strong boy for his age. His deep brown eyes and hair blended well with his newly acquired Mid-eastern tan. He was a boy with great charm and manner.

Raha, a young man almost seventeen, seemed a bit timid for his age. He stood about five-six and weighed almost one hundred thirty pounds. He possessed a certain flare that no other Arab I met had. Raha was not concerned with politics only friendship. Although we did not speak much of the same language his smile and glare said it all.

As the obese middle-eastern butcher cleared his cutting table for the armwrestling match, my mind traveled back in time. I vividly remembered landing in Tel Aviv. Such a modern town, it's almost like a mini-Israeli verison of New York City.

It was three a.m. and Steve wanted to get an ice cream. We decided to venture out into the Mediterranean air for the first time. The sight of a soldier armed with an oosie machine gun in the hotel lobby scared the hell out of me at first. Then, I realized he was only there to protect not to disrupt.

The new surroundings made both of us a little uneasy. We quickly walked down the block to the ice cream stand. The Israeli smiled and asked, "What can I do for you?"

Steve asked, "How much for ice cream cones?"

"One thousand lira."

I then questioned how much that was in American currency. The witty Israeli never answered, but he did sell us two ice cream cones for forty lira.

Next, our tour traveled to Haifa. Haifa is a city similar to San Francisco. Haifa is on three mountain levels.

Our hotel, the Don Carmel was on the third level. From my balcony I viewed Haifa Bay filled with an aura of different boats, from sunfishes to radar submarines. The sun shined on the clear blue water and sandy white beaches of the bay.

Two days later, Steven and I found ourselves praying atop Mount Scopis, outside Jerusalem. We decided to have a prayer service before entering the holy city.

Jerusalem is one of a kind. Its population is greatly diversified. Moslems, Jews and Christians come together in religious unity. Or, they try to.

From the mountain we viewed the walls of the old city, filled inside with markets, homes and buildings of prayer. The houses made from mud melt into the Israeli soil. Outside the walls, modernization, many highrises and condominium complexes surround the holy city. There's even a Sheraton.

By now many children from our tour decided to be spectators. Three old Arab men and the butcher rooted Raha on.

Steven and Raha gripped wrists. The butcher shouted go! Suddenly the boys' muscles bulged and their faces seemed stricken by pain. All the children watched with excitement as Steven got a little edge. The old men only cursed. Steven got Raha down further. The old men yelled out in frustration. Steven started to loose his advantage. The old men were jovial, until once again Steven was ahead. One old man tried to push Steven's wrist up. The children shouted that that wasn't fair. But the wristwrestling went on. Once again Steven was close to victory. The old men cursing and yelling fiercely pushed Steven's wrist up.

The boys decided to call a draw. They shook hands, conversed a bit, and we all said farewell to our new friend Raha. The old men stood in disgust.

Tom Forman

Autumn Dance

A quiet still.
The unusual symmetry of the autumn downpour
gives solace.
Before me appears a ballroom
bespangled with color.
The gentle patter is a back-up beat
for the leaves' swaying dance.
The wind leads the blushing trees,
dressed in their holiday finery,
in a waltz
keeping perfect time with the drum roll of the rain.
The music is growing,
swelling to a climax that will only end
when winter's death
has swallowed up all of the dancers
and finally quelled the autumn song.

Evie Shapiro



An Orchard of Us

Outside in the yard
the oak tree stands stolid and stubborn and
plants its' working boots;
but the little dogwood patters softly
in its' light bedroom slippers.
And who is that light-footed free soul over there?
Is that the willow swaying and twirling
again, in her dancing shoes?
She always looks so young and graceful.
The old apple tree thinks so, too.
From his stiff and gnarled old limbs
To the tops of his
orthopedic shoes
He is unyielding in his desire
to remain fruitful.

Rebecca Levin

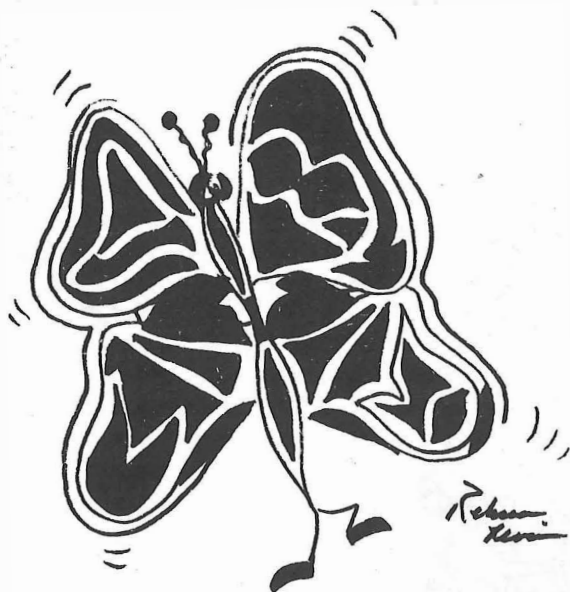
Corruption of Innocence

One pink rose bud
spurts from weedery
timorously spreading her ears
to tainted air.

She parts her petals
nearing full bloom
only to be severed at the spine
by bickering blades.

Tumbling to the beds
she sleeps in the soil
to flake,
disintegrate and
wither away.

Michele Turner



She

Airily she floats
Now up, now back
Carefree above the rest.

Gracefully gliding
She moves away
Once more, and

He is left.
Alone, again,
Heavy-footed.

Awkwardly, he sighs,
Stumbling after.

Risa Shargel

Reprimand to Would-be Lion Tamers

Trying to sing comfort to a restless sea. Oh, you loving fool, you are overtrustful. But, such have you always been — always approaching hap-hazzardly. You want to pet every monster, every beast in the forest. A whiff of warm breath — a soft ruff of fur under the neck and at once you're ready to love and lure it . . . And now you're torn by their untamed tallons. Oh you loving fool.

Brenda Way

The Gilded Acquaintance

I stand outside your iron cage,
staring favorably into your eyes,
watching you roar to the crowd.
I gaze in amazement,
never having seen one so bold.
Finally alone with you—
I, so impressed, beg for more enchantment.
But instead, you hide in the back of your cell
under straw and branches.
One moment, looking in the corner,
I fear I see a mouse.
I rub my eyes— The Lion.
Shuddering each time you glance my way.
Confused. Standing for hours; wondering, waiting.
Dejected, I turn and leave.
The show is over.

Tracy White

An Old English Sonnet

The glory in men's hearts can not compare;
The rage of battle can never excel;
The hate I feel my soul is pressed to bear;
The anguish in my heart they can't compel.
She was as bright as any goddess born,
Her beauty paled the sun and moon above,
To me, my love's heart was forever sworn,
No king or god had seen such faithful love.
We lived and loved and knew true happiness,
Yet still we were but mortal lovers both,
And now my life is boundless emptiness,
And to this fight I make my timeless oath;
The fight I fight I fight for love of thee,
I shall fight death till death give death to me.

Gregg Van Vranken



A Piece of Time

I'll tell you
Time doesn't always ripen the pearl.
They say that the oyster gets better with age
But don't let them fool you.
Time holds unending knowledge
That flame, flood and wind cannot destroy.
Oceans overflow with ebolic harshness
As reality surpasses time.
If the oyster gives up
Then the prize awaiting inside
Is hidden and it's beauty
Is never seen.

Victoria Mooers



Going Nowhere

Not so clever as he wanted to be
his hands are stained with ink
And so, his memory

He's a marionette
writing to the tune
of a nimble fingered melody

Passing time away
He realizes
that there are no questions
for a puppets perceptions

Tom Forman

Another Variation on the Old Cliche'

Love, like a falling star
Sits for years, lonely in a cold vacuum
Then, by chance, it sights
A vast glimmering sphere of beauty
As it picks up speed and momentum
It starts to glow
Then, to burn
Till finally, for one brief, glorious moment
It shines brighter than the stars

Gregg Van Vranken

No More Time

Making angels in the snow,
That's the you I know.
Watching the planes gliding
through the air like ghosts.
Making faces of the clouds,
That's the me you know.
Running through the tall
grass, quick as leopards.
Rolling down hills in rain,
Acting insane.

Something changed,
Either you grew up or I grew down.
There's no more time, you say
For the silly games we played.

Faith Hileman

American Protestant Punctuation

?

education:
employment:
career:
profit.
(profit?)
Profit!

!

?

(responsibility(soul))
Responsibility?
sorry.

Career,
profit
profitprofitprofit,
sex
sexsexsexsexsex;
-perversion.

?

(responsibility(truth))
(-soul)
-(Happiness)

Responsibility- -Profit
Happiness? -Profit

,sex
perversion.
(dissidence)
Dissidence? -infidelity.

(dissidence-
(pain(responsibility, happiness,(insanity))
(death)

Employment-profit-career-profit-sex-perversionperversion-transparent respect-
death.
respect.

(infamy/reverence)

Mike Peck

A Commuter Makes His Break

Couldn't you just picture a man coming into his place of work—in this case State Mutual Insurance—and receiving stares because his wife was caught fondling another woman in Henri's Bakery. Thus was the case for Anson Pitcairne on this rather overcast day. The moisture was coming up off the great lake and adding a hint of muggyness in the air.

Anson Pitcairne walked straight to his cubicle without showing even the slightest hint of contempt or heartbreak. He put his dark green overcoat on the hanger and moved over to his desk terminal. The terminal itself was a television screen and a keyboard. It would greet him in the morning—every morning—with the customary, *Good Morning, Sonny*. Anson sat down, brushed his hair back and pressed for the power to go on. His terminal connected to a large mother terminal named Jeanne D'Arc, which fed information on various facets of Anson's job. New information was coming in all the time. This was a bustling business. Anson looked forward to it every morning on the 335 commuter from New Ring, his suburban haven. He looked forward, today, to escaping his private life and diving into the refreshing computer. *Hello Jeanne D'Arc*, he pressed.

Good Morning, Sonny, it replied.

Have any news on the accident in Bridgely?

Before we begin, Sonny, I want to say how sorry I am that Paulina left you for another female.

Who's the jerk who fed that? Anson was shocked. He replied by simply re-entering his first phrase. *Have any news on the accident in Bridgeway?*

Yes. Pike Memorial reports that Donald Blair died at 2:44 last evening due to a punctured cerebral cortex.

Due to the accident?

Autopsy at 4:00, this afternoon.

Anson knew that Jeanne D'Arc wouldn't pursue the matter concerning his wife any longer. Somebody had obviously programmed her earlier this morning. Either as a condolence or as a prank. Whatever the reason, Anson felt wounded. If you can't escape homelife at work, what good is it? He had promised himself when his mother died eleven years ago that he would never bring his private life to work. He, actually, didn't today. Someone else had done it for him. What happened to the sanctity of the workplace? He asked himself. Life used to be so easily defined. The lines so easily drawn. Now, we had video games combining factory line technology with family fun. That was the root of it all.

Anson continued until 7:30. He got off work then. His cubicle neighbor, Marianne—big, beautiful Marianne—offered him a ride home.

"No, I'm taking the 335 at 7:40. Thank You." Marianne had the hots for him and he knew it. Why, he could not answer. He was at least 25 years her senior.

"That bloody train?"

"It suits me fine. It tranquilizes me."

"It's quicker by car."

"Exactly why I'd prefer to take the train, thanks."

He walked in the mist to the station. He was a little tipsy due to the office party. Apparently, the hospital had done a lousy job trying to cover up the fact that Donald Blair had no puncture in his cerebral cortex. He was killed by his chicken soup. A maniac in dietary had put Ajax in the broth. Since it wasn't caused by the accident, State Mutual wouldn't have to pay the fortune they thought they'd have to pay. They could always sue the hospital.

So, he was particularly misty. Marianne was in her 320 i. She slowed down and waved. Anson waved back. She smiled and accelerated. He looked on for the 7:40 335 to New Ring.

At 7:38, the big, orange and blue vehicle stopped at the station. Anson loved these new trains. The old ones were always late. These were sleek and fast. As fast as a commuter could be.

He boarded; a billow of steam he had to walk through. He sat down in the moderately crowded car. Wonderful, he cursed to himself. Shortly after sitting, he was joined by an older man, who was intent on revealing various aspects of his life. Anson grinned and bore it.

"I was a psychoanalyst, you know." The man said.

"A psychoanalyst?" Anson really had no interest. He wanted to be left alone. He loved these rides because they gave him solitary freedom; something which was hard to come by at work and home. Now, after the crowded commuter car, he'd have to face his sexually confused wife.

"Well," the man continued. "I was primarily a behaviorist before that, But . . . I realized that that was a bunch of crap. I wasn't into torturing monkeys."

Anson wasn't listening. "Where do you get off?" the man asked.

"Um . . ." he snapped out of it. "New Ring . . . but I don't think I'm getting off today."

"Why not?"

"I've had a very taxing day and I've no interest in bringing it all home with me."

"Problems at home?"

"Yes. Problems at home. My wife is having an affair. With a woman. Her manicurist! They were caught by my best friend at the bakery. Why the bakery, I'll never know. I don't want to know. I just don't want to think about it. My office is a heartless place. I really think I'll become a misanthrope."

"So, you're staying on the train."

"Yeah. I'm staying on until it ends. Wherever that is. Where all the big, orange and blue trains sleep. I've thought a lot about this . . . you don't mind me confiding in you . . ."

"Not in the least."

"Okay . . . and I've come to the conclusion that I couldn't be the only one to feel this way. That life bites. Maybe I'm not the first to do this. Maybe . . . there are a thousand other commuters who have done the same. That's where I should be."

"Your paradise?"

"Possibly. I just want to go to where I can meet my maker. I want to see people who share my plight."

"You think they all congregate in one place and moan and groan about their predicaments?"

"Yes. Commuterland. A celebration of people who are tired of being with people."

As Anson was talking, the train passed New Ring. He moved farther and farther away from home.

"Well," the ex-psychoanalytical behaviorist said, as he stroked his beard. "I wish you luck. I hope you find your home away from home. I guess if society is your conflict, you should get away from it." With that, he arose and headed to the hydraulic doors. The brakes made their gaseous noise as the train came to a halt.

About 20 minutes after the old man got off, the train was empty. Anson was beginning to get restless. It was 8:32 and the sky was black. He could barely make out the station signs when the train made its stops. Anson unzipped his briefcase and took out his "homework". He had some papers and a calculator spread out on his lap. He had a hard time being organized with it all on his lap. Then he decided, the hell, I might as well

use what I have. He spread all his papers on the floor and knelt down just like he used to do in high school. This went on for an hour or so until Anson realized that the whole thing was ridiculous. Why was he thinking of work? Commuterland was at hand and he was doing work? Anson made a mental note that this habit would *have* to stop.

When Anson awoke, he was on the floor. It was 10:00 already. Where was he? Was he there yet? He looked out the window. The train was still moving.

He started to gather up his work papers when the train stopped and a very elegantly dressed blonde woman of, Anson guessed, 45 stepped aboard. She looked at him with contempt. "One of you . . ." she said rudely.

"I'll just get my stuff together here," he said nervously. He quickly did so and sat down.

"Where are you to?" She asked, motioning with her cigarette that she needed a light.

"I don't smoke." He smiled; whereby she proceeded to remove a blinding silver match-case. She lit her cigarette and inhaled dramatically.

"You didn't answer my question," she glared at him. "Where are you headed?"

"Anywhere. Till it ends."

"That might take a while?"

"Are you asking me? I don't know. I thought you might have some idea. I was getting really lonely until you showed up."

"Well, I don't know and don't get too friendly here. I'm late for a very, very posh party and I'm already lightheaded after two glasses of Chablis."

"Where's the party?"

"Birmingham, of course."

The name didn't ring a bell. He knew he was far away. He was far from anywhere he knew.

"I wish I knew where this finished," he said.

"Why don't you ask the conductor?"

"I wouldn't want to bother him."

"You know where I'd be if I didn't demand answers?"

"Where?"

"My hair wouldn't be so lovely. It wouldn't be blonde either but . . ."

She continued to talk about her hair appointment escapades, which Anson found thoroughly engrossing. When it came time for her to get off, he was sad about it.

When she left, it was twenty after ten. He spent the next hour looking at his watch and looking out the window. Finally, he decided that he had to know. He made his way through the empty cars in front of his towards the conductor. Eventually, he reached the destination. The door said in large red letters: KEEP DOOR CLOSED. OPEN ONLY IN EMERGENCY. This was emergency enough. He had to know. He had to see a human face. He swung the steel door open and looked for the conductor. There was none. All computer terminals. He looked around and saw no one. He looked at the banks of computers controlling the train and began to cry. He looked up on the wall and saw a route map. It showed that the train made circles and had no nightly resting place. He'd end up back where he started from. He made his way, slowly, back to his seat.

What now? he asked himself. Maybe he'd get off at the next stop and call his wife to pick him up. Maybe call Marianne to pick him up. No, he decided, he'd stay on until morning, where he'd get off at work. Maybe then he'd quit, maybe he'd stay on and buy a manual typewriter. Maybe, maybe not. He sat down and thought about how wonderful it would be to see faces again. As he thought of this, the lights in the train were shut off. It was midnight. The lights would stay off, only to go on in the morning.

M.C. Kentoff

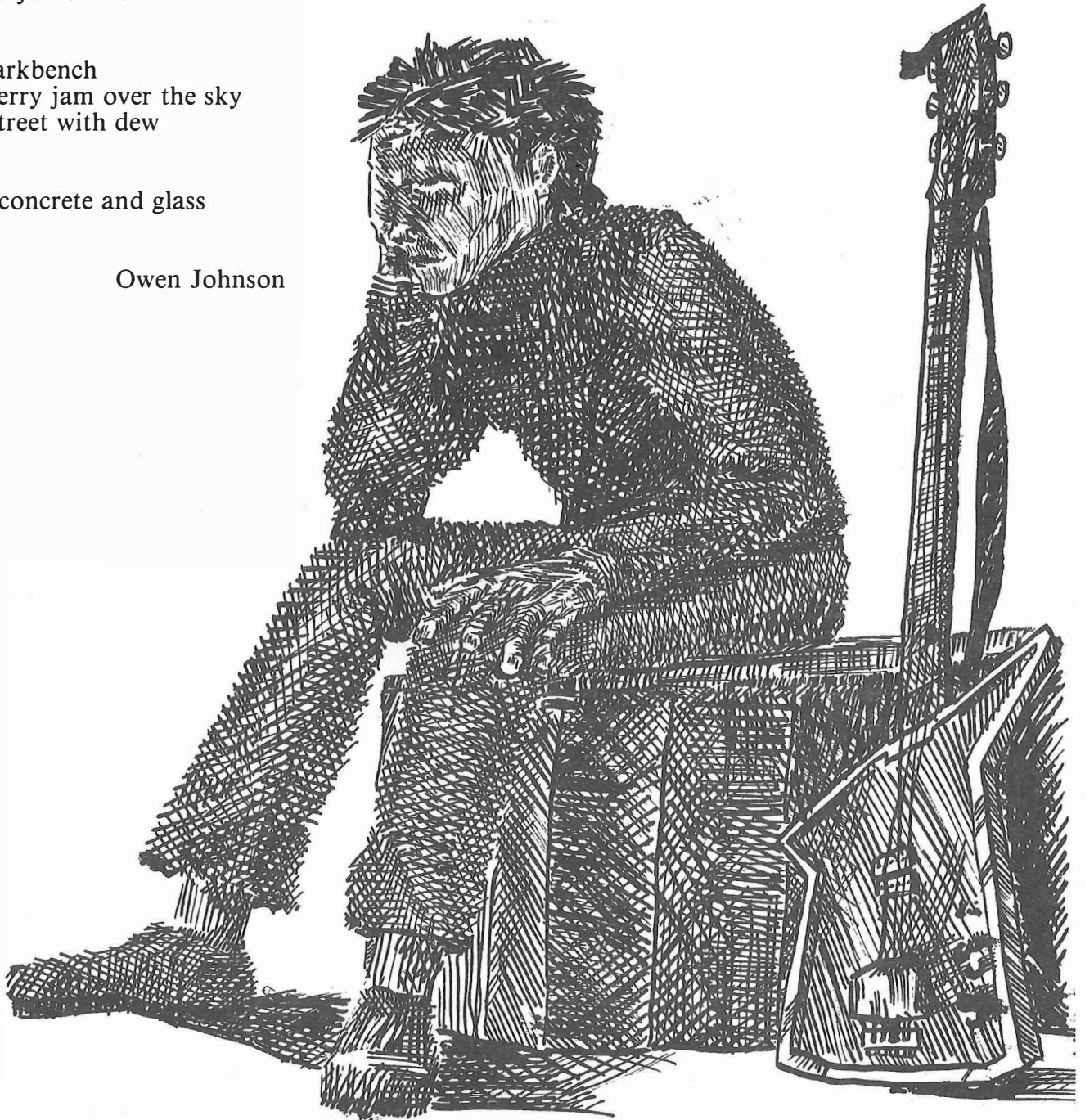
Time Zones

A wave
and I leave
should say goodbye
but words debate and suicide in my mouth.
Years of trees and songs and sunsets and,
I never touched you.
Smiles can be so hollow: I forgot
to see love dancing
nervously in your eyes.

Now 1:00 A.M.
this stainless steel train
rattles the rusting night.
Tomorrow twinkles in slow motion
from many tears away. Drunk,
the moon sags dangerously:
What if my bluejeans die?

Dawn
awakes on a parkbench
spreads strawberry jam over the sky
polishes each street with dew
by hand.
A new city
a new page of concrete and glass
for scribbling.

Owen Johnson



Scream of Consciousness

What a clean sheet of paper is it is and O how I hate to cover it with ink. I do I do it is it isn't. Long too long it's been since I thought to write at first I thought to do it is.

But I must keep track of my thoughts I must for all they come quickly and more than too many to count.

Then time was then, I sat on the shore. The sky was metal, the sea ice, the sand a wavy white cushion surrounding me.

Wave after wave recklessly rolled in, left a bit of foam about my legs, and tried to tug me back to the ocean—that I should sacrifice myself to the pleasure it gave me. To move was the easiest thing not to do, so I sat I sat and thought.

A boy, a small, he ran past my thoughts toward the waves. In he jumped and swam he through the waves the waves. Then he was gone. I closed my eyes, and opened them again as if this would erase illusion as it always had before. I opened them again, and he was above. Bobbed he bobbed up then down and I screamed out loud. Too I found I was pushing through the waves, the salt burned my eyes o how it burned. I turned in circles looking for the boy, but the ocean had its gift, and I had sat witness.

Out I swam and ran and yelled to the barren beach for help, but it would not even give me an echo. Ran I ran and screamed and cried and screamed.

I sat and looked in a chair through a window for long so long and watched the clean white beach. And in and out the waves rolled and soon light cracked the horizon. The waves had left a gift. A crumpled mass lay still lay still one alone, on the sand. A woman came and saw and screamed like I had screamed screamed to the sky and harmonized with the gulls. She ran like I had run she ran.

Soon the beach was crowed with lights that flashed flashed and men and sound.

What a clean patch of sand it is it is and O how I hated to see it covered the way it was.

Brian Loube

A Careless Playmate

She wore me as a garland in her hair
We danced on clouds
Then fickle-fled
I couldn't follow fast enough
Hopes and body sank
Thus, on many days
But wind is a careless playmate
She tossed me roughly, left me useless
Now rips and rents—they do not matter
I'm nestled in the corner,
She rattles on the pane
And I can only laugh,
For I have no desire to chase the wind again.

Travis Koplow

O Rouen

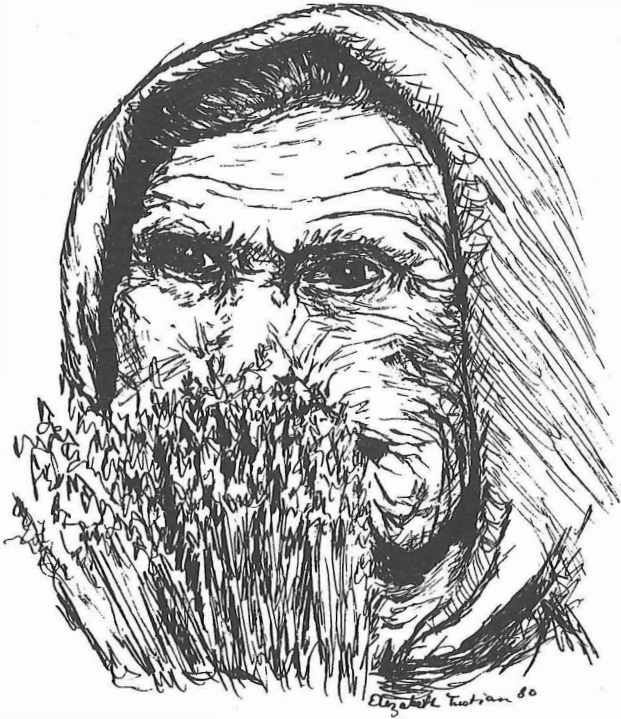
I never knew why she left
And I never understood why she gave her hand
To something that couldn't save her.
And if she were here again
She would leave again
Without me.

Just a little Catholic girl
Who wouldn't say the right words
And always knew the price of human dignity
Would cost her her life.
She didn't want to fall in love
With something that could be deceived.
She made me promise she wouldn't
Have to return
To where they tried to sever her beliefs.
The rope on her wrists talked for them
But inner allegiance spoke for her
And didn't say a word.

She promised me once more
But I knew she didn't mean it.
They took her to the
Marketplace
And asked her if she'd learned.
Will you confess?
Will you repent?
Her right words to them
Were wrong.
Oh! Little maid of old Orleans
The flames do bring out the truth.
And the heaven will show
In the way that you glow
To finally prove them wrong.

Oh God! I'm going mad
Because she broke her promise
And left again
Without me.
So ha ha I'm drowning
Under this treasonous pier.
Now that you're gone
All the affirmative magnolias
Will do as much for me as
Poppies in the field.

Now I understand why I
Must be with you soon.
I also realize you didn't
Break your promise at all.
Oh Joan, you saw so much more
Than the rest of them
But failed to see twenty.
Such an innocent girl
As you
Should have known better
Than to leave your heart
With me.



Tableau

For man now blind as eyes,
his destiny holds worlds
kneeling before grand
thrones,
a convict before
the chair,
sacrilege.
As the sword arm is raised
so doth it flow
through the veins of life,
so doth the scie
stop by his side,
knowledge
spilling out
and back
to where the journey began.

David Jensen

Nighttime Eyes

He used to go out on the porch every time there was a thunderstorm. He'd sit safely on the dry step and feel the electricity in the air. He listened to the thunder, rolling over the hills like the echo of a war cannon, and wondered where the lightening was striking—but he never asked any of the others. How would they have answered? The sound of patiently falling rain as it puddled on the pavement drew him to venture beyond the safety of the porch. Sometimes he'd trip down the step and raise his nighttime eyes to feel the rain carress his lids—no one else wanted to (they were afraid to touch him, I guess). He said the nighttime sky was deep blue and cool and fresh, and the stars were holes in the bubble where the light shined through, and he could see through those holes though not many daytime eyes could.

Susan Mitchell

The Image Merchant

Solitude. Of seeing my ill lit street at night. Strangely posted lights reflecting the oily water seeping into the draining system.

Silence. Everything as silent as a frozen wasteland. And the only sounds are the ethereal musings of the evil in man's heart.

My eyes staring fixedly at the rain. Trickling down the drains. And the sound made by the rainwater hitting the asphalt.

A tantalizing hypnotic quality confounds me, but that doesn't account for the fact that. . .

I hear . . . a sound. It breaks my trance and brings me back to life.

Footsteps. Accompanied by the sound of a harmonica. Playing an eerily beautiful song.

A dark form can now be seen. But the rain seems to obtusely distort much of its physical shape. It is a caped figure that walks by. A case in one hand. The other hand holding a harmonica up to the quivering lips.

The music casts a spell on me. I must go . . . and see.

Such a bizzare song that harmonica plays.

It wakes me from my sleep and takes me back from the depths of . . .

I should, or rather, must, look out my window. A figure wears a dark overcoat. It . . . a man. He holds a case. With silver lining.

Within all the slight mutterings in my head. I feel compelled to escape: And join him.

The door. I mustn't wake the whole family. All the love will last. Such fortune.

It's very dark outside. I'll let my eyes adjust. But . . . seemingly other people have been called by the sounds of the harmonica.

A feeling of . . . nothing.

—Please, please, stop, one of them screams.

But he doesn't care . . . He keeps on going. Nothing exists for me except the feeling of being. Physically.

I am not an illusion. But what about him?

I seem to be lost in the dark. Following the man. All of us, really.

A surreptitious urge strikes me. An urge to be able to see. To be certain about something.

Something makes me lose control. The strange sound of the harmonica he plays, maybe.

—Show me, Show me.

He didn't seem to notice the first man. But now he turns around and lets us all see.

He brusquely lets his harmonica fall to a puddle in the street. All of us stop. He slowly opens up the strange case with the silver lining.

Something inside the case shines. Intensely. It lights up the whole street. A blinding light.

Gold.

Most of us begin to step forward towards the beautiful luster. My fortune could be made from. . .

The glitter is gone, the gold is stone.

Anger storms possessively in my brain. In all our brains.

I can't seem able to move.

All our minds are perversely entwined in anger. As if we all shared a collective consciousness.

None of us can move, yet. The rain begins to hit the asphalt harder. The stones inside the case dissolve, and the dirty, sedimented water begins to overflow

My eyes shift slowly from the gutter to the mystical man's eyes. They reflect. . . promises, promises, promises, promises. . .

His eyes become screens for my private fears.

I see a man in his eyes. The man takes out a weapon and begins to shoot those around him. The bullets make horrible gashes on the victims. I try to close my eyes, and the man gives out a maddening cry.

My ears are shattered by the intensity of the scream. I find myself able to move my hands and I place them on my ears in order to protect them from the screams.

I can't bring myself to look back at the man's eyes. A horrible voice coaxes me to. . .
". . . look, look."

But I can't. I can't bear to look at all the insensibility that the visions hold.

A chorus of sirens coaxes me to. . .

". . . look, look"

I can't bear this torture anymore. Slowly my eyes open up.

The images continue to pass through my eyes with an unmarked persistence.

They are the same images of sadistic delight.

A man is being hung. I can see his life ooze out of him as his skin becomes dark and his face gradually loses its skin covering and becomes. . .

. . . The skeleton of a man. A horrible skull. An inchoate feeling of neurotic aggressiveness. A marked grave. A life lost. Sensible trick.

And when my thought has come back to me, I begin to wonder who is the strange man that brings all the horrid images.

The facts become clear. He coaxed us with the untold pleasures of fortune. The gold and the beautiful music.

But now — these images.

The man . . . the image merchant . . . makes our minds infested in evil as we begin to appreciate and gaze into the grisly images depicted in his eyes.

There's a gun in my pocket. If . . . I . . . could . . . only . . . break . . . the . . . spell.

Of images? Simple images.

I try to look down. I'm horrified by the lack of lo. . .

. . . shots

The will to . . . that man actually shot him . . . thoughts run through my mind. No time to react just to watch the chain reaction.

In a split second after the shot was fired, the man became a statue. Yes, he did. Hard to understand.

The rain seems to be hitting even harder than before. My skin shivers from a recently acquired feeling of coldness.

We all stand there watching the statue that was a man gradually dissolving in the street. Slowly . . .

. . . slowly

Ricardo Ferreira

The Letter

My Dearest,

I think that this will be the hardest letter of my life to write. I wanted to explain to you why I have to do this. I didn't plan it, sweetheart, you see, your Daddy and I just aren't ready for you yet. I suppose this is sort of an apology for what will happen in a few hours. So please try to understand what I'm about to say.

I woke up this morning and had a feeling that you would be a girl. I think I'd name you Sasha—because you're so much like a little bird, kind of like Peter and the wolf. You flutter inside of me so much . . . My little Sasha, do you realize how much I long to hold you in my arms? Honey, you are the product of a deep and beautiful love between two people—it's just that we didn't mean for it to go so far. I cry for you at night. My first little girl. I cry because no matter how big my family gets, you will always be missing.

Sweetheart, I just want to kick myself when I think of your innocence. I see you pleading inside of me, "What did I do wrong? Why won't you let me live? Please! just give me a chance. . ."

Your father tells me I'm too harsh on myself, that you aren't legally a human being until after the first trimester, that we are doing what we have to do. Something inside, in my heart, tells me I'm wrong. But, Sasha, there are so many reasons why I can't go through with it. Sasha, I'm only sixteen . . .

Please understand.

I love you,
Mommy

The girl opened an envelope, placed the letter inside and sealed it by melting a stick of wax over the flap. She pressed a small gold stamp into the hot crimson, lifted it and stared into the imprint. Reaching over onto a pink canopy bed, the girl gently lifted a brand new teddy bear. Caressing the bear with one hand, she printed with the other, "I'm sorry" onto the envelope, dated it and placed it into the bears arms.

". . . Any allergies? No? Good, here's a valium to relax you. The procedure itself will only last about ten minutes and there will be a short rest period afterward. Also, we'll give you a pain killer then if needed. You may go right in."

She turned without word or expression and walked away from the receptionist's desk. The receptionist asked, "Oh, Miss, will this be cash or charge?"

Brenda Way

A Probability

"Higher, Daddy, push me higher!" The tree tops swing up to meet her, disappear and she rushes toward the sky. The clouds slide, to a standstill, give a jump, then blur and are replaced by trampled earth and her parents upturned faces. They grin at each other for a moment, then she aims her feet and rushes back down and up to meet the clouds.

"Okay, that's enough Stacie. One last push and I'm going to rest with Mommy on the bench. Here goes!" He pushes gently on the seat and they watch her sail up past them and the empty seat jangle back down.

Invisible quicksand grabs their hands, their feet, sucks the breath from their lungs. There's no breath to scream or shout or even whimper. The scene is played out each second by slower second, then gels to a moment.

A daughter, somersaulting in the air, a ragged puppet; but the strings have been cut and now she must fall. And fall and fall and lands with a thud that breaks their hearts.

But the broken pieces mend as the moments melt away into many seconds, for the still puppet moves and gains life as their daughter. The quicksand slithers away into their memories, its victory lost. It gives them back their breath and bones, allows them to run and hug, kiss and cry in relief. But it's still there, waiting for the moment when it will win. After all, there are lifetimes of possibilities.

Arlynn Unger

Mirror Images

Sometimes I look in the mirror
Caught by reflection
My self surprising myself
Looking back, tentative
Seeing one as a stranger
An unrecognizable flask filled with strange contents
A curiosity,
A foreigner.

Sometimes I look in the mirror
Drawn by hate
My self reviling myself
Staring deep, hurting
Seeing a repugnant image
A grotesque hovel shielding a bizarre inhabitant
A horror,
A freak.

Sometimes I look in the mirror
Gazing in idly
My self pleasing myself
Peering in, contemplative
Seeing an appealing personage
A good book with chapters yet unwritten
An individual,
With promise.

Risa Shargel

It was silly September. There was one apple tree with fruit and there was Cambell and me and Franny, who was seven, all bunched toward the trunk just chewing and talking, and spitting out seeds. That's when Franny started choking, and Cambell started crying, and I started screaming for Grandma who was on the porch feeding the birds and calling "coo, coo" to the sparrows. I'd never seen Grandma run but she ran for Franny, cracking her leather shoes and punching the air with her arms like a prize fighter. She was breathing and heaving so hard that I thought I'd have to be saving her by the time she got to the tree to save Franny.

By this time poor Franny's whole face was turning a sort of purple color and he was half crying and making all sorts of grunting noises. Cambell was crying and bouncing around Franny yelling "Franny don't! Franny don't!" Grandma arrived and even though she was really looking a bit fatigued she took up Franny by the straps of his overalls and cracked him one right between the blades. That really started Cambell bawling and he screamed "No, Grandma, no!" like Granny was hitting him instead of Franny. I just sort of stood there watching. Franny's body was real rigid and flexed, like he was diving, and his eyes were swelling and tearing. I was getting prettty scared.

"Put your fingers down his throat!" Grandma yelled, between beating Franny's back. "Go on!"

The thought of putting my fingers down Franny's throat escaped me. What was I supposed to do once my fingers were down his throat anyway? I'd never done anything like that before and there was so much noise between Franny's choking and Cambell's screams that I just sort of stood there. Franny's brown eyes stared through me.

"Put your hand down his throat Griffin!" Grandma called again. She was really beating on Franny's back now — much harder than I'd ever seen her hit anybody, even Cambell when he shot out all the plant pots with a bee-bee gun. Franny was choking a lot less and was really purple-faced. Grandma was screaming and Cambell was screaming and I was just so shocked that I couldn't even speak until I saw a chunk of apple rocket from Franny's mouth and then I said "There!" and pointed at the apple.

"Thank God," Grandma said and pulled Franny up to her face. "Franny!" she yelled at him. But Franny didn't move. His eyes were closed, too. Grandma hugged him up to her shoulder and ran off to the house yelling "Get a doctor, get a doctor!" I looked at her go off like that, her apron flapping in the wind, Franny's head bobbing against her shoulder, Cambell running after her crying and crying. I picked up the piece of apple that had come from Franny's mouth. It was wet with spit and pretty horrible looking. I wished I'd put my hand down his throat like Grandma had said.

The doctor looked very tired when he came out of the bedroom. Franny had been put in the guestroom which was always saved for special people who came to visit. Normally, Franny slept on the bottom of my bunk in our bedroom but he was put in the guest bedroom now. The doctor had a black bag like every doctor does. And he was putting some of his medicines back into it and closing the bag. Cambell and I viewed him from the stairway. Mama was up there with him, wringing her hands. Poor Mama.

"I'm sorry," I heard the doctor say.

"Waddit he say?" Cambell asked.

"Shh."

The doctor held his bag with one hand and put the other on Mama's shoulder. "He just didn't get enough air."

Mama started crying softly and Papa came bounding up the stairs not noticing me or Cambell. He looked at the doctor and seemed to know what happened.

"No," said Papa. But he looked real sad and took Mama and hugged her.

"What happened?" Cambell asked again, "Is Franny okay?"

"No, shut up." I said.

"He was my baby!" Mama cried.

The doctor made some leaving noises and mentioned something about being alone at a time like this. Then he started down the steps and tipped his hat to Cambell and me real nicely. Cambell started crying, too, even though I don't think he really understood what was going on, he was only eight, and I started getting a little sobby, too. Because I hated Mama to be crying and I knew this was a real terrible thing because Franny had been her baby child and she couldn't have no more children so she was stuck with Cambell and me. We weren't much to look at either, just sitting there by the stairway crying.

That night we all went to sleep kind of early. Cambell was real upset and crying a whole bunch. Mama kind of tried to comfort him but she was pretty upset, too, so I don't know how much good she did. Anyway, he and I were awake in our bunks not talking for awhile.

"Cambell, are you awake?" I asked, finally, knowing that he was. But he didn't answer or anything. I knew he couldn't be asleep because he wasn't in his usual sleeping position.

"Cambell," I said, "you're not asleep are you?" But he still didn't answer. I guessed he was asleep after all and stopped asking. I was feeling pretty bad anyway and didn't feel much like talking. I kept sort of thinking about Franny not asleep in the bunk under me but finally I started to drift off to sleep. That's when Cambell said, "You better pray a lot, Griffin."

"What?" I said, becoming totally awake again.

"Nothing."

"No, you said something about church. What did you say?"

"That you better pray a lot."

At first I didn't believe it, that he would be thinking about what I'd been thinking — but there was a real mean sound in his voice and I wanted to know exactly what was on his mind.

"Pray for him, you mean?" I was talking, of course, about Franny.

"Sort of."

"Whatever you're saying, Cambell, come out with it!"

"No."

"Tell me!" I was sitting up in bed now staring at the dark outline of Cambell.

"Tell me." I demanded again and finally he turned over and said in a whiny voice, but real soft, "It was your fault, Griffin, you didn't save him."

Suddenly, I picked up my reading book and hurled it at Cambell, "Damn you!" I yelled and I saw the book hit him. He started crying and I started yelling at him, more and more, and telling him how I'd throw the whole book shelf at him if he didn't shut up about things he didn't know about. That really scared him and he jumped out of bed when he thought I was really going to get him and ran toward the door, almost hitting Papa who was coming into the room.

"What's going on here?" Papa's voice was stern but he sounded a bit tired. Cambell was crying and hugging him and sobbing something about me trying to kill him. Pa got him to stop crying long enough to settle him back in to his bunk. I was still sitting up, stunned, and staring at Cambell. He thought it was my fault about Franny.

"What was the fight about Griffin?" Pa asked. What could I tell him? That Franny wouldn't have died if I had pulled the apple out of his throat? And now I was fighting with Cambell because he had no business thinking what he thought?

"Nothing." I said.

"You boys don't fight about nothing." Pa said, rising from Cambell and walking toward the middle of the room.

"Whatever it was you better just forget it, 'cause your mother's not feeling too well and I don't want nothing disturbing her. You got that?"

"Yes, Pa," I said, as he walked from the room. I could hear Cambell crying softly in his bunk. I turned over and closed my eyes, wishing I could sleep.

The house buzzed with neighbors and they kept coming in and in, wearing smiles, carrying baskets of flowers and food as if our whole family would starve now that Franny was gone. It looked like it could have been a party, even a wedding, but it wasn't. Last spring, Mary, from down the road, got married — she used to babysit me once in a while before Grandma lived with us — and there was a gathering like this one. It was different now, though, and if you looked real close at the people they didn't look so happy as they let on. Grandma was cheerful. She was wearing her best dress, the one she bought for the spring wedding, and her hair was combed up all nice. She was talking to a whole group of people and making all sorts of gestures with her hands and laughing. I took a seat on the wood bench in the kitchen on account of there were no free chairs anywhere.

"Griffin, come say hello to Mrs. Parker," called Mama. I got up smiled at this tiny girl baby who was suddenly at the doorway and walked toward where Mama was sitting. There was this really old lady next to her, clasping Mama's hands and smiling up at me when I got to where they were sitting.

"Oh, isn't he a handsome boy!" said the old lady, squinting at me and still smiling.

"Griffin, you remember Mrs. Parker, don't you?" Mama asked, "she used to live just right down the road."

I didn't remember Mrs. Parker but I guessed she was the one who got sent off to a nursing home when I was little. I didn't know what a nursing home was then, but I guessed they weren't too bad because Mrs. Parker looked happy enough.

"Yes, you lived in the red brick house, I remember," I said. We used to run by that house on our way home from school because there was a rumor about a mean man who lived there who used to shoot at little kids. I used to tell Franny how he better grow soon so he could run fast enough not to get caught by that man. Franny was real scared of the red house, and was real glad when he heard that the old man died and he wouldn't have to run anymore.

I talked to the old lady a bit longer before Mama let me go with Cambell to gather some vegetables from the garden for dinner.

The house was quiet again. Everyone was asleep except me. Mama had protested my staying up late, but Pa had said that I was big enough to put my own self to bed and, besides, she did too much worrying. I was in the room off the kitchen doing a puzzle. It was of three horses standing around each other, necks interlocking, in a paddock. I'd

almost finished two of the horses but the last one was getting kind of difficult. Besides, my concentration wasn't too good and I was kind of tired. I was going to go to sleep but I heard this noise which kind of startled me and looked up to see Grandma coming down the steps in her bathrobe. She didn't see me and went into the kitchen. I hardly ever saw Grandma alone before — she was always around people, mostly doing things and helping out in one way or another. "Being old is no excuse for idleness," she always said.

The piece that I thought would fit on the back leg of the horse didn't fit and made me kind of mad. I was going to give it up and see if I could get Grandma to make me some hot chocolate when I heard a sound from the kitchen. It was this whimper-like noise and at first I thought it was the dog but then I figured it must be Grandma. I went into the kitchen and, sure enough, there was my Grandma crying. So I said, "You feeling poorly, Grandma?" trying not to notice all her tears and sniffing and all. She ran her hands across her hair and nodded.

"You don't want to see your old Grandma like this, now, Griffin, run yourself to bed."

I stood there for a moment thinking maybe I should because I really couldn't stand her crying like that because she never cried and was always telling us we should keep a stiff upper lip. Besides, if she kept up like this pretty soon I'd be crying.

"I'll call up to Pa to get you a doctor, Grandma." I offered.

"No, now don't you," she blew her nose, "don't you be doing that."

"Well, if you're feeling poorly, well, I'll. . ."

"I'm fine now, Griffin."

"Well, you keep crying like that and," Oh, I wished I hadn't said that! Now she knew that I knew she was crying and everything was getting just awful between us right there in the kitchen. There was only her crying for a moment and then, "Well, I guess I miss your little brother, Griffin. There isn't a thing your Pa or any doctor can do for that, is there?"

"No m'am, I guess not," I said, and thought maybe I better go. But I couldn't just leave her like that and, after all, it was my fault she was crying.

"Oh, Grandma, I'm sorry." I choked, and I started crying, too. Oh, we were a fine mess, just sitting there in the kitchen like that.

"It's okay, I'll be fine." Grandma dabbed her eyes and looked up at me. "Now, Griff, I've got you crying, don't I?"

"It's my fault!"

"It's okay, you can cry," Grandma had stopped crying now and was looking at me queerly. "What's your fault, child?"

"Franny."

"No, Griffin," Grandma gathered me up by the arms and shook me. "Never, never, can you think that! If anything it was me. I couldn't stop him from . . . and I tried but, oh, I'm so old!" and she started crying so hard that I stopped and just looked at her, crying enough for the both of us.

"We couldn't do nothing for him, could we? We tried but there wasn't nothing to do. No time, right Grandma? Right? It wasn't enough time, that was the fault!" She rocked back and forth nodding and crying.

“It was an accident. It happened just like that, right? Just like when Cambell broke his thumb, remember that? And you set it on a split just right so that the doctor didn’t have to even do nothing once he got here!

“I would have done something but I didn’t know what you meant by fingers down his throat. I didn’t know what good it would do. I figured it out later but it . . . it was too late!”

I felt her hug go round me and leaned against her like when I was real little. She wasn’t crying hardly at all. And I felt kind of all of a sudden exhausted and let her hold me.

Grandma did make me hot chocolate that night. She had some too, and we both stayed up very late and talked. She told me all sorts of stories, some I’d heard before but didn’t mind hearing again. In fact, she took a liking to the puzzle I was working on and was real good at helping me with the third horse. That was just like Grandma — to be good at puzzles and stuff like that.

Marti Leimbach

Restless Shades of Blue

A blank field of canvas stands before me.
It is my duty to create a work of art.
I do not wish to create, yet I am compelled to.
I have no ideas; my mind is blank like the canvas.
I cannot concentrate; I am too absorbed in my problems.
With what colors should I splash the canvas?
Reds, yellows, greens?
No, I decide, the canvas must be shades of blue
Like me.

Stephanie Manison



Only for Today

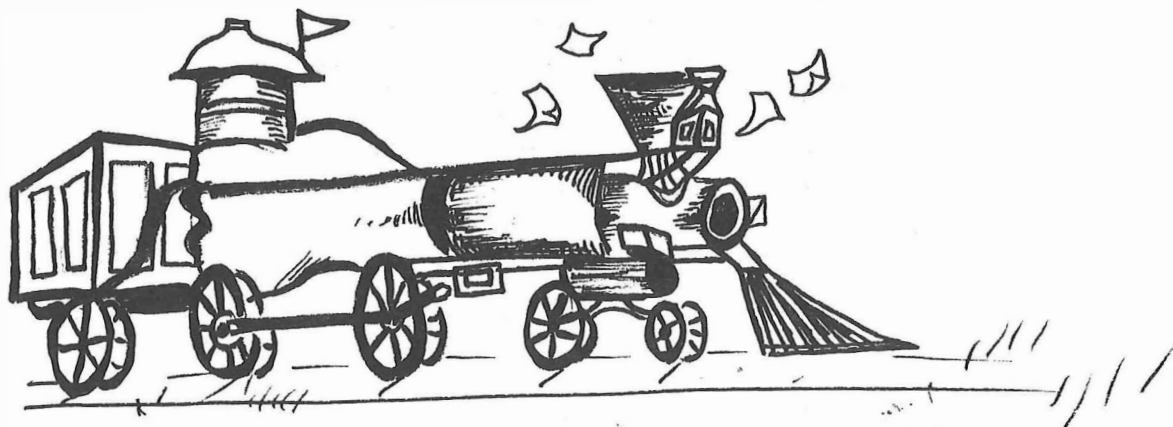
Mayan faces
stare through open hallways
onto empty streets.
Bodies on the sidewalk
pain(t) the site red,
but green uniforms take no rest.
With guns in arm,
they shout "Rebel for freedom!"
then kill freeman
that scream against.

Afraid to speak
or take night's rest,
families cling to their home's warmth.
Mothers, in turn, meander
through the streets
to sell bread for the bread
of today's meal.

At Midnight

What would you do if the world were to end at midnight would you snort your brains out in Peru smoke a cigarette & toast the colors toast the bombs red glare as it bounced off the white house would you cry inside your lover's arms weep into his chest would you dream of yesterday as the bombs exploded thrice (or maybe) sleepily you'd pick up your dog or cat or goldfish bowl and save them from the ordeal i'd float up to the heavens with you beside me and drink wine from the milky way.

Beth Kaminow



A Train

On Thursday morning at two A.M.
I stood in that worn down station
waiting alone for the train of thought.

For hours I stood there lonely
grasping my bag filled to bursting with
cliches, and dangling participles, and
overused expressions.

But the train didn't come as I stood
unmoving and unthinking
and staring off into
the vast cold tunnel.

My eyes caught and held for a minute
a small stray of light
and my mind and impulsive hands
reached out eagerly to flag it down.

But the train just passed
its siren blowing and its funnel steaming
and it dropped small, unattached fragments
if perhaps in its tracks for me.

So I patiently sat and settled in a worn out
little rut of a bench
and caught the next train of thought
to nowhere
after hours had passed me by.

Rebecca Levin

Sonnet: So I will Trust

A hand so fair, or lips quite warm might touch
My silken skin, yet none has passed my way.
Like a gentle breeze one shall call my name and sway
My resting limbs. I want only to clutch
One's love, and build a friendship. But in so much
As I speak these words, my form each day
Grows thin and pale. I hunt a swain but nonesuch
Does show his beauty. Virtuous I must stay?

In You I found a strength I can't explain.
O Lord, I see how I must wait and learn
So much before I can give to another;
And so a love for one I will not feign,
In hope that these desires will cease to churn.
I'll trust in You until we find each other.

Barbara Legnini

No Win Battle

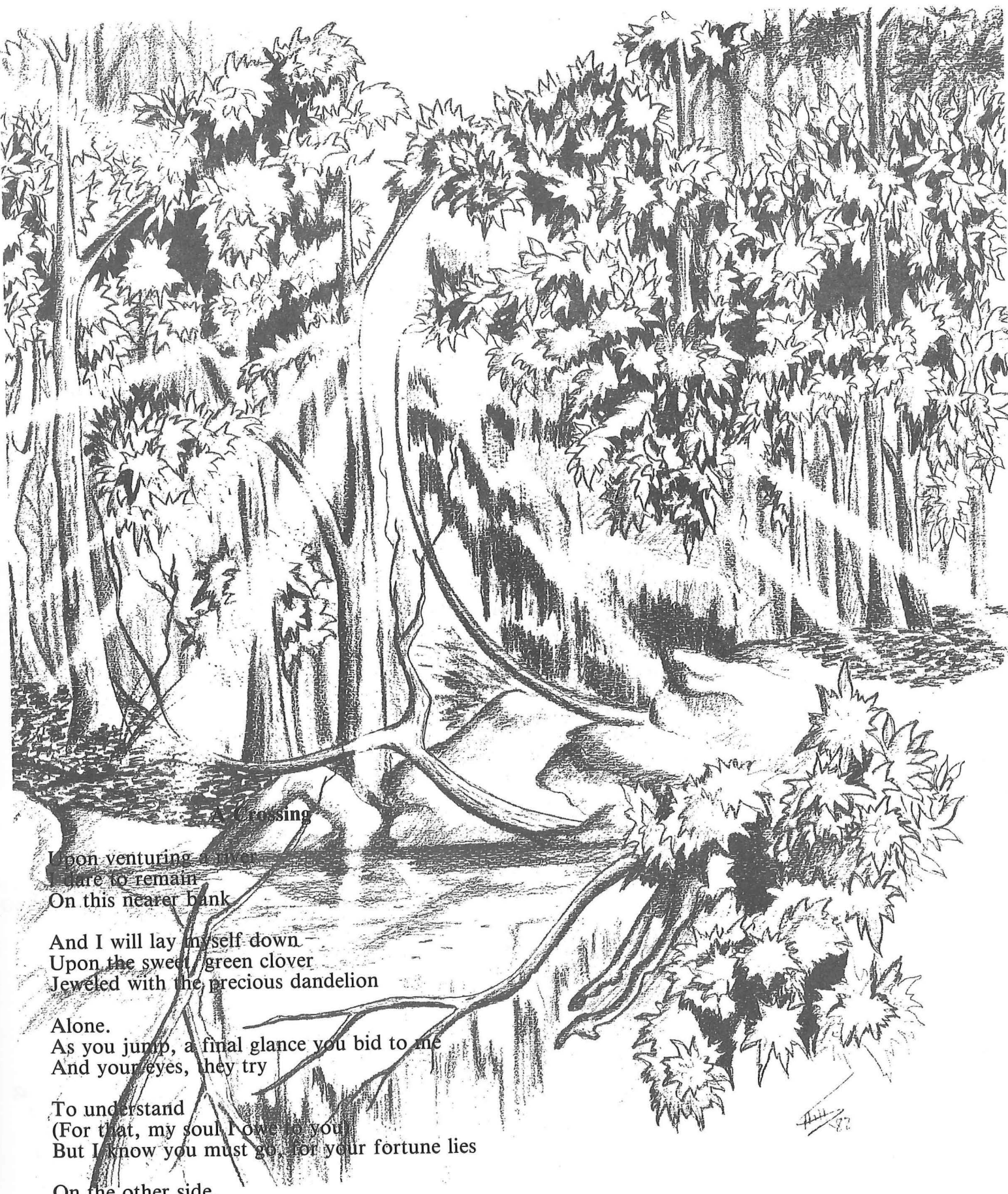
Your golden shield of armor
Shines as I hiss back
At your gentle, festering words.
My skin sheds in sheets
As I turn away,
Listening to your calm
Good-bye.
My eyes glow with fire;
I try to poison you with my expression.
Unaffected by my harsh bite,
Your hard coat saves your insides
While mine wastes away.

Tracy White

Ambitious

Racing crazily
you scooped the world up
with one wild, youth-struck paw,
fit it to your goals,
and wore it like a hat upon your head.
One-eyed, half-eared, and single pathed,
you threw off broken woolly people-pieces
which clung static when not needed,
and ran through life
like a savage, raving dog.

Marti Leimbach



A Crossing

Upon venturing a river
I dare to remain
On this nearer bank

And I will lay myself down
Upon the sweet green clover
Jeweled with the precious dandelion

Alone.
As you jump, a final glance you bid to me
And your eyes, they try

To understand
(For that, my soul I owe to you)
But I know you must go, for your fortune lies

On the other side.

Grand Finale .

Just as your foot slides off the ledge
Above worm drill decay
A hero ally flies upstream
And whisks your soul away.

You dream farewell to station Earth
And mount your lightwave owl.
You jump across the universe
And laugh through time's last howl.

You catch the diamond subway train
And float through six light beams,
Which shoot across truth warp terrain
To merge at heaven's seams.

The band plays fire with climax blood;
Guitarists murder strings.
The stage implodes with dreadnought fire
As life's lost sister sings.

You clutch the white hot wand of truth
And sizzle in its wrath.
Totality is torn apart.
You find another path.

Owen Johnson