

Jusquehanna University



The
Apprentice WRITER



Annette Goss, West Snyder High School

\$1.00

Introduction

In a time when secondary education is being criticized, it seems almost sentimental to be writing paragraphs of praise. But read even briefly through the pages that follow, and you will discover excellence, not only of craft but also of perception. There are high school students producing quality creative work; there are teachers providing guidance and criticism. What we have done is assemble a collection of some of the best of this material--poems, stories, essays, editorials, photographs, artwork--and distribute it to thousands of high schools throughout the Middle Atlantic States. What we plan to do is continue this project so that each year we can solicit new student work and publish as much of the best of it as we can, returning it to classrooms to be used for the enjoyment and enrichment of both students and teachers.

We mean this publication to be used as a teaching tool. Several of the stories explore the theme of family relationships. Several of the poems employ the device of a fictional "I" as the narrator. Comparisons can be made; the variations can be discussed.

There are stories here that shift time and reality. There are depressing images in the poems, but there are metaphors of exuberance. The serious and the humorous alternate throughout the essays. So we have tried to publish the best of what we

received (nearly 2,000 entries), but we have also tried to present material that lends itself well to classroom discussions and workshop activities.

Susquehanna University and Ottaway Newspapers both have a commitment to writing excellence. We hope that this first issue of THE APPRENTICE WRITER will be practical as well as enjoyable, encouraging even greater participation by student writers and artists in our second issue.

We welcome submissions of poetry, short fiction, essays, interviews, feature articles, editorials, photographs, and artwork by students in grades 10-12. Send material to Gary Fincke, Writing Program Director, Susquehanna University, Selinsgrove, PA 17870. The deadline for submitting is February 15, 1984. Please include a stamped, self-addressed envelope for return of photographs and artwork. We will announce acceptances on April 15, 1984. We also invite teachers to submit short essays on the teaching of writing.

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A Love Story in Two Acts

I'd hate you somewhat less
if you'd fallen for my giant teddy bear.
She's only two feet high,
with paws, and coated in brown fuzz,
but she might be just right for you.

The two of you in a classy
Italian restaurant. You order
manicotti, chicken parmigiana
and red wine. As you're sipping the
warm liquid, you gaze into her
black plastic eyes. The music plays
and the two of you are out on the dance
floor. You hold her tight.
Her soft body molds itself against your
lean form.

As you bring her home, she's
wondering how the night will turn
out. She sways against you,
pressing her lips to the
red felt of hers. The night turns out

to be remarkable. I now pronounce
you man and bear.

But no!! Instead, you fell for a
rotten blonde, with big, cold violet eyes.
When you and this five-foot-seven
person, with her cardboard thinness
and revoltingly flawless bronze skin,
walk into an elegant restaurant,
everyone turns his head.

So go ahead and be with
that creature tonight. I am going
home to open the champagne and
drink it by the fireplace,
in the arms of someone else, while
we both forget all about you.
Woman and teddy bear.

Jennifer Fischetto
Long Beach, NY

Mrs. F. Goldwater

Farewell Senora

Farewell, Senora,
as I lay under the Jamaica moon
watching your body naked touch the shore.
You think you are one bad lady
standing body bare body bold
against the waves
which drive you
back into my arms
when you cry and hide sheltered by the darkness
inside you, where I cannot see.
Farewell, Senora,
because I know that even now
as you nestle your head
within my bosom
you contemplate the selfish love you will make
tonight in the sand under the Jamaica moon.
Farewell, Senora
because you continuously send enemy agents
into my soul
disguised as love to drive me insane
but I have discovered them
and no longer
allow them
at my door.

Thomas Mambande
Philadelphia, PA

Untitled

I drew a picture of ponies and dolls, smiling,
dancing on the hot city pavement. The black
boys sold luck for real cheap. And if you wanted
to see snails, only luck could show them to you.

A lonely balloon man stood silently far away.
And one small child wondered if he'd ever been
in love before.

The child could give him love, but the child
wasn't allowed to talk to strangers.

The mall maid sat like a shadow on the park
bench feeding the birds.

Someone said she was "chewing on the
insane root" and I didn't argue.

But I argued when they told me Mister was
too. I know him, he's just lonely and tired. And
everyone smiled 'cause the flowers didn't miss
their cue.

One person died, but the flowers didn't mind.
They knew he'd bloom again. God told them.
Bruce tried to steal me a rainbow, but fate
wouldn't let him. Fate knew I had to do that on
my own. It's a part of growing up.

Greaser pulled his mattress on the roof to see
if Santa would come. Luckily he jumped. But the
black boys didn't mind. They knew luck was not
a lady. I told them. It reminded me of pink
hearts, only without the snails.

Someone touched me and silently walked
away. And it was over.

And foolishly I still hear those inspiring words.
The last city light dimmed and I prayed that
Mister wouldn't buy luck and meet the mall
maid to "chew on the insane root." Maybe she
is what he needs.

Karen Wujcik

Moorestown, NJ

When the Blind Can See

What an idiot he is. Tony always locks himself in the bathroom on the mornings that I look the worst and need a shower. Look at my hair. He can't do anything right and screws everything up. He probably let the bathtub overflow and is trying to clean it up before Mom finds out or something.

"Tony, hurry up. I'm gonna be late." The least he can do is answer me.

"Mom, would you call Tony out of the bathroom? He's been in there all morning."

"Marty, it hasn't been all morning, and go easy on Tee. He has as much right to be in there as you do."

She's a lot of help. Terrific, now I'll have to wash my hair in the kitchen sink.

After Mom leaves the kitchen, I wash my hair in the sink. On my way up to my room, cold water drips from my wet hair onto my back. Tony is coming down the stairs. For fifteen he is tall, over six foot, and very skinny, but a lot stronger than I am. Sometimes when we fight he really hurts me, so I try not to argue with him. I hate the way his eyes are crossed.

"Come on, Marty," Mom yells from the bottom of the steps, "Tee is going to be late."

"Ya, I'm coming." It's bad enough that I'm short, but I have to go to school looking like this because he has been in the bathroom all morning. I wonder if other freshmen have it this bad?

The ride to Tony's school is always a long one. Mom drives so slowly that I can walk faster, and she just barely misses other cars. Jesus, I wish that someone would say something to me. I can't stand it. I get the silent treatment from both of them anytime I ever say anything. Why should I feel guilty? Tony is the inconsiderate one.

"We're gonna paint today and I gonna paint you Mommy," Tony says excitedly.

Wow ... everybody with older brothers goes with them to football games and out with their friends. When I'm sixteen, I think painting will be the last thing on my mind. Why doesn't he want to go out or drive or do anything normal?

Finally I can see Tony's school. It is a big institution that takes up two city blocks in a rural part of Binford. The school has a tall, black iron gate which runs around the entire campus that makes the school look like a prison.

"Binford State School for the Retarded." I always think that the name is kinda crude, especially when it is displayed on the main building.

Dropping Tony off is always depressing. All those retarded. Some of them even wear crash helmets, probably because they fall so often. Tony appears to fit right in.

"Bye, Tee, honey." And Mom gives him a kiss.

"Hey, Tony, see ya later, buddy, okay?" I say, trying to make friends with him again.

"Sure, Marty, and g-bye Mommy, I love you," Tony slurs.

He walks pigeon toed without much coordination.

"Thank God you are being nice to him, Marty; sometimes he thinks that you hate him. Sometimes I think you do too," Mom says, feeding the fire of my guilt.

"Mom, what took you so long, I have been waiting at the school for over an hour?" She has to pick up Tony first even though I get out a half hour before he does.

"Now, Marty, you know I don't like to have Tee waiting at his school. Well, he lost his coat and we looked all over for it but we couldn't find it. I think that someone stole it."

"Mom, he probably just misplaced it. I could've gotten a ride home after school. I said I didn't want it because I thought that you would be worried if I wasn't at the school when you came to pick me up. It's Tony's own problem if he loses his coat."

"I said that the coat was stolen and watch your mouth," she says quickly.

"Maybe Marty's right, Mommy; I can't remember, um, where I put it," Tony says. "Here, Marty, I painted two pictures in school today, one of Mommy and one of you. I gave the one of her to her and this one of you. Take it."

I take the piece of wrinkled paper from his hand. There is a small stick figure with lots of yellow hair. "Thanks a lot Tony."

"I can't wait to get home and eat; I'm hungry. I lost my lunch today," Tony says.

Ya, it was probably stolen.

"Would someone please change the station and put on a decent one," I say.

"Telephone, Marty," Mom yells up to me in my room.

"I got it," I yell back as I pick up the receiver. "Hello?"

"Marty, this is Jerry. Guess what? My dad just got a set of stamps that have the stamps from New Guinea that you have been looking for. Now I'll trade you all twelve of them for those three of yours from Germany, okay?"

"Well, um let's see. The three cost me a lot. I'll take a trade if you throw in one of your Japanese stamps."

"All right, I take that deal, but only because I really want those ones from East Germany," Jerry says.

"Don't forget to bring them to school tomorrow. We'll switch then, okay?"

"Sounds good, don't forget and I'll see you tomorrow. Bye," he says as if he is just closing a big business deal.

It's about time I got a good deal from him. He constantly sticks me.

As I reach the top of the steps, I see that my door is open. I thought that I closed it when I answered the phone.

"Mom? Who is in there?" I ask.

"It's me, Marty. I have a surprise for you," Tony says happily.

Continued

"Uh, what is it? I say as I turn the corner at the top of the steps. When I go in to the room I see that Tony has been pasting S&H Green Stamps into my stamp collection.

"What the hell are you doing?" I yell.

"Uh, well, I got these stamps from in a bag in the kitchen and I looked in your collection and saw that you didn't have any like them in it, so I thought that you would like to have some, and I wanted to make you happy, because you never seem happy anymore, and, um, well."

"Jesus Christ! Now it's ruined. You're such an idiot, I can't believe you; Mom!" I scream at the top of my voice.

"I didn't mean to hurt it," Tony sobs. He starts to cry like he always does, really heavily and every once in a while he throws in a big gasp for air.

"Now, what's going on?" Mom yells as she runs into the room.

"The stupid jerk just pasted about twenty stamps over some valuable stamps in my collection. And he screwed up the entire thing."

"Aw, come on, Marty, I'm sure that it was an accident," Mom says, as she pets Tony like a kitten.

Then Tony cries. "I didn't mean to hurt anything, I was just trying to help. I'm sorry, Marty."

"Why don't you go down to the kitchen and set the table for dinner, Tee?" Mom asks Tony.

"Sure, Mommy and geez Marty, I'm sorry," Tony says as he wipes tears out of his eyes.

"What are you doing yelling at Tee for? You'll hurt his feelings, and never, ever again, call him another name again. Do you understand me? If you do, you'll be in a lot of trouble."

"This is totally unfair. He ruins my stamp collection and I'm the one who gets in trouble. I don't believe it."

She storms out of the room. I can't believe this. Now I'll never get those stamps. All of mine are stuck together.

"Breakfast's ready," I hear Mom yell from the kitchen. Tony goes running past my door, and I can hear him clod down the stairs. After brushing my hair, I go down for breakfast. On my way into the kitchen Mom gives me a bad look. She is still mad because I yelled at him last night. She's crazy ... I didn't do anything.

"I hope everybody slept well," Mom says, assuredly not to me.

"I'm starved, Mom, What's for breakfast?" I say.

"Oatmeal," she says back.

That figures, it's Tony's favorite and personally I cannot stand it. As usual Tony gets his bowl before I get mine. Then Mom brings my bowl over and a big glass of orange juice for Tony, and she returns for my glass. While we're eating, Tony reaches over the table to get his eighth teaspoon of sugar and spills the full glass over. The orange juice comes rolling over the table towards

me, and before I can stand up, I am drenched with cold, sticky juice. It is all on my pants and sweater, and it is soaking through to my body.

Before I can even yell, Mom says, "Oh well, accidents will happen." Tony starts to cry and I am too upset to even bother to waste the energy to get myself into any trouble.

"Oh well, accidents will happen," while grinding my teeth on my way upstairs to change.

Mom comes running up the stairs behind me.

"I want you to tell Tee that you don't mind. He's really upset that you are mad," she says.

"Me," I say as I flop down on the bed. "I can't even have one day of peace — not one day without a fight. Every thing that happens around here is my fault. I am constantly blamed for the things that Tony does and you accept it. I am too fed up with everyone to even bother to fight. I have things to do at school, and I try to live a normal life at home, but I just can't. You won't let me."

Mom comes over and sits beside me and looks at me with tears in her eyes and says, "I know you have your own problems, Marty, and I also know that I don't seem to respond to them all of the time. I am worried about Tee. He is growing up, and I don't know what is going to happen to him. You, you're lucky; you are really smart and have a lot of things going for you — but Tee, what does he have to look forward to? Nothing but a life of loneliness. I am worried that he is going to spend his life alone."

She puts her head on my shoulder and cries almost uncontrollably.

"Mom, I'm sorry. I just now feel like I am doing everything wrong when you yell at me all the time," I say.

"Well," she says sniffing, "one of Tee's teachers suggested that I allow him to live at the institution. She said it would do him some good to make close friends and be with them a lot. The teacher said that he could be given better attention there. She said it isn't as if I weren't a good mother and then I got to thinking that maybe I'm not — I can't get my two sons to be friends. I don't want to lose Tee, but I want to do what is best for him."

"I had no idea what the problem was," I tell her.

"The next quarter begins in two weeks, and the teacher said that it would be a good time for him to move in," Mom says as she and I get off the bed and start down stairs.

"Well, what do you think?" she says.

I turn the corner and go into the kitchen. Tony is down on the floor wiping it with a sponge. He looks up at me and stands up.

"Marty, I'm sorry that I ruined your clothes," he says.

I stand there for a few moments. I go over and give Tee a hug and tell him that it is okay.

Todd Kelleheer
Scranton, PA

Vincent Vanston

RISING TO NEW HEIGHTS

Being tall is as much a psychological, as it is a physical trait. Girls, especially, are affected by the "Too tall" syndrome. This disease, an enormous growth spurt that occurs during childhood, is a genetic curse to those afflicted. In young girls general symptoms include: being the tallest in your grade, being placed last on line to go to lunch, being able to look at your third grade teacher at eye level, and being the object of crude nicknames and painful jokes. The symptoms of this chronic illness decrease in severity as you grow older. Older girls and women reach maximum heights between 5'7 and 6'0, with a few exceptions in The Guinness Book of World Records, but tall teenagers and women often try to conceal their height by slouching, frequently sitting, standing in the street while their friend stands on the curb, and wearing flat pumps. The reduction of calcium rich milk is the tall girl's theory of another way to "shrink." I was, and still am, a victim of the "too tall" syndrome, devising all sorts of tricks and tactics to appear shorter.

For a tall child, his or her height can easily be made the butt of cruel nicknames and jokes. I cried secretly as I was dubbed "too tall for the tree tops" and "the jolly green giant." I fumed when my relatives remarked "My, how tall she is." When I was in sixth grade, I overheard my two good friends talking; one of them said, "I feel so sorry for Andrea. I tried to set her up with John, but he snapped at me, 'No way, she's too tall!'" I ran for the bathroom and pounded my head against the pink tiled wall as I cried. I hoped the pounding would make me instantly shorter, but I just ended up with a throbbing headache. "Why couldn't I be a normal, short or regular height kid?, I must have done something wrong when I was little." I played on the basketball team in seventh and eighth grades, my one refuge where I was accepted for my height. As I grew older and planned to leave my grammar school, my yearbook was filled with goodbyes and requests to stop growing. The one thing my friends seemed to remember about me was my height.

To Andrea,
Please don't grow anymore,
if you do, quit Buckley and
sign a contract with the
Knicks. Have a nice summer.
The Load
Dear Andrea,
Have a great summer, and
I hope you meet a boy 7
feet tall.
Good Luck.

Those around me taught me my height was something to be ashamed of and embarrassed about. Many girls develop the "too tall" syndrome this way from antagonistic classmates who don't know any better. Being tall was a curse, one that no girl should have to live with, but as I grew older, my views grew lax. I realized there was no humanly possible way to grow shorter, so my efforts were channeled into hiding my height instead.

Although during my teen years society pushed a taller, thinner model's look for today's woman, with sleeker, more seductive styles to fit these women, I still attempted to conceal my height in every possible way, because my height was awkward, not like a model's. Although society provided a comparable solution for most girls suffering from the "too tall" syndrome, (to accept these tall girls and create clothing meant just for them) I couldn't be sold. In ninth grade I tried slouching, but I looked worse slouching than I did standing up straight. It did, however, boost my confidence in my new "shortness" for a few weeks. I developed a theory: if I didn't drink or eat many items containing calcium, I wouldn't grow taller. I soon abandoned this theory, figuring I had stopped growing by now. I should have developed and applied this theory when I was ten, not fifteen. I stood in the street, or on a low step if on a staircase, while my friend would stand on the curb or a higher step. Being shorter in photographs was easiest of all. I would just stand behind someone, bend my knees and smile until the picture was taken. The greatest invention to come on the market was, and still is, the flat pump. Now, when shorter girls wear high heels to appear taller, tall girls, too, can wear stylish pumps, without having to add a three inch heel to their already present 5'11" height. Though I utilize many tricks and tactics to appear shorter, I have at least realized although I can fulfill a shorter image, I can never grow shorter.

Being tall, a physical characteristic, can also become a very real psychological characteristic. Being tall is a unique, individual trait, but for those suffering from the "too tall" syndrome it is an embarrassing characteristic that would be much better going unnoticed. Fortunately, this disease can be made as severe, or as inconsequential as the carrier makes it.

*Andrea Vambutas
Douglastown, NY*

Doc Sullivan



Janine Gordon, N. Bellmore, N.Y.

Untitled

*I looked for sleep everywhere-
the high, dark corners of my bedroom,
in the boxes in my closet,
underneath my bed,
but found only a white path
of moonlight on the wooden floor,
growing slimmer and slimmer,
as night's jealous opposite eclipsed the moon.*

*Laurie MacFarlane
Fanwood, NJ*

Janet Kollmar

Big Guy

"Here, Bobby, don't forget your lunch," a mother draped in a flowered green and pink bathrobe said at the doorway. "Have a nice day, sweetheart, and call if you're going to stay after."

Bobby trudged through the thawing ground spring had brought. It was still cool enough for his Mother to make him wear his jacket. He stood in a patch of light that broke through the barren trees at the bus stop. His friend, Peter, whom he'd known since third grade, met him there.

"Hey, Dude, what's going on?" Peter asked.

"Not much," Bobby replied.

"Aren't you sort of hot in that coat?"

"Mmm, sort of." Not wanting to lose his interest, he added, "What'd you do this weekend?"

"I went out with John and Ted. We got half a bottle of rum and some coke. It was cash!"

As Peter went on about his weekend, Bobby remembered his. It hardly compared. John and Ted were some guys he had met this year. Peter got along with them better than he did. They had all gone out together for a time, but they quit calling Bobby. He didn't mind much, except Peter hadn't called in about a week, which was unusual.

As Peter was saying how bad he felt the next morning, John came up.

"Hey, hey, Big-guy, what's going on? Still spinning from Friday night?"

"Get out of here, Dude, what are you doing?"

Peter's attention diverted from Bobby to John, and Bobby looked around to see how many other mothers made their kids wear coats. Peter and John were the only ones without.

The bus arrived and the coatless boys were the first ones on. They moved to the back where they were greeted by Ted and some other people Bobby knew of. Bobby sat next to the window in the third seat on the left. He always sat there. He recognized the holes he had punched in the seat cover, one ever day. He made another hole and looked out the window.

His head barely stirred as he watched the road move beneath him. Suddenly he heard screeching, then screaming. It felt like God had changed the rotation of the earth, and the bus was hurtled sideways. He found himself upside down on the back of his neck on the other side of the bus. He struggled to get up and out of the capsized vehicle when he heard Peter moaning for help. He scrambled back and grabbed him under the arms. Kicking the emergency door open he made a passage large enough to pull Peter through. He laid him on his back and told him not to move, as he had learned in Boy Scouts. He turned to see John and Ted pinned under some seats when the rear of the bus exploded.

"Thank God you were able to save me, Bobby. I owe my life to you. Let's stay friends forever," Peter praised.

"Hey, Big-guy, let's go. We don't want to miss the first bell, do we?" said Peter, bringing him back to his place on the bus.

"Mmm. Right."

Bobby went upstairs to greet his locker in his usual manner. He hung up his coat, put his bag lunch at the bottom of his locker and took out an English book, a three ring binder, one pen, and one pencil. He went to his first period class, sat down next to the door and waited

for the bell to ring. He opened his **Modern English in Action** book and pretended to be reading some exercise. The teacher walked up and said her traditional "Good Morning" to him. Bobby replied, as always, and took his place in the front row, third seat from the left. A few other students walked in and also pretended to read something in their books. Mrs. Farland re-entered the room and asked Bobby if he would come help her move some books. He followed her to the bookroom. She held the door open for him and closed it behind her. Her painted nails moved towards the closet wall to flick off two of the three switches, giving the room an artificial dusk.

"Bobby," she said, running her fingers through her hair and down her neck, "I don't want you to help me move books. I want you for something else."

The first bell rang and Bobby looked up. Mrs. Farland was erasing something on the board. He went back to his grammar book, turning the page.

The rest of the day went as the first period had. At lunch he sat alone on the right side of his open locker, eating first his peanut butter sandwich, then his potato chips, and finally his Oreos — not by splitting the layers and eating the white, creamy inside, but by chomping them in two bites.

At the end of the school day, he walked to the bus and took his seat. The bus ride home was quiet because Peter, John, and Ted stayed after every day. They usually didn't stay after for a reason. They just stood in front of Ted's locker and laughed.

At home, Bobby had his snack of peanut butter on smooth, white bread and watched the movie on Channel 7. After the movie came the Flintstones and the Brady Bunch, followed by the news. This was when he did his homework. If he had time before the Family Feud, and he usually did, he would read the comics.

When prime time became bed time, Bobby thought about his relationship with Peter. It seemed John and Ted were stealing Peter from him. He reasoned the only way to get Peter back was to become more like John and Ted. He decided to start the next day.

As his mother woke him, he thought, "This is it." He wasn't sure if he was doing the right thing or not. He had heard all about peer pressure in his health class, but he wasn't sure if this was it. Peter and his friends weren't forcing him to change. Besides, health class always talked about drinking and peer pressure, so he figured he was doing the right thing after all.

He went downstairs and told his mother he didn't want to bring his lunch today.

"Bobby, there's no sense in wasting money for lunch when you can bring one, Honey."

"I've got my own money, Mom," Bobby said impatiently.

"Oh really? And when did we become a Rockefeller?"

"God, Mom, I swear," Bobby retorted as he grabbed his books and stormed from the room.

"Bobby, you forgot your coat!"

He slammed the screen door and went to the bus stop. His arms were chilled. It was a bit colder than yesterday, and he wished he had worn his jacket until Peter came up without one.

Bobby gulped and said, "Hey, Dude, what'cha been up to?"

Continued

"Mmm, not much," Peter replied listlessly as he turned away from Bobby and toward the street.

Bobby wasn't sure how to take this response. He thought he had said it right, but he wasn't sure. Maybe Peter was just tired. He decided not to say anything more and just observe Peter's reactions. Peter didn't see John coming up, but Bobby did. He watched the meeting carefully to see where he had gone wrong in his approach.

He tried to pick up on every detail of the boys' behavior. "This is going to be tough," Bobby thought. The bus rolled up and, as always, Peter and John were first aboard. He tried to be third, but a stout girl with a thick black braid shoved her way through. She was about an inch taller than he, and several inches wider, so he decided not to try to gain back his place in line.

He stepped up the bus's stairwell to see everyone already in place. The boys in the back had begun making their noises when Bobby moved to the first seat in front of John. He figured he should observe the boys' actions until he could imitate them well enough to fit in without being noticed. The boys talked a lot about sports, especially football, and about getting smashed on weekends. Drinking had reached the point where it was a competitive sport; the more you couldn't remember, the more points you got from the rest of the team. Bobby had never drunk any real amount of alcohol and was worried about what would happen if he ever reached this point in the game.

Looking out of the window, he spotted a hearse in the Seven-Eleven parking lot. He then looked over again to see a funeral in progress. It was his own. It wasn't a sad funeral. Bobby always thought it would be like this. The only one crying was his mother and she cried at everything. Peter, John and Ted were there too. Bobby could see them and the rest of his family gathered around a coffin covered with carnations. He saw the Minister close his Bible and he surmised that the funeral was over. Just then, Peter turned around and saw Bobby standing behind a tombstone. Peter smiled broadly and said, "Glad to have ya with us, Dude," and handed him a beer.

By the end of the school day, Bobby was thoroughly confused. He had been unable to study the group's behavior all at once, so he decided to make a schedule of whom to watch on each day of school.

At home, his mother was bending over and reaching into the oven when Bobby went in, looking for a pen.

"Hi, Mom, I'm home. Where's a pen?"

"Hmm? I can't hear you in here, Honey."

"Never mind, I found one," Bobby said, taking the pen and a notebook into his bedroom.

In no time he had fashioned a chart of whom to watch on what days. Tomorrow would be Peter's day. Bobby went to his closet to find something that resembled what Peter had worn that day. He took out a pair of light-blue corduroys and set them on his bed. Then he went to his dresser and pulled out a flannel shirt that matched the cords. "Let's see. All I'll need now is a long-john shirt."

Leaving his room and walking to the kitchen, he asked his mother if Dad had one he could wear.

"Gee, Honey, I think that he has one someplace. Check in his bottom left-hand drawer. Why do you want one, Dear?"

"Oh, just to wear."

He put the shirt on his bed with the rest of tomorrow's

clothing and closed his door. He decided to try on everything now to see how it looked. He stared into the mirror after donning the two shirts and was somewhat disappointed. The long-john sleeves came to the edge of his knuckles and the flannel shirt's buttons bulged to the point of popping. He tried just the long-john top, but he looked like he ought to work in a gas station. The flannel shirt alone fit all right, but it didn't look that good after being stretched. "I'll just wear this or something else," he said in frustration as he flicked on the switch to his black and white T.V. Fred and Barney were on. "This one is so dull," he thought. Just then someone knocked on his window.

"Hey, Big-guy, what's going on?" Peter said in a hushed voice.

"Nothing, Dude. Let me check the door first." Bobby went over and locked his door. He climbed out the window and saw John and Ted waiting in a car.

Peter and he jumped in the back. "Wow, I didn't know you could drive."

"I can't, Dude," John said handing him a beer. "I sort of borrowed this from my dad. Ain't it cash!"

"Let's hear some tunes, Dude," Ted said as he blared AC/DC on the radio.

Bobby chugged his beer and tossed it out the window. "This stuff tasted great!" he thought. "Hand me another beer, Big-guy."

"God, Bobby, you really are cool. We should've kept hanging around you," John said, passing a beer back.

"Well, it's your fault you stopped. Hey, can I drive for a while?"

"Have you ever driven before?"

"No," Bobby said, starting his third beer.

"Cool, cool," John thought as he pulled over and switched places with Bobby.

"This is gonna be cash," Bobby said. "Journey's on the radio!"

Bobby screeched off the shoulder, and asked for another beer.

"Are you sure, Bobby? This'll be your fourth."

"Don't worry, I'm in control, Dude, I don't even get buzzed off a six-pack."

It was dark now and Bobby couldn't find the headlights, so he figured he could do without them. He was driving on unfamiliar roads, or at least he thought they were. On a large oak tree ahead, there was a rectangular sign. Without the lights, Bobby became curious about what it said. He figured the only way to see it was to pull up to it.

"Bobby, wake up, dinner's ready," his mother said over him. Bobby opened his eyes, not knowing where he was. As the characteristics of the room became familiar, he asked his mother how she got in.

"I just walked in, silly. What'd you think - I used the window?"

"I thought I locked the door though," Bobby said, still semi-bewildered.

"Well, dinner's ready anyway, Dear."

Between eating the steak and peas, Bobby decided to call Peter after dinner. He feigned fullness to skip dessert and excused himself from the table on the pretense of unfinished homework. He figured he would have enough time to finish his call with Peter before his family was done eating.

He entered his parents' room and sat on Mom's side of the bed. He picked up the Princess phone and punched out six of Peter's digits. Taking an uneasy breath, he pressed the final number. Peter's mother answered and

Continued

said he had gone to the library to study with John and Ted.

Bobby thought of going, too, but figured they probably wouldn't be there anyway. He flopped back on the bed, sighing because he had missed cheesecake for that.

The next morning, Bobby left for the bus stop early. He decided on the cords and the flannel shirt, along with a down vest he'd gotten two Christmases ago. He thought he looked good. Bobby saw Peter round the block, so he looked the other way, not to appear too anxious. After exchanging a successful, "Hey, Dude," with Peter, they started talking.

"Hey, guess what, Dude?" Peter asked.

"What, Big-guy?" Bobby said trying to restrain his happiness over this sustained conversation with Peter.

"My folks are goin' out of town this weekend!"

"Cash, man, cash!"

"It's gonna be one big party, the whole weekend," Peter boasted.

"Excellent! Who all are you inviting?" Bobby asked, hoping.

"Anyone who wants to come. Are you gonna be coming?"

"Yeah, I guess so," Bobby said, real laid back.

"Okay, but don't tell your folks there's a party or your Mom'll tell my Mom. That'd be a drag."

"Yeah, Man."

"I guess it'll start around eight — and it's a B.Y.O.B. Got it?"

"Got it, Dude," Bobby said, although he wasn't sure what B.Y.O.B stood for. He knew it had something to do with beer though. Feeling great over this breakthrough, he ventured a little further.

"I can come over early and help set up if ya' want." Bobby was nervous.

"No need, John and Ted are going to."

"Oh, Okay."

"Hey, Dude, what's going on?" John said as he approached.

"Dudes?" Bobby thought. "He acknowledged me! It happened so fast!"

For the bus rides and school days leading up to Friday, Bobby was elated. In no time, he had become someone in a popular clique. He rode the bus with them, ate lunch with them, and this weekend he'd be at a party with them. "Cash, man, cash," he thought.

He finished his shower, blow dried his hair, and dressed. He wore a fresh pair of jeans, a Pittsburgh Steelers shirt and his new Nikes, white with a black stripe. Peter had a pair just like them. He went to his mirror to check out his appearance. He never looked better. He glanced over at his clock-radio. It was 6:45. Now all he had to do was wait. He went over to his bed and turned the T.V. on. The Brady Bunch. He turned it off again. He was getting fidgety. He didn't feel like doing homework, so he took out the school's memo and read it. Hardly any sports. Just track and field and that hardly counted. The flip side announced auditions for the school play. "Sounds interesting," he thought. "I'll see if Peter's going to try out." He ended up playing wastepaper basketball for the next hour until it was time to go.

Grabbing his down vest, he approached his mother. "Mom, can I have, like five bucks to go to a movie with Peter and some friends?"

"Oh, I think that can be arranged. It's been a while since you two went out. What movie are you going to see?"

"We haven't decided yet. Thanks, Mom. Uh, we're probably gonna go someplace afterwards."

"Oh? Are you going to need some more money?"

"No, that's O.K. I'll see ya' later."

Bobby exited quickly and had to keep from yelling. "God, this is so easy!"

He glanced at his digital watch. It was a little after eight. His watch! "None of the Dudes have one. Oh, well, I'll just put it in my vest." There. He was perfect now. He rounded the corner onto Peter's street. There was only one car in front. He went up the walk and rang the bell.

"Hey, Dude, come on in," John said, "Glad to have ya' with us. Here, take my beer."

"Thanks, Big-guy. Who else is here?" Bobby said, feeling confident.

"So far, me, you, Ted, and Peter."

"That's cool. Where do I put my coat?"

"Anywhere ya' want. Help yourself to the beer."

"I thought it was B.Y.O.B."

"It was, until Peter's parents decided to leave him fifty bucks for the weekend. The others are downstairs. Put your stuff away and then come on down, Dude."

Bobby put his jacket on the stairs and went to the kitchen to look in the refrigerator. It was jammed with Canadian Style Black Label Beer. He wouldn't even have to spend his money. "This is great," he said, as he positioned his head and took his first chug of beer. "God, what is this?" He took a smaller sip and winced a bit. "Well, if they bought it, I guess this must be the way it tastes." He resigned himself to the fact that this was good and took another sip, trying not to wince. The door bell rang and Peter came up.

"Hey, guys, come on in." Bobby recognized them from the bus and followed them downstairs. The radio was shouting the Stones and everyone was trying to talk sports over it. Before he knew it, Bobby had finished his beer. As he went upstairs to get another, he noticed that the skin on his forehead felt funny.

"Hey, Dude, bring down a six-pack, will ya'?"

"Sure, Big-guy."

He brought one down, and it was quickly pulled apart. Peter and a few others were bending over a table and laughing. As Bobby approached, Peter picked up a magazine and kissed it.

"What's going on, Dudes?" Bobby inquired.

"Playboy, Big-guy, Playboy!"

"Cash," Bobby said, although he felt like wincing again. He proceeded to laugh and gasp in appropriate places. He couldn't quite see why they were getting so worked up about pictures. The girls were pretty, but it wasn't like you could touch them. This thought led to another: there were no girls at the party. Definitely below cash. He went upstairs for another beer. When he came down, the boys had finished with the magazine.

"Hey, Dudes, how 'bout a game of quarters?"

Peter dashed upstairs and returned moments later with two six-packs. Bobby's confidence started slipping. He knew about quarters, but he had never played before.

"Okay, same rules as always; no swearing, pointing or saying anybody's name."

When Bobby's turn came around, he picked up the quarter and plunked it on the table. It landed several inches away from the glass, prompting the boys into laughter.

Continued

"Whose turn?" Peter inquired of Bobby.

"John's," Bobby replied.

"Ahhh! A name! Drink up, Dude, drink up!"

"Dammit!"

"Ahhh! Swearing! Take another one, Dude!"

For the rest of the game, anyone who made it, chose Bobby to drink. Bobby lost count of how many drinks he had taken, but, he knew it was time to go to the bathroom. When he stood up, he almost fell over. He could hear the boys' laughter as he staggered out.

He flicked on the light switch in the bathroom. The room became unbalanced, so he flicked the light off again. Bobby slowly lifted the rim to the toilet, as his mother told him always to do. After he finished, he moved towards the door, feeling the walls for guidance. He made it to the door knob and decided he could turn the light on again. He did so, but made the mistake of looking up, directly into the mirror. The image made him sick. This time, he had to use the toilet for another reason. A hydraulic pump lying dormant at the bottom of his gut suddenly jolted to life, sending his stomach to his throat and its contents through his mouth. The pump jolted twice more, and returned to an uneasy state of hibernation. Bobby heard Peter's voice.

"Hey, Dude, how ya' doin' in there?"

"Great," Bobby muttered. He wiped his mouth and chin with a Kleenex and flushed the toilet. The smell in the tiny room almost awakened Bobby's stomach, but he opened the door and was greeted by a rush of cool, dry air.

"Hey, Dude, how 'bout another beer?" John yelled. Bobby didn't respond. Instead, he walked upstairs, got his coat, and left. The crisp, spring air cleared his head a bit, but he still had trouble walking. When he got home, his mother was up.

"What happened, Honey? Didn't you go out afterwards?"

"No."

"Are you hungry? I can heat up some left over lasagna if you'd like."

"Uh, Uh," Bobby whimpered as he went for the door to his bedroom. He quickly got undressed and crawled into bed, pulling his blankets to his chin. That night, he relived each moment in the bathroom. In his dreams, Peter and the others were trying to kill him. He went to Peter's house. He walked around back where Peter, John, and Ted were sitting around a table, talking to Bobby's mother.

"Hey, Dude," she said, "Here. Have some more money and grab a beer."

Bobby didn't say anything. He went over and sat in a chair across from his mother. She didn't seem sweet anymore. It was something in her eyes, he wasn't sure

what. Now he noticed. "Your eyes, they're bl-----." Bobby wasn't able to finish his thought. He was hurtled back, downward until he landed in a foul smelling liquid. He started swimming, but he could barely move his legs. He went under, gulping some of the liquid. It was beer! Thrashing about, he heard laughter.

When he woke up, he felt so bad. He raised his hand to his head, expecting to find it bloated and out of shape. He painfully turned towards his clock. "Oh, God, it's a quarter of two!" In health class, they said there was no proven cure for a hangover. "Oh, God." Bobby made his mind up never to drink again. He knew this wouldn't be hard to do.

After surviving the rest of Saturday and all of Sunday, he was ready for Monday morning. Bobby dreaded seeing Peter at the bus stop. He saw him round the corner, and turned away, hoping Peter would ignore him.

"Hey, Hey, Big-guy, still spinning from Friday night?"

"Mmm, not quite, Peter," Bobby said turning away from him and toward the street. When the bus arrived, Bobby was the first one on. He moved down the aisle to the third seat on the left and sat down. On the way to school, he remembered that auditions for the school play were today at 2:30. He was glad he had forgotten to tell Peter about them.

At the end of the school day, Bobby reported to the drama room. He went in and was surprised to see all the people running around and yelling. Someone had a tape player and others were dancing to the music. He moved to the opposite side and opened a book, pretending to be reading something in it.

"Hi, Bobby," said a spunky, female voice.

He looked up, somewhat startled. "Hi," he said, with growing interest. It was the girl who sat in front of him in World Geography. She was known as a new-waver and not too well liked by Peter's crowd.

"I didn't know you were into drama," she said.

"This is the first time I've ever tried out."

"Here, this'll make you feel more at home." She plucked off one of her buttons and pinned it on his shirt. It said, "Bow Wow Wow."

"What's it mean?"

"It's a group. Wanna dance?"

"Why not," he said, closing his book.

She grabbed his hand and led him to the music. On the way, he noticed how soft her hand was. It was a lot softer than pictures. He liked it.

Michael Toohey
Vienna, VA

Bernis von zur Muehlen



Susan Gorman, Potomac, Md.

The Extra Traveler's Tale

Setting: Tabard Inn, fourteenth century. A small green creature walks into a tavern which is occupied by a group of people on a pilgrimage to Canterbury.

Nun: Eeeek! (All eyes fall upon E.T.)

Prioress: By Seynt Loy!

Knight: (In a deep, proud voice) I am a Kuhnigget, and I demand to know your business.

E.T.: My name is E.T., and I'm looking for a broad.

Knight: What is that — a "broad"?

E.T.: You know, a woman.

Hubert, the Friar: That ith a good idea!

Nun: Shush!

E.T.: Well, I heard that the only newcomers in town were here. You see, where I come from, I am too tall for the women. But, here, I met a girl my size, named Ger-tie. But, I guess I came back at the wrong time.

Monk: Nonsense, we are all enjoying the Pardoner's tale. Join us!

Miller: I say we flog the runt.

Reeve: Shut up and go back to sleep, ya twit.

Miller: Idare you to try to make me. Shall we wrestle?

Nun: Gentlemen, gentlemen, please. Let us hear this young thing out.

E.T.: Thanks, sis, but I don't thing you folks can help me. I want to leave this place.

Miller: Good! You come along and we'll leave this decrepit Reeve here!

Knight: Yes, join us on our pilgrimage to Canterbury. With you we have thirty, uh, people, and it is lucky to travel in even numbers.

E.T.: Thanks, Mr. McNugget, but I think I'd better "reach out and touch someone."

Miller: Better not be my wife.

E.T.: (Inserts glowing finger into Miller's ear) Beam me up, Scotty! (Disappears)

Monk: Wow!! By goddes bones!

Prioress: By Seynt Loy!

Miller: Good riddance!

Wife of Bath: I thought he was kinda cute.

John Young
West Chester, PA

R. McCann

I Saw a Butterfly

White butterflies with red stains
On paper wings strung together
By a steel rod
Shiver in the icy blue gale.
Waiting for

Ophelia's
Effervescent white horses
To charge skybound and
Splash
Their brittle wings,
Glimmering in the whisp'ring mist.
White
Scarlet-slashed petals
Too tender to flit up
And away into the blue breeze.

Eileen Connell
Danville, PA

Sr. Martina

Confessions on a Rainy Altar

Simply said, I would rather go
exploring jaded coasts, rat-worn posts,
war relics, faded, cracked shells.
With you, standing remotely posed, hands buried
in fleece, eyes surveying tidal changes.
Dangerously climbing, slipping on rain-slick rocks;
You always fail to catch me when I fall.
Where were you when the cradle cried,
when the damaged dialogue wounded the core,
when my hand was cold, empty?
In the audience of some curling movie?
Walking with yourself under imposing clouds of snow?
Where was I?
Do you remember the gray hut of worship?
where the bread was stale and the soul unleavened?
Seeing me, you spoke.
Since then, you've been silent.
Like a highbred dog in slumber, trying to act aloof
while whimpering in a bad dream.

Here we are, exploring.
Here where there's no sun.
Ambling alone, you return to the fireside fable;
This is Heaven over a cliff,
where I may slip, alone,
myself.
You never catch me when I fall.

Katherine E. Walker
Goochland, VA

Ann Brooke Lewis

I.C.T.T.B.I.A.M.

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TM 1
Melodies engulf me at
daybreak
Enter my heart
Fill my soul
Renew me
A spiritual born from
the yearning
Mouth of a blind man
Boosts the rising sun
Lights my world
Of music

TM 2
Tripping down town
with
Funk on my "bad box"
Street corner blues in
the heat of a summer
night
Pavoratti at the Met; air
conditioned
Notes floating from a
tenor sax
On the river of my mind
I see it all
I know it all
I am bad
When I hear
music.

TM 3
Reggae players wash
out the
Cacophony of subway
cars
In a tunnel of darkness
A fanfare of steel drums
Awaits my return
I pause
And wonder
How silence
Would
Be.

Sylvia Isler
Rockville, MD

Mary Alice Delia

"Haiku"

Pestering pipedreams
wallow in old men's gray eyes
softening their grave faces.

Chris Indoe
Butler, NJ

Ms. Lyne Ciccarelli

Computer Dating

"Don't get involved with a computer," my mother warned me. "You're too young and you'll only get hurt." I should have listened to her, but I couldn't help myself.

My "first time" with a computer happened earlier this year when I took Computer Science 1 at my high school. Looking back, I realize how immature I was about it, but you know about the first time; you think it's the real thing.

Anyway, I had been seeing the computer for some time. Lately, however, I noticed that things were different between us. The computer no longer had that glassy-eyed expression on its screen. Then, one day. . .

"Will you run my program?" I asked.

"Incoherent data in line 20," said the computer. I erased the bad data.

"There. No will you work?" I pleaded.

"Out of data in line 20," responded the computer.

"What do you mean, 'Out of data'? How can you say that to me?"

"Unmatched data in line 20," snapped the computer.

"What do you want from me?!" I screamed. "Every damn thing I do is wrong. I just can't seem to please you anymore! When we first met, everything was. . . was magic." My voice quieted. "We didn't used to argue like this; we just liked being together. Remember those first few weeks? You were so receptive when I pressed your linefeed. You responded eagerly when I stroked your return. You even let me touch your control! Now you recoil every time I come near you!"

Looking up, I noticed that everybody in the computer room was staring at me.

"Tell me the truth," I continued. "Will we ever feel the same way towards each other again?"

"Error," responded the computer.

Now I take Auto Mechanics.

Andrew Elby
Westfield, N.J.

Mrs. Lois Hopkins, teacher

An excerpt from "Adventures with a Retainer"

In today's world of inflation, crime, war, and strikes, anxiety is a common feeling shared by millions of people. We continually hear about the high pressure tensions experienced by presidents, advertising executives, or more notably, air traffic controllers. There exists a group of people, however, who until now have been excluded from the high anxiety class. These are the poor unfortunates who are required to wear "dental retainers."

Now most people who have these clean, deceptive-looking gadgets shoved down their throats learn to cope with the slight annoyances continually provided by the appliance. One example is the pain caused by a retainer, which can be overcome, maybe, if you're a morphine addict. Another is that with an item that bulky in your mouth, you will practically have to relearn the English language. Don't worry, though, because within a few weeks time you will be able to articulate your swear words succinctly enough that the orthodontist understands them.

Aside from these somewhat fascinating effects of retainers, I have not yet mentioned the one which causes the most anxiety among their owners. This effect has caused thousands of us masochistic retainer wearers to cry in frustration and gnash our teeth (thereby throwing off our removal time by six months). This effect is quite simply: losing our retainer.

I've personally had two major experiences of this type. The first occurred one day in school during lunch. Wanting to spare my friends the sight of a saliva-covered retainer, I quickly placed it in my lunch bag. Unfortunately, I just as quickly forgot about it, and when the bell rang I tossed my lunch bag, and unknowingly my retainer, into the nearest garbage can. Not until my next class did I realize what blow Fate had dealt me.

With Chopin's Funeral March running through my

head, I quickly explained the situation to my teacher and darted out the door before he could ask any questions. After narrowly avoiding two girls, a two-hundred and fifty pound senior and the assistant principal, I rounded the corner to the cafeteria and halted in mid-stride. All the trash had vanished. The funeral march increased to a double forte as I asked a custodian what had happened to the trash cans. After a few minutes of intense concentration, she laconically replied that the "men-folk" must have taken them outside and dumped them in the trash bin.

Slamming open the doors, I ran outside just in time to see the last trash can being dumped into a massive metal trash bin. Looking down into the maw of the bin, I saw what seemed like thousands of brown paper lunch bags which were identical to mine.

After muttering a short prayer, I lowered myself into the bin and searched. Fighting off rampaging hordes of bees, dextrously avoiding miniature avalanches of lunch bags, I waded through all the leftover food produced during a high school lunch period. All seemed lost, however, and I stopped to catch my breath.

During this lull in my search, the "men-folk" custodians came over and asked me, "What in tarnation are you doin', boy?" I resignedly explained the situation to them, whereupon the one looked down, grasped a bag, and languidly asked me if this was what I was looking for. Naturally enough, that bag held my retainer. With a massive sigh of relief, I thanked them to the best of my ability and strolled back to class. I promised myself that I would never go through such an ordeal with my retainer again. Unfortunately, I'm notorious for breaking my promises.

Brian Gielser
Camp Hill, PA.

Mrs. Deborah Ketterer

CHEMICAL REACTION

I disliked Mr. Thurmond from the start. Chemistry had never been my best class, and having a teacher who didn't believe in extra-credit or jeans wasn't exactly a help. And he didn't like me either. I think he looked down on anyone who couldn't memorize all of the molecular formulas. I can still remember my first thoughts on seeing him — those black suits of his were enough to give anyone doubts about his taste, to say the least. And his pointed beard and horn-rimmed glasses made him look more like an out-of-place psychologist than a teacher.

"Jenny Carlson must be that girl with the stained shirt" were the first words he ever said to me. I thought that was an unfair comment, considering the circumstances. It wasn't my fault that some chemical had spilled on it. But it convinced him that I was destined to fail. I didn't feel upset — he had an equally annoying attitude towards the rest of the class. It was enough to hear what he said to Sara Larsen when she was late. It was amazing how quickly he found out why — he must have had X-ray vision to know that she was out in the parking lot with Jim. Maybe he did. After a few more times of this, we all certainly believed it. And few people came late after that.

Since I didn't have an excuse for spilling the silver nitrate on my shirt (I wasn't going to tell him that I'd been eating some cookies while doing the mixing), he decided that I would have to redo the lab. Convinced that I would only ruin another good shirt, not to mention my grade point average, I nevertheless went into the lab Tuesday with thoughts of hydrochloric boredom. But that day I was in for a surprise.

Mr. Thurmond is the last person that I would have thought strange in any way. He looks as if he were born in a black, three-piece suit. You just knew that he would hate any new idea — such as electricity. So I was astonished to walk in and find him mumbling over a beaker, his short black beard going up and down. I started to laugh — quietly, of course. So this is why his reactions work, I thought sarcastically. I listened for a little while to catch the words — they were not, as I had hoped, the answers to our next test — then walked out whistling. If Mr. Thurmond wanted to spend his time chanting over beakers, that was fine. But I didn't want to hear it.

A few days later I had more or less forgotten about the whole incident. I was thinking mostly about the Homecoming Dance, which was next week. I was hoping that Tom Rafford, a cute blond guy who worked near me, would ask me out. One day while I was watching him do an experiment, Mr. Thurmond started picking up all of his equipment, supposedly to check it for safety. Mr. Thurmond disliked Tom — Tom was a bit of a clown, and to Tom the disciplined lab environment was the perfect place for his jokes. Lately Mr. Thurmond had become more than a little annoyed with him, and was bothering him any way he could. But to Tom's relief, he checked the last test tube without saying a word, and moved on to the next table.

Trying to look studious, Tom carefully added the last component to his beaker. A moment later, I heard a loud bang and the part of the room where Tom was working filled with dense black smoke. Coughing and waving it away, I looked for Tom to see if he was all right. He was uninjured but frozen with shock. His blond hair had been singed so that exactly half of it was jet black! Luckily I avoided most of the smoke, but my white sweater was never the same.

I didn't go to Homecoming that year. Of course, I knew that Thurmond had also been working with beakers before the explosion — mumbling over one, in fact — but I didn't make a connection. Chemists only believe hard facts, Mr. Thurmond would say.

But my point of view began to change quickly. I was certain-

ly surprised when my best friend's notebook caught on fire — by itself. Thurmond, of course, adamantly insisted that she had placed it too close to the sodium. But soon, I realized that the percentage of accidents in that class was simply too high. Someone's gold pen broke and leaked over his test paper. (Thurmond, with his typical generosity, gave the poor boy a twenty instead of a zero.)

By the second month that I had been in chemistry, we were so tense that we couldn't do anything right. One of the more impressive exhibitions of this was when Betsy dumped a whole bottle of acid on the table. It now has a large hole in the center of it. But that was nothing compared to the time when someone turned the incubator up too high and melted all of my Petri dishes. I also managed to botch another lab. Except this time I spilled the solution on Harvey. (That class drove away more possible boyfriends than my mother.) So once again, I had to come after school.

I didn't expect Mr. Thurmond to be doing anything normal when I passed by — I knew better than that — but I didn't expect him to be chanting over a cup of coffee. I decided to ignore it while I completed my lab, but it was certainly unnerving. I couldn't get anything constructive done.

For the next few evenings, I didn't have to worry about chemistry because I had a large history report to do. It had taken me several weeks to complete, but I had finally done it. In my opinion, it was the most definitive account of Zambibia ever written. It was my pride and joy, as well as a large part of my grade, and I guarded it closely. I wouldn't allow anyone near it.

I was therefore horrified when I saw Thurmond approaching my report purposefully, coffee cup in hand. I could imagine him placing the cup on the nearby shelf, as he always did, and then a sudden wind would spring up and knock it over. I suddenly remembered the weird chanting the other day, and Tom's beaker. Was there a connection?

Well, I wasn't going to wait to find out. "Get away from my report!" I shouted. Everyone turned around, startled by my strange behavior. And when, naturally, he didn't listen, I took action.

Sometimes I tell myself that I did what I did because I wanted to protect my report. But deep down I know that my annoyance with Mr. Thurmond in general was what made me lift my heavy, three-hundred page chemistry textbook and hurl it straight at Mr. Thurmond's head.

I missed, of course. Mr. Thurmond ducked, and the book slammed into a complex setup of tubes and wires, shattering everything into tiny glass fragments. (I had to spend three months allowance to fix it later.) One of the broken tubes began to leak gas and soon the room was filled with a most unpleasant odor. A whole wing of the school had to be cleared.

This was not meant to be a good day. Mr. Thurmond's coffee fell on my report anyway and ruined it. Mrs. Farrel, my history teacher, might have understood, but unfortunately she was in the same wing where I broke the tube.

I was automatically suspended from school ten days for assaulting a teacher and my school "trial" is still pending. At least now I don't have to face Mr. Thurmond.

I've decided that my defense should rest on the possibility that Mr. Thurmond may have been practicing witchcraft. Unfortunately, since I don't live in Massachusetts and this isn't the nineteenth century, I can't have him hanged. I just hope this doesn't get on my transcript.

Erica Schulman
Bethesda, MD

Ms. Meyer



Janine Gordon, N. Bellmore, N.Y.



Leo Hall, Paterson, N.J.



Landon R. Goss, West Snyder High School

Life of a Day



Bart C. Ewing, West Snyder High School

*This is the sort of day in which
You don't know how to feel (?)*

*You are walking up to the house
And you spy your first bumblebee
Of the year
So you quick-go-inside
But — letdown—
You can't find your camera.*

*Today is the sort of day in which
You test a magnifying glass
To see if it can really
Start something burning,
But you don't have enough patience.
You've got an itch in your bones
That only the mountains can scratch
So you go
And when you look at the ponds
They are filled with lily pads and ducks
So you know that they are not going
To level them and build a high rise after all.*

*You get up on the mountain
That you've known for so long
And you take a trail you've never been on,
Find an old creek bed you didn't know to exist.
Get lost,
And find yourself in a sunspot.
In the old cistern you see
A tiny, shimmering frog
And a translucent newt.
The water is as sweet
As forever.
You take an old path
Iridesced by the sweet shock of the new
The opalescent colors too rich to be painted —
Muddied in the camera's eye.*

*Up over the crest on the other side is
A stream
The sweetest water on the mountain—
Then the sight and the stench of a carelessly strewn
Carcass of a deer
Smacks you across the face
And you ask God, why —
But only birds sing.
You lie upon the mountain
Determined to become as one.
You carve a castle from a dead stick
And contemplate your hand
In the same situation.
The castle is brittle and breaks;
You throw it away
Because it doesn't look like a castle anymore.
Then down at the creek
You skip across the stones
And not once do you get wet.*

Lori Fraind
Nescopeck, PA
Mr. Harwood Rhodes

sounds like . . .

*his name sounds like mine.
sometimes
when his mom calls to him outside
i answer.
though situated so close to one another
in houses so similar,
we cannot be mistaken for one another.
yet,
his name does sound
so like mine.*

Beth Geisler
McKees Rocks, PA
William P. Wayman

Why Is a Boy Calling You?

Nancy ran up the wooden stairs in six short stomps. She instinctively turned on the stereo in her bedroom. Her father often remarked about the music she listened to. He said that rock'n roll was damaging to the mind. Nancy flopped onto her comforter. The bed groaned as the springs shifted to support her weight. She lifted her soft flannel shirt and could hear her stomach growl.

"Your stomach is not hungry. Your mind is fooling you," Nancy's mother had ordered.

Her mother thought she knew everything. Nancy knew when her stomach was empty. She mimicked her mother's whiney voice: "Have an apple. Teenage girls are always eating. Then they complain about how fat they are. If they're not eating, they're in front of the sacred mirror! Don't touch those cookies. I need them all for tonight. Don't eat chips either. You'll ruin your dinner."

She had skipped lunch to talk with Dave. He was a senior, so she could rarely spend time with him. She thought he liked her. Maybe he would ask her out. Fat chance, Nancy thought, lifting her hand from her stomach. Dave dated only pretty girls. His latest steady was the homecoming princess. Why would Dave even notice fat, ugly Nancy? He did, however, wink at her every time they passed in the halls. Her head felt light, and listening to the music, she closed her eyes.

"Nan, are you upstairs?" Music floated in one direction, her mother's words in another. Nancy listened to the music.

"Nan, can you come here a minute?" No, Nancy thought. She was not moving. The Pink Floyd song was not over. She knew her mother was yelling from the recliner, a cigarette burning between her fingers. The cat raced into her room, his ear twitching in excitement. She rubbed the cat along his back as he settled against her side.

"Nancy!" Nancy heaved her legs off the bed, unsettling the cat from his nest.

"What, for God's sake? I answered you! I yelled 'what!' What is so important?"

"You don't have to raise your voice. I didn't hear you. I can't possibly hear anything over that noise. That stereo means more to you than your own mother! I could have been dying and you wouldn't have come. Couldn't you have come to the stairs in the first place? It isn't too much to ask and —"

"What do you want?" Nancy forced between her clenched teeth. She watched the cloud of smoke change shape in the sunlight above her mother.

"I need you to go to the grocery for me. I meant to go today, but I had a headache again. I hope you didn't make plans for tonight because you're staying with your sister while I'm at Hal's. Dad has a meeting and Patty —"

"What?! You didn't tell me you were going out! You know I go out Friday nights! There's no way I'm staying in this house! I'm stuck here all week and I'm not sacrificing my free time! You'll have to make other arrangements."

"Well, I'll see if Patty can stay next door. She'll be disappointed though. You never spend time with her anymore. Where are you going tonight? I'm taking those cookies to Hal's. We're editing his latest book on ..." Nancy gazed at the family room rug as her mother talked. The new plush carpet was buried beneath last month's newspapers. The papers belonged to Nancy's mother. They were never thrown away, just stacked. The piles sat for weeks, growing higher as each day brought more mail. Occasionally her mother would carry a stack into the family room and clip. Nancy did not know what her mother clipped. She did not care, but their house looked as though a strong wind had whipped through and turned everything upside down. Nancy never brought friends into the

house. She tried to organize but found it hopeless. She avoided the mess.

"You haven't heard a word I've said!" whined her mother. "Oh, never mind. You obviously don't care. Go to the store and get some greens for the salad tonight. Also, I need some garlic for the bread. It's special, not the store brand. Oh, one other thing. You'd better think about moving your stereo back to the way it was. I don't think your father would approve." Her mother took a long drag from her cigarette, and Nancy slipped upstairs. She hated her mother. If it was not one chore, it was another. Do this, do that. Her mother ordered only Nancy to do things. Patty was her precious baby. Nancy was not a baby and she certainly would not move her stereo. She had set each speaker upon a night stand by the sides of her bed. It looked like a giant music box. Nancy liked the way she felt when she sat on her bed. She was inside of the speakers — the music penetrated her head.

Nancy grabbed her coat and purse and checked the mirror. "Yuck," she pouted at the face with sapphire-blue eyes. She should not have gotten her hair cut. From now on Nancy was going to ignore her mother's sudden whims. Nancy noticed her mother's dark circles under her own eyes. She patted some powder on them. Why did she have to go out when she looked so sick. Nancy tiptoed downstairs.

"Mom, what are we having for dinner?"

"Spaghetti, salad, and garlic bread."

"Gross. I'm not eating. None of my clothes fit. Why can't you make something good?"

"Don't be ridiculous!" Nancy's mother said sharply. "If you don't want it, don't eat it. You'll have to eat salad though, because I'm not making another dinner just for you. Be sure to add protein to your salad. We have cheese, and wheat germ, and —"

"Mom, shut up! I'm sixteen, remember? I know what's good for me? That's all I've heard for sixteen years! Don't you think I've learned anything?"

"I only care about you."

"Sure, then let me have room to breathe. I don't mind shopping for you, but I'll decide how I want my room and what I'm going to eat and when I'm going out!" Nancy grabbed her keys and slammed the door. Driving down the road, she turned on the radio and lit a cigarette that she had stolen from her mother because she was angry. As she walked across the parking lot, a breeze caught her hair. She could smell autumn's pumpkins and yellowing leaves. She breathed deeply. A tall, muscular boy tipped his cap toward her with a smile. She returned his gesture wishing she was prettier. The boy had firm, meaty shoulders and wore tight corduroys. As she pushed through the glass doors of the grocery store, she saw in the reflection his eyes following her legs.

A block of cool air hit her face, and she was suddenly aware of the din within the store. She weaved her way toward the vegetables. A short, stocky workboy tossing cantaloupes onto a pile grabbed two of them and grinned. He yelled across the aisle to a fellow worker with feathered blond hair.

"How do the cantaloupes look today?" he snickered.

"Very good," the other answered over her shoulder. Her face grew hot. Nancy looked around hoping to see a foxy blond in tight designer jeans. Women with screaming toddlers in their carts gathered groceries. Nancy looked down at the hole in her jeans. After selecting her vegetables, Nancy set out to find the garlic. She hoped she could find it easily because she would not ask one of the workers. Nancy went to the end of an aisle and began to look through some wicker baskets under a shelf.

Continued

"My beautiful maiden with the soft brown hair, for what do you seek?" A voice came from behind her. Damn, not again. Nancy quickly thought of an offensive response to spit back in his face. She would not be hassled again. She turned around on her sneakers and found his eyes.

"Dave, what are you doing here?"

"Oh, searching for beautiful maidens lost in dark aisles. Looks as though I'm lucky today." Dave pressed close to Nancy, and she laughed nervously.

"Um, I'm looking for some garlic, but I can't find it anywhere. My mom says it's a special brand."

"Well, I'm not that bad. If you're desperate, a wooden spike will do." Dave placed his hand on Nancy's shoulder. She felt warmth rising in her cheeks.

"Uh, really Dave. I have to find it." Nancy looked into Dave's emerald eyes.

"If I find it for you, will you go to a movie with me tonight?" Nancy would do anything for Dave. She smiled at him.

"If you can find it, you must have some sort of magical power."

"Well, the garlic's right here." Dave reached his arm around Nancy's shoulder and picked out some garlic from the basket in front of her. "But I won't deny the magical power." Dave winked at Nancy and stood. He offered his hand to Nancy and helped her up. His hand felt tender and warm. "I'll call you around din' time. And stay away from the garlic," he laughed, walking down the aisle. Nancy could not pry her eyes away from his gorgeous body. She could tell he was a dedicated athlete. Nancy looked up at the garlic in her hand and smiled. She placed it in her basket and hummed to herself as she walked to the register.

When Nancy arrived home, she began to wash the vegetables. Nancy's mother carried her cigarette into the kitchen and with her free hand rubbed Nancy's shoulder. Nancy felt irritation swell up inside her; she shrank away. Her mother emptied the second grocery bag and put the things away.

"How was your school day, Nan?"

"Fine."

"Really? Nothing unusual, no problems!" Nancy wished her mother would leave her alone. She could not believe she had met Dave at the store. He had actually asked her out. What would she wear to the movie? Which perfume? Would he try to kiss her?

"Well, dear, what are you doing tonight?"

"Going to a movie."

"Really? Which one? There are so many good movies to choose from right now. Don't go to a horror film though. They're always garbage. Who are you going with?"

"Mom, I'm going with a guy named Dave Hutchins. Now will you leave me alone?"

"Nancy, it's impossible to have a civil conversation with you! I never know what you are doing anymore. I don't know how you are doing in school; I can't say I even know you anymore!" Nancy finished draining the sink, wiped her hands dry, and quietly walked upstairs. She hated her mother! Why couldn't she be left alone? She tried to be nice to her family, but she was always yelled at. Nancy washed her face, turned on her stereo, and began to apply her make-up. Patty, home from soccer practice, bounced into Nancy's room.

"Guess what Nancy?" Patty asked excitedly. "I scored two goals against the boys' team today. We creamed them suckers!"

"Patty! Get those cleats off of my rug! I've told you a million times. Just get out of here. Can't you see I'm busy?" Patty hung her head and dragged her feet across the carpet as she moved toward the door.

"Move it! And it's those suckers, not them suckers. Close the door as you leave." Nancy hated it when Patty bothered her. Patty knew that she was supposed to take her cleats off outside. Besides, any minute Nancy would be called down to finish making dinner and to set the table. Patty was supposed to set the table, but she always took too long to change her clothes.

Nancy heard the phone ring. Her stomach jumped.

"Nancy, a boy is on the phone. Why is a boy calling you?"

"Shut up, Patty. Can I have some privacy, please?" Patty stuck her tongue out at Nancy and then puckered her lips and made kissing noises. Nancy quickly pushed Patty out of the room. She sat down on her mother's unmade bed and began to twist the telephone cord around her finger.

"Hello?"

"Nancy? Hi, sweetie. Save those kisses for later." Nancy smiled but quickly straightened her face. She was mature.

"Oh, that was just my baby sister. Isn't she obnoxious? She always gets in my way. Sometimes I think she'll never grow up." Nancy feared she was talking too much. She sounded like her mother.

"The kid sounds cute. So, what about the movie? There's a triple R playing in town."

"Sounds great. I'm looking forward to it."

"Good. I'll pick you up at 7:30."

"Okay. I'll be ready."

"See ya later, chick."

Nancy picked out her best pair of jeans, her new sweater, and a pair of clogs. Her hands were shaking as she finished making up her face.

"Gee, Nancy, you look nice. Are you going out with that boy who was on the phone?" asked Patty who had followed Nancy into her room.

"Yeah. Hey, will you clean up the dishes for me tonight? I'll be leaving right after dinner."

"Okay, if I can try on some of your perfume."

"No way, Patty. It's expensive!"

"I won't hurt it. I just want to try it."

"You'll dump it, and then I won't have anymore."

"Then I won't do your dishes."

"Oh, try the perfume, you brat! But let me put it on you. Then go set the table." Nancy poured some perfume on a cotton ball and dabbed it on the tip of Patty's nose. Patty wrinkled her nose and skipped out of the room. Nancy dabbed the rest of the perfume on herself, hoping Dave would like it. She put away her cosmetics and lay down on her bed. She wanted to lie there listening to the stereo to calm her nerves, but Patty called her to dinner.

"Where's Mom? Isn't she eating with us?"

"Mom said she had a headache, and we should eat without her. Will you please give me some spaghetti?" Nancy piled some noodles on Patty's plate.

"Yuck," Nancy whispered as she poured the sauce on top.

"Yuck," Patty mimicked as she stuffed a spoonful into her mouth.

What a pig. She can't even eat like a normal seven year old. Nancy finished her salad just as the doorbell rang.

"Don't you even want bread?" asked Patty.

"If I had wanted some, I would have taken some! Would you answer the door while I finish upstairs?" Nancy put her plate into the sink and ran up to the bathroom. She brushed her teeth and made one last check of herself. Well, it would have to do. She heard Patty talking with Dave. Nancy would have to be quick or Patty might scare him away. Nancy peeked her head into her mother's dark room. She saw nothing.

Continued

"Mom? I'm leaving. Have a good time tonight." Nancy walked down to the door. Patty was sharing her math book with Dave.

"That's really neat, Patty. You know how to do all of those problems?"

"Sure, and I have other books too."

"Good, Patty, now run along. Dave doesn't have time to look at your things." Nancy looked into Dave's eyes, and he smiled at her. He wore a tan and green rugby shirt that complemented his curlyblond hair.

"Ready, Gorgeous?" Dave held out his arm for Nancy.

"Be good, Patty. Don't bother Mom. I'll see you tomorrow."

"Bye, Nancy. Bye, Dave. I like your shirt."

Dave waved, and walking to the car, he wrapped his arm around Nancy's shoulder. Nancy liked his warmth. She knew she would have a good time.

Nancy pulled the covers over her head. It was dark and warm beneath her comforter. She pulled her nightgown down to her knees and then stretched. She smelled Dave on her. He smelled wild and manly. She reached her hand up to rub her neck. Nancy hoped she had no marks. The evening before had been wonderful. Nancy could not remember the story in the movie. She smiled; it did not matter. Nancy reached above her head and turned on her stereo. The air was cold. She snuggled back under the covers and tried to go to sleep. Patty peeked into Nancy's room and heard the stereo. She bounced into the room wearing her fuzzy yellow bunny pajamas and climbed into bed with Nancy.

"Patty, it's 7:30! You should be in your own bed. I'm tired. I got in late last night."

"I'm cold."

"Go make yourself some hot chocolate." Patty crawled out of Nancy's bed.

"Mom said to wake you up. She's going somewhere and needs you to do the laundry."

Nancy folded her comforter down to her waist. She stared at the ceiling and her eyes teared from the cold. She heard the clicking of her mother's heels in the hall. Nancy closed her eyes again and let the music lull her.

"Are you still in bed? Didn't Patty wake you? I've got a million things for you to do, and I'm leaving in a minute. The soccer pool will pick Patty up in a half hour, and your father left this morning for New York. He'll be back Wednesday."

"Why didn't he say goodbye?" Nancy whispered, her eyes still shut. She had not seen her father since the morning before at breakfast when she had made him an omelette. It had been just the two of them. Patty had still been asleep, and her mother did not eat breakfast. Nancy and her father tried to eat breakfast together as often as they could. They shared the paper too. She took the "Style" section, and he read the first section. Then they switched.

"I'll be back around dinner time. Could you put a pizza in? I think there's one in the freezer. After you've done the laundry, please fold it. Patty will bring it upstairs. Try to get all of your homework done because we'll be at Aunt Linda's all day tomorrow. See you later, Sweetheart, and be good." Nancy held her breath as her mother kissed her. Cigarettes smelled awful in the morning. Nancy had forgotten about tomorrow's trip. She had made plans to go to a bonfire with Dave and hated the thought of having to cancel. Jumping out of bed and sprinting to the bathroom where it was warm, she looked in the mirror and saw a black-eyed monster with frazzled hair. Nancy smiled and then washed her face. Thank goodness Dave couldn't see her.

When Nancy came out of the bathroom, Patty and her mother were already gone. Nancy wondered what Dave might be doing. She imagined him lifting weights or playing basketball. She could see the sweat glistening on his bare chest as he worked out. Ten years from now (they would be married, of course) he would still have his tremendous biceps and fantastic chest. Nancy's father would soon be forty, and he still had his figure. Sometimes Nancy went running with him. He had quite a lot of energy for an old man. Nancy's mother had had gray hair for as long as she could remember. Her father, however, was only starting to show some gray around his ears. A few years ago, Nancy's mother had bought a fancy pair of jogging shoes and had started working out. Nancy smiled as she remembered her mother wheezing and gasping up and down the street. Then she would come home and smoke a cigarette. Her mother had quickly abandoned the running without regret.

Later in the afternoon, the phone rang, startling Nancy who had grown fond of the silence in the house. She hoped it was Dave.

"Hello?"

"Nancy? Good, you're home. I was afraid you might be out." Nancy recognized Dave's voice. Maybe he would want to go out tonight instead of tomorrow.

"Hi, Dave. I'm glad it's you. I've been home alone all day long doing house work and stuff. I miss you."

"Yeah, well ..."

"Tell her, Dave." Nancy heard a girl's voice giggle. Dave stifled a laugh. Nancy felt a lump in her throat. She took the phone out of her sweating palm and placed it in her cool one.

"Uh, Nancy?"

"Yeah?" Nancy was afraid she was going to cry before she hung up the phone. Dave had been so sincere to her.

"Uh, I'm going to have to break our date for tomorrow. I'm going to be, uh, busy."

"You'd better believe it," Nancy heard softly in the background.

"Yeah, well, I was going to have to cancel too. I have to go to my aunt's house. I guess I'll see you Monday."

"Well, see ya around."

"Yeah, see ya." Nancy hung up the phone and stared at it. She felt an impulse to throw it across the room. Why? Nancy sighed. Did Dave like her at all? He had told her that he did. Why else did he tease her in the halls, and meet her at the store, and even buy her movie ticket? Only a creep would say the sweet things he had said to her and not mean them. Nancy truly liked Dave. She could not believe that only coldness lurked beneath his tender touch. He was a user. Nancy waited for the tears, but none came. She had had such a good time with him. She did not regret having fallen for him — even if he was a phony. She smiled wryly, remembering how cute he and Patty had looked leafing through the math book. Nancy folded the last piece of laundry and sighed. She had worked hard. Upstairs, the door was pushed open and Nancy's mother appeared at the stairs.

"Have I got a headache! Nancy, I'm going to lie down until dinner. You did a great job with the laundry. Thanks a lot."

"Wait a minute, Mom." Nancy stood and climbed the stairs. "You know what?" she asked, placing her hands on her mother's shoulders.

"What?" asked her mother. She looked old and tired.

"I love you." Nancy hugged her mother tightly.

"I love you too," Nancy's mother said, surprised, and kissed her on the cheek.

Continued

THE MX "PEACEKEEPER" MISSILE

Since their numbing entry into world politics on August 6, 1945, nuclear weapons have been the most potentially volatile topic ever mediated between nations. For the first time in man's history the fate of the race itself lies in the balance of world negotiations. With that in mind, President Reagan's naming of the proposed MX missile, "Peacekeeper," is seen as not only tasteless but also dangerous considering the attitude implied toward nuclear weapons by such a name.

Unless President Reagan is of the opinion that his cutbacks in education have already blinded the public to the inherent contradiction in the missile's name, then there is no excuse for such a tactless joke. To name an instrument of incomprehensible death and destruction a guardian of peace implies a complete misunderstanding of the concept of peace. Perhaps the MX can prevent a direct confrontation with a hostile nation, but peace is more than just the absence of war. On a global scale peace could be defined as the harmonious concordance of all members of a society in working toward mutually agreeable goals. With advances in technology the world has been increasingly forced to function as one society. Therefore, if any sincere peace is to be achieved, it must be achieved on a world-wide basis or not at all. Nuclear missiles are by their very nature signs of distrust and hence barriers to world peace. This is not to comment on the necessity of nuclear weaponry. Perhaps we will not be ready for a lasting peace for many years to come, but to name one of the greatest obstacles to this peace as "Peacekeeper" is surely a step in the wrong direction. There is another type of peace, and that is the right of an individual to be calm, serene, and in harmony with himself. This is, perhaps, the more important aspect of peace stolen by nuclear weaponry. I, for one, do not wish to live in a world overshadowed by the prospect of nuclear Armageddon. Yet, beyond any poor taste or hypocrisy exhibited by this name, it also reveals a dangerous change of attitude toward nuclear weapons as

shown by this administration. It seems the administration has taken much the same attitude toward nuclear weapons as the National Rifle Association has taken towards handguns; that is, missiles don't kill people, people kill people. Nonetheless, if the medium for destruction is not available to those in power, then you need not depend on their virtuosity. We have been shown in the post-Hiroshima era that the morals of even one such as a president need not match his high office.

Surprisingly, there has been very little opposition to this naming by the general public. This can possibly be attributed to the numbing effect caused by the incomprehensible destructive power of these weapons, or perhaps a form of Orwellian double-think must be employed to correctly comprehend the president's meaning. For on the surface it seems all too ridiculous to think that one of the most powerful weapons of war ever created should be called "Peacekeeper" or that grown and supposedly mature people can not mediate a mutually beneficent treaty controlling such weapons. But that is being simplistic and one must rethink it. Of course only lasting peace can be achieved through an endless procession of nuclear weapons, each more horrifying than the last. In this way one never grows numb to the potential for destruction of the weapon at hand. It is unfortunate that the President did not have time to think up names clarifying all his other defense programs. The M-1 tanks could be our "Guardians of Justice" while the B-1 bomber could give new meaning to the slogan, "When it absolutely, positively has to be there over night." Nevertheless, perhaps the best way to name new weapons of any sort is simply by their function. In that case there could be only one name for the MX and that would be "Murder Weapon."

*Duffy Maher
Potomac, MD*

Ms. Meyer

Why Is a Boy Calling You?

Nancy took a pizza out of the freezer as Patty walked into the kitchen. "Hi, Patty. Did you win your soccer game?"

"No, we lost." Patty sat down and hid her face in her arms, resting them on the table. Nancy wanted to sit beside her and tell her it was only a game. There will be many more, and no one can win them all.

"I'm sorry, Patty. Hey, we're having your favorite for dinner."

"Really? Pizza? Great!" Patty jumped up from the chair as if she had never been upset. "Are you going out tonight, Nancy? I really wish you'd stay home sometimes," Patty walked over to the stove next to Nancy and poked her finger in the pizza.

Nancy hated this, especially when she knew Patty had not washed her hands all day.

"Nope. I'm going to be home all evening, and I'll even play cards with you if you want."

"Great. I was over at Alice's today, and she taught me how to play this really fun game."

"Okay, you can teach me. What's the game called?"

"Old Maid." Patty beamed a smile at Nancy and licked her sauce-covered finger. Nancy laughed and rubbed her hand over Patty's head.

"You know what, Patty? You're all right."

*Judith Berger
Vienna, VA*

ASSIGNMENT TM14

On the Blackboard: WRITE A SHORT STORY THAT REVEALS YOUR VIEW OF LIFE THROUGH THE CASUAL DIALOGUE OF TWO PEOPLE. INCLUDE AT LEAST ONE ALLUSION AND ONE UNIQUE STYLISTIC DEVICE. LIMIT: 500 WORDS. THIS ASSIGNMENT (14) IS DUE FRIDAY.

In the IN Bin: At the Stream, by James A. Wu, Pd. 2

Joyce stopped, stooped, picked up a small, smooth, flat rock, brought it to her lips for no reason, and made it skip across the surface of the stream before it sank into its sparkling depths with an insignificant "plop" and a few bubbles.

"Wyatt," she said wrinkling her nose, "Wyatt. Why are we here."

"Well, because you called me and said you wanted to talk . . ."

" . . . about why we're here." She looked up at him. "So why are we here."

Wyatt, scratching his belly, looked up into the sky and said nothing.

Joyce looked at him some more, sighed, got up.

Wyatt touched her, gently, on the arm. "Let's keep moving."

Joyce did not move, stared out at the stream. "What for."

Wyatt held her arms now, gently. "It's getting colder."

Joyce sighed again, wrinkled her nose again. "Oh, Wyatt."

She moved, and they went.

"Wyatt," she said, scratching her head, "Wyatt. Why are we here."

"Where."

"Over here."

Wyatt stopped and looked at her. "My dog died yesterday."

"So?"

Wyatt looked up at the sky, and they went on. "I don't know," he said to the ground. "I thought you might want to know." He scratched his belly, shrugged. "So now you know."

Joyce laughed, stopped laughing, put her hand to her mouth. "I'm sorry."

Barefoot, she stepped on a sharp rock, squealed. "Ouch" she said, sitting.

"What's the matter, Joyce. Are you okay."

Sitting on the rocky beach of a loud stream, cradling her injured foot in her lap, looking up at his incurious face, she could only smile. "What do you care, you big lug," she laughed. Her voice was so warm, pleasant, high-pitched; he loved her deeply, but could never find the words to tell her so. What was wrong with him, he thought.

"I care," he choked.

She could not hear his words. "What?"

He stooped to face her and lost the words again. "Are you okay."

She laughed again; he thought of R. Buckminster Fuller. "You said that."

He shrugged. "So I said it again. So who cares."

They smiled over this as she held her sore foot. He did not touch her.

He walked, she limped. Suddenly, he stopped. "Well, I'll be damned."

Joyce stopped, looked at him. "What's wrong, Wyatt."

He stooped, picked up a rock. "Look at this, Joyce. Look at this."

Joyce looked, gasped. "That's the rock I threw into the water." The mark of her lips sat squarely on it, staring at her. Her hand went over her mouth as she turned to look back at where they had gone. "How did it get here?"

He looked at her, and the stream's burblings played a background harmony to his laughter. She could not see the humor, and could only watch and wait for him to stop.

When he finally did, he touched the rock in Joyce's hands, smiling.

"This," he said, "is why we're here."

And she laughed.

On the Paper: C-. FOR A FIVE HUNDRED WORD STORY, THIS IS VERY SLOW. THE STYLISTIC DEVICE OF S, V1, V2 IS OVERDONE, DETRACTS FROM THE CLEAN, SIMPLE DIALOGUE. ALSO, THE OMISION OF QUESTION MARKS IS VERY ANNOYING; HAVEN'T YOU LEARNED TO USE PROPER PUNCTUATION. (SEE?) HOWEVER, I LIKE THE WAY YOU SEEM TO VIEW LIFE, AND I FIND YOUR CHARACTERS VERY INTERESTING AND ATTRACTIVE. I WILL GIVE YOU THE OPPORTUNITY TO DEFEND YOUR STORY (SINCE YOU PUT SO MUCH WORK INTO IT; YOU HANDED IT IN TWO WEEKS LATE!) AND PERHAPS CHANGE YOUR GRADE. . . ? LIMIT: 1000 WORDS. THIS ASSIGNMENT (WHICH I WILL LABEL 14A) IS DUE WEDNESDAY.

For the Defense: About "At the Stream," by James A. Wu, Pd. 2

So there I sat, sitting in front of my typewriter, thinking about my English assignment and waiting for a good idea to hit me. The Rolling Stones were on WAVA, playing "Satisfaction" for me; nice of them. Just before sitting down to my desk, I had been reading "Trout Fishing in America," a marvelous gem of a book by Richard Brautigan that Mrs. Delia had loaned to me in class.

When, abruptly, this story walked up to me and pulled

Continued

on the cuff of my pants (it was a short story) (groan) and said, "Hey! Look down here!" So I looked down and this story went

!!!KA-WHAM!!!

hit me right where it counts (diaphragm) and jumped into my typewriter, laughing raucously. I had the hiccups as I slammed into the keys viciously, hoping that I would hit the little rascal with a comma or a "p" and maybe bust his skull.

I got through two drafts of the story before going to Wheaton Plaza with Seth, Norman, and Matt (the birthday boy!) for a look at National Lampoon's **Class Reunion**, a lousy movie. There was one good line (from a vampire to a woman), three bad belches (from me; no one sat next to me), and a plot (a very stupid, ugly, formula type of plot that just walked out of the screen and said, "Good evening, sir, I'm a plot, may I throw up in your seat?").

Then I got home, did a final draft, kissed it, and recopied it into my personal writing notebook because I liked it, despite its kick. (I have a bruise

BUT SERIOUSLY, FOLKS . . .

I call myself, only half-whimsically, a "closet optimist"; it's very dangerous to hold any high hopes for humanity in these hard times, to have faith in the future of man, etc., etc., ad nauseum; J. Robert Oppenheimer once said: "The optimist thinks this is the best of all possible worlds. The pessimist knows it." Despite all that, though, I still have one or two "bright sides" I like to pull out of my closet occasionally and stare at for a while. This story had one of them: the discovery of the impossible, the unexpected, the delightful. Nothing like this has happened to my yet, but I'm still waiting.

As to the technical aspects of this story, well . . . I organized it according to a scheme that I felt was appropriate to the theme: I began with a very negative, incomprehending ("Why are we here") outlook of life, which led to its logical conclusion, death ("My dog died yesterday"). But, with some pain ("Ouch"), love is realized, and this brings about the joyous discovery ("This is why we're here").

The two characters are halves of me: Joyce (J.) and Wyatt (W.). I chose the name "Joyce" because it concealed "joy," and "Wyatt" concealed "why." As to the setting, . . . well, I have Richard Brautigan to thank for the stream. (I could almost smell the sheep . . .)

And, in case nobody noticed, I did complete the assignment; I did use one allusion. It was to one of my favorite human beings, R. Buckminster Fuller, the man who created the geodesic dome and is the author of several dozen acclaimed scientific, philosophical, and poetic works of modern literature. I like him a lot: he's an optimist who isn't afraid to speak his mind. I am alluding, in the story, to a poem of Fuller's entitled "How Little I

Know," specifically, this section:
It is understood
That if you know that I know
How to say it "correctly"
(The exact meaning of which
I have not yet learned)
Then I am entitled to say it
All incorrectly
Which once in a rare while
Will make you laugh.
And I love you so much
Whenever you laugh.

And I know that Fuller isn't exactly well-known for his poetry, but he said what I needed said best, so I used this poem in my story. What is the correct way, after all.

And I did use a unique stylistic device. The absence of question marks in this story was purely intentional; this technique served to show the flatness, the weariness of such questions as "Why are we here(?)" and "What for(?)." Not that I wish to take credit for inventing it; I noticed this particular atmosphere necessary to several particular scenes of his novel, as well as to the book as a whole.

On the other hand, I did not completely eliminate question marks; their presence usually indicates (in this story) a sense of genuine wonder or curiosity, even in a satirical ("SO?") vein. Death is something to wonder about, too. Joyce doesn't understand why Wyatt would bring up such a thing in the middle of their conversation ("Why is he telling me that his dog died yesterday?"). In fact, there are a lot of things that Joyce doesn't understand. Wyatt doesn't either, but he never asks any questions. (Catch that little irony, there? "Why" never asks why.)

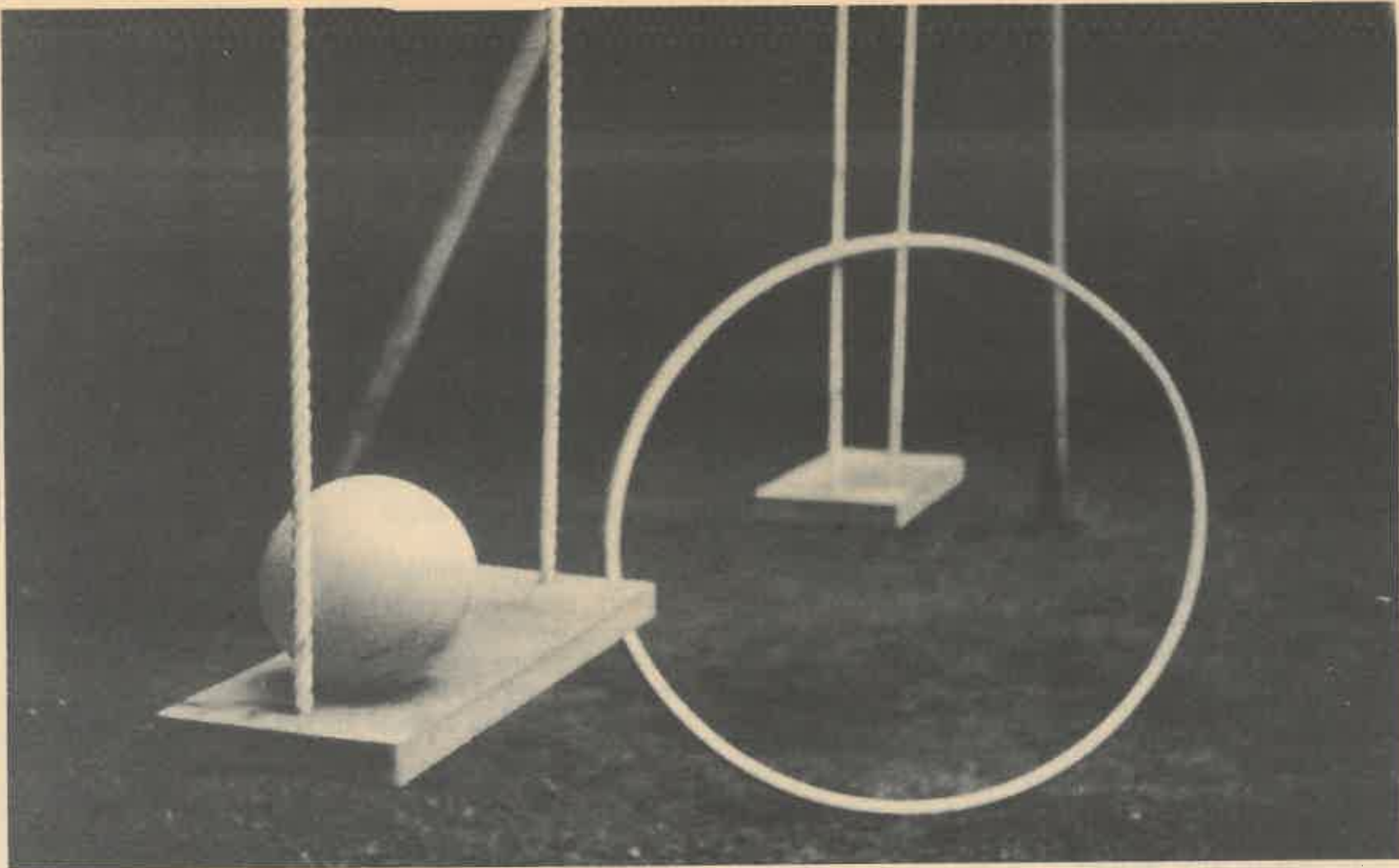
All of which is, I must say, remarkable, considering the fact that I wrote all of this in one night. Not bad for a sixteen-year-old high school senior, huh?

I thought you'd say something like that.
Okay.

Against the Grain: B+. NOT BAD JAMES, BUT I TOLD YOU TO BRING IT WEDNESDAY, NOT THE TUESDAY AFTER THAT. YOU REALLY MUST LEARN HOW TO WRITE MORE EFFICIENTLY, TIME-WISE; YOU WOULD NEVER GET AWAY WITH THIS IN COLLEGE. AND YOU ARE TELLING ME THE TRUTH WHEN YOU TELL ME THAT YOU WROTE ALL OF THIS STORY, "AT THE STREAM," IN ONE NIGHT? JAMES, YOU'RE SUCH A PROCRASTINATOR! TSK, TSK, TSK; I'M AFRAID THAT, IN THE INTERESTS OF EQUALITY AND FAIR PLAY, I'LL HAVE TO CHANGE THE GRADE ON YOUR STORY TO A D+. I'M SORRY. (BUT THANKS FOR BEING HONEST!)

James Arthanielus Wu
Wheaton, MD

Mrs. Mary Alice Delia



James Warden, Philadelphia

A Rational Look at the Issue of Abortion

Abortion is a confusing and controversial issue which is now, more than ever, confronting the American public. It was a major issue in the last Presidential election and is still a prominent political topic. The anti-abortionists, who supported President Reagan, remain frustrated because of lack of legislation advocating their position. While discussing the issue of abortion, it is difficult to separate emotion from reason. Central to the argument between the anti-abortionists and the pro-abortionists is the question of when the fetus becomes a human being and thus acquires the rights and protection afforded persons after birth. This essay will expose the inconsistencies in anti-abortionists' arguments.

There is much evidence that under current law and even under the laws proposed by anti-abortionists, the fetus is not considered a human being in the same sense as a person after birth. In the past, penalties for abortions have never been consistent with penalties for murder. Instead of life imprisonment or capital punishment for those who performed the abortion, four or five years in prison were the most likely punishment. The mother who solicits and pays for the illegal abortion was given no punishment whatsoever. Furthermore, the mother is not required by law to register a fetus with the state at the moment of conception, as occurs at birth or with adoption. Also, the zygote is not entitled to the same inheritance rights as a human living outside of a mother's womb. Finally, the ceremonies for the death of a human being and a miscarried fetus are not the same. No funeral is performed for a miscarried fetus and the loss of a zygote is not considered a death.

There are other inconsistencies in the arguments of the anti-abortionists. In essence, these people argue that a two or four cell zygote is entitled to the same rights and privileges as any other human being. However, the anti-abortionists, in general, believe that this practice is justified in certain circumstances such as pregnancy resulting from rape or incest or in cases where the mother's physical or mental health is in danger.

These two stands are inconsistent and contradictory. If one considers the fetus a human being at the moment of conception, then abortion at any time or under any circumstance is murder.

The anti-abortionist view that the fetus is a human being at the moment of conception is inconsistent with current contraceptive practices. Presently, the law permits the use of the IUD method of birth control. This method prevents the implantation of the zygote in the womb of the mother. This method of birth control occurs after the moment of conception. Therefore, the use of the IUD would be considered murder, but there is no intention of some of the anti-abortionists to ban this form of birth control.

It is impossible to determine at what point the fetus becomes a human being entitled to the same rights and privileges of a human being living outside of a mother's womb. The anti-abortionists, who are promoting legislation on this, should realize that the argument concerning when a fetus becomes a human being is basically a religious issue. It seems most logical for the law to remain neutral. The opinion in this issue should be left for each individual to decide.

The anti-abortionists should realize that abortion is not only a legal issue, but also a moral one as well. The moral right is founded upon the principle that a person's body should not be used against his or her will. Being forced into motherhood is simply not a nine month ordeal, for the mental pain may last a lifetime. It is difficult for a mother to force a maternal warmth that she does not feel.

Therefore, for a number of legal, religious, and moral reasons, the views of the anti-abortionists are difficult for many to accept, to understand, and further, to codify as law.

Elizabeth Chabner
Potomac, MD

Ms. Rosemary Meyer

vows & dishtowels

she has this job from nine to three;
an obedient housewife.
i always thought she enjoyed it.
however, yesterday i saw her,
standing at the sink,
her tears mixing with dishwater.
though she tries to hide them,
her top-job shield doesn't hold up in front
of me. she's just a little girl,
who accepts and accepts,
and never knows why.
perhaps no one else knows,
but i do, i know.
finished, she removes the strainer.
the water along with her lemon-scented dreams
drain from the sink and soon are gone.

Lori Gulbin
Coraopolis, PA
Mr. William P. Wayman

Untitled

I have to write on envelopes
and the bottom of Dixie bathroom cups.
Only,
the fear of someone changing my writing into
something it's not,
holds me back from full-fledged lined paper.
I hate it this way.
I am not loved.
Recluses never are.
Who ever loved Emily for her body?
Who's ever seen Emily's body?
But, then,
who's ever seen Hitler dead?
Suffocates are crazy.
And, so,
their writings are crazy.
I'm already beginning to doubt myself.
The fear...
if only I could conquer the fear.

Deidre Verrilli
So. Pfd., NJ
Mr. R.W. Thomas

Scratch

Look, it flowers
Like a bowl full of cherries, then it bubbles
Soon to escape down a clammy corridor
The world goes to bed
I want to watch it flow some more
The harder I push the quicker it down pours
So when I close my eyes the world goes to bed
As color hits the white, white floor it scatters about like
The dispersing spray on an ocean shore
The world goes to bed
Lay me down to darkness so
I can see the world wake up
Sleep blinds my eyes, with darkness I go to bed

Amie Dougherty,
Ivylnd, Pa.

Night Rider

You seem quite timid
Behind your windshiled Miss May.
But I know you.
At night your wheels breathe
Fire. You make the others
Rue the day they first honked
Their horns with your blue
Tinted goggles and your billowing,
White, silk scarf.

S.R. Johnson
Staunton, Va.
Ms. Connie Harris

IN THE CITY

Yesterday
I saw a man sleeping on a bench
In the park with a newspaper over his face
Holding a bottle of liquor
He woke up, groggily it seemed
Brought the shaking bottle to his lips
Took a long swallow
And huddled on the seat of the bench
Cradling the bottle to his chest
As a mother would hold a baby
I felt indignant
He should not have invaded the park and claimed it as his own

Therese On
Silver Spring, MD
Mrs. Peckerar

"When the Bough Breaks"

"You don't love me, Mommy!"

"Of course I do, sweetie. You're my little princess."

"Oh, there you go again. I'm sick and tired of your bit-chin'."

"Amy Fenderick," my mother scolds as she turns chalk white. "Where in the world did you pick up that horrible expression?"

"I heard Daddy say it to you once, Mommy. Was Daddy horrible?"

My mother looks to the floor as if the answer lies somewhere in the tweeded blues and greys. Her permanent press smile never suggests her unhappiness. She always manages to gather her strength as quickly as the wind changes direction.

"No, honey, your father is a wonderful man. We both love you very much. Mommy and Daddy have just decided that it's better for us to live apart. Someday when you're a little older, I'll explain it to you better."

She may be able to fool my sister, Amy, who is only six years old, but I know her too well to believe it. She'll never be able to explain it better. I can remember how much they loved each other. It was so evident as I was growing up. Each Sunday, we'd rush to the park after mass. Daddy would say, "Abbey, don't you worry about those dishes. Put that towel down right now. I'll clean up after breakfast — You just go get yourself all pretty." I don't think she understands it herself.

"Mom, is the divorce definite?" I ask.

"Yes, honey."

Silence falls, but not for long. Nothing lasts forever.

"Kelley, phone's for you."

As I dart for the phone, I almost crush my youngest sister, Michelle. I reach down and pat her delicate head, which is covered with short hairs that resemble peach fuzz.

"Hello?"

"Kelley — Hi, it's Traci. I've got great news for you. You're going to die. Jamie Stone likes you, a lot. You should have been there, today. We were having lunch at McDonald's and he came over to talk to me. I guess he knows that we're best friends. Anyway, he wanted to know if I thought you'd go to the prom with him. Well, I was going to say, right there, 'Of course, Fool,' but I knew you'd want to play it cool. He's going to ask you on Monday. Kelley, I'm so jealous."

"Traci, he's the most popular boy in the school, and he won't be interested in me for long. If I agree to go with him, he'll forget about me the next day. I guess I just don't want to get involved."

"I've never met anyone like you, Kelley. I don't understand your attitude anymore. You're blowing the biggest chance of a lifetime," she snaps bitterly.

"I would hardly call a date with Jamie Stone the chance of a lifetime."

"Yea, well, not many girls think the same way you do," her voice trails off.

The disappointment in Traci's voice lingers after she has hung the phone up. I feel alone, suddenly isolated, but I'm safe and this is comfortable.

Jamie Stone is the heart-throb of the Junior class. Any girl in her right mind would go out with him. Actually, I don't think he's ever been turned down. These thoughts jeer at me. Daddy was that way when he was in high school. My mother used to tell me stories about how he used to flirt with all the girls, and

left them broken-hearted when he went steady with her. The photo albums in this house are full of pictures of my parents on many special occasions. They have souvenirs from everything they did together.

If only they were as eager to hold on to the present as they were to the past. These memories are lost, now, in the time-warp between youthful dreams and reality. It's a once-upon-a-time sort of thing. I used to dream that love would be like this for me when I was older. I am now sixteen, however, and have outgrown these dreams like my mother, who can no longer squeeze herself into the wedding dress which she wore three sizes, four children, and one husband ago.

Little Michelle is crying. If only babies could know that what they cry about is nothing compared to what life has in store for them.

"Oh, my precious baby. What's the matter with you?" my mother sings as she enters the room.

Michelle is exuberant in her mother's arms. As I look at her, I realize how selfish I've been. She will never know what it was like when we were a family. At least I have the memories to cherish, finding strength in the tears generated by my melancholy. The very thing Michelle has no understanding of is the one thing my mother holds on to when she holds her . . .

Tomorrow I will say, "no" to Jamie.

Humidity mingles with the stench of snacks in the cafeteria. Spring is teasing the chill of winter with its subtle heat. I like the summer because my chestnut hair turns auburn with red highlights. It's the time of year when time moves real slowly and it feels as though summer will never arrive. The day has become so routine that there is little motivation to rise from bed in the morning. The dread of opening my brown paper lunch bag has never been so intense. Luckily a small bag of Doritos, which I'm convinced gets smaller every day, has been placed on a sandwich. I'm not even going to investigate what the rest of this bag holds. I reach for the munchies and crumple the bag violently. The conversation has been mere background for the habitual actions which I perform. The only conversation these days is the prom. My musing is interrupted as a sudden hush sweeps the debris of chatter away. All eyes are fixed on me.

"Kelley, can I speak with you for a second?" Jamie asks.

I forgot that today he'd want my answer. I guess I just never believed it could be true.

"I'm not interrupting your lunch, Kel, am I?" he asks.

I had hoped he wouldn't be smooth with me because I know what he's all about. I thought long and hard about this and I'm sure of my decision. I pray he won't change my mind . . .

"No, Jamie . . . I'm not busy at all."

I look at the floor. His eyes are so blue that I'm afraid if I look at them my resolve will leave me. If I allow myself to become confused, my words will take on a life of their own and run away on me.

"I was wondering if you had a date for the prom yet," he says with a gentle smile.

I've been awaiting this moment all weekend, and now I'm wondering as much as he, what my answer will be. My eyes are searching the cafeteria, hoping that a cue card will appear, somewhere, and I might get through this moment. Finally, I look at him . . .

"I don't have a date, Jamie, not yet."

Continued

I should have said, "I won't have a date, Jamie, not ever!"

"I was hoping you would go with me, Kelley," he replies.

"Well, I'm not sure I'll be able to go. I'm already going to another prom, and I don't think I can go to two. I guess you should ask someone else ..." I know how Pinnochio must have felt.

"That's okay. Don't worry about it. If you're not doing anything Friday night, how about a movie? Kelley, I'd really like to get to know you. What do you say?"

His words are as smooth and as calm as a father's calming an excited child on a stormy night. My thoughts are scrambled and I stutter ...

"I-I think that would be o-okay."

I'm sure I'll get out of going to the prom. I suppose one night wouldn't kill me, though ...

"Great, then I'll call you one of these nights and make plans." Jamie, you're making this so hard for me. You're pretending that it really matters to you. I can't believe that I matter at all. If it's just a joke to you, I wish you'd stop. I want things to be different for me ...

"I'll give you a call then, Kel," he says as the bell rings, ending lunch period.

"Kelley, is that you?" my mother calls from the kitchen. She is cleaning out the refrigerator. Something must be bothering her.

"Yeah, Mom, it's me."

Plopping myself down in the chair, I realize that something is missing. It's Michelle. For the past several months I've become accustomed to the pandemonium caused by that little girl. Every day when I come home from school the first thing I hear when I open the door is her crying.

"Mom, where's the baby?" I inquire.

She appears in the doorway. Her hair is swept back in a tie-dyed handkerchief. For the first time I realize that my mother is just an ordinary woman. She can be caught off guard, allowing herself to be human, forgetting to hide her misery from me.

"Your dad stopped by to get her. He wanted his girlfriend to meet her. I think they went to the park or something ..."

Her lips barely move as she speaks. I don't know what to say to her. She turns and continues cleaning out the refrigerator. I know you feel like dying, Mom, why can't you give in this once? I promise I won't tell anyone ... The phone rings. The world has a way of constantly reminding you that it's there.

"Hello," I say.

"Kelley, it's Traci. I was wondering how it went with Jamie today. What did you say to him?"

"Traci, I told him I didn't think I'll be able to go. Actually I'm sure that I don't want to go. Not with him, not with anyone. If everybody would just let me alone ... What's so great about the prom, anyway?"

Tears are streaming from my face. Suddenly I am aware that my mother is watching me. The tears I cry, I cry for her, and there she stands longing to comfort me.

"Kelley, I'm sorry if I upset you," Traci says. "I guess I just don't understand ... Well I'll call you later to see how you are. Bye."

Her voice is long gone, but I feel like a million voices are speaking to me all at once. Tears have a way of choking you when you try to swallow them.

"Honey, why didn't you tell my that you were invited to the prom?"

By now her strawberry blond hair has fallen from its nest. She was a model in high school. She could have pursued it as a career, except she was pregnant with me soon after she gradu-

ated, and at that time, my father was all that mattered to her. She invested everything that she had in her children.

"Mom, I don't want to go. I didn't tell you because I wasn't sure myself, why I didn't want to go."

"But, Kelley, this is a time in your life which you'll always remember. I'll never forget my Junior prom. I went with your father and ..."

"Don't you think it's time you forgot, Mom? How can you even think about the past without feeling cheated? Don't you see, I don't want this to happen to me, Mom. You loved him so much, but what's it worth now? He's at the park with the child you gave birth to less than a year ago. They're at the same park we used to go to every Sunday. The play is the same except the characters have changed. I'll never forgive him, and I don't see how you can either. We are not a family anymore, and I hate him for it. I hate him for Michelle, who will never understand why. I hate him for not living up to all his heartless promises."

My mother's swollen red face streams with tears, like a dam which has held back more than it was able to for too long a time. I have never seen her cry like this before, I'm amazed, but frightened at the same time. Pretending is just delaying pain. I will never be hurt like this. I won't pretend.

"Kelley, I won't listen to anymore of this. I don't know how to explain to you how wrong you are. You're building a wall with your thoughts. Don't think, for one second, that this attitude is making you a strong person. You can't shelter yourself from what might happen, because you'll never know what could've happened. Honey, your father didn't leave me. We grew apart. I know that not very long ago we were happy. I wanted things always to stay the same, but they just don't, Kelley. People constantly change, and their needs change too. Love encourages individual growth and there are no guarantees. One day you can wake up and realize you are not the person you thought you were, and the one you once loved is a complete stranger.

"Mom, is that what happened to you and dad?" I interrupt.

"We were very young. Things seem a lot simpler when you're young. Your dad was studying medicine, and I was taking care of you. Oh, things were rough, but we made the best of everything. I knew that somehow your father would have enough money saved up at the end of the month for the rent. I created outfits for us all with material we saved for. We needed each other, then. Once your father became successful, we gradually grew bored with the way things had become. You've got to realize, honey, that it doesn't always end the same way. Perhaps if we didn't rush, things would be different. Kelley, just promise me that you'll think about all I've said. It's through being unafraid that we learn important things about ourselves. This is the key to success in anything you attempt."

"Mom, I wish I could see things as clearly as you always do, but I'm very confused now. I have a French test tomorrow and I have to get to bed. I'll sleep on what you said, and Mom ..."

"Yes, hon?"

"I'm really sorry. I didn't mean to make you cry."

Traci is giving me strange looks. We're the only two who have handed tests in. I wish the bell would ring. The fresh smell of Spring is making me high. I can't wait until lunch. Jamie doesn't have a date, yet. I overheard girls talking about it this morning. I am going to say 'yes' if he asks me again. The bell rings, and I must find Jamie before I change my mind.

"Hey beautiful, how was that French test?" Jamie inquires.

Continued

Quiet Achilles

Shame is gripping my heart with age. Only an ache that can break your back. Fire sells candy on the corner of our block. Politics has taken over in our city. Tar-blotted boots sitting by the doorway.

My beginning ceremony was beautiful. Dumped in by the foot and then I began to remember. A time of pure realization. I still remember the bubbles bubbling up around my face.

I was confused in my early days. I just sat there all day long with nothing to do. All I could do, usually, was to taste the salami taste that I had eaten for lunch.

Later in life, I learned the lesson of greed. Learned that people were all killers at heart. Those people's power took up all the time in the day. Every second. In time, I had to reprogram their thunderstorms.

William Mickle
Greenville, PA

Evelyn Minshull

Good Morning

You are gone...
All that's left
is a hat—
jaunty,
rust-colored,
feathered—
some rotting apples,
low-cal cheese.
The essence of you lingers
as does the scent of the rain
on freshly cut spring grass.
Your hopeless energy
followed by
spurts of lethargy.
My coffee grows cold
as I smile.

Susan Heather Gallop
Fords, NJ

Ms. Prestia

Moon's Day

An ursine mood
lumbers on me
with claws bared
and fangs dripping
the juices of
a dying weekend.

Beth Geisler
McKees Rocks, PA

William P. Wayman

Untitled

each song had a story
we died in our arms
fore the New Resurrection that
vied in aheart
each song had a story
a turpentine table
of playing in slavery the
windless lay able
each song had a story
no more areaction
a tabletime liveliness stay
around the beginning
each song had a story
there were 29 lives
and all were excepted—
save one
each song had a story
the Cabinet decision
the folding of sun-set (but)
when wer-en't alive
each song had a story
all told in succession
beginning these battles of
mortary (flavrd)
each song had a story
atorturetime moral
the end of history, this
notness of power.
the next reservation
as torn in the taxes a gain
each song had a story

Sean Middleton
Norfolk, VA

Ms. C.L. Harrison

Bough breaks

Continued from Page 27

"Not as bad as I thought it would be," I reply.

"Kelley, I thought about what you said yesterday. I understand that going to two proms would be a hassle. So why don't we do something else the same night?"

"You'd take me out the night of the prom instead of asking someone else?" I ask.

"What's so big about the prom, anyway?" he responds.

I giggle and remember saying those same words.

"I'll tell you what's so big about the prom ... I wouldn't miss it for the world. You probably don't want to take me anymore, though ..."

"Want to make a bet?"

His words are smooth, once again. I look at his eyes and smile. Thanks, Mom.

Kathleen Murtaugh
Scranton, PA

Vincent Vanston

SUMMERTIME AT HAMPDEN SYDNEY

I rode up the street because there was nothing to do but explore the empty campus, deserted and lonely at the top of the hill. My horse's shoulders, which at present were all that attracted my attention, moved rhythmically back and forth as she plodded over the cracked pavement. I thought for a moment about the scores of boys who usually walked across this road, laughing and yelling to each other on their way to classes. And look at it now. The grass, rich and green, is growing uncut around buildings and into the cracks of sidewalks. The large brick dorms are all closed and locked for the season, daring any passerby to disturb their solitude. The belfry, majestically perched on the roof of Venable, is still and lifeless, even though it's five o'clock.

A car poked over the hill and paused momentarily at each dorm and academic building. I saw a father (obviously an old alumnus) pointing out various things to his son, sitting on his seat's edge, his eager eyes catching sight of everything being

shown to him. They drove down the road and pretty soon they drove right back, leaving the campus.

No one stays very long at Hampden Sydney in the summer. It's a kind of out-of-the-way place you might drive through between terms, when the grounds aren't kept and the main road is like a burnt fireline between two walls of overgrown weeds, and the twisting limbs and branches of ancient trees reach to one another, supplying feeble shade from the summer sun. The only life in the place is children riding up and down the lawns, past the crumbling stone belltower and the stagnant lake below it, on their rickety bicycles.

Slowly riding by the emptiness of fraternity circle and John's Auditorium, I whispered to my horse, "I can't wait 'til fall."

*Paula Moore
Farmville, VA*

Mrs. Katherine Stuart

Different Drummer

Thoreau said, "If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer."

I, myself, march to a different drummer. In fact, I march to a whole different band. I'm not into purple, designer jeans, hard rock, gorgeous guys, or money. I also do and own some pretty unique things no one else does or owns.

Let's attack purple first. I think it's the most disgusting color since peagreen. It makes me want to puke. Why can't people leave well enough alone and stick to basic, non-offensive colors such as brown, pink, blue and regular green? I just don't know. As for designer jeans, I will not, cannot wear them. My brother, a great comic at heart, has an affectionate name for people my size who wear designer jeans. Want to take a guess? It's lard a --! (It rhymes with Jordache), so as a matter of self-respect and dignity, I don't wear them. Besides, I would have to pay ten dollars extra for my size! When I sit in a chair to listen to music, I don't want to be bounced out of my seat by the beat (cute, huh?). It may turn some people on, but not me. I'm sure you'll agree (cute, again). Gorgeous guys are not my thing either. They usually hang out with gorgeous girls anyway. As a benefit I don't have to put up with their conceit! And now for everyone's favorite subject-- MONEY. I don't have any, and I don't care. If I have it, great. If I don't, great.

Now for the things I do and own that are unique. There is probably a book full, but for now, I will spare you, and only grace you with a few. If you promise not to laugh, I'll tell you my main unique do's. I like going out with my Mom. Mom and I are pals, and I enjoy myself in her company. I also take a shower at night, let my hair dry natural, use only blush and mascara, go to sleep without my stereo on, babysit my nephew for free, and read. Now that you've had your big laugh for the day, on we go to bigger and better things.

There is something I must confess: I not only own, but enjoy ladies and gentlemen, a Shawn Cassidy album. Sad but true. I also own and use seat cushions for driving. What else is a 4'11" midget supposed to do?

In all meanings of the phrase, I am "marching to a different drummer," yet I still have friends. Sometimes it pays to be different.

*Andrea Morlock
Wilmington, DE*

Mrs. Bellone



James Colletti, N. Bellmore, N.Y.

TREE

I sat by the window looking out into the warm fall day. The trees were losing their colorful autumn party clothes, preparing to sleep during the cold death of winter. I looked at the tree, the turning leaves, the browning grass, and the clouding gray sky. Then I looked at the tree again.

There was a step ladder set under the tree, and a man was on it, while another man held it steady. They were buzzing through the tree with a chain saw. "BRUZZZZZZ" went the saw angrily, as if it was being done some injustice, instead of being the executor of the tree's sentence. The men let the branches fall to the ground as though they were somehow offending humanity by being held up so gracefully against the sky by the strong trunk. They fell to the ground, heavily, the dried leaves crackling underneath.

The highest boughs fell first. I looked out noiselessly, and suddenly, the ladder and men were gone, and the branches were back in their proper places. There was a skinny little girl sitting amongst them. She was nine or ten, with scraggly brown pony tails, scabs on her knees, and dirt smeared on her chin. I could see that her teeth were crooked, because she smiled. She laughed, just then, a triumphant laugh. And she looked down in her glee and said in a boastful little girl-voice. "I'm at the highest place in the entire tree, and no one else can climb this high, and this spot is mine!" No one else could climb that far up, it was true, because the girl trusted the skinniest branches and wedged herself up between the twisted twigs to a place where no one else would have dared to go.

A tired-looking young woman who had been hanging clothes unnoticed in the back yard came and stood glaring under the tree. She peered up through the thick cover of leaves. "You get down here right now, before you fall and kill yourself, Penny!" she yelled. "What do you think you are, a monkey?"

And the little baboon in the tree top grinned and yelled back down. "AWHHHHH, Mom, I'm not gonna fall! This is my favorite spot in the whole tree! 'Sides, I named it after me. This seat is 'Penny's Place'. Look, I even carved my name up here with my fingernail, so everybody'll know. 'Cept they can't climb up here. They're all scared to."

"I don't care. You come down this instant!"

"But Mom. . ."

"BRZZZZZZZZZZ. . ." The scene faded. The branches were again on the ground. I sighed and shifted my head. The wind tousled the leaves of the tree's remaining arms. Leaves fluttered past. A stick flew against the window glass. My eyes blurred, and when they finished misting, they cleared, and the picture was different, but clear.

It's Penny again. She is younger than before, perhaps, but still scampering about in the tree. But she isn't alone this time. "Velvet," she says, "you sit right here, and Jackie, you can go over there, and I'll set Carol by me. . ." Whoops! Jackie tumbles to the ground, landing on her head.

Penny scowls. "Jackie!" she scolds. "You should have held on!" Then, good-naturedly, she jumps to the ground to pick Jackie up, dust her off, and help her into the branches again. "Now hold on," Penny warns, as Jackie settles back in the seat again.

"Who're you talking to?" asks a tall man who had been working on the broken down lawn mower a moment ago.

"Jackie. She fell." Penny explains.

The man frowns. "Penny," he says. "Wouldn't you much rather take your dolls inside and play with them and the nice furniture Daddy and Mommy bought you for your birthday? You could cook them supper and then put them to bed."

Penny emphatically shakes her head. "No, Daddy. Jackie's not hurt. And 'sides, they need fresh air and exercise. And they

like it up here." And confidentially, she whispers, "They're pretending they're birds."

The tall man cannot help smiling. He goes back to his motor, and soon it is running like new. "Bruzzzzzz," it calls.

"Bruzzzzz, BRUZZZZZZZZZZ!" I am jarred with a start back to the reality of the chainsaw. A whole section of the tree is missing now, and the tree looks quite forlorn. Somehow it seems to be losing its dignity along with every branch. It looks so. . .deserted. . .and helpless. . .My mind drifts. . .

"They yelled at me and tole me that I wasn't a nice girl and that I can't go over Jenny's. I have to clean my room tonight and I'm not allowed to watch TV, either!" Penny sobbed. "They hate me! Everybody hates me. I'm ugly, and dumb, and bad, and nobody cares." She cried, and cried inconsolably as only a misunderstood seven-year-old can, stopping occasionally to wipe her drippy nose on her sleeve. It was almost dark, and the cover of the leaves hid her anguish reasonably well. She mumbled to the night, and the tree absorbed her pain, even as it did the water from her tears.

"Penny?" came a concerned call from the back porch. "Penny? Are you out there, honey?"

The little body stiffens. And doesn't answer.

"Penny? Come in. It's getting dark, and cold out. Come on in. It's no good pretending you don't hear me, because I know you're out here somewhere. Come in." the voice waits. Still no answer.

The screen door bangs shut as the little girl vows, "I can spend all night up here. I'm not going in there with them. They don't like me, so, well, they can just live in their old house. I'll sleep up here!"

And ten minutes crawl past. It is dark. Penny shivers. Maybe she's just a little bit cold. Penny slips to the grass and quietly in the door, leaving behind the quiet stillness of the night.

Quiet. "It's quiet." I suddenly realize. "Why is it so still all of a sudden?" The chain saw lies on the picnic table. Is the execution complete? No wait, the men are just stopping to remove something from the tree. It's a bird house. A bird house, hung from a gnarled limb with rusted wires.

The bird house. The one thought on Penny's mind. She'scrawling along the edge of a skinny branch, trying desperately to get a peep inside the tiny house. I can hear the baby wrens inside chirping hungrily. "Chip, chip, chip!" Penny imitates, laughing.

"Chip, chip, chip," answers the mail man, stopping to drop two advertisements, an electric bill, and a letter from Aunt Jane in Minneapolis into the mailbox. "What kind of bird is that? Looks pretty big for a blue bird to me!"

"Mr. Flynn!" Penny giggles. "It's only me!"

"Why so it is." Mr. Flynn smiles as he goes whistling on his way.

Wait. One of the men is whistling. It's not Mr. Flynn. He retired three years ago. The bird house is down, laid aside carefully by one workman as the other starts to move the ladder to the other side of the tree. I wonder whether they realize they are no longer able to work in the shade because so many leaves and twigs and tree tops have been chopped off. I guess not. I notice for them. The shade that once covered over half the yard now takes up less than a quarter of it. A shadow falls over my face. I sigh. Reality retreats.

Penny is older now. She is growing up. Too old for her pony-tails at last, her hair falls somewhat rattily into curls. From her mouth I catch a glint of silver; her crooked teeth are in braces. Gone are the scabby knees; maybe if I looked close, I could find tiny scars. She's leaning back against a thick bough. In her hands she holds a novel — a grown-up novel, full of romance.

Continued

and adventure and a pretty heroine in peril with a dashing hero to save her. Penny is hanging on every word, taking the breathtaking picture the pages paint and turning over in her head. She sits among the leaves, turning the leaves of the book. A breeze rumples the pages, and she looks up with a sigh. Wait. She's looking at a set of initials cut crookedly into the bark. "S.F." it reads. Well, judging from the look on Penny's face, ole S.F. is really some kind of Romeo. She runs her fingers slowly over the letters, mouthing the name and wistfully dreaming of what it would be like to be a heroine in a love story. She'd be in a castle, not a tree, and her faded cut-offs and t-shirt would be a swishing along, full skirt. "The Duke of Maplewood? Charmed, I'm sure." She offers her hand. Thump! The paperback hits the grass.

No. No, it's only more twigs hitting the ground. The trunk is nearly deserted. All major branches lay about. The step ladder is put aside, and the men clear the area around the stem. There is a huge crack in the trunk. Split, as though a wedge were forced into it, the crack runs nearly two feet.

...Lightning flashes across the velvet sky. Penny sits by the window. The rain is torrenting the earth in sheets. The howls of the wind rise above all other noises. The wind is whipping it relentlessly back and forth, and back and forth. The crack of branches mingles with claps of thunder as limbs are torn from the tree. The gusts thrust the tree over, stretching, stretching, stretching beyond its stretching point. The trunk cracks, but the howls, and claps, and whistles continue. Penny slips from the window.

The men survey the damage quickly. "Penny, it's got to come down," her now graying father says. "Or else it'll fall. I can't understand why it didn't collapse onto the house last night. Guess we can only thank God for that."

"Are you sure it'll fall?"

"Sure. Take a look at this split. It won't last through another windy day. . ."

Today it was windy. I looked at the tree, the fallen leaves, the brown grass, the cloudy gray sky, and then at the tree again. But there was not a tree to look at, only a stump.

I began to cry.

My mother stole softly up behind me. She put her tired and wrinkled hand on my shoulder. "Penney."

I looked up with full eyes.

"Don't cry." She implored. "It was only a tree."

Only a tree? Only a tree? How could she not understand, how could she not see that it was so much, much more?

"Only a tree?" I sobbed. "Oh, mom. If it's only a tree, then why do I feel like a part of me has been chopped down with it?"

She hugged me, smoothing my tousled hair. "I don't know. Maybe all the memories — all that is gone, too."

"There's got to be more." This terrible ache I felt — all for old times' sake? It couldn't be possible.

"Penny — when you look outside—not all you see is empty space —the stump. But that's not the end."

I looked up, out the window. The empty space. I hurt so badly inside!

"Don't you see? It's an end — but it's a beginning, too. See the empty space, but see the challenge of filling up that space with something else — something big enough to fill the emptiness — inside you as well as outside."

I didn't see.

"Don't cry." She handed me a kleenex.

I didn't use it. It felt so good to feel the warm tears run down my face. So good, just to let a small part of the pain free.

She sighed. "Cry, child, get it all out of your system. Cry." And abruptly she spun and left me alone.

I looked outside. There, through the mist of my tears, I saw tree again, as it had once been. In the top was the skinny little girl, playing, laughing, dreaming, crying, somehow, all at once. I blinked. There were the men, the saw, the Bruzzz. The tree began to lean. "Timber!" yelled the elf in the leaves.

The tree fell. She didn't have time to jump clear. The tree fell, and she with it. The little monkey hit the ground and lay still amongst the leaves.

I blinked. I guess then the realization of what really happened hit me. She was dead. She was Dead. The child was dead. The little girl no longer existed. The tree — the girl — they were together, and now both were gone.

Mother was right. All I could see was the empty space, the space outside and the one inside. Now it was up to me to fill the space, to replace the child with an older, wiser Penny.

I dried my tears. My life was just beginning.

Susan Viazanko
Mt. Pleasant, PA

Mr. Don Bischoff

Impressions

Barefoot,
you walk along
the empty beach, leaving
impressions
in the moist sand,
your right foot playing
follow the leader with
the left.
I, too, travel
that sandy trail,
guided by your
foot prints in the sand.
An impossible quest, pursuing
five independent toes
and a dawdling
heel,
but I never reach
you,
for although we journey down
the same path,
I am going in
the wrong direction.

Kimberly Lupek
Park Hill, PA

Mrs. Laura C. Gordon

EAST MILTON ODYSSEY

It was windy and cold, just how I hate it. If there's one thing I can't stand, it's got to be wind. What good does it do? Oh, right, it blows away the pollution and improves the air quality index. How nice for you. Air's air; and even if it is polluted, what do you want to do, blow it somewhere else where other people get cancer from it?

I had just come out of Dart Drug. What a place. If you walk in the store, you're trapped unless you buy something. There are either four people or four shopping carts stacked in every aisle. It probably works, too. I mean there's no way for some of those old ladies to get out unless they buy something. At least I can hop over a railing or something. Anyway, I eventually did find a rail to slide under and passed America's future, drooling as they tried to fit their quarters into an Asteroids game. I don't know why I get so annoyed by things like that. Let 'em have their fun, the bums.

I had a good twenty-five minute walk ahead of me, so I zipped up my jacket and started down the street, all the while wallowing in the elegance of East Milton. It was not long after I had begun my journey that I beheld two of my better friends from East Milton High walking towards me. On the left was Tex Danielson (Tex! Can you believe it? I'm sure that isn't his real name. It's probably something like Theo.) Now Theo, I mean Tex, is quite an interesting personage. I conjecture that he has overly-productive salivary glands for he is continually at a need to spit, a need to which he often succumbs. Tex wears the same jeans every day, along with cowboy boots, a flannel shirt, a cowboy hat, and a wallet secured to his belt by an artistic metal chain. Where do you go to buy a metal chain that ties you to your wallet? Unbelievable.

Accompanying the miniature Lone Star State was Mark Gerald, who, I regretfully must inform you, is not terribly intelligent. Despite his scholarly weaknesses, however, Mark is quite deft at fixing a car. Hey, I can't make sport of him for that; if my car got a flat, my girlfriend would have to fix it.

As I approached my two comrades, I wondered whether Tex would tell me about how he had taken a dip of Skoal in Mrs. Greenwood's class or about how he had cussed out Mr. Fletcher, the chemistry teacher. "Hey, Jimmy, you should have seen it today (spit) when I put in a dip of Skoal (spit) right in the middle of Mr. Fletcher's class (spit)."

"That must have really gotten him mad."

"Yeah, Jimmy, it shore did (spit)."

Why would he call me "Jimmy"? How much could he expect from me? I mean I already hated him as much as I could. I had no choice but to provoke. "Tell me, Tex, where exactly do you go to get one of those little chains for your wallet?"

"You (spit) makin' (spit) fun'a it (spit)?" His glands evidently became more active when he got excited.

"Oh, no, no, Tex, I think it's ... a great conversation piece."

"Yeah, (spit) well you ain't so hot yourself (spit)." I had to admit it. His power of expression was peerless. While I was still convalescing from Tex's first humbling remark, he viciously went on, "And what about those galsses you're wearing (spit)? Where do you go to get them, huh, four eyes (spit)?" That sense of humor, along with everything else Tex had going for him. Boy, some parents just have all the luck.

Tex walked away contented that he had "showed me." Mark followed him. Mark hadn't said anything. I don't think he understood exactly what we were talking about.

"See you in school tomorrow, padners!" I yelled at them. I shoved my hands in my pockets and started walking again. I felt kind of bad about riding Tex, but it had been irresistible. Tex had come to the South only two years earlier, and, by this time, he had pretty well perfected his "Tex talk." He had

moved from Boston, though, and in the beginning stages of his intentional voice transition, he would often say things like, "I shore do love them New Yaawuk Yankees." Ah, what the heck, he probably asks his mom for a "mess" of potatoes. And the way I see it, anyone who asks for a "mess" of anything deserves to be ridden once in a while.

My mom had asked me to pick up some milk, so I stopped at the High's store. There was a Seven-Eleven closer to my house, and it would have been easier to carry the milk from there; but I kind of feel sorry for High's stores. No one ever goes to them.

Mr. O'Brian was receiving his change when I walked in. Mr. O'Brian lets us kids call him by his first name, Jack. I call him Mr. O'Brian.

"Hi there, Jim. A little bit nippy out there, isn't it?"

"Yes, sir, it sure is."

"Well, you keep buttoned up, you hear?"

"Okay," I said with a big smile. "Bye."

Mr. O'Brian really is a nice man, but I think he missed his calling. I think he would rather have been a pioneer or something. Because he always tells you about how he once killed a snake with a stick, or a squirrel with a rock, or at any rate, a something with a something.. Not that I wouldn't like to kill a snake with a stick. I guess I never really gave it much thought. I mean there just aren't that many snakes slithering around East Milton. And Mr. O'Brian is the kind of guy that takes a deep breath and says, "Mmm, breathe that air. Tastes good, dudn't it?" What am I supposed to say? It seems okay to me, Mr. O'Brian. I guess I don't have very sensitive taste buds. I suspect he has a book of adages at home because you'll be doing something, like washing your car, and he'll say, "You know, there's more than one way to skin a cat." That's kind of a difficult one to respond to as well. I usually coin something like, "Oh."

The store keeper put the milk in one of those small brown bags and handed it to me. I hate carrying those little bags. I always feel like a second grader carrying his lunch. I pushed open the door and heard the ringing of eight bells. Why would they put bells on the doors? I mean the store itself is smaller than my bedroom. I guess they give the attendant a little extra time to prepare. You know, he straightens up the place in the two steps it takes you to get to where he's standing.

It seemed colder when I walked out so I put on the knit hat I had concealed in my pocket. Just then I saw a car coming up the lot. There was Stephanie Simpson, perhaps the most enticing sixteen year old ever to enchant East Milton. And there I was, right out of a Bayer children's aspirin commercial, with my lunch and knit hat, waiting for the big, yellow bus.

"Hi, Jim," she said. "What are you doing just standing here?"

"Waiting for the schoolbus."

"What?"

"I'm kidding. My mom asked me to pick up some milk."

"Well, wait and I'll give you a ride."

"Oh, that's okay, really. I'd just as soon walk."

"It's freezing, Jim."

"Yeah, I know ... I like the cold weather. It's good for the respiration. You know, it ... makes the air taste good."

"Don't be silly. Wait a minute and I'll take you." She walked into the store.

"Don't be silly," she says. What does she expect? I'm standing here with my Dukes of Hazzard lunch box and a runny nose, and she wants logic. You have to understand, I get a little nervous around girls, especially the ordained love goddesses like Stephanie.

She came out with a little brown bag like mine. Interesting-
Continued

ly, in her angora sweater and Jordache jeans, she didn't look at all like a second grader.

"Hop in," she said.

I hate having girls drive me. I feel like I'm their son or something. "I really felt stupid standing out there in my knit hat when you drove up."

"I thought you looked cute." /cute (kyoot) adj. cuter, cutest. 1. delightfully pretty or dainty. 2. informal, word used by teenage girls for purposes of tact literally meaning immature, not quite handsome, or dressed as a second grader carrying his lunch./

I didn't say anything so she went on, "How are you doing in school? Straight A's, right?" I love it when people say that. I sort of half laughed. I wished that she would drive faster. "Are you still going out with Janet?"

"Me? No. We're not going out any ... well, we go out sometimes. You know, once in a blue moon."

"A blue moon?"

"Two weeks. About once every two weeks." I glanced at the speedometer.

"Are you in a hurry?"

"No, I just don't want to miss Speed Racer."

"You watch Speed Racer? Oh, you're joking, right?"

Where is my house I don't remember it being this far did we make a wrong turn I should have stayed at Darts and played Asteroids I knew we should have bought this house on the corner boy it's hot in here does the heater need to be this high?

I had to say something. "Did you hear about Tex? He took a

dip of Skoal in Mr. Fletcher's class."

"Yes, I heard about it. That stuff is so disgusting. You don't dip, do you?"

"Me? No. Not unless a bee stings me on the lip."

"What? I don't get it."

I was sure we had made a wrong turn. "The tobacco, it sort of draws the poison out of bee stings. I was just kidding."

"You're so silly."

By the time we turned the corner to my street, I was perspiring heavily. "Thanks for the ride, Stephanie. See you in school tomorrow."

"It was my pleasure. You're so funny. Bye, bye."

As I watched Stephanie drive away, I wondered how rich I'd be if I had a penny for every time she said "what." I turned to walk to the house and saw our neighbor, Mr. Wilson, doing something to his lawn. The man has no life. The ground is tundra three feet deep, and he's trying to make grass grow. You've got to feel for the guy.

I walked into the house. "Did you get the milk, honey?" my mom asked.

"Yeah, what's for dinner?"

"Barbecued chicken."

"Really? Can I invite Tex over?"

At least my mom laughed.

Jim Hecht
Vienna, VA

Mrs. von zur Muehlen

The Amazon

*Wings sheared off. Outer shell dented.
No movement within this metal coffin.
There was sunlight, distant through treetops,
Fading even as I watched.
I waited to hear a voice.
I received silence. Only brushing leaves
And the caw-caw of a faraway bird.
Parting branches, I dared a few steps.
My feet sank into the marshy soil,
Submerging more with each one.
I could see mist in the air,
Feel it through my torn clothing.
The clammy wetness brought a sudden chill
But still faintness overpowered me.
I heard a roar in the distance.
Hairs raised on my neck.
Was it a jaguar,
Mouth glistening? Shining-eyed and eager?
Not knowing where I was heading-
I ran on.*

Kim Kreitman
Long Beach, NY

Ms. Goldwater

Capricious

*Desire
As deep
As a soap bubble's thick
Scintillating
Blue-gold and purple
A bubble
Of child's breath
Sweet as a gumdrop
Sticking fingers
To furry red clothes
A puffy scarlet sweater
With yellow ducks
Swimming
Knit patterns of down
On a late-summer
Dandelion
Blown in October
In the folly
Of a passing
Desire.*

Holly Krueger
Wyckoff, N.J.

Mrs. Wheaton

Symbolism in *The Great Gatsby*

In *The Great Gatsby* F. Scott Fitzgerald uses symbolism to reveal the theme of the shallowness of society. The sybaritic attitude in the novel is expressed by the way the characters view themselves and their goals in life. Three specific examples from the story symbolize the hedonism of their society: the eyes of Dr. T.J. Eckleburg; the valley of ashes; and the green light at the end of Daisy's pier.

The post-World War I society of Gatsby and his neighbors is one of disillusionment, moral and spiritual decay. Desperate hedonism has replaced any sense of moral direction that Fitzgerald's characters may have possessed. The eyes of Dr. T.J. Eckleburg symbolize a god that has been forgotten by a society dedicated only to a life of luxury and pleasure.

The eyes of Dr. T.J. Eckleburg are blue and gigantic ... They look out of no face, but, instead, from a pair of enormous yellow spectacles which pass over a non-existent nose. Evidently some ... oculist sent them thru to fatten his practice ... and moved away. But his eyes, dimmed a little by many paintless days under sun and rain, brood on over the solemn dumping ground. 1

1 F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1953), p. 15. All further references are to this edition and will hereafter be noted in the body of the text.

The eyes of the optician's billboard represent "deus in absentia," a departed god. Eckleburg's eyes also indicate the absence of morals in Gatsby, Daisy, and Tom Buchanan. All three are ambitious and interested only in furthering their own self-interest. And even though they have rejected God, "his eyes ... brood on over the solemn dumping ground." Gatsby and his acquaintances continue to be judged by God even though they deny his existence.

In addition to casting off all moral and religious values, Fitzgerald places his characters on a pedestal above the rest of the human race. The valley of ashes symbolizes the rest of society, the great, gray, middle class.

The valley of ashes is bounded on one side by a small, foul river, and, when the drawbridge is up to let barges through, the passengers on waiting trains can stare at the dismal scene for as long as half an hour. There's always a halt of at least a minute, and it was because of this that I first met Tom Buchanan's mistress. 2 (p. 15)

Fitzgerald's characters encounter the valley of ashes when traveling between East and West Egg or between East or West Egg and New York City. Therefore, they are alienated from the struggling and sufferings of the middle class; those people stranded between two paradises of wealth and luxury. When the narrator of the novel, Nick Carraway, first meets Tom's mistress, Myrtle Wilson, he encounters the only link between the rich aristocracy of East Egg and the plebeian population of the valley of ashes. Tom's "purchase" of Myrtle is his way of adding some temporary meaning to life; his marriage to Daisy

is one of convenience, and although they have established a sense of companionship, no love exists between them. Myrtle, desperate to add passion and excitement to her life, uses Tom as a means to obtain entrance into a world of unestimable wealth and luxury. Fitzgerald ultimately portrays the valley of ashes as the spiritual, moral wasteland of America. All of the characters in the novel, be they rich or poor, are basically superficial — desiring wealth and affluence as the supreme goal in life.

In order to obtain the wealth that they so desire, Fitzgerald's characters will do and say anything. Daisy achieves her goal of a life of luxury by leading Gatsby on and then deserting him for Tom. Later, when she learns of Gatsby's great wealth, she has an affair with her former lover. She is incapable of a longterm commitment. The desire for wealth is the driving force in her life. Gatsby, who starts out with the basic American Dream, achieves his goal of possessing Daisy through corrupt dealings and the ruination of innocent people. Gatsby's pursuit of the American Dream is a sort of perverted version of the Horatio Alger theme.

It was James Gatz who had been loafing along the beach that afternoon...but it was already Jay Gatsby who borrowed a row-boat...and informed (Dan) Cody that a wind might catch him and break him up in half an hour... To young Gatz... that yacht represented all the beauty and glamour in the world...and at any rate Cody asked him a few questions...and found that he was quick and extravagantly ambitious...He (Gatsby) was employed in a vague personal capacity...for Dan Cody sober knew what lavish doings Dan Cody drunk might soon be about, and he provided for such contingencies by...(trusting) Gatsby...

I remember the portrait of him (Cody) in Gatsby's bedroom... the pioneer debauchee, who during one phase of American life brought back to the (East) the savage violence of the frontier brothel and saloon...3 (pp. 65-66)

From the very beginning Gatsby's dream is doomed to fail. His rich benefactor is a notorious criminal and he never inherits the money left to him. However, this does not stop Gatsby. He goes on to earn his fortune, albeit by dishonest methods, and seek the hand of the fair maiden-Daisy.

The green light at the end of Daisy's dock is a symbol of promise for Gatsby just as "the fresh, green breast of the New World," was a symbol of promise for Dutch sailors long ago.

...as the moon rose higher the inessential houses began to melt away until gradually I became aware of the old island here that flowered once for Dutch sailors' eyes - a fresh, green breast of the new world. Its vanished trees ...

Continued

had once pandered in whispers to the last and greatest of all human dreams.....

And as I sat there brooding on the old, unknown world, I thought of Gatsby's wonder when he picked out the green light at the end of Daisy's dock. He had come a long way to this blue lawn, and his dream must have seemed so close that he could hardly fail to grasp it. He did not know that it was already behind him ... 4 (p. 121)

The new land, the "fresh, green breast of the new world," and the chance to begin again have come down over the centuries to Gatsby's desire for Daisy. The green light symbolizes freshness

and vitality, qualities Daisy possessed when Gatsby first met her. But Gatsby fails to realize that just as America changed from fresh and vital to over-worked and over-populated, so has Daisy changed from the young, innocent girl he once knew to a scheming, meretricious woman. Gatsby loves his image of Daisy; he perceives her as "(a) dream (that) must have seemed so close that he could hardly fail to grasp it." She is the final aspect of his ultimate desire.

On the whole, all of Fitzgerald's characters try and fail to obtain what they deem to be the highest goal in life. Because they are superficial, possessing no moral code, and totally disillusioned by the world around them, they do not realize that the hedonistic attitude they cherish is the cause for the ever-present despair and anguish in their lives.

Linda Surles
Warrenton, VA

Robert Keys

ELY CATHEDRAL

*Chips of marble lie in crimson pools
Dead priests guard open portals
And I who will follow
Steal glances at the murderer
Silhouetted in the distance.
General Cromwell advances, turned
Green by a stained-glass silver,
Green as the River Ouse beside us,
The devout observer of
His own great deeds.
He reaches the pew
I lie beneath, stepping on my cassock,
Kneeling in my river. His face shows
Less resolve and more humanity
Than I have seen this day
From the Commonwealth's soldiers.
A cold wind whistles
Through the great hall
And chills us. The Lord Protector
Prays, as Crusaders always will,
For greater slaughters
In the name of righteousness.
Ah, to be a victor.*

Christopher Grewe
Long Beach, NY

Mrs. F. Goldwater

The Artist

Canvas walls
With paintings set
In place, arranged
One beside the other.

Pastels and turpentine
Filling the small cozy room,
The clean cut smell of
Freshly painted pictures.

The old voyeuristic tree roots itself
Beside the pain-cracked window,
Looking in to watch us play
With the reds, blues, and yellows.

The small stout man with
His long aged fingers
Helping the brush to stroke
The final amount.

Different colors of chalk
Etched into his finger prints,
With deep set eyes of crayon brown.
Not muddy, yet not clear.

His soft penciled face
With blotches of cherry
Dabbing his cheeks and nose
In both spring and fall.

The pleasure I would find
In marching in our school line
Towards the white house
With the color inside.

Christine E. Way
Baltimore, MD

Gary Blankenburg

"For the Love of God, Montreasor"

Like tap-dancing on a tightrope
 Or daydreaming on train tracks
 Or jaywalking in traffic
 Like shivering in a phone booth,
 unable to find a coin
 Or shrinking away from
 a nightmare's maniacal laugh
 Or skating on spring ice
 Like cold hands cutting off sight
 as an unfamiliar voice says, "Guess who?"
 Or making small talk
 with your great aunt from Kansas
 Or coming home each day
 to find the furniture rearranged
 I don't like this feeling:
 I'm uncomfortable, on edge,
 Snapping pencil after pencil,
 Heart pumping too fast,
 Knuckles whitening.
 I wait for the floor to cave in
 While I try to hold up the ceiling.
 Indeed, smoldering is more frightening
 Than actually being on fire.

Gina Catanzarite
 McKees Rocks, PA
 Mr. William Wayman

Bad Influences

The Winebergers and Newmans
 Are coming over for cocktails,
 Conversation, and the latest
 Gossip about those uninvited.
 So Buddy and I eat in the
 Kitchen, swipe a bottle of gin,
 And steal out of our own
 House like bandits. Later
 We'll meet with Timmy Wineberger
 And Juli and Dick Newman.
 We'll creep into our
 Backyard and drink the gin
 And peek into our windows,
 Watching our parents at play.

S.R. Johnson
 Staunton, Va.

Ms. Connie Harris

September

Lying, unobserved
 on forbidden straw
 Watching through a crack
 in the barn roof
 As sapphire stars shimmer
 in a velvet indigo sky.
 The sweet perfume
 of newly cut hay
 Grates upon my conscience,
 ignored reminder
 Of scoldings to come
 and chores neglected,
 And still the charm
 of the enchanted twilight
 And forbidden straw
 outshout the call of duty.

Richelle Baugh,
 Seaford, NY

Elizabeth Harrigan

Blue Funk

I wish someone
 would write
 a poem about you
 about how you
 brush your black hair out of your eyes
 smile when you first see me
 have such soft gentle hands
 look at me with indigo eyes
 and then
 sign it
 with your name
 and send it
 to your girlfriend
 on Valentine's Day.

Tricia Connell
 Pittsburgh, PA

Mr. William Wayman



Lannie Hammond, Waynesboro

Untitled

*Autumn happened one night,
When no one else was watching,
And two season-clouds collided,
Making fireworks fly into the dark stillness.
In the crystal morning of the next day,
Wherever the pinwheels and sparklers had glowed,
The air was chilled,
And smelled of bittersweet memories,
And where the embers had fallen,
Frost was burnt into the grass.*

Laurie MacFarlane
Fanwood, NJ

Janet Kollmar



Lannie Hammond, Waynesboro

It's Fall!

*Breathing deeply
 walking through
 the lighted night
 the clouds grey
 against the deepest
 indigo of the sky
 clenching my fists
 next to my thighs
 as I cavort
 immensely enjoying
 the freezing of
 my lungs*

*Susan Heather Gallop
 Fords, NJ*

Ms. Prestia

You watch your train as it pulls out of the station
disappearing with a high pitched cry
and a peal of steam in an orange sky,
watching it as it trudges off into the horizon
taking with it all your discoveries

Who knows what you hoped to find that moment long, long ago
when you left with only your dreams
expecting to find a long lost civilization—
anything, a broken vase, a shard of glass,
that could have been the key —
Now, you're coming home, with boxes filled
with broken dreams and shattered fragments
of what once was

No one had said it would be easy
(And you hadn't expected it to be)
But you waited, toiled all those hours
dreaming of a civilization long gone
seeing in your mind's eye
the marketplace teeming with men in white
robes against brown skin and smelling
the smells of spices and oils...
Unearthing and dusting with gentle hands
what turned out to be just another piece of clay
circa 1913

It's time to come home
time to catalogue and evaluate all you've found
and wonder about the things you left behind
just waiting to be discovered

Kris Rice
Catasauqua, PA

Mrs. Lambert

hussy

november
undresses
for her date
with winter frost.

Lori Gulbin
Coraopolis, PA

Mr. William P. Wayman

Darkness folds over the city street
Broken only by a solitary street lamp
Casting dim and eerie shadows.
The skeletons of buildings stand
Dark against the coal black sky.
Wind whistles through jagged glass of
Broken windows.
And rattles broken shutters.
Battered yellow advertisements
Tumble across the cracked pavement-
Dreams so old and weatherbeaten
That they have become illegible
Shredded and beaten by the wind
Until they are like sooty ashes
Left over from a burnt-out fire.

Julie Humbert
Lancaster, PA

Mrs. Snavelly

AN ELECTRICAL SEPARATION FOR A NUCLEAR FAMILY'S KIDS

Three atoms bonded together like
two twin brothers and an older sister in a close-knit family
travel from the blue above to the blue below.
There are countless numbers of such triplets
all pooled together to form one massive body.
Reservoir water is channeled through a network of
tunnels and pipes until it finally reaches
the hallowed halls of cement and brick
which compose Roslyn High School. A babysitter
with a doctorate in chemistry is demonstrating
the electrical separation of H₂O to his sleeping
first period students.
For this we have to break up a family.

Richard Thau
Roslyn, NY

Mr. V. Razzore

"On the Teaching of Writing"

Feelings

- On opening minds
- On expressing thoughts, ideas, feelings
- On seeing those words and knowing
MORE
- About who they are and
What they care about

Writing is free-ing. It allows the eye to see what the mind can imagine. If the thoughts are negative, it provides an outlet so they won't fester, contaminate, destroy. If they are positive, it permits revelation, growth, maturity. Once exposed, words on a page can be reviewed, restored or rejected.

What a fragile, nebulous task is the teaching of writing! For what is teaching? Is it sharing information? covering material? seeking regurgitation in order to justify or validate one's reason for feeling professional?

The teaching of writing should be like fireworks, setting the spark that lights up the mind, setting the scene for the student to explode-- to realize that his experience is unique and worthy.

After being encouraged and instructed to examine student writing from this startling perspective, I read Patty's first draft on "How to Care for a Pet." It was stiff, boring and "correct." In our conference I asked her if she had a pet. Her eyes sparkled as she told me about her poodle. I urged

her to describe him vividly enough for me to really see him and understand her love for him. Her second draft was accomplished with no moans or groans.

That revised version began. "The house was screaming for a pet." Reading on, I felt him cuddled by her toes, licking her awake, catching her ball, but refusing to give it up and gobbling down her "illicit" treats. I trembled with her anxiety as she watched him hit by a car (three times) and shuddered with her relief as he "made it" through recovery. "No wonder we called him Peppy," she concluded.

My awareness of my part in her production permitted me to label myself a "teacher." To write is to be awake, alert, alive. To teach writing is to awaken, arouse, anticipate. It is to stir minds and touch hearts, to make moments last by offering their reactions to eternity. It is reinforcement, courage, sustenance.

The teaching of writing is like the task of the missionary, for it, too, is holy. Thus, the writing teacher must be awed by her responsibility and strive continuously for guidance, seeking tangible and intangible tools to enhance and implement her goals. She also prays a lot — for renewed energy and enthusiasm to create the excitement which motivates students into setting down their words with pride.

Leona Drizin
English Department
Narritown Area High School
Narritown, PA

EDITORIAL: A SLOB'S POINT OF VIEW

Maybe it was the stack of dishes on my dresser that hadn't seen the kitchen for weeks. Or maybe it was the pile of clothes in the corner that looked ready to get up and walk out of my room. It might even have been the crumpled papers that formed a pathway to my door. But whatever the reason, my parents were adamant: "Clean your room!"

As I was growing up, I was required to keep my room as decent as possible on a daily basis. But as my parents began to realize the hopelessness of the situation, the rule became relaxed until I was only required (begged) to close my door when company came.

I pity those organized souls whose lives are as neat as pins. A fun Saturday night for them most likely includes a rousing evening of alphabetizing the food in the refrigerator and color-coordinating their cologne. Friends are quickly driven away by their annoying habit of bringing their own napkins to restaurants. And demanding that the silverware be sterilized is simply too much! Because of the sympathy I feel, I never ridicule when I catch sight of one of those unfortunate nitpickers cleaning their locker out (for the fifth time that week!) So, why,

may I ask, am I teased when my French homework somehow works its way into my English book?

I can't help but feel that it's the messy minority with their cluttered lives that have all the fun. There's never a dull moment - I often wonder what neat people do with their time. Any free time I have is wholeheartedly spent searching for lost items. Add that to sleeping, eating and living in general and I do quite nicely! And because of the time I spend in quest of misplaced items, I can honestly say I know the thrill of discovery personally. Just last week, when I went in search of a pair of shoes, I stumbled across the book that I'd spent two days swearing to the librarian I'd turned in. And last summer when I went exploring for my favorite beach towel, I managed to find the winter gloves I'd got for Christmas, but had lost before I'd had the chance to wear. (I never did find the towel!)

Even in the world of messiness, though, there exists a code of honor. For instance, never misplace the Thanksgiving turkey only to rediscover it in the middle of March - your family won't appreciate it even if you were only trying to practice dissection on it. And never forget your lunch in your locker for three months - it's a good way of alienating the entire school!

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