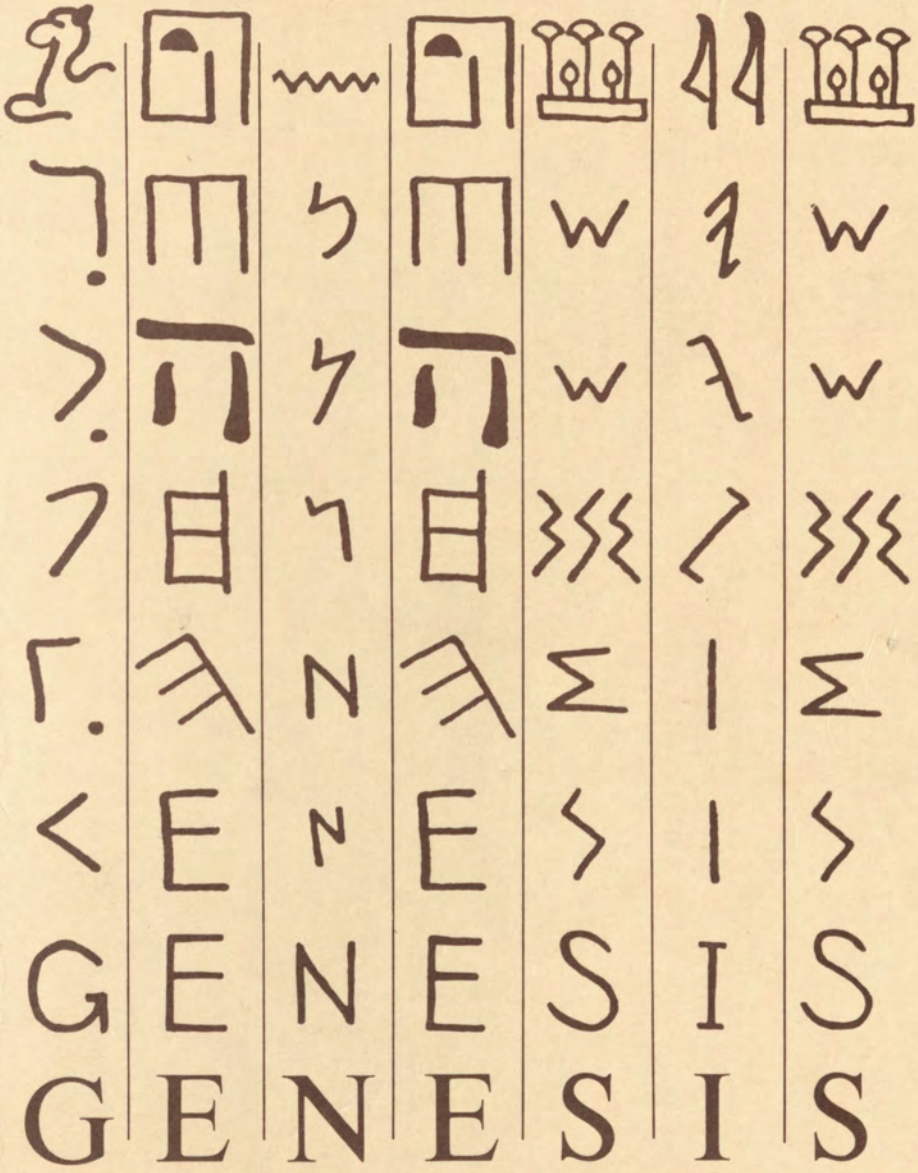

spring 1979 genesis

Volume 7
Number 1

genesis

Senior Editors

David Frisby,
Philosophy Club
JoAnn C. Starker,
English Club

Editorial Board

Philosophy Club:
Jim Gregory
George Carter
Sandy Tatay

English Club:
Nikki Martin
Maribeth Winslow
Becky Ries

Cover Design:

Lee Swanson is a third-year student at the Herron School of Art in the V. C. Department. Lee is single and works for IUPUI Publications as Assistant Graphic Designer.

The editorial staff appreciates the support and assistance of our faculty advisor: Dean Dan Wolf.

Prose

Poetry

Copyright • 1979 by the Trustees of Indiana University. GENESIS is published in the spring and fall of each year by the English Club Sigma-Tau Delta and the Philosophy Club-Phi Sigma Tau, Indiana University-Purdue University at Indianapolis. Content is devoted to creative writing in the areas of fiction, essay, and poetry. Correspondence pertaining to business or editorial matters should be addressed to GENESIS, Student Services Office. Cavanaugh Hall, 925 West Michigan Street, Indianapolis, Indiana, 46202. Publication of GENESIS is made possible through a grant from the School of Liberal Arts.

Invitation to Artists

The Fall 1979 edition of GENESIS will feature a section solely devoted to artwork. The length of this section will be determined by the number of accepted submissions. Any type of drawings may be submitted, although black-and-white ink sketches are preferred. Photographs may also be submitted. All artwork will be reproduced in black-and-white. Artists whose work is not accepted will be notified by mail; those desiring the return of their work must enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

Instructions to Authors

Manuscripts are invited from all persons who have been students at IUPUI at any time during the last eighteen months prior to submission. Manuscripts of essays, fiction, or poetry, on any topic, may be submitted at any time to GENESIS, Student Services Office, Cavanaugh Hall, 925 West Michigan Street, Indianapolis, Indiana 46202. All manuscripts are considered by an editorial board elected by the English Club and the Philosophy Club. Authorship is not revealed to the board until a manuscript has been accepted.

All submissions must be accompanied by a separate title sheet containing the author's name, address, and telephone number. Essays and fiction should be typed on a sixty-space line and double spaced. Manuscripts of less than twenty-two pages will be given first consideration. *Manuscripts must be submitted in duplicate.*

Authors whose material has been accepted will be notified prior to publication. Authors who wish to be notified of rejection prior to publication date—and all authors who wish their manuscripts to be returned—must include a self-addressed stamped envelope with their submissions. Any manuscript submitted too late for the current deadline will be considered for the next issue. Prizes of $25 are awarded at the discretion of the editors for the outstanding entry in each of the categories of essay, fiction, art, and poetry.

1. Loretta Gaverton Brinks

Daniel Lucy

Daniel Lucy is a senior who plans to take degrees in English (Composition/Journalism) and Spanish. His fiction and poetry have appeared previously in *Genesis*. He is of Irish/Jewish descent, drinks bourbon and is currently living in a decadent neighborhood on the city's near-west side. He is the co-winner of the *Genesis* prize for fiction. His story "Loretta Gaverton Brinks" is based on an epitaph in *Spoon River Anthology*.

Loretta Gaverton was, in her early years, what most people refer to as a "rebel"—not that this quality of hers was immediately tangible through any one of her actions—it was, instead, a cumulative impression housed in the minds of those people who knew her intimately enough to care. It is perhaps in the photograph of her that sits now on the buffet beside the fireplace that this peculiar quality comes through to the eye. The portrait was taken years ago—before her marriage to David Brinks—at the Hiram Schlegel Studio of Fine Photography on Warpel Street. It cost her twelve dollars, which was three dollars less than the going rate, because Hiram had taken a fancy to her. In the portrait her chin is cupped by one hand, whose fingers gracefully curve upward to echo the line of her jaw, and her eyes, deep-set and charcoal gray, seem fixed on a distant vanishing point over the viewer's shoulder. An elegant strand of auburn hair delicately caresses one indented cheek. The total effect was very convincing, and it was just what she wanted for the jacket of her novel when it was published.

After she had the photograph taken, Hiram Schlegel—pleased with his work as well, and much taken by the subject—called her house every few months and asked to speak with her. She was almost always at home, he found. When she came to the phone, Hiram would inquire, with as much casualness as he could muster, if she was thinking of maybe having more photographs done, at, of course, a much-reduced rate and at her convenience entirely. But she always declined, thanking him for his interest and ending the conversation soon afterward. When a

year had passed, Hiram Schlegel, at last certain that her disinterest was genuine and all-inclusive, gave up hope and once again lost himself in his profession, as was his habit.

Loretta Graverton was determined to be a writer—not just *any* writer but a *famous* writer, like George Eliot or the Bronte sisters—and it was around this determination that she arranged her day-to-day affairs. After graduating from high school, she turned a deaf ear to her mother's advice that she go on to college in Richmond. She wouldn't hear of it. Instead, she took some of her graduation money from the ceramic pig bank on her vanity and bought a used Royal typewriter at Mr. Garby's Hardware and Sundry. She dragged the old, water-stained, roll-top desk up from the basement and installed it in her room. She bought a fancy lamp at Walther's Five and Dime. She had her portrait taken at Hiram Schlegel's Studio of Fine Photography. And when everything was done, and her room arranged to her liking, she signalled her intent to her mother and the rest of the family by announcing that when her door was closed she was not to be bothered, under any circumstances, for any reason whatsoever. And that was that.

It was in this manner that Loretta passed several years in the house—seldom seen by the neighbors or the people of the town, except when, neatly dressed in a bright blouse and with her hair drawn back and tied with a chiffon scarf, she would make an appearance in the world; and although she didn't quite seem to be a part of the world, her outings at least served to notify the citizenry of Jasper that she was still someone to be dealt with. As for the citizens themselves, they thought, for the most part, just that she was prettier each time she appeared. Nevertheless, most were pleasantly surprised, and not a few broken-hearted, when she married David Brinks and went to live with him in his split-level house on the edge of town.

David Brinks had money—there could be no questioning that. His drugstore was the only one in Jasper, and he was careful to see—being the astute businessman that he was—that his inventory included just about anything a person might expect to find in such an establishment. But he was good-looking, too, in an unfinished sort of way—a stout man with a squarish face and thick fingers—and this combination had no doubt given impetus to many of the town widows' solitary dreams. It can't be said that he wasn't

something of a cad with the women—two or three of his romantic liaisons were common knowledge to those with a bent for local color. But because of his position in the town, and his affable manner, his shortcomings were for the most part overlooked. And so when the marriage between the younger and retiring would-be-novelist and the much older and not-at-all-retiring druggist came to pass, the summer porches were abuzz not only with June bugs but also with theory and insinuation. Mrs. Gaverton, who alone had been permitted the details of Loretta's heart, staunchly refused to impart to any of her friends the truth: that David Brinks had promised Loretta the luxury of time—time to confront her typewriter in the plush, panelled den that overlooked the garden and work away to her soul's content toward the fame she was certain would follow.

What did follow were eight children, since it turned out that David Brinks had a flair for that kind of thing—attempting, as it were, to make up for having put off marriage until his thirty-fourth year.

Loretta Gaverton Brinks was, in her late and last years, what most people refer to as a "broken woman"—not that this quality of hers was immediately tangible through any one of her actions—it was, instead, a cumulative impression housed in the minds of those people who knew her intimately enough to care. She died midway in her thirty-fourth year of lock jaw contracted when she accidentally struck her finger with a pin while changing David, Jr.'s diapers. She left several manuscripts, none of them completed, all of them rather Gothic in style; the setting for one, in fact, was a castle in the Scottish moors. David Brinks, who has since remarried, keeps them under lock in the buffet beside the fireplace; atop the buffet sits Loretta's picture, taken years ago—before her marriage—at the Hiram Schlegel Studio of Fine Photography on Warpel Street. It cost her twelve dollars.

2. Parvis Pappas

Daniel Lucy

Parvis Pappas knew that in the city outside his meager room existed affairs of the heart, and he intuited that in the dark places of the city's buildings were carried out affairs of the flesh, some unspeakable and swift, others, he was certain, above reproach and with the luxury of leisure. He knew that some began and were finished in the space of time it takes to dress; others had no end save the temporal boundaries that life itself imposes.

These thoughts he carried with him always.

I.

The sign above the locker room read:

COSMOPOLITAN BATHS FOR MEN AND WOMEN.

HELPING AMERICA FEEL GOOD FOR MORE THAN HALF A CENTURY.

Parvis Pappas stepped out of his pants and hung them on the hook next to his neatly-pressed pink shirt. He closed the locker. In the gaudy light of the fluorescent lamps, his skin, tightly stretched over his short, dense frame, looked hepatic. The fat man who stood at the mirror across the room combing his hair looked hepatic, too.

It was nothing to worry about.

"These here lights make you look hepatic," the fat man said to Parvis without turning. The fat man's buttocks moved like lips when he spoke.

"It's nothing to worry about," Parvis replied vaguely. His thoughts were on other things.

Normally he went straight to the little, moist steam room at the back of the building, but tonight was special, and for that reason he was early.

First, he went through the hallway to the door that said, "COSMOPOLITAN BATHS DRY STEAM." Inside were three or four men who each sat in silence, sweating. Parvis sat with them in silence until he was sweating, too.

When he had had enough, he went to the door that said, "COSMOPOLITAN BATHS COLD POOL."

Then he went to the "WARM POOL."

Then he went to the "SHOWERS." The "SHOWERS" were filled with soapy men. Some of them, Parvis thought secretly, soaped themselves more than was necessary. There was a Chinese man who didn't soap himself at all. There was a Mexican man, with a big belly, who was completely covered with lather. He peered out through the drifts of lather with dark, little Mexican eyes.

Parvis Pappas stood under the stream of water in his forty-second year and closed his eyes. The sound of the water splashing on the tiles made him think of cloudbursts in the August streets. He thought about the pictures of soaring waterfalls in the *National Geographic.* He thought about the splashing fountains at the Palace of Versailles. He thought about peeing.

He went to the door that said, "COSMOPOLITAN BATHS MENS ROOM.

II.

Clean and relieved, Parvis Pappas stood before the doorway of the room that held his dreams. The sign across its apex read, "COSMOPOLITAN BATHS MOIST HEAT."

Inside, the steam rolled up and took his breath away. It was eight o'clock.

Parvis took his place on the tile bench in the corner of the room. When his eyes had accustomed themselves to the dimness, he looked around and was relieved to see that he was alone. His hands, he noticed, were trembling. It was time. He leaned into the corner and pressed his face as close as he could to the plumbing without burning himself.

"Thelma?"

Silence.

"Thelma, are you there, dear?"

"Parvis? Is that you?" The tiny voice burst like a shell in his ears, as it had burst so many evenings before. He burned his left ear on the pipe. But it didn't matter, for in the moments that followed he was consumed with the love that had germinated here in this place—in this strange, dark, steamy room—like an orchid blooming in the murk of Paradise and pushing out its petals into the inscrutable light.

Like the flower of his erection.

Like the words that tumbled through the crevice of the stone and fluttered at her face as though their sounds sought vision as well as meaning.

"I have to see you. I have to see you. I have to see you," he said three times.

As he said this he was terrified to realize that he was no longer alone. Frantically he whispered: "Meet me at Schlacher's Drugstore. Magazine rack. Ten o'clock." And he turned to find himself sitting next to a naked form.

"No, thank you," the form said as it rose.

He found himself alone again.

His heart was pounding.

III.

"I guess there really is something to this romance stuff," Parvis Pappas admitted to himself as he walked through the March street in his forty-second year. He felt it in his bones. He felt it in his thoughts. He felt it in his penis as it shifted against the fabric of his trousers.

He felt terribly potent and kind.

He felt inordinately affectionate and capable of immense goodness.

He felt like what he thought a father must feel like on his way home to his children and his wife.

He felt all these things and more as he picked his way across the set of train tracks in front of the drugstore.

He was early.

Mindlessly, he picked up a magazine from the rack and thumbed through it. His eyes alternated between the street and his watch.

How would he know her?

As he stood there, shifting his weight first to one foot and then the other, he envisioned Thelma. In his mind he

saw her appearing on the sidewalk, her long legs thrown out elegantly as she walked, her dark, mysterious hair cascading over her collar, her bright scarf whipping in the wind like the flag at the ballpark.

Her tits bouncing on air.

He thought back to his brother's visit a year ago. His brother was a huge man with incredibly good looks. "I'm as Greek as they come," he always used to say to Parvis, slapping him on the shoulder. And then he would hook his broad thumbs under his belt and hitch up his trousers. "And I can tell you right now, you'd better get out there in this world and start enjoying yourself. Me, I don't have trouble. I've got all the women I need. But you—hah! What kind of man sits in a little room like this expecting women to break down the door?"

His presence had filled the room; his coarse hands had flown around it like some kind of menacing aircraft. When he had gone, Parvis had sat in the light of the little lamp and cried, out of humiliation or loneliness, he couldn't decide. When he was finished crying he had gone out into the street and walked to that part of the city where the whorehouses were. He stood and looked at the lights in the windows and the nebulous forms that moved behind their chiffon curtains. And then he had returned to his room, and had lain on his bed, in the darkness, without sleeping, listening to the couple above him make love.

IV.

She appeared out of nowhere, and Parvis Pappas was certain that she was Thelma. Although he could not see her plainly through the smudged window, he could discern that she was coming from the other side of the street toward him, and that she clasped her coat at the neck with her hands in a manner that he found touching. She must have been wearing high heels, since she watched the ground carefully as she walked; she was watching the ground intently at the time the train hurled her into the ties and bellowed over her broken frame.

V.

Parvis Pappas sat unclothed on the edge of his bed and looked at the naked lady in the pin-up that hung next to the picture of Yellowstone National Park. The lady was posed on a piano stool with a coy look about her. She covered one of her breasts partially with a sheet of music by Chopin, so that the notes seemed to emanate from her nipple. Her other hand rested on the keyboard of a piano, indicating middle C. The picture was very musically oriented, Parvis thought. He thought maybe he would buy a piano, but then he remembered that he didn't know how to play.

The window behind him had been opened to let in May. The curtains fluttered against his bare shoulders. He wondered why his parents had not had him circumcised. "George," Parvis had inquired of his brother one evening, "how come you and me got all that extra skin when a lotta guys don't?" At the time they were lying in their bed, the bed they shared, each with his hands clasped behind his head, during those minutes just before sleep when their conversations always seemed to lean toward the philosophical.

"I dunno," George had said, and, after a pause, "maybe it's so you don't use it up so fast."

There were never any answers, Parvis reflected. Only questions. Pictures. Places. Solitude. Personal towels. Dead grape ivies in windowsills. Wanderings. Sleep. He wished that George were there now, asleep in the bed behind him snoring and scratching his armpits while he dreamed.

And last, before he reached under the mattress and took out the pistol, he thought about Thelma. About the COSMOPOLITAN BATHS FOR MEN AND WOMEN. And he understood, in the space of time it takes to swallow, the meaning of the city and its plan.

"I am living my life," he said out loud, not caring if someone heard, "through a crevice in the world."

He raised the barrel of the gun and, pointing it with precision, blew away half of the Tetons.

Women in Lies

Sin is sexless and modes of such belie
ubiety but in Eve men have seen
their vanity mimed, apocryphal fear.
Naive as it appears, men seek belief
in what defies either metaphor or
words, as lies, as women's eyes, or denied
understanding. The venture of belief
is faith on a shoreless sea or as I,
reluctant with my trust, resolved nevertheless,
calentured sailor, my lady, your eyes.

—David G. Mick

Farmtown Carnival

A farmtown carnival, the smell
of wildstock tents, crushed straw,
and freaks slurking behind warped
mirrors; every barker waves a cane
like a wand and each lisps temptations
even the devil could never devise.
Ripped tickets, popcorn, matted grass
where hundreds walk the midway
or hypnotize in sideshows.

At six years old these things
have meaning: an innocent
anxiety, a niche in the psyche
of some confused adults like
us.

The turnstiles screech messages
of rust,
of neglect.

—David G. Mick

The Oyster Judge

Dawn and a fog steamed beach.
Two friends shared the moist shore
reweaving their past, each

like a worn quilt, but for
an oyster found there they
stood near the tip of surf's

reach: bone brown prize bewrayed,
stuck deep in a muddle.
What would blind giveness say?

Who would be the lawful
owner? Another beach
comber in his straddle

was stopped and asked to reach
a decision. "Only
fools dispute to appease,"

he said, "this is easily
done." A pocket knife pryed the obstinate oyster free.

Then he clutching the knife
gobbled the oyster. "This
shell half for you deprived,

one for you so dismissed,"
he said, "do not grovel,
justice is almost priceless."

—David G. Mick

David Glen Mick is currently a graduate student in the department of Health and Hospital Administration. At present he is serving his administrative residency in Watseka, Illinois, at Iroquois Memorial Hospital. He has published poetry in varied journals and magazines over the last six years, including the fall, 1977, edition of IUPUI's *Genesis*, for which he was awarded the co-prize for poetry. In the fall, 1978, edition he was awarded the fiction prize by *Genesis* for his short story "Won't You Please Buy An Organ From This Man?"

The Times They Are a' Changing

Linda Collins

Linda J. Collins is twenty-three and a junior majoring in English. She has a full-time job and attends school part-time in the hopes of someday obtaining a degree. Her story was written for Dr. Mary Louise Rea's creative writing class.

"The man who sat on the ground in his tipi meditating on life and its meaning, accepting the kinship of all creatures, and acknowledging unity with the universe of things, was infusing into his being the true essence of civilization. And when native man left off this form of development, his humanization was retarded in growth."

Chief Luther Standing Bear, *Touch the Earth*

1729

Jenny sat upon the earth, singing songs of the vision-quest to her small boys. She sang with pride and understanding of the purification rites and of fasting alone in the hills, where the braves received communication from the Great Spirit. The children listened to her with wonder-filled eyes. In a few years, they would embark on the vision-quest if they so chose. Then they would be shown their purpose in life.

Their father was the best hunter and the swiftest rider in the tribe. Their mother weaved beautiful blankets and grew the necessary vegetables for the family. When another tribe member was hungry, Jenny would feed him until he was again able to take care of himself. Food was plentiful, and their lives were rich with happiness. The elders often spoke to the children of the sacred ways. They learned of the power in the circle and in the four seasons. They were taught the ancient legends and cures for illness through sacred herbs. Their father taught them to ride their ponies, design and use tools and weapons, hunt for game, and prepare and dry meats. The boys were eager to learn these lessons, for they would prepare them for manhood.

Later, Jenny worked in the garden, tilling the soil carefully. Her papoose was snugly secured on her back. She bobbed up and down gently with her mother's movements. The swaying motion soothed the baby, and she soon settled

into a quiet sleep. The sun warmed them in the fields. It was a bright spring afternoon. Deer were plentiful in the forest now, and the river was thick with catfish and bass. They would not be hungry this year.

The tribe had met in a circle the night before. The circle renewed their bonds of trust and friendship, and strengthened their purpose. Although food was plentiful, they would need to work together to assure themselves of clothing and provisions to last the winter. Last winter had been hard, and their food from the summer before had helped them to survive when other tribes had been less fortunate. The tribe was healthy, and problems were few. Yes, the Great Spirit had been good to them.

1979

John Running Deer stared moodily through the cracked window, watching several ragged children playing tug-of-war in the mud. He tilted a bottle into the air, draining the last trickle of whiskey. His tarpaper shack was damp, and the fire burning in the stove warmed only a small area of the room.

John coughed and spat saliva mixed with Southern Comfort and brown chaw into the sink. Turning carefully, he shuffled across cold wooden floors scattered with rugs to the couch at the other end of the room. He turned on the radio. Static roared from within as he adjusted the dials to his favorite station. He listened carefully to Chet Atkins strumming a song on his guitar. A young girl accompanied his melody with haunting vocals. Her nasal lyrics spun around and around in his mind, mixing with the whiskey and the pain. He longed to see this girl, to share in her release through song. The whiskey was beginning to work now, easing the cramping in his arms and legs. He wished there were something to reduce the swelling, but at least the stiffness was going away.

A few hours ago, the authorities had visited John to inform him that they had picked up his grandson Thomas again, this time for heroin. They wanted to prosecute him as an adult now, though he was still only seventeen. A tear trickled down the wrinkles lining John's face, and fell unnoticed from his chin. Thomas was a gifted child who had grown tall and strong, but reservation life had made him bitter. John tried to help his daughter raise the boy properly. The white man who had married Sarah deserted her shortly after the child was born, and John could not replace

him. The children on the reservation were not like the children in John's day. These youngsters no longer respected the tribal elders or took interest in the old teachings. Their only interest was in escape. In town, they were unable to walk the streets safely, and on the reservation the poverty overwhelmed them. Many of John's people turned to alcohol and drugs.

The whiskey was gone, and the pain in his joints would soon be returning. In the days of John's ancestors, illness was almost completely unknown. They used natural medicines and ate wholesome foods. Alcohol had not corrupted them. Their exercise came through hunting and farming, and they endured the weather, making them free from many different diseases. Poor land, sickening animals, and bad crops had weakened their health. They did not have the money to see city doctors, and did not trust the doctors who came to the reservation. The tribal youth abandoned the old beliefs, for they no longer solved their problems. The elders lost respect for themselves and for their tribe, turning to alcohol to forget. John was out of alcohol.

The trip to the city in the battered bus jarred John uneasily. He lurched from side to side, swaying like the rock-and-roll blaring over the loudspeaker. The bus was full. Forgetting the whiskey for the time being, John looked around. The teachers on the reservation were returning home for the evening. Unlike the Indians, they could leave the reservation behind. Many of the young Indian girls were going to town to meet white men, who waited for them at the depot, poking each other and leering. For the price of a few drinks, they had themselves a fine time, and if one of the girls reported their abuse to the police, who listened to an Indian? There were many fatherless babies on the reservation.

John exited the bus quickly, trying to fade in with the crowd. He was an old man—there could be trouble. A group of young boys lounged beside a building on the way to the liquor store. John hesitated. He saw that they were only fourteen or so, and slowly continued on his way. As he pressed by, a young blond boy shoved him and he lost his balance. He stumbled and fell, smacking his shoulder against the wall. Pain brought tears to his eyes.

Stunned, John turned to face the boys. Though they

were young, he could see that their hatred was strong, nurtured in them by their parents.

"What's a matter, old man? Can't handle the booze? Why don't you go back in your wigwam and meditate or something? Where's your Great Spirit now, Indian? It looks like you're worshiping another kind of spirit, don't you think, guys?" The pimple-faced blond came forward and kicked John in the ribs. "Suffer, old man. Pay for all those bloody scalps your father took!"

"Leave the old drunk alone, Randy," said a small dark-haired boy. "He looks like he's suffered enough already. Let him be!"

"Indian lover!" the others taunted, but they scattered, kicking dirt in John's face. The boy who had defended John hesitated, looking back, then quickly hurried away to join his friends.

John tried to get up, but he was in too much pain, so he lay against the wall for a few minutes, trying to recover. People passed him by, but no one stopped to help. Finally, he managed to get up, and he painfully struggled back to the depot.

Later in the evening, a knock upon the screen awakened John from a fitful sleep. Peering through the door from where he lay, John recognized the dark-haired boy who had defended him earlier in the afternoon.

"The door's open. Come on in if you'd like," he said.

"I asked where you lived and someone told me to come here. I just came around to say I'm sorry for the way my friends did you and all. I just kept thinking of you lying there, and I had to come see if you was all right. The guys didn't have no right to go kicking you like that just because you're Indian. They just wanted to prove they were big shots. My name is David, and I live pretty close to here. Are you hurt bad?"

"Thank you for coming to see me, David. Don't let what your friends did bother you too much. They are young and do not understand. They should not be blamed. Their parents taught them to hate us. I am in pain right now, but my pain is small compared to the pain of their hatred," John told him.

"Well, my dad's not around no more, but my mom doesn't hate Indians. Seems to me, your folks didn't do no different than ours did. How come they treat you like that?" asked the boy.

"Our way of life was different than the way of life of your ancestors. They thought we were evil because we believed in our own gods. We tried to be friends, but they took our land from us and slaughtered our game, and we fought them to save our lives. Now we are outcasts and poor. Our people sicken and our pride and heritage have been stripped from us."

David stared at him, trying to understand his words. John looked small and helpless, sitting propped up on the couch.

"We try to keep on living the best way we can, but little is left for us. Our children turn away, trying to forget that they are a part of this, but find that there's no place to run." He smiled at the boy. "Thank you for listening to me and for coming to see me tonight. I was not sure anyone was left who cared." John's voice was weak and tired. He was bruised from his fall, and the pain of sitting up was making his head spin. David went over to help him adjust his pillow, and covered the old man with a faded woven rug.

He sat watching John, thinking of the Indians in the movies and in his books. "I knew they didn't start all the fighting. Maybe they were just trying to keep something for themselves. He sure doesn't have much," he thought to himself. Looking at the sick old man, he began to see the whole picture. It was all a big lie. He reached for John's hand and squeezed it lightly. He wouldn't let him be all alone.

Cause and Effect

The Muse tweaked my tail
a sharp enjoiner to
pick the intricate lock.
Oblation, efficacy jail.

—Pauline O'Quinn

Pauline H. O'Guinn is a senior with majors in English Literature and Language and Psychology, and a minor in Modern Lit. She is interested in all forms of creative and interpretive art.

Hope, A Finale

Golden images shatter,
dissolved in the chaos of time.
Hope's bleeding nails
rake bolted gates of steel . . .
sealed to her touch . . .
cool and sterile.

Grey clouds swim in dense haze
as daylight fades into night.
She struggles for dawn,
screaming cries of anguish,
while her days of splendor
crumble into mist.

Death comes silently.
Creeping softly into her consciousness,
he calms her tortured sorrow
with a kiss.

—Linda Collins

Memory's Friend

So quickly came the chill to flesh
So slowly left our fear
We covered all with brown leaves
And dark earth that we found near,
Then waiting with the face of ice
We sacrificed to wind
By offering on the marble
A friend to memory's friend.

—Smith

Borges' Labyrinth: An Invitation

Mark Springer

> "You have not awakened to wakefulness, but to a previous dream. This dream is enclosed within another, and so on to infinity, which is the number of grains of sand. The path you must retrace is interminable and you will die before you ever really awake."
>
> I felt lost. The sand burst my mouth, but I shouted: "A sand of dreams cannot kill me nor are there dreams within dreams." A blaze of light awoke me.

Mark Springer is a twenty-one year-old graduate student here at IUPUI (having completed BA requirements for an English degree in December). His poem was written for Dr. Mary Louise Rea's W401 Advanced Fiction Writing Class. The Borges essay was written for Dr. Nancy Newton's S494 Individual Readings in Hispanic Literature Class. Hobbies include photography, mountain-climbing and looking for loopholes in the eligibility requirements for "Family Feud."

Through this excerpt from Borges' "The God's Script," the reader can enter this Argentine story-teller's labyrinth—a "labyrinth of dreams." But as the excerpt typifies, Borges introduces another turn of the screw—dreams within dreams—and this, perhaps, is the ultimate labyrinth. Borges' characters awaken to a reality that is still contigent and elusive: they are at least twice-removed, and, as in "The Circular Ruins," the possible removals may almost reach infinity. "In the dreamer's dream, the dreamed one awoke." Borges writes about a labyrinth of the mind; the spaces that men are trapped within, in his fictions, are inside. They are the sinuous pathways of memory and imagination and language itself.

Borges uses this notion of removal very effectively. He is able to show man's isolation as in "The House of Asterion"—an image of man's removal from his fellow man. The house this character lives in becomes his labyrinth, and his denial of such only reinforces the reader's belief in it. The house comes to represent his mind. Or, as in "Emma Zunz," Borges makes time a part of this labyrinth. Emma murders Aaron Loewenthal during "that time outside of time." That is, it is a period of time once removed from the normal flow because "the immediate past is as if disconnected from the future, or because the parts which form these events do not seem to be consecutive." Time, too, functions as a part of Borges' labyrinth.

Borges seems to entice his readers out of their armchairs and into his labyrinth and traps them there. The reader begins to turn around in the stories, but finds his escape barred. Borges seals off all syntactc outlets and the reader truly finds himself trapped in the labyrinth of words which Borges has contructed. For example, in "The Circular Ruins" the narrator says, "He wanted to dream a man: he wanted to dream him with minute integrity and insert him into reality." And we are drawn into this dream. In "The Secret Miracle" our story-teller counters, "Then he reflected that reality does not usually coincide with our anticipation of it; with a logic of his own he inferred that to foresee a circumstantial detail is to prevent its happening." In other words, Borges has drawn us into his labyrinth of dreams in search of reality; once inside, he slams the door shut on us by suggesting that reality usually doesn't coincide with our anticipation (or dreams) of it.

Reality is contrasted with anticipation, as most of the story endings illustrate. For example, we see a man at first, but by the end of the piece he is revealed as a dream. Or, we hear a story about a coward and later learn that it is the coward who is actually telling the story—and he tells his listener in order to be "despised" by him. Certainly this is not what we expect when we enter Borges' labyrinth. Reality, in his works, seem an elusive concept: it is "everything and nothing."

But there is hope. As Borges states in "Tlon, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius," Tlon, like his writings, "is surely a labyrinth, but it is a labyrinth devised by men, a labyrinth destined to be deciphered by men." Borges' labyrinth does then seem to have an exit; it can be deciphered. And yet, with perhaps his final—and most effective—turn of the screw, Borges, in "The God's Script," foretells the fate of the decipherer:

> May the mystery lettered on the tigers die with me. Whoever has seen the universe, whoever has beheld the fiery designs of the universe, cannot think in terms of one man, of that man's trivial fortunes or misfortunes, though he be that very man. That man *has been he* and now matters no more to him. What is the life of that other to him, the nation of that other to him, if he, now, is no one. This is why I do not pronounce the formula, why, lying here in the darkness, I let the days obliterate me.

Understanding exacts a high price—loss of self. Perhaps Borges questions our ability, or desire, to pay this price. It is indeed ironic that a man nearly blind[1] "lying here in the darkness," if you will, is such a seer. Enter, reader, decipherer, Theseus and Minotaur, if you dare.

[1]Jorge Luis Borges, 1899- , has been almost totally blind for many years now, and so prefers to work on poetry, where the traditional mnemonic elements of human speech—rhyme, meter, and repetition—facilitate his creative (re-creative) task. His short fictions from the 1930's, 40's and 50's (referred to here) are widely available in English translation.

Snow-covered peaks
Lonely figures weave through white
Footprints dotting snow

Lake of melting ice
Chunks weakly cling to the shore
Fragments of winter

Fire breaks the still night
Crackling bright in the distance
Smell of hickory

—Mark Springer

The Basement

Walls . . . institution green
and a cold cement floor.
Framed in dust, a way station
for misfits, the unwanted, and forgotten.

Sacked clothes wore out their welcome
But a desk stocked with crayons and coloring books
waits patiently for its child.

A fold-up bed, used only on occasion,
yearns for a constant companion.
And a garden love seat is broken
like the promises of the heart.

Toys, tricycle, and training wheels
have outlived their purpose
And a steam engine track,
tacked to a plywood landscape,
stands on end . . .
the painted lake splashes over its banks.

Dreams of being a family room fade
as the light of a bare blub
slaps the potential into a cobwebbed corner.
And memories of the growing years compete to be heard
over the drone of a washer and dryer.

—**Susan J. Ferrer**

A Faded Pair of Jeans

Once young, so blue and lonely,
A samaritan liberated me from the rack,
And comfortable, together were we.
Now I'm old, pale, and weak-kneed,
But still loved.

When my youthful vigor began to fade,
You never cut me short,
Left me hanging or abandoned me
To rot in the dreary drawer where old garments go.
Instead,

Compassionate as a country doctor,
You cared for me—
Patching my sores, and
Helping me endure those times
I nearly fell apart at the seams.

Too often, the old are put away—
Only to be forgotten, but
You sensed my undying spirit and purpose.
You knew that an increase in age
Doesn't diminish a need for love.

—Susan J. Ferrer

Seduced

On a dimly lit stage
She walked through her lines
Without an audience or other players.

Then from out of the dark
And without a cue
Came a young man
With directed moves and a rehearsed delivery.

Seduced by a well-executed passion
She forgot her lines
And he stole the show.

Riding on rave reviews, he moved on
And she tried desperately to remember her part.

—Susan J. Ferrer

Susan J. Ferrer, 21, is currently a junior majoring in criminal justice in the School of Public and Environmental Affairs. She is also a staff writer for the *Sagamore*.

Camouflage

—Natalie Nicholls

Natalie Nicholls has a B.A. with honors in English from the University of Michigan. Presently, she is taking creative writing courses as a non-degree student at IUPUI. She has previously published poetry in GENESIS. Her story "Camouflage" was written for a class in creative writing taught by Dr. Mary Louise Rea.

The square-dance teacher was looking the other way. My friend Judy and I escaped through the side door of the gloomy park building. We were tired of being shot at with rubber bands by sixth-grade boys. Outside, sun glinted on the peeling bark of eucalyptus trees. A few blocks away, the San Gabriel Mountains rose, dark brown against a sky of brilliant blue. Rows of stucco bungalows with neatly trimmed yards bordered the park. Wandering down a path, we could feel just the hint of a cooling breeze against our skin. We sat down in the canvas loops of huge park swings, lazily scuffing our shoes in the dirt as we talked.

There was no one else on the playground. While we were swinging, though, a man came across the grass. He sat down near the playground, in the shade of an oak. He was unshaven, and below the tattered cuffs of his soiled pants were bare, white ankles. I saw holes in the bottoms of his scuffed, brown shoes. At first he seemed to fall asleep, but then, as we watched, he reached into the inside pocket of a greasy jacket and pulled out a brown paper bag, flattened around the small, rectangular shape of a bottle. He turned the bag, unscrewing the lid which protruded from it, and drank. Red lips glistening, he screwed the top back on and hid the bottle once more in his pocket. He did not seem aware of us at all, but his action made us uneasy, and we decided to return to our lesson. Passing by him on our way back to the building, I could see that his faded blue eyes were filmy and bloodshot. He stared through us with a vague and uncomprehending look, as if we were not even there. He seemed to me both lost and alien. I did not know whether to pity or to fear him and, in spite of the warm sun, I shivered.

My father picked us up from the lesson. He was in his Saturday clothes, which I did not like—an old, gray sweatshirt, suit pants with frayed pockets, and brown bedroom slippers. I liked the way he looked when he was all dressed up for work. He was handsome in white shirts and striped ties and business suits. I especially liked his blue suit—it made the piercing blue of his eyes look even bluer. He was quite intelligent—he had thought of radar before it came out, but he never did anything about it. He was an engineer, and he worked for Lockhead Aircraft. He was working on the Constellation now, but during World War II he had made P-38's. I remembered once going with my mother, during the war, to pick him up from work. The entire Lockhead complex had been camouflaged so that it would not be bombed by the Japanese. There had been posts supporting the canvas with its artificial shrubs, and underneath, shadowed, the buildings where the warplanes were being made.

After lunch, my father left to run some errands. I did my hand wash and hung all my colored socks—green and blue and brown and red—on the line in the back yard to dry. Then I practiced the piano. When I was through practicing, I got my tennis racket and went out to hit balls against the garage door. They made a loud, clunking noise against the wooden door. I was not very good, and I wished my father would come back so he could teach me how to serve. By sundown, when he still had not returned, just the three of us—my mother, my brother, and I—sat down to dinner. The light from the chandelier was dim, and outside the dining-room window the night turned blank and black. Soon after we had finished eating, the front door thumped open and my father stumbled in. There was a silly grin on his face.

"How's my favorite daughter?" he said.

I was his only daughter. He hugged me and rubbed his stubbled beard against my cheek. It stung. I hated it on Saturdays when he didn't shave. His breath smelled sour, and I tried to get away.

My mother's black eyes were flashing. "Where have you been? It's past dinnertime."

"Just at the Youngs'. They asked me to stay and have a drink."

"It looks like you've had more than one."

"Just a couple. I'm all right." His speech was slurred, and he swayed slightly as he crossed the living room to the hall door.

He went down the hall and into the bathroom. Then there was a crash and a ripping sound.

"Are you all right?" My mother ran to the bathroom door.

"I'm fine. I'm fine."

Soon he emerged, still with the silly grin. "I just had a little problem with the shower curtain. I must have lost my balance."

I looked into the bathroom. Four shower curtain rings hung empty on the rod, and a torn end of curtain dangled from the fifth. My mother was furious. They went into their bedroom, and I could hear them arguing.

"Why do you have to do things like this?"

"There's nothing wrong with having a couple of drinks."

"You've had more than a couple."

"If you won't believe me, I'll leave. I don't have to put up with your nagging. If a man can't have a few drinks with a friend . . ."

He was standing now, and I could hear him banging around in the closet. My brother, who was only four, was frightened. We sat down together on the piano bench in the living room. To drown out the sounds of the argument, I played the piano and we sang my brother's favorite song.

"London Bridge is falling down . . ."

I heard the closet door slam shut.

". . . falling down, falling down . . ."

A dresser drawer screeched out, then thudded in.

"London Bridge is falling down . . ."

The latch of a suitcase clicked.

". . . my fair lady."

"Don't go now. You're too drunk. You'll have an accident."

"Build it up with sticks and stones, sticks and stones, sticks and stones . . ."

Our father strode past us, carrying a suitcase, and went out, slamming the front door behind him. The three of us went to the dining room window. We heard the squeal of tires and saw glaring headlights dwindle up the drive, then aim away toward lawns and hedges down the streets. We

watched while the two red dots of his taillights shrank, then were erased by the black night.

My mother was crying. "Where will he go? He'll have to come back soon. He's too drunk."

The next morning, though, he still had not returned, so we stayed home from church, hoping he would appear. Lately he had been going with my mother to her Sunday school class, and on the way home we would stop to pick up the Sunday paper at the drug store on the corner, next to the liquor store. He would always treat my brother and me to popsicles or ice-cream bars. But this day there were no treats.

To keep busy, my mother decided to clean out the garage. After I finished my homework, I went out to help her. A bright sun was filtering through the huge leaves of the sycamore in our back yard. I walked along the hedge—my father had trimmed it only last week—down the sloping drive. Nearing the bottom of the slope, I heard a clunk and the sound of breaking glass. Then I heard my mother sob. Just as I reached the cool shade of the garage, she threw something into a trash can near the door, and there was again the sound of glass shattering. She was kneeling on the cement floor in front of an old chest of drawers, where we kept paint and tools and old rags. The bottom drawer was pulled out, and it was full of bottles. I could tell they were whiskey bottles, small and flat, and they were all empty. They were just like the bottle I had seen the man in the park hide in his grimy pocket.

It was as though an alarm had gone off in my body, sending vibrations through every nerve, then setting to a muffled buzz deep, deep inside. I knew without being told that no one but my father could have hidden those bottles there. I knew then what I had always hated about the gray sweatshirt and the worn pants and the Saturday beard.

Tears were running down my mother's cheeks, and she was throwing the bottles deliberately, one by one, into the trash can. As they broke, the smell of whiskey floated out. It reminded me of my father's breath. I picked up a bottle and threw it into the can. It splintered with a resounding crash. I picked up one more, and so did my mother, and we threw them, my mother and I, until the drawer was empty. We wiped out the drawer and pushed it in and put a lid on

the trash can. Then we closed the garage door behind us and walked slowly up the steep slope to the house.

Sometime during the evening, after I was in bed, my father came home. There were his footsteps and the soft murmur of voices and then the sound of my father snoring. But the next morning when I got up, he was gone again. He had left for work before sunrise. I went to a piano lesson after school, and the sun was already down by the time I walked in our front door. My father was there in the living room, sitting in his usual chair, reading the paper by the light of a lamp and drinking wine from a cheese glass. He was wearing his blue suit.

"How's my favorite daughter?" he said.

I did not know how to answer. He acted as if he had not been gone, as if nothing had happened. He talked to me about his day at work, and he mentioned the building where they made the planes. I told him the only time I remembered seeing Lockhead was during the war, while it was covered with camouflage, and he described for me how it had looked from the air then, when he had flown over it on a clear day. It had seemed to be a peaceful neighborhood, he told me, with neat rows of houses bordered with shrubs. There were even clothes hanging on a clothesline. From the air, he said, no one could tell that underneath those tranquil streets they were making planes for war.

And then he stopped talking and took a drink of wine from the cheese glass. His lips as he lowered the glass were red and glistening. In spite of the blue suit, his eyes seemed pale to me in the lamplight, and blurred, and though he looked toward me, he did not seem to see me. He sat there in his chair, my father, in his starched white shirt and his blue striped tie and the handsome suit, and his eyes had the same look, vague and lost, as the eyes of the man in the park.

GENESIS

he was standing in my dream in the cretan ocean
and I knew him as if he were me
he was me and had come for me
we strolled
over
to the macedonian islands swam nude in
the agean sea that evening
planned
our lives in accord with what we had a glimpse of
he planned i whispered yes and cried
he repeated for effect my name
read from ancient german texts
and said we'd marry
and buy a stereo

—Pamela S. Keller

my work is not good
it does not sooth it does not speak
and when it does it speaks softly
too few hear and when
i need comfort that is not good either

i can be cold and i can be cold
i can be cold amphibious and always
searching for a warm rock
you can be cold and cave dark
rock hard and intelligent
dont you know that my work is not good now
and if we're not good then what is what is left
what is good now
except this expulsion of waste called poem
and i can be cold
ingenius reptile
rubbing the ground with my soft belly that
human hands have not touched
dragging myself toward
empty hot rocks will
warm me from underneath
no human hands

—Pamela S. Keller

Pamela Sue Keller is an immigrant from the land of dreams.

Homemade Apple Wine

Colleen H. Bolden

Colleen Bolden, a senior majoring in journalism, considers her writing merely an extension of herself. Future plans include law school. Her story in this issue of *Genesis* was written for a class in creative writing taught by Dr. Mary Louise Rea.

"Dammit Liv, you're drunk again," complained Aunt Collester. She continued, "You know we're suppose to have company, and . . ." Before she could finish, Liv, short for Livingston, interrupted. "Nope, I ain't had a drop." His hands were in his pockets and he rocked back and forth. Uncle called it "being in the swing of things." He added, "I remember what you told me, Collester—you said you'd shoot my toes off if you caught me drunk again. I still remember the time you made me dance to some bullets. No whiskey. I haven't had a drop."

I could tell this made Auntie mad. Her face became flushed and her head cocked to one side. Her right hand was glued to her hip while the left remained in the air with a pointing finger extended. "L," she said, "I've lived in this house with you for nearly fifty years. I know when you're drunk and when you're lying. Right now, you're both. I swear, seems like every time we have company, you take it upon yourself to show the real you. You old fool. You're enough to make the dead shift in their graves."

Aunt Collester maintained her fussing until Uncle decided to sing. Out of nowhere, he reached for his pants legs, pulled them up at the thighs and started to shuffle his feet, singing,

"I can do the eagle rock, I can ball the jack,
I can do anything I want to, to get my baby back."

Aunt Collester sat down on the sofa and shook her head. After he finished his performance, a bottle dropped from under his sweater.

Aunt Collester popped up from the sofa, like toast from a toaster. "L, I know it's only family that's visiting, and I know that they know that you're a drunk, but why do you have to remind them? It seems like you'd want to surprise them one time. They've never seen you when you wasn't swaying back and forth and blowing whiskey in their face. Not once in fifty years. Besides, if you ain't drunk and you ain't been drinking, what's that bottle on the floor?"

Uncle looked down at the bottle. "It ain't whiskey," he said, "it's wine." He picked it up and added, "This here is some good old-fashion', side-hitting, teeth-gritting, homemade apple wine. Get a glass and we'll have a taste—unless you're too high and mighty. And I'm not gonna try to change; you see, I am what I am. Nobody ever thought I was good enough for you—Ms. Hoity-Toity, Ms. Satin Doll. I'm not gonna try to prove them different." Uncle unscrewed the top and turned up the bottle. Aunt Collester stood still and looked solemn. Then she left the room. She returned with a glass.

"Okay L," she said. "I'll have a drink with you. There's nothing wrong with a drink but I won't have to get drunk."

L poured her a glass, full to the top, and Aunt Collester took a big, long drink. "This ain't bad, L. Who made it?"

"Well," he answered, "Whitecap's wife has been trying to perfect her wine-making ability for years. She says she'll make a mint on this apple wine. I've always tried to help her out by sampling and reporting on her wares. But the trouble is, me and Whitecap get carried away with the sampling and forget what we had to report. What do you think about it?"

Auntie tilted her glass and her head. "Let me taste a little more, Liv," she said. A few gulps required a few more. Auntie's mood changed to a jovial one and her words ran together like links in a chain. "Liv, this is some good old-fashion', side-hitting, drunk-getting wine."

Then, all three of us laughed.

BORDA

Peggy D. Smith

Peggy Smith is a misplaced elf searching for home. Apart from that she's a senior majoring in English. She dedicates this story to the bear for whom it was written. "Borda" was written for a class in creative writing taught by Dr. Mary Louise Rea. She is co-winner of the *Genesis* prize for fiction.

"I'm sorry, but I don't speak that language."

Actually, no one did, grammatically anyway. The string of syllables continued sing-song.

"Will you please calm down? I hate talking to you, Doug, when you're like this."

He continued even more excitedly.

"Listen to me, if you can't calm down and speak as if you have some sense, you can just get out. I can't understand you. And you know it!"

Doug and the Teddy Bear studied me blankly.

"Where you going?" he asked.

"Now, that's more like it."

"Answer me." This time it was Borda's voice.

"I'm going out with Rick," I said leaning close to the mirror to apply mascara.

"Why?"

"Because I like him."

"Me too," he said. "What time?"

"Oh, about 7:00."

"How do you know you like him?"

"Just a feeling I have."

"Is it real?"

"Well, I've never felt this way before."

Then Doug asked in the high child's pitch, "You like him more than me?"

"Ah, you're not getting jealous, now?" Borda stood on my vanity. I poked him in the belly.

"Quit it, quit it! You just don't like me. You never spend any time here." Doug turned Borda away from me.

"I like you fine," I said. "You get on my nerves sometimes."

"You get on my nerves too—sometimes." Then Doug picked up Borda and punched me with his furry little paw.

"Well, excuse me. I'll try to clean up my act, sir. Now get out so I can change clothes."

"Why? You ain't got anything I want to see."

"Just get out. I'd like a little privacy."

"So would I, but nobody ever listens to me. They just throw me here—throw me there." Doug lifted Borda's arm to show the thread scar. "See?" He turned and caught a glimpse of himself in the mirror. With a little gasp he faced his reflection and then looked upward at mine.

"Is that your face?" It was Borda asking, pointing.

"Yes."

"Is that Rick's face?" He turned and indicated a picture of my boyfriend.

"Of course," I replied confused.

"This isn't my face," the bear said rubbing his own image in the glass laughing his mysterious child's laughter.

"Lucky you!" I sneered. "Good-bye."

Suddenly Borda began with the old language again. The syllables climbed in intensity. I had no time for it. I lowered my head and pushed my face in close to his so that my own nose was against his worn yellow one, and my eyes stared into the black felt eyes of my brother's companion.

"Get out!" I screamed. Teddy Bear and Doug, who held him, glared.

"Goddamn girl! Yell like that again and I'll punch you right in your eye!" Doug bellowed.

"C'mon Doug, I don't have time to play games now. You and Bear have to go."

"What for? So you can get ready for freak-boy? He's just using you. He'll never marry you."

"So who said anything about marriage?"

"I never want to get married either. I couldn't stand to have someone always hanging around."

"It's nice to have someone who cares," I told him.

"Nobody gives a damn about anyone else, and you know it."

"Just because you don't care doesn't hold true for everyone."

"I don't want anyone to care about me; I care about myself. Don't you touch me!"

I had stepped in too close to him.

"You're invading my space." He stepped back.

"Ah, Doug . . ." I reached out to touch him.

"Don't touch me! How many times do I have to tell you?"

He tucked Borda under his arm and strode heavily out of the room. His form blocked out the light from the lamp in the hall. I watched my twin brother swagger away with the stiff sidestep he had had since childhood, and I remembered how he was ten years before.

Douglas had not always been this way. He had once been frail and quiet, his eyes like soft brown chalk. Though we were twins, from the beginning the differences between us were apparent. Douglas could make beautiful games that were more than games. I thought of them as recreations. Together, he and I built ancient Egypt in a vacant garage in our neighborhood. He designed a temple in one corner and a palace in another. Patrolling the alleys with a red wagon chariot, he collected the junk cast away by others and remade it to beautify his land; his prize was a slab of marble with "Egypt" chisled into it.

On one wall he planned a mural which was to picture a Pharaoh and the royal artist, their arms around each other, surveying a landscape of green and blue. Only the Pharaoh's face was finished, and it looked like mine. That was the difference between us. I was the stronger; he, a gentle, pensive artist. What happened only made me stronger. It destroyed Douglas and placed in him an anger which was to control the rest of his life.

He might have escaped with his dreams and promises intact, but he could not overcome or ignore the problems which plagued our family: the father who puffed his pipe and wove bright memories of his past in the smoke, and who chose sleep as his ultimate escape; the mother who screamed that she was going to leave forever, but never did; and, of course, the fights—ugly, violent scenes which spared us nothing.

"Did you hear that?" Douglas's voice came to me sounding far younger than our twelve years.

"Yeah," I answered. Indeed, lying awake in the darkness, we had been expecting it all night.

"Let's go see."

We tiptoed downstairs, waiting with each step to hear something. Suddenly, the awful sound of crashing glass surrounded us.

"Turn the lights on," I ordered him.

I wished that I had not. The living room was no longer familiar, with overturned chairs and broken glass strewn on the floor. From the kitchen we heard my mother cry out. Ignoring the glass, Douglas rushed to help her, only to stumble back and fall at my feet sobbing. I stepped over him and pushed open the swinging kitchen door. Inside I saw more glass and a greasy mural in butter splattered across one wall. My father had pushed my mother against the sink. While I stood frozen in the door, Doug ran past me holding a broom. Twice he hit my father who slumped to the floor dazed. My mother, her eyes circled with darkness, wept as she leaned against the refrigerator. Doug stood there in his baggy shorts and too-big shirt supported by thin white legs, the broom still in his hands.

Later, after the cleaning up, and after the tears, and after all the endless apologies, everyone went to bed. Doug lay on his narrow roll-away clutching a toy bear which I recognized as one he had bought for himself four years before. It had been discarded for his grander plans. I sat down on the bed next to him and tapped his shoulder.

"Don't touch me," he said. His tone disturbed me as nothing else that night had.

"You O.K.?"

"Fine, more than fine," he replied. "Just go away and leave me alone."

"Hey, it's all right; you know how they are."

"I know; now go away. Get out!" He had never yelled like this at me before. It drove me from the room.

The finality of that night has never left him. The beautiful lands we had created together were lost forever. The blue and green in the painting would never appear, and the artist of Egypt would remain forever faceless.

After that night the bear, Borda, as he came to be called, became a part of the family—and a part of Douglas. At first, Borda could only speak "baby bor talk"—so Doug called it. While Borda mastered English, Doug flunked out of high school in spite of a high I.Q. Changing his name from Douglas to Charles, he took to sleeping by day and wandering the house by night after Borda had been tucked safely away in my bed. Borda could mysteriously turn up anyplace: among the Kleenexes and prescription bottles on a nightstand, or near someone hurt by an outburst of Douglas' ugly anger.

Douglas shunned affection, including Christmas gifts. Borda made out a list of what he wanted. It was Borda who loved to be brushed and petted, and, on occasion, when he whined and pleaded, smuggled into a movie in an oversized purse. His manners were always predictable. If Doug were not present, Borda would sit quietly without a sound, but, if Doug accompanied him, Borda threw popcorn and burped whenever someone on the screen opened his mouth without saying anything. He loved to make us laugh.

"I'm going out for a while." Doug walked into my room and handed Borda to me. "Keep him in a safe place. You can't trust anyone these days."

I held the bear in my hands before the mirror. He looked at me and I at him. In his felt eyes I saw something more. There, I recognized, or perhaps imagined, the same light which had once softened Doug's. I turned him around in my hands to face me and drew him close.

"What do you know that I don't know?" I asked him. He said nothing, as was his habit when Doug was not around. He looked at me with innocent understanding.

It Simply Happens To Be

Nature: an ever changing reality
matter and energy ceaselessly interact
and sometimes life happens to form
randomly, accidentally, purposelessly
the dynamic process of evolution has resulted in me

Nature: that which is, all that is
the living and the non-living spread throughout space
the laws of physics need not be enforced, they simply are
I react accordingly and try to adapt, to survive
to understand, to grow and, ah, to feel good

Nature: everything belongs, moving and developing
in search of balance, equilibrium, stability
living matter naturally pursues pleasure, and avoids pain
the universe wasn't created, it simply happens to be
and I am part of it, what more could I ask for?

—Jim Hartman

Jim Hartman says, "I am a part-time student majoring in business. I wrote this poem back in July after reading *The Dragons of Eden* and *The Cosmic Connection*, both by Carl Sagan. I decided to submit it to GENESIS after reading David Frisby's "Nothing Scientific," which appeared in last spring's edition."

Time Out of Mind[1]

Opaque eyes furl, knit
yet another afghan
to rest our smelt of childhood
and ages.
Figs, barley bread quietly pulled,
honey dipped, partaken of—
this giving thanks to-night.
Dearest of paracletes
what occurs when you take leave,
as all must to tend their needs,
inquired i.
Gently milk, unguent ooze,
dropts freshen moist skin,
whiskered lip lightly bid the dusk
to dust.

What of the children
puzzled i—
none have considered why,
said only good-bye.
Hall whence the sniffles resound,
dark, crouched shadows still,
silently command all.
Opalescent caladrius at toe tips,
turns, seeks not i but another.
There, it seems,
there my stoics be,
watching,
somber tearless
empty
watching the caladrius watching them.

GENESIS

Parting of the whey this morn.
Piscine odyssey held
gripped fast my Wake-ning.
Small one tail the larger
yet each followed 'The Other' no end,
dove, nought save a ripple remained,
Peculiar behavior—
concerned, i.
Libationary ichor pelt
nascent dayflowers yearning to be,
cathartic sky belch, distented clouds
spate ceaselessly upon my unwonted raiment.
To and fro o're the wheat and poppy
the petral go
plucking when necessary those who grow.

[1]A phrase used by Mary Renault in her book *The King Must Die.*

—Patrick Hannon

Haiku

Spring departs with haste
Pastel tears at her passing
Silent flowers weep.

Fur hats pulled down tight
Chimnies smoke at right angles
Winter's frigid breath.

—Larry G. Goldsberry

Larry Goldsberry is a Liberal Arts student majoring in Journalism and minoring in Telecommunications. His interests include writing, commercial art and broadcasting. The Haiku is dedicated to Larry, Lora and Karen.

Dear Grandmother

dear grandmother:
the night is pelting the tin roof,
pieces of it falling from the constellations.
no I have not forgotten porridge but my ways
have changed, and I am writing
from the saddle of that strangeness;

the days go by you know, I picture:
all the kettles, cast-iron, roses pursing lips,
now opened, closed, the cottonwood filling
the indian-summer yard with fluff;

no I have not forgotten—
the city warbles so that one can't hear;
the roads aren't gravel anymore,
the horns aren't factory workers leaving;

dear grandmother;
I wish to lay the total of my dreams
into your apron, finding room among the eggs,
I want to cradle your poor broken frame
like land cradles a new fenced field;

I need to stand against the stove
in deadest winter, saying:
please try to understand, forgive,
this distance that I see:
the roads aren't gravel anymore
the horns aren't factory workers leaving
and all the dogs of childhood weren't hit
by cars
but all the same are dead.

—Daniel Lucy

Vision

Even the treebark seems to sigh,
The weight of some deciduous dream
Is shouldered by its limbs, hoisted
Into the strokes of moonlight;

Swirls of mosquitoes, silly fools, do
Dances; jumbled roofs tilted
Toward or away from
The penumbral wedge of sun;

The faraway buildings are tarpaper boxes
Under the dropping sky; distant dogs
Become verbal: collapsing yawns, a dialect
Of yowls, dismay, premonition;

Cars slip through the torn twilight,
Sucking wind through metal nostrils;
Birds spangle the west, brushing the evening
Planets with their wings:

Their forms are dark, percussive, experimental,
Nomadic, scissoring; And there!
From the cottage by the river's bend:
The first light—

A burnished square hurls itself from a window
Into the water: a lamp, a chair,
A china cupboard, a man without shirt,
Rearranged beyond the floating pier,

An image committing suicide . . .

—Daniel Lucy

The Priest of Winter

I had been the priest of winter once.
My collar shone against the snow, untested.
Below it were legumes and vetches, dormant.
The growing tips of oaks were pinched by bitter cold.
The rabbit paths were fresh and led to light.
I felt the celibate paleness of my soul.
I watched the service of the sun, sputtering.
I shivered in my cloak, an unmigrated wren.
My dreams would be a pelican in unfished waters.
Unquestioning, the myrmidons return.
Amen.

—Daniel Lucy

It Was One

it was one when
the streetcleaner
pillaging
passed down the gutters
engorged with trash
spewing water in
its wake
howling
turning an eye
toward me
leaving the night
clean
and full of polished
stars and croquet wickets.

—Daniel Lucy

Room

My life now
  is 9 X 12,
paint-flaking sashes form
  the jaundice-yellow frown
  of window, sounds carry
like homing pigeons
rushing from an opened loft;
  naked bulbs fertilize
wall-paper plains, pretending
to be sundown in Arizona but isn't.
I have visions
of the old landlady
dying any minute, with
her hand stretched out
  for seven dollars.

—**Daniel Lucy**

Dear Dr. Abraham

Ah, Abraham, your dynamic self
Walks aged through my nights of love and hate.
The object gone to anger gone,
Early rejected I am bivalent
To grieving, to guilt.
Failing light with loss,
I despair, yeah, suffer,
Differentiated forever,
Narcissistic, inner-oriented,
Oral fixated,
Loathing self,
Regrouped, not gaining.
Lo, I am sad defense for the sum of me remaining.

—**Smith**

The Zodiac Wins

Laura A. Burris

During the '60s, when everyone was watching the stars to find out what they were really like, what was going to happen to them through the years and on what day these things would happen, and which other signs they were or were not compatible with in regard to their friends and lovers, Jana studied Leo. The Lion: regal, aloof, haughty, showy, ambitious, competitive, loving but selfish, loyal and proud. Except for the "loving" (without the selfish), and the "loyal" she did not like that description of herself, and convinced she was not showy, haughty, ambitious and aloof decided to deny her inheritance and defy her horoscope. Instead, she would be helpful and humble and unselfish.

At the age of eight Jana and her sister, a true Taurus, the Bull, each received as a gift a pair of sidewalk roller skates. Neither knew how to skate but both enthusiastically wanted to learn, and upon agreeing to help one another, both went to the long stretch of sidewalk in front of the house and slipped their feet into the skates and laced them up. Sitting side by side on the step, the reformed Leo and the truly stubborn and persistent red-haired Taurus first looked momentarily bewildered, then questioningly at one another, and then the not-at-all-selfish-or-haughty Leo began taking her skates back off.

"How about if I help you first, and then when you get good enough to stay up on your feet and can help me with your skates on, you can help me."

"Fine with me!"

For the next three days, Jana and Susanna were absorbed with teaching Susanna to skate. Jana held her hands as she worked her feet back and forth, trying at first without any results to get the wheels to glide smoothly and to develop a little grace, for as long as she was on her feet, anyway. Many times, Jana would let go to check Susanna's progress, but as persistent as she was, she did not stay up and really skate until the third day. Suddenly, she gained her balance, and she managed to skate from the sidewalk that led from their house to the sidewalk that led to the house three doors away.

"I can't believe it! You really can do it now! Now it's my turn!"

"I know—I'll be back in a minute to help you," Taurus said as she took off alternately clunking and sliding down the rough sidewalk.

"Okay—I'll get my skates on," called Leo, the kind and patient, as she ran into the house to get her own skates.

A few minutes later, as she sat on the step, skates tightly laced, waiting, Susanna came back down the sidewalk.

"I'm ready!"

"Well . . . I'll be back in a minute, Jana. I just want to try one more time before I stop." Jana was getting impatient but said okay. Susanna went to the end of the sidewalk a block away and then started back, slowing down now—it was about time she was getting tired, after all she only learned how to stay up on her feet today. She limply skooted up to the steps and flopped down on the step beside Jana.

"Oh boy, am I tired," she said, out of breath. "I don't know if I can help you right now, Jana."

"Oh, come on, Susanna, you're not that tired. Just rest a minute and then help me."

"Okay." She stretched out on the grass beside the steps and stared at the leaves above blowing in the wind. "Come here, Jana, isn't this pretty?" she said, seemingly fully recovered.

"Hey, I don't want to look at anything. I want to skate."

"I'm really tired of skating. Hey, I have an idea, why don't you hang on the edge of the porch and skate right around here."

"Susanna!"

"I can already do it, Jana, and I'm tired of it now. I want to do something else. I'll help you later."

* * * * *

At the end of that decade of star searching Jana met Joseph, a Libra—kind and loving but a strict perfectionist. Jana and Joseph decided they were a compatible pair. After all, according to their signs, she was fire and he was air. Fire needed air to exist at all and air was so cold without fire. Leo and Libra would make a good combination; Libra demanding perfection in all things, and the still confirmed-to-reformation Leo ready to please and give all.

"Would you give up the piano for me?" he once asked.

"Why would you want me to do that?"

"I'm not saying I want you to, I just want to know if you would. I want to know how much you'd give up for me."

"Well you know how much I like to play the piano, so I would have to have a really good reason to do it."

"This is purely hypothetical—simply, if I asked you to, would you give up the piano for me?"

She persisted. "Only if I had a very good reason."

Two years later, long after she had given away the piano because they "just didn't have room for it" and right after their son Jason was born, Jana had been up for forty-eight hours followed by two weeks of rare catnaps. For a while she patiently, maybe foolishly, waited for Joseph to offer some help, but as usual he was too busy being perfect. He was unruffled, unhurried and complacently pretending that nothing had changed in their lives. So finally she did ask.

"Joe, please, could you get up and feed Jason tonight? I'm *really* tired."

He looked at her red eyes and haggard face and noticed how awful she looked and told her so. That gave her hope; he must realize how hard the last few weeks had been.

Then he said, "I can't do that. I'll be dead tired in the morning. And, I'm really not in the mood."

She was too hurt to complain. He was never "in the mood" when she needed something. And, not knowing what she was doing wrong or why the marriage was so worthless, Jana broke her personal code of loyalty which included never saying anything at all derogatory about Joseph and talked about the problem with a friend. She told her how he neglected any responsibility beyond his nine-to-five job and how even when she asked for really-needed help, he would sweetly tell her he just wasn't in the mood. Her friend was a true Leo and her advice coincided with her sign.

"Have some pride, Jana! You have to put your foot down and don't let him or anyone else walk on you. He will take advantage of you as long as you let him."

"But, Donna, I can't be mean to him . . ."

Donna cut her off. "It's not mean to expect to sleep a full night—occasionally—or to play the piano, or to expect him to behave like a father."

Jana couldn't help but see the truth to this, but her disrespect that had grown over the years of Joseph's ways had almost gone too far. Almost . . . but she decided to give it a try.

* * * * *

In the '70s, in the wake of the feminist liberation movement, when individual self-fulfillment and development and finding one's most comfortable lifestyle, companion, relationships and lifework were covered regularly in every magazine, newspaper column, conversation and new book, Jana made the decision to leave Joseph. During their five years of marriage Jana's resolve had hardened so that his apologies, pleadings and promises had no longer had an effect on her. She had heard them before and the consistent lack of follow-up convinced her that she was doing the right thing. The fire had burned out and the air was left icy. Their Aquarian son would, of couse, stay with the emerging Leo.

After they parted, a hobby which she had apologetically and sporadically pursued, photography, suddenly had a stronger appeal than it had ever had before. She had felt presumptuous to consider that she could be a good photographer, but now she decided that maybe it was possible, and why not try it? Some of an old unwillingness to compete with people in the family lingered—it would not be kind—and the fact that her father had recently bought a camera and was taking one roll of shots after another held her back—for awhile

Then she decided.

"The hell with him. If I rule out everything that someone in my family is doing then I won't have much left to choose from." So she bought a camera and began shooting: all the angles, subjects, expressions and moods she could see or imagine went through the shutter. She gained more confidence each time the results came back from the developer. She showed her father a few of her pictures just before they were both, amiably, going to submit some to a local photography contest.

"This is good, Jana," he said as he scanned all the crystal clear details of a shot she had taken of her Aquarian splashing around in a wading pool unsuspecting, while a Scorpion friend snuck up behind him, ready to douse him with a bucket of water. She silently, smugly agreed. It was quite good, actually.

Then expressionlessly she leafed through a stack of about twenty photos, none of which were at all remarkable. Then she started at the beginning of the group looking for something sincere, but complimentary to say. Then for a moment she thought about Susanna and Joseph, and other times, like when her father sternly advised her to never help her friends with their homework because some day they would be graded on a curve and Jana would be cutting her own throat. . . .

During her silence, her father, somewhat gullible and very egotistic, unimaginative but energetic, glanced at her stern stare, with meaning indiscernible and eagerly asked, "Well, what do you think?"

Leo pensively and cooly raised her eyebrows and shook back her mane.

"This one is very good, Dad. I like the colors—looks like you used a skylight filter? And the angle—very unusual. In this other one, you really caught a somber, haunting expression on mom's face . . . that's rare." She leafed through a few more, wanting to keep him encouraged in the right direction.

"Oh, this one is definitely my favorite. It's so peaceful and serene—you really should enter it today—can't lose!" The comment was on a trite, nature shot.

"Do you really think so?" he said, obviously flattered.

"Oh, yes, a definite winner," she said. "No doubt about it."

He decided to enter the shot.

Jana-the-Leo strode away with a silent purr.

Birthday Girl

A fragile gift unfurled this morning,
Stretching out two arms
Until a ray of sun fell
Across her fingertips
And down her face
To paint soft, rosy lips.
She curled away—
A small, slight thing—
As I pretended to
Unwrap her wings.
"Wake up, birthday girl,"
I coaxed, while brushing back
Sleep-tossed curls
From amber-colored eyes.
Then like a golden
Butterfly
She lit upon my neck
And pressed sweet rosy
Lips next to my ear—
Where secrets pass—
To whisper was
She really three at last.

—Smith

The When

1.

Dark and hideous the viper-thoughts coil around
my sleep-dragged mind.
—I float
oh! so pliant—
Spewing silken venom, the familiar voice
echoes through my empty brain . . .
Obscene whispers of a phantom-fiend lover
Tortured murmurs from the void of time.
—I listen
oh! so helpless—
Waking, haunted sleep becomes nightmare reality
My writhing spirit once again searches for
a shelter-spot.

2.

Alone . . .
always and never alone
In my locked room
I tear down the rotting boards to expose
a solitary window.
Panting with anticipation, I peer into the universe—
the half-crazed sea and jagged rocks
so tantalizingly far below;
the murderous storm clouds and screeching birds
so tantalizingly far above.
Stark greyness. This sterile wasteland,
reflection of my life
projection of my soul.

3.

The days, the hours, the minutes, the seconds
. . . surely they must be passing
My burning eyes scan the blank walls
until I locate
the window.

Sky of velvet black, achingly beautiful starshine
The Ocean Mother croons her bittersweet lullabies
my screams fade—now pale moans
that claw the window glass
then
suddenly slipping through, hover feeble and vunerable
until
vainly clutching, plummet. Mercifully
swift death on the sleeping rocks below.
The lullaby ends.

4.

Suspended in the timeless waste of middle-night,
I conjure the dawn.
Myriad hordes of netherspirits explode into this my room
mute mouths grimace bare-bone fingers beckon
wreathed in seductive mistiness, they advance
driven by terrifying lust, I retreat.
Nevertheless
hypnotic vision-dance continues, intensifies
"Drown me, bleed me" I at last reply . . . quicksand passion.
They laughingly begin to devour my mind.
A miasma of pain and horror burns away
my shell of numbness
I race through the familiar labyrinth
seeking, weeping, pleading
As stillborn morning returns, I despair.
Safe and insane in my crystal cocoon
will I never be touching you?

—Brenda Beidelman

Brenda Beidelman received her BA in English in 1978 at Ball State University. She is currently working as a bookkeeper for Service Merchandise while trying to formulate plans for the future. Describing herself as by no means a "dedicated writer," she wrote "The When" a year and a half ago as the product of extreme boredom brought on by a series of bitterly cold, overcast fall days.

Elderly Minds

Elderly minds sometimes dig graves
in bed and wipe children from the
kitchen table. Tunnel gaze holds onto
loose seconds that play jump rope and tag
and fall down hard laughing.
Elderly minds sometimes bait fishing hooks
with paper napkins and wipe noses leisurely
in applesauce. Stirring up children in their
groins once more they moan.
They hiss and lose their bowels too easily
and hunt faintly back without
disgrace at having mother diaper them
backwards. They misplace God
along with orange peelings in wheelchairs.
Metal chairs that take them to a carpeted lounge
or to Macy's back in 1934. They cry because
they missed the mule train and cry wondering
why he's gone, "I loved him!" Bodies shrivel up,
knees knocking fires in chests where they burn
cold ashes.
Medicine winds them to grey
dreamless sleep. Brains hack against jail-like bars
of the bank teller and now money only buys
baby lotion and the challenging bingo cards.
Minds want to close the screen door on the porch
because they feel the baby might catch cold,
and they want to fix brown gravy for the family.
Elderly minds sometimes want to brush a few wild flowers
off the cemetery and draw charcoal days
with broken fingers instead. Elderly minds
kiss crooked cheeks and clutch breathlessly at air.
Wanting to walk under covered bridges, they slowly die.

—Lisa Ramsperger

Lisa Ramsperger "Elderly Minds" was written in a class taught by Michael Allen of whom she is fond. She is a woman whose weakness is older bearded men. A woman whose essence comes from her writing, her womanness, her freedom, and her smiles won after the struggle with pain.

Violation

Janet Whalen Moore

Janet Moore, a native of Indiana, describes herself as faculty wife (Anderson College), Psychology Buff, listener, mother of 3 daughters, student, and friend. She enjoys traveling, the Arts and gourmet cooking. She taught Early Childhood 3 years at Park Place Children's Center in Anderson. Her story was written for Dr. Mary Louise Rea's creative writing class.

"Uncle Bill Paul's comin'," Mama called as she swept past me into the bathroom. I followed her, bracing myself in the door casing and letting my body hang over her as she scoured the toilet.

"Who?" I asked.

"Your Uncle Bill Paul—Daddy's brother. He's been in Michigan City." She stood up and shook the brush over the toilet, leaving the lid beaded with water.

"What for?" I asked.

"Writin' bad checks," Mama said. She sprayed the seat and wiped it dry. "It's no tellin' what he's picked up in the Pen." I stopped and looked at her, my head resting on the doorjamb. "What are you talkin' about?" She ran the sponge over the faucet and spoke without looking at me, "It's a filthy place! He could'a picked up all sorts of stuff. You wipe that seat before you ever use it!"

I was almost twelve and Mama said I was bloomin' like a daffodil in the spring. Staring at myself, I stretched up full before the long mirror in the hall. I leaned over and criss-crossed my arms, looking straight down into the cotton print top I wore. Mama snapped, "Ginger Lee, stop that!"

She went into the kitchen to start supper and I followed. She dipped pork chops into flour, her fingers turning white and pasty. "Pick up your shoes." She pointed with a covered finger.

"When will he be here?" I asked.

"Soon!" she said. "Now go!"

I turned and picked them up, and as I passed the mirror I stopped to glance at my long brown hair. I shook my head and it fell way down on my back. The door latch clicked and I stood up straight. I could hear my father's voice as I walked back toward the living room to get a look at my

new uncle. He was right behind my daddy, and a little taller even with his poor posture. He smiled out of one side of his mouth exposing the dark recesses in his teeth. A scratchy cough came from somewhere deep inside, and he held onto his stomach until it stopped. His hair was black, so black it was almost blue, shining as though it were shellacked. His eyes held a trace of warmth in their dark centers, but now standing beside my father, he looked tired. He had a brown duffle bag in his hand and his clothes were faded.

"Sara Joyce!" My father's voice rose above the evening news. "Come see Bill Paul!" Mama came out of the kitchen wiping her hands on a towel. She brushed past me, flipped the television set off, and turned to embrace my uncle. "Bill Paul, you're jus' skin and bone!" Mama said.

"Nah. I'm o.k." Bill Paul dismissed her accusation.

"You look pretty as ever, Sara Joyce. You married a beauty, Tommy," he said to my father. Mama turned toward the kitchen, inviting him to relax and wash up for supper; then she saw me standing in the doorway between the rooms. "Come here, Ginger Lee!" She looked back at my uncle. "This is our baby. Remember her, Bill Paul?" He grinned sideways at me as I came into the room beside my mother.

"So this is da baby?" he asked. "You sure are pretty, jus' like your mama." He punched me playfully on the arm, winked his left eye and smiled. I smiled right back.

In the week that followed, my father and Uncle Bill Paul talked about their youth, about the move from Kentucky and what a bedroom suite cost in 1935. He went to work for my father in the dry cleaners and made his bed on the sofa. He was advanced enough pay to buy clothes as he learned how to operate the machinery. They laughed about relatives and cursed their mistakes. My father included a plea for Uncle Bill Paul's soul in his prayers and invited him to join us in church. But he rarely did.

In the summer, Uncle Bill Paul and I made frequent trips to the supply house. I talked about boys and clothes and how my older brother mistreated me. He listened. Then he would punch me on the arm and say, "Ah, doesn't anybody love da Baby?" When school began he postponed the trips until Saturday. We went for ice cream every trip, and sometimes he stopped at Walker's Variety Store to buy

straight pins. Little Dutch never had enough. Once he found me looking at a rack of blue and white moccasins. "What does da Baby want?" he asked.

"Nothing," I replied.

"What size does da Baby wear?" he asked, rubbing his hand through my hair.

"Six," I said sheepishly. We carried the moccasins home.

The supper table was always fun-time and one evening Uncle Bill Paul began teasing me as soon as we sat down. He wiggled in his chair, dancing with his top half and making faces. Mama passed him fried chicken and Daddy asked about the day's receipts. When my parents looked away, Uncle Bill Paul jerked his head sideways with a little grin. I began to giggle. He held his finger to his lips.

"What's the matter with you two?" Mama asked, smiling at me.

"Uncle Bill Paul's half crazy—that's all," I replied. Daddy said he would have a half-price special next week and as he spoke, my uncle whispered quietly "The truck!" and pointed his drumstick toward the door. I pushed my chair out and excusing myself, ran outside to push the door of the panel truck along its track. I heard a whimper from a cardboard box inside. A little black Dachsund puppy looked up at me, shivering and still. "Uncle Bill Paul!" I squealed. Back in the kitchen, its trembling legs slid across the tile floor. Mama stopped eating and looked at my father. My father looked at his brother, and Uncle Bill looked at me shrugging his shoulders, "Where did da Baby find the puppy?"

In the months that followed Uncle Bill Paul and I learned to speak a special language, but his absence in the evenings frightened me. He had begun to drink again, and although my father tried to protect us, his long face and the whispered talks to my mother meant trouble. I was awakened one night, half in fear and half in relief, by Uncle Bill Paul's insistent pounding on the door. Sitting up, I waited in the dark for my father to hear him. It seemed like hours passed before he bounded from bed. I heard his footsteps trace the hallway into the living room.

"Tommee!" my uncle yelled. "Lemme in, Tommee!" There was silence. I heard my father's slippers cross the room, and then the dialing of the telephone. "Pleaze, Tom-

mee, pleaze." Uncle Bill Paul began to cry. My stomach knotted and I crawled quietly to the stool that looked onto the street outside. The lights were yellow in the dark night and my uncle paced slowly, falling sideways and catching himself in front of the door. I wanted to run and take him in, but I knew my father would yell for me to go back to bed. Red lights flashed into view and turned down our street, stopping in front of my window. I let the curtain drop back into place and watched through the crack in the middle as the policeman put Uncle Bill Paul into the back seat. His head dropped back and his eyes stared above him. The siren came on, and I watched my uncle's black hair shining against the grey seat until the car was out of sight.

After that, frequent quarrels began between my uncle and my father. His drinking continued and he often walked off the job in the middle of the day. Wanting to help his brother, my father was more patient than usual and continued to let him work. Now the times I spent with him were rare. He ate his supper quickly, accompanied by four glasses of buttermilk to soothe a burning ulcer, and then went out for the night. I asked him to stay, to play a game, to watch the puppy we had named Jezebel, but he always went out the door, winking his left eye and grinning.

One afternoon when I was returning from school Uncle Bill Paul came through the front door of Little Dutch Cleaners. "Come on, Baby," he said.

"Where you goin'?" I asked, pausing in front of the shop.

"Come on, come on!" he laughed and winked. "Go for a ride with me" He laughed again and wagged his head toward the car. I looked into the shop where my parents were working, and then back to the car where my uncle waited. I had missed our talks, our ice creams.

I piled into the front seat beside my uncle, and he started the motor. I began telling him about Lee Rigel, the boy who spoke to me today, and how we'd probably be going steady soon. The car turned north from our street and headed into the country instead of toward town.

"Where you goin', Uncle Bill Paul?" I asked. He looked at me and smiled. It was a distant smile and I grew quiet, watching him race along the dusty roads between the cornfields. "Don't you have to get supplies?" I asked.

"Nah," he whispered, his eyes fixed on the road ahead.

"Did you tell Mama and Daddy you was takin' me?" I asked. His head fell onto the seat behind him and he laughed. The car stopped, throwing me forward from the seat, and the yellow-grey dust from the dry country roads billowed up in a cloud. My school books were on the floor now, and as I reached to pick them up I felt my uncle's hand clasp the back of my neck pulling me down. Then his wide wet mouth opened over my face. The world went white, and I felt the saliva run across my cheeks and down my neck as his long, thin body pushed against mine. I couldn't scream. My head was spinning. An ocean swept over my body and carried me into its tumbling depths, and I waited for it to land me breathless and limp on the shore. Then the motor was racing again and we returned over the long narrow roads. I pressed my face against the window, leaning onto the door, and my white hand held the handle as he sped along.

I didn't stop to reflect as I passed the hall mirror. I went straight into my room, locking the door behind me, and wept into the bedspread. It was over. It must not be told. My father would surely kill him. I brushed my hair and washed my face, preparing for supper.

My parents came home from work and I talked about Lee Rigel as I helped my mother set the table. Daddy said it was time to run another half-price special. I kicked Jezebel out of my way and set Uncle Bill Paul's place at the end of the table. But Uncle Bill Paul didn't come to supper that night. He didn't ever come to supper.

Dolls

Little girls, women
Dolls to lace, white rice and rings
Disillusionment

—Janet W. Moore

Midnight

Midnight in the lonely part of town:
Distant cries of night come
Flashing out from neon lights,
Sirens rape the coldness
Of these streets;
Roaches with their sly, dark ways
Creep out to sift the
Loss of day,
And dance to maddest tunes
When they are found;
In the shadows on the walls
The mirrored lives go on and on,
Until they fade and
Come falling through the stains;
A whinning in the dark,
A scream, a dog's wild bark
Has made the ache
Become a thundering pain.
Midnight drag me out,
Bewitch this thing
That shouts,
"I'm here, somewhere, alone,
Quite uncontained."

—Smith

A Bit of Innocence

Wanda Threlkeld

Wanda Threlkeld graduated from IUPUI with honors with a Bachelor's Degee in Psychology and a minor in Literature. She is a feminist, married to the same gorgeous man for 22 years, and has three gorgeous kids. Her immediate goal is to work with raped or battered women. A future goal is to obtain a Masters' Degree in Anthropology. Writing is a pleasurable avocation.

The blazing Illinois sun beat down mercilessly on the prairie. July always seemed to produce days like that with the air so hot and moisture-laden that most endeavor was forced to a standstill. The paint on the yellowing house had blistered and peeled badly after enduring years of the humid Midwestern heat. In back of the house the aged grove of peach trees had long ago given up the struggle to bear any fruit other than hard green little knots although the fierce summers were conducive to fruition.

The youth of the two girls playing in the shade of the gnarled trees made them oblivious to the intense heat. The younger of the girls, probably seven years old, bore a definite resemblance to her sister, the older by nearly two years. Having been born in the exact middle of eight daughters they were not watched closely by either their careworn mother or by the older sisters who were generally charged with their supervision. So instead of hanging the basketful of wet clothes onto the sagging wire clothes-lines with the wooden pins that always squeezed rust marks from the metal and onto the garments, the two sat almost out of sight near the tall hollyhocks which grew at the edge of the grove. Their nimble little-girl fingers fashioned long-skirted dolls from the upside-down hollyhock blossoms as they had been taught by their grandmother who had learned it from her grandmother.

While the sisters carried on their make-believe with th the pink and white and red blossoms, the condition of the house and outbuildings seemed to visibly settle into further disrepair. If the person in charge of upkeep had ever had the energy or wherewithal to follow to completion the many jobs begun, it was not evident. Scattered about the yard and fields surrounding the house were assorted pieces of rusty farm equipment, some so ancient as to be unrecognizable by the modern 1946 farmer. High grass grew up through the slotted metal seats of some pieces, but was worn to baldness in front of the house from constant use by sixteen juvenile feet.

Jagged hunks of concrete, leading from the unpainted back porch to the outdoor toilet at the back of the property, were not quite embedded, imparting an uphill downhill effect. The fencing around the pig pen had drooped in some places but had been rooted upward in others by freedom hungry hogs. The low voltage electric wire, attached at one end to the house and at the other to the hog fence, to prevent escape, was slung just under the steel clothesline, creating a long skinny unwieldy cross.

The neighbors and kin didn't expect much more from the girls' father who labored in the local railroad shops building boxcars for ten hours a day, then tended cows and pigs and chickens until dark in an effect to feed his large hungry family.

The relatives and neighbors of the girls' mother, however, did look down their collective nose at her for having reproduced herself so many times, feeling vaguely that to do so was somehow obscene. But with very little choice in the matter, the woman had continued to birth her girls, produce much of the family food from the vegetable garden near the house, boil water on top of the kerosene stove in galvanized tubs for the weekly washing, and sit up every night until midnight to do the sewing and alternations she took in to bolster the family income.

By then the two girls had a ballroom full of billowing flower ladies, under the immediate direction of the older who allowed the younger to make the dolls but not the decisions of the game. The older was not particularly more intelligent than the younger but was innately very sly. She began at an early age to evade her turn with the dish towel

by disappearing after meals and making the act seem quite innocent by the cleverness of her excuses.

The older was not only sly but slightly cruel. Everyone seemed to be fair target for her inexplicable hostility toward the world. On the rare occasions when the eight girls were treated to candy or cookies or other sought after delights, she would not eat her share until she was sure everyone else had finished. Only then, in a triumphant and vindictive manner, would she produce her sweets and bite by bite, in proximity to as many siblings as possible, would chew and eat and smile, deliberately refusing all requests that she share even a taste.

The younger was of a softer nature, trusting, naive, gentle. The broken wing of a bird brought involuntary tears to her eyes and the sight of a dead turtle could keep her silent and grieving for days. Her mother always said of her that she was the easiest to get along with of all eight daughters. And she was usually the one who could be depended upon to dry the dishes left by her elusive sister.

Yet a bond existed between the two middle girls. They were closer to each other than to the rest of the family. The older, when not engaged in teasing her, would take the younger's part in any altercation. And the younger always defended the older when lapses in performance of household chores caught up with her and punishment loomed.

As they tired of their hollyhock fantasies, they ignored their mother's tired calls about the drying wrinkled clothes still in the basket and as yet untouched. Knowing that the mother's unmet demands were not apt to bring retribution, the job would remain untouched as long as the older could keep the younger occupied with thoughts other than obedience.

"Come on," said the older, jumping up. "I just thought of a new game!"

"What kind?" inquired the younger.

"Well, what we do is, we go over there to the clothesline and we'll have a contest and see who can pull the clothesline down the farthest!"

"But mama's calling us to hang up the washing," said the younger, looking doubtful.

"Oh, come on, you baby. She'll holler a hundred more times before she gets mad."

"Well, I don't care, I'm not gonna do it. Daddy said he'd whip anybody he caught hanging on the clothesline again after he just tightened it. He said he was good and tired of cutting saplings to prop it up with, too, and that he wouldn't have to if we'd stay off of it."

The older was growing impatient at that point and barked, "Come on, chicken! Nobody's looking! Daddy's at work and mama's in the kitchen. And I tell you what," she said, her voice changing to a persuasive purr, "if you'll play I'll let you go first."

The younger looked surprised when she heard this but still hung back, not wanting to feel the bite of her father's belt across her backside. But the unprecedented generosity of her older sister's offer filled her with a surge of love and a desire to please.

"Okay," she said, "if I really get to be first."

The older began to smile, but not with her eyes. The younger, looking cautiously in all directions and seeing no one who would tattle, feeling the security of her older sister's protection, moved from the hollyhocks and peach trees to the steel clothesline. She placed both hands on the line in a firm grip, then yanked downward as hard as her seven year old muscles would allow. But they were sufficient. As the steel line was pushed toward the ground it made contact with the underhanging electric wire and instant pain darted through her youthful body like the sting of a hundred buzzing bees. The voltage slipped from the wire to the flesh to the ground as quickly as a rattlesnake's bite. With the numbing sizzling pain came her short scream as she dropped her hold on the clothesline and thought how foolish to have forgotten the hog wire.

Then, more powerful even than the electric shock, she felt shame and betrayal cut through her like a butcher knife as she heard her sister laugh and laugh and laugh and knew she had behaved in perfect accord with her sister's plan.

A bit of innocence evaporated into the hot prairie air as the younger, her small chin drooped onto her chest, turned and walked slowly away from the accusing laughter, toward the house with the peeling paint as scalding tears slid down her round dusty cheeks. As she plodded along she wondered why she felt so alone.

Black Poet-Black Woman

Black poet-black woman
the world on her tongue
rolling
spit out
through perfect white teeth
clenched
her rhythmic voice
wisdom edged with pain
gleaned by hard bent backs
in fresh plowed fields
running with tears with sweat
and blood
through furrowed ditches
earth turned blacker still
In husky throaty sounds
cotton balls are spat out
colors of brown
pale my blue eyed world
slashes of crimson
slivers of screams
rise with gospel singin'
in fluttering breaths
move as she moves
as she is
poetry

—Shirley A. Couts

Shirley Couts is a writer-illustrator and poet, majoring in English at IUPUI. she has had work published in the *Hamilton Magazine* and the *Sagamore*. Her illustrations have been published in *Indianapolis House and Garden Magazine*, and the *Hamiltonian*. This poem, entitled BLACK POET–BLACK WOMAN was inspired by the poet, Maya Angelou.

A Song in the Night

The moon's sympathy rests upon the trees,
The stars direct the flights of seraphims,
And all the leaves of scattered emotion
Collect beneath humiliated limbs.

The wastes of failure are now fertile ground,
The work of sowing dreams has long been done
And so though night forbids I must not doubt
The promise of a resurrected sun.

I stand and feel my heart twinkle with hope.
I wait. I ponder my dark past and yearn
To see the love I've sent into the night
With the ecstasy of the dawn return.

—Jack Dashiell

Jack M. Dashiell

Louis: "Jack, why did you come to America?"

Jack: "For poetry for my health."

Louis: "But Jack, there's no real poetry here only rock."

Jack: "I was misinformed."

The poem "A Song In The Night" has previously appeared in *The Poet*, a magazine published by the Fine Arts Society, Mishawaka, Indiana.