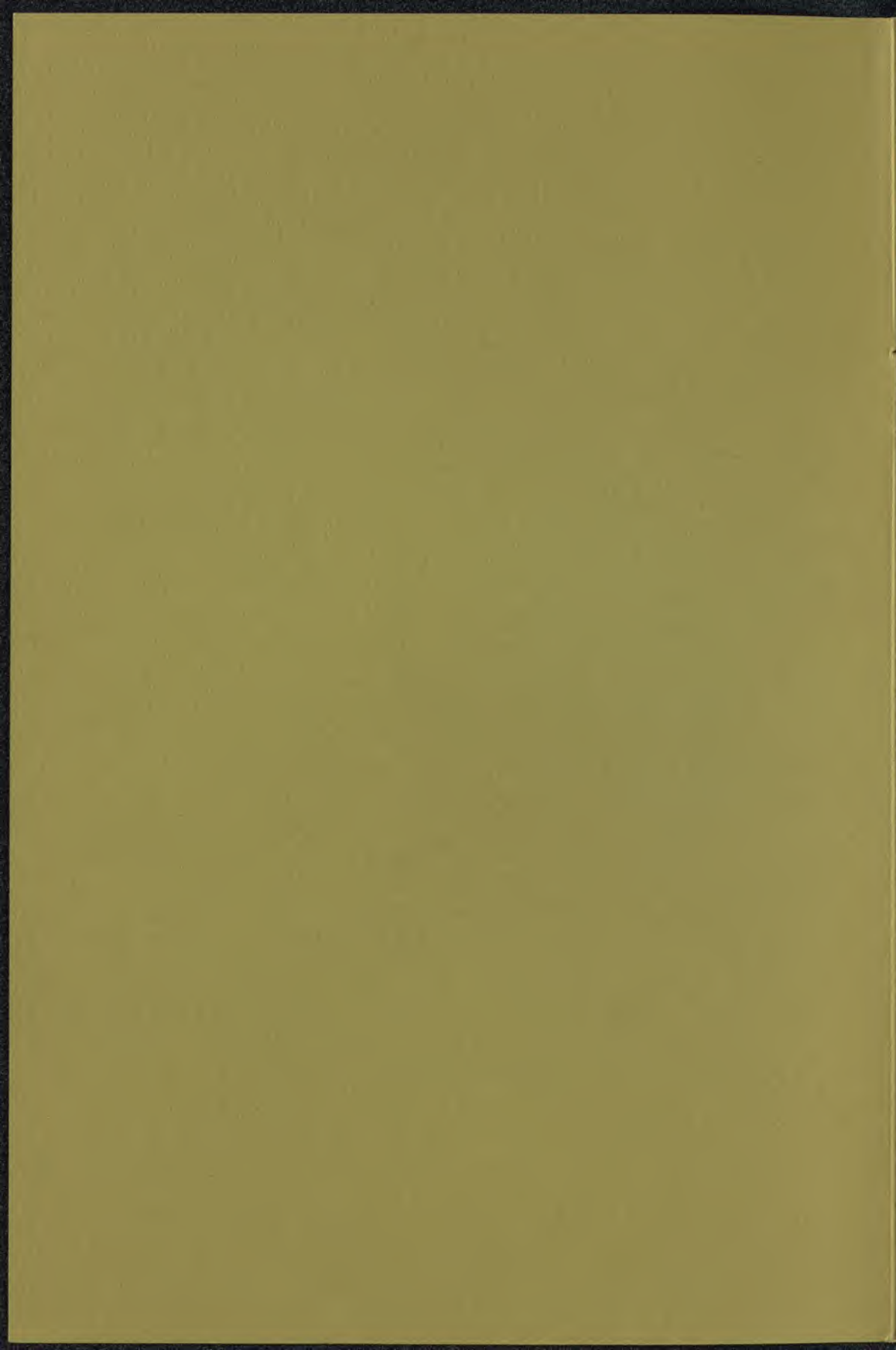




APOGÉE



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Editor

Willie G. Shaw, Jr.

Advisor

Dr. C. E. Mounts

Gary Austin, *Business Manager*

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Billy Dunn
Sharon Hall
Bill Hatchel
Joyce Kait
Hartson Poland
Alice Seymour
Don Staley
Ruth Tapson

SPECIAL CONSULTANT

Gregg Tapson

*Quemadmodum desiderat cervus ad fontes
aquarum, ita desiderat anima mea ad te, mea
Sylvia Rubecula.*

In Dedication

W. S.

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GOLDEN CHILD OF THE FOREST GREEN

I

In the tutorial summer now graduated to virtue,
I was heard crying:

'Come from the forest, Golden Child;
Come not as a boy of five,
Come as life . . . beautiful and eternal.
As a child upon my lap,
How can I love you;
How can I not love you?'

The night laughed at my deceit
And the day cradled me in sleep;
I could not cry alone forever.

After being too seasonal
I was mocked and betrayed
In lightning, wind, and rain;
And I sent kisses into the forest
To Golden Child grown afraid.

'Loving the rich odors of your damp hair and body;
Loving the innocence never dead, but slaughtered:
I would to have washed you clean with my tongue,
To have dried you with gentlest of caresses'

But from the green forest he would not come,
In the moonlight he was golden,
And the womb was empty from his rich conception.

II

His mother's pride was my envy.
We both were as strangers to his joy;
And in sharing love, the sources
Of his beginning and his end were united
Against him . . . Golden Child
Loved by the sun,
Hidden in the forest green.

'Is memory as soft as flesh?
So easy to bruise, so quick to heal
And the scars fading with time.

'I would to have penetrated you,
To have fathomed the hollow of your early soul,
To have known the beauty of silence and vacancy
Before the shadows of life's fantasies,
Before the web of dread and doubt
Had dressed your soul in envy and pride

'For you to have known me,
For me to have known you
Not as a child,
But as earliest life.'

III

In the autumnal denial
My voice refused to cry.
His heart had been within my breast,
And I had felt the rhythm of his life.

'I could not hold the whole of you, Golden Child.
I could not encompass your love,
For my soul's arms are not as this world's.
To have held you to me,
I would have needed a universal grasp
Of selfish devotion and concern.
But the virtue of loneliness has found my need,
Has found my heart.'

I continue obsequiously
With only a memory of my innocence.

Come from the forest, Golden Child;
But never coming as a boy again,
I behold you wretched and ugly
As I, too, am wretched and ugly.

—Willie Shaw

STARS THAT DANCE

Stars that dance on yesterday's
configurations bend with the whistling wind song;
the moment's beautiful bounty of words
unfolds like the sunflower's bloom
opening to a world of wonder
enhanced by the moon's caress
enchanted by the presence of one
who would breathe the passion of
life's breath,
for sun's coming is followed not by
sun's coming,
an interlude of time's slowing-down
fills the void like a treasure chest of
secret things,
finds for us a resting place for
radiance
and the breeding ground of
mystery.

—*Hartson Poland*

DREAMS

Drifting over the ice-glazed dreams
of my long forgotten
mind,
I find myself within the neon light of the
beggar's sign
laughing,
crouching,
Kneeling before a nongod song
that would gouge the unborn infant
from the womb
Yet draw us . . . fools like
bees to nectar
like
salmon to the spawning grounds
We would run to hear the nonwords of its lyrics,
the inharmonious babblings of its score.
Cackling at the open door
shunning light for truth of
what
I find myself
within the maze of the spangled sky,
floating helplessly among the multitudes
of heaven/hell seekers,
thrown to the wolves of my destiny
like a blind man to the rainbow.

—*Hartson Poland*

HIDEAWAYS OF MY MIND

In the quiet hideaways of my mind,
I found no peace.

With deep, searching eyes,
I questioned the countless flames of tiny suns
as to what man had become.
They sighed,
closed their thoughts,
and the rain began.

My ears strained to hear the answer
from almighty silence,
but her single sounds were like the solars.

I tasted
the bitter-sweet experiences of life,
wishing for unattainable knowledge,
only to discover I was drinking water.

With outstretching arm
I tried to claim this knowledge
retained in the many universes of time,
but learned too late
that the clock had stopped.

I breathed the air
in hopes
of a pleasant fragrance
to calm my inquiring senses,
but no peace came.

And still those secretive, rampaging thought-questions
persist in torturing my mind.

—*Rich Moore*

CAPITULATION

Laughter follows
When I say
I fear the darkness,
Yet not of ghosts
And the unknown horrors
Of childhood.
My fear springs
From an unwilling knowledge
Of the deadly deeds
Of men
Who make a camouflage
Of night.
So confessing,
I seek protection
Among the objects
Of my fear.

—*Susan Wright*

CONSTRUCTION . . . DESTRUCTION?

Huge orange box
With bands of black
On either end of
Your flatness—
 What shape so strange!
Sitting upon wheels
So high, you seem
Suspended in unnatural balance.

 An arm of black
 Extending from your
 Side pulls and
 Digs the earth
 From its ageless bier.

How many years of
Life do you distort,
Displace, and replace
Again?

 Like a hungry bird,
 Plucking with fervor
 And decision—
 Patiently plucking—
 You feast until
 Your mouth is
 Full.

—*Joyce Kait*

GENESIS MIRRORED (?)

Who will believe you when

you say that I'm dead?

No one, NO ONE!

Who will listen when you make your plea?

No one.

For to be alive is to touch, and without my hands,
how can I touch?

Romping in fields of a silvery green—without my legs,
where will I run?

It is all so utterly senseless—

this maiming and death.

The king has turned off the palace—he watches no more . . .
and retires to his chamber.

A piercingly shrill cry disturbs him,

And the ignoramus babbles on blindly believing,

Children screaming hysterically,

mourning mothers sob

uncontrollably.

Economical gain—The funeral refrain

So senseless!

So terrible!

Young men KILLING, OLD MEN WILLING to

reap the harvest

of this

GENOCIDAL

DANCE!

Oh, who will believe you when

you say that we're Dead?

Magnanimous Earth, receive our charred bodies.

Omnipotent Spirit,

forgive,

forsake us not.

—Billy Dunn

(UNTITLED)

gun to his head
in a dark, lonely alley,
two eyes looked upon him.
he felt their presence,
and a child left the shadows behind
—a lovely, happy child.

gun in his hand,
man sighing, child smiling,
flash of light, sound shattered night;
a lovely, happy child
lay half in the shadows.

man, gun to his head
in a dark, lonely alley.

—*Rich Moore*

IN MEMORIAM

An ephemeral hope searches the waking horizon
Weeping as an abandoned child,
Robbed of a gilded sun and sky.

. . . crying, "They are gone."

A slumbering beach reaching towards infinity
Now lies alone: aged by a nation's wail,
Battered by a relentless sea.

. . . screaming, "They are gone."

A stifling haze clouds our plaintive sight,
Angrily foiling our pleading eyes while
Whispering a lament that shatters our senses.

. . . mourning, "They are gone."

Nostalgic memories of things no more
Torture our anguished minds as
We vainly search the barren land.

. . . moaning, "They are gone."

A darkening sky slumps our sagging
Shoulders, echoing the piercing lament
With an astonished silence.

. . . "They are gone."

Dawn arrives amidst a haunting pang
While a rising sun torments our
Wandering, wondering, wishing eyes.

. . .

—*Bill Hatchel*

A WIDOW'S SONG

Here, from salt-swept cliffs and pondered paths
I see lost hours of smiles and prayers found again
By this once blue-laughing, now pale-lamenting sea.
Whispering laps softly splash goodbye . . .
With briny foam that reeks and rolls to tell
Of all that was our Yesterday.

Here we walked through spring's celestial prime
Into the crinkling realm of autumn's glory
Till one silver thread was severed,
And left me dangling with half a soul . . .
Parting life into colored memories and gray tomorrows.
Dear God, it was just Yesterday.

Here, roaming cherished cliffs and powdered beaches,
And shading the pallid ocean's eye,
I wade in black through old splashing friends.
Searching, my soul shadows other waters of other seas,
While he casts a still, green shadow
Over the white sands of Tonkin Bay.

—*Sharon Hall*

WHEN I DIE

Make to me no graven image of stone
to mark my death place.
If I cannot make my own remembrances in Life,
how then does Death exalt me?

If you do not rejoice in my passing,
then do not grieve, either.
"I am that I am . . ."
is that not enough?
Speak not good of the dead,
but truth.
No long-winded eulogy.
those who knew me, know.
And those who did not, do not care.

No coffin at all . . .
I need not be preserved by any means,
for it serves no purpose.
Nor cremated, which is a waste of the body.
Nor to Science . . .
it has done enough to me in this Life.

Just bury me in a shallow grave
and plant flowers over me,
that in the last account I may give
beauty to others.

—David Springer

TO JAN PALAK

The wind cried to me once,
I heard its whispering flow as it leaf-rattled its way
Through elfen forests, across sorrel skies turning darker with dusk;
And the wind fell in pages on me

Cobbler stands and vampire castles bewitched the fairy tales
I long ago heard, the wolves moaned at death's moon distantly;
That's all I can remember, until the metal rain
Entranced the cobblestones, rumbling sure-foot
Over still waiting men.
Storybook recollections, now with Mother Bear porridge-pouring
In a world grown beyond her den,
She sees love washed away like tears;
Old Cossack riders, like land-lemmings, prance across the
Life-grain of men too weary to not resist.

Love fell like a hammer in the cruel mist of the eastern sky,
And the boys left their Andersen and Grimm
To touch that roof of the world they thought was theirs.
Later, when the roof collapsed,
Streets stood bare, horror hung like the guillotine blade,
And darkened minds wasted into winter shallows.

Street-corner Christ walked lonely, around the
Death that only dead men know better than life;
He mourned, for kisses from the wind that carry ashes now.

—Don Staley

A MOMENT'S GLANCE

In our search for each other,
in a moment's glance
we saw too much, too soon.

In fear of pain we turned away
from that parting glance
to go our separate ways.

But that moment's glance
that revealed so much
and told me of you
lingered on in my mind

—Pat Dutton

I COULD LIVE WITH LEAVING

I will leave you soon,
too soon for all the love
I want to give you . . .
You will leave me too.
We will meet again, though,
I know—maybe
on some green field,
with the wind blowing
my hair from my face
and you will hold me,
kissing my forehead
as you would a child's—
gently loving me.
Or will our meeting be
at the club over
rum and collins and memories
of what we once did—long ago—
with awkward conversation
where silence once was understood?
I will leave you soon
and you, me.
What I'll do with all the
love I want to give you
I don't know—all the desires
to touch your lips and
caress your unshaven chin,
be enfolded by your arms and
bury my face in your warm chest—
I could live with leaving—
It is the coming back I fear.

—Jane Bell

TO LOVE

Love, you have taken me at my weakest
And crushed me
Till even the bleakest winter night
Seemed but an autumn chill to me.
You have tormented my being
To the point of my lamenting
Having ever known your petty joys;
For what seemed a lifetime I endeavored
To sever the silvery strings
Which bound my soul;
But once entangled in your web,
I am lost forever.

—Karen Hollingsworth

TRANSITION

Transition
Is that time of year
When the Old Master climbs into his attic
And gently
Blows the dust from his brush and palate.
With his aged hand
He dips His brush into the colors
And creates a masterpiece
Of which
No earthly creature has ever seen the like.
With steady fingers
He dabs on hues of color
Which man can only imitate at best;
And as He strokes his chin and smiles,
He puts away his tools
And, for a lengthy interval,
Settles back to rest.

—Karen Hollingsworth

I USED TO THINK, NAIVELY

I used to think, naively, that all traps
Were forced upon someone by cruel foes
And followed shortly by complete collapse
Of spirits coupled with unnumbered woes;
But now I know, as many people must,
That those most binding stays are self-imposed,
Consisting generally of love and trust
And not the chains and shackles I'd supposed.

More naive still was I to think, once caught,
That to escape was my immediate aim;
For since that time experience has taught
Me that all situations hold the same
Sensations of a rabbit in a snare
His birthright of freedom profaned by care.

—*Susan Wright*

FOR ANYONE WHO HAS TRIED TO SEE FAIRIES

That hill is in my way—it blots so much from view.
In the space it hides may be the palace of a king or two
With golden steps down to a path of diamonds and dew!

May be a magic forest of fairy wishing trees;
May be a cave of crystal stone in lacy filigrees.
The strangest things may lie beyond—I have it as I please.

I hesitate to climb my hill: so much is there to see
That climbing it might serve to hide a magic world from me,
A world more wonderful by far than there could ever be.

But climb I must, and up I go, and, on the other side,
The fields stretch out to meet the sky, the grassy plain is wide;
A tree or two, a flock of sheep, are all my hilltop had to hide.

There is no magic anymore. I look for it in vain.
Unless I count the magic of the sunlight and the rain.
Unless I count reality. Then all things best remain.

—Sam J. Underwood

BEAUTY

Snowflakes are falling one by one,
As silently slips the night away,
Only to melt beneath the sun
When dawn doth bring another day.

In such a way is beauty lost.
Have we no thoughts to keep it there
Among the cold midmorning frost?
It nature's touch of wrath must bear.

But yet the snow fell not in vain,
For moments of joy to us it brought.
With feathery flakes it sent our gain,
The kind of beauty we had sought.

—*Lucy Hill*

SUCH WORDS

Here I sit and write such words,
My mind they put at rest.
Straight from the lives or mortal man,
The lines go up for test.
To be a man who writes in verse,
His love of life to tell,
Of tranquil leaves upon the stem,
Of ripples on the mirror lake.
He dreams of pebbled paths in woods,
And wonders at the sky.
Nature guides a soothing breeze,
The writer bends upon his knees.
A single blade in seas of grass,
No larger than the rest.
He smiles upon the butter-cup
He sings the song of bees.
And when the winter days do come,
He shares their agonies.
With downy flake upon trees' feet,
He walks and breathes a mist,
For never on a sunny day,
Could he rejoice such bliss.

—*Gary Browne*

THANKSGIVING NIGHT

Whatever else, I have tonight the rain
That drums upon the roof with homely sound
And flows by eaves and gutters to the ground
With intermittent rhythm. Were I fain
For rarer gifts, I should seek long in vain
To find content more sweet than I have found
Prevailing in this dwelling's narrow bound
While rushing raindrops pelt against the pane.

For I have more . . . I have my books and you,
And yonder dream-wrapped, sleep-enfolded child.
Upon the roof the raindrops' drowsy din
Intensifies our peace, creates anew
Love's ancient loneliness. How chill and wild
The night without! How good to be within!

—Charles Eugene Mounts

THE LIGHT IS DIMMING

The light is dimming
In aged eyes encumbered with regret
For the energy that ebbs from opportunity
The light is dimming
In youthful eyes eager for excitement
In life's adventures born of dreams
Which yield a weariness even in play.
The light is dimming
On synthetic eyes which forbid the dark an entrance
And yet which imprison a tinted lamp
That will not always hide the despair
Or shield the folly.

The night bears upon us,
Offering a kiss of peace,
Extending the token of sleep,
And we refuse.
Forever we will fight an unknown peace,
Forever we will refuse a secure darkness.
For in the fear of forgetting
We fear to know, to share
The beauty of a rumored dawn;
We fear to live, to try
The honesty of an untortured dream.

And the light is dimming
And will soon forget its promise of sleep.
We will wander in that time
When there is not even the chance,
An opportunity for a tortured forgetting in
darkness.
In the light we are blinded,
But led by a luring melody
Of selfish hope.

In the dark we will be lost,
For if we are all blind and deaf,
Who will see our agony,
Who will hear our cries?

Lost, lost, lost.
By the day deceived,
By the night neglected.

—Willie Shaw

ODE TO MIND OF MAN

Loving footsteps stumble in the weed, well-trod paths
Of ego diggings that minds develop—
God is the great-uncle of us all,
Who seeps his glory down in little packages,
Sold by black-hut soldiers
Who stand secure in church-corporate corrals.

The mind is a funny place, for men do dwell there
Side by side with mirrored deities
Doing dirty work, sweeping ideas, ideals
Like cluttered trash.
Finding god like a magic wand—
Me's a word to serve; yet
He stands, an excuse to make man love,
And to cast away the sparkling shroud,
That shimmers in the darkling night.

As men do live, so they live together,
And gods flourish in their dreams
The thought is dream—men love and pray
For too much mind.
Beyond the cold distance of an
Ever-reaching wish the true god lies,
And world-warmth settles in laughter, tears, love;
Faith is the yesterday hope for tomorrow,
Love is man's today.

So dance I may, in starlight glimmer,
Dance as I will to tunes that
Share the shrugs of land-lost,
For I feel God beyond my thought.
I have but the fiery slope of man-passion
That drives the spell—the moments
When sparks of minds defeat the sun,
When all other light becomes shade even while
Sparks become embers,
When soul searches soul for the one instant
That breaks the dawn more than daylight,
That mans the mind-helm more than mind itself.

—*Don Staley*

BY THE FIRE

The cold of the North
Builds a blizzard inside me.
I sit by the fire and I think.
Remembering the good times
And also the sadness,
I lift my cup and I drink.
I cannot remember
Why life is a stranger.
I sit by the fire and I think.

I wonder what roads
My path has not taken.
I sit by the fire and I think.
The forests were green,
But now they are yellow.
I reach for the warmth of my drink.
My friends have all parted,
Their own roads to wander.
I sit by the fire and I think.

I think of the future
The life of tomorrow.
I wonder what changes
The world has in store.
But more than the future
I think by the past time.
Remember the old friends
My life of before.

The rain at the window
will bring me no sorrow.
I sit dreaming thoughts that are deep.
The fire brings me warmth,
My drink hides my troubles.
I sit by the fire . . . I must sleep.
In comfort tomorrow
I'll forget I am lonely;
I sit by the fire and I weep.

—*Eugene Munger*

FOR MY SISTER LYN

Radiance
 like crystals in chandelier shops.
Kind and warm
 as the newlywed wife.
 She's alive and running
 worshipping the sun
 praying for peace
 meeting everyone.
 Leaving upon them a beautiful
 scar
 from the peacock splendor
 and clouds of wonder
She's a gift of the sea,
 galloping like Spring
 torrent streams.
While searching for love in the
 Summer's eve.

—Billy Dunn

HALLOWED HOLLOWNESS

Why not dissolve our friendly kinship
for the morals of the world?
We'll take up laurels and carry
symbols of a god's universe
Smiles and laughter sounds would cease
until in passion a pant brings chuckles
Eyes, we'll paint of bronze and orange
triangles to produce awe-ful glory
The cross will carry all the disparaged
deeds done by a jasper Man.

Kinship lies in rash awareness of
triumphs past-into Dante's world
Step forward to a candle surrounded
by a ring of hands, then
Ram the bolt to history's misfortune—
through the paint of bronze
and orange dissolve a mortal friend.

—Jane Bell

(UNTITLED)

I may not show my feelings,
As many people do,
I've had my ups and downs in life
And will continue to.
I laugh, I cry, I smile and frown
The situations say
But only to a heart of love
Will I give mine away.

—*Gary Browne*

HUNGER

One of me longs for Beauty,
One of me longs for bread.

But all of me reaches for singing words,
That run from me just ahead.

Cadence of fugitive flashing sounds,
Held by a tenous thread . . .

One of me hungers for Beauty,
One of me earns my bread.

—*Sam J. Underwood*

HARLEM . . . (!)

Flocks of pigeons

dance in the sky like
children in backyards
 playing hopskotch
with their shadows.

No chalk in these yards, though,

only blackness being
shattered by the

 chalky whiteness of tombstones
that scatter sunlight into

countless stopsigns
which smash
 babies' skulls
upon the sewers of
today.

—Billy Dunn

INSOMNIA

and there it was
and is
to be,
the first successful Papal hysterectomy

the time had past
and the time
had come
with tails between their legs
now they run

and the hand
it was a hand,
a mysterious hand indeed
which when it turned
it dropped a grape
 (Californian,
 no doubt)

and it bounced to
the White House
which had since then been painted once more
Tom Sawyer was a tricky fellow, wasn't he!?

—*Lenny Selvaggio*

SONNET

Fair roses blooming, white, yellow, and red,
And vireos chanting matutinal lays—
Such blessings come sweetest on calm Sabbath days.
All night rain had fallen, but now clouds were spread,

Both veiling the earth from the sun's rosy head
And painting the vault with cathedral-like grays—
A scene so serene that it moved me to phrase
Some murmur of thanks for the grace freely shed.

I felt all alone, but here fancy proved wrong,
For appeared out of nowhere a black-robed nun
In thoughtful devotion, reading her hours—

Our grave, merry sister, teacher of song.
Her faith is not mine, but we worshipped as one,
Good Sister Michaela, among the bright flowers.

—Charles Eugene Mounts

WHERE THE WOODBINE TWINETH

Where stars steel down to touch the mountain rims,
Where green clover drips with misty dew,
Where conical clouds conceal rainbows,
Where the sun is always shining through pink on blue,
Where flutes and pipes are playing,
Through meadows hung with petaled gold,
Where the autumn tree grows forever,
In a colored unseasonal wood followed by no cold,
Where oceans are made of sun drops and glaciers of silken egg shells,
Where hearts delight in warmth again,
Please God, let me come now
To where even Time can be a friend.

—*Sharon Lynn Hall*

COLORED

Who am I?

I'm black with rage,
Green with envy,
Blue with love,
Purple with age.

I'm red with fire,

Yellow with fear,
Orange with hope,
And white with desire.

Who am I?

A colored man.

—*Carlvin Steed*

FAIRY GODDESS

My fairy goddess flew on
gilded feathers
now she's gone

lost, lonely, wandering
soul am i
lone, lost, open, one
waiting for a once upon

silent senses aroused
by a thought
the movement
 we waned in the swells
 of ourselves

Fairy goddess hear me
that we may touch
each other's powers again

My minds feet circle
this earth
Searching silent ships
wanting you

a heart is torn
one, now two
us,
you
 and me . . .

—*Lenny Selvaggio*

TO: DLH

You were like a rising wave
.. Offspring of some parent fault
Secreted beneath the ocean's
Basaltic basin . .
As you wrenched security
From my hands
And swept me
 toward a shoreline
 only barely visible
 through salt-stung eyes.

Lost somewhere
Between fear and fascination,
I envied your supreme confidence
As we rolled over the beach,
Churning away
Sand-coated Coppertone tubes
And rusty Schlitz cans.
I declined a second ride,
And you rolled back
Alone
To regroup,
Aspiring to the mauve motels
And the heated,
 heart-shaped
 swimming pools.

Today,
As I stand
Resisting the surf's
Gentle persuasion,
I despair of a second tidal blast
And shudder,
Wondering what force
Transformed so massive a will
Into innocuous pools
 of tepid brine
 fringed with dingy foam.

—*Susan Wright*

THE GREEK MIND

And he looked at himself,
A Self within which the heavens appeared
And the Earth passed away.
And the entire world revolved somewhere in between.
And he envisioned a vast, indeterminate space,
An eternity of nothingness, inconceivable,
For there likewise was confusion.
And this he called Chaos.

Another look, another way, and he perceived
Round about him the cover of darkness—
The veil that enveloped him with sweet odors.
And this that was nearest to his heart
Became the first of all creatures,
The phantom, Night, his joy and his ruin.

But as he saw the Night come,
He saw likewise Love, and Light, and Day, and
 Heaven, and Earth.
And upon the earth appeared creatures—
But with them came also destruction,
The violent force of cataclysmic change.
And the earth was formless and void.

Again he looked, his gaze now outward,
And perceived a new Earth,
Inhabited by new Creatures,
And these creatures, he called Men.

He looked.
He looked and found God—created in the image of Man,
And he stumbled.

—*Nancy Powell*

ETERNAL EYE

"In nature evil is infinite; good, finite."

I

*The dead Christ
falsified the
timeless confession
of the one coming.*

The advent, the eve, the coming
Of a mystery, a ghost, a shadow
Madly dancing
To the memory of a white fleece
Which disguised the deceit
Of the midlight's confession.

*The bard fears for
his soul; he invokes
the virtue of lone-
liness and the Muses
who have been
desecrated by physical
life.*

"Go into the house,
My soul;
I must wait alone
For the anniversary
Of his sins' betrayal.
"Come, only virtue,
Hold strong,
Hold still
The fragments of his heart;
Let the gashing,
Let the weeping,
Laughing, sighing,
Dying be enough.

"Sisters nine,
Regenerated as
Wanton whores,
Be dressed in vital red,
Smell of the rest after labor,
Have kisses for the three salts,
Yield fangs to his labored visions.
Come, come, come to be lost."

*The time is the
anniversaries of
Christian feats.*

November's winds
From the Shepherd-king's chamber
Pierce the common sores.
Wailing on the wind
Jakanaan's cry
With Abelard's confession . . .
Reason for nature's folly.
Laughing, the priest
Swallowed his absolution;
Later at twelve-ten
With wimple and cassock joined,
The deceit was their folly
In the wine and wafer
Joined by celebration.

*He awaits to present
to a god his only and
greatest gift: His
innocence.*

*Man, as an animal,
assumes his place to
await the coming.*

In a dream

*he beholds his unborn
soul.*

Prepared for the coming,
He comes now
Too late to be too early.
In the cold of the star's fire
He bears a gift
Once, twice, thrice,
Always refused:
 'Swaddling Master,
 The bow's undone,
 The paper's soiled,
 But the mystery
 In the gift
 Is mine . . . is ours alone.'

For the coming,
He crawls to wait
Among the flock:
The ox, the mule,
Wearied of inflicted toil;
The goat, the swine,
Nourished from the keeper's waste.
Beside the serpents,
Gold and green, unhooded,
He lies down
To warm his sleep.

II

Unconscious journey,
Yet the pain, the color,
The memory too bold . . .
Afraid in the dark,
Chilled with sweat,
Weary at dawn.

Beyond the lighted darkness
In the Eden of his mind,
The tree's fruits,
In youth, have embittered him,
And he longs for an end
Of life in death,
Of death in life.

. . . They brought snakes:
A cobra of gold,
A python of green.
The golden hood
Danced against their tongues
For the unique sensuality.

*His soul cannot
participate in nature's
betrayal.*

*He overpowers the
sensuous forces with
his blood, sweat, and
seed.*

*He learns of his
life's fated tragedy.*

*To a conceived form,
his soul is sent by the
Creator.*

*He is conscious,
though unborn.*

*He is born to a
physical life.*

He tasted the smooth curves:
The kiss was immortally cold;
He could not take the hood
Into his mouth.
With hissing laughter
The python circumvented him
In forced embraces.
There was no kiss,
Only the fearful embrace.
The green life rope fell
With thousands of feti
Lying uncongealed,
But alike to poison.
Weakening their poison
With hot salts,
Emptying the pool . . .
He swam naked
Among clear waters
In the beginning beauty
Of his mind's Eden.

Dutifully Melpomene was called
Concerning the drama,
A creative urge,
A collective recollection
In distilled destruction.
He answered,
The bearded co-author,
Commanding him only
To swim nude, alone.
How was He
Ever in vigilance,
Ever along the bank?

Ejected to the freedom,
To the love
Of the crystalline embrace
Among the fish,
Among wavering grass
Along a bottom unseen
He swam.

Scraping his nose
Upon a hidden root,
He climbed upon the bank.
There was the tree
Of many black branches
Deserted of green
Into which he climbed.

*Again, the sensuous-
ness assails him.*

*To achieve an existence
honest to himself, he
withdraws into himself
to seek the virtue of
loneliness.*

He beholds loneliness.

*He seeks to possess
loneliness physically.*

*Loneliness achieves
in him the virtue.*

Two business men,
Two antique boys,
Waiting together,
Received him
Without reception.
Too strong the union
Of the three,
Forcing him again
Into clean waters.
The bottom quilted
Red, white, black . . .
Arriving again,
Climbing again,
Going among the blacker branches
From where he was
Unable to see
Red, white, black . . .

III

In the last and second coming
He beheld there
The Stranger-brother,
The Father-one.
In trembling awe
Words he sounded:
 'How shall I name you;
 How will you hear me?'
The answer,
A name,
Among blacker branches
Discovered only.
 'That I could have found you before'
Running his hand
Along the inside
Of a strange darkness
Thick with certainty,
He felt his need stir
Into a motion of concern,
Nearing him to relief.
His whispered plea:
 'Let us go down together'
And the strange hand
Seized the inside of his doubt
To join in him,
To follow in him,
To lose in him,
Too eagerly lost alone,
Not to die again.

—Willie Shaw

EPILOGUE

This small volume represents the noblest strains of voices which could not keep silent the union of their imagination and reason. Yet there are many writers who belong to this campus and who are not represented. There was not enough money to match their interest.

Now there are voices which will forever remain silent, thoughts which will never be developed, and ideas which will never be shared. I fear this to be a loss and an injustice to each of us.

If each student writer fills his expressions with purpose and truth, he will be heard: deaf ears will listen; fists closed by selfishness and banality will open.

Beyond the grounds of this college, there waits a people, a world, a time wanting for wisdom to guide them and for harmony to comfort them. Writing must not be a collegiate hobby. This art form, if taken in earnest, is an obligation, a dedication of genius. I beg you, believe in yourselves and sing for man in his struggle with destiny a song of hope.

Faithfully,

Willie Shaw



