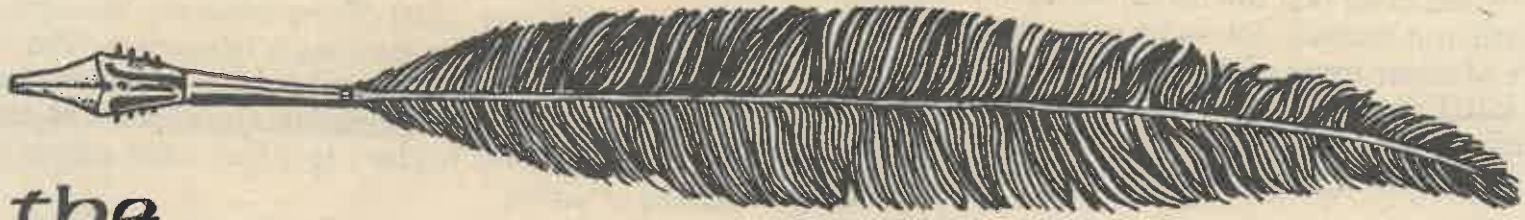
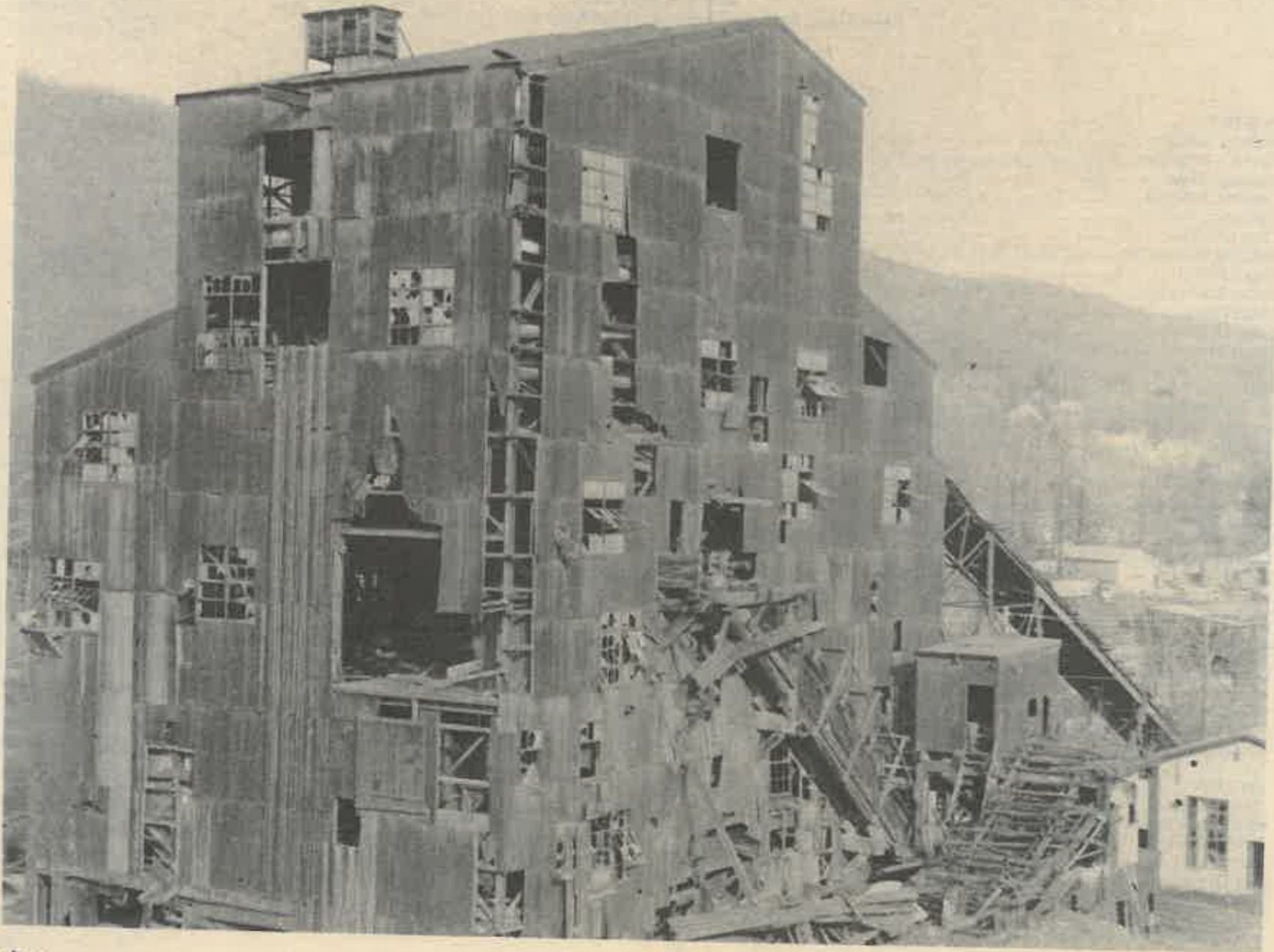


SUSQUEHANNA UNIVERSITY



the  
apprentice WRITER



\$1

Dave Koppenhaver



# Introduction

Welcome to the third issue of THE APPRENTICE WRITER, which annually features the best writing, photography, and artwork we receive from secondary school students.

As I've said in the first two issues, we mean this publication to be used as a teaching tool, so we encourage teachers to reproduce whatever seems appropriate. I also want to encourage future submissions (we received over 3,000 entries this year) from any student attending high school in the Middle Atlantic States.

We are distributing copies to nearly 3,500 schools this year. Susquehanna University and Ottaway Newspapers are committed both to this project and to writing excellence, and we believe this third issue of THE APPRENTICE WRITER will be as

practical and enjoyable as the first two issues.

We welcome submissions of poetry, short fiction, essays, interviews, feature articles, editorials, photographs, and artwork by students in grades 9-12. Send material to Gary Fincke, Writing Program Director, Susquehanna University, Selinsgrove, PA 17870. The deadline for submitting is February 15, 1986. Please include a stamped, self-addressed envelope for return of photographs and artwork. We will announce acceptances on April 30, 1986. We also invite teachers to submit short essays on the teaching of writing.

THE APPRENTICE WRITER is published through the generous support of Ottaway Newspapers, Inc. and the printing facilities of The Sunbury Daily Item.

## THE APPRENTICE WRITER

Number 3

1985

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Editor: Gary Fincke

Assistants: Barbara Feldmann, Billee Kaye Sooy, Joy Wood,  
Lyn Beamesderfer

### POETRY

Miriam Bastian	3
Rachel Carpenter	3,24,47
Heather Davis	3,19
Deborah Sobeloff	3,36
Katherine Hoover	4
Cara Garofalo	5
Behrouz Montakhab	5,11
Susan Briante	9
Susan Knobloch	10
Leigh Cheng	11
Ellen Dessloch	11
Sandy Moser	11,46
Kathleen Zaff	13
Porter Shreve	17
Caitlin Oeschger	19
Stephen Sollins	19
Pam Carter	20,31
Lisa Beskin	24
Lawrence McNamara	24
Stephen Singer	24
Justin Vicari	25,42
Paula Krout	26
Darren Aronofsky	27
Mibsy Raney	31
Laura Reiley	35
Andrew Gordon	36
Brad Jacobs	36
Tonya Joy Byard	39
Christine Reiss	41
Michelle Sabol	41
Michelle Saez	41
Jim Masland	42
Catherine Wagner	46

### FICTION

Darren Haber	6
Elizabeth Fasoldt	8
Patrick Kelley	13
Amy Ongiri	15
Alisa Aydin	16
Ron Nyren	22
Vanessa Weiman	26
Amir Nasir	32
Sam Cohen	33
Vanessa Elder	34
Jeff Rosenberg	42
Emily Fleschner	43

### ESSAYS

Dacey Kiang	4
Dan Kulpinski	8
Tonya Joy Byard	12
Sebastian DeGregorio	18
William Minor	18
Sandy Moser	20
Jennifer Theiss	23
Andrew Blendermann	25
Susan Kaufman	27,47
Linda Brown	28
Scott Colburn	28
Alex Miko	29
Claire Nixon	30
Tony Stone	34
Christopher Korintus	35
Wendy Schreckinger	37
Susan Knasiak	40
Jennifer Newkirk	40
Pamela Eyers Trickett (Teacher)	48

### PHOTOGRAPHY, ARTWORK

Dave Koppenhaver	Cover, 12, 39
Lily Tsong	5, 14
Kate Baron	9
Bob Kenny	10
Jennifer Au	14
Linda Tooma	17
David Halstead	19
Mike McMullen	21
James Polahar	25
Dana Martinelli	30
Neil Gourley	46

### LOGO DESIGN

Carolyn Gienieccko

THE APPRENTICE WRITER is published annually by Susquehanna University, Selinsgrove, PA 17870, and Ottaway Newspapers.

## Lines

An artist once told me,  
"The truth is somewhere between these two lines."  
He showed me twenty feet by twenty feet canvases  
covered with layers of thick, bold paint  
that described sea and sky and color.

My grandmother has trouble getting up out of chairs.  
The deep pillows tug with the strength of youth  
against her weak knees.

She drinks coffee out of a straw,  
the kind that I used to love to drink with,  
an accordion that bends.  
She tells me about how she started college  
as a math major.  
"I was supposed to be quite attractive then,"  
she says.

My grandmother plods through the front page  
reading to my grandfather  
who can no longer see the emaciated  
lines of writing.  
Each story recalls a thought that winds through  
her silver, wispy hair.

Truth lives somewhere between the lines  
of my grandmother's face.

Deborah Sobeloff  
Bethesda, MD  
Dr. Martin Galvin

## Untitled

The clock on the wall waits to be seen,  
its arms skipping over grooves,  
with no resolution.  
The people are reading  
waiting to finish their sentences,  
their papers,  
their books,  
waiting for the bus.  
Vinyl men rest on the floor like suitcases,  
waiting to be picked up and carried home,  
waiting for someone to wrap in their lonely insides.  
Old women stand with swollen ankles  
clutching their tickets like their hearts.  
They want to be first to get on the bus,  
to have their tickets torn.  
They want to be first to be seated,  
their eyes closed  
and arms folded  
over their  
chests.

Miriam Bastian  
Middletown, NJ  
Lakewood Prep  
Lois Hirshkowitz

## Big Yellow Bellow

page 3

Play me  
saxophone sounds--  
ones that roll  
like the smirk  
cross your face--  
set deep and twisted  
to echo in sad  
trenchcoat notes.  
The long drawn sounds,  
half shadows,  
slide down till breath is  
almost gone.  
Play me  
your big yellow brute  
in office and elevator  
over the Musak--  
a real instrument.

Heather Davis  
Hershey, PA  
Hershey High School  
Mrs. Marilyn Durfee

## Discussing

I put my finger on it as we walk down the street;  
I, with this talent for cliches. I have it:  
Just like in the movie on at midnight,  
Of suburban housewives killed and replacements.

With their faces. Your sisters agree: It is startling  
Your total submersion over the summer, in Paris  
(Where we did not see you they could have done anything)  
And you returning, pounds thinner, face tight and the eyes

A little murky. So this is love: your twenty-fourth birthday,  
And he let you eat a loaf of bread, and wine.  
He handles the financial and you the social now.  
He tacks up horoscopes on the refrigerator: Days

Of be reasonable and wedding bells will sound.  
Rarely are you seen alone, walking. And you tell  
Us: My goal is just five more pounds.  
Owing it all to Paris you say, with those new eyes--reasonable.

Rachel W. Carpenter  
Philadelphia, PA  
Germantown Friends School  
Pat Macpherson



## Exquisitely Oriental--Hollywood Style

To be exquisitely Oriental is not difficult if one does it in the Hollywood style. Last summer, I landed a bit part in an upcoming movie, *The Man with One Red Shoe*, filmed in Washington, D.C. I was to portray a typical Chinese teenager in mainland China who one day meets a young American man on the Great Wall. An afternoon of playful, souvenir-picture-taking for the young man's scrapbook was the subject of that day's filming segment.

Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer had rented the entire third floor of the Washington Marriott Hotel for the use of its moviemaking crew and "extras." Standing before a brightly lit vanity in the large suite designated for the dressing room, I studied my reflection critically. Although I was to be a simple peasant girl, the wardrobe department gave me a glamorous costume--silken Chinese pajamas of rich turquoise and lavishly brocaded golden dragons, and a mandarin collar. Never had I felt quite so foolish and conspicuous. I had expected modest, homespun workclothes of drab brown or faded blue, not this stereotypic outfit that no Chinese peasant would really wear. And when she saw me, the wardrobe woman gushed, "Ooh! You look adorable! So exquisitely Oriental." The director nodded and suggested that we "extras" go down to the set and wait for the star, Tom Hanks.

Outside on the street, where the filming was to be done, two cameramen had selected the massive, white stone face of a nearby building to represent the Great Wall of China. Later, the film producers would simply superimpose our images from the pictures onto a real photograph of the Great Wall.

As we waited for Tom Hanks, I watched the crew busily making last-minute adjustments on the set. Fussy cameramen pushed their cameras to certain angles, only to immediately shove them back to their original positions. Large, complex-looking sound equipment left twisted wires and cords snaking along the pavement. Moving closer to a speaker, I caught the murmur of Chinese voices, probably recorded in nearby Chinatown on Seventh and H.

Finally, Tom Hanks sauntered out of the hotel toward us at the stone wall. He gave each of us a hearty handshake and asked our names: Chen, Lisa, Jose, Dacey, Linda. A group of small black boys in frayed, cut-off jeans and torn tee-shirts suddenly spotted Hanks and swarmed around him.

"Whoa!" He laughed and threw up his hands in surrender. "All right, c'mom guys, we're supposed to be in China!" The boys left reluctantly as I stared, starstruck, at Hanks, who clapped his hands, rubbed them together, and winked at me. "Well!" Grinning widely, he called to the director in a booming voice, "Why don't we start with me and the Chinese girl?" I bristled to hear he had forgotten my name so quickly, and soon found myself being herded in front of four cameras. Instantly the filming began and the director barked instructions to Hanks. "Go and flirt with her, Tom..." Hanks swaggered toward me, one eyebrow cocked, and lips pursed. "No, Tom, I said 'flirt,' not 'seduce'!..." Hanks then wiggled his eyebrows and playfully chucked me under the chin. "Kayo, that's better." The director turned to me. "Honey, ya' look a little lost. Try imagining how a real peasant girl would react to the charm of a tall, good-lookin', red-blooded Yankee."

Oh, I get it, I realized. He thought that a young girl in China would be awed by any American man who flirted with her. As my frown turned into an indignant scowl, Hanks tried to ease my mood. "Hey hey, c'mom guy! She's a red-blooded Yank too, ya' know." The director waved his hand impatiently and continued with his "helpful" hints: "Close your eyes more...smile wider..." Why didn't he just bluntly tell me to act more "Chinese-y"? I supposed he wanted me to take the tiny, mincing steps of a "typical" Chinese woman, or perhaps bow deeply and solemnly to Hanks. After all, that was what the Hollywood image of being exquisitely Oriental required. I felt degraded by

each attempt the filmmakers made to pigeon-hole me into their stereotype: they gave me lines like, "Ooh! You Ame-lee-can, no?," and they gave me directions like, "Squint your eyes some."

In the dressing room after the filming, I tore off my gaudy costume and flung it to the floor. It lay there--a satiny turquoise puddle; the fierce features of one golden dragon forming a smirk, as if mocking the events of the entire day.

Suddenly curious, I picked up the costume and looked at the inner label. I then realized that this movie and the elaborate pajamas had something in common: they were both

100% polyester  
Made in U.S.A.

Dacey Kiang  
Silver Spring, MD  
Northwood High School

## Wed. 3:42 P.M.

*It is a cold day  
I sit on the milkbox  
bundled in my big black coat  
and smoke  
and smoke  
and smoke  
until it feels like my lungs glow every time I inhale  
and flicker every time I exhale  
menthol air buzzes in my ears  
I light the next one off the butt of the other  
My eyes start to tear in the cold  
I think that by now they too must be glowing red  
like a cat's eyes in a polaroid  
I think that my mother will find me here dead frozen  
with a cigarette still burning between my bluegrey fingers  
I think the coroner will proclaim "frozen solid"  
but he will jump a little when he lifts my eyelids  
just to be sure  
and finds my eyes glowing red  
ha ha ha*

*Let me sit with my cigarettes and go blind in my overcoat  
for one half hour after school  
It's nothing outrageous*

Katherine Hoover  
Summit, NJ  
Kent Place School  
Dr. Jane Coil Cole





Lily Tsong

## Paper Boy

Louis said:

that there is no Santa Claus  
that there is no Easter Bunny  
that there is no Paper Boy

but I have seen

the presents  
wrapped in red and gold sitting under the twinkling tree  
the eggs  
painted with blue and yellow hidden in the verdant bushes  
the newspaper  
printed in black and white lying on the concrete porch

and today I saw Him  
the Paper Boy  
Himself  
He was riding a bike  
and He had a huge orange bag  
and He gave to every home a newspaper in water-proof plastic

And then He rang the bell of his bike  
and He disappeared.

Behrouz Montakhab  
Potomac, MD  
Mrs. Zirzow

## The Pea Mouse

These New England maples  
like early Christmas trees  
extend boughs lambent  
with autumn leaves' wind-spirals.  
Gold, red, and orange  
dance more softly on October's breath  
than on fine pointed needles--  
Look, the last green,  
its veins swelling  
to mask anomaly  
brushes our fender, swift  
as the Cape pea-mouse darts  
to evade the intent stares of children--  
all searching for a crossing deer  
in this "bumper-to-bumper" limbo,  
but I  
search for the pea-mouse,  
wondering yet never recalling  
the origin of its name.  
Still you mock--still insist  
I am a silly child,  
but I  
have to see the pea-mouse  
before it changes like the leaves  
and a star lights the tallest maple.

Cara Garofalo  
Westfield, NJ  
Westfield High School  
Paula A. Roy



In the time it takes to lock a car door, Marc explodes in a flurry of frustration.

"Jesus!" he says, his face scrunching up in a mixture of anger and amazement.

"A ticket! Can you believe it. My dad's gonna kill me..."

25 feet away from the tan Buick, Rob can see the white rectangle tucked firmly under the windshield wiper. At that instant, all is lost for Rob. The climax of victory was near, but now the argument must be tucked away, saved for later. It's hard at first, but soon Rob hands over his sympathy: "Marc, I'm sorry. See what it's for."

The two walk over to the car and Marc plucks the paper from the windshield. He turns his back on the car to study the ticket. His finger searches through the policeman's scrawl for the crucial amount.

"32 bucks? For...no, come on. Well..." he mutters, letting his hands fall to his sides. He turns to look at the bright yellow curb, scowling at how clearly it stands out against the grey of the cement.

"Damn." Rob tilts his head so the sun's glare bounces off the windshield and into his eyes. "I guess we lose."

"Great. We lost. I feel better, Rob. I just got a 32 dollar ticket, that's what happened." He shoves the ticket into his back pocket and walks over to the car door.

"Who knew, Marc? We were only going to be gone a few minutes, and it turned into twenty. You didn't know the pants were going to take that long...it was only a hemming. It's not your fault." Rob looks to Marc, who fingers a tooth and stares at the driver's seat.

"Get in," says Marc coolly.

Rob does, and bounces a little on the seat since a late August heat has made the upholstery warm. In just a small time, the sun will darken and red streaks will line the sky. The day will soon begin to cool. Marc starts the car and pulls out smoothly, showing his five-month driving experience. It's following all the rules, Rob thinks, that he's not so great at.

The mood in the car hangs like an uninvited guest. Rob attempts to get Marc to talk a little, so he won't begin to take his frustration out on the drivers who happen to get in his way, like the Volkswagen that passes them with ample space to spare. Mark honks violently without even braking.

"Let's talk about something pleasant," says Rob.

"Like what?"

"Well, school starts soon."

"Oh yeah, that's something pleasant."

"Alright. Let's talk about nuclear war instead."

Marc cracks a smile, and his lower jaw slides slightly under his upper as his lips form a wry grin. "Cute, Rob, cute. You know how to cheer a guy up. But I know what you'd rather be talking about."

"How about our bet?"

They come to a stop light. Marc turns to Rob. His face is one of utter calm, now having lost all animation. Rob recognizes this look, expecting an irrelevant, illogical rationalization.

"Look. I just got a 30 dollar ticket."

Rob sighs gently, and places one foot slowly over the other on the milky brown carpeting. His posture is lax.

"See, Rob, I was hoping that as my best friend, you'd forget about the 10 dollars you claim I owe you."

"Now that's being manipulative. Of course I'll forget about it, but this time there's a good excuse. Last time the excuse was kind of silly, remember?"

"Hey, I needed money for my girlfriend!"

The light flashes green, and Marc turns to the road, the engine picking up a little hum. "And Rob, you can't say this is silly. I'm stuck with this goddamn--"

The immediate silence causes Rob to sit up a little in his seat and turn to him. Suddenly, Marc is over in the left lane, and then

into a deserted gas station. He is turning around.

"Got something in mind?" Rob asks.

"Sure do, my man. Gonna get me out of 34 dollars, or 32, or whatever," he says, laughing his short, broken up laugh, "I'm gonna get my ticket fixed. Gonna get me a favor done."

Rob shuts his eyes. What now? Perhaps he's go back and paint the curb grey. It wouldn't be any worse than the time he was going to break a strong lock in order to claim a new bike from the lock company. The company had a policy where they promised to replace any bike that was stolen because of broken locks. Marc decided against the idea when he realized he might have some trouble breaking the lock without a small supply of dynamite.

"What are you planning?"

"There's this guy owns a fruit store in the strip district. Named, uh, Pantz. Good friend of my dad's. He'll fix this ticket."

"How?"

"Connections. Use your imagination, Rob. He's one of those guys who just knows people."

After a time in the direction away from home, green begins to be replaced by gray. They pass by small ethnic stores, and then the buildings start getting taller.

"Marc, this won't take long, I've got dinner you know, and--"

"Oh, no problem. I'll take a shortcut, instead of going through downtown. We'll be back before the meat's cold."

Rob leans back again, asking himself to remain unnerved.

Marc breaks a brief silence by asking, "I was going to ask about Anne, before you brought up our bet. Have you talked to her lately?"

"Oh, Anne."

"'Oh, Anne,' listen to you!"

Rob smiles a little; this is a game they play often.

"She's great," says Rob, "I mean, she's different."

"Sure, sure, that's what they all say. I'm kidding of course. She's cute, is she going to be a senior, too?"

"Yeah, as a matter of fact. Maybe we'll have some classes. Well, I hope not. If we have classes together we might get sick of each other, you know?"

"Is that possible? Sick of each other? I don't know, you guys seem to get along real well, which is more than I can say for me and JoAnne."

JoAnne was going to be a junior. They had had a series of arguments over the last week, but they agreed to try, once more. Marc had a resounding stubbornness, and he meant to overcome their problems and turn the relationship into a lasting one. Rob had different expectations.

"You guys will work things out, I think," he lies, "Give her a chance."

Marc is now looking for a parking space. He finds one and pulls in. Rob feels a little guilty about not telling Marc how he really thinks, but he's got to be cheerful, he convinces himself, and not worry about holding back.

"So, your parents know this dude Pantz?"

"Yeah, well, somehow they met him a little bit ago. My dad may have been working for him at one point, I'm not sure. Maybe he helped him to find a lawyer."

They walk past the stores with their sidewalk displays. People mill about, going from table to table in search of discounts. Food is the biggest commodity here, especially fish, fruits, and vegetables. They walk under the green awning of Pantz's store, "Hogans." A chubby lady with a white apron smiles at the cash register, just inside the front door. The boys have turned and are now heading towards the back. For a moment, Rob thought that Marc was going to stop and talk to the woman, but he only nodded and walked on.

In the back of the store, people are moving boxes, slapping

(Continued on Page 7)



# Shut Up and Drive

(Continued from Page 6)

them against the floor, grunting as they push and shove the heavy crates. On the left side of the wall are vegetables, laid out under a fluorescent grocery light. The entire place smells like an open, stale refrigerator. Bits of lettuce and other greens are scattered on the cement floor.

The boys keep walking until they reach the back, which eventually leads out into a loading zone. A sweaty man comes up to them, wearing a pencil in his hair and odd greasy workshoes.

"Can I help you boys?" he asks.

"Yeah, I'm looking for, uh, Pantz?"

"Upstairs...follow those steps," says the worker, pointing off to the right. "Used to be an elevator shaft. You the boss's cousin?"

"No, just a visiting friend."

The guy nods indifferently and goes off to his work. Marc walks towards the stairs and climbs them. Rob notices that they are covered with a sticky residue, as if they'd never seen the likes of water. They ascend the stairs to a small hallway. At the end of the hallway is a wooden door, which like the rest of the hall is painted a light aqua, though the paint is faded and lined with cracks. A man talking loudly on the phone brings a strange image to Rob. He pictures a temperamental Italian who will rub out some policemen when he hears of the ticket. He doesn't share this cliched, gangster-movie induced joke with Marc.

"Well, let's do it," says Marc, who struts down to the door and knocks. Rob hangs a little behind but catches up to him when his knock is answered.

"Yeah?" comes a voice from behind the door.

"Uh, it's me...Marc Simons. You know, Mr. Simon's son?"

Rob laughs a little under his breath, thinking that "Mr. Simons's son" probably didn't help much.

"Hold on," says the voice. It then starts mumbling to the person on the phone. A few seconds later, it calls for Marc to come in.

"Now, wait out here for just a bit," says Marc. He opens the door and quickly closes it. Rob strains to hear the conversation, and pictures the glimpse of the office he caught. Pantz, an overweight man with a large nose, sat behind a brown wooden desk with scattered papers about and a black telephone next to a cluster of pictures. Behind the chair was an oblong view of the strip and a distant glimpse of downtown included in the window's frame.

Then the door opens, and Marc motions for Rob to come in. Marc's eyes are widened slightly, and Rob wonders if he will have to serve as Marc's character witness. Inside, Pantz motions for the two boys to sit down in a couple of wooden chairs. They do.

"So, you're Marc's friend?"

Rob nods and extends his hand. "Glad to meet you."

Pantz hoists himself up from the chair, shakes his hand, and plops back down. His palms are large and his fingers meaty and strong.

"He's a good kid. He tells me he needs this ticket fixed."

Rob nods, wondering if he should start begging for help. Perhaps not, he thinks, maybe later if things get kind of tough. He then asks himself how Marc is hoping he'll act.

"What did he do?" Pantz asks.

"He, uh, parked illegally. See, we were just running into this--"

"Shouldn't do that, Marc," he says, swiveling to him in his squeaky chair. "Those cops...bust you in a minute if you do something wrong. Watch yourself, they like picking on kids like you."

"Well," says Marc, "I'll have to be a little more careful. But I've learned my lesson, and if you could only give me a little

hand, I'd be sure not to do it again."

Pantz turns in his chair and looks to the right wall. Hung up are several pictures of him with different people; a geometric arrangement of local celebrities. Rob recognizes a local newscaster on one of them, the quarterback of the pro football team, a city council member. He then wonders how this guy happens to know these people.

"Hey," Pantz says, turning his attention back to an increasingly uncomfortable Marc, "how come you don't visit more often? Your old man, he's a good guy. Helped me out once. Your mother would probably like some cheap corn, eh? Maybe some peas at wholesale?"

Marc leans a little to his left, then back. Rob smiles and feels like asking Marc how much he's enjoying this.

"Oh, she likes cheap food, alright. I mean, you know, good food at good prices."

There is a pause, and Marc scratches his head, putting one foot on top of his thigh, holding it there uneasily.

"So what do you want?" says Pantz. "You want me to make a phone call, raise a little hell? Huh?" he says, beginning to laugh a little to himself.

"Well," Marc says, letting the foot thud to the floor, "maybe you could, you know, see if maybe they'd let a first time offender off the hook...just this once of course."

Pantz nods. "You hungry?" he says, suddenly turning to Rob. "Me? A little."

"Do me a favor. Go down and get us three oranges. They're in season now. They'll be going up in price in a month or so. Thanks. You know the way? Good."

Rob opens the door and goes downstairs. This is too much, he almost says out loud. One of those crazy things to be laughed about in college, or something like that. Maybe, he thinks, Pantz will keep him up there so long Marc will never even get to college. Rob laughs at the thought of Marc's brow, spotted with perspiration, as Pantz continues to ramble. He laughs all the way to the oranges. It's then that he doesn't know whether or not to tell someone that the boss wants these, and he won't be stealing. Or should he simply take them and walk away smoothly, with the risk of getting caught?

He turns in time to see Marc coming down the stairs. Marc wears a very angry expression, one that reveals without a doubt what Pantz is going to do. He walks past Rob and begins to breathe more deeply.

"Well?" asks Rob, following him out of the store.

"Forget it. No way. He said they wouldn't listen to them. The police won't do anything for him."

"Why? I thought--"

"Because I'm a kid, and 'the cops don't like kids' he said. What an ass."

Marc walks and seems to notice only his own footsteps.

"You know," he says to Rob, "you have these expectations of people and then they turn on you. I didn't want much. He could have fixed the ticket, if he really wanted to. What an ass."

The boys are approaching the car. Before they get there, Rob takes a look around at the vendors trying to give people a bargain. That's what everyone comes down here for, he thinks, for a bargain. Save some money. Actually, what you save you end up spending in gas to drive down here.

The two are now at the car. Marc's jaw hangs down like a wet rag. Rob looks at him, and then at the slip of paper under one of the wipers. And then at the parking meter with the red sign in the window.

(Continued on Page 8)



## Untitled

Every day was Saturday. That's the way it seemed, anyway. Really every day was not a day. It was all a limbo. There was no school or work or money because scientists had discovered a miscalculation in the calendar. Everything was to be called off for six months. The days and nights and seasons rolled on, but every manmade measure of time was stopped.

The girl played in the yard. She was old enough to appreciate the rest from life. She saw her friends whenever she wanted and played all the time. Her family--all families--lived like rich and poor men at the same time. They did what they wanted when they wanted, but they had to eat canned food that the government had issued beforehand and watch for thieves constantly.

The girl thought about life as it was. When time came back, things would be different. October eighth was in the fall and October ninth would be in the spring. October would become April. It didn't make sense. People can't ignore time and make it go away. Still, that is what they had done. The people who died were forgotten and babies were born without birthdays. She realized that she had gotten older but it wasn't really age. If no time had passed, she could never get older. As she thought back, she was not able to remember how long they had dwelled in this limbo. It was not like the summer when she counted down the days until school because she didn't know when this would end. She realized that she had lost all perception of time. She could not remember when she had seen her friends, her parents last. But she brushed these thoughts aside and dug in the sandbox with her wrinkled hands.

Elizabeth Fasoldt  
Rosemont, PA  
Harrilton High School  
Mrs. Ceil Frey

## Shut Up and Drive

(Continued from Page 7)

"Oh no, not again," says Marc.

Rob hesitates for a moment.

"No problem," he says, "I'll pay for this one." Meanwhile, he prays deeply that it will be no more than a few dollars.

"You will? Really? Oh man, you're incredible. Let's go home, I'm hungry."

The two are driving home, and Marc has taken a back road, a tiny out of the way street that will eventually lead them to the main street of their neighborhood. The one they both live on. It's kind of an indirect route, but the sun, filtered by the trees, makes it pretty.

Meanwhile, the two sit in silence, each alone with his reflections. Marc is getting near a stop sign. It almost seems ridiculous. Who'd be driving now? Rob asks himself. Everyone should be home around the dinner table. Yet he's relaxed; the aloneness of the Buick on the woodsy road is peaceful. He puts his hand on the door handle. His gaze follows the trees, and he squints at the spotty sun.

"We'll keep in touch through college, won't we?" he asks.

"Sure. We've got to."

Marc eases the accelerator up slightly, and the car slows. He goes right through the stop sign, but doesn't come close to having an accident.

Darren Haber  
Pittsburgh, PA

## All I Want for Christmas

### Are My Two 800's

Every year my dad asks me for a Christmas list. It used to be, "Dan, have you made out your list for Santa yet?" Making out lists for Santa was always so easy when I was five or six years old. I would sit at my old wooden desk and list a local toy store's inventory: Big Wheels that rumbled down the driveway; bicycles with two wheels and more than one speed; legos, red, white, and blue; matchbox cars, which raced along my basement floor; racing cars, with authentic stripes, numbers, and lights; trains which choo-chooed around my realistic looking train-track; board games, of strategy, of chance, and of skill.

This year, my dad asked me for a Christmas list, not a list for Santa. This year it was, "Dan, what do you want for Christmas? Have you made a list for Christmas yet?" I answered "No," went up to my room, and thought about it: a computer game like Zork II--no, copied it already; a new Bruce Springsteen album--possibility; a Batman comic book--absolutely; video cassette recorder tapes--too expensive; personal computer--too expensive; color TV--not allowed. I went through the whole realm of material entertainment, such as records, movies, clothes, tapes, squirt guns, G.I. Joes (with the Kung Fu grip), comic books, and board games of all types, and came up with two things not crossed out on my list. So, I thought about the practical world of wishes. Mom had been saying that I needed a clock/radio with an alarm, and she'd probably get it for me. I wrote it down. I now had three things I "wanted" on my list. Then I got to thinking, and I figured that if Santa has his elves making high-tech toys, T.V.'s, and stereos, then he could surely have them procure for me one little piece of paper. A \$32,000 piece of paper at that.

Yes, Santa, I want a scholarship for Christmas. And if there is a Scholarship Santa out there, he could also load his sleigh with SAT scores, Achievement test scores, nice job security, social security, et cetera. Santa should be a branch of government up at the North Pole, designated to give us wishful people our dearest wishes. Most people do wish for things that are hard to come by, such as \$32,000 scholarships to the college of their choice, 1600 SAT's, and Redskins' season tickets. How simple life would be if, Christmas morning, I found two evenly balanced SAT scores waiting in my stocking, maybe with a note:

"Sir:

Next year, please specify what kind of job it is you want, so I can get a jump on your mom."

S.C.

I know you're saying, "Gee, this kid's a dreamer: he'll never get anywhere." But what you don't understand is that my belief in Santa has never died. I sometimes wonder why people make so many jokes about Santa, as if he didn't exist. I know there is a Santa Claus (I saw him at the mall the other day), and I also know that he has always brought me what I ask for. When it comes to scholarships, Santa knows if I'm an Ivy, and he knows if I'm a State. He knows if I'm an MIT, and he knows if I'm top rate. So I'm making my list, and fixing my price, I'm gonna find out if Santa's real nice. And I think he will be real nice this year--because all I want for Christmas are my two 800's.

Dan Kulpinski  
Silver Spring MD  
Northwood High School  
Mary Lee Ruddle





Kate Baron

## Rainsong

I'm lost  
 somewhere  
 among the  
 intertwining webs of people  
 trapped in the confusion  
 of Canal Street  
 It's Friday--4:30  
 and it's raining  
 And peering at the world on Mott Street  
 through wipers and windshield  
 I begin to wonder  
 about the umbrellas  
 unfolding like  
 black flowers  
 blanketing the city  
 You know every flower  
 is a single life  
 a single story  
 --a tear  
 a smile  
 each black flower  
 is a daisy,  
 a rose,  
 or a deep violet  
 You just can't tell  
 in the city  
 where flowers get lost

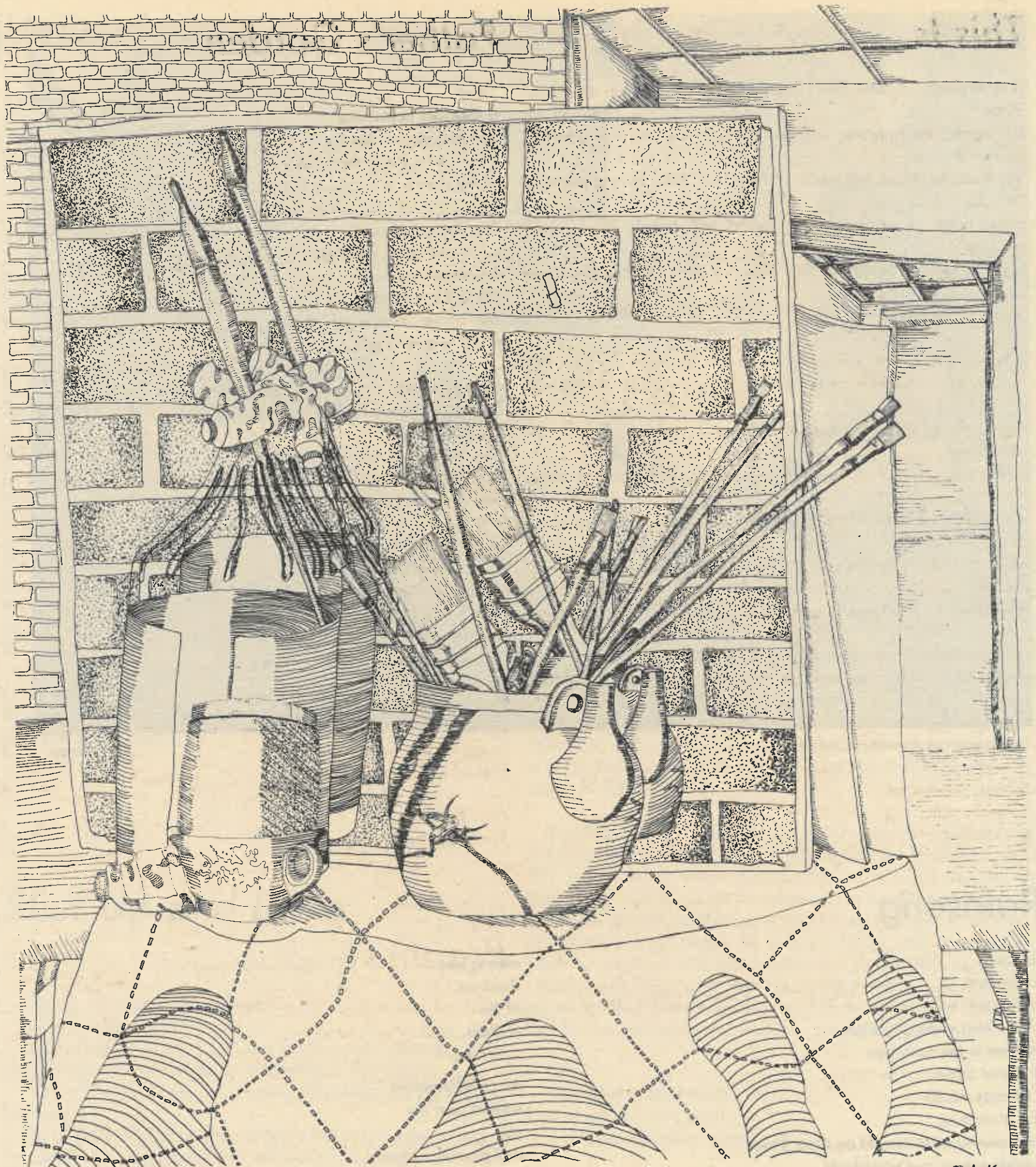
among the  
 shadows  
 of the  
 skylines.

An old Chinaman  
 walked past my  
 car  
 and glancing into the  
 world of my windshield  
 he opened a large  
 black umbrella  
 I tried to look behind it  
 but all I could see  
 was his darkness--  
 petals  
 closed without light.

I was only a raindrop in the city  
 Wishing to be  
 the sun.

Susan Briante  
 Fanwood, NJ  
 Scotch Plains Fanwood High School  
 Mr. James Mason





Bob Kenny

## Fan Of Reality

Plays about crazy dreaming ladies have always scared me  
 Like a credit card in the lock between what I can touch  
 And what touches me  
 The aberrant and unnatural have a smirking attractiould draw lines  
 with my soul.  
 Now I use you as my ruler, I measure myself against you  
 If I ever had a goal, I guess it was impressing you  
 I never know if I'm elating or depressing you  
 But it doesn't matter  
 The trying occupies my mind.  
 And you said you've always been a big fan of reality

To me, the one uncertain of anybody's sanity  
 I throw my thoughts into your lap  
 So I don't have to know where they go when you stand up  
 Do you rest your life on facts because you're frightened  
 Or just because you're tough?

Susan Knobloch  
 Oakhurst, NJ  
 Ocean Township High School  
 Mr. Richards

© 1997 Susan Knobloch



## This Is

a chain poem, an isita. Don't fear it has hurt no one, will not. Touch it, by the corner, no embrace, will do. Whisper the words to yourself. Scream if you wish, no blood, will curdle. When done, hand to next person in line. A

chain poem is versatile, have verse, will travel. If you have pressing pursuits, tend to them now. Your duty has been fulfilled. Thank you and, please come again.

...however if you can still spare a moment, you may wish to watch the next person in line. Set your watch back a minute, instant replay, mirror image. Watch for the warning signs of an impending confrontation with literature. Observe the startled twist of a brow, the way a nervous smile slithers across thin lips, the undirected crinkling of a nose. Feel free to talk to your comrade, to communicate, commiserate. "Is it a paradox? An eternal chain? Is it a...isita?"

It doesn't have to end here, here at "The End." You have my written permission, right here, written here, to ambush friend and foe alike with this isita, this chain poem, this self-indulgent scrap of Contemporary American Literature.

Behrouz Montakhab  
Potomac, MD  
Mrs. Zirzow

## In Touch With Yesterday

Cherries splat  
on the bottom of my bucket.  
Their roundness  
is perfect  
but their bodies are orange  
and pecked by greedy birds.

I've been picking  
cherries forever.  
From the underside of branches  
the teetering tops of ladders.  
Eating two handfuls  
for every one in the bucket,  
throwing the rest at my brother.

It's summertime  
and Bible school  
and the cherries are rotting in the grass.

Sandy Moser  
Bally, PA  
Boyertown Senior High  
Mr. Raymond Fulmer

## Father's Garden

Silent,  
a reluctant apprentice  
hunched against the icy  
fingers of a damp March day  
at the dump.

The sky hung heavy  
as you whistled, rooting  
for earthworms.  
I held the battered  
zinc bucket, nose wrinkled  
at the oozing mass.

I, your vigilant  
scarecrow, danced  
inflated robins  
from the delicacies  
you scattered across black earth  
enlivened by calloused hands  
and sweat.

You crumbled the soil,  
sensing its thirst,  
turned it to breathe,  
feeding it last year's  
grapefruit rinds and  
eggshells.  
And your best friend  
stirred,  
struggled from winter stupor,  
pushing out blanched seedlings.

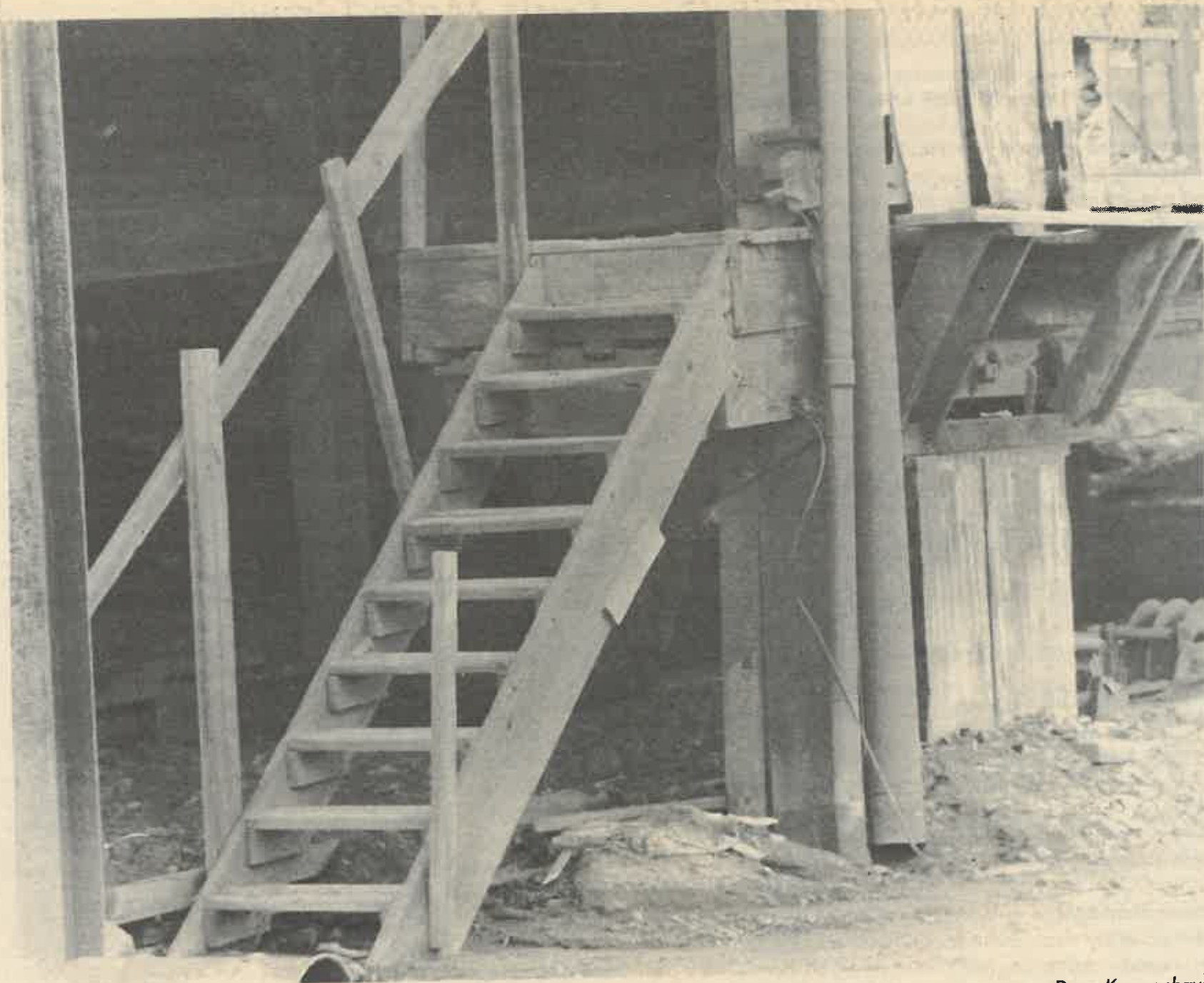
Ellen A. Dessloch  
Sewickley, PA

## Prophecy

That fat Widow Smith  
inlaid on white terry sweats  
with Poofy  
trotting four-legged  
to the  
right.  
Shot  
July the Fourth  
between  
Mafiosos  
Don Gagliani and Rabbi Bergman  
Lays on her side  
soft  
feed-the-world thighs  
festering.  
Let her flesh melt  
Let her body melt  
'Til it seeps  
deep.  
Deep into the earth  
Deep into the raw earth.

Leigh Cheng  
Potomac, MD  
Peggy Zirzow





Dave Koppenhaver

## Untitled

I am sitting stiffly in the corner of the summer heated hall. Showers of dust turn and glimmer in a lone sunbeam. Behind me is a wall. To my left is a window, extending from floor to ceiling. The air has the feel of dry wood. The sun is not shining significantly, and the whole room is dim and dull and drab. It is an appropriate setting for the phone call I have to make. I should want to call her, but I don't. I don't know what to say or how to say it, and I don't want to get involved. I have only known her for a few weeks. But I do call. I call because I feel that people who try to kill themselves need to know that others care.

The phone rings, and I press it hard against my ear. We talk. We carefully discuss the qualities of some movie, avoiding any discussion of trauma or suicide. I stand up passively like a patch of fluff on an undecided breeze, and gaze mellowly out into the world. Finally she brings it up. She tells me that I shouldn't call anymore because she has given up. I ask her to consider her sixty year old self. What right does her fifteen year old self have to ruin it for all her other selves? She has given up, and there is no sun in her life. She doesn't want to consider. She wants to pull down her window shade forever. I tell her to look outside and see how much the world has in it. But for her the world is funeral dress black, and she can't see any light through her aid raid curtains. I hate her for that. I despise her for being someone who can never give me anything but pain.

She tells me how it was for her to cut her wrists. "Like slicing a loaf of bread, that's all." Disbelieving, I ask if it hurt. She treats me as if I didn't understand life, like a naive child, "Oh it didn't hurt, it was like slicing a loaf of bread that's all." I gaze

down at my wrist, at its milky smoothness. I see a fragile vein, worming its way to my heart, and I know that my life is contained in this vein. I know that to cut this tributary open, I would have to slice my own arm, quite scientifically, like cutting a carrot stick. And I am suddenly unseasonably cold, and I shudder at such uncaring darkness and ice in July. I know I could never, never, never do it. And somehow we say good-bye, and I drop the haunted receiver, and I wish phone conversations had never been invented, and I hate her for what she is doing. I feel that she let me down.

The sun, lemony and strong, flashes out from a break in the clouds, and shaking still, I push my way outside. I am struck by a trillion alive things all at once, bees and buzzing bugs, and sweet bird songs, and swollen, water green grass, and the majestic maples, and the life giving sun, and the earth. I am awed. I take it for my own. I go back inside, surrounded by the life in every bit of my world, and I pick up the phone that I hated so. But now I use it to call someone else. To call a friend. A friend that I knew then, as I know now, that I can't always depend on. And as we reaffirm to each other that we are both sane, alive, and happy, I look out through pools of sunshine at this world of mine. And I see the earth as a radiant jewel that I will not discard.

Tonya Joy Byard  
Ithaca, NY  
Mr: Pickens



# The End of All Odysseys

My sluggish mind skitters across small black lines of Greek, as forlornly as Odysseus once wandered the hostile sea. It is late, they have all gone, and I am alone in my deserted room. I saw them leave, Chris, looking dark and grim, as he always does on his way back, Alice wearing gaudy fifties style clothing and a prism design sash. Horn rimmed glasses mock her pretty face. She dresses, she says, to scare off weirdos. "You look like Elvis Costello's girlfriend," I told her, and, in her forced cynicism and real innocence, she does. Chris was standing on the front porch, staring wordlessly down the winding road as if he were already on it, drifting down the highway sea as helpless to change his course as a drowning man being tossed towards the rocks. But that was hours ago, and I can't waste time worrying about them. It is so late, and I am so tired, and I can hardly hear my own thoughts above the deafening roar of the total silence of my empty room.

Light flurries of snow sing through the early morning air. I can't tell if we'll have a delay tomorrow, but once, in an earlier age, I could have sensed it instinctively. I would have stood outside until the trees thrashed in time with my own heartbeat, and have known the answer because I was home. But now, in my own room, I have that displaced, highway's-edge feeling of estrangement, like the sinner in the Greek myth who has to keep reaching for the luscious fruit and water to see it fall away from his grasp. Green lights run rampant in these nasal days of early January, but I've been well educated, and now I rarely notice them.

"Hit my stomach, harder, c'mom, Pat, you're too weak to hurt me." Angry now at this well-timed insult, I flail my arms harder at Chris's iron stomach muscles, gasping in a child's exertion. Still being taunted, I desperately hit his solar plexus, and am instantly remorseful when he grunts painfully.

"I told you I didn't want to hit you. That's a stupid way to train for boxing, I'm sorry, but now maybe you learned a lesson." I hide my shame with anger, for I've made my idol stumble, and wounded heroes never want pity, sufficient in their own strength. Chris, who is rarely at a loss, laughs now, already recovered, but I can still see his look of hurt surprise, as if he was shocked that I could have wanted to give him pain.

My face is scarred with wrestling mat burns, for I just had a match, a match I lost. I feel as weak as Odysseus, caked with salt and washed up on the shore. I no longer have a home, and when I stare out across the moribund winter countryside, I have the detachment of a movie-goer, using artificial visions and certified dreams to view the show with self indulgent reverence.

I am Odysseus, whose name means pain, not just my own, but the pain I have given to others. This late at night, I can see their ghosts, moving about the house of my memories, accusing me with our combined failures. With them, I have struggled to the hilltop, only to see that another more majestic mountain loomed beyond, and beyond that, another, the largest of all. I've sailed through oceans knowing that their underwater secrets would forever be as hidden to me as the secret thoughts of other human beings. I've seen so many people come and go, and all the while I thought I was the one remaining motionless.

Chris is frustrated with school. Alice says he talks about quitting, about how he thinks he's going to be just another legal criminal soon. He says the other students are as obnoxious and amoral as a Cyclops, and he thinks they're influencing him. He asked me about school, about what the people were like, shyly, as if afraid that they hadn't changed. He speaks less, as if worry took all his words. He is realizing that there is no end to the journey, that Ithaca ceased forever to be a concrete place the moment he left it, and that future visits would only be redundant.

The second hand ticks away, pounding a mournful funeral dirge for another forgotten hour, pulling me closer into the vor-

# Girls Make Graves

*Digging my own grave,  
I meet your new lover  
who smiles with a gap between his  
teeth. Money made mine straight.*

*I imagine that he and I talk of  
Venturi's new building or the Smiths'  
latest misogynist music. Instead  
he walks down the hall to sit a  
floor beneath us.*

*After dinner, in which you try your  
best at small talk,  
we lie upon your bed, clawing each other--  
your lips slide by mine with a  
bitterness that slices like cool steel.*

*Letting this distraughtness  
overcome you and take hold,  
I find you sinking into me, saying,  
"I still like girls."  
I try to hold you, but  
my arms are broken and used.*

*You lay upon me, my hips sheltering  
yours. Like a  
puzzle  
our bodies still fit.*

*Kathleen E. Zaff  
Maplewood, NJ  
Kent Place School  
Dr. Jane Coil Cole*

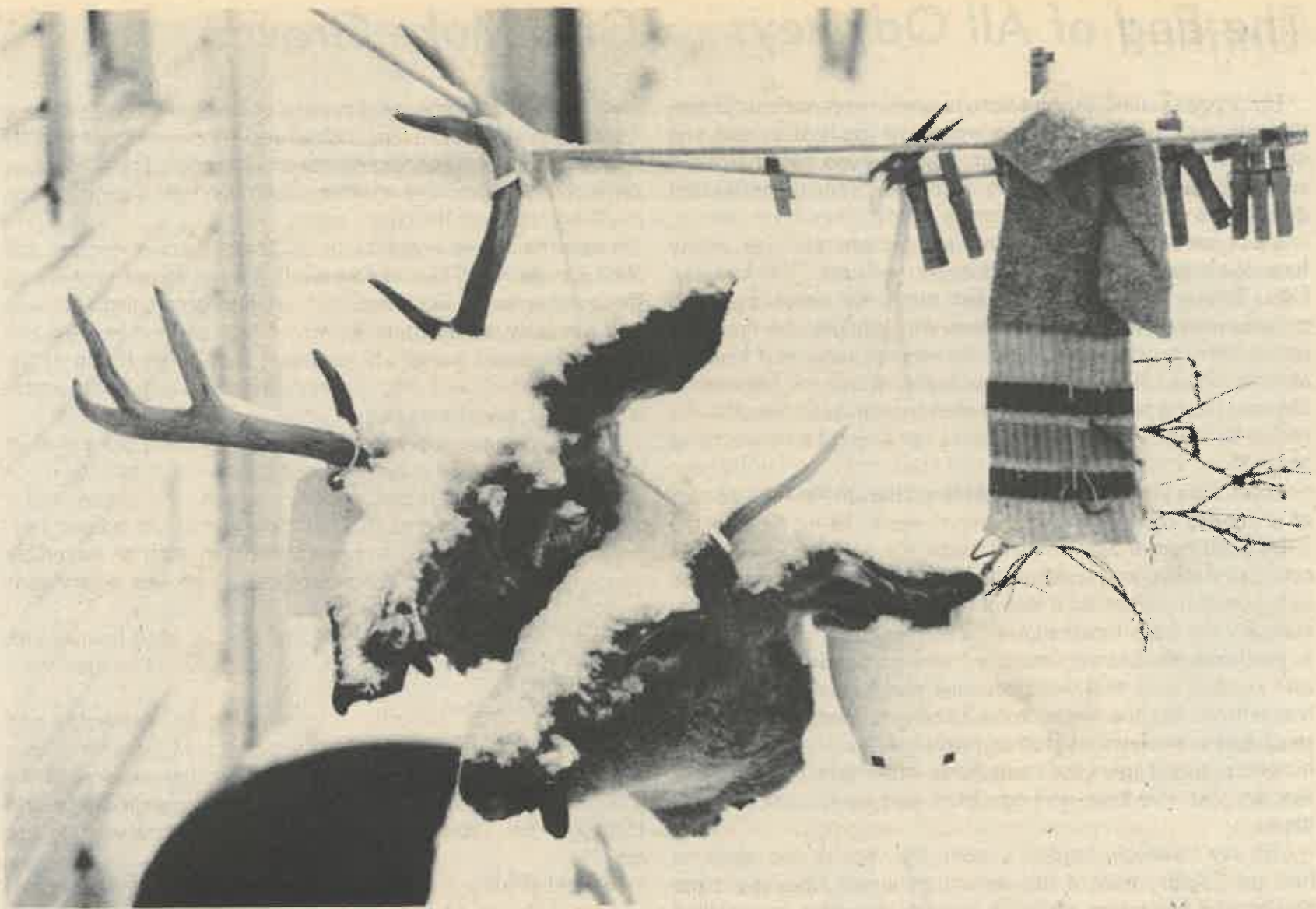


tex of the day. My room is full of that tomblake pre-dawn hush, and soon, most likely, the sun will rise, and I will go to school. The world recedes, like the tides of the sea and the problem of my brother, of myself, and everyone I have known fade under my sleep-filled eyes.

Odysseus drifts painlessly into the sea, his ancient body slowly succumbing to his gentle destroyer. Tilting his face for one last look at his beloved homeland, he barely bothers to note that he is drifting toward the beach, which is as warm and inviting as if he had never left.

*Patrick Kelley  
Scranton, PA  
Scranton Prep  
Mr. Vanston*





Jennifer Au



Lily Tsong



Every once in a while something happens, like you'll see a face that you feel like you know, but you just can't place and you start to think about the guys you knew when you were growing up; you know what I mean, don't you? Well, something like that happened to me the other day.

I was coming home to visit my mother who still lives in my hometown, Beaver Falls--I live close by, so I visit a lot. Anyway, I was driving down Pawnee Street--that's my street--there's a parking place open right out in front of the house and I start to pull up into it. I take a nice long look at the house and I realize that I don't like the way my house looks. Anyway it was only a passing feeling, but I got to remembering a guy I knew for a couple of years when I was growing up. A guy by the name of Hugh.

The minute I met him I knew he'd be different--always be sort of a charity case on my part--never really fit in. He had the letters HUEY scratched on the outside of each finger, which like scared the hell out of us but at the same time sort of fascinated us, you know. Other than that though, I guess he wasn't really that much different than the rest of us guys.

But he really didn't do much with the other guys apart from just hanging out. He always affected that kind of stand-offish James Dean tough attitude that a lot of kids did back then. Only thing was with Hugh, the tattoo really sold it.

Even though Huey didn't hang with other guys much, I was like his best friend and I remember him coming over once for Thanksgiving dinner. He may have been a tough guy, but he had parents just like everybody else and he minded his manners and cleaned his plate all right. My parents were really impressed and told him so. My father went out to catch the end of the football game and Huey went with him. I helped my Mom clear the table.

The next day in school he told me that if I ever put him through that again he would kill me. I couldn't tell if he was kidding or not, but you know he never really did come over again.

I remember this one spring in particular--the spring I made the Beaver Falls High School J.V. Basketball team. Well, the guys were pretty impressed (none of them had ever tried anything like that before). They wanted to do something, you know, really special. They decided on taking me to the quarry one Saturday.

Eric parked the car on this like cliff that dropped off into one of those deep, ancient quarry holes that filled with water probably even before you were born. Eric always did have a good eye for drinking spots.

"Get the brewsky and let's celebrate," he says, and we got out and stood at the edge of the hill looking over into the water while Charlie extracted the rest of the beer from under the front seat of the car. We just stood looking at that water for a long, long time.

We had been drinking the whole way up, and Charlie was so drunk he like fell out of the car. The beer went all over--a couple opened and splashed on everything. Well, everybody broke up cause he looked so stupid, you know, lying there--it was a real big laugh at the time anyway.

I don't really remember what started it all, I remember Huey saying something like "Hey, let's go swimming." Charlie must have still felt kind of sore about everybody laughing at him, cause right away he snapped back, "It's forty below, asshole."

Well, you know Huey was always like bugged--a real short fuse. He didn't like Charlie that much anyway and Charlie practically reached right up and knocked that giant chip off of Huey's shoulder--I could like see it hit the ground. Anyway, he starts undressing right then.

"Forty below? Well, I'm going in," he says. And before I know it, everybody's in their shorts but me. Well, it isn't long before the guys notice and start ribbing me about not having had enough to drink (truth is I had about one can to every one of

their four). Then someone--I'm not positive but I'm almost sure it was Huey--grabs me from behind and lifts me nearly clean off my feet and starts pushing me toward the edge. The other guys join in. I'm grabbing at everything, but I don't get a good hold on anything and over the edge I go.

I saw this movie once, it was a Charles Bronson picture and like I got this idea like I know what it's like to get shot--clean through the head--like hard cold but also refreshing. Anyway that's exactly what hitting the water that day felt like. When I came up I heard somebody humming the "Battle Hymn of the Republic," which was also our high school's song. I was pretty mad when I saw it was Huey.

He called me one night senior year and insisted I come over. It was pretty unusual for him to insist on anything, so I went.

When I got to his house, nobody seemed to be home, and it was Huey who answered the door. We went right up and I remember being surprised to find his room in such an incredible mess--cause for all his "rebelliousness," Hugh was a very neat person.

"Mom leaves you for a minute and all that good home-training goes down the toilet," I said. He laughed and handed me a slim booklet.

"I'm outta here," he said. "I signed the papers yesterday, and I guess you can see I'm packing," he started, jamming more stuff into a suitcase into the middle of the room. I looked at the book. It was called Armed Services Pre-Enlistment Guide and Training Guide. I couldn't believe it and I didn't know what to say next.

"I couldn't tell you sooner cause I wanted to be sure," he said; he kept trying to fit this one last sweater into his suitcase. "I didn't even really tell my parents until Friday," he laughed. "They just about killed me--hey, you aren't mad, are you?" Mad, I was shocked as hell--joining the Army was something guys always talk about--everyone always talked about. Our neighborhood was true blue: red, white and blue! Most of our fathers had gone straight from high school to the steel mills. A few went to the Army (they were like living legends to us) but for us guys actually joining was like quitting the basketball team. You talked a lot about it, but you couldn't really do it no matter how mad you got.

"No, I'm not mad," I said after a while, "but what about school?"

He had finally given up trying to fit his sweater in his suitcase and now was trying to cram it into his duffle bag. "In two weeks we'll be eighteen, right?" Our birthdays were two days apart. "I'll be a free agent. My Dad doesn't really want me to drop out, but he don't really got a choice now. I'm going to boot camp a week early." He laughed and so did I.

"Can you imagine me at boot camp?" I really couldn't. "My Mom keeps crying. I want you to tell the other guys before I see them--will you? I don't need another scene," he said.

"Yeah, all right--I'll do that. You're really deserting us, leaving for good."

"Yup," he smiled and I smiled with him. "Hey, I think you'd better get out of here before my parents get back." He smiled again and I noticed that he was smiling more than I'd ever seen him. "My parents are really schized out."

"O.K., give me a call, O.K.?" he said, and I escaped from the house undetected.

We all got together at the quarry and got drunk, and then he left. We heard from him infrequently for almost a whole year. Then he got assigned to some place in Germany, lost contact and sort of passed into legend, if you know what I mean. Every-time something would happen like the Cuban Missile Crisis, you know, right up to Vietnam, we would give Huey credit for

(Continued on Page 16)



## Two for Hope

This is what I saw before I died:

Beyond the firing squad, beyond the General with his uplifted arm, way beyond them

I should mention that I could see because I had refused the proffered blindfold in keeping with my belief that I should experience everything as fully as possible, including my own death--I wanted to see my men shooting at me, I wanted to see those bullets rushing hard and pure through the clouds of smoke--and, that I could see so far into the distance because I was very far-sighted and the General had taken my glasses, either because he thought the men would have trouble shooting a leader who could see them (this theory doesn't really work because my men were so stupid that they probably were not aware that they were going to shoot their leader and because the General was too smart not to realize this), or because--and this to me seems more likely--the General was far-sighted and might have lost his glasses during the bombing.

Beyond the firing squad, beyond the General with his uplifted arm, way beyond them, far out in the charred field, was a child, a very young girl, pretty blonde clean and pink, in a pink dress, one of those dresses that grandmothers used to dress granddaughters in, pretty blonde clean and pink, squatting on this charred and choked field, playing with two lightbulbs, totally absorbed in these two lightbulbs. And I thought "This is very funny. I am about to die."

Let me add that the very fact that I was about to be executed seemed ridiculous at that point, because although I had admittedly committed The Crime of War, I had had no idea when I snuck into the office and pressed the little button and announced it to the world that there would ever be anyone around to kill me for it afterward.

Nor did I mean any harm to anybody. I pressed that button because I thought death would be kinder "en masse"--without sorrow and without pain--yes, I thought "Let us all die at once and together since we have to die anyway." I did it for myself and for every other poor guy who sat at home biting his nails over the 11 o'clock news thinking "When? When is it going to happen?" every night over and over because it was never going to happen anyway until I pressed that button and it was happening.

And I thought "This is very funny. I am about to die, and there is this little girl squatting out there in the field, playing with lightbulbs. And this is very rude because she is spoiling the ugliness of this field and she is making me laugh when I'm finally about to die."

The whole scene in retrospect was actually quite beautiful:

This dead field bathed in a bright cold light, and there are shadows everywhere, yet the sun is invisible because of the fallout dust. It is very cold and windy and quiet, very quiet, because there is nothing for the wind to howl through, no trees and no houses in this field.

And there in the middle of the cold and bright endless field is a man with hands tied behind his back, and some feet away is a line of men with guns pointed at this man, and a little to the left of the line of men is another man with his arm raised high in the air, and very far away behind this man is a child, squatting, playing with two lightbulbs.

And the man with tied hands is laughing loudly, and the line of men is looking at him, and the other man is crying, and far away the child is playing with lightbulbs.

So I started shaking uncontrollably, shaking until I couldn't hold my laughter in any longer. I was laughing so loud and so hard that it hurt. My men were really scared--they didn't know what to do, so they just kept their guns level. And the General started to cry, he kept his arm up, was very stoic, but he was crying.

And I couldn't stop laughing. "After all," I thought, "everybody is dying anyway. Although not as quickly and as painlessly as I had intended, every one is, in fact, dying. And you are going in style: you've got the big man of the military crying, you've got your own men as a firing line, and you've got this kid, this little girl, this child." My mind was then like a needle going over a scratched record "The child, the child, the child" and I was not laughing anymore because I had suddenly realized what this child meant. I had not counted on children, I hadn't seen children since I joined the forces. And my mind was racing because children

I interrupt here one last time to say something about time itself. At this moment every function of existence stopped for me except thought: I had stumbled upon a hitch in my theory, and I had to, in the very little bit of time I had left to live, think out the problem and answer all the new questions I had to know before I was dead.

because children meant hope and a New World and then I hadn't finished it off I thought bitterly it would go on and on forever and ever because there was this pretty little girl playing with lightbulbs and then maybe I was wrong maybe I was wrong all along maybe the world is good and life is good and I'm going to die now having been wrong all this time and then but maybe I have seen a light maybe all is not in vain maybe there is a God

In the middle of this last and most important "maybe" the guns had exploded loud and clear as if to dispel all doubt, as if to say "No, there is no God" But I didn't hear and I fell very slowly to the ground as somewhere ages ago the General's arm had fallen with "Fire!"

The girl turned for the first time toward my scene, looking slightly annoyed because the sound of my pure bullets had broken her concentration and shattered one of those lightbulbs. I opened my mouth to yell "I'm sorry." She stood up and wiped her hands and then seemed very much closer to me and not as clean and a little older, and rather tired, and sad. And she walked slowly past the line of men over to me, she looked down at me and I looked up at her through bloody eyes with my mouth open and gurgling an apology. Then the General came over and held the blindfold out to her and she shook her head sadly and then I thought I understood and I screamed inside my head "Wait, I was wrong She is the end of the beginning" and then she was on the ground next to me and her bloody little face like a red flower was right before mine and she looked in my bloody eyes with her bloody eyes and she said "No you were right

---

## Untitled

(Continued from Page 15)

upholding our American Way. After a while though you like stop seeing the same guys and stuff--well.

There's a certain taste to spring when it's in your memory, you know like the sleep that comes right before you wake up. I guess I could look up Huey--it wouldn't be too hard in my neighborhood--but I don't really know if I'd want to.

Amy Ongiri  
Bethlehem, PA  
St. Francis Academy  
Mrs. Colleen Hunter

Alisa Aydin  
New York, NY  
Mrs. Shirlye Harrison





Linda Tooma

## Potential: A Sad Story

Call him Lou.  
 Lou was a bottle of it.  
 His feet and his head  
 Stood still. But  
 He was quite full.  
 Someone said,  
 "Let him be.  
 Give him time.  
 He'll come around."  
 Naaaaaaw.  
 He'll never move  
 Unless we push him.  
 Drip...Drip...  
 Stay in Lou.  
 You got to earn  
 Yo weekends boy. But  
 Something stood him up.  
 "Lou can go go go."  
 "Lou tells good stories."  
 A smile stretched his face.  
 What you smilin' at?  
 Don't let me see that, boy.  
 What about them founding fathers?  
 What about them books?"  
 What make a car go go?"  
 Drip...drip...  
 Lou lay down again. Drip...  
 "Why don't Lou go go go?"  
 "Why don't Lou tell stories no mo?"

"Hush but,  
 Damn good he was gonna be."  
 Way down the hall, more talking...

"Misses Lou, yo son can dance.  
 Oh, and he sing good too."  
 After a while Lou sat up.  
 Don't sing. Don't dance.  
 Lou, you got it wrong.  
 Why can't you be like  
 Any of yo frens?  
 Lou shocks himself  
 And stands up to sing.  
 You can't sing boy  
 Sound bad.  
 You can't dance either.  
 Leadfeet, Ha.  
 Drip...drip...  
 Lou lay down again. Drip...  
 Go away now boy--  
 We got no room for you.  
 Find yoself alone.  
 Lou stood up again.  
 "I wanna dance!"  
 Go Home.  
 "I wanna sing!"  
 Go Home.  
 "I wanna go go go!"  
 Then do so boy--  
 Out my doe.  
 Lou thought he was spent.  
 He lay down.

There's always the army, boy.

Porter Shreve  
 Washington, D.C.



## Gyros

We were hungry, and a good, greasy, Greek meal sounded better than the other alternatives: Vietnamese, Chinese, or Hungarian. The restaurant my girlfriend and I strolled into seemed to have no name other than "Gyros," which was printed on the neon Pabst marquee.

The seats, both of the booths lining the right side of the restaurant and of the counter on the left, were bright orange plastic, and seemed to match the flecks of color in the otherwise beige linoleum floor. The second thing that caught our attention was the smell. Spicy, oniony odors drifted from the leg of lamb turning slowly on the vertical spit, and a sugary, honey aroma poured from the oven where fresh baklava baked.

In the back of the restaurant, to the side of the counter, stood a large refrigerator, filled with everything from juice to pop to beer. A hand-drawn sign above read, "Illinois state law prohibits the selling of alcoholic beverages to those under the age of nineteen--Sorry!!!" Another sign, "NO REFUNDS!" in the same handwriting, was taped above the coin slot of the juke-box nestled amongst the booths on the other side of the narrow restaurant. On one end of the counter an old black and white Zenith sat, a toilet paper ad hailing the product as "softer than cotton."

The walls of "Gyros" told its story with a curious mix of old and new. Joining the many Chicago Cubs banners, posters, and pennants were drawings and etchings of famous Athenian structures. The Parthenon stood between a former star outfielder and one of the current pitching phenoms. Elsewhere on the walls, it looked as if someone had gone through Life or People and cut out and pasted up all of the pictures. Photos of everything imaginable, from Judy Garland in "The Wizard of Oz" to a new Corvette taking a corner to the Space Shuttle lifting into the sky, covered the walls. At least half were Greek in origin, and meant nothing at all to us.

The only other items on the walls were the flags. One was, of course, Greek, the other American. They hung close together, and were slightly twisted about each other, almost embracing one another.

We approached the counter. "Hallo, what for you can I get?" offered the man behind the counter. His white T-shirt and pants contrasted his curly black hair, short charcoal mustache, and dark skin. His clothes were splattered with polka dots of grease and fat.

We didn't need to look at the plastic menus he presented; it would have been a sin to order anything other than a gyro with everything on it. I asked for one for each of us, along with a pair of Michelob's. As we were only seventeen, the sign above the refrigerator obviously meant little to the man behind the counter. We crossed the orange-flecked floor and took a seat together on one side of a booth by the juke-box, under the Colosseum and the '79 Cubs.

Two booths down the wall, beyond the juke-box, sat three hard-hats, apparently fresh off the job, probably from a new building being put up in the next block. Their eating seemed secondary to their drinking, for we could hardly see their plates among the empty bottles covering the table. On the other side of the restaurant sat an elderly lady, halfway finished with a bowl of soup. Alone, she sat and watched us, the hard-hats, and the man behind the counter.

Our food soon came, two huge pockets of pita bread stuffed with hot, sliced lamb, peppers, tomatoes, onions, and cheese. How to eat the gyros presented a bit of a problem, but it was solved easily enough by the absence of silverware at our table.

We ate our meal, the hard-hats drank, and the lady sipped her soup and surveyed the restaurant. We finished just as the "Rockford Files" gave way to "Kojak" on the black and white Zenith behind the counter. The Cubs played ball on the walls, amongst the Greek ruins, and the flags hung just as they did

## My Late Grandfather

A slow whir is heard and then a loud bang and the metal gate drops. He grabs the wheels and with his mighty arms powers the small transport to the end of the small carport and sighs with relief. Positioned in the bright sunlight, he carefully removes his favorite carved pipe from his lap. Next he removes his pouch of Captain Black and his thin red lighter from his shirt pocket. He gingerly takes a small wad of tobacco from the pouch and places it in his pipe. He packs it down, first with his thumb, then with the butt end of the lighter. Patiently waiting this common pleasure, he flicks the lighter and ignites the raw tobacco and a gentle, sweet-smelling aroma arises. As I watch him joyfully puffing on his pipe, I realize that this is a daily procedure for my grandfather, alias "pop."

He is a big man, not from over-eating or laziness, but because he is a paraplegic. Though he never felt sorry for himself, I always did. Calmly he says, "Push me down. Will ya, Seb?"

Assuringly I say, "Sure, Pop.." Slowly we stroll down the cracked alley. When we arrive at the "shop," pop's garage converted to a wood shop, I open the garage door. The lingering smell of wood, paint and turpentine hits me. The garage is cluttered with saws, drills, cabinets, wood and even my cousin's '55 Chevy car parts. Pop puts on his shop apron and immediately begins work on one of his many projects for the neighboring people on the alley. His work is so good it's hard to imagine his condition.

Looking at him, I see his large hands and wrists and think of the many things they have touched or worked on. His face is a study of concentration, his brown "pointed-corner" rim glasses, dirty from his work, show his dark but gentle eyes. His light green shirt pocket holds his many trinkets which are used daily. His brown nylon pants are a shambles, not from misuse, but from the rough metal braces in which his legs are enclosed.

Hearing him call my name, I suddenly snap out of one of my day dreams. "Sebby," he says, "get me my drill bits out of the cabinet." Finding them, and handing them to him, I notice he is fixing a chair for Gram. I, not knowing much about wood working, watch attentively. Once the task is completed, he reaches into his cigar box and withdraws one and takes off the cellophane. Drilling a hole in the end, he lights it and puffs away. You may think my pop is addicted to tobacco, but it is one of the only pleasures he can enjoy. Withdrawing his cigar, he begins one of his old stories, always keeping me interested and in suspense, he rattles on and on. Sitting comfortably in one of his old wheelchairs, I almost think I'm there with him in the story. Time slowly passes, and as usual around 5:00 Pop looks at his watch and we begin to close up shop. Again we both travel the old alley to the house.

Sebastian DeGregorio  
Turbotville, PA  
Warrior Run Senior High School  
Mrs. Gail Deans

---

when we entered. The lamb turned round and round on the spit, again and again, as we walked out the door and back to our lives.

William H. Minor  
Chevy Chase, MD



## Moving

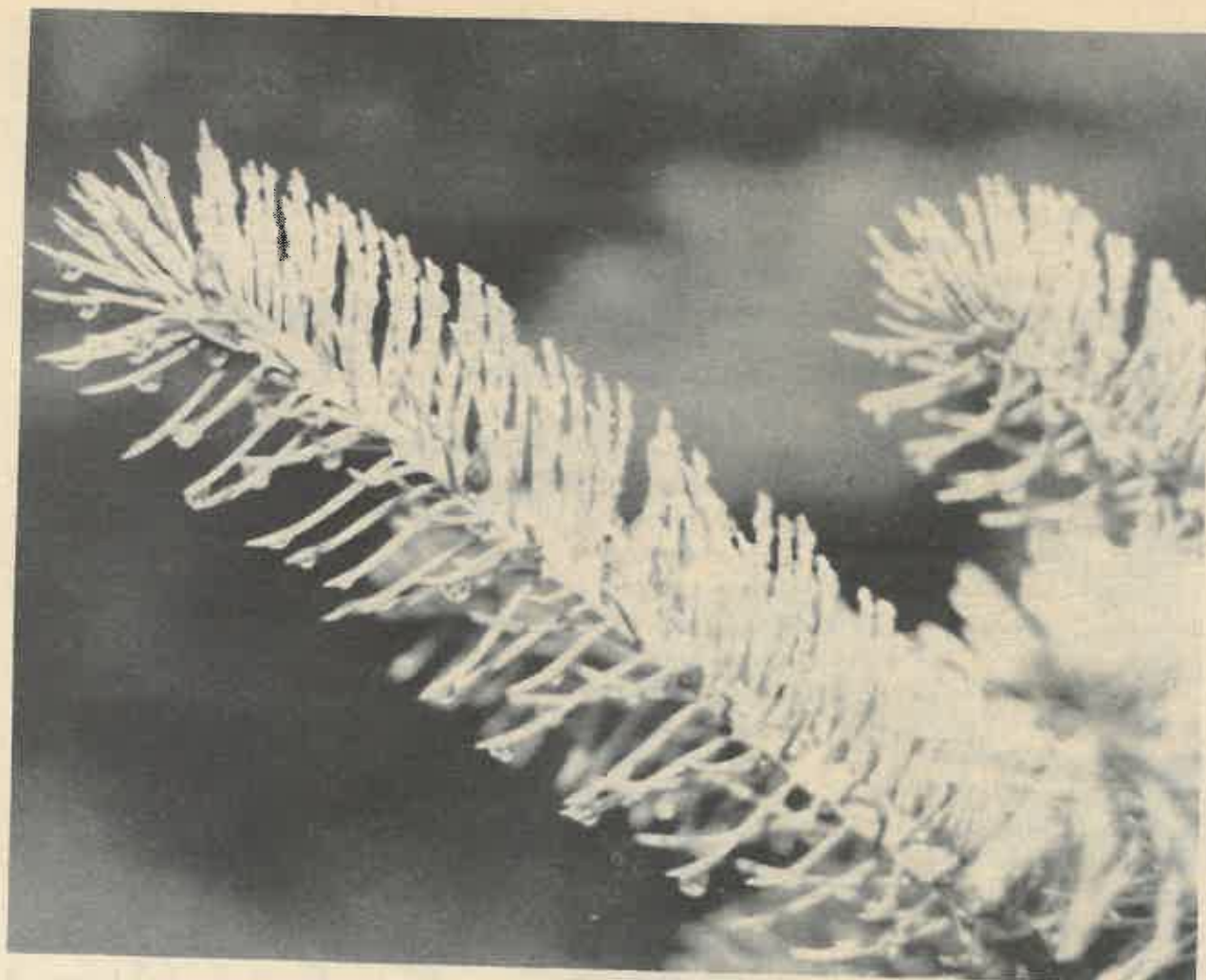
I will never have  
to stay awake  
to the sounds of the neighbor's  
pool parties  
that I'm not invited to

And Lisa won't  
give us her overripe tomatoes  
that rot in the hamster's  
cedar shavings  
until Paul has to clean out  
the cage

And the boys next door  
won't throw bricks  
at my brother

Anymore.

Caitlin Oeschger  
Silver Spring, MD  
Northwood High School  
Mary Lee Ruddle



David Halstead

## The Babysitter

(Watch and)  
Remember those sweaty days  
filled with thick  
yellow air--not sickly,  
but sunny,  
and icing breezes  
that slid cross your back  
till you shook.  
Skateboard Saturday afternoons  
sprang forever  
from cartoon mornings.  
In the back  
the plastic baby pool  
cracked--  
Now it's a sandbox  
and your cousins'  
diapers are full  
of the grit.  
So Mom says  
"Give them a bath  
before lunch."  
Oblige and remember  
the sprinkler sprints--  
slipping on muddy,  
uncut grass.  
Remember the wet arc  
of colors above  
and the huge hands  
that helped you  
down from the clouds.

Heather Davis  
Hershey, PA  
Hershey High School  
Mrs. Marilyn Durfee

## Aquino Was Slain--Fabian Ver Aquino

In response to the report...  
Aquino was slain after seconds  
seconds after he stepped off the plane  
Aug. 21, 1984.

26 people found indictable  
(no less intense)

23 military men  
And one civilian  
Then, Aquino was slain.  
7 military men  
And the 3rd general  
(no less intense)

The majority report-----for Marcos' opponent  
for 3 generals and 7 mil-  
itary men (and for the  
less intense) for Marcos  
(no less intense) for 3  
generals and 7 (intense)  
military men (no less in-  
tense) for Ferdinand Mar-  
cos and for FABIAN VER  
(no less intense) the top  
general and for 23 mili-  
tary men.

The Justice Military of Benigno  
S. Aquino.

Stephen Sollins  
Washington, D.C.  
Sue Willens



## Breaking Point

They were everywhere: in schools, on the sidewalks, in malls. They were characterized by ten-pound 'boogie boxes,' and plastic clothing that made slippery sounds when they moved. Their conversation often focused on bruises and Ace bandages. They were the breakers, and I wanted to join their legions.

I don't know what attracted me to breakdancing. It certainly wasn't my athletic inclinations. Actually, I had a habit of contracting mysterious diseases every time my gym course began its gymnastic phase. In fact, during one quarter I managed to stay in bed for eight consecutive Tuesdays, but that was probably coincidence.

It wasn't my sense of adventure, either. I considered climbing into the car while my brother was driving to be a daring feat.

My mother wasn't happy with my choice of hobbies. She was quick to point out the fact that I got queasy on merry-go-rounds. "But Mom," I reasoned, "it looks like fun on television and in the movies." "So do the stunts on the Dukes of Hazard," she retorted, "but I'm not going to go out and try them."

Despite her arguments, I remained undaunted. In my characteristic stubbornness, I armed myself with flat-bottomed sneakers and several pillows tied to my back. I laid on my back and prepared to spin. It didn't take me long to realize that I was only going to spin as fast as the Earth was rotating.

These were not the impressive results I had been planning.

Rather than sit around being disappointed in myself, I decided to try something simpler.

I finally chose perfecting the moonwalk as my next goal. For those whose idea of breakdancing is sliding across the slippery bathroom floor, the moonwalk is the popular style of walking backwards while giving the illusion of forward motion. I figured it would be easy; I had already mastered the art of walking forwards, and I could gracefully walk backwards. What could be so difficult about combining the two skills?

I was just beginning to notice how naive I was. First, I couldn't manage to step up on one foot and slide back on the other. Then I looked in the mirror and I encountered my second problem: I couldn't stop laughing. My appearance is difficult to describe, but you could say I resembled the Hunchback of Notre Dame with a trick knee.

It was time to try something else.

The knee spin looked simple enough. I knelt on the floor, using my hands to propel my body in a circular motion. I didn't clock the time that it took me to complete one revolution, but I had the feeling that I still wasn't spinning fast enough.

I came to the conclusion that I had learned enough for one day.

That night, television featured an interview with a prominent breakdancer from New York City. He mentioned that it was easier to learn to break on a smooth but fairly slippery surface. That was my problem!! My floor was too rough. Why, I could never perfect my moves and achieve the required speed. True to my goal, I used lemon Pledge on my hardwood floor. I don't know how much it helped my technique, but my mother managed to demonstrate three of the most difficult steps just moments after she walked into my room. This took place while she was collecting dirty wash. I can only wonder what she might have been able to perform had she been consciously trying.

Breakdancing was changing my outlook on life. I considered myself more exciting, more daring. So did my boyfriend, who had to physically restrain me from riding the merry-go-round three times in a row. My vocabulary was also increased; words like popping, baby boogie, and ouch! were slipping into my conversation.

However, it wasn't until a month later that the other breakers accepted me. It makes no difference that I was hobbling around on crutches because of a fractured ankle. I told everyone that I had received this injury while perfecting my double back spin

## I Found Forever

*Walking*

*across deserted land  
full of flying monsters &  
scattering things under my feet.  
That crunch when I step on them.  
I'm going to forever to a dream  
In darkness black just walking  
no direction  
no moon no stars just Black Heaven  
Stumbling over always  
in night time air.  
Thirst of silence  
quenched by sounds of  
ocean waves and turbo engines.*

*Headlights on my navel; blurring my eyes.  
"Get in"*

*Out of nowhere. The black car  
chasing forever?  
Driving? My Savior  
Making figure eights w/  
his tongue.  
Running fingers through  
my hair.  
coasting car on  
never-ever highway  
Licking the rearview mirror  
fondling the dashboard  
pull knobs from radio  
waves  
pulling me to back seats  
and out of my skin.  
Shiny teeth dull yellow  
eyes  
Warming my shoulder blades  
across the sky.  
My savior stop me,  
making skid marks on the air.  
Take me down.*

*Pam Carter  
Dallastown, PA  
Dallastown Area High School  
Miss Anne Wilson*

---

walkover. It didn't matter that I had actually just slipped on my floor when I woke up; the fact remained: I was one of them.

*Sandy Moser  
Bally, PA  
Boyertown Senior High  
Mr. Raymond Fulmer*





Mike McMullen



## Lord of the Snails

"Take those snails out of your mouth and look at me when I talk to you!" Morris shouted.

Startled, Michael spat the small escargots onto the hot-side-walk and looked guiltily at his brother. The snails made a feeble effort to escape, yet did not move too far.

The two men stared at each other in silence for a moment, their eyes locked. Finally, Michael looked away and spoke.

"Listen. It's them. Surely you can see that. I can't help it."

Morris still said nothing.

"I...I know what you're thinking. You're thinking that I'm pretty strange. That there's something wrong with me. Maybe there is. I don't know. But--just look at them!" he ended savagely, pointing at the ground.

Morris did look. The snails, still covered with saliva, were now huddled around his brother in a semicircle that seemed almost worshipful.

"I think we'd better go see Dr. Faltallian," he said softly. The two turned and walked toward Morris' car, which had been parked nearby. Neither looked back, but if either had, he would have seen the snails hopelessly trying to pursue. The sun went behind a cloud as they got into the car, and a flock of ducks flew across the sky.

Dr. Faltallian was a tall, solemn-looking man, yet he didn't look like a psychiatrist. He had blond curly hair that refused to stay in place and a badly-shaved moustache. His eyes seemed to be one-way mirrors, but Michael couldn't tell whether the doctor was looking out at him or if he was looking in at the doctor. Faltallian's only annoying peculiarity was that he had a habit of sniffing at the green ball-point pen he held in his hand, for what reason Michael could not begin to guess.

With Dr. Faltallian looking down at him, Michael felt that someone ought to speak. Since the doctor did not seem inclined to begin, he swallowed and related his troubles.

"It's a curse," he stated simply. "It's been in my family for many generations. From old journals and such, I've learned that there was a feud between my ancestors and another clan. I'm not really sure what it was about...I think there was a land dispute, and after a long legal battle, neither side turned out to rightfully own it. But in any case, the other family was a...a strange clan. They cast this curse, somehow, on my ancestors and their descendants."

He looked apologetically at the doctor. "I suppose all this sounds kind of silly," he said, expecting the doctor to say, "No, not at all."

"Yes," said Doctor Faltallian.

Maldrey cleared his throat. "Well, the curse was this--that the cursed ones would have a...an attraction to a certain creature. The animal involved is usually small, like a chipmunk, or a spider, or...or a snail. As far as I can tell from the old records, the curse does not affect everybody in the family, just certain individuals. The creatures involved are somehow compelled to follow the victim, and...the attraction is...mutual, sort of."

He rushed on before he could stop himself. "All my life I've been surrounded by snails. I liked them, and made pets of them when I was young--that is, until my mother found out. But even she couldn't keep them out. They always crawled back. And they still crawl back, even if I shut and lock the door." He swallowed and fixed his eyes imploringly at the doctor. "It's driven most of my ancestors insane." The doctor had stopped sniffing at his pen in order to unwrap a candy bar.

"I first began to realize that I was...different...when I wrote a report on them for science class in sixth grade. I began the report, 'Snails are always around us...' or something like that, and the teacher corrected me. 'Few snails,' she said, 'are found in this part of the country.' Then one started crawling up her leg and she got mad.

"Anyway, it hasn't been that bad. If I don't stay in one place for a long period of time, they can't catch up to me. But lately the attraction has been getting stronger...I'm beginning to...en-

joy having them around me. And I want to..." He stopped and turned pleading eyes to the doctor. "Am I really crazy? Am I just imagining all these snails? What's wrong with me, Doctor?"

Dr. Faltallian threw the candy wrapper on the tan shag rug. "Of course you're not crazy. You're just a little insane, that's all. Many people are." He was about to continue when he suddenly felt an odd sensation on his foot. Glancing downward, he discovered a rather large snail moving across the top of his shoe, leaving a trail of gray slime. The mollusk was heading toward the couch. Faltallian's voice trembled a little as he said, "I'll have to think about this a while. Why don't you make an appointment with my secretary for next Tuesday?"

As they returned to the waiting room, Morris put down the copy of PEOPLE magazine he had been reading and got up to shake Doctor Faltallian's hand. "Thank you, Doctor. I hope you can help my brother. If there is anything I can do to help, I'd be more than willing..."

"Yes, well, I will send you my bill in the mail."

"Certainly, Doctor."

\* \* \* \*

"So how are your treatments...er, sessions...coming along?" inquired Morris as the two drove into their driveway a few weeks later.

"Okay, I guess," said Michael, with a reluctance in his voice. As they got out of the car, he had to jump to avoid stepping on the snails that crowded in wait for him. "I'm learning to control them now."

"Really? That's good. Show me," said Morris, eyeing his brother's followers warily.

Michael closed his eyes and pointed his finger at a snailless spot on the wall of the shed. Obediently, they all started to ooze toward that place.

"Hey, that's great," said Morris. "Then you're cured. You can..."

"Well, not really. I mean, I can tell them to go someplace...but I can't really send them away. I mean, I just don't...don't want to send them away. I don't think I'm going to see Dr. Faltallian any more."

"What??? What's wrong with y...that is, why not??? If you can control them, then you're doing great. It's just a matter of time."

Michael paused in the doorway of the house. "Yes, but...I don't know. I get the feeling more that they're...that they're controlling me. And anyway, they're not really hurting anyone, are they? Why spend all this money on Dr. Faltallian, who thinks it's all a hallucination? Look, thanks for being concerned, and for paying and all, but...but I'm really all right, Morris. I'll survive." He turned and walked into the house.

"But you can't! You have to keep going! You're sick, Michael, sick, sick, sick..." the words died on his lips as Michael turned back and fixed him with a cold gaze. "I'm sorry...I didn't mean it that way, it's just..."

Michael went into his room and firmly closed the door. Morris stopped, frustrated, and after a moment went outside again.

Heaven knew what his brother would think of next. Morris tried to plan some way to coax him into returning to Dr. Faltallian. There had to be some cure. He would have to use trickery. After all, he had his brother's best interests at heart. He returned to the house.

A duck tried to enter with him. Cursing, he kicked the fowl away and shut the door quickly. He wished they didn't live so near to a duckpond. The damn things were always around, it seemed, getting in his way...

Following him...

Ron Nyren  
Southington, CT  
Mrs. Mary Dapkins



Crescendo--violins soaring. Vivaldi's Four Seasons, allegro and confusing. Confusing. Yes, that's the word that describes the state of our Audi traveling ninety miles an hour on the Austrian Autobahn with Vivaldi bursting through the stereo speakers. After four hundred miles of Vivaldi, we don't notice the music. Its lively rising and falling mixes with the chaotic noise rising and falling in the car. Mom sits in the front holding the large map, trying to decipher the red, black, orange, and purple lines while arguing with Dad as to the direction we are going. Dad says for the fifth time, "The sign we just passed reads 'Ost' which is east, so we're GOING THE WRONG WAY!" Mom argues, "It said 'West' not 'Ost' so we are GOING THE RIGHT WAY!" This argument has been going on since we crossed the German border into Austria.

Meanwhile, in the tight quarters of the back seat, Janet and I torture Tammy, who is wedged in the middle--the plight of the youngest. We tickle and poke and pinch her until she cries, "Uncle." Soon, Mom turns down the music, and, our curiosity piqued, we quiet down to see what's happening. Traffic is slowing, brake lights blink on and off, car after car begins to fall in line as we pass a sign SOPRON, HUNGARY. Our line of cars inches along--the beginning of a long, intense wait for our car, stuffed with luggage, to be inspected by the guards at the Hungarian border.

We move ahead every five minutes. Each time we stop, Dad turns off the engine, glances at the back seat and sighs at its catastrophic state--tapes, books, and magazines stuffed among jackets and sweaters that are stashed on the rear window shelf. Gun wrappers stuffed in ashtrays and littering the seat; and the traveling, magnetic chess-checkers-tic-tac-toe-set between Janet and me. But he cannot see the shoes wedged under the seats and the kleenex and the box flattened under our feet. To relax Dad a bit, we pile all of the back seat paraphernalia on top of Tammy because she's the youngest.

Behind us in the endless line of cars, doors open, heads poke out, legs stretch, and weary travelers wander around like newly-hatched chicks. We too get out and pace around in our socks, Janet wearing the walkman and Tammy and I gobbling gummi-bears. The line starts to move again. Dad starts the car; we jump in and slam the doors. The engine roars, then sputters, and away we zoom for about fifteen feet. Again, engines off. Now only a few cars away from the check point booth, closet-sized with three stern guards looking just like communists to us, though we've never really seen a communist soldier before. Tammy crawls over me and tumbles out of the car right in front of one of the grim guards who has left his post at the red and white striped crossing gate. He walks stiffly by the line of cars, barking in Hungarian and broken German that passports must be ready before time for inspection.

Only two cars ahead of us ... Mom discovers that our passports are not in the glove compartment and orders everyone to look for them. Madly we search all the packs and purses and pockets. Tammy turns a bag upside down letting all of the contents scatter to the floor. Janet kneels on the seat to examine the rear window shelf, and Tammy is on the floor--almost neck-deep in stuff.

"I'll bet we've left them at the last hotel," Mom moans as we move up one more space. Janet adds, "They have to be here SOMEWHERE!" Tammy emerges from the heap on the floor, "I've found them!" The back seat is more of a jumble than before.

In a few minutes it will be our turn for inspection. "What if they think we're spies?" Tammy whispers.

"Shhhhh!" we all hiss.

"What if they find something that will keep us from crossing the border?" Tammy asks again. "What if?"

"Shhhhh!"

"In the movies the guards always find guns and illegal things stashed under seats or stuffed in seat covers or under floor mats."

The couple ahead gets out of their car solemnly, and after the guard inspects their trunk, he asks for their passports. He checks passport photo with faces and then marches briskly to the booth. We, in the back seat, scramble for our shoes. Soon he emerges from the booth, returns the passports to the couple and waves them across the border.

Dad pulls up to the guard, who peers through the back window and gapes at the fantastic mess. While he concerns himself with only the trunk, looking under suitcases and coats, Dad carefully counts the passports and takes roll, pointing his finger at each of us, Mom, Janet, Tammy, me--lined up against the car.

The guard takes the passports, scans our faces carefully in an effort to match us with the photos. My sisters and I crowd around him, looking at the photos. "That's Mom, the one with the puckered mouth and the hair sticking up. Yes, that's Mom's!" (No one in our family is very photogenic.) Everyone giggles and talks at once and the guard, obviously not understanding English by his confused expression, smiles.

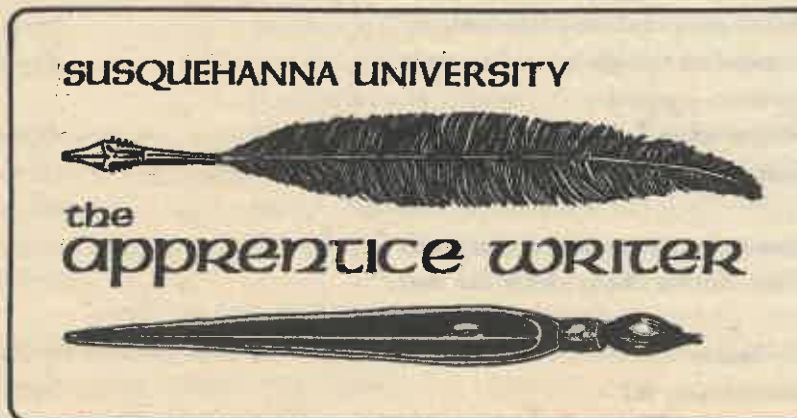
He studies the next photo. We crowd around him again to see a face which seems all hair and sunburned cheeks--it's Tammy. Laughing we point to Tammy, and the guard glances from photo to face, from face to photo, from photo to face again, while we pat Tammy on the head like a puppy and exclaim, "Oh, that's Tammy!" He tries not to laugh at our antics.

The next passport--Dad's. His picture, taken before his haircut, looks like a mug shot--expression, serious; eyes, half-closed. Dad's photo is easy to match because he's the only male in the car. The smiling guard looks at the next one. It's mine, looking a bit cross-eyed with static hair sticking to my cheeks. I quickly claim the passport. Nevertheless, the chorus of "Oh, that's Jenny!" chimes in again.

Actually chuckling, the guard studies the last passport and stares at Janet's picture. "That's the ugly one, over there!" Tammy informs him, wrinkling her nose and pointing to Janet. This time, composure completely broken, the guard, after glancing at Janet's photo again, laughs too. Somehow, he understands our chaotic family.

For a very brief moment, we, who have only heard of the Iron Curtain and communist soldiers, have brought some laughter into his life of tanks and guns at the Hungarian border. And as he waves us past the gate and strolls into his booth, still laughing, we wave back, and pile into our Audi, turn on Vivaldi and finally cross the border.

Jennifer Theiss  
Silver Spring, MD  
Northwood High School  
Mary Lee Ruddle





## Balance

Third-monthed, she leaves, her yearly migration.  
Not pregnancy, only winter. My sister  
And no more in evenings to throw me  
Out of my bed: Now it is mine.

How good for us to have our own rooms.  
Last night I stayed late after work:  
This woman we decided would soon return.  
I said I fear I follow footsteps.

I said I fear I fall into adoration again.  
And what do you mean and what  
Do I mean and four years apart.  
I have left off schooling, also. Symmetry---a pattern.

She left and we dissect now--not her---  
The family finds itself the subject  
Once more. It all began in kindergarten  
We never learned to work.

One should have been a boy, for balance.

||

And our balance?  
For one outside, fog. And then  
Again there is our caffeine.  
Yesterday I counted, fifteen cups easily.

Where do they hide away the decaffeinated  
Who turn and find only herbal teas  
And no audience for tonight,  
For this family?

Where is the balance to even out evenings.

Carry your thin blood and become  
Well slept, a pattern of health  
And I will follow. I fear  
Footsteps tiring my new paid shoes.

Rachel W. Carpenter  
Philadelphia, PA  
Germantown Friends School  
Pat Macphearson

## Jason and The Possum

There was one lying in the road that day.  
Matted grey and bloodstained,  
it looked as though an old woman  
had been scalped  
and the souvenir flung to the ground,  
grinning a dead yellow grin.

Passing by, Jason saw it and said,  
"Their mouths always look like that."

Lisa Beskin  
Moorestown, NJ  
Mrs. Barbara Fine

## God: 20th Century Style

The light from the television  
streams into my eyes  
Images of people I don't care to know  
float across the screen  
But what is this?  
My subconscious must have plucked it  
from its brothers in the cellophane bag  
A potato chip  
Its golden arches harbor no truth  
convey no clue to the meaning of life  
But it is indeed a beautiful thing  
This is silly  
How can a burnt collection of plant cells  
be beautiful  
my mind questions  
I tell it to mind its own business  
My hand runs over the chip's surface  
picking up loose cells  
which momentarily cling to my flesh  
It reminds me of a dead fish  
whose scales flake off  
as a careless human picks it off a lonely beach  
The television interrupts with  
a commercial  
making me aware of problems  
I never knew I had  
Bright hues of light illuminate  
the translucent chip  
But wait!

Vague contours of continents appear  
across its greasy surface  
It now has the appearance of  
the Earth  
But it is flat  
The muscles in my hand tense up  
The potato chip cracks  
under the superior forces of my organic actions  
Outside  
a large mushroom cloud is forming  
on the horizon  
I yawn and reach for more chips  
to appease my hunger

Stephen Singer  
Manlius, NY  
Fayetteville-Manlius High School  
W. Fibiger

## The Role of Anxiety

Over the phone I can hear your voice and the sweet  
roar of your father's chain saw,  
And I wonder  
if he is hacking off your foot,  
And whether or not Freud was right.

Laurence McNamara  
Moorestown, NJ  
Ms. Turnbull





James Polahar

## Sunday Night

Sleeping horses  
will enter  
the feathery  
tunnels

when day  
will have sung  
in the windows

and far across  
the reflections  
of water

the mysterious  
commotion  
of a smile

casts shadows  
like searchlights  
on snowy  
rooftops.

Justin Vicari  
Pittsburgh, PA

## Faces While Collecting

Drudgery. Dreary monotony. Neither sleet nor snow nor rain nor malfunctioning alarm clock shall keep me from the completion of my appointed rounds. I am the silent town crier, the paper boy, deliverer of good and bad news to the masses.

At 4:30 AM sharp, I awake to make my rounds. Every morning (and that's every morning, even Christmas--no time off for good behavior), I toss the news on porches that look more and more alike each day--a vision through sleepy eyes. For two hours I trudge along the empty street, not a soul awake for miles.

When the sun has voyaged the sky, I must make the rounds again, but for different reasons: this time I'm collecting. Money. Cash. The big bucks that fill my wallet. Somewhere amid the ringing of doorbells and the hammering of lionheaded knockers, I awaken my readers from their television trances. Out from behind their walls of privacy peek the faces...

- Everett: awakened from an early deep sleep, hair (what there is of it) standing up--he appears, disgusted, in bathrobe.
- Johnson: sparsely furnished living room--TV and stereo on simultaneously (Car ads and "The Temptations")--a friendly portly man--always smiling.
- Clark: man, wife, mother--the last wearing a bright green bathrobe--some dispute about money (Weren't you just here?)
- Fever: first--a dog, very annoying one, barking at my shadow  
second--young retarded boy, eager to answer the doorbell, opens door, and smiles wide  
third--father: bald but with a thick black beard--a big tip!
- Cokenins: Old man with bristling gray moustache, holding back a tiny yapping puppy. "Wasn't that an incredible football game!" I laugh.

- Taylor: A plastic house. All the gold furniture is covered in plastic membrane. A plastic mat on the floor. Plastic flowers (gold). The couple is real enough.
- Pecuraro: "Down, Tequila. Get down! Good girl! Hey, y'know I didn't get no E section yesterday....That's okay, keep the change."
- Heath: She comes to the door in red, yellow, blue rollers and magenta bathrobe. She is merely a silhouette--the only light in the house is an open bulb in the kitchen.
- Apolenis: Me--"Collecting for the Post." She--"No, thank you." Me--"??"
- Talero: Conversation through plate glass. She was once friendly. Now her door never opens after dark. Stuck, I suppose. I'll come back later.
- Bowser: On the porch I cautiously step over a small dead bird, mangled by cat's claws. There they are--the eyes, in the dark azalea bushes, watching me, daring me to touch its bird. Door finally opens, revealing a home--no, a house occupied by three or four middle-aged men, all animal lovers. Poodles and small terriers scurry about the living room, parrots squawk in the kitchen, scores of little birds in cages line the dining room walls. Cat stays outside. Can't these men see the bird carcass? . . . The faces silently retreat into their dens. I close my little yellow book, pat my bulging back pocket and head for home. The sun has set. But I do not look forward to seeing it rise. Again. . .

Andrew Blendermann  
Silver Spring, MD  
Northwood High School  
Mary Lee Ruddle



## Sophie

There was a mimosa tree outside the courtyard; it leaned peculiarly to one side and its blossoms were dark pink and fluffy, like dyed dandelion puffs. Sophie liked this tree. It seemed an unusual tree to be growing in the middle of the city. It pleased her. The courtyard of the tiny building where her apartment was also pleased her. Iron planters decorated the court's small space. In the summer they held ivy and small, bright flowers. There were also two trees and a bench.

Sophie's apartment was on the left. She turned and walked up one flight of stairs to the door and—there. It was special. It was painted pale yellow; all the seasons appeared to be spring in Sophie's room. The floors were wood and the sun shone in from the back window, which looked out on the small street. Her furniture was unobtrusive, light. She moved easily in this space, touching the objects that she particularly enjoyed, such as her scattered knickknacks and her dried flowers.

She was alone, mostly, but she did not feel lonely. She would often play the phonograph which sat on her bureau, devoting her full attention to each song, or rearrange her old photo collection. Seldom did she have visitors, though the other apartments were all occupied by elderly people like herself, many of them seeking companionship. A small, lithe cat shared the apartment with her, slipping in and out of closets and reclining near the radiator, a quivering body of brown and black. It was independent, but would throw itself into occasional bouts of affection—an unsure companion.

The seasons themselves were Sophie's companions, each one holding familiar moods and small, nostalgic tasks of which Sophie never tired. In the fall, Sophie would sit in the court on the carved concrete bench and carefully watch the comings and goings of the small street. There were many children on the street, and Sophie saw them in their new clothes and red and brown shoes. They went to school in the morning and crowded the street in the crisp afternoon. Sophie's favorite among these neighborhood children was a little Oriental girl with short straight black hair; she was the prettiest and the fastest. Sophie would always look into the open doors of the children's houses across the street, looking into what seemed to be a strange but safe other world. The mimosa blossoms would begin to fall off the tree and darkness came earlier; Sophie would light a large candle and eat her supper in semi-darkness.

Sophie did not like the cold of winter, but she loved the holidays. She shopped in the big department stores at Christmas time, absorbing the bright little ornaments and green trees, the songs, and the crinkling gift wrap. She bought herself a few gifts and, feeling both foolish and cheered, put them under the tiny tree she placed near her sofa. She also bought fruitcake, which she disliked, and imported chocolates, in case guests dropped by. During the day she read, watched television, or knitted, sometimes going out or napping to break up the day. The cat perched by the air vent to catch the heat, and at night it slept on the edge of Sophie's bed, its ears perked to the close and then distant sound of cars passing. Snow was a wonderful part of the winter—the cat would paw at it against the window pane, and Sophie thought it brought light into the room. She was afraid, however, to go outside when it snowed, for fear that she might fall.

The spring would often move Sophie to try new things. One year she planted some flower and vegetable seeds in a small planter she had bought, and one year she bought tickets to a concert. She had enjoyed the music and the feeling of being part of a group of people but not actually being connected to any of them.

One spring, however, Sophie was no longer alone. Her sister, who announced the plans of her visit through letters, arrived at the apartment in early May. Eva lived in the West; she came to Sophie tanned, slightly buxom, and with soft white hair held

## Ease Crumbles

*I'll erase you and  
you're gone and  
no one cares  
but me  
trampled on a subway  
pieces broken apart  
lost inside a toybox  
underneath the rest  
nothing's moving to clear the way  
broken things forgotten and  
started things unfinished  
time is running out and  
nothing's been done about  
the crumbles on the floor.*

Paula Krout  
Dallastown, PA  
Dallastown High School  
Anne Wilson

back from her face by a bright blue scarf. She hugged Sophie close to her:

"How are you, Sophie dear?"

Sophie felt bewildered by her presence and wished there were a way she could make her sister fade comfortably into the soft yellowness of the room. Her sister did not receive this mental message, however, and when she sat down on the sofa her scarf stood out harshly.

Eva made herself at ease quickly, although she appeared to think the apartment too tame for her. Her healthy stride now showed a marked cautiousness, as if she thought too heavy a step might suddenly split the room in two. She insisted on taking Sophie out to dinner, and Sophie felt ashamed when she did not know the names of any restaurants.

"I'm hoping we'll go to the shore this summer, Sophie," Eva said as they ate their meal.

"The shore?" Sophie echoed.

"Yes ... the beaches are good here. Just think! We'll get brown, eat seafood ... collect shells!" Eva's face shone.

"Lovely," Sophie said.

\* \* \* \* \*

The beach was much like Sophie remembered it as a child, though it seemed three times as crowded. Eva rented plastic striped chairs for them and they sat near the water. Sophie felt vaguely as though she were in some other world with Eva as her guide, conducting her and teaching her familiar rituals.

"Look, Sophie, here's some sea glass."

Eva bent down and picked up a piece of fuzzy green glass. She placed it in Sophie's hand.

"Don't get too brown, dear," Eva directed.

Sophie looked down at her new, tanned skin and at the shells that she and her sister had collected in the morning. She wondered where she could put the shells in her apartment. Where did they fit in?

In the evening, they walked on the boardwalk and listened to the sound of the waves together. They drove home and sat at the living room window, looking down at the mimosa tree and talking softly. It was then that Sophie stopped wondering where to put the shells. She lined them up on the windowsill and grasped her sister's hand.

Vanessa Weiman  
Philadelphia, PA  
Friends Select School  
Connie Kennedy



Stepping back, I inspect my art work. Not too good. I hop back onto the kitchen stool and puff out the smiling stick figure on the window. With a clean slate of glass I draw an airplane that somehow turns into a distorted Dachshund. Frustrated, I erase my breath and squint into a sudden flash of morning sun bouncing off the pond out back. The yellow glare, however, can't thaw the frost edging on the windowpane, much less Aunt Elizabeth and Uncle Carl's frozen pond where the ducks and geese skid gracelessly across the ice-veneered surface. A green-headed mallard just broke through the ice, and in a frenzied flapping of wings, all the ducks and Canada geese evacuate their cattailed refuge. My breath fogs the window again. I turn towards Chris hunched over a card game at the kitchen table, "How ya doin'?" I ask half-heartedly.

"Lost three games, won two," he mutters, flipping over a jack of hearts.

"Wanna play spit?" I offer, thinking that after two hours of solitaire he might like some company.

"Not right now," he mumbles, not looking at me. I plop into the rocker, slouch down, and put on my best pout. What a Thanksgiving vacation!

My family and Chris' family are "stranded" here in the heart of Pennsylvania, Williamsport, between the townships of Montrose and Balls Mills, to be exact. Three days in the country, playing solitaire or watching ducks slide across a frozen pond. Three days in a small farmhouse, miles from city life. The 1956 Zenith black and white is broken and the radio gets only farm reports, local news or static--mostly static. The nearest town, Balls Mills, is ten miles away and it's not even worth the trip unless you need Sneider's Hardware Store, Steuart gasoline, Kwik-King Grocery Mart or a post office. So for the past three days I have been observing ducks, listening to static, and watching Chris play solitaire--mostly watching Chris.

No more! I leap up from the rocker letting it slam against the wall.

"C'mon buddy, we're going for a walk!" I declare, strewing his cards all over the kitchen table. I pull him out of the chair and shove him out the door onto the back porch. I yank open the closet and throw hats, coats, gloves and scarves at Chris standing dumbfounded in the cold.

"It'll be fun!" I exclaim. No response. After sufficiently wrapping ourselves in down and wool, we wander out to the duck pond, Chris still lost in himself. With his pocketknife, the one his dad brought him from Switzerland last year, Chris hacks off some cattails, making them into little boats as we used to when we were kids. We silently watch the brown boats float aimlessly among the ducks. Then we head down Heim Road, stopping to scratch the rough noses of Walt Ely's dappled horses. A little brook on the other side of the road clinks as ice collides and shatters against the rocks. Silently we meander alongside the stream; I skip pebbles across the ice.

"Let's make a bridge across," I say suddenly, placing a flat stone from the bank into the stream. We bend down, lift a stone and toss it next to the other. After about six rocks, Chris darts across the bridge, barely touching any of the stones. I follow, but miss the last stone, splashing ice water up my pants leg. "Wait up!" I yell. But he just heads towards a cowpath leading up a forested hill. I grab a branch, hoist myself up the bank and run to catch up with him.

Wordlessly I follow Chris as we pick our way among fallen trees, lichen-covered rocks and scraggly saplings. The ice-encased world is silent except for the wind snapping in the frozen, leafless branches. Strange how all the chirping and chattering of summer is absent in the winter. We stop at the top of the hill, our breath swirling and eyes smarting in the bitter wind. I turn to Chris,

"Hey, Chris?" I start cautiously. He's staring ahead, lost in the cloudless blue grey sky.

*A moonlit bumper,  
a sickel in the sky.*

*The dying water  
upon the silent street,  
against the crackling curb.*

*The umbrella-like tree  
whose green is now black,  
and the oil that engulfs it.*

*Streetlights  
destroying the darkness.*

*A burnt building, no windows,  
glass drowns its floors.*

*Black bricks, moaning drunks,  
lonely children, yawning wolves.*

*A distinct smell.*

*No clouds, screaming fireworks.*

*The dead wind.*

*An average-sized acorn rolling down the hill.*

Darren Scott Aronofsky  
Brooklyn, NY

"Never mind." I turn towards our farmhouse up the road. The ducks and Canada geese are once again buoying amid the cattails and sliding across the ice near the dock.

I turn back to Chris, but he's already halfway down the hill. I sprint after him. On the other side of the road we tramp along, thigh-deep in dried weeds. Chris just gazes at the ground, hands shoved in his pockets, oblivious to me. He climbs over a barbed wire fence enclosing a deserted shack. I follow him gingerly. We stop at a patch of milkweed. I crack open a stringy grey pod and free the millions of weightless white seed, watching them whirl in the wind. I shuck another pod, flinging the feathery spirits against the wind. Like white duck down, the seeds swirl around me until they catch in my wood coat and hair. Noticing Chris watching me, I pop open some more pods and let the wind whirl them towards Chris. A couple white puffs stick to his scarf under his nose. He hacks a pod off the stalk. We split the flimsy husks, slinging the soft seeds against the wind until we are covered with a layer of white silk down. I look at Chris and giggle. A grin spreads over his face. He squats down and flaps his arms, "Quack! Quack!"

"You're nuts!" I laugh, trying to shake the seeds out of my hair. Chris laughs too and bounds over the fence, flapping his arms.

"C'mon, granny, let's go home and I'll beat you at a game of gin rummy," he yells. "I'll race ya there!" Not giving me a chance to answer, he gallops up Heim Road. Some minutes later I jog into the living room and collapse on the sofa.

"What took ya so long?" Chris asks, shuffling the cards like a professional. I brush puffs of down out of my hair and look at Chris. The glint is back in his eyes again. I pick up my cards and settle back on the sofa to arrange my hand.

This is Chris' first Thanksgiving without his father...strange how winter's silence has eased the pain.

Susan Kaufman  
Silver Spring, MD  
Northwood High School  
Mary Lee Ruddle



## It's Over

"She's about five feet tall with short, curly, grey-brown hair, and I think she's wearing a maroon pants suit. Oh, and she wears glasses, too." I was describing my mother to a doctor I had just met. But what I was saying seemed so superficial, so trivial. If I were to really describe my mom I'd tell how she smiles to try and hide her teeth that never had braces, how she tugs at her shirt every once in a while to be sure it's not too clingy and how she lost two pounds last week. But, honestly, I couldn't even remember any of those things now. All I could think about was the IV tubes attached to each of my arms and the chalky aftertaste of Maalox in my mouth. I was in the Intensive Care Unit at Hershey Medical Center, awaiting my third operation in three weeks. I had just arrived by ambulance, which is why I had to describe my mom to the doctor.

I guess my description was accurate, because soon my mother and the doctor entered my room.

"You're going to have one more operation, sweetheart," my mother was informing me. As I looked at her I was glad that I hadn't noticed the dark circles under her eyes before or I might have included them in her description.

"Doctor Cohen is a wonderful surgeon," mom was saying, "He's the head of pediatrics. We're very lucky to be at Hershey aren't we, Linda?"

Pediatrics? I had forgotten that I had only turned twelve last month. After all the shots and treatments I had undergone since my appendectomy, it seemed to me that I must be a senior citizen by now.

I remembered that it was October and I was immediately saddened not so much by the fact that I would miss Halloween, but by the fact that I didn't care that much. For some reason, at that moment, I knew I wasn't a kid anymore. All those afternoons playing Barbie in my bedroom and swinging on the tire in my backyard were over. There would never be another Playdough sculpture, no more construction paper Kool-Aid signs and no more painted rock gardens. I had stepped over a thin line into adolescence that, no matter how hard I tried, I couldn't recross. Now I had to worry about my health, maybe even my life. I had to reassure my parents that I felt fine even though I asked for morphine every hour. It was strange. One month ago I didn't even know what morphine was.

But that wasn't the only term I had become familiar with. Ultra-sound, colostomy, barium, catheter, nasal-gastric tubes--these were all words I used every day now. I had to if I were to comprehend any of what was going on around me.

This fact reminded me once again that my childhood was slipping away. Before, if I went to the doctor only my parents paid attention to what he and the nurses said. But now I was even beginning to ask questions! How could it go so fast I wondered. I didn't ask to grow up. I had been drafted. And the worst part of it all was that my "mommy and daddy" didn't even seem to notice.

Or did they? Maybe in my state of panic at the ending of my innocence my parents were watching and thinking of a way to ease the pain.

Perhaps, because on the morning of my final operation as I was being wheeled into the Operating Room, my mom slipped one of my dolls, Bashful Becky, onto my litter. "This way you won't be alone in there, sweetie," she whispered.

I guess I wasn't all that old, I thought. It was the most comforting feeling I had felt in three weeks.

I hadn't been alone in that operating room, either. When I came out from under the anesthesia hours later I was back in my room, and so was Bashful Becky, with a Band-Aid on her arm.

Linda Brown  
Bellefonte, PA  
Bellefonte High School

## Look Out!

### It's The Library Police!

They stare at me, suspicion burning in their eyes. I walk in quietly. My disguise is perfect. Cautiously I enter through the metal gate. I have gotten in!

Currently, access to the school library is next to impossible. Only a limited number of students are granted entry, and certainly not an infamous book-user such as myself. That's right. I'm a man with a price on my head. I am wanted in four grade sections for malicious reading, possession of overdue books, and for sitting in the area marked "FOR CLASS USE ONLY." Consequently, I must disguise myself as a study-hall student. They are allowed in the library because no study hall student would ever touch a book. They just sit in the corner and smoke funny cigarettes until the Library Police come and bully them.

As I move toward the reference section, I hear a piteous, faint scream from somewhere in the labyrinthine recesses of the library. The Library Police are "questioning" another book-user. He'll never see his graduation, the poor devil. The scream fades. I hear a soothing voice, barely audible, repeating "Don't touch the books, Don't touch the books." The Library Police use subliminal persuasion to reinforce the natural aversion to books of study hall students. I have become used to it, and can therefore ignore it.

I'm now in the reference section. Just for spite I switch volumes two and three of the Encyclopedia Britannica. That will show them! A Library Police officer passes by, on her way to scream "SSSSSHHHHH!!!!" in the ear of some student who is taking a nap. A student can't really do anything in the library except wait for the study period to end. The only reason anyone is allowed in the library is that the Library Police like to have someone to intimidate.

I've got to carry out my mission. I am here to obtain a copy of Critical Interpretations of Kahlil Gibran. The book-user coalition needs the book for a project. The Library Police are the most protective of this kind of book. They are angry enough at the loss of a Harlequin Romance, but if a book of critical essays is taken they wreak havoc. I must be cautious.

I pass a group of Library Police who are discussing plans to make the library a sovereign state and declare war on the cafeteria. I find the book and, when no one is looking, I slip it into a secret pocket in my jacket. This is not really theft, for I will return it later, and besides, the Library Police don't appreciate books. They just like to keep others from enjoying them.

A year ago, two fellow book-users and myself tried to take the non-fiction section from .223 to .401. Our plan was to put some of the books in gym bags under our gym clothes, and the rest inside our shirts. The mission failed when the Library Police saw that we were fatter going out than we were going in. I barely escaped, and I don't like to think what happened to the others.

Now to make my escape. I walk up to the librarian who is checking bags. Fortunately, she is not conducting body searches, as some do. I smile at her; she glares back. I hand her my bag. She looks in it then throws it back to me. I step through the gate. Suddenly a high-pitched whine shatters the air--WHeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeet!!! The gate was electronically sensitized to detect the book! I try to run, but the gate closes and several Library Police come over and grab me. A malevolent sneer is on the lips of the Chief of Library Police as she utters those horrible words: "BOOK HIM!!"

Scott Colburn  
Reisterstown, MD



My dad and I walked down the main street of his home town. It was Christmas time and snow blanketed the roofs of the stores. It was a cloudy day, as it often is in this town, and it looked like it would snow some more. The entire town seemed not to have changed in thirty years. There were faded advertisements for tobacco on the sides of the buildings and posters for Coca Cola at five cents a shapely bottle in the windows. There was a Bank of Ohio on the corner and a Mom and Pop's grocery store next to it. Further down the street was a restaurant, a drug store, a book store, and finally Joe's Java Joint where we were heading to get some coffee and soup.

Only a few people were out on the street; it was early Sunday morning and most of the people were at church or still in bed. The people who were out were old; in fact, almost everyone in this town is old. Not many people have moved here in the last ten years, and many of the people who grew up here have left. My dad's relatives still live here though, scraping an existence out of what remains of the steel industry either from working or pension plans. We were staying with my father's mother, which was why we decided to take a walk.

Ever since my grandfather died, almost thirty years ago, my grandmother has been steadily declining. She is shy, self-effacing, and faithful to those she loves, which may be why she never remarried. Although she lives within a few blocks of most of her friends, she rarely visits them. Except when we see her every Christmas, she spends most of her time alone. She has arthritis and is hard of hearing; so when my dad got tired of shouting and listening to her sigh when she bent over, we left. She lives in a vicious circle. She is unhappy because she is lonely which tends to accentuate her arthritis. But when people visit her they feel uncomfortable around her because she is unhappy, so they leave. Then she becomes more unhappy, and the cycle goes on.

My father and I stepped through the door of the coffee shop, and the door knocked some bells which jingled forever in the stillness of the nearly empty shop. There was a clean, linoleum-topped counter with a fat waitress watching a football game behind it and a number of booths on the other side of the room. A bum sat drinking coffee at the end of the counter. Dad ordered a cup of soup for me and coffee for himself. We sat down a few seats away from the bum and waited. The bum got up and staggered toward the door. On the way he asked my dad for some money, and to my surprise dad gave him some. Usually he politely told them no. The bum left and we were alone.

"Dad, why did you give him the money?"

"I don't know, I sort of felt sorry for the poor sap." Sympathy and melancholy always pour out of my dad when we are in his home town.

The food came and it helped to melt the cold in our chests. Outside it was snowing so we sat down at one of the booths with our food and decided to wait out the storm. My dad looked sad, and he was flexing his jaw muscles which meant he was thinking about something.

"What's the matter, dad?"

"I was just thinking about my father."

"Oh yeah, what about him?" I was genuinely curious; he rarely talked about his father, and what little I knew came from lots of questioning.

"Well, I was thinking about a number of things. I remember one evening when I was about your age, and I was full of energy like you. After dinner my father and I sat down in the living room. He started reading the newspaper, and I asked him what he was reading. He said he didn't really understand it. I made

some comment like, 'The words too long for you huh.,' and I knew I had overstepped my bounds. At first he did nothing; then he folded his paper, walked over to me and slapped me cleanly across the face. I remember being so impressed by that. He wouldn't argue or chastise me; he just got up and put me where I belonged. I didn't say much the rest of the evening."

I smiled and asked, "What else were you thinking about?"

"One night I was walking a date home from a dance. When I got to my house, I was surprised to see all the lights on because it was late, and my parents should have been asleep--or so I had hoped. Inside were all my relatives--my grandpa, uncles and aunts, friends of the family, practically the whole neighborhood, except my father. They were crying. I asked them what had happened, and they told me my father was dead. Apparently, he was carrying in the groceries and then keeled over. My mom had to call the neighbors to get his two-hundred pound body into the car. When he got to the hospital, nothing could be done. I sat down and watched the people crying."

"Didn't you cry?"

"Sure, for a while. But then I realized that I was responsible for my family. I had to take care of my mom, who didn't stop crying for weeks, and my little brother who didn't really understand what was going on."

"What made you think of all this?"

"I guess being here makes me think about it. Also in a few months I am going to be as old as he was when he died."

"You don't believe you are going to die this year, do you?"

"You never know. I might go to bed tonight and never wake up."

"Oh come on dad, you're in fine health."

He shrugged his shoulders and looked away. I sat and stirred what was left of my soup; I had lost my appetite. The snow was coming down thick, but there wasn't any wind, so it just fell, and fell. He turned back to me.

"Whether I die or not, soon you are going to have to make your decisions. I hope you come to me or your mother if you have problems, but you have to make decisions for yourself." He paused for a second and then continued. "I want you to become a responsible adult; that's all."

"Sure dad, stop talking like you are going to die. Let's go."

Dad paid and tipped, and we left. Outside it was still snowing, and after a while when I looked back, I could see our tracks leading back to the shop. We walked back to grandma's house in silence.

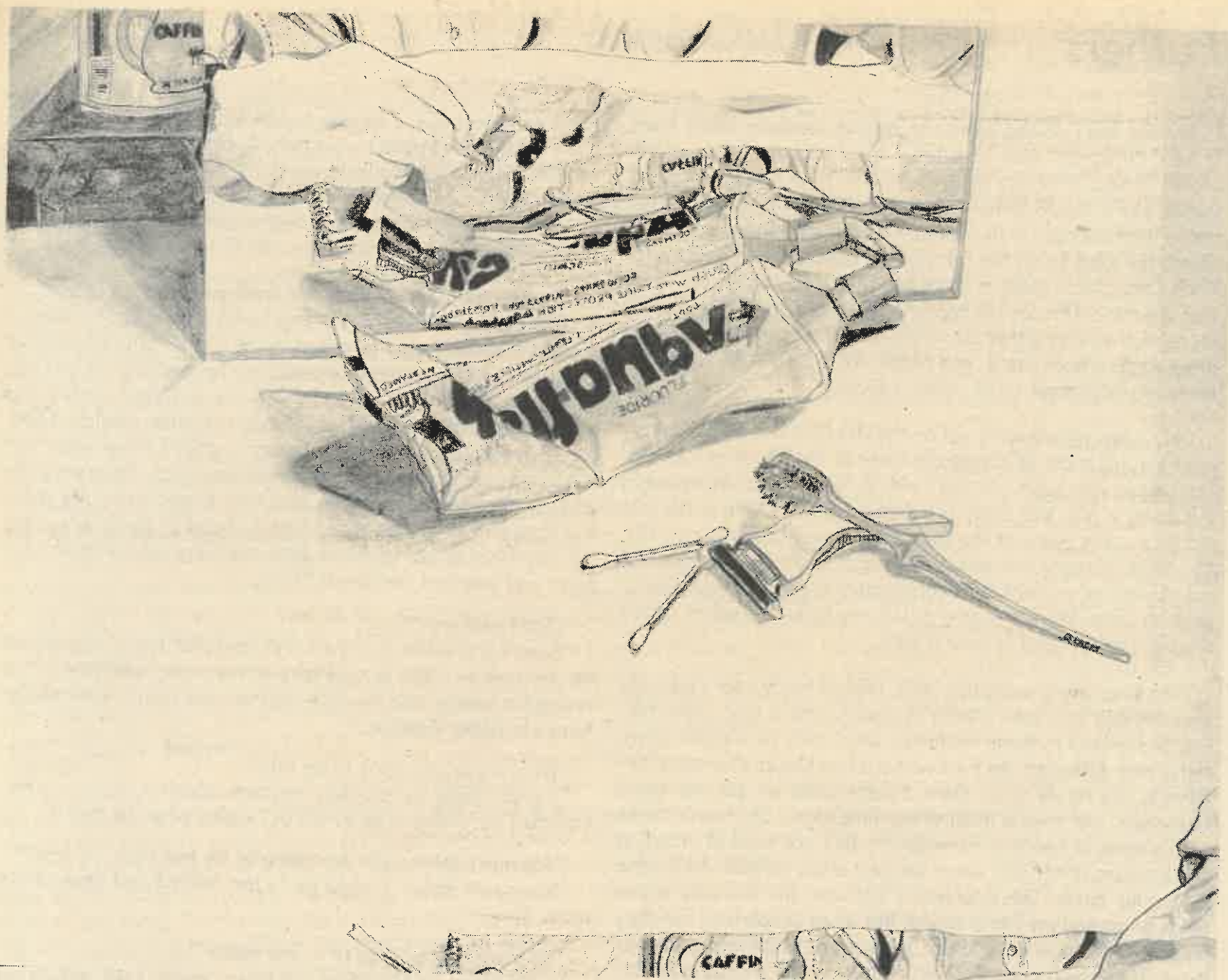
I could not stop thinking about what he had said. I had always wondered how his father's death had affected him, and now I had an inkling. For him death is a very tangible phenomenon. He runs five miles a day not only to 'keep in shape,' but also to create a buffer zone between himself and death. He has always made jokes about death but that too may have been a means of keeping death at bay. And how death comes even closer. But if he lives through this year, maybe he will stop allowing death to harass him.

We reached my grandmother's house, and the lights were all on; I guess from morning activity. We brushed the snow off the drooping bushes, picked up the paper on the porch, and stomped our feet. I looked up at my dad.

"Beauty before age." He smiled. I took a deep breath of the cold winter air and opened the door.

Alex Miko  
Washington, D.C.





Dana Martinelli

## Picking Tomatoes in Autumn

"Go get me three ripe tomatoes, dear!" That was easy for her to say. I was sitting by the stereo, reading a book. My favorite song was playing and I had just come to the super-suspenseful climax of the book. I was also halfway through eating my favorite food. How could my mother do this to me?

"I need those tomatoes now! If you don't get them, you won't get any spaghetti!" Nag, nag, nag. I didn't really want any spaghetti after having downed half a milkshake and a doughnut.

I peeled myself from the floor, away from my music, away from my novel, and away from my food for thought. I dragged, heaved, and tugged myself out the door, down the steps, and into the autumn breeze. It was October and we still had tomatoes. I hate gardening.

I trudged through the shady depths of the backyard. The air nipped at me, making chills run down my back. I never liked October, especially at about four o'clock in the afternoon. The sun was out and yet it was chilly.

I surveyed the sloppy garden. Dead grass was lying here and there in clumps. Some of the soil was turned as if someone had been riding a motorcycle through it, spewing dirt everywhere. Lonely beanpoles were stuck in the mess, brittle and betrayed. Farther back, in the corner, was the aged tomato patch. I could not see anything red peeking out from the tangled vines. There were plenty of green tomatoes, however. Why wasn't I inside the house in my own paradise?

I didn't have much experience with tomatoes, or any other plant growing for that matter. I made a bouquet of daisies once. I had never had a green thumb.

The brown leaves on the vines were a forlorn sight. This job

was so drab. I picked through the foliage to find a rotten, greenish-brown tomato. Tiny flies fed upon it. This was not a good sign. I then proceeded to look down toward the bottom of the tangled mass, and I spotted a miniscule, yellow-orange tomato. It would not do.

What could I accomplish out here? There was no hope of finding a cheery, red tomato, let alone three of them. I felt something on my wrist. It was an inchworm. Inchworms are loads of fun when one is bored. I let it crawl down each of my fingers and into my palm. I was so involved with the tiny creature that I hardly heard my mother's call.

"Could you please hurry up?! I'm ready to make the sauce!" Oh, bother. I let the inchworm crawl onto a leaf and resumed my search. Suddenly, a red blob appeared!

It was indeed a ripe tomato. I yanked it off the vine with a new hope. I looked among the assortment of half-rotten tomatoes and leaves to find another bright sphere. I grabbed it and was filled with a maddening determination.

"Aha, I have found you at last!" I bellowed upon the discovery of the final prize. Triumphant, I marched back to the house with my loot.

It was then that I learned why I had never liked gardening. I had never finished any gardening projects. The fun part of gardening is relishing your accomplishment in the end, and I did indeed relish that spaghetti.

Claire Nixon  
Seaford, DE  
Mrs. Hastings



## T. Waldo Emerson

Classes every day. Sheila on my mind.  
What? The leaves are green. Sheila's  
eyes are green. Both of them.  
She glides ya know. No, she has a nice waddle.  
It seems to bounce so smoothly.  
Eight minutes.  
The longest eight minutes of my life.  
longer than Christmas eve at 7:30 in the  
morning, waiting for Dad to wake up.  
(All I got was a microscope.)  
longer than every red light I've encountered and  
eventually run through.  
Red...red...  
Her favorite color is Red.  
Exams! "When? Oh, last week."  
Reproduction of plants  
Another test passed; another course forgotten  
I'll remember Sheila  
remember her forever  
The way she tries not to make it obvious her armpit itches  
The way she bites her cuticles back  
The way she runs her fingers through the  
back of her hair.  
Six minutes and forty-two seconds.  
Sheila, Sheila, Sheila, before you  
Beth, Beth, Beth. Beth who?  
"Sheila," I'll say, "Sheila, would you dine with  
me tonight? I have an extra Ponderosa coupon."  
She'll twinkle and blink and swing her hair  
"Yes."  
I'll play my favorite piece for her.  
The one I played when Dad thought I was  
studying for Chemistry tests.  
You know the one. I played it for you  
many times.  
"I wish to drown the droning voice before me."  
Day after day the same thing  
Day after day after day  
Feel my pulse. It beats for Sheila.  
So hard I can't stand it. Can you  
feel the heat coming off of my body.  
I think I'm going to commit suicide. For Sheila. How noble.  
I don't got the guts.  
Four and one half minutes. My hand is starting to cramp  
What will I do.  
She won't like my music or my clothes,  
"O Sheila why can't the chase be over?"  
I'm a good guy.  
I have the long red hair I plucked from the back of  
her coat. I scotch taped it to my wall.  
Half of it's in my wallet.  
Remember when we shared our room.  
And I slept with T. Waldo E. my teddy.  
Waldo Emerson loves her too. He better love her,  
Her picture is stapled to his chest.  
  
"Don't you ever poke my arm again."  
I don't care who hears me. I do the deeds  
I go through the motions with much success.  
Who needs you to poke me in my arm and  
tell me to pay attention?!  
Daddy watches me. All the way from Boston  
he watches.  
I'm under his thumb, huh? Think again Pop.  
Two more minutes.

## Untitled

When I was in Washington, D.C.  
yesterday  
there was this lady.  
She was in the bathroom,  
sitting there and taking tips in her pink and white uniform,  
like a peppermint drop.  
She was a big black woman  
with shiny, gingerbread-smelling skin,  
her plump fingers joined to two thin knitting needles.  
Surrounding her were  
two pairs of booties  
a square pink Christmas tree ornament  
and an unfinished green and white quilt.  
I thought,  
what does she do all day long?  
Just sit here and listen to people  
go to the bathroom?  
I wondered if these government people would catch on to her one  
day  
and lay her off.  
She looked like she needed the job,  
I was glad she had it.  
But They will probably say, "She's not doing anything useful"  
and put a toilet in her place.  
I don't think that's right.  
They should really put a monument there instead,  
right in the middle of the bathroom  
right in the middle of Washington, D.C.  
I couldn't sit and take tips  
and listen to people go to the bathroom all day.

Mibsy Raney  
Rosemont, PA  
The Agnes Irwin School  
A. Miller

---

Who am I kidding?  
There is no way I can talk in the presence of her.  
She's so...Sheila.  
And I'm so...not.  
My so-so music will not be adequate.  
Ponderosa is anything but romantic.  
"I'm lost in the Age of Junk!"  
My mediocre body  
in my mediocre infatuation  
in my mediocre desk will not meet the expectations  
of a Sheila. Maybe a Beth, but not a Sheila.  
Poor Waldo Emerson with staples in his  
chest.

"Well W.E., ya wanna go to the Ponderosa."

Pam Carter  
Dallastown, PA  
Dallastown Area High School  
Miss Anne Wilson



## "Not a Chameleon"

It was a cold November morning in Weston, South Carolina when a small black African child could be seen shivering at a bus stop in the middle of a snowdrift. He was wearing a red and blue jacket and light blue pants. He was carrying a backpack with the name "MAMBUTU" written on it. In the bag were his school books. In the distance the child noticed a series of flickering lights which he recognized to be the lights of his school bus. As the bus approached, the child's expression became sad. He was always the first person picked up by the bus and the last one dropped off. He didn't think this was fair, but he never complained.

As he boarded the bus, he could feel his stomach growl. He hadn't had breakfast. He was always too tired to eat early in the morning. He sat down on the front seat as the bus began to move. He opened his backpack, took out a book, and began to read. He had been reading since he was six. Now he was eight years old, in the sixth grade, and was reading books like *A Rumor of War*, *Watership Down*, *The Good Earth*, and *The Iliad*. He was a bright child, and people hated him for it. People hated the fact that he was much younger than them, but knew so much more. They called him "The Little Black Brain."

He couldn't concentrate on his book that day, he kept thinking about his home in Africa. The place where he was born and the place where he wanted to die. He thought of his old friends, of his aunts and uncles, of his true home. Since the first day he and his family landed at The John F. Kennedy Airport in New York, he missed his country. He loved Africa, and vowed he would never forget it.

As the bus began to fill up with more kids, Mambutu began to feel more and more uncomfortable. After what seemed to be hours, the bus slowed down and came to a halt in front of a large modern building. It was The George Washington Elementary school. All of the children got off the bus and entered the building.

Mambutu went straight to room 42. He didn't stop to talk to any of the other students in the halls. As he entered, Mrs. Whitney greeted him, "How are you doing Mambutu?" she asked. "Fine, thank you, Mrs. Whitney," he replied in fractured English.

He then walked over to his desk, sat down, looked at the clock, put his head down on his desk between his folded arms, and began to think. He thought about the reasons that his parents sent him to this school. He knew his parents had volunteered him for a "Community Enrichment Program" in which gifted black students were sent to "respectable" white schools, to "nurture their potential intellect to the highest possible degree." At least that is what was supposed to be happening. The reality was, Mambutu was being treated like an outcast. The students tormented him on a daily basis. They picked on him in gym class, because he was the smallest. They called him names because he was black. They, very simply, made life as miserable for him as they could. They, however, never acknowledged his intellectual prowess, nor his artistic ability, nor his warm personality. They didn't hate Mambutu just because he was black, or because he was black and smart, they hated him because he was black, smart, and proud.

Mambutu was torn from his thoughts as the 8:00 bell rang. The bell was followed by the usual announcements, and the five-minute silent prayer period. During the prayer periods, Mambutu always prayed for the same thing--to be accepted by his fellow students. But through Mambutu's eyes, God too was deaf to the prayers of an African black child.

Right after the prayer period, English began. Though English was Mambutu's weakest subject, it was his favorite. He never felt that he was able to express himself, and he believed that in order for him to overcome his problem, he had to perfect his

usage of the English language. Mambutu found great pleasure in writing stories, in spite of the fact that they were terribly difficult for him to write.

English was followed by a thirty-minute recess. Mambutu strolled around the school watching the boys play football, and the girls play jump rope in the cold. After he had walked around the school once and was about to start around for the second time, he heard his name being called. Mambutu turned around and saw a group of boys. They were all calling his name. Mambutu continued to walk in the opposite direction, because he thought they were cursing him. He hadn't gone more than a few feet when a boy caught up to him. The boy was about six inches taller than Mambutu, had brown hair, and was wearing blue jeans and a heavy red sports coat. After catching his breath, the boy introduced himself as Tom, and asked if Mambutu would be on his team because they lacked one player. Mambutu was overwhelmed by the offer, and immediately accepted. That was the first time in his three months at George Washington Elementary School that any student had referred to him as "Mambutu," instead of "nigger," "black brain," or "African Man." Before that moment no one had ever invited him anywhere to do anything.

When Mambutu and Tom reached the group of boys, each of the boys introduced himself with a condescending smile and a wave. After the brief introductions, the game immediately got underway. Mambutu didn't understand the game at first, but quickly learned.

The game was interrupted by the teacher's whistle, and all of the students reluctantly dragged themselves into the school building. Tom invited Mambutu to sit in the seat next to him, and Mambutu readily agreed.

After everyone had settled down, Mrs. Whitney began admonishing the class. She asked the class why they had such poor grades in math. She told the class that everyone's grade was below a 75%--except for Mambutu's grade, which was a 98%.

Mambutu always felt proud when the teacher congratulated him, or when she told the class that he got a good grade. He could, however, never understand the behavior of the class when he was congratulated by the teacher. All of the students glared at him. In Africa, people were happy when someone accomplished something good. In the United States, his schoolmates looked at him with disgust, and called him a "show-off." All his life, Mambutu was taught to do the best he could, and be proud of himself if he did something well. Mambutu concluded that in the homes of the Americans, other lessons were taught to the children.

Once again Mambutu had proven himself to be academically adept by his high grade in math, and once again Mambutu was friendless. Tom had told Mambutu to leave him alone, because Tom was mad about being "beaten" by a black African.

Suddenly, Mambutu thought of the hogundoo chameleon which lived in his native land. He wondered why such an irrelevant image came to mind, then he realized that he had thought of it for a very relevant reason. The hogundoo chameleon found safety and comfort by changing color and blending into the environment, just as he would if he "gave up his color," heritage, intelligence, and pride to blend in with the American society. After much thought he came to the realization that it wasn't worth it...

Amir Nasirj  
Ovid, NY  
South Seneca High School  
Ms. Jane Kelly



# Shaking Branches

He saw the face, framed by the cross pieces of the window. The face wore a grim and huge eyebrows, which rose and fell as the wind picked up and dropped off. The boy swept his hand across his night table, grabbed his glasses, and put them on. The soft features of the face hardened into the bare branches of the trees in the backyard outside his window. The dark curtains froze into the same green and blue plaid of the blanket that was bunched up under his chin. He pushed himself up on one elbow, and watched the wind shake the branches outside his window.

"Nick, it's time to go see your grandmother." He opened his right eye just enough to see his mother standing in the doorway.

"We haven't seen her for two weeks." She came over and sat on the edge of his bed. "We're leaving in a half hour. Take a shower, and make sure to brush your teeth. They're getting orange again." Nick listened to her slippers pad softly away on the carpet.

He rocked back and forth in front of the television. Nick always had to wait for his mother to get ready. He would always sit in the chair, and his dad would sit in the kitchen reading the paper. When he was sick his grandma always sat in the rocking chair. It was white wicker and wood, and a flat pillow she had made was the cushion. They used to watch cartoons and game shows. His grandma always had to watch *The Price is Right*. She liked to make fun of the ladies who would run screaming down the aisles. Nick always felt better when his grandma came over.

He flipped the dial to a cartoon. A big black duck skipped across the screen, whistling. A dog dressed in a lab coat ran out in front of him and put a bottle labeled Aging Medicine - Danger down on the grass. The mad doctor dog crossed that out and wrote Soda Pop. He rubbed his hands together and hid behind a bush. The duck skipped up to the bottle, read it, and took a sip.

The duck's feathers turned white and his legs grew skinny and crooked. His bright yellow bill drooped into a wrinkled frown. He dropped to his knees, then suddenly his frown turned up into a wide smile. The duck hobbled around the screen in crazy circles, bouncing off trees. He stopped, spun around and dropped onto the grass, his legs sticking up in the air. His bill was frozen into a smile, and his eyes were two little 'x's.

The mad doctor dog ran out scratching his shiny black nose. He smiled down at the duck and hopped off into the trees. The black shutter border closed in until the circle of picture was filled only by the duck's face. One of the 'x's opened and winked, and then the circle closed completely.

The green sedan rolled smoothly up the hill and slowed to a stop in front of the door. Nick's father stared straight out the windshield and firmly gripped the steering wheel.

"You and your mother go on up. I'll park the car,"

"Dad...I'll stay with you, okay?" Nick's mother stuck her head back inside the car. His father ran his hand quickly through his thinning hair.

"Son, go with your mom. I'll be right up." Nick slammed his door and stepped up onto the curb.

The lobby was hard edged and antiseptic. Nick's mother turned right, and her high heels cracked against the tile as she strode to the elevators. Her hands clutched the top of her pocketbook like the hands of a strongman ripping a telephone book in half. Nick stood and gazed up at the red light above the doors. It hit bottom and beeped at him. The doors parted and revealed a couple sliding into middle age.

The woman's eyes were rimmed with the same red that colored her nose. She stared down at her hands, which tightly gripped each other. Her husband's mouth was set in a hard line and his lips were clenched over his teeth. They stepped quickly out of the elevator without looking at Nick or his mother.

"Nick," began his mother, as she let go of the bag long enough to push the floor button inside the elevator. "This won't be too long. She likes company. It makes her happy. And the doctor says if she's happy she'll feel better. So if we visit a lot, she might get better..."

"Better? Mom!" Nick's mother looked up at the red light as it moved across the top of the doors. Nick dug his hands down deep in his pockets and closed his eyes hard. There was no change to play with. A harsh fluorescent light flooded the elevator as the doors slid open.

Her head was trembling. She twisted a lock of her thin gray hair around her gnarled finger and stared at the television. The curtains were shut against the daylight. The glow from the screen darkened the hollows of her face. Her mouth was set in a wide smile, and she did not turn her head as they walked through the door.

"Hello, mother. How are you feeling?"

"Why shouldn't I feel fine? I feel just fine. Are you feeling okay? How's your little problem?" Her eyebrows quivered.

"Little problem? Oh, mother, that was years ago. And it's fine. Can't you see I had Nick? So it must be okay."

Nick's grandmother's smile sagged a little, and her eyes wandered around the room. "When I'm well, dear, I must go on *The Price is Right*. I just love Bob Barker."

"I can send for tickets, mother." Nick remembered his father's words when explaining his grandmother's situation. A year at most. Nick's grandmother's withered hand reached up and scratched at her sparse gray hair. Her smile grew wide again.

"Good. I'll know the price of everything. I hope I can win a new living room set." She glanced over at Nick, who stood uneasily resting a hand on the bedpost. "Why don't you introduce me to this young man, dear?"

Nick's hands rested numbly on his thighs. He stared at the back of the headrest in front of him and listened to the sound of the engine. The buzz of his mother's voice flew around his ears.

"She just made a mistake, honey. Everybody makes mistakes. Remember when you didn't recognize Aunt Sylvia last month?" Her voice faded into the background. The dull ache in Nick's arms had spread to his feet. He rested his head on the window, but straightened it up because it kept bouncing around and jiggling his glasses. His father never turned his head away from the road. Nick stared at the wrinkles on his knuckles. His mother's voice bounced off the inside of the car and rapped on his eardrums. Unable to quiet the noise, Nick leaned his head against the window and listened to his skull bounce off the glass.

Nick closed the door to his room behind him. He pulled off his coat and let it fall to the floor. He walked over to his bed and lay down on his back. Looking out of his window frame, Nick's eye was caught by the branches of the tree. The cold winter light filtered through the branches. He slid off his glasses and set them on his night table.

Nick lay on his bed and stared at the face, and wondered how it could smile, as the cold wind ripped the last leaves off the branches and shook the lines of its face. He tried to lift the corners of his lips to copy the branches. He tried to think of its smile as a happy one. He succeeded only in parting his lips enough for a gasp to escape, and the hardness of his mouth melted into the soft lines of quiet crying.

Sam Cohen  
Lawrenceville, NJ  
Peter Rowley



## Grandma's Stroke

When Grandma received the letter from Aunt Eleanor telling of her new farm, nothing would satisfy Gram but our immediate departure to visit the farm. Who ever heard of Fenway, Indiana? It would take time and planning but try and argue with a seventy-five year old lady. "We have to leave now. I could have a stroke and never be able to see the farm!" said Grandma.

"Have a stroke?" I asked. I looked at this big, strong lady with a gray bun on the back of her head and thought to myself she is not the type to have a stroke; she gives them! But no one says no to Grandma.

I suggested we call to get some kind of directions, but we learned the phone had not been connected yet. We were on our own. I have found that when you do not want to do something, the best thing to do is just get it over with. "Okay, Gram, I'll go find a map, cash a check, and pack and be back to get you," I said.

When I returned two hours later the smell of ham hit me as I opened the front door. Gram announced it would be about two hours before the ham was finished.

"What ham?" I asked.

"The ham I am taking to Eleanor's. You can't go empty handed when you go to visit someone--especially in a new house. If someone came to visit me empty handed, I'd have a stroke!" said Grandma.

So late in the afternoon, I packed Grandma and the ham into the Volvo and headed for Fenway, Indiana.

Somewhere in Pennsylvania, Grandma told me she wanted me to find her a nice bathroom. Almost an hour and twenty gas stations later, we still had not come to what she considered to be a nice bathroom. As we passed an enormous truck stop, Grandma yelled "Stop here. This is it! Stop where the truckers stop! They have good bathrooms. That's a rule!"

"No, Grandma. It's eat where the truckers eat. That's the rule," I said.

"Whatever," shrugged Grandma.

The lid from the ham pot in the trunk must have fallen off somewhere around the border of Pennsylvania because since then I was not able to smell anything but hot ham. I went inside to get some paper towels to sop up the spilled ham juice. When I came out there was a large black dog sniffing at the crack of the trunk. He was obviously a born ham lover. I tried to shoo him away, and a trucker yelled "Leave my dog alone!"

Grandma returned from the bathroom and barked "Dog get out of here--Tony, get in the car--Mr., mind your own business!" We all did as we were told. No one says no to Grandma.

It was so dark by now that I knew it was hopeless to go on. I couldn't find the farm nor Fenway. I probably couldn't find Indiana for that matter. I thought we should head for the nearest big town to find a motel. Grandma said that we should stop at the first sight of one. She also said that she was so tired from the ride that day that if she didn't get some rest soon she would have a stroke.

We were in a section of Pennsylvania that had seen better days. We had passed several motels that were pretty raunchy. Grandma insisted that we stop at each one. But I passed them with hopes of finding something a little better. As we were about to pass the fourth motel Grandma said "If you don't stop here I'll have..."

I interrupted, "a stroke!, right Grandma?"

"Don't you be such a smarty--you!" said Grandma.

I think this motel saw its last customers back when soap-operas were on the radio. It had a sign on the T.V. "A quarter for 15 minutes." I said "You get settled Grandma while I get a map. I will be back in a few minutes." Grandma was already stretched out on the bed feeling cranky.

When I returned I found Grandma wide-eyed and quivering on the bed. She whined "I told you we should have stopped at the first motel, but you went on too long. Now I'm having a stroke!"

## Penn Station

The image of his argyle socks lingers.

He stands against the filthy underground wall; he stands easily and serene amidst the filth, watching.

His slight weight is relaxed against the concrete. His left foot is crossed over his right. As I pass him my eyes are arrested by his socks, as if they are fluorescent. They are blue, light blue, grey, red. He wears faded jeans and an old black coat. His hands are precisely carved. He holds a fountain pen with a gold cap in his right hand, and a small notebook in his left. Nothing is written in the notebook. His hair is brown. He wears plain glasses.

His eyes are open, slowly and widely drinking in. His eyes rest on my eyes for a moment as I pass. He catches my fleeting glance only because I have looked at him.

There are millions of people. Don't his eyes long to see them all? Like mine, mine that rest on all?

A woman in a purple fur coat and black high heels rushes by me, dragging a heavy red suitcase with one hand and a crying child with the other. Her makeup is magenta; her hair is wild. She curses and frowns as she violently passes. He sees her, but he does not shudder. He patiently and hopefully waits.

I wait for the train by the track, just behind the yellow line. As I wait, people gather behind me. They quickly sift themselves out of the sea of shoving bodies.

The man standing behind me inches closer, a man holding the New York Times.

He inches closer. His eyes are brown his face is pale--he will push me onto the track.

I push my leg muscles hard into the grimy floor and bend my knees a little, so I can escape when he tries to push me in.

Faster and faster, everyone moves. A noise is rumbling deep and cold. It is a train. I see its light.

I am weak suddenly, my legs twigs.

In an instant the train rushes through in a storm of hot wind which blows my hair back. Its scream drowns out all other cries for help.

I see every window fly past. The seats are all vacant.

The train is gone, swallowed in the dark void.

I turn, my gaze trembling, to the man with the argyle socks. His feet are still crossed. The sock revealed on his left foot is bright and motionless.

He has closed his eyes, and is resting.

Vanessa Elder  
Oyster Bay, NY  
Friends Academy  
Mr. Erickson

When I sat beside her on the bed to comfort her, I realized what had happened, and I burst out laughing. Grandma said, "What are you crazy?"

I said "Did you put the T.V. on?"

She said "I put a quarter in by the bed, but the T.V. does not work."

I said "You're not having a stroke, Gram."

I then showed her the card by the side of the bed saying "25¢ buys 15 minutes of Magical Mattress Massage."

Tony Stone  
West Long Branch, NJ  
Shore Regional High School  
Ms. Donovan



## My True Begotten Father

My father used to be an athiest. In today's world being an athiest or an agnostic is quite common, but athiests do not join religious orders. I've tried to tell my father this many times. He doesn't listen.

Some people find my situation unbelievable. My father is the computer science teacher at Marianapolis Preparatory School. The school and order are run by the Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception of Mary. My father is a layman who lives on campus as a member of the religious community. Although he has taken no vows, most students call him "Brother Ron."

When I started going to Marianapolis last year, I was surprised at the reaction of my classmates. They could not believe that "Brother Ron" was my father. In talking to some of the faculty I found that it caused quite a ruckus among the students whom my father had had as students. They could not believe that "Brother Ron" had a son. I did not know whether to laugh or cry. I felt much as young Launcelot Gobbo, a clown in "The Merchant of Venice," who said, "Oh heavens, my true begotten Father." To me, he has always been "Dad" or "Father" plus a few things that I've called him at various times that I don't think I should write down. Even my nickname on occasion has been "Brother Ron's son" or "Bronson" when said very quickly.

Having a father who is a brother is not bad. In fact, I find it quite amusing. When I compare his present life to his past life, I get quite a kick out of it. When I was little, I knew that my dad did not believe in God. I think now that up until I was 9, my father was an agnostic, but from 9 to 13, he was an athiest. Even though he considered religion "foolish nonsense," he did not force his feelings on me. In fact, he used to drive me to religious instruction every Sunday. It was as if something remained with him from his childhood. For when he was quite young, he had a type of blood disease that was incurable. When he was about five years old and not expected to live much longer, he declined in health so much that one night he was not expected to live until morning. The doctors asked my grandparents to leave the room since they felt that the emotional strain on both sides would be too much. Then he started to get better and by the next morning he was almost normal. During the next few days he was overwhelmed with visitors and during one of those visit he asked his parents for a rosary, a symbolic prayer aid used by Roman Catholics. They were startled for he was still quite young and he had no great religious training. When asked why he wanted a rosary, he said that on the night he was in critical health a very beautiful lady visited him. He said she talked to him for some time and then left. He couldn't remember that much of what they spoke about, but he did remember that she told him to get a rosary. One was purchased for him and most of his relatives expected him to become a priest. An aunt once said, "He should have gone straight into Seminary after high school."

Instead, he went into the service, then to college and then he married my mother. As a child, I didn't get to see my father that much or my mother for that matter. In fact, after my parents were divorced and living in two different cities, I saw both my parents a lot more than before.

My parents were divorced mainly because my father wanted to join a religious community. His big "change" was the result of an automobile accident that put him in the hospital and left him paralyzed. And he became a recalled Christian.

He has been at the school for four years now. I was happy to find out that I would be able to go to the school where my dad taught. I felt that I could get to know my dad better. And it would also be better than my going to another school that would just alienate me further from my parents. I am in my second year at school. It is quite strange living at a boarding school and only minutes away from my father.

But I still find the reactions of other people very amusing.

## Untitled

Uneven spewing of angry  
luke water at the fountain  
too low to the floor  
somehow meets the fierce red  
of exertion this afternoon, soothes and  
mollifies a cooling sweat....  
The track dropped a few feet at  
every visit until it seemed  
almost too little a space to  
scream my body against.  
Now mornings too would meet me  
as I hurried to busily  
go nowhere but the place  
I first shot out of.  
Family would hear my breath  
and feet in the foyer and  
smile  
stretch good-mornin'  
and marvel at the wet  
of my tee shirt.  
In the summer,  
the weenie man would  
wave and laugh,  
comparing my pinkness to  
that of his ware  
as I moved more quickly uphill in  
the blanket of mushy, pointless wind.  
Old shoeboxes marked my  
progress, I burned more soles  
(than Hell ever could).  
Christmas was easy for friends:  
socks, sweatbands, van Aaken method,  
special distance checker.  
In April when I tripped over  
the laundry basket and fell down the  
stairs, everyone worried.  
But I'm already back up to  
quarter miles, and so what  
if the track is big again,  
next summer I'll be just as  
pink when the weenie man  
waves.

Laura Reiley  
Ridgefield, CT

---

Recently, in a discussion with my English teacher, I mentioned that I would like to show a particular essay to my father. When she said that she would very much like to meet my father, I just stared until I realized that she didn't know that I was "Brother Ron's" son. I had seen her speak to him on several occasions. When I told her who my father was, she just smiled and said, "Now, Christopher, I realize that all my sophomores have very good imaginations, but really!" It took a friend, my father and me to convince her of my heritage.

Christopher Korintus  
Thompson, CT  
Marianapolis Prep School  
Mrs. Jane Vercelli



## House of Women

We are four women round and full  
like the Matisse nude above my bed.  
We share a bathroom  
breathing bras and pantyhose  
that are drying on the clothes rack.

Mother--daughter, daughter, daughter,  
You had us--three you's.  
The other two look like you,  
but in my green eyes  
I see the image of a father.

The cat lies fat bellied up  
daring me to rub her soft, pale underside  
which is protected by claws  
that scratch over tender skin  
to bring out red dew.  
When she walks her white side hangs low,  
almost touching the ground.  
She is not full of kittens  
and never can be.

Arbor day one year,  
we planted three baby pines,  
Only one lived.  
We tied a golden ribbon around  
its slender waist  
to honor the Iranian hostages.

Years later the robust tree  
has only one scar  
where it was strangled  
with a piece of yellow silk.  
The pine with bound feet  
is growing solid and healthy.

Deborah Sobeloff  
Bethesda, MD  
Dr. Martin Galvin

## Untitled

It all came out one Summer Sunday  
It felt like Spring and they knew  
She dove down deep inside his brain,  
Careful not to disturb his memory, but  
She did. She caressed his sense of responsibility  
And slowly his fears flew, like leaves on a  
Blustery Autumn afternoon. No order.  
Just motion.  
She seduced his desires, raped his reservations.

Little did he remember; the morning.  
She was crumpled under smooth satin sheets,  
With an eerie lifelessness. A happy one

Brad Jacobs  
Wilmington, DE  
Mr. Donald Staley

## Seasons

In my bedroom,  
six rainbow birds are trapped  
on a mobile.  
They can only look outside  
through the jail-bar strips of venetian blinds  
to watch  
the cherry blossoms'  
kaleidoscopic version  
of the seasons.  
Petals fill the branches of a tree  
to form a cloud  
scattered with magenta berries.

The tree where day and night  
have mingled forms a smooth jungle  
of leaves.

A green, full tree  
has two freshly changed leaves  
like cardinal lovers kissing.

A jogged knife slashes dark lines  
across the empty sky.  
The air has baptized the lines with crystal.

The mobile birds sometimes  
turn their heads  
to look inside and see me  
curled and suffocating  
on the worn spot of my rug.

Then they return  
to looking out the window  
until it is night  
and I close the blinds.

Deborah Sobeloff  
Bethesda, MD  
Dr. Martin Galvin

## What Luck!

As I fell  
From the  
Very tall  
Building,  
A small  
Frog,  
Sitting on  
A window's  
Ledge,  
Caught me  
With its  
Tongue.  
What Luck!

Andrew M. Gordon  
Delmar, NY  
Bethlehem Central High School  
Eugene Duffy



# Alcoholism's Neglected Majority

Dad,

So again you come home drunk!! Your drinking is getting so bad that I feel I don't know you anymore. Do you know what you said to Mom yesterday when you got home? You told her to "Go f--- off!!"--and that she has no sympathy for you because you're a fifty year old man. Dad, Mom was crying!! She told me that she felt like killing you for what you said to her.

After last night I'm sure that I want you to leave because I never want to see Mom like she was last night again.

When you come home drunk you make me feel like such a jerk!

You ask me if I have any problems, and you expect me to tell my problems to a drunk who doesn't know how to handle his own problems. You get me really mad when you come home drunk and you expect me, John (brother) and Mom to forget that you're drunk and for us to be nice to you.

Matt

P.S. I still love you, Dad, and I want to see you get better.

'Although they may not drink themselves, more than 28 million children of alcoholic parents are affected by their parents' disease.'

This letter was written two years ago by a Central Islip teenager at a time when his father was coming home intoxicated every night. The letter prompted Matt's father to resume attending Alcoholics' Anonymous meetings (he had attended before and was sober for two years). Now Matt is fifteen and his father hasn't had a drink in over a month.

"I want to believe him--that he's stopped," says Matt. "Dad is a great guy when he's not drunk--he helps me with school and I can talk to him. It sounds like he's stopped now. It's the first time I've heard him say, 'I've had enough, I've hurt enough people.'"

His father's alcoholism has affected Matt's home life for as long as he can remember. "There was a time when I was six and my brother and father were supposed to take me to a father-son dinner at an organization we belonged to," Matt recalls. "Dad came home drunk and said that he didn't want to go. My brother and I cried and Mom got angry and yelled at him. He threw the car keys at her and told her to take us. Finally he said that he'd go, but by then we didn't want to. We went anyway and everyone there knew he was drunk. It was terrible."

What hurt Matt the most, he says, is the way his father's drinking problem affected his mother. "She would always cry," he states. "She went to Al-Anon, and that helped." Matt adds, "We stayed together because we knew somehow that he'd get off of it."

It's going to take time, however, to ease all of the fears and worries. "Sometimes now when Dad gets home late from work, Mom gets real worried. I tell him about it later and he says 'no problem,'" Matt relates. "The other times when he went back to drinking after he had stopped a while I thought, 'Oh s---, it's going to start all over again!'"

Matt feels that dealing with his father's drinking problem has made him "a stronger and tougher person." He adds, "I drink very rarely. Alcoholism seems to run on my Dad's side of the family--I'll never do that to my wife and kids."

Matt's experiences are by no means uncommon in American society. Alcoholism affects many more people than just the alcoholic, and the alcoholic's children are, perhaps, the most greatly affected group. According to a National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism report, "Targets for Prevention: Children of Alcoholics." Science has made it increasingly clear that sons and daughters of alcoholics are more likely to develop alcohol-related problems. They may be twice as likely as chil-

dren from nonalcoholic homes to develop alcoholism and related problems...As children or adults, they are also more likely to express behavioral, social and health problems." The report goes on to say that, "The offspring of alcoholics are often ignored or treated inappropriately. Some say that only 5% of the 12 to 25 million sons and daughters of alcoholic parents are being helped."

A listing of results of alcoholism on non-alcoholics distributed by the Long Island Council on Alcoholism stated that:

1. More than 28 million children of alcoholic parents (including adult children) are affected by parental alcoholism.

2. At least 50% of the juvenile delinquents have family members with drinking problems.

3. A correlation exists between battered wives, child neglect/abuse and alcohol abuse.

It is due to these and other "domino effects" of alcoholism that groups such as Al-Anon and Alateen have come into existence. The Al-Anon Family Groups are, according to an Al-Anon Information Booklet, "a fellowship of relatives and friends of alcoholics who share their experience, strength and hope in order to solve their common problems."

The children of alcoholics are amongst those helped through Project Pass (Positive Alternatives to School Suspension) in the Time-Out Room at our high school. Mr. John Smith, director of Project PASS, says that he realized it was a common problem among the students when the parents' alcoholism and heavy drinking came up during the discussion of other problems.

Mr. Smith said that help with this problem is individualized. Once a year, representatives from APPLE (A Program Planned for Life Enrichment) come to talk with the students who are involved in the program. The representatives are recovered alcoholics and drug addicts who relate their experiences to the students. This is followed by a question and answer session between the kids and the representatives. "After APPLE, we go back to the kids individually and suggest ways of dealing with their problems," Mr. Smith summarized. The basic course of action he follows is to arrange an immediate interview with the parent if he or she has been proven to be abusive. If there is no case of proven abuse then he follows this plan of action:

1) Education of the problems and effects of alcoholism.

2) Prevention of the problem--hiding the car keys if parent drinks and tries to drive, systematically disposing of the alcohol in the house, etc.

3) Intervention--if other methods don't work then the kid must get out of the house and avoid the alcoholic. Also, the other family members should leave.

4) Treatment--the whole family should go--Family Counseling, Mental Health Clinics, Al-Anon, Alcoholics Anonymous.

Among the Project PASS members who have an alcoholic parent are Marie, Jimmy, Nicole and Peter. Marie and her brother, Jimmy, and Nicole and her brother Peter all have a father with a drinking problem. Each of the above's attitude and method of dealing with the problem varies.

Marie and Jimmy's father began drinking heavily four years ago, right after their mother divorced him. During his first serious drinking bout Marie said he "flipped over the table, broke up the house and kicked us out. The day after he said that he was sorry, but he kept on drinking." Her father became extremely strict about chores, according to Marie. "When something wasn't done the right way and he was drunk, he would beat me. One time he threw me down the stairs because I didn't do the dishes right," Marie recalls.

"The hitting got so bad that I left home for a while this summer, and stayed with my mother," Marie explains, "He promised to make some changes, and I was homesick, so I came

(Continued on Page 38)



# Alcoholism's Neglected Majority

(Continued from Page 37)

back." According to Marie the hitting has stopped, but her father still drinks and behaves irrationally because of it. She says, "I'm still afraid of him."

Jimmy gives another view of the situation. "I try to keep away from him, but even when he's not drunk he takes his problems out on us," he says. "Dad was a different person before my Mom left and he started drinking and everything. His drinking starts problems of my own with school. When I get in trouble, he says we'll work out the problems, but we don't and I don't really trust him," explains Jimmy.

Nicole and Peter's father and older brothers drink excessively. They disagree, however, as to whether their father is an alcoholic. Nicole says that he is, and that, "My younger brother (Peter) doesn't really see the problem, he isn't home most of the time." According to Nicole, her father used to hit her when he was drunk, but stopped after she attempted suicide. "When I came home from the hospital he was drunk and I thought I should have killed myself," she says.

Nicole also says that when her father is drunk, "He makes my Mom stay in their room all day--he doesn't even let her go make dinner. When she tries to leave he yells 'Where is she--we never spend time together!' " Nicole's brothers' drinking also bothers her. "When they're drunk they really act up and say things like 'if you weren't my sister I'd mess around with you!' " She says that when her father is sober, he tells them to stop saying such things, but when he's drunk he says it's her fault."

Their father's drinking is nothing new to Nicole and Peter. Both agree that they can not remember a time when their father did not drink--but they say that his drinking has decreased over the years. "Dad drank a lot more before I was born," says Nicole.

According to Peter, his father is not an alcoholic, but one of his brothers is. Nicole says that particular brother is "becoming another Dad, even though he always says he doesn't want to be like him."

There are certain characteristics which the children of alcoholics share. According to the Long Island Council on Alcoholism's literature on the subject these characteristics are:

1. They become isolated and afraid of people and authority figures.
2. They become approval seekers and lose their identity in the process.
3. They are frightened by angry people and by personal criticism.
4. They either become alcoholics, marry them--or both--or find another compulsive personality such as a workaholic to fulfill their abandonment needs.
5. They live life from the viewpoints of victims and are attracted by that weakness in their love and friendship relationships.
6. They have an overdeveloped sense of responsibility and it is easier for them to be concerned with others rather than themselves, as this enables them not to look too closely at their faults, etc.
7. They get guilt feelings when they stand up for themselves instead of giving in to others.
8. They become addicted to excitement.
9. They confuse love and pity and tend to "love" people they can "pity" and "rescue."
10. They bury their feelings from their traumatic childhoods when they are adults and lose the ability to feel or express their feelings because it hurts too much (denial).
11. They judge themselves harshly and have a low sense of self-esteem.

12. They are dependent personalities who are terrified of abandonment.

13. Since alcoholism is a family disease, they become para-alcoholics and take on the characteristics of the disease even though they did not pick up the drink.

14. Para-alcoholics are reactors rather than actors.

That these characteristics belong to each and every child of an alcoholic is not true. They do seem to express certain patterns of behavior, however.

According to Mr. John Vorcott, the Program Director at Brunswick House, there is one of four roles which the child of an alcoholic often finds himself playing. "These are 1) the 'lost child'--his parents are too preoccupied so he doesn't speak out his problems for fear that they will not listen or care, 2) the 'scapegoat'--will draw attention to himself in a negative way to create a diversion, 3) the 'clown'-- focuses attention on himself in a little more positive way--he becomes the comic relief, 4) the 'family hero' takes responsibility for his family and its reputation. He feels compelled to excel at everything," summarizes Mr. Norcott. He adds, "Each of these roles carries a tremendous burden and the long term effect can be very negative."

Ms. Joan Halligan, a counselor of alcoholics and their families, says that often the children of alcoholics become approval seekers, "because they feel that if they 'behave' and do certain things right, daddy or mommy won't drink. Even though they are constantly disappointed, they still try to control their environment." She goes on to say, "The other side of the coin is the child who drinks to cope with his parent's drinking, and that happens quite often too."

Denial of alcoholism is the major factor contributing to the alcoholic's refusal of help, or his own refusal to even seek help. The family may also practice denial in various forms. "One of the things that happens," says Mr. Norcott, "is the 'contract of silence'--an unspoken agreement not to express certain feelings or facts as a way of maintaining peace. This backfires because if the child's needs can't be expressed, the child's needs get neglected."

Mrs. Barbara Budd, the Central Islip High School Psychologist for seven years, says that she has had several children of alcoholics come to see her for help with their problems. "They come out of frustration" she says, "and the all-pervading question is 'I have a parent who drinks--Why?' " Mrs. Budd went on to say that "to get over that first hurdle they must accept that there is almost nothing they can do to the situation. They cannot take responsibility for changing the alcoholic. Accepting the limits of having an alcoholic parent is highly important. They can't change the alcoholic, so they must deal with their own problems."

As long as alcoholism exists, its devastating effects on nonalcoholics will exist. These effects cross all social and economic barriers and reach all age groups of both sexes. The only way of modifying or treating these effects is to address and identify the needs of the 'neglected majority' of those affected by alcoholism. These needs must be recognized regardless of whether or not the alcoholic himself seeks help or even recognizes the existence of a drinking problem. It is now up to those touched by the "domino effect" of alcoholism to seek help with the destructive forces of that disease.

Wendy Schreckinger  
Mrs. Margaret M. Johnson  
Central Islip High School





Dave Koppenhaver

# Untitled

They left me alone in the kitchen  
 I pull on a scab until my blood decorates the floor  
 the time becomes later  
 and I sponge it up before they see it  
 Spoiled child  
 they taunt me  
 use your time to create or to sin or to love  
 but spoiled girl use it  
 they give me  
 bits of graham cracker and cherries and a teaspoon of brandy  
 ungrateful  
 they scream at me  
 as the cracker crumbles and the brandy is not enough  
 I put my hand to the crystal charm that hangs around my neck

sometimes it holds the sun  
 the brandy bubbles in my blood and I take a carving  
 knife and this  
 time the blood on the  
 floor is  
 an epic  
 work which used up all  
 the artist's  
 paint  
 I am a spoiled child.

Tonya Joy Byard  
 Ithaca, NY  
 Mr. Pickens

...nsetes tuc



## Just Like Old Times

Now that we're older, Teddy is Ted. Teddy is a kid's name, not a guy's name. I'm the only one who calls him Ted. Everyone in my family still calls him Teddy, though. They just don't understand how terrible it is having a kiddie name. I mean, my mom still calls me Joey, and I can't stand it. It's so embarrassing, especially in front of my friends. My sisters call me Joey just because they know it bugs me. Trust me, it really does.

Ted and I grew up together, and we've been the best of friends since I met him on my second birthday. He wasn't invited to the party, but my Aunt Joan brought him along, anyway. For being only a two-year-old, I hit it off really well with Ted. After that, we were inseparable, even though we were both too young to know what inseparable meant.

We never really did anything stupendous together, like water skiing over sharks. Ted and I always had a different kind of relationship. We were different from other friends because from the very start we were always able to talk honestly to each other. It's kind of wierd talking freely at three years old about how you're really afraid of the dark. I mean, I never told my mom or my dad or anyone that I was afraid. After all, I was a big kid with my own bed. Ted is the only one who knows I used to cry under my covers at night when they turned out the lights.

Ted and I went everywhere together, even the dentist's office. He came with me the first time I went to see Dr. Manard. He sat right next to me the whole time. To tell you the truth, I even held his hand I was so scared. I don't tell that to everyone, you know.

We travelled to the Rockies, Walt Disney World, the Grand Canyon, Yellowstone National Park, Quebec, and Maine together. All that time on the road together gave us a lot of time to get to know each other. It was great having a guy around. Missy and Janet just didn't make the grade. After all, how many older sisters want to read comic books and eat graham crackers on the bed with their kid brother?

Once I got a little older, Ted started to take a back seat to Little League baseball, midget football, and household chores. He never complained, not once. We still talked a lot. Rather, I talked a lot. Ted used to listen. He was always the best listener because he would never interrupt.

Summer days filled with Camp Winnepoga came and went, and I soon found myself doing summer jobs instead. I was very ambitious at eleven, with my own lawn mowing company. Ted couldn't really help with that stuff, so Janet came along as official trimmer. It was really busy that summer, and I didn't get to see Ted too much. As a matter of fact, I didn't see him at all until I got into a minor accident with the lawnmower and had to stay in the hospital. I saw Ted every day then, and we got reacquainted.

When I was twelve, Ted went away. I didn't see him too often, but our friendship never froze solid. He would still hear about my turbulent times at Shawnee Middle School. The best time was when he found out that I asked Lisa Burnbaum to dance and she fell, kerplunk, right in front of everyone. The only reason that was so great was because the guys had loosened the heels on her shoes, and I had been elected to give them a test run to see if they would really give way.

High school came pretty quickly, and I was a super jock with a girl on each arm. As star quarterback for Washington's superb team, I was in demand. After all, what girl could resist a smart, good looking guy with a winning personality who was on the football team to boot? Ted heard more from me than he had in a while. He heard about Sheila, Debbie, Bernadette, Liz, and Cathy, and he still hears about Lisa, the girl who has made my entire senior year bearable.

I saw Ted the other day while I was packing for college. I never realized how much stuff I needed and how many trips to the attic I would have to take. There we were, two old buddies, shooting the breeze. I've been really "hyper" about being two thousand miles from home and the people I love. Ted was right

## In the Alley (A Dream Sequence)

I'm standing in a dark alley. You're there too. It's crowded. Row after row of couples waiting to see Pat Metheny in concert. We're in line--towards the end, near the street.

A car engine turns on. Smooth purring floats down the alley towards the street, towards us. Suddenly, the headlights are on. Sharp, piercing beams illuminate the alley, throwing shadows on the white brick walls, silhouetting the heads of a couple whose lips are puckered, straining to meet, to kiss. You cover your eyes with your arm, hiding your head in the crook of your elbow. You don't want to see.

I'm standing in the middle of the alley, watching myself from outside my body. The beams move towards me, shining on my sandalled feet...my clean-shaven legs...the brass button of my mini-skirt...my breasts. Moving closer and closer until my whole body lights up. My eyes are squinting, but my mouth is open--a dark, purple-brown cavern. I'm laughing. The O of my mouth narrows to a C lying on its side. I grin as I look at the white wall. I'm a giant. There are two of me. The giant me imitates the little me--or is it the other way around? The little me tosses her head, shaking her curly hair back and forth. The big me does too. The little me points at the wall, her forefinger extended, her hand shaking, the bracelets on her wrists jiggling up 'n down, up 'n down. The big me points back, her head nodding, her mouth hanging open. The little me is nodding, too; her mouth is open, but noise is coming out. Laughter bounces off the walls, hitting the big me, echoing down the alley.

You pat my bottom. Your long arm encircles my waist, but you haven't moved; you don't want to lose your place in line.

"Come on," you say, leaning towards me. "Let the car pass." Under your breath you hiss, "Stop making a fool of yourself."

I look down. The bumper is inches from my knees, shiny silver that reflects the blue of my jean skirt. Warm air encircles my bare legs, creeping under the hem of my skirt and up my thighs. You jerk my waist, pulling me towards you. You wave politely to the driver of the car.

I'm standing in the circle of your arm. I rub my lips against your neck, nudging my face against your skin. I rest my head on your shoulder. It's bony, but I don't move.

"Uhh...ow." You push me away. I feel exposed. I straighten my head and step sideways, standing alone.

The line starts moving forward. We walk. Left foot, right foot, left foot, my heels clatter on the cobblestones. You pay the man at the door. He smiles at me. I smile back. You grab my hand and pull me inside.

Jennifer Newkirk  
Bethesda, MD

there, listening, just like old times. It was the most I've talked to him in years. It's amazing how an eighteen year-old guy can still talk to his beat-up and worn-out teddy bear without feeling uncomfortable.

Susan Knasiak  
Southampton, PA  
Mount Saint Joseph Academy  
Mrs. Margaret Walton





Lily Tsong

# Thanksgiving

Leaves have fallen; scarlet,  
 pine pins hide the ground  
 as it steels.  
 Soon the fiery autumn fades  
 Like the shooting down  
 of an iridescent peacock  
 into dust.  
 There  
 a child sits;  
 sand and  
 a flush upon his cheeks.  
 Whiteness is mirrored  
 in his large, blue eyes.  
 I walk on. . .  
 Past the couple arm in arm,  
 through the steam  
 rising from the pavement;  
 An echo of forgotten dew.

Michelle Saez  
 Stratford, NY  
 Mr. Joseph Martuscello

# I am the Archway

Rocking slowly on  
 the playground swing  
 in the August light of Day  
 I drag my toe in the sand below  
 and re-read the ragged torn letter  
 Postmarked May.

August air; the breath of time  
 Strawberries are melting on the  
 Twining Vine.

I can see your face in the clouds  
 Through highlights of white and grey  
 Mr. Malory says, "No mail today"  
 The breeze turns your image away.

Through tiny whispers you sing to me  
 Old memories of mockery.  
 No, it's just the wind in the  
 Lilac tree. Its fingers scrape  
 Outside my window pane.  
 August you've tranced me once again.

The grapes are sweeter on the vine  
 August gasping for its last breath  
 of Time.  
 Hollow holes in an oaken floor.  
 Black Bishop to Kings four  
 I am the archway that shapes the door.

Michelle Sabol  
 Washington, PA  
 Trinity High School  
 Mrs. Hennen

# Tympani: Period 7

high heels  
 click, click  
 nervous pencils  
 tap, tap  
 desk lids  
 crash, crash  
 classroom clock  
 tick, tock  
 hallway bell  
 brrrring - ting  
 running feet  
 chucka - chucka, chucka - chucka  
 i look across at you  
 whrrrrr - ping

Christine Reiss  
 Pittsburgh, PA  
 Montour High School  
 William P. Wayman





## Contact

I shook the paperweight violently, then clunked it down on the tabletop. Glittering snow drifted down over the plastic Magic Kingdom. My eyes moved to the window. The scene was almost the same. I reached for my coffee cup, but realized that it had been empty for ten minutes. The pot was across the room, but I wasn't, so instead I swished my tongue around inside my mouth to quench my thirst and rubbed my arms to warm myself. A dizzying yawn shook my body, and when I opened my eyes again, they were looking outside. The snow was drifting in waves, as thick as cream.

The phone rang. I pushed myself out of the chair and answered it after two rings. "Hello," I mumbled.

"Hi, is Mrs. Dewey there?" someone mumbled back.

"Got the wrong number."

"Hmm. Sorry." They hung up. Silence followed, then a hollow tone. I listened to its whine for a while, until it started yapping. Putting the phone down, I fell back into my chair. As soon as I had collapsed, I realized I should have gotten coffee while I was up, and swore aloud.

The phone rang again. This time, it was starting a fourth ring before I grabbed it. It was for Mrs. Dewey a second time. It was still the wrong number, I informed the caller.

"Oh. Sorry to bother you again," said the voice. It registered on me that it was a girl. "Wait a second--is this 494-2708?"

"Yep."

"Gee. And there's no Mrs. Dewey here?"

"No," I said.

"Damn. I guess I copied the number wrong or something."

"Guess so." I was really eloquent today.

"Well, so much for that. Goodbye," she replied.

"Bye."

I went to the coffee pot. The coffee was already cold, so I dumped it in the sink and returned to the table. The Magic Kingdom was still. It seemed like it was waiting for someone to shake it up.

Before I could sit down again, I heard the phone. "Hello," I challenged it.

It was the girl. "Hi. Listen, I'm sorry to call you again, I just--are you alone?"

"Yes," I confessed.

"Well, so am I, and you sounded alone, and it's snowing and all, so I wanted to talk to somebody. If you don't want to, I'll understand, but I just--"

"Sure, yeah, I can talk," I hurriedly told her. "What's your name?" She said it was Becky. A nice name. A great name, actually.

She giggled. "This is funny. Um...so how's life?"

"Oh, fine," was my automatic response. Considering my present state of affairs, though, I saw that wasn't quite true. "Actually, kind of boring at the moment. And too busy. I'm getting really harried at work."

"Yeah, I've got a lot to do these days too," the girl said.

"So you're busy too?"

"Yeah. A lot of demands on me. I mean, everyone seems to think they own me." I knew just how she felt.

She continued, "I mean, yesterday, my boyfriend--"

A frown bent my face, drowning out the rest of her sentence. But next she said, "So, I broke up with him."

"Oh! That's good."

"Huh?"

"Nothing. So, where do you work, Becky?" I wanted to speak her name another fifty times.

"I don't work," she told me.

"Oh. Umemployed, huh?" Now that was a dumb thing to say!

"Not exactly." I decided I'd better shut up about it.

"Anyway," she asked, "What are you up to?"

"Nothing," I laughed. "Nothing at all. Not till you called, that is." Looking at the hand that held the phone, I noticed my white

## Strip District (October 1984)

*One of the last cobblestone streets  
in the New World now so dreadfully old  
bumps and jerks us into some other world,  
the foremost sense of which is smell.  
Fish, white and shiny on the jagged ice,  
each one staring its single upturned eye.  
Dwarfish vegetables, strangely lunar,  
Ranks of flowers so silent, so pale,  
can already feel a new chill. Yesterday  
the wind still blew caressingly,  
billowing above the blue cement wreckage.  
Why are our lives so little and so lost?*

Justin Vicari  
Pittsburgh, PA

## She Sat Alone

*She sat  
alone in the kitchen  
a gray moth  
chased the dim light  
snow fell on the patio  
and covered bright green chairs  
rhododendron leaves  
curled inwards  
a hollow wind  
unshoveled walk  
empty footprints  
in the snow  
and the half-open gate.*

Jim Masland  
Philadelphia, PA  
Edward Miller

knuckles. I was gripping the receiver very tightly. With my other hand, I was tossing the paperweight up and down.

"I'm not doing anything either, I guess. I was trying to call this Dewey lady 'cause I was supposed to baby-sit her kids, but I'm stuck because of the snow."

"Baby-sit, huh?" I said. "How old are you?"

"Seventeen. What about you? What's your name, anyway?"

"Tom. Thirty-one."

"I like your voice," the girl said. I didn't answer. It was a stupid comment. I missed a catch and the Magic Kingdom fell from my hand and rolled to the wall. I looked out the window. Snow.

"Well, I'm gonna try and reach Mrs. Dewey. It was nice talking to you," said the voice from somewhere else.

"Yeah. Bye." I hung up first.

I sat down again, yawned, closed my eyes. The Magic Kingdom lay on the floor by the window. I didn't pick it up. Ten minutes later, the phone rang, but I didn't pick that up, either.

Jeff Rosenberg  
Potomac, MD  
Mrs. Peggy Zirzow



# A Summer To Learn

He was sailing alone on a greenish-blue ocean. Multi-colored fish, dolphins, whales, and even sharks swam around him, talking to him and smiling at him, but not trying to hurt him. The sun was shining brightly and reflecting their fins, while the boat rocked gently on the waves. Then all of a sudden he was in a tiny plane, flying all over the sky. He dipped and turned and maneuvered his plane. It was a great feeling of freedom--then the plane tipped and he fell out, his body zooming downward. He was rushing down towards a vast grayness--the ocean, he realized, and he was aiming right for his little boat. Faster and faster he fell, and he screamed with terror as he was about to crash into the boat--

Billy sat up in bed, his breath coming in short gasps. He was sweating but shivering with cold, and he looked around in wonder that he was still in his bed in the guest room at his great-grandmother's house. The room was dark, and still. He lay down with his head under the covers and crouched there, terrified, until dawn when he fell asleep.

The next morning Billy O'Neill got up, brushed his teeth, dressed, and skipped downstairs to join his great-grandmother at the breakfast table. She nodded to him and continued sipping her tea.

"Good morning Great-grandmother," Billy greeted her. He gulped down some orange juice and buttered bread and bounded out the side door, letting it slam. Then he ran back. "Great-grandmother, is it OK if Aurora and I go hiking?" he asked her.

"Certainly," she replied in her snappy, matter-of-fact voice. One might have thought she was irritable, but the laughter that was always in her bright blue eyes gave her away. "Just be back in time for lunch."

"Thank you!" Billy answered, and was out the door again.

He ran across the lawn, singing loudly and doing a series of--in his eyes--intricate leaps and somersaults. He was soon joined by the Siberian husky Aurora and the two of them galloped wildly in the direction of the woods.

Billy was at his great-grandmother's house for the entire summer, and the thought gladdened him. The land in Northern Vermont was his favorite place in the whole world. Billy considered the one hundred acres of woods and the tiny creek meandering through to be a part of him. He didn't like cities, which was what he lived in, or the loneliness and boredom he knew there.

Billy and Aurora reached the creek, and Billy took off his boots and socks to wade. Great-grandmother was afraid Billy would get leeches if he did this, so he never told her.

He was busy constructing a dam in a narrow part of the creek when he heard a voice bellow out, "Ahoy there, mate!" Billy veered quickly to see a boy about his own age sitting on the bank grinning. He was thin, with sandy-blond hair and deep blue eyes. He wore a sailor suit and carried a long stick which he was attempting to whittle with a pen knife. Billy raised his eyebrows warily.

"Hello," he replied politely.

"And what would your name be, mate?" asked the strange boy.

Billy was distrustful. "What's yours?" he questioned back.

The sailor boy jumped up and strutted over to Billy, his arms swinging jauntily. "Well, I'll tell you," he began. "My real name--that is, my official birth certificate name, is Ethan. You know, like Ethan Allen?" He squinted at Billy, as if making sure Billy knew who Ethan Allen was. Billy stared back, unblinking. "But everyone calls me Dick. You know why?" he inquired loudly. He seemed to be trying to retain his former bellow.

Billy swallowed, somewhat alarmed. "No," he answered.

"Well, I'll tell you!" the boy hollered. "I'm named after," he paused, as if for dramatic effect, "Moby Dick!" and with that deliverance, he turned and sat down on the bank again.

Billy shook his head. "Kid," he stated, "you're really weird."

"No," the boy protested, "it's the truth! My ancestor's name was Ishmayel, and--"

"You're really weird," Billy interrupted, "and you're on my land, so would you please leave?" Billy wondered if trespassers could be put in jail. Then, appraising the boy again, he figured maybe they could just institutionalize him.

"NO!" the boy wailed. "No please, you musn't make me leave!" He raced over to Billy, dropped to his knees and grasped Billy's ankles. "Don't you see?" he said in a trembling voice, "I have no home. I must live here and eat berries. I'm an orphan and they beat me at the orphanage." He pulled up his tee-shirt sleeve and showed Billy a long scar on the back of one skinny shoulder. Billy was impressed. "You've got to let me stay," the boy implored, "or they'll kill me!" His eyes widened and he nodded slowly.

Billy pondered this. "Why should they want to kill you?" he asked. Billy was still wary of the other boy, but at the same time, somehow fascinated.

The other boy rose from the ground where he had been kneeling and answered softly, "Because I know things."

"What kind of things?"

The boy looked at Billy solemnly. "I know they killed my father," he replied. "I have evidence."

Billy was spellbound. "What kind of evidence?" he breathed. The other boy waved this off airily. "Oh, you know, signed documents, juridicial subpoenas, that sort of thing." Billy nodded wisely in agreement. "So, I'm a refugee," the boy concluded dismissively, and collapsed onto his back, as if resigned to his fate.

They remained in silence for a long time. The boy was lying on the soft ground of pine needles, and staring, hypnotized, at the bright blue June sky poking through the green treetops. Billy stood leaning against a tall fir, his arms crossed over his chest. It was sad, he thought, that Ethan or Dick or whatever had no parents. Billy was all of a sudden grateful to God for letting him have parents, even if he never saw them. He tried to think of what life would be like without them. He looked over at Ethan. The other boy was staring intently at the sky, following the movements of a small wren as it twittered about above the trees. Abruptly he began to chirp.

That roused Billy from his thoughts and he said quickly, "Would you like to come home with me for lunch? My great-grandmother wouldn't mind."

The other boy sat up, then stood up. "No, no thank you," he answered, "I have to get back now."

Billy was confused. "But, I thought . . ."

"No, you see . . ." the boy averted his eyes and spoke rapidly. "I show up every now and then just so they don't call the cops." He was toeing the ground and fingering the knife that he still carried.

"Well, where is this orphanage? We could drive you, or something."

"No no no no no, it's OK I'll be fine!" and he turned and ran away, disappearing soon into the thick foliage.

Billy looked around. He wasn't in the mood for building dams anymore. He turned and trod back in the direction of the house, whistling for Aurora, who had been chasing squirrels. As he walked he wondered vaguely what the boy had been whittling with his knife.

Two days after his first meeting with Ethan, Billy found himself thinking about the unusual boy. He didn't know why, but he wanted to see him again. He wasn't like anyone Billy had ever known before. At home Billy was pretty much a loner, since there were no kids in his neighborhood, and it was hard to maintain a friendship at school only. His parents worked all day long, leaving Billy to his own devices. And, Billy had decided, he could only watch so much TV and read so many books before he be-

(Continued from Page 44)



# A Summer To Learn

(Continued from Page 43)

gan to yearn for experiences of his own, instead of watching or reading about fictional characters' lives.

It was raining so Billy was inside, and very bored. He alternated from bothering Aurora to visiting the refrigerator to staring out the window. He was at the window stage when he looked out and noticed someone standing on the birdbath in the backyard. It couldn't be . . . he thought. He put on his raincoat and went outside. As he approached the birdbath he realized it was Ethan, standing on top of it, mumbling to himself and waving his arms.

"Ethan, what are you doing?" Billy asked him. Ethan looked down, saw Billy, and jumped down next to him. They were both soaking wet by this time.

"I was speaking to the rain god." Ethan explained. "My grandfather was an Indian, and he taught me everything he knew."

Billy looked dubious. "Huh?"

Ethan sighed, and explained patiently, "I was asking the Spirit of the Rain to stop this downpour."

"You talk to spirits." Billy said sarcastically.

"Yes," confirmed Ethan. He grabbed one of Billy's hands and twirled him around. "Now come and join me in the Rain Dance!" he shouted, and proceeded to twirl around the yard.

Billy rejected this, then something in him stirred. Perhaps it was the impulsive freedom of a child to act totally natural, but a freedom that was restrained as one "matured." In any case Billy spun on his toes and danced wildly after Ethan. The two of them bounced and swirled in the rain, laughing and secretly hoping their rain dance didn't work.

After the rain dance, Billy didn't see Ethan again for quite a while. It seemed to Billy now that his time at Great-grandmother's was divided into two parts--time spent with Ethan and time spent without him. When he was without him, Billy missed him. But Ethan only showed up when he felt like it, and was very mysterious about his comings and goings.

At that moment Billy was lying on his bed contemplating the wallpaper, when the doorbell rang. Billy leaped up and raced down the stairs to answer it. He opened the door and two people stood on the stoop, a big tall man with a dark beard and a boy that looked a little like the man. They both wore big boots and heavy overcoats, though the weather was mild. They entered into the hall, tracking mud all over the shiny wooden floor. Oh boy, Billy thought, Great-grandmother will have a fit when she sees this. Just then Great-grandmother entered, taking in the two wet, somewhat scruffy-looking people, and the muddy floor, all at once.

"May I help you?" she inquired coolly, wearing upon her face the 'tight' look that Billy had come to know so well, associating with annoying shopkeepers, the evening news, and misbehaving boys. The man spoke.

"I'm going into town. Wondered if your boy wanted to come," he explained, with the usual reticence of native Vermonters.

Great-grandmother was puzzled, then realized, "Oh, you must be the people that just moved into the house across the street." The man nodded. "Why, that's very kind of you, but," she looked uncertainly at Billy. Billy could see she didn't want him to go, but he was so bored he felt that anything was better than just sitting around.

"Please?" he asked.

She looked at him, deciding. "Well, all right," she acquiesced, against her better judgment. She felt it was very irresponsible to let him drive off with people she didn't even know, and as she heard the truck rumble off down the driveway she wondered exactly what had possessed her to give in.

By the time he had arrived in the town of Westley with the boy and his father, Billy was absolutely certain that he should've

stayed at Great-grandmother's. During the whole trip up in a rickety old Ford, no one had spoken. Billy thought they were the weirdest people he had ever met and hoped they weren't going to abduct him. The bearded man scared him, with his wild hair and intense dark eyes. The boy was also dark but looked more frightened than intense. The boy, Billy had decided, had become mute from shock at having to live with this man his whole life. The thought almost made Billy chuckle, but he didn't dare.

They pulled into a parking spot and the man turned off the ignition. The engine died slowly, with many coughs, sputters, and bumps. Billy, sitting in the back seat, had decided to count to three and take off, when the man handed his son a bill and said, "Be here at five." The boy looked at Billy impatiently, and said, "Well, aincha comin'?" and jumped out of the truck onto the sidewalk. Billy followed, figuring that out of the boy and the man, the boy was probably the lesser of two evils. And at least he wasn't mute.

They walked along the street, passing many stores. It was a cute little town, with cute little houses and cute little shops. Even cute little dogs, Billy thought, as a puppy scampered in front of them, dragging along a leash. A young girl followed it, calling, "Here Yippy, here Yippy Yippy--" Billy smiled and the other boy scowled.

They kept walking, and Billy swallowed and asked courageously, "What's your name?"

"Jack." Jack turned and went into a drugstore. They walked up and down the aisles until Billy was quite bored and then Jack bought a pencil. They left and went to sit on a bench in the park in the center of the small townsquare. They were shaded by a tall elm and it was very peaceful.

"What are you going to do with a pencil?" Billy asked. Jack didn't answer but took off his overcoat and turned it upside-down. Out fell three candy bars, two packages of cookies, a vial of perfume, a Swiss army knife, some chewing tobacco, and a greeting card. "It's my mother's birthday," Jack explained.

Billy stared at him, open-mouthed. "You stole all this stuff?" he asked, incredulous. Jack ripped open a candy bar and handed one to Billy.

"Yeah."

Billy stared at the candy bar in his hand. "But," and he felt stupid saying it, "that's dishonest." Jack eyed him coldly. Then he blurted out, "They're rich! Whadda those people care about a few cookies, they got money comin' outta their ears!" Then he smiled reassuringly at Billy. "They don't miss this stuff. Honest." Billy was still dumbstruck, but this argument seemed to convince him. He proceeded to eat his candy bar.

The next time they left a store, Billy carried two unpaid-for dirty magazines and a box of Animal Crackers. Jack snickered at the sight of the Animal Crackers, so Billy turned and shoved him into a nearby stop sign. Jack merely laughed and spit some tobacco onto the ground. They gloated when people gave them angry looks. They laughed when a man's car stalled. By five o'clock Billy had learned some jokes that Great-grandmother would never approve of, and Jack had some new terms for things they gaped at in the magazines.

They arrived back at the truck promptly when the Westley Church bell struck five. They were feeling good, in the spirit of comradeship. Jack's father noted the new knife Jack carried and didn't ask for any change back. They drove back to Billy's Great-grandmother's house in silence, and Billy said "Thanks" as he hopped out of the truck. The man nodded, and Jack said nothing. Billy hurried up the steps as the truck rumbled off. When he opened the door he found himself face to face with Great-grandmother. "Did you have a nice time?" she asked.

Billy suppressed a smile. Great-grandmother was trying to appear so casual, but it was obvious she had been worrying. Her hands were clutched tightly together and behind her, Ethan could see from the pile of clothes that she had been ironing at a furious rate, something she only did when she was worried.

(Continued on Page 45)



# A Summer To Learn

(Continued on Page 44)

Sometimes the ironing would collect for months before something came up to alarm her, and then she'd do it all.

"Yes, it was OK," Billy answered.

Great-grandmother searched his face, and Billy squirmed and looked at his feet, embarrassed under such close scrutiny. Then Great-grandmother turned and walked into the kitchen. "What did you do?" she asked.

Billy sat down at the kitchen table and watched Great-grandmother take out two glasses. "Well, we went to this little town and just . . . walked around," Billy answered.

"Oh, really? You didn't get bored walking around for three hours?" she asked.

"No, no, it was fun. We just talked and . . . they're very interesting people." Billy saw that Great-grandmother was making gingerale floats, their favorite drink. Somehow the fact that Great-grandmother was making gingerale floats made Billy feel worse about not being totally honest. Now that he was here with Great-grandmother, Billy was ashamed of his antics that afternoon with Jack.

Great-grandmother brought over their floats and sat down at the table. "Yes," she chuckled, "they certainly looked interesting!"

"I know," Billy laughed, "I was surprised when you let me go."

Great-grandmother sighed. "So was I," she admitted. She couldn't tell him that she so pitied him, alone and unhappy at home, that when he came to visit she tried to indulge him overmuch to make up for it. She gazed at her Great-grandson fondly. "But I realize that it must get pretty dull around here, with no one else your age." As Billy started to protest she quickly added, "Oh, I know you love your old Great-grandmother, and you enjoy coming to visit, Billy dear, but still it's only natural for a boy your age to want playmates of your own age."

Billy winced at the term "playmates," and wondered what Jack would say if he knew that he was one of Billy's "playmates." Then he thought of Ethan—"Oh, Great-grandmother, that reminds me! I have to tell you about this other boy I met . . ." And Billy and his Great-grandmother spent an enchanting afternoon, laughing over Ethan's antics and sharing opinions about his mysterious background.

Billy met Ethan again, this time as he and Aurora were searching for wintergreen berries. At least, Billy was searching for berries; Aurora was more interested in the squirrels. Billy looked up and there Ethan sat, in a tree.

"Hi Ethan!" called Billy. The other boy made frantic gestures for Billy to shut up. So Billy crept up to the tree trunk and whispered up, "What's wrong?"

The other boy shut his eyes, listening. Then he opened them. "OK," Ethan declared. He climbed down the tree, not bothering to explain his strange behavior. Instead he knelt to the ground and stood on his head, his eyes shut. Billy observed this thoughtfully. "Ethan, I think I know someone who can help you," Billy began. Then he asked crossly, "Are you listening to me?"

Ethan came down from his stance and opened his eyes. "Sorry, I was meditating. My grandfather was a lunatic. Continue?" He sat down on the ground, arms resting loosely around his knees.

Billy continued, "I think this kid I met the other day could be of assistance to you. He's great at lying, he could convince those people at the orphanage that you know nothing about them murdering your father, and then you could leave." Billy thought some more, not noticing that Ethan had shut his eyes. "I don't know where you could live, but maybe Great-grandmother could adopt you—" Billy stopped short, at the gasping noise emanating

from Ethan. His head hung between his knees, and Billy realized he was crying. He rushed over to him, kneeling beside him but afraid to touch him. "What's wrong?" Billy asked, feeling awkward.

Ethan's head jerked up, his eyes burning red and his face streaked with dirt and tears. "I don't live in an orphanage," he spat out. Billy was flabbergasted. "But," he protested, not knowing what to say. It didn't matter, Ethan wasn't listening to him anyway. "Hardly an orphanage," he laughed, a humorless laugh. "I live at home," Ethan maintained, speaking in an acid tone, "with my alcoholic mother and my latest father. The first one I ever had is still out West, with his cult group." Ethan was still crying as he talked. "And now," his voice rose, "my mother . . ." The rest was lost as he wailed pitifully, his shoulders wracked with sobs.

Billy was utterly confused. Never in his life had he ever had an experience such as this. He'd never had a friend before, especially one that broke down and cried in front of him. He was totally lost as he stood there facing the miserable Ethan, doing nothing to console him.

Suddenly there came the sound of someone whistling, and Jack appeared from behind Ethan, in front of Billy. When he saw them, he stopped and grinned at Billy.

Ethan swung around, and at the sight of Jack he froze with fear. Jack saw Ethan and laughed derisively. "Well, if it isn't Little Ethie!" he exclaimed. Billy suddenly had a sense of impending doom, as if he were falling but couldn't stop. He wondered if Ethan had been in the tree to avoid Jack.

Jack turned to Billy, "You know this loser?" Billy put up his arms, as if it would make Jack stop. But Jack continued, "Did he tell you about himself? About his 'royal ancestry' and his family's castle in England?" Jack laughed, "or did he tell you about his real home, a smelly old trailer near the dump." Jack brought out his new knife and admired it as he jeered softly, "But now he ain't even got that, huh Ethie?" Billy was scared by the tenseness of Ethan's body and the desperate look on his face. And in that moment Billy knew it was up to him to prevent disaster, but he was useless, he still had the falling sensation.

"No," Jack goaded, "now Ethan's mommy has decided that there's not enough room for Ethie and her business, what with all her men clients sleeping over—" Ethan sprang at Jack, knocking him to the ground. The two boys wrestled for several minutes as Billy watched, frozen. Suddenly Billy screamed "No!" and leaped onto the struggle, pulling Ethan off Jack. All movement stopped. All that could be heard was their heavy breathing, and in the background, the birds singing to each other in the trees. The sun was warm and a slight breeze riffled their bodies. Billy still held Ethan back, while Jack lay on the ground. The boys stared, transfixed, at the knife still tightly gripped in Ethan's hand, its blade revealed.

Billy spent the remaining two months of the summer as he usually did, playing with Aurora, helping Great-grandmother, or exploring. He didn't see Ethan or Jack again, but he thought about them. Two weeks after he had gone home in September, the family received a letter from Great-grandmother. She wrote of the usual things, the garden, her volunteer work. At the bottom there was a P.S.:

Billy Dear,

Remember that boy you wanted me to ask about the Social Service office? His name is Ethan Cumbler and he has been placed in a foster home, with people by the name of Jacobs. They happen to be friends of mine so I dropped by to see how he was for you. He seems all right, but somewhat sickly-looking. Anyway, remember you wanted me to ask him what he had been whittling the first day you met him? I'm glad I asked, it seemed to brighten him up a little. He answered, "a peace pipe."

Emily Fleschner  
Newtown, PA  
George School





Neil Gourley

## Summers Lost

*I miss butterflies.*

*When I was eight  
they danced in the garden,  
and skipped on the petals  
in the summer dew.*

*Now the air is restless  
and I miss the powdery  
sound  
of cellophane wings  
on a windless day.*

*Outside the den  
sits an orange monarch  
testing its wings.*

*They've been there;  
I've been missing.*

Sandy Moser  
Bally, PA  
Boyertown Senior High  
Mr. Raymond Fulmer

## Untitled

*You dangle me  
casually  
from the hook  
in my ribs;  
you walk  
and talk aimlessly  
to neighbors,  
of fish  
and gardening  
you swing me  
around your head--  
I hurtle into the day*

*What am I to you?  
a white object  
quickly fading  
hands to feet  
eyes to knees*

Catherine Wagner  
Baltimore, MD  
Catonsville High School  
Mr. Dougherty



"A child's spirit grows in the soil of acceptance and approval, a sense of being loved unconditionally."

At 7:50 A.M. our three Ryder trucks, one concession trailer, one van and two car Tent Troupe caravan pulled into Hayfield, Minnesota, population 653, to be greeted only by a cold drizzle, a unisex Jiffy Jon and about fifty kids just finished with swim lessons. The lot was dinky with a public pool, a playground, and two giant oak trees in the middle. Having been awake since 4:45 A.M., most of our troupe were not too thrilled about setting up wet canvas on a small lot while battling fifty curious kids wandering around our equipment.

Wearily, we piled out of our vehicles and began the two-and-a-half hour ritual of set-up. Being only an amateur acting troupe, we not only had to give two different shows a day but were responsible for erecting and striking three circus tents, for unloading and loading light and sound equipment, a stage, two sets, crates of props, costumes, dining tables, sleeping bags, cots and overnight bags.

Three hours later, after set-up and after fixing the broken apple tree prop for the matinee skit "Goll-Golly-Gee," and helping Erik sweep out the generator truck and gluing the sole back on my shoe, I headed to "Mason City," our dining tent. All through lunch we listened to the routine orders, "Balloon Crew II, 125 balloons. Generator comes on at 1 P.M. I realize it's a miserable day, but since you only get one chance in a town, you're got to make it good."

I munched on a fluffernutter sandwich, silently hoping no one would show up. At one o'clock, however, the generator grumbled to a start and we began to prepare for the children's matinee. At 1:30 the calliope signalled the beginning of the pre-show for kids. Without much enthusiasm, I lead the troupe into the tent. Surprisingly, the rain hadn't hampered attendance and we were greeted by two hundred fascinated kids trying to absorb every detail of the 500-person capacity circus tent. Their applause and excitement sparked our theater spirit, and we began meeting the audience, singing and dancing with them. We threw ourselves wholeheartedly in "The Happy Whistler," "There's a Hole in the Bottom of the Sea," and "Oh Susannah!" Soon the Sesame Street favorite, "Simple Dance," blared out of the speakers.

"Who wants to dance?" I shouted, caught up in their eagerness. Not waiting for an answer, I chose a little boy out of the front row and led him up on stage.

"You can help me show the other kids how to do the dance. First, you clap your hands, onetwothree! Can you do that?" I asked, turning to a two-year old and her dolly in the front row who was convinced that sitting in the audience was really more fun than being on the stage.

"No," quaked the faint voice.

"Sure you can. Now stomp your feet, onetwothree!" I said, encouraging a miniature Roy Rogers look-alike in the third row to dance. "Parents in the back, let's see you dance, too! Turn around, touch your toes, stretch up high and fall down low!" I sang everywhere, parents and kids twisting and turning and laughing.

"That was great! OK, now the song is gonna speed up." I turned towards my helper, "Are you ready?"

"I think so," said the face from under the oversized baseball cap. I knelt down to one knee, "Want to slap my hands?"

He turned to me, nodding excitedly. His left eye shuddered uncontrollably in the socket, his upper lip marred by a cleft palate, gnarled around his teeth and quivered into a smile. His arms were but two disfigured appendages, dangling from the pinned up sleeves of his Yankees baseball shirt. Swallowing awkwardly, I choked out, "Clap your hands, onetwothree," gently patting his handless arms. I tried to ignore his deformity and sang the song with him doing all the motions: "Stomp your feet, turn

*She, sitting in some ornamental chair  
And seeming no more modern than  
This room: fans, goldeneyed, cigar boxes and waltzes  
(I cannot hold her face for more than  
A mile--have not learned to drive), and*

*She, waiting, dreams of getting many letters:  
Wonders why there is a night.  
And reading, and living,*

*In this summer grown tan and cottoned, grown  
Molasses thick and cracked as that.  
This girl as modern as twelve noon will ever be,  
Puts her hand upon biological clocks.*

*Puts her finger to the door's lips.  
Finds her hair neverending.  
Tells us in postcards of this all, plus sailboats.*

*Rachel W. Carpenter  
Philadelphia, PA  
Germantown Friends School  
Pat Macpherson*



around, touch your toes, stretch up high and fall down low." He had stomped and turned and stretched up high...beaming.

"What's your name? Tell the audience your name," I encouraged.

"Rod-ney!" he grinned shyly.

"You were a terrific helper, Rodney," I exclaimed, "a real great dancer!" I put my arm around his thin slumped shoulders and guided him back to his seat, regretting that I had not noticed his handicap before putting him on stage.

That night, after our performance, a note on the back of a program was sent backstage to me: "Today was the first time Rodney has even been treated like a normal child. Thank you, Susan."

And when people ask me why I gave up my entire summer: job, beach and Disney World vacation for nineteen hours unpaid work a day, six days a week, to travel with our teenage Tent Troupe, I smile, remembering...

*Susan Kaufman  
Silver Spring, MD  
Mary Lee Ruddle*



## Inside and Out

Outside my classroom window it is February: a dormant blur of gray sky and soot stained snow. Inside, on the opening day of second semester, new students drift toward seats at the back of the classroom. I see February in their eyes: they yawn, stare out smudged windows, scribble absently on desk tops. When I refer to them as poets, they glance up skeptically. Now they are still like late winter bulbs surrounded by years of dry protective layers. Soon, however, they will begin shedding the myths about poetry and push their way up toward the sunlight. The first surprising lesson that most of them will learn is that poems evolve slowly: the myth of final drafts arriving intact during flashes of inspiration is as unrealistic as is the birth of a flower on time lapse photography.

A new fascination with language occurs when students stop fighting words and learn to use them as tools. To many of them, words are hurdles to be spelled and defined, then assembled in minimum numbers on essays. Not surprisingly, most fledgling writers choose familiar words to avoid a teacher's deadly red pen. Since words have so often backfired on them, they learn to take few risks, using only those with which they are on friendly terms. Early attempts at writing poetry often sound like greeting cards fuzzy with abstractions, clichés and rhetorical questions.

With practice, though, writers begin to see how specific words wake up tired lines. Then, instead of merely saying the man is old, they show the web of lines on his face. The Thesaurus, once ignored, now criss-crosses the room and classmates begin trading words like children trading baseball cards. "What do you call it when..." someone asks with flailing arms, trying to pantomime an illusive word. Writers also learn to coin their own words, awakening once again the child of jingles, nonsense rhymes and secret codes that sleeps inside each of them. Poetry is helping them rediscover the playfulness that is at the core of all good writing.

The act of writing changes the person as well as the poems. At the beginning of the semester students frequently ask me to

check their work, "to tell me if I'm doing it right." Their assumption is that there is a "right" and they probably aren't doing it that way. Some students are at first so critical of what they write they refuse any audience for their poems. Gradually, however, most share their words, and in the process, themselves. As the semester progresses they gain more confidence in their own internal critic for direction. A teacher, after all, is merely a gardener who provides an environment conducive to growth once the sleeping bulb awakens.

The process of creation, whether a velvety crocus pushing up through the snow, or an evolving poem, instills a sense of wonder. "I like this poem," a student marvels, realizing he has created something of beauty where there was nothing before. Through writing the poem, the writer has changed: he feels a little more insightful, a little more competent, a little more accepting of himself.

Outside my classroom window it is May: a wash of sunlight, clear sky, and life springing up through the fertile ground. I sit reading the personal thoughts of a once reluctant writer. In her simple words are the essence of what writing and teaching writing are all about:

"I didn't want to take Poetry and I never liked it. I never gave poetry a chance. It looked hard from the outside, and I didn't want to be on the inside. The more I did get on the inside, I liked it. The more I wrote and understood what some poems were saying, I saw how interesting it can be. I realized how much emotion can be hidden in just a few words. If I hadn't tried it, I still wouldn't like it. Now I like poetry very much. I've seen the beauty of it. Inside and out.

Pamela Evers Trickett  
English Department  
Cobleskill Central High School  
72 Elm Street  
Cobleskill, NY 12043

**SUSQUEHANNA UNIVERSITY**  
*Selinsgrove, Pennsylvania 17870*

Non-Profit Organization  
U. S. Postage  
**PAID**  
Selinsgrove, Pa. 17870  
Permit No. 10