

The IUPU Columbus Magazine of the Arts

L
I
T
E
R
A
L
I
N
E
S

LITERALINES

Volume III

Spring 1996

STAFF

Editor

Julie DeVine Phillips

Editorial Board

Marge Bruns
Jon Eric Johnson
L. Keith Loyd
Sarah Malcomb
Dara Tormoehlen

Faculty Advisor

Robin L. Kares



*Seated left to right: Dara Tormoehlen, L. Keith Loyd, Julie DeVine Phillips, Robin L. Kares.
Standing left to right: Marge Bruns, Jon Eric Johnson, Sarah Malcomb.*

Literalines, the IUPU Columbus Magazine of the Arts, is published in the spring of each year. Copyright 1996, IUPU Columbus, first serial rights reserved.

Cover art: "Literal Connections" by Marge Bruns.
Staff Photo: Jon Eric Johnson.

CONTENTS

<p>Marge Bruns Photo: Ghost of Summer.....4</p> <p>Dara Tormoehlen Resurrection.....5</p> <p>Shayla Holtkamp The Lighthouse.....6</p> <p>John Shepard Drawing: Fish.....6</p> <p>Sarah Malcomb Rosetta Stone.....7</p> <p>J. Michael Buchanan Sanctuary.....8</p> <p>J. Michael Buchanan Solitude.....8</p> <p>Susan Brand Bus To Somewhere.....9</p> <p>Susan Brand Family Farm.....9</p> <p>Travis Fendley Anomaly in Whitechapel.....10</p> <p>John Shepard Drawing: Balcony.....13</p> <p>Julie DeVine Phillips U-Hauls and Old Dogs.....14</p> <p>Shayla Holtkamp Growing Up.....15</p> <p>Shayla Holtkamp Yellowstone.....15</p> <p>J. Michael Buchanan Death of a Poet.....16</p> <p>Jon Eric Johnson LOVE & POETRY 2.....17</p>	<p>Jeffrey Littrell Truckstop.....18</p> <p>Matthew Grubaugh Pieces and Stems.....18</p> <p>Shayla Holtkamp The General Store.....19</p> <p>Sarah Malcomb Progress.....20</p> <p>Marge Bruns Photo: Earth Turning.....21</p> <p>Julie DeVine Phillips Mercury.....22</p> <p>Amy L. Lee Heat Lightning.....22</p> <p>Beatrice D. Eldridge Ten.....23</p> <p>John Shepard Drawing: Column.....23</p> <p>Deona Sadler The Policy.....24</p> <p>Jon Eric Johnson Photo: Forgotten Harvest.....27</p> <p>Jon Eric Johnson Destiny of Flowers.....28</p> <p>Dara Tormoehlen Isis isabella.....30</p> <p>Deona Sadler Tuesday Morning.....31</p> <p>Sarah Malcomb A Cemetery in Winter.....32</p> <p>Matthew Grubaugh Photo: Study in Infrared: Guarding Eternity.....33</p>
---	---

CONTENTS

Travis Fendley Endless Apprentice.....	34	Jeffrey Littrell So Like An Abandoned Ship.....	44
Kevin Greenlee Crying Corpse.....	35	Beatrice D. Eldridge Grandfather.....	44
Amy L. Lee Today's Mythology.....	36	Marge Bruns Photo: Napoleon, Indiana 47034.....	45
Shayla Holtkamp Holocaust.....	37	Julie DeVine Phillips Ode on a Nap.....	46
Jon Eric Johnson Photo: Reaching Toward Autumn.....	38	J. Michael Buchanan Walden Revisited.....	47
J. Michael Buchanan Dry Spell.....	39	Marge Bruns Photo: Polar Rapids.....	48
Travis Fendley Now Showing At A Theater Near You.....	40	Julie DeVine Phillips Snowsuit.....	49
Susan Brand New Orleans.....	41	Sarah Malcomb An Environmental Epiphany.....	50
Susan Brand Photo: Forbidden City.....	41	Amy L. Lee Endless Paradise.....	51
Sarah Malcomb A Parting Kiss.....	42	Jon Eric Johnson Summertimes.....	54
		Biographical Notes.....	55

Acknowledgments

The *Literalines* staff gratefully acknowledges the ongoing support and encouragement of the IUPU Columbus faculty and administration, especially that of Campus Dean, Dr. Paul Bippen. Additional thanks go out to Tom Vujovich of Pentzer Printing for his patience and helpful advice, technical assistance and another job well done. Thanks, too, to Rick Rominger for computer assistance and to Kris Anderson for proofreading.

* * *

Statement of Policy and Purpose

The *Literalines* editorial board accepts original works of fiction, poetry, black & white photography and line drawings from students throughout the academic 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.



Ghost of Summer
Marge Bruns

Resurrection

“o poet of the blood and bone
of the short song
and serious belief
I sing you release”

--Etheridge Knight

I too sing release--
release from life-burdens
that constrain the soul:
Prosthetic legs that carry,
a generation that suppresses,
Lutheranisms that impale.

So I sing release:
Journey beyond the horizon,
roam celestial skies.
See the Light?...See it? There, run!
Let its brilliance guide the spirit.
Feel textures of other dimensions.
Remember familiar sensations--warm mud
oozes between toes / grass, fresh-cut,
tickles nostrils / nonsense songs
cause girl-giggles.

I sing release:
to infinite Spring where we are
free to discover beauty.
Thoughts become emancipated.
Let the damn burst so the song may flow
forever.

Dara Tormoehlen

The Lighthouse

I am the lighthouse that towers on the cliff
near the ocean's edge.
I guide the two small ships I have
created with my hammer and nail.
Secure within my harbor, they play amongst
the gentle swells.
Seasons pass; the ships no longer content
within well-known shores venture out into unexplored seas.
I fear the tumultuous storms that await and stand
ready to beckon them back to my comforting harbor.
I, an aged and weathered lighthouse, look after my ships
from a distant shore.
Glancing from the crest of a wave,
they behold a beacon of light
as I stand ready to lead them back home.

Shayla Holtkamp



Fish
John Shepard

Rosetta Stone

*My daughter, in the morning,
opens her dark eyes in a haze of lazy inspiration.*

*Goddess of the morning, demands
"Look!"--though it sounds like "Krrpuckel!"
and no one understands.*

*She stirs, and the white lotus unfolds
at sunrise.*

*Reaching slowly
for the white, metal bars of her crib,
she says, "See!"--though it sounds like "Drrigeel!"
and a red and riddled world looks away.*

*She leans against the bars,
inspecting the tan walls of her room,
a canvas she will paint,
like Isis creating life-size stick figures
to keep her company.*

*She sees me with those dark eyes
always discovering,
and waiting to be discovered.*

*My daughter, in the evening,
has passed her day
with grand speeches and lego pyramids.*

*Resting, at last,
her dark hair flows,
like spilt tea, over a pillow.
She lets set the living sun, blue lotus folding;
a sleeping moon rises.*

*Dreamily she lets one eye close
and the other slowly follows.
She says "Goodnight!" to her god--
and it sounds like "Reflyte!"
And her father says she's a genius.*

*My daughter is the life-giving sun rising at dawn,
to settle low for the night.*

*Everything from dawn to dusk
is a secret she tells me again and again.
I think she is laughing,
because we are so close, at least we think we are,
to the Rosetta Stone.*

Sarah Malcomb

Solitude

What is a tree
that stands alone
in a field,
Mending its wounds
from last night's
lightning strike,
Casting full
shadows in
the summer sun,
Resting the moon
on the tops of its branches,
Easing it down
to the horizon?

J. Michael Buchanan

Sanctuary

I kick off the day's dirt,
Inherited.
I knead,
Fingers feel grit,
Like gold dust
Descends into cracks,
Returns respectful.

I cross the threshold,
Textured.
Like generations
I thread fingers
In gathered rain,
Tested, taut.

In weariness, walls waver.
Earth tones blend.
Aberrations angle awkwardly,
Bound silent.

Old chair,
Worn cloth,
Impressions
Framed familiar.
Refuge
Reclines
In heaviness.

J. Michael Buchanan

Bus To Somewhere

A collage of
Cardboard lives
Tickets
To desperate destinations

Anonymous faces
Sightless eyes
Groped in blinding darkness

Wandering feet
Traveling souls
Shoes without strings

Susan Brand

FAMILY FARM

TRACTORS AND PLOWS,
DEAD CARCASSES,
RUSTED BODIES,

CATS THAT USED TO GATHER
LIKE BEGGARS
AT THE BACK DOOR,
ARE GHOSTS OF MY MIND'S EYE.

BLACK COWS THAT GRAZED
IN PEACEFUL PASTURES
LIVE IN CELLOPHANE BARNES.

THE BONES OF REALITY
RATTLE
TO COMFORT ME.

SUSAN BRAND

Anomaly in Whitechapel

The year was 1888, and this was London, east London, the bad part of London. Night was falling early now; autumn had arrived at last. The woman moved slowly, wanderingly, aimlessly. She was bundled in her thick, wool shawl, a gift from her boyfriend Lloyd, a birthday present. As suspicious as these days had become lately, as dangerous, the woman had a purpose out here on the streets. The fog was draped around her, making it difficult to see clearly; the bit of knicker she had showing would probably not help her tonight. She would have to make her connections up close. She would have to get personal.

The woman's name was Mary Kelly, and she was to be the fifth victim of the man they called Jack. The man on every woman's mind in Whitechapel. The killer. The ripper. The devil.

Mary was drunk, very drunk. She stood--no, *leaned*--against the brick. Water from the recent rain still dripped in heavy beads, pellets of moisture. Her shawl -- precious to her, as precious as anything got to Mary Kelly --was getting wet, but Mary was too drunk to care. A group of men had gathered under the streetlamp at the corner. Mary could not tell if any of the men were policemen--a constant concern for women of her profession. Mary squinted through the fog, through her drunken haze, and saw no signature hats, no shining badges. Mary smiled. Maybe she'd get lucky tonight after all.

She took two staggering steps forward, adrift in the fog, and suddenly, she stopped, tethered, a strong halt. Her knees buckled and she nearly fell. At first she thought her shawl had snagged a brick, was about to tear, but no . . . She turned and saw the face of the man that held her, a kind face, a warm face, the face of a gentleman. The hand that rested on her shoulder was warm and strong. Mary smiled up at the man -- the best smile she could muster under the circumstances -- and he smiled back. Mary thought the man resembled her father, working-class similarities.

"Oh -- you startled me, love," she said.

The man -- the smiling man -- looked down at her with a face that showed very little expression. He lifted his hand, slowly, and withdrew his purse from his lapel. Mary noticed the make of his coat, tailor-made, a fine cut. This man was not poor. The man snapped open the purse and all Mary saw inside were bills, a thick wad of cash. Mary felt giddy. Tonight, Mary was indeed getting lucky.

Then something very strange happened. As the man was returning his purse to his coat-pocket, a drop

of rainwater fell from the roof above him, a small drop, almost insignificant in the scheme of things. But that was exactly what this drop was not: *insignificant*. The drop fell, and history fell with it, tragic history, the known history. With that drop of water the entire universe was about to change.

The drop hit the man squarely on the lapel, and a small splash touched his face. The man was distracted, distraught. His coat opened -- not too much, but just enough. Just enough to see. And Mary saw -- she *saw*. The open coat, the coat pocket. Mary saw the tip of the blade, shining in the lamplight. Mary knew enough, even drunk, to be careful. The man they called the Ripper used a medical instrument on his victims -- a scalpel. He was suspected of carrying a doctor's medical bag. This man did not carry such a bag. But the knife -- it was there. There was no denying it, not now. Mary saw the knife and knew -- she just *knew* -- it was a scalpel. This man was Jack. This man was the devil.

Mary screamed.

And the men under the streetlight heard. One of them, as it turned out, was a policeman.

Mary heard something that she never in a million years thought she'd be glad to hear. It was the sound of hope, of salvation. Echoing throughout the streets of Whitechapel came the piercing screech of a Bobbie's whistle.

And history was changed.

* * *

The year was 1914 and this was Paris, northern Paris, the bad part of Paris. Summer was trying to regain a hold on the city, a last effort before autumn claimed all. The man in the trench peered through his gas mask, through the smoke of the gunfire, and saw the approach of the enemy. The Kaiser's men rushed ahead upon the command of a whistle, a chaotic charge to the next trench. The man aimed his rifle but did not fire, did not even think of firing. All around him soldiers volleyed rifle shots, cannon-fire. Burnt earth, flying everywhere. The man did not think, did not pray. He was beyond all that now. He was a soldier fighting for the Union Jack. He had not been drafted to think.

The man's name was Thomas Bruce Kelly, the son of Mary and Lloyd. He was twenty-four years old. And he was afraid he was going insane.

"Tom?" came a voice behind him. A friendly

voice. Tom knew the voice, even through the muffling gas mask: his friend Theodore.

Tom turned and looked at him -- but couldn't say anything. He was tired of this, tired of fighting. If the Germans got through . . . If they captured Paris . . . Tom didn't want to think about the implications. Tom didn't want to think at all.

"Tom," Theodore said. "Come on, get with it. We've got a war to win."

Theodore's voice was not harsh, not insinuating. He did not mean any ill will toward Tom. The two soldiers had gone through a lot in the past six months, and their bond was tight. Tom knew he was losing it, losing touch with reality. And he knew Theodore could see it, too.

"I -- I can't . . ."

"Yes, you can, Tom. They're coming. They're *right there*. Just aim and shoot. Aim and shoot. Think about it later."

Tom lifted his rifle, found the sight -- but Theodore was right. The enemy was *right there*. German soldiers began filing into their trench. More soldiers, everywhere. A cascade of bayonets. Gunfire. Cannon fire. The world was a blur for Tom, a hollow vagueness. The world was all action for Tom, and he was no part of it. He was alone, watching, staring, useless. He was a decoration on the landscape. He was nothing.

Tom saw his commanding officer go down in a burst of gunfire. The man's head was cleaved off by the blow. Tom saw soldiers, enemy soldiers, storming into the trench. More followed closely behind them. They were being overrun. And worst of all, Tom saw the corporal, that evil corporal that would haunt his dreams for many years, come leaping into his trench, scant yards away.

The next few minutes of Tom's life ran in slow motion, painfully slow, horribly slow. The images he next witnessed would burn themselves into his mind, would play forever and ever, an endless cycle of dread, of pain, of cowardice. He saw the German corporal run, not to him, but to Theodore, who was engrossed in gunfire and facing the wrong direction. He saw the corporal's first bayonet thrust and Theodore's stricken reaction. The two men grappled in the trench, volleying for position. Their wrestling match lasted only seconds in real time, but to Tom it lasted hours, days. He saw the corporal twist, snakelike, and move through Theodore's arms, gaining the upper hand. The corporal's bayonet was poised to strike; Theodore was lost, lost . . . And all Tom could see was Theodore's face, looking up at him, staring at him, . . . and the rifle in his useless hands. Tom held Theodore's life in his

fists, but he couldn't move. He couldn't move.

That stare . . . Theodore's final gaze -- Tom knew his own cowardice was the last thing Theodore would ever see. Their eyes met, he and Theodore. And the bayonet came down, a rough thrust, and Theodore's life ended before the stare did. Long before.

Tom, still caught in that gaze, felt the rough hands of the enemy on his shoulders, pulling him rudely out of the trench, out of his trance.

But they didn't kill him. Oh no. They did something worse.

They let him live.

* * *

The year was 1923, and this was Germany, east Germany, the bad part of Germany. Spring had come to Landsberg, but all Tom saw of it were the four trees he could view from his cell window. Four trees, six bars, too many bricks. The cell he'd been in for nine years was four feet square, sparse, cold in winter, hot in summer. For nine years he'd had time to sit, to think, to reflect. Life was not good in prison, was never meant to be, but for Tom, the time spent was a hell of unrelenting self-hate, self-disgust. Landsberg was penance for his war-crimes -- that's what the Germans told him. But the war-crimes he'd committed were not the ones the Germans had imprisoned him for. Landsberg *was* penance, an atonement, an ordeal he endured every day. But it was not enough. Nothing would ever be enough.

Tom sat and thought and slept and sat and thought again. He let the mind-movie play itself over and over in his head: the trench, the corporal, the bayonet. He was a new man now, relaxed, content with punishment. The new Tom didn't know the old one. The new Tom couldn't understand why he'd reacted the way he did that day, that fateful day in the fall of 1914. If placed in the same situation, the new Tom would react differently.

Which was why Tom needed to kill the inmate in cell B-20.

He'd seen him come in, with a new batch of prisoners, the previous November. A short man, now bearing a mustache. The man's hair was longer; he'd gained weight. But Tom could see through all that, could see the man for what he was, what he had been. In that face, Tom could see a young corporal brandishing a bayonet with murder in his eyes. The corporal, the face in Tom's dreams, his waking nightmares, had come to Landsberg. Tom did not know why, did not care. His second change had come, and Tom was not about to fail again.

Tom had made it his business to learn the man's routine. He'd found out from a fellow inmate that the man was allowed special privileges in Landsberg. German prisoners were often given more leeway. The man was a writer, apparently. Every day at noon, the man was allowed the use of the medical officer's desk in the infirmary. Tom had even seen the man in there, hard at work, a thick manuscript accumulating before him. But those times Tom had been accompanied by guards, or within sight of them. He hadn't a chance. Not yet, anyway. Tom knew his chance was coming. He might get only one, only one chance. But it was coming.

By May, Tom had grown tired of waiting.

He had a plan, a simple one, one unlikely to fail. Tom was not interested in failing. He never wanted to fail again.

On a Thursday in early May, Tom saw his way out. He was in the prison cafeteria, in line for food. On the menu that night was thin, watery stew, potatoes, and strawberries. Tom normally turned down strawberries when they were offered. Tonight he did not. He accepted them onto his tray, and ate them with trepidation and mild disgust. Tom was allergic to strawberries, had been his whole life. He was sick almost immediately, and the guards took him away, away to exactly where he wanted to be.

His mind in tangles, his stomach in tortured knots, Tom spent that evening in the infirmary, waiting. As always, waiting. Waiting for his chance.

* * *

Noon, the next day.

Tom let the images, the familiar images, roll past in his mind. He wanted to bring forth all the hate he could muster, focus it, aim it at the corporal.

Sunlight poured in through the infirmary windows as Tom rolled back his sheet, sat up. He was alone in the infirmary; empty cots filled the long hall. Outside, in the entryway, he could hear voices, German voices. At the bedside were Tom's boots, and he pulled one to him, the left one. Tom began unthreading the lace.

The voices dissipated. Tom could hear the slow plod of boots drawing near, entering the infirmary. And suddenly--out of nowhere--came the unsuspecting corporal, a sheaf of papers under his arm. He crossed to the desk, set down his manuscript, then relaxed into the chair.

Tom moved. He was ready--far too ready. It seemed as if his whole life had been leading to this moment. He began wrapping the bootlace tightly around his fists. Only six inches remained exposed. Six inches of bootstrap. The man at the desk did not know that that six inches was all the life he had left to live.

The man had his back to Tom, which made it easy, all too easy. But Tom had something he needed first, something he needed to say. He crept to the man, and with the strength of nine years, gripped his shoulder and spun him around. The man--the corporal--looked stunned, wore an expression of utter disbelief. He was not prepared. He was not prepared for death.

Their eyes met and Tom spoke:

"I just wanted to see your eyes first," Tom said.

Then, with lightning quickness, he forced the bootstrap around the corporal's neck, spun him back around, and drew taught. The man fought; he twisted and turned, slippery. But Tom was ready. He'd seen the man's snakelike moves before.

Within minutes, the deed was done.

Tom left the corporal's lifeless body at his desk, draped backward over the chair. Tom would have to pay dearly for his action at the hands of the Germans but not now, not yet.

The corporal's unfinished manuscript lay scattered upon the desk. Tom, curious, lifted the title page and read the words:

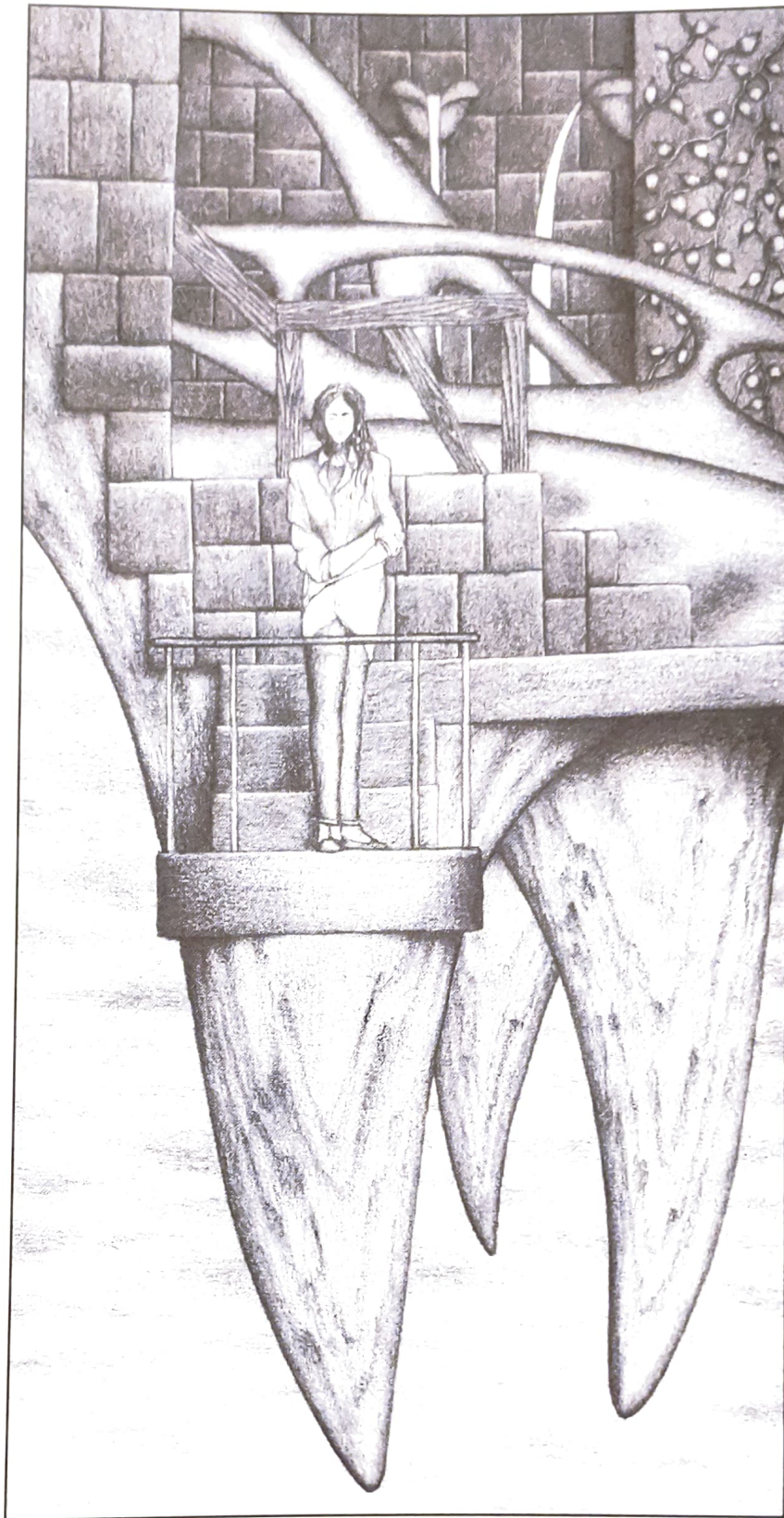
Mein Kampf

Tom stared at the page for a long time. He didn't know what the words meant although they carried a significance for him he couldn't understand. He felt relief, resolved. His personal war was over, and he could begin the healing process anew, a man starting over, from the very bottom.

Tom took the page and held it in both hands. This manuscript had obviously meant a lot to the man who wrote it. But to Tom it was worthless. With one swift gesture, he ripped the page solidly down the middle.

And history was changed.

Travis Fendley



Balcony
John Shepard

U-Hauls and Old Dogs

August white satin and cummerbunds,
toasts and rice. Flash of early morning
heat, champagne in bed,
check out.

Backing up a little trailer to pine-
needled walkway, puppy and threshold,
mustiness, and military haircut. Mattress
on the floor, motorcycle in the kitchen.
New days of waiting, nights of not enough,
discharged.

Dropping off at Mom's, then friend's
dropping off at Grandma's, return the truck,
return to school, return to work, return to
home, but don't open boxes, don't squeak
the bed, don't wake up the house,
down payment.

Orange trailered trips back and forth, stripping
floors, mending stairs, peeling clothes, playing jazz,
pinching pennies, birthing babies, cutting class.
Rolling a stroller along city sidewalks then
stealing time at midnight, two a.m. feedings,
national boards.

Big truck and a trailer and two cars follow
in line. Rolling hills and hoosierisms, empty house
to fill, books, blankets, and berbers. Working days,
restful days, nights of chosen sleeplessness. School
lunches, Sunday sermons, silver whiskers on the dog.

Julie DeVine Phillips

Growing Up

The seed gently releases
its dangling hold from the mother limb
and descends slowly earthward.
Shaded by the shadow of its
origin it plants virgin feet
into dark damp soil.
Through dense dirt it channels;
seeking nourishment
it rises and blossoms.
Confronted with obstacles
it dredges deeper, cultivating
stronger roots, a stronger soul.
Nature's fury rips the seed
from its strong hold.
It begins again and digs roots
broader and deeper until it rises up
to meet the stare of the midday sun
and the gentle tap of drizzle
on a sturdy branch.
The seed, no longer within the shadow,
casts a shadow of its own.

Shayla Holtkamp

Yellowstone

Clothed in padded winter wear
eight lovers of adventure
mount metal chariots on skis,
set forth on a white winding trail
up mountains, through valleys,
along cascading rivers.
Steamy-nosed buffalo
graze on a field of white,
search for a hint of green.
Moose in slow motion,
bulky bodies plod
through land deep in snow.

They stop to enjoy the beauty
of silence interrupted by occasional birds.
Old Faithful
hot and cold together as one
creates a third, rises into the air.

In search of communion with nature,
we are one with silence.

Shayla Holtkamp

Death of a Poet

In the wake of a grey passing,
Rains pound a tin cadence.
And I alone, tender
Among tangled groves,
Naked in winter,
Thick in the thistle,
Long for the covering
Of spring and you
Are not here.

Spent your farewell
To gather on good ground
Before the winter raw,
The familiar niche,
With arched back, elbows
Hinged on knobby knees,
Heels entrenched in
Steep slopes, singling out
A sparrow in season.

And once, August
Rounded the moon,
And Autumn gathered
Her golden profit.
Your fields left fallow,
You walked barefoot,
Feeling the frail fall.
Wood stems strike
Your soul, silently
You yield, placid
Among the land,
Escaping notice.

Now you lie dormant.
Like so many winters,
Never to break ground
And swell with sweet sap.
I pine, leafing through
Unfinished work.
A thousand pieces
Of spring and you
Are here.

J. Michael Buchanan

LOVE @ POETRY 2

Let felt lines slip through
solipsistic lips like warm mud
slides between outstretched fingertips.
Release, and fall gently
into fluid spontaneity,
meaning beneath moist, slick
stones buried deep in flesh,
like marrow in bones.

And liquid articulation flows.

Each opposing motion pushes
together, pulls apart.
One gives way to another
in spiritual syncopation,
a rhythm of souls
in suspension of time,
the perfect connection of two
words which with no others
may rhyme.

When true, you can tell
by the tongue,
and the way you hold fast
the echoes and numbness,
and stay.

A selenic silence penetrates,
as solemn serenity meets
quietly in our eyes,
the wildness within us
nearly gone,
reflections of evening
at the first purple tint,
the coming dawn.

Jon Eric Johnson

Truckstop

Miranda
waits tables,
waiting on her destiny
to walk through the door.

She counts
thirty-six bucks in tips tonight,
locks up
and sits alone,

Then slides
a dollar into the jukebox
to block out everything.
Man, that Garth can sing.

Miranda
walks across the linoleum floor
and stares
out the grease-stained window at a star.

Jeffrey Littrell

Pieces and Stems

(Working the night shift at the grocery store)

The world looks like a Hopper painting.
Everything is plate glass and starlight.
All the decent people have gone home,
leaving me to feed them
and prepare tomorrow's table.
I stack the cans,
place them lightly lip to lip
in a precarious but lasting kiss.
Everything is new and improved
except my disposition.
Everything light,
but my mood.
I work alone
and study the angle of the night.

Matthew Grubaugh

The General Store

In the center of town
stands a red brick general store.
Amber leaves skirt across
the scuffed wooden floor
embedded with large knots
and black holes
from cigarette ashes.

The screen door creaks.
Without a spring it slams shut.
A customer wants service--
maybe flour to bake bread
or linen for the table.

Four men, late in years,
take chairs on the porch.
With fly swatters in hand,
they share the latest news.

A small child peers
at candy on top of the counter.
One penny for red licorice.
Brown eyes plead.
Free licorice for a smile.
The old wooden stove
warms the inside.

Coke bottles sit deserted
in crates on the floor.
Ants scavenge for a small
speck of sweetness.
Signs shout from windows.
"Bread 19 cents"
"7up your thirst away."
Chairs appear; sit a spell and talk
about the town's latest happenings:
Mrs. Baker had her fifth yesterday.

The old general store,
like a small child in a large crowded room
is swallowed up by bigger and better.
The windows are boarded.
The bulldozers must come.
Licorice 30 cents a piece.
The child begs; mother says no.

Shayla Holtkamp

Progress
(Leaving Home)

*Having lived there for years,
I leave returning to the sparrows
whose pointed prints wind trails
across the dusty, red tin roof,
whose squabbling calls echo
in empty rooms where wallpaper
peels from vacant walls,
whose beady eyes seek out
the last crumbs of our existence there--
a broken chair supported by three good legs
and the corner walls...
A scrap of rusty metal,
carcass of a photograph,
split at an upper angle from a hasty,
plummeting descent in the last moving days.*

*Having lived there for years,
I find it easy to recall the sparkle
of dew dripping from pink petals,
lightening the dustiness, the rusty redness
of the wooden shanty house.
Mother's azaleas creep from the side yard
around the corner of the gap-tooth porch,
bringing springtime and memories
of all that was, but isn't.*

*Today, rough black shingles are indistinguishable
from the rough black asphalt
that pulls at the soles of my new shoes,
not like the dirt path--the dusty film on which
smooth feet slipped all summer long.
The rock-hauling, chicken-squalling,
earth-turning, cow-herding days yield,
and a new reaping time begins with
a harvest of time-saving, electric-humming,
engine-growling black, shiny, newness
that cloth petals cannot soften.*

*This red brick apartment in its red brick complex
is a trivial part of the redness of a city so different
from the red, wood boards that made ceilings
and doorways and walls once--
in a house near no other, like no other...
Hidden, treasured by its inhabitants,
in the back woods of Missouri mountains.*

Having lived there, I leave returning to the sparrows.

Sarah Malcomb



**Earth Turning
Marge Bruns**

Heat Lightning

*The slick silver snake
tears open the night;
His brilliant bright life
sleeps stale at day.*

Amy L. Lee

Mercury

Today I hold lightning in my hands,
a picture, brilliant and clear, vision of
twelve years former, a recollection.

Thunder cracks so swift and intense
again and again in my ears,
heart thumps, knees tremble.
I hear a shot ring out and see
a poof of gray smoke at the starter's line.
A raging tornado, a torrent of wind
dizzies my temples.
Swirling momentum speeds.

But it is smooth, sleek, long and light,
graceful yet storm strong. Elegantly
beauty races to me and fills my being.
Sweltering I remember to push gently,
pull quickly, push gently, pull quickly.
Never looking up until the end line crossed,
the swirling storm sound slowly, slowly
stops.

And it is over.

It will never again crack quite so quickly but
now I can hold its picture in my heart and
Today I can hold lightning in my hands.

Julie DeVine Phillips

Ten

*Just the other night,
the moon was a slice
of pale melon
in a sky of ice-sliver stars.*

*Your touch electric,
everything about you
right,
and we were right.*

*Just the other night,
wrapped in old blankets,
sharing secrets,
passion won.*

Beatrice D. Eldridge



Column
John Shepard

The Policy

As the sea of somber faces files past, Virginia's mind obediently follows the familiar path of social etiquette, allowing her soul to escape for a moment of refuge. "Thank you. Thank you for coming. I appreciate your concern. You were so kind to join us today. Thank you for the lovely flowers. Thank you so much." The soothing repetition of her own voice lulls her into an emotional sleep. "Yes, it was a very lovely service. Thank you for com . . ." Virginia's voice stops suddenly, confronted by a face so familiar that it might have stepped right out of her memory. She braces herself against the wall as he begins to speak. "Ginnie, I believe we have some business to attend to, that is, if you're up to it."

"Ginnie," she whispers to herself, lifting a nervous hand to her mouth as water seeps into her dimming eyes.

Now oblivious to the remaining guests who had come to mourn her husband's passing, Virginia trembles slightly, her eyes drawn to the black leather briefcase in the man's left hand. Nearly overcome by the pounding in her chest and the violent flutter in her stomach, she is relieved when the tender voice of her eldest daughter breaks in. "Mother," Rebecca inquires, placing her hand on her mother's arm and addressing the man with her eyes, "Is everything all right?"

"Yes, yes dear. Um, this is an old friend of the family."

Rebecca, with a friendly lilt to her voice gently chides her mother, "Why, he looks younger than I do, Mother." As Rebecca shakes the man's hand, politely thanking him for coming to the service, Virginia reaches for the gentleman's arm and begins to escort him away from the crowd, down the carpeted hall, and through the glass doors that lead onto the verandah overlooking the estate's gardens. The vibrant hues of potted roses amid lush green foliage, which her husband had tended to as carefully as he had tended to her, draw a sharp contrast to the pale color of Virginia's skin. Still, she wears her seventy-two years of age with a dignity that becomes her. The light breeze pressing against the hem of her black dress reveals a slight frame, weakened and bent by a life lived to the full. Over time, turmoil and triumph have chiseled a temperate countenance that now settles like a comfortable old blanket around her steady gray eyes. For fifty-seven years, William Robins had held the loving gaze of those steady eyes; now, he is gone.

"Ginnie, you do remember our arrangement, don't you?"

"It's been so long since anyone but my Will called me Ginnie."

"That's how you signed your name," laying the black briefcase on the nearby breakfast table, he continues. "It's right here on the policy." He opens the brass latches and lifts the lid to reveal a document more than a half century old. "Will and Ginnie Robins. Of course, it looks like things have changed a bit since those days, doesn't it, Ginnie?"

Virginia had seen many policies over the past weeks: life insurance, corporate policies, health insurance, piles of paperwork produced by efficient attorneys. But the sight of this humble page releases the tides of grief within her, flooding her eyes with tears and her mind with memories.

* * *

I don't remember a time when Will wasn't a part of my life. I think he and my older brother, Ryan, were best friends before I was even born. From the time I was old enough to toddle around, they would let me tag along with them. Coming from large families, the three of us made our own little club where we were the only important people in the world. I guess I probably loved Will all of my life. There was something different about him, different from most of the other children in our close-knit town, different from our fathers and brothers and uncles, and though I wasn't old enough to define it, I was drawn to him nonetheless.

When Will asked me to marry him at the tender age of fifteen, it was no great shock to family and friends. There never seemed much more purpose for a woman except to marry and have children, and the sooner she married, the more children she could have! Mama had a sad look about her, but Papa said he was proud of me. Our wedding was humble, but full of celebration. We were welcomed into married life with laughter and gaiety, dishtowels and sheets, baked goods and casseroles, and everything seemed so perfect that I didn't mind settling down to live in Will's parents' home.

We imagined that we were living our own life, as both of us were assigned household chores and bathroom schedules. All in all, things seemed to run smoothly. I helped with meals and cared for the younger children, often pretending the two smallest were my own, while Will helped out with the farm from sun up to sun down.

We were both careful not to let our dreams spill over into the family discussions, but at night we lay in bed and feasted on our imagined future. We were going to move away from this town, and Will was going to go to school and become someone important. We had higher hopes than could ever be fulfilled in this rural farming community.

Over the passing months, I gained a special affection for Will's Pa. Even though he was not a man given to displays of emotion, I saw a softening in his eyes when he looked at Will. It was as though he knew Will's secret: that he was special, that he could make it outside of this town. I had just turned sixteen when Will's father passed away. His heart failed him when he was in the fields on his tractor. By the time Will could get help, his father was gone. I couldn't help feeling that Will and his Pa parted with too many words unspoken between them.

Several days later, we had a family meeting. Everyone was there, including the lawyer from town. I don't think anyone, including Ma, knew how much thought Pa had taken to the future. He had taken care of almost everything. The main operations of the farm were to go to John, Jr., providing that he ran the farm and took care of Ma. Other pieces of land were sectioned off to leave something for everyone. I knew why I had liked Pa so much when we heard what he had left to Will. It was a piece of property worth about \$15,000, and the only piece that could easily be sold off without any damage to the existing farm. Will leaned over and whispered sentimentally, "Pa knew I wasn't cut out to farm the rest of my life. He said I was the only one of his boys that had it in him to make a break."

We tried to contain ourselves, at least as much as excited young people can, hoping to let Ma's grief settle before breaking the news that we were leaving. Will began following the plan he had dreamed of a hundred times before, writing to the list of universities carefully folded in his bureau drawer, and checking the mail daily for responses. Over the next several months, we rode the waves of excitement and dejection, as one by one, rejection letters arrived in the mail. It became evident that his dreams were going to be drastically altered by reality. By the time he was admitted to a small state college only 150 miles away, discouragement was already settling in. We were due to close on the sale of the property that he had inherited in just a few days when he began voicing his questions whether or not he was making a mistake by wanting to leave. "Who am I to think I can do any better than my Pa? What if I am giving up our only chance for a future right here on the farm? Maybe I don't have what it takes to make it out there." I'm afraid I wasn't set to be much help to Will either. At the ripe old age of sixteen, I found myself changing opinions every time he expressed another point of view. Our whole future lay in the decision that two inexperienced young people had no idea how to make!

It was a Tuesday morning. Ma was out in her

garden doing some work before the heat of the day set in while I was preparing to hang out the laundry. Will and I hadn't spoken more than pleasantries to one another, both of us knowing that today was the day we had to sign on the sale of the property. Our time had run out. Frustrated words from the night before hung in the air like morning fog. "I need some answers; I need to know what I should do! I know it sounds silly, but I want someone to give me a guarantee that we're doing the right thing, and that we're going to make it! I wish my father were here. I wish now I had just come out with it and asked him what I should do!" It was into this tense, silent atmosphere that a strange visitor arrived.

Dressed in a black suit, white shirt, gray-striped tie, and wielding a black leather briefcase, the salesman strode up to the front porch. Before he reached the top of the stairs I intercepted him, laundry basket in hand. "Is there something I can help you with?" I said politely, but with an unwelcome undertone.

"Yes, I would like to speak with Mr. and Mrs. Robins."

"I'm Ginnie Robins, but I don't expect we'll be buying anything today," I said, hoping to ward off the inevitable sales pitch.

"If I could only have a minute of your time, I am sure what I have to say will be beneficial."

Just then, Will walked out onto the porch. "Can I help you?"

Walking to Will's side, I introduced the visitor. "This salesman says he would like a moment of our time, but I told him we weren't likely to be buying anything today."

"Please, Mr. Robins, Mrs. Robins, if I could just speak to you for a moment."

"Well, there's no use us being rude on such a pretty morning as this," Will spoke in his usual friendly manner. "Come on in and Ginnie will fix you up with some of her coffee," he continued as he opened the screen door and ushered the visitor into the front room. Ginnie, surprised by her husband's show of hospitality, went into the kitchen to pour coffee.

Will listened intently as the man began speaking, almost as if he were glad for the diversion from thinking about his own dilemmas. I sat down beside Will after serving cups of coffee and fresh cookies. Taking his arm, I, too, listened with unusual interest as the salesman spoke.

"I am sure you have already become acquainted with a good many insurance policies, accident, health, life, homeowner's automobile, you name it, and we have a policy to cover it!"

Will interrupted, "I wish that were true; you don't have a policy to cover the future do you?" Much to my surprise, Will began to pour out to

this total stranger the scope of our hopes and dreams for the future! Until this moment, no one had known our plans for Will to attend business college, and how he felt he had a knack for making money, but was unsure about stepping out, seeing as no one he had ever known had left their hometown and been successful. He even began to disclose our private affairs, exposing that we had made an unheard-of decision to forego having children until we were older, and how he had hopes for me to be able to enjoy some of the luxuries that his mother and sisters had never known. I sat, shocked and embarrassed at my husband's outburst of information!

"Will, Ginnie," the salesman spoke quietly, "It is against company policy to give guarantees for the future, but I might be able to find a way around it in your case."

Will's countenance lifted a little at the salesman's humor, his lips released a smile, while I was still embarrassed by my husband's personal remarks.

The salesman continued, "Here's what we can do, we can add a clause to executive life insurance policy to cover 'life chances'."

"Life chances?" I interrupted, suddenly confused by this line of thought.

"Yes, Mrs. Robins, 'life chances.' This clause will allow you to pick one of your available routes to the future, with coverage for unanswered questions.

Now Will chimed in. "Wait a minute, I'm confused. Are you just being funny or what?"

"I assure you, I am being very honest, and hope to be offering you some useful service. As I was saying, it seems to me that you want coverage lest you make a claim of unanswered questions and I-wonder-what-would-have-beens, which are quite common among young couples, and I am offering you just such a clause." Without pausing, he continued in a more serious tone, "There is, however, one qualification to this coverage. You must accept the policy in good faith, at which time you must select the "life chance" you wish to pursue, and an I-wonder-what-would-have-been claims cannot be satisfied until you are deceased, at which time the answers will be given to your beneficiary."

"Now wait a minute," Will said, upset by the sudden turn in the conversation. "What are you trying to do, upset my wife?" "I don't know what you are talking about, but . . ."

"Mr. Robins, I don't mean to upset you or your lovely wife; I only mean to say that no one can offer you the answers to all of your questions today, but our policy offers the closest solution available, and the policy is completely risk free, since there is no premium unless you actually file

a claim."

Will and I were both dumbfounded, but still naive enough to sign on the dotted line. The experience had such a shocking effect on both of us that all of our questions about whether or not to follow through with college went right out the window. We concluded the sale of our property and bid farewell to family and lifelong friends. We never expected to hear anything back from the salesman who visited that day. And frankly, we spoke very little of it from that point on. Will took it as a sign from God, and I thought it was an angel come down to give us some advice. "Make your decision and don't look back," that's what the clause had said to me. Surely he was just a salesman who thought he would try to give a couple of kids some good advice.

* * *

Virginia takes a deep breath and exhales the rush of emotions and memories, trying to focus on the man before her. "I never expected to see you again! I've often wondered if you ever really visited us at all; perhaps we just created a fanciful memory out of thin air?" Hesitating, she asks, "Why have you come back?"

"In the 56 years that your policy was active, we never received a claim, so this is really a courtesy call. It is customary to visit the beneficiary and give opportunities for any unanswered questions to be voiced." The salesman continues in a matter-of-fact tone, "I assume that you were pleased with your 'life chances' selection?"

"Once we stepped out we never regretted our decision; life has unfolded very generously for us. Although we were very confused by your presentation, you somehow gave us the boost of confidence that we needed--thank you."

"You're quite welcome, Mrs. Robins, perhaps I can use your name as a testimonial. To this day we have never had a customer who followed the specifications of the policy and was dissatisfied! Now, if our business is finished, I guess I will be going, and please, accept my condolences on the loss of your husband; he was a good man."

Virginia, with a sudden thought toward her sanity, began looking around for someone to attest to her conversation with the salesman. "If you could just stay a moment, I'd like to introduce you..." staring back at where he had stood just a few minutes earlier, she saw only the policy she and her husband had signed in their youth. Looking down at the bottom of the crumbling page, she could read the signatures, Will Robins, Ginnie Robins, and sales representative...

John Robins, Sr.

Deona Sadler



Forgotten Harvest
Jon Eric Johnson

The Destiny of Flowers

"Flowers are beautiful because they die."
--Peter Meinke

Look to the flowers:
The coming of spring draws me
near fragrant fields, freed from fences,
blossom-filled and bathed
by sunlight, they bend
and sway softly in the breeze.

Swallowed alive and whole, drenched
in long-stemmed sanguine depths---
a Pollock painting---
I disappear within
that fresh field of flowers,
yield to the scent, the milky-white
softness, as a bee to a young bloom,
honeysuckle drowned, slowly sinks
supine down slight curves and
roundness, and drinks
the sweetness of summer.

But now it is winter,
and the sun glows angry
and cold, like a 40-watt bulb
in an empty white-walled room.
And ice stills the stream,
stretches and swells against the banks.
And the flowers, gone.

The distant memory
of daisies lingers yellow in my mind.
I can find no solace in this misery,
no wisdom from pain.

(Once, in a midwinter night's dream,
I rose above a bed of thorns
and kissed two lips, parted.)

O, were it not for those ephemeral forms
whose eyes fixed in constant stare
remind me that ours
is the destiny of flowers
---to pull ourselves up
from dense earth,
reach forth to celestial skies,
briefly blossom in the ethereal warmth of sun.
---to lend a short smile to the world,
then wither, fade and
fall back to earth
in the quiet resignation
of finality.
The hopeful life cut short
by a false sense of fate,
a needless necessity.

And in the end,
in the dead, grey thickness of winter,
in twisted fragments of remembrance,
we privately mourn for the lost
company of flowers,
the broken promise of perfect,
permanent beauty,
the short-lived love.

(We must forgive the unfailing frailty
of flowers, for they soon shall leave.
So let us love them while we can,
because they are beautiful,
and because they are flowers.)

And when we grieve, we weep,
not for the passing of flowers,
but for ourselves,
and the inevitability
of loss.

Jon Eric Johnson

Isis isabella

*Dark brown wooly prophets
inch across cooling gray asphalt
foretelling the winter solstice.*

Isis wanders o'er her kingdom,
watchful, protective of winter's aridity.
Magical powers reunite birth and new hope.
Nature is renewed. Isis rests.

Industrial gloom blackens the horizon
as rivers dredge refuse.
Nature diminishes; man flourishes,
ignoring definite destruction.

*Wooly land bears' journey warns
of stagnant domains and conjures
Isis' protection, seeking the
reunion of humanity, creation, and
inspired awe.*

Dara Tormoehlen

Tuesday Morning

Early dawn illumines
glistening dew
on shiny, black mountains
of forsaken treasure.
Remnants of days too full
and houses too cluttered
mingle in musty coffins
of disdain.
Snips of colored paper
abandoned by a
child's imagination,
discarded scraps
from a family dinner,
and crumpled pages of
Life no longer valued
create a stench of death
and decay
and await a lonely burial.
Cowards hide
in still-dark houses
as once-favored memories
are turned over to callous hands
and dragged to an unmarked grave.

Deona Sadler

A Cemetery in Winter

What lingers among the snow-laced granite stones of a cemetery in winter?

Resolute with physical strength,
he stands steadfast against the white devils
forming at his feet
and swirling about his pointed peak,
wearing smooth the grave lettering,
rubbing round the squared edges of endurance,
seeking out the source of perseverance.
The cold wind, the wet snow,
and the counter-constance of time
day by year destroy him,
(though never having caught him unaware)
this leader of men and stones--
a soldier guarding eternity.

Huddled, like cowardly disciples,
they of a weaker, rounded nature stoop,
bent to the frozen ground like old, old
men and women wearied by endless winters.
Nameless, dateless statues--
crooked, warped, fatigued--
they yield their granite cast of dignity and pride
to the demands of all that is cold.
Launching their final pleas to the relentless wind,
they send whispers of hope
to their pointed leader, symbol of strength,
whose great stone front demands
mercy from the merciless cold...
Though behind a mask of daring defiance
he, too, shelters shells of hope
and knowledge of defeat.

Something small,
something almost silent, lingers
when the brutal wind has let its howl shake the land.
Something minute is left in the wintry breeze
when the last snowflakes settle
on the unmarred blanket of snow.
From the most disarrayed and dilapidated stones
comes a breath of life,
something to solicit the remembrance of passers-by.
Even as the pointed peak grows smooth and round itself,

even as the smaller stones bend grudgingly in defeat,
a laughter rises like steam from the moist earth.
And smiles lie like snow angels in the white dust.
Children sing songs they learned
before death claimed the physical,
even before reality clinched with steel grip
the spirit of immortality.

Sing naively with carefree jubilee
when human physicality is defeated
by constant, cold austerity.
In this, death loses one point to life.
Listen: the children are laughing
at the pointed men and their blind-eyed disciples,
who struggle against that
which has already staked its claim.

And what is life when only gravestones remain?

Sarah Malcomb



Study In Infrared: Guarding Eternity
Matthew Grubaugh

Endless Apprentice

If eyes are windows to the soul,
Yours look in on an empty room:
A vagueness,
A child's game,
Follow the leader.

Someone else talks
And you respond,
Without question,
Without waste.
Unencumbered by thoughts of your own
You traipse through the forest
On paths already cleared.

I have a question,
If you have the time:
Who will you turn to,
Who will you blame
When you march
 In formation,
 Upon command,
Off the edge of that cliff?

Have you nothing to say?
Inner candles extinguished?
A permanent disciple?
And endless apprentice?
Tell me:
At the end of the day,
When your head hits the pillow,
And the ceiling looks as blank as your mind,
Who'll answer my questions for you?

Travis Fendley

Crying Corpse

It was snowing.

"If it keeps up like this much longer," said my wife, "We'll be trapped inside this house together for the entire Christmas holiday."

"Yes," I said. I looked at her. I had married her, and so I must have loved her once--but that had been a long time ago.

"It's going to be a pretty bad holiday," she said, "If I have to spend it alone with you."

I stared at her. Somewhere along the line she had stopped being a person and became instead a barrier--holding me back from a fuller, richer life. If it weren't for her I might be able to find myself a beautiful, new wife. If it weren't for her, I wouldn't have to spend my life working in her father's office. If it weren't for her, I might actually have a decent life.

"Christ!" she said abruptly "Is that a new shirt you're wearing?"

"Yes," I said. I had seen it at the mall. The sales clerk was a cute blond; I think she liked me. If I wasn't married, I would have asked her out, and who knows what might have happened?

"You know," said my wife, "that we don't have money to waste on new clothes! You know how tight things are--and yet you go out and--"

I hit her. I hadn't planned to do it, and I'm not really sure why I did. But I did it. And it felt good. As I looked at her staring at me in shock, I realized I should have done it a long time before now.

"How dare you!" she sputtered. "I'm going to call Daddy and the police, and they'll take care of you! They know what to do with men like you--they'll throw you in prison!"

I did not want to go to prison. So, without even thinking about it, I lunged at my wife and wrapped my fingers around her throat and slowly squeezed as tightly as I could. She struggled with me, but I was stronger than she was, and so she died. She died.

I stood up and looked down at her body. I did not regret killing her, but just the same, her murder presented me with a problem. How was I going to dispose of the body? I stared out the window, thinking.

It was snowing.

That was my answer. I would take her outside and let the falling snow cover her, and by the time it melted away and she was discovered, I would be somewhere far away, safe, free and--at long last--happy. I carried her outside and dumped her in the snow, and I took one last look at her.

She was crying.

I know it sounds crazy--I know dead women don't cry--but I clearly saw the tears on her cheeks. It was almost as if she was mourning her own death.

I no longer felt proud or smug about what I had done; instead I was just scared. And so I turned and ran away. I slipped on the snow and ice a few times, but that didn't stop me. I just ran.

I jumped into my car, turned it on, and raced away, paying no attention at all to the dangers of ice on the road. The only thing on my mind was the memory of my wife's tear-stained face. The image haunted me; I knew it always would. No matter where I went or what I did, her face would always be in front of me.

Jesus, why did she have to cry? If she hadn't wept I still would have felt good about her death. I could have had a wonderful life, but those damned tears spoiled everything. They made me aware of what I had done, that I had caused pain, that I had taken a life.

A police car was behind me on the road. I could hear its blaring sirens. My heart beating furiously, I pulled my car to the side of the road, and the police car stopped beside me. I got out of my car and walked to the policeman.

"It's not safe," he said, "To speed like that on these icy roads."

"I know," I said. I looked down, ashamed. I took a breath. The only way I could rid myself of the guilt the tears had aroused in me was to admit what I had done and face the consequences (Damn those tears! Damn them to hell!).

"Officer," I said, "I just killed my wife." And as I spoke the last word, I absently noticed a flake of snow land on my hand, melt, and become a tear.

Kevin Greenlee

Today's Mythology

*The sun rises and sets
in a great fashion show
where dancing colors of nature
slowly amble on picturesque horizons,
changing constantly to allure wanting souls.*

*Once, Apollo's crimson gold chariot
graced the open heavens.
Now trapped in the minds of romantics,
his fiery carriage is surrounded by
cobwebs of fragile cotton.
Past tense are all days
of zipping, carefree fairies
who bring dangling drops of dew
to a world lying between dream and wake.*

*Today, the sun rises and sets
by means not strange to men.
A strong, mangled hand,
placed at the top of the world
to appease man's thirst for control,
thrives with metallic arteries that run cold
with oil-infected blood
pumped
profusely
by a bodiless heart.*

*The sun rises at 7:26 October 21
and sets the same day at 6:35.
Clouds blend in a murky monotone
as the sun is jerked
from her home in the sky.
The program presides unfeeling
for the infinite days that follow,
governed only by white coats,
darkened by the loss of imagination.*

Amy L. Lee

Holocaust

The decadent, dark hand
explodes out of the earthy crust.
Flowers are plucked from where they bloom.
Taken from sunlight, water and warmth
cast into the dark, dry and drafty.

The odor of decomposed petals and stems
disturbs the nostrils.
Roots delve deeper in search of sustenance
only to be uprooted again.

To the inevitable they succumb.
Stems bow down,
tears crawl away from blooms.
Slowly the disheartened flower
descends into the infertile ground.
Only the memory of a resplendent
once flourishing flower remains.

Shayla Holtkamp



Reaching Toward Autumn
Jon Eric Johnson

DRY SPELL

HE RISES WITH A TENACIOUS SMILE
PIERCING,
THROUGH THE GLASS,
AS THE DUST TWINKLES.

HE LAUGHS, KNOWING THIS IS HIS DAY.
LIKE SO MANY DAYS.

CLOUDLESS, ENDLESS SKY.
EVERYTHING
IS EMPTY,
SETTLING,
STILL.

HIGH NOON.
HE WORKS LIKE AN ARTIST,
SLASHING STROKES, CRISP LINES,
LIFTING A PARCHED GREY CREEK BED
THAT WINDS THROUGH THE EARTHEN CANVAS.

IN THE DISTANCE, A FIELD.
GREEN STEMMED, SCATTERED BLADES OF BROWN,
BENT TIPS, TEDIOUS WORK THAT WILL GO UNFINISHED.

HE DESCENDS
WITH WIDE STROKES.
DUST CLOUDS FORM, TRAILING A GRAVEL ROAD.
STILL, THE SKY IS RED WITH HOPE.

J. MICHAEL BUCHANAN

Now Showing at a Theater Near You

Red carpet
Strolls the aisles
Speckled and stained,
Scuffed and stale,
Worn with tread
Of the souls of human feat
That softly sink in
As if supported by sponge
Wet with the liquid of
 car chases,
 spilled blood,
 deplorable deeds,
 crushed popcorn,
and the ever-flowing drama of human existence
spread through the backs of cinema seats.

Travis Fendley

New Orleans

Neon epiphanies
Seek
Temporary highs
Half-empty promises
Fill
Broken glasses
Greedy lips
Drink
Bourbon sounds
As
Night's light
Flickers and
Slowly succumbs
To
Another Day.

Susan Brand



Forbidden City
Susan Brand

A Parting Kiss

It must be like a parting kiss,
whispered by a man
you hate to leave.
What innocence sustains such grief
and helpless misery?
With all the creativity,
worldliness and sensitivity,
I pride myself in having,
no part of me seems to know,
sufficiently imagine, or understand,
how it must feel,
how you feel,
facing death unready to die.

Cynicism knocks--
long hollow sounds in my mind.
I scan the gray winter sky
for resolution.

In your presence, we all struggle
to convey optimism and conviction
we are not really familiar with.
And you say, "Don't worry so much,"
with a tone of resignation.
Still, that cynical cadence beats on
in my mind; some inner comprehension tells me
you have already made its acquaintance.

Dying, not old--but old enough
to have felt the first twinge of love
several times,
to have seen your first child,

and second, leave home,
to have constructed strong, enduring bonds
and occasionally watched them break,
to have sustained suffering and grief,
triumphed and rejoiced,
forgotten the past
and remembered it again.
You stand before me
dying, not young--but young enough
to still giggle uncontrollably,
and flirt unintentionally,
to make love passionately,
and live with the idealism sacred
to youth.

I sit here surrounded by books
and this cold, blue screen,
searching for words
I cannot know or find.
From the window, I can see
my daughter launching first snow balls
and making angels
in the six inches of untouched snow outside.
I want her to live forever untouched
by pain and suffering and death
and the loss of good friends.
I want to try,
with the strength of every mother trying,
to keep her from ever finding herself
facing death, unready to die.

Sarah Malcomb

Grandfather

Everyday
he sits
in his chair, rereading
anything,
quite content
to have woken up
another morning.

His blue eyes have faded now,
cloudy with memories and time.
Wrinkledskin,
like the grocery sack
used too many times--
coarse white hair
still combed before dinner.

He told me once
"I love you, too"
when I asked him
where the T.V. Guide was.

Beatrice D. Eldridge

So Like An Abandoned Ship

The nurse greets her
with phony cheerfulness,
moving
the wheelchair to the window.
She's left alone
to stare at traffic
while flies
buzz around her untouched lunch tray.

Jeffrey Littrell



Napoleon, Indiana 47034
Marge Bruns

Ode on a Nap

1

My back aches, and drowsy midday pains my
Senses, as though of cartoons I have endured
Or toys I have tripped, long for Brooks and a
Blanket. Tis not of forsaking that I desire or
Cessation either, rather simply a respite of
Dryads to dream, an escape from vile cherubs,
Academia and slovenly abode.

2

O, for a draught of vintage that hath been sipped
From goblets green on linens cotton! What gauze
Sheers from yonder window flutter, bringing the
Breath of Autumn's being. Telephone and doorbell
Now an unheard presence, flee! O, envisioned
Moment of sweet slumber, long awaited serenity,
Sustainer, preserver; hear, oh hear!

3

Away! Away! For I will fly to thee, not on davenport
Or recliners like the boars of Calydonia, whom the
Huntress Atlanta wounded. Wounded boars bore.
But on the airy wings of Hypnos. O winged youth,
Though dull brain perplexes and retards, touch this fair,
Tired head with thy branch. Pour thy soporific liquid
From thy horn to drench this hour with slumber.

4

Ah, happy, happy bed that bids venir, bienvenu!
O, bed, though still unravished bride of quietness
Your unheard melody is sweet. Ye soft pipes, play on.
Pipe to the spirit of my listless soul. This fair youth,
Beneath the quilt, that can not bear to leave, forever
Warm and still to be enjoyed with head like lead.
O happy, sleep. More happy, happy sleep. More sleep.

5

Dusk! The very word is like a bell to toll me back
From thee to my soul self. Adieu! Adieu! thy
Plaintive anthem fades. Rise! O rise! Awake!
Was it a vision, or a waking dream? Fled is that
Music like Keats and Shelley. Present is music like life.
Do I wake or sleep? Aye, I rise to nap again.

Julie DeVine Phillips

Walden Revisited

"I went to the woods because I wished
to live life deliberately,...to live deep
and suck out all the marrow of life...
to drive life into a corner."

--Henry David Thoreau

In darkness,
Face pressed against cold plaster,
I lift my mind another day.

My feet greet old oak.
A raised board reminds me
Of life,
Life, that lifts, leans, bends,
And shapes all my days.

In the warmth of a blanket,
Squeezed shoulders
Wrapped with my smell,
I walk clutching the fabric,
The texture of life,
Woven and familiar.

Reaching, feeling, touching, gripping,
The cold iron, I stoke the coals,
Crackling wood pierces crisp air,
Winter is winding down.

I wait in wonderment
Of winged creatures,
Of fragrant flowers,
Of spring,
Old as creation.
I delight
In the darkness
Of my life.

J. Michael Buchanan



**Polar Rapids
Marge Bruns**

Snowsuit

We are shaped by those shapeless suits--
bright red, stiff and heavy with
matted fake fur framing the face.
Wrapped in spun-warmth,
cocooned for safety. Strings
pulled around the chin. Hood
holding head face forward: A blinder.

Progress ploddingly into polar air that
slows breath like sluggish smoke.
Movement muted, snowy stairs freeze us.
One fall and we're flash frozen.
Like a bug on its back, it keeps us down,
grunting and gasping, struggling strait-legged,
stuck in the snow: Insulated for safety,
isolated for life.

We grow up but not out of those suits.
Today, secure, safe, settled, and yet
It hits us suddenly, a paranoia of red,
uncertainty, doubt and apprehension,
cocooned and blinded, noose-necked,
surrounded but altogether alone.
We are shaped by those shapeless suits.

Julie DeVine Phillips

An Environmental Epiphany

"How many times must a man look up before he sees the sky?" --Bob Dylan

I drive as slowly along this black asphalt today,
as I drove yesterday on this same pitch highway--
as I drive everyday.
I count the bright hyphens,
no words, but punctuation on black paper,
yellow dashes as infinite today
as yesterday and everyday,
until out-of-place, offensive orange cones
mar the black-faced slate, obscure my yellow streak,
stir me from a near hypnotic state.
I try to count the fiery cones,
but they bring to mind the setting sun--I look up.
I look up and blinking lights form blaring arrows
that direct me to the right
where burly men with sun-red flags
wave me to the left
where huge orange signs bear bold green words
that scream "DETOUR!" and preach alternative routes.
I catch my breath, wildly in awe
of the strange process of progress.
Yellow machines, great bellowing monsters,
stir and come to life in the gravel chaos
beyond the pavement. Roaring thunder, spinning tires,
steel-horned dragons dredge the earth.
Bewildered, I notice peripherally
that the highway has been re-hyphenated;
the cones are gone.
I retreat from the chaotic scene to resume my yellow routine,
counting myself toward hypnosis.
My mind wanders; I look up.
Burning exhaust, stifling smoke--
I see black asphalt below and a black, cumulus sky above.
Monsters of human madness I have seen,
pagan by-products of progress,
daring to paint the green face of earth black,
tempting God by staining that of heaven as well.
I roll down the tinted glass of my window
and peer into the clouds and the setting sun.
A cold, dusty wind blows against my upturned face,
and black vapor from the roadside fills my car.

Sarah Malcomb

Endless Paradise

"Daddy," Elizabeth said, looking toward the heavens, "how do the stars move like that?"

At first, Jonathan Oaks was taken aback by the inquisitiveness of his four-year-old daughter. He had always experienced problems with Jessica, his eight-year-old, but never with Elizabeth, his youngest.

"Well," he commented after a brief pause, "Sometimes God tires of the way his sky appears. When this happens, he calls all of his angels together to create a new world full of dragons and great heroes so that little girls like you can look forward to bedtime and the wonderful, exciting dreams you will have."

"Oh, but why do some stars blink?"

"That's God's way of telling us everything in the world is right. He winks at us through the stars, and we know that our house is blessed." Then Jonathan reached over to scoop his small, chestnut-haired daughter into his comforting arms. "Why all the questions, little one?"

Her curiosity grew into disinterest, and she said, "I don't know. Where's Samuel? I want to play a game." Without waiting for his answer, Elizabeth broke the hold of safety her father had and darted for the house she knew and believed in.

The woods crept silently in on Jonathan as he sat and wondered about the decision he had made to bring his family here so long ago. 1890. What would happen if they knew, if they found out? He didn't know, but there was no reason to ponder the matter. How could his family ever know when the only world they had was the house and surrounding forest? Only he and his wife knew the limits the crooked, wooden fence set on their souls, and his children would never venture far enough to discover the ever-changing world which did exist and was constantly moving forward, suffocating their existence.

"Enough," he sighed out loud and stumbled drearly into the ancient, oak house.

The next morning, as Jonathan and his wife, Hannah, awoke, they knew that much would have to be done to prepare for the coming winter months. Even though death would not come to the garden and surrounding animals, it would be much too cold to venture out doors. Besides, the work would keep him busy and his mind from wandering.

The preparations would be relatively easy, as they had been all the years before. Jonathan would hunt while his wife and children worried about the fruits and vegetables. They would store the food in the little shed that Jonathan had built at the edge of

the forest over fifty years ago.

"I suppose I'll begin some hunting today, Hannah. Do you think you can keep the children out of trouble and within sight?"

"Don't be silly, John. I'm sure I can handle my own children. I've been doing it for..." Hannah sadly stopped her sentence short as she realized she had no idea how many years had gone by. With familiarity, but a little fear, she gazed at her husband. "You will come back for supper, won't you?"

"Of course I will. Where else would I go?" he said. Then he turned and headed for the thick trees and underbrush which almost engulfed the house itself. As he walked the slightly overgrown trail, he noticed how strange the wood he lived in was. He had always known, but would never allow himself to actually think about it. Everywhere he looked there was life. The trees were always green and full of lively squirrels and birds, even though the winter would try to kill. The same deer he hunted before, he would hunt this year, with the exception of the newcomers who had managed to hop over the crooked fence. Even the trail beneath his forty-one year old feet was covered with the same vines, which twisted and jumped in the wind, giving the trail itself life. He knew the only death which would occur, would occur by his hands alone. Where time future, present and past met. The Crossroads. Jonathan knew much too well, now, what the old Indian had meant.

He had said, "Life will never end. Wars, the white man's politics, none will matter when you reach the Crossroads."

He told them how the spirits of time future, present and past struggled with one another in the ancient wood. Where their great battle occurred, time ceased and death was banned. The only catch, as Jonathan understood it, was that if one tried to leave, the spirits would claim their bodies and peace would enter their souls. He could not believe anyone would want to leave such a blessed place, and soon he discarded the mention of death.

Many people discredited the Indians and their myths, but not Jonathan. He longed for happiness. He and his wife believed in the paradise which they thought awaited their family.

As the path crawled along, bending to the shape of the earth, Jonathan looked down, forgetting his real purpose of hunting. Then, out of the corner of his eye, he saw the fragile, but governing fence. Without thinking, he headed toward the feeble remains. Just five feet from the fence, life on the

colorful undergrowth was the hopeful soldiers of blue gentians.

"Have I forgotten death?" he thought to himself. "No!" As he struggled to clear his mind, the wind blew once more from across the fence and with it carried a small scrap of paper. Jonathan almost left the piece where it lay, but remembered how little he knew about the world he had left. As he raised the new information to his eyes, he recognized it to be part of an old newspaper. November 12, 2008. "Could that be right? Have I spent that many years in this place?"

As he continued to read the small passage, he realized the article was about some sort of war with which he was not familiar. The article read, "Mexico City has surrendered to the Japanese. After five years of massive trade wars, fraud, and treason, the nearly Post-industrialized Mexico was defeated after the economy went bankrupt. Japan has not yet commented about . . ." The article was abruptly cut short, but John had read more than he cared to.

His mind whirled. "Another war. How could there be another war?" He remembered seeing the title of a newspaper clipping that briefly stated, "The War to End All Wars. Americans Must Defend Americans!" He could remember how rapidly the world of his time was changing and was frightened to think where those changes had led.

"You can't trust the words of people you don't know," he thought. Yet somehow what was described in the scrap he had just found did not seem to be like the world he remembered. No bloodshed or generals were mentioned. He wondered what would happen if the descendants of the men he believed to be heartless in their invasion of the Indian's home were to find the place he once loved. He knew he could not fight them alone.

Could the world be more cruel than he remembered it? He could never let a world full of evil discover the family he loved, and the words of the Indian flooded his pool of thoughts. He could not think of the consequences any longer and shoved the paper in his pants pocket as he walked back toward the house.

The tired porch sighed as if awaiting the footsteps of its owner. "John, is that you?" Hannah called as she looked up from her cooking. He did not answer, but continued to walk into the back room to change his clothing.

That night he and his wife discussed the life they were living in the Appalachian Mountains for the first time in over forty years. "Hannah," he said, "are you happy living here like this?"

She put her arm around him and tried to smile as she said, "Of course I am, dear. I have you and my

children. My family is my happiness. Is everything right in *your* heart?"

Knowing she was wondering what regrets had begun to consume his mind, Jonathan snapped, "What are you talking about? We made a decision once; there's nothing we can do to change that now." He felt cold lying next to her and wanted her to harbor the same doubts he had inside.

Frightened by the sudden change in his voice, she said, "I'm sorry if I've upset you. I know we're happy here together, and nothing can take our family away in this place."

"I love you," he whispered, regaining control and wanting to ease her mind, but knowing his would remind him of his everlasting mistake. "Let's forget this nonsense and go to sleep."

The following day, his oldest was posing the same questions again. "Daddy," Jessica looked puzzled, "What's a war?"

Jonathan sat up, startled. Trying to sound casual he replied. "When countries don't agree with each other it sometimes causes a war. War causes many people to lose their life, and nothing is solved." He knew his daughter could not possibly understand the cynicism he meant, and he didn't want her to.

"Is that what happened to all of my friends? Did they die in a war?" Jessica asked.

"Your friends did not die in a war," he stated. "Where did you hear the word war anyway?" As he asked the question, the answer formed in his own mind, and his heart ached with sadness.

"Momma told me to get your pants this morning out of the back room to be washed, and I found this in them." The small newspaper clipping stared back at him from his daughter's delicate hand.

"I do not have time to discuss such trivial questions with you, Jessica. Don't you need to go and help your mother in the garden?" Her father seemed to be quite irritated, so she quickly turned from him.

"Yes, sir," she replied, heading for her mother and the ceaseless garden she knelt in.

"How could she still remember her school mates after all this time alone? I've tried so hard to make her forget. I can't believe I kept that silly newspaper scrap. Why should I care about a world so different? I left it once, and I will never return. Maybe the Indian was right; this place is not to live in. It is only meant for the Indians' spirits.

As the evening passed, Jonathan's mind raced from memory to confusion. He could clearly remember his life in West Virginia, the small farm, the changing reds, browns, and oranges of fall trees. "I never should have brought them here. I wish things were different, but they will never be. Years will pass, and I will still

be forty-one years old. My precious daughters will never have children; Samuel will never know what a real man is meant to be. He won't have his own home and farm to control as he ought to." At that moment, he decided to make his family's lives right again.

The winter had come and taken what remained of life from the wood beyond the fence. Most of the deer and other animals had left for the winter or had begun to take refuge for the day. His unanswerable questions grew and after several weeks of being alone and trapped in life while death laughed at him, he had begun to grow weak. He would never let his family know the horror the world had become. As he returned home that evening, Jonathan ignored his beloved wife and even slept without her.

The following morning as he left for hunting, Jonathan knew he needed to take the children with him. "Hannah," he called, "Get the children ready. They're going with me today." It was strange for her husband to order her about in such a strict manner, and without saying a word, she obeyed him.

"Here are the children," Hannah spoke softly. "Why do you want to take them today? I could really use their help cleaning the house."

Then, with a coldness Hannah did not know her husband possessed, he said, "That's none of your concern now. Just leave it in my hands."

She stood in the front yard watching the clothes flap on the line, wanting to run, to cry, "Please, John, leave my babies," but she could only stand. She felt as if she was the only one left in a world in which she herself was only a dream. She did not understand her husband's harsh actions over the past months but was afraid to confront him. She just slowly turned and walked back to the cold, hard porch and heard it creak with pain as she sat on the wooden step.

"Children," Jonathan spoke with wide, glaring eyes, "We're going to do some exploring today. Remember the stories I told you about treasure hunters and pirates? Well, we're going to hunt for a treasure that little children can only dream of possessing." With blind faith, his children followed the man who had controlled their fate throughout life. Knowing nothing of pain or death, they found themselves in a world of wonderment as their merciful leader drew them closer to the confining gate.

"Daddy," Samuel screamed with delight, "Look!" His small eyes grew with curiosity as excited fear swept over his unknowing body. Within seconds, his sisters were standing next to him, staring at the dead forest beyond the cracked white gate.

"What's wrong with the forest?" Jessica shouted in shock. "There's no grass and no leaves on the trees."

Jonathan smiled peacefully and spoke, "They've

shed their leaves to hide the treasures." He then walked toward the gate and placed his hand on the wood. A cold chill ran up his arm as the pain of what was about to occur sprung into his consciousness. He could feel death tingle in his fingertips. Then, with love, he opened the gate. There was a small creak as the rusted latch fell loose and the gate began to swing open. As life flowed from him to the fence, he heard the creaking cease and saw the broken hinge begin to mend itself.

"Come children," he shouted, "Let the glorious treasure hunt begin."

As the children raced toward the fence, Hannah's cry came from behind the foliage. "Jonathan, where are my children?" Although Jonathan heard her cry, he could not understand it. He was engrossed by the barrier and his family.

They crossed almost simultaneously. Then, there was nothing. The children he loved disappeared before his very eyes. His wife fell to her knees in horror and disbelief. "What have you done?" She screamed as her tears fell to her full, blue skirt. He never said anything in reply. Then Hannah rose, tearless, and began to walk toward the open gate. Staring in the vacant eyes of the man she once respected, she waited. He looked through her and toward the tattered fence.

"Look at me," she demanded. As his vision began to focus on her face he saw the hate. Her hair was hanging against her forehead and was matted to her left cheek. Hannah's fine complexion was now reddened by anger and hurt.

Finally, with all the coldness she could find in her heart, Hannah said, "Never die, Jonathan." She turned with determination and walked through the gate.

He sat down in the same thick patch of moss he had stood in when his wife and children left his life. He felt nothing. "I was right. I helped them," he repeated over and over again in his mind. As he heard a sparrow begin to sing in a treetop overhead, he stood to his feet. Jonathan looked once more at the boundary which confined him and saw the gate still standing open. A few feet across the gate, amidst the suffocating dead leaves, bloomed four blue gentians. He knew in his heart those flowers would bloom from season to season throughout every year, and for the only time in his endless life, he felt remorse.

Amy L. Lee

Summertimes

(For Robin)

It really was a wonderful summer.
We had peaches and penumbras;
while Ginsburg showed us the power
one word could express,
we sat at the center
and shared many nonetheless,
and sang together sweet tunes,
soaked in friendship like children
at recess in June,
or innocents under the first full light
from a new August moon.

After these moments,
and summertimes since,
I've searched my soul through
for the right words within,
but find these thoughts failing
to bring true recompense.

Jon Eric Johnson

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

Susan Brand is currently exploring new areas of study. She is no Maya Angelou or Margaret Atwood, but she occasionally writes a decent poem. She is a two year alumnus of the Literalines editorial board, and her work has appeared in previous issues.

Marge Bruns is enjoying her last semester at IUPUC. She will be student teaching in the fall of '96 and cannot wait to get in the classroom. When asked why she chose Elementary Education, she said she would rather take care of children who need it than adults who do not. Photography is a hobby which could easily become a passion.

J. Michael Buchanan is a senior at IUPUC majoring in Secondary Education / English. He and his wife, Tracy, have two children, Megan and Alex. Jeff believes that if you take care of the little things in life, the big things will take care of themselves. Having said that, his greatest hope is for his children to become kind human beings.

Beatrice D. Eldridge is a daughter, sister, wife, mother, and a second grade teacher. She began writing poetry in fourth grade and seeks its shelter during difficult times. She is grateful for the opportunity to submit work and see it published.

Travis Fendley is an English major who writes fiction and poetry but not bios.

Kevin Greenlee has met a child molester, a murderer, and Bob Dole.

Matthew Grubaugh loves writing fiction and has an infatuation with poetry which led him to make submissions to Literalines. When he is not writing fiction, he works as a journalist for the Jackson County Banner.

Shayla Holtkamp is a senior Exercise Science major who will receive a Bachelors degree in Kinesiology in the spring of 1996. She presently teaches classes for the Wellness Program at Columbus Regional Hospital and the Health, Physical Education and Recreation department at Indiana University. She is married and has two children, a fifteen-year-old son and a twelve-year-old daughter.

Jon Eric Johnson is a senior who will graduate in May of 1996 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in English. He looks forward to graduate school, where he shall continue studies in the English language, literature, and the writing process while pursuing a Ph.D. He wishes to teach college-level English courses and publish original works of prose and poetry.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

Robin L. Kares is relieved to have survived her third issue of *Literalines*. She says the *Literalines* board makes her feel 25 again! More than anything else, Robin is our best friend, our favorite instructor, and an outstanding magazine advisor. Thanks for everything, Robin.

Amy L. Lee is a sophomore majoring in Elementary Education who enjoys a diversity of subjects, from paleontology to voice. She enjoys I.U. basketball and complains when the season is over. Amy has lived in Columbus all her life and hopes to work locally upon graduating.

L. Keith Loyd continues to support wetland preservation as he prepares to graduate. Keith wishes to dedicate his participation in this issue of *Literalines* to his wife, Gerry, who has supported him in his scholastic efforts.

Sarah Malcomb has a beautiful and delightful daughter, Evelyn, who appears in several of her poems. Sarah likes black leather, cowboy boots and chocolate--although unlike Evelyn, these have yet to make an appearance in her poetry.

Julie DeVine Phillips is finding poetry in her thirties. With her husband of thirteen years, her two sons, singing, and school, she is blessed. Working on her double Secondary Education Major of Communications/Theater and English, she has just enough time to fit in a ball game and some Gwendolyn Brooks.

Deona Sadler is studying for her Bachelors in Secondary Education, as an English major and psychology minor. She is a wife and a mother of three and hopes to pursue a writing career alongside teaching, with an emphasis in the genres of poetry and short fiction.

John Shepard doesn't always know what he's drawing. He begins with a fragment of an idea--or sometimes, if he's lucky, a complete idea--and goes from there, often scaring himself with the results. When he's not drawing (which is, unfortunately, too often these days) he's working full-time at Columbus PBX (which has changed its name by the time you read this), designing World Wide Web pages.

Dara Tormoehlen is a junior majoring in English. She tries to divide her time equally between children, school and work (HA!). She is discovering modern poetry and likes the work of Etheridge Knight and Maya Angelou.

