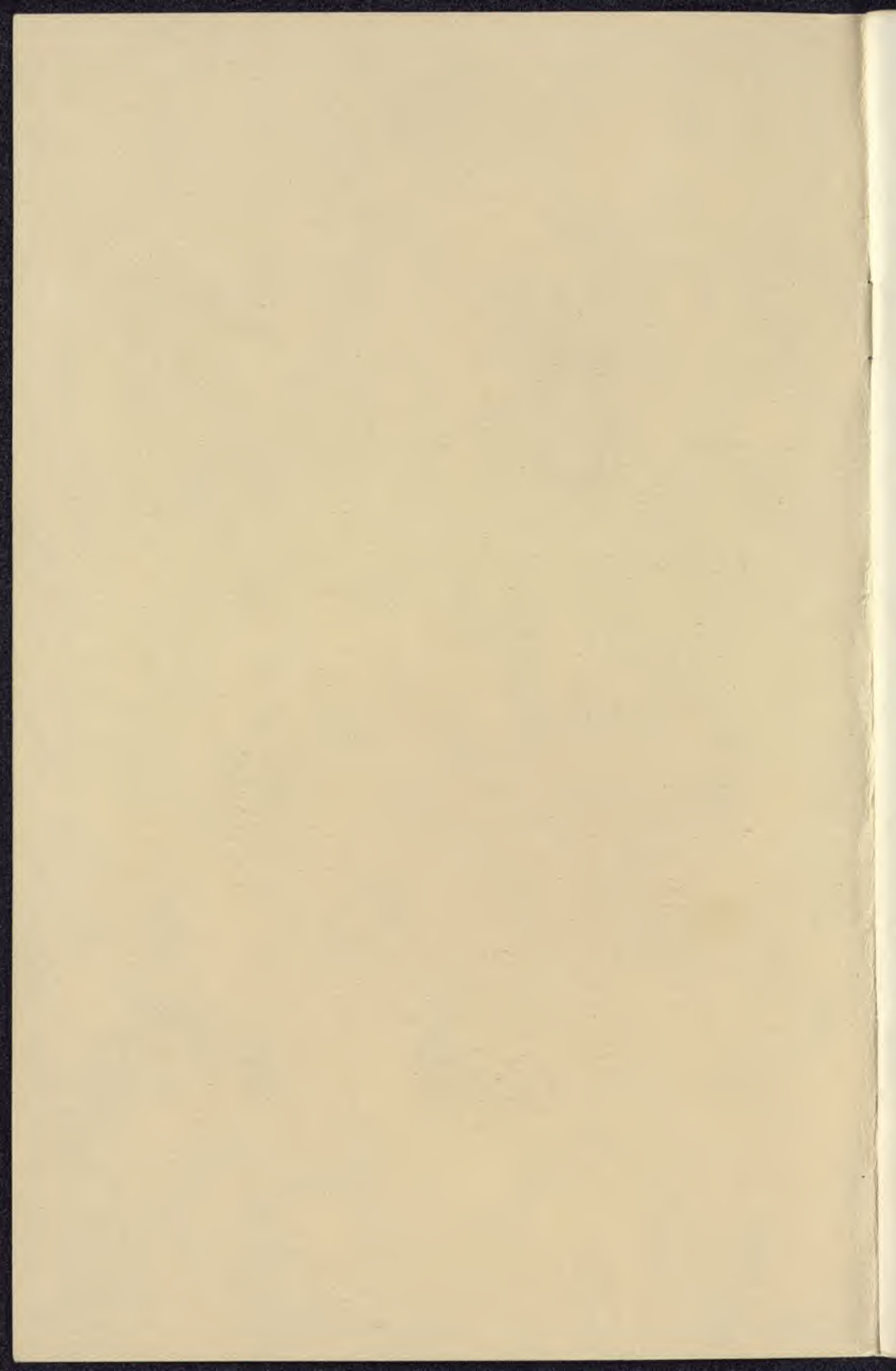


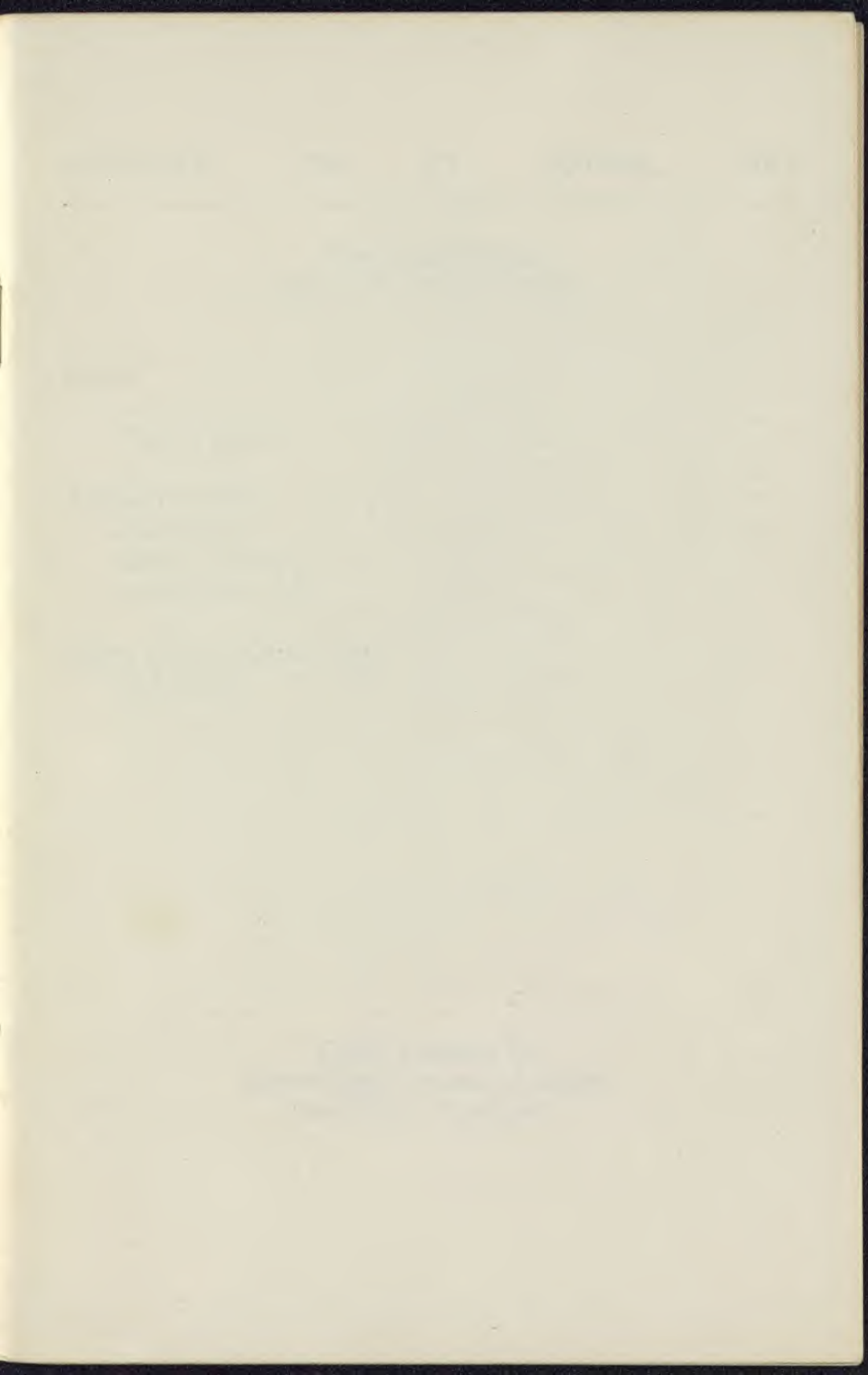
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APOGEE, No. 21, Spring, 1983

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Cover Woodcut by
*Marisa Firpi, Winner of Award
for Artistic Excellence*

CONTENTS

Renee Henry-Marsh, LIFE-CYCLE _____	1
Anonymous, CHARCOAL DRAWING _____	4
Brian Caskie, LUST FOR LIFE _____	5
Marion Hodge, NATURE CENTER _____	6
*Jane Needham, THE PARTHENOS _____	7
Alice E. Sink, LEWIS CARROLL _____	8
John Moehlmann, STORYTELLER _____	9
*Jane Needham, UNTITLED _____	10
David Matzko, WILL NO ONE SEARCH? _____	11
Alice E. Sink, KNOTS _____	12
Lynn Andrews, ETCHING _____	13
Glenn Groseclose, PHOTOGRAPH _____	17
<i>Glenn Groseclose, Communications Major, Junior, Pikesville, MD</i>	
Renee Henry-Marsh, THE TREE _____	18
Robin Killian, SILK SCREEN PRINT _____	19
David Matzko, STEPPING OUT THE DOOR _____	20
Jim Scott, THE SWEAT _____	21
Jim Scott, REVISIT THE FATE OF USHER _____	22
Maris Firpi, WOODCUT _____	23
*Brenda Teetor, BRENDA WAS A PRETTY GIRL _____	24
*Maris Firpi, THE ROOM _____	25
Lisa Stowe, THE FALL _____	26
Heidi Young, SPRING AWAKES _____	26
Beverly Clement, PHOTOGRAPH _____	27

*Note: These 4 poems were submitted too late to qualify for the Mounts Award. *EDITOR*

*Charles Eugene Mounts Award
for Literary Excellence*

Life-Cycle

They pulled your large
Diamond-shape into the shallows,
Hung on a thin line,
Attached to a hideous hook.

As their bathtub-sized boat drug bottom,
They hoisted you onto the sand;
Your wings flapping vainly,
Your deadly tail lashing at the benign beach.

A contortion quivered down your back,
And from beneath you
Three miniature models of yourself
Lay gasping in the surf.

The boys lifted your babies gently
On the end of their flat paddles;
Then tossed them into their
Heaving, white-crested home.

“What of the babies?” I cried.
“Won’t they die?”
I hollered, feeling your pain,
Yet hearing the clanging death-buoy.

“Hell, they’re born independent!”
They sniggered,
Watching my anxiety
With snickering sarcasm,

Their toasted brown bodies
And shoulder-length hair
Swung heavily in the breeze
As they prepared to shove-off.

They lashed you securely to port,
And pushed their tub afloat,
Jumping lightly inside,
Avoiding the floundering sand-sharks within.

They paused to wave briefly,
Then began to row upriver,
Where the land excretes
Itself into the sea.

Dully, I watched your
Triumphant funeral;
Imagining the thrashing, gashing fins
Drive to ecstasy in your life's blood.

I wondered if there would be
Anything left of you,
To grace the tables of a
Fishing families' restaurant.

Renee Henry-Marsh



Lust for Life

There is a stranger somewhere in my head
his shadow does not even look like me
waiting to jump out of my head
and into my shoes
he is the infamous wolf in sheep's clothing

Watching while children play
he is flooded with desire
so be careful little boys and girls
he will feed on your innocence
while you are sleeping

Squeeze and tease all you please
the victim of a social disease
send him running
back into the furthestest corners
where he belongs

Brian Caskie

Nature Center

Here they don't keep parakeets;
They dote on wild birds,
Hard mouths crammed with death,
Dangling air, fear.
One is an ember, one is smoke,
One the sky itself, one, earth,
One is water, snaking slopes,
One, a child's heart in forsythia.
They want everyone to look
At wild birds, close his book,
Be the night-crawler scratched for,
The beetle stabbed.
They want everyone to hear
The harmony of warning,
Melody of threat.
I hear it when I breathe in bed.

Marion Hodge

*The Parthenos**

Did Mary tire of being pure and poor of life? or
did her brood accept her as Momma Superior?

Luke and John
Matthew and Mark

None ever said she was pregnant gloriously
with fallen arches and morning sickness.
No midwife, nor gyn-obs, nor maternity wards.
She was full of Child.
Full of children.
Did she clean, cook, and sew for her others? or
only for the One?
Mother to them all.
Son of God. Children of God.

Jane Needham

*Parthenos: The Greek word for "virgin."

Lewis Carroll

The two sides of his
face did not march
A symbol of doubleness
Brother to seven motherless sisters
Confirmed bachelor
Inventor
Stammerer
Cataloger of 98,000 letters
Photographer of nude children
Who thrilled to see the
negative float in the acid bath
Holder of black bag Wonderland
Games and Puzzles
Quirky, Oblique, complex
Rather a genius
Curiouser and Curiouser.

Alice E. Sink



Untitled

Half moon's bounce
the bigtop sky.
Nightly performance begins.
Rising black curtain

with
the spangled silver stars,
and the shadowed field gasps.
Clown Hawks swoop to snatch
Harlequin Mice.

Gray field laughs big.
Teeter-totter, teeter-totter the half moon
startles...
T r a p e e z e across the night to the big
sky finale.
Cedar Children away their applause.
Late evening breeze summons bird orchestra--
Mockingbirds and Starlings
Robins and Jays.
A tufted blue curtain ushers out nightly audience.
Ghostly pads away...

Jane Needham

Will no one search?

*A boy is lost in the circus crowd,
The car is in the lot
behind a car, behind a car
The wrinkled man at the gate doesn't know,
alone he finds it
but the door refuses,
Where are they?
Worse than the whimper of a starving child,
Like fleshless skin
shrinking around the bones
anguish will leave a clue.*

Will no one search?

*In the ferment of my tears I found a boy,
a balloon tied to his wrist,
he doesn't want it
so I've brought him home,
together we wait.*

David Matzko

KNOTS

Easter Monday afternoon Stephen comes over with his daughter Martha and my own Judith and asks if I want to scoot--that's the word he used--scoot over to Finch Pond to get in a little casting before dinner. I do not like Stephen, and behind his back, I call him Mr. Nature Study. My wife Eloise thinks he is nece because all day Saturdays, he beats rugs on the clothesline next door or stands on a step-ladder washing windows.

Some afternoons Stephen catches me getting out of my company car, and before I can escape into the house, he bounds through the vine-covered knoll separating our property. Waving his hands over his head, he asks if I want to come look at the turtle he has found. One day he wanted to know if I had seen his hula-hoop. "Come look at the vines," he shouted one evening. "I've sprayed them." Standing in the middle of the prickly vines, he looked like a deep-sea diver, a large cylinder of spray slung on his back and strapped across his broad shoulders.

"That's nice," I always say. That has become my standard response. That's nice. It is as if I were talking to Judith, our ten-year old, or his Martha. It is not that Stephen upsets me. I simply want to go inside as soon as I get home. I want to kiss my wife and look at my little girl's school work, and listen to her plunk "Circus Clown" on the piano for the fifty-millionth time.

After clearing a green wad of Easter basket grass from my recliner, I open a beer and turn on TV. There is a strong knock at the den door. I can see Stephen's salt and pepper crew cut through the top of the dutch opening. Judith and Martha are with him; they want me to go fishing. Stephen's daughter Martha is a dark beauty with a smooth olive complexion. In a few years, she will be ravishing. She will never have to experiment with eye makeup or paint on her face. My Judith is so light and freckled that once in a while Eloise dabs a spot of rouge on her cheeks and rubs a little colored gloss around her think lips. "Keeps you from looking like Death-Warmed-Over," she told Judith. I did not like that comment. The artificial coloring, I had to admit, did live her pale features.

I tell Judith I will take her fishing. Stephen and Martha stand there. "We'll meet you at the upper drive in ten minutes," I tell them as I drag the last of the beer from the can. "Got to get my gear together." After sending

Judith upstairs to get sneakers and a sweat shirt, I go to the pump room to gather my poles. Stephen has walked to the back yard where Eloise is digging in the dirt. I hear him tell her how he saved \$5.97 last week using powdered milk.

"Howard and Judith wouldn't touch it," I hear Eloise tell him. "It would be a waste for us."

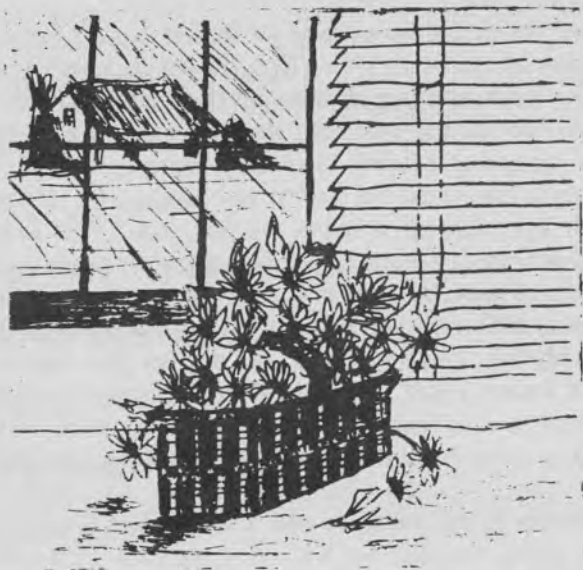
I look around the corner. Stephen flicks something from a fat holly bush. "You have to mix it at night and keep it in the refrigerator. When it's cold, you couldn't ask for anything better," he says, his voice drifting to the pump room.

Eloise becomes defensive. "It's cheaper to buy it in the carton," she says, pointing a large kitchen spoon at Stephen. "Anyhow, you know what you buy is good--if you get a well-known brand."

I put my poles and tackle box in the pickup and go inside for a sweater. When I get back to the yard, Stephen is cleaning dead leaves from the holly bush. Eloise has gone down the hill toward the tool shed. Stephen and I climb in the truck and wedge Judith and Martha between us. They wiggle on the seat. We pass a field where boys are playing ball. Stephen looks over his shoulder. "Real people," he says. "Down-to-earth-God-fearing folks." No one comments.

The truck bumps along the gravel. I hear the girls giggle again. Stephen says, "Oh, dear."

"What's the matter?" Martha asks. "Forget something?"



Lynn Andrews

"No. That is, nothing too important. Just forgot to take something out of the freezer for dinner."

Again, no one comments. I know if I say anything, it will be nasty. Stephen bought the freezer after Catherine left. Eloise said he bought it out of spite because Catherine had always wanted one. Stephen expected her to freeze vegetables from his summer garden in the freezer compartment of their refrigerator. "Why, even a carton of ice cream and a few cans of juice fill that little compartment," Eloise had shouted to me after Catherine complained

about lack of freezing space.

"Don't blame me," I told Eloise. "Go scream at Stephen."

"Oh that old tightwad," Eloise said. "He makes me furious."

I told Eloise it was none of her business, and later when Catherine walked out on Stephen and Martha, Eloise said, "I told you so."

Stephen leans against the door of the truck and attempts to lead the girls in a song. Judith giggles and rolls her eyes to the ceiling of the cab. Martha cups the palm of her hand toward her lips and apes her father.

"Sing, Daddy," Judith demands, poking me in the side.

I am angry thinking of Stephen and his miser acts. He was the one who had run Catherine off. I want, at that second, to tell him. He has his head against the backrest and is bellowing. He does not seem the least forlorn or angry.

Eloise said Stephen is too stupid to be affected by Catherine's leaving. "I don't blame her for going," Eloise said. As an afterthought, she added, "Of course, there's the right way and the wrong way."

"Maybe this new fellow didn't want A-Martha-Along," I reminded her.

"Oh, I don't know," she said, waving me aside. "I get confused every time I think about it."

Somewhere in the crowded truck, the songs change from the unfamiliar folk tunes to "You are My Sunshine." Stephen's clear baritone is good. He and the girls finish the chorus just as I pull close to one of the park shelters. Stephen and I gather the fishing equipment, and Martha and Judith set out for the pond and the ducks.

Stephen runs his hand over his graying crew-cut and looks out over the pond. He wipes the crystal case of his watch with a handkerchief. "We'll get in a couple hours if it doesn't rain," he tells me. "Real entertainment--fishing," he adds. "Down-to-earth-God-fearing sport."

"You're full of shit, Stephen," I say without stopping to think. Either he doesn't mind my saying that or he is not going to be intimidated by it. "Here's your rod," is all he says in answer to my rudeness.

I hear the girls' footsteps. "Tell those fishes to get ready, 'cause here we come," Martha sings. The girls take their poles and a can of worms Stephen had dug. They go to the bridge built over the upper edge of the pond. Stephen and I are left together.

"I thought Judith wanted me to come along so she's be with me," I say, wanting Stephen to know I do not exactly cherish the idea of his company.

Stephen scratches his head. "Maybe. May-be...if you play your cards right," he says. I hope to god he is not going to try to tell me how to raise my kid. But he is. I can tell. He starts, "I find it helps to designate something special for each day," he explains.

"Now," I answer bluntly, "I'm sure you have your ways..."

"For example," he interrupts. "We have Together Day."

I wonder just how much I can take. "Oh, cut it out," I say,

trying to manage a weak smile.

"I'm serious Howard," Stephen says. "And there's Reflection Day."

Ah, shit, I think. He's started now and there's no stopping him.

"Togetherness. That's the key, ol' buddy. Organization is important. Martha gried to balk at first, but I insisted. She's coming around...with Catherine gone, togetherness is essential."

"How is Catherine doing?" I ask suddenly, and am glad I don't feel guilty about bringing it up. Stephen does not seem disturbed either.

"I try to be objective where my former wife is concerned," is his reply. He sits on a jutting rock and fiddles around in his tackle box. "She's made her bed, as the old saying goes. Now let her lie in it," Stephen says.

"That's not quite fair," I tell him as I throw my line out beyond his cork.

"I gave her a second chance, ol' Buddy," he says. She had every opportunity to come back home. But she wouldn't."

I begin thinking I really don't blame her.

Stephen continues. "She visited Martha a couply months ago..."

"I don't really want to hear this, Stephen," I say. "Really...."

He looks at me funny. "No," he says, "Everybody blames me. And I am blameless." He means it. I can tell by the tone of his voice and his innocent expression. "I tried," he says. "Believe me." Then he begins talking of going the second mile.

As the unexpected words pour from Stephen's mouth in a businesslike clip, I feel a knot in the pit of my stomach. Where there had been reall indifference to Stephen before, there is not repulsion. My first inclination is to escape. I want to leave; I am dizzy with anger. Stephen remains sitting on the rock. He casts into the pond and looks straight ahead at the water. The sun is beginning to set on the other side of the pond. I can see Martha and Judith fishing from the bridge. Stephen stoops down to straighten something in his tackle box. He cocks his head and surveys the alterations he has made in the tangled disarray. Apparently satisfied with his gear, he turns to face me. "What do you think?" he asks, his hands clutching the fishing pole.

At first I don't know whether he means the tackle box or the rod or his and Catherine's estrangement.

"Don't you want to know what Catherine said when I asked her to come back? Aren't you curious?"

"Curious? Yes, I guess so," I tell him

"She said I was stupid," Stephen says. There appears on his face a half-grin. "You are stupid," she said. Then she asked for a divorce. I go custody of Martha."

"You don't seem too upset by the whole thing," I offer.

"She'll come back," Stephen assures me, and by the look on his face, I know he really believes it. "If there is to be a divorce, I'll end up having to pay for it."

"And you're in no hurry to do that," I venture.

Stephen laughs a high false staccato. "You know what Catherine said? She said maybe I could receive a nice discount from one of the lawyers in Civitan Club."

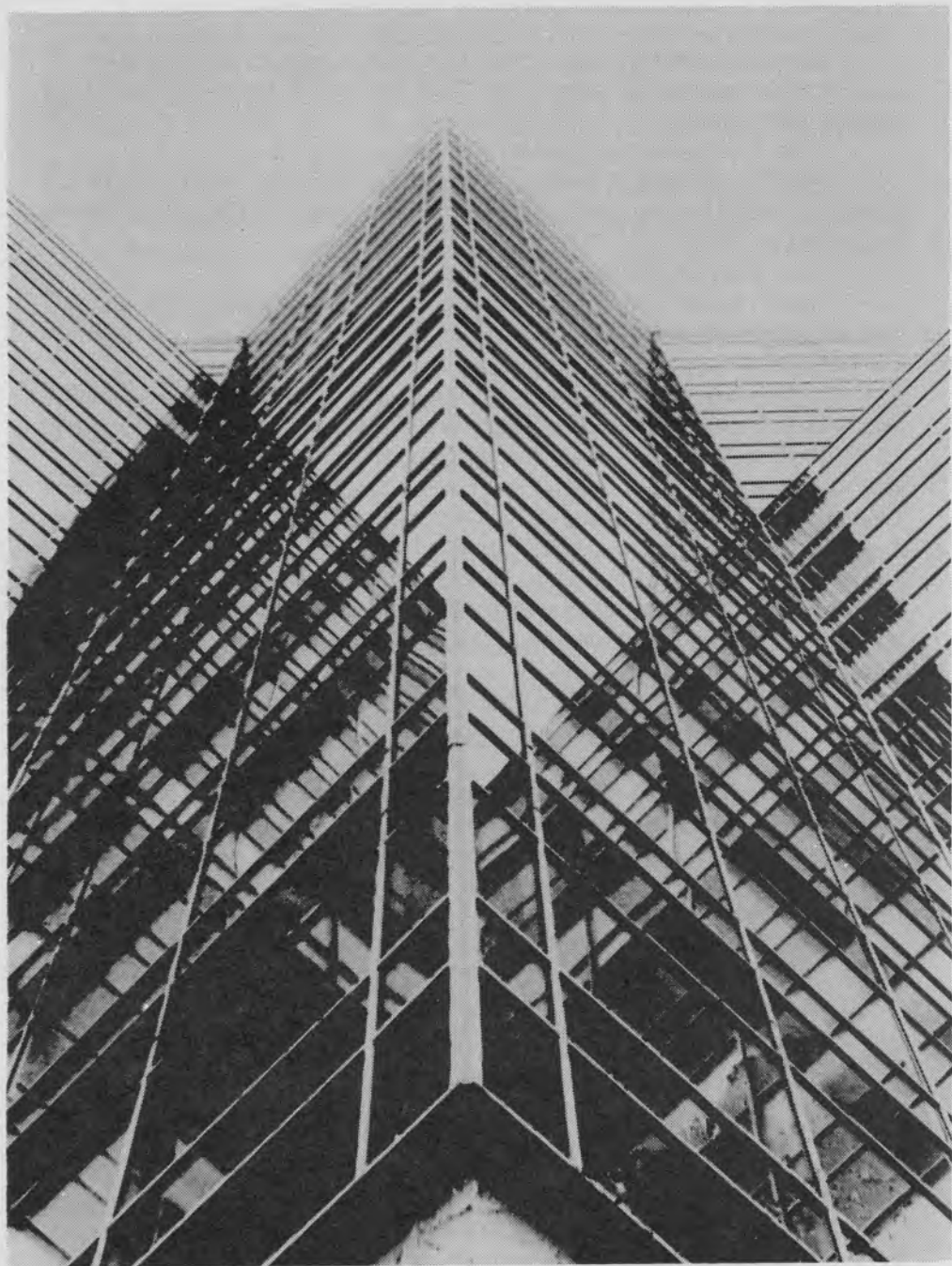
I gather my gear and say it is time to leave. Stephen calls to Judith and Martha on the bridge. We had caught a few small fish, and I give them all to Stephen. Driving home, Judith leans her head against my arm and is almost asleep when we pull into the driveway. Stephen and Martha take their fishing supplies and the string of fish across the upper knoll to their house. I guide Judith into the house and tell her to wash up for dinner. Eloise is in the kitchen frying ham. I tell her Stephen talked about Catherine. When I finish telling her what he said, Catherine turns from the stove. "Howard," she comments, "Stephen didn't tell you a thing we didn't already know."

I say that's right, he didn't but the way he talked about it makes me angry. Eloise says to forget it because I can't gain anything by losing my temper.

The three of us sit around the dinette table and eat soup and ham biscuits and deviled egg sandwiches made from Martha's Easter eggs. Eloise helps Martha find her school books for the next morning. After I kiss my daughter goodnight and tell her how much I enjoyed our fishing trip, she goes upstairs to bed.

Later, I go into her room to pull down the window against the April night. I look up towards Stephen's house. The flood light is on his back patio. I can see through the flowering trees the silhouette of a man working outside in the yard. Using a tree stump as a table, Stephen is busy cleaning the fish we caught.

Alice E. Sink



The Tree

I watched the woodsman
Slice your base
And bring to ground
Your ancient face.
Now barren, proud
Prickling arms
Crushed into the forest loam.
Blood drained from the cut,
Dripping slowly down your stump
To solidify into sticky tears
Of golden hue.
Multi-rings of time before
Shone wetly exposed to
Apollo's embrace.
Methodically stripped,
You shivered and groaned
As each maiming blow
Pierced your grey hide;
Splitting your insides,
Splintering your life.
Thrown against yourself now,
You lie neatly stacked
Until the funeral ends at least
In someone's roaring stove.
Your ashes float, airborne
In the crackling cold.
You fly
Like the chirping denizens
Who once called you home.

Renee Henry-Marsh



Stepping out the door

Stepping out the door
I'm a brick in the snow,
an abandoned building.
The hoarse wind hacks
through my foundations
whistles into my openings.
he barks at the winter,
a circular path beaten
at the end of a steel chain
rips the skin raw.
he doesn't know.
Each breath loses life,
seized by the cold
it gathers, thins, and fades away.
A tear
shaking legs
toes scratching the ice.
I hate that thing.
Shut up. it never shuts up.
What can I do? the animal.
Loosen the winter from my bones
rap the coat tighter
my warmth is mine
I'm late, better hurry.

David Matzko

THE SWEAT

He lifts.

A glint of seeking eyes, a flash of snarling teeth, pistoning arms and legs, the snapping of cloth over toned flesh, a streak and a smokeless flame.

He jumps.

Rubber pushing from steel, a fleshy breeze, a juggernaut purely accelerating, slaps of blurred feet on heat-soaked lanes, a sleek and mighty beast.

He soars.

Snatching the lead, in full flight, a quill from a supple bow, searing the air, burning the wind, mocking reality, free in pursuit of victory, battling himself.

He knows

The tick of the clocks, the hush of the crowd, the effort, the expectation, the suck of air, the slamming of hearts behind, ahead, right and left, the will, the challenge and the sweat; The sweat. There is not substance, in the possessions of Man, near so noble as the sweat of an athlete.

Jim Scott

REVISIT THE FATE OF USHER

The moonlit night's stormy lights cast shadows long and still
'Cross the cracked and mossy steps of Castle Gluderville.
Mist swirls and cools in glazed pools to the wind's whim and will
While I pause by rusty gates swung out from Gluderville.
Twisted vines flow from below up over marbled sills,
Filling ancient, vacant vaults in shrouded Gluderville.
The tread of man, that any can mark his path with, still
Has not in years tamped the tangled lawn at Gluderville.

A plague swept in and, within, made those who breathed fall ill;
None escaped the poisoned wind that blew through Gluderville.
The castle moaned as death honed its icy claws; the chill
Came at night and froze the blood of those in Gluderville.

The people fear, none goes near the souls of dead that fill
The hushed and dusty crypt that's become of Gluderville.
It broods beyond image-ponds awash with brackish swill,
This towering, glowering beast, solemn Gluderville.
It beckons me, silently, impelling me until
I fix to foot the long-unstepped grounds of Gluderville.

Crash! my foot falls, agony calls from the house beyond;
The grounds shake, the souls wake and scream in the house beyond;
Their piercing shrieks trill and trill until, amazingly,
The earth opens and sucks down the Castle Gluderville!

Jim Scott



Handwritten signature or text, possibly 'H. ... 1983'

Bonnie Was A Pretty Girl

Bonnie Taylor died last night.
Nothin' spectacular.
She just snuffed it out
like the cigarette butts
rotting in a bowl by her bed.
Hateful streaks of mascara
trace twin rivers that flowed
Over Maybelline make-up
'til they stopped on her collar,
and died.

Bonnie was a pretty girl,
so everyone told her.
But, she couldn't be convinced.
Punctured, battered somedays,
a chalet in the Blue Ridge,
broken promises and Bonnie
wrapped up in a blanket
of time-released sleep.

We should pity poor Bonnie
'cause that's what she wanted.
Unmitigated flames
scorched her birthday candle dreams.
She just couldn't make it
in the Eden she invented.
When Adam is gone,
ain't no need for Eve.

Brenda Teetor

The Room

The room, white as gauze,
Held my blood in its walls.

A blanket covered
The tormented skin
Scratched by exposed edges
of broken glass in the sink.

The tan colored hoses
Warmed the swollen ankles
Which stretched the leather shoes
When they walked on the ungraveled pavement.

Your eyes had receded,
and smoke remained from the previous cigarette,
and the air became tight like the rubber
tied on my arm to find the vein.

Confined, pre-measured dwelling
Celebrated its innocence
as it sheltered me,
Furnished and sincere.

Marisa Firpi

THE FALL

Leaves fall off and slide down

Into the sprawl of

Bitter, rotten apples.

Transparent eggs

Plop tears of a

Blank god.

Lisa Stowe

Spring Awakes

Each leaf and petal
Yawn into laughing color
Dressing naked fields.

Heidi Young



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REPORTS

[The main body of the page contains extremely faint and illegible text, likely representing the start of a medical report or article.]



