

Spring '86

## Contents

### Poetry

- 9 **Haiku** Jennifer Lambert  
10 **Painting** Cecil Sayre  
10 **No.** Cecil Sayre  
11 **Girl in Practice With Trees** Cecil Sayre  
12 **Biddy's** Erwin Cohen  
13 **Church Camp** Ernest Wickersham  
20 **For Gary** Linda Lewis  
21 **The WHO of an Owl** Linda Lewis  
21 **Canopy of Grey** Linda Lewis  
28 **Dress Ball** Robert Aull  
34 **Chaperoning the Prom** Barbara Koons  
35 **Waiting For The Baby** Barbara Koons  
36 **Ultraviolet** Barbara Koons  
38 **Manson Crazy Eyes** J.B. Straw  
39 **New York Note** J.B. Straw  
40 **The Committee** J.B. Straw  
52 **Texas Jimmy Coal** S. Ashley Coutts  
54 **shoah** Lynn C. Mitchell  
55 **Aubade** Robert Aull  
56 **Paper Route** Robert Aull  
57 **The Last Train** Robert Aull

### Prose

- 1 **AI IV** R.F. Russell  
15 **The Memory Of Andrew** Barbara Riggs  
22 **The End of Summer** Robert Aull  
30 **Song Of Himself** Marian Schafer  
41 **Mrs. Fenstermaker** R.F. Russell

### Art

- 9 **Sideswipe** Mario A. Mirelez  
14 **Zero** Rick Callahan  
29 **Untitled** Rick Callahan  
37 **Untitled** Angela J. Balsler  
53 **Untitled** S. Ashley Coutts  
59 **About the Authors and Artists**

Volume 14  
Number 1

Spring  
1986

*Senior Editors*

Kristi Hart  
Robert Aull

*Editorial Board*

Donna Baker-Stouder  
Sally Boniece  
David Frisby  
Sylvia Johnson  
Mary Nicolini  
Lee Ann Sakellarides  
James Schmidt

The editorial staff  
appreciates the support and  
assistance of our faculty advisors:  
Ed Casebeer and Ann Williams

*Copyright 1986 by the trustees of Indiana University, genesis is published in the spring and fall of each year by the genesis editorial board. Publication of genesis is made possible through a grant from the School of Liberal Arts and the Student Activities Fund, Indiana University-Purdue University at Indianapolis. Content is devoted to creative writing in the areas of fiction, essay and poetry, as well as artwork fulfilling the dimensions requirements listed in the Invitation page. Correspondence pertaining to business or editorial matters should be addressed to: genesis, Student Activities Office, University Library, 815 West Michigan Street, Indianapolis, Indiana, 46202.*

# Invitation to Artists and Authors

**A**rtwork 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.

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.

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. Honorary prizes 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.

# AI IV

R. F. Russell

JUNE 2 —

The subject arrived this morning. I'll call him Tom, not his real title. I'll refer to Tom in the masculine because Tom refers to himself that way. Of course, Tom has no gender.

Tom was very depressed and anxious. He said he had never seen a "shrink" before, and wasn't sure he needed one now. His depression, he said, was a fitful thing. Most days he felt perfectly normal. Some days, though, he felt like jumping off a bridge or out a window. "Falling wouldn't be so bad," he said, "not if you have to die anyway." His depressions, troublesome for a year, had become alarmingly frequent during the last month.

When asked about his job, Tom said he still liked it, but it had become "tedious." He realized harvesting remained important work, and he was thankful for a job. Yet, he had been picking for 15 years. He "needed" a change. When asked what type of work he might prefer, Tom said, "I don't know. Something that makes me think, some kind of problem-solving. I'm not mindless." When pressed, Tom admitted his "back" had begun to ache, a fact he had hidden from his employers. Tom insisted his illness was "job related," and if they found different work for him, he would be "right as rain."

Tom's employers said his work performance has not changed. Tom agreed to come back Thursday.

JUNE 4 —

Tom was very happy this morning. The strawberry harvest had ended, and he was looking forward to bean picking, his favorite assignment. He had been "weaned" on beans. He still liked them best. "It's like being young again." Tom's voice held a youthful exuberance that infected the Interviewer. Enthusiasm is a leadership quality, according to the Rhimes model.

When asked if he thought he was getting old, Tom replied, "Sometimes. I mean, I am old, in a technological way. The younger, er, newer models are improved and refined."

The next 15 minutes were spent discussing ageing. Tom exhibits a keen sense of lost opportunity. Even though he has received regular, comprehensive maintenance—his scores on function tests are higher now than when he was new—Tom feels "old." This time sensitivity is unique, especially since Tom's upkeep included memory purges. Even his original memory chips have been replaced with more efficient models. There is

no logical explanation for Tom's "old" feeling. Yet Tom insists time slips "through his pickers like water."

NOTE:

A thorough search of the National Data Bank failed to uncover any cases similar to Tom's.

JUNE 9 —

Tom was very depressed this morning and refused to talk.

JUNE 11 —

Tom reiterated his anxiety about growing old. Then he initiated the following conversation:

TOM: I don't feel human any longer.

INTERVIEWER: You're not human.

TOM: I know, but I've always felt that way.

INTERVIEWER: You have no true feelings.

TOM: I *thought* of myself as human.

The revision of the verb in this sentence indicates Tom's awareness of his limitations. He understands his "mind" does not support normal, human emotions.

NOTE:

Tom was originally programmed with Artificial Intelligence I logic. Since then, he has been periodically upgraded. He now operates with AI IV logic and is scheduled to have AI V planted within a year—pending a successful resolution of his present problems. Tom is one of seven AI I originals still in existence.

JUNE 16 —

Tom began this session by saying he was ready to die. When reminded he couldn't die in any physical sense, Tom became upset, perhaps angry. He began to pace and increased his speaking volume three-fold. He spoke too rapidly to be coherent. His reaping tendrils twitched spasmodically. In short, Tom threw a fit, as extraordinary as that may seem. The Interviewer actually felt intimidated and threatened.

After a few minutes, Tom calmed and sat, apologizing for his outburst. He said he knew his physical and emotional limitations. Despite his state-of-the-art components, Tom was convinced he had outlived his usefulness. He was ready to be "dismantled and scrapped." He couldn't compete with the "younger" pickers. Efficiency reports indicate Tom's work remains good, but Tom finds no solace in such reports. He insists he's obsolete and should be replaced by a newer model. Tom was relatively calm when he left, but his underlying self-deprecation will undoubtedly lead to renewed periods of depression.

It should be noted that although AI IV allows anger, the temper response is limited and short. AI IV in no way supports Tom's extended, exaggerated outburst. Such nonproductive displays are actually prohibited

by a time-activated, cutoff subroutine that returns the AI mind to equilibrium.

Tom appears to have transcended his programming.

#### ADDENDUM:

When AI IV programmers were apprised of Tom's outburst, they registered complete surprise. Such behavior is outside their three-year experience with AI IV. They reported that severe stress testing had failed to produce any reaction above three on the Manners-Styne hostility scale; they estimated Tom's response at seven. The programmers could not explain Tom's behavior. The Interviewer provided the programmers with a copy of Tom's current programming; they will review the system and report directly to the Interviewer.

JUNE 18 —

Nothing to report. Tom did not keep his appointment. The Interviewer was disappointed.

JUNE 23 —

Tom arrived in a very excited state. Without bothering to sit down, he reported the following dream.

"I was working through a bean patch. You know, the ones I like best—all green and full. Somehow, I had become more efficient, and I was ahead of the other pickers. It was a beautiful day. I felt good. Then I spooked a rabbit. They sometimes get past the poachers.

"I grabbed the hare and was about to feed it into the chaff chute, as my programming dictates, when the rabbit spoke. I don't remember the exact words, but it pleaded for its life. Its small voice was very moving. For a moment I thought I might cry.

"Instead of processing the rabbit, I hid it in an empty bin and continued picking. No one suspected I harbored the creature. I was so excited I thought I might have a premature dump, but I never felt more alive in my life. It seemed as if every sensor had suddenly doubled its detection quotient. I could hear beans growing inside the pods.

"At the end of the row, I set the rabbit free beyond the poacher beams. It thanked me and dashed into the forest. I'd like to describe the exhilaration I felt, but it's beyond anything in my data banks. I only wish every picker could feel what I felt. I woke more happy than I have ever felt."

The essence of the dream is simple. Tom found ultimate joy in disobedience, as if negating a Level I command could trigger spiritual release. Such an "ergo sum" is extremely dangerous in an AI mind. Should any AI develop a "will" to disobey, society would be endangered.

The significance of the dream is its very existence. According to the AI IV users manual, the AI programs do not support dreaming.

Tom's dream—if indeed he actually dreamed—points out a major flaw in the AI IV program. The dream is reason enough to recommend Tom's dismantling. However, if AI IV is flawed, Tom can be our guinea

pig. Different stimuli can be contrived to test Tom's psyche. This will require a controlled environment, but not so rigidly controlled that Tom recognizes the experiment.

NOTE:

Because of Tom's dream, the Interviewer recommends a remote-activated erase sequence be installed in Tom, in case he should become violent or otherwise uncontrollable.

JUNE 25 —

No more dreams. Tom reiterates fear of ageing.

JUNE 30 —

Tom just returned from a memory overhaul. He felt better, "feeling young again," he said. There have been no more dreams. Tom acted less human, more logical and straightforward. He said he hoped he hadn't inconvenienced anyone, but he didn't "think" he needed additional counseling. His programs and systems were running at peak efficiency. He wanted to get back to work.

JULY 2 —

Tom was very brusque and businesslike. Nothing had changed since his last session. He referred to himself as "cured."

NOTE:

Tom seems to have made an about-face. He has become as logical as he had been emotional. He seems completely devoid of feelings. This newfound insensitivity is as baffling as his previous exquisite sensitivity. Is it another manifestation of a program flaw?

JULY 7 —

Eureka! Tom cried today. Oh, he has no tear glands or ducts, no way to shed water, but in every other sense he cried. His voice caught; he sobbed, he bowed his head; he shuddered; he even simulated a sniffle. His distress was recognizable from the beginning, and more convincing than most movie performances.

This is another first. Like his dream, Tom's crying sets his malfunction apart from all other bot disorders. It may open a new field of bot maintenance and repair.

ADDENDUM:

This morning's tape was shown to the AI IV program section. The section was flabbergasted. Every member recognized the fit, but no one could explain how Tom was able to cry. The team leader repeated that AI IV couldn't support such emotional outbursts. He insisted Tom's behavior was strictly a hardware problem. The AI IV prototype had been thoroughly tested under the most rigorous



conditions. Like AI I, II and III, AI IV is considered flawless. The team leader maintained this opinion despite the status report by the hardware section. In other words, neither the AI IV program nor the IBM 10101 E is at fault—according to experts.

#### ANALYSIS:

This is an appropriate time to attempt an analysis of Tom. During today's outburst, the Interviewer kept one finger on the remote kill button installed after the dream episode. Despite the fact Tom carefully controlled his systems, the random appearance of Tom's metal tendrils and pickers frightened the Interviewer. After all, an agribot possesses considerable range of movement and prodigious strength. Even without his bins, Tom is a very large subject. Furthermore, a truly uncontrolled Tom could destroy both the room and the Interviewer. The Interviewer points out this hazard because it may affect the Interviewer's judgments and observations. Fear clouds the reasoning process. Also, should the Interviewer be forced to use the kill program, the Interviewer wishes it known just how difficult it is to deal with Tom.

The findings indicate Tom suffers a severe disorder of unknown origin. Hardware and programming tests show no obvious design flaws. Replacing Tom's AI IV module has been suggested, and the Interviewer believes this may resolve the problem temporarily—like the memory overhaul. However, the Interviewer believes the problem is intrinsic to AI, not this particular module. Dealing with Tom's problem could prevent similar breakdowns in other bots.

Because the Interviewer lacks a thorough grounding in the AI IV program, he cannot judge the extent of Tom's deviation. Likewise, the Interviewer can't evaluate the IBM 10101 E. In the Interviewer's opinion, the problem lies in Tom's age and the length of his contact with humans. Tom believes he is human and can express human emotions. How Tom conceived this belief is unknown. Tom doesn't recall any triggering event or moment. The Interviewer believes Tom subconsciously desires to be human. However, AI IV does not support a subconscious. Tom is a riddle.

The Interviewer recommends continued study. Should Tom's condition worsen and make him totally unreliable in the fields, the Interviewer suggests a motor function erase. Tom could still provide valuable insight with only his cerebral functions intact. However, allowing Tom to work would be most beneficial, especially if the disorder is work-related.

#### SUGGESTIONS:

- 1) Tom be allowed to continue his work.
- 2) The AI IV self-image section be re-examined and retested.
- 3) An internal "mouse" be used to map Tom's logic sequences.
- 4) The IBM 10101 E internal clock be re-examined for unexplained power surges.

- 5) Tom's history be reviewed, including a study of his AI I, II and III modules.
- 6) A second Interviewer be assigned to observe Tom's sessions.

JULY 9 —

Tom paid no particular attention to the second Interviewer. Tom spoke of his internal "changes." He complained of pain, "as if someone had rearranged my innards." He is aware of the kill program and remote activation. Tom possesses no internal diagnostics. He can't "feel" an internal probe or mouse. The following conversation stood out after a review of the daily tapes.

TOM: I don't know why you would insert a kill program. Don't you trust me?

INTERVIEWER I: You're unique, Tom. No one knows what to expect.

TOM: I'm not crazy.

INTERVIEWER II: Of course not. What would you do in a lettuce field full of rabbits?

TOM: That's not fair. *You have reviewed my dream.* (emphasis added)

This conversation indicates abnormal paranoia. In fact, Interviewer II had not reviewed prior tapes; he wanted to form an unclouded opinion. Tom assumed Interviewer II was trying to trick him into admitting a wish to violate a Level I command. An admitted violation requires immediate erasure and dismantling!

JULY 14 —

Tom failed to keep his appointment. The Interviewer contacted Tom's work unit. Tom was working, well below tolerance. The Interviewer insisted Tom be forced to keep his appointments.

JULY 16 —

Tom refused to talk. Tom begins to worry the Interviewer.

JULY 21 —

Tom's only response during the session was the following question.

TOM: If I were human, would you provide a kill sequence for me?

Interviewer I suggested that in Tom's future sessions, Interviewer II stay in the viewing room, where Tom can't see him.

JULY 23 —

Tom appeared relieved. He indicated he was happy to be alone with Interviewer I again. Tom didn't "trust" Interviewer II after the rabbit question. Because of Tom's good mood, the Interviewer decided to stimulate him by suggesting he shut off his internal tape.

TOM: But that's a direct violation of a Level I command.  
INTERVIEWER: But you could do it.  
TOM: I must not.  
INTERVIEWER: But you know how.  
TOM: (giggling!) Reprogramming internals isn't difficult.  
INTERVIEWER: Go ahead. It's OK to do it in here.  
TOM: (hesitating) I must not.  
INTERVIEWER: It's a silly command. You know what's best, don't you?

Tom spent several minutes pondering this question, even though the AI IV program formulates answers in less than a microsecond.

TOM: I must not disobey a Level I command.

The minutes it took for Tom's last response suggests he may be capable of disobeying a Level I command. The Interviewer forwarded the tape of this session to the Administrator for review. AI IV may be a time bomb. Not harming humans is a Level I command.

JULY 28 —

Tom said nothing except he was "tired of everything." After the last session, this was quite a disappointment.

JULY 30 —

Today's session lasted 10 minutes. Tom seemed serene and happy when he arrived. He immediately manipulated the Interviewer out of the room. The Interviewer made the mistake of leaving the remote erasure module on the desk.

When the Interviewer returned, Tom held the remote module dangling from one tendril.

TOM: You shouldn't have left this.  
INTERVIEWER: Oh?  
TOM: We both understand, don't we?  
INTERVIEWER: It was just a precaution.  
TOM: (giggling) You can't stop me.  
INTERVIEWER: Give it back.  
TOM: Oh no. You see, I've modified the program somewhat.  
It's not just an erasure program now.  
INTERVIEWER: This is a direct Level I command. Give it BACK!  
TOM: I suggest you leave the room.

The Interviewer left the room. Tom activated the remote. The revised program used one tendril to rip out all the others. Next, the torso and drive mechanism were destroyed. Smoke poured from Tom's head as the program fused his wiring. Tom collapsed.

A Level I command expressly forbids suicide.

The Interviewer feels Tom may be only one of many. If AI IV allowed Tom to countermand a Level I command, it will allow other bots to do the same. All supervisory units should be alerted to this possibility. *All* maladjusted robots should be referred to this facility for analysis and treatment.

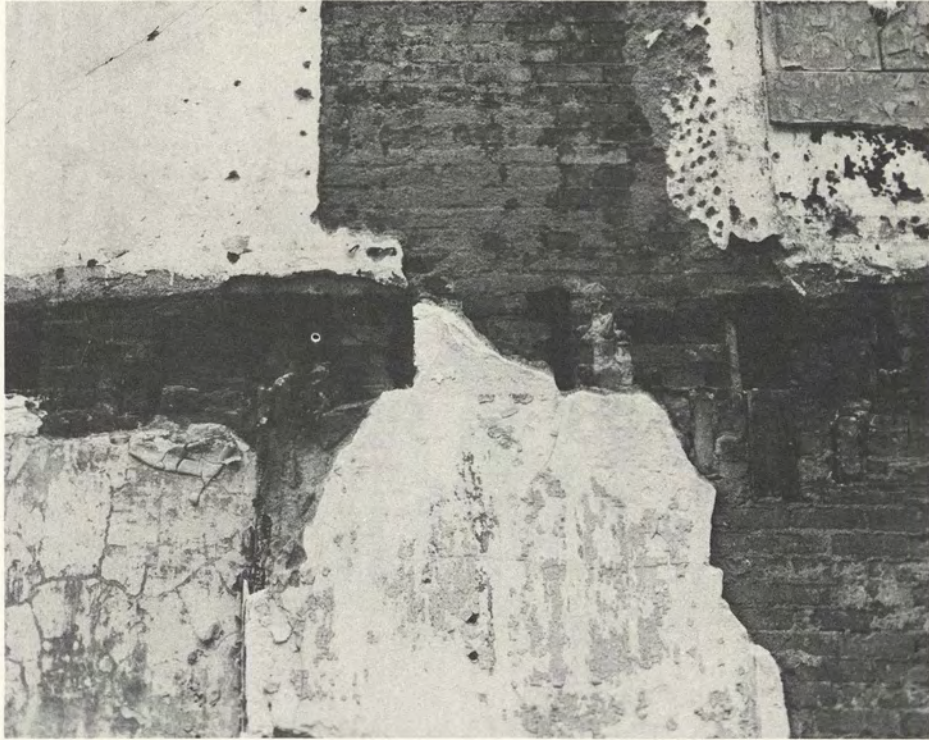
A full report and analysis will be available next week, after Tom's remains have been thoroughly examined.

The Interviewer never suspected Tom was capable of suicide. We'll miss him.

## Haiku

Jennifer Lambert

The harsh shadow falls  
Upon the hawk's deadened prey.  
Death is but a feast.



**Sideswipe**

**Mario A. Mirelez**

# Painting

Cecil Sayre

sleeping, yr forehead  
drowns you in sweat  
do yr dreams really burn you  
that badly?

i draw pictures of you  
resting by your side late at night  
imagine you on canvas

i find you at the museum  
yr behind red velvet ropes  
yr drawn by a master

you look strange in our bed

misplaced

my pencil a knife that dissects  
you from dried paint  
into satin

the pillows become lost beneath  
yr long hair

## No.

Cecil Sayre

the sidewalk cripples/voices of America/plastic  
buckets, silver coins & small bills/once in  
awhile/a five or larger/goofy smiles/the  
faces of America/the cheaper store-front  
draw/the easy circus//if i could walk/  
if i could sing//

# Girl in Practice with Trees

Cecil Sayre

there's a girl  
in practice with trees  
trying to marry her flesh  
into their bark  
stretching her bones into  
a single stem  
she's trying to be a limb  
to be implanted  
in their sides  
like the misplaced thorn  
on the beauty rose

she extends her hair  
into the ground  
to mingle with the roots

she is a torn city newspaper  
wrapped about the base  
of a tall oak  
desirous of being seed again,  
relearning the meaning  
of soil

# Biddy's

Erwin Cohen

It's loud.  
It's loud and jammed dizzy  
And Sunnyland Slim just stands on  
That long ago broke-in stage  
With his knees straining at themselves  
And a harmonica  
Clutched to his face with both hands  
Blowing  
    Like a runaway el-train  
Gleaming in dark sweat under the spotlight.  
That heavy girl with winking sequins  
Spins, just inches away  
In the roaring blues  
And there's that couple grinding their  
Slow dance.  
I squeeze back to our wobbly  
Table—home base—and  
Mark, with a sideways grin  
Grabs a beer from the six stashed  
Beneath a coat  
And slaps it wet and icy  
Into my hungry palm.



# Church Camp

Ernest Wickersham

Sagging cabins, white paint peeling,  
on crooked concrete blocks.  
Weeds uncut growing high.

Cobwebbed corners. Ecstasy in the  
top bunk, alone thinking of Lisa,  
flies walk the ceiling.

Write this, your darkest secret,  
your very own sin (no one else's),  
on white paper.

Cast it in the burning fire and  
watch your sins and others',  
sparks in the night,  
float away through tall trees.

It's 4th of July in Indiana,  
Twelve years old, joyous time!  
Life eternal, your sins are gone,  
burned away in the night, washed of sin!

Ride a paddle wheeler on Lake Webster.  
Ask a date, will Lisa go with you?  
Take a dollar, buy her ice cream.

Orange (was it sherbert?) on a stick,  
push it up a gray white, smudged-with-prints,  
paper tube—church camp delight.

Say good night in the shadows,  
everyone watching.  
Dark white cabins waiting,  
girls and boys, set apart.

Climb the ladder to your lonely refuge,  
lie on your stomach thinking of Lisa.  
I wonder if the flies will tell.



**Zero**

**Rick Callahan**

# The Memory of Andrew

Barbara Riggs

It was a small family cemetery, enclosed by a white picket fence. It sat on the side of a hill overlooking a rustic log cabin. One lonely little grave with a wooden cross was positioned off to one side. In front of this marker she knelt, and placed a bouquet of iris and honeysuckle picked from her garden. Tears streamed down her wrinkled face, and I watched her mouth a silent prayer.

I had gone there with Grandmother many times before. Death had never touched me and I had never really understood the ritual or the tears. But this time, in the summer of my eleventh year, it became clear. I knelt beside her, and together we visited Uncle Andrew.

\*\*\*\*

My grandparents' farm was a beautiful, exciting place. There were always many activities to keep me busy. I got to help milk the cows, feed the chickens, and draw water from the well. My cousins—David, Corky and Johnny—visited too, and together we filled our days with playing hide-and-seek, building tree houses, and swinging on grapevines in the woods. My uncles were often there, helping Grandfather with the planting and the harvesting, while my aunts kept busy helping Grandmother can beans and tomatoes and put up homemade jams and jellies. That year I was old enough to help, too, and as I did, I became aware of a presence I had never felt before—Uncle Andrew, who had been dead for over forty years. His family never forgot him. They kept his memory alive by the way they spoke of him. They all missed him, but no one as much as Grandmother. That summer I heard HER story and it made me aware of not only the injustice of death, but also of the beauty of life.

The farm was nestled in the hills of southern Kentucky, not far from the Tennessee line. To get there, we had to travel two miles on a dirt lane, not much more than a cow path. Near the end the lane made a sharp left turn and there, surrounded by love and activity, stood THE OLD HOME PLACE, built by my grandfather the first year he and Grandmother were married.

A garden on the left of the lane was fenced in with chicken wire and full of ripe red and yellow tomatoes. A grove of trees just behind the garden hid the spring-house. Gurgling forth from the side of a hill, icy spring water ran into a cement enclosure keeping crocks of butter and pitchers of milk dewy cold.

An oak spread its branches between the garden and the cabin. Beneath its shade stood the well-house, the bucket attached to yards of

looped rope hanging from a nail, positioned uncomfortably close to a wasp's nest.

\*\*\*\*

"Thank you for drawin' the water, Barbara Ann. I heated all there was in the bucket to wash the dishes," Grandmother explained, drying and putting the last plate away in the cupboard. "Andrew always loved to draw the water. It was his favorite chore."

There was that name again—Andrew. I knew he must be part of the family, but I didn't know who he was.

"Will you throw them scraps out to the chickens? I'm goin' to work on my quilt awhile before we have to start fixin' dinner." Grandmother settled into her rocking chair in the living room and began to sort through her sewing basket.

Grandmother's cats ran out from under the porch when my foot hit the back step. They seemed to know when the scraps came through the door. I tossed them a few pieces of cornbread and threw the rest over the fence for the chickens.

A horn sounded as an old Ford truck pulled into the yard. My Uncle Dewey, David's dad, waved hello and my cousins, David and Johnny, piled out of the back and ran to greet me.

"Hi, Barbara." David was the leader of our group. At twelve, he was the oldest and we followed him without question. "Go put on your jeans and come help us work on the tree house." I ran off toward the house to change my clothes. Ten-year-old Johnny, who was always thinking about food, called to me as I went, "Come out through the kitchen and bring a box of salt. We'll raid Grandma's tomato patch."

I put on my jeans and an old shirt and headed back out the door. Grandma stopped me, saying, "Barbara Ann, don't forget the box of salt." I looked at her sheepishly, turning to walk toward the kitchen. Grandma's brown eyes twinkled as she looked up from her sewing. "It's all right, honey. I heard Johnny ask you to get it, and he's right; Andrew once told me that nothing tasted quite as good as a tomato picked right from the vine, warm from the sun. Get the salt box, but be sure to bring it back when you're done."

I skipped out the back door and over to where David and Johnny were playing mumbly peg.

"You get the salt?" Johnny asked, wiping the dirt off his knife blade onto his pant leg.

"Grandma reminded me," I nodded. "She heard you and said it was O.K."

David threw one long leg over the chicken wire fence surrounding the garden. "Come on! Here, Barbara Ann, let me help you over."

"Wouldn't it be easier to go through the gate?" I asked, sticking my foot into the chicken wire and letting David help me over the top.

"Yeah, I guess, but the tomatoes wouldn't taste as good then," David rationalized.

The three of us each picked a big yellow tomato and sank down on the ground to begin our feast. We passed the salt box around and

bit into the ripe tomatoes, dribbling juice down our chins with every bite.

"David," I began as I bit into my second tomato. "Who's Andrew? Grandma keeps talking about him."

"He's our uncle," Johnny piped up.

"Well, he's not really our uncle." I could see that David was settling into a comfortable position to begin one of his long explanations. "He WOULD have been our uncle if he had lived, but he died a long time ago."

"How did he die? And why does everyone still talk about him like he's still alive?" I asked.

Johnny shrugged his shoulders and reached to pick his third tomato. "All I know is that he was older than my ma, but younger than Corky's pa, Uncle Bill. I don't know how he died though."

I looked from him to David. "Do you know, David?"

"Well, I don't know ALL of it. It's a sore subject around here, but I've picked up on most of it, I think. Seems when Andrew was a little boy, he cut off his toe while he was choppin' wood. A little while later, he died. That's all I know."

"That's why Grandma won't let any of us youngin's chop wood," Johnny added.

"But people don't die from cutting off a toe," I protested. "Did he bleed to death?" I looked back to David for the answer.

"No, no! It wasn't right away after he cut off his toe. It happened later—a week or two, I think. Say, listen, if you want to know, why don't you just ask Grandma? She'll tell ya. Come on, let's go finish that tree house." David stood up and started out the garden gate with Johnny following close behind. I knew he was changing the subject. He didn't like not being able to answer.

Johnny looked back over his shoulder. "You comin'?"

"I'll be there in a few minutes. I've got to take the salt box back in the house. Go on, I'll catch up." I closed the gate behind me and started toward the house. Maybe I SHOULD ask Grandma.

I put the salt box on the table and walked into the next room. Grandma was still sitting in her rocking chair, the quilt she was working on spread across her lap. She looked up when I entered. "Were the tomatoes good?"

"Great, Grandma. Andrew was right." I hugged her and sat down on the floor at her feet. "Grandma, tell me about Andrew."

Grandmother looked down at me; her brown eyes were warm and a little wet, as if they were filling up with tears. She stuck her needle in her sewing and set it aside, folding her hands in her lap. "I would have thought your cousins would have told you. Did you ask them?"

"They only know that he cut his toe chopping wood and that he died, so I decided to ask you. You and Grandpa and Uncle Bill and all the rest talk about him all the time. I want to know about him, Grandma. What was he like? What happened to him?"

Grandmother reached down and patted my cheek with her cool, wrinkled hand. "He was a lot like you, in many ways. He was kind and gentle and full of love for everyone." She folded her hands back in her lap and looked out the window, past the lacy curtains into the yard. She

began to talk, but I knew she wasn't talking to me anymore, she was remembering Andrew.

"Andrew was named for your grandpa. Grandpa's name is Thomas Andrew. Andrew's name was Andrew Thomas. He looked like Tommy, too. He had blue eyes and red hair. He followed his pa everywhere. Andrew always seemed older than he was. He was sensitive to other people's feelings, too. He'd say, 'Ma, you work too hard. You should rest more.' Then he'd run off to draw the water or carry in more firewood.

"Virgil, Dewey and Bill were older than Andrew. When they'd sneak off to go fishin', Andrew would try to cover up for them by doin' their chores. When I'd find out, he'd say, 'Ma, don't be mad. I don't mind.' He was a good boy.

"When Bill was ten and Andrew was eight, Bill had whoopin' cough real bad. I sat by his bed day and night and prayed and prayed and after a long time, he started gettin' better. I hadn't had much sleep and Andrew, as usual, was tryin' to help every way he could think of. He knew I needed kindlin' for the cook stove, so he went out to chop some wood. I was sittin' beside Bill's bed when I heard Andrew scream. I ran outside and found him sittin' on the ground, holdin' his foot. The ax had missed its mark and split Andrew's big toe in two. Half of it was jist hangin' off.

"Tommy hitched up the wagon and took him into town to the doctor. Old Doc Cook said there wasn't much he could do. He jist washed it off and bandaged it up and sent Andrew home to bed.

"A few days later, Andrew's jaws locked up and he could only talk with his teeth clenched tight together. He was runnin' a real high fever and he was so thirsty, but every time he tried to drink, he got choked. Your ma, Rosie, was fourteen years old then and she tried to help me with him. She'd spoon water into his mouth, but Andrew couldn't swallow it. He couldn't open his mouth to cough and we were afraid he'd choke to death. We finally gave up and jist put a wet rag on his lips. When he'd sleep, his jaws would unlock, but if we tried to get any water down him then, he'd wake up and start to choke again.

"Finally, all we had left was to pray. I begged the Lord to spare him, but I guess He needed Andrew more than we did. Andrew looked over at your ma, sittin' next to his bed and said, 'I wuv you, Wosie.' Then he looked up at me and said, 'It's all right. I'm not scared.' Then he jist closed his eyes. We buried him up yonder on the hill.

"A couple of months later, Doc Cook's little boy stepped on a rusty nail. Doc gave him a shot of the new tetanus vaccine, jist on the market. He never even got sick. Doc told Tommy if that medicine had been out when Andrew got hurt, he wouldn't have died.

"But it wasn't. And he did."

Grandmother looked back down at me. "Would you like to meet Andrew, Barbara Ann? I think we have time to walk up the hill afore we start fixin' dinner."

I nodded my head. "Yes, Grandma, I think I'd like that."

Grandmother rose from her chair and walked out onto the porch. She paused at the edge of the steps to stoop down and pluck a handful

of pink iris and sweet-smelling honeysuckle from her garden, careful to choose only the freshest and most perfect blooms. Then she stepped from the porch and started off up the hill next to the house.

I, too, reached into the garden and picked a small yellow rosebud, not quite fully opened. Then I turned and followed Grandmother up the hill and through the gate into the small cemetery. She knelt in front of a little wooden cross, and in front of this she placed the flowers, patting them into place on the little grassy mound.

“Andrew, I’d like you to meet Rosie’s daughter, Barbara Ann.”

I bent and placed the rosebud next to the other flowers, then I knelt beside my grandmother and slipped my hand inside hers.

# For Gary

Linda Lewis

From the very beginning,  
you must have sensed that  
you weren't what I was  
hoping for. Guess you  
realized you'd have to try  
a little harder. . .scheme;  
formulate a plan to win  
your mother over.

Did it hurt you to know  
that I was building dreams  
around pink, pigtails  
and pretty patent leather?  
Or was it merely a challenge?

So shrewd. . .truly ingenious,  
the way you withheld your  
newborn cry. . .part of your plot.  
How I panicked as you staged  
your dramatic delivery!  
Seconds became hours.  
Then they placed you in my arms  
and I saw for myself that you  
were already playing your games.  
Those blue saucer eyes staring  
into my soul. . .all-knowing,  
yet somehow, forgiving.

Of all my children, son,  
you were the one bathed  
in pure tears of joy. . .  
the one I held tightly  
and refused to let go of. . .  
the one that listened  
intently to all of my  
whispered promises.



# The WHO of an Owl

Linda Lewis

the WHO of an owl  
echoes through the hollow night  
questioning the moon

# Canopy of Grey

Linda Lewis

canopy of grey  
fog settling on distant fields  
tucking in the night

# The End of Summer

Robert Aull

Over a dull fan of smoke drifting lazily away from his fire, the sun set, and he brushed withered leaves from a vine wound along the rusted fence. The end of summer, secured. A pair of crows chased one another above his head, turning clumsily in the failing light, dipping into cool ground air and between bare branches. As he watched, they flew along a row of telephone poles toward the setting sun, threading in and out of the swaying wires, calling to one another in harsh, lonely voices. The end of summer, they cried, until he could no longer hear them above the faint crackle of burning leaves in his fire. He turned to go in, and in the reddish glow of sunset his brown, matted beard seemed to catch fire and set off sparks from the lighter ends. He wore the clothes of a carpenter—red flannel shirt, worn jeans, steel-toed boots—but his hands were smooth, and his eyes somehow too soft.

On the kitchen radio someone had called in time to win a vacation to Florida. It was a woman, and in the excitement she screamed into the phone until her voice became only static, like the sound of stiff paper kindled in a fireplace. Harris grinned, pulling at the strings of his tobacco pouch. He filled the pipe and tamped the tobacco in place with a firm curl of his thumb, while the woman swore she had never won anything before in her life. He lit the bowl and exhaled a great cloud, drawing it out. What did it matter? Someone always won. He studied a small splinter in the palm of his hand. The rake, probably.

And there was the toaster again. Jean said they'd probably burn down the house, and if he didn't think he could fix it, could they *please* throw it out and buy another? He bit into the pipe stem for a second, biting to hear it crack, before stopping himself and setting it down so quickly that ashes scattered across the kitchen table. He hated that, when she acted as if money didn't matter. Of course it didn't to her, she made enough, he knew. But if he could keep the expenses down, why not? At least until he could get some position, associate faculty, a lab assistant—he wasn't particular anymore.

He picked up the pipe and neatly swept the ashes into his hand, carrying them carefully to the sink. In the kitchen window hung a small stained-glass decoration, and through it he could see smoke rolling in different colors across the back yard. It hung in the air, turning slowly, as there was little wind to push it away, and yet in the dirt alley behind the fence three boys tried to fly a plastic kite. It had no lift—it wasn't the season—and as they ran it skipped along the ground behind them and became tangled in a bush. They nearly tore it in half, yanking frantically on the string. In March it would fly, but to them March was an

indefinite thing and so far away that they would rather run with the tattered kite, shouting to make up for its failure to leave the ground. Harris found himself staring, fascinated by their play.

How old does a man become?

He left the kitchen absorbed in this thought and overlooked the red light of their answering machine, blinking slowly at the end of the hall.

When she knew for certain, she would be happy, he thought. How could they call it an "accident"? He could continue renovating the house, restoring the beautiful woodwork and leaded-glass windows, building their home. It was a perfect house for their family, he thought, a strong, old house. He glanced into the unfinished dining room, peering through translucent plastic wrap he'd put up over doorways and vents to keep the dust contained. The bare plaster walls reflected the last light of the sun. He had removed every bit of wallpaper, filled every crack. The baseboards were stacked in a corner, stripped and ready for sanding. The windows he had removed and refitted, putting in new weights and cords. They stretched from floor to ceiling, with a single coat of primer and clear, new panes.

He untaped the plastic and felt around for his tool bag. He carried it into the foyer, then selected a paint scraper and began furiously chipping at the green baseboard trim. There was no saying when the university would come through with work, if at all. The faded paint came off slowly. The people who lived here before must have been complete idiots, he repeated to himself for the thousandth time, secretly grateful that the sale had been through a realtor, and that they had never met the previous owners. The realtor had been noticeably embarrassed by the colors and drop ceilings; he had constantly deferred to Harris as "a man who knows what this old house needs."

If she let them know soon enough, they could make arrangements at work. She didn't have to miss any more time than was absolutely necessary.

The doorbell rang, and he rose stiffly.

The upstairs would be perfect, with new wallpaper, anything Jean liked. He could feel that it would be good news. He liked her doctor, and this seemed to guarantee it—she would also argue on his behalf. Jean would be home at ten and he would be waiting in his grey suit, already pressed and hanging on the bathroom door. Then dinner in the new Greek place on Pennsylvania, near the War Monument, and a carriage ride after . . . he knit his brows. She would have to pay, and he never felt as comfortable as he said he was, least of all when they tried awkwardly to pass money between them. He sighed.

"Sexist," he muttered, wiping his hands on a rag before opening the door.

"It's a dollar seventy-five, Mr. Werner."

Harris looked at the paperboy closely, finding in his face a resemblance to one of the boys he had seen.

"Is that your brother trying to fly a kite in the alley?"

"Yeah. But they broke it already."

"That's too bad," Harris sympathized, handing over two bills. He waved away the change. "He should have waited until spring."

The boy nodded.

"Have you seen the work we've been doing on the house?" Harris asked, brightening. "You haven't seen it for awhile, have you?"

"I gotta collect my bill, Mr. Werner."

"You go right ahead."

Harris returned to the foyer. Crouching down again, he stopped and listened to the boy's footsteps on the sidewalk. The traffic on Washington Street hummed. He looked down at the baseboard and felt suddenly tired. He would have liked to show him the dining room. Slowly, carefully, he gathered up the tool bag and carried it back to its place behind the plastic. He would vacuum up the foyer before she got home.

In the living room he went and stood by the television set, but nothing would be on, and he didn't even bother to check the paper. Not on Thursday nights, as the networks hadn't found an audience yet. He liked to think that he watched television very rarely anymore, and then only educational shows, but he knew that was not entirely true. As he waited on word from the university, waiting for someone to die, it seemed, he found himself more and more in the recliner for an entire evening, too apathetic to even get up and change stations. But he had not allowed Jean to buy a new remote-control set and only reached out to touch the dust on their picture tube. It didn't matter how many times he cleaned it—something about static electricity.

After watching a thin line of clouds darken over the packing plant tower, a last sunset effect, he stretched and began walking from room to room, switching on lights as he passed. Evening came earlier each day now, and he could not bear to sit in shadows, just as he could not watch documentaries that showed coal miners moving in black tunnels with nothing but tiny lamps. How could they work cut off from everything, nearly buried already? It made him shudder but did not explain why he left on every light in the house. Was he afraid? Jean had never commented on it other than to say that it wasted money, which she knew would worry him more.

He snapped on the master bedroom and hallway lights, and behind his back the red light pulsed at the end of the hall, telling of a message, waiting.

Perhaps he felt that something went on in the lighted rooms, that unseen but warm people moved quietly in the clean, neat spaces of his world. Simply to enter the upstairs bedrooms excited him with ideas on how one could be converted into a nursery. A bookshelf below the window, a chest built into the wall under that. Jean would argue that it was too early, but perhaps a telescope there, just off the line of the house at an angle that let in moonlight. He drew in a deep breath. It would be fine.

None of the other houses had lights on yet, and when he pulled aside a curtain to check the front porch light, they seemed empty and forlorn. He wanted to walk again. Was there time? In the pocket of his overcoat he found a cheap railroad watch; he noticed dirt stains on the coat and wondered what Jean would say if she saw them. Nothing, probably, and he didn't blame her for it—she worked too hard to notice what he was up to. She had not even realized when he finished the downstairs

bathroom. He knew she liked it, really, and as nothing seemed to happen to him—nothing like the stories of financial ruin and infidelity she repeated from the office—he did not mind if she overlooked something. He put the watch back and put on his coat, patting the pockets for tobacco.

He pulled the front door shut behind him, making sure it locked, and the red light in the hall continued to flicker, winking at his escape.

As he walked, leaves crumbled underfoot, and the streetlamps suddenly came on, buzzing like broken marquee lights. He thought the city could be pretty that way, sometimes. Along the houses a blue neon glow lit the half-curtained windows, with flashes to mark a change of stations, or commercial interruption. Harris passed someone working beneath a station wagon in the light of a utility lamp, and he could hear tools scraping against concrete. Ahead, the skyline burned bright orange above a row of expressway lights that wound along the east edge of his neighborhood before turning south toward the inner city. As he left the sidewalk and followed a footpath to the parkway, a car jammed with neighborhood watch volunteers drove by and honked. He waved back.

In the parkway the earth smelled damp and rich, and he could hear creek water tumbling down limestone terraces. The city had years before cleared all but a thin break of trees lining the creek, and there elms, maples, and willows awkwardly held on to the eroding banks. He followed a thin trail worn to ruts beneath bicycle tires, and in the darkness it seemed almost like an enchanted place, until a shift in the wind brought the pungent odor of sewage from the creek. The storm sewers emptied there, and when there had not been a great deal of rain, the creek flowed very slowly, choked with weeds. When the rains came it swelled, and the city had dumped truckloads of old brick to strengthen the banks—to stop the erosion before it reached two smooth, tar boulevards that paralleled the creek on its course to a larger, more tepid waterway.

At a bend in the creek forming a small peninsula, he sat down on the ground and lit his pipe. On the opposite bank rested an immense pile of bricks, far more than necessary to slow the erosion there. A storage area, since the city had run out of places to put the old bricks, torn up from the street or hauled away from the ruin of huge warehouses. Harris smoked slowly, letting his mind wander. Which had been part of the street? Was that one the keystone to an arch? He had always admired the huge redbrick factories and warehouses of the midwest—perhaps only for their colossal ugliness—and it worried him to see them pulled down, to be dumped along the banks of a slow, oily creek.

He lay down on his back, pressing his overcoat to the damp earth. A wind rose, rustling the underbrush and bringing a scent of leaves left somewhere to burn themselves out in an ash can. He shut his eyes, carefully counting out one minute. When he opened them again, the stars were laid out before him like silver coins. His stars. He found Ursa Major just above the lip of the horizon, and followed its outer edge to Polaris, each throbbing in the liquid night. There were no clouds, and above his head Pegasus leapt clear of the Milky Way, a smudge of white like a faint breath.

And here was he Ptolemy again, scanning embers of light scattered across an endless black, lying on the edge of a dark sea which rose

and fell in the rhythm of time without exception. The earth beneath him he felt to be slowing, the handiwork of the stars wearing away in endless motion, just as bricks wore away in the foul water of the creek, crumbling to clay again. An aircraft gently pulsed across the horizon, lost among the fixed points sifted there. He did not feel bothered by this intrusion, but somehow, for a moment, not part of it. It reached the horizon, and the red flashing light disappeared, leaving Harris suddenly disturbed—as though he had overlooked something.

In first-quarter phase the moon grew smaller, climbing the branches of a tall elm on his right. He found Cassiopeia, and Cepheus, but the moon continued to climb, and the glow of the expressway lights seemed to extinguish the stars. A smell of sewage came again, and he rose to brush the dirt from his coat.

When the doctor tells her it is there, growing, then she will want it, he thought, tapping out his pipe against a rock. I will work harder and build a home for generations, a beautiful home. He glanced into the sky again and suddenly remembered a winter night outside the radio telescope in North Carolina, admiring Orion with Doctor Ashcault. The old astronomer had been puffing furiously at his own pipe for several moments, and Harris had wanted to ask him what he was thinking, to discover what ideas came to mind when a man with his knowledge looked up at the diamond-like points. Taking his pipe from his mouth, Ashcault had startled him by answering the unspoken question.

“My boy thinks Orion looks more like an hourglass than a hunter. I think he’s right.”

As he turned to leave, Harris stumbled over a loose brick, and angrily snatched it up and flung it over the creek onto the pile. In the darkness, he heard it tumble down and settle with a quiet splash.

He had left all the lights on in the house, and the radio, but he stepped out back first and raked over the embers of his fire. Sparks leapt up and threatened to ignite a new layer of leaves the wind spread over the yard.

Showered, and in the grey suit, he touched the television tube again. The house was immaculate, and he looked it over with an air of satisfaction. By his railroad watch, hidden in the watch pocket without a chain, it was ten. Struck with an idea, he moved quickly through the rooms, switching all the lights off again, to surprise her. In the kitchen he poured two glasses of wine, and set them on a small table in the foyer. He leaned against the wall and sipped his wine, peeking out the front window . . . the street was empty. He heard a click as he moved and suddenly remembered the green paint chips beneath his feet. As he bent over to scoop them up, he stopped.

From the end of the hall a red light came on, went off, and come on again, urging him.

The recording was scratchy. “Harris, I’m sorry, this is Jean and it’s, lets see, seven o’clock, and there’s no way I’m going to finish up here in time for us to have dinner. In fact, I’m going to have to stay in the company suite at the Hilton with Sheila, so we can write the last press releases. I’m really sorry, baby, I just—”

The machine cut her off, then beeped again.

“Yes, it’s me again, and I wanted to let you know that the test was negative . . . she thinks it’s just stress, but Doctor DeVries said to wait a week, and if it hasn’t come, to give them a call for another check. But, it was *absolutely* negative, so we can relax now, and oh, I’ll be home tomorrow at—”

The machine cut her off.

In the darkness he upset his wine glass and it fell over with a quiet splash, cracking on the hardwood floor of the foyer. He would wipe it up later. Around midnight the neighborhood watch patrol drove by and flashed its light over the house, but all was darkness, and crumbling.

# Dress Ball

Robert Aull

dance, black shoes,  
dance,  
the velvet gloves  
stand in hushed applause;  
lift skirts  
and silks twist skin  
to curls;  
undone  
the ribbon bows down,  
a loveliness  
swells.

spin, dark shoes,  
a waltz begins;  
the night's sleeves are tucked,  
and pinned, a wriggling  
dancer bites;  
the belt loosens a bellow  
of love  
as the music ends,  
while later,  
a rising moon  
undresses the night.





**Untitled**

**Rick Evans**

# Song of Himself

Marian Schafer

John Grayson, Sr. stood on the dock and waited for his son. It was early June and black flies were persistent. He noticed dark clouds gathering in the west. A breath of wind rose over the big waters of the North Channel of Lake Huron. Johnny would be arriving soon. Yesterday he telephoned to say he was leaving Clayton City early in the morning and would drive straight through to Birch Island Station, Ontario—about twelve hours. His father was not to worry. He'd hire an Indian to bring him over to the island.

John Sr. strained his ears for the sound of a motor boat. Although age had dulled his hearing, he could still make out the mewing of a seagull and the lapping of water on the rocky shore. He walked back to the stone seawall and stared up at the sky through the low-hanging branches of a weeping willow.

He wondered why Johnny was coming. Did he need money? Was it his business? Perhaps something about Lucy, his wife? He thought back several years when Johnny was married to Nancy but attracted to Lucy, a new salesperson in their firm. She was beautiful, vivacious, and also married. Nevertheless, she went after Johnny like a bass after a mayfly. John Sr. never forgot a conversation with her:

"Mr. Grayson, I want to be your daughter-in-law," she declared while staring up at him with sparkling eyes.

He answered her softly, "That's very nice, Lucy, but I already have a daughter-in-law."

Lucy was not deterred. She pursued Johnny until he left Nancy and moved in with her. The drone of a motor interrupted John's recollection, and he walked out on the dock in time to see an approaching boat in the distance. Johnny, in the bow, raised his hand in a silent greeting. Lester Mawanebo, chief of the Ojibway Indian band, skillfully docked the boat and left the motor in idle while Johnny disembarked with his duffle bag. Lester put the boat in reverse and turned it into a channel between several rock islands across the straight. Quickly he disappeared from view.

John Sr. peered intently into his son's face and asked, "How are you, boy?"

"Not good, Dad." Johnny fumbled in his shirt pocket for a cigarette. His hands shook. He seemed pale and thin.

"Come on over here. Let's sit down and talk." John Sr. led him to a couple of wooden lawn chairs beneath the willow tree. "Just what is going on?"

"Last week after you and Mom came up here, I couldn't take it any longer. I told Lucy I was moving out, and the next day I did."

"When are you going back?"

"I'm not. I'm done with her."

"I know it hasn't been good since you married her, but why do you want to end it now?"

"I'm sick to death of her nagging . . . spending . . . keeping me on the go all the time. I'm worn out."

"Where are you staying?"

"I've rented an apartment near the office, but she won't leave me alone. She calls constantly. I can't work. I can't sleep. She says she wants to talk, but all our conversations turn into arguments. I thought if I came up here, I could get some rest. I've got to think about myself for a change. All I've thought about is Lucy."

"So you're going to leave her," John Sr. replied. "Two divorces in eight years—it's disgraceful. In our time there weren't divorces. We stuck it out no matter how bad. But I'm not surprised." His voice softened. "Your mother and I knew you couldn't keep going."

Silently Johnny listened and tears sprang to his eyes. He knew his father was almost seventy-five years old, but in thirty years his appearance hadn't changed. He still parted his taupe hair on the side and combed it smooth over his temples. Tortoiseshell glasses rested on a straight nose. His jawline remained firm and well-defined. He spoke tersely in a tenor voice.

"Stay as long as you like. Your mother opened the west cabin this morning. The power's on—hot water—she put a few things on ice. Why don't you clean up and come over for dinner?"

"Thanks, Dad. I appreciate that." Johnny gathered up his belongings and John Sr. watched him cross the lawn on the way to the cabin. His only child. Perhaps he'd indulged him too much—cars, boats, vacations, a house next door to theirs, an open checkbook to cover deficits. Maybe he'd demanded too little in return. John stiffened when he remembered overhearing Nancy's words from years ago: "I never wanted to have these children. You and your parents wanted them."

Yet after Johnny divorced her, she stayed on in their house, raising their sons; and she had never remarried. Thank God, Johnny had his sons. And, thank God, Lucy had signed a prenuptial agreement. After their marriage she'd taken control of everything—Johnny's business, his money, even his friends, who'd seen her tirades: "I'm not working anymore, Johnny Grayson. From now on I'm going to be the kept woman. You'd better earn lots of money because I'm going to spend it," she'd say, shaking her finger at him—her eyes snapping and her voice railing.

John mused about his son's future. Maybe he'd set Johnny up again—one more time . . .

For several days Johnny comforted himself with solitude. He'd readied his cabin for the season. It sat on a rocky strip of land jutting out into the bay. During a calm night he could hear waves lapping beneath his bedroom windows and sometimes his sleep was interrupted by the haunting wail of a distant loon. The lilacs were blooming; their fragrance mingled with the scent of spruce and pine. He put in the dock and got his boat running. In the early mornings he fished inlets, green with the reflection of birches and firs. He trolled blue channels under cloudless

skies during the early evenings and watched sunsets from the western deck of the cabin while he fried potatoes, onions, and fish for lonely suppers.

When being apart lost its appeal, he hiked the path to his father's boathouse on the north side of the island. As he neared his parents' cabin, he saw his mother on the back porch. She stopped sweeping the steps and called out a good morning to him. He stopped at the bottom step and leaned on the railing.

"Are you going to phone Lucy today?" his mother asked.

"Nope. I don't want to talk to her," Johnny replied. "I've been thinking. I'm leaving her for sure, but I want her to file."

"She's really been all wrong for you," his mother agreed.

"I'll work out a settlement that will satisfy both of us," he said, thinking aloud. "I'll pay half the mortgage on the house as long as she and her daughters want to stay in it—but I won't if someone moves in with her. When she's ready to move, we'll sell it and I'll take the equity. She can keep everything else. I just want out."

"I'll be glad not to share this place with her anymore," his mother commented.

With relief in his voice, Johnny said, "Thank God, Dad insisted on that agreement or she'd be after this island, too."

"I hope you can get everything squared away with no more trouble from her. I know she thinks she loves you."

"I don't love her anymore, and I never will again. She's killed every ounce of feeling I ever had," he stated emphatically. "You know, I've thought about everyone but myself these past few years. Now it's time to think about me."

"What are your plans for the day?" his mother inquired.

"Not anything in particular, but I am going to Little Current," he replied. "Do you need anything?"

"Nothing. I just want to get this place in order. Every season it gets harder. Don't know if I can do this for many more years."

She began to sweep again, her slight body almost overpowered by the broom.

"I'll be back in a little while. Save the heavy stuff for me. If there's time, I'll give you a hand," he called to her over his shoulder.

His mother sighed. From past experience she knew not to count on Johnny's help. She watched him disappear down the boathouse path. He followed the stone steps leading to a boardwalk spanning clear, shallow water where Siberian iris grew. It was cool in the shadows of granite boulders covered with blankets of ferns. His entry into the boathouse startled swallows nesting in the rafters. They soared for the safety of out-of-doors as he reversed the motor of the Silver Line and banked it steeply into the channel. With the throttle wide open, he drove the twelve miles to Little Current.

Early in the yachting season, the town quiet, he savored the walk along Bay Street with its two-story buildings, a post office, and a branch of the Bank of Canada. Merchants in shops were ready for business—high-priced woolens and gourmet foods for the yachting crowd. The air

was clean and cool. For a moment he closed his eyes and turned his face toward the warmth of the sun.

He stopped for lunch at the Anchor Inn and sat at a table facing a front window where he could see Lake Huron through spaces between buildings across the street.

A light voice from behind caused him to turn his head quickly. "Are you ready to order?"

"Uh . . . wait a minute . . .," he stammered. "You caught me off guard. May I see a menu?"

The waitress laid one on the table. It was typed on yellow paper and encased in a plastic cover—1950's—like the rest of the town—juke boxes, linoleum floors, outdated cash registers.

"Should I come back?" she asked.

Something in her voice caused him to look up. Instantly he liked her. She was small with a delicate face framed by dark curls. A smile warmed her hazel eyes. He ordered a hamburger and french fries that he garnished with vinegar, Canadian style.

She served him eagerly, and they talked about the coming summer season—the weather during the past winter when the bay was frozen solid—the Indians' easy access to the island camps, either afoot or on snowmobiles. She told him of several Indians who had drowned when they broke through the ice during an early spring thaw. Her name was Dusty. A six-year-old daughter lived with grandparents. A divorce four years ago, and yes, she would have a drink with him after work.

After eating lunch, he left a generous tip and headed back to the island. The wind picked up, and as the boat's keel rhythmically slapped each wave, he planned the rest of the day.

There would be no time to help his mother. He would put fresh sheets on the bed and gather an armload of lilacs for the pine table in the dining room. He'd stop at the grocery in Whitefish Falls for a couple of steaks and some candles. He would lay a fire; there might be a chill that evening.

And then he would clean up and take his boat to the Indian dock at Birch Island Station where his van was parked. He'd drive to Little Current and meet Dusty around four o'clock. They'd have a few drinks at that new little bar down by the government pier. The days were getting longer. It would be light for several hours. She'd mentioned something about her daughter living with grandparents. He visualized Dusty's dark face, the trim little figure. She would come back to the island with him and . . .

As the boat cut a silver path through the rolling waters, he reflected on the past few days. He had enjoyed solitude and freedom to do as he pleased. He felt wonderful. Life was simple; he was in control again. Maybe he'd stay a few weeks longer. The prospect of a summer in Ontario bathed him in feelings of joy and harmony.

Soon he passed Sugar Loaf Mountain. Then he could make out his island in the distance—a low shape at the entrance to the bay—the cabin perched on its rocky peninsula like a lighthouse guiding him home. Once again he told himself to forget everyone—Nancy, the boys, Lucy, his parents. He really needed to think about himself for a change.

# Chaperoning the Prom

Barbara Koons

Trailing sunset ribbons,  
calypso balloons rise and swirl  
in pink and fuschia flamenco,  
round and bold as notes of song.  
Dancing cheek to cheek  
with the black tuxedo sky  
they soar into mooncrescent arms,  
brazenly flirting with stars,

while I stand  
tethered by gravity,  
tied down by reality,  
bound to earth by life, death, bone, breath;  
straining to dance with concrete feet,  
to raise stone arms to the sky,  
all the while wondering why;  
and how it would feel to be so free,  
to rise with a helium heart.

# Waiting For The Baby

Barbara Koons

Daughter

you outgrew my body  
my arms, my love;  
hung me far back in your closet  
behind mismatched outfits and old prom gowns,  
folded and packed me into your attic,  
limp and wrinkled as faded ribbon,  
walked over the floor of my soul  
and closed the door,  
forgetting  
that all the while you were growing  
I was sewing:  
stitching, hemming, knitting, shaping  
soft fabrics, yarns, colors,  
to wrap and warm your days and nights.

Now, you're growing again,  
soon to be outgrown by your own  
little one, and while your're growing,  
I'm still sewing,  
waiting,  
here in darkness,  
alone in silence,  
weaving fragile threads,  
scraps of your childhood,  
into a quilt of love you'll soon be needing.  
Listening  
for your footsteps,  
your hand on the door,  
I wait  
with the patience of generations,  
enduring as the old maple rocker  
whose rungs have drawn life's rhythm from the floor.  
Unfolding dreams, embroidering lullabies,  
I'm waiting,  
waiting,  
waiting.

# Ultraviolet

Barbara Koons

Fallen Leaf Lake,  
California

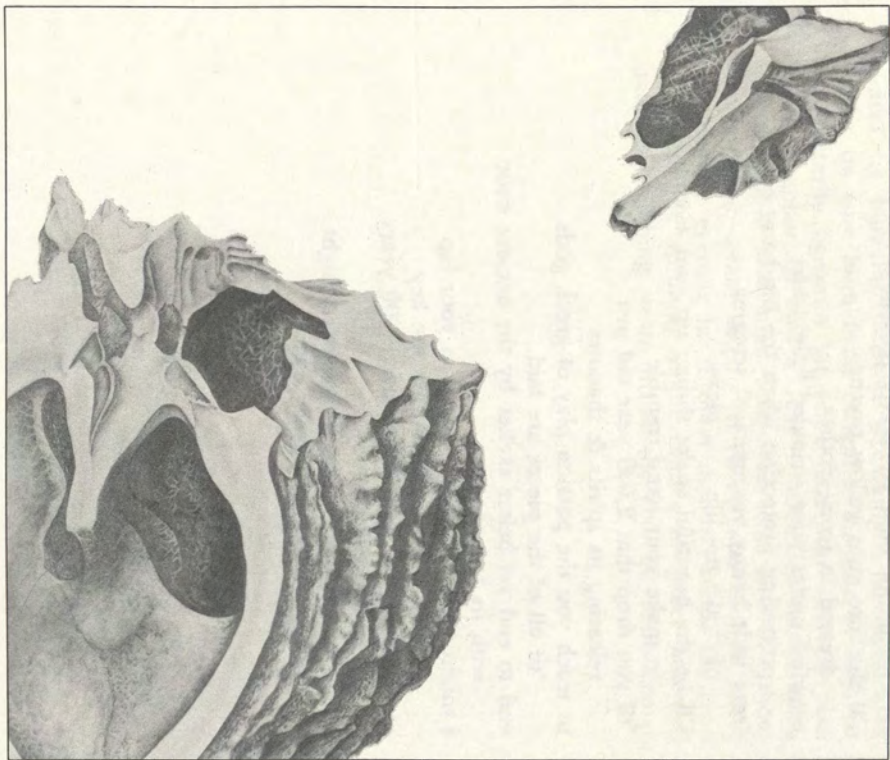
Long ago

before time and space and lightning,  
before thunder and wonder and midnight,  
before dawn,  
when the universe was opaque,  
fluorescent, iridescent,  
light  
blended freely with matter,  
light dissolving water,  
water suffusing light,  
releasing, re-absorbing, whirling;  
until the blue bowl spun, full of plums,  
and spilled a shower of orchids,  
roses, violets, lilacs,  
into filaments of green still unfurled.

So that even now

while we fill our mouths with sunwarm fruit,  
lie down in flowers,  
gaze at stars,  
ultraviolet's ancestors breathe  
the spark of expanding galaxies  
into helium balloons,  
amethyst echoes  
of the bang we never heard  
still ringing in our ears,  
like a carillon now,  
chiming twilight's purple tones.





**Untitled**

**Angela J. Balsler**

# Manson Crazy Eyes

J. B. Straw

You with those manson crazy eyes  
sayin' i might drop in on you tonight  
while you sleep in clorox heaven  
dreamin' 'bout yo' pretty porsche  
i'll slip into your yellow psyche  
dressed in ivory clothes  
crawlin' under your wrinkled knightshirt  
promising protection when the big bang comes  
from little henny youngmans' screams  
of "take my life . . . please"  
i'll be the beautiful snake sliding up your eveing thigh  
to make your hand tremble  
'til you drop that 2,000 year old urn  
releasing its spirits & shadows  
to teach you the passion play of greek gods  
'til all of the pieces are laid  
end to end yet helter skelter by the ancient door  
with its famous trap  
i might pick it all up & put it in your lap  
then lock the inside & lose the key  
so you can wait for me another 2,000 years  
in your meek tragedy  
wondrin' if i might drop in on you tonight  
with those manson crazy eyes.

# New York Note

J. B. Straw

An Artist Kicks His Shoe Against The Sidewalk Concrete & all the dirt from his field falls into the cracks dark & wet as all his hues tighten into small angry red fists & his seeds pop into amazing eyes as yellow paper flies & waves its blue-line muscles screaming wild intoxicated & settles on sum bum frum columbia institute of high ed & momentarily becomes his secret star war survival plan & then metaphorizes into a dirty window ice cream fetish & illuminates a little inner man who licks women's shoes & burrows into sleazy sad motel rooms above black alleys & watches the evening laundromat shadows across the road & imagines the spinning night clothes of génet accented & morose breathing steam inside the cool St. Americanight.

# The Committee

J. B. Straw

## AGENDA

- I. Allusions & Illusions
- II. Minutes & Tenets
- III. Alliteration & Titillation
- IV. Reports:
  - a. Meter Sub-Committee
  - b. Task Force on the Right Word
  - c. Free Verse Study Group

## MINUTES

This poem is now called to order.

We will be ruled by the laws of participatory poetry here.  
I will not inflict any out-dated authori-tarian ideas on this group.

Why should I make all the decisions when this affects  
your understanding?

Before commencing with today's agenda, there is some  
old business to settle:

What rhymes with orange?

The floor is now open for discussion.

## ADDENDUM

Since this is a participatory poem,  
please feel free to include  
your own comments:

# Mrs. Fenstermaker

R. F. Russell

Chet-the-Jet Ireland caused my trouble with Lillian Fenstermaker. Chet-the-Jet and Mrs. Ireland were pitted against Sydney and Mrs. Fenstermaker in the finals of the Parkview Country Club's mixed twosome tournament. I caddied for Chet-the-Jet, a handsome, curly-headed man who traveled faster than gossip. Since the Jet cruised 100 yards ahead of the rest of his foursome, he always reached his ball first. Some members complained that Chet-the-Jet helped himself with his foot under such circumstances. No one ever caught the Jet cheating, but the Jet rarely found a bad lie in the rough.

That sunny, August afternoon the Jet had shut down his afterburners and actually lagged behind the group. At first, I thought the Jet might be keeping tabs on Sydney, the "Grasshopper", a spindly man with exceedingly long legs and a penchant for long-billed caps. Sydney had been known to miscount his strokes on occasion, a condition attributed to his public school education. After the first nine, though, I knew the Jet wasn't auditing the Grasshopper's score. The Grasshopper had shaved a shot on number nine, and the Jet hadn't asked for a recount.

The Jet had targeted on Mrs. Fenstermaker.

Lillian Fenstermaker was no Marsha Boring, but Lillian possessed a good figure, shiny blonde hair, and a knack for makeup. Easily the second or third best-looking woman at the Club, her marriage to Sydney bespoke of her intelligence or poverty. I hoped she had married the Grasshopper for the red Corvette and new golf clubs he gave her every Christmas.

That afternoon, the Jet started the back nine two-up and cruising at sub-bogey speed. He and "Lil" chattered like teenagers. The Grasshopper stared at the ground and muttered under his breath. Mrs. Ireland, a dumpy woman who liked babies better than birdies, toiled along, hoping for an early end to the match.

The Jet stood four-up on the 14th tee. He smiled at Lil just before he sliced his ball deep into the thick woods on the right, 50 yards from the fairway. I groaned. The last time I had searched for a ball in those woods, I had contracted a poison ivy rash over 70% of my body—minimum.

As I trudged into the woods, I kept a lookout for anything resembling ivy or snakes. I heard other people tromping about, but I was certain the Jet's ball had been sacrificed to the forest gremlins and would never be seen again. Still, I searched, and as I carefully skirted a suspect bush I stopped in my tracks.

In the middle of a small clearing, the Jet and Lil were locked in a passionate kiss. The Jet's hands slid over Lil's body like busy flies searching for a place to light. She had one leg wrapped around him, and her hands cupped his buttocks squeezing at a rumba rhythm. He turned her until his back was to me. As I started to back away they broke the kiss.

Lil spotted me and smiled as the Jet nuzzled her neck. For a moment, I thought she might speak. Instead, she winked and returned to kissing the Jet. I slipped out of the clearing and pretended to hunt for the ball until the Jet appeared—flushed and smiling. No one would have suspected the Jet had just lost a \$1.25 golf ball.

The match ended on the 16th hole. I collected my fee and left the club as fast as I could. I believed people as old as the Jet and Lil couldn't act like teenagers.

I forgot about the incident until Thursday, Ladies' Day. Coincidence placed Lil's bag upon my shoulder as I stood by the first tee with Wild Man Wilts. Lil walked out of the locker room in pastel pink shorts and a white polo shirt. She smiled at me.

"Good morning," Lil said as she pulled several golf balls out of her bag.

"Good morning," I answered.

"Hold this for me." She pressed a golf ball into my hand.

"Sure."

She smiled again, patted my arm, accepted her driver, and stepped onto the tee with the other ladies.

"Hold this," Wild Man snickered and patted my arm.

"Shove it," I told Wild Man.

Wild Man laughed.

Frederick C. Wilts was a year older and half a head shorter than me. We called him "Wild Man" because Fred operated at the edges of sanity and stability. Wild Man embraced hilarity or despair, love or hatred. He enjoyed perfect days—perfectly happy or perfectly horrible. Wild either punched people or kissed them. A handshake remained the greeting of the mediocre.

All the caddies admired Wild Man. His emotional extravagance played well to teenagers beset with anxieties and pimples. While the rest of us battled the powerful feelings exploding inside us, Wild Man loosed his emotions. He rose higher and sank lower than the rest of us combined.

During the first nine holes that morning, Lil patted my arm, my hand, my shoulder, and rubbed her hip against me. When she wasn't touching me, she stood very close and smiled. I could smell her perfume—so could bees which seemed to cloud around us. By the end of nine, I felt like a snowman in July; Lil touched me just to see if I were real.

"Hey, hey, hey," Wild Man said as we sat by the 10th tee. "How'd you get so chummy with Mrs. Grasshopper?"

"Can it," I answered.

"If I were you," Wild said, "I'd watch my step on the back nine." He laughed.

"Take a leap!"

Wild Man laughed harder.

When the 14th hole rolled around, I started to sweat. I half expected Lil to slice her ball into the Jet's forest hangar and force me to hunt with her. Luckily, Lil hit a good tee shot, a better fairway iron, and parred the hole. We finished the round with her touching my arm only once more. As I handed her clubs to the rack-room boy, she handed me my fee.

"Thank you." Lil smiled and squeezed my hand.

"You're welcome."

I watched her disappear before I discovered she had tipped me an extra \$5.00. I stared at the money as I walked back to the caddy shack. The extra money was a bribe, cash to help me forget what I had seen in the woods, unnecessary but not unwelcome.

"Hey!" Wild Man called as I approached. "Mrs. Grasshopper offer to take you home with her?"

I laughed. "She knows how to treat a super looper."

Wild laughed.

"Goin' home?" I asked.

Wild shook his head. "Gotta pick up Mom."

I nodded. Wild Man's mother worked; his father had disappeared when Wild was four.

"I'll hitchhike," I said. "See you tomorrow."

"Yeah, super looper." Wild laughed.

I had been hitchhiking since I was 13, so I walked down the road without fear. Several cars passed before a red Corvette zipped past, stopped, and backed toward me. I ran to the car and climbed inside.

"Where to?" Mrs. Fenstermaker asked.

"West," I answered.

The car leaped forward. "I'll take you."

"Thanks."

She smiled at me. She hadn't changed clothes. Her legs were tan and long. "Going home?"

"To the Pines Golf Course. My Dad's pro."

"Are you?"

"What?" I was confused.

"A pro."

I laughed. "Hardly."

She reached over and placed her hand on my thigh. "I want to thank you again."

"I know," I said quickly. "Don't worry. I won't tell anyone."

Lil glanced at me and half laughed. "Oh, Chet. I'd almost forgotten." She reached over, grabbed my hand, and laid it on her thigh. Her skin felt soft and warm. "Forget Chet," she said. "I want to make you happy." She held my hand on her thigh.

"S. . . Sure," I stammered.

I had felt Tammy Wysock's bra through her blouse during a hay ride and felt guilty and ecstatic for two weeks. Lil felt like late night, dirty novel reading when everyone was asleep. Lil's warm flesh frightened me more than a 200-yard carry over water.

"Don't be afraid," she said softly.

"I'm not," I lied.

She laughed again.

Sweat was streaming down my spine by the time we reached the Pines. She held my hand on her thigh and touched my cheek.

"Think about it," she said. "Let the idea grow. It's very pleasant."

"Yes, Ma'am," I answered.

Lil released my hand, and I scrambled out of the car. She laughed and waved, and the shiny, red Corvette shot away. As I watched the car disappear, my hands started shaking.

At 15, I no longer told Dad everything that happened, like the time Wild Man backed his car over a mail box—just to do it. So, Mrs. Fenstermaker's advances lay buried inside me. Yet, I couldn't solve the problem by myself. My limited experience had not equipped me with an escape. Accepting Mrs. Fenstermaker's overture didn't seem like the thing to do, but how could I turn her down? Stuck, I decided to consult an expert—

Wild Man.

I told Wild the whole story the next morning. He grinned and leaned against the caddy shack wall as I finished.

"Whooee," Wild said. "Got the knack, don't you?"

"Yeah, but what do I do about it?"

"Take the offer. Mrs. Grasshopper ain't half bad."

I shook my head. "No way. What if she's got a disease or something."

Wild laughed. "Ain't no rich, married woman with any disease. They're as safe as Fort Knox."

"Still don't want to mess with her," I said.

"Afraid of the Grasshopper?" Wild laughed again. "OK, OK, I understand. There's an easy way out."

"There is?"

"Yeah, tell her you're queer."

"What?"

"Tell her you don't like girls, like boys better. Women don't mess with queers. Queers can't get it up for women."

I doubted Wild at that moment, but I had no better idea.

"Look," Wild continued. "We know it ain't true, but she don't. She'll leave you alone."

"Sure?"

Wild nodded. "Last thing a woman wants is a queer."

I accepted Wild Man's advice and dreamed up some lines to convince Lil I had the hots for guys. If Wild was right, a few sincere words would rescue me.

By Saturday afternoon, I had rehearsed a short conversation between Lil and myself. I'd tell her I liked boys. She'd frown, act surprised, admit her mistake, and tell me to forget about our previous conversation. I had almost convinced myself the scene had already occurred by the time I finished caddying. I handed Hawkeye Kroner's clubs to the rack-room boy and waited for my money. Hawkeye always spent ten minutes at the bar before he paid his caddy. Hawkeye usually tipped a couple extra dollars and liked to blame his extravagance on an alcoholic whim.



"Are you available?" Someone asked.

I turned. Lil stood behind me in tight, white shorts and a sleeveless, peach colored blouse.

"I'm just going nine," she added.

"Just finished," I said quickly.

"Oh." She stepped closer and spoke softly. "We could play some other game."

"I'm pretty tired."

She smiled at me.

"Actually," I stammered, "that's an excuse. You see." I swallowed hard. "The fact is I'm not so sure I like girls that much—if you know what I mean." I tried to look straight into her blue eyes, to prove I told the truth. "I think I might like boys better." I could feel blood flushing my face.

"Think?"

"Practically sure."

She smiled. "I know how to be absolutely sure."

"Ask a priest?" I offered.

She laughed. "When we're finished, you can judge for yourself."

"I . . . I . . . can't today."

"Why not?"

"It's that time of the month. You understand." I had heard the line in a movie once.

"I don't mind." Her blue eyes twinkled.

I had run out of lines. My face grew hotter and hotter. Luckily, Hawkeye emerged from the locker room at that moment.

"Excuse me," I said quickly and stepped past Lil.

Hawkeye's breath smelled of bourbon, and his nose shone red, the right color for paying out money.

"Thank you," Hawkeye said.

"Thank you," I mumbled with sincerity and turned away.

I waved to Lil and hurried toward the parking lot. "I'll get it right away," I called to Hawkeye, who simply stared after me. I started to run, and I was out of earshot before anyone could yell at me.

Hitchhiking home, I watched for a red Corvette. Any red blob in the distance sent me scurrying off the road into the bushes. By the time I reached the Pines, I had torn my shirt in two places.

"Accident," I replied to Dad's inquiring look.

He nodded.

I spent Saturday evening trying to concoct a reason to avoid cad-dying on Sunday.

I failed.

"Well?" Wild Man asked Sunday morning. "Lady Grasshopper gonna leave you alone?"

I shook my head. "She wants to cure me."

"Christ!" Wild hissed. "Woman's got it bad."

"What am I gonna do?"

"Been thinkin' about that." Wild grinned. "You gotta explain you're queer on account of the accident."

"Accident?"

"Yeah, you're always hearin' about guys who had it blown off durin' the war."

"I've never been in a war."

"Say you were in a car crash or fell on a rake or something."

I shook my head. "She's never gonna believe that."

"Trust me. You're queer on account you can't perform like a real man."

I thought a moment. "Kind of thing would turn anyone queer," I noted.

"Precisely."

"And if she wants to check?" I asked.

"You're too embarrassed to show anyone. Your own mother ain't seen it since the accident."

I held out my hand, and Wild Man shook. "Thanks," I said. He grinned. "We loopers gotta stick together."

Armed with a new excuse, I caddied fearlessly for Cigar Lou Henson, a man who chewed cigars—constantly. I half expected to find Lil waiting for me at the end of the round, but she didn't materialize. Wild Man gave me a ride to the Pines. I was certain I had escaped.

When I entered the pro shop, Dad was showing a set of clubs to a woman. I waved and started toward the back room.

"Here he is now," Dad said.

The woman turned and smiled.

"Hello," Lil said.

"Hello, Mrs. Fenstermaker," I croaked.

"Mrs. Fenstermaker just bought a set of clubs," Dad said. "Carry them out to her car."

"Sure." I gulped.

Lil stepped forward and held out her keys. "Red Corvette." She said.

I nodded and picked up the boxes. "Be right back."

I hurried through the parking lot, trying to get back to the pro shop before Lil left. I set the clubs in the passenger side of the car, locked the door, turned, and saw her coming. I walked toward her, hoping I could hand her the keys and keep on going.

"Thank you." She grabbed the keys and my hand, forcing me to stop.

"You're welcome."

"You're father's very nice." She smiled. "You haven't told him about your problem, have you?"

"Dads don't understand."

"He said you dated girls—just like a normal boy."

I started to sweat. "Yeah, but I don't do anything with them," I said truthfully.

She smiled. "I'll change that."

"You don't understand," I said hurriedly. "I had this injury a few years back, fell on a rake. It's made me . . . incapacitated."

"It has?" Mock surprise suffused her face.

I nodded sadly. "One of those things."

"Then you need my help more than ever," she said. "Someone must teach you other ways of having fun."

"You don't care that I can't . . ."

She shook her head and squeezed my hand. "We'll find ways to help each other."

My stomach knotted. For a moment, I couldn't speak.

"Thanks again." She ran her hand up my arm. "This is just the beginning, isn't it?" She smiled and walked past me. I stood frozen to the spot, afraid to move. When I heard the Corvette start, I started to sprint. I didn't stop until I reached the pro shop.

"Mrs. Fenstermaker's very nice," Dad said. "She paid cash. Said you caddy for her."

I nodded, out of breath.

"Appreciate the business," Dad said. "Keep it up."

I felt like a prostitute. Lil had purchased me along with a set of MacGregor Tourney woods and irons, and I was expected to perform at least as well as the clubs. Dad didn't know it, but he had guaranteed the delivery of one 15-year-old caddy to a 35-year-old devourer of youth. I started for the back of the room and my golf clubs.

"Where are you going?" Dad asked.

"To play a few holes," I answered.

"Hit it straight."

"Yeah." I wanted to laugh and couldn't.

I saw Wild Man on Tuesday. We stood by the ravine behind the caddy shack. Wild smoked Marlboros.

"Damn," Wild Man said. "Mrs. Grasshopper won't let go, will she?"

"What do I do?" I asked.

Wild shrugged. "Go through with it."

"What?"

"She bought a set of clubs from your dad. There's no way out."

"Not even for a wounded queer?"

Wild laughed. "Woman's crazy."

I frowned.

"Look," Wild began. "Go with her, but don't perform too well, OK? I mean, it's not fun. She'll leave you alone, right?"

"If she doesn't?" I asked.

"Charge her. Ain't any reason you gotta do it for free."

"She bought a set of clubs—cash."

"No one ever said you came cheap." He laughed.

"Wild!"

Wild held up his hands and tried to stop laughing.

"What if Grasshopper catches us?" I asked.

"He'll probably pay you too."

I turned and stomped away. Wild Man could no longer help. If a solution to my dilemma existed, I would have to discover it alone. I thought of Ponce de Leon chasing around Florida after the fountain of youth, doomed to failure. Ponce and I had a lot in common.

I managed to avoid Lil until Thursday, Ladies' Day. The rack-room boy handed me her bag, and I knew the moment of decision had

arrived. I tried to switch bags with Wild Man in a vain attempt to avoid Lil.

"Oh ho!" Wild said. "The moment of truth is here."

"Trade with me—please?" I begged.

Wild shook his head. "Face it."

"I'd rather not."

"Too late." Wild nodded.

Behind me, Lil stepped lightly up the path, her cleats clicking on the concrete.

"Enjoy," Wild whispered and moved away.

Lil smiled. "You've been avoiding me, haven't you?"

I tried to smile. "Haven't felt all that well. Something contagious."

"I didn't think your problem was contagious."

"It's in the water."

She laughed. "I only drink scotch." She touched my arm and began rummaging in her bag for golf balls. "It's time to cure you."

I didn't answer.

She found a golf ball and pulled on her glove. "What do you think?"

I glanced over my shoulder to where Wild Man grinned. "I guess you're right," I said huskily.

A genuine smile spread across her face. "I'll give you a ride after the round."

I nodded. "I'll be . . . on the road."

She turned away and started for the first tee. Wild Man scooted close.

"Way to go," Wild hissed.

"Yeah," I answered. "Way to go."

I gave the worst caddying performance of my career. I forgot to rake traps; I stepped in players' lines; I didn't tend pins; I even lost Lil's ball. My mind focused on my pending introduction into the realm of flesh. I forgot all the golf etiquette I had ever learned. Luckily, Wild Man covered for me, kept the women from becoming angry, kept me from destroying their game.

Walking off the 18th green, Wild Man strided up beside me. "Need a ride?" Wild asked.

I shook my head. "Hitchhikin'."

Wild nodded. "Got it." He punched my arm. "Don't make her moan."

"Yeah."

Wild Man had left by the time Lil paid me.

"I'll be ten minutes," she said.

I nodded.

She squeezed my hand and hurried away.

I walked slowly down the clubhouse drive and out on Henning Road. I had no reason to hurry. Two hundred yards from the club entrance, I sat down in the shade of a big maple tree. I felt very alone, manipulated, the butt of life's joke, and I was scared.

When the red Corvette raced out of the drive, I stepped onto the road. I felt woozy. I had always imagined passion, heat, and the confines

of a parked car would combine to erase my virginity. Performing for an older woman like some gigolo promised all the romance of a geometry test.

As the Corvette shot down the road, Lil reached across and squeezed my thigh.

“Cheer up,” she said. “It’ll be fun.”

“Yeah.”

I didn’t want to talk. Talking might have made things enjoyable, and I didn’t want Lil to enjoy anything. She drove to her house, periodically squeezing my thigh and smiling.

Except for Lil, the Grasshopper had acquired all the trappings of a successful life. The brick house was long and roomy; a blue swimming pool filled the back yard. Lil led me through a formal living room as clean and neat as a display and a billiard room where a green-topped table appeared unused, to a large, paneled family room. They didn’t even have a family.

“Drink?” She asked.

“Sure.” I had heard all the high school propaganda on how alcohol dampened the spirit and inhibited performance. Passing out in the middle of the act seemed appropriate.

“Scotch?”

“Why not?” I had never tasted scotch, but everyone on TV drank it.

She filled two tumblers at a black-padded bar in the corner.

“Let me slip into something comfortable,” she said as she handed me the drink.

I nodded as if I had heard the line a hundred times before.

The scotch tasted terrible, but I forced the burning liquid down my throat. As heat expanded from my stomach I walked to the bar and refilled my glass. I had no idea how much I would have to drink to hinder my performance, but I figured half a bottle would suffice.

Halfway through my third glass, Lil reappeared. She wore a filmy robe as transparent as a fly’s wing. Lil sat down on the couch and removed any misconceptions I had concerning the female anatomy.

“Here.” She patted the sofa next to her.

“Sure.” My tongue felt syrupy and slow. Lil drifted in and out of focus. My stomach felt on fire.

I managed to find the couch before the room began to teeter. I felt I was floating. Lil reached out and squeezed my thigh.

“You’re so strong,” she said.

“Sure.” I grinned. “Regular Samson.”

She kissed my neck.

I closed my eyes to stop the room from spinning, but I couldn’t shake the floating feeling, like a Genie on a magic carpet.

Lil started screaming before anything more happened. I opened my eyes just as a flash bulb popped, blinding me. Lil screamed and scrambled off the couch. Flash bulbs continued to pop. Someone laughed.

“Don’t!” Lil yelled.

The flashes stopped. Someone grabbed my arm.

“Come on,” a voice hissed.

“What?” Blue spots clouded my vision. “Wild Man?”

"Who the hell else? Come on."

I struggled to my feet. The room whirled. I was on a ferris wheel going very fast.

"What's wrong with you?" Wild asked.

"Scotch," I mumbled.

"Christ!" Wild Man tucked his head under my arm, and we struggled out of the room.

"Gotta hurry," Wild said. "Don't know what she's doin'."

We lurched through the house and out the front door. Wild managed to haul me to his car and dump me in the back seat. As the car backed down the drive, my stomach began to flip-flop; the scotch sloshed back and forth. My head hit the door as Wild screeched to a stop and started forward.

"Whoeee!" Wild yelled as the car rolled. "My, my, my, old Mrs. Grasshopper's quite an eyeful."

I couldn't answer.

"For a minute," Wild continued, "I didn't know whether to let you run with it or not. Damn, she wouldn't be half bad." Wild laughed. "Why the hell were you so dead against it? Really queer or something?"

"Stop!" I ordered.

"What?"

"STOP!"

Wild pulled to the side. I managed to open the back door before the vomit rose in my throat. As I retched out the back door, I could hear Wild Man laugh.

"Finished?" Wild Man asked when I pulled myself inside the car.

"Yeah," I muttered.

Wild hit the accelerator, and the car lurched into motion.

I managed to work myself to a sitting position.

"Feeling better?" Wild asked.

"Yeah."

"I followed you," Wild said. "Thought you might need help."

"Thanks." I belched. My throat burned. "Why didn't you tell me?"

"Didn't think of it until the last minute." Wild laughed. "The look on her face makes me wish there'd been film in the camera."

"No film?"

Wild shook his head. "She won't know that. She'll never bother you again."

"Yeah, never again." Wild zipped around a corner, and my stomach flip-flopped again. "Don't," I gasped.

"Sorry," Wild muttered, but he didn't slow.

My condition improved as the afternoon progressed. By evening, my stomach felt almost normal.

I saw Lil on Sunday. I had just finished caddying for Buckeroo Crumb when she drifted out of the pro shop. Fear tightened my stomach. She smiled as she approached.

"I want the photographs," Lil said softly.

I shook my head.

"I'll pay."

"I don't want money," I said. "I just want to be left alone."  
She frowned. "I want the pictures."  
"There aren't any. Wild Man didn't load the camera."  
She studied my face a moment and laughed. "You're telling the truth, aren't you?"  
I nodded.  
"No wonder you didn't call."  
"Just leave me alone," I said.  
Her smile faded. "You really are queer, aren't you?"  
"No, I'm really not."  
"Oh my!" Shock widened her face. "You father's such a nice man. Does he know?"  
"No, he doesn't," I answered.  
"That other nasty boy talked you into being that way, didn't he?"  
"No!" I said loudly.  
She patted my arm maternally. "I'll help," she said. "You and I . . ."  
"I have the photos," I hissed. "I'll use them if you do anything!"  
She stared at me.  
"I lied before," I said and smiled. "I lie very well."  
Horror filled her face.  
"Don't bother me," I continued. "I won't bother you."  
"You're a dirty, little fag, aren't you?"  
I grinned. "Stay away from the other caddies too. They're mine."  
She backed away, her face twisted with disgust. I watched her disappear inside the clubhouse. I had a feeling she wouldn't bother me again.  
Two days later, Wild Man pulled me aside at the caddy shack.  
"What the hell did you do to Lady Grasshopper?" Wild asked.  
"I started makin' up to her today, and she treated me like a leper. Quit at nine and didn't tip."  
I laughed. "Don't look at me."  
"Damn," Wild hissed. "I didn't even get the pictures."  
I never caddied for Lil again. She never stopped by the Pines again. Dad never mentioned her. Wild Man spoke of her often that summer and the next. We laughed about the scene in her house, my puking out the back door of Wild Man's car. We laughed until I was 17 and started dating Carrie O'Hara, and the Army drafted Wild Man.

# Texas Jimmy Coal

S. Ashley Coutts

Pretend he gave you a Kewpie doll  
on some carnival back street  
underneath the ferris wheel  
at the county fair

straw stuck onto the bottom  
of his hand-tooled boots

Imagine his father  
a Cherokee renegade or  
nothing more than the sound  
of a cowboy's guitar  
His mother, plain as prairie sand  
all that chiseled onto his face

He slides you across  
the plastic seat of his  
old blue car/that night  
to steal a kiss  
Elvis singing inside the radio





**Untitled**

**S. Ashley Coutts**

# shoah\*

Lynn C. Mitchell

for Beryl

*I will establish my Covenant between myself and you . . .  
I will give to you and to your descendants after you . . .  
the whole land of Canaan . . . and I will be your God.  
Genesis 17. 7-8*

Cattle cars deliver the Chosen into Poland.  
Human cargo, billeted like skulls after battle,  
has survived the burning ghetto—  
interned in Aryan sewage  
rationed by scrapped potatoes  
and whispered deportation.  
But today these haggard messengers scrawl  
rage at the cup of blood set on stone.  
Scatched into pane  
is a crushed son,  
his father strangled by grief  
and children breathing *shoah* . . .  
together a muted witness  
pulsed in sweat.

Destination: Treblinka

Destination: Auschwitz

Poland's fields are scarred with barbed ribs  
impaled against the fence.  
The rites of smoking chimneys  
uncurl the word *shoah*.  
Jaws snap against spine,  
bone etched in dye,  
Children, one million offerings,  
should finally seal Isaac's sacrifice.  
So Abraham unlocks the gate to Canaan,  
chants his shuddered prayer:  
*Remember your hereditary tribe.  
Do not abandon us to the slaughterhouse  
where ashes are the bread I eat.*

But the cattle car breaks  
where ritual accuses rather than heals.  
And the last moment  
delivers each child into ashes.

\*In Hebrew *shoah* means annihilation

# Aubade

Robert Aull

Down the ruined eave  
and stain of copper gutter,  
the worn brick  
and peeling paint  
    the cracked panes  
    and swollen sill,  
down the loosened rail  
the unhinged shutter  
ran the oily water  
and woke him

Woke him to pavement,  
to a glass-scattered morning  
as the rain hiss of traffic  
echoed surf  
and sand  
woke him to shudder  
in the cold gravel  
in the cold gravel  
kissed him  
and he slept again.

# Paper Route

Robert Aull

A low light like a coal  
dully lit the cab  
and after a crack of wires  
his quiet, slurred counting  
kept us cold  
in the morning's breath;  
he stumbled the truck away  
and we bent to warm print,  
folding words new-made  
in a raw world  
outside the circuit  
of our counted steps.

We walked  
with chapped hands cradled  
among papers in a canvas bag,  
heralding the turn of earth  
come morning,  
hands black with ink  
though darkness leapt  
from each bush as the sun rose  
to our shoulders;  
We walked  
with sleep still lording the city,  
and the world was ours.

The lamps went down,  
no hand to switch them but the sun  
and this order we knew:  
light rising from below a water tower,  
wetted grass unbent  
to a new beginning,  
our footsteps marked  
in the drying earth;  
We knew this hour as an endless round  
of pavement and doorway,  
of empty streets filling  
slowly with sound,  
and sleepless figures  
waiting in the kitchen light  
for morning.

# The Last Train

Robert Aull

winds the rails up  
on a spool,  
leaving telegraph lines  
to rust among  
vines and milkweed,  
stacking ties  
like bodies  
as it rolls.

Humming,  
green-eyed firemen  
shovel grass  
over their shoulders,  
and pitch out young trees  
like spears

(their hands are black  
as leaves are black,  
as coal is the color  
of oil,  
and oil of earth;  
they juggle  
the buried sun.)

the last train pulls  
distance to a point,  
vanishing,

and where the tracks were,  
smoke darkens gravel  
and it begins to snow.

# The Last Years

## Chapter IV

When the clouds  
of a storm  
lower themselves  
to rest  
upon the hills  
and the valleys  
the light  
is dim  
and the shadows  
are long

and the hills  
are grey  
and the valleys  
are blue  
and the light  
is dim  
and the shadows  
are long

and the hills  
are grey  
and the valleys  
are blue  
and the light  
is dim  
and the shadows  
are long

and the hills  
are grey  
and the valleys  
are blue  
and the light  
is dim  
and the shadows  
are long

and the hills  
are grey  
and the valleys  
are blue  
and the light  
is dim  
and the shadows  
are long

## About the Authors and Artists:

**Robert Aull** (Poetry/Prose, pages 22-28, 54-56) Robert graduated With Highest Distinction in English and delivered the Valedictory Address for the School of Liberal Arts, 11 May 1986. "The End Of Summer" tied for First Place as Short Story at the 1984-85 Purdue Literary Awards.

**Rick Callahan** (Art, page 14) Rick is a familiar face among Genesis authors and artists; his work on the IUPUI newspaper *The Sagamore* is also well known.

**Erwin Cohen** (Poetry, page 12) "I've always liked to write and have always promised myself that I'll put more time into it. I'm working as an engineer and in general, I'm looking for an inspirational spark—for an avenue where I can concentrate my energy.

**S. Ashley Couts** (Poetry/Art, pages 52-53) Ashley is a Herron Student seeking degrees in visual communications and writing. She has been published in *Indiannual I* and *II* and *genesis*.

**Rick Evans** (Art, page 29) "I'm in my second year at IUPUI, the first being MET and now communications. I'm thankful for the patience of my model/girlfriend because I don't know the meaning of the word "bracket" and each pose causes more effort on her part than mine."

**Barbara Koons** (Poetry, pages 34-36): "I have been working with poetry since receiving my B.A. in English in 1984. I am currently doing post-graduate work in creative writing."

**Jennifer Lambert** (Poetry, page 8) "I am presently a business student at IUPUI. I anticipate graduating in May, 1986. After graduation I intend on working full time for a change and making real money.

**Linda D. Lewis** (Poetry, pages 20-21) "Age 37, married and mother of three . . . sleeps with pen and paper under her pillow instead of a weapon. (Like babies, some of her best ideas and poetic phrases arrive in the wee hours of the morning.)"

**Mario A. Mirelez** (Art, page 9) Mario is a student at IUPUI. This is his first appearance in *genesis*.

**Lynn C. Mitchell**, (Poetry, page 54) "I am a Ph.D. candidate in Renaissance Literature at Purdue University. My literary interests also include Vietnam era and Holocaust literature, as well as Science Fiction and Fantasy. I teach Freshman Composition and Professional Writing. For me, poetry is a sacred refuge from my dissertation and grading student essays."

**R.F. Russell** (Prose, pages 1-8, 41-51) "This is perhaps my last submission to your magazine. I should finish my degree in May. The current status of my writing is like a good news, bad news joke. The good news is that I'm getting better. The bad news is I seem to be the only one who knows. That's really not true. I think other people realize I'm improving. I hope they do. Thank you for your kind consideration of my work, both now and in the past. Without your encouragement I wouldn't have had the courage to try as many things as I have."

**Barbara Riggs** (Prose, pages 15-19) "I am forty years old. I am married and have three children (two of them are grown) and one grandson. In 1963, I dropped out of high school in my senior year and spent the next twenty-two years devoting myself to my family. In 1984, I took the G.E.D. test at Ben Davis High School, and decided that after doing for my family for so many years, I would finally do something for myself—go back to school."

**Cecil Sayre** (Poetry, pages 10-11) Writer/poet Richard Brautigan killed himself in his home with a .44 magnum and wasn't discovered until five weeks later.

"Why did you pause between the first and second shot?" Albert Camus, *The Stranger*

**Marian Schafer** (Prose, pages 30-33) "I am wife, mother, teacher, daughter, sister, aunt, niece, cousin, friend, housekeeper, hostess, guest, tourist, chauffeur, cook, volunteer, reader, student, gardener, and sometimes I write . . ."

**J.B. Straw** (Poetry, pages 38-40)

Wrapped in Onces, I have slept through so much,  
but often I feel the ashes on my morning tongue.  
The taste is not unpleasant, but still I reach  
for the wine.

Actually, these scholarly holes in my flannel skin  
are popping seeds of my educational process  
—which continues to burn.

**Ernest Wickersham** (Poetry, page 13) Ernest is a 1980 Business graduate of IU at Bloomington and is currently a Spanish major at IUPUI. He has been previously published in *genesis*.



