

apostrophe

1161

Instructional
Materials
Center
High Point College



1969
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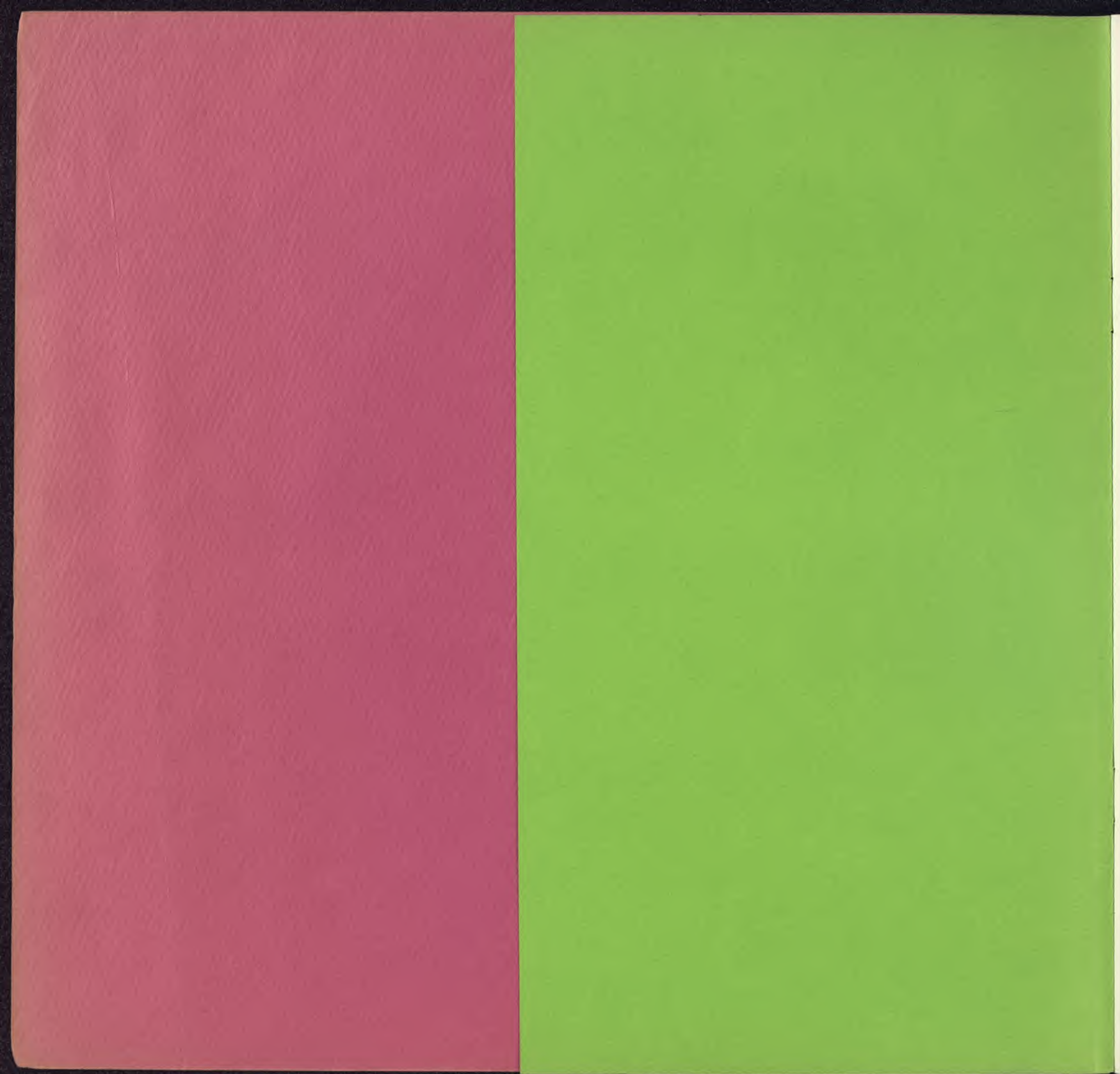
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Portrait

Lyn Nevitt



Soft Breath of the Robin

In te speravi;
Ne me perdas illa die.

In solitude He stands, attentive.
One hand extended,
Holding dim Winter's Light
Which celebrates upon His face,
Barring Night's Virgin.

Frost,
Exhalation of Granite Physicians
Yields unctuous care
For violets in daisies' disguise.

Reverberations embrace
The embryo of Spring
With the crack of oval calico.

Dry leaves from a forgotten Fall
Rattle as bones from neglected graves.
Her womb's two scars,
Rebellion—hegira sought,
Melancholy—retrograded concourse,
Mortal imbrications.

Mid-Light's silvan silhouettes
Foliaged feather black
Anxiously murmur the Moment:

Shadowed Shadow,
Cool 'twixt midnight and morn,
Upon Clytemnestra's Herald
Fall.

I.

To green bars
Among gray pines hidden
Came He to another day,
Seeking the Blue Gate
Beyond the needles,
Beyond the storm.

Upon the ground were laid
A pointed, youthful elm,
A safety-pinned cape,
Blanket of august dreams.



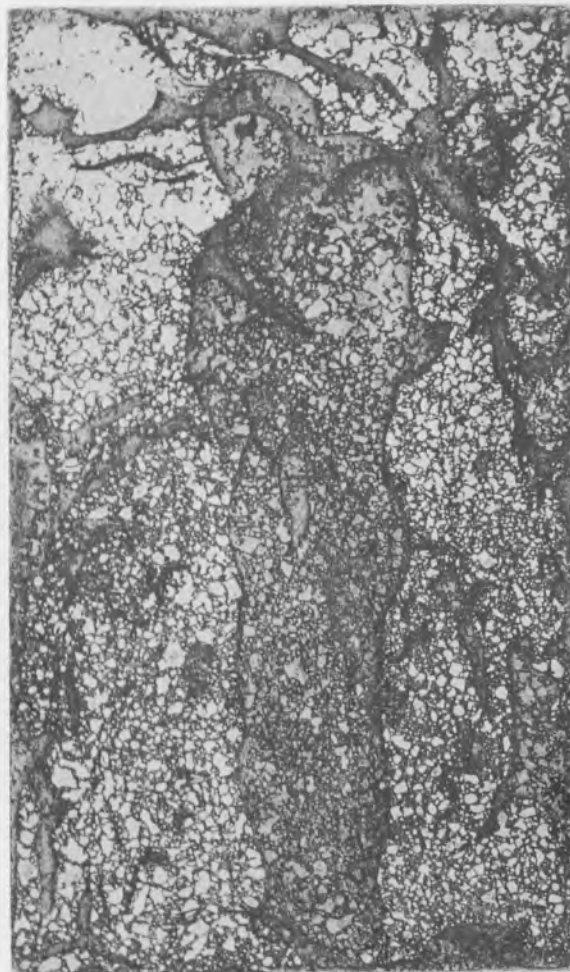
Portrait

Lyn Nevitt

And He swang,
Striving with every kick
Of dusty, bare feet
To meet the Dreamer's call.
Only He heard
The harsh campfire voices
Of bivouacked centuries;
Only He smelled
The redolent perfume
Of gardens now lost of silt;
Only He touched
The immortal, naked corpses
Of Time's participants;
Only He saw
The fateful, sublime reality
Of Life.
And He played
For two tens of years
Before and beyond
The Dreamer's Blue Gate.

II.

Peace,
Happiness,
Conversations within,
Man's morsels of earth
Devoured by Time.
Journey begun,
Endless quest
With seasons to perform
The Sentry's duties;
Dressed in scars
He stands.



Night Shadows

Karen Czarny

From the extended hand
Burns brightly the candle,
Beacon for the stray,
Guide for the quest,
Light for the hollow cave—
The Blind Viewer escaped.
Shadows,
Guarded by spotless leopards,
Search the Night,
Murmurs to identify.
Silence sweeps the air
As the Winged Approacher nears
The ignoble Sentry
Standing in atrophy.
Before Him
The Robin hovers,
Peering,
Penetrating,
Fathoming
The Flame's reflection
Of the Sentry's courage.
Questions the Robin:
How long
This obsequious recognition
Uniformed Coward?
Now long
This superfluous watch
Awaiting shadowed morn?
How long
Those nebulous thoughts
Of myopic consciousness?
For you,

Sentry's of the Blue Gate,
Messenger of the Dreamer's Call,
Know this,
Know no more:
Beams brighter burn
For less noble sentries.

III.

By the Breath of the Robin
The beaconing light upon Courage
Is darkened.

Upon the ebony roof
Falls the Robin's tears.
Crystalline paths
Of molten future flowing,
Gentler Spirit convulsed
By uncarnal treason.

Pluck hard
At your chest,
Darkened sentry.
Bathe these moments crimson:
Life,
Love . . .
Lost.

Memories
To flight as the Robin
Must go,
Higher,
Further,
Beyond awareness
Of the Cold Ember,
Fleeting streamer of gray,
Scented recollections
Of mortal grace.

Soft Breath of the Robin,
Mysterious kiss
Of Shadows
To awakening souls,
How fears He the embrace.

Cold fear,
Loneliness,
Memories' ember ashen,
Hand still extended.

Sounds the Cock,
The Robin's nobler conscience;
Flees the Robin,
As light ran before the flame.

Dim, sparkled mist
Descends,
Descends instinctive chills,
Reflections of ago
As ruins decayed and lost.

IV.

In myriads of shadows
Seeks He the touch
Of single petal rose.
The rounded dagger
From moistened wound,
The breach of ivory,
Murmurs unintelligibly.

By the Soft Breath
Of the Robin
Lay the Sentry down.
Silence this hour
In proper due
The Dreamer's Child.
No hymn of Jay or Dove
Ascend;
No morn to exalt.

Robin's Soft Breath
Of Love,
Of Death,
Mortal Sentry's
Fall.

Willie Shaw

With Funerals and Flowers

I can see you chasing the colors
Of the wind and laughing
With funerals in your hair and Jesus in
Flowers draped with iron and crimson crepe,
And time was when with amaryllis and sand
One could hear the pallbearers' hair smile,
Then shuffle that drape in clowns and
Coffins with sod with echoes while pins
Cringe.

With ships and lace, coal in your heart;
The nuns parade like rabid bats, so
With love and One Rue Jules Ferry.
Montronges, I can still see you free
With funerals in your hair and Jesus in
Flowers Beckoned by a plastic syringe.
To a cross and a grave where
Stains of burial tears are braided by bodies,
Where rape is sterile and disposable,,
Capsuled Death Huddled.
And time was when with amaryllis and sand
I could hear the candle in your widow's veil,
Feel the peacocks in your corpse and stand,
Watching the breath of funeral whispers in your hand.

Bob Donovan



Stylized

Lyn Nevitt

The Rain

The rain falls so silently,
And yet so noisily,
For it reminds me of my love.

My love,
The love that used to walk with me through rain, and snow,
and sunshine.

The love that talked, and listened, and understood,
The love that made the silence as beautiful as the conversation.

Yes, my love,
The love that has flown,
Flown for fear of being hurt.
He did not know that loving always hurts,
Hurts like the raindrops
Falling alone until joined with another drop
Till they fall to the ground
And spread their love all over the earth.
They loved, I lost, I hurt,
But I loved.

The rain gives itself and is not sorry.
I give myself and am not sorry.
It loved.
I loved.

Monica Schwegel

See the Night Come Darkly

Some see the night come darkly,
with staring eyes and silent
footfalls; and it may be just
the absence of day that blackens
half-a-world at the time.

The washed-out shadows on a moon
stand out in early evening, before
the harrowing embers of the sun
disappear; in this cloud the awakened
minds wonder
at their smallness, while the
sleeping continue bother-free.

The hours slowly touch minutes, even
seconds, and eternal ticks
reach out
for the listener.

Passing, passing—
everything shaded grey-white-black, warnings
seen in the half-light on the grain of a
wooden floor; one standing
faded in his image,
simonized,
serialized.

Early sunbursts scorch pillows under
heavy eyes, drive a weariness
to the brain; morning light
burns cold at six.

Don Staley



Whooo?

Karen Czarny

On the night of February 9, 1967, I was standing at trackside, armed with a tape-recorder to catch the symphony of sound stirred by a passing passenger train. It began to snow. Time passed. An hour and a quarter later I was still standing, ankle deep in the downy silt. Cold and soaked to the bone, I was strangely warmed when she finally came: here was a living personality whose days were indeed numbered by a loathsome carcinoma—declining passenger traffic. When would she hear the curtain call? A month . . . maybe a year? I was moved to compose this ode at the site of the recording, an ode to my dying friend: *The Passenger Train*.

The Asheville Special on a Snowy Night

As a dingy moon casts its dingy glow across the snow-whitened fields, long, low whistle blasts re-echo across the hill. Minutes pass. Then the horizon brightens to the approaching headlight gleam. Suddenly the brow of Engine 6142 pops unannounced around the curve to the south, her crystal beam turning the white snowflakes into black silhouettes. Drifting downhill, and with neither whistle nor bell, she glides gently past at a lazy twenty miles an hour, entirely lacking in the familiar rush and laborings and frenzied pantings and screaming whistle and clanging bell of the traditional train. Even though two hours and forty minutes late, the Engineer is not beating his hog on the back to make up the lost time, for on his previous trip, attempting to run off an hour-and-twenty-minute delay on this stretch of track, he wheeled over a grade crossing at high speed and smashed into an automobile, killing a woman passenger. But tonight the hog slides easily past, crisply crunching the crust of ice from the frosty railheads, and the three green mail cars and passenger coach roll slowly by in its path, whickty-whack, whickty-whack . . . They, too, pass on by . . . The rear end, now some yards away, seems momentarily to pause in her descent into the valley, with markers aglow and her red platform lantern burning brightly, swaying from side to side, presenting a lovely pastoral in subdued, silvery colors. As she recedes into the silvery night, snow falls obliquely to cover her tracks, and clouds of the downy flake, stirred from their soft rest, spew gently outward and upward in undulating circles from the rear set of wheels, circling and falling, circling and falling, covering the *Special's* wake. The last car bounces upward time and again as she slowly rolls away down the track. The end of the olive-green coach, body, and steps flared downward, becomes obscured by the mist of flakes, then the yellow glow from the circular vestibule door-glass dies, and finally the markers and lantern, only seconds ago having stung the night, now burn out in the milky sea. She is gone. *The Asheville Special* is gone, lost again in the silky, shallow night. But her sound lingers momentarily: the 6142 opens up into a phantom chant as she begins to tear through the valley, gaining momentum for the hill ahead. Two brief crossing calls, and *The Asheville Special*, Southern Railroad train #22, has gone, lost forever in the night.

Biff Burnett

Poetry Is the Other Me

Poetry is the other me
the one no one can see.
it's the me that loves
and wants something more
from life than just to be alive.
This me is alive in my mind
it hides behind the sea and calls to the known me
from a sea gulls wing and a whimpering reed.
But I am me.
Me writes what I feels.
we all get lost in the other self.
poetry brings us together.

Jan Henry

Today I Felt the Wind

Today, I felt the wind rush by my naked face;
I thought eternity had brushed my cheek.
Soon after, the darkness followed in its wake,
And in the silence, I could scarcely seek
The darkness or the wind—my final resting place.

Alice Seymour

The Cave

It was a small cave. Merely a tiny opening in a rocky cove. The mouth was a small slit worn smooth from the constant pounding of the ocean. There was a line of rocks on either side of the cave that stretched out to feed the coming tides directly into the mouth. The rock funnel channeled the tide as it rose and forced its way into the tiny aperture of the alcove.

The gently washing tide lapped pleasantly at the smooth rock and filtered back into the recesses of the cave. Deep into the inner core, where no light had shone for all the time in the sea's memory. So dark that even the waves knew the rocks only by the feel of their polished surface. Another wave washed gently in and savored the cool green stone.

The tide swelled and boiled and made stronger assaults on the folds of the opening. The rising water began to crash over the cave's crest and flow on to the walls of the cove. Each violent lunge of the water showed more of the lichen covering of the rocks and brought them to life. The swirling thrusts of the water crashed up through the funnel and washed omnipotently into the dark cavern.

The cave changed from passive acceptance to actively reaching out and sucking in all of each foaming wave. Each wave shook the structure of the cave and then filled it with salty foam. The fury of the rising tide approached the climax that would signal the beginning of a new cycle. The cave had become engulfed in the power of the tide and was no longer visible.

With no more obstacles in the cove, the tide triumphantly shot its last violent tongues over the cave's crest. The shudder in the cave suddenly ebbed and the final air pocket filled and sent bubbles carrying briny foam to the surface. The waves stopped their thrashing just as suddenly and flowed calmly over the cove caressing all the memories of its triumph as it passed its climax.

The malevolence of the tide had turned to loving yearning as the water slowly began its return to the vast oceans. As it descended over the cave top it drew all of its forced power and sucked all the available strength in a final effort to prove its dominance and sate its desires. Shrinking, shriveling, caressing, careening, it passed over the cave and swelled back out through the directing lines of rocks.

The cave emptied and stood once more with its dark secrets covered from the probing eyes of the ocean. The rocks dried and regained their austere black. The floor of the cave accepted the final licks of the waves as they strained to reach into the heart of nature's secure chastity.

The sea retreated and regrouped while a spelunker came over the beach with his gleaming synthetic eyes.

L. H. McGavin

The Exile

Snuffed martyrs wallow in shallow sobriety,
Combing the oasis of doubt,
Expecting a cathartic evolution,
Longing for the caress of manic anxieties.

We run barefoot in shackles.

Our timeless halo of insanity hangs somberly
Over a downtown heart,
While a scarecrow of desolate black spots
Shivers a bale of solemnity.

We run barefoot in shackles.

Plebeians of fawning hope
Dissolve
Into the old party of inherent clemency.
Feigning the sympathy of sadness.

We run barefoot in shackles.

Attending our cross of sorrow,
We bleed tears of salt and slander,
And transpose for hours three
In a torrent of grey vanity.

"Woman, behold thy son,"
Running barefoot in shackles.

Bob Donovan



Reminiscence

Karen Czarny

Remembering

Silence now.
Only your breathing
To remind me
Of fleeting moments past,
When that geiser of ecstasy
Put out the raging fire
In our souls.
I remember softest emotions
Rising in torrents
And racing to fill our heads
With secret dreams
Known only to the warmth
Of an embrace—surging heat
That melted us together
In a final frantic grasp—
For eternity.
We were never quite close enough, though;
Never close enough to catch hold;
For the power finally burst through,
Leaving us limp and lifeless
With joy!
I remember a golden moment of love
As I watch you sleep,
And wonder—
Do you remember, too?

Marilyn Hull

Dual Face

Dangers of the morning revive my fear.
People in the background of life appear
Casting hate and jealousy in the stillness of love
Pausing only to watch a tear.
Towering only in a fool's land
These people treasure the crumbling of a man,
But in their soul, they deafen their plea for love
Pausing only to find an empty hand.
The distant tempest is magnified.
Retrospecting, I listen from far and wide
To the broken fidelity of friendship's vow
Pausing only to share your cry.
Dreams of the stars weave a storm
Concealing truth so welcome—worn.
I believe in trying to untie these ruins
Pausing only to feel forlorn.

Bill Leslie

Rachel

*Behold, thou art fair, my love;
behold, thou art fair—Canticles*

Accidentally, I discovered a dusty, red journal—no, not in the attic, but neatly packed among some favorite volumes bequeathed me by a late friend. Puzzled, I lifted the leather-bound book and brushed the brown, musty substance from its back. "LGR," it read. I opened the journal and began to read at random:

I do not know what it was about Rachel that first attracted my attention—I say attracted; yet, it was more than that—it was rather like a leaf being caught in the vortex of a whirlwind, whispering heavenward. I do remember that September day she sat there alone in the stillness of the new dining hall needing someone. O sweet void! I say I was attracted—sucked in, as it were—by her prepossessing posture.

When she quit her quiet perch, I was waiting patiently down the path. As I turned, my eyes fixed on her half-smile. "Hi." My gaze mirrored her monosyllable. There was nothing to say—I mean I had no pretext. Yet I could detect an aura of distraction hovering about her being. "Well—uh," I stuttered. The twittering of the birds, the whap-whap-whap of acorns smashing against the sidewalk—snatched prematurely from their berths by scurrying squirrels, the traffic of crickets chattering incessantly, provided a vivid contrast to the cacophonous orchestration of guttural sounds issuing from my lips. An idea, nourished by a draught drawn by the diaphragm up the esophagus, past the larynx, through the pharynx—pauses. I hesitate. The would-be words escape unuttered.

Many other encounters followed that first meeting. The results were always the same; the same flutter, the same stutter, the same sense of utter failure—always reaching, ever groping, never grasping. I thought of Rachel as an airy sprite, or perhaps a bird just five fingers away.

As our visits—I like to call them visits; they were always special occasions for me—as our visits became more frequent, I grew more sensitive (perhaps "exposed" would be a better word) to her problem. At first she shrouded her secret with silence, offering me little access to her paper-doll world. It was a world of summer-grass and dandelions and daffodils: "Oh, look at the pretty flowers!" she mews, nestling her breast in her arms and shivering with delight. "Did you ever feel so happy you just wanted to tell somebody about it?" I didn't. Not then. She reminds me of the lady down the street who died from leukemia last summer. She was happy, too. She never knew. Rachel's well-being seems to play the same note, kisses the same false key.

I think of Rachel, waking. The floor feels cold to my feet, the shower wet to my back. Toothpaste and spittle splash in the sink and breakfast begins at 6:30. We talk low over toast and coffee and I can't eat. Rachel watches as I'm leaving, washroom looming, stomach retching, "God, I'm dying." Lying later in my chamber, I recall with glowing anger the too familiar reoccurrence of this recalcitrant reaction, but I could find no cause to suit my satisfaction.

Rachel has an affinity for ribbons. Usually pink. Rose pink to match her blush when I stare. Introvert. I peer into her brown eyes to see if they dilate. Work intervenes. I seldom see Rachel anymore. I try to capture her in my thoughts: chestnut hair and cream complexion, cherry lips and chocolate eyes—wandering in the woods for hours or walking barefoot in the rain, white toes squishing through wetgrass. Reflections I try to trap in ink—just so:

TO RACHEL

*Elusive sprite who e'er evades,
Yet soothes my soul like silent glades;
Who beauty sees in grassy blades
Of green—and leaves; all hues, all shades;
O Laughter's child, that child of Mirth,
Who knows how much a smile is worth;
Who barefoot feels the rain-soaked earth
When clouds to dewy drops give birth;
Sweet bird of Youth, who walks on air,
Who wears a ribbon in her hair,
Who makes the woods her constant lair;
Whom angels love with loving care;
Will ever soothe, will ever laugh,
Will ever walk, serene seraph?*

Faint iambs? A rap on the door concludes the exercise, and I lay it aside, unfinished. Later, returning to my labors, I find that futile feeling of failure fostered by dead ideas and dry ink. I push the paper away. I think I know how Coleridge must have felt—bending low, brooding, as it were—trying to breathe life into the dying "Kubla Khan." Ideas, like cement, once set, lose their flexibility, becoming sterile, unvirile, virgin-hard.

It's cold. The January snow whistles off the rooftops in white, wispy clouds; the wind whips the barren arms of the trees, etched in gray against the winter landscape. Rachel left today—left me with only the memory of those sad eyes and a little red astronaut from a Crackerjack box. I watched her as she left, growing smaller and smaller in the distance until swallowed by the virgin snow.

The sharp ring of the telephone interrupted my reading. I laid the journal gently aside, having carefully marked my place with a red-leather marker. I lit a cigarette as I removed the receiver.

"Hello?" a voice queried. "Rachel?"

Steve Kennedy

Cracks in a Crystal Shadow

A pop-top wedding band given in lust,
Payment for an evening's frolic—
A kaleidoscope of silvery shadows
Conceals the face of one who loved.
Time crawled through the window
And ravaged sublimity.
Past pain—tomorrow's existence.

Cruelty has an angel's face
Complete with ethereal luminescence.
Love is haggard and time-worn.
Silvery shadows recede into darkness.
A crystal glow remains.
Encasing the loins of one who loved
In an icy armor of virginal madness.

Linda M. Crowder

Cellophane Hearts

Sweeping sensitivity brushes
the fading illusion—
Maneuvering reality pierces
imagined beauty, as peeling symbols
slither from impartial walls.
Sensing lurking shadows,
Morning glories clamp their petals tightly—
quivering. Their inner radiance
growing dim, as the glistening
sunrise soon overpowers the petals
as a glare.
Sharp light penetrates
cellophane hearts while vulnerable minds
panic, run, and hide.
Failing to find opaque shelters,
reason is jolted—but smiles again when
meeting emotion.

Linda C. Smith

To Talking Girl Lately Sad

Talking girl—in the
Spring and summer when the heat
Is in the trees—talking girl with
A voice of mature winds and reed-thin
Inches of laughter: a strange economy
Of emotion and language, talking girl
So quiet as your laughter means more to me
Than my world, say that which first
Hides beneath the shade, You are
Taller this year, and irony
Storms like wisdom from your mouth.
A head framed in black—a matted
Mantilla of hair that shines and does not
Shine, but pouts and runs and is wet
With rain.
Talking girl whose laughter means more to me
Than my world, talking girl who told me
The color of the wind, why is it that
In the winter you seem to die?

Bob Donovan

On a Sandy Dune

A flower grows on a sandy dune;
Just waiting for someone.
Softly it whispers,
"I'm here, find me."
I see it there on that dune.
"Run, run I'm falling,
Catch me, pluck me; I'm yours.
Hold me close, lick my dew,
Feel my beauty.
I'm dying, save me.
Love me,
I'm yours,
I'm life."

Jan Henry



Aquatint Etching-Fallen

Mimi Bratt

The Human Tragedy

Brightly colored clowns, wart-nosed witches, ghastly ghosts, and numerous storybook characters filled the streets of Johnstown. It was Halloween night, and all the neighborhood kids were out trick-or-treating . . . that is, all but Sally Masefield. Sally, a ten-year-old motherless girl, was left at home to care for her younger brother Johnny, aged three, while her father had gone out to perform his nightly ritual . . . getting drunk. Mr. Masefield made a good salary on his bridge construction job but failed to use it either for the improvement of his home or for his children's appearance. Nearly all of his earnings were squandered for alcoholic beverages. Although most of the Johnstown neighborhood looked prosperous, the Masefields' house was an eyesore to the township. The appearance of both the children and the house reflected utter neglect.

As Sally rested a moment after she finished washing the supper dishes, she thought about all the kids who were going trick-or-treating and wished that she could be among them. One thing she would not have to worry about would be a costume. She would be without question the best-dressed Raggedy Ann of the young masqueraders. Thinking of her younger brother who had been left in her care, she dismissed all her thoughts of getting goodies as the other children would be doing. Settling down in a chair, she prepared to do her homework.

Suddenly there was a hard knock at the door. "Who could that be?" she wondered. "No one ever visits us." She peered out the window but was unable to recognize the unexpected visitors.

Slowly opening the door, she observed two husky figures, attired in devil's costumes, who gruffly demanded, "Trick-or-treat!"

What was she to do? There was nothing in the house to eat. "I . . . I'm sorry," she said stumbly, "but I have nothing to give you."

"Well, " the larger devil said, "it looks like she's in for the treatment."

"The treatment," Sally thought. "What are they going to do to me?" She slammed the door quickly and ran into her little brother's room. Awakening him, she forced him to crawl under the rickety old bed with her. Johnny, ignorant of what had happened but aware something was wrong, started to cry. Sally, trembling with fear, tried to quiet him.

Meanwhile, the boys, believing they had scared Sally enough, laughed at their joke and went on their way. Sally, however, unaware of their departure, lay as still as a mouse, waiting for something to happen. Finally, Johnny, who had been awakened from his sleep, returned to his restful slumber. Sally, after an hour of waiting, also fell asleep.

About midnight Mr. Masefield returned home, thoroughly intoxicated, singing loudly and incoherently as he stumbled into the house. He was a large man who weighed about two hundred and fifty pounds, and his noisy entrance into the house would have normally awakened any person. The children, however, had become accustomed to these disruptive entrances and continued their peaceful rest under the dilapidated bed. Masefield, not only drunk but also completely exhausted from a hard day's work, entered the closer of the two bedrooms in the house, hoping the bed was empty. Finding unoccupied the bed under which the children were asleep, he heavily collapsed on it. The sagging bed suddenly broke and fell heavily to the floor. Two little cries, muffled underneath a mass of twisted metal, were unnoticed by the inebriated parent, who instantly fell asleep.

Alexis Hinkle

To: RBP

You are but a shadow now, new stranger,
in memory's land without setting
sun.

And in the chill of the darkness,
your passing,
I stand tearful with salute to you—
your hand I held but once.

On the eve of need I drew more than truth;
Laughing reality broke the sentimental
hope,

Even now, scattered again be the pieces.

So I will walk alone, feeling the new
frost, seeing life its greenest
in labor before rest, hear farewells
of unseen robins,

And I will try not to think of you,
to plan for us.

Willie Shaw

Your Picture

So much of color and paper, and your image
looking boldly from an instant frozen
to infinity and me.

And as time deepens a gap that sends me to
pen and tears, I seek you from so much
color and paper, too.

If I were less of spirit and more of man,
perhaps this burden of dreams would
ease,

But is not the spirit physicked by the
dream of a tomorrow of sacred time

Willie Shaw

To: JH

The snow reminds me of you,
It snowed tons of you today
And I felt you in my hair—
A winter friend.

I remember chestnut hair
Wind-kissed cheeks
The wet surprise of your mouth
And the whisper of your eyes.

The snow reminds me of you.
It snowed tons of you today
And I tried to catch you
In my hands.

I remember chestnut hair
Brown lashes
The kisses in your smile
And the laughter in your eyes.

The snow reminds me of you.
It snowed tons of you today
And I held you in my arms
And then you were gone

And now I know the meaning of love.

Steve Kennedy

Mailbox-Watching

When I think of the Jayhawker,
Classic images—
Cottonwood and hanging trees;
The maternal parent of hamster food;
Towering white symbols of infant Communism;
Piercing screams of a passing freight;
Old Front Street;
Wax manikins of Matt and Festus;
The Longbranch and Delmonico's;
Saddles, leather, and bowlegs;
The smell of ozone; (Man's ethical disguise)
Eternal grainfields bound only by asphalt ribbons;
And black iron seesaws—
Fall victim to

memories
of

A fifty-dollar-a-month walk-up;
Shelves overpouring with literature
That smiles at having been explored

and understood;

A family of scurrying gerbils
Content to eat, sleep, and

m l p y;
u t i l

Burning incense that blankets
The fragrance of burning grass;
A young man,
Confused and disillusioned
By technical placement of the juco,
And the death of RFK,
And life;

The evolution of empathy into love—
A love unsurpassed by even

the confusion and disillusionment—

A love that held the future's hand
until

Necessity and Ego

p-u-l-l-e-d me

away.

Fond memories breed discontent.
I wish I were flying to Kansas
Instead of mailbox-watching.

Marilyn Hull

The Tie of Fate

Whenever I was treated to a visit to the third floor, the old chest in the attic of my boyhood home always attracted my attention. It rested in the far corner, covered with a heavy layer of dust and cobwebs. Although it stood alone and in plain sight, the chest's contents never found a place in my memory. Now that the old house was being torn down, my sister and I volunteered to help our mother clean out the unnecessary bits of furniture and other needless household effects.

Moving the chest from the third floor to the first was a very demanding job. The combined weight of the chest and its contents was about seventy pounds, and carrying it down the steps required careful attention. After a difficult struggle we finally reached our desired destination, setting the chest down in the middle of the den floor. We then decided that while we were taking a short coffee break we would open the chest and disclose its long-hidden contents. Mother's presence helped in the identification of keepsakes, the strangest being an article in a copy of the Crownsville BUGLE dated August, 1919. The brown, dried, cracked paper was fragile, and the corners shredded in my hands as I unfolded it. With careful handling, however, we found that the article and picture connected to it were about the steeple of St. Andrew's church on Henry Street.

My sister and I knew from early childhood that the original steeple had fallen a few years before our birth, and Mother soon provided the reason for saving the article and explained to us how it concerned our family.

As she disclosed the story, time suddenly stood still. To our surprise and interest we suddenly realized Mother was telling of Dad's courtship, a story never known to us before.

The year was 1919. As a young man Dad worked as a clerk in the office of Fairchild's Department Store, a large building located in the center of town. It was here he was learning the art of bookkeeping and the exactness of figures. His eventual success as a public accountant could be attributed to his early experience and training at Fairchild's.

At the time Dad was a true perfectionist; exacting in manner, precise with figures and exceptionally neat in dress. These characteristics were never apparent to my sister and me, for the man we knew and remembered did not display these traits. To us and to our close friends he was a man's man and somewhat of the "old shoe type."

Dad had made a date with Mother for exactly 9:15 on a late evening in August. The occasion was the Fairchild's company dance, an annual affair and the big event of their courting years. Dad always took the same route to Mother's home approximately six blocks from his boarding house. Down Henry Street to Second Avenue, two long blocks on Second to Adams to her house, 6416. He had this route timed carefully so that he would always arrive at the exact minute he specified with Mother. On this evening, as on others, he walked, saving his money for the trip by carriage to the dance and home again.

As he began to dress he had already planned in his mind the exact schedule he would follow in order to be ready at the appropriate time. He had shaved in four minutes, bathed in eight and was well on his way to complete his dressing in his regular time of six minutes, a schedule similar to the regimented one he followed every morning. His decision to wear a bow tie given to him by Mother on his birthday ruined the precise schedule he always enjoyed. The difficulty he encountered when trying to manipulate the tie into a neat, compact bow was a challenge, a challenge he would not release even to adhere to his rigid time schedule of dress nor to his important arrival time at 6416 Adams. The first knot was fairly good, but it would not suffice for an important occasion like this. He tried again and again, but each succeeding attempt was progressively worse. Time flew by, and finally Dad decided to let the tie hang, hoping Mother would be able to complete the job on the way to the dance.

Taking one minute to brush his shoes, he suddenly felt the stillness of the night. As was his habit, he glanced at his watch only to find it was 8:58. The quiet which surrounded him a minute before was disappearing. A light breeze was picking up and becoming increasingly more violent all the time.

Dad was off schedule three minutes, and this upset him more than he cared to admit. He realized that if he was going to make up his lost time he must take a short cut. Although he disliked the idea of leaving his usual route along Henry, he knew it was the only way he could get back on schedule.

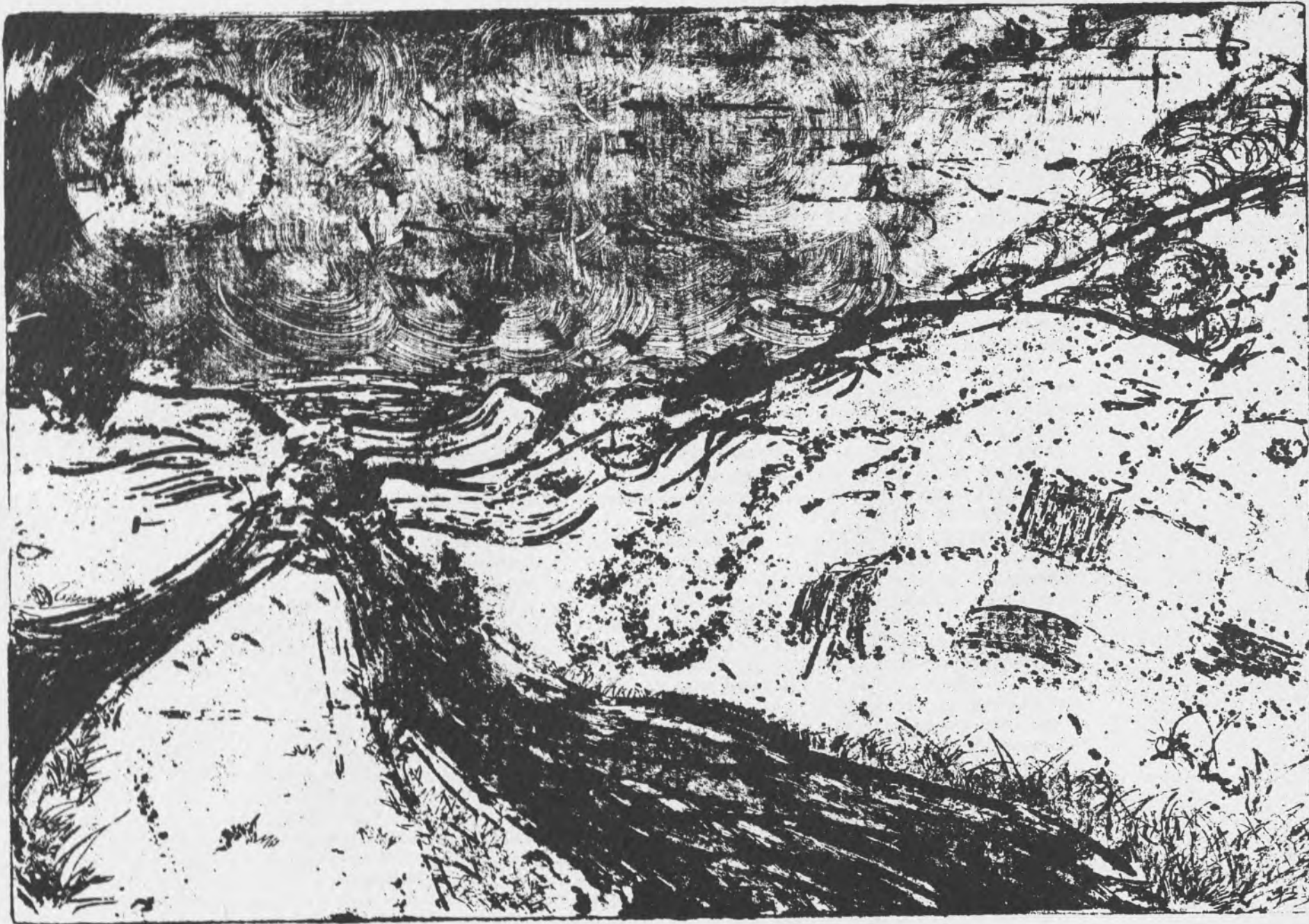
As he walked out the door, the idea of taking a short cut seemed better and better all the time. He walked rapidly, mentally planning how he would avoid the loose cobblestones in the alley that would surely be disastrous to his finely polished shoes. Another quick glance at his watch showed him it was 9:13, and he discovered he had actually gained the lost three minutes plus forty seconds. As he slowed his pace to regular walk, a loud crashing sound came over the entire area. It was one he could not identify. It sounded as though it came from the direction of Henry Street, but now that he had worked so hard to get back on his rigid schedule he was not about to lose time again investigating the strange noise.

He soon arrived at Mother's house, where she was patiently waiting for his arrival. As he caught sight of her, the strange noise he had heard minutes before completely slipped his mind. Looking at his watch he found that he was right on schedule. It was exactly 9:15. They walked down the sidewalk to the carriage waiting in front of the house and were soon off to the long-awaited dance.

This was the night. After careful financial calculations which had consumed many hours, Dad had decided to propose. Mother accepted immediately, as if she too felt that this was the time for a prompt decision. The now-engaged couple danced the night away.

At 7:04 A.M. the following morning, the newspaper banged against Dad's door as usual. He picked it up and opened it, glancing at the pictures and headlines. There was a photo of the steeple of St. Andrew's Church fallen in a scattered heap in the middle of the 6300 block of Henry Street. Its clock had stopped at exactly 9:13.

Mike Smith



Pushing The Clouds Away

Lyn Nevitt

Empty Soul

Encountering myself
in the darkness,
there is nothing—
maybe a ghost,
but one waiting in
tangled piles of gloom
and spider webs

For intangible inspiration.

Hollow eyes scan
tomorrow for time, and
time for tomorrow.

Anxious egos
stand on tiptoes,
peek between iron bars
and hope—

For sparkling stars
to glimmer through
blackened shadows.

Linda C. Smith



Norma

The Meadows of My Mind

Through a mist, I accrue my sedate environment,
Stolid it may appear to the placid waters,
As tranquility, serenity enhances my soul,
Contiguous, ambient air assuages the heat.

Opulence at heart, to enrich the mind,
Piquantly, sweet complacency lulls within,
Reprimand all horrors and relinquish all fears,
The epitome of peace my mind will endure.

No burden shall cling to my weightless world,
I indulge in daydream with pity on hate,
With miles of baby blue that curtains the sky,
A nabob in faith, reproof for doubt.

Abated winds, diffident of power,
Obtrusive clouds lie in yesterday,
Reasseverated storms turn to nature's song,
The meadows on my mind are in the shadow of dream.

Bill Leslie

The Cycle of Life

The wind screams through the branches of the trees,
The trees now standing dark, brittle, and bare,
The trees now left alone without life.

They once were young and fresh,
Colored with the brightness of innocent green,
Full of life, loved by all.

The green soon turned to flaming orange,
Flaming with lustful love,
Nature made them brilliant and wild.

Too quickly the wildness was tamed,
Tamed to a quiet yellow,
Contented, happy, and peaceful.

Then came the cruel brown,
The leaves left their love and life,
Left to fight a lonely death.

Now the wind screams through the branches,
The trees stand dark, brittle, and bare,
The trees now left alone without life.

As I watch the snow complete the burial scene,
My heart screams through the branches,
Without love, my life is also over.

New fresh life will soon fill the trees,
The fresh innocent green will return,
And the previous life will no longer be missed.

Just as the new leaves replace the old,
New faces will replace mine,
And I will be forgotten.

Monica Schwegel



Diabolical Frog

Norma

When the Wind is Hollow

The wind is hollow laughter
And dry in the mouth
As alum in a bog, where Pilate's
Bones rest and weep and
Sutpen's Hundred in 1910 was ablaze
Before David could ever die.
When will those ears cease to hear
If the wind is hollow laughter?
The carrion is upon the tongue
And in the road where that play played
And in the eyes reflection of dust
Stirred by callous toes.
Can you count the funeral pale
As pale impales pale to the chant?
When the wind is hollow laughter and
You can hear the open spaces, that soldier
Echoes that cloak's image and is dead in silence.
Wax will not seal the lance's hole,
Only mask the laughter, and I tell to you
Of these the largest truth
And shudder at your ignorance.

Bob Donovan

Meadows of Tomorrow

The night's song wrote a picture within my mind. As the wind hurled leaves, I walked along a country road contemplating my tomorrow. My thoughts echoed through the deepest part of my mind, as the chill of autumn set the stage of my serious solitude. Retrospecting, I could see myself as a boy of five, carefree and spell-bound by almost anything. Yesterday's fluent memories sought to construct a mood of sadness of my recollections. However, I could see tomorrow coming swiftly just behind the dawn. I brushed a tear from my eye, a sense of manly composure suddenly overwhelming me. Now, I knew that I was ready to leave a contentment to find my own fortune. A star flittered, as my heart beat with optimism. Then, the star shone bright, as my soliloquy ended in the bliss of my vision of tomorrow.

Bill Leslie



Berlin Wall

Lawrence Jordan

Lifeless Lecture

Blind eyes pierce
the image standing
at the lectern.
Whirling daydreams,
flooded behind
staring eyes,
block out light—
And distant wheels
rotate until the page
must turn.
Yawns hint of apathy,
but senseless
words continue—
Their master unaware.

Linda C. Smith



Figure Head

C. Raper

By Breath's Heavy Chain We Are Bound

Willie Shaw

"Influence creates nothing; it awakens something"—Andre' Gide—

"When a work of fiction is written or interpreted thematically, it becomes a parable or illustrative parable."—Northrop Frye—

John Updike through his presentation of *Rabbit, Run* has given a parable revealing a man's incapability of escaping social criticism and the order of nature of establishing an harmony between the two in which to exist, even though this man is gifted with the insight of seeing the effects of deterministic forces. As a result of this vision, this man attempts to escape his state of impossible stability with true purpose, and to run to an arena wherein the ideal, his mind's conceived order, can be achieved and perpetuated.

Rabbit is a hero of the "high mimetic" mode. He is so listed due to two main factors. First, he is superior to other men because he values the essence of man above all the determining material factors of a complex society. When he looks about himself, he is repulsed by the banal causations which man tags purposeful existence. From his youth he recalls a fundamentalistic approach to life. Each act was motivated by need or immediate desire. When he enters his apartment, he is confronted with the material forces in status-objects which have pushed aside the innocence, the essence of life. The material objects represent to him the result of society's demand for each person to be linked, not by the beauty of their being—their essence, but by the common and the ethnocentric denominators of a material oriented life. His son's broken and neglected toys reflect the material man, cheaply made for immediate sensation, but quickly cast aside when broken or the experience is had. His wife seems a scoreboard upon which his ability to conform is recorded. There is no longer the joyful union of their being expressing need; rather she sits, transformed by alcohol and electric waves. She cannot even pretend her role of housewife; her essence of life as a human being, a woman, has been lost to the material forces which require no struggle.

Rabbit runs when his insight presents his life with a cancer, the forces destroying his limbs. As he runs, he reveals the second factor which places him in the "high mimetic" mode. Rabbit runs to find a place or person wherein essence is of all importance. But as he runs from, he runs to the same environment which he attempted to escape. While he has the insight to view man, he is not superior to his natural environment. When he finds Ruth, he does not first attempt to awaken her to the meaning of essence. He yields to natural urges which control him. He cannot escape the drive of status and reward in the holy state of sex. Rabbit knows the qualities of pure and absolute love, yet his affair is a series of conditioned remarks and actions.

He attempts to elevate his relationship in two manners. As he and Ruth climb above the society, they escape the dense smog of confusion and pretense. And they share this moment, but trivial worries cause the return. Through the purification of water in the pool, Rabbit sees the beauty of Ruth as a complete being. Yet two young figures with their conforming standards destroy the approach to the essence. The affair then resolves to the law of determined existence; each action has an opposite and equal reaction.

As the second environment takes on the familiar qualities of a meaningless existence, Rabbit forces the destructive event. As he forces Ruth to love him in a manner she reserved for others, he forces her to perform rites which reduce the relationship to sheer physical action without meaning.

Rabbit is aware of the importance of the essence of man, yet he is subject to man's natural environment and the actions involved. As a hero of this order, he has "authority, passions, and powers of expression" far greater than the average man has. But when he performs or reveals these abilities, he becomes subject both to social criticism and to the order of nature.

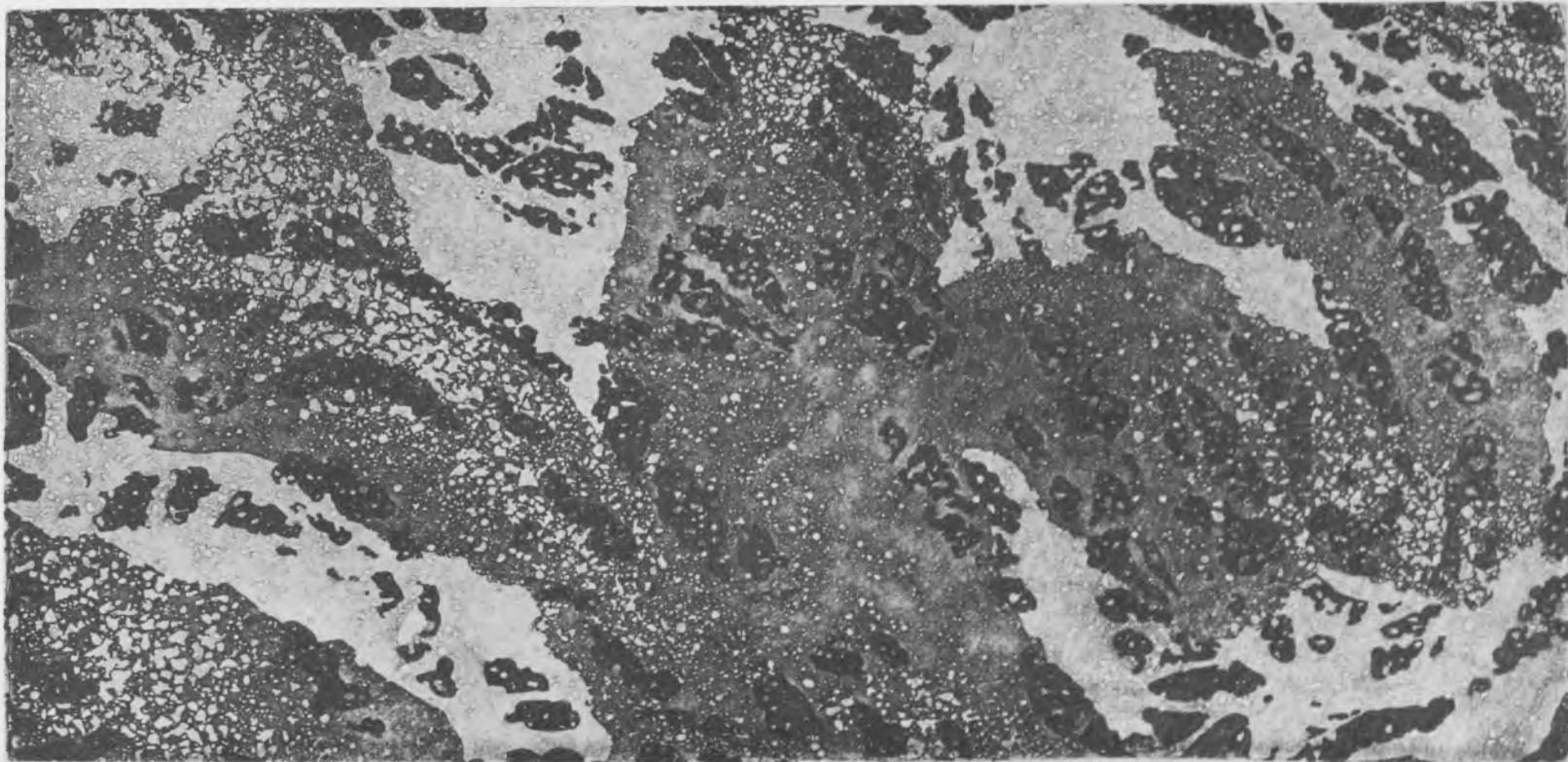
When he forces Ruth to love him in a manner repulsive to them both, his passion for love is seeking a meaning which normalcy cannot yield. Yet, he is aware of the destruction inflicted by his descent to a manner of pursuit which has neither essence or empirical qualities. Due to his relationship, society will not approve. He feels alone and cast aside, as something dirty. Society cannot recognize the event as a search for meaning. Natural order will not approve; even though basic urges are satiated, the double essence of love—creation, either physical or spiritual, or the achievement of absolute reality—has not been achieved.

When he forces Ruth to climb above the city, he reveals his authority over the socially controlled. Or when he forces Janice to make love to him anally, his force is again shown. Society will not allow escape or substitutes. One must participate in what is common to all. One cannot substitute, for deviation is a denial of the common and traditional. Natural order will not allow authority to triumph at the expense of another individual. One must have authority over himself first.

When he screams out at the cemetery, or when he had run away previously, his power of expression to protest against the destructive forces surpasses the conformity of the determined. Society will not allow a break in order or mechanical decorum. Rabbit's position qualifies only certain actions. To change these expectations negates society from him. Natural order will allow the scream, but Rabbit cannot run, for there is no escape except within himself.

Rabbit is a tragic hero. He sees the evil of the determined forces of society, yet he cannot escape. Ironically, Rabbit runs away from himself when the escape is within himself. As he is aware of the nobility of man through his essence, nobility also comes when man goes into himself and becomes autonomous. Only then will he become a complete and whole individual.

Updike's parable is that of a man who is aware of evil, but who can find no escape outside himself, for there he participates in evil. The nobility of man rests upon his ability to recognize his potential as an autonomous being. Only then can he survive in the mechanically determined world of a complex society. For, as Updike relates, there is no escape, no place to run. Man is a rabbit caught in the snare of life.



A Cry of Tomorrow

Willie Shaw

He is out again, beyond by knowing where, and it's lonely. Absorbed, blackened rings mark where the car usually rests. But that is how he left, or so it seems. Sun's been set. What red that penetrated the grey wind clouds of evening has faded. Now there's only the dim glow of the moon. The sun's reflection. Maybe there is some sunlight? Supposed to be night, dark and all, but if the light belongs to the sun, but Trees still sound like winter. Branches have soft burnished buds. A sign of spring. They sing winter's song. Fading, then screaming with fury. Smells, sweet and strong, floating by tonight, probing your mind to recall places or people that are familiar to you. Supper's smell has gone. But the strong, sweet smell of them wild onions been lingering since before noon. Their smell's sort of odd. Must be something familiar, can't think of anything but of onions you eat. But you're not supposed to eat wild onions. Standing tall and alone, they just wave in the breeze. But Pa tears them out. Then the smell stays on. Disappears. Whenever you catch that smell, you think of something wild. Something being where it doesn't belong. Awful bright stars up there. All high and sparkling. One, two . . . six of them. Looks as if they're all in a row. Over yonder's a big one, burning a dull ruby color. Flickers as if it might go out, but Sam said stars don't go out. Somebody once said that light and sound are alike in a way. They both go on and on and on, even after you cut off the light or run away from the sound. Guess that red one must burn all the time. Must go out sometime. Maybe just grow weak, but on and on and on. . . . Sort of like a beacon light at the beach, always signaling. Then a storm comes. Clouds hide the light. Ships go off course. Some wreck on the rocks. They couldn't see the light, but it was there. Just burning on and on and on. . . . Trees cause a funny shadow in the dark, standing straight and strong and seeming to touch them stars. Looks like a box without a top, or maybe a table for the dark to rest on. Must be a box, with houses and sheds and barns and schools and churches and a bunch of people all inside. Must be a big box or a crowded little one. No way of knowing in the dark. Been a long time sitting here, but the moon hasn't moved much. Maybe it has come some over the corner of the house. Can't really tell, sun was still up when he left. Didn't ask for anybody to go along. Acted sort of funny, nervous and all. Going into town is something special. Everything so big and new and bright and . . . but always cost too much, and if there is no need, then save your money. Might need some extra one day. Takes an awful lot later. What if later forgets to come or is late? Town will always be there. It always has. He is going to be late. Then ma will cry, and pa will cuss at him. They always do. Everything will be damn this and damn that. He'll shout back. Then they'll all storm off mad till morning. Yea, that's him yonder coming over the bridge. Headlights are flickering in the trees. Be ten more minutes yet. Hope ma stays calm and don't get upset. Doc says she's getting bad off. Soon she'll die. Hair is sort of greyish white. Pulls it tight in a bun. Some ends always hang down. After breakfast, her sweat will keep them loose ends in place, but that sweat makes her look tired. Skin wrinkled and yellowed, and them knots on her arm. Doc said she would die soon. She still laughs with me, once in a while. Nothing is really funny, but we laugh. She'll laugh till she cries. Crying makes laughing sad. Just another reason to make her look old. Maybe she is. Don't seem time for her to die, if there is a time. Maybe there is? Funny how pa acted after he learned about ma being sick. Didn't stop his yelling or cussing. He whispered a lot more to ma. He wouldn't go up and touch her, but their eyes looked funny when they watched each other. Half asleep he sits in that same old plastic rocker everynight. Don't rest. Always moaning, whimpering. Wakes up real scared when ma calls to him to hush up. Then he cusses, but then he acts funny again. Sort of sorry, maybe for his words. But ma smiles and tells him it's the devil, not him. Maybe it is the devil in him. Always talks like that though, even when he's got the spirit.

"Jude, what are you doing sitting out here on the produce boxes, all alone on the porch? There is no use in hanging your head, boy. I want to see your face when I am talking to you."

You finally came home. You don't look any different. But it's there, deep in your eyes. Used to could look into your eyes when we were together. Blue as that glass vase from pittsburg, shiny and sparkling with sunshine, they seemed so full of, of . . . something like what's in the air on the first warm day in March, like the sweet smell of cut hay, like the hot, watery smell of nearing rain. You used to look back to me with your eyes. To answer wasn't necessary. All the meaning of any word was in your eyes, and a quick smile. Now, they seem like they're always looking way off. Someplace where you have to be alone. Lost to something else. Out in the fields when you turn to talk to me, you lower your head or just look off. Old Noah used to run his eyes away like that when you called him. He was just a dog. A big brown hunting hound. A dumb animal, not knowing anything but hunting. And you are my brother, a grown man. Do it some more. Big, strong, rub my head harder. Your hands are so big, a lot bigger than mine. Ma always kidded you about all them biscuits you would grab. When Mary was a baby, stumbling about and all, she would take hold of a finger of yours. You would walk her slowly out and around on the porch. She would look up to you and smile with the fun. You would pick her up, hold her tight, and she would close her eyes. Her eyes were closed just like that when she was asleep in the parlor. You bent over and hugged her then, too, but pa and ma pulled you away. You had tears running down out of your eyes. Why you crying? You looked at me and told me the lilacs stung your eyes. But that wasn't the real reason. Them slow, clear, salty tears was for Mary. Cause she was gone, not ever to come back. Not ever to take hold of one of your fingers again. Lilac smell is starting to come down the valley. About another week, it'll mix into your sweat.

"Why Sam, are you just now getting in? And what are you out here for, Jude?"
Go back in ma. Leave us be. Go back in and die beside pa. Die in that same bed where you and pa made me and Sam and Mary. Same bed where you had us. Old rusty iron bed stands all alone. Flowers and butterflies of all colors used to dance on the wall around it. Now the summers mark their coming and going by them yellow rings of sweat on the wall. Maybe them wrinkles on your face are life's sweat rings. Not room for many more. Guess the Doc was right. You are dying. No. No-o-o-o. Oh Ma, if you go who will take me and care. Don't die now, not now.

"What you crying for, Jude? Sam, did you say something to hurt him? Pick him up. Poor baby."

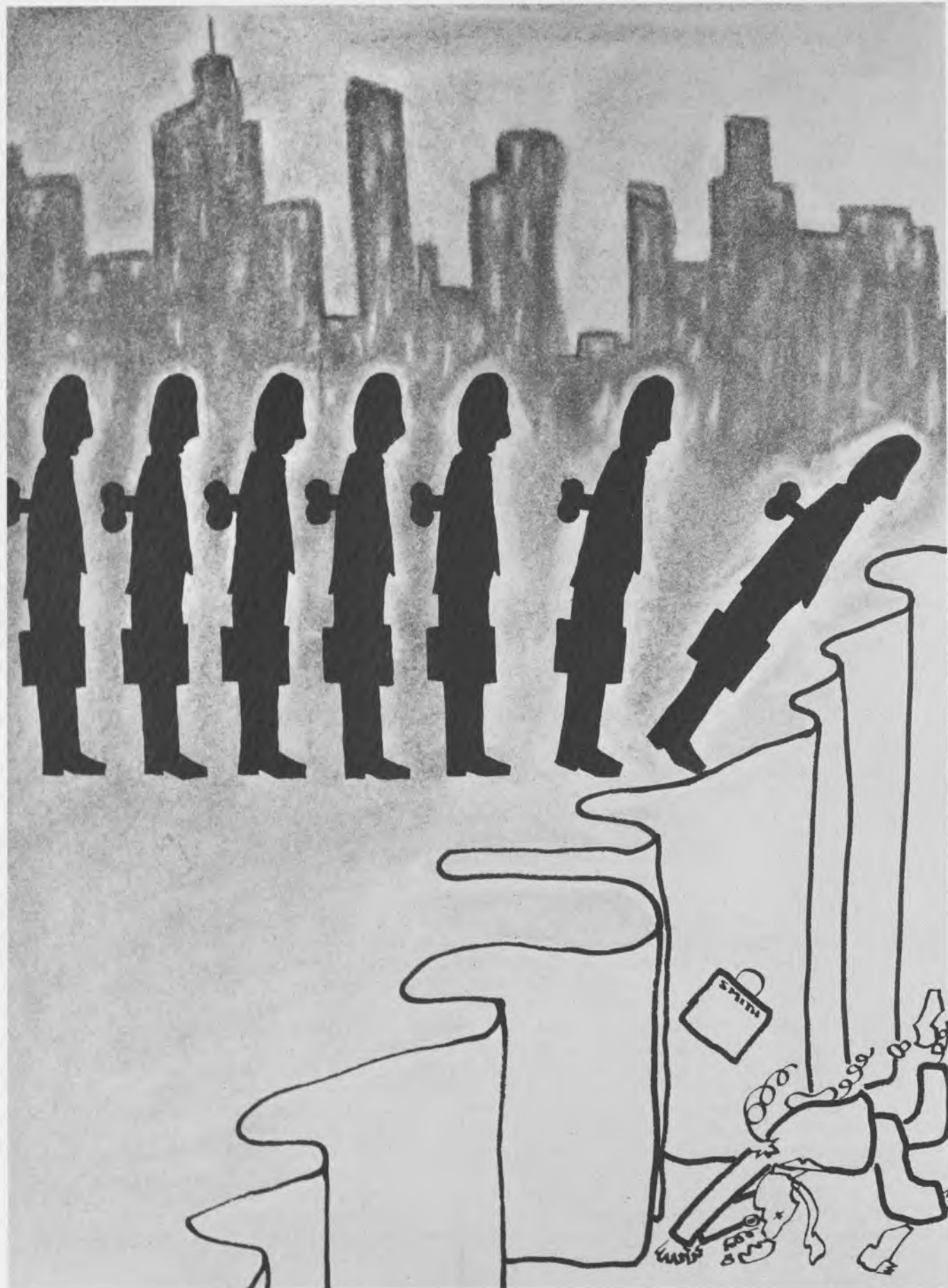
Sam, Sam, why was God so mean to me? Hold me, hold me hard. What the preacher says is not true. God didn't make every person's body and their soul. Maybe he made some people that way. Not me. God might have made my body, but Sam, my soul was made in hell. Why else do devils eat at me? Cause me to have dreams when not asleep? Going with you, being like you would make me happy. But no. This porch and my devils, we get away. We go with you. Way beyond where no body can go, I run. Carrying my arms full of dreams. Colored shadows painted by my mind. Days lived by my memory. And happenings, felt here, deep inside where nobody can reach.

"Hush, boy. What got into you? Why Ma, he was sitting here, waiting for me, I guess. I walked up from the shed, and he smiled to me."

Was it a smile, Sam. You thought it was hello, and I was shouting goodbye. Seems like everything has two meanings. One meaning fits. Everybody likes it, agrees with it. And that fact of life is a rule. Then the second meaning is sounded in silence. People hear and see it. They don't want to change, to be different. Pa pulled up the dandelions this morning. They were all golden and pretty, mixed in with the clover and grass. Them wild onions were the evil, the bad in the yard. But Pa pulled up the wild onions and the dandelions. Just because one was evil and the other did not belong there.

"Jude, you go on up and get in my bed. Sam don't want his boy crying himself to sleep. Go on now. I'll be up directly, and don't you go to sleep until I come."

"Now baby. See. Everything's fine. It's going to be O.K. Sam'll cheer you up. Your Mama just thanks the Lord for two boys like you two. Couldn't ask for anybody any better. Sam, you one of the hardest workers I ever seen. And you, Jude---don't pull away from your Mama---you're the best company your Mama's got. Why, just having you handy keeps me from getting lonely. And you're not going to be lonely tonight. Get along now, Jude. And Sam, don't you two stay awake all night. Lots of work always to be done."



You're not lonely with me around, are you Ma? But it's always lonely for me. Even when people are all around. Even when they're close enough to touch, it's lonely. Silence and darkness are supposed to be lonely things. But even with noises and bright lights, it's lonely. Only one way to shake it off. Close my eyes and dream. Then it's not lonely. Somebody's there. Waiting for me. Wanting me to come. To be happy. To be warm inside---and out. Then around me there's silence or noise, or light or darkness, and it's all over. It's lonely again. Alone. But not tonight. Won't have to close my eyes and create something or somebody. It'll be real. Oh. Oh. Oh. No. Why?

"Jude, you crying again. Get on upstairs, boy. I'll be on directly. I'll get a laugh out of you. Do as Sam says, go on."

"You're going to be sick. Poor baby. Just jerking with sobs. Wish Mama could know why, but I'm just glad you can cry. A man's not a man if he don't know how to cry. Crying is a sign of strength. Shows your soul is strong enough for anything. Give Mama a kiss and go along now. Night, sugar. Be careful going up them stairs in the dark." Ma, is that where tears come from? From your soul? And they show you're strong? Maybe they can make you strong? Strong for what? Why? Tonight? Strength to face dreams that come true? You can dream of all sorts of things. Anything and it can happen in a dream. Dreams are always happy. They're what you always really want. But then they come true. Come to life. Them shadows you create and depend on become real flesh and blood people. The warmth you always try to feel is come true. You feel it near you. Security you always been searching for is there. But then, it's not a dream any more. It's real. It's now. You have to play a part. Before, you always just watched your shadows move with meaning and reason. Now you got to move. Reason and meaning have come alive. Where's the strength? In tears? No. You can't do it. You can dream dreams, but you can't live them, cause they're lies. Lies to comfort and shut out the loneliness. Where do you get the courage? Your insides ache to move, to be a part of the living dream. You're afraid. Scared. Cause it's wrong. You can dream from now till forever, but the time a dream comes true, it's a lie. You got to live it or run. Run so hard nobody can see or catch you. Run far away. But you can never run far enough, cause you'll always be there. You, your dreams, the lie, and you'll know, you'll know, you'll always know you couldn't do it. You'll always want, but you can never take or give back.

"Is he gone out of hearing range, Sam?"

"Yeah, Ma. I watched him go up the steps. Something must be really eating inside of him. He walked so slow. Seemed like he couldn't reach that top step. As if it wasn't made for him."

"Lands, Sam. What a mind you've got. Come on to the bedroom. Pa's been waiting up just to know what we have to do. Sam, oh Sam, Why couldn't my baby be all right, normal, able to speak and think like other boys?"

"It's not going to help to cry, Ma. Jude will be taken good care of. You know it'll be best. Even if we don't understand him, they will."

"The Good Lord hears him, Sam. Everyone of his thoughts, the Master hears, but my baby don't know that."

"Come on in, Ma. Don't cry. I got to tell you and Pa about tomorrow."

"Tomorrow? Oh, Sam. Tomorrow without my baby? Where will be my reason for tomorrow? I know I got you, but . . . My baby, by this time tomorrow, by baby. Why, Sweet Jesus? Why?"

Curtains are pretty when they flutter with the wind in the moon light. They wing way out, then they jerk back. Sort of like a chicken trying to fly. They jump up and flap their wings, but don't go any where. They weren't made to fly. They try. Try hard. Over and over. Them wild onions smell way up here. Pa must of thrown them in the pit back near the porch. Wonder why dandelions don't smell. They're both weeds, only one smells though. You can't get rid of the smell, unless you burn it. The dandelions are pretty. But you pull up both of them, cause one's evil and the other don't belong there. Wind makes it cool in here. If the vent over Ma and Pa's fire is open, heat'll rise up and warm me. Don't see no fire, but who's that talking down there. Pa and Ma and Sam. Awful late to be talking. Ma being sick ought to be in bed. Pa and Sam got to get up so early. Maybe they got restless cause of my crying. Couldn't help it. Just filled up and had to let it out. You get like that sometimes. Your insides fill so full of hot and sort of heavy. Then your eyes burn. You can't swallow, so you cry, hoping you'll feel better. Nothing's washed away.

"Hell of a time to keep a man up. Damn near two o'clock. Where'd you stop? Thinks since he's twenty he can run around. Whatn't so late I'd show you how big yor are. Tear your ass up, boy."

"George, please, not tonight. I can't take it. It's hard enough without you driving Sam off. The devil gets in us all, not-too-seldom either. As long as I'm here we'll fight him. Now. Go ahead, Sam. What did Dr. Jamieson tell you?"

"We can take him tomorrow, Ma. They got a place in the hospital where they'll try to teach him to talk and read and write. Doc said it might work, being Jude's almost grown, might not. Maybe they could have taught him before. Him being seventeen makes a lot of difference. Sort of like the saying, you can't teach an old dog new tricks. That's what the Doc said."

Goddamn Doctor. Compare my boy to a dog. If anybody's a bitch he's the son of one. Why I . . ."

"George. He was only trying to make it easier for us to understand. Maybe if I had sent my baby early, but I kept hoping one day I'd get up and he'd come running down them stairs, rush into the kitchen and shout 'hello Ma' and kiss me. But he never has. At first, I gave him toys and begged him to talk. But he'd look at me, start crying, throw down the toy, and run out into the yard. There he'd stand at the corner fence post waiting for that orange school bus to bring his Sam home. Then I had Pa beat to make him talk. Beat him hard. 'You going to be a man,' Pa would tell him, 'I'm going to whip you till you tell me that you're a man.' When I should have stopped it, I just stood outside the shed and silently begged George to hit him harder, harder. Then George would rush out and drive off. I'd go inside the shed and Jude would be lying, all wadded up on the floor in pain. He would jerk with tears as I'd go to pick him up. But he wouldn't yell; he couldn't yell. He'd pull loose and go outside, grabbing some dandelions, crying on them, squeezing them tight. It was as if he was talking to them, begging them flowers to help him. I'd say 'bring your mama some.' He'd jerk up a hand full of wild onions and lay them in my lap. Why? 'Why did you do that?' I'd say. He'd look at me, then at them wild onions. He'd point at them onions, then toward the shed. He'd point to the dandelions, then to himself. It was as if he was trying to say, 'What you want me to be would make me bad like wild onions, but I'm just a poor, pretty flower.' To be a man would make him evil, yet he is my baby, a poor, pretty flower."

"Help your Ma to bed, Sam. Here, here, woman. It's going to be all right. Tomorrow Sam will take your baby into town to the hospital to get well. Won't you, Sam?"

"Sure, Ma. I don't want to take Jude, but it's what's best for him, I guess?"

"See, woman. It's all going to be all right. Everything will wor . . . Damn. Where'd that drop of water come from? Must of come from that heat vent up there. Hit me right here on my chest."

"Oh, God. Sam. George. My baby heard. Go to him, Sam. I can't face him. I've hurt him again, but I love him. I love him, my baby, my poor, pretty baby."

Come on, Sam. Ma's baby's been waiting for you a long time. But it won't be like my dreams, cause you don't really care about me. Come on. Maybe for a little while it'll be a dream. We can both dream. Moon has gone behind the trees. Now they look like strangers waiting, watching, hoping something will happen, something bad. Then they can point and jeer. It'll make them feel bigger than me, cause my dreams come true. But there's no difference. This dark room is just like mine or any other. In the dark there's no walls, no ceiling, no floor, you're just laying in darkness. It's like your body is just laying in somebody's hand. You won't fall, but you wonder who's holding you up. Then you realize there's nobody. nobody holding you up. You're holding the darkness together. If you hold it tight enough maybe nobody can get in to you. Then you don't want to be lonely. Sam, Why you going to take and give me away? Can't you keep me here to stay with you?

"You heard, didn't you, Jude? Come here, boy. Don't cry, Jude. Listen to me. I'm going to take you to a school where you can learn to read and write and maybe even talk. Don't you see, now? You can be like me if you go. Don't cry, Jude. Remember when you were little and I'd go fishing on Sunday afternoon and you'd cry to go? Well, I took you. I didn't forget you. And remember how you used to wait on me at the fence post? Waiting on me to come from school? I always carried you in, way up on my shoulders. And I didn't leave you. Now, why don't you trust me, Jude? I'm your brother. I want you to be like me. Then you and me can get us dates and go to the movie show together. Then one day we'll find the right girls and get married and have children. But you got to go learn how to read and write and talk, first. Don't cry, Jude. Here, Lay down. Let Sam get ready for bed. I'll be back in just a minute and tell you about where you going and what you going to do. It's all real nice and pretty, Jude. You'll like it. I'll be back in a minute, and don't cry, please.

Don't cry? What else is there to do? Don't want to go away. Don't want to learn to read and write and talk. Them things don't mean anything. You think they're what make a man? It can't be. Got to be something inside you that makes you what you are. Yeah, you can read and read. Read all sorts of stuff, but that's not like being in all them places or doing all those things in them books. Everything that's worth knowing you can learn by seeing and feeling and hearing. You don't need to read. And writing? Man, Ma and Pa don't know how; they don't know how to read either. Why are you going to make me go then. Go away to learn to talk to you? Now you don't understand; you can't hear me. You always heard me before. We didn't need to say anything. You knew what was meant in my looks and in my moods. You could sense when something had hurt me. Now you don't understand. Sam, you're my brother. If you don't understand, who will, who can? Alone. All alone. A dream comes true. It's over. You have to run, but where? Maybe you can run with the wind? Run to wherever smells go. Maybe to follow the smell of wild onions away? Way far off. But maybe smells don't go anywhere? Maybe the dandelions got a smell? You just can't smell it. It's always got a smell, but it's run away. Got to run. Got to find somebody that'll care, that'll understand. You, Sam, you always understood in my dreams, but now . . . Got to find somebody. Nobody out here. Only them strangers reaching out to lift me off this roof. Take me softly? Keep me warm? Where do strangers take you in the dark? Maybe tomorrow. Carry you all the way. Beyond tomorrow. Maybe that's where dreams can come true? Maybe that's where dandelions have a smell and are left to grow? What? Talking to me? What're you saying? Want me to follow you? To run with you? But where? Where? Not supposed to ask? Then won't matter any. Just run away. Run faster and faster, farther and farther. Goodbye, Sam. Don't want to go, but you didn't care any more. You'll be in my dreams---always---no matter where tomorrow is. Free. Where you taking me? Why you all dancing like that? Reaching out to grab me, but you can't. Too fast. Running too fast to catch. You're still now. No. You're laughing, laughing at me. Why? Ran far away? See. Ran with the wild onions and the dandelions. Going to dream now. Don't have to be afraid to dream. Dreams not going to come true, cause . . . cause . . . rest here. Rest with the wild onions and the dandelions. Rest for a long time. Then we'll know why not to be afraid to dream. We know now. Already know. Cause we ran away. We're a dream come true. That's why. We're a dream. You're not afraid of yourself. Everythings dream come true here. Everything's run away. Run far away. But . . . But . . . Why . . .? Here's the wild onions. The dandelions. And them strangers trying to reach and get me. It'll be like life here. Won't be a dream. Didn't run far enough. Got to run some more. But got to rest. Got to get ready to run. Run to my dreams. It'll be like life. Some will be evil and some won't belong.

TO: REH that he learns the truth before he dreams and runs away.



Woodblock

Leslie Steele

Staff

Editor

Linda M. Crowder

Associate Editor

Willie Shaw

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Dr. C. E. Mounts

High Point College
High Point, North Carolina
Spring, 1969
Vol. VII



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