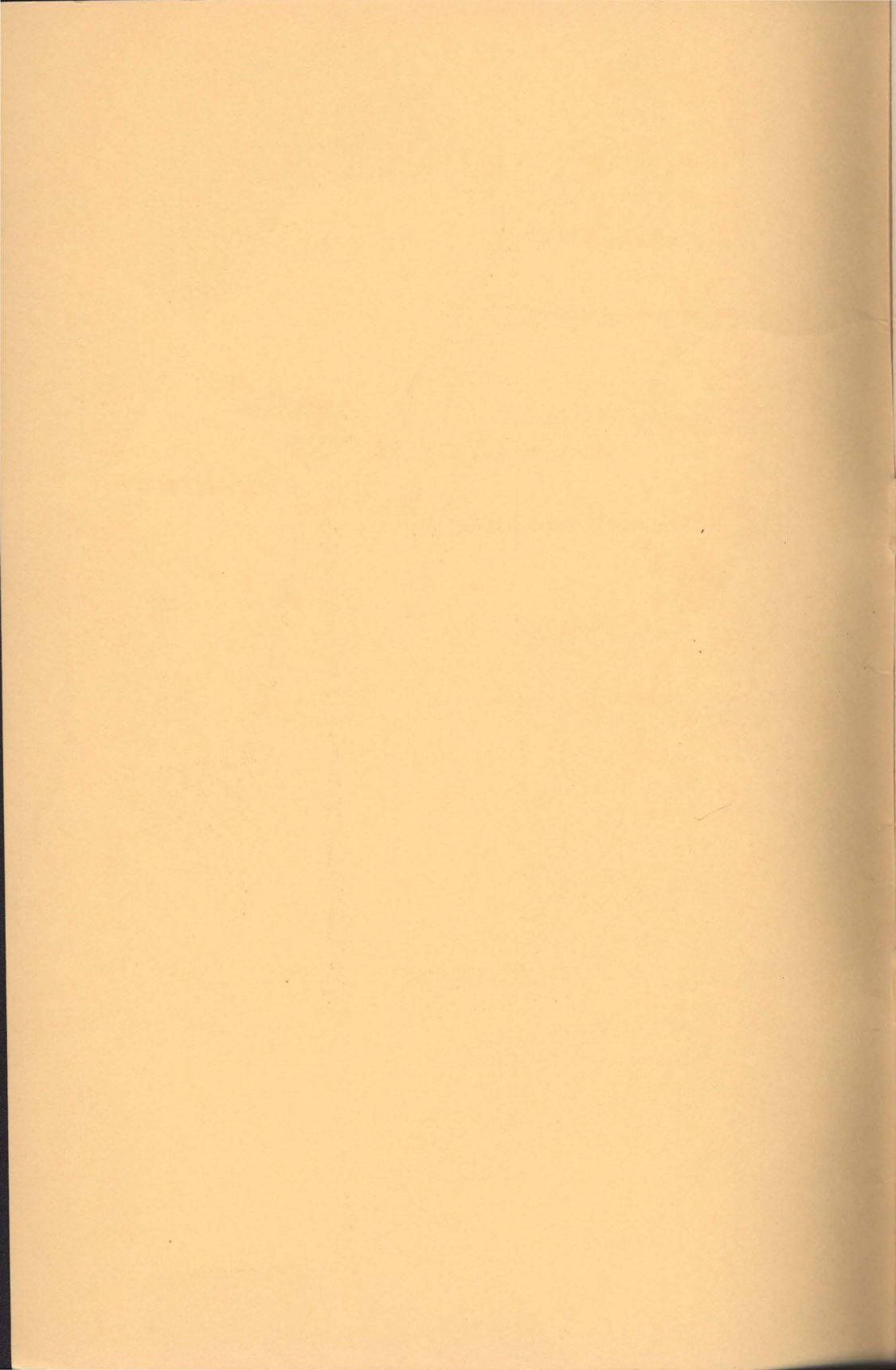


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THE REFLECTOR

Literary Magazine

Shippensburg State College

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Winter, 1963

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THE REFLECTOR

Literary Magazine

Winter 1953

Pile high the hickory and the light
Log of chestnut struck by the blight.
Welcome-in the winter night.

The day has gone in hewing and felling,
Sawing and drawing wood to the dwelling
For the night of talk and story-telling.

These are the hours that give the edge
To the blunted axe and the bent wedge,
Straighten the saw and lighten the sledge.

Here are question and reply,
And the fire reflected in the thinking eye.
So peace, and let the bob-cat cry.

"Winter Night"

by Edna St. Vincent Millay

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Your words are born, not spoken
Dimensional, soft-vowelled words,
palpable to the eye or to the fingertip:
exquisitely curved, as the young that flowers conceive.

Often have I watched your lips shape words . . . and
your tongue nudge them out like small birds
not wholly certain of their wings.
Your sweetest words
are those shaped ovally, like plums or wild birds eggs.

And the long bright ribbons you laugh—
the multitudes of hyacinth and bluebells.

When I see words like soft gray catkins I know
they are of love — whatever else my ears register.
And because your mouth is like the flesh of a ripe
fig, often I take

your words unsaid . . .

. . . from "This Is My Beloved"

by Walter Benton

Pictures of Christmas

. . . PHILIP REPLOGLE

It's snow time

And rolling out of the white
Are dusky pictures
Of aged oaks gathering snow,
Of children looking up
With wet faces
Cold
As flake melts by flake,
Of one breath-held mouth, straining
Open for waiting
For that one special flake
Now bitter,
Now gone
From the tongue.

It's a time of

Fine, thin December wind
Streaming hills of white dust into hollows,
Making a clear path for the New Year.

It's almost Christmas

Season made for bells
And candles in window wells —
Short bright days of tinsel and sugar
And long clinging nights
Of flights on darkling paths
Of runner-crushed snow
— a time to know the close breath, white
And the warmth of a hand in frosty light
And one brief image of a face in night —

Until The Day

And a quiet prayer
For the token cards
And the token gifts
And the memory of a token
Of God.

Doubt

. . . CAROLE BYRNE

Near the end
 his eyes pleaded
 lamb-like
 for admittance
 She glanced away.
 He was free
 but if received
 a victim
 to hell's wrath
 She knew.
 Knowing isn't the end.

A Tear

. . . DOROTHY FIELDS

I love to indulge in a tear,
To watch it go, — trickling and twinkling and tickling,
Then slipping and sliding it stops.
And it starts
Again on its journey from eyelash to cheekbone to ear.
I said ear!
And I'll say it again if you'll bother to hear. I say ear!
For I guide its sweet pilgrimage,
Cocking my head,
Twisting my face
Till my symbol of sorrow
Slips quickly to place.
So I cry till I laugh
At my fancy.

People Forget

. . . NICHOLAS DIFFENDERFER

It was nine fifteen. A grimy commuter train clacked through the rising fog to the hidden city ahead. Inside one of the cars a man sat at the back, alone. The coach was half full and there was no conversation. A radio was whining from a briefcase but the sound was so faint that it was barely audible. He had purposely isolated himself from other passengers.

His magazine, folded open on his left leg, broke the parallel lines of the straight creases in his trousers. His coat was open and his gray hat rested on his briefcase beside him. Occasionally he would glance up from the printed pages and peer at the blackness outside. He saw nothing but his reflection, and he wiped the window as though by erasing his image he would see more clearly.

Glare from the overhead light caused him to look up momentarily. A man seated two seats away on the left hand side quickly turned his head away from the back.

"Strange man," he thought nonchalantly as he turned a page. Once again his eyes began to water from the brightness of the glossy pages. He closed his eyes and placed the magazine beside his hat.

"What to do about Margaret," he thought as he moved his cuff to see what time it was. "Twenty minutes yet and fifteen by cab. But in this fog it might be twenty-five. Is she worth the trouble?"

He lit a cigarette and smiled at the man who was turned around again.

"Must know me from somewhere, but I never saw him before."

The man left his seat and with a casual air tainted with diffidence asked, "Could I join you for a smoke?"

With a sweep of his hand he indicated to the man that there was room for another.

"He's either lost his money or his wife," he thought as he looked at the man. "Probably both."

There was a brief silence while both men smoked. The man had his head inverted downward not aware that he was being scrutinized. His hair was longer than that of his new-found companion and was tinted in front with streaks of white. His shirt collar was open and there was no tie. His suit fitted well but was unpressed and his scuffed shoes suited perfectly.

He looked up from the floor showing for the first time his bleak eyes. Obviously needing rest, his eyes were criss-crossed with tiny ribbons of red.

"What do you do in our fair metropolis?" the man asked.

"Stocks and bonds. The usual. You know."

"You must work a long day. Coming back at nine fifteen." The man used his first cigarette as a lighter for his second.

"Important meeting. The kind that takes you away from the crackling fire-place and the cackling wife," he answered.

"How far out do you live?"

"Thirty minutes. Reget's Settlement. Maybe you know where it is."

"My relatives live there," the man replied. "They have a large family. Do you have a family?"

"There are five of us. Two boys — age two and four. My mother lives with us too."

"Is your father deceased?" the man inquired.

"Yes, he died a year ago." He reached for his second cigarette. "He was ill for a very long time. But it's over now."

"My mother may be dead by the time I arrive," the man interjected. "Cancer." The cigarette had become wet from his clenched perspiring fingers.

"That's too bad," he said as he uncrossed his legs. "Now we get to the crux of the thing," he thought as he noticed a small boy sticking a water gun into his sleeping grandmother's armpit. "I guess I should display some sort of sympathy," he concluded. "How long has she been ill?" he managed to ask.

"At least eighteen months. Just recently it got bad. I don't know how I'll be happy without her. She's always slaved for me and I always said I'd pay her back. Now when I'm starting to get ahead in the store this had to happen. What's that expression? C'est la vie or something."

"You're correct. C'est la vie," he answered. "This would be great for television but I'm thirsty," he thought looking for a fountain. "Excuse me. I'll be back." He left the man without even a backward glance.

Seeing him leave, the man crushed his cigarette against the side of the coach and returned to his seat. He massaged his eyes and stared out the window. His eyes clouded over with tears and he turned his face away gently allowing his head to sink to his chest.

As the train began to slow down the passengers prepared to leave. He didn't see the man as he left the train, and he wouldn't have cared in the slightest if he had.

There was still a fog and he couldn't find any cabs. The air was beginning to feel wet on his face and his magazine was now damp and limp. He turned to enter the station when he saw a taxi drive in. Opening the door, he told the driver the address.

"Twice in one week she's demanded that I see her," he thought. "I'm starting to think it's all a game with her now. Call and jump. Call and jump. These damned calls have to cease too."

He looked out at the wet, shining streets which led to Margaret. The cab was overheated but to open a window would have been asinine now that a rain had begun.

"Bad night for traveling," said the cabbie. "Saw two accidents tonight and I only came on at seven."

"Wrecks you mean or run-downs?", he asked.

"Run-downs. Some people forget about cars when it rains. They forget everything. All their worries will be washed away by the clear cleansing rain. At least that's what they imagine. Bills, the office, the wife—everything. But they get careless in the rain. Like cats they keep their heads down and think only of where they're going. Everybody runs. Some even get killed. Then they're forgotten too. Yes sir, people have a knack for forgetting."

"I agree," he replied.

The taxi stopped in front of the apartment house and he got out. After paying the driver he looked up at her window.

Sixty seconds later he knocked at her door. It opened slowly revealing a darkened room. He pushed it open farther and entered.

When he left the building the fog had lifted and it was raining harder. There were no cabs in sight so he decided to walk until he found one.

"I can't marry her," he thought worriedly. "It wouldn't work. She's just Margaret. Not my wife."

He walked with his head down strangely resembling the man on the train. He had had his troubles too.

"God, Margaret wouldn't even like the kids. Why the hell didn't I stay home?"

He was going against the light but wasn't aware of it. Brakes screeched and tires skidded. It took only a few seconds for a small crowd to gather.

The policeman did his best to shield the body from the rain but somehow it seemed a futile gesture. Listing the man's name and seeing his body taken by an ambulance, the policeman hurried to his parked car without even a backward glance.

"Third accident I've seen tonight," a passing cab driver remarked to his lone passenger. "People forget about cars when it rains. They forget everything. All their worries will be washed away by the clear cleansing rain. Bills, the office, the wife—everything. But people get careless in the rain. Like cats they keep their heads down and think only of where they're going. Everybody runs. Some people even get killed. Then they're forgotten too. People have a knack for forgetting."

His passenger nodded her head in accordance.

Tapestry In Blue

Count

Never-to-be remembered nor forgotten
 words of China
 fall in clutters
 at my feet
 or hover on the air
 like the shining bronze
 of liquid-scented tones of bells.

Lines on Words

CHARLES HACKENBERRY

Never-to-be remembered nor forgotten
 words of lovers
 and of prowlers
 mingle in a lustiness
 of soft and tender
 sinews stretched
 between an abyss of the midnight black
 and the warm sun shining
 on the multitudes of spring.

Never-to-be remembered nor forgotten
 words
 leave their naked and trailing
 footprints in the halls
 of tomorrow.

Count

... JANICE ALTEMOSE

One?

Two?

Three?

How many?

How many does it take

to kill a heart . . .

to make one dry . . .

a sponge on a shoreless beach . . .

dry?

How often before mind rules heart . . .

before heart realizes

—expect nothing . . .

—man tempts

feeds

deserts

—you . . .

less heart

Tell me.

When will my giving

dry?

die?

After one?

Two?

I've not much left.

After you?

Tapestry In Blur

. . . GERRY CORDAS

The night was cold, bitterly cold. The chill wind howled and whipped around the deserted street-corners. Not a living soul was visible. No one dared to venture forth from the warmth and security of the hearth. There was nobody to brave the biting wind and penetrating cold. The threatening storm held prisoner all the townspeople. Shutters creaked and groaned under the cruel lash of the merciless elements. Even the stalwart lamp-posts seemed to sway to the macabre tune of the whistling wind. Bits of hail and sleet heralded the arrival of the fast-approaching blizzard.

The townspeople knew what was in store and were prepared to hibernate behind the safety of their bolted doors for the duration of the dreaded storm. They had spent weeks getting ready. The Slemanski family had sealed their cottage and left the village three weeks ago in order to reach the sheltered village where Mrs. Slemanski's sister lived. The Sosnoskis, too, had left the village to stay with relatives until the storm passed. The rest of the villagers, however, felt safer in their own homes, secure within the familiar walls which were their haven, their refuge from all harm. They remained in the little village. The men and boys spent their days sealing all the cracks of their houses' exteriors, carrying in barrels of milk, laying up a generous supply of food for the livestock, and securing their cows and sheep in the barns. The distaff population was busy, too. Long hours were spent by the women and girls in the kitchen. They would need much food, for their men were hearty eaters. Candles and soap had to be made, as did warm clothing. All must be ready when the white nightmare began its sweeping descent from the mountain-top.

Maria Parecki sat in the creaking rocking chair, knitting another sweater for her brother, Stefan. She was a rather pretty girl of sixteen, blonde, slender, full of that shy sensitivity so peculiar to her age. She had a strange look on her young face — apprehensive, wistful, almost painful. Mama Parecki sat across the room on the lumpy, once-blue sofa. She was a big woman in her late forties;

the head bowed over her knitting was heavily silvered. The mother and daughter worked in silence, save for the click-click of knitting needles, while the ancient clock on the rickety corner-table tick-ticked the minutes into infinity.

"Maria—." The silvered head lifted, showing the face of a woman who has lived through a thousand winters, catching brief snatches of spring and summer and autumn.

"Yes, Mama?" The clicking stopped.

"It is time to light the outside lamp. Papa and Stefan will be coming soon."

The girl rose and made her way silently to the door. She opened it and stepped into the blackness outside.

"It is so still, Mama."

"Yes, it is still."

Maria lighted the lamp and stood motionless in its mellow glow.

"I do not see them yet, Mama."

"They will come."

"Already the snow begins to fall. Very soon it will—"

"They will come now. Come inside."

Maria stood for a moment more, then turned and went back into the house, carefully closing and bolting the door behind her. She sat again in the old rocking chair and resumed her knitting. The ancient clock tick-ticked away the minutes, the hours.

The girl put down her needles and walked silently to the door again.

"They will come — Papa and Stefan — Maria."

"I just want to look to see if they are near."

Maria looked into the blackness, listening for the crunch of footsteps on the rising snow. Only the howling wind answered her straining ears.

"They will come, Maria. Come inside."

"Yes, Mama."

Maria once again returned to the sweater she was knitting. The click-click of the knitting needles, the tick-tick of the ancient clock on the corner-table measured the minutes and sent them into nothingness. The woman and the girl worked without speaking.

The girl stopped her work and listened intently. The wind was screaming now; the clock ticked louder. Her thoughts came, rushing to the past, picking it up, and bringing it back to her. She looked up at the picture on the wall, above her mother's bowed head. A million memories flooded her mind. The

picture blended with the faded wallpaper and Maria's tears flowed freely now, trying vainly to wash away the memories and pain of that night just one year ago.

"Maria!"

The sharp, commanding tone of Mama Parecki's voice halted Maria's painful reverie. Her tears dwindled to dry eyes, but her face could not conceal the fear gripping her heart.

"Keep on with your work, child. They will come."

Maria listened. The wind screamed and howled, hurling the white flakes of its wrath unmercifully at the little village.

"The blizzard, Mama — it is come."

"Come, child. We shall go to bed. They will come — Papa and Stefan — when it is done."

The woman and the girl darkened the house, except for the outside lamp, and slowly climbed the stairs. Each went to her own alcove, each knowing what was in the thoughts of the other.

In her room Maria sat on the edge of her bed. She took a small picture from her nightstand and studied it until its face became lost in a salty blur. "Petar was so good a brother. Why did the storm have to —?" her heart cried. She tried to push the terrible memory from her mind. "Petar! Petar, keep Papa and Stefan—!" she sobbed.

In the next room Mama Parecki knelt before the statue of her saint, Saint Rita. "Oh sweet Saint of the Impossible," she prayed. "Seek out our Petar! With him watch on our Papa and our Stefan!" She knelt before her simple shrine for a long time while the storm pounded in her ears and the memory of last year flooded her mind.

The storm gained momentum; it was cold, heartless, cruel. Onward it came, sweeping from its path every obstacle in the way of its onslaught. Blinding, driving, biting snow and frozen rain buried the town in a cold wet grave. In a few days the townspeople would dig their way out into the sunlight which always followed the terrible darkness and cold. The village would resurrect itself — repair its damages, bury its dead, and continue weaving its tapestry of living for another year. For most of the villagers, the pattern would go on uninterrupted. For some, however, the tapestry would change its pattern; for them it could not continue unaltered.

Fran

. . . ELAINE KAUFFMAN

"I saw little Blair today," I said to my husband. "Fran will never be dead as long as that child lives." An inaudible grunt came from behind the newspaper. Sensing no response was forthcoming, I picked up the other half of the paper to see what the week-end specials would be. Somewhere between the paper towels and face soap the print suddenly swam before my eyes and I saw the face of the child, — and once again I remembered Fran.

The first time I saw her she was running after little Blair, who was then barely walking. She was "keeping shop" at her husband's place of business, trying, at the same time, to keep an eagle-eye on the baby. I was struck by the child's strong resemblance to his mother and by her own sweetness of face and friendly smile. They were new in town then, and Fran and I immediately hit it off. I was delighted when they moved almost next door. We soon had a "drop-in-for-coffee" type of relationship. We sewed together and played bridge together. Almost as a newlywed runs home for help, she seemed to look to me as her confidant. I was one of the first to know when she became pregnant for the second time. I remembered how we searched for the just-right stroller that the bridge club girls got for her and how pleased she was with the gift.

Stevie was born the week before Christmas, but when Fran came home from the hospital she wasn't permitted to bring him home with her. He was an incubator baby and remained in the hospital another two weeks. During this time I visited Fran and she seemed to be in good spirits, though naturally disappointed at not being able to bring Stevie home.

I had just finished clearing away the breakfast dishes one morning a few weeks later when the phone rang. It was Blair, Fran's husband.

"Laney, can you come over and look after the children for a few minutes until the baby sitter gets here? Fran's had an accident. I left her at Dr. Hanna's and I must go back for her."

"What in the world happened?" I blurted out.

"She cut herself."

"I'll be right over," I said in a panic, slammed down the phone and flew out the door.

I was there only a few minutes when the baby sitter arrived. I went back home without seeing Fran that day. In fact, I didn't see her for quite some time. She called me a couple of days later to say that Blair was taking her and the children to Florida to visit with his family who wintered there every year.

One day, when Fran's visit had stretched into two months, I saw Blair and yelled across the yard to him, "Fran is really having herself a vacation, isn't she? When is she coming home?"

He walked toward me, hesitating slightly, then came resolutely, as if he had made a quick decision. "Fran won't be home for awhile," he said. "She isn't in Florida; she's in a rest home in Baltimore . . . nervous breakdown. I haven't told it around yet."

I looked at him unbelievably. "Fran? I can't believe it! What? When?" I was almost speechless.

Very calmly, almost resignedly, he related past instances of Fran's instability. My head spun and I hardly heard what he was saying. "A year in a sanatorium when her father died . . . I knew but 'love conquers all' . . . Little Blair . . . breakdown . . . seeming recovery . . . then brother or sister for Little Blair . . . Stevie's birth . . . relapse . . . children taken to grandparents in Florida . . . visits with Fran . . . pleas to come home . . ."

He stopped, his face grotesque through my blurred eyes. I told him to say hello when he next visited her and turned numbly toward the house. I still couldn't believe that the sweet, laughing Fran that I knew could be disturbed in any way.

A short time later, — I remember it was just before Easter, — Blair brought Fran home against the advice of the doctors at the sanatorium. I didn't know whether to go to see her or not. I didn't want to make her uneasy since I was fairly sure she knew that I had been told something about her condition. (I've wondered since if I could have helped her in any way). Anyway, I waited — then one afternoon, after she had been home a couple of weeks, she came to visit, bringing the children with her. She looked wonderful. I asked her how she felt to which she replied, "Fine, I just feel fine. Hasn't Stevie done beautifully?" And, indeed, he had. No one would ever know he had had such a precarious start in life. We talked a while over coffee. When Stevie began to squirm and fuss Fran gathered him up and said goodbye. Little did I realize then . . .

Seven short days passed during which I was busily engaged in the yearly bane of the homemaker, — housecleaning. Before starting to paint the bedroom, I had taken a load of rugs out to hang on the line when I noticed the red streak going up the alley and realized the ambulance had just pulled away from Fran's back yard.

"Who's sick?" I yelled to my neighbor on the other side. She walked over to the separating fence and I could see the tears in her eyes. "Mrs. Kelley just shot herself, — she's dead." "Oh no," I gasped.

My heart began to thump — I couldn't see "Nana" for the flood that quickly gathered in my eyes. Fran . . . dead. How can you describe the overpowering heat, the beating in the ears, the stinging of the eyes, the panic that overtakes your being in a state of shock?

Somehow I hung up the rugs, ran into the house and headed for the bedroom. I poured the paint out into the pan, picked up the roller and began to apply the paint with hard, sweeping strokes.

I don't know which flowed more freely, the paint or the tears. I kept going over and over in my mind all the associations I had had with Fran and wondering if maybe I had not done enough. But then I really didn't know Fran well enough, did I? Fran, whom I thought I had known so well! I wonder just how well we really know even those who are very close to us? I wonder?

I must have said those last words aloud because I was jarred back to the present by Jim's crackling newspaper. "You wonder what?"

"Oh, nothing. I was just thinking — aloud."

1962—*In A Plane Over Ireland*

... LARRY KINLEY

I traveled over
 Ten million miles
 And every inch was lovely.
 Ten million miles of beauty
 With always the
 Heavens above me
 And sometimes the clouds below.

Over many a mountain,
 Through many a valley
 And never two the same.
 Over many a lake
 And often a sea,
 And usually a river;
 But whether large or small,
 Though I could not now name them,
 I've the image, the memory, of all.

And the cities,
 And the towns,
 And the many ways to get there;
 And oh, and this is best of all,
 The people I saw and met there.

Ten million miles of adventure,
 Exciting every one.
 Ten million miles: a lifetime,
 Yet a life that has just begun.

Sing a song of sadness
 And loud is the refrain
 Many come to join you
 To lift and swell the strain

Note your fellow moaners
 In full harmony weep
 Spend a lifetime wailing —
 Till off to death you creep

Sad Song

. . . LARRY KINLEY

The Lovers

Their eyes stare at feet
 And then quickly meet;
 Fervently yearning,
 With passion burning,
 Till kindles a flame
 Too ancient to name,
 And bodies on fire
 Must yield to desire—
 Never forgetting
 Sometimes regretting
 Perhaps they sorrow
 When comes tomorrow.

The candle hush of love paints the room
 The room
 Filled with years of conversation
 The main topic
 Life.
 The main difference
 Life.
 Love
 The main bond.
 Sanctuary seekers
 You religious
 Agnostic
 Atheist
 You have come open hearted
 To the hushed room —
 One found God
 Others humility and
 The human bondage of life.

Home

. . . CAROLE BRUNER

What ever
 You came
 And are here forever.
 All seekers, finding one small token
 In the picture.
 The symphony blends
 The conversation and binds the years together
 When the violins sings in the dark.
 The statues keep their silent vigil —
 You Aphrodite, Apollo
 All speak to me in the hush
 You Laura
 Your words are strongest
 You the shadowed symbol
 Of love.
 You have been silent
 Observing the heritage painted in the room.
 Then there are those of us
 That grew in this room —
 From this —
 We have gone to the corners
 Of the sunset
 And with us the painted hush
 Has brushed
 But silently
 Into the rooms of the world
 Spreading
 (Like The Artist)
 Our thoughts to the eyes of the universe.

O Love

. . . SUE DOUGHERTY

Don't you know, love,
That one smile on your face
Sends a thousand words of joy to my heart?

Don't you know, sweet elusive dream,
That the simplest of treasures from your hands
Place all else in my world in total oblivion?

Have you forgotten the ecstasy
Of a summer day, a winter evening?
Will you deprive me of my life
in one quick thrust?

Surely a power so potent as yours,
A generosity so magnanimous
Can lend me one small speck of time?

Find Something

. . . CHARLES HACKENBERRY

(After hearing "Provide, Provide" by R. F.)

find something for your own —
— try gathering lilacs in the morning
or singing to the moon
try scattered memories
left spattered in the dust
of ancient hearths
try anything short of multiple deaths
and single births —
find something for your own

I know nothing about your hands —

Except how they feel.

Nothing about your face —

Except how it looks,

Nothing about you —

Except —

 You know how to live.

 You made your peace with

 Things I love.

I know one thing —

 If I could know you

 Hands -

 Face -

 All —

 I would have an exquisite way to

 Know my world.

I'd like a shot of life
 Right now.
 Something that would make my head
 Dizzy and my tongue thick.
 My brains need
 To go to people that
 Know that I am drunk with life
 And NOT sober with facts.

Three Poems

... CAROLE BRUNER

My God has been with me for years.
 Guiding love, friend and life to me.
 Every day the apparition brings beauty
 into my being.
 Living is my God —
 What is yours?

Relativity

. . . LARRY KINLEY

It was Tuesday.
 Listerine killed a
 Trillion germs before breakfast.
 Catastrophe struck an
 Ant hill in Africa
 As two aardvarks munched
 Their morning meal.
 Five thousand head of cattle
 Starved in continuing
 Mid-western snow storms;
 At noon many coyotes
 Had beef as an appetizer.
 In Asia fifty million children
 Cried at empty bowls
 And skipped lunch.
 In South America
 Three children fell from a boat
 So passing piranhas
 Had them for dessert.
 For dinner, somehow, somewhere,
 Something managed to
 Consume a glittering array
 Of almost everything else.
 And as they served coffee in
 New York Russia announced
 She had enough bombs
 To devour the entire surface
 Of the planet several times.
 Then the sun set,
 The moon shone,
 The stars came out
 And the world whirled on
 To Wednesday.

Night Under Bowed Trees

. . . CLAUDIA BAIR

A glance from you sends me to your side,
 A word, and I cannot think,
 A caress when we're alone
 And my heart catches fire.

We were one —
 I was not satisfied—
 And so, for me we parted.
 I went my way, and you went yours—
 The trees and the flowers bowed down
 And I ran to them
 And they caught me in their arms
 And it rained, and washed my laughter away.

Now I am alone.
 I stand surrounded by craggy mountains.
 And bottomless caverns
 My mind whirls
 I see laughing eyes, a lighted cigarette,
 A familiar apartment where we talked,
 And I see you.

Coming in from a lonely walk
 I ponder.
 I wonder.
 Will I again run to the forest,
 Or will the strong oak
 Enclose me with loving branches
 Until my heart bursts with overwhelming joy.

The Woman Figure

. . . LINDA REID

Woman is the other half, — the completion of man into a whole being. Woman—created from the inner depths of man's soul — is a helpmate, a mother, a lover, a wife. How true is the adage, "Behind every successful man is a woman." Indeed, just how true? For centuries man has realized that woman is not measuring up to his expectations of loving servitude. And for centuries he has been protesting against this necessary evil through every medium possible, trying desperately to prod woman into a long over-due awakening.

But woman, at least most women, has not and probably never will realize her precarious position. Yet she need only turn to the medium of drama to see herself as she appears to man in all her sadistic cruelty. From Shakespeare's *Lady Macbeth* to Ibsen's *Hedda Gabler*, we find the theme of selfishness, vanity, thoughtlessness, unfaithfulness, and any other characteristic you may have noticed in a woman you loathe, appearing time and time again in the drama of the greatest playwrights. Through the eyes of these playwrights, all of them men, I shall attempt to show you the distortions of the woman figure that actually exist, in the hope that you, men, will be forewarned of such creatures and that you, women, will be forewarned of becoming such creatures.

Let us look first at the mother figure. Perhaps the most distorted mother of all drama is Mrs. Phelps of *The Silver Cord* by Sidney Howard. Mr. Howard has the delicate task of developing a plausible Oedipus complex in reverse. And, true to his masculine nature, he treats a delicate subject vehemently, shouting instead of whispering. Mrs. Phelps, a widow, has devoted her life and soul to her two sons. In fact, on the night of her husband's death she chose to stay with her younger son, then a baby, who was suffering with the croup. Thus began the development of a devoted, dominating mother. Now, after breaking up an engagement between her younger son, Robert, and his fiancée, she is attempting to destroy the marriage of her older son, David. I shall let Christina, David's wife, build the character image of the "mother figure" for you:

"Oh, there are normal mothers around; mothers who want their children to be men and women and take care of themselves . . . But you're not one of the normal ones, Mrs. Phelps! . . . You've destroyed Robert. You've swallowed him up until there's nothing left of him but an effete make-believe. And Dave! Poor Dave! . . . How he survived at all is beyond me. If you're choking a bit on David, now, that's my fault, because you'd have swallowed him up, too, if I hadn't come along to save him! Talk about cannibals! You and your kind beat any cannibals I've ever heard of! And what makes you doubly deadly and dangerous is that people admire

you and your kind. They actually admire you! You professional mothers!" To complete the image of our "mother figure" let us listen to Mrs. Phelps' final words to her son, Robert, after David has finally cut the silver umbilical cord:

"And you must remember what David, in his blindness, has forgotten. That mother love suffereth long and is kind; envieth not, is not puffed up, is not easily provoked; beareth all things; believeth all things; hopeth all things; endureth all things . . . At least, I think my love does."

Another sadistic "mother figure" is Amanda from Tennessee William's **The Glass Menagerie**. Amanda is not paranoic, but her life is paranoia. Her foolishness makes her unwittingly cruel at times. I have chosen scenes between Amanda and her son, Tom, to illustrate her unconscious sadism:

AMANDA (calling). Tom?

TOM. Yes, Mother.

AMANDA. We can't say grace until you come to the table!

TOM. Coming, Mother.

AMANDA (to her son). Honey, don't push with your finger. If you have to push with something, the thing to push with is a crust of bread. And chew—chew! Animals have sections in their stomachs which enable them to digest food without mastication, but human beings are supposed to chew their food before they swallow it down. Eat food leisurely, son, and really enjoy it. A well-cooked meal has lots of delicate flavors that have to be held in the mouth for appreciation. So chew your food and give your salivary glands a chance to function! (TOM deliberately lays his fork down and pushes his chair back from the table).

TOM. I haven't enjoyed one bite of this dinner because of your constant directions on how to eat it. It's you that made me rush through meals with your hawklike attention to every bite I take. Sickening—spoils my appetite—all this discussion of—animals' secretion—salivary glands—mastication!

AMANDA (lightly). Temperament like a Metropolitan star! You're not excused from the table!

Tom struggles for his freedom as motherly devotion and concern begin to down him:

AMANDA. Have you gone out of your senses?

TOM. I have, that's true, driven out!

AMANDA. What is the matter with you, you—big—big—IDIOT!

TOM. Look! — I've got nothing, no single thing —

AMANDA. Lower your voice!

TOM. In my life here that I can call my own! Everything is —

AMANDA. Stop that shouting!

TOM. Yesterday you confiscated my books! You had the nerve to —

AMANDA. I took that horrible novel back to the library—yes! That hideous book by that insane Mr. Lawrence. I cannot control the output of diseased minds or people who cater to them—But I won't allow such filth brought into my house! No, no, no, no, no!

TOM. I won't hear more, I'm going out!

AMANDA. You come right back in— You're going to listen and no more insolence from you! I'm at the end of my patience!

TOM. What do you think I'm at? Aren't I supposed to have any patience to reach the end of, Mother? I know, I know. It seems unimportant to you, what I'm doing — what I want to do — having a little difference between them."

And, finally, Tom hints at the essence of masculinity — only to be crushed again by mother and her adult ideals.

AMANDA. Most young men find adventure in their careers.

TOM. Then most young men are not employed in a warehouse.

AMANDA. The world is full of young men employed in warehouses and offices and factories.

TOM. Do all of them find adventure in their careers?

AMANDA. They do or they do without it! Not everybody has a craze for adventure.

TOM. Man is by instinct a lover, a hunter, a fighter, and none of those instincts are given much play at the warehouse!

AMANDA. Man is by instinct! Don't quote instinct to me! Instinct is something that people have got away from! It belongs to animals! Christian adults don't want it!"

Let us turn now to a second most important position of woman — the "wife figure." George Kelly's **Craig's Wife** is an excellent example of how close man has come to being sucked down the sewer of female dominance. Harriet, Craig's wife, has successfully beaten her husband into a state of submission by one of woman's most powerful weapons, beauty. Craig is still unaware of the situation when his aunt informs him thus as she leaves their house after being rudely insulted by Harriet:

"She's left you practically friendless because the visits of your friends imply an importance to you that is at variance with her plan: so she's made it perfectly clear to them, by a thousand little gestures, that they are not welcome in her house. Because this is her house, you know, Walter; it isn't yours — don't make any mistake about that. This house is what Harriet married — she didn't marry you. You simply went with the house — as a more or less regrettable necessity. And you must not obtrude; for she wants the house all to herself. So she has set about reducing you to as negligible a factor as possible in the scheme of things here."

And later, when Craig has finally realized his situation, he makes one final effort to save himself. Harriet has made the remark that he is a romantic fool. Craig says:

"Many a man has lost his life, Harriet, because his wife has never made a sufficiently illuminating remark. But you did make it. And that other remark — when you said there were ways of getting rid of people without driving them away from the house. I saw your entire plan of life, Harriet, and its relationship to me. And my instinct of self-preservation suggested the need of immediate action — the inauguration of a new regime here . . . I suddenly remembered the truth of what you called me last night; and in view of that, the absurdity of my trying to sustain such a role indefinitely. It made me laugh . . . The role is not for me, Harriet; I can only play a romantic part."

Craig escaped the clutches of his demon. But let us look at another who was not quite so lucky. August Strindberg reveals the "wife figure" who does succeed in disposing of her husband into the sewer of female domination in **The Father**. The question arises, between the Captain and his wife Laura, of which school their daughter, Berta, should attend:

CAPTAIN. According to the law, children are to be brought up in their father's faith.

LAURA. And the mother has no voice in the matter?

CAPTAIN. None whatever. She has sold her birthright by a legal transaction and forfeited her rights in return for the man's responsibility of caring for her and her children.

LAURA. That is to say she has no rights concerning her child.

CAPTAIN. No, none at all. When once one has sold one's goods, one cannot have them back and still keep the money.

LAURA. But if both father and mother should agree?

CAPTAIN. Do you think that could ever happen? I want her to live in town, you want her to stay at home. The arithmetical result would be that she remain at the railway station midway between town and home. This is a knot that cannot be untied, you see.

LAURA. Then it must be broken!

And broken it is when Laura uses another of woman's tricks — the vilest of all her tricks:

LAURA. Is Bertha to leave home now?

CAPTAIN. Yes, she is to start in a fortnight.

LAURA. That is your decision?

CAPTAIN. Yes.

LAURA. Then I must try to prevent it.

CAPTAIN. You cannot.

LAURA. Can't I? Do you really think I would trust my daughter to wicked people to have her taught that everything her mother has implanted in her child is mere foolishness? Why, afterwards, she would despise me all the rest of her life!

CAPTAIN. Do you think that a father should allow ignorant and conceited women to teach his daughter that he is a charlatan?

LAURA. It means less to the father.

CAPTAIN. Why so?

LAURA. Because the mother is closer to the child, as it has been discovered that no one can tell for a certainty who the father of a child is.

CAPTAIN. How does that apply to this case?

LAURA. You do not know whether you are Bertha's father or not!"

But Laura is not content with breaking the knot of their disagreement; she must break the Captain, also.

CAPTAIN. I feel that one of us must go under in this struggle.

LAURA. Which?

CAPTAIN. The weaker, of course.

LAURA. And the stronger will be in the right?

CAPTAIN. Always, since he has the power.

LAURA. Then I am in the right.

CAPTAIN. Have you the power already, then?

LAURA. Yes, and a legal power with which I shall put you under the control of a guardian.

CAPTAIN. Under a guardian?

LAURA. And then I shall educate my child without listening to your fantastic notions.

CAPTAIN. And who will pay for the education when I am no longer here?

LAURA. Your pension will pay for it.

CAPTAIN. How can you have me put under a guardian?

LAURA. With this letter of which an attested copy is in the hands of the board of lunacy.

CAPTAIN. What letter?

LAURA. Yours! Your declaration to the doctor that you are insane. Now you have fulfilled your function as an unfortunately necessary father and breadwinner, you are not needed any longer and you must go. You must go, since you have realized that my intellect is as strong as my will, and since you will not stay and acknowledge it."

The Captain was destroyed; Craig escaped in the nick of time; Tom, too, finally escaped; David escaped; Robert did not. All were men struggling, some violently, some less violently, in the grip of woman. Those who escaped will bear the scars of woman to their graves. Those who did not escape are in their graves. It is to you who are yet untainted that I say beware, beware of the distorted woman figure.

The Image

. . . PHILIP REPLOGLE

How do you see me —
Can there be two
Who see with the same eyes?
Can you, with your own heritage of soul,
Your own forged moments building image,
Shake the same tone from beaten brass,
Know the same scent of crushed grass,
Taste the same liqueur from hand-cut glass
Or mass equal moment from the rattle of day?
Play that song or this singer —
What iron memories or reed-sung whispers
Bring your mind to the sound?
Are like people merely like memories —
And experiences, not saints, the makers of soul-mates?

When the soundless swinging of the gate
Ceases, and breathing is snuffed
By some quiet hand,
In what manor does the hammer of living
Leave its forged gold,
And who will know the strange mass that is left
But some same mass,
Some equal in sharing the shearing of time.

Are you my equal in breath and sorrow;
Will your heaven be my house, my house be your soul?
Or will we only blend blindness, as now?
I would rather we mate forces and grow together
Twining ecstasy and misery into a mating of souls.
Are we alike enough from growing alone
To share the movements of liquid gold?

Gone

... JOHN K. SPITZBERG

Fall carries no tales, not like Summer
 Oh summer you are gone, gone my love
 And love, you too do turn cool and crisp
 Love and summer bear such fleeting witnesses.

Summer is not the time for decision
 Bring on that awakening of white to come.
 Away the heart, and sadness descends
 For 'tis good-bye love — Summer's gone now.

“Things Are Not What They Seem”

. . . CAROLE BRUNER

There was a boy and there was a girl. The boy and girl passed every day but they never said the words that would usually make a boy and girl feel that they belonged to each other.

To the girl, the boy represented a wonderful world. When he spoke the adults could tell that he was intelligent and capable of displaying his knowledge in a creative and convincing way. He was the student that every senior high teacher wanted to have. He respected adults beyond their capacities, and with it all he remained an individual.

To the boy, she was quiet. Not yet a senior, but that did not matter for she was mature, and to him maturity meant a lot. She could see all and did not turn her head to by-pass the improbable. Her world was more elevated, she spoke in a world of flowers and sunshine. She was wind, rain, and the everpresent rainbow that restores life to its natural owner — human beings.

She was also from the right class of people. She did not live in the masses' world; her world was neat and orderly and for that reason he wanted her; but, for the same reason, he knew that she could never want him.

They never spoke to each other until one day—it was a gray stormy day—he had just announced, to the world, his attachment to another girl. She felt that she should say something to him in the way of congratulations. "This could mean a lot to him," she thought, "and he no doubt wants praise." "After all, if I were his girl I would be proud to have others congratulate him."

She was shy about saying anything to him, but when she had the chance she realized that what she had to say was coming out in a very personal manner. For the first time she felt like a defeated lover. She was overwhelmed by her reaction and realized that she was going to fight for her own chance to bring this boy to her world. He was amazed! He admitted later that he wanted her to be concerned but he never expected this dream to come true.

From that time on nothing seemed real. She gave him a reason to live in the world of flowers; he gave her a reason to believe in the world of a strong individual. The sun, stars, moon, all obeyed their wishes. The world was covered with snow—to be eaten like the icing of a cake. The snow was a passport to their world, for with it they found a world incredibly free to explore. Life was a constant parade of things to love; and above all, they loved each other. She became beautiful; he became handsome and proud. They met the challenges of the world together and proved that their love was stronger than opinion.

Life became spring, and with spring she felt a part of her frozen. Had he betrayed her, or himself? No! Did he stop loving her? No! It was something else. She felt herself dying to the world of reality. — Reality—how did one dress for it? In black, she supposed. So she dressed in black, her thoughts became clothed with black shadows.

Then, as suddenly as the black curtain fell, it was summer. They ran to the mountain and shouted their love to every echo. He was happy again and she threw her scarf to the wind, like caution; and forgot the black spring. It was summer. They danced in the street and declared their love to the statues and the squirrels in the park.

Then fall came and again the black curtain fell between them. This fall she was a senior, and reserved the privileges that became her position. This time she realized that she must look closely at her strange love. It was born in the snow and was lovely, in the spring it changed to black, and in the summer it lit up the world again. The fall was rainy.

He worshipped her. She followed, —lightly tripped over the one step beyond— and could see clearly into a world that he had created. She was as close to his god as any human on earth because she believed in the boy and went willingly into his world of self-persecution. She looked, commented, and then led him to the safety of sanity, not like his world, for his was untested and rebuked society and himself.

One day in the fall they walked hand-in-hand in the rain. She looked at him and knew that he was tortured. He was engulfed in a world that was beyond the reach of most of us. His hand clasped over hers was cold — the link between their worlds was frozen. She was horrified. How could she escape? What was his world? Why had she ever tried to reach out to a world that twisted the human being and made him put a stop to all future becoming?

Now — the memory of their snow song plays to her and she is lonely. She knew a love that demanded her to divide her thoughts into two worlds. She still has one but having known the second, how can she continue without sharing the knowledge of the world beyond sanity? Only now can she realize the truth in the Psalm:

"For the soul is dead that slumbers,

And things are not what they seem."

Inamorata

. . . M. MADELINE NOLL

Each time my love passes,
My heart o'erfills
And his presence feeds the fire.
But it is hidden, untended.

Each time my love goes by,
My daydreams capture him
And hold him for my nightdreams.
But they are secret, unviewed.

Each time my love speaks,
My mind records his being
And plays back the theme.
But it is contained, unheard.

Each time my love smiles,
My eyes impress the sight
And enter it in my heart's book.
But it is veiled, unread.

Each time my love passes,
My own love follows after
And prays he hear its voice.
But it is mute, untold.

Loved?

Who?

ME?

Liked

perhaps,

but not

loved—

not Me—

I'm

too much

of a

buddy-

buddy

and not enough

of a

lover.

I'm the type

who is

around

when he

has

a problem . . .

around

when he

needs

a favor

done,

Because

I'll

do

it—I always

do it—

I'm

a

buddy.

Pals

JANICE ALTEMOSE

The Race

... JOHN K. SPITZBERG

The starter blew his whistle for the runners to come to the blocks. Six men in their thin clad shorts and jerseys approached their blocks with grim determination set on their faces.

The paunchy official made his perfunctory remarks. All six had heard them before. "Gentlemen trot around while I talk. Now I want you men to go to your blocks, do what you have to and stay loose. Now gentlemen stay in your lanes, no elbowing or tripping. Good luck!"

Bo Corbert eyed the fat official, watched him puff on every word and meticulously noticed every wrinkle on the fat man's face contort and sag as he voiced his orders.

Bo looked at the other runners, looking at their long graceful bodies. He calculated the distance between the starting line and finish and vaguely saw the faces on the side lines. In between his blocks and the tape were those obstacles, just a lot of slats of wood to jump over. Gotta get the altitude!

Corbert adjusted his starter blocks. He measured their relationship and concentrated on his shoestrings for a minute, just tying one and then the other. He fingered the spikes for dirt and looseness.

It was always the same, complete concentration, always the same nervous tension. Again he looked over his opponents. "Were any of them any good? Could he beat them? Could he beat them off the blocks?"

"All right gentlemen; let's go."

Bo crossed himself as he always did. It had become a habit with him. First it meant something, but then he had forgotten what it meant and just did it.

Was he loose enough? He broke from the blocks and jogged awhile. The slight annoyance on the fat man's face showed, but Corbert was used to that. Again he looked down the track. "God, they're far away."

The official whistled again. The boys went to their blocks.

"Get ready—get set . . . Bang, Bang . . . All right, men, shake it loose. Number three you broke too soon. Don't jump the gun now—Okay men let's try it again."

"Damn that son of a bitch. I had it made." Bo crossed himself again, played with his spikes and swore softly to himself.

"Get ready—Get set—Bang . . ."

Bo sensed that he was being pushed. "Gotta shake that guy," He gasped for breath, every ounce of strength being used. And each race was the same.

Each race was do or die, win or . . . He knocked the last hurdle over but passed number six. He was ahead. "Go damn it go. You're ahead—keep moving, keep movng, the tape. Where's the G. D. tape," he thought.

Bo felt someone rush up to him and grasp his arm. Through gasps for breath he asked—"Did I win?"

"Sorry, son, just missed it by a head."

"But"—Oh hell always the same, one hundred per cent effort and always number two. Bo crossed himself at the end like he always did and looked up and said "Thanks."

Thought 124

. . . FREDERICK WEINTRAUB

The forge of existence is under my window

And as the great arm of mass beats out its constant pattern

I sit here alone in fear

Fear that I too may someday hammer out my tomorrows

If only tomorrows would be today

Then I would be the stag who runs through the green-twilight

till he can run no more.

Of Simple Things

. . . CAROLE BRUNER

I think I'll write of simple things —
 —A thousand years
 —A thousand springs—
 Of love, or maybe just the rain.
 I'm tired of dust, misery
 and constant strife to pain.
 I'd like to look for one brief glance at what I've
 found and what I've seen—
 I think I'll write of simple things.
 And simple things
 If truth be told
 You know — they're worth much more than gold.

Just take today—
 And what I saw
 Was one small boy with one big doll.
 "And where are you going with that young man?"
 "I'm taking it home to my sister Ann.
 You see she's rather sick at home and wants
 a dollie all her own."
 Down in the square the Santa Claus gives
 Children thoughts that make men pause.
 For children have a way — you know
 That fills the heart and makes it glow.
 If we were more like children
 (I know that cannot be!)
 But if we were, then we could see
 A thousand years
 A thousand springs—
 I think I'll write of simple things.

bright star twilight in orange-hued autumn fields
 hardened grain grasses in whirlwind flight
 and the moon (it was there too)
 as a clown thrown in the sky to watch tomorrow's promises
 dancing by
 it laughed
 not a warm soft moon laugh
 but the muffled rape song of organic passion
 and the world spun
 while a big black crow ate the scarecrow's eyes
 "and love screamed" (for that's all it could do)
 as we grew and broke the past
 flinging blood on the moon's laugh face
 while orchestras or organs beat out their lonely rhythms
 and time just stood there with his hands limply at his sides
 as the light went out

Miracle

. . . BARBARA BOUGHNER HACKENBERRY

I've never known a black cat
how would I know.
But everybody always says,
shimmering secrets.
Soulful Salutations
Musical manifestations on the make.
Let's have a miracle,
but then, of course, I've never known one.
How would I know.
But everybody never says . . .

Elegy

. . . CHARLES HACKENBERRY

How many lovers
have lain and
seen death hiding
in another's eyes?

— have watched
the pall of autumn
sweep crimson and beautiful
over the green lush of summer
and another
love?

For I have
seen October
riding on the Pegasus
of a chill breeze —
of a chill breeze —
and known the
crackled leaves
in bush-breathed
stirrings
till they've become
the death-rattle
of spring.

And I have seen
the body of a frog
rolled headless
and decayed,
and smelled the
oil on its skin
and I have known a world
without me.

And heard a
 red-flayed leaf
 scream "death!"
 and watched the
 teeth of its
 grim cunning thoughts
 of doomed survival
 till this leaf too
 fell in silence
 with the rest.
 — And still the grackles
 played.

and I have heard
 a death-dried
 cricket chirp
 "As you are now
 I once was;
 As I am now
 You will be."

And still the grackles
 sang
 and feasted.

For I have lain
 and seen death
 hiding
 in another's eyes.
 And I can only ask
 because a chill
 October breeze
 whispers questions in my ear.

Questions which
 I cannot answer
 for I have only
 known a world of
 sunshine
 and of youth,
 but I have lain
 and seen death
 hiding in another's eyes.

Questions which the
world has known before —
as others wondered
who are now
just dusty atoms
at my feet.

Questions which
a million mute Octobers
must someday answer
when this dream
of death is
done . . .
and still the grackles
frolic in the crisply
fallen leaves.

Oh, do not try
to answer —
for you have never known
a world without
the thought of
you —
nor can you ever
believe
that God did
not scoop out valleys
just for you,
or heave up mountains
for your pleasure.

— And questioning grackles
must have answers to be
grackles or questions.

— But have you
lain and seen death
hiding
in another's eyes?

Let Fall, Love

. . . PHILIP REPLOGLE

Let fall the snow of time,
 Let the mad mime of angered gods
 Spill over the footfalls of my boots —
 End is not sighted yet
 Nor yet even conceived in the imagination —
 Yet,
 But let the snow fall —
 Red viewing of summer blood
 In the labyrinth of madness
 Is over,
 And the heart not decayed
 Nor mind swayed
 By it.
 A thousand days may cadence past
 A million hours may sway
 Their empty way —
 Heart is only heart
 Minded by mind not
 And has not forgotten
 Though told one and two and three
 And other clever schemes
 — or dreams . . .
 So let the snow fall,
 Let all be covered with the while of now —
 Allow spring to find later, later,
 Allow the memory to find later, much later,
 For now busy the heart in whiteness.
 Let purity of death cover the earth
 Till rebirth forces the issue
 Of spring.

