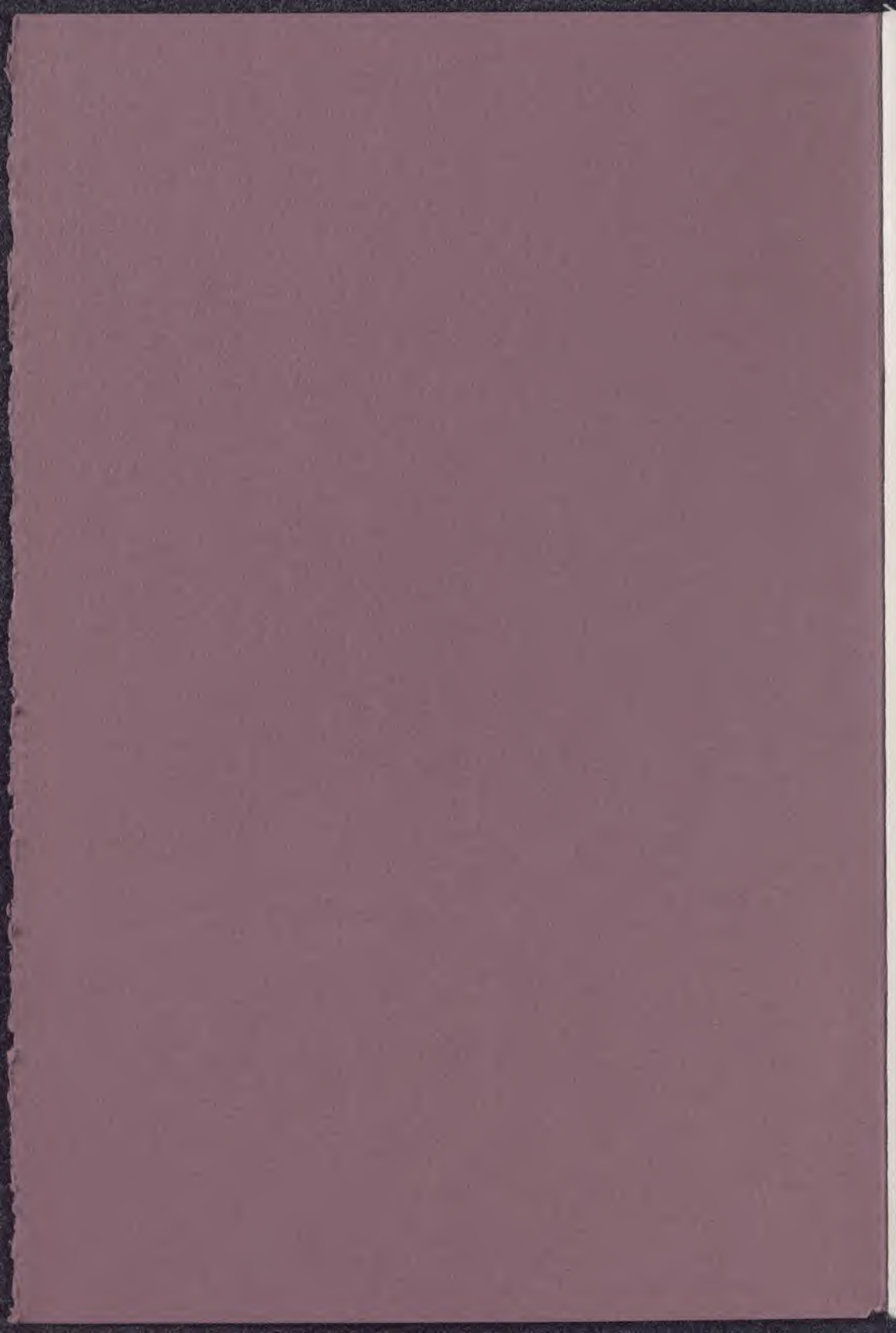


THE APOGEE



HIGH POINT COLLEGE
HIGH POINT, NORTH CAROLINA
SPRING 1991
No. 29

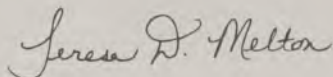


Greetings. . . .

I send out my sincere appreciation to ALL who submitted their creative works to the APOGEE, despite the war and mass confusion occurring among us. I have enjoyed the opportunity to bring together the brilliant work associated with the talent of High Point College. My assistant, Chris Davis and I were overwhelmed with the submissions this year. To my regret, some works were not able to be used because of the limitations of this publication.

I would like to give special thanks to Steve Jarrett for his input and helpfulness throughout the development process. To Dr. John Moehlmann for always listening and in return giving the appropriate advice. My appreciation is extended to Chris Davis for his tremendous help during the semester. Last but not least, special thanks is given to a special person, Robin Owens of Pioneer Printing Company. Thank you Pioneer Printing for doing such a wonderful job.

May God Bless,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Teresa D. Melton". The signature is written in dark ink and is centered on the page.

Teresa D. Melton



EDITOR-IN-CHIEF:

Teresa Melton

ASSOCIATE EDITOR:

Chris Davis

ADVISOR:

Dr. John Moehlmann

READING COMMITTEE:

Mr. Steve Jarrett

Teresa Melton

Chris Davis

COVER DESIGN:

Susan Andrews



Table Of Contents

PAGE	TITLE	AUTHOR
2	In Blackness I Wake	Kristi Pierce
3	Say What?.....	Jack C. Cho
4	But You're Just A Girl	Suzanne Smith
6	Descant	Penny Brooker Rendle
11	Age of Innocence	Eleanor Albright
12	Untitled	Eleanor Albright
14	Heavy Metal	Jack C. Cho
15	Somebody's Got To Run The Rides.....	Alice E. Sink
19	Slopefoam	John Moehlmann
20	Even Though Never.....	Kristi Pierce
21	Copper's Visit	Rose Ann T. Weaver
24	During Market	Michele Williamson
25	Curses	Rose Ann T. Weaver
26	Being There	Michele Williamson
27	The Storm.....	Steve Brenneis
30	White Panties and White Tennis Shoes ...	Brenda Morris
31	A True Vacation	Ivy Banner
34	Fish	Eleanor Albright
36	Arioso	Kristi Pierce
38	Goodbye	Eleanor Albright
39	And In My Garden	Kristi Pierce

Photographs taken by Karen Scott

Pen and ink sketches by Susan Andrews

In Blackness I Wake

In blackness I wake inside of your mind
And feel your need to vanish.
Unable to prevent your end or my undoing;
Begin my own beginning.

The glass and metal coldness of your house
Melts in my wooden fire.
Unable to melt the stone of your soul
My flames dance on unheeded.

Imagined pains answer yours in the night —
I know before I see.
The noose will jerk, the knife will slip,
The gun will sound despite me.

In blackness I wake inside of your mind
And feel your need to vanish.
Unable to prevent your end or my undoing
I'll begin my own beginning.

Kristi Pierce

Say What?

Help Yourself by Doctor Phil Goode
Another poem about Grandma's rocker?

Designer Dots — lay'em anywhere
Artificial Manilla Vanilla Ice Cream

Try JESSE'S Puritan-Style Oats
Pro-Life Tax Dolls: Comes with welfare

If you want a beer real bad
We've got a real bad beer

Praise the nerds of academia
Warning: Reading causes blindness

The rise of fascism in America
Censorship kisses ultra-conservatism

Twin Cheeks: Who killed Seymour Ashe?
S & L Premiere: The Shady Bunch

Lottery — 1:1,000 killed on way home
Banjo's feeling the rice paddy blues

Rise and Shine Wino Special
Lots of fun — Ricochet Gum

Today on Geraldo: People who act normal
Deficit Trio — "Splish Splash & No More Cash"

Find true love at Milton's Hilton
The Far Side: Totally hidden stoplights

DESCENDO'S New Obsolete Brain Cells
The Exerciser — Still going. . .

Jack C. Cho

But You're Just A Girl
(in the Grocery Store w/Mama)

Mama, I want to be an astronaut!

Whatever you say Sweetie. Put those cookies back Dear.

Mama, I want to be President.

But you're only 6. Honey, don't stand on the cart like that.

Mama, I want to race cars a hundred zillion miles an hour.

Uh-huh. Don't be silly.

I'm gonna be a gypsy and ride around in a wagon playing music!

Maybe afer college, Honey.

Mama, I want to know why flowers grow but Snowball died.

God's will.

Mama, I. . .

Hush, Dear. I'm trying to talk to Mrs. Wagner about Mrs. Gillespie's gout.

Mama. I want to stop the war.

(she looked at me!)

But Sweetie, you're just a girl.

Suzanne Smith



Descant

That Monday in July would go down on the record books as the hottest day of the summer in Central Illinois. There had been little cooling overnight and the humidity stood at 97%. Morning light revealed a milky vapor in the air that served as forewarning of the sweltering day ahead. Yet the mugginess was no more than a false promise. There hadn't been any rain in over three weeks. Just the heat.

At a farm set eight miles west of Normal, on old rural highway 150, sixty-three-year-old soy bean farmer Leo Spivey was hard at work by 5:00 a.m. He knew that soon after the sun came up the conditions for outdoor chores would be miserable. His aim was to feed his small herd of hogs first. After that he intended to get the work he had to do on the tractor out of the way.

Leo was fattening the hogs for slaughter in the fall. The under-the-table income he received from selling them would buy Christmas presents for his family. Leo had been widowed in 1981, having lost his wife, Lottie, to heart failure. Since then his four children had meant more to him than ever. All of them were grown and had homes of their own, but happily for Leo, had settled within a fifteen mile radius of the farm. They had brightened his life with five precious grandchildren so far, and he was hopeful there would be more who would keep the Spivey family tree thriving. Nowadays he looked forward to the approach of Thanksgiving and Christmas. It was then the bonds which tied them all together put him at the center of the festivities.

Leo's life had been essentially an uneventful one, with little to tell about it that would make him interesting — until today. He had nothing more than a few personal moments of rapture to punctuate an unusually bland existence.

His twelfth birthday was memorable to him. His parents had given him a brand new two-wheeler bike. His older sisters and his brother had gotten hand-me-down bikes. It never occurred to Leo that there happened not to be a used bicycle available that year. Instead, he remembered it as being an indication that he was special to his parents in some unspoken way.

Buying the farm thirty-six years earlier had been a dream realized for Lottie and him. It had taken them almost five years to save enough for the down payment. Lottie had gone on working full time another two years to help with the budget. During that time Leo stabilized his crop planning and began to turn a reasonable profit.

Then the babies had started to arrive. The birth of each child had been a special sort of bliss — they were little bits of Leo who had come as miraculous gifts. With every one he would look first to see what features the baby had that were his, and which features belonged to Lottie. It had always proved to be a delightful way of savoring the moment.

The rapture that Leo would meet with on this morning of his life, however, would be such as most people are never called upon to suffer.

He arose at 4:30 a.m., put on his overalls, and gone downstairs for his usual light breakfast of coffee and Rice Krispies. He was vaguely dysphoric from the

time he got out of bed. Something he couldn't quite pinpoint chafed at him. It was a kind of sluggishness, and his left hand trembled indistinctly. His cup of coffee had rattled on its saucer when he carried it from the stove to the table. Later, when he was out in the field, Leo would experience a fleeting episode of total memory loss. He would recover from it with the tractor having strayed several rows off, askew from where he'd been, because he'd forgotten how to drive it.

His death certificate would read: Thrombosis, right temporal lobe/massive intracranial occlusion.

Leon died of a blood clot in his brain that danced him around the edges of Satan's kingdom before it let him go in peace.

The temporal lobes of the brain are also referred to as the auditory lobes. Activation of musical memory traces in the cortex is one of their many proficiencies, a marvel we take for granted. Yet there are certain circumstances which can produce remarkable aberrations in normal function that are far more impressive. For instance, it is commonly known that Russian composer Dimitri Shostakovich had a tiny splinter of loose shell-fragment in this area of his brain. When he tipped his head to one side he was subject to musical hallucinations that helped him to write some of his finest compositions.

More problematical symptoms can arise from a lesion in one of the lobes or a thrombosis like the one Leo fell victim to. Musical memories are forced up from the cortex randomly, often at a deafening volume. Usually the selection of tunes is limited. The same song, or few songs, will play with infuriating redundancy. These pieces are not necessarily old favorites the victim has enjoyed. Regrettably, this was Leo's fate.

Leo Spivey started hearing music from Fiddler on the Roof about nine o'clock that morning. Lottie had dragged him to see the movie when it was shown at the high school in Carlock in 1978. He had disliked the show immensely. It was too sentimental. There was too much silly singing and dancing. He had kept his opinion to himself back then simply to be agreeable. Now the opening melody returned to him as a nemesis that would make his last hours alive a torment.

The fiddle had begun to play in his head distantly at the onset. For awhile he wasn't even sure he was hearing it. He'd wondered if the tractor had developed a whine that was an announcement of something amiss in the engine. But soon a mellow flute joined the fiddle, thin and delicate in its song. Yet like the fiddle it waxed ominously, becoming a dark menace. Then that sad Jewish man's voice insinuated itself slowly into the wistful cry of the strings. Was it Tevye? Yes, Leo could even recall the man's name had been Tevye. The song was "Tradition".

"A fiddler on the roof," Tevye murmured softly. "Sounds crazy — no?"

The music was getting louder as Leo grumbled to himself, "Oh, no, no, this is not for a Baptist farmer to listen to."

But the voice spoke again, a maudlin baritone, "Everyone of us is a fiddler on the roof."

Leo looked all about frantically, hoping he might discover the source of the swelling cacophony.

“Trying to scratch out a pleasant, simple tune without breaking his neck!” said Tevey, more boldly.

The instruments were searing Leo’s mind. They had multiplied. There was a second fiddle, a host of violins, cymbals and tambourines.

“Please — no,” he grunted with bitterness.

“WHY DO WE STAY UP THERE IF IT’S SO DANGEROUS?,” the voice roared at him suddenly.

“Hell’s fire!” hollered Leo, who had vowed not to cuss anymore after his Lottie died. It was in memory of her that he now lived a pristine life. He brought the tractor to a skidding halt. Dust thrown from under the locked wheels plumed into a brown smog that enveloped the cab of the tractor. Hacking from the powdery dirt in his throat, he pummeled the side of his head with the heel of his hand to try and stop the piercing screech of the fiddle.

“HOW DO WE KEEP OUR BALANCE?” demanded Tevey’s voice, potently bellicose.

Leo yanked his dentures out of his mouth to see if they had some metal part in them that he wasn’t aware of — he’d heard about fillings in the teeth — bad things happening to people.

“TRADITION!” thundered Tevey.

“Stinking radio transmissions,” he remonstrated gutterally and, throwing his teeth to the ground, gummed out, “Godda be Chicago.”

The trombone added its blare with merciless volume until the crescendo was almost unbearable. Then the others chimed in, their voices surging even beyond the orchestral strafing. They were Golda, Lazar Wolf, and Motel.

“TRADITION!” they chorused, a surreal fracas.

“Only those S.O.B.’s in Chicago could do this!” Leo yowled. His nerves had been shredded to a raw pulp.

He dared not make further attempts to drive the tractor, and the struggle to get to the house was a difficult one. He tottered across seventeen acres of plowed field, stopping only once to call out — to anyone who might hear his plea. Upon reaching the kitchen, he tried to use the telephone to contact one of his daughters at the Piggly Wiggly where she worked. The woman who answered the phone in the office there would remember later on about the man who called, shouting at her. “If you’re there — send somebody quick!” When she asked who he was he’d cried hoarsely, “Oooww — my teeth are gone and the music is still too loud!” Then he’d hung up.

He drove himself to the Care Well Walk-In Clinic in Normal, where he burst through the door bellowing, “SPEAK UP, SPEAK UP! I can’t hear over all the racket!”

The receptionist there was an immature woman, having graduated from high school only five weeks earlier. She fled her post as Leo approached. His face had become a telling reflection of the anguish he was undergoing, and from which she felt compelled to make an escape. The office manager was more used to exotic behavior and immediately stepped in to restore calm to the waiting room area. She was a member of the same church Leo attended and, recognizing him,

took his arm to lead him to a chair.

“Mr. Spivey,” she coaxed, “please come over —”

“What? What?” he boomed.

“Over here!” she spoke loudly as she tugged on his arm to tow him towards a corner seat.

“Beer?” He narrowed his eyes, straining to make out her words. He took several steps along with her, but then planted his feet stubbornly. “No, no — I haven’t been drinking! It’s those citified subversives — those numbskulls in Chicago!”

“Please, Leo,” she patted his shoulder, guiding him into a chair that was right near by.

“The police owe?” he barked, dropping into the seat. “I’m talking about these transmissions dammit! Don’t go off on a tangent!”

“I’LL GET THE DOCTOR!” she screamed, exasperated.

“WELL I SHOULD SAY!” he yelled back at her.

Discomfort amongst the patients intensified soon after she went back through the door to the inner offices. Leo rocked back and forth in his chair for a time, humming. There was nothing disturbing about that. Others thought he was humming to himself, when in fact he knew quite well he was humming along with the music. He was growing desperate to make a retreat from it though. He needed to divert his attention and moved nearer to the coffee table which held the magazines, picking up a Field and Stream for himself. However, it was not long until he was swaying at the others with smoldering indignation, growling, “How do we keep our balance?”

One woman who had a young child with her got up and left as unobtrusively as possible. Still another woman insisted that she be taken in earlier. She did not want to miss her appointment, but she was certain Leo was about to unleash some kind of maniacal frenzy. Most of the others there used somewhat more tact, moving to different seats without being obviously rude.

Those who endured would tell of it for the rest of their lives. No small clutch of people could have witnessed a more unnerving, yet riveting final throes than they who were gathered in the waiting room of the Care Well Clinic. Leo held his ground bravely the last few minutes he was among them, embracing the frail edge of composure. But then Tevye’s taunting took on a sonorous echo, shattering Leo internally. His field of vision flashed with white brilliance, his eyes opened wide and round. As he pitched over to the floor he thrust one hand high into the air and wailed, “Tradition!”

Though no one was precisely certain what it was Leo meant, they made all manner of presumptions. The unanimously agreed that he’d had an epiphany which held some profound truth. Certainly they were grateful for the heroic effort he’d made to convey such a dazzling insight. Indeed, it had been a rare privilege to be present and they all felt a responsibility to tell others about their experience. It was obvious that traditions were of central importance to life itself. In Normal, Illinois that summer many families endeavored to strengthen old traditions and carefully choose new ones to build on.

The Fourth of July parade the next year would include a Leo Spivey memorial float. It was intended as a tribute both to Leo and to all farmers in the area, for they were a mainstay of the proud mid-West heritage. Four mammoth Clydesdale horses drew a great old fashioned wagon that carried a mock square dance in progress. Two couples in country dress whirled about the straw-scattered bed of the wagon in time to the music being played by a trio of lively fiddlers.

Several of the spectators who had been neighbors and friends of Leo's held a silent hope that by some mysterious means he could see how they'd thought to honor him — and that he would be pleased.

Penny Brooker Rendle

Age Of Innocence

The sun is shining bright today,
said a little girl in an old fashion way.
With a smile she spoke again,
what a way for the day to begin.

The moon is shining bright tonight,
said a little boy standing in the moonlight.
As the stars twinkled he commented again,
what a way for the day to end.

Eleanor Albright

Untitled

Open your veins in it comes
Crawling through your body
creeping throughout your soul
robbing you of your values
open wide your veins
shoot strait for the heart
The shot of cupid's needle
is a powerful drug.

Eleanor Albright



The Fallen Giant

Karen Scott

Heavy Metal

Our freeways jam-up with credit
All the milk and honey is gone
Values blow-out in our lives
Or get misplaced in this marathon

Kids are raised to be indifferent
And primed for grown-up games
Why accept the consequences
There's always someone else to blame

Accessorize with trendy rhetoric
Then point fingers and look the other way
Become Mr. and Mrs. Costume Ethics
The individualist is now passé

Morality sells for its smokescreen
And the smugness of pious vermouth
Freewill is in conflict of interest
With political limits of the truth

Instead of a Pepsi Generation
We married an ugly national debt
Having bought everything but the piper
Still counting — American Roulette.

Jack C. Cho

Somebody's Got To Run The Rides

At the Grand Strand Amusement Park, a late summer sun slithers from the slanted gazebo of the merry-go-round and settles in splotches on the concrete. Along low red fences surrounding various rides, smiling couples transport fat, rosy children in canvas strollers. Young lovers promenade hand-in-hand on the boardwalk in front of stands boasting pictures of puffy cotton candy and cherry snowcones. The ocean's waves slap on the shore to compete with an Olivia Newton-John hit blating above the whirling buckets of Swiss Bob's Alpine Sled.

A woman in her mid-thirties runs after a boy of about three. She wears a pink polyester jumpsuit, the pants legs stopping several inches above her ankles to reveal the scuffed straps of white vinyl high heels. Her prunelike face is framed by long nondescript hair and punctuated with leathery skin drawn taut over her cheekbones and sharp nose. As she chases the youngster, she does not call the child's name, but her thin lips express disgust.

The child, dressed in soiled cotton shorts and knit shirt of contrasting stripes, wears no shoes. His stringy pageboy haircut accentuates his pudgy, tanned face. As he darts from one ride to another, the woman follows closely behind, her aged voodoo features overpowering the youthful appearance she attempts to project.

The ferris-wheel operator, fiftyish, combs a greasy duck tail at the nape of his neck as he watches the bird-like woman. Behind thick black-rimmed glasses, his eyes follow as she grabs the arm of the boy to pull him from the red spoke fence. Embroidered stitches on a bright yellow shirt identify him: *Herman*. He stares, apparently engrossed in visual pursuit of the exploring child and woman who follows a few steps behind to jerk the youngster back to her side. Herman's attention is diverted as vacationers approach the ferris wheel. He stops the giant cylinder to snap open the steel bar of a padded cubicle. A petite lady and sandy-headed boy enter first. A large, bloated red-faced man staggers to the seat and plops heavily beside the boy, mashing the lad's hand with his large buttocks. The boy screams, but the man maintains a drunken grin and rigid posture while the lady tries to pull the boy's flattened palm from beneath his broad hips. The man's glazed eyes stare straight ahead as Herman starts the giant wheel rising into the salty, sea air.

After Herman has the machine in motion, he jerks his head back and forth until he again locates the woman and child. He focuses on the tow-headed youngster who now sprints to a bright orange trash can buzzing with sweat bees. Before the flitting woman can weave her way among the vacationers, the child pulls a Polaroid box from the barrel. She runs behind him, grabs the empty box from the grasp of his clutched fist, and tosses the carton back into the trash. After she snatches the child in her skinny arms and plops him heavily on a nearby bench, she begins to hit the youngster on his dirty, bare legs. The boy cries, and the louder he screams, the more persistent the woman spansks with her bony hand.

Herman leaves the ferris wheel and walks to his side of the fence. "What's the matter with him now, Ethel?" he asks the woman in the pink pantsuit.

"How do I know what's wrong with him?"

"What does he want to do?"

"He wants to run all over the place and climb anything he can put his two feet on and ramble around, pullin' everything out of the garbage cans. That's what he wants to do."

"Have you tried lettin' him ride?"

"He don't want to ride nothin'. He just wants to go from one thing to somethin' else."

Herman stands silently for a moment. "Here," he finally says as he removes several folded bills from his trouser pocket. "Take this," he urges.

"What do I need money for to chase after a young'n?" Ethel asks over the screams of the boy.

"Go get him somethin' to eat," Herman calmly suggests.

Ethel jerks the money from Herman's hand. Picking up the boy, she carries him, kicking and crying, from the amusement park. Herman goes back to the levers and brakes that control the red, orange, and yellow buckets dangling between the giant steel wheels.

Weaving among the vacationers, Ethel nestles the plump boy against her bony shoulder blade. His knees bounce against her waist as she walks, and his dirty bare feet bob at her knees. She has walked only a block when she feels the boy's muscles relax and his body go limp. He sleeps. Ethel crosses the intersection at the light and blends with the laughing tourists. Another block and she is home. She edges her way among vacationers going in the Dew Drop Inn Tavern and waits for a path to clear before turning to walk behind the beer joint. After hoisting the sleeping child up the steep, wooden stairs, she enters their two-room apartment. Ethel staggers to the bedroom with the child, places him on a roll-away cot jammed in the corner, and sits down on the double bed to rest.

She looks out the window at the foot of the bed. The sea is deserted except for one lone fisherman standing knee deep in the breaking whitecaps. The man wears flowered Hawaiian swim trunks and a white cotton tea shirt cropped in jagged snips around his midriff. In a nearby gazebo, a small girl in yellow sunsuit and a red-headed boy ape the fisherman by casting long stems of seaweed back and forth over their shoulders. After pretending one big catch after another, they snap their make-shift poles, strip the seedy oatlike tips in their fists, and offer the fuzz to the sand below.

Ethel watches as the fisherman turns to walk back to the wet, packed sand where he takes more bait from a cardboard carton. The little girl shouts above the hiss and churn of the waves. "Catch anything yet, Daddy?" The man smiles, shakes his head, and stoops to the wet sand to light a cigarette between the shelter of his legs, away from the salty gusts of wind.

Farther down the beach, Ethel notices two more children. They carry a stack of plastic sand buckets. The bigger one carefully divides the stack, placing two red pails, a dark blue one, and a yellow one on the sand; the smaller boy, only a toddler, spreads his short legs and bends over each pail, lowering his head until his blonde curls touch the rims. Digging with his hands, the older boy tosses

sand in a pile between his widespread legs. The tot picks a blue shovel from the pile and begins going around in a circle, patting playfully each bucket. Suddenly he starts down the beach, running as fast as his short legs will carry him. Leaving the buckets, the older boy chases gleefully after the small child.

Ethel leans against the pillows on the bed. She knows the fisherman and the children will soon return to their vacation cottages. The sky has begun to darken and a foggy haze covers the ocean. They will eat late suppers and play guessing games before going to bed. And soon the two little boys will gather their sand buckets and go back to an evening of family stories, popcorn, and Kool-aid.

As the breeze calms, stalks of seaweed stand tall and unmoving in the underbrush near the gazebo. The incoming tide has left the shoreland a narrow strip of grayish sand. A couple stroll arm in arm along the beach. Ethel leans over to the night table and turns on a lamp. the dull light throws shadows on the wooden walls where knotty pine splotches join dusty floor slats. The dilapidated bedroom suite, neither aged enough to be an antique nor solid enough to be valuable, fills the small bedroom of the rented apartment. The spool bed supports a warped headboard, and a matching highboy with chipped sides and newspaper-lined drawers daily fills their clothes with mildew. A squatty dressing table with burnt-gold plastic doily and a scalloped mirror coated with a film of salt water and spray complete the furnishings, except for the baby's daybed, covered with a yellow ribbed spread, on which he now sleeps.

Ethel thinks of all the tourists and vacationers staying in clean, well-furnished motel rooms or rustic cottages complete with tile baths and central air conditioning. She is tired of living in dumps over greasy spoons. Maybe she and Herman and the boy can go to Florida. She's seen pictures of glittering Miami. Yes, she'd like to go there. Fortified by her new idea, Ethel turns off the lamp and walks into the other room of the apartment.

She inventories the living room with its floral plastic cushions and draperies. The walls, draped with fishing nets and laced with bamboo rope chains and shell mobiles, seem unusually ugly tonight. Ethel sits on one of the sticky cushions and looks around. Dried seaweed and artificial cattails stare back. In one corner a peeling black, wrought-iron table displays a bowl with faded paper African violets dipping over its chipped edges.

The kitchen is only a poor L-shaped extension of the living room. Fringed tan oilcloth, stamped with brown tulips, sticks to a round table while two wooden chairs offer peeled beige paint to the linoleum floor. Faded lime green crystal discs hang from a wrought-iron light fixture to produce a dull tinkling mobile which thumps every time anyone walks from stove to refrigerator.

Ethel tries to curl up on the hard couch. She falls asleep smelling the mildew on the plastic cushions. The next sound she hears is Herman coming home from work. Ethel tries to clear her head. She wants to finalize her plan. It shouldn't be hard to persuade Herman to move again. She has bewitched him before. And she can do it again. She sits up as Herman takes a seat at the other end of the couch.

"I fell asleep," Ethel confesses.

"The boy. Did he get all right?"

"Yeah, he was just wore out. That's all. You'd think he could act like all the other kids, wouldn't you?"

"He'll get better as time goes on."

Ethel rests her arm on the back of the couch. "Not in this dump, he won't get better," she says. "He probably already knows he's different, and his momma and daddy ain't fancy tourists."

"Somebody's got to run the rides," Herman offers, no apologetic overtones in his voice.

"I know," Ethel agrees, stroking the plastic couch, "but it's so musty and sticky here. We should go somewhere where the weather is cooler." She looks into Herman's face. "Like Miami," she ventures.

"You wanted to come here," he responds. "You said you'd be happy here. Besides, Miami is hot in the summer. Let's stick it out here until after Labor Day and see what happens?" He gets up, walks to the door, and goes into the darkened bedroom.

She does not move. From the living room, she hears the rusty springs of the old bed as Herman lies down. Ethel puts her head against the cushion, closes her eyes, and thinks of the cloudless sky over Miami. She can see the sun chasing shadows on the green, green shore grass as early morning lovers on brightly colored canvas floats ride the waves. Her mind envisions a newly painted swing set amid green and white webbed lawn chairs. She sees one direction. Only one. South. To Miami.

Alice E. Sink

Slopefoam

The slick
between lewd and luscious
the smell between apples and heat
a lemon orchard
exploding peaches
cinnamonsuckle.

The clear between slime doodles
on crystal goblets
oriental honey, warmed and moving
with geologic slowness
down, between, in.

Find it on Uranus
among the hillocks
beyond the Cove of Loo
or else between
warmlush and lickydew.

John Moehlmann

Even Though Never

Even though never
it somehow was.
While physically a virgin; spiritually, I am not
and I ask myself
which one counts? . . .

Even though didn't
we somehow did.
No passion gave loss to certain articles which
are once and forever lost
Yet passion gave way.

Even though couldn't
we somehow could.
And I must say, I feel different.

Even though never
it somehow was

And you are still within me.

Kristi Pierce

Copper's Visit

I had procrastinated again! My sociology final exam was just hours away. I needed to memorize scores of words and definitions. My anxiety mounted as I headed outdoors into the autumn sunshine. I plopped down on our back steps and snapped open my textbook. Sunshine warmed my body, but the bright glare made me squint. I stomped off to find a better place. As I rounded the corner of my house, I spotted two webbed aluminum chairs beside the yellowing maple tree. "That's the place," I said, as I positioned my tush in one chair and propped my feet up in the other. Our dog, Pepper, jumped up to welcome me. I patted her head to get rid of her and slumped down further into the chair. Pepper crunched the dry food left in her bowl from last night's feeding. Birds chirped loudly in my ears. A sweet perfume-like odor was in the air. The distant call of a crow echoed in the slight breeze. Even mother nature wasn't cooperating with my last minute efforts to study.

Finally, Pepper slipped underneath my chair and I jerked out my study guide. Slowly, my concentration was disrupted by a scraping, sliding sound. "What was that noise?" I looked over my left shoulder and saw our next door neighbor's Irish Setter, Copper. He was pushing Pepper's plastic bowl around the slate stoop with his nose. I glared at him as he finished off the Kibbles 'n Bits. "Why don't you eat your own food? How did you get out of your fence? How dare you distract me from studying," I snapped.

Painfully, I returned to my books. Suddenly, a long slobbery tongue attacked my note paper. "Yuck, Copper!" "Why don't you go away dog?" "I'm trying to study." With disgust, I wiped the dog drool off my paper onto my sweat pants. Copper proceeded to poke his nose under my chair and sniff ungentlemanly at Pepper. After about three of Pepper's nippy growls, Copper retreated to an allowable dog distance. The thigh-high setter had been successfully reprimanded by my miniature poodle.

Again, I attempted to focus on my sociology. As I glanced up to contemplate an unfamiliar term, I noticed Copper gnawing on something fluorescent yellow. It was my highlighter marker. I jumped to my feet and dropped my book in the chair. "How did you sneak my pen without me seeing you?" I questioned the intruding canine. I was following Copper around in circles and chanting for him to bring back my marker. That's when I realized that no one was home at Copper's house and perhaps he sought my attention instead of my refusal. A simple pat on the head was promptly rewarded by a wiggling, slobbery showing of appreciation. Satisfied, Copper trotted off and settled down under the maple tree.

At the time, I thought about how content Copper looked with his head resting on his paws. I was not aware that this goofy dog had succeeded in calming my pre-test jitters with his demanding presence. My negative thoughts had diminished as I hopped up to answer the telephone, and Copper had left when I returned to my outdoor study hall.

During the following days, I noticed Copper lying in the sunshine when I drove past our neighbor's house. Just seeing the Irish Setter brought a smile to

my face and pleasant memories of our recent afternoon encounter.

About a week later, I noticed my neighbor shoveling dirt in a far corner of his back yard. "What happened?" I questioned my son as I backed our pickup truck out of the driveway. "Copper got run over by a car," my son replied. "Oh, no!" I moaned. Visions of Copper's visit rolled through my mind like an instant replay. Unfortunately, Coppers wavy-red-hair, wobbly-long-legs, and slobbery-wet-tongue would never distract me again.

Rose Ann T. Weaver



SA

During Market

Streets swarming
Car horns blaring
Crowds waiting on corners
 for the gods to say
"Walk."

Buildings, stories high,
 peer down on the
Expensive suits
Leather briefcases
Japanese/English dictionaries
Asking where the CEO's came from.

It doesn't matter where they came from.
Tomorrow they're leaving.
The again-empty sidewalks
 will contain no more busy footsteps
Only ice cream wrappers
Cigarette butts
Discarded furniture brochures
The city waits for months
Before it once again feels needed.

Michele Williamson

Curses

P
M
S,
post-
partum,
M E N O P A U S E .

Discomfort,
P
A
I
N,
Hot-flashes.

B L O A T,
Burden,
Over.

Letters,
Labels,
Stereotypes.

Blood,
Life,
P
E
A
C
E.

FEMALE, FEMALE, FEMALE.

U N I Q U E,
Underrated,
U
N
E
Q
U
A
L.

Rose Ann T. Weaver

Being There

The road extends into nothingness;
It looks unreal
 but it is real.

Fading clouds of pink sunset
 die as a neon white moon
 becomes the spotlight.

The waves of sweltering heat that once
 rippled,
 distorting
 the world into a dream,
 now dwindle into bitter cold.

There is dust, dust that sticks to your
 tongue and blows in your eyes,
 because you are there.

Only you are there.

Michele Williamson

The Storm

When Miguel started down the road out of the mountains, the sun was already well past noon. "I will be late again," he thought, "and Rosalinda will be angry." It was not his fault. The new man in the market had argued with Miguel over the price of his chickens. Miguel felt since he had raised the chickens and carried them all the way to town to sell, he was due at least the price that the supermarkets paid for them. The new man had not agreed and they had haggled for quite a while before agreeing on a price. As far as Miguel was concerned, it was still too little.

An angry rumble, which Miguel felt more than heard, rolled over the pass behind him. "*Typico*," thought Miguel, "Now I will be wet as well as late." It was strange for a storm to come at this time of the year. As if in contradiction to Miguel's thoughts, bright flashes of light played in the sky at his back. After a long time, more rumbling came to his ears. It sounded like a bad storm. Before him stretched the floor of the desert valley he must cross. The sun blazed down on the sand and shimmering waves of heat obscured any details in the valley. In the distance, Miguel could see the next range of mountains. His home was at the foot of those mountains. Miguel hoped he would make it through the dry wash ahead before the rains came.

Since he had gotten so little for the chickens, he had only enough money to buy a small piece of salt pork and a sack of masa. "There will be many dinners of *frijoles y papas* before we have more meat" he thought. Miguel was not unhappy at this thought. Pinto beans and potatoes for dinner were a fact of life. He and Rosalinda had always been poor and would always be poor. As he reached the floor of the desert, the cool mountain air was left behind and the sun began to beat down on his head. The hot wind reminded him that he had many miles to go.

He had not crossed even one of those miles when a jet roared over him from the south. It flew so low that Miguel thought he could see every detail before it passed. In reality the jet was merely a flashing silver streak which was gone before he heard the sound of the engines and the boom, like a physical blow, pounded the desert around him. "*Dios mio*," Miguel thought, "He must have very important business." Miguel had seen jets once before. When he was young, his Uncle Daniel had taken him to Alamogordo to see a fair. Miguel had not known what a fair was, but if Tio Daniel was taking him, it had to have been good. The old F-14 Tomcat had been parked in a field near the fair on a big flatbed trailer. "*?Que es esso?*" Miguel had asked. "That is a jet, Miguelito" Uncle Daniel had answered. "It flies very fast through the sky." Later, there had been an air show and Miguel had cowered behind his uncle, terrified of the noise from the jet engines.

Miguel liked to remember his childhood, especially his uncle, as he walked along. It helped to pass the time and to forget about the hot New Mexican sun baking his back. To be fair, the real reason for his lateness was Jorge. Jorge had sold three pigs in the market before he met Miguel and had insisted they

celebrate. Because Miguel had done so poorly with his chickens, and because Jorge was buying, it was several *cervezas* later when he finally started for home. Jorge had spoken of celebrating and enjoying life while they still could. “*?Quien sabe?*” Jorge had said. “We may all be dead tomorrow. The politicians and the government will kill us all some day.” Miguel never understood why Jorge talked the way he did. He was still considering the best excuse for his lateness when he heard the truck’s engine behind him.

He could hear the engine whining loudly, so he knew that it was coming very fast. Miguel searched the arroyo around him for a place to get out of sight. Not many places to go out here. For as far as he could see was sand. Here and there grew wild sage and straggling scrub pines. Far off in the distance was a lone Saguaro cactus looking like a three-fingered hand planted in the sand. It was always best to stay back from the road when anyone came. Sometimes men from the town would drink too many *cervezas* or maybe too much *mezcal*, and they would ride out into the desert terrorizing anyone they found. Miguel scrambled off of the dirt road and sat very still beside a tall sage bush. As he watched the road, sweat beaded on his forehead and ran down his face to drip off of his chin. The mountains were already beginning to look dark with the distance and the lateness of the day.

The truck slid sideways as it rounded the last curve of the mountain road and began across the desert floor. A plume of dust boiled up from behind and the truck straightened as the tires found traction on the road. It was a very old pickup and many desert summers had taken their toll on the paint and bodywork. Miguel could not see how many were in the cab, but the bed of the pickup was completely full of people. He wondered what would cause this many people to brave the desert sun and the obvious insanity of the driver. As the truck drew nearer, he could see that it was carrying men and women of all ages as well as several children. There must have been at least a dozen people in the old truck.

“Hey stupid, get moving. It’s the bomb!” One of the men in the truck had seen Miguel and had shouted this at him as the truck sped by. The man had been pointing toward the mountains. Miguel was confused by the man’s words and did not know what he had meant. He looked again at the mountains and from behind the tallest peaks a black cloud rolled many miles into the sky, spreading in all directions. The menace of the cloud caused Miguel to hurry back to the road and toward his home. “He calls me stupid” Miguel thought, laughing inwardly. “At least I know that it does no good to run from a rainstorm.”

In the west, the sun was no more than a tall man’s head from the horizon. The desert sand began to take on the orange tint of evening as Miguel walked the long miles toward home. The hot wind blew from behind him, pushing him along. The mountains’ color deepened from violet to midnight blue, reflecting the color of the northern sky. The desert plant life bent and trembled in the hot blast. Sand blew up in clouds around Miguel and dust devils swirled dry sage leaves and broken twigs in miniature tornadoes close to the ground.

When Miguel started into the foothills near his home the sun was sinking on the horizon. The sky to the north and south had broken into a riot of colors.

A dull red glow began to light the northeastern sky and it turned the bottoms of the clouds yellow and orange while their tops stood out in brilliant blue and white where the fading sun struck them. Miguel walked on in a twilight that would give an artist nightmares. There was a brief tug of war as the night began to steal the colors from the sky. Finally the sun sank below the western edge of the world and yellow, brown, and gold took over the southwestern sky. As night fell on the hot dry desert, a flash of deep red and orange streaked across the sky and was reflected in the desert sands.

As Miguel opened the door to his house and met the eyes of his wife, Rosalinda, he gave thanks that he had beat the storm home. He would weather its fury in the comfort of his little house. He and his wife would watch it pass together. He didn't know that the storm had overtaken him. In the desert, the invisible rain had been falling on him all afternoon. He had been right. It did no good to run from the storm.

Steve Brenneis

White Panties and White Tennis Shoes

Panties and tennis shoes
Discarded on the floor
Like dreams of times past
Looking for the future

Panties and tennis shoes
Left behind
Purposes or mistakes?
Like old lovers who grow cold
Looking in the future
For what's left in the past

White Panties and white tennis shoes
And, virginity all lost
Discarded
Like dreams of times past

Brenda Morris

A True Vacation

It rained today. We sat there in the sand as if sheer determination to wish it away would do just that. The beach: what a comforting ambience; so pleasant and soothing its breezes and ocean sounds — unless it rains. Surely inclement weather there is a mistake by God — perhaps while he was busily caring for the rest of the world, he took his eyes off “cloud-watch” for a minute and at that point, the error occurred. Rain at the beach — like finding a hair in that piece of chocolate cake that your mouth had been watering for — oh, it just ruined the event.

All those tourists — they scurried eagerly to arrive on the sand this morning. All those mamas and daddies alternating holding babies’ hands while juggling the coolers, lounge chairs, beach toys, towels, umbrellas, oils, and music paraphernalia. Once reaching the perfect destination, the children hurry off to do their thing, while mom chases them in attempts to apply multiple layers of sun block to the child’s already blistered face and shoulders. Dad sets up camp, relieved to unload his heavy awkward burden to the sand — sand that will never be removed: its grains clinging permanently to cracks and crevices. It’s nice today, he thinks, and after several minutes of preparation, at long last, finds his chair by mom and carefully applies tanning oil to his body and sun block to his nose and eyelids. He smiles and reclines to listen to the sea gulls and the ocean waves. He can feel the atmosphere. Every sense in his body could identify its surroundings, the taste, smell and touch told him that he had arrived to vacation.

He reached for one of the two novels he had bought at the corner bait-tackle-and-sundries shop. Two books that he, like everyone else in the world does on occasion, would read while lying on the beach but wouldn’t even consider perusing at any other time.

He reads for only a short time before being interrupted by a nearby group of teen-agers, who, he decides, are determined to transform all other beach-goers into rock-and-roll worshipers. Dad is appalled that he can no longer listen peacefully to his self-produced beach tapes.

He had searched for weeks to locate his favorite tunes, and as well, had spent several hard-earned dollars on a collection that would be considered impeccable to any shag-rhythm lover. He had exerted great energies in recording each tune precisely; ensuring that all were arranged appropriately by their beat and meter. Now he could barely recognize the music of each song, much less comprehend the lyrics beneath the screaming rasp of the words “you left me baby and I don’t care. . .”, only to be silenced by the shrill and violent squeaky screech of an electric guitar that resembled no form of music knowable to man. What has this world come to, he asks himself, but shakes his unbelieving head as a smile creeps slowly to his face — wasn’t that expression exactly what his parents had said to him during his own teen years. Then and only then, he seemed content to click off his music box, remove the tape and carefully place it in its plastic case; close his book, tuck it away for later, and lean back to indulge in the lighthearted happiness that surrounded him.

Meanwhile, his children played. They made numerous trips to the ocean to retrieve sand buckets full of water. This, they used to fill the hole that mom had started for them earlier, and with the help of two of the "rocker-teen-agers", the hole had reached proportions that would endanger beach walkers if not filled prior to nightfall. The children seemed unconcerned that their mouths, noses, ears, and other unseen cracks were filled with sand, salt water, and caked on sun block lotion — just as mom seemed unconcerned about everything: she was asleep. He suspected she was dreaming something quite pleasant, as the smile on her face appeared to be filled with romantic intimate thoughts. Or perhaps she wasn't asleep at all. Maybe she was daydreaming about her life before him; of past boyfriends and good times she had shared with them: of endless summer days cluttered with joy and irresponsibility; of playing volleyball on the beach with her college friends and laughing uncontrollably at silly things; of living as a youngster during a time when there were no children to mother or to set an example for. She was a good mom, he thought. She deserves her fantasies. He smiles again, reclines his chair to a lower position, closes his eyes and begins his own dreaming of yesterday.

Minutes later he wakes thinking ill of himself for sleeping away part of his day, but realizes it was only for a short time. He checks the kids, who are still trotting back and forth to and from the ocean. The teen-agers have made it easier — they've helped by filling their empty cooler with water and carrying it back to the hole for the kids. Mom is still asleep — her mouth hanging slightly open. He looks around. The beach is packed. He watches each person in attempts to gain insight of what they may be like personally. To his right is a group of fat people, with fat kids and a dog. The fat father is sitting on a gigantic cooler. His too-tight black elasticized trunks have bore just enough strain to reveal the top of his backside. The kids are eating twinkies and potato chips while the fat mom prepares peanut butter sandwiches for the entire clan. The dog helps one of the kids finish off the chips. At this moment he thinks to himself that his family is beautiful, and he observes each of them with love. Approaching from his left, he spies two ladies that he mentally labeled as flawless. They were brown, almost a bronze color. He was convinced they had spent a tremendous amount of time preparing their tan for the observant's eye. They were sexy, he thought, and continued to watch them until they had gone so far up the beach that he couldn't pick them out of the crowd. He resumed the watch, noticing skinny people with pale bodies; couples holding hands and kissing; lost children crying; drunken parties laughing loudly; old people under umbrellas; surfers determined to stand on their boards gracefully; women jiggling in barely-there bikinis; but mostly, he noticed mom and the kids.

Becoming hot and bored with the scenery at hand, he decides to take a walk up the beach and find a few new prospects for observation. He wakes mom to relieve him from guard duty and proceeds up the beach, knee-deep in the seemingly freezing ocean water. He finds himself thinking more than observing. He remembers how the beach used to be when he was a child. He recalls it being more empty with long distances between hotel accommodations. He can see it

in black and white, and resolves that he can't really remember those days, only the photographs that remain from that time. He walks a long way realizing how slowly time passes while at the beach, thinking that he was hungry, yet it hadn't been long since he and his family had eaten breakfast.

The clouds rolled in quickly and he noticed that people started gathering their belongings in preparation for beach evacuation. He concluded that he should return to mom and the kids. He slowly circled a sand castle and headed back, walking in the same footprints he had made on his trip up. He skimmed the balls of his feet along the top of the ocean water as its waves reached their ultimate distance before being pulled back to sea. He made deep impressions in the sand with his feet and looked back over his shoulder to view the prints he had left. At randomly selected spots, he would stop, bend, and with his hands on his knees, search for a specially shaped shell to take back to mom. She would like that and think it was romantic of him. He would find one, but at each spot, would replace it with one that he thought was shaped better. He was so engrossed he didn't notice that the beach was deserted. It began to rain. He picked up his pace and almost hurried back to the place where he had left his family. They weren't there. Apparently after giving up on the weather and dad, mom had packed all she and the kids could carry and had gone back to the hotel for shelter. Dad was left with his chair and radio, a towel, and his bag of necessities.

Almost relieved that everyone had gone inside, he placed a tape of beach tunes into the cassette player slot, pushed the play button, and covered the radio with his towel. He sat down, opened his book and began to read. The rain came lightly, only in a sprinkle. He listened to his music and while reading his book, he thought how a little rain had spoiled everybody's day. . .everybody's except his.

Ivy Banner

Fish

Fish

darting from danger
darting left and right
swimming day and night

Chasing

Running

Hiding from each other.

Playful

Colorful and full of life
Waiting 'til the last day of time

Floating

Still

Silent

Decaying on the top of the water.

Eleanor Albright



My Footsteps In The Sand

Karen Scott

Arioso

The lump tightened in Emily's throat. Rigid tension in her step and seas forming in her green eyes, she watched her feet as if they didn't belong to her.

"Please, God, don't let me cry before I get to the beach," she whispered. Not here on the main road where all the uncaring people could see her, and wonder, and maybe even laugh.

The red convertible jerked to a halt as Emily looked up. It had almost hit her. She hadn't seen it turn from the side street onto the main road just as she started to cross.

"Watch where you're going!" yelled the tan, blond driver. Emily wanted to curse him. Why do I always make a fool of myself in front of the beautiful ones? she wondered. She ran across the road lightly and headed for the shelter of the dunes.

A passer-by might have thought he had found a beached mermaid had he seen Emily perched in the sea oats on the dunes, covered from the waist up, her long, sun-streaked hair blowing about her shoulders and wrapping around her sides. She sucked in her breath, determined not to cry, even now when there was no one to see. She looked at the waves and wondered what it would be like to walk into them until they swallowed her. She shuddered.

"I don't have anything to cry about, really," she said to herself. "Something will happen. It always does."

Emily wasn't sure what she was waiting for, but her relentless optimism would not let her give up. Something special, just for her, always came when her depressions reached their breaking point.

"Where's the rainbow?" she demanded of the sky. It had stopped raining and there was supposed to be a rainbow.

Emily began to walk down the beach toward the pavilion. She tried to put her finger on what had set off her melancholia. But it wasn't just one awful thing; it was a list of little things that would have had no significance had they occurred over a period of time. But all on the same day! It wasn't just that her father's sick uncle had died while the family vacationed and that her parents had gone home for the funeral, leaving Emily and her sister Shelly at the coast with their aunt. It wasn't just that Shelly and Emily had argued all afternoon over trivial matters like who read the stupidest books. It wasn't just that all of Emily's friends from college were miles away and she was desperately lonely. It wasn't just the rain today or the way no one on the beach noticed her or the cockleburrs that got stuck in her feet even when she wore sandals. Perhaps more than anything, the six o'clock news had set her off, summarizing all the pain and misery of the entire day.

"I am so selfish!" she moaned. "I don't even have any problems! I get plenty to eat, I'm healthy, I'm on vacation, my parents love me, I wear nice clothes, I have a decent body. . .so why do I feel like crying?"

Emily almost tripped over a half-finished sand castle. The inside had sunk into itself, leaving a pool of lukewarm water. Emily jumped in with both feet,

careful not to knock down the sides in case some child builder was watching.

The sun was sinking at the tip of a spiral of splendor. Emily had never seen clouds like these, rising up tornado-like over her head. She was walking with her eyes toward the dunes and the sunset, wondering if this was her miracle, and she almost ran into an old woman in a bathing cap who was jogging slowly up the beach. She had on a green bathing suit with a skirt flap, the usual attire for an eighty-year-old bather. Further up from the waves an equally aged man sat on a grass mat drying his hair with a towel. Emily wondered if they belonged together. She wanted to tell them to look up at the sky.

The wind had whipped Emily's hair into a long, wild tangle. She tried to plait it as she ascended the dunes behind the pavilion. She climbed over the back railing and walked out onto the fishing pier. The sunset was even more glorious from the pier. But no one else noticed. The fashionable boys and girls threw odd looks at the girl with her back to the surf, staring into the sky. Emily hoped that one, just one of them, would join her and say, "Isn't this a beautiful sunset? I love sunsets!" But things like that don't happen in real life, she reminded herself.

The sky had lost its glow, turning to deep blue. Emily trudged back down the beach, having forgotten about miracles for now. Her mind was filled only with the dull, gentle drumming of the breakers.

Then a new sound surprised her. Light and airy; then thin and reedy, but full, the notes of a flute trickled to her from up the shore. Bacchus is following me, she thought. Emily was shocked to see the old woman, now without her rubber cap, sitting with her legs spread, playing Pan pipes. The old man lay on his side. He looked at the woman and pulled a beach towel over himself, closing his eyes and smiling peacefully.

Emily stopped and watched them for a moment. For a brief moment the man's eyes sparkled in the fading light before he closed them again. Although she was far from him, she knew his eyes were blue as the sea on a clear day.

Emily ran gazelle-like down the beach. A rainbow of notes followed her. She felt tears running down her face, but they were tears of happiness. Restored, she twirled in the sand, a maenad in the twilight.

Kristi Pierce

Goodbye

I awoke one morning,
As the sky sparkled with tears,
only to find. . .

 a cold empty space
 next to me.
This spot in my bed once
 crinkled by passion.

The early hour paused,
 as if to allow me
 a moment of silence.

Only then could I truly
 discover the definition
 of Goodbye.

Eleanor Albright

And In My Garden

And in my garden
No moonlight falls
There is forever sunlight
Though in yours the
Blue-black trees whisper
To a sapphire sky

And in my garden
No autumn leaves float down
To rest against the emerald grass
Though in yours the
Rosebushes are swimming
in maple leaves

Yet in my garden
No magic lives
You took that with you
When you left

As I recall.

Kristi Pierce



SA



