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E_{ssays} S_{tories} P_{oems}

is the

Literary Magazine of York College of Pennsylvania

We wish to Thank . . .

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Bob Hoffman Writing Citations:

Cindy Sweitzer, "For the Bull-Leapers," "The Long Way Out"; Martha Debacher, "A Dream of Still Waters"; Sylvia Bowman, "Letter to the Brightest Star"; Tracy Curio, "An Old Bird," "Your Wall"; Dennis Myers, "The Cat"; Susan Fink, "Animal Crackers," "The Musicians."

Credits for Art Work:

Tomie Kumamoto -- of Aichi, Japan -- for three cover drawings, four "seasons for haiku," "Bull Leaping," "Star Mirror," "Garden Wall," "Spring Lady," for lettering in Japanese and English.

Deb Alvey -- of York, PA -- for "Cheery Bird," "Zenith-Neck Bird," "Grasses," and "Boatman."

The ESP Staff:

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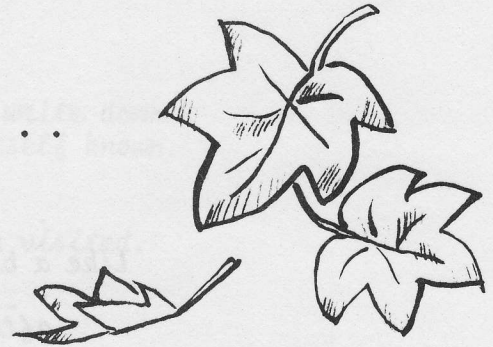
We welcome your participation. Please send manuscripts and drawings to Dr. McKulik c/o The YCP Department of English.

morning, sun-fired . . .

light . . . flame's flickering tints . . .

leaf and petal glow

andrea davis

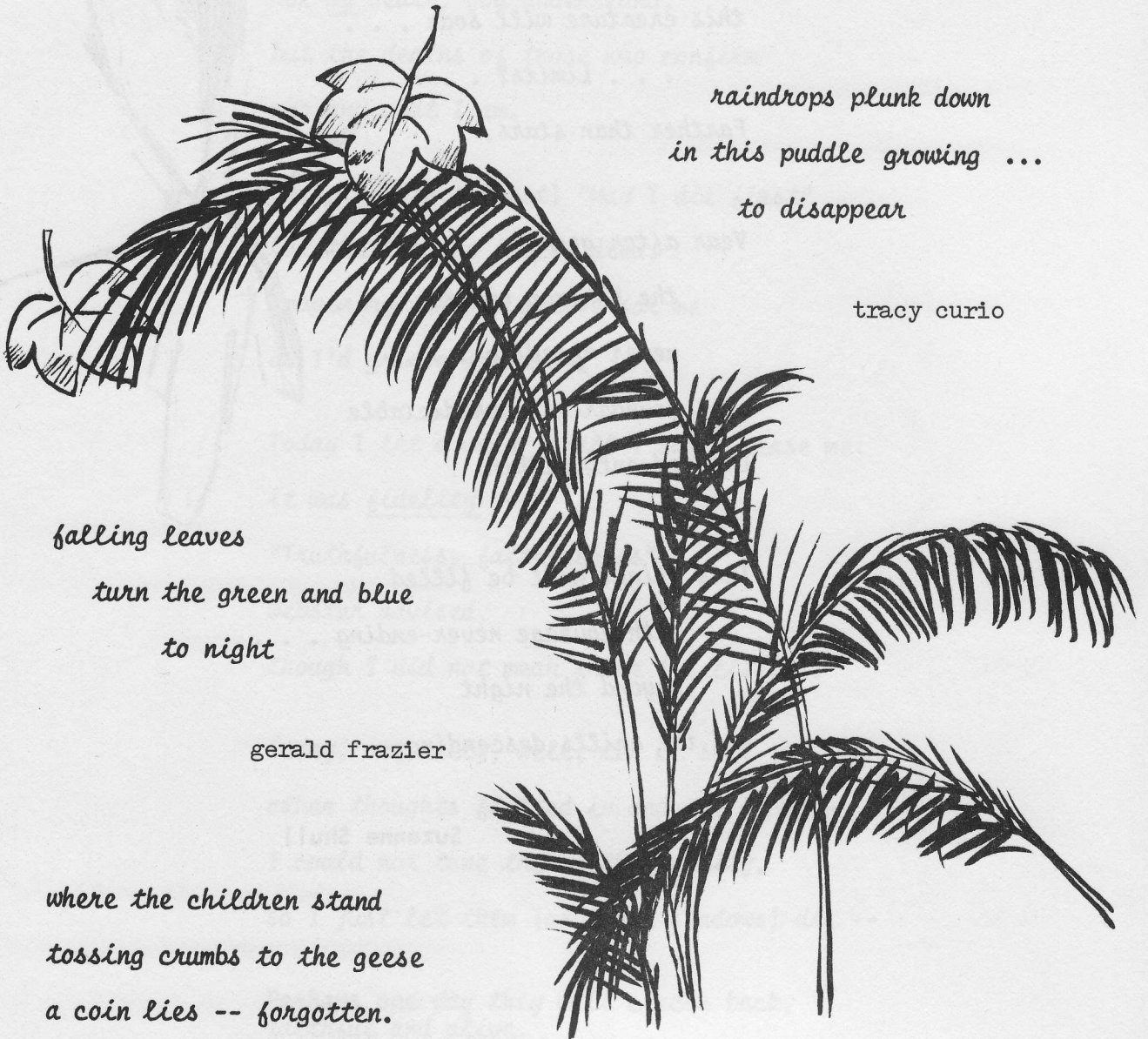


raindrops plunk down

in this puddle growing ...

to disappear

tracy curio



falling leaves

turn the green and blue

to night

gerald frazier

*where the children stand
tossing crumbs to the geese
a coin lies -- forgotten.*

martha debacher

The Student

Like a bird let free
after careful nurturing
this creature will soar . . .
. . . Limits? . . .
Farther than stars.

Year after year
the horizon extends . . .
never receding . . .
boundaries unpredictable
Created only within.

This flight will be filled
with courage never-ending . . .
beyond the night
And the chills descending.

Suzanne Shull



Journal

In school they told me to write down
every thought that made itself known.

Today the thought of death visited.

I cried it should not be --

Not my death, you understand,

but the deaths of those who confirm

who and what I am.

Once I wrote (almost) "May I die first"

but the thought itself died,

imagining persons grieve for me

as I'd grieve for them.

Today I let a word (shall I say?) tease me:

it was fidelity --

"Truthfulness, faithfulness"

Webster advised,

though I did not mean these (precisely).

Today, naturally, well, let me see:

other thoughts flitted in and out of me --

I could not tune them with fidelity,

so I just let them (or their shadows) die --

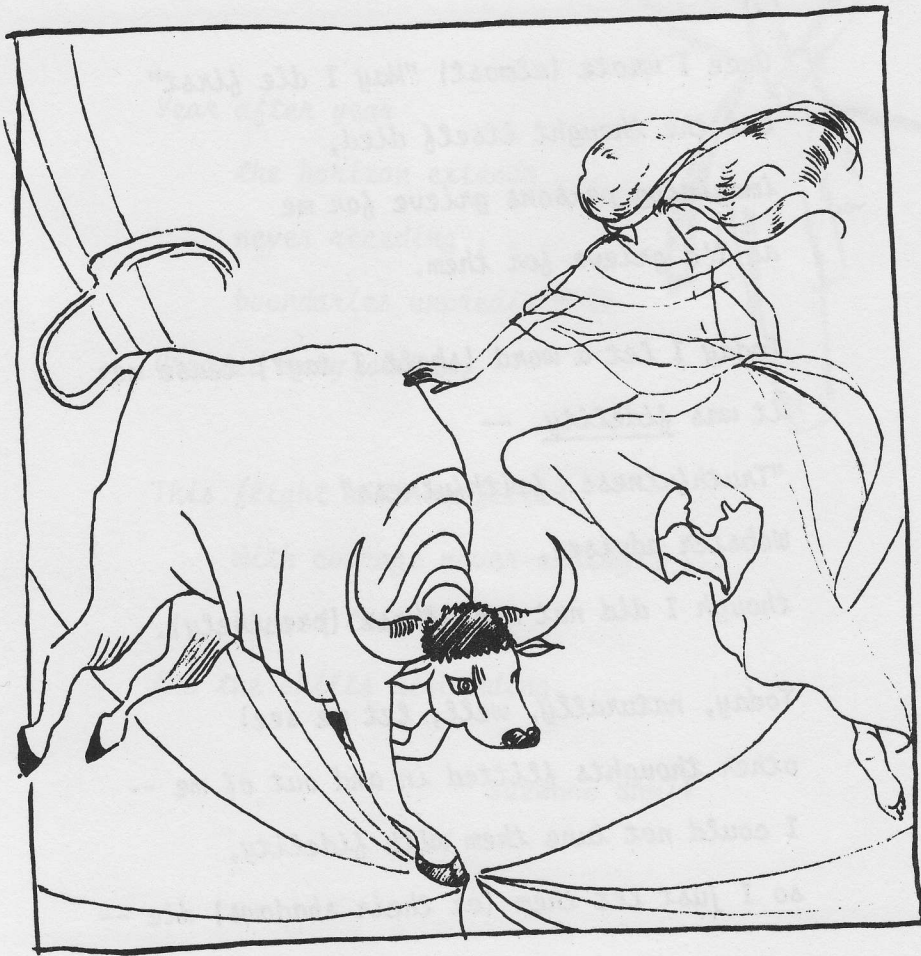
Perhaps one day they will circle back,
faithful and alive.

There are women who believe

that once there was a matriarchal civilization

where violence and hatred were non-existent.

They dream of going back to that place.



FOR THE BULL-LEAPERS

The bull did not always die.

The crowd cheered,

but not for death.

The bull did not have to die for them.

Young maidens performed in the arena --

handstands, backflips, somersaults.

All done from the back of a bull.

The crowd cheered,

but not for death.

Young maidens of courage and grace,

without ceremonial sword.

Young maidens of strength and speed,

without blood-red cape.

The bull did not have to die for them.

Then, priestesses placed lily crowns

on the heads of brave acrobats.

The crowd cheered,

and goddesses were thanked.

Now, scarlet roses are tossed

to proud men with swords.

The crowd still cheers,

and a carcass rots in the sun.

THE WAREHOUSE OF DREAMS

(in memory of Wendy)

*it was in the backroom of an entire city
cobwebs and piled high
there was no rent to pay -- nothing to buy.
we sat in shade and steam
chatting in the warehouse of broken dreams.*

*our talk was slow
with words comfortably old
as they were spoken they died
making our hearts light
and glad for the cool water
we shared in our glass.*

*at last we grew crowded
all the dreams no longer sheltered
lay cracked and broken
tossed about on all sides.*

*a moment for eyes
a moment for sighs
a last drink purifies . . .
and we return to the city.*

john gingrich

THE CAT

The man came out of the garage attached to his house and spied the black cat halfway between the woods and the half open garage door as it was sneaking its way inside to steal the kitten's food. Although the Tom was well fed and groomed, he had made a habit of stealing into the garage, perhaps merely to make his presence and availability known to the soon-to-be-matured females that the man cared for. The man had chased the Tom away on previous occasions, but had come to the limit of his patience due to the Tom's habit of pilfering food and marking the territory with his scent.

The cat, caught red handed and knowing it, stopped dead in his tracks and cringed while staring the man squarely in the eye. Fully knowledgeable of the man's capability of doing him harm and of his own guilt of theft, the cat hastily sought the intent of the man. The predator-prey exchange between the man and cat passed by the meeting of eyes instinctively informed the cat that the danger was not immediate and that flight was not necessary.

The man re-entered the house and went upstairs into the bedroom. His wife called "Hello" from the other room, but he was too intent in his purpose to acknowledge her greeting. She knew from past experience that his "closed door" meant that he was concentrating upon a task and that interruption at this moment would bring only a fragmented and contextually unintelligible response. He would not allow anything to interrupt his concentration.

He opened the bureau drawer. The Smith and Wesson .357 revolver lay waiting in its holster. Glistening from its light coating of oil, the pistol was removed and unlocked. The man opened the cylinder

and loaded the gun with a quick loader. Leaving the cylinder open as a safety precaution, he made his way through the house, down the stairs and out the basement door. With the caution and craft of a thief, the tomcat had meanwhile retreated to the shelter of a laurel bush in the woods to hide quietly, watching and waiting until the danger had subsided.

The man quietly exited the garage and took in the scene. The cat had vanished from sight as the man had expected. The man sensed that the cat was near, and made his way stealthily around the side of the house to insure that the Tom was not in the open before searching the woods where he knew the cat's chances of eluding him were greatest.

At the far edge of the clearing that made up the yard, a smoke grey, medium-sized house cat was entering from the woods. About ten yards into the clearing, the cat noticed the man and stopped short. The man closed the cylinder, cocked the hammer and aimed. He estimated the range to be thirty-five paces and judged from past experience that the cat had a 50% chance of the bullet missing him. The man also knew that if he attempted to improve his position, the cat would use the opportunity to flee into the woods and would subsequently escape.

The eyes of the cat and the man met. The man had never seen this cat before. He slowly returned the hammer to the uncocked position. The cat fled. To satisfy his curiosity, the man walked to the place where the grey cat had entered the woods, but the cat had disappeared.

From his vantage point behind the laurel bush, the black cat did not witness the exchange between the grey cat and the man, but he did sense the presence of the man in the backyard as he often did while anticipating his absence before entering the garage. The man often went about his business in the yard, unaware that the black Tom waited only a

few paces inside the woods for him to leave long enough to enter the garage to do his marauding.

Proceeding to the point where the woods was closest to the garage door, the man re-opened the cylinder of the weapon and gazed intently into the woods. When he reached the point closest to the woods, his eye caught the black Tom. Feeling secure in the many obstacles his agility could use to advantage in the event of a chase, the Tom merely gazed back at the man while he closed the cylinder, cocked and aimed the pistol. The range was less than ten paces with no obstacles in the line of sight between the gun and the cat. The man knew he would not miss.

The force of the projectile rolled the cat two paces further into the woods, although the shot had entered from an **angle above him**. Sheer terror projected from the cat's eyes as he realized the fatality of his misjudgment of the man's intentions. The cat thrashed obscenely while trying to regain enough balance to retreat. The man could not end the misery because the squirming cat made too poor a target. The Tom regained enough **equilibrium to flee with a curiously** macabre sidwinding motion. It was obvious that the cat could not properly control his hind quarters.

The man watched the cat make its way and recoiled with horror at the prospect of the animal eluding him and finding its way home to present itself to the empathy of its master.

After 30 yards the Tom could make no more progress and writhed sickeningly. The man advanced to within five yards of the cat, cocked the hammer and aimed at the slight hollow behind the front shoulders, inside which he knew the vital organs of the heart and lungs lay.

Instantly, the cat was still. The man's hands shook. He picked up the body by the tail and surveyed it with a confusion of emotions.

The cat had been a sleek, handsome animal of young adult age as evidenced by its clean, white teeth and general excellent physique. As the man had suspected, the cat was an unneutered male and a pet, as evidenced by the collar it wore. He put the cat down, stowed the revolver in his pocket, picked up the cat again by the tail and took it across the creek, where he kicked dirt from under a bush and buried it.

The man returned to the house and made his way to the bedroom where he prepared to restore the gun to its proper place. His wife stood in the hall outside the bedroom.

"Did you shoot a cat?"

"Yes," harsh, but without reprimand.

"That black one?"

"Yes."

"Not Abdul!" called the little girl from the other room. He softened his voice to reply to her, "Not Abdul."

The man locked and replaced the gun in the drawer without cleaning it, contrary to his ordinary habit.

Both the wife and the little girl knew the man would be quiet and must be left alone for awhile.

dennis myers



SHORT AND BLUNT

I see a tree. So?
breathe air. Who will care?
Does it matter?

He's black. He's white.
What's the fuss?
After they drop the bomb
All of us will be colorless.

UP FRONT

Year after year We tilled this soil
Denied the American freedom ours --
Emancipated? We were chased by faceless
sheets.

We were hanged, and burned alive,
Children shoved out of sight,
Mothers fouled by the lustful
creeps.

We ran to the North, for a better chance,
stared the truth in the eye: another fight --
This time the enemy was invisibility
or too clearly seen.

Yes, we put our shoulders to the land,
helped build from L.A. to D.C.
Yet who would look us in the eye,
share the liberty?

We fought in all of the wars,
we were the ones up front,
Yet you wonder, you shrug, you are amazed
at the thunder of the sixties?

Dunbar saw it,
as did Hughes.
So too all the raisins who fiercely exploded --
When equality was denied.

PUNK

"Thrash ain't trash!"
Against, yes --
Anarchist, no:
Whether Surf, Skateboard, Skinhead
time and energy to go.

We make our music
to rock
White House
black house
rich house
poor house --
Psychedelics of the eighties:
"Oi," Buddy, "loud and fast rules."

We'll protest
till the day of change --
Hope for that day!

Now
Let's play!

SONG FOR BRIXTON
(or Miami)

Barren streets, crumbling fast,
Days are short, nights don't last,
No place to go, all just roam.
A lonely man, where's his home?

Any future, children of today?
For today's dreams, tomorrow's pay?
What on up over that hill? Who's to say?
Say, Blind Mice, *what are the rules today?*

I hear the cliff roar, on a blaring box:
Deep city riots, neither white nor black,
People jobless, and no one home --
And the man, the man, he's still alone.

Andrew Ringgold

JAZZ MAN

Now that night has pushed itself
far past the thumb-tacks
designed to hold the skyline still --
golden dusk all quicksilver,
arclights refusing to illuminate us,

comes the Jazz Man to speak his clear sight --
snare and base, 'net and horns

screaming all and sobbing,

stricken and strangling --

loud, wounded, mute,

small talk tearing at the night

conceived and aborted

in this narrow city-closet

straining sound . . . for

losers come to win & winners to cheat,

tea-swiggers & chess-brooders

holding tight for what's right,

hookahs, helpmates, housemen,

thief, hawker, hankerer -- your tunes --

straightman, dummy, clown

(lonely, low, or lost)

Gentlemen or Ladies about town,

The Jazz Man warms to your song.

Gerald Frazier

THE FADED BLUE JEAN BLUES

In my walk'n
I've worn many a shoe
bevelin' my thumb
to the wind ...
Had nothin' to win
n' nothin' to lose.

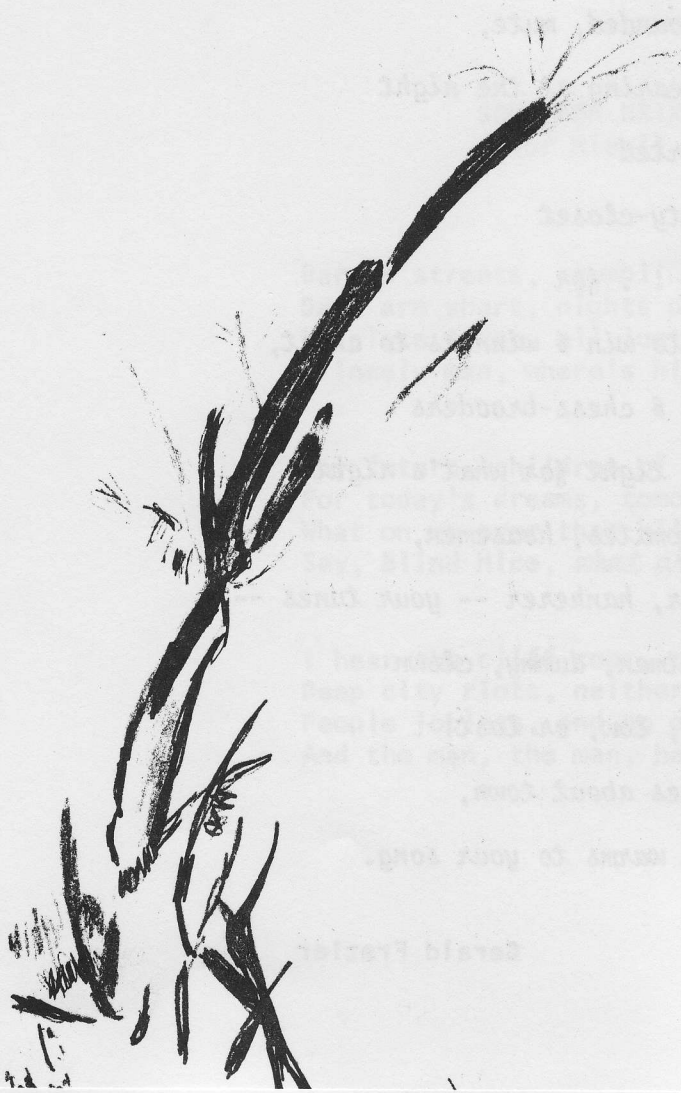
Be home again
when the new snow's fallin'
be comin' home soon
when I can ...
Right 'fore the winds change
Wanna make that plain.



It's been some time.
May be just a bit strange
to hear the echo
of my name ...
These faded blues know
nothin' much's changed.

Be home again
when December's comin'
Been a bit o' time
I been gone ...
I sure am hopin'
nothin' much's changed.

Gerald Frazier



THE MUSICIANS

"Come play with me," I whisper low
into the gentle night,
The instruments are finely tuned
the melody just right."

He shakes his head, and slowly moves
his body toward the door,
"I cannot play this fickle tune
for long I've known the score.

Discordant is the wayward beat
that marks the tempo slow,
The introduction does not prove
the coda's way to go.

Sweet though in words well known
the melody may be
The timbre changes later on
into the minor key."

But wearing thin resistance down,
I press the matter on;
He raises up his instrument
as I lift the baton.

He is lying in my bed tonight
for I, the cause of his delight,
have well transposed the score.

THE BLUE BALLOON

so bright, bright blue.
i had to bring it home
and turn it

loose
it floated
floated to the ceiling
bounced against the ceiling

so bright blue,
and full.

(i feared that it would burst)

i turned it loose

floating bouncing then still.

and oh, the things that it brought back:
birthday parties, circus clowns,
parades, and

lots and lots
of giggles.

(lots of giggles)

by next day's noon

(did it always happen that fast?)
it had fallen to the floor.

half the size.

now darker.

darker and smaller.

smaller

and the darker, darker blue

diminished the brightness.

i red thumb-tacked its
string to the ceiling.

now all was gone:

the clowns,

the backyard birthdays,

gone. gone, gone,

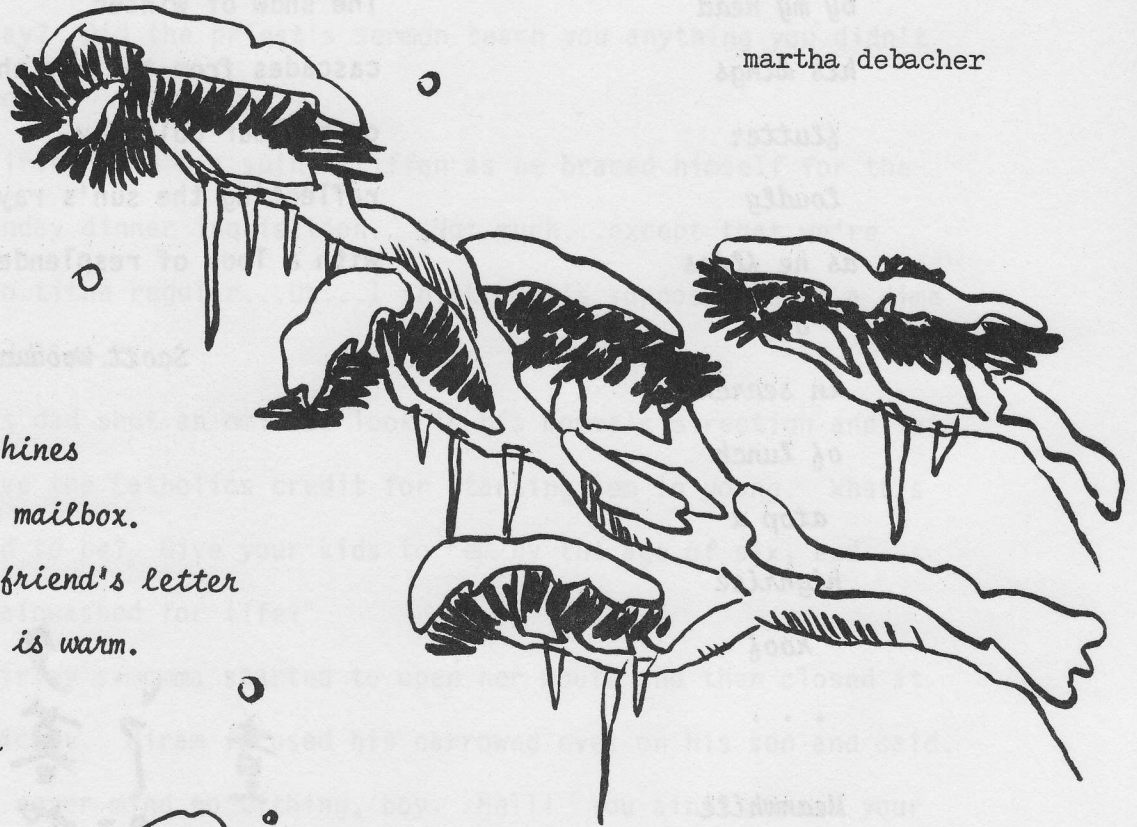
were the giggles,
the parades.

(did it always happen so fast?)
so tightly, tightly and carefully,
i had tied the string around its neck.
but still, still somehow and so soon,
too much escaped.

cindy sweitzer

Morning sunshine . . . Ah!
Frost lies in the shadow
of that tree.

martha debacher



The sun shines
on the mailbox.
My friend's letter
is warm.

martha



Fat geese sit
on a ripple of ice.
The sun is low.

martha

A grey seagull
leaves a quick quaint trail
on the bright
chilly shore.

tracy curio

a pigeon
whizzes
by my head
his wings
flutter
loudly
as he flies
off
in search
of lunch
atop a
highrise
roof

...

Meanwhile
a small
brown turtle
silent
by my foot
trudges on
(melancholy)
to find
a place to
s l e e p

Tracy Curio

The snow of winter
cascades from the sky above
on a clear cold day
reflecting the sun's rays
with a look of resplendence.

Scott Woodward

夕暮や
いっか消えら
童のこえ

When dusk is deeping
the cheerful voices of children
go home one after another.

Suddenly I notice
there is no voice in the street.

Tomie Kumamoto

INQUISITION, JUNIOR GRADE

Hiram took a swallow of coffee and said, "Well, what went on at church today? Did the priest's sermon teach you anything you didn't already know?"

Fairley felt his spine stiffen as he braced himself for the regular Sunday dinner inquisition. "Not much...except that we're supposed to tithe regular...Uh...I think that's supposed to be a dime for every dollar."

His dad shot an ominous look in his momma's direction and said, "Got to give the Catholics credit for starting 'em in young. What's it supposed to be? Give your kids to 'em by the age of six, and they're brainwashed for life?"

Fairley's momma started to open her mouth and then closed it just as quickly. Hiram focused his narrowed eyes on his son and said, "Don't you never mind no tithing, boy. Hell! You ain't earned your first dollar yet; and, when you do, if you're wise, you'll keep it away from those priests' fat, greedy paws."

"Father Laban's hands aren't fat! He ain't fat no place at all. He's long and skinn...like a hot dog."

"Same thing! If you're smart, you'll keep your money away from his long, skinny paws. He's still a crook like all the rest--sendin' all that money to line the vaults in Rome."

"Father Laban always tells about how your money's gonna help the missions."

"What he says is one thing--what he really does, well, that's another story. Someday you'll get wise to it."

"I like the priests at school. They play baseball with us. Some of 'em are pretty good," Fairley said, jabbing the end tine of his fork at two elusive peas and eyeing the strawberry shortcake waiting in the table's center.

"Hell boy! Don't you go admiring them priests and sisters too much! All I need's a priest in my line. Your great-granddad would turn over in his grave. He had no time for Catholics...said the Church of Rome played both sides during the Civil War. The Pope wanted to make sure he'd picked a winner. Only reason you're at that school is because I gave my word to your momma and that crazy clan of hers."

"You mean you promised the priest when you married momma, don't you? Now you got to raise me Catholic, don't you?"

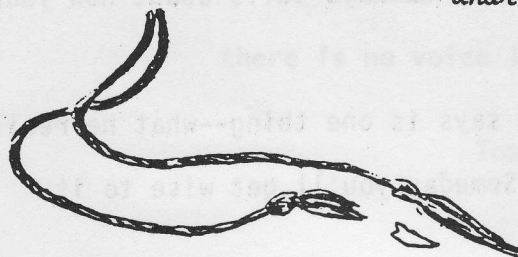
Hiram gritted his teeth and said, "Fairley, a promise to your momma means something to me. I never worry about a promise to a priest. They sure as Hell don't worry about theirs!"

"You'd only have to worry about breaking a solemn vow. That's a mortal sin," Fairley said, handing his empty plate to his momma.

"What do you mean 'a mortal sin'? Sin's sin...wrong's wrong! Live a right life and let God pass the verdict!"

"Oh no! You die with a mortal sin on your soul--you go straight to hell. See, Dad, you don't know everything." Fairley met his momma's eyes and popped a plum-sized strawberry into his mouth.

andrea davis



ANIMAL CRACKERS

We had an Armenian cat,
who was grossly, enormously fat;

When walking, he waddled.

He also was coddled

And couldn't tell a roach from a rat.

A tropical fish we called Sam
slept in a jar full of jam.

His tooth was so sweet

and this proved such a treat

He grew every day by the gram.

Our puppy with hair like a mop
grew dust on herself like a crop.

We coughed and we sneezed,

We choked and we wheezed,

Yet we groomed her and brushed her non-stop.

susan fink

STEAK AND POTATOES

There once was a cow in the mud
who contentedly chewed on her cud.

Along came a farmer

who most surely alarmed her

when he said, "You'd taste good

with a spud!"

Tracy Curio

THE TYPEWRITER STRIKES BACK

Dear Sir or Madam:

I reside every day in an Advertising Office at Walnut and Vine, and every day I work non-stop from nine to five. Should you think that you have got problems, let me give you a few samples of the type of thing that passes through my body every week:

If Repair Service or The Business Office does not satisfactorily resolve your problem, please . . . Pack a lab in your bag! . . .

Why are monumental pictures monumentally boring? . . . Dr. Morton Sinister says,

I keep chili powder, paprika, and red pepper in the refrigerator; it's very Whoever thought a call girl would add a new shape to photography? . . . of course, at this stage of the game, scientists were merely developing a totally new type of tomato and Yes, to a large degree, but why answer the phone and miss part of your favorite TV show? . . . well, it has to do with our ego needs Were you, incidentally, looking for something unique? . . . No, these are the blocks -- red, yellow, and blue -- with funny eyes that look at you. . . . How often do you shampoo your hair? . . . You do? . . . Then, the moment the microwave is turned on

This man came into the office this morning and said he could improve my services -- by slipping "programs" into me, floppy little discs that . . . I have a feeling he Well, I do get serviced once again this year. If you wish a really efficient job done, simply

Very Truly Yours,

I. B. M.

I. B. M(uddled).

suzanne skull

A WOMAN'S FEAR

Last Saturday, my nine-year-old daughter, Michelle, began a walk up the street to her friend's house, as I watched from our living room window. From still another direction, a young man appeared, walking behind Michelle. She turned once and glanced at him; then she took a quick left between two houses and disappeared from view. Almost within the same moment, the man broke into a jog and took the same left turn. As I observed this fifteen-second scene, my back stiffened with the idea that this person might intend harm to my daughter. As fast as I could, I made my way out to the back yard to my husband -- calling his name several times, each call sounding a little more urgent than the last. As I hurriedly explained to him what I had seen, my legs felt like a pair of tightly wound springs, ready to leap over the houses towards my daughter. My husband caught the intensity in my voice and, dropping his tools, raced up the street. I watched him run and the cold fist of fear clutched my heart; my head spun with a picture of my little girl being hurt. With clenched hands, I waited on the lawn, inwardly screaming "no!"

My husband returned, walking slowly. He smiled slightly as he approached me and explained that he had seen the young man enter a house and that Michelle had met her friend and was playing. My chest heaved forth a sigh of relief; my body relaxed. Our eyes met with a look that said, "I was afraid"

This fear -- I hate it. I hate what it does to me: the suspicion it arouses, the mental exhaustion it causes, the freedom that is lost because of its binding grip on my life. When does this fear take root? How does it grow?

It begins when you are a little girl and your mother frowns, shakes her finger at you and warns you not to talk to strangers. Your young mind perceives an anger in her. You and Mom have talked about strangers before and the subject seems to make her tense. You cannot figure Mom out, but you know enough that you will not be speaking to any adult you do not know -- or at least one you do not feel comfortable around. After all, how does someone qualify to be a stranger? It can't be that smiling old lady, or that other little girl on a pink bicycle, or that small boy with a puppy. They are not strangers, for Mom does not seem to mind you talking to them. But you have seen her body stiffen when a nameless man comes to the door. You have taken a walk with her and felt her hand squeeze your fingers together when a car slows down along side you. You've watched her jaw tighten when a man leans out of a car window and asks directions. You begin to catch on to these signals of caution from Mom. "Beware" is engraved in your mind.

As you grow older and more responsible for yourself, Mom's caution becomes your own. The "beware" sign looms larger as you listen to the newscaster's daily reports of muggings and rapes. The couple you babysit for instruct you to keep all doors locked and if you answer the phone never to let the caller know you are the sitter and you are alone.

You land a summer job before your freshman year and you find out that a salesgirl, who used to work at the same store, was abducted last year in the parking lot in broad daylight, was beaten and raped. You know now to have your car keys in your hand as you leave the store, and always to park under a street lamp at night. It is a beautiful evening; you would like to go to town with the windows down, but "beware" -- you'd better not; it's not safe.

Then one day you are all grown-up with daughters of your own. You look at their smooth, innocent faces. Gosh! They're beautiful! You want them to remain beautiful; you want to protect them. Yet you hold them to your breast, and at the same time, wish that you could fling open your door and let them run free. But "beware" -- you can't; it's not safe. And you must teach them that. You feel angry because you have to make them afraid -- just like your mother did.

Judy Newman

The Quilt

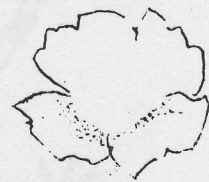
She

*sleeps in bliss
her arm draped loosely round her lover.
They cuddle in the warm pink quilt.*

He

*shivers in his tent
beneath a scratchy army blanket,
thinking of his wife
while the bombs explode nearby.*

*He wishes for her . . .
and that warm pink quilt.*



Tracy Curio

A DREAM OF STILL WATERS

Dreams
of faulty men
running . . . running . . .
with faulty me
over lines and lanes
to save that worn out refinery
flooding . . . flooding . . .

Trills and bubbles call,
blending with the white noise
in my puzzled brain.
Around that ceaseless sound
I weave my dream
of a strange neglected land.

Now, I think I understand.

Quietly, I rise,
so my bedmate doesn't wake,
then confront
that ancient porcelain beast,
and indulge its gurgling request
with a jiggle and a flush.

And I hush
this faulty life necessity
(which, this day, I labored to repair
as an equal partner in my love affair.)

Back to bed,
fully conscious now,

The Silence

softly bristles in my ears --
a sound I've heard for years,

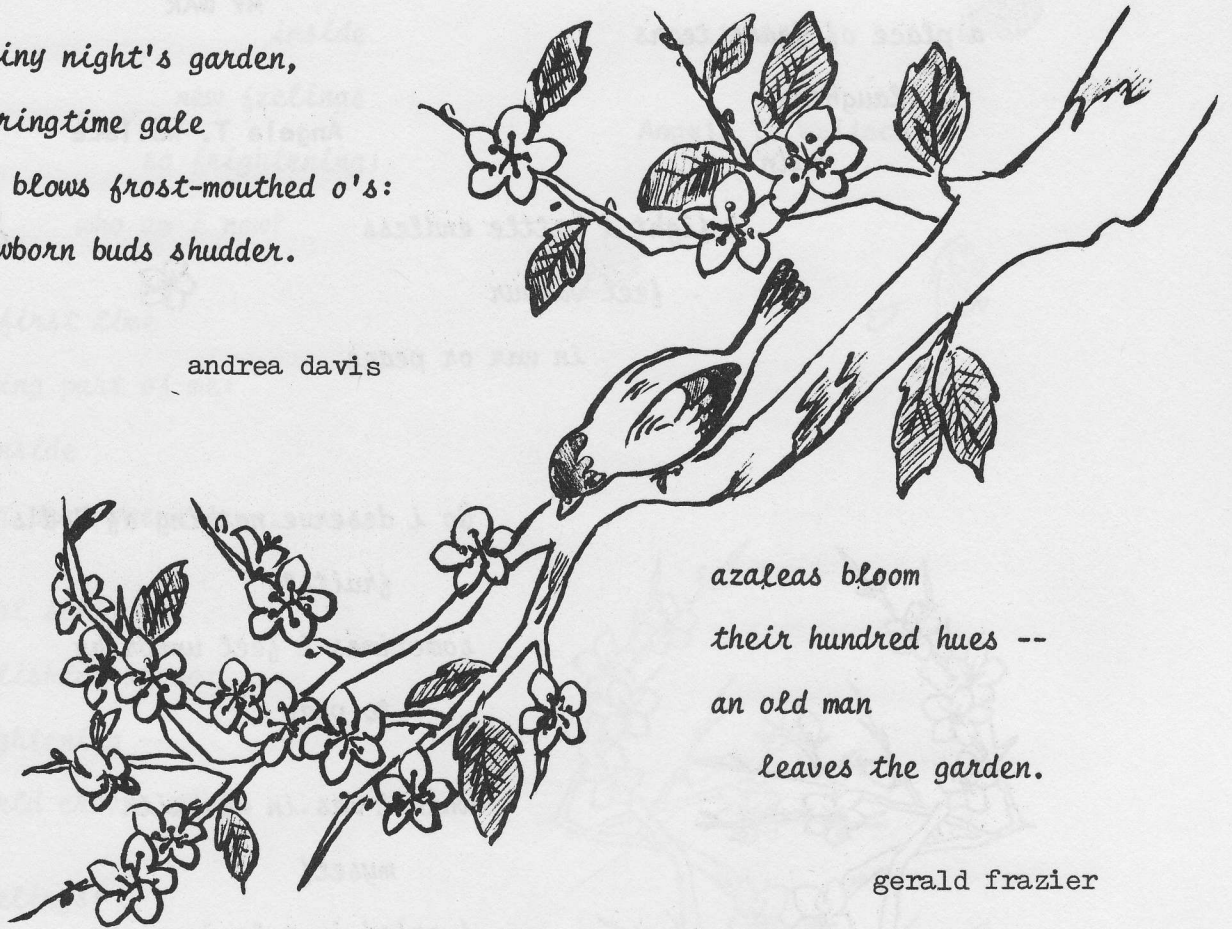
But cannot answer.

And next to me,
My husband
sleeping . . . sleeping . . .
(without plumbing on his mind).
He's resting well, it seems.
Am I the woman of his dreams?

Martha Debacher

*rainy night's garden,
springtime gale
blows frost-mouthed o's:
newborn buds shudder.*

andrea davis



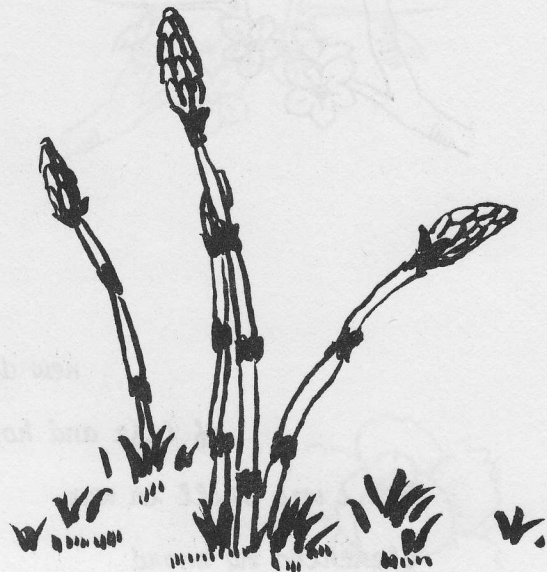
*azaleas bloom
their hundred hues --
an old man
leaves the garden.*

gerald frazier

*the pup sleeps there
nose tucked between his paws
eyes
gently shut.*

tracy curio

*the clear spring water
splashes gently on the rocks
reflecting
the sun.*



scott woodward

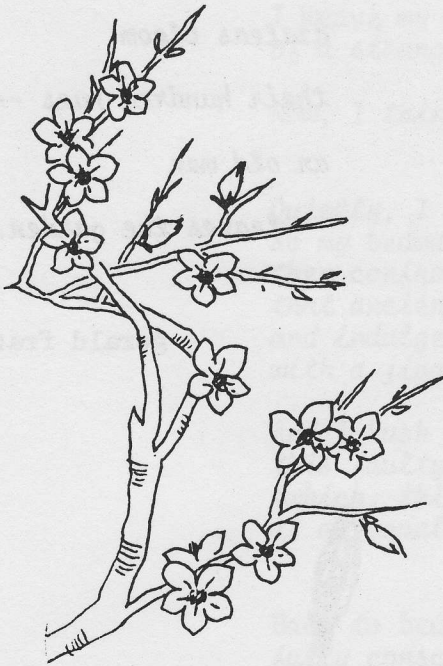
*i live in a destiny
a place of fears tears
laughter
pain*

MY WAR



Angela T. Wallace

*i fight a battle endless
feel valour
in war or peace*



*do i deserve nothing of God's
fruits?*

*sometimes i feel unworthy
to pray*

*when i was in war with
myself*

i cried in a loud voice:

WHY must i suffer AGONY?

*yet i fell asleep
and dreamed*

of a

new day

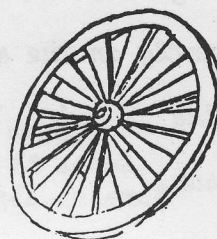
new destiny

of life and hope

*but i was still in war
clenching my sword
wrapping my shield
around my loins*

I cried in a loud voice:

VICTORY in WAR my soul / my flesh!



inside
new feelings
so frightening:
who am i now?

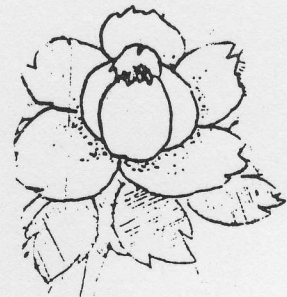
NEW ME



Angela T. Wallace

first time
losing part of me:
deep inside
another part opens . . .
the real self:
accomplishing alone:
so frightening --
the world creeps close . . .
new feelings:
Hate them
hide from them
shield my heart!
no:
accept --
life is change
i am change . . .

but I shall feel
who I am
amidst the differences
of growth





Tomie Kumamoto

YOUR WALL

The magnificent garden wall
is polished
Pink marble
Surrounds a flowered mall.

Inside, the flowers bloom bright.
Beautiful . . .
Bespeckle
The garden in the forenoon light.

Sparkling creeks wind gently through.
Laughing,
Singing
Of their travels past and ventures due.

Outside, the garden wall stands tall and proud.
Concealing
The bounty
That grows content within its confines.

And I peer at the burnished outer surface
Wishing . . .
Beseeching
Entrance to that private paradise.

I know well I'd find delight beyond.
Petrified,
Cold and grey
Garden walls holding grandeur in tight bond.

Tracy Curio

ONE DAY IN MAY

Charged with pain,
He bursts from the door.
She,
flushed from admission of sin,
stays in.

From the back hedge
He watches the river lap gently
on the smooth mud,
while his heart
fights the swells
of lonely love
that pound his memory.

She sees him
from the window above.
And, He, is the pale blue shirt
she ironed just yesterday,
slowly fades away,
as her warm breath
fogs the cold pane.

She sighs
and hugs herself for warmth.
The air
too cold for May.

THE LONG WAY OUT

Inside the bus, its engine made a steady humming kind of sound which changed in pitch every time the driver shifted gears. Susan listened to the sound until it became annoying. It was late afternoon and the sun was bright and very hot. There weren't many people on the bus. Susan was glad about that. Today she didn't want to hear the conversation and laughter of other passengers. She just wanted to sit--just sit in total silence. Alone, in the back section of the bus, she sat by the aisle and stared at the seat in front of her. She tried to think of something pleasant. It did not work. She tried to think of nothing. It did not work. She counted the horizontal stripes on the seat in front of her. Her mind wandered and she kept losing her place.

The bus jolted into a lower gear and edged onto the exit ramp. The driver's voice interrupted Susan's thoughts.

"We will be stopping over for a 45 minute dinner break. Please return to your seats promptly at 5:15. Thank you."

Susan wasn't really hungry, but the bus plaza was cleverly arranged so that there was absolutely nothing to do but eat. She walked over and stood in the cafeteria-style line.

"Your order, please." The woman behind the counter did her job so routinely that she did not even have to look up to know that she had a customer.

"The special, I guess," Susan answered.

"Corn, peas, or mixed?"

"No. Uh, no vegetables, please." This reminded Susan of

the army mess hall. Except, Susan was missing Mary, her lunch partner.

Susan hated most vegetables. Mary hated almost everything else. It worked out perfectly. They both got some of everything and swapped back at the table.

Susan had finished going through the line. She carried her tray to a vacant table and sat down. She stuck her fork into the puddle of gravy in the middle of her mashed potatoes. Susan twirled her fork until the pile of potatoes became a light brown glob. She almost laughed out loud thinking about the mess hall lunches with Mary.

Everything about the army was dreadfully serious. Susan and Mary decided that to avoid going crazy from the seriousness, they had to be as silly as possible whenever they got the chance. Lunch was the prime opportunity. They would go through the line, survey the damage to the food, and then decide on the day's game. Susan's favorite was one which Mary had named "food face." It was only played on mashed potato days and involved seeing who could sculpt the best likeness of a drill sergeant. Susan usually won this game because she had the patent on sauerkraut hair.

They also had an ongoing contest to see who could come up with the best alternative to war. They had decided that since the whole concept of war is absurd, their alternative must be even more absurd, or no one would consider it.

"I've got it this time," Mary exclaimed one day between mouthfuls of stew.

"Botulism? No surprise to me," Susan replied.

"No, a game the boys will like better than war."

"Great! Want my broccoli?"

"Susan, that is not broccoli. It's olive colored mush."

"It was green three days ago."

"Yeah. So were the pork chops."

"You're gross. What's the game?"

"Are you ready for this? It's called eat out."

"Oh, dear. My mother was right. The Army does turn innocent young women into obnoxious perverts."

"Come on, Susan. We know who the obnoxious one is. This happens to be an innocent game. Each side picks a team of twelve gluttons and the players spend a week consuming as much food as possible."

"Nope. Won't work, Mary."

"And why not?"

"Well, I just don't think other countries will want to compete with us. Let's face it, they just don't have our talent for **overeating**. By the way, how did you finish your meal so fast?"

Passengers began to leave the cafeteria. Their movement brought Susan back to the present. It must be time to leave. She checked her watch. It was ten minutes after five. She grabbed her Coke and headed back to the bus. Soon they were rambling along at the same boring pace as before. She moved to the seat by the window and looked out at the scenery. They were traveling through an area of pine covered hills. Susan was too tired to focus on each individual tree. The landscape became an endless green blur.

She thought about the different kinds of green. The green of the army had always bothered her. It was not a peaceful forest green.

It was a disturbing green. It was the green of killing, and shiny metal weapons, and shiny black boots--a green of man-made things. There were better greens. The green of the pine trees reminded her of her favorite place at home. Whenever Susan felt discouraged, or depressed, or just needed to relax, she went to this place. It was deep in the forest. Halfway down the side of a hollow, the pines were so dense that hardly any vegetation grew on the forest floor. Only a few large ferns and some occasional mushrooms could survive in the dim light. Susan loved this place. The branches of the tall pines overlapped above her head and made a thick green ceiling. Narrow beams of sunlight pushed through this ceiling and spotlighted the ferns. The heavy scent of pine needles and rich black earth relaxed Susan. She loved the stillness. Everything was such a fertile, healthy green. It made her think about the place which she and Mary had decided was their favorite.

Someone sitting a few seats in front of Susan snapped on their reading light. Susan looked out of the bus window again. The sun had almost set. Only a red glow could be seen above the line of trees. Next to wandering in the woods, the thing that Susan loved most was watching the sun set. That is how she met Mary.

Whenever Susan got the chance, she would walk to the other side of the base and watch the sun set behind the trees in the distance. One evening, just as the sun was nearing the horizon, Mary showed up. Susan was thrilled that someone else was there for the same reason that she was. They chatted quietly and watched the golden beams of sunlight until the sky was black.

Mary was smaller and thinner than Susan, but she was much more confident. It made her seem strong. Susan liked her immediately. Mary was fond of the woods and dreaming.

They began to spend all of their free time together. Sometimes Mary was like a grown-up child. Her laughter made Susan feel good inside. It made her happy. On Saturdays, the two women would get passes and go explore the countryside around the base. They went for long walks in the forest and skipped through the meadows, collecting wildflowers, singing, and laughing the whole time. Susan felt better than she ever had. She trusted Mary.

One day, they were sitting on a large rock in the middle of the stream which splashed through the forest. This was their favorite spot. Sometimes they would bring books along and spend the afternoon reading and enjoying the peacefulness. Other times, they would just daydream or talk. Today, Susan began to tell Mary the story of her favorite place at home.

"You know something," Susan said, "I never told anyone about that place before because I was afraid they would think I was weird."

Mary smiled warmly and her eyes became a little misty.

"I had a place like that too, Susan," she said. "And I never thought I would find another place that I loved as much. Much less, someone to share it with."

Susan looked at her for a moment. Little splashes of sunlight sifted through Mary's thick brown hair. She looked beautiful--like she belonged out there with nature. Warmth and understanding glowed around her. Susan embraced Mary.

It felt different that day--much different than the sisterly

hugs which they had so often exchanged. A feeling swept through Susan's body. It was a strong feeling. It was unlike any emotion she had ever before felt for another woman. Her thoughts whirled inside her head. Her body moved slowly, instinctively. She gently placed one hand on Mary's cheek, lifted her face toward her own, and tenderly kissed her. Mary ran her fingers through Susan's long hair. She moved her body against Susan's. Then suddenly, she pulled away from Susan and quickly stood up. Susan could not tell if the look in Mary's eyes was one of anger or fright. Either way, she knew that she had made a big mistake.

"What are you trying to do?" Mary shrieked. "I thought you were my friend."

"I just...I just...I don't know. Is it so wrong?" Susan sobbed.

"You're sick, Susan. Really sick. I thought you were my friend." Mary began to move away.

"Mary. Please, wait. I promise...I just...Please, stay and talk," Susan pleaded.

"Don't ever, ever come near me again," Mary shouted as she climbed across the rocks to the trail on the other side of the stream.

"Wait, Mary. Please don't go. Please," Susan cried. But Mary was gone.

Fear sometimes drives even the most sympathetic person to do unkind things. Mary was afraid and that fear drove her right to the colonel's office. She knew what would happen to Susan, but she was sure it was the right thing to do.

It was very dark inside the bus now. Many of the passengers

had reclined their seats and dozed off. Susan sat in the darkness and wondered if it was all true. A dishonorable discharge? Could they really do that? Was she really that wrong? She didn't feel like she was wrong. And Mary, how could she have done this? Was she that afraid of her emotions? Susan looked down at her hands. She was gripping the arm rests of her seat so tightly that her knuckles were white.

The bus stopped and a few passengers got on. Susan tried to relax. A chubby bald man and his grey-haired wife pushed their way down the aisle and took the seats across from Susan. The man looked at her and smiled. Susan smiled back.

"We're going to see our grandchildren in **Tucson**," he proudly told her. "Where you headed?"

"I...uh...I'm not sure yet," she answered.

Confused, the man turned away and began fumbling through a paper bag. Susan looked at the seat in front of her and tried to count the horizontal stripes.

cindy sweitzer



The warm springtime breeze
travels swiftly through the grass
on an April day
whispering as it passes
with a message of summer.

scott woodward

やわらか
梅吹雪に
むせる春

I am in the flow
of cherry blossoms
just like snowflakes --
Now, it is spring!

tomie kumamoto



DERBY EVE: IN KENTUCKY

In the further pasture
where the grass is sweet
earth and sky are just touching.

A thoroughbred bay --
teeth cracked but shoulders solid --
dislodges a dark clod
with a burst of hoof
as the wind rises in his mane.

He bridles against the hard
red breath of sun
etching his shadow
into the ground.

He pauses to listen:
. . . far away the hooves whisper . . .

Below, at the neat stable,
a bell calls --
gentle, insistent --
He does not tremble,
does not shrug or bow.
Arches his ears in the red dimming:
. . . closer dance the thudding hooves . . .

The bell has stopped now.
Even in the dark, his head high, motionless:
Feel him . . . listening for the roar.

TAKE-HOME POEM

York sky almost twisted yellow gold,
Tyler Run, students running, babbling,
bubbling by the tennis courts and the gym
for the Jello Jumblenasts and Simon Sayings,
Rocking us into the spring . . .Weekend.

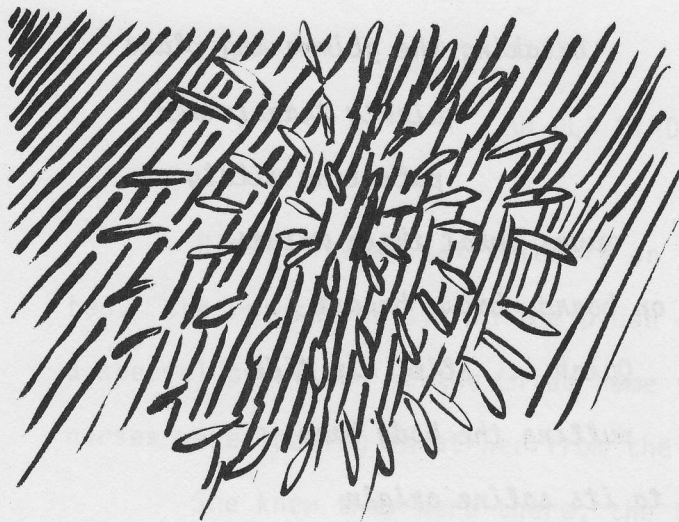
Still, it is necessary to remember:
Truth is a rare chameleon --
Sometimes it insinuates itself
into the apartment minds of students.
Blanche Moore* knew it in '75, brightly asserting:
"Bagels and oranges on a Sunday afternoon,
it's a pleasant day in a million ways."

Sneakers continually circle us,
vowing with their squeaks to become journalists,
recalling the brisk news in Campbell corridors,
that most of us want happiness (undefined unconfined).

Will Pamela ever eagle back to France
where she and Angie can search among the fountains?
Recalling how, at York, that spring of '83
the white pear blossoms burst serenely upwards,
the library doors swinging open and open,
you reading and wishing far far into the warmish night.

*ESP poet & artist, '75.

Pamela Wagner created this poem from the
choices in the ESP Computer Program
for YCP Spring Weekend, 4/24/83.

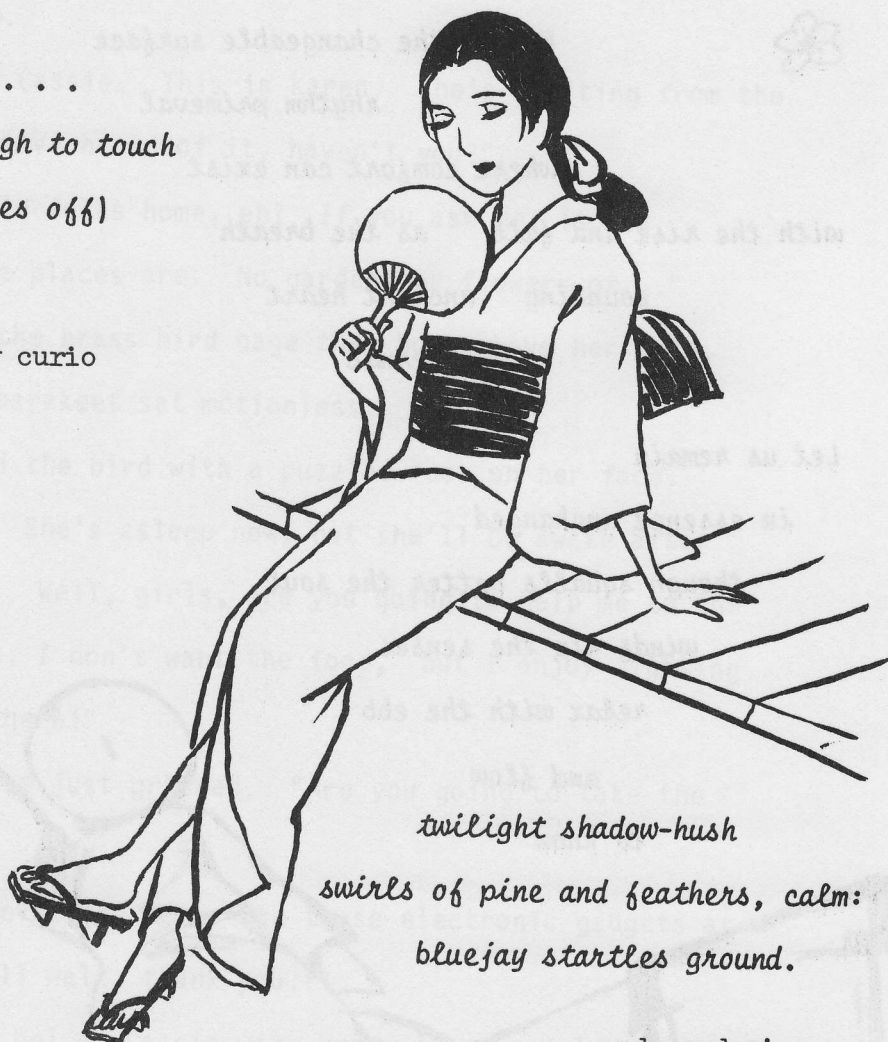


plush velvet grass
covers the ground like carpet
seeming not to end

scott woodward

blue rock ahead . . .
seems close enough to touch
(a mountain, miles off)

tracy curio



twilight shadow-hush
swirls of pine and feathers, calm:
bluejay startles ground.

andrea davis

ivy grows rampant
waiting . . . to be plucked:
a young man's lust

gerald frazier

SURF

TIDE



Rebecca Snyder

Across the surface
breaking the glimmering plane

quickly transformed

pulsating wildly

waves splat their wetness

on board, brow, breast ...

Quick ... slip, rip tide

pulling the body back

to its saline origin



Beyond the changeable surface

rhythm primeval

where comfort can exist

with the rise and fall as the breath

pounding ancient heart

eternal

Let us remain

in essence unchanged

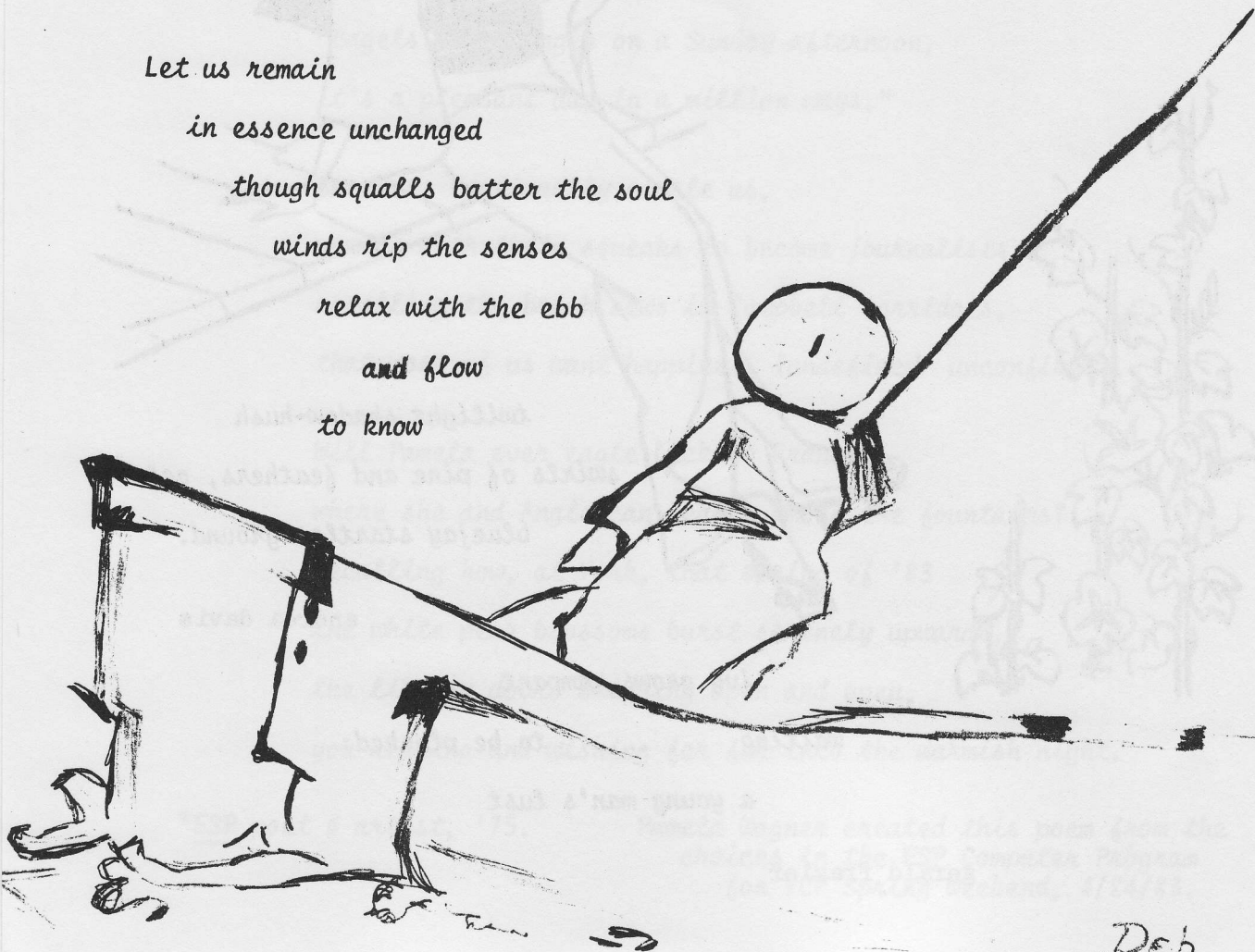
though squalls batter the soul

winds rip the senses

relax with the ebb

and flow

to know



Deb

AN OLD BIRD

Cassie Troman sat silently on the hard plastic chair by her bed. She refused to sit in the plush electric rocking chair that was a special provision at the Lilac Home for the Elderly. Two young nurses were looking in at her from the doorway.

She knew they were there, the taller nurse realized, and stepped into the room.

"Good morning Cassie. This is Karen. She's visiting from the Springfield Home. You've heard of it, haven't you?"

"That fancy old folks home, eh? If you ask me, it's a disgrace how all these places are. No gardens or flowers or..." Cassie glanced up at the brass bird cage that hung above her head, where a bright green parakeet sat motionless.

Karen observed the bird with a puzzled look on her face.

"That's Gurt. She's asleep now, but she'll be awake after I've had my breakfast. Well, girls, are you going to help me to the cafeteria? Lord knows, I don't want the food, but I enjoy fighting with the nurses down there!"

The taller nurse just grinned. "Are you going to take the chair today?"

"No! You'll never get me to use those electronic gadgets as long as I breathe! I'll walk, thank you!!"

The two nurses helped Cassie with her walker, and led her down the hall. A few minutes later the matron came into Cassie's room to tidy up and to see whether Gurt was in good order.

When Cassie returned, Gurt was fluttering happily in her cage and chirped a cheerful hello.

"Ah, Gurtie, Gurtie, so nice to hear you today. I wonder if we'll have any visitors?"

There was a knock at the door about a half hour later. Cassie looked over to see a small girl of about eight standing in the doorway.

"Who are you?" Cassie asked.

"I'm Stacy. My grandmother is here somewhere but I can't find her and all the nurses are busy."

"Well that's the usual. All the damned machines they have around here to save time and still no one has time for anybody real. Well, I suppose you can stay and visit with us. Gurt and I don't get much company.

"Who's Gurt?"

The bird chirped cheerfully and fluttered in her cage.

Stacy let out a scream and started backing towards the door.

"It's okay, child. Gurt's as tame as could be. You'll see."

The girl stared expressionless at the cage, "What is it?"

"Why it's a bird, of course. Don't they tell you children about these things anymore?"

"They taught us about computers last week," she said, hopefully.

"Gurt's a rare parakeet." Cassie said.

"What's that noise?" Stacy asked, cocking her head toward the cage.

"I don't hear any noise." Cassie snapped.

"I hear a click-ing sound." Stacy persisted, "Click, click, click...There! Don't you hear it?"

"Would you like to see some pictures of other birds like Gurt? I got this book when I was just a little older than you."

Stacy climbed onto Cassie's high bed to get a look at the curious faded book the old woman held. Cassie turned the yellowed pages and

named the various birds for Stacy. "Pelican, sparrow, eagle ..."

On the last page there was a picture of a green parakeet.

"That's just like Gurt!" Stacy exclaimed. "But that one is sitting in a tree. How come it isn't in a cage like Gurt?"

"That's where birds should live -- in the trees, where they can fly like the wind whenever they want to."

A frown fluttered across Stacy's face but quickly disappeared.

"Cassie, I really like these birds. And I like Gurt most of all!"

She stood up on the bed and reached for the door of Gurt's cage.

"No, no ..." Cassie gasped, "you musn't touch her. She's much too delicate."

"I thought you said that birds were supposed to be free to fly. You said that birds should be able to fly like the wind! Let's let Gurt fly!"

"Gurt can't be let out!" Cassie screamed. "She might fly away!"

A nurse passing by the room heard Cassie's commotion and hurried in to find out what was going on.

Stacy, who had been frightened by Cassie's strange outburst, was afraid that she might be blamed, and tried to explain what had happened.

"I only wanted to let Gurt fly like she's supposed to! I didn't know she wasn't allowed out of the cage!"

"It's okay. It's just that Gurt is a special kind of bird," the nurse explained, trying to calm the girl. "Aren't you Mary Nathan's granddaughter? She's been worried about you. She said that you were to spend the day with her."

Stacy nodded.

"Wait outside a moment, and I'll take you to her room."

Stacy left the room and the nurse took out an electronic device to measure Cassie's vital signs and make sure she hadn't been too greatly upset.

"Get that damned thing away from me!" Cassie growled. "I don't want any of your gadgets around me. I'm fine. Now get out and let me be alone with Gurt."

The nurse, used to it, simply shrugged and left the room.

Later that afternoon, Cassie was staring out her window at the streets below. Funny, she thought, it looks so strange, now that they've banned all the cars from the streets. Actually, automobiles had long since been replaced by high speed trains. Cassie's thoughts were interrupted when John Parks, an elderly man who had taken a liking to her, wheeled through the door in his electric wheelchair.

"Good afternoon, Cassie. I hear you had a bit of a scuff this morning over Gurt."

"Still using that newfangled chair, eh John?"

"Yeah, well I say thank heavens for the technology of the twenty-first century. You'd be a lot wiser to just give in to it Cassie. Why, back in the nineteen-eighties when I was a kid, life was too slow and took too much effort. Now I just sit back and let a machine take care of whatever I want."

"Did you hear some girl came in here this morning trying to kill my Gurt?"

"Cassie, I mentioned that when I came in." A worried look crossed John's face, "Cassie, don't you think it's time you gave that thing up?"

"Damned girl wanted to let Gurt out of the cage. Did you ever hear of anything like it?"

"Cassie..."

"Dear old Gurt...She's always been with me..."

Cassie was interrupted by a sharp rap at the door.

"How dare you!" snapped the women sitting in the wheel chair in Cassie's doorway. "How dare you show that thing to my Stacy! I don't want her getting crazy ideas about birds. You have that stupid thing clicking away in that cage day in and day out. When are you going to realize that there are no more..."

"Stacy enjoyed meeting Gurt." Cassie said calmly.

"Well I told her how crazy you are and not to come back here. If she ever sets foot in here and you tell her more of your crazy stories..."

"That's quite enough, Mary," John cut in, "Go on and let Cassie be. You know how she is about the bird," he said, following the grumbling woman out the door.

"What does she know, Gurt? What do any of them know? You've been by my side for so long now. I know you and they don't."

That evening, the lights in Cassie's room were dimmed. The old woman had been taken down to the cafeteria for supper. Stacy peered in cautiously and quietly opened the door to the room. All was quiet except for a soft steady clicking. She shut the door behind her carefully and tiptoed over to Cassie's high bed. Gurt fluttered only a little at the intruder.

"Hi, Gurt. I've come to let you fly like the wind. I know that's what you really want to do. My grandmother said that you weren't real, but I saw you for myself and I know you are. You want to be free, don't you?"

Gurt let out a tiny peep.

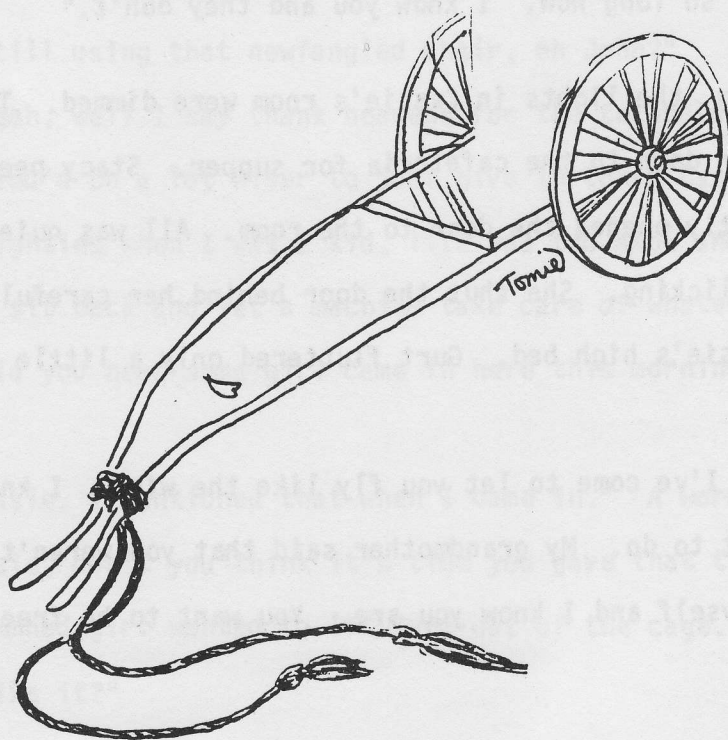
Stacy stood up on the bed and reached over to open the door of the brass cage. Gurt did not move. Stacy reached in and picked up the creature. She cooed to it gently.

"Okay Gurt, go ahead and fly away -- free!" she said as she tossed the bird into the air.

At the exact moment that Gurt crashed to the floor, Cassie walked into the room. Springs, wires, and gears clattered in every direction as the bird's body was smashed into a hundred pieces.

Stacy started to run to the door but stopped before she got to it. "I knew it wasn't real. My grandmother told me that it wasn't and that you were crazy! I knew Gurt wasn't real!"

Cassie stared blankly at the floor. "Look, Gurt," she said. "Look at the mess our little visitor has made."



tracy curio

THE OLD WITH THE NEW

Amid our convenience foods, disposable products, and labor-saving chrome appliances, we are striving, obstinately, to hold on to the past -- to rescue those "things" which give us a sense of continuity and heritage. We are engaged in a never-ending quest to surround ourselves with family heirlooms, antique furnishings, and a multitude of memorabilia in order to combat our ephemeral relationships with the things of our "throw-away society." Reverently we rummage through our mother's and grandmother's attics resurrecting long-forgotten objects. An assortment of grandmother's wooden cooking utensils, blackened and worn with age, now hang proudly on our kitchen wall in quiet defiance of all things plastic, aluminum, or disposable. An old wooden bookcase (lovingly restored to its original patina) stands smugly next to our modern refrigerator -- the warm, golden glow of oak reflecting off the cold chrome. Our Formica counters are laden with fragile, old pottery, while our indestructible (but ugly) Tupperware hides behind cabinet doors. We can still rescue what is old but well made. For those of us forever hopeful of salvaging some small relic that will unite us with the past, flea markets, antique shows, auctions, and garage sales are continuous haunts. The result? A printer's old type-tray, for example, which once found itself unceremoniously tossed on the trash heap with the advent of the composing room, now stands in the midst of our modern office as a symbol of American continuity. Perhaps one way, then, in which we can live within our "throw-away society" and still preserve our man-thing relationships is by mixing the old and the new--the permanent with the temporary, the disposable with the indestructible.

Kathryn R. O'Donnell

Letter to the Brightest Star

Sirius, you do not twinkle.

You rage, roar and spew,

Colossus of anger . . .

No cosmic wanderer dare

penetrate your dark territory

so long as your gaseous arms

flail hysterically in space.

But from where I stand,

Your ferocity is beautiful:

Your instances of massive

energy are but a charming flicker.

Through my eyes, you, a smiling father,

hold gentle dominion over our night sky,

flanking the primitive hunter.

Sirius, I am happy that observations

from lonely poets and probing

astronomers on some sentient microcosm

far from your truth

do not cause you to cease to rant

like a spoiled god in the reaches

that are forever your home,

in the dome that is my wonder --

Your mad meanderings:

Steady magic seen from earth.

Sylvia Bowman



FLUTE MAGIC

a prose poem

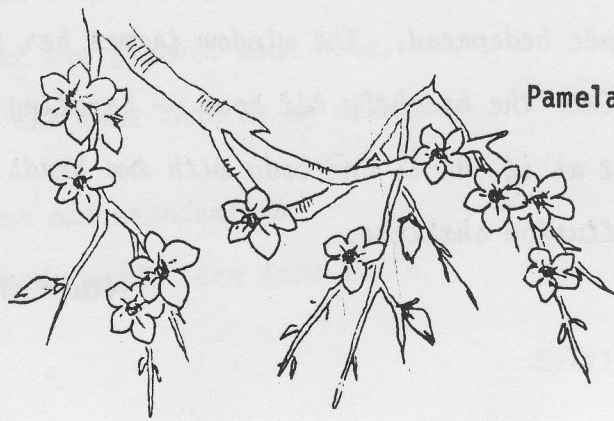
Joy sits across the room reading Euripides, while Julia crosses her legs on the bed, the faded blue of her jeans in striking contrast to the brilliant purple bedspread. The window frames her face and casts her reflection back into the brightly lit room -- creating a strange double image. Almost as if she is one body with two heads. As she leans forward, the illusion shatters.

(turn the page)

Taking up the silver flute beside her, she touches the air gently with the mysterious opening notes of Mozart's "Magic Flute" theme, the walls of the chamber attempting tiny echoes. Now it is stronger, harder. The melody careens wildly from wall to wall, bouncing like a racket ball: ceiling to floor to wall, an almost predictable flight repeated again and again. Suddenly the phone in the hall rings, shattering the spell. Julia stops.

But slowly, the voice in the hall having receded, Julia takes up her flute again. Its silver glistens in the reading light. Her back is hunched, her head tilted to the side. Her hair falls in a tangle of curls over her frail shoulders, bent with the intensity of her effort. Faltering at a high note, Julia cringes, but recovers her place effortlessly.

Soon Julia becomes deeply absorbed, drawn like a nymph through a wood filled with unusual ancient animals. Still, Joy struggles to read, to push the music toward the horizon, to let it cascade over the edges, like static from a radio. But she feels entranced, drawn into the magic the flutist is weaving all about her. Finally, even Euripides succumbs, Joy allowing the notes to flow around her, to hold her willing captive in Mozart's tones. She smiles at Julia, who gazes at her serenely. A look of shared memories and thoughts leisurely passes between them. Together, then, the girls sit cradled in silver song, as if the air were filled with the warbling of many birds. How perfectly at peace they are -- with themselves, each other, and the world.



Pamela Wagner

CLOSE TO YOU



I really felt close to you last weekend.

It was not something spectacular

Or easily explainable.

Outsiders wouldn't understand,

But the meals we cooked

And the love we made

Seemed to grow

And flow like soft songs.



I have known times

When Key Largo was just pointless talk

Keeping pace with equally pointless people,

All glowing as bright

As their calculated lies.



Maybe it's timing -- or maybe it's love:

I'm hard pressed to know which.

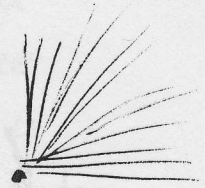
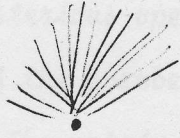
But last weekend

a very ordinary weekend

I really felt close to you.

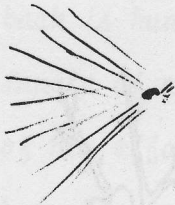


Jeff Sprenkle

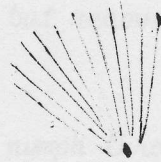


Milkweed Summer

*Silver strands stick to the window screen
pressed tight radiating
from dark seed centers*



*Asymmetrical their cloudy clusters
so like the summer passing
randomly beautiful*

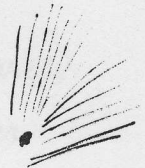


*A season when three dimensions
seem strangely inadequate
to contain the vibrations*

*All beings new and full
yet each day changing
the landscape cannot be fixed*



*The suppleness of each growing thing
reminds us somehow
to bend with the breezes
or snap
in the waiting winter winds.*



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