

# GENESIS



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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 asked 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.

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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.

# Sweet Sixteen

Ralph T. Walls

Ralph T. Walls continues to write "weird stuff." He'd like to be able to call himself a writer without embarrassment or apologies. That's what he does; that's what he is. He is the recipient of the *genesis* award for prose.

In that twilight between sleep and waking, they come. They surround my bed and speak in sad, whispering voices. Their mouths are filled with candy, and their white uniforms are smeared with chocolate. With teary eyes and sad faces they watch me lying, breathing, unable to move. And I wait for the morning to free me, to prove my existence, for in this isolated state I am never sure that I am alive.

\*

\*

\*

6:30 am: I'm here a little early today, so I go to the cafeteria and get a cup of coffee. I sit with a nurse who works on four-three. "How are things on four?" I ask.

With quick glances she looks about for anyone who might overhear: it's a secret, you see. "Oh, Tom, we've got so many gumbys up there . . . I wish the Death Angel would pay us a visit and clean it out."

7:00 am: I've been working in the Respiratory Therapy Department of this hospital for ten years now. Every day at seven I go through the morning ritual—something I do without thinking, like taking aspirin for my hangover. We sit around a large table and the last shift tells us who has died, is dying, or will probably die. And when we have our assignments and all the information we need, we always say the same thing. "Let's save a life," we say. And we laugh.

Our patients don't have names—we call them by their diseases: there's an emphysema in 3305, a brain-damage in 2410, a heart disease in 2218 . . .

I'm not a man today—I'm a hangover.

8:00 am: Old Mr. Benson smoked three packs of cigarettes every day for thirty years. Now he's too weak to move and almost too weak to breathe. His lips and tongue are blue, and he moves his mouth like a fish gasping for breath. He looks at me and tries to speak. I put my ear close to his lips to hear what will probably be his last words.

"Please," he whispers. "Cigarette."

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8:15 am: I'm called to the Shock Room. The Shock Room is a separate room in the Emergency Room area where patients who need immediate attention are taken. It is where the "action" is. A 72-year-old man has had a heart attack. We know he's dead when they bring him in, but we do all the family expects. We shock him three times, give him all the routine drugs, and pump his chest for twenty minutes. There is no sense of urgency in our actions, and no stress shows on our faces. An old man has died of natural causes; and, if we are lucky, the same thing will happen to us.

10:00 am: I'm working in an area where patients with neurological problems are kept. I take the opportunity to visit Danny. Danny is a 19-year-old who has been lying in the same bed, in the same room for five years. When his eyes are open, he is awake. When his eyes are closed, he is asleep. The hospital is taking care of him because, while he was having minor surgery here, someone made a mistake. "At least he's alive," they say.

When the staff talks about Danny they say something to show that they forgive the person responsible for Danny's coma. "We all make mistakes," they say.

And we all do.

Danny's family visits him every day. They decorate his room with posters and pictures of his high-school friends. There are rosaries hanging from his bed rails and a picture of crucified Jesus above his head. Sometimes Danny's family leaves candy for the hospital staff. That's very nice. We say the Coma Fairy left the candy. And we laugh.

In the room next to Danny's is an 8-year-old girl who choked on a piece of apple. The doctors tried to convince the parents that she is dead, but her parents believe that God will heal their little girl. For more than an hour every day the parents and a preacher, who specializes in faith healing, pray for the little girl. The father stands at the foot of the bed with both arms raised high above his head, as if he were taking a foul shot. The mother is on her knees beside her daughter. She holds one of the little girl's hands, and she weeps. The preacher stands at the head of the bed with his left hand raised like an antenna and his right hand on the girl's face. He is a lightning rod, hoping for the Power of God to strike. On the wall above the bed they have taped a sign: **EXPECT A MIRACLE.**

11:00 am: A 14-year-old boy was hit by a car a few days ago. Now, they say he has brain death, and they want to harvest his kidneys and eyes. His young heart is beating well, but he will not breathe without the machine made

famous by the Karen Quinlan trial. I make sure he continues to breathe on the way to surgery—then, it won't matter.

We sometimes call people whose brains have died “dead heads.” Sometimes we call them “vegetables.” The medical term for removing organs for transplantation from a person with a dead brain into a person with a living brain is “harvesting.” We call the area of the hospital where most of the dead-heads are kept “the vegetable garden.”

We harvest organs from the vegetable garden.

12:00 noon: It's time for lunch. A woman behind the counter asks me if I'd like a salad. “No, thanks,” I say. “I've had my vegetables today.” I have five cigarettes and three cups of coffee. A friend I haven't seen for several weeks tells me I've lost weight. I say I probably have cancer, and we both laugh.

1:00 pm: I am called to the Shock Room again. An ambulance en route to the hospital has called ahead; we're ready and waiting. The nurses take their places around the table, and the EMTs enter with the patient. Hands, from every direction, grab the bleeding girl and lift her onto the table. The nurses tear off her clothes and push a catheter between her legs; I attach the electrodes to her chest, and we watch the squiggly line that represents the beating of her failing heart.

She is young: 15 or 16. She is in the middle of that metamorphosis from child to woman. Her breasts have only begun to develop, and her pubic hair is sparse. Her legs are thin and seem too long for her body. Her toenails are painted with bright red polish.

I turn to a nurse who is examining a few sheets of paper that will become the girl's chart. “How old is she?” I ask.

The nurse searches the paper for a moment; then with a look of surprise she says, “Today's her birthday. She's sixteen.”

“Sweet sixteen,” another nurse says.

In a whispering echo another voice says, “Sweet sixteen.”

I think she's pretty, but I'm not sure. Her nose is broken and crooked, and there are deep cuts in her face and forehead. A little stream of blood is flowing from under her hair and dripping onto the toe of my shoe. I turn her head and lift her hair to find the source of the flow. Her right ear has been torn off. I start to tell the doctor about the missing ear when the pattern of her heart changes suddenly.

“She's in fib!” he says. He takes the paddles and places them on her chest. “Clear!” Everyone steps back and his

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thumbs hit the buttons. The girl's body convulses, and he checks the monitor for the results. "Straight line," he moans. Her pupils are as big as nickles, and they stay that way.

If we continue, we might save a body with a dead brain: another dead-head, another vegetable. If we stop, we will never know for sure . . . All eyes are on the doctor. He alone must decide what happens next. He looks at the monitor and then at the girl. He looks up toward the ceiling, then down toward the floor. He sighs a long, deep sigh.

3:30 pm: On the walls, on the table, on the window ledge are pictures: moments of a boy's life. Above his head the face of crucified Jesus is frozen in eternal agony. On the bedside table is an offering of chocolate for the keepers of his shrine. I bow before Danny and look into the void of his empty eyes—the impotent eyes of a doll. A single tear falls from my eyes into his.

And he blinks.

## Stoic

The time for crisis has passed  
and denied any dramatic collapse  
—some ceremony of change—  
we grow now in hesitant,  
chafing states of acceptance.  
Our pains are as scrapes  
tenderly itching  
to be better;  
our gains,  
brief throbs of self.

—Robert M. Aull

Robert M. Aull, 24,  
English major says: "I do  
not find people in love to  
be boring, and although  
it rapes my time,  
Education is certainly a  
much-slandered panacea.  
I believe in singleness of  
purpose; as Ecclesiastes  
says, 'In finitum numerus  
stultorum est' (infinite is  
the number of fools)."



-Lorie Davis



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### **Waking Near the Lost Sailors Monument (New Hampshire, 1978)**

on Hampton Beach,  
a stone jetty dips a brackish arm  
into the cold Atlantic  
and draws out the sun;  
we watch for the Isles of Shoals  
and waves scatter light applause  
among our footprints,  
while the unlit arcades  
glitter shabbily in the awful dawn.  
gulls tend to garbage,  
Hampton empties into the sea  
at a grain a moment,  
and the shelf-anchored derrick,  
spied through a boardwalk glass,  
rolls in unison with pitching sand;  
the sky alone becomes a sphere of permanence,  
and below it,  
ever-waves wash the strand . . .  
we stir, and caught along our littered benches,  
faces pale and stung in salt,  
the uneasy clatter of our boots  
disturbs stilled grains, draws us away again,  
dry again,  
and on the windshield salt-frost thaws.

**-Robert M. Aull**

### **Tempus Fugit**

Each tiny grain of sand  
sifting through the hourglass  
drops with thunder-noise  
on other grains as they mound  
until, with the timbre  
of massive stone sealing a tomb,  
the last grain plunges  
to mysterious denouement.

**-Shirley Vogler Meister**

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### Ave Maria

At our old house there was a statue:  
a four-inch cedar triptych shaped like a bullet,  
that opened to reveal the white lady  
who flew for me.

I was allowed to play with it  
as I might absorb something, I suppose  
but oh God

the blasphemy of the Blessed Virgin  
lifting off from my bedspread  
and the heresy of Our Lady of Grace  
on her third docking attempt with a lamp  
I could only guess.

For back on the ground near my marble track  
with the cedar doors open like a cargo bay  
she would just stand there, smiling  
the calm white face saying:  
good.

A fitful nap or so later  
we would dive to periscope depth

to share an unthreatened grace  
in a rain-day room.

**-Robert M. Aull**

## the tempest (for Ann)

her ire subsides gently,  
 a tide  
 withdrawing with the bulk  
 of my defiance  
 reduced to sand;  
 her calm hands wash over me  
 lull to sleep everything  
 and we wake along a silent strand,  
 forgetting.

—Robert M. Aull

## Morning

the water  
     still in your hair  
 has dripped  
     onto my back-  
 these mornings  
     when your hands are  
 the dawn of my skin  
     and your voice  
 the breath,  
     when you have crawled back  
 into bed  
     after a shower  
 your body silk  
     as newly changed sheets  
 your eyelashes  
     smelling of aloe  
 you awaken in me  
     more than the sun  
 more than just  
     rising through dark.

—Jeff Berger

Degree in hand, **Jeff Berger** recently left Indianapolis to begin his residency in psychiatry in Portland, Oregon.

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**last supper  
(in honor of Judas)**

at your house for dinner  
moods are romantic  
cloth napkins with lace borders  
lay rolled in wooden holders  
candles shimmer in half-light:  
wax runs sticky like you know what  
down their slim pale  
sticks

to the side  
silver glints  
i see

knife

in spite of my indifference  
(not to mention my new sexual preference)  
i'm caught up as you enter:  
never-seen-before-  
evening gown swishes  
not unlike a satin shade  
around a lava lamp  
i raise my glass  
to your class  
but my fingers shake  
muscles still atremble  
from the "workout"  
i just had with  
him  
tacky bad taste no time for a shower  
so what if there's still sweat  
(maybe it's his who knows)  
on my lips  
on my hands

grip slips  
glass tips  
rosé spills  
splashes  
stains tablecloth  
i see

blood

across the table  
 through the glass  
 your face  
 writhes in the wine

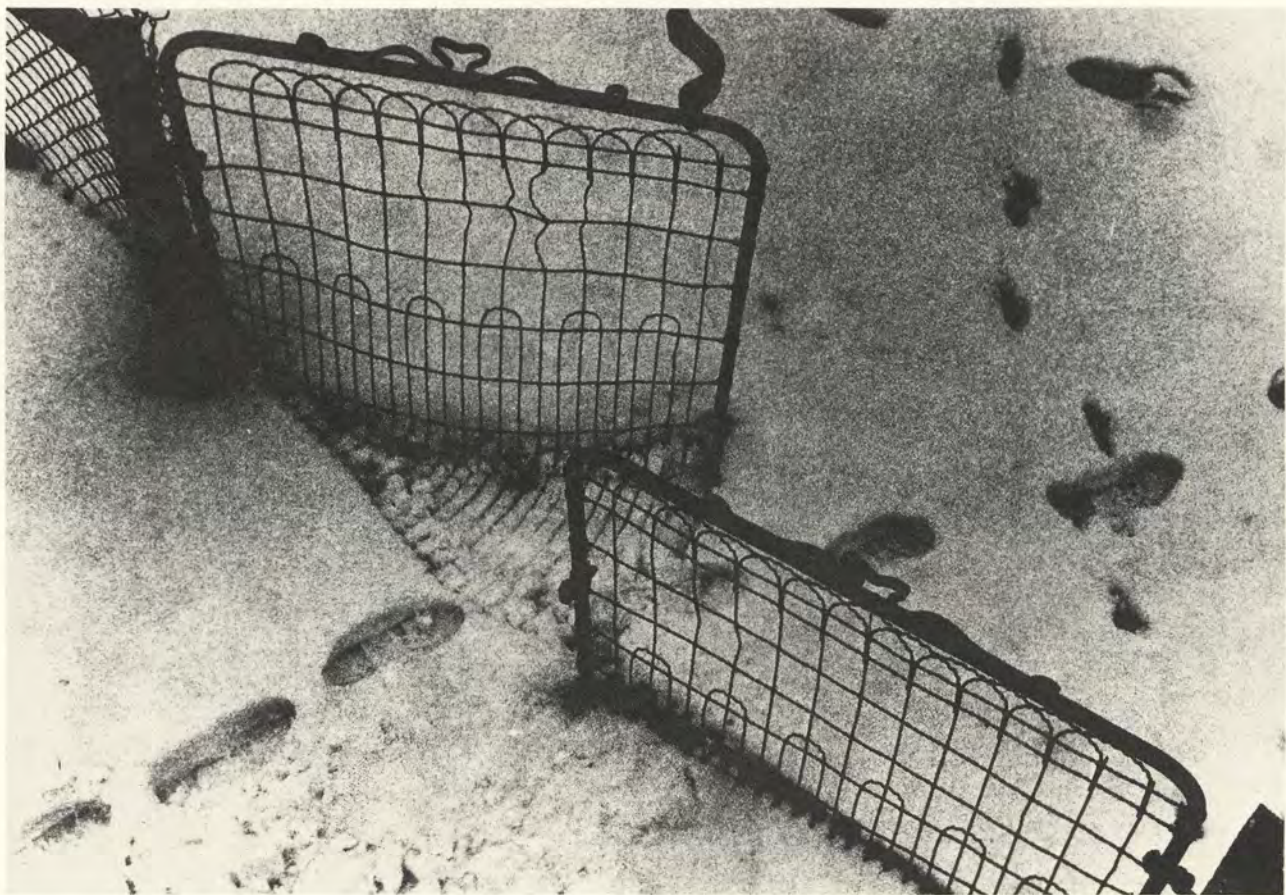
you rise to leave  
 getting a towel i suppose  
 but not before pecking me  
 lightly  
 near my mouth  
 for my "ingratiating clumsiness"  
 i cradle your chin in my hand  
 just an instant  
 you start  
 stare  
 nearly spit  
 oh god oh no  
 "well dear  
 you always could smell  
 (ahem) sex  
 on my han . . .  
 sorry  
 on my brea . . .  
 christ that's worse

"fuck it i'm sick of patronizing you"  
 i yell at your back  
 "this farewell dinner  
 was  
 after all  
 your idea"

you turn  
 in your hand  
 steel shines  
 bright as the caps  
 on your teeth  
 (god the things i think of)  
 i see

gun  
 (now where the hell did you pull *that* out from?)

-Rick Powell



-Rick Callahan

## The Dream

Dimension Dream,  
 you gave me the thrill  
 Experience kill.  
 Dimensional Dream.

Cool, calm night air  
 In the night woods  
 Going just somewhere  
                     With You.  
 The breeze, stops  
 You turn above me  
                     And Kiss.  
 And I, stop.

We're going again  
 Away to touch,  
 Away from eyes  
 And we rush.

You stop, and turn  
 take my clothes.  
 Eat my flesh  
 And rush. And hunger.

I wake.  
 Not to be just meat,  
 But just betrayed.  
 In calm night woods,  
 And I, stop.  
 You turning above me  
                     to eat  
 And I, stop.  
                     stop.

**-W. Bruce Willis**

The poetry of W. Bruce Willis was not written with an audience in mind, but over the years he has found many different types of people who identify with and enjoy his work. It is for these people that he submits his poems, in hopes that others will also enjoy and experience what they see in them.



## GENESIS

### there is no quiet

there are storms            before storms  
                                 no rain  
                                 no thunderclouds  
clear skies            but            overcast  
   heads

and although i sit  
ears stuffed

there is no quiet  
no block of time  
when everything            shuts-up  
                                 there is  
no breath  
                                 without heaving  
no heart  
                                 without beatings  
no sex  
                                 without screams.

here  
ontiptoeathewindow  
i wish the wind  
to smother  
                                 thunder  
wrap lightning in soft folds  
of dark wool  
silently strangle  
                                 rain rain rain rain  
                                 as it scatters gravel  
   in  
   the  
   chim  
   ney

kick legs out from under it  
a s it    w a l    ks m y    ro    o    f

i run from storms ..... room to room  
                                 and somewhere miles below  
                                 my escape echoes  
                                 in the earth  
it rumbles  
it makes the magma hunger

so there is no sitting;  
 the carpet (the shag carpet)  
 and the chairs hum along with the sky  
 and there is no sleeping:  
 the pillow  
 assaults my ears:  
 sound travels faster  
 through solids.

i can't stand it    i can't stand it  
    i can't stand it

there are storms  
 after storms  
 when the squall is squelched  
 but even then  
    there is no quiet  
 not in your eyes  
 swirling whirlpooling oil  
 your lips tandem tremelo  
    i imagine your weeping;  
    but it's not you  
    it's my sobbing  
 it won't stop

the right    and    left side  
    of my brain  
    collide

therisnoquiet  
 there is  
    no     quiet

**-Rick Powell**

Besides writing esoteric poetry, **Rick Powell** reads books. He goes to movies. He goes to plays. Then he writes reviews about the movies and the plays. He listens to lots and lots of music. Then he writes reviews about the music. (Look for his reviews in "Stepping Out," please.) Three times a week, he works-out. Then he takes a shower. He is the recipient of the *genesis* award for poetry.

GENESIS



-Hung Tien Nguyen

**inexperience**

if i choke on you  
will you slap my back

if i can't relax  
will you pull out

if it hurts will you stop  
if it hurts  
can you stop

and if you  
cum first  
will i sleep last

if night after night  
we assemble sex  
bit by bit  
and still lose pieces  
under the bed  
will you overturn me  
like a puzzle  
shake me out  
like crumbs  
in the sheets

**Rick Powell****kitchen Cabinet**

Come on  
put down  
the dishes  
I can't  
talk to you  
with your hands  
scrubbed  
clean with Joy  
your hair  
tied back  
taut  
against  
your skull  
and the goddamn  
broiling pan  
lying there  
soaking  
in  
the  
sink.

**-Rick Powell**

GENESIS

**WOLF**  
**Homeward Bound**

I lope in moonless dark  
without the musk of blood  
without the blood of  
the sick calves of the caribou  
to trail behind me  
marking the blank snow

the Tundra robs me  
and as i run  
the Lights lead my soul  
to dream  
but not to eat

ah, to dream  
den-dreams  
where the yawns of pups  
answer the whimper  
of their mother  
as she scents my return  
from the full belly  
of the night

and to dream  
mate-dreams  
where she rubs and  
licks my muzzle  
relieving the ache  
of empty jaws

i quicken my pace  
over and over  
for dreams  
where i curl into the curve  
of her silver flank  
her teeth pull through my fur  
biting off the Ice

**-Rick Powell**



-Rick Callahan

GENESIS



-W.B. McFee

**one of the boys**

sidewise sit  
 seven famous writers  
 in order ascending  
 or descending  
 depending  
 on where you sit

one end smiles  
 the other  
 less known  
 strikes another tone

among them  
 I would fit  
 would sit  
 bright, dazzling  
 erudite

female

**—Joyce K. Jensen**

**crows**

ghouls gather  
 wanting tears  
 preferring headstones  
 to photographs  
 black roses  
 to silk flowers  
 uncomprehending  
 the joy of having  
 had

**—Joyce K. Jensen**



## GENESIS

### Gus

my father  
smoked sausages  
and cigarettes

he had to share the cart and pony  
with his brothers  
three older, one younger  
two sisters  
and I suppose  
neighbors and cousins and  
dogs and cats  
and rats and garter snakes

twelve years old  
he rode the cattlecar with his dad  
chopped ice blocks for the sawdust  
assembled John Deeres with his brothers  
butchered, plowed, hauled water, picked stones,  
bailed hay  
learned to hate black and brown suits  
and corn bread  
and ice cream

he liked school  
but refused the ministry,  
wanting airplanes  
liked to farm but chose the city  
chauffeured awhile  
electricianed longer  
remaining always a fixer of things  
going back to the old days  
of the horse and the plow  
and the old man  
who fixed the hame strap,  
deriding him

he knew things  
the way he knew people  
his wife a buffer  
friends and children loyal

sister, brother keep the vigil  
remembering

scarred and calloused  
the big hands are stilled  
idled for the first time on the sheets

we danced at my wedding  
I love you

—Joyce K. Jensen

**Joyce K. Jensen:**  
"Writer, student,  
journalist, parent,  
spouse, friend . . . the  
roles proliferate, filled  
with excitement, joy and,  
often enough, fatigue.  
Forming the words like  
clay, finding the shape  
within them and within,  
is currently consuming."

## Park Promise

Father strolls, smoke dangling  
cloudlike from strong fingers.  
I run, skip, twirl on the walk  
to Forest Park, where golden  
minnows dance neath waterfalls.  
Pond-smells greet us and foam  
froths on the pool. Quietly,  
we watch the fish scurry when  
playful pebbles disturb clouds  
buoyed upon the water-mirror.  
Dragonflies dart as father cuts  
my fishing twig, well-stringed  
but hookless: a fishing charade.  
When I tire, we amble home.  
"Traffic's bad. Take my hand."  
We inch across, I in silent  
fear, midst screeching brakes  
and whirring wheels. A siren  
wails; a hospital looms near:  
"If I am hit, will I go there?"  
"You can't be hit;  
                    you have my hand."  
Trusting, I clutch it still  
                    . . . though he is gone.

—Shirley Vogler Meister

## 1 day or 2

on a slightly tinted american bus compactly in tune & time sitting in a knife torn pocket comb split ? seat reminded somehow of thinhaired men in grey undershirts carrying black lunchboxes w/yellow teeth/underwear i caught my eye on a red flannel coat covering orangeblue dotted (: : : : :) goodwill k-mart dress covering pink slip covering unhampered freedom obesity & avant-garde canvass stretchmarks below mutacious breasts kinda sagging woman fondly fondling on her continuous lap a desolate-inner-city-sunday-morning-rainy-street-belching-cartoon-sounds-from-browning-houses-on-surburban-avenue-type-of-grey-color cat actually meowin' twitchin' long silly whiskers looking like shared feline brother of the immortal commercial soul O that whimsical secret inspiration of saturday morning & sunday morning & tuesday afternoon at five o'clock cartoon madness & barbecue aprons & mad wall hangings adorning the furry walls of crazy little houses & absurd fables of marshmellowed morals so humanlike winking inner knowledge (O cato) while slobbering with genuine ingenuity & innocent child of great literature passion & i

shuffling glancing left thru grease window sighting blurry array of speeding house fences rolling children & large dark elephant supposed creature of the night then turning right vision of whiskers like pencil sketch shadows on high school art class drawing illustrating direction of sun on ragged face of white scalp O not interesting smooth yul brynnner type bald no but stubborn whiskeybreath too quickly decaying spectre gutter tramp hero spitting large wad of salivasoaked dark liquid brown bottom-of-shoe-after-autumn-walk-following-country-rain-&-babe-ruth-homerun-catfish-hunter-fastball-over-390-mark chawin' tabbaccy by golly by gum at an invisible target about two inches from my right chewing gum heel then gumbo smiling as missile splashed upon point zero as if from an alexander haig personality steaming inside poor soul frustrated gamester without finances for boxed aggression releases risk dungeon & dragons assassin or cracker jack intelligence space invaders star warriors galaxian pac men shooters with clear eyes nerves unattacked by electronic images from outer space of corporate alien mind games winking fuzzy appreciation of own accomplishment as inner thought buzzed me why is everyone winking today? suddenly feeling surrounded (ghosts of little blond custers; confident butch & the kid guns ableedin', they made it you know; john wayne, fess parker, or some tall man, standing with glinting eye above the alamo, remember?; and a whole nation of red brothers watching great white destiny manifest itself on their sacred burial grounds)

i looked to the north (polka dotted emenceness & winking cat whiskers)  
 i turned to the east (solid speed flurries too dismal to comprehend)  
 & back to the west (saliva, whiskey, whiskers, & winks)  
 so in desperation i looked once more to the south (O beloved spirit of great writerpoets)  
 & was greeted by hot candydipped brat breath of beatletopped dirty teeshirt actual mark twain opie taylor freckleface popping bubblegum at my nose doubtless aiming for the hair . . .  
 O blade of humor . . .  
 O mad american bus egyptian barge jolting down streets of pot hole roman wilderness  
 Stop:  
 lines form early . . .  
 lines form on the left . . . sort of revolutionary romance . . .  
 at the american theatre . . . waiting in line . . .  
 conversations in the air . . . (hey, babe, think we'll get seats this time? man, did we get wiped! you ever been east? well, my broker is . . . and . . . says . . . check her out!)  
 crowd with a growing american personality unique in time & place . . .  
 ivory haired teenies on the muscled arm of blowdried tan targets, whistling navy coat pot faced bandit looking numb faced with hands stretching pockets chompin' gum behind halfdead bogart-short cigs, twinkling coverup covergirls in cord upcollared jackets & penciltip-bottom pants with itty bitty aigner belts cutting their middle parts, sandytopped smokey snowdrained palepalmed "hey, man, i'm a punk" adolescents in orange jeans, wrinkled cocky bitches in too tight designers with "doos" & lips inherently forming tiny screws O & bring out the beast, & flat-eyed survivors hanging to the sidewalk . . .  
 all eyes suddenly upon the opening pioneer wood strong angry mohammed must come to the mountain type door . . .  
 & then on that other side . . .  
 strong scents & visions of hoppalong cassidy buck rogers saturday popcorn heroes syrupy maidens solid horses & occasional flying men flicking celluloid attacks on dark eyes kinda clockwork orange while mouths strained with snickers knees peaked thru rusty jeans as summer & sister seasons slowly passed away on the other side of the moving wall . . .  
 perhaps a small escape . . . perhaps a mere continuance . . . perhaps sleep . . . still crowds  
 dotted on . . .  
 muscle this image—change it to a comfortable form—create a warm fluffy shirt

to caress your tender head as it covers your cautious ass . . .  
 its 1939 . . . its 1952 . . . its 1968 . . . its 1982 . . . these scenes go on . . .  
 only the wrinkles change.  
 imagine  
 red blowing winds across our spines & a quivering quiet light sparkling across the sky  
 reflecting in our yellow eyes entwined between electric lines smoothed out in solid blue  
 deepset liquid love . . .  
 yes, deepest liquid love!  
 sudden breath  
 instant of the poet  
 point of the next moment  
 history of canned man  
 settling like polite applause at a bad play  
 mystery thunder above the city  
 lights sparkling in the emotional night  
 like unlikely diamonds  
 among empty beer bottles  
 in glass alleys of america  
 strange scenes outside the busrider's window  
 mass transportation of spirit  
 then into the dark escape  
 O america  
 lift the poet's finger  
 the trigger clicks  
 safe for a moment more

—John B



-Anne M. White

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**Biology Blast**

IT came in a PINK book  
-with daisies on the cover,  
IT slept in my drawer  
-like an undetonated BOMB  
or lecherous lover.

IT said I didn't have  
long to dream of-  
-Radium Atoms clashing  
-Lost Horizons  
-Sabers Flashing

I let IT sleep  
Never opening ITS pages  
I knew IT LIED

The blue ribbon from the school  
SCIENCE FAIR  
was still in my hand -the night  
I BLED- down my  
skinny-child legs-  
my mother CRIED

UN-scientificlike-I SWORE  
to ignore the indisputable TRUTH  
I was a woman

ACID TEARS I SWALLOWED  
but the book remained  
in the drawer

until the day I left  
for college  
When THE JOY OF WOMANHOOD  
THE STORY OF MENSTRUATION  
was packed in the attic  
with my fairy-tales  
and chemistry set,  
I haven't read it  
yet.

**-Kim Devane**

## Aunt Maggie

THEY came to your house  
In long black cars  
when I was just a kid,

THEY'D stay for awhile  
then they'd go-  
You'd sigh for awhile  
Play your old piano  
Dance around the room-giggle  
Drink gin  
You changed my mind  
on Sin  
Forever then.

Your skin was petal soft  
You smelled too sweet-  
We'd eat chinese food  
From paper cartons  
Bringing them home  
To litter your table

Your gin gone you'd sleep  
I'd watch T.V.  
Till the flag came on.

Sometimes you'd scream  
In your dreams-  
Night-terrors you called them  
Long, black car-terrors  
If you asked me.

Back at home, Momma would call-  
Have fun at Maggies-  
I'd nod-and run off-  
to mutilate my Barbie doll.

I could never erase  
the smile off her face  
You couldn't stop giggling  
Could you Maggie?

**-Kim Devane**

Kim Devane has wanted to enter *genesis* competition since its inception; however, rampant terror prevented her. Entering this contest is the bravest thing she has done in a long time.



-Thomas Meyer



# The Day The Doom Laughed

R. F. Russell

Another semester finds R. F. Russell submitting more work to *genesis*. He has maintained the status quo. Only time betrays him. He had fun writing these stories, and of the Doom says "even he had some redeeming qualities." He will continue to create, because creation provides the biggest thrill of all.

Glen "Professor" Moyer understood life's obtuseness. A Phi Beta Kappa, the Professor could recite from memory the calculus defining the aerodynamics of a golf ball flying through the Indianapolis pall. Yet the obvious, like babies and trash cans, baffled him.

The Professor played the Pines Golf Course where my father was Head Pro. Dad liked the Professor, a tall, wild-haired man with thick-lensed glasses. Dad and the Professor often argued the finer points of economics, politics, and religion. My father praised the conservative nature of Attila, the Hun; the Professor broke ground just to the left of Karl Marx. Dad usually lost these mental duels, but he won the common sense ones—like the trash can.

Most members of the Pines Men's Club toiled 9-5 days and arrived at the course in the evening. A small group of ten to twenty players launched their complicated money game from the 10th tee and played the back nine while public leagues tied up the front. The arrangement separated and pleased all parties.

Arriving late one evening, the Professor hurried onto the 10th tee, his golf shoes in hand. While the players teed off, the Professor changed shoes. Not wanting to run to his car or the locker room, the Professor deposited his penny loafers in an orange trash can by the tee and snap-hooked his first drive out-of-bounds. Muttering something about "counter clockwise rotation" and "prevailing westerlies", he sliced his second effort safely into the 14th fairway.

"Prevailing westerlies" and "angle of descent" aside, the Professor lost his proverbial shirt that evening. After pouring fourth the contents of his wallet, the Professor sauntered through the soft evening light to fetch his shoes.

I was vacuuming the pro shop when the Professor hurried inside, as agitated as I had ever seen him. I switched

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off the vacuum and listened to the Professor's voice rising stridently above the fading vacuum motor.

"Why would someone steal a pair of shoes?" the Professor asked.

"What?" Dad asked.

"I can see stealing money or golf clubs, but who would steal shoes?"

"Wait a minute," Dad said. "Start at the beginning."

The Professor blinked and ambled through the story. "And the shoes were gone," he finished. "Someone stole my shoes."

"The shoes were in the trash can?" Dad asked.

The Professor nodded.

"Then maybe whoever took the shoes thought the owner had discarded them."

"Don't be silly," the Professor said. "Who would throw away a perfectly good pair of shoes?"

"You did."

The Professor blinked. "Of course I didn't. I placed them there for safekeeping."

At 16, I sympathized with Dad, but sympathy couldn't disabuse the Professor of his misconception.

"Look," Dad began. "If you came across a perfectly good 9-iron in the trash out back, would you think I had meant to throw it away?"

"Why else would you put it in the trash?"

"Precisely what the guy who took your shoes thought," Dad said triumphantly.

The Professor shook his head. "Shoes are different."

For five minutes, the Professor enumerated the physical, moral, ethical, and emotional differences between golf clubs and penny loafers. When the Professor had finished, Dad simply shrugged and said, "Finders, keepers."

Not finding the sympathy he expected, the Professor left, only to reappear ten seconds later.

"How will I get home?" the Professor asked.

"Your car keys were in your shoes?" Dad quizzed.

"I'm not a complete idiot." The Professor sounded hurt.

"Drive barefoot," Dad suggested.

The Professor smiled. "Of course," he said and left again.

Dad looked at me. "What do you think?" he asked.

I grinned. "Wouldn't want the vacuum bag to get full while he was sweeping."

Dad laughed. "Not exactly earthy, huh?"

I nodded and kicked on the sweeper.

So when the Professor arrived with the baby that July afternoon, I should have expected trouble.

The Doom arrived first.

The Doom's name was Carl. Everyone called him the Doom because he wore only black: black hat, glove, pants, shirt, socks, underwear, and probably soul. Rumor had it the Doom smiled once a year, April 15th, and spent Christmas alone in a Virginia Beach seaside room. That no one ever spent Christmas in Virginia Beach suited the Doom. He liked to play golf in the rain, work at night, and attend funerals—for which he was always properly attired. In the Doom's soul, it was always three a.m.

Since the Doom worked evenings, he played golf afternoons. This noon, he prowled the pro shop like a caged shadow.

"He's always late," the Doom muttered as he waved a new putter.

"Then why get here early?" Dad asked.

The Doom shrugged. "Gotta be somewhere."

Dad would have preferred the Doom be somewhere else, but Dad didn't say anything. The Doom was harmless, if unsavory.

The Professor arrived twenty minutes past the appointed hour. He wore madras shorts, a white T-shirt, unmatched socks, and a sweatband on his forehead. In his arms he cradled an eight-month-old baby. Oblivious to the baby, the Professor stepped forward, paid his green fees, and rented an electric cart. Then, he turned to the Doom. "Ready?" the Professor asked impatiently.

The Doom's eyes narrowed, as if the baby constituted a ploy to pry out an extra stroke handicap.

"What's that?" The Doom pointed to the baby.

The Professor looked down. "Oh, Glen Junior. Mary had a Friends-of-the-Arapaho meeting. I couldn't get a sitter."

"He's playing with us?" The Doom pointed to the baby.

Glen Jr. was naked except for an ill-fitting diaper. When the baby spotted the Doom, he gurgled and smiled.

"He's no trouble," the Professor said. "I brought a bottle."

The Doom looked to Dad for help, but Dad just smiled.

"Come on," the Professor said and started for the door. "I have to be home in time to chant the sunset song."

The Doom frowned as if it were Christmas and stomped out after the Professor.

The rest of the story drifted into the pro shop over the next few days. Many of the details shrank to nothing or expanded to gargantuan proportions, but the essentials remained.

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Glen Jr. gurgled and cooed through the first six holes, with an occasional burp when the cart hit a bump. He began to cry on the 7th tee. At first wail, the Professor smiled and extracted the baby bottle from his bag. He shoved the nipple into Glen Jr.'s mouth. The baby sucked once, spat out the nipple and wailed. The Professor tried to reinsert the nipple several times. Each time, the baby tasted the milk and wailed. The Professor stared at the bottle for a long moment. Then, he tested the milk and discovered it had soured. He frowned. "How do you suppose that happened?" the Professor asked.

"How the hell do I know?" the Doom answered.

The Professor glanced from the bottle to his bag. "What's the ambient temperature? Eighty-six? Eighty-seven? And a dark bag. Inside bag temperature without circulation, could reach a hundred perhaps. At what temperature does pasteurized milk curdle?"

The Doom regarded the Professor with unmasked scorn while Glen Jr. tried to disturb the foursome two holes behind.

"I used to know," the Professor said. "What the hell's happened to my memory? Maybe I can assimilate the melting point of swiss cheese."

While the Professor mused over the ovenlike qualities of his golf bag, the Doom acted. He grabbed the bottle, dumped the milk, and poured in four ounces of semi-warm beer. He handed the bottle to Glen Jr. who sucked the beer greedily. Before the Professor noticed Glen Jr. was no longer crying, the Doom had slapped his tee shot into the 12th fairway.

"You're up," the Doom growled.

The Professor glanced from the baby to the Doom. "Did you do that?"

"You're up," the Doom repeated.

The Professor was so pleased, he hit his best drive of the day.

By the end of nine, the four ounces of Budweiser coursing through Glen Jr.'s tiny system had put him to sleep. Smiling, he snored softly.

The Doom and Professor had played the first nine to a draw, which bothered the Doom. He stomped into the pro shop and glowered at Dad who was filling a display case with new golf balls.

"Need a ruling," the Doom began.

"Oh?" Dad answered.

"There a rule against having a baby on the course?"

Dad shook his head.

"How about an unnatural, loose impediment?"

"What's unnatural about a baby?" Dad countered.

The Doom frowned. "How about illegal caddy?"

"Is the baby carrying the bag?"

"Unsportsmanlike conduct?" the Doom pleaded.

Dad shook his head. "There's no rule against the baby. You'll have to ignore it."

The Doom nodded, more unhappy than before, and started away, only to stop by the door. "He was carrying a baby bottle," the Doom said. "Illegal club?"

"Did the Professor hit a shot with it?" Dad asked.

The Doom shook his head.

"Sorry." Dad shrugged.

The back nine began without incident and progressed until 14. Glen Jr. awoke with a squall in the middle of the Doom's downswing; the Doom pushed his 5-iron 50 yards right of the green. Doom glared at the Professor who had rushed to the baby's aid.

Beer and sun had combined to discomfort Glen Jr. The ill-fitting diaper had leaked half the baby's greenish discards. When the Doom reached the cart, the Professor stood staring at the squalling, kicking baby whose tender skin had taken on a reddish, sunburned tinge.

"That shouldn't have happened," the Professor muttered. "I designed a trapezoidal fold to keep the diaper from leaking."

"Christ!" the Doom bellowed. "Get another diaper and change him!"

The Professor blinked. "Diaper?"

"You did bring a spare?"

The Professor shook his head. "Only the bottle."

The Doom threw up his hands. "How the hell you gonna change him without a diaper?!"

The Professor grinned. "Necessity is the mother of invention." He turned his back to the cart and stared over the course. "Sycamore leaves should do nicely," he said. "We'll use vine to tie the leaves in place."

The Doom looked from the Professor to the baby, shook his head, and acted. He used the Professor's once-white towel to clean up the baby and cart seat. Then, the Doom folded his own black towel and pinned it on Glen Jr. The Professor turned just as the baby stopped crying.

"I've got it," the Professor said. "We'll sew leaves together using a pine needle . . . what have you done?"

"Hit your shot," the Doom ordered.

"Glen looks like he's going to a funeral," the Professor observed.

"Yours, if you don't hit."

## GENESIS

The Professor chuckled. "That's good. A funeral diaper."

As soon as the Professor pulled his shot left of the green, Glen Jr. began wailing again. The Professor replaced his club, muttering, "outside in, square face."

"Damn!" the Doom said and refilled the baby bottle with Budweiser.

Halfway through the bottle and the 15th hole, Glen Jr. spat out the nipple and began to cry again. Alone on the cart, the Doom tried to replace the nipple without success.

"He won't drink," the Doom yelled to the Professor.

"Try burping him," the Professor called back.

Scowling, the Doom picked up Glen and started rocking awkwardly. When the baby squinted at the sun, the Doom took off his cap and placed it on Glen Jr.'s head. Glen Jr. was so appreciative he promptly turned his head and emptied the contents of his stomach down the front of the Doom's shirt.

"Damn!" Doom yelled and dropped Glen who immediately began to cry. The Professor strolled up as the Doom tried to clean his shirt with a black handkerchief.

"Least you could do is give Glen his bottle," the Professor said and thrust the nipple back into the baby's mouth.

The Doom glowered, grabbed a club, and hurried away from the cart where Glen Jr. sucked happily at the beer.

By the 18th, the match stood even. Glen Jr. napped. The Professor cleaned the grooves of his 4-iron with a tee. The Doom crunched a perfect tee shot and mentally counted the money he planned to win; he needed to replace a black shirt which smelled of sour beer and baby vomit. The Professor lofted a 4-iron into the fairway, 80 yards behind the Doom.

"Position A," the Doom muttered.

The 18th fairway was almost as wide as the Mississippi at flood stage. Hitting a 4-iron to keep the ball straight was as productive as a government worker on vacation. So the Doom frowned good-naturedly as the Professor stepped up to his 180 yard second shot.

The Professor glanced at the green and his ball and stared hard at his 4-iron. Whispering about the "vector coefficient of the earth's rotational spin", the Professor tagged the 4-iron to within twenty feet of the cup.

"The molecular density of a golf ball cover doesn't change with temperature," the Professor said triumphantly.

The Doom scowled.

"The ball kicks left on the third Tuesday of the month," the Doom countered.

In his haste to reach the green, the Professor drove the cart over a sizable bump. The jolt shook Glen Jr. awake, and he immediately began to cry. The Doom looked at the baby as if Glen Jr. possessed contagious leprosy. The Professor braked hard and skidded to a stop by the green.

"First time I've ever hit a green with a four iron," the Professor mused and walked away.

"Hey!" the Doom called. "How do you quiet the kid?"

"Pick him up."

The Doom glowered at the Professor before reaching down and grabbing the pink bundle, still sporting the black diaper and cap. Glen Jr. stopped crying. The Doom half smiled. Dad and I watched from the clubhouse porch.

"Is it April fifteenth?" Dad asked.

"It's a miracle," I answered.

The Doom walked across the green with Glen Jr. in one hand and his putter in the other. He marked his ball and waited as the Professor, on his hands and knees, ran his fingers lightly over the grass.

"The angle of refraction is equal to the angle of incidence," the Professor said.

"You're away," the Doom answered.

"What time was the green cut this morning?" the Professor called to Dad.

"Six-seventeen!" Dad called back.

"Greens weren't cut this morning," I whispered.

"Hush!" Dad hissed. "Tell him that, and he'll want to know if the dew was heavy."

The Professor stared directly into the sun for a minute. Blinded, he tilted his head awkwardly as he hit the putt.

"Did it go in?" the Professor asked. "I can't see because of the spots in my eyes."

"Missed by a foot," the Doom answered. "The rest is good."

The Professor raked in his ball and stood to one side.

"Wanna take your son?" the Doom asked.

The Professor blinked. "Oh, sure."

Maybe it was the Doom's black warmth or beer breath or maybe the vomit scent on his shirt, but for some unexplained reason, Glen Jr. wailed like an alcoholic on Sunday whenever the Professor took Glen Jr. from the Doom. For five minutes, the Doom tried to putt, only to be halted by the baby's pitiful sobbing. The Doom scowled like a preacher at a carnival peep show, but only the Doom's touch could quiet the wailing baby.

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"Can't you do something?" the Doom asked.

The Professor shrugged. "He's always exhibited odd attachments. A cerebellum anomaly, I think."

"Christ!"

The Doom then rearranged his grip so that Glen Jr. rested on the Doom's forearms. Glen Jr. liked the cradle position and gurgled as the Doom stood over his putt. The Professor cocked his head to one side, trying to see around the spots in his vision.

"Is the baby legal?" I asked Dad.

"As long as the baby doesn't straddle the line of the putt," Dad answered.

The Doom slowed his putting stroke to a crawl in an effort to keep the baby in place, as if the baby were more important than the putt. The ball rolled directly for the hole and stopped on the lip, half in, half out. I thought the Doom might cry as he stepped to the hole to examine the ball.

"An object at rest tends to stay at rest unless acted upon by an outside force," the Professor said.

The Doom stared at the ball, his face a mask of pain, the baby's shadow covering the ball. Everyone thought the match would end in a tie—a loss for the Doom.

Then, Glen Jr. burped.

The ball fell into the cup.

For a moment, Glen Jr.'s gurgle was the only sound. Then, the Doom laughed, a sound more rare than a rock's hum. Dad clutched his chest, as if having a heart attack. I looked for the ground to part and swallow the 18th green whole. The Doom danced off the green toward the clubhouse, leaving the ball, the cart, and the Professor, who blinked, mumbled, and walked crookedly for the cart.

I ran into the clubhouse for a moment. When I returned, Dad took my arm and pulled me into the snack bar.

The Doom sat at a table. On the table stood a Budweiser and a cup of ice cream. As he watched, the Doom sipped beer and spooned ice cream into Glen Jr., perched happily on the Doom's lap.

And the Doom laughed.

Like a stranger engaging in local custom for the first time, the Doom laughed and then examined the laugh, as if trying it on for fit.

"A soul is born," Dad whispered to me.

No one at the Pines ever heard the Doom laugh again; his nickname remained "The Doom." Yet, for a few minutes on a July afternoon, the Doom deigned to join the human race.

No one at the Pines ever forgot.



## Bayou Blue Jean Overalls

these don quixote illusions ride my mind & color my tingling  
 fingertips  
 as sweet odors shoot the blue fish sky tanning under the  
 brooding sun  
 this high  
 jumping aboard the silver truck as it glistens like wet hair  
 across the lanes  
 i crawl into your furry mouth and wait  
 so high  
 wrinkled cotton falls upon the ground  
 this is the land of wampus cats & snipes & johnson grass &  
 rag Weed & bayou blues  
 & old rusting yellow buses turned to old rusting yellow  
 houses  
 & river rats & bayou bums (in bayou blue jean overalls) &  
 quiet midnight hunts  
 & frog gigs & big-mouthed bass & dust & wooden ferries &  
 tatters & sweet corn  
 fields & buckshot watermelon patches & hot afternoon  
 planting strolls &  
 1959 & desoto & john deere & deer & old rusting yellow  
 teeth turned to smile  
 & nightskies that just go on & on & on & on & on & on &  
 endless on & on & on . . .  
 oh, high  
 booge & beau in a brown dirt lean-to covered with blankets  
 of wheat  
 snoring  
 in the on & on & endless on & on & on nightsky  
 with heads on pillows of baled hay  
 bare feet  
 (below bayou blue jean overalls)  
 this is part of my blood  
 this is how i get  
 high  
 & sometimes why  
 jumping off the truckbed  
 landing in these fields  
 of reality

—John B

## GENESIS

### Cycleanalysis

i wake up in a garage, see  
kinda like kafka's insect  
i look down at my hands  
they're greasy  
i smell oil  
my shoes are gone  
my skin is blurring  
my thoughts are haiku rags  
i hear critics under the hood of my car  
"his lines aren't in the traditional form, you know"  
"he should put one word on one  
line  
& then finish his thought on another  
line  
,  
don't you think?"  
i pick up the nearest wrench  
(which just happens to be in my hip pocket)  
&  
throw it in the running chatter  
the motor sputters  
(& should i say here)  
the critic stutters  
(no, probably not)  
in about 50 years that wrench should be just another part  
of the engine  
an integral part  
"how did it ever run without it?"  
the critic will sputter  
i wipe my dirty hands on my white belgium pants  
bulge my new muscle  
& swat the insect for a change

### John B

Born by a Southern Indiana Bayou, **John B** left the endless nightland for the collegelife in the early '70s. Solidly hooked on education, he attended IU and then completed his work for a BS in Secondary Education at IUPUI. After spending a year trying to somehow show the importance of shakespeare to some

folks who were more in need of someone to show them how to fill out job applications, he gave up teaching. John now works in the IUPUI Archives and is pursuing a Masters in Library Science. But he still believes in WampusCats. He would like to dedicate all the poetry in him, past and present, to his bride, Connie.

## Zoological Stoning

Me, me and me  
 Betty Jo and Bobby Jean  
 so stiff and starched  
 In summer whites  
     White girls  
     Bobby socks  
     Jeans rolled  
     And cuffed  
     Camisoles  
     And curls, so  
     Greased and black  
 Wondering what we'd find in  
 The park that Sabbath day when  
 We saw a peacock escaping from  
 The zoo. Over the fence he went  
 In his black silken suit  
 With such ostentatious accessories:  
     Red, yellow, blue  
     Purple, orange and green.  
     Green!  
 He stood, stooped and said as he looked  
 Our way,  
     "I'm free. Do you hear? Free!  
 Well. Me, me and me.  
 Were stunned, shaken and certain this  
 Could not be the case.  
 After all, we were members of the human  
 Race. The HUMAN race and even we could  
 Not say that line.  
 So, we got our three white rocks  
 From our three pockets and, well.  
 Me, me and me, Betty Jo and Bobbie Jean  
 We killed that bird in the park  
 That Sabbath day.  
 Smiling.

**-Roslyn Dillard**

Roslyn Dillard believes  
 she is a reincarnated  
 version of Marilyn  
 Monroe. A negative of  
 Norma Jean. She collects  
 toads and other gods.

GENESIS



-Lorie Davis

## The Other Woman

It doesn't bother me  
that you've known her  
for all time  
as long as I'm the one you come to  
with days gone wrong.  
Or that you see her  
now and then  
as long as now is not too often  
and then's when I'm away.  
No matter if you go out with her  
if you promise  
to stay in with me.  
Me  
who hangs loose.  
Me  
who preaches freedom.  
Me  
who can deal  
with otherloves,  
it doesn't bother.  
What bothers  
me  
is the way  
you  
say hello  
when the phone rings and  
she's  
on  
the other end.

—Jan Michelsen

## GENESIS

### Cancer

Doctor unlocks rib  
cage, out flies blackbird  
squalking like devil.

—Kristi Hart

### Sign of Arrival

So  
you will not go slowly  
like an old balloon  
each day a bit less full  
like the helium balloons  
I held on to too long.

I will cut you loose.  
still full of spirit  
sailing up and up to the gods  
until your soul pressure  
is greater than  
the cloud pressure,  
your color gives up  
with a bang,  
and out flies your soul  
into the blue air.

Leaves in the garden  
catch your body's fall  
and I have flowers in spring.

—Kristi Hart

## Recovery Room

Shoved into the black  
 where even spirits lack  
 consciousness  
 sight and voice  
 fight their way  
 back into body

I have suffered  
 enough  
 this steel table  
 suffered enough  
 the dry  
 silent throat  
 the vision of darkness

I want to get back  
 to the real pain  
 not the temporary pain  
 of bone and muscle  
 but that love pain  
 that want pain  
 that need pain

I'm alive  
 I'm alive  
 out of the dark  
 again

–Kristi Hart

## Dialogue About Oysters

Kentucky Oysters,  
 Rocky Mountain Oysters,  
 Barb says her husband fixed them  
 chopped up in scrambled eggs.  
 Karen looks wide-eyed and says,  
 “In the eggs?”  
 “Right in the scrambled eggs.  
 “He made me eat them,” says Barb.  
 Says Karen, “I wouldn’t eat those  
 no matter where they were.”

–Kristi Hart

## On Quiet Spring Mornings

I,  
The maker of birdhouses  
For fat teenage girls  
Who weep secretly for their fathers  
Who are dead, but still live  
Though flattened and pressed beneath glass  
And hung on yellow midwestern walls  
Cleaned often by large, semi-living mothers,  
Once believed that the stars were stones  
Floating just beyond my grasp.  
And if you listened very hard  
On quiet spring mornings  
You could hear angels singing  
Somewhere.  
And just yesterday I saw a magician  
Wandering along a beach looking for a lost person  
To alter. But he could find no one, so  
He wandered some more and vanished  
Into the sweet, Aphrodite-foam that is secretly mixed  
With radioactive isotopes  
And other things.  
So now, in the loud Autumn dusk  
Among the din of chattering squirrels and cicada-hum  
There is a battle taking place  
Between reality and fantasy.  
With Santa Claus dead, the Tooth Fairy and all  
The rest long buried and half-forgotten  
I can look out on the morning hoar frost and actually see  
That the god-rumor will  
Beat me to infinity.

—Rick Callahan

**Rick Callahan** is currently trying to figure out how to write a short story. He has spent the last three years writing mediocre poems that deserve to be expanded on. Time is running out for him.



## Seven Sisters Now Six: Pleiades

One has died, or perhaps not born.  
 Only six gas-blue survivors, kin to flames  
 Used to warm the morning tea  
 Continue the vigil. Look for them.  
 A hazy smudge in the November sky.  
 Misty and ancient, warming of the winter  
 That will someday come. I used to count  
 Them, but one was always missing.  
 Even ideal conditions can not resurrect  
 The one. No frigid evening, moisture frosted out,  
 The rest of the stars so calm  
 They refuse to blink.  
 Telescopes are useless, brass  
 Or otherwise. It is truly hopeless. They resolve  
 Down into thousands, shining blue.  
 But I feel they will always be there: a greasy smudge.  
 Someone rubbed their nose against this sky.  
 I forget their related myth. Greek,  
 I think, and tragic. Vaguely  
 Something about a dark pursuit. A long  
 Madness that followed them everywhere.  
 Sylvia's Bell Jar on a thread.

–Rick Callahan

## Nursing Home

Wailing in a corner  
 waving at a stranger  
 barking for attention  
 longing to be held  
 staring into space.  
 Applesauce dribbling  
 onto soiled bib.  
 Wheelchairs positioned  
 arbitrarily  
 waiting for Godot.

Remnants of the past  
 framed petit point  
 cards from well-wishers  
 a view of the garden  
 longing to be  
 dead.

–Fran Brahmi

Fran Brahmi is  
 presently Head of the  
 Reference Department at  
 the I.U. School of  
 Medicine Library. She  
 enjoys writing poetry  
 occasionally.



-Hung Tien Nguyen

## Quiet Letters Of Oblivion

In Nazi Germany  
 There were mornings fogged cool,  
 Ragged and perfectly chaotic,  
 Far beyond the Führer's ordering hands.  
 And farmers rose early to relieve  
 Cows of their sweet, white burden  
 While their fat wives picked strawberries  
 Beneath the slanted Germanic sun.  
 And late-night travelers glanced  
 At the moon and saw something  
 In its face that made them tired and sad.  
 And even as the distant ovens of Treblinka  
 Still warmed the air, the roads paved  
 With their terrible refuse were puddled  
 So meagerly with bomb craters  
 That mailmen could still bicycle them,  
 Sliding quiet letters into mailboxes  
 And wonder about the coming days' weather.  
 Spoked wheels turning. Slowly.

—Rick Callahan

## Empiricism

I placed my face  
     beneath a pool  
         to smother fear  
             but soon withdrew . . .  
 I forced myself  
     to stay awake  
         but sleep prevailed:  
             I failed.  
 I laid my finger  
     into flame  
         to try my nerve,  
             yet burned . . .  
 Thus, too, I tested you  
     . . . and learned.

**Shirley Vogler Meister**  
 is a senior English  
 major. Her poetry's  
 appeared in *genesis* since  
 the spring of 1981. Her  
 "New Apples for the  
 Teacher" (fall, 1983) won  
 a Purdue University  
 Literary Award.

—Shirley Vogler Meister

## GENESIS

Contentment strokes  
across blank routine  
like a paint-with-water miracle  
exploding day-to-day  
from blackwhite into rainbow  
days, weeks, or lives even  
(or so you heartthink)  
all peppermint and lime  
and not staying in the lines  
of real scream and cry feel  
more like subtle smiles  
and careful cheer  
so easily defaced by grey smudges  
or an unframed vision  
of watermelons smashed against  
brick walls.

—Jan Michelsen

## Mastered

You have a way of dangling yourself  
and your friendship  
like a string-suspended bone  
just a quarter inch too high  
above my reach  
and I, like a foolish puppy,  
sit,  
wag-tailingly expectant,  
waiting for scraps of your affection.  
I sit  
and dare not jump  
for fear the string will be yanked  
higher,  
unreachably up  
to where the treat of you  
is unsee-  
    untouch-  
    unhopeable  
Begging,  
playing games  
for your smile rewards,  
I invite you  
to stoop just low enough  
to pat my head

while trying to keep from biting  
 the hand that feeds my need to care  
 and trying to remember  
 that I am,  
 or am supposed to be  
 this  
 man's best friend.

—Jan Michelsen

## Your Mother's Back

Once upon an age of reason  
 summers were Good Humored  
 and street lights were gods of time  
 but now  
 summer is just a panting breath-catch  
 between choased years  
 and I'm asked,  
 instead of told  
 to go to bed.  
 Friendship was,  
 pure and simply,  
 popsicle sharing,  
 blood brothering,  
 secret coding,  
 and free  
 and easy,  
 but now it's faded  
 to an earned-bartered blur  
 with motiveless smiles  
 and unpurchased highs  
 suspiciously deviant.  
 The ultimate sin  
 used to be  
 stepping on sidewalk cracks  
 but now  
 it seems  
 all the squares I see  
 are neatly poured.

—Jan Michelsen

Jan Michelsen's poetry  
 has been a favorite of  
*genesis* readers.

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**On meeting Elissa by phone**

We compared notes.  
A good lover?  
Definitely.  
A good person?  
Perhaps.  
Worth the hassle?  
Probably not.  
We compared beginnings  
and endings  
and the shortnesses  
in between.  
Then  
we were each other's  
other woman,  
each other's  
hated unknown.  
Now,  
unmet,  
we are friends.  
Time has devalued the commodity (you).  
Still,  
you might have enjoyed listening in.  
You always liked being  
    topic of conversation,  
center of universe,  
cause of pain.

**-Jan Michelsen**

## The Diners

The couple slides over leather,  
 maître d' suggesting  
 they sit side by side:  
 "We're married four decades;  
 we don't have to sit so close."  
 "Enough's enough?"  
 laughs *garcon*  
 and they laugh too,  
 brushing fingertips  
 across the vast table  
 to dwindle distance.  
 Sensient eyes and smiles  
 embrace their space  
 and contagious warmth  
 remains as they depart.

Another couple chills  
 the booth with bogus smiles,  
 sarcastic sugar-coos:  
 "It's our tenth anniversary;  
 of course we'll sit together."  
 Eyes avoid touch,  
 dead elbow bumps dead elbow,  
 parsimonies seep  
 into conversation and  
 honeyed criticisms hit marks  
 across a snug abyss.  
 They hurry off,  
 alien hand in alien hand,  
 and *garcon* sighs:  
 "Enough's enough."

—Shirley Vogler Meister





## The Edge of Crazy

That moat around your bed  
where strangers hover and talk

That spot on the wall  
where your dead son leans and cries

That hole in your mind  
where words are laid  
to make the journey in and back

There you can speak  
to the red-eyed demon of your dreams

From there you bring back  
pictures you can't explain

Like worry stones  
we pocket the gifts of the crazy  
and sing to ourselves  
the song of the other side

We go there  
when there is no place  
in the world to go  
and we come back  
when there is no more reason  
to stay

Sometimes we forget the words  
one by precious one  
until all we can do  
is grin or frown

Sometimes the demons  
follow us out on our shoulders  
waiting for the dark  
waiting for us to see them  
and snap

But we  
who are not frightened  
welcome them  
reach for the light  
look them in their red eyes  
and ask them to dance

**Kristi Hart** remembers Dr. Casebeer saying once that perhaps poetry was a way of being more real than we are normally; but she thinks that poetry is a way of being more normal than we are really.

—Kristi Hart

## Rodney

—R.F. Russell

Seery stopped on the sidewalk to watch the blonde woman slide out of the gold Mercedes. Thin, tan, the woman modeled a shimmery, silver dress which glowed in the dusk half-light. The woman tapped her foot impatiently as the driver tossed his keys to a valet and hurried around the car. In black tuxedo, the brown-haired driver was spawned of the night, the antithesis of the glittery woman.

“Did you remember to turn off the hot tub?” the woman asked petulantly.

The driver shrugged and guided the statuesque woman toward the brass doors of the Golden Hind restaurant.

“Won’t hurt,” he said.

“The water will bubble away, and I’ll have to use fresh tomorrow,” the woman whined. “You know how long it takes to heat fresh.”

The doors closed tight, cutting off the driver’s reply.

“Hey!”

Seery turned.

A pimply-faced valet in a crimson half-jacket leaned on the Mercedes’ door. “Beat feet!” The valet jerked his thumb.

Seery nodded and hurried past the restaurant. At the corner, she stopped and looked back. A burgundy Cadillac braked to a stop in front of the restaurant. Seery didn’t wait to see who climbed out but hurried around the corner.

Halfway to the next red light a small knot of teenagers roiled in front of the whitewashed windows of an abandoned store. Although the letters had been removed, the brick wall displayed the outline of the former occupant—G.C. MURPHY. Seery slowed as she approached the group.

“Hey, Seery,” Fanny called. “Rodney look for you.”

Fanny danced next to a long, portable radio-tape player spewing slow jazz into the warm spring evening. Fanny swayed gracefully despite her weight; she carried her bloated body easily, like an athlete.

"What Rodney want?" Seery asked.

Fanny grinned, exposing large black holes in her yellowed teeth. "What Rodney always want?" She closed her eyes and pursed her lips as a trumpet hit a deliciously pure note. "You for the stable," Fanny whispered.

Seery bit her lip. "Anything else?"

Fanny's eyes popped open. "What else you want? Rodney choose you."

Seery shoved her hands into her jeans and rocked on her feet. "Rodney ain't everything."

Fanny stopped dancing and stared. "Rodney best thing happen to girl."

"Rodney not so A-team," a voice said.

Both girls turned. Rocket Man fidgeted a few feet away, his eyes dilated, his nostrils flared. His shadow-thin body wouldn't stop shaking. A long, cruel scar wormed down his forearm.

"Rodney not so A-team," Rocket Man repeated.

"Don't talk fool," Fanny said. "Rodney together."

"Be doin' jail-stripe boogie when they catches him."

Fanny shook her head. "Too slick for the Man."

Rocket's cheek jerked involuntarily. "Not when fillies sing."

"No gal roll on Rodney. He got enough to keep 'em sore."

Rocket laughed, a high-pitched, nasal laugh, and grabbed his crotch. "Rocket got more limp than Rodney straight up."

"Comparin' pencils and baseball bats, boy. Don't shame yourself."

"Wanna try for fit?" Rocket asked.

Fanny laughed. "Lose ten year of life if Fanny get hold of it."

Rocket skipped to one side. "Rocket take you for moon ride."

"Gotta go," Seery said. "Gotta sit for Justele."

Fanny turned away from Rocket Man. "Don't stupid," she said to Seery. "Lots of pretty gals waitin' your stall."

"Rocket for your pocket," Rocket Man interjected.

"Hush!" Fanny said to Rocket. She stepped forward and placed a plump hand on Seery's shoulder. "You smart, pretty. Don't let valedictorian stuff ruin your sense. Rodney better'n Fanny and sidewalk folk."

Seery nodded. "See you."

Seery hurried away from the concoction of music, Fanny, and Rocket Man. The concrete relinquished its heat as full night invaded the empty downtown streets. Seery bypassed the restaurant and entered a garbage-filled alley. A police

## GENESIS

siren screamed in the distance, a lonely, keening sound. Seery ran down the dark alley. She kept looking over her shoulder to see if anyone followed.

Seery slowed on the sidewalk; her breath arrived in short gasps. A sliver of moon edged over the rooftops. A mercurial cat oozed across Seery's path.

Ahead, two women strolled toward Seery; their voices harmonized with the city din. One woman wore a white, summer dress, a ghost dress. A funeral lavender dress flattered the other woman. Both floated coolly, unaware of the heat or the noise, two specters out of their nightly haunt.

"Evenin', little sister," the woman in white smiled.

"Ain't seen Rodney," Seery answered.

"Matter of time," the Lavender said. "Rodney save you from the project."

"Be like us," the woman in white said. "Cool and still."

"Ain't seen Rodney," Seery repeated.

The Lavender laughed. "Rodney see you."

The women slipped past, their feet barely touching the ground.

"Rodney take good care, little sister," the woman in white said. "Rodney care for all us."

Seery stared after the two women who had already deteriorated into insubstantial forms gliding down the sidewalk, their cackling laughter echoing through the night. With a small cry, Seery turned and ran.

The apartment door bore no numbers or letters, just a crudely carved skull and a splash of black spray paint, the protective runes of the Cannibals, a local gang. Seery knocked on the door and waited. The scantily lit hall smelled of smoke and urine.

"'Bout time," the woman who opened the door said.

Seery stepped into the apartment which stank of cabbage and sweat and ammonia. "Don't work for an hour," Seery said.

"Don't sass me," the woman said. Her ample figure stretched the seams of her brown polyester pants; a red bra strap snaked across her arm, outside her blue, sleeveless top. "Ray junior got ear infection. Medicine in the fridge. Get it at nine."

Seery nodded.

"What Rodney want?"

Seery shrugged. "Ain't seen him, Justele."

"Don't stupid me. Rodney want one thing from pretty gal like you."

Seery shifted her weight from foot to foot.

“What gonna do?” Justele asked.

Seery shrugged.

“You my sister and I got right to help,” Justele said.

“Rodney girls don’t work or sell or dope. Eat and clothe regular, and Rodney handle all paperwork. They just hands over the check.”

“Cheatin’ welfare,” Seery mumbled.

“What cheatin’? Just doin’ eye for eye what they done to us.”

Seery gazed hopefully at her older sister. “Why can’t I be like you?”

“Look at me. Four babies in six years. Twenty-three and pushin’ forty.” Justele ran her hands down her hips, as if trying to reshape her body. “No celebratin’ clothes, eatin’ saltines and beer, hands raw from the chemicals. I ain’t no Rodney girl.”

“Got Ray.”

Justele laughed, a bitter laugh. “Drunk more’n sober. Ain’t home as often as the new moon. Spendin’ all he earn. Keepin’ Darla Branch moanin’ from what I hear.”

Seery stared; horror stretched her teenage face.

“Ray gone soon,” Justele said matter-of-factly. “Ain’t gonna be no new Ray. I be on the rolls like Mama. Just holdin’ on till the grave take me.” Justele sighed. “That what you wanna, Seery?”

Seery lowered her eyes. “Wanna go to school.”

“How?”

“Mrs. Kibbe say she help.”

“Pay your tuition and books and room and eats? Ain’t other way.”

“Scholarship and loans. I’d have enough.”

“Child, you got but four ways. Whore, marry, welfare, or Rodney. Rodney be best.”

Tears formed in Seery’s brown eyes and ran down her cheeks.

“Ain’t loud-talkin’,” Justele said softly. “Just wantin’ best for Seery. Seery be school smart, pretty. Deserve better’n me.”

Seery wrapped her arms around Justele and cried on the blue sleeveless top.

“I be captain cheerleader in high school,” Justele whispered. “Gonna star Hollywood. Gonna live like queen. Then Ray happen. Marry. Cry for two years, till all cried out.” She stroked Seery’s fine, black hair. “All cried out.”

Seery sobbed and shuddered and buried her face in Justele’s shoulder.

Seery had just coaxed Ray Jr. into taking his ear

## GENESIS

medicine and going to bed when she heard the knock at the door.

"Who there?" Seery called through the door.

"Rodney."

Seery stared at the plain door a moment before opening it.

Rodney smiled from a cream colored silk suit, yellow-tinted sunglasses, and a new straw hat. He looked as if he had stepped out of a fashion magazine.

"Hello, Seery." He waved a hand glittering with gold and diamonds. "Be one Rodney look for."

Seery stepped back. "Come in."

Rodney stepped past her and turned. "Seery better lookin' every day."

Seery blushed.

"Rodney see the play. Rodney decide to offer you."

He smelled of expensive cologne. Seery had heard Rodney wore silk underwear, like a woman.

"Was I good?" Seery asked.

"Rodney want private performance."

Seery smiled.

"Rodney handle Seery like others," he began. "Rodney file papers and collect checks. Rodney tell what to say when caseworker appear. Rodney have children, and Rodney service too." He grinned widely, exposing a gold front tooth with a black question mark inlaid in black onyx. "Have one baby and collect for ten. Have nice clothes, nice apartment, no work. Rodney handle everything."

"How?"

Rodney tapped his forehead. "Rodney got system."

Seery looked up at the tall, well-dressed man. Her smile faded by degrees. "I can't," she said softly.

"Seery think," Rodney said. "Rodney be back tomorrow."

She shook her head. "Don't have to think. I'm going to finish high school and college."

He frowned. "Rodney no offer twice."

"Appreciate it. Really do."

"Rather ends like Mama and Justele?" Rodney's voice hardened.

"Gotta try." Seery stared at him; her lip quivered.

"Wouldn't be happy not tryin'."

Rodney licked his lips, grinned, and touched his hat. "Rodney loser here." He moved past her and left, not bothering to look back.

Seery locked the door and sat on the couch, staring blankly at the fuzzy television. Ray Jr. whimpered in the bedroom, causing Seery to rise and walk to the doorway. In

the semidark, she could see the children in the bed, their sprawled bodies overlapping each other like snakes in a crowded nest.

“No,” Seery whispered. “No, no, no.”

Covering her face, Seery sank to the floor and began to cry.

## Remembering The Uterus

I found my sister's Rosary Beads in the womb.  
 She is always leaving things behind  
 To mark her existence.  
 After eight months of quiet-anxious boredom  
 I ground mirrors and built a Newtonian opera glass  
 Peering out into the world through the navel.  
 I liked what I saw and waited to ripen.  
 Later, my brother found my optical device  
 And sketched it on his pad along with  
 The ovaries, his feet and the imagined world.  
 He left nothing behind: a pack rat.  
 Little is known of our younger almost-sister.  
 But I imagine her as sentimental, timid,  
 Perhaps a librarian, nun or collector of things.  
 Something went wrong. She could not leave  
 The warmth and security of the uterus.  
 She hung herself on her umbilical cord  
 And was born sleeping-blue.

—Rick Callahan

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### The Art Work

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### The Artists

**Rick Callahan** abandoned his camera briefly this semester to fool around with the photostat machine at the *Sagamore*, where he is Photography Editor. The results of his elegant experiments are printed, along with their disassociated titles, in this elusive issue of *genesis*.

**Lorie Davis**, a third generation artist attending Herron, is majoring in Visual Communication and various other nervous disorders. She hopes to travel the world someday and eventually settle in Sicily, eat large amounts of Italian food, meet the Medicis' descendants and just have an all around good time. If she doesn't make it to Europe, she'll settle either on the east or west coast, depending on which direction her ship comes in.

**David Henry Frisby Junior**: D.F.Jr., 33, is by circumstance autochthonic to this region by virtue of W.W. II's Lot which called D.F.Sr. to make this place the home for his family; a zetetical antiquary today, he is by circumstance the photographer in this space/time-pattern by virtue of Nam's Lot which did not call him to give what the reflected name said was due.

**W. B. McFee**, a fourth year junior at the Herron School of Art, hopes to attend U.S.C.'s film department, or something like that.

**Thomas Meyer**, currently attending Herron while refining drawing skills in illustration and lithogrpahy, has interests in space exploration, flight architecture, cinema, music and anything unique or unusual.

**Hung Tien Nguyen** is a senior at the Herron School of Art majoring in Graphic Design and Illustration. He left Saigon, South Vietnam, with his family in April, 1975, two days before the Communist take-over. He hopes to return there someday to visit relatives and friends.

Obsessed with the Bridge, **Mary Nicolini** journeyed to Brooklyn to walk on her promenade, all the time reciting from Thomas Wolfe's *The Web and the Rock*: "The Bridge made music and a kind of magic in me, it bound the earth together like a cry; and all of the earth seemed young and tender . . ."

**Anne M. White** is an English student at IUPUI. She likes to dance, draw and cash her paycheck.



