



# T H E A P O G E E

The Apogee  
Spring Issue  
No. 27  
High Point College

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We hope you enjoy the work within.

THE APOGEE

The Literary Magazine of High Point College

Spring, 1989

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## THE PLAYERS

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*"I miss the honky tonks,  
Dairy Queens and 7-Elevens. . .  
And as things fell apart,  
Nobody paid much attention."*

— David Byrne —

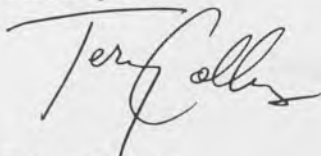
### *Opening Salvo*

On my desk sit two of those little plaques with words to live by printed on them. One of the signs boldly proclaims "CREATIVITY exists through CHAOS." The other says "No Amount of Planning Will Replace Dumb Luck." I think elements from both of these statements went into the production of this year's Apogee. Thank you's are in order for Marti Brown, Judie Perry, and Dr. Edward Piacentino. All three of these people were there with suggestions and aid when I needed it, and I thank them for their willingness to get involved. Also, another thank you goes to the fine folks at Pioneer Printing for helping me to get the look of this year's magazine to match the pictures I had in my head.

For 1989, I asked for diversity and experimentation in submissions. That goal was achieved. To everyone who submitted work that didn't make the final draft, I apologize. Space limitations are always a hinderance, and makes the final decisions about which pieces of work to use much harder.

Oh, well. The night grows long and the time has arrived to let you continue into the magazine (as if I think anyone bothers to read these introductions). Good night. Drive safely. And when you arrive at your destination, sit down and write something.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Terry Collins". The signature is fluid and somewhat stylized, with the first name being more prominent.

Terry Collins

Part I

Watching the cars  
travel back & forth  
in Cow Town.  
Highway intercourse  
& smokestacks. Chicken feed.  
Cold marble limbs  
Line the runways &  
stretch into infinity,  
into an infinitely pewter  
sky.  
All hail to the Bastard Prince  
Industry.

Part II

Cow Town  
grew up without a  
moment's notice - festered & spread  
& with a wink and a flash  
of the thigh she parted  
her lips & spewed forth  
a monstrous cloud of smoke  
As she devoured the sky.

Part III

Darkness falls on Cow Town  
as the State Road aristocrats  
settle down to sleep.

Quiet reservations made to  
hold the castle keep

Silent wounds & liberal views  
alive & kicking, kicking  
at life, kicking up dust,

Waiting for a chance to

Run the real world red  
with their bitter blood

Despite silent slumber.

Keep the kids happy.  
Buy a soda.  
Run around.  
Stare, lost, as clothes,  
    colorful and colorless,  
    become one with soap in  
    the spinning mindlessness  
    of the  
Machine.

People everywhere without  
    a voice, just mouths moving.  
All people come.  
The poor people gossip with the other  
    poor people about the rich people in  
    the place.  
Their Machine broke.

So we're all alike.  
Rich and poor.  
We're all dictated by the  
    rumbling, the  
    overbearing, the  
    dictatorial  
Machine



Dear Abbie:

I can't seem to write a book lately without some world leader getting porked off about it. What's the deal?

S. Rushdie

#

Dear S. Rushdie:

Look, it's their job to get porked off about things like that. Don't take it personally. Besides, they're right. A free and open marketplace of ideas is a dangerous thing. Always has been. It's the reason we have to put up with Penthouse and The 700 Club. Unfortunately, the alternative is even more dangerous. So buck up, kiddo. You're the light of the world, even if I don't agree with you.

#

Dear Abbie:

If you ever mention me in print again, I'll have you killed — and I'm just the guy who can do it, too.

Ayatollah K.

#

Dear Ayatollah K:

Lighten up. Nobody's scared of you, Bub. It just won't play in the Twentieth Century. If you don't watch your step, they'll start making these books you don't like into movies, and then by God you'll have a problem. Ask Stephen King. And if you think writers are hard to intimidate, try playing hardnose with Hollywood types. These guys have Sinatra to worry about; they haven't got time for you and your childish threats.

#

Dear Abbie:

I hate my mother-in-law. What should I do?

Troubled

#

Dear Troubled:

Obviously you have me confused with Abigail van Buren. My name is Abbie Hoffman.

#

Dedicated to the memory of Abbie Hoffman. Requiescat in pace — they don't burn books (or writers) in heaven.

A jungle of blue acrylic shrubs  
Sprouts below my nose.  
The lost back of an earring becomes  
A giant mechanical wonder.  
Popcorn clouds are flying low  
over the miniscule countryside.  
Coke stains look much larger  
from this angle —  
cloud shadows viewed from an airplane.  
Spilled glitter makes wonderful mirrors  
for micro-dwellers.  
I think of Raid commercials and my arm  
begins to itch.  
And somebody has borrowed my vacuum.

“Sit down.”

The psychologist gestured to a chair in front of his desk, which Gayle reluctantly took.

“I’m not crazy, you know,” she stated matter-of-factly, setting her mouth defiantly. “I can’t imagine why my parents wanted me to talk to you. They made me talk to the chaplain last month.”

The psychologist leaned back, made a teepee of his fingers, crossed his legs, and said nothing.

“They just don’t understand me!” Gayle blared, slumping into the chair.

The psychologist gave her a patronizing smile and then started to speak.

“You aren’t gonna make me lie on a couch or anything, are you?” Gayle blurted.

“No, no. no!” he laughed. “We’re just going to talk a little about why your parents thought you should talk to someone like myself and why they think you have a problem.”

“I don’t have a problem; they do!” Gayle said, glaring at him.

“Now, Gayle, it’s important for you to remember that I’m not the enemy here. Don’t be angry with me; I’m just doing what I’m here to do. I want to help you get to the root of the problem.”

Gayle’s eyes perused the office. I wonder if he believes all that sexual bullcrap that Freud said, she mused.

“What do you want to know?” she asked.

“Well, Gayle, your parents seem to think you have a problem with fantasizing and refusing to accept reality.”

Gayle’s eyes opened wide with concern.

“No, that’s not it at all!” she cried. “They think I’m crazy because — because —”

“Because why, Gayle? Do you have anything you’d like to talk about?”

Gayle shifted around in the chair. She pushed up the sleeves of her oversized sweatshirt and leaned on her elbow.

“Yeah...well...have you ever felt like you could do anything? I mean, I bet it was a big dream at first, ya know, wanting to be a psychologist.”

“Yes, I suppose it was.”

“Well, I remember the day I learned how to do a backflip. Did you know I do acrobatics? Anyway, the first time you ever do anything really hard, you think you can conquer the world. You get this incredible high. I knew, the first time I did a backflip, that I could do anything. But this little voice in my head, it said ‘don’t tell anybody’, so I didn’t.”

Gayle chewed the ends of her shoulder length brown bob.

“Go on,” nodded the psychologist.

“Well, when I was in junior high school, I used to have these dreams. I dreamed I was — like in this other world. And when my mother came to wake me up one time, I couldn’t remember who she was. I was expecting somebody else because I had been away so long. So I knew it was real, because time was messed up and everything. But the voice told me not to tell anybody because it **was** real and people who didn’t have experiences like that would definitely think I was weird. It was the best feeling, knowing that there’s somewhere besides here.”

The psychologist nodded, contemplating.

“That high,” she resumed, “it came again when I learned to do a gainer off of the diving board. Just knowing that I was flying through the air upside-down and that I was self-propelled — well, it was great! And that little voice, it said, ‘Gayle, you can do anything, but don’t tell anyone. Keep it to yourself. They won’t believe in you.’ But I know I can do anything.”

“Surely those aren’t the only reason your parents wanted you to talk to me.”

Gayle bit her lip. "No, I don't guess so."

"Do you think you could tell me about it?"

"May as well. **They** know. See, I have this friend, and we think just alike. We both used to read books about ESP and telepathy. Then one night we decided to try to read each other's minds."

"What happened?"

"We did it! What a rush of feelings! I mean, to know that your mind is absolutely limitless. You can do so much with your mind. You can like, take trips, only without drugs. It's amazing."

The psychologist didn't seem to be taken aback by Gayle's candid revelations. He picked up a pencil, which he flipped from hand to hand.

"That little voice came again. It said that what had just happened was amazing and that I shouldn't tell anyone."

"So, Gayle, why do you think you're here?"

"Because I told someone."

Sophomore in a dorm room

all by oneself

no companion, no real friends.

Walking across the campus

seeing everyone but not caring

thinking of chicken and wine sauce

made by mom.

Growing to be a man like dad

wishing to see

my three nieces.

As if we knew where we were going

the car sped with us.

Peter only drove where the road was.

The radio made the passing scenery into

a bizarre music video.

Somehow life matched its rhythm and

faded with the end of each song.

A bare field or expressionless building

served as a seque.

It could have perhaps been a film,

a new study in realism.

The radio station faded to white noise

near an all-night truck stop.

Outside its smudged windows was a construction

sign — “ROAD CLOSED”.



In a process turning —

Birds fly to nests awkwardly aware of  
branches hitting and rain swallowing  
dryness.

Mildew smells rise as furred paws rake at the  
earth to find something possibly left behind.

Turning —

Old houses fall down eventually to be  
replaced by trees aching for the sun.

Dead timber replaced by green, supple life so  
luscious.



## Hearing the Hammers

Terry Collins - Words  
Scott Sides - Photographs



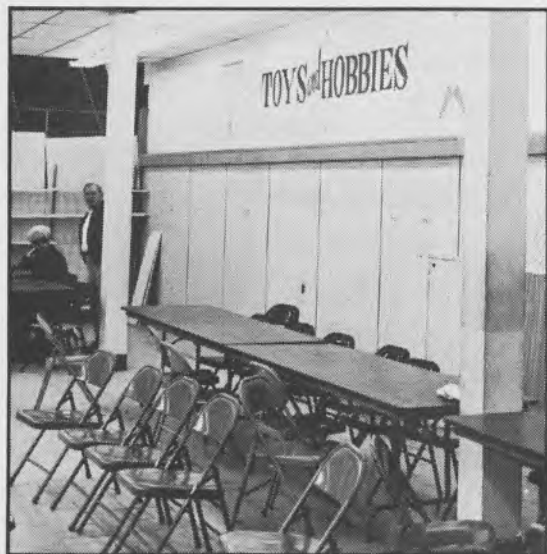
A big empty building echoes like a piece of broken pavement. You don't even have to whisper to hear the crash. I hate moving. Going from one place to the other is a long and tedious process, and after you arrive, you always discover that something valuable has been left behind by mistake.



And why bother with "Clearance" signs? There's nothing left to sell. What remains is free for the taking if you listen closely enough.



I grew up in this store a week at a time. Each Saturday we both greeted the end of another week, knowing that Sunday would bring little activity and sleeping in late. Now I'm accepting the guilt. I haven't been in this store in over seven months. Think of all the cards and letters never sent. Think of all the planned visits never accomplished.



There were booths downstairs where you could sit down after a long day and pause. A grill cooked french fries and served up Frosty Cokes — real Frosty Cokes — the kind you could see rotating through the little windows in the front of the machine. Now the grill has been ripped out and the booths have been replaced with metal folding chairs.



Naked silver wires hang from the ceiling without bicycles. The walls are bare except for graphics older than I am. I wonder what colors of paint will cover them and transform this building into being a modern addition to society? There's a certain kind of dignity to the past that rings false these days because we can't understand it. We try to laugh it off, and look away embarrassed.



Listen. I went to a yard sale this week. Intermingled with the glassware and card tables was a box of smaller boxes. I pulled out four cigar boxes (King Edward) filled with letters and photographs. I took the cigar boxes to the front and showed them to one of the women in charge. She told me that the items for sale belonged to a recently deceased woman, and they had been instructed to sell everything. What was left was to be discarded. At the moment, I realized I could have purchased another person's memories.



The soft-neon green Check Out sign will not be placed over the registers in Roses new location. I can hear the hammers and I know it is time to leave.



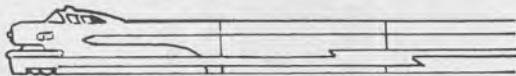
What can the cashier do but scrape the hours of the store from the door with a razor blade and gaze out across the blank parking lot. This building will soon house many smaller shops. This building will become something quaint like a mini-mall. My life is being remodeled into tiny little compartments and I can't do anything to prevent it.

# RUNAWAY TRAINS

the Single Page

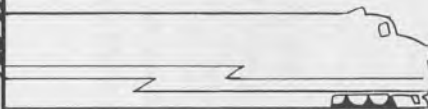
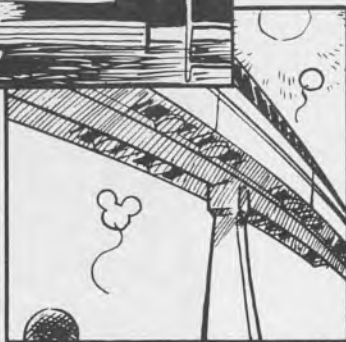
- STEAMPOWER, A MAN AND A SHOVEL. THE FIRE BURNS HOT AND LONG.

A TRAIN IS A LARGE, IRON MACHINE WITH TINY BITS OF FLESH CRAWLING AROUND INSIDE OF IT. THE BREATH CATCHES AT THE SIGHT OF IT. SO BIG. TOO BIG.

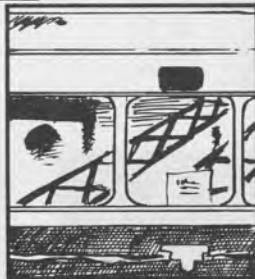


AT DISNEY WORLD, THE MONORAIL GLIDES HIGH ABOVE THE HEADS OF THOSE BELOW. THERE ARE NO CONDUCTORS, AND THE VOICE COMING FROM THE TINY SPEAKER IS HARSH AND UNINTELLIGIBLE. REAL TRAINS SING.

THEY CALL OUT THEIR PRESENCE LOUD AND LONG INTO THE NIGHT.



I USED TO WATCH THE CARS GO BY— A BLUR ALONG THE METAL RAILS OF THE TRACK.



I USED TO THROW STONES AT THE WINDOWS OF THE PASSENGER CARS, HOPING SHE WOULD LOWER THE SILL AND LEAN OUT AND CALL TO ME.

I USED TO RUN ALONGSIDE, UNTIL THE TRAIN WOULD ROAR PAST, AND I WOULD COLLAPSE ON MY KNEES—GASPING—CLASPING MY ARMS AROUND MY CHEST TO KEEP IT FROM BURSTING.



THEY SAY, IN THE FUTURE, THAT TRAINS WILL RIDE ABOVE THE TRACK ON BEAMS OF INVISIBLE MAGNETIC ENERGY. NO WEAR, NO TEAR, NO SOUND BUT A SHARP CONSTANT HISS, LIKE A METAL SNAKE TWISTING AND TURNING ACROSS THE SURFACE OF THE LAND. THESE TRAINS WILL BE INCREDIBLY FAST AND WILL SAVE THE RAILROAD INDUSTRY BY PROVIDING SAFE, QUICK, ECONOMICAL TRAVEL. WHEN THIS DOES OCCUR, THEN WHAT WE KNOW AS TRAINS WILL NO LONGER EXIST.

TERRY COLLINS / BRIAN HODGES © 1989

I've been stopping on the street and looking into the windows at the naked storefronts and empty rooms. Moving on, moving forward, moving out into (onto) the great plains — the flatlands are spreading out in all directions and the tall buildings are imploding, sucking inward like broken paper boxes. All of these deserted small southern towns — tiny empty dots on the atlas. I can trace with my finger each plastic letter of address. I can write with my finger on the dirt covered plate glass, but nothing original comes to mind. Draw a face or a crowd, and all around the lines spread off the graph and past the boundaries of the page. Small towns can accomplish one of two aims: either they can grow into bigger towns or they can keep their integrity. But small town integrity disintegrated into Mayberry camp a long time ago, and the image of a well-maintained sidewalk is enough to induce hysterical laughter. That joke isn't funny anymore, but the locals haven't figured that out yet. Tomorrow, we'll be leaving behind plastic and formica instead of bricks and trees, and I'll still have to assert myself in the grey dust of the street or on the uncrowded thoroughfares. In some parts of the city, bits of downtown are being revitalized with shiny green lamp-posts and crisp new awnings. No one under forty goes there.

As I glance in the rearview mirror, there's a bump along the tracks at each and every intersection. Somewhere a bell is ringing. An outmoded form of transport.

The annoying sound of my Cosmo Time alarm clock signified the beginning of another typical day in the life of Brett Bennett. I began to go about my usual morning routine in preparation for school. Everything I did seemed as if it was happening at the precise time it had the day before. I grabbed my Raspberry New York Seltzer from the aging refrigerator and headed out the door with my books in one hand and my car keys hanging out of my mouth.

I unlocked the door to my Jeep Wagoneer and threw my books on top of the back seat. Now it was time to play Mr. Neighborhood Alarm Clock. My car had the sound of a dying cow saying his last words each time someone tried to start it. I stress each time someone tries to start it up because it often took more than once to get that baby running in the mornings. This time it only took four attempts before I could stick it in reverse. I got the car going and I was off for another day at the desk. At this point, I usually realize how much time I had left before my first period and feel the need to speed through the neighborhood to avoid having to explain myself to Miss Glassburn in the main office. With her in mind, and knowing I was running out of creative excuses, I increased the speed even more. I was now on a straight road which led to the interstate ramp I always take to school. As the road came towards the interstate junction, I missed catching the green light by a matter of seconds.

As I sat in my car swigging my seltzer and waiting for the light to change, I noticed all the pedestrians standing at the corner of the crosswalk pointing up above. At this point I did not think much of it because the majority of the people at that intersection were tourists on route to Walt Disney World. I assumed they saw some type of bird they had never seen before in their native land. While looking at the tourists, I drifted off to the right of me and noticed a businessman on his car phone pointing towards my car as well. It looked as if he was trying to get my attention.



He began to roll down his window as if he was going to tell me something. I then heard this muttering voice say, “Thuee eikd cis eti ei hkeisk!” Not being able to understand him I gave him the old I-can’t-understand-you-look while I rolled down my window.

He then said loudly, “There is a cat on your roof!”

I smiled in a joking manner and replied, “Yeah, and there is one on yours too!” This did not seem to be a joking matter to him after judging from his facial response to my remark. He seemed convincing enough at this point for me to put my car in park and go see if there really was a cat on my roof. Sure enough there was one and it just happened to be my very own. It seemed as though Red had slept on the roof that night and had not awakened until her ride from hell began. I would probably be minus one cat, if it was not for the luggage racks that surround the outer rim of the roof.

As I lifted her off the roof, her nails scraped the surface with loud forceful screeches. Her whole body at the moment felt like one gigantic heart. While I placed her in my arms, I noticed everyone around the intersection smiling and clapping. It seemed very odd, yet it seemed even more peculiar that the light had finally turned green. I gently placed my cat on the passenger seat and did a u-turn back home.

Realizing what had just happened, I tried to imagine how weird the man on the other end of that phone conversation felt towards whom he was talking to when he was told, “There is a cat on the car’s roof beside me.”

As it turned out I was once again late, but this time I had one hell of an excuse.

## ***CONTRIBUTORS' NOTES***

If you want to know anything about BRETT BENNETT, feel free to call him and ask. TERRY COLLINS spends too much of his time and money on cartoon memorabilia. JENNIFER COUTURE is a graduating senior from North Surry High School who won all three of the top honors in the 1988 Phoenix Literary Festival. BRIAN HODGES is currently assistant stage manager on **The Wizard of Oz**. STEVE JARRETT is one of the most subtle people you will ever meet. JUDIE PERRY started to read very early as a child. KRISTI PIERCE is currently going through her Dylan Thomas phase. STEPHEN PROKOP has a really cool last name. SCOTT SIDES is also an artist. This is the first piece of work that MICHELE WILLIAMSON has ever submitted for publication.

apo•gee n 1: the point in the orbit of a satellite of the earth that is at the greatest distance from the center of the earth; also: the point farthest from a planet or a satellite (as the moon) reached by an object orbiting it. 2: the farthest or highest point: CULMINATION

*"I hate moving. Going from one place to the other is a long and tedious process, and after you arrive, you always discover that something valuable has been left behind by mistake."*

