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## Searching . . .

perhaps this word strikes a common chord inside. In this issue, the High Point College *Apogee* staff offers you a look at man. Let us view man in the world — his failures, his hopes, his questions, his answers — man's life as it is or as it can be. Let the words speak, and look through the eyes of the writers and artists as they have chosen to take "A Searching Look."

We are all grateful to the North Carolina Arts Council for their support and interest. From a grant of \$250 received in the spring of 1970, *Apogee* was last year enabled to reward its contributors in cash. A similar grant makes possible the continuation of this encouragement in the current issue. And we are especially proud to acknowledge the most recent grant of \$300, which will be used to pay the contributors to next year's issue.

All the material of this issue — cover design, art work, poetry, and fiction — is the work of students and faculty of High Point College.

I also wish to commend the *Apogee* staff for the admirable work and cooperation which has made this tenth issue possible.

Lucy E. Hill  
*Editor-in-Chief*



# APOGÉE 72

"Night Flight I" *Geoffrey Iswandhi*

HIGH POINT COLLEGE  
High Point, North Carolina

Spring, 1972  
Volume X

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*Phyllis L. Weyraugh*

# Looking, Searching

## I

Forward into many dark nights of loneliness  
Into infinite moments, empty; trying  
To remember back to a better time:  
Forward, pushed by relentless, flowing  
Mechanical, dreary, dragging time, nowhere;  
To no new end, no end at all, just on.  
Those ragged puns and pointless games  
Abet time in pseudo-distraction.  
They follow dying desires and waning  
Hopes, no distraction at all.  
Thinking they knew what passed, fearing  
They were seers through time, no seers at all;  
They lay down in the face of stampeding  
Time, to be carried gently but steadily along, no stopping.  
Daring not to look and not being  
Able to resist, their horror ground  
Into their fragile souls where fear  
Poured its foundation and built its monument.  
As if elected to every other time but  
The future, they fell hopelessly

## II

Out to the present's gifts to the soul  
Whose wounds are deep, deadly;  
Time's consolations, none at all. Out to the moment  
Between past just past and future becoming past.  
Looking outward on the world's joys; a starved child,  
Standing in stillness with past and present, no future: no joy.  
They turn quickly to avoid the pain, but the  
Present brings other delicacies to turn strong stomachs.  
There, see! food burning, fed to animals, fattening pigs:  
It's to feed fattened workers with no time, nothing  
Over there! the bimonthly two bits dropped into sometime  
Charities run by non-existent mafias: no charity at all.  
Out to the battles and suffering,  
Out to the work-day people  
Who hurry to and from building assets  
And expanding liabilities and  
Forgetting the smell of summer after  
Rain and the loveliness of honey bees robbing a flower.  
They think of robbing one another and forget their past;  
Their salvation and eternity are forgotten along with humanity.

### III

Inward to the deep dark unsaid  
And the secret, self-secret thoughts echoing through  
The soul; remembering those impulses of  
Selfishness, choking on them; then seeking  
Forgetfulness, none comes, none.  
Moving always inward, looking, hoping  
To find something unknown before, unfound  
Before, to free; and finding only their  
Greed and lust; finding that of which they  
Create their devils and demons, no demons.  
As they search they fear they are wandering, being  
Ghost hunters entering a long dead house,  
Searching, not finding. They want to know  
Salvation in the lost past, in those  
Remembered dreams of childhood; a time of  
Innocence and sensitive spirit when the  
Soul had not yet felt the weariness  
Of imprisoned years; a time  
Where present and future held no fear  
And all the world was friend and company.  
Rushing inward to the death of hope  
And sterile life they find  
No way to turn, but seek in the stable past that knowledge,  
Of creation that brings a peace, an assurance.

### IV

Up to a magnitude of space and motion;  
Up with longing to become part of the  
Quiet heavens spinning in majesty through eternity;  
Or looking upward with visions of heavenly implication;  
Call we it by general names or prefer elusive form:  
Affirmation rings through man that  
There is control and concern.  
But this is the man of emptiness and question;  
Is he not loneliness and void throughout?  
A God is known as though  
Humankind contained some knowledge, some divinity,  
And yet, is not man's thoughts and love eternal: like knows like.



Looking backward to a past once  
 At peace; before birth and toil of living.  
 Remembering deeply into shadows long past before the torture  
 Of the womb and woman's labor.  
 Knowing through intuition, the common  
 Task of the soul, the real man covered with flesh.  
 If only man could see his real self and existence  
 Without the carton that carries a soul;  
 He would realize the truth and form of life  
 And his home without fear, that to which life leads.  
 Man whose true existence is beyond spirit, numbed  
 And in exile in this sour land of shadows  
 Where the temptress of passions creates  
 Forgetfulness and makes exile loved and cherished.

*Wiley Garrett*

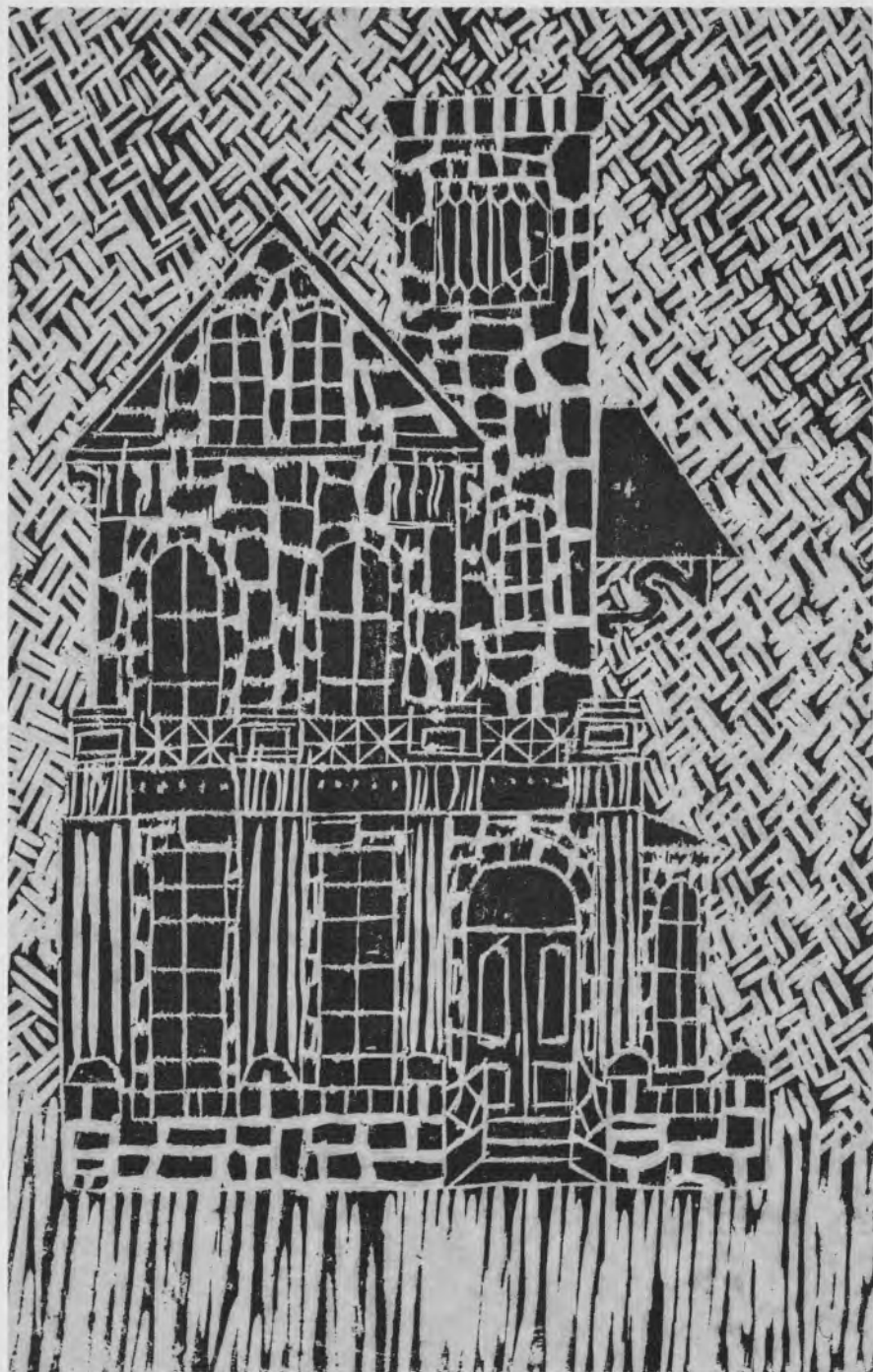
### *A Father's Strength*

One hour a small child took my hand,  
 And bade me lead the way.  
 And as I grasped those fingers small,  
 My heart believed that day.

How often I would doubt myself —  
 The world's so great, yet small.  
 But faith in those uplifted eyes  
 Forbid my hopes to fall.

And on that day I knew at last,  
 The worth of His great plan.  
 I found new strength to feed my dreams,  
 Drawn from my child's wee hand.

*Lucy E. Hill*



"House on a Hill" *Allen Goldberg*

She  
A nameless face  
In a faceless choir

With  
our  
voices  
With  
our  
eyes

With  
our  
hearts hearts  
We We

meet meet  
in in  
the the  
Lord  
It is good.

I  
A faceless name  
In a nameless congregation

With  
our  
voices  
With  
our  
eyes

With  
our

*James Coble*

## Someone Named Catherine

To Catherine, the world outside was bleak indeed. The wind moaned through the deserted streets and down the empty alleys. Bits of paper and rubbish swirled about under the gray sky. Tall buildings, once buzzing with activity, stood as silent sentries over the lifeless surroundings. Houses appeared to be empty tombs, with glass from their shattered windows littering the lawns and sidewalks. Here and there, a rotting corpse could be seen on the avenues and boulevards. A horrid stench filled the air.

She stood alone in the small three-room flat she and Bartlett had been using since the end. A dim glow pervaded the scene, turning the whole room into a world of gray and semidarkness. An old, rusty double bed stood in one corner, barely distinguishable in the low light. A bureau stood against the north wall, its cracked mirror sending back the faint light coming in from the south window. A mahogany vanity was cluttered with cosmetics Catherine hadn't bothered to use for two or three weeks. Somehow, it hadn't seemed to matter anymore. Dusty boxes were stacked in another corner.

Silhouetted against the other window, Catherine stood motionless. The image of the rotting corpse haunted her. She could still see it lying there; she still remembered the smell, the horror. Silently, painfully, her mind churned with the details of the last hour.

She had walked with Bartlett to the edge of town. He would be gone for several days, and she had wanted to see him off. Once a week, Bartlett made these trips to look for other survivors. For five weeks, all he had found was rotting carcasses and drying bones. But once again he had set off on his vigilant quest. Catherine had watched him until he disappeared into the grayness of the horizon. She had turned and started back toward their abode about ten blocks away, deciding to take another route in hopes of finding a short cut.

She had been walking for about five minutes when she first saw the corpse. Curious about what it might be, she had quickened her pace. As she neared, she had decided that it must be a pile of abandoned clothes, perhaps ones that would fit Bartlett or herself. Finding suitable clothing had begun to be a problem. Much had been destroyed in the fires that occurred near the end. The little clothing that was left was wrapped around the dead bodies. Catherine had been only five feet away when she saw the emaciated hand protruding from the sleeve.

Horror had gripped her, and she had felt very sick. Gasping, she

had stepped back from the mass of decaying flesh. After making a wide circle around the corpse, Catherine had begun to run, sobbing as she went. She had flown down the streets and around the corners. After what had seemed an eternity, she had stumbled into the ruin she and Bartlett were using as a home. The next thing she remembered was waking up and finding herself sprawled across the rusty bed.

Catherine shuddered. Best to rid herself of these thoughts, she decided. She lighted the taper on the vanity. How alone and pitiful it looked. She found herself going into the kitchen and bringing another candle back with her. She placed it beside the first and lit it too. For Bartlett, she thought.

She walked slowly across the room amidst the flickering candlelight. Sighing, she sat on the old bed, its ancient springs groaning under the pressure. How tired and alone she felt. "Oh, Bartlett," she muttered. The wind gave an answering sigh as it moaned outside. She told herself that she must soon get up and prepare supper for Bartlett and herself — no, not for Bartlett. She wondered what time it was. Must be after six, she decided.

Catherine stiffened suddenly. What was that? Voices? No, not voices, not talking anyway. Just a moaning, a crying, a wailing. Wailing, weeping — just as on the days before the end. Catherine slapped her hands to her ears as terror swept her soul. But it wouldn't stop. God, make it stop! Now she could see too — the streets — the men in black — the careworn expressions — the white placards pasted on every door — QUARANTINE. She shook her head furiously. No! God, make it quit! Oh, God, please! A knock on the door — a man in black — slow, somber words — "I - am - sor - ry - to - have - to - tell - you - that - For - rest - is - dead - is dead - is dead - is dead - is . . ."

"No! No! No! Not Forrest! Oh, God, no! Oh, help me! Oh, God, help me!"

Catherine lay on the bed, great sobs choking her and shuddering her small body.

For the second time since Bartlett had left, Catherine pulled herself together. She turned over on the bed and pulled the wet hair from around her face. The room was dark except for the two candles. She sat up slowly, the bed complaining again as she shifted. She had loved Forrest very much — sometimes she felt she still did. They

were to have been married that next day. Now he was gone. Everyone was gone — except her and Bartlett. As the others had dropped like flies, only she and Bartlett had escaped. Why? She didn't know — maybe, she thought, it was God's affirmation that life should continue. She and Bartlett were to be the founders of a new human race. They were Adam and Eve. Only this time it was different. They weren't in a luscious garden filled with fruits and sunshine, as the first Adam and Eve had been. Instead, their inheritance was a ravaged planet, the final product of man's horrid desire for self-destruction. She and Bartlett were Adam and Eve all right, but this time Adam and Eve found themselves in a garden of despair.

Another spell of squeaking from the rusty old bed reminded her of the night before. Bartlett had been there then. They had just finished a late supper and were preparing for bed. Bartlett had blown out the solitary candle and walked past her. Methodically, she had shed her clothes and climbed into the bed. The springs had squeaked. Bartlett had placed his arms around her as usual. She had responded just as she had done for what seemed countless nights before. It was at times like that that she knew she still loved Forrest. Eventually, they had drifted off to sleep.

Nights had become objects of dread for her. She was afraid Bartlett had begun to suspect that she was loving him out of duty rather than affection. Any day now, either she or Bartlett might contract the dread disease. Children were needed as soon as possible. Hence, the ritual every night was stifled by an air of urgency. She had to conceive and soon. The whole future of humanity depended upon her — upon her — Catherine Winston. If she failed now, humanity was doomed to extinction. It was with this horrid thought that she approached the bed each night — half afraid she wouldn't conceive, half afraid she would.

Catherine's mind churned as she thought of the consequences if she should become pregnant. She would be a new Eve — mother of humanity's second chance. Would it be any different this time, she wondered. Have we learned anything? She thought back to the time before the end. Painfully, she recalled the half-forgotten days. There had been riots and protests. A president had been assassinated. There had been crime. Pollution. Starvation. Then had come The War. She cringed as she remembered the horrid pictures of the mushroom clouds. She thought of the radio — Forrest's radio. The reports had been so terrifying. Yet, even more terrifying had been the silence that

had finally met their ears — silence that had never changed no matter how frantically Forrest twisted the dial. Then had come The Disease. She had watched as it claimed the lives of all those around her — even Forrest's. She and Bartlett had been the only ones — the only ones . . . Catherine shuddered as she thought of mankind's horrid legacy.

Now man had a new chance. Would it be any different, she wondered again. She thought of the first Eve — she wondered how she felt now, seeing what she had done by begetting the human race. Does she consider it a mistake on her behalf that the universe would be better without? Would she, Catherine, feel the same way five thousand years from now? Would she ever have peace knowing she was responsible for the survival of the human blight?

Once Catherine made up her mind, she wasted no time. She rose quickly from the bed and crossed to the vanity. A quick search revealed a small scrap of paper she could use. She strode into the kitchen and secured a pencil. Returning to the bed, she began to write, her hand steady.

"Dear Bartlett,"

Her hand began to quiver as she wrote his name.

". . . no use . . ."

Tears began to wet cheeks.

". . . forgive me . . ."

Her hand shook as she wrote the words.

". . . good-by Bartlett."

She concluded and, pulling herself together, wrote "Catherine" across the bottom. Laying the note on the bed, she walked across the room to the vanity. Pausing a moment, she watched the two candles. How alone they looked. Catherine blew out one of the tapers, being careful not to disturb the other one. A jagged piece of glass — a couple of swift movements — and Catherine lay crumpled on the floor, her blood staining the faded carpet.

A few moments later, a gust of wind blew out the solitary taper. But there was no one to see it go out. There was no one to know that the same wind had just blown over the body of Bartlett Younger, beside whom lay a crumpled note addressed to someone named Catherine. No one to know.

In the distance, a baby cried.

*James Coble*



*Phyllis L. Weyraugh*



## Eternity

The minute one heart stopped beating  
Was my Epiphany,  
Illuminating the fragile leaf  
From the would-be fruit of the forbidden tree.  
No, no fruit —  
Only the bitterness of the root  
And the faintness of blossoms that lay dormant,  
Sinking back into the earth.

*Emily B. Sullivan*

## Idle Thoughts

Can dust and ashes mix  
To be gathered into one beautiful,  
Gold-flecked solid whole,  
Piecing together, from some unknown quantity  
Of Eternity, life's tiny fragments,  
Welding together forever  
The hidden voiceless bond?

*Emily B. Sullivan*

## Words

If words could fill the emptiness  
That stays when you are gone,  
Then I could stop the hurt  
With some simple little song,  
And sing and sing unto myself  
Until convinced I am not wrong  
To let you be my waking thought,  
My sleep when nights are long.

If words could somehow say to you  
What I can say to none,  
I'd take up my pen and never stop  
To think my task could not be done,  
But words come like the summer rain  
Silent and sudden in the brightest sun  
To wet the soil which will crack and dry  
Again as if rain had never come.

So leave the singing to the birds  
To feign the morning cold,  
And leave the words for scholars  
When they be wise and old,  
For I must speak in silence  
And use the time I stole  
To disclose the comely wonder  
Of how to reach your soul.

*Pat Berry*

## *"Nothing Gold Can Stay"*

(A Trio in Tribute to Forsythia)

Today in your yellow gown  
    You stand there gleaming.  
Yesterday bare and brown,  
Today in your yellow gown —  
So quick came Spring to town  
    While we were dreaming.

We come here day by day  
    To watch your garment's changing.  
Since "nothing gold can stay,"  
We come here day by day —  
Relentlessly, do what we may,  
    That gold to green is ranging.  
We come here day by day  
    To watch your garment's changing.

Green summer yields to fall,  
    Your duller bronze unleaving.  
When wintry winds appall,  
Green summer yields to fall  
Till brown bare stems are all —  
    We pass from gay to grieving.  
Green summer yields to fall,  
    Your duller bronze unleaving.

*Charles Eugene Mounts*

## Parable

Once on a summer evening in the gloom  
A large, brown moth flew blinded by the light  
That marked my open window, whence in fright  
It gained bewildered entrance to the room  
And settled on the wall. "How strange a tomb  
Are shining walls," I thought. "How bright  
The fatal refuge gleams. Back to the night  
My visitor must go, not here encounter doom."

But when in human kindness I essayed  
To set the brown-winged prisoner free, I found  
The duty harsh, for fluttering wings were flails  
Against the gentlest grasp. At last dismayed,  
I flung a shattered victim to the ground  
And stared aghast at fingers dark with scales.

*Charles Eugene Mounts*



"Mother" *Allen Goldberg*

## Image of a Friend

Here is my poem,  
my gift for you, my friend.  
For you, because you walked  
through the snow with me.  
In the cold, still air  
you were beside me.  
In the reflection of the sharp stars and pale round moon  
we walked in the same light.  
And in the quiet silence of a snowy night  
when all my dark, lost dreams came to me  
You were there.

*Beth Lewis*

## Gone is the Snow

Upon one snowy winter's night  
When I awoke, I found  
The old drab world had vanished —  
For love lay on the ground.

With warmer days the snow was gone,  
But love remained behind,  
Leaving a springtime freshness  
That eased my weary mind.

So love — your love — had waked me,  
Creating me anew,  
Transforming all my old world  
To a paradise of you.

*Gregory R. Bennett*

My life was winter; cold, barren, desolate  
It seemed no sun would ever shine on me to melt  
my frozen dreams and bring them into  
blossom as in Spring.  
Then the sky broke and caring beams of sunshine  
reached out for me and changed my winter  
into Spring  
My life is now a prism shining in a flood of  
sunlight and glowing in all directions  
Yet I can look back into the Emptiness and under-  
stand all  
Because it was you who changed the seasons of my life  
And you who filled my prism with color through the  
sparkle in your eyes.

*Janet Brugger*

### *Step Inside?*

Would you care to step inside,  
and dream my dreams for awhile?  
You see, I don't want it all to myself —  
I wish to share it with you.  
Give it to all, don't hold it inside.  
Say what you will say.  
Be surprised to find that others,  
too, dream like you.  
Your world is your own,  
but it is owned by everyone.  
Colors so beautiful,  
they sparkle in your eyes.  
Touch the gold  
and speak of the dreams —  
on the edge of your mind.  
Let it rise.  
Say what must be said.  
To hold inside  
is but to  
kill the flame of the future.

*Wayne Green*

And I cried, "Mama! Mama!"  
As the tears streamed down my face  
As I scrubbed one swollen foot against  
The other  
Until the skin grew raw and bled.

Swollen feet. That have since  
Clambered over the clumsy cobblestones  
Of childhood;  
Skipped across the sharp sudden strikes of  
Life's truth;  
Danced among the mixed merriment  
Of a mind's emotions,  
Running on with choking blindness into the cold  
Hatred that heeds only heathens —  
Healing enough to know the night's beginning,  
Still fool enough to seek a secret way;  
Tiptoeing toward this last temptation  
On and on into the trying tiredness  
Of a tattered soul  
As again I find myself screaming —  
"Mama! Mama!"

My will's grown weary.  
I asked for love and its son only —  
Sent for stolen moments  
And solemn memories —  
For tears unspent, half drying  
Half dying inside;  
Still searching to see a reason  
For Mama's silence.

*Pat Berry*



## Wind Song

The sound of the wind is scarcely discernible at first, just a mere rustling of leaves at the head of the dank, stinking coal mining valley. Then the sigh begins, a lonely, empty sigh, swelling into an anguished groan, undulating down the narrow pass, and wrapping in a sinister, foreboding embrace around the shabby company houses, which huddle together, like terrified children before an approaching menace. On the horizon, heavy storm clouds rapidly, threateningly mount to usher angrily in the hesitant dawn.

Lenny tosses restlessly. "Damn," he mutters, "I wish the rain would hurry up and break so that ungodly howl would hush."

At his side, Melinda, his wife, stirs. "Honey, what's ailing you? Are you sick?"

"No, Missy, I hain't sick. Just can't sleep. Guess it's that wind out there, shaking this old dump of a shack. That and, well . . . to tell the truth, I guess I just can't get that letter Will writ off my mind. What'd you think, Missy?"

"Now, Lenny, there hain't no need for you to ask me. It's your decision. I want you to be happy. If you can find that happiness here working in the mines like your pappy and grandpappy did before you, then I'll be happy too. But, if you feel down in your bones that we oughter leave and go up to Cleveland, where Will Bennett is, and get a job in that steel place, then I'll be happy there too. All I want is to see that skeered, lost look gone out of your eyes." Gently, lovingly, she touches Lenny's face with her fingers, exploring every line, every wrinkle. "I just want to see your face all lit up, happy with being happy. I don't keer if we're in the middle of the Saharie Desert, if that's what it takes."

"Missy, I want to do right by you and little Michael. These coal mines shore hain't much future to offer my son; but, lord, Missy, I heerd yesterday, down at the company store, that the Johnsons have come back from up there 'bout Cincinnati. They said it was a den of iniquity, they did. Said young folks just walked the streets, smoking and cussing and taking dope and calling them hillbillies. Even said there weren't a real church in the whole place where you could shout amen when you felt the Holy Spirit and where you could get to know the sisters and brothers. Of course, they said, if all you wuz after wuz money, well, the devil and that and the big city went hand in hand but that they had come back to be poor among god-fearing folks. Missy, I just feel torn twixt this and that. Listen, sweetie, you go on

back to sleep. Believe I'll go get a little fresh air."

"Lenny, are you shore you'll be okay. You hain't sick?"

"No, no. Just restless. Need to get out and do a little searching of my soul, I guess. You close those pretty eyes and get a few more winks of sleep. I can't have the best looking gal in Fayette Valley having circles under her eyes!"

"Lenny, you old silly! I'm acomin' with you." Melinda giggles and slides out of bed.

Together they quietly dress and tiptoe out onto the front stoop. Lenny crouches down upon the rickety top step and peers up at the black clouds, which are billowing ominously. "God, it shore is spooky," he mutters, shivering, as his sweaty skin cools rapidly in the gusty wind. "No wonder those old codgers down at the company store can cook up scare stories about this wind we get down here in this damn valley. Look over there at that mine's old hell-mouth. You can almost feel it gaping at us, can't you? Damn, if it don't look scary even in the middle of the day, all boarded over."

Old timers swore that the eerie howlings of the wind were the cries of miners trapped in a gas explosion fifty years earlier in the old mine, now abandoned, which overlooked the town from a barren hill. Women in those parts maintained that, if you looked very carefully at the boards sealing off the mine, you could see dark spots — spots that were the blood from the fingers of the mothers and wives of those men trapped inside. As the story was told, the women had clawed at the boards when the officials, lacking an alternative, ordered the mine sealed forever because of the poison gas. There had been no attempt made to recover the bodies because of the insurmountable dangers involved.

Silently, Lenny and Melinda contemplate the distant mine, each dwelling on inner misgivings which the spectacle always aroused in their hearts. Finally, Lenny shifts his position on the steps and moves nearer to Melinda, as if to cast off the morbid mood. Putting his arm around her and pulling her close to his body, he says, "Oh, Missy, I forgot to tell you Wilkins — you know that government safety inspector who came by and checked our mine a few months ago — is due back in a couple weeks or so."

"Oh, Lenny, I'm so glad. I worry so about you. Do you reckon he'll do any good?"

"Well, I'm not a betting fellar, but, if I wuz, I'd lay my buck with Wilkins in any showdown. Yep, smart, tough guy he wuz. Really laid down the law to Herb Scott and Sons, Incorporated, as they call their stingy selves, to keep those shafts clear of that coal dust and to keep that ventilating equipment up to par. Yes, sir. He'll be back least twice a year to check, too. He promised. And, guess what, Missy? I heerd that we miners are going to get more disability insurance for our old age. How about that?"

"Promises, promises . . . there's been so many promises just to build up your hopes and then let you down. I'm more worried about you right now than any high-flutin' retirement plan. Lenny, you just hain't been looking good to me lately. Seems least little thing gets you all out of breath. Being down there in that dark and dirt just hain't agreeing with you, now is it?"

"The dust hain't what's bothering me, Missy. It's the dark. Seems to be just smothering my soul. Missy, you know it's getting to me, that dark. When I go to work, I can think of half a dozen reasons to put off going down that tunnel. Seems I have to keep looking back to soak in the last bit of sunlight. Lord, one day I felt panicky like. Know what I did? I ran back out and picked a dadburn buttercup and stuck it in my pocket to feel and smell while I wuz in the dark that day. Missy, I just had to have something to connect me back up with you and love and life while I wuz down in that grave! I'm skeered. Lord, yes! I'm skeered!"

"Then, let's go, Lenny. Let's go to Cleveland, where we can see the sunlight and breathe it and taste it and roll in it and laugh in it and love in it and see Michael grow in it and . . . oh, yes, let's go, Lenny!"

Lenny throws his arms around Melinda. "Oh, lord, Missy, that's all I wuz waiting on, just to hear you say that, just like that, to have you feel your heart pound in excitement at the thought, like mine does. Amen, Missy, we're going with our son to where God's light beams down on our faces like he intended."

"But . . . but, Lenny, the money."

"To hell with the money! To hell with Scott and Sons! That's just what I'm planning to go in and tell them today after I get finished with that damn first shift. We'll have a little money, Missy. Today'll be Friday, the seventh of August. That'll make it payday. Now won't that be nice . . . free and with money in my pocket!"

"Well now, sounds like we're going to have a mighty important day. How's about some good old poor man's gravy and fried fatback for breakfast to get off to a good start?"

"Lead the way, Miss Beautiful!"

Hand in hand, Lenny and Melinda go back inside. While Lenny dresses for work, Melinda, humming happily, putters around the kitchen preparing breakfast. Coming into the kitchen, Lenny splashes cold water from the tin basin on the side counter on his face and hands, dries on a spotless towel hanging from a nail above the counter, and sits down at the table to eat. "Lord, this tastes great, Missy," he says, as he gobbles down the food. "I don't know if I married you for your money or your cooking."

"Oh, hush, you silly willy, you'll wake Michael with your goings on. You'd better hurry up. Jeff is outside honking for you."

Wiping his mouth on the back of his hand, Lenny hurriedly rises and kisses Melinda quickly on the cheek. "Now, Miss Cleveland, you start packing all your belongings and, when I get home this evening, I'll help with the heavy stuff. Lord, Missy, we're going to be so happy. Just you and Michael and me! See you this evening, sweetie!"

Melinda watches from the kitchen window as Lenny hops into Jeff's old rattletrap car, and they rumble off toward Scott's Mines. Then, hearing Michael stir, she turns to start her busy day.

Six months later, the experts are still bickering over the precise cause of the August seventh explosion of a coal mine in Fayette Valley, West Virginia, which entombed all the first shift workers deep inside the mountain. The owners, Scott and Sons, Incorporated, say it was an unavoidable disaster, a risk of the business. The safety inspectors are arguing that the tragedy was due to negligence on the part of the owners. Senator Carington is making a campaign issue of the poor plight of coal miners. All, however, agree that it will be at least another two months before the mine can be opened and the bodies brought out.

And the wind still sighs and moans its song of woe.

*Cynthia Stanley*



*"Trash" Mary Jane Smith*

### *Obliterate the Litterer*

For those lousy lads that litter  
How I long to make life bitter  
With some blows upon that sitter  
    Called the bum.

Shattered bottles, cans for liquor,  
Deserve their punishment but quicker —  
I would hang each slovenly slicker  
    By the thumb.

Then to pelt him with his messes  
In his face till he confesses  
All his sins and then professes  
    To have done

With all such unseemly doing,  
With every sad and sorry spewing  
Of this trash upon my viewing,  
    Every one.

*Charles Eugene Mounts*

## Apple-gaited Train

apple-gaited train  
bound for the extremity of  
the unknown  
left at early morn  
with its sunset ripeness

but none can say  
they were not  
forewarned  
for seven long years  
the rooster crowed his prophecy  
thrice each night  
at the man  
with the mechanical heart  
all to no avail

and now  
the old rooster  
is dead  
(they ate him for Sunday dinner)  
and the apple-gaited train  
goes  
on  
blowing its nonexistent whistle  
in warning of its  
ever-pressing  
approach

*Kathleen Lee*

## Miss Heroin

So now Little Man you've grown tired of grass,  
L.S.D., acid, cocaine, and hash.  
And someone pretending to be a true friend  
Said, "I'll introduce you to Miss Heroin."

Well Honey, before you start fooling with me,  
Just let me inform you of how it will be.  
For I will seduce you and make you my slave.  
I've sent men much stronger than you to their graves.

You think you could never become a disgrace,  
And end up addicted to poppy seed waste.  
So you'll start inhaling me one afternoon;  
You'll take me into your arms very soon.

And once I have entered deep down in your veins,  
The craving will nearly drive you insane.  
You'll need lots of money (as you have been told)  
For, darling, I'm much more expensive than gold.

You'll swindle your mother and, just for a buck,  
You'll turn into something vile and corrupt.  
You'll mug and you'll steal for my narcotic charm,  
And feel contentment when I'm in your arms.

The day when you realize the monster you've grown,  
You'll solemnly promise to leave me alone.  
If you think that you've got the mystical knack,  
Then, sweetie, just try getting me off your back.



The vomit, the cramps, your gut tied in a knot,  
The jangling nerves screaming for just one more shot.  
The hot chills, the cold sweat, the withdrawal pains  
Can only be saved by my little white grains.

There's no other way, and there's no need to look;  
For deep down inside, you will know you are hooked.  
You'll desperately run to the pusher and then,  
You'll welcome me back to your arms once again.

And when you return (just as I foretold!)  
I know that you'll give me your body and soul.  
You'll give up your morals, your conscience, your heart,  
And you will be mine until DEATH DO US PART!

*Buddy McElvaney*

### “Wonder”

Wonder is silent curiosity,  
— a manifestation of anxiety,  
— a lonely cry of anticipation,  
The deep, smiling dream that attains those elusive goals of reality.

Wonder is the breezy sway of the trees  
as they whisper their secrets,  
The tranquil, pondering mood of the rainstorm's dripping aftermath,  
A “Spring-cleaning” of dusty memories,  
Thought absorbing itself.

Wonder expresses that which words could never tell,  
or emotions could never show.  
It is contented achievement in the midst of despair,  
A fantasy of success in times of failure,  
Regret for missed opportunities and hope for unknown possibilities.

Wonder is the distant faith of striving Man.  
With it, we were, are, and will become.  
Without it, we could cease to be...

*Bill McGhee*

Wrenn Memorial Library  
High Point College  
High Point, North Carolina

from "Odyssey in Black"

*Equilibrium*

Sweet wisdom of life that brings me  
to sing the blues;  
Sweet, yet sour life that gives me  
bad news;  
Spout out your anger — vile and green.  
Tell me of my troubles and where I've been.  
Speak — oh pursuer of life's gray dawn.  
I've been away and down so long!  
Tell me what to do, and how to do it —  
I want to make snow flakes out of suet.  
The soft yellow lights of my mind withdraw —  
lead me down the corridors of a long  
white hall.  
I've come to the end of that long  
white hall.  
Will I stand,  
or will I fall?

*A Prayer*

Dear Lord —  
Make me strong,  
so the master won't beat me today.  
Grant me strength to be a man.  
And, if you think it's right, let  
my children have freedom someday.  
Let them be able to do whatever they want.  
Make the whiteman see that we are  
all the same.  
White and black — brothers under the sun.  
  
Now Lord, don't think of me as  
an uppity nigger,  
I'm only asking for what I  
Think is right,

Amen.

*H. P. Melrose*

## *My Sweet Molly June*

On a sunny afternoon in October I first met Molly. The spreading branches of the old tree above me were naked; and, as I looked up, I saw patches of white between the black limbs. How in the world would I ever get my mind on studying? This old oak tree had become a favorite spot for me, but it was difficult trying to study with Mother Nature peeking over my shoulder, smiling deviously.

The first few hectic weeks of college had been hell for me. It was the first time I'd been away from home for a lengthy period of time, and I still wasn't adjusted to this new environment. Sometimes, I would wonder if I was cut out for college. I was easily depressed and very shy.

I was thinking about home when she first walked up. I started up curiously, wondering what she wanted. Later, I found out she was searching for a friend, just as I was. We began talking about our home towns and finally told each other our names. At first we acted like little kids.

Her name was Molly. The first thing I noticed about her was her long black hair. In my eyes, she was a very complete woman. She said practically everyone called her Molly June, this being her full name. We talked for a good while, discussing our major fields of study, the college, our families, and various things that crept into the conversation. Molly had a beautiful twinkle in her eyes, a more noticeable aspect of her features. When she spoke, I would gaze into her soft brown eyes, as if under a spell.

We sat on the grass nearly an hour talking. It was good having someone listen, and it was good discovering a friend. Molly seemed so mature and responsible. She was unlike any other girl I had ever met.

Our friendship grew cautiously. We usually dined together, and I often walked her to her dormitory. I soon discovered that Molly had a heart of gold and a peace with God. It was difficult to find a friend with these qualities. Wherever we walked, we encountered puzzling stares; but soon we began to ignore the remarks and glances of students. I had found a true friend in Molly, and there was nothing which could hinder our friendship.

I had come to college with a specific goal in mind and decided that there was nothing which could prevent my achieving it. I also hoped to gain, along with an education, a deeper sense of what life was all about. This was a new situation in which I would be out on my own. Everything I wanted I would have to get on my own, and only I, myself, would be responsible. Molly and I were alike in these

ideas. Each of us was a source of encouragement for the other.

In the ensuing months after meeting her, I spent most of my time with Molly June. We usually studied in the library and took long walks on campus. We hardly ever dined together any more, for reasons which Molly would not say. I found it strange that my attitudes toward college and toward life in general could be altered so much by this one girl. I found myself enjoying studying, an activity for which I had never had a great love. I also became more optimistic. Each day I would live as if it were the last, enjoying life to the utmost; and never was I to be seen without a smile on my face. Is this hard to believe? It is for me, knowing that all this resulted from letting someone care.

Such were my first few months in college and the remarkable friend I found there. After Christmas, Molly June informed me that our relationship could not continue as in the preceding months. I begged her for a reason, and she told me the way it was. She had explained to her parents the situation. Although I knew this would be the end of a beautiful relationship, we would still be "friends." On making the sacrifice, Molly informed me that her parents would not support her in college if she continued seeing me.

Naturally, I was deeply hurt by the decision of Molly's parents. It was difficult for me to comprehend how Molly had such narrow-minded and selfish parents and still be the kind of person she was. Molly refrained from relating the details of what her parents had said, knowing that I knew as well as she did.

After her freshman year, Molly transferred to a college nearer to her home town. We parted sadly and promised to write each other. I knew, however, that we would never be together again as before. I knew that it would be a challenge trying to find such a devoted friend to take her place. And I knew that I would miss her exceedingly.

I am thankful that I found Molly June. Her friendship is one I shall always treasure. I learned many things through her. I learned to look at one's heart for one's true identity. Molly added much to my life; and, now that she's gone, I realize how fortunate I was. I still wonder how we met, became so close, and then parted in such a small period of time. It still seems as if that year was a dream. Yes, Molly and I looked for more in each other. She is black and I am white.

*Irving Crump*



"Portrait of an Old Woman" *Mary Jane Smith*

To an Indian Grandmother on Her  
Ninety-second Birthday

When you were a girl, the green and yellow parakeets  
Still flocked and chattered,  
The big black and white woodpeckers hammered noisily  
On the dead cypresses by the river,  
And the sky grew as dark from the passage of pigeons  
As from the storm clouds  
In the season of the big winds.

After ninety-two springtimes  
The ibises and egrets still flock back from the gladeland  
To build their platforms of sticks  
In the waterfowl village  
On the island in the big lake,  
And the yellowhammer calls lustily  
From a new-dug hole in a wateroak  
Over a city street.

The voices of spring  
Come clamorously  
Through the office window,  
And the heart of your descendant  
Is fevered with restlessness.

*Charles Eugene Mounts*

## The Judgment

The case went to trial on a warm spring afternoon. Charlotte Lawless was on trial for the first-degree murder of her child.

As she entered the courtroom her eyes were glued to the floor. She could not bear to look at the prosecutor, nor anyone else in the courtroom, for that matter. She was without help. She had to face this, the worst crisis of her life, all alone. As she carefully walked up the rows of seats toward the front, Charlotte could feel the hatred of those in attendance crawling up her back.

"Here she comes. Look at her eyes. You can plainly see she's guilty."

"I think it's disgraceful. How could anyone. . . ."

"I hope they do justice to that child-killer!"

When she finally reached her seat, the only glimmer of hope was the assuring look of her young long-haired lawyer. She noted that he resembled an old boyfriend of hers. This thought gave her a shiver.

"Everything's going to work out. Come on now."

"Yeah. Okay."

"Please, Charlotte, we have to fight to prove your innocence. You can't give up at the start."

"I know, Frank. I know. I'm sorry." While speaking these words she wished she really was as sure about the condition of her innocence as Frank.

She fell into deep thought while the jury filed in.

The first juror to enter was Mr. Banker. He was a very prominent-looking man and had a face that did not look too unlike that of a bulldog. The gentleman following him was Mr. B. Safe, the town's insurance salesman. Many people of the town were involved in this trial as it had rapidly become everyone's business. One of the woman jurors was Miss Learned, a very respected lady who was a member of the teachers' association. She knew "just what to do" with someone such as Charlotte. The jurors each took his seat, casting a cold look toward the defendant. The only one who seemed the least bit kind was a younger girl of the town, Miss Mary Hope.

The ceremony that was given the judge as he entered was unnecessary. He drew everyone's attention and took Charlotte away from her thoughts. He was an elderly and kindly-looking man. His soft and lustrous gray hair gave the illusion of a rim of light around his head. With a solemn, yet warm, expression, he took his seat, and the trial was ready to start. The prosecution began.

"May I show you, Judge Lord, Exhibit A, the doctor's evidence?"

'The child died an unnatural death at the hands of its mother.' Even though this evidence is sufficient in itself, let me bring to you a witness who will take away any doubt which may be left. I call the witness for the state to the stand."

Charlotte did not look up as the lady took the stand. She feared the hate she knew she would find in this woman's eyes. She was aware of the wave of surprise that fluttered through the courtroom as the woman gave her name to the attendant and took her oath. She was poised as she sat down on the stand.

"Now, ma'am, will you please tell the court of your association with the defendant?"

"I cannot tell you how it breaks my heart that my daughter is the one who has brought disgrace upon herself and her entire family."

"Thank you. Now, will you please tell the court what you know about your daughter's plans for her child over the past three months?"

"It hurts for me to condemn Charlotte before all of society. However, I believe you will all agree with me, that she has forced this unpleasant task upon me. Yes, Charlotte planned and then committed this murder. She even spoke to me about it at one time. Naturally I never thought she could be serious. To kill a poor defenseless child before it has even had a chance at life is an inexcusable crime for which I maintain she must not ever be forgiven."

"I see. Now, may we all understand that even the defendant's mother seeks punishment?"

"Yes. We must get vengeance for the child who was unable to defend himself. I will say no more."

The judge gave her a seemingly kindly, yet unexplainable look as he listened to her condemnation. He thought of the words, "Let him who is without sin cast the first stone." Even so, he could forgive her her harsh words. He felt assured that she thought she was doing right.

As the woman stepped down from the stand she appeared unmoved by the tears that flowed freely down Charlotte's cheeks. Her heart had hardened against Charlotte.

Frank was now addressing the court. He called for the jury to keep an open mind toward Charlotte's case and not to be too quick to judge. As he spoke, Charlotte overheard the words of the person behind her.

"He might as well be speaking to a wall. His words fall on deaf



ears. Look at the jurors' faces."

With this Charlotte looked, for the first time, toward the people who were to judge her. The coldness stung her; yet she found a warm spot in Miss Hope, whose face portrayed uncertainty. She heard Frank speaking her name.

"Come on, Charlotte. Charlotte, for God's sake are you listening? Look I can't do that much to get you out of this. Honey, you must explain to them, they . . ."

The words rang in her ears—why did she have to explain to these people? Why? Couldn't it just be between herself and the older wise man who sat before her? Why must she try to explain to society?

". . . so do you understand Charlotte? Now come on—get up there."

Charlotte felt herself getting up and walking toward the stand. She was dry-eyed as she took the oath and then sat down. She looked toward Frank.

"Will you please tell the court exactly what happened, in your own words?"

"Oh, I know that you all think of me as a cold, calculating killer. Maybe you have a right to. I am the first to admit that I do not know. In case there is still any doubt, it is true that I planned the murder of my child and went through with it. I knew exactly what I was doing and I did it."

"Please, explain your motives to the court!"

"I had to do it. It was necessary. The child's father and I could not afford this child, nor could we take care of it. If my child had been allowed to live, three people's lives would have been made miserable. I saved all of us from that. The world has too many people as it is already, so I've just taken one more life away from it."

"Would you like to add anything more?"

"Only that I stand ready to be judged. I cannot continue my life a free person not knowing for sure whether or not I have sinned. My only wish is to know the judgment."

"Charlotte, Charlotte, Charlotte! Wake up. Are you awake? Charlotte? I think she's opening her eyes. Charlotte, it's done. Everything is all right now!"

Charlotte slowly looked around the strange room as she lay in bed. She noted the rain falling heavily outside the uncurtained window. She then saw a young nurse in a starched white uniform on the other

side of the room. Her weary eyes now gazed upon her best friend, who was speaking rapidly to her.

"Charlotte? Charlotte, can you hear me?"

"Yes, Marty, I can hear you."

"Look, the abortion went fine. Now you're safe. Nothing to worry about."

"Yeah." She felt the pain of these words in her heart.

"Look, did you hear me? Everything's okay!"

"Yes, I heard you. Is Mom here?"

"No, Charlotte, she wouldn't come. I called Frank and told him, and he was relieved for both of you. Oh, Charlotte, now you don't have anything to worry about."

Charlotte thought that her friend would never be able to realize the irony of her words. She could only look at her in dismay. Charlotte's wish had not been granted. She would have to wait out her life, not knowing until she died, what the judgment would be.

*Jeanne C. Sentman*

### "Wouldn't You Know?"

Truth stared at me today  
In all its radiant beauty.  
I didn't stop to say, "Hello."  
Wouldn't you know?  
Just closed my eyes, turned away,  
And started to go.  
Love gently spoke to me  
In its peaceful harmony.  
I never heard.  
Wouldn't you know?  
Never said a word  
Started to go.  
Sometimes we're sorry, or so left alone  
Due to what we see or say,  
Maybe kindness and time,  
Maybe secrets we'd find,  
If only you'd know?  
We'd stay.

*Bill McGhee*

## Duet

A bird sang;  
I did not hear its song.  
A leaf fell;  
I did not see its fluttering.  
The sun rose;  
I did not feel its warmth.  
I ate an apple;  
I did not taste its sweetness.  
I took a breath;  
I did not smell its fragrance.  
Forgive me, Father,  
For I have sinned.

I did not notice her soft, brown hair.  
I did not see the laughter in her eyes.  
I did not feel the coolness of her skin.  
I did not hear the lilt in her voice.  
I did not see the glow in her cheeks.  
I did not feel the warmth of her hand.  
I did not smell the freshness of her breath.  
I did not hear the sound of her breathing.  
I did not notice the redness of her sweater.  
I did not feel the texture of her jeans.  
I did not count her toes.  
    Forgive me, Father;  
    I have committed murder.

*James Coble*

I gazed at morning's dewdrops  
Sparkling on the weary meadow,  
And as the wakened blades of clover  
Welcomed its cool comfort—  
A longing came over me.  
In that one moment I gave nothing,  
Neither did I receive—  
And yet I loved.

And so I ask, Lord,  
What is love?  
That it be so utterly simple—  
I shrink lest I reach beyond it,  
Yet so intangible—  
I fear for losing my way.  
That nothing goes and nothing comes  
But what's loved best is there,  
Nothing's given—nothing's asked  
But that love's fleeting moment  
Should not pass.

*Pat Berry*

### But Once

I was never lonesome but once —  
When my veins were ice  
Where the warm blood used to flow,  
And my eyes blocked by the freeze,  
Refusing to let the thaw erupt.

All within encased in a solid, hard mass,  
Each fixture tightened — pointing to "off."  
No seepage anywhere —

See how brave she is!  
Completely undaunted by watching death.

*Emily B. Sullivan*



"Trees" *Allen Goldberg*

## Come, Sweet Death

Come, sweet death, and steal away  
The nighttime and the years,  
That seem to pass so quickly  
As we pass from smiles to tears.

No bitter taste of failure,  
Or things which might have been  
Erase the joy of living  
Free from fellowship of sin.

We've known the things of broken dreams,  
And hopes we laid aside;  
For they are but a shadow, yet,  
We held them close inside.

As time goes by and seconds fly,  
Our life so short may seem,  
But if to serve and love we can  
These things fulfill life's dream.

Death, quickly come, but softly tread.  
Our soul cries out, "Be mild!"  
And as we round the final bend,  
God welcomes His humble child.

*Lucy E. Hill*

## Resurrection

Red leaves  
Their life-blood gone,  
Break loose at last to meet  
The day of their unwanted death.  
It's fall.

Green buds  
Their life-blood draw  
Up from the earth and find  
Their source of new reviving birth.  
It's spring.

Blue eyes,  
Deep pools of thought,  
Survey my face and still  
Their question in my mind remains:  
"Man, too?"

*Lucy E. Hill*



## Your Song

Oh Jesu, how your song lifts me to the heights of its  
singing.

The melody, rising and falling through the clouds of day,  
Chills me like the strong wind and forces me to see beyond  
myself.

Higher and higher, I am carried up, as each note falls  
gently upon my ears.

And when the night comes, and I am enfolded in your song,  
Nothing else can touch me.

The sweet strings fill me with a joy I cannot contain.

My night comes to light more than the brightest day.

Oh how the living spirit of your song transforms me;

One with the night and with you.

*Janet Hampton*



"Night Flight II" *Geoffrey Iswandbi*



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