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Invitation to Artists and Authors

Artwork is invited from all persons who have been students at IUPUI at any time during the last eighteen months prior to submission. Any type of artwork may be submitted. All artwork will be reproduced in black-and-white. Artists are ask to submit no more than ten pieces for a given issue; artwork should not exceed 26 inches by 32 inches. Please identify each piece on the back with its title and your name. Enclose a cover sheet with your name, address, phone number, title(s) of your artwork *and* a 25-50 word bio. Submissions not accompanied by a bio will not be considered. Artists will be notified as to acceptance prior to publication; they will also be instructed as to how artwork will be returned. Submit work to GENESIS, Student Activities Office, University Library, 815 West Michigan Street, Indianapolis, Indiana 46202 or to the Herron Student Senate Office in the JA Building, Herron School of Art, 1605 North Talbott Street, Indianapolis, Indiana 46202.

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, non-fiction or poetry, on any topic, may be submitted at any time to GENESIS, Student Activities Office, University Library, 815 West Michigan Street, Indianapolis, Indiana 46202. All manuscripts are considered by a student editorial board. Authorship is not revealed to the board until a manuscript has been accepted.

Manuscripts must be typed and submitted in duplicate; prose pieces should be double-spaced on a sixty-space line. Please classify prose pieces as either fiction or non-fiction. Poets are asked to submit no more than ten pieces for a given issue. All submissions must be accompanied by a separate title sheet containing the author's name, address, telephone number and a 25-50 word bio; submissions not accompanied by a bio will not be considered.

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 art, essay, fiction and poetry. Members of the Editorial Board are ineligible to receive prizes.

Paternity

—R.F. Russell

R. F. Russell continues to write and study with a distinct feeling of reverse paranoia. He believes people are plotting to make him happy. He is the recipient of the *genesis* award for prose.

As quitting time approached, Wilson Traub began to sweat. He loosened his tie and unbuttoned his collar. He tried to concentrate on the cathode screen in front of him. The green cursor pulsed like an accusing eye. His fingers quivered over the keyboard; his back muscles knotted with tension. He felt as if he had just consumed a gallon of hot, strong coffee.

"Ok, Traub?"

Wilson looked up. Jack Banks, Wilson's supervisor, grinned like the sadistic overseer he was. Wilson snatched back his hands, as if he had been caught reaching for a forbidden cookie.

"Seems a little warm." Wilson was surprised by the steady quality of his voice.

"Does it? I'll check." Jack slapped Wilson's shoulder. "Can't have these terminals overheating. Why don't you break for ten minutes?"

Wilson shook his head. To take an unscheduled break was a sign of instability; instability indicated a need for attitude-adjustment training.

"It's nearly quitting time," Wilson said. "I want to compile this program."

"Suit yourself." Jack moved away from Wilson's work station.

Wilson let out a long, low breath. "Concentrate," he whispered. "Concentrate!" His fingers began to tap keys. For five minutes he managed to create a bit of worthwhile code.

"Wilson!" someone hissed.

Wilson looked around. At the work station to Wilson's right, Falen Oaks winked wickedly.

"Brewski after work?" Falen asked.

Wilson shook his head. "It's my drive day."

"One beer ain't gonna hurt."

"You know the law. Anyone caught driving with an inflated blood alcohol level sobers up in jail—for a year."

"Who's gonna know?" Falen grinned. "You can handle one beer, can't you?"

Wilson shook his head. "Have you heard about the Litzu test? It's accurate to within a tenth of an ounce."

Falen frowned. "Gonna let them tell you when to eat and crap too?"

"I don't want to go to Joliet."

"Joliet's a vacation compared to this place."

Wilson spotted Banks several stations over. "Shhh," Wilson hushed. "Banks."

Falen turned back to his terminal and pretended to be busy. Wilson wiped his palms on his pants and began typing again. A minute later, a message appeared on his screen.

TWO MINUTES TILL SIGNOFF

Wilson stopped creating and instructed the computer to compile his program. As he waited for the computer, Wilson mentally examined the drunk driving statute.

Some people considered the law overly harsh, but no one disputed the huge reduction in fatal traffic accidents. Critics of the intoxication law pointed to the road access regulations which limited individual driving to one day per week. The access regulations had cut traffic by two-thirds, and those few drivers left were frightened by the prospect of a year in jail. Not that prison was bad. Since prisons had become co-ed, they portrayed a decidedly pleasant atmosphere. Still, most people couldn't afford to lose a year. Wilson couldn't afford to lose a year. Companies weren't required to hold slots open or rehire inmates. Starting over often proved harder than starting fresh.

The computer acknowledged Wilson's compilation just before it signaled for signoff. Wilson signed off and rolled down his sleeves. Beads of sweat popped out on his forehead. Wilson suspected his body stank. Luckily, his car wasn't equipped with a nervous-disorder detector. In his present state, the detector might automatically lock the controls. Wilson wouldn't be able to see. . .

Billy.

Denise Sharard waved from across the room. Wilson waved back. He liked Denise. Prettier than average, she wrote elegant little search routines for Internal Revenue. She had been hinting at a child. More than hinting, she had been squeezing Wilson like a boa constrictor. "Let's get a permit," she had urged just the previous week. "Then, we

can be ready whenever the notion hits. You know, no time for second thoughts."

Wilson had managed to fend off her argument, but he couldn't thwart her forever. Denise had qualified in the "optimum" category, as had Wilson. They could acquire a conception permit the minute they stepped into the population assessor's office.

Wilson had never fully understood why women wanted to give birth. He understood how someone could love children, but childbirth was reportedly excruciatingly painful. Yet every woman Wilson ever dated wanted to have a child. Wilson had resisted most of them. At times, he wished he had resisted all.

Denise waited by the exit. "Dinner tonight?" She asked.

Wilson shook his head. "I'm busy."

"I'll fix your favorite, noodles and eggs." She leaned close and whispered. "Real eggs."

Wilson understood. Denise had offered to share her quarterly egg ration. He hadn't eaten an egg in two months.

"Sorry," Wilson said. "I have an engagement."

"I hope she's optimum," Denise said sharply and turned away.

Wilson watched Denise leave. He felt sad. He wished he could tell her where he was going, what he was going to do; but he couldn't. If he told her, Denise would have to report to the police or face imprisonment along with him. Wilson couldn't ask her to take the risk. Hell, he shouldn't take the risk. Why did he? For what?

For Billy.

Wilson shrugged and started toward his Toyota. "Hey, Denise," he called. "Want a ride?"

She turned, and her anger dissolved into a small smile. "That'd be nice."

Wilson walked up to her. "Maybe I can stop by later, just before curfew," he suggested, taking her arm.

Denise giggled. "You'd have to spend the night. You can't go out after curfew."

"Have you ever eaten eggs for breakfast?" Wilson asked.

"Don't be silly. Who eats eggs for breakfast?"

Wilson opened the car door. "My grandfather ate eggs for breakfast."

"Your grandfather needed honesty training."

Wilson started the car. "He claimed he had eggs every morning. Said he got sick of eggs and insisted on pancakes

once a week. His favorite breakfast was a sausage and cheese omelet."

"Omelet?"

Wilson laughed. "Look it up in a dictionary, an old dictionary."

She laughed and squeezed his shoulder. "You're tense," she said. "You need a good rub."

"Maybe later."

Denise smiled. "Yes, later. We'll rub and save the eggs for breakfast."

Wilson felt the serpentine squeeze again. Served with breakfast would be the suggestion of a conception permit. He could feel it, an egg and permit omelet.

"Sure," Wilson said. "We'll be crazy. For breakfast."

He pulled away into the light traffic and past the teeming bus stop.

Wilson relaxed on the park bench and smiled at the evening sun. Summer was a good time, he thought. The long evenings allowed use of the swings and slides and paths. The park was more fun than the skating rink or the video theaters where Wilson whiled away the winter evenings. Wilson could smell in the park. He could touch and hear and run in the park. He could even hide in the park, walk off into the trees and hide. A girl in the security section had once told him the parks were "clean", no microphones. The thought pleased him.

"Fine evening, isn't it?"

Wilson half-turned. A portly, red-faced stranger smiled from the walk. Wilson touched the brown sack by his side protectively.

"Yes it is," Wilson agreed.

"My father used to help me catch fireflies on such evenings." The stranger frowned. "That's a violation, isn't it? I guess you could report me if you wished."

Fear knotted Wilson's stomach. "You . . . you hardly seem old enough to have had a father," Wilson stammered.

"We lived in the country. My father was the last independent farmer in the state." The stranger stared into the sun. "We lost the place after he died. The courts took it. Dear me, another violation. I'm just full of them this evening."

Too afraid to speak, Wilson simply watched the stranger who turned and grinned. "Sound old, don't I?" he chuckled, then saluted Wilson. "Good night, sir. Enjoy your evening."

Wilson watched the stranger stroll down the path. Wilson didn't notice the blonde eight-year-old sprinting

across the grass. The boy slid to a stop and plopped onto the bench.

"Hi," the boy said.

Wilson grinned. "How ya doin', sport?"

"Fine." The boy looked around Wilson and spotted the brown sack. "Did you bring something for me?"

"It's not polite to ask, Billy. You're supposed to wait, just in case the person doesn't have a gift for you."

"Oh."

"But," Wilson smiled, "it just so happens this sack is for you."

Billy's face lit up. "Great. What is it?"

Wilson handed over the sack. "Open it and find out."

Billy grabbed the sack and tore it hurriedly.

"Easy," Wilson cautioned. "Don't break it."

Billy tore the sack more gently, finally exposing a simple single-masted toy boat.

"What is it?" Billy asked.

"A boat."

"Doesn't look like a boat."

"It's an old boat, a sailing ship. They used them years ago. Used the wind to move."

Billy turned the boat as if trying to figure out how the wind could possibly move it.

"Come on," Wilson said. "Let's find some water. I'll show you."

They started down the asphalt path.

"Where'd you get it?" Billy asked.

"Made it," Wilson answered. "Carved it by hand. It's real wood, very precious. Fathers do that for their sons."

Billy stared hard at the boat. Wilson tousled Billy's blonde hair. "Like it?" Wilson asked.

Billy nodded.

Wilson grinned. He and Billy drifted down the path in the evening sun. Wilson felt strong, proud. Yet he glanced over his shoulder to see who might be watching. Across a small meadow, the fat man Wilson had spoken to earlier watched. Wilson's stomach tightened. Not every violator was trustworthy.

"Over there?" Billy pointed to a small wading pond.

"Sure," Wilson said.

Billy ran across the grass to the water's edge. He dropped the boat into the water and watched it.

"It won't go," Billy said when Wilson reached him.

"You have to make some wind." Wilson dropped to his knees and blew at the sail. The boat scooted across the water. Billy laughed.

"See?"

"Sure, do it again," Billy answered.

"Tell you what," Wilson began. "Take off your shoes and wade after it. Just blow into the sail."

"We're not supposed to wade."

"Nonsense. Try it."

Billy glanced at Wilson doubtfully, but the boy sat and removed his shoes. Soon, he was knee-deep in the water blowing the boat across the ripples and laughing. Wilson surveyed the area, searching for the fat man, but the fat man wasn't in sight. That didn't mean the fat man wasn't close by. The government had people everywhere.

Wilson sat down on the grass and watched Billy play. "Like it?" Wilson asked.

"Yeah," Billy tipped the boat over and laughed.

"Can you say 'thanks, Dad'?" Wilson asked.

"Thanks."

"Thanks what?"

Billy shrugged. He wouldn't look at Wilson.

"You can't thank your father any more?"

Billy squirmed, as if he had to use a restroom. Wilson thought a moment.

"Something bothering you, sport?" Wilson asked.

Billy shrugged. Wilson waited.

"The other kids don't have fathers," Billy finally said.

"They all have fathers. It's just that most of them have no idea who their fathers are."

"Some of the older kids say it's wrong to have a father."

"Wrong?" Wilson mused. "Unlawful—but not wrong."

"Some don't even have mothers." Billy stared at Wilson.

"But you have a mother," Wilson offered.

"Two nights a week."

Wilson nodded. "And Mom lets me have one of her nights, right?"

Billy nodded.

Wilson felt a huge weight in his chest. He didn't want to ask, but he had no choice. "You don't want to spend one evening with me?"

"Yes, I mean no. I mean, I want to be with you."

"You just don't want to call me 'Dad'."

Billy nodded. "Yeah. Can I call you 'Wilson'?"

"Like you call Mom's boyfriends?"

"Yeah."

Wilson smiled sadly. "That can be arranged."

"Great, and you can call me Billy."

Wilson nodded. "We'll forget I'm your father."

Billy grinned. "I can be like everybody else."

Wilson felt helpless as tears filled his eyes. "So can I," he said.

Billy splashed the boat, trying to swamp it.

Wilson smiled through the tears. He was no longer a father, no longer a criminal. He had joined the ranks of the boyfriends, and the law didn't restrict boyfriends. Boyfriends could hang around any time a mother had custody—as long as the "boyfriend" didn't claim to be the "father." No one was allowed to have a "father."

Wilson wiped away the tears. He would never feel like a father again. He would be "Wilson." He wanted to scream.

"Can you get some ice cream?" Billy asked.

"Saved my ration for you."

"Oh boy!" Billy splashed out of the pond, hauling his boat with him.

Wilson remembered Denise and her ration of eggs. She would be waiting after he dropped off Billy, and Wilson would owe her a conception permit for the eggs. Two eggs, a conception, and Wilson could be a father again.

And there were many women like Denise just waiting for an "optimum" mate to happen along.

Wilson watched Billy slip running shoes over wet, muddy feet. Wilson grinned, knowing Billy's mother would be angry.

"I have to drop you off early," Wilson said.

"That's OK," Billy said. He grabbed his boat. "Ready to go . . .Wilson?"

Wilson nodded. Billy tore off across the grass.

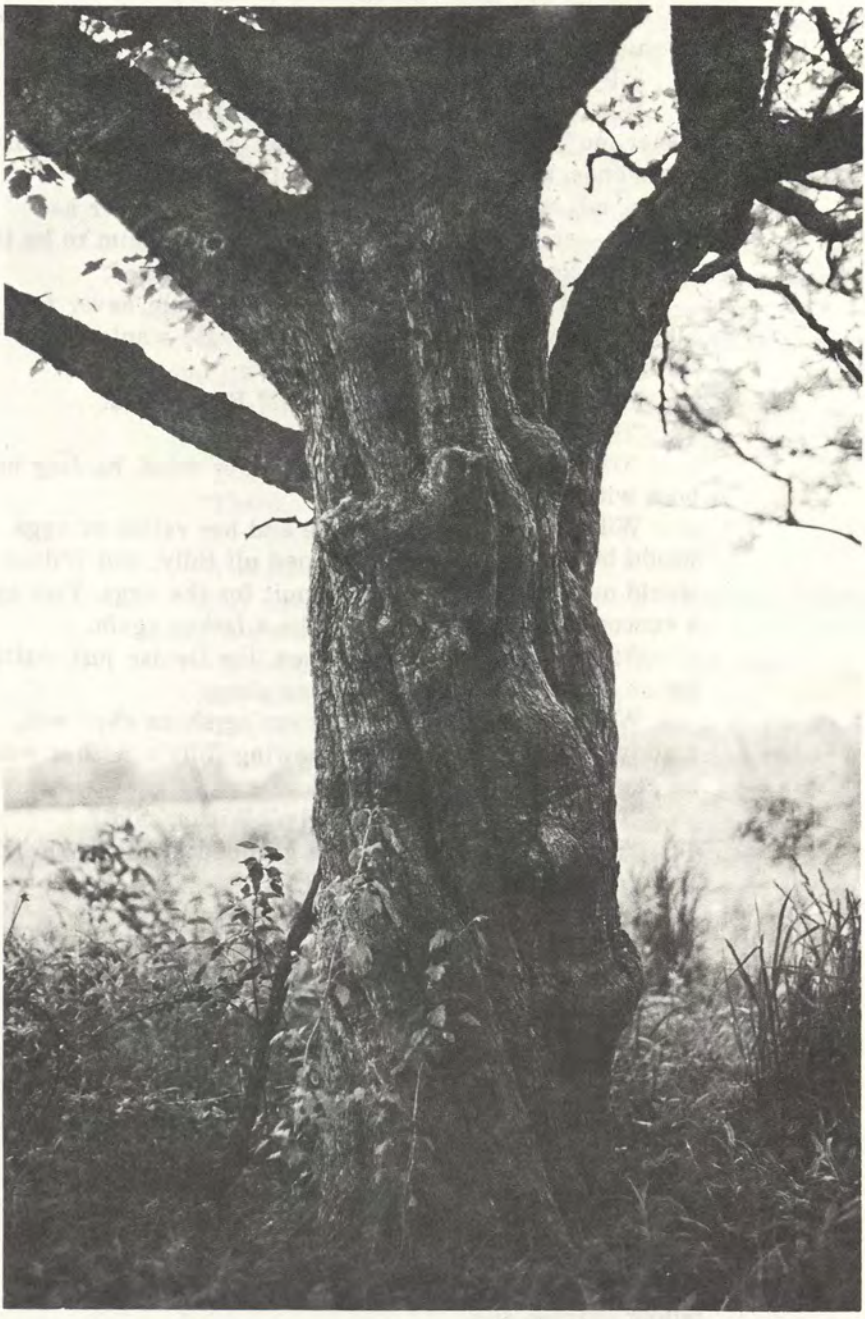
"Let's run," Billy called.

Wilson watched Billy grow steadily smaller in the dusk.

for Issa

she kissed her child's cheek
with one eye on the fireflies;
falling autumn sun.

—renoir gaither



—James A. Lamb

"What's the Matter, Things Not So Good in Paradise?"

It's reached the point
where I can't tell
the difference anymore
between your heaven
and my hell.

In this exclusive relationship
that has suddenly gone communal
we don't make love anymore—
at least not with each other.
No, it's who can out-insert whom
as we rediscover that the best offense
is still a good offence.

And just to show how much
we really care for one another
as well as our new found friends,
we play a truly touching variation
of "dating around" called
revenge-a-fuck.

Chasing and tasting
those new celestial bodies
all our compacts shattered
all the bonds broken—
we're damned to Gehenna
where dreams lie battered
and tendertalk is never spoken.

Two lust-blinded libido moths
plummeting down Hell's Passage
retreating from Heaven's Gate and streets
where we don't see the light
nearly as much as we feel the heat.

We're fallen angels
hellbent, heavenless hellraisers—
but what are the costs?
It's double standards
and double-crossed,
with freedom and fantasies realized
and paradise lost.

Carriage-captured,
I tug at the turn signal—
which way?
Right, left?
    Yes-no
    high-low
    fast-slow
    stay-go
    damn-flow.

And it seems that
the only certainties are these
concrete cavities
we traverse,
and which
free
way
we journey
is ultimately
our own choice.

—David Drayson

Henry Ward Beecher wrote in *Proverbs From Plymouth* (1887) that "The pen is the tongue of the hand. . .", and as every writer knows, the more honest and candid you are, the greater the chance that the pen will bite the tongue that feeds it. I hope that reading my poetry provokes thought, memories, identification, reflection and perhaps pangs of hunger.

Synchronization

I can't match you in
sweat or
bruises or
gasps or
sleekness of movement
but
my pupils dilate
when you come

—Rick Powell

f cheeks flush wince
o teeth nip ears
r blood pulses
b throbs
i in neck below waist
d hands
d clamparms
e pin press sweatshirts
n eyes withdraw
k slide closed
i lips brush fuzz
s slipto gether
s rub like sticks
a whimpers echo in
f echo in jaws
t hollows of nostrils
e s p r e a d for air
r mouths tongues steam
a lungs heave
w hearts vibrate
o hes
r i
k tate
o tremble
u merge
t standing back
i fingerprint rests on
' fingerprint
m air stings skin sweats
n hands arms rejoin:
o Suspension Bridge
t miles
s miles
o miles
r e m b r a c e d
r
y

—Rick Powell

Rick Powell—Writing is painful. And writing honestly without self-indulgence can be pure hell. Not writing is worse; so, I write. Other love/hate relationships I have are with rock-and-roll, money, and my parents, to name a few. I walk the line with Johnny Cash.

Posted

pool drenched
slickened your skin
behind you
i almost . . .
NO TOUCHES

yardwork built
hardened your back
muscles tense
i could've . . .
NO RUBS

sun
accent lighting
played off
sweat against shorts
Christ
you looked . . .
NO STARES

So by order of
Fire Marshall
Board of Health
Zone Commissioner
Safety Inspector
or whoever the hell
hands down shit like this:
OFF LIMITS
QUARANTINED
CONDEMNED

—Rick Powell

Amour

like proud wizened apostates
your lice stumble through
the vaults of my cathedral,
blowing out the candles on
their way to the altar.

—renoir gaither

—James A. Lamb

On holidays

on holidays
i
spend a lot of
time
in from of the
t.v.
oh maybe i'll
play cards or
pass the potato chips
but mostly i look at
Everyone's Unfamiliar Faces
and
wonder
what
they'd
really
rather
be
doing
i
throw up a lot
at christmas:
nerves

—Rick Powell

Domestic

Even tomato soup
I don't cook to her liking.
Though I marble it with milk
the way she does,
stirring slow on medium heat
in an eggbeat motion,
I get clumps she must smooth out,
leaving the cream
its feathery orange.
And the spoon, she says to me,
don't ever leave the spoon
in the pan, because
it will slip off the rim,
get lost beneath the surface,
and then you'll have to fish it out
with your fingers.

—Jeff Berger

Small Losses

—R.F. Russell

Crystal awoke bathed in sweat. She started to roll over and gasped. Grabbing her stomach, she shut her eyes and gritted her teeth to stifle her scream. A fly buzzed past her ear—a hot, high-pitched July buzz. She lay perfectly still. Sweat ran off her forehead. The fly zipped past like an angry plane. Slowly, hesitantly, Crystal drew her legs up to her chest in classic fetal position. Her cotton nightgown clung to her skin; her hair stuck out stiffly at all angles. The loud fly zeroed in on her ear. She raised a hand and shooed it away. For a moment she could hear the crickets through the open window. Then Dora's voice drifted into the room.

"Gonna sleep all day?" Dora called from downstairs.

Crystal opened her eyes. Bright, hot sunlight flooded the room. The fly buzzed past. She slowly stretched out her legs. As she slid her legs out of bed, she pushed herself to a sitting position. Breathing quickly and shallowly, she stood and grabbed for the nightstand to steady herself. Crystal leaned on the nightstand for a full minute.

Wearing quilted silver mittens, Dora pulled the bubbling pie out of the oven and placed it on a bright copper trivet in the middle of the kitchen table. She snatched an unbaked pie off the stove and placed it in the oven. She closed the oven door and removed her mittens.

"Might as well as set 'em on the sidewalk," she muttered. "Bake just as well out there."

"What?"

Dora turned. Crystal stood in the doorway. She wore a frayed, once white terrycloth robe and open-toed red slippers.

"Ain't you gonna shower?" Dora asked.

"Maybe later." Crystal shuffled slowly across the tile floor and sank onto a chair by the table.

Dora studied Crystal a moment. "Pain bad?"

Crystal shrugged.

"Doctor said you could have aspirin or Tylenol. Even whiskey if you wanted it."

Crystal shook her head. "Hate to get started on that stuff."

Dora opened the refrigerator and pulled out a can of Diet Coke. "Want one?" Dora asked.

Crystal nodded.

"You're too late for breakfast," Dora said. "Won't be no lunch till I finish these pies."

"Why you bakin' on such a hot day?"

"Etna Green Baptist festival." Dora set the can on the table in front of Crystal. "But then, you ain't been to church in a while, have you?"

"Don't start in on me, Ma." Crystal held the can against her cheek. "It's too hot."

Dora sat down opposite Crystal. Dora unbuttoned the top of her blouse and spread it to allow air to reach her skin. Her oversized red knuckles displayed the ravages of arthritis. She wiped her brow on her sleeve and sipped the Coke.

The telephone rang. Dora stood up and walked to it. Crystal waved at a fly which had discovered the pies.

"Hello May," Dora said.

Crystal stared out the window at the long rows of dark green corn.

"Nine pounds!" Dora exclaimed. "He's a big one. How's Dawn?"

In the distance, Crystal saw the plume of dust raised by a car or truck on the old county road.

"That's wonderful," Dora continued. "Let her stay in the hospital. Don't want a baby out in this heat."

Tags, Crystal's yellow cat, trotted across the yard, a dead mouse in her mouth for her new kittens.

"Thanks for callin'," Dora said and hung up the phone.

"Boy or girl?" Crystal asked.

"Boy. Jeffrey Scott. He and Dawn's doin' fine."

"Not Dawn's," Crystal added. "Mine."

Dora sat down again. "How about a slice of lemon pie?"

"Boy or girl?"

"Ain't no good talkin' about it. Doctor said so. Doctor said the best thing's to forget."

Crystal turned from the window. "I gotta know."

"Why? It's gone. You can't bring it back."

"I don't wanna bring it back. I just wanna know what

I lost."

Dora pulled a rumpled Kleenex out of her skirt pocket and wiped her face. "You didn't have no choice."

"Ma-ma!"

"Boy," Dora said softly.

Crystal tried to stifle her cry.

"You had to do it," Dora said. "No home. Father run off on ya." She spoke quickly, as if familiar with the words. "You didn't have no choice. Another week and they couldn't've done it."

"Ray didn't run off," Crystal protested.

"He ain't here."

"Went lookin' for a job. Ain't no jobs around here."

"Ain't heard of him in three months, have ya?"

Crystal wiped her eyes. "Ray's been busy, been workin'."

"Hah!" Dora wiped away the bead of sweat at the end of her nose. "Run off and left behind a pregnant girl of seventeen."

"He's comin' back."

"Like hell! Ain't no eighteen-year-old boy gonna come back. Got any idea of what it's like havin' a wife and child at eighteen?"

Crystal glared at Dora. "You had Elroy when you was sixteen."

"And I ain't never got over it!" Dora stepped to the window. The fly zipped past the pies. "We was poor, so poor we ate pea soup for a month once. I didn't get no Christmas gift for five years. When my Pa died, I couldn't go home for the buryin'." She stopped. "You don't forget the things you did without. Not ever."

"You had Pa and Elroy."

"Hated your Pa half the time; hated Elroy all the time." She sighed. "Pa hated me too. If he'd had anywhere to go, he'd've left me."

Crystal felt a drop of sweat roll down her spine.

"Wouldn't've done it if I'd known," Dora said "Would've done what you done."

A tear started down Crystal's cheek.

"Would've had a doctor cut it out just like you done." She paused. "Car comin'."

Crystal sniffled.

"No, it's a truck," Dora said. "Nobody we know." She stopped. A cold note entered her voice. "It's Ray."

Crystal looked up and wiped her face. "Ray?" She asked incredulously.

Dora nodded. "Want me to fetch him?"

Crystal pulled herself erect. "No, maybe the porch'll be cooler."

Dora nodded and watched Crystal shuffle toward the front of the house as the doorbell rang. Dora turned back to the table and the cooling pies. She shooed away a fly and reached for the swatter hanging on a nail in the wall.

"Crystal?" Ray grinned through the screen door. "I got it, Crystal. I got everything."

She nodded. Ray's smile slowly faded.

"What the hell happened?" Ray asked as Crystal stepped onto the porch.

"Help me," Crystal said.

Ray helped her to the swing. He wore his cowboy hat pushed back off his forehead; he had sweated through his orange t-shirt. His eyes were red and tired.

"What happened?"

Crystal gritted her teeth against the pain. "Lost the baby," she gasped.

Ray stepped back as if he had been physically struck. He stared at Crystal a moment. "H-h-how?" he stammered.

Crystal shrugged. "Does it matter?"

Ray thought a moment. His face worked with a thought he couldn't speak. "Not really." He stepped forward and sat down gingerly beside her. "When?"

"Yesterday."

Ray closed his eyes and leaned back. "One day," he said softly. "One day."

Crystal half-turned to see his face. "Why didn't ya call, Ray?"

"Meant to," Ray said without opening his eyes. "But I got so busy workin' and stuff, didn't have time." He half-smiled. "Drove all night to get here, drove like hell."

Crystal looked out over the porch railing to Ray's yellow truck. "New truck?" she asked.

"Uh-huh. Picked it up reasonable." Ray paused. "Got a good job down in Houston. Got a trailer. Two bedroom." He took a deep breath. "Got a crib."

"We'll be able to use it," Crystal said quickly. "Doctor fixed it so I could have more."

"That so?"

"Promised before he even begun. Said he'd be real careful so's not to hurt nothin'."

"How'd he know ya weren't messed up already?"

"I wasn't bleedin' or nothin'."

"Then how did ya know?"

Crystal couldn't answer.

Ray sat up and stared hard at her. "Ya had it done?" he asked.

Crystal's face paled. She hesitated. "I didn't have no choice. You didn't call."

"Ya had it done?"

"You don't know what it's like. People sayin' you gotta do it because you ain't got a husband or a home. Everyone always . . ."

"Boy or girl?" Ray hissed.

She quivered. "Everyone said you wasn't comin' back."

"Boy or girl?" Ray growled.

"I'm only seventeen. I ain't never been pregnant before."

"Boy or girl!"

"Boy!" Crystal yelled.

Ray glared at her a moment before standing and stepping away. He took off his hat, pulled up his shirt, and wiped his face on it. The crickets chirped loudly. Crystal stared at her feet and held her stomach.

"I had to do it, Ray. I know you said you was comin' back, but you hadn't called. Everyone ganged up on me."

"I know." Ray replaced his hat and tucked in his shirt. There was a finality in his actions.

"It don't matter," Crystal continued. "I can have plenty more. I can go back with you in a day or two."

Ray nodded.

She stared at his back. A bead of sweat ran down her nose and hung at the tip.

"I gotta go," Ray said.

"Where?"

"I ain't been home or nothin'. I came here because. . ." He stopped. "Gotta go." He started off the porch.

Crystal stood. "You're comin' back, ain't ya?"

Ray didn't bother answering. He climbed into his pickup, started the engine, and rolled out of the yard in a huge cloud of dust that hung in the air like a fog.

Crystal watched him disappear before she sat down.

Dora appeared at the screen door a minute later.

"Where's Ray goin'?" Dora asked.

Crystal shrugged.

"Comin' back?" Dora asked.

"Don't know." Sweat ran down Crystal's spine. She shivered.

"Feelin' ok?" Dora asked. "Don't wanna push yourself the first day."

"Fine," Crystal said softly. "Feelin' fine."

"Sure? I gotta get back to them pies. Sure you're ok?"
Crystal nodded.
"Holler if you need something."
Crystal nodded again.

A fly landed on Crystal's hand. She snatched at it and missed. Tears ran down her cheeks and mixed with the perspiration there until what dripped from her chin was more sweat than tear.

Communion for the Stillborn

Sister,
here are my ovaries.
Every woman thing I have is yours:
my shoulders
my back
whatever hand you need
to pull you from this church.
I would even crawl into your womb
and float for nine months
to be born again,
your son.

—Kristi Hart

Kristi Hart—After years of intense self-analysis, she has finally gotten her multiple personalities to come together under one name, which she changes frequently. She is the winner of the *genesis* award for poetry.

—Rick Callahan

Leaving Siam

We were twins
happily one-hearted
till shock from surgery:
you took the heart.
Now I follow you
out of sync
and clumsy.
I stumble along
dog-faithful
and forgiving
the scalpel that cut
the rope
and the surgeon
who tied the knot
where my heart should be.

—Kristi Hart

Colorado Siren

She calls for you
she wants to know
that your beard is sage brush on your plain face
your hands will stroke the gray wolf at her feet
you can smell rain the day before it comes
and tell the cougar from its shadow

but she feels already
that your roots are growing
the garden is weeded
the car is paid for
the job is fine
the money is banked

and the alarm goes off
every morning
every morning
every morning

—Kristi Hart

Getting Laughs

I said
I could have thrown my clothes away
and bought a whole new wardrobe
for what it cost me to wash them
at the laundromat
and you said
I think you're exaggerating.

I said
I have to do a scene in a play
where I get on my knees and tell another girl
that I've loved her THAT way
and last night I dreamed I had a mustache
and you said
I don't think you have anything to worry about.

Once
when I threw an ice cube
in your side of the bed
as you were getting under the covers
and it finally melted through your pajamas
you yelled and said
Now that's funny
but you didn't laugh.

Then
after you swore for weeks you had read
in a magazine that actor John Candy was dead
and I never believed you, you got mad
when I finally found my proof and said
Oh, yeah, then he must be ghost-hosting
Saturday Night Live this week
and you turned red and said
you're not funny
and I laughed
and laughed.

—Kristi Hart

Peerless

No gold star getters
them, laughing at scholars' looks
and book stacks; lacking

satisfaction there
cheerleaders, beauteous winners,
pass only back seat

classes. Popular
pretties, picks of the litter,
shun grade-A runts, but

cross their names and not
their legs, expert fielders till
last snapshots stop dead

in clique slicks those lives
while janes breathe and read who's who
under plain last names.

—Kristi Hart

Revolution

Reeled in like a sunfish
I glistened in your talk
of love at first sight,
how you'd played me for days
and finally set the hook.
I flipped and floundered in new air,
found that I could breathe
and flew into my evolution.
Then you balked
at the power of your catch,
thought you'd landed a witch
and fought but couldn't fight
the soaring in your head.
Tangled in the risks of flight
you acquired a fishlike fear of air,
snapped the line,
chose your fins
and dove into the sea.
Now you're in love
with a common fish
and not with me.

—Kristi Hart

Too Late

When she's gone
my ears hear sounds of her coming.
The windows are open.
Crosscurrents blow through the room,
each passing car
a ripple of memory
never quite reaching the surface.
The wind
which plays soft paddy-cake with the curtains
speaks to me of the little boy
in our grown-up bed, crosslegged,
sitting opposite her, clothes
tossed on the floor,
laughing as she tries to teach me
old routines, slapping hands and thighs
until we lose ourselves in the feel
and entangle beneath the sheets.
And the cats
how they stalk among our bodies
as if exploring high grass. They now
bump against the windowsill,
chew the ferns, chase each other
across the tables and chairs
with her not here to stammer out
in the hall and yell to them
like children . . .
And even the silences have hinges.
The doors are bolted and safe,
but yearnings never stop swinging open
awaiting my next lingering glance.

—Jeff Berger

Jeff Berger—such vanity
to ponder a long time
what to say in something
as inconsequential as
prose. Smile!

Happy On The Coast of Florida

Crumbling, painted-pink flamingos
dressed the peeling, cracked stucco of
Marlene's Passe-A-Grille Motel and Efficiency Apartments.
Emphysemic Granny welcomed us,
puffing on a Raleigh,
fingering a cordless telephone pinned to her blouse
as if to imply more than proprietor.
"So you're a doctor,"
grazed off her tongue to Michael
as she led us to our room.

Unpacked, I stepped out for air.
Two bald-headed, beer-bellied, retired Chrysler workers
sat out front on borrowed lawn-chairs arguing
over cards and the economy and whether or not the Jews
were overtaking the country—until—
I thought
the tiny, red veins netting their cheeks
and holding their noses
would
let go.

Sand in my thongs reminded me
of the public beach across the street.
The Gulf of Mexico
carried another conversation
of stoic couples sipping amaretto,
too tired, too tense, too afraid,
to break away the brittle stretched taffy
that pulled them back into talk
of interns at code blues,
patients, nurses, and hospital politics.

Most mornings we laid in bed with Phil Donahue
and made love on two Hollywood beds pushed together.
Days we walked the beach,
dodging skipping waves of green,
dizzying plans to avoid jellyfish.
Nights we bet on the doggies,
played Space Invaders at Peninsula Point arcade,
and dined at the Hurricane
with Casablanca fans, beer, tender scrod sandwiches
and hidden jazz musicians.

One day we sunned behind a clump of reeds
to block the sixty-five-degree breeze.
Listening to rushing ocean massaging sand
I watched Michael
half-concentrating on the same
life-saving article he carried everywhere.
How delicate he looked,
how fragile his bones,
soft the cartilage,
thin his flesh.

Sometimes he spoke
of quitting medicine to open a bait shop.
Just a little place in Minnesota maybe,
with worms and minnows and big, fat chubs
all in tanks lining the walls.
I laughed ... but could picture it.
Long nights without Michael "managing"
dying Mrs. Harris by phone,
without the pain when he sat up on one elbow
to tell Mr. Harris it was over.

Nights were going fast.
Gulf spray tousled our hair
and filled our chests
with salty particles of dreams
from times we didn't know.
We'd have a country farm house,
children to fill the house and love us all day long,
thirty years in one place,
enough money to fly to Europe
and see the world.

There we were, happy on the coast of Florida,
pretending we didn't have to go back.
The last day we sat in the sun too long
and burned the tops of our feet.
We loaded the Datsun in a hurry
and lingered once more on the beach.
At four o'clock we left balmy, palmy Passe-A-Grille.
At six we stopped for a ten-pound bag of oranges.
At eleven the next morning we fell into bed
in our brown house in the winter city of the north.

Selene Wyatt—The unsure times were the most gentle and the most free. I hope it's always that way. Thanks sab ever so much for putting things into perspective.

—Selene Wyatt

—Ron Neal

Carversation

Frustration fingers my hair
instead of you.
We sit at opposite ends of
the seat,
stationary statues.
    You holding hands with the door's armrest
    while I caress the steering wheel.

Across the barrier of
my black briefcase
you cry for another—
and I am restrained from
comforting you,
choked
by my
seatbelt of suppression.

Time travels
and each speeding vehicle
flying by reminds us of
fleeting seconds,
    overdue appointments,
    commitments we are uncommitted to.

You talk of trips you've taken on
taxis
trains
trolleys
tricycles,
while I
dream of driving
into the future.

—David Drayson

The Art Work

10 **Photograph:** James A. Lamb
15 **Photograph:** James A. Lamb
23 **Photograph:** Rick Callahan
30 **Photograph:** Ron Neal
33 **Drawing:** Thomas Meyer
34 **Photograph:** Rick Callahan
40 **Drawing:** Bill Marsh
43 **Photograph:** Carol Trigg
44 **Photograph:** James A. Lamb
46 **Drawing:** Thomas Meyer
51 **Lithograph:** Cynthia Bauer McQuigg
53 **Photograph:** Rich Callahan
55 **Photograph:** Carol Trigg

The Artists

Cynthia Bauer McQuigg has the distinction of having illustrations in the first issue of *genesis* to carry art (spring, 1977). Proving that right-brained skills have a place in left-brained studies, Cynthia has transferred from Herron to pursue a biology degree in the School of Science.

Rick Callahan is adept at using a pen as well as a camera; his poetry appears in this and last semester's issue of *genesis*. Rick will succeed Ron Neal as Photo Editor for the Sagamore.

The seventh of May, 1960, is **James A. Lamb**'s date of birth, causing him to miss out on all those idealistic movements of the early '60s. He rented his body to the USAF for four years; escaped with his ideals intact but the feeling that life is always a compromise. Now pre-med, journalist, photographer, scatterbrained; but it's all leading somewhere. He'd rather not end up renting his brain, body and values out to some corporation.

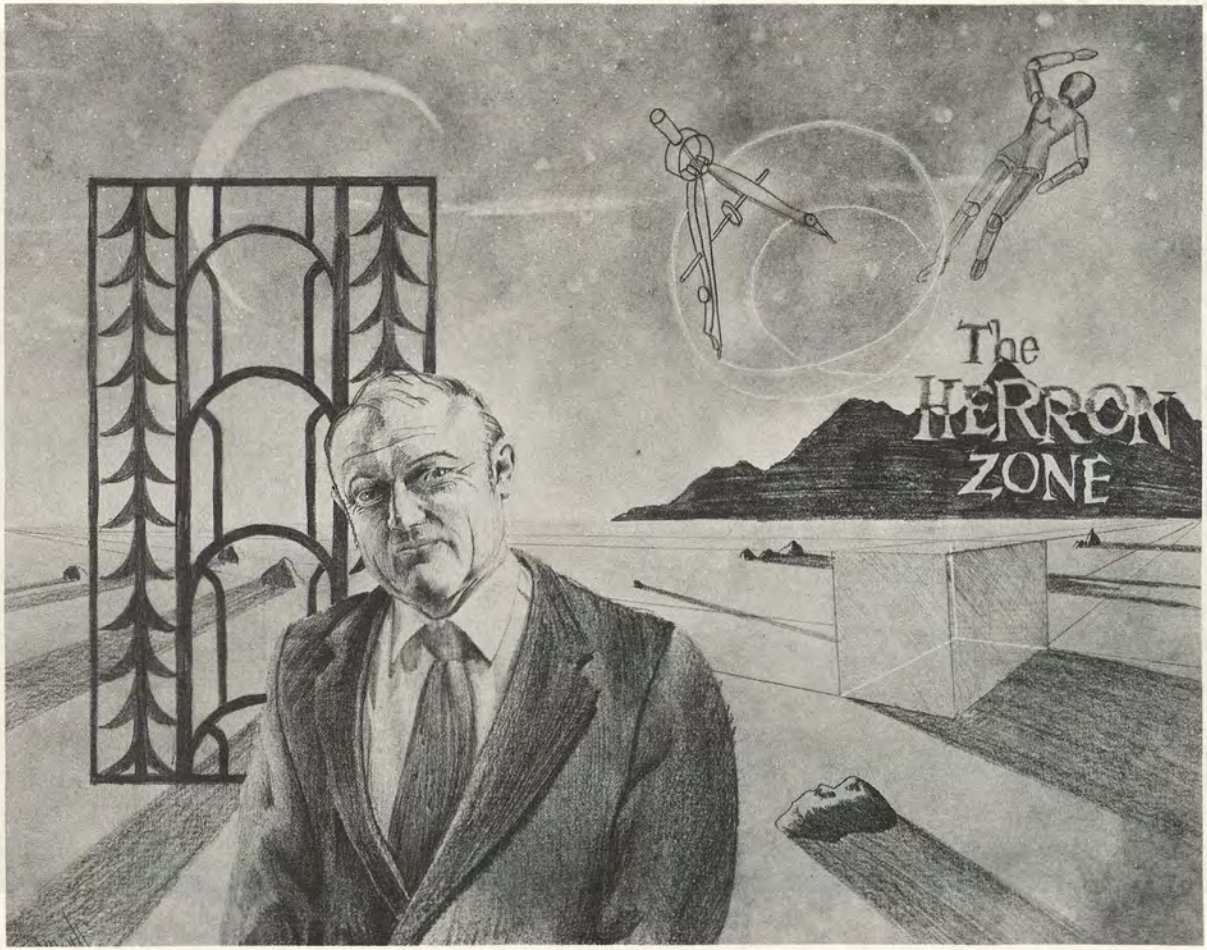
Born on the Vernal Equinox, **Bill Marsh** holds a degree in Germanic Languages. On the thirteenth of May, this will be joined by one in Visual Communication.

Having moved south from Tipton, **Thomas Meyer** is a junior at Herron in Fine Arts.

Travels to Pittsburg, Philadelphia, Niagra Falls and "a minor island in the Hawaiin chain" are summertime plans of **Ron Neal**, Photo Editor for the Sagamore. Primarily a journalistic photographer, Ron uses his lenses skillfully to make art along with his news prints.

Gabriel Szoke, 23, is a senior in Visual Communication at John Herron School of Art and a founder of the Herron Student Senate. He is production manager/design editor of the Sagamore, and spends his spare time doing volunteer work for Indianapolis civic and artistic organizations. After graduation he plans to pursue a career in graphic arts or illustration.

Carol Trigg's black-and-white photo vignettes are a favourite of those familiar with *genesis* art. Her photographs have appeared extensively in previous issues.



—Thomas Meyer

—Rick Callahan

Tommy's Picture

—Ralph T. Walls

Ralph T. Walls—I like to write more about the meaning than the facts, the feelings more than the thoughts. I think that is what art is all about. Sometimes, those feelings are pretty painful. "Tommy's Picture" hurt like hell.

Tommy fidgeted restlessly in his chair. He watched the second hand of the big clock on the wall go around twice. He wondered where Toledo was and what kind of place made clocks.

Most of the other children were hunched over their desks, with crayon in hand, drawing furiously. The little girl on Tommy's left stuck her tongue out the side of her mouth as she strained against her desk top, pressing hard with her crayon.

Tommy looked at the paper on his desk and wondered what could possibly be important enough to be displayed at the school art fair. The paper was white, clean, empty. He looked out the window. A freezing rain was driven in sheets against the window glass by an icy November wind. So cold. A lone maple stood in the school yard, its naked limbs reaching up toward the threatening sky.

There had been a day, a warm sunny day in the park. Mommy and Daddy smiled and laughed together then. It was before all the fighting started. It was when they were all together, before Daddy went away. It was a good feeling to remember. And he remembered so well he could almost see it. There on the paper—that day in the park.

Blue. The sky was blue that day. And the water in the pond where the ducks swam. He fed them bits of bread from the picnic lunch. His mother's eyes were especially blue. Blue was a pretty color. Lots and lots of blue.

Yellow. The sun was yellow. And there were little yellow flowers in the grass. His father wore a yellow shirt.

Red. His father's face turned red from the sun.

Brown. The squirrel was brown. He and his father fed the squirrel crackers. It came right up and took them from his hand.

Green. The grass was green. The leaves were green. His mother's dress was green.

Black. Yes, he must use black. Black was the car his father left in.

He looked at the paper for a moment, and he smiled. Yes, it was just like he felt that day. He could feel the warmth of the yellow sun. He smelled the little yellow flowers in the green grass. A warm breeze blew gently through the trees as brown squirrels scurried among the branches. His father laughed loudly and put his arm tenderly around his mother's shoulder . . . "Tommy!" his teacher said sharply. "Have you finished? We're waiting on you."

Tommy walked to the front of the class and handed his picture to his teacher. But when she looked at it, she frowned. "What is this mess?" she demanded. He looked at the paper again. There were no trees, no people, no shapes or forms of any kind—only colors. Suddenly the picture was ugly, meaningless smears of crayon.

"Tommy, can't you do anything right?"

"Yes," he answered meekly.

She took a deep breath and let it out slowly. "When I asked you to draw a picture, dot-to-dot, do you remember what you did?"

"Yes."

"All you had to do was connect the dots. That's all you had to do. The picture was a dog, Tommy, a d-o-g! Everyone in the class drew a dog—every one but you!"

"I like giraffes better."

His teacher's face grew crimson. "All right, Tommy. This is going on display at the art fair. And I'm going to put your name on it in big black letters. I want everyone to see it."

All that day his picture was a matter of public interest and scorn. And when the fair was over and he was handed the source of his humiliation, he wadded it up and stuffed it in his pocket without comment.

Tommy let himself in and locked the door behind him. It would be hours before his mother came home from work. But Tommy was used to being alone. He sat in the darkened living room and stared at the black television screen.

The door bell rang, and Tommy opened his eyes. He had fallen asleep, but he wasn't sure for how long. Maybe it was his mother. Maybe she had forgotten her key. He ran to the door and opened it. A tall man stood on the steps. He held a large, thin, rectangular package with both hands. "Are you Tommy?" he asked. Tommy nodded. "I've got a package for you—all the way from California."

"Daddy! It's from Daddy!"

The man laughed pleasantly. He handed Tommy the package, and he went away. Tommy locked the door again.

He turned on the light, carried the huge package to the center of the living room, and began tearing at the plain wrapping. It was a framed photograph as wide as Tommy could stretch his arms. At the bottom of the picture was a desert, dark and empty. In the distance were jagged peaks of bare mountains. But most of the picture was of the sky above the desert. And in that sky was a rainbow, the most brilliant, most perfectly formed rainbow he had ever seen. It stretched from one end of the frame to the other, arching high above the desert floor. And the colors . . . the colors changed from the deepest blood-red to the brightest blue.

Blue. Blue like the summer sky. Blue like his mother's eyes. Blue was such a pretty color.

Tommy sat up. The street light came in through his window and cast perverted shadows on the walls. He threw back the covers and put his feet on the cold, hard floor. Through the maze of twisted shadows he found his way to his mother's room and opened the door just enough to peek inside. Beneath the blankets he saw the dark form of his sleeping mother—and of the stranger beside her. Tommy promised himself that he would never open the door again. He went back to his room and looked out the window. Snow was falling from the dark sky. The world was black and white. He lay down on his bed and stared up into the darkness.

It was a long time before he dreamed again.

A Downtown Fountain

expecting little remonstrance
from a coterie of silver gnats,
two supple elbows of water
retrace the impasse of ancient,
airy wings
                and etch
these bruised whore's eyes
on night's ocher palms.

—renoir gaither

Suicide

It makes you happy,
It makes you numb,
It makes you sleep.

Four emptied fifths of sawdust whiskey
strewn on the wood in pilot project-house,
the Old Northwest: Portland's forgotten

A filthy mattress, a pocketknife, its
blade nestling the folds of bloody sheets

A fisherman's life of wet arthritis.
An emigrant eskimo, sixty-three years of
wild work, rough man life, his bones

Rusty nails, his heart-muscle eroded
by booze and smoke, his thoughts disheveled
like unwashed hair

stumbles through the streets of summer snow

freezes

sleeps

—**Jeff Berger**

Platinum Roses

Under the blood-stained sky,
the blue eagle floats.
She is waiting,
sweating in her green wedding dress.

Under mounds of clay,
he takes her to his burning bed,
and slashes her throat
when the children are born.

Tosca Lewis grew up in Indianapolis and has attended I.U.P.U.I. for over one year. She is twenty-one and aspires to publish a book of poems & hear a song she's written on the radio.

—**Tosca Lewis**

Lullabye

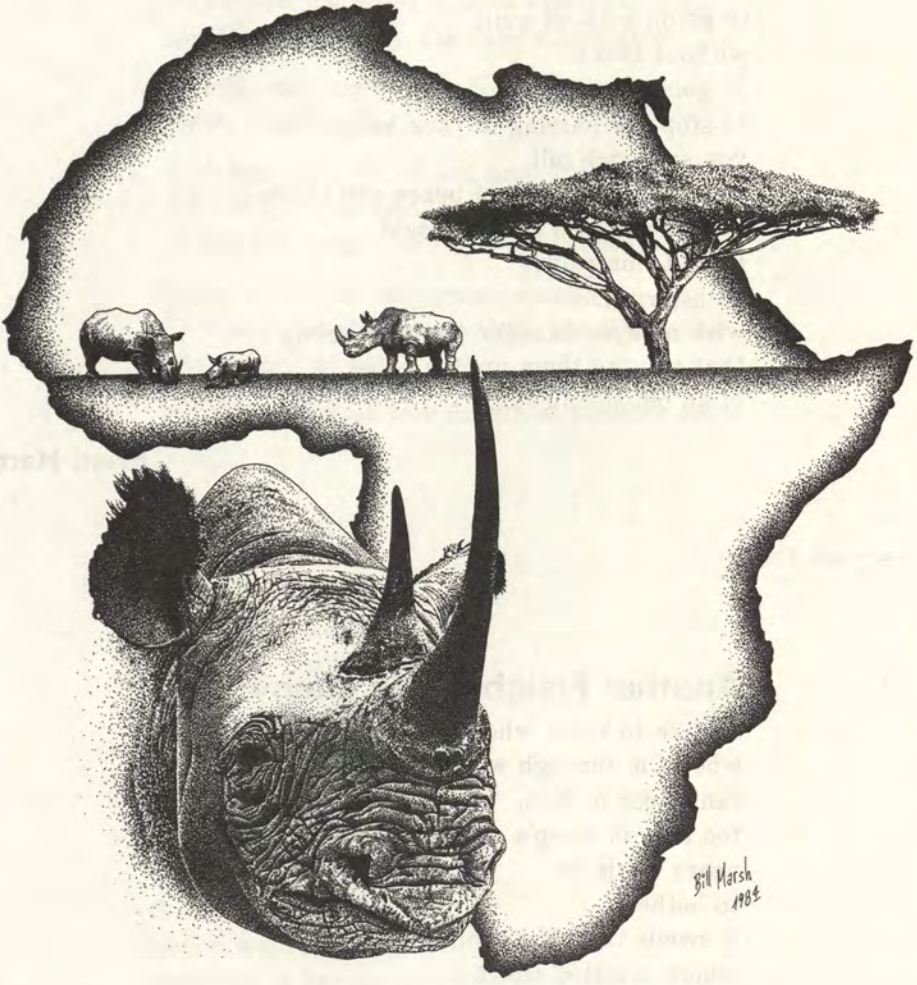
As I bump the bottle
and seven spill out
offering up their little white truths,
I wonder if this was how
you decided
to go on without guilt
without heart.
If, going only for two
to stop the buzzing in your head,
you saw each pill
as five more grains of peace and quiet.
Maybe so much could be said
for cut-thin smiles
on aspirin faces
with no eyes to make you feel wrong
that you ate them up like notes
of an old sleep song.

—Kristi Hart

Another Freight Train Litany

I'd like to know where the train whistle goes
when I'm through with it.
can't hear it then,
too rapt in sleep's embrace and feeling
years settle in
to bother.
it swells the track, and flows
where startled crows
circle in the doppler sigh;
where tar-black ties,
blunted spikes,
and track-coal diamonds
burn along the midwest line.

—Robert Aull



—Bill Marsh

Afro and the Americans
or
The Busboy and the Bloods

The coin box vacuums the change from my hands,
just another fare without a face
as I grope and push my way down the aisle
to the back of the bus
sitting down among seven black dudes.

Like latter-day freedom riders
shoulder-to-shoulder on institutional benches
eight of us crammed in a U
on the hottest day of the year
with windows jammed open to let the steam escape
from this boiling bowl of hot ethnic stew.

Seven bowling balls and one pin
rolling down the city's arteries,
staring up the alley between the seats
as our thermal technicolor teamster trolley
careens from gutter to gutter.

Together we sway in rhythmic uniformity
to every bump, grind and swing
of our big mama dance partner
Bertha Bus—
the soul Bros and me.

As we make our daily pilgrimage
promenading from the bittersweet Chocolate City
toward the artificial Vanilla Suburbs,
seats in the front open up
but—we don't move
'cause—we cool
        we bad
        or maybe
        we just
        too damned hot.

—Nat Murphy

The Tearoom Model

The executive doodles on napkins
and occasionally recedes a hollow stare
as I brush by him in a model's ware.
I avoid him purposely
because I know
how pretentious wool-worsted Evan Picone
can be on a hot autumn day.

The lecher is stuck to his chair
old enough to die but young enough to stare
as I push onward donning a model's ware.
I avoid him deliberately
because I know
how precocious spaghetti-strapped Kamali
can be on a cold winter night.

The buyers gloat like crocodiles
as I know what lurks behind their smiles
and stop at their tables with the wares.
They seek to strip away, laissez-faire
savage and brutal in their brooding stares.

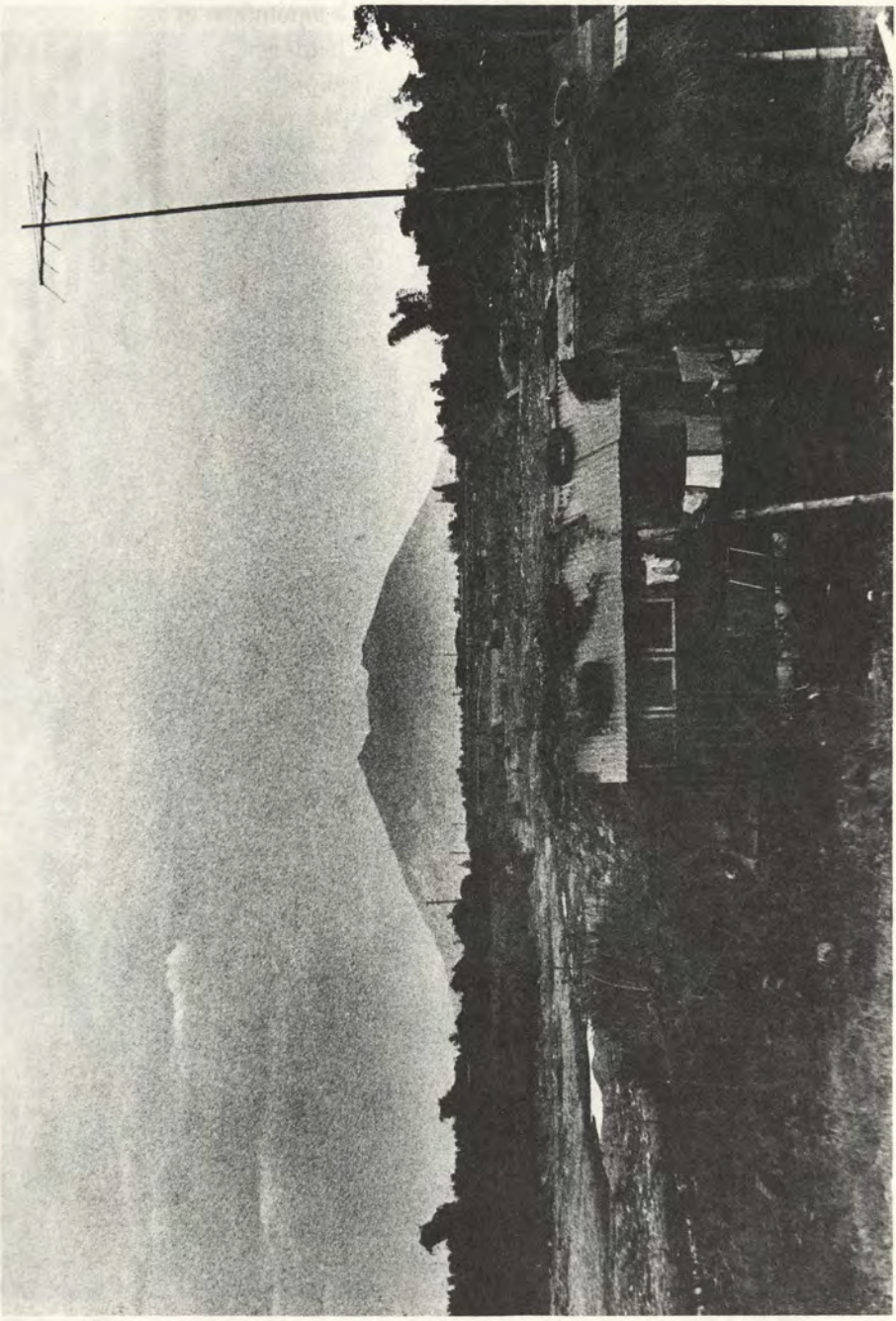
The fat old ladies gorge themselves on pie
as I prepare to pretend and lie
that Calvin and Liz surely have half-sizes
and that their garments are figure flattering;
yeah, just another day with Klein and Claiborne.

And in that day of four designer suits
I have been seen by hundreds of people
that I do not and would not
want to know;
but it's my job to sell their wares
and tolerate the feeding stares
and pretend I have no human cares;
for after all,
I'm just a tearoom model.

M. A. Boulangere is a frustrated writer who hopes to write along the Mediterranean someday . . . . who really doesn't enjoy reading depressing poetry and who struggles not to write it.

—M.A. Boulangere

—Carol Trigg



—James A. Lamb

In The Ruins

the fight is on
but the
cause is lost
before it's really begun

pathetic people wallow
in a
dull ignorance
in the ruins
of what
once was

coal black faces
and
far away places
does it ever end?

everything
will be fine
in the ruins

the news is out
the
captains relieved
does it ever end?

in the name
of god
plans are sown
in the ruins
of what
is

alligator shirts
and
pastel skirts
who do you think
you're fooling

with broken dreams
and
destitute scenes
in the ruins

economic segregation
leaders
rape
the nation

in the name of God
these things
come to pass
in the ruins
of what
could have been

those
that choose
to call
God a lie

it's too easy
why should
we try?

while madmen
dream
a madman's
dream

too late
to fly
blind eyes
can't see
the
american

dream
is
not
what it
seems

read
between
the lives
in the ruins

T. Shaw—I have sophomore class standing at IUPUI. I am a little older and would like to think, a lot more perceptive. I would also prefer to remain rather anonymous.
I just call it as I see it, But any reality is mutable and relative. One person's reality may be another's fantasy ... or nightmare.

—T. Shaw

—Thomas Meyer

Bringing It On Back Home

—Joyce K. Jensen

Joyce K. Jensen—Reading fuels thinking, writing defines it. A student of writing, I discovered joy at the age of 36. Others no longer define my life—I can mess it up all by myself, thank you. Reviewing for the *Sagamore* is very satisfying. I love the wildly creative mix of science fiction.

Science fiction is a thematic medium. Once a tolerable idea manifests itself, droves of s-f writers will pounce upon it and take off, rather like the Stephen Leacock protagonist who "flung himself upon his horse and rode madly off in all directions."

They do this, of course, to provide material for doctoral dissertations. This fact is rarely acknowledged. It's a public service provided by the Science Fiction Writers of America.

Many s-f themes are easily defined and are even familiar to, if not properly understood by, the public at large. Most people believe, for instance, that *E.T.* was science fiction; however, in real s-f the aliens come to invade us or to improve our lot, seldom if ever to eat peanut butter bits. It's a subtle difference, but valid.

Some themes, like time travel, have enduring value; others, such as Bigfoot, fade quickly. In s-f, Bigfoot was variously postulated to be an alien invader (without a sweet tooth, no doubt), the Missing Link, and a sentient, foul-smelling lonelyheart looking for a lover from among her nearest hominid relatives, namely, us. As I recall, the hominid found the idea relatively unappealing.

One seldom runs across a Bigfoot story anymore, although foul-smelling lovers abound in s-f. One suspects that Conan doesn't keep Lifebuoy tucked in his loincloth; certainly Wells' Time Traveler didn't pack a change of linen; and Arthur Dent, Douglas Adams' galactic hitchhiker, grabbed only a towel—no mention of shampoo.

One theme that is fairly new to the genre, yet is finding wide employment, is the theme of making love to yourself.

Bah, you say, hardly a new idea.

But there you are wrong, for you must consider that

we are discussing making love with yourself, ONLY THERE ARE TWO BODIES INVOLVED! It's a little more complicated than you thought, *n'est-ce-pas*?

Now that I have your attention, let's take a look at devices. PLOT devices, I mean.

The easiest way that one could make love to oneself would be to go back in time. You could even arrange for a sex-change operation first. Before you object, keep in mind that sex change operations are somewhat more common in our society than are trips in time. That bodes well for the future, does it not?

Given this schema, you could continue to travel backward, making love to your mother or father and thereby becoming your own parent. Soon enough, given the stamina, you could become your own grandparent, great-grandparent, etc., until eventually you became EVERYBODY.

Furthermore, I have given you a science fiction theme and now you can write a story of your own and perhaps start a trend. The doctoral candidates will appreciate it.

There are other possibilities, of course. In "A Song for Lya," George R. R. Martin's characters were telepathic; when they made love, they read each other's minds, and therefore were able to provide complete fulfillment to each other. With the total sharing of their thoughts they were, in essence, each other, and thereby could be said to have made love to themself. Or themselves. Whatever.

It's easy to imagine the drawbacks, though. When one itched, who scratched? Would both suffer from PMS? Which one gets the headache?

Marion Zimmer Bradley used the sleeping-with-yourself theme in "Elbow Room," but she cheated a little. There weren't actually two bodies involved, the protagonist only THOUGHT there were. It was a delusion induced by psychologists to make life alone in space endurable. Actually the woman thought there were *four* bodies, a cook and a gardener as well as herself and her lover—she seems to have spent a lot of time in fugue states.

Personally I know a lot of people who are lost in space; they probably wouldn't find these delusions at all unfamiliar.

The most popular sleep-with-yourself plot device is, as you may have surmised, cloning. In John Varley's "The Phantom of Kansas," the protagonist is continually being murdered, but he/she manages to keep a supply of clones

of both sexes around within which to be resurrected. As it turns out, the murderer is also a clone. Should he be charged with murder or suicide? Whatever, the two selves naturally end up in bed together.

To my mind, endless cloning of one's self seems unbearably narcissistic. Indeed, if I had a clone, I would prefer that it be of Robert Redford. Writer C. J. Cherryh, renowned for her innovative s-f, seems to feel the same way. Cherryh has pioneered ideas such as bathrooms and laundries on interstellar ships. (Did you ever see Mr. Spock take a shower?)

Cherryh's clones are limited editions who self-destruct at forty, about the time that cellulite and baldness set in. Presumably this holds down the demand for bifocals. In her novel *Serpent's Reach*, the heroine purchases one such clone who has been designed for intelligence and good looks, exactly the qualities I'd build in if I were designing a man. Actually, the sort of man one would have designs ON, should she find him prefabricated.

Eventually the clone inculcates himself with all the taped knowledge that has shaped our heroine, so that their minds become nearly identical. The advantage here is that you can sleep with yourself and with Robert Redford at the same time.

And so our foray into the world of science fiction draws to a close. We hope we have widened your horizons a bit, perhaps enhanced your understanding of the inner world of the mind. And, with luck, you have achieved a whole new understanding of the term "self love."

love

sleeping where the leaves
prepare a bed,
their soft cymbals over us
in a wind that pulls the mountains
beneath the clouds
like oxen pulling a cart
of boulders,
we breathe the autumn,
the tree bark and pond moss
into the wilderness
within us.

—Jeff Berger

Hospital Cafeteria

She walks through the lunchroom
carrying flowers,
                her dress,
transparent as her face, moves
like wind around her legs.

The forks scrape down with knives
on a hundred white plates,
shoes scuff the floor, readjusting,
spoons are raised to mouths
bent over trays, over chins

talk
buzzing like rows of beehives
drifts into a larger noise

                and she
pressing the red petals to her neck
knows this oblivion:
to walk among the bees
like an ordorless wind.

—Jeff Berger

to love

please lie still
tonight

leave the blankets
near our feet

let's stretch
under night's massage
and sleep

together like windows
open
to the air

—Jeff Berger

—Cynthia Bauer McQuigg

grandmother

I've changed the face.
daubed color there, and wound
the last grey strand of hair
from memory.
how peaceful, lines dissolve in
lines and pass, converging,
merging one upon the other
on a changeless plain,
where she laughs.
her eyes are ages I've
washed down to muted
shades of grey
and kept.

—Robert Aull

irvington

wend my way down redbrick streets,
and rain-cracked sidewalks,
where bare feet
have ever nimbly skirted
roots past growing.
lace curtain panes observe me,
and outside the dappled ivy edge,
I follow grey shale curbs
sharpened in streetlamp winter.
somewhere beyond the wrought-iron fence,
beyond a want of paint disguised by night,
bulky frame houses settle and creak.
Shadowed Gothics have paused to whisper
and call all their children to sleep.

—Robert Aull

—Rick Callahan

Hurry My Child

Sister Agnes
Took a knife
And used it to end
The lives of six humans
She never liked at all
There they found her afterwards
Laughing and swirling her finger
In the drying blood
Their names are of no importance
To anyone because they are no more
But Sister Agnes *is*
And will continue for many years to come
Chewing gum in her little cell all alone

But at night rats emerge from dark holes
And the good sister listens to their grievances
And prescribes moral remedies
"Repent and you shall have eternal life, life forever."
She told one when it came to search for crumbs
Late one evening
It darted off quickly in horror and fright
Said dear Agnes in a happy-sad voice
"Hurry my child, Judgment day grows near"
And it is
It is growing nearer
Look out your window
You can see it now

—Rick Callahan

Rick Callahan is probably the most whimsical character anyone would ever want to encounter. The only thing he is truly serious about is procuring food. And, even then there is a faint smugness in his eyes. Oh, he also uses many words in his works that he is not quite able to define. He selects for sound and texture, not meaning. Therefore, he can best be described as a philosopher instead of a writer.

—Carol Trigg

The Number Two Bus

—Joyce K. Jensen

Driving south on Hillside Avenue on a Friday afternoon, I got stuck behind the number two bus. Millerton is an old town and the streets are narrow, so that even though Hillside Avenue is four lanes wide, spates of parked cars and people making left turns prevented me from getting around the bus. I sat at every corner, as the bus ingested passengers and I ingested diesel fumes, fuming.

Within a couple of blocks we had established a pattern. The bus would start up and chug noisily along as I maneuvered to get around it; then, exactly at that moment when the bus had started gaining momentum, the driver would apply the brakes and the bus would squeal to a halt at the next corner. We missed most of the lights.

Sitting in a black cloud of diesel detritus, I had nothing to do but reflect how little Millerton had changed in the years since I had stopped riding the number two myself. I had lived away a long time but came back often enough that I didn't find the surroundings remarkable when I returned. The streets were still narrow, the houses were still massive, and the buses still bounced and rattled along Hillside. Now I live in a suburb called Overlook Ridge; the developer had a good imagination or maybe he was using a controlled substance when he named it because the tract is as flat as Nebraska. Still, Overlook Ridge has all the amenities of modern life; two-car garages, left turn lanes and no bus fumes.

After fourteen interminable blocks we got to Elm Street and the bus chugged on north as I turned west. I made a face at the smiling couple in the cigarette ad on its receding back but the bus continued to refuse to acknowledge me. Harrassing hapless drivers was all in a day's work for the old number two.

Unfortunately for Elm Street, Dutch elm disease has removed most of its namesakes over the years. I pulled up in a sunny spot in front of the second to the last house and lamented a departed tree whose stump marred the parkway, then forgot it just as quickly. I couldn't believe my eyes—there was a "For Sale" sign in the front yard. I left my luggage in the car and ran up the front steps and into the dark entryway.

"Mother!"

"Why, hello, Linnie." She came down the stairs with the unhurried calm she applied to every crisis, large or small. She was lugging a battered cardboard box that looked heavy. "Good heavens, what's the matter?"

"Why didn't you tell me over the phone?"

"Tell you what?" She walked past me and set the box on the top of a stack of them by the hall closet.

"That you put the house up for sale!"

"Why pay for long distance if I was going to see you anyway?" she said, nonchalantly brushing her hands on her apron.

"Mother, you call to tell me when you're having your hair done."

Mother sighed as if I had lost my lunch money again or the cat was stuck up a tree. "I was afraid you'd talk me out of it. Not you, really, Mellie—and George."

Not "try to talk me out of it," but "talk me out of it." I nodded. Go on.

"It's a big change after forty years," Mother continued. "But the woodwork needs painting again. The floors need refinishing. There are so many BEDROOMS."

"Have you found another place?"

Mother shrugged. "I've got a couple of options," she said airily, hedging. "But you haven't said why you wanted to come this weekend."

It was my turn to hedge. Suddenly the timing wasn't right. "Just needed to get away. Phil's busy, the office is in chaos. I always get a different perspective when I come here." I looked at the boxes. There were nine or ten of them stacked up—she really was serious about the move. They were neatly labeled in different colored markers: Alvin/books, Linnie/high school, George/trophies.

"Nothing for Mellie?" I said.

"The attic's full of her things."

"I'll help you with it tomorrow."

"Mellie's coming in to see you tomorrow."

I groaned. But of course, we were sisters. Why shouldn't we want to see one another? It made no

difference that we hadn't agreed on anything since 1965, when we both fell in love with Paul McCartney and went to see *A Hard Day's Night* together seven times. I had something to talk over with Mother and I didn't need Mellie's omniscience. The weekend was deteriorating around me, crackers into crumbs.

* * *

It's one of the great enigmas of my life that I don't like looking like my mother. Once without planning to, I had my hair cut the way she wears hers, and until it grew out I got a shock every time I looked in the mirror because the resemblance was so strong. Yet at the age of sixty-one, Mother is still eye-catching, with good calves and silver-blue hair and a svelte body. She weighs nary an ounce more now than she did the day she was married. This same Lois McElroy bequeathed to me the genetic coding to grey early (fortunately for me we live in the age of Miss Clairol), but she withheld the lucky metabolism that allowed her to remain a size ten. As usual I was on a diet.

Anticipating croissants, she had made chicken salad. Anticipating chicken salad, I had brought croissants: butter croissants, chocolate croissants, almond croissants. It galled me now to think I'd have to offer them to Mellie; she'd grab one of the chocolates and I'd only brought two. I blew my diet out of spite and ate one of the chocolate croissants for dessert, then forced the other one on Mother; so we had butter croissants for dinner and chocolate croissants for dessert. I didn't even enjoy them.

We sat at the big pine trestle table in the kitchen, our little repast looking paltry on its vast polished surface.

"Is it true that Aunt Frieda had an abortion?" I tried to sneak it into the conversation, gliding it in like a Dorothy Hamill, but it crashed through with the finesse of the Incredible Hulk.

Mother looked surprised. "What brings that up?"

"Mellie said something. . . " I said, trying for vagueness.

"Everybody always thought she did, but who would ask? Liz and Violet were so sure they didn't speak to her for a year."

"Gosh," I said. Did the family still go in for ostracism?

"That was forty years ago."

"How did you feel about it?"

Mother shrugged. "Who am I to judge?" she said, but she looked uncomfortable talking about it. "It couldn't have been an easy decision."

"Couldn't have been easy," I agreed.

* * *

Bob Boardman, a long time friend of my parents, phoned Saturday morning and asked Mother to help him pick out the no-wax floor for his new condominium in Oakbrook. It seemed like a flimsy excuse to leave me alone with Mellie, but Mother jumped at the chance and I began to suspect what one of her new housing prospects might be. But I didn't ask. It was probably one thing too many to spring on Mellie, what with the house and all. Mother hurried to leave before Mellie arrived.

It was like watching reruns. My sister stomped into the house squawking "Mother?" while I rearranged boxes in the front hall.

"She's running an errand."

"What's this business with the house?"

"I'm fine. How about you?"

"This is serious, Linnie. When did she put the house on the market?"

"Thursday."

"That means she's been working on it for a while. Getting estimates and stuff." She paused to frown. "She knows you have to get estimates, doesn't she?"

I took her arm, dragged her out on the porch, and sat her down on the top step. It's where Dad always took us for private talks. When he shut the front door behind you, all hope was lost.

I didn't have that effect on Mellie, however. She would go to her grave fifteen months older than me, and Mellie knew how to make use of an advantage, especially one she's had for thirty-four years.

"We've got to stop her," she said. She leaned over and took my arm, fingers digging in. "We can't let her do this."

"Whyever not?" I shifted around uncomfortably, wondering why there weren't sitzmarks on the cement, considering all the time we'd spent there over the years.

"Because she and Dad built it together. She helped lay the bricks!"

"That was a symbolic gesture, Mellie." It was a favorite story, that was still being trotted out for the grandchildren, George's and Alvin's and Mellie's kids, on family occasions. Mother and Dad together had set a brick into place, a symbol of the family they were building (she was pregnant with George at the time). Nobody remembered which brick it was, which had irritated me to no end as a child—if it was so important, why hadn't they

marked it? Now I wondered, for Mellie's sake, if they hadn't cemented the edifice together too well.

Mellie frowned intimidatingly, but her disgruntlements no longer threatened me. "What would Daddy say?"

"He wouldn't have wanted her to live here alone forever."

"We grew UP here."

"It is hard to leave it behind."

"That's what I mean. How can Mother do it?"

I tried to think of another way to put it so that Mellie would understand. But when I didn't answer right away, she assumed that I agreed with her. She brushed her red hair out of her eyes; no grey there, the red hadn't even started to fade. She leaned back on her elbows.

"I thought you were in California," she said.

"I was. I wasn't feeling well so I came home. Their office staff are pretty well trained now anyway."

"What was wrong?"

"Nothing serious." Nothing wrong; something serious.

"So what's Phil doing?"

"He's got three commissions with deadlines. He hasn't been out of the studio since Ground Hog Day."

She almost conceded a chuckle. "Surely he eats."

"I send in coffee and granola twice a day."

Mellie considered all men untrustworthy by nature and so disapproved of my traveling. Naturally she found a way to remind me. "Maybe he comes out when you're not home."

"Improbable," I said, proud of myself for refusing to be baited. "He did come to Omaha with me a couple of months ago. We had a great time." Did we ever. A better time than even we knew.

Mellie nodded and brushed her hair back again. She still wore the pageboy style she'd adopted during our Paul McCartney era. It had always seemed an integral part of Mellie before. Today it was an anachronism.

The air was very still. Mellie went in to get us some iced tea and I thought reflexive thoughts. Was there danger in caffeine? I heard a distant screech of brakes and got up to walk down to the sidewalk and watch the number two bus pull away from the corner. The buses were bigger and squarer now, not yellow like they used to be. Mellie came out and I rejoined her on the steps.

"It only comes every half an hour now," she said, nodding in the direction the bus had gone.

"No kidding." Some things do change, I guess.

When I was sixteen, I started riding the number two

down to Lincoln Street two afternoons a week and Saturday mornings to work at the Cone Carnival. They called the ice cream "custard" then, not soft serve, and they had a baby cone you could buy for a nickel. There were no sandwiches or onion rings and there was no inside seating, either—only some picnic tables decorated with bird droppings.

If Dad wasn't on call, he'd come to pick me up after work because I was afraid to ride the bus home alone late at night. When I did, I'd run all the way from the corner, conjuring moving shadows under every bush. Now I drive rental cars around strange cities at any hour of the day or night and never blink.

It had always seemed that no matter what was going on, Dad was at the hospital, but I had loved him anyway and never felt neglected. I suppose a child doesn't need to have both parents there all the time to turn out all right, if they both work at it. How had Mother coped with four children, alone so much of the time?

"Life was so WONDERFUL then," Mellie said. "No responsibilities, no worries, no carpools."

"That's easy to you to say. You had Betty and Sue Ellen to play with. I was stuck with the Keith brothers." I stood up and stretched. "Let's walk around the block."

Millerton blocks are long, and this one is longer than most, a double block really, with deep back yards and an alley running behind them. We passed the Keith house. They'd moved away years ago, and the current owners had screened in the front porch and painted the shutters a vile shade of pink. The Keiths had raised rowdy children but at least they had good taste in paint. We pushed a tricycle off the sidewalk and onto their lawn.

Mellie sighed. "Sue Ellen writes once in a while. They're living in Hong Kong and she has servants to do everything."

"Sound idyllic."

"But of course Phil helps you around the house. You don't need servants."

"Phil helps when he's not in the throes of inspiration or under the spell of a commission."

Mellie swore that her husband Dennis, who coached high school football, had never changed a diaper. I wondered how Phil felt about diapers.

"What I really need is a chauffeur," Mellie continued. "My carpools have carpools. I take Dennie over to Rickie's every other Thursday so Cliff's mother doesn't have to drive so far."

I groaned inwardly. Can a person work and run carpools? How old did your kids have to be before they joined one? How did the Sumerians get along without carpools before they invented the wheel?

Mellie had her hands shoved in her pockets and was focused on the sidewalk. "Maybe George could stop her from selling."

"It's her house, Mellie."

"She'll regret it later."

"You don't know that." We turned the corner and started walking along Hillside. The houses were all a little different than they used to be—new fence or no fence, aluminum siding, rose bushes replacing lilacs. The years worked their changes. It was still a nice neighborhood.

"Don't oppose her on the house," I said.

Mellie didn't answer.

Mother stayed out until late afternoon, knowing, I suppose, that Mellie would leave by five to get home to fix dinner. Pushing her luck, Mellie stayed and argued with Mother until nearly six. She ate both of the almond croissants. We both breathed a sigh of relief when she left.

* * *

Sometimes years ago when I was waiting to catch the bus to go to work at the Cone Carnival, I'd get restless waiting at the corner and start walking down to the next corner. It was kind of like challenging the bus. Chances were the bus was late already and hurrying to catch up with its schedule. Heralded by its grinding motor and squealing brakes, it might appear while I was in the middle of the long block, and I would have to choose which direction to run in. If I ran towards the bus, the driver might notice me coming and wait. Then again, he might not. If I ran the other way, back to the corner I had started from, I would have a headstart on the bus but not a big one, and it might roar past me.

Either way, there wasn't much danger. Another bus would be along in ten minutes. You couldn't do that anymore because the buses didn't run as often. The risk was bigger now than it had been eighteen years ago.

After church the next morning, we had lunch at an elegant restaurant with glass-topped tables and iron grillwork that was painted white. There were huge plants hanging all over.

Mother ordered for us in rusty French.

"I didn't know you liked this sort of thing," I said.

"Your father didn't care for sauces."

"Bob Boardman looks like a sauce sort of guy to me."

"He was the one that brought me here. He's flexible. And retired. And he likes to travel. And, yes, he makes a passable Bernaise."

The waiter brought our salads; he was obsequious to a fault and Mother loved it. After he left, she said, "I like Bob. But I have to settle the matter of the house first."

Mellie not being handy, I jabbed at an artichoke heart with my fork. "You haven't made up your mind about Bob, then?"

"It's like choosing between the veal and the shrimp. It's nice to have someone to travel with and talk to over dinner. It's also nice to eat crackers in bed and not have to do anyone else's laundry."

"Sometimes it's just easier to let things stay the way they are, isn't it?"

"Mellie may be right. What if I sell the house and then I'm sorry?"

The mood was growing gloomy. I was glad when the waiter brought our plates, veal for me and shrimp for Mother. "You'll never know until you try," I said, mostly to myself.

* * *

When we got home, Mother took a nap and I decided to walk around the block again. Overlook Ridge doesn't have blocks or sidewalks, only cul-de-sacs and bicycle paths and nowhere much to walk.

I stopped in the middle of the block on Hillside to watch two versions of the number two bus chug and roar and spew fumes to the rear as they passed me. For some reason Mellie was nagging at my thoughts. If I took the northbound bus, I could go all the way to the elevated station at Marvin Street and catch the train into the city. I did that one summer when I was in college and had a job selling lingerie in a department store downtown.

It was very exciting. The train was full of interesting characters, but they were only a little bit scary in the crowd and the daylight. It bounced and rattled through ethnic neighborhoods where the store windows had hand-lettered signs in Italian and Greek and Chinese. It twisted perilously near the back porches of tenements with rickety stairs and laundry strung across them. Finally it swooped underground, elevated becoming subway with its dirty, impersonal, starkly lighted platforms. The stairs led up out of the gloom to a bright, fascinating world of stores and restaurants and museums.

If I took the southbound bus, I would ride past the

Cone Carnival, beyond the high school stadium and over to the familiar small-town confines of the city park and the library, to loop around again towards home.

But in the long run it didn't make much difference. I could choose to climb aboard a bus and accept its destination, but I couldn't choose the destination. And in the end the destination was the same. The southbound bus would swing around the park and head north, and the northbound bus would go the length of Marvin Street, then turn back south. If I stood here long enough, both would pass me again. I suppose there is a bus barn somewhere for them to return to, to take a break out of the endless cycle, where there are rows of bus clones whose sides advise us to drink Dark Eyes Vodka, use Afro Sheen and Reach Out and Touch Someone.

That last seemed like a particularly good idea. Besides, my destination wasn't a bus barn. I returned to the house.

"Phil called," Mother said from the kitchen. There was an inordinate amount of crashing and clanging going on. I peeked in—she was packing the bakeware. "You're supposed to call him back."

It rang eleven times, so he must have left the studio door open; he usually doesn't catch it until the fifteenth ring.

"Hello?" he said, huffing from the jog across the yard.

"What's the matter? Run out of coffee?"

"I miss you, babe. Besides, you never told me what the doctor said."

"It's just a souvenir from Omaha. Think you're going to like being a daddy?"

hokku

sshh. sshh. be quiet.
under the dark, ambling eaves
an icicle melts.

—renoir gaither

renoir gaither

"am 26 yrs. old
dig thelonious monk
& john coltrane.
i also dig ives
if it makes any
difference.
i've copulated
with nightmares,
some in a bar on
n. meridian st.
i also have trouble
placing a comma
after the word
women."