

L I T E R A L I N E S

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Statement of Policy and Purpose

The *Literalines* editorial board accepts original works of fiction, poetry, black and white photography and line drawings from students throughout the academic school year. Each submission is reviewed by the entire board anonymously and judged solely on the basis of artistic merit and the standards set forth in the Guidelines, a copy of which is available upon request.



Before The Storm: Destination OZ

Dennis Fogle

A Cycle

*Waiting with anticipation
becoming with love and labor.
Actually happening,
then joy with anxiety.
The season is over....It is over.*

*Becoming strong with energy
warming with life and promise.
To development full,
then clouds on the horizon..
The season is over....It is over.*

*Waning light with accounting
harvesting the results.
Cold, yet some comfort,
then accomplishments done.
The season is over....It is done.*

L. Keith Loyd

THE WRITING PLACE

There really was something under there. Tommy knew something was there. The wooden stairs leading from the cellar always scared him. He and his parents had moved to the old house at the end of Harbor Lane three months ago, and he had the only upstairs bedroom in the red brick masterpiece of a house. He had considered himself very lucky to have his own room now that his older brother had moved away, waiting for college to begin. Now Tommy was not so sure that he liked having his brother so far away. His mother, Meg Sullivan, allowed him to arrange his things in this new room all by himself. Almost. He was not allowed to keep his most prized possession, his writing supplies, with him in his room upstairs. Although he was only thirteen, he was destined to write horror stories. Of course, that was not the kind of profession that a mother would want for her son. Meg always thought he should be a doctor, like his grandfather. She would only let him write and keep his writing supplies in the cellar. No one could see the violent, gruesome stories that the boy thought up. It was then that the boy found the thing under the stairs.

At first, he thought that it was only his wild imagination. The whispering. The footsteps. The calling. Tommy persisted in writing his stories down there, but every night he had nightmares about what could be making those noises; he tried to explain to his mother why he kept waking up in the middle of the night screaming, but she thought it was just a childish game to get her to let him write upstairs. It would not work.

Finally, after eight days of hearing her youngest son screaming in bed, Meg sent him to his brother's apartment on the coast. The boy did not object. His brother, Nathan, liked his stories.

The morning of his trip to the coast, Tommy decided to bring some of his newest stories to his brother, but that meant that he would have to go downstairs to get them. He had not been down there in three days. Gulping down the lump in his throat that seemed to be his pulsing heart, he ran down the creaky, wooden stairs. Nothing got him.

Once in the single, soft-white bulb lit room, Tommy felt a little safer. He unlocked his filing cabinet with a key that he kept on a chain around his neck, started to go through the many stories. He found what he thought were the five best stories he'd written since his brother left, and he packed the stories in a folder carrying case that he'd bought with his allowance against his mother's wishes. Task complete, he had to ascend the stairs.

Package in hand, he held his head up to the cement ceiling, making sure not to look at the slits between the stairs. If he did not see it, it could not get him, or so he believed.

Halfway up, the light went off, and Tommy froze, in total darkness. He could hear the whispering, like breathing. Then came the voice.

"I'll let you out now, Tommy," it whispered in its

graveyard-dark voice. "But you'll have to come back. And when you do, I'll get you." The light came back on. The boy raced up the stairs, not even allowing himself to catch his breath, and banged open the cellar door. For a second, he could swear that something brushed against his ankle.

His father, a subdued businessman in his late forties, drove him to Nathan's apartment. Before Tommy could get out of the car, Ralph Sullivan decided to have a talk with his youngest son about his wife. Things were getting out of hand. She did not seem to like the children, and she did not seem to love him anymore.

"What I mean is, Mommy may not be around much longer. She wants to get a new life. It's not to hurt you, and it's not your fault. She just doesn't want to stay with us any longer. I hope you understand."

Tommy said that he did, and that he was sort of expecting something like that to happen. Tommy really did understand about his mother. Neither he nor Nathan was ever very close to her. Mr. Sullivan's rusty brown station wagon rumbled away.

That night, Nathan read his younger brother's stories and loved them. When Tommy awoke screaming and found Nathan next to him, he explained what was happening and what he had to go home to. Nathan wanted to believe him, but how could he? It was crazy. Instead, he just sat with his little brother until he could fall asleep again.

"You want some orange juice or something?" Nathan asked.

"Yeah, sure," the shaking boy said, accepting the juice and toast that was put in front of him. After a while, he asked, "What am I supposed to do now?" His little boy voice choked back a sob.

Nathan thought it over before saying anything. "We'll go back tonight and get your writing stuff. Nothing will happen. Besides, if Mom is gone, you can write in your room. If she's not, then you can stay here with me, at least until school starts. Nathan was having trouble deciding what to really believe, but Tommy was his little brother, and he would do anything for him.

The boys arrived at the end of Harbor Lane at eight o'clock that night. Police cars blocked their driveway, while flashing lights lit their path. They burst into the house to find their father crying at the kitchen table, too hysterical to get a reasonable answer from. Seconds later, the police carried a stretcher from the cellar. A limp, pale hand fell from the cover. It was Meg Sullivan's red tipped fingernails and gold wedding band that gleamed from under the blood-soaked sheet.

Nathan asked the policeman what had happened. The policeman told him that Mr. Sullivan had decided to stay at a friend's house when he and his wife were having yet another argument. Mrs. Sullivan decided to leave her husband and wrote a note saying that she would leave as soon as she had destroyed the terrible stories that her

younger son had written.

As soon as Tommy heard this, he immediately ran downstairs. The officer continued to explain that Mr. Sullivan had returned with his friend to pick up a few personal items, saw the note and found blood at the door of the stairs. His friend called the police before going downstairs. Mr. Sullivan now sat quietly at the table at the conclusion of the officer's story.

When Tommy reached the filing cabinet, it was blood-covered, but still locked. He used his key and took out his stories. They had not been touched by his mother, or her blood. He went to the stairs. The door at the top of the stairs closed, and the light went out. He knew what was coming. He stood at the edge of the stairs and listened to Nathan and the policemen trying to get the door open. He listened for the voice that he knew would come.

"I killed her to free you," the shadow with the bright eyes stated. "Now you must repay me. Do you know how?"

Tommy shook his head.

"You must write of me. Describe the thought of me and your fear. I freed you. Now you free me. Scare them for me, and I'll allow you to live. If you don't, I'll come back. You can run, but you can't hide. For the rest of your life, I'll always be with you." Then there was silence. The cellar door burst open and the men stormed down the stairs. One man slid on Meg's tainted blood.

They pulled the talented boy out of the dark cellar and took him to the hospital with Mr. Sullivan. Later, they put the silent boy in a flawless white bed next to his sleeping father. The closet door was open just a crack...just enough to see two shiny eyes.

They all thought that he was in shock. All but Nathan. He knew Tommy was contemplating a new story. Later that night, Tommy got up and wrote for his life.

Katie G. Carman



Green Mansions

Marge Bruns

Metamorphosis

*A tourist eye
Captures, interprets
Windows of time*

*A glimpse
Framed
A flash,
Frozen
inside the magic box.*

Susan Brand

Umbrellas

**An Army
Of rainy day faces
Hiding
Overcast identities
Under taut, nylon domes
Lethargically marching
On learned asphalt
To feet's drum.**

Susan Brand

On Stage with Milosz

Invited:

A Poetry Reading.
Something different
Seems an interesting
Nice cultured thing.
My friend and I laughed.
It might be silly
As privately hoped.

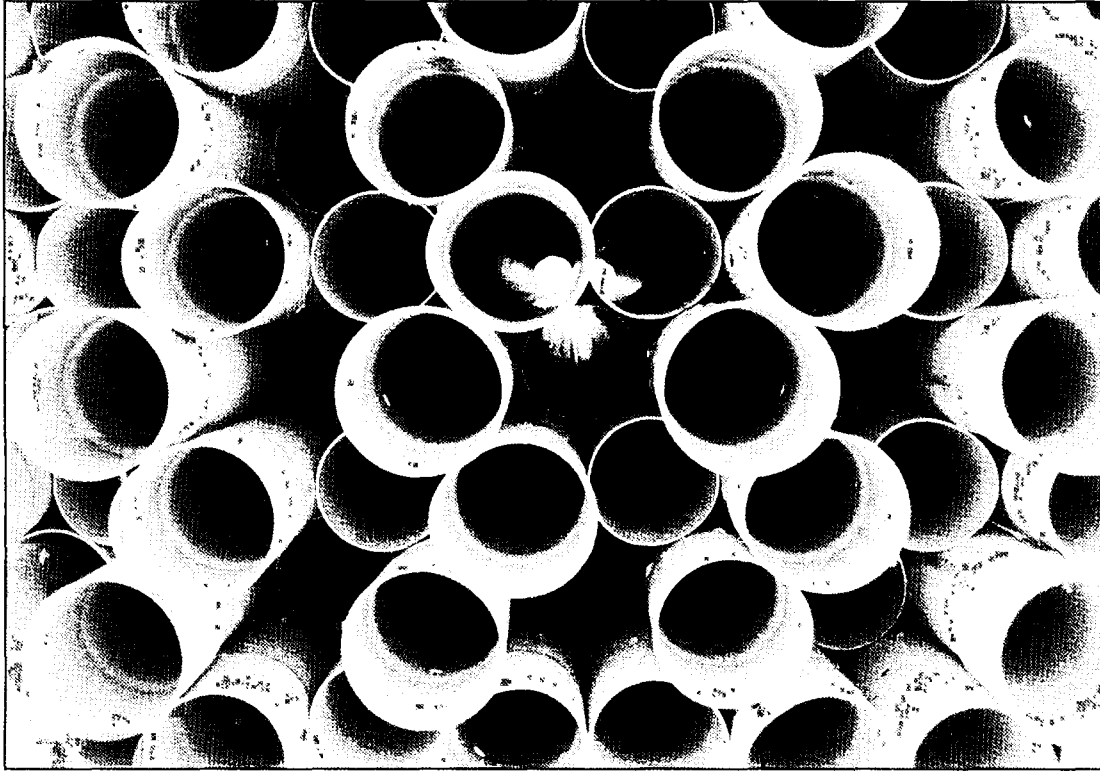
In the hall that night we attended
Conforming silence
Concealing smiles
In languid velvet seats.

The crowd's
Adrenaline ascended
Anticipating the great artist
Milosz
And
His words
Which moved,
Propelled us
Down dark hallways,
Through passages
To the side
Of the stage.

Our four padding feet
Stepped and stilled
Behind the curtain
So close
The reader.

There in hush peace and
Halcyon presence
Milosz sanctified
Our regard
For Readings.

Laura Mershon



Focal Point

Sonda Marie Schmidt

THE BIG SCORE

The plane shuddered as the wheels left the ground. Just as Steve began to wonder if they were going to crash, he felt the plane pull away from the earth as the speed of the engines was increased. God, he hated flying! As he stared at the ground falling away beneath the plane, he remembered the day that Jeff had sucked him into this little venture.

"Aw, come on, Steve, this is our chance to score. We'll be the Frank Lloyd Wrights of our time."

"But there are so many things to consider, Jeff. One of us will have to live there. How will Nancy or Gwen like the idea of pulling up stakes and moving to Las Vegas?"

"I don't know how Gwen will feel, but Nancy will do what I tell her to do. Come on, just take a minute and look over these preliminary sketches."

"All right, Jeff. I guess I might as well. God knows you're not going to leave me alone until I do."

It was hard to tell one partner of Van Clete and Jacobs from the other. They were both well over six feet tall, with strong shoulders, remnants of their football days, and blond hair. People who had known them their whole lives had trouble telling them apart at first sight.

"What do you think, Steve?"

"Well, I like the entrance design, but I'm thinking that. . ."

As their talk drifted to other aspects of the project, Steve Jacobs found that he was hooked. That's the problem with me, he thought, I have to study all the contingencies first, slay all the dragons. I know that drives Gwen nuts. That's probably why we're on the verge of a divorce.

That evening they met at Jeff's house after dinner to pitch the idea to their wives.

"Hi, Nancy Fancy Pants," Steve said as Nancy Van Clete opened the door.

"Hi, yourself," she replied. "Hi, Gwen."

"Hello, Nancy," Gwen answered coolly.

Steve started to ask Nancy what she thought of the project, but as he reached out and touched her shoulder he saw her wince. "What happened," he asked, "Another slip in the bathtub?"

"No, as I was getting out of the car. Come on."

"For heaven's sake, Steve," Gwen started in when they reached the living room, "When are you going to stop calling Nancy by that ridiculous name?"

"Never." Steve grinned at Nancy and gave her a slow wink.

When they were children, they had been in one of those traditional Christmas pageants where they had to sing *The Twelve Days of Christmas*. Nancy had been forced to wear ruffles on her underpants, and every time they sang the part about the three French hens she was supposed to turn around, bend over, throw up her skirt, and wiggle her fanny. The teacher had pinned three paper French hens to her ruffles. Unfortunately, the hens were heavier than expected,

and the first time Nancy wiggled, her pants fell down. He knew the name was silly, of course, and that Gwen detested it, but it was between Nancy and him, and she didn't seem to mind.

The discussion lasted for hours, but in the end they decided that this was just too good an opportunity to pass up; the partners would try for the job.

The next three weeks had been filled with a million little details, but here they were finally in the air on the way to Las Vegas.

"Well," Jeff said, bringing Steve out of his reverie, "I can't think of another thing we could have done. We're as ready as we'll ever be, I guess."

During the presentation the following day, the partners were asked so many questions that they began to wonder just how ready they were. However, after four grueling hours, the CEO of the consortium leaned back in his chair and said: "I must tell you, gentlemen, that this is the best design we've seen so far. It's full of innovative ideas, just like the study of holistic medicine. We've talked about it, and you can rest assured, the job is yours."

In a state of elation, the partners decided to celebrate a little before they took their flight home at midnight.

"Let's eat at the MGM Grand and play a little Blackjack," Jeff said as they got in the taxi.

"Great idea."

As they were leaving the casino later that evening to head to the airport, Jeff said, "Hey, I've got one silver dollar left. Let's play one of those million dollar slot machines with it. If we win, we'll split the million."

"Yeah, right," answered Steve with a smile. "But just to keep you on the up and up, here's fifty cents for my half of the million."

"What's the matter, don't you trust me? Why I'm as honest as an altar boy," Jeff said.

"You forget, I knew you when you were an altar boy."

"Okay, you win," Jeff said as he accepted the two quarters. "You have legally and morally purchased a share in the million dollars. We'll even share the responsibility for winning. I'll put the dollar in and you pull the lever."

Round and round the tumblers spun, the colors of a kaleidoscope blurred together. The first tumbler stopped on a dollar sign. The second tumbler dropped into place with a dollar sign on its face. The third tumbler slowed, then hung suspended for a moment.

"Come on," Steve said through gritted teeth.

"Give us the dollar sign, you wonderful machine," Jeff pleaded.

As if by magic the tumbler fell, a dollar sign on its face. Pandemonium broke out. Lights flashed over the whole casino. Bells, whistles, and shouts were heard from all directions. People ran from everywhere while Jeff and Steve stood in stunned silence staring at the

machine, trying to comprehend the reality of their winning.

"Jeff, you magnificent ex-altar boy, I think we actually won," Steve shouted above the din.

"We won. We won!" Jeff said, a smile brightening his face.

They began to dance around and kiss the machine. They hugged each other, several strangers, and the manager of the casino when he came to take them to his office to receive their winnings. They fairly floated through the aisles crowded with people congratulating them at every turn.

The next hour went by in a total blur. They filled out papers galore, had the taxes explained, and finally received a cashier's check for the first, and biggest, of the ten yearly installments, over a quarter of a million dollars!

As they were leaving the office, the manager said, "You might consider hiring security to see you to the airport. That check is negotiable you know."

After they left the office, Jeff and Steve stepped into a vacant room down the hall. Jeff had been given the check by the manager, and he removed it, along with his wallet, from his pocket.

"Steve," he said, "Why don't you take this? Since all those people saw the manager give the check to me, it might not be a bad idea if I wasn't carrying it."

"Good thought," Steve answered as he accepted the check and wallet. He placed them in his button-closed inside coat pocket. "It should be safe there. No one can pick that pocket. Here, you take my wallet. In case we're stopped, it will look less suspicious. We'll take separate taxis to the airport, too, just to throw anyone who might be interested off the scent."

"That's a great idea. Why don't you take my plane ticket, and I'll take yours? I feel like James Bond trying to outmaneuver Goldfinger." Jeff chuckled at the thought.

"Yes, it is silly, but I suppose it's better to be safe. You go first, and I'll follow in a few minutes. See you on the plane, stranger."

The taxi rides were uneventful. They presented their tickets at the counter and were ushered on to the plane with the other passengers. While preparing for takeoff, Jeff looked back at Steve, smiled, and gave him the thumbs up sign. They were almost home!

The plane taxied down the runway and lifted off into a perfectly clear starlit night. It was a short flight to L.A., barely enough time to have a drink. But short or not, this flight was noted for its turbulence, and sure enough, the pilot's voice soon came over the intercom.

"Sorry for the rough ride, folks," he said. "Just sit back and have another drink. We'll hit the ground in L.A. in about eight minutes."

"Boy, I hate it when they say hit the ground, don't you?" Steve said to his neighbors. They all laughed.

"I guess we really should have ordered another drink," said the older lady next to Steve. "It might have been our last chance before we hit, you know."

In the midst of the laughter that followed, the plane began its descent over Los Angeles International Airport. About fifty feet from the ground there was a sudden jerk followed by the sound of metal being torn away. Screams replaced the laughter as the plane raced toward the ground.

The fire must have reached them. Steve thought he could hear the people yelling, but he couldn't make out the words. The light was getting brighter and closer, but there was no heat. Maybe this was the light people saw when they were dying. He tried to reach out toward the light but nothing seemed to move at the command of his mind. The voices were louder now. Someone was calling. It must be Jeff, he thought, as the darkness closed in again.

He heard the voice calling again, but there was something wrong, something out of place.

"Mr. Van Clete," the voice shouted, "Don't try to talk. Just open your eyes and look at me. Can you hear me? Open your eyes."

As Steve lay there, he couldn't understand why Jeff didn't answer this guy. After a few minutes he got tired of waiting and opened his eyes to see what was wrong with Jeff. He tried to look around the room, but his head was held tightly in place.

"Very good, Mr. Van Clete," the voice continued. "Try to follow the movement of my pencil with your eyes."

Steve watched as the pencil slowly moved across his range of vision. Why is he calling me Mr. Van Clete, Steve wondered. In a flash, he remembered what he and Jeff had done. They must think I'm Jeff and Jeff is me. Good grief, what a mixup. This kind of thing would never happen to James Bond. He tried speak, but the person spoke again.

"Don't try to move or talk. You have a vertebrae crushed in your neck, and your jaw is broken too. I'd sure like to know how you got out of that airplane after it clipped the hanger."

As though in answer, the scene of the crash rushed back to Steve. He could see Jeff slump forward and the fire coming toward his friend. He heard the crack as the plane exploded and separated in two and felt himself thrown against the side wall. That was the last thing he remembered before the pain of knowing his friend was dead mercifully crowded out consciousness once again.

"It's a miracle." he kept hearing them say, "A miracle." It had been six weeks since the crash. They had buried Jeff, identified by Steve's wallet and his place in the charred plane, thinking he was Steve, while Steve lay helpless, unable to stop them. Gwen, overcome by it all, promptly took her grief and her share of the money and headed for the South of France.

The frustration of not being able to stop the horrible charade was unbearable. Steve lay day after day, swathed in bandages, trapped in the agony of his imprisoned silence. The only bright spots in his existence were the daily visits from Nancy. But even

she seemed remote. He tried to convey to her that he was Steve and not Jeff, but each attempt ushered forth a moaning sound, and was answered with an immediate, "Hush, don't try to talk." His arms were immobile like the rest of his body. He couldn't write. Hell, he couldn't even move his fingers. He knew that it would only be another week or two before he was finally able to set the record straight, but some days he felt driven mad to make them understand.

The last rays of the setting sun were projecting shadow pictures on the walls of his room when Nancy entered. She came and stood by the side of his bed.

"I am so sorry, Jeff," she began. "I've tried to be here for you, but I can't go on any longer. I thought I could stick it out, but I can't. I loved Steve. I didn't know how much until he was gone. He made it bearable. I hate to do this, but I can't allow you to hurt me ever again. I've got to go away and sort all this out." Nancy paused as though gathering strength from the encroaching darkness. Steve suddenly and nonsensically remembered a quote from *Alice in Wonderland* that he had learned in school "And

the wonder of it grew, that one small mind could hold all she knew." He didn't think that his mind could contain the joy he was feeling. He had loved Nancy since they were children, but when she had chosen Jeff, he had buried that love. He felt like he could fly. He wanted to hold Nancy in his arms--but--what did she say--she was leaving. No! He rebelled as he listened, locked in silence.

"I can't tell you where I'm going because I don't know. It's better this way. Please, please try to forgive me. I'm sorry."

Steve had never felt so helpless. His mind screamed as a moan escaped his lips. The bed began to tremble with the effort he made to communicate. She couldn't leave!

He watched as she reached for the doorknob. A sudden flare of sunlight flung its fingers across the head of his bed as he silently willed her to turn around. Miraculously, she felt his pleading and turned as though compelled to take one final look. Steve spoke to her in the only way he had left. He gave her a long slow wink that ended in a tear.

Dianne Wiemers Wyman



Standing Alone

Marge Bruns

THE RIDE

When I was growin' up in the hollers just south of Bull Skin Kentucky, there was a lady livin' on the land borderin' ours that went by the name of Miss Ruth. Close neighbors was scarce and what few we had all figured Miss Ruth to be a witch. Pa would just shake his head when us kids would ask if this was true, and then he would raise his eyebrows and say, "You kids just be double sure to treat Miss Ruth nice and respectful."

Every now and then after we was all put up in bed we'd hear a slight rap at the cabin door, and it would be Miss Ruth askin' Pa if she could borrow a horse and Pa would always reply "Yes Ma'am" and that'd be that.

One night I sneaked outta bed and watched from the loft window as she got her a horse. She just walked out to the corral, opened the gate, clucked and pointed at a rough broke young stud we called Roofus. Now Roofus had nothin' easy about him -- he wasn't easy to catch, he wasn't easy to saddle, he wasn't easy to ride, and he sure wasn't easy to look at, bone-deep plumb ugly he was.

But Roofus was one heck of a piece of horse flesh. Strong in the rear quarters, broad and deep in the chest, Roofus would go with the best of 'em and just be gettin' good and warmed up when the others was finished and done. But when Miss Ruth clucked, ole Roofus just walked out as gentle as you please and stood while Miss Ruth latched up the gate and then in a blink she was up on his back.

Before they was off she turned to the window I was a peekin' out and the moon shone on her smile as she give me a little wave, and then they was off and gone. Me, I just shaky kneed my way on over to the bed, crawled in and pulled the quilt up over my head. Whatever horse she borried would be waiting in the corral come daylight.

A couple o' years later, when I was somewheres between a boy and a man, I'd took over the job of roughin' out the green horses around the place. Pa was always swappin' this horse for that horse, any way he might show a bit of profit, and the horse I was smoothin' out that day was a real knot head.

I thought he was gentlin' down good, so I was out ridin' the ridge tops when a grouse came up from between that knot head's front legs. That horse must a figured ole Lucifer hisself was comin' up outta the ground after him, and away he went like his tail was afire.

That horse took to flyin' along that ridge top just as fast as he could go with me a hangin' on for dear life, tuggin' on them reins and yellin' "whoa" at the top of my lungs. By the time that horse decided to stop, I was plumb riled.

I figured if that horse couldn't be taught to whoa, then by God he'd learn to run. So I laid into him with heels and crop. I was some young and some dumb and all riled, and I laid into that horse screamin' like a madman and raisin' welts on that horse's ass, and I do mean we laid on down that trail.

It was comin' on to dark by the time the madness come off me, and I was just short of ridin' that horse to death. I stopped and reined him to a crooked dogwood and was takin' a good look at what I'd done to that horse when I saw Miss Ruth a comin' up the hillside.

She was walkin' right at me, and I was all set to greet her, but she just goes on around me and starts to walkin' up to that knot head horse. I have to say I was feelin' might unproud of myself as she steps around that horse frownin' and shakin' her head.

I was feelin' mighty unproud of myself when she ups an taps me on the shoulder with her walking stick. Now me, I start to feelin' purty strange right then and falls to my knees.

The next thing I remember is the wind rushing by. I can feel a slight weight on my back and hear a gentle, almost lullin' sing-song chant in my ear as limbs slap my chest and legs. My feet, (or are they hooves?) shock the ground on the flats and slide down the steep slopes and then feel strange unfamiliar muscles bunch and unbunch as I charge up the side of a deep holler. I feel sweat blown back along my torso as the wind pulls at me, and all the while, the slight weight and sing-song chant accompany me. And then, after I don't know how long, we enter a clearing high on a mountain top where a large bonfire burns.

We stop, and the weight slips off my back, and I see Miss Ruth join the strange figures that whirl and sing and dance around the flames. All I kin do is stand, front legs spread, head hung and breathing hard as the dancers frolic through the night.

Sometime later I come to as mornin' grey ate up the black night sky, I plodded along the same trails I had run before with the now familiar weight on my back and liltin' chant in my ear. After a while, we stopped and once again the weight slipped off my back. Miss Ruth walked around and scratched between my ears, which felt mighty good. Then she tapped me once again with that walkin' stick o' hers. Consciousness began to fade as she walked away hummin' to herself. As everything went black, Miss Ruth turned, smilin' and waved.

I awoke midday curled up in the oak leaves with my clothes piled next to me and my horse still tethered to the dogwood. I got dressed, all but my boots, seein' how my feet was swelled, hobbled over to the horse and led him down to the creek to drink. As the horse watered, I sat on a rock pickin' pieces of flint and beechnut hulls from my hands and the soles of my feet. I then mounted up, threw my crop into the creek and headed that horse towards home at a gentle gait.

It's been years since that night and I've growed up and moved away. I keep that tale to myself (who'd believe me anyway) but I can't help but wonder sometimes, who Miss Ruth borries' horses from nowadays.

Rex Apsley



Reading Place

Marge Bruns

COLLECTOR

Awakening,
I see the moon
Floating lazily over the mountains;
As other creatures wearily finish their day,
Mine only begins.
Stars light my paths
As the darkness embraces the last folds of daylight,
I will go,
As I have learned to go
As have others before me,
Into the shadows
To find my prey,
To provoke and seduce
And to live.
It was not my choice
To live in the night,
But I will do as so-called monsters must:
No man living should see us,
Of course,
Some do see
And wish that they had not
For I am the collector of souls.
One who dwells in dreams
Ready for a chance to live
As others live,
If only in illusions
And the soft mists almost of reality.
I embrace the night's dark shadows
Ready,
Waiting,
Almost impatient
In my attempt to prove
My own existence
No matter what the futility
Of why I am here.
I exist
Only for others
And I wait
For the unprivileged
Of mind and body
To gather their thoughts,
Savoring the moments
Of great ecstasy
When I can collect their souls
And live in reality of illusions
And move freely in a mist
Of dreams.

Katie G. Carman

all night diner

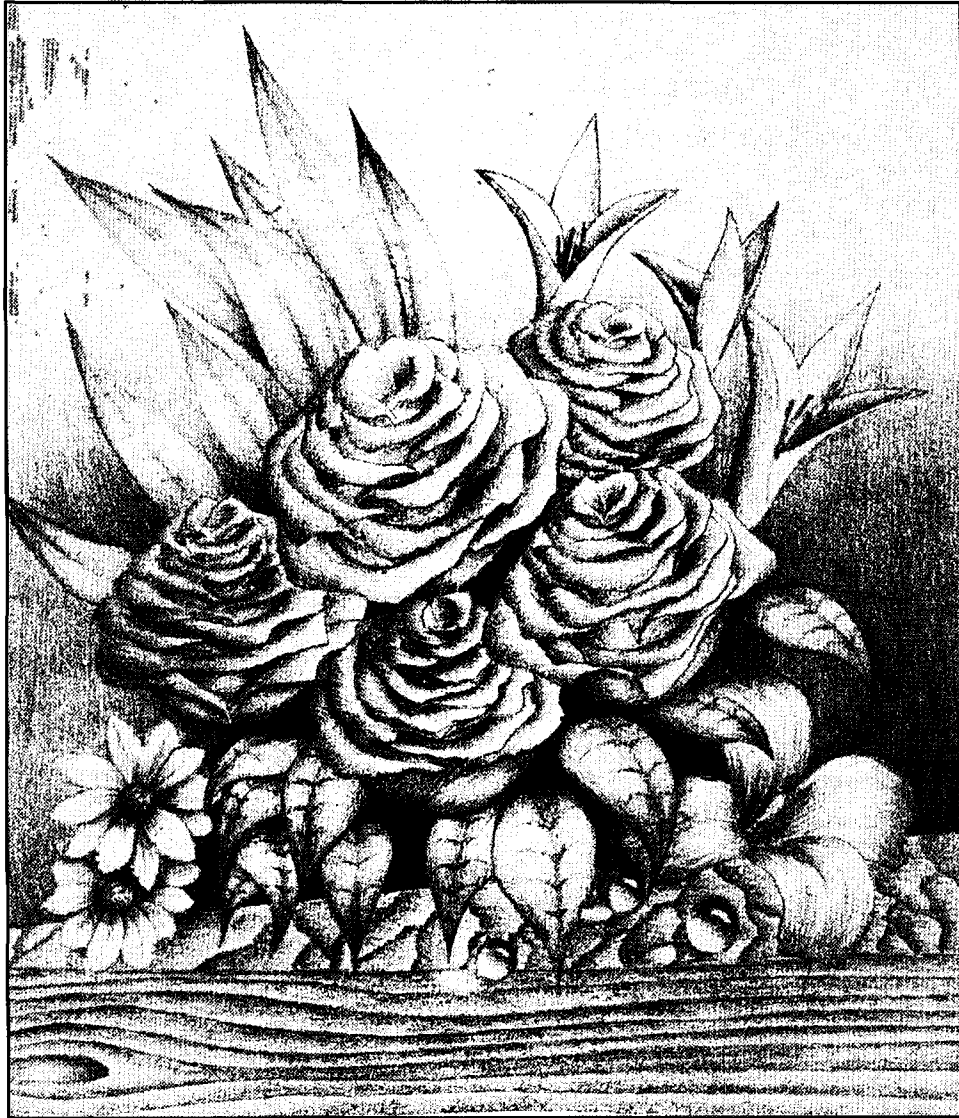
traffic sighs by
respite warms the regulars
interlopers assume ceremonial postures
cash registers play brief melodies
interlude and destination
midwest samovar

Laura Mershon

Dark Horizons

*as i stare out the window
of this place that holds my mind
rainbows on the horizon
are all of darkened colors
pots of gold have no shine
and contain a worthless fortune
i close my eyes
and seek refuge within myself
only to find my inner sanctum
has been infected
by my own jaded view
the solitude i so desperately seek
as distant as the rainbow-filled horizon
and just as dark*

Jerry Glascock



Flowers 117

John Shepard

Paradise Regained

Journey through the valley,
Lonesome yet never alone.
Ancient persuasions hover
Like dark stormy clouds,
Separating rummaging hearts.
Quest for the grail,
Paradise escapes without truth.

Struggle shrouds the prize;
Face the face of fear.
That which is needed most
Lurks inside all the while.
Walls of past experience
Reach high, far, beyond...
Somewhere within
Hides a stranger.
A frightened child
Nestles in the nook,
Trembling.

Fear,
The enemy of love.

Mourn the velveteen rabbit,
Climb the barriers,
Drop the baggage, surrender confusion,
Break down the wall,
Find the true self,
Free the stranger,
Befriend the friend,
And become whole.

Conflict resolution
Rediscovered passion,
Reciprocates the gift,
And unconditionally
Opens the door to
Paradise regained.

Teresa L. Mullins

THE EMPTY CHAIR

The chair is as empty as I left it last spring.
In these woods where quiet prevails,
The green is gone. The cold wind stirs the limbs where
The cardinals and chickadees make their song.
The chair is here as my quiet place where my mind can find its soul.
But each time I see the chair, my heart sees my father,
A man of boys.
It must be the quietness mixed with the steady persuasive breeze.
The shadow in the chair is not really mine, but the man that my heart sees.
My dad was a quiet man.
Steady and observing, he quickly saw the better side of things.
His actions and words were a guiding force; his anger was rarely seen.
He instilled the desire to be one's self, the best that one could be.
He's been gone as long as this chair's been empty.
His form I cannot see, the chair's I can.
His spirit is here.
The chair is empty, but my heart is full.

Carol Walp

THE CELEBRATION
(For Mama)

*From the jigsaw pathways of our segregated lives we gathered,
to pay homage,
to commemorate,
to embrace the memories of our antiquity.*

*Ball games played in the stifling heat of luminous
summer mornings; illicit cigarettes smoked covertly
in murky basements; exhilarating pursuits of hide
and seek as we chased through the gathering shadows
of twilight, and adolescent secrets of wondrous
first love shared in midnight darkness to the
creaking melody of an ancient porch swing.*

*One by one we passed the shimmering crystal of remembrance,
and shared again,
in a fleeting flash of eternity,
the essence of family.*

Dianne Wiemers Wyman

SNOWBIRD

A snowbird drifts gently down
Glides across the sky
Falls in the air
Flies once more
Ready to achieve
Ready to land
Ready for his goal to appear
He scans the sky
He surveys
He finds the point
A perfect limb
An ideal tree
All is well
The snowbird lands
To make his nest
His home
His life
Of bits of string
Of straw
Of sticks
All woven
All complex
All beyond understanding

Christy Hubbard

THE RECITAL

With
blustering
buffeting
winds
rushing
rustling
racing
l e a v e s
twirled
and
swirled
t o g e t h e r

Calliope premieres the symphony

of

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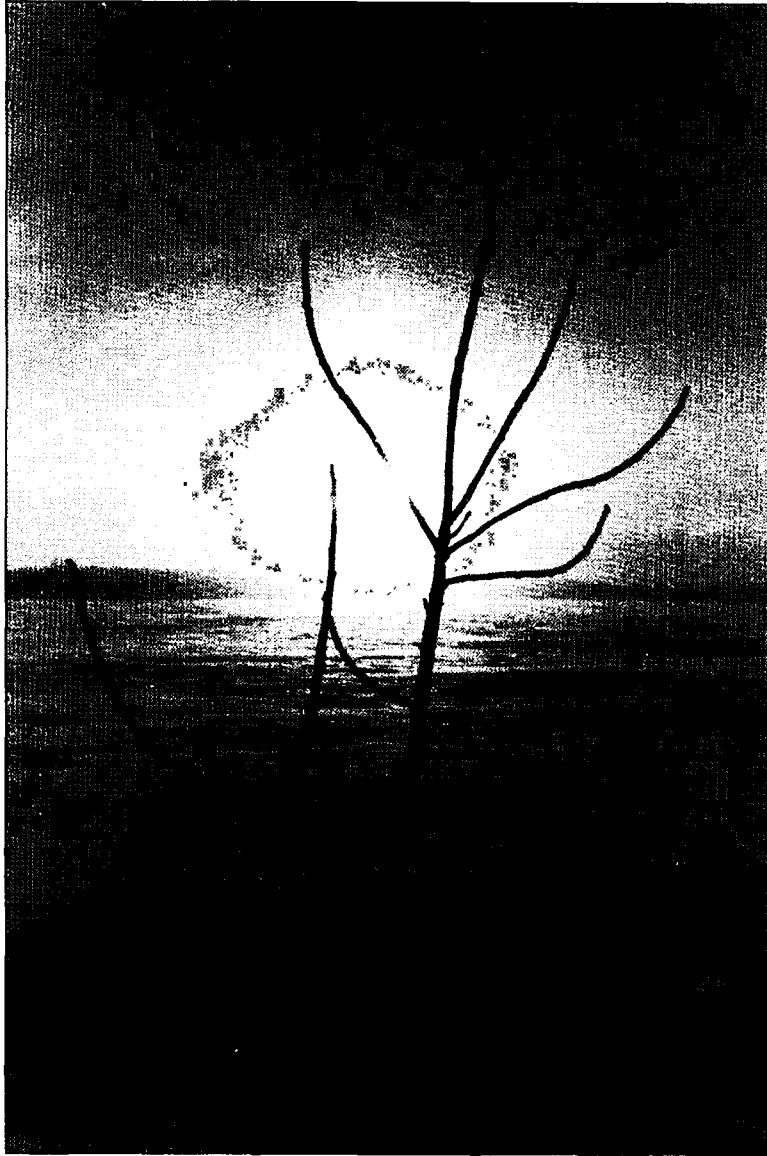
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Dianne Wiemers Wyman



Silent Crucifix

Dennis Fogle

Deathsong for Ajamu Nassor

"We must make up our minds to look for our protection not to legal terrors but to careful administration. . . Good policy against an adversary is superior to blind force."

-Diodotus, 428 B.C.

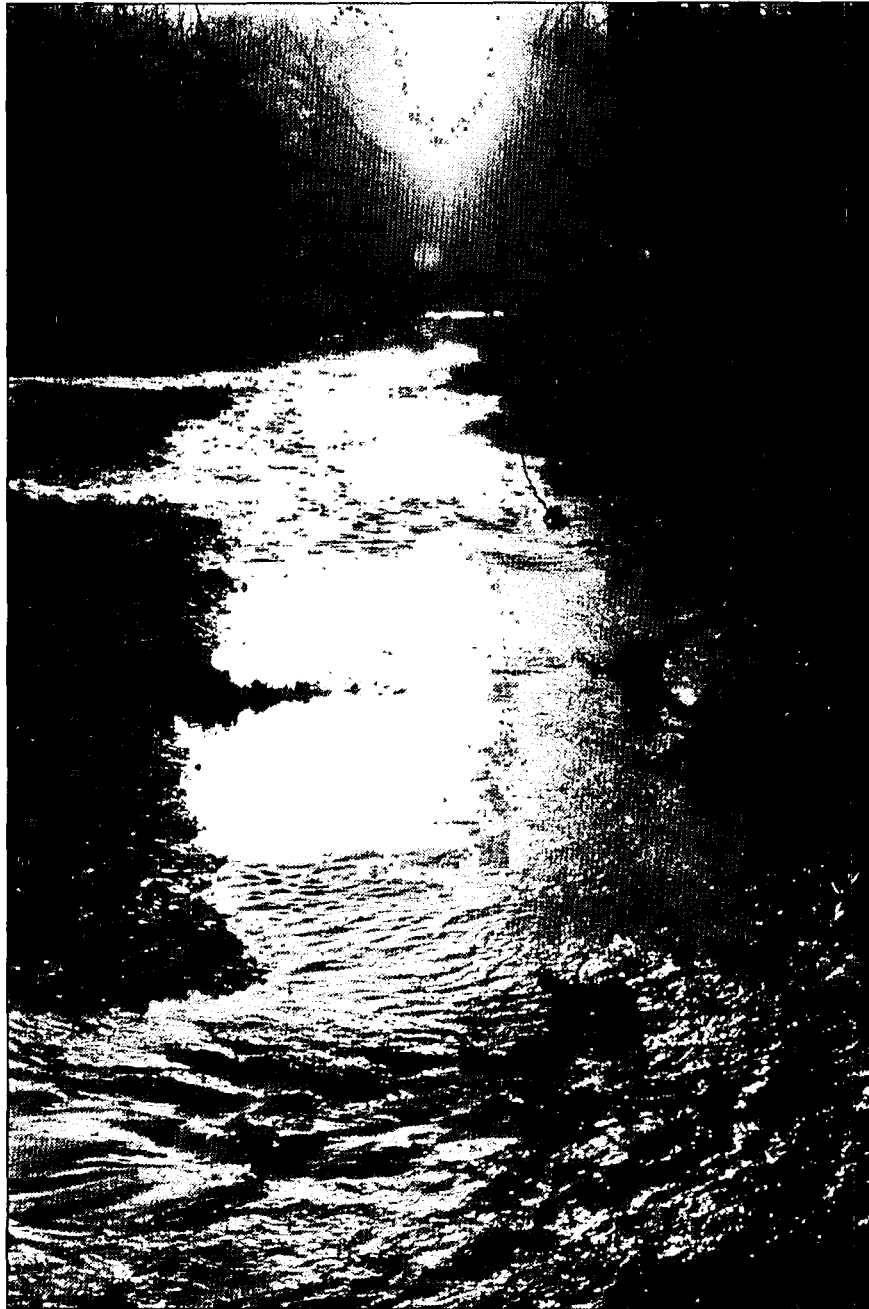
*On my way to the governor's house,
I was thinkin' about politics,
Deathsongs, and electric screams
In the night.
This song is because I can,
Because he won't
Have another chance
To write.
Midnight seemed dreamlike,
With protest signs, guard dogs,
Relentless chants punctuated by
Ghostly silence surrounded
By policemen and candlelight.
The Man inside holds foolish
Philosophies, like killing
One of us, now and then,
By example, keeps us afraid.
But we stood on the lawn
In conspicuous sight 'til
The killswitch was thrown,
And, heads bowed, resigned,
We slowly dissolved homeward,
Not to sleep, but to dream
Full awake, for him, for us
And others sure to come.
And in my waking dream, Shelley
Says I'm a legislator,
Hands me a pen, & I begin
To write.*

Jon Eric Johnson

Evening
(For Dugan)

*On the day bed, by the front window,
The lamp from above his head
Softly touches his face with gentle warmth.
He has been here asleep for a while.
Today's newspapers, a magazine that came
In the mail, and a pile of children's books encircle him.
From the books, I know that, earlier in the evening,
Cuddled close with our child,
He read about the bears who pick up their room,
And how Tate's family gives her a birthday surprise,
And how they went beyond zebra,
And more.
His hands are clasped across his chest,
A comfortable napping posture inherited
From his father, a man he respects and loves.
In a minute, he will sense me
And open his eyes,
But only slightly;
The irises of green and brown concentric circles
Remind me of a photograph in a magazine
From my youth where the sun illuminated
A pride of lions running through a savanna.
These are the colors in his eyes.
Someday I will try to capture
Their marriage of wisdom and beauty
On canvas.
He will shift slightly in a moment.
He will smile almost indiscernibly, or
I will imagine that he does.
He will tell me
That I am who he likes to see
Upon waking.*

Laura Mershon



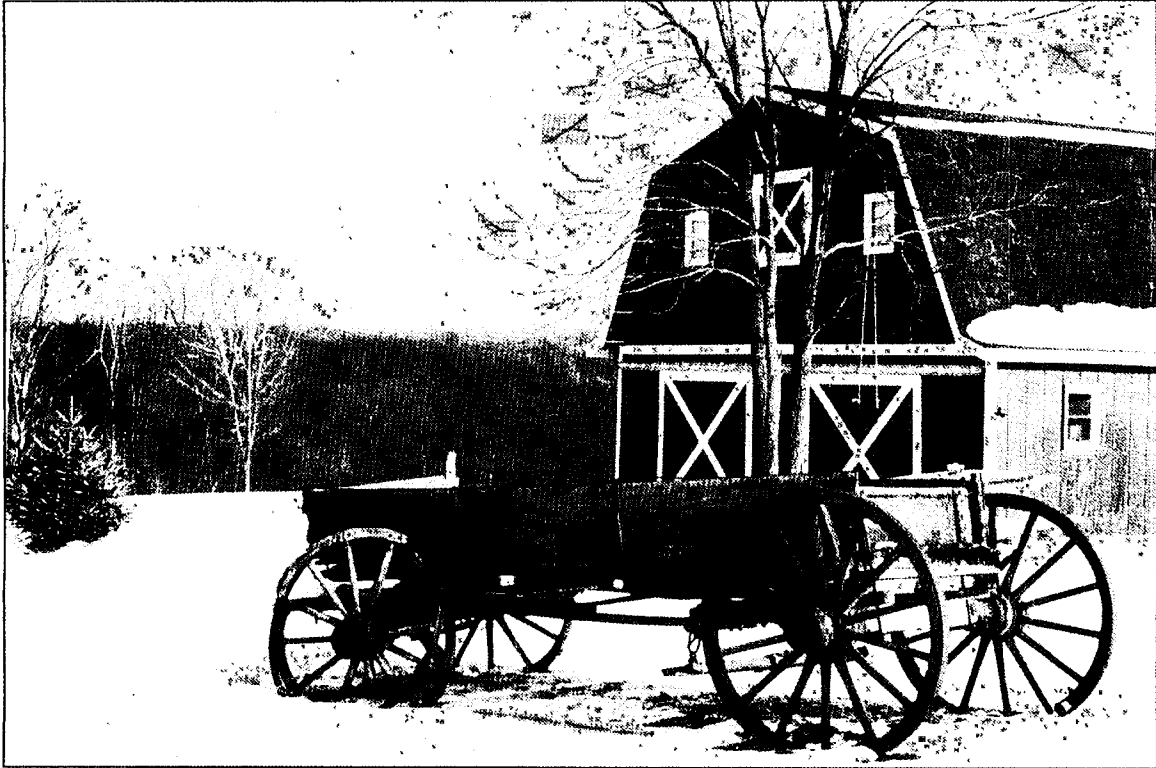
Daylight's Demise

Sonda Marie Schmidt

HUNTING THE WILD TURKEY

*We hunt the wild turkey
In the comfort of our chair and fire.
We watch through woods in Texas, Arkansas and Ohio
In a matter of an hour's time.
The scenery changes from state to state,
But the feeling is the same.
The stillness is present each time,
With only the birds
And the hunter's calls,
Until they come.
Quietly they come.
The hunter,
With his hiding garb,
Gear and sounds,
Has not the motive
As others years before him.
The turkey,
With basic instincts and senses,
Is trusting
And foolish.
Quietly they come.
Quietly they come, until they stand before the hunter,
Lured by man's deceit
In a staged habitat.
Now we must create
So we can see what our fathers
Hunted by skill and need--not deceit.
Quietly they come.*

Carol Walp



The Last Stop

Sonda Marie Schmidt

THE HUNT

"You know, Marcy, I've been thinking, since the season seems to have changed for good, this would be a good day to shop for a new purse. How about it?"

Oh, God, I groaned inwardly, not the purse safari.

"Well," I said as I continued to put on my makeup, "I was thinking I would do some studying at the library today."

"You can do that this evening. Come on, we'll make a day of it, have lunch out and everything. I can be ready to leave in fifteen minutes."

I should have seen it coming, I thought, as I turned back to my mirror and began to brush my hair. It happened every year at this time. You would think I'd have more sense by now, that I'd have scheduled major surgery or something. After all, she had been dropping hints for over a week: "Isn't it lovely today; it looks like spring is here for good." "Things have really warmed up." "We'll have to unpack the summer clothes."

Yes, I should have guessed. But it was too late now, I was trapped. How could I be so dumb?

Oh, Mom, I thought, you're such a levelheaded person most of the time...except...for fall and spring when some primal urge drives you to shop for a new purse.

"Let's try Neiman Marcus at the new super mall first," Mother said enthusiastically as she buckled her seatbelt. "I hear they have some wonderful new styles for spring and there's lots of other shops in case I can't find what I want there."

We descended on Neiman Marcus ten minutes later, and the great white hunter moved in for the kill. She circled to the left, then to the right. Up and down each aisle she stalked her quarry.

"Ah, ha!" she exclaimed, snatching the unsuspecting purse from its hook. "Here's one. What do you think of this?"

"It's very pretty, Mom," I said hopefully, pushing my glasses up my nose to get a better look. "I like the color, and it would be a very nice summer purse."

"Yes, it is nice, but...don't you think it's too light? It would probably get dirty easily and...oh, look at this one. Donna has one like

this and she just loves it, says it goes with everything."

"That's great," I replied.

"Of course, I couldn't buy the same purse as Donna."

"Of course not," I sighed.

An hour later we had exhausted the supply at Neiman Marcus. It was amazing. Every purse of its kind had been looked over and every one had a flaw. They were too light, too dark, too large, too small, too heavy, too common, too cheap -- the list went on and on.

"It's a shame that the selections are so poor this year," Mother lamented. "I don't know why Donna said they had such great styles; they seem rather common to me. They just don't stock purses like they used to. Oh, well, let's try Bergdorf's."

Our search led us through Bergdorf's, and Macy's, and Nordstorm's and countless other boutiques scattered throughout the mall, all without success.

"You know, dear, since we're here anyway, let's go ahead and try I. Magnin's. They are just down the way here on the opposite end of mall, and they always have interesting things. I'm just sure I'll find a purse there."

"Right, Mom," I stated. "But aren't you getting tired? How about if we continue this another day?"

"No, no, I'm not tired. I just can't understand why there is so little to choose from nowadays. I never used to have such trouble."

Simultaneously, I began to choke on my soft drink and grabbed for my glasses which had slipped to the end of my nose.

"Are you all right, dear?" Mother asked, concern filling her voice.

"Fine, just fine," I squeaked. "Lead on to Magnin's, O' Sahib."

"You know, Marcy," she replied, "Sometimes you are so strange."

As we entered Magnin's, it unfolded us within a jungle of prints, patterns and textures. Opulent gold appointments and deep green carpets were juxtaposed with the light, bright colors of summer.

"May I help, madam?" a silken voice inquired from behind us.

"Yes, thank you. I am looking for a purse," my mother answered.

"The purses are found in the Lione Room. If madam will follow me."

How suitable, I thought, as I trudged behind my mother.

"Now, what kind of purse is madam looking for?"

"Something for summer. I would like something versatile, not too small or too large."

"Of course, madam. If you will be seated, I'm sure I can find something you'll like."

Easier said than done, I thought. For the next forty minutes our guide led the procession of prey past my mother. There were the "It's too small, I couldn't get anything in it."; "Don't you think it looks a little cheap?"; the "Heaven's, what awful colors!"; and on and on and on...

The carefully cultivated veneer of our faithful attendant was growing a little thin. Mother had looked at and rejected almost every purse in the store when she said: "If madam would like to see it, I have a purse that just came in this morning. It is just exquisite, and I'm sure it would go well with madam's summer wardrobe."

"Well, I suppose since I'm here I may as well look at it," my mother said, without much enthusiasm.

The purse was medium size, off white, and looked to me like about ninety others we had already seen. Mother picked it up and looked inside, checking out all the compartments. She walked up and down the aisle, the thin strap of the purse draped casually over her shoulder, her perfectly manicured fingers stroking it as if to check the quality.

How like Mom, I thought, the perfect manicure, the perfect purse, perfect order in her life. Maybe it helped to give her a sense of control in a world that had changed so

drastically around her in the last few years since Dad's death. Maybe that was why my world was so disordered now...mmm...

As if we were on the same wavelength, my mother made the same sound out loud, drawing me away from my thoughts.

"Mmmm...It is nice," mother said tentatively, "But don't you think it's a little youthful?"

"Oh, it's just perfect, Mom," I said with great eagerness. "It's attractive and just the right size, and nobody will have one like it."

"That's true," Mother said slowly.

Our guide caught the pleading look I threw her way, stepped forward and said softly, "If I may say so, madam, that style is particularly lovely. It is just different enough to accent madam's youthful spirit while maintaining a balance with madam's good taste."

"Oh, do you think so? Mmm...you know, I believe you're right. I'll take it."

"Certainly, madam."

As mother paid for the purse, I stepped toward the saleswoman and whispered:

"Thank you so very, very much."

"Oh, that's okay, honey", she replied with a big smile as the veneer vanished. "I have a mother, too."

As we left the mall Mother turned to me and said: "You know, dear, I believe that week after next we may have enough time to shop for new summer shoes. I've thought about taking a trip to the new mega-mall in Minnesota for that. It's just so hard to find what I want here."

Oh, well, I thought, as I shoved my glasses up my nose, I had been toying with the idea of serving in the Peace Corps this summer. I wonder if they can take me in the next two weeks.

Dianne Wiemers Wyman



Meandering

Sonda Marie Schmidt

The Wind

*The night wind blows
Like fire through my hair
Its passing
Whispers words of desire.*

*The wind tells me
of a love...
That can never be denied.
The wind tells me
of a life
My broken heart will never live.*

*In a dream, I held you--
You were mine--
We laughed and talked
Then made love
'Till the end of time.*

*As I opened my eyes
They filled with tears
They knew before looking
You wouldn't be there.*

*The wind tells me
of a woman...
One who talks to my soul.
The wind tells me
She owns my heart.*

*If only I would give her
My life, my heart, my soul.
But she'll never know
How it feels to hold me
And never let go.*

*But I can love her only
'til she makes me go.
She holds my love--in her life
and I have no control.*

*The wind tells me
I still want you,
Even with all I know.*

*And when the wind blows,
Know this is true,
It will whisper
I love you.*

Alix McKenzie Krash

Mailbox

Nothing is so final
as a hand-written letter
dropped into darkness
in the mailbox on the corner.
"Local" or "Out of Town"
dichotomate destinations,
divide the world
and consume thoughts made
permanent and real with ink
into random isolation--
gumballs from a machine.

Jon Eric Johnson

Winter

Bits of winter gloom
Float
With parachutes of air
Protecting
The sleeping earth

The sky wears
Its winter garb
Sickening shades
Of hospital gray

The limbs
Of naked trees
Like arms
Embrace the cold
And reach
For understanding

Susan Brand



BOVINOLOGY:
**Manifestations of Bovine Propinquity as Exhibited
in Pastoral Settings**

Jon Eric Johnson

Dear Dad

Dear Dad,

You hold this paper now because my pen can say the things that my mouth cannot.

You are alone now, though I do not know where, and you're not thinking of me. I'm thinking of you, though, and it hurts to do it.

I'm thinking of throwing a baseball in the yard after school, but instead of it being snatched out of the air, it lands and keeps rolling because no one is there to catch it.

I'm thinking of shooting a basketball on a warm summer evening, only now I hit the shots because there is no one there to block them.

I'm thinking of sitting in my room and watching you walk down the hallway and out the door, somehow knowing that your feet would never touch these floors again.

I'm thinking of watching your truck drive down the road, away from our home. Your boat was hooked behind it, but you were not going fishing.

I'm thinking about what will happen next, and suddenly, I don't want to think anymore.

Greg Laman

Another Revolution

*On the day I became thirty
my child and I walked
far far down the warm water's push and tug
to the rocky point
where the high waves slam hard enough to wear the earth away.
From our blanket's sanctuary it looked distant and
unforgiving
but we went--compelled by the pursuit.*

*I thought the point would be hard and lifeless like the big
rocks around the lakes where I grew up. Breakers or riff
raff the fishermen call them. Under the water they hide
slime and snails and dead things.*

*But this was not a lake and I was not a child.
Gentle green and gray and red
grew to carpet our way.
Teeming with little creatures'
strange new movements and beauty
the point was alive.*

*And when the first wave came upon us we ran back afraid.
The second though, we were tempted, we wanted to know,
Resolute and rapturous I hungered for its spray--
The child's faithful hold a tender anchor.*

then

*The crash and thrust and pull
exalted me--*

*With a new courage, I devoted myself
to that ocean, that sacred point,
the child,
and that day.*

Laura Mersbon

BASEBALL 1995

I reached over my desk and depressed the "hands free" button on my large office phone, "Peggy, you gotta help me out here. I have the Korean clients in town on the twenty seventh. Huge baseball fans, Peg, and replacement players won't cut it. If it's not Dodger dogs and LaSorta, they're uninterested. With all the pressure from Heiser to get them to sign with us, I need something good. See what you can do for me? Get something good." I let my finger off of the button and rolled back, reclining into the chair. My office's great view showed the typical L.A. smog of 10 am. I let myself gaze into the haze. Peggy's not going to be able to find tickets to anything that would replace watching a baseball game. What is it about the mystique of that game? Peggy beeped in. "How about Stephanie Powers and Robert Wagner in 'Love Letters' at the Bowl? At least you'd be outside?" I reached again for the phone, "Keep trying, would you?" Yea right. 'Love Letters' at the Bowl instead of hot dogs, beer and the crack of the bat. Baseball just seems to grow to be a part of you. I gazed out the floor to ceiling window and remembered falling in love with the game one night and how, ironically it occurred through the eyes of my sister.

"Hey Scott, I'll trade you a pretzel log for half of your dots on paper. Or do you want to go together on a Pez?" Maria asked me. "Pez", I said and handed my change to the old man behind the candy-filled counter. "Eemo, we're going to the game tomorrow. When you watch it on T.V. look for us," I said looking up at him. Eemo's was the candy store in the middle of our block. Gas City and Creme Castle Soft Serve were at either end. Being south-siders, "the game", of course, meant the White Sox game. We would go three or four times a summer and on one trip we always took Aunt Pauline and Uncle Larry in their wheel chairs. We loved pushing them. The danger and attention of pushing their chairs up and down the steep blacktop ramps of old Commiskey Park was great fun. On a downhill ramp, I'd always yell, "Maria, look. No hands!" and I would start to let go of the wheel chair. I'd never actually do it, but it would freak her out every time. With my Aunt and Uncle, we would always get great seats. Actually, Pauline and Larry were our great aunt and great uncle and we'd call them "your highness" for fun. "Would you like lunch now,

your highness?" Maria would ask Aunt Pauline. They had a great time watching the game from behind their dark black, light-sensitive glasses, eating home packed lunches and drinking cans of Canfield's Honey Orange pop. Aunt Pauline was so little sitting in her chair and quiet. Uncle Larry was tall and liked to yell at the players. The hem of his slacks was always about four inches from the top of his black socks, showing part of his long white legs. He'd say, "Here you go guys. Your hero's coming up to bat."

Maria was always into it. Her hero was Carlton Fisk, who came to the Sox after a thrilling world series with Boston. "Wouldn't it be neat, Scott, if he'd hit a game winner and leap down first base line like he did in Boston?" Each time his name was announced over the P.A. speakers to hit next, she would stand up and yell. It could be embarrassing, but I would join her when he slammed one out of the park. We would stand on the wooden slats of our fold-down stadium seats and just go nuts. She always looked so happy as he rounded the bases. On those warm summer nights you'd hear the deafening cracks of the fireworks going off from the colorful center field scoreboard. "Boom. Boom-Boom," as he slowed down the third base line and touched home plate. Old Commiskey would rock.

Carlton Fisk and those summers seemed a long time ago now. Peggy beeped in, startling me. "I got four tickets to Shirley Jones and the guy who was the handy man on the Bob Newhart show in 'Carnival', if you want?" Was this worth paging back, I thought? "Uh, no thanks." I quickly returned to thoughts of baseball. I remembered that it was only a couple years ago when a vendor rep to the company was able to get me tickets to a first season game of the White Sox in new Commiskey Park. The vendor pulled some strings as well. I was excited, thinking that I would give Maria the thrill of her lifetime. I was quite mistaken. Instead, she gave me something.

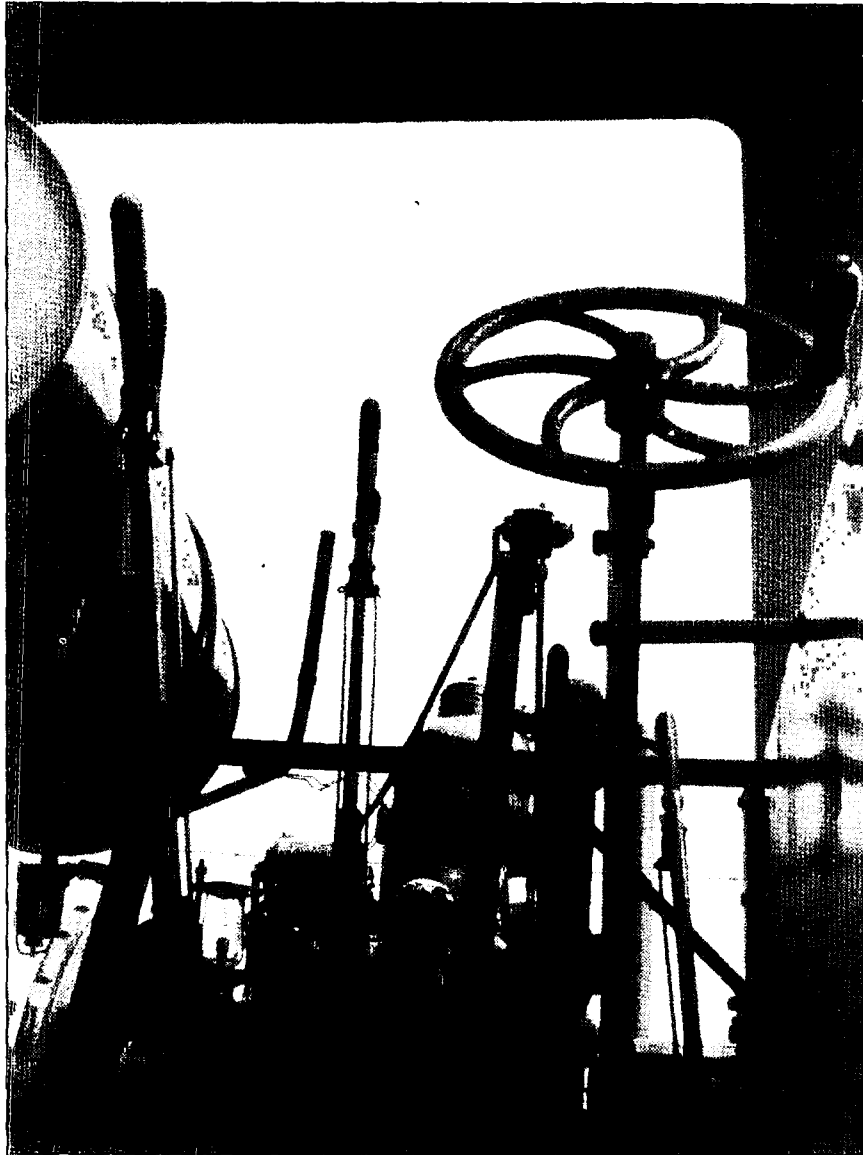
"Wow. We found our seats so fast." Maria said. "Yeah, I know. Isn't this excellent? New Commiskey is gorgeous and the seat-to-bathroom distance is nonexistent. This is great!" I replied. We were really excited and glad to be early enough to sit back and take it all in. "Let's go down near the field," I told her and led Maria near home plate. Jack McDowell was warming up and Fisk was catching for him. We watched

and talked for a few minutes. Then I heard a field employee whistle to Fisk and my heart began to beat faster. He stood up, resting his catcher's mask on top of his head and looked at the employee who pointed our way. Maria watched his every move. She loved this guy. OK, maybe she had romantic fantasies about him, but she also loved him because he was one of baseball's great players and because she was a true fan of baseball. She couldn't help being in awe of his hitting, his stamina behind the plate, and his take-charge attitude. Team mates called him "The Admiral" and that's the look Maria had in her eyes at that moment. She looked as if she were watching an admiral. He walked toward us, tucked his catcher's mit under his left arm, and extended his right hand as he made the last few steps to the aisle where we stood. Maria looked as if she would pass out. I noticed her shoulders quiver as she took in a deep breath. "Hi, I'm Carlton Fisk," he said to her and reached to shake her hand. " Oh, I know, Mr. Fisk I'm a big..." He cut her off, saying, " Yeah, I understand you're a big fan." "Yes," she said, "I love the way you play the game." Her eyes danced but her voice was strong and smooth. I was suddenly in awe of her. She told him, "I always thought that if, in my lifetime, I was ever

fortunate enough to meet you, I would want to thank you for coming to Chicago and giving so much to the game. Thank you. You've given me and my kid brother, here, a lot of great memories." He simply said, "It's been my pleasure. I hope you really enjoy tonight's game." I sat down in a nearby seat and realized that what she felt for baseball and for those fortunate enough to play it was a very special thing. I could see in her eyes the feeling she had for the game. And it was through her eyes that I came to really value "America's pastime" for myself.

I paged Peggy. "Peg, why don't you go ahead and get me Dodger tickets? After that, please get my sister on the line. She's at the 812 number in your rolodex. Hold off on any interruptions for a while. I want to cry on her shoulder about the baseball strike." Peggy answered, "Will do, but you could save the long distance call. Heiser's outside my office complaining about the strike with some of the guys from Graphics." I thought just a minute. "No, make the call. She's the one person who can remind me that it's not the players, rather it's the game that's most important." I leaned back and thought again of that starry summer night when I was happy to be her kid brother, to be sitting next to her, and to be in the ball park.

Julie DeVine Phillips



Time Machine

Dennis Fogle

Obscure Expectations

***The hands of the clock
Move like cement
Cold
Instruments
Glistening
Like a new car
Anesthesia
Sleeps in the waiting room***

***The past
Slapped
Upon the sterile table's skin
Like after shave***

***Her life
Scrutinized
By the blind
Microscope's
Eye
While the mad sorcerer
Laughs***

***Futures
Uncertain
Youthful face
Puts on its make-up
While
Fear gets dressed
Dons its sanitary
Rubber threads
Washes its hands
And prepares
For surgery.***

Susan Brand

Poet's Plight

*The struggle engulfs me
With effort that mirrors consumption.
Pen in hand, I sit
Anxiously laboring in vain.
Slowly...threads are woven.
Patterns begin to emerge
As private images
Insinuate themselves on paper,
Demanding their due expression.
A word
 A phrase
 A verse...then two,
The quest continues,
Despite repeated denial,
Of perfect poignant poetry.*

Sonda Marie Schmidt

Birdsongs

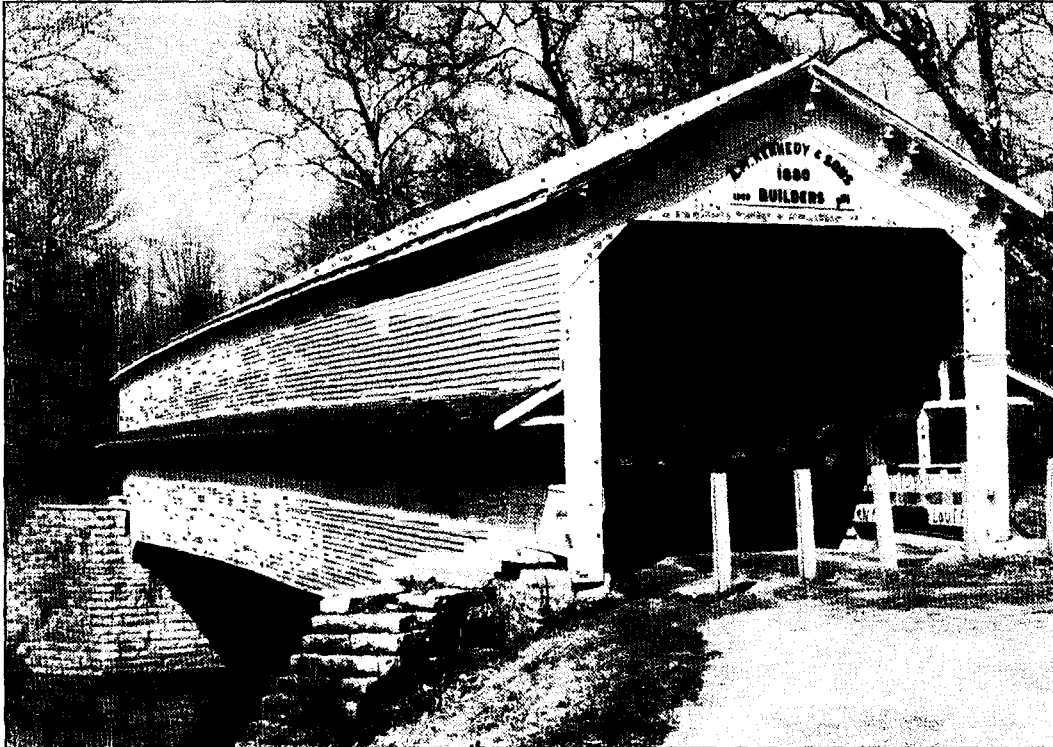
I.
Two hawks circle above:
One turns to ride
a current of wind
and rise; the other
slowly falls to glide,
but always, they make circles,
smaller
and smaller
circles,
searching for someplace safe
to land, or maybe
something good to kill.

II.
Wide angles of geese
in straight lines fly:
Together the pointed journey
made easier by a willingness
to follow over
and again
the same direction
home.

III.
Seventeen silent blackbirds sit
among twisted ebon boughs
like leaves
and wait:
Silence is shattered,
separate they scatter
like flies from a swatter,
yet return again later
in naked stillness
and wait.

IV.
At the edge of an evening
desperate flappings of wings
overhead remind grounded,
pitiful souls of gravity
beneath darkening skies.
Earth-bound ears hear
far-off cries and
panicked wing beats.
A lone sparrow flies
away.

Jon Eric Johnson



Antique Passage

Marge Bruns

And In This Corner

Rita was four years older, and at thirteen, she was my role model for being cool. She was cute, witty and athletic. Everything I wasn't. Unless you counted Mom saying how cute I was. She sometimes even did that in front of my buddies. Then it always seemed they'd manage to tease me about it while they were within earshot of one of the neighborhood toughs. Being "cute" caused me more than one fight. Not that I started them. I didn't even finish them, except in a heap on the ground or running for home, most often bleeding and bruised on at least one portion of my body and in need of more tape for my glasses.

Rita had tried to teach me to fight, or at least to fight back. That was an ability she had proven two years before.

Our cousin Jimmy had gotten boxing gloves for Christmas that year and had challenged all comers at our family New Year's Day pitch-in dinner.

The men were on one side of the room talking politics and religion while they drank their after-dinner coffee. Those were the only topics ever discussed besides the weather and "the old days." John Kennedy had been elected to the Presidency last November and would take office within weeks. As always, there was a general theme of rot and ruin in their conversations. "A Papist in the White House." "Country'll be run from Rome now." "Shows the lack of morality in the country these days." "I heard about a singer doin' the hoochie koochie on stage." "It's plain that these are the end of times prophesied in Revelations." "Having eyes, see you not? And having ears, hear ye not? Mark chapter 8 verse 18." Periodically there would be a round of "Amens" and the process would begin again, bound for the same destination.

While the grownups were deciding the future of the world, or lack thereof, there was a much more sinister and immediate threat in our young lives. Something with a potential for blood was developing and this gave the grownups a diversion from their disasters-to-come.

At twelve, our cousin Jimmy was one tough customer. He had the look and the talk. He glared at the circle of kids surrounding him.

"Come on. Who's it gonna be?" He challenged, reminding me of Butch from the "Little Rascals" on television. Everyone hung back. Parents made up the outermost portion of the circle.

Mothers wrung their hands hoping their baby boys would have more sense than to pick up the challenge. Hope and hand wringing was all they were allowed as the new decade showed itself unchanged from the last. When, where, and who their sons fought was still a father's province in the Bible Belt of the 1960's.

Time seemed to expand as Jimmy's glare caught first one eye then another. He dismissed those too young or too weak with a snort. I could tell that he applied both to me as he stopped momentarily to meet

my gaze. Swallowing hard, I was thankful when he moved to the next pair of nervous eyes. From one to the next he completed the circle.

"Come on ya bunch of sissies," he growled, "Who's gonna be first?"

He hadn't held Billy Joe's gaze too long. Billy Joe was a year older than Jimmy and taller. But, Jimmy owned a pair of boxing gloves, and that gave him the advantage. True, he'd only had them for a week, but none of us had been deemed worthy of such a gift. Just receiving them had been a recognition of his pugilistic ability. Most of us hadn't even thought about asking Santa for boxing gloves.

Jimmy had started looking back and forth at the small crowd around him like a marlin fighting a hook. We all knew what that meant. He was going to pick someone seemingly at random, but it would be someone that he could finish easily. With that victory he would establish dominance over us for the foreseeable future. No one would be foolish enough to challenge him after seeing the carnage he would inflict upon his chosen victim. I cringed at the momentary hesitation as his gaze swept over me.

Then a small sweet voice beside me quieted the entire room.

"I will." Rita said in a matter-of-fact voice.

When, where, and who their sons fought may have been a father's province, but Rita was Mom's bailiwick.

"No-you-will-not-young-lady!" Mom shrilly enunciated each word. "Now get yourself over here. I don't know what's gotten into you thinking you're going to put on boxing gloves with a boy or a girl for that matter. And furthermore..."

"Marge, just a minute," Dad interrupted as he moved through the crowd from the 'men's side' with its talk of politics and religion, to the 'women's side' where cooking and children dominated the conversation.

"Joe, I'm not going to hear of it," Mom started. Dad leaned close to our mother and they began to hiss at each other like steam boilers run amuck. Occasional words would force past the relief valve;

"...won't get hurt..."

"...don't care..."

"...not womanly mature yet..."

"If you think for one minute..."

"...won't let it go that far..."

I think every man back then wanted a strong and virile child, and at least Dad had Rita. It must have been really important to him because he kept at it till he carried the day. Mom retired to a neutral corner, muttering and wringing her hands.

"Where's them gloves?" Dad asked turning to the crowd.

Our Dad had been quite a fighter when he was young. He'd even thought of turning pro. So here he was kneeling in front of his eleven year-old daughter

playing trainer, pulling the gloves on her and lacing them tight. Rita listened politely to his encouragement and advice. "Dodge or block when he swings but keep your eye on him or he could catch you off guard. Keep your gloves up, but not so high as you can't see over them."

Rita, head down, peered up under her brows and nodded without speaking. Her green plaid dress and black patent leather "Mary Janes" contrasted sharply with the red boxing gloves.

Then Dad switched from trainer to referee, "O.K. back up now and give them some room here," forcing open the circle of onlookers. He gave the traditional instructions to his daughter and nephew, "Defend yourselves at all times, keep your hands up and don't hit below the belt. Shake hands. Ready? Box!"

The two looked at Dad without a hint of understanding and suddenly realized that they were alone in the ring of relatives and now was the time to fight. The two raised their hands and started to circle, feeling each other out. Each of Jimmy's swift and aimless jabs was accompanied by a small shriek from Mom's corner. The two stood well apart, punched at the air. Jimmy was sure of a quick victory.

"I mean, this is a girl. One punch and she will run to her mommy, right?" he reasoned. Then one of the boys would have to take her place. If a girl was brave enough to fight then at least one of the boys could be shamed into the ring. Besides, this would give him an opportunity to warm up. Again and again he jabbed. Again and again Rita was not where he thought she should be. Rita held her punches to one or two jabs as the two continued to circle.

"She's not fighting right," he thought. "There's something wrong with the way she's standing." The assembled family cheered and shouted. The fact that they cheered mostly for Rita didn't help his self confidence either. Why wouldn't this girl stand still and fight? She's standing backwards, he realized. She doesn't even know how to stand. Now he knew why his punches weren't landing, her backward stance put her farther away than he was used to.

"Dumb girl," he laughed, "Standing backwards." His confidence buoyed, he drove in for the kill. He jabbed with his left and moved forward to throw his right for a knock out punch. His jab was again short and as he stepped in, Rita uncorked with her dominant left hand. Her dainty fist coiled inside that glove collided with Jimmy's jaw, driving him straight backward onto the floor and into unconsciousness.

Now it was Jimmy's mom's turn to do the whimpering as she charged into the crowd, "Jimmy, baby, are you O.K.?" Jimmy mumbled incoherently as she cradled his head on her lap.

"The boy's father knelt at his side and announced, "He's breathin'. Just got his clock stopped, that's all. And by a girl," he spat. "Course the boy's never fought a South Paw before."

When Jimmy returned from the land of nod, he produced tears and wails to match his mother's. He quickly regained his composure when he remembered where he was and what had happened. The collective motherhood in the room packed him off to the kitchen for a liberal application of ice for his bruised jaw.

Dad was removing Rita's gloves, telling her what a good job she had done, and how proud he was of her. At the same time he was apologizing to his brother, Jimmy's father, and wishing the boy a speedy recovery.

I don't know who was prouder of my sister, Dad or me. She was rather subdued and seemed more worried about getting in trouble for hurting her cousin than she had been about being injured herself.

"I didn't mean to hurt him. Is he O.K.?" she remarked. "I thought I could whip him, but not so easy."

We never saw those gloves again. With his reputation in ruins, his bravado decreased accordingly, or maybe he was just growing up. We were all thankful that Jimmy became less rowdy each passing year at family gatherings.

Rita became a cheerleader the next fall, an acceptable outlet for a girl's athletic abilities in the 1960's. But on that first day of the new year, she set an example for a little brother.

Steve Mitchell

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

Rex Apsley says, simply, "I be Rex."

Susan Brand is a vertically challenged senior English major here at IUPU Columbus. She is also the Poetry Goddess of *Literalines*. She believes that arming ourselves with knowledge of the world and educating ourselves as much as possible makes us very powerful. With this power, we have the opportunity to become whatever we want to become.

Marge Bruns is a part-time student at IUPU Columbus working toward certification in Elementary Education. She received a Bachelor of Science degree in Restaurant and Hotel Management from Purdue University and worked at a golf club for four years before deciding to return to school. When asked why she chose Elementary Education, she said she would rather take care of children who needed it instead of adults who did not.

Katie G. Carman is a first year student at IUPU Columbus majoring in Costume Design. She enjoys writing and has been reading Stephen King books since she was ten years old. She enjoys many different forms of art. Although she is a quiet person, she is not afraid to stand up for the things she believes. The most important parts of her life are her fiancée and her many pets.

Dennis Fogle is married and has two children. He is Human Resources Manager for a corporation in Greensburg and is in the process of completing his Associate in General Studies degree at IUPU Columbus. He has been involved in photography for the past five or six years.

Jerry L. Glascock is a second year student studying Criminal Justice. He hopes to put his degree to use as a juvenile probation officer and move into the field of law. He is a member of Midtown Writers Association and Poets and Writers and has several pieces of poetry published. His one motto is "Live life, no regrets." So far he's been able to abide by that credo.

Christy Hubbard has been writing on paper since the age of nine, but has created fiction and poetry in her mind since her earliest memories. At present, she is working on a novel and preparing her poetry to send off for possible publication.

Jon Eric Johnson is a senior majoring in English. Bokononist in faith, Epicurean in philosophy, and socialist in politics, he endeavors daily to remain a (somewhat) decent person in an otherwise indecent world. He is a member of Alpha Sigma Lambda Honorary and President of the IUPUC English Club. He plans to teach writing and literature someday.

Robin Lee Kares is the Columbus Goddess of Writing and is faithfully worshipped by the *Literalines* staff. She describes herself as both teacher and learner. Recently, she began devoting herself to writing poetry after a hiatus of about fifteen years. Although this sometimes results in "poetry seizures" and temper tantrums, *Literaliners* consider her basically groovy.

Alix McKenzie Krash is an IUPU Columbus psychology major who insists this poem refers to no one in particular.

Greg Laman is a senior majoring in Elementary Education.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

Shelley Smith Law is a second year PST student majoring in both CPT and OLS. She and Lynn are the parents of Kole, ReBecca and Levi. She collects images of wolves and loves to howl. She believes the key to life is to try and fail but never fail to try.

L. Keith Loyd describes himself as a senior/senior looking toward the end of the season, but looking forward to the next season. Keith appreciates the patience of his family and friends as he seeks his BGS degree. He hopes to use his knowledge and experience to continue to fight for wetland and environmental preservation in spite of present day obstacles.

Laura Mershon is a 1994 Secondary Education-English/Psychology graduate. She is a member of Psi Chi and Kappa Delta Pi Honorary Societies and is eager to begin graduate school. She loves being a wife and mother. She is currently employed as a free-lance writer, substitute teacher, and coach of East's Fine Arts Academic Team. She is a chess enthusiast in winter and plays tennis in the summer "The similarities are interesting." She credits the IUPUC Writing Center with making her what she is today.

Steve Mitchell has been writing seriously for a couple of years. He's had the most success with stories from his life, but he really wants to write horror. After two failed marriages, he wonders if he should get some inspiration from his past. He enjoys hiking with his wife, Joy, and hopes to retire on a sailboat on the Caribbean after writing his first best seller.

Teresa L. Mullins is a junior majoring in education and is a resident of Columbus. She is the single parent of a nineteen year old son who attends IUPU Columbus. She is a member of the Alpha Lambda Delta honor society and volunteers for First Call for Help.

Julie DeVine Phillips is a thirty-two year old freshman who lives with three men--her husband and two young sons. She is a communications-theater major, a soprano, and an avid basketball junkie who longs to be "queen" of her theatre company following the completion of her education.

Sonda Marie Schmidt is a 1995 graduate earning a BA in Psychology (at last!) She dedicates her work in Literalines to her best friend and husband Glenn, and thier three children Erin, Andrew and Joseph for their unlimited gifts of love and encouragement throughout this journey at IUPU. Life truly is as rich as you make it.

John Shepard is a genuine career student. He has no real job and spends a large portion of his time hanging around IUPUC, drawing most of the time when he should be studying. Stop by and talk to him and he will try to sell you a drawing or two. His interests and hobbies range from writing science fiction to listening to music to vegetating in front of the computer. He is perfectly normal, or at least that's what his psychiatrist tells him.

Carol Walp is a part-time student in the RN to BSN program. She works full time and spends her leisure time with her three grandbabies and her hobbies of reading and quilting. She does not intend to be a writer, but finds that sometimes phrasing her thoughts in verse helps to sort them out and assign the proper meaning to them.

Dianne Wiemers Wyman is a graduating senior majoring in Psychology. She loves writing music, poetry and fiction. She credits this love to the support of her parents and to those who have shared the very best of themselves as educators on her journey of discovery.