

Spring
1970

Reflector

REFLECTOR

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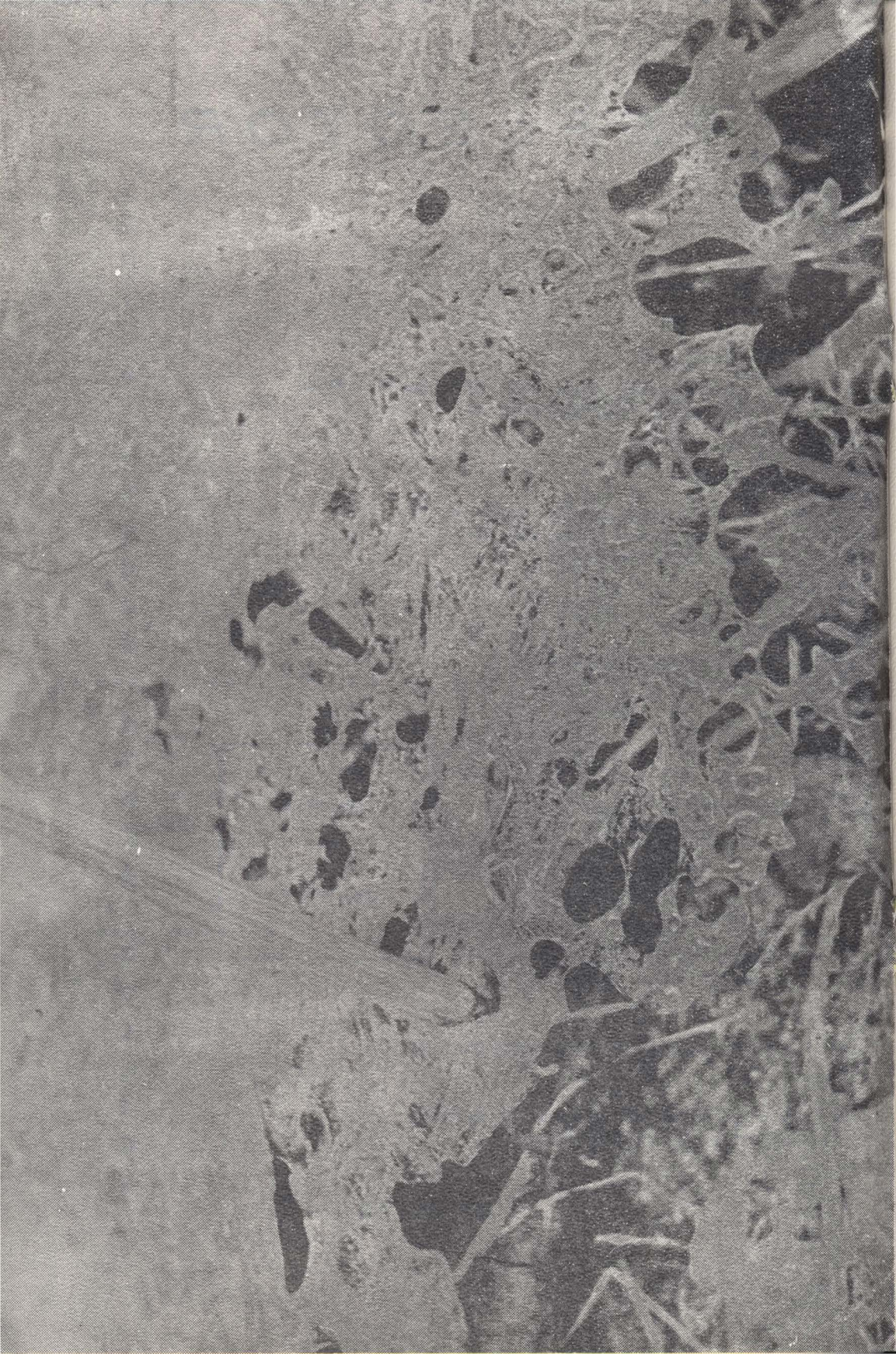
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SPRING, 1970

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- 1 challenge . . . john wilson
2 haiku . . . maryanne donovan
2 unusual reflections . . . brent amoroso
3 soliloquy . . . maryanne donovan
4 tomorrow . . . brenda baylor
5 whetstone . . . rod miller
- 7 to you across the room . . . paul politis
8 peacepassingmazecrazer . . . craig zumbrun
9 a time for tears . . . nancy haller
15 a woman and a man . . . john wilson
16 the look that makes me say . . . paul politis
17 picnic . . . lin henry
- 17 soft thoughts . . . craig zumbrun
19 rain . . . brenda hetrick
20 in search of socrates . . . sarah r. james
24 memories of the morning . . . paul politis
25 the largest building in town . . . tom harner
26 the wheel was invented . . . l. kenneth williams
- 28 we be free . . . john wilson
28 well . . . david sheaffer
29 a quarter for a long time . . . paul politis
30 untitled . . . jim taylor
31 harold, william e. . . . joe leach
34 river . . . mary m. turner
- 35 we . . . mary m. turner
36 why trap me . . . jeff naugle
36 names . . . brent amoroso
37 poets of loneliness, heartache, despair . . . john wilson
38 common knowledge . . . brent amoroso
40 resiliency . . . l. kenneth williams
- 40 center thoughts . . . craig zumbrun
41 eastman . . . tom harner
43 a fool's production . . . john wilson
44 a flowering relationship . . . brent amoroso
44 somebody . . . paul politis
45 conversation peace . . . greg russ
47 time melts all raindrops . . . paul politis

People singing; people with song mouths connecting
with song hearts; people who must sing or die;
people whose song hearts break if there is no
song mouth; these are my people.

—Carl Sandburg

Challenge

Do it, boy-man, do it now
do it anything
outstanding, artistic, revolting, heroic
but do it, as master
no martyr can do it—

And spill out your brains, your knowledge, your cunning,
obscenity, stupidity,

Whatever it is that you have to spill,
spill it, to do it,
and let others judge it

And find where you fit, or misfit, or can't fit,

And see if you've talent, the promise of
greatness

or if you belong to be lost in the masses,
society's victim instead of its Jesus

leaving your calling to others aesthetic
producing your meaningless drama of living
and maybe your children
who someday
may do it

or die in the folly of pursuing beauty
and answers to questions
unanswerable.

. . . JOHN WILSON

Haiku

Tongues facing the clouds
Taste the sweetened, soft wetness
Of tranquil snow flakes

. . . MARYANNE DONOVAN

Unusual Reflections

there was the time
i said
"i love you"
in the laundromat
between rinses.

. . . BRENT AMOROSO

Soliloquy

Harry, Harry, hi Har, ole buddy. Remember me? Jim, Jim Putman. Yeah, yeah, I knew you wouldn't forget. How're things going? Heart trouble, I suppose — eh? That's right, it's been four years, my friend. How are things back at Riplate Blade? Same, probably. Oh, I suppose some things have changed. Why you know I'll bet those willow trees down by the creek have grown some. I doubt, though, that even now they're as tall as those willows down stream. I remember walking under those huge trees one day and just looking straight into the sun. It was something, Harry, seeing the sun peek through those leaves. Did you ever look up? I tell you, if ever I wanted a canvas and brush, that was the day. Oh, I probably sound like a rambling old fool. No, you probably understand, maybe it's the wisdom of age. We did catch some trout in that stream didn't we?

How's the railroad doing back there? No doubt it's suffering like most of the rails are suffering these days. Let's see now, you had been retired about a year and a half when I met you, right? Your wife didn't know what to do with you either. We had some good times didn't we? You know, I can't help wondering how that little Charlie Stouffer is doing. I guess he's not so little any more. He could really swing a bat couldn't he? He could hit a line ball to center field better than any Little Leaguer around. We should know, huh, buddy? You know I don't think we missed a practice or game that whole summer. Of course, it wasn't all fun. They needed some experienced coaching. We helped them, Harry, yes we did.

Ah, yeah . . . Hey, what about Sunrise Park? I remember they were having a bit of trouble raising the tulips there in spring. They could have used some good fertilizer. Do you recall how they kept blaming it on the spring rains. That town council should have hired a gardener. Fertilizer. I hope they painted those benches. We probably wore them out. I can still see the little ones playing in the snow. It's a wonder we didn't catch our deaths of cold, sitting there, watching them for hours the way we did. I never felt a thing, nothing. You know the brim of my hat would sag, it got so drenched. The wet never bothered me, though, never. Just gotta forget yourself sometimes, that's all. And the leaves in autumn, now that was a sight. The trees in that park were every color you could imagine. Remember? Oranges, golds, reds, yellows.

It was in the Fall that my wife passed away. She was 68, at the time. That same winter I came here to live. Remember how surprised we were when I told you I was moving to Cramersville to live with my sister and you said that was your hometown? That was some coincidence wasn't it? I knew I'd see you again sometime, Harry. I can hear myself saying, "I'll see you again, no doubt." Remember? You should have looked me up when you got here, but I guess you haven't been here too long. I wasn't quite sure they were talking about you in the paper. You know I only saw your last name once. We were

at the ball field. Some cards had fallen from your wallet and that little left-handed pitcher found them somewhere around first base. I guess you had gone to get a hot dog or something, so he handed them to me. He said "Here, Mr. Jim, I think these belong to your friend." The name on all of them was Harry Simione. I remember when you came back I asked you if you were Harry Simione. That was a pretty funny thing, us being such good friends and me not even knowing your last name.

So anyway, when I read in the paper "Viewing from 7 p.m. to 8 p.m. on Wednesday evening for Harry Simione at Colliers Funeral Home," I figured it had to be you. Well, listen old buddy, I should be going. My sister is waiting in the parlor. Now I don't want you feeling sad, Harry. I mean, things being how they're supposed to be and all, I'll see you again, no doubt.

. . . MARYANNE DONOVAN

Tomorrow

tomorrow . . .
so mysterious,
out of reach,
fills today with anticipation.

. . . BRENDA BAYLOR

Whetstone

The beast of burden
is hitched to the plow
to work and sweat
his meagre life away.

EPILOGUE

But, you are a man,
arise and challenge your lowly task!
Spread your fingers to the sky
to grasp for the meaning of your life,
and seek a higher vision.

Never be content to remain
with your feet so rooted,
that you may never step
closer to the destiny that awaits you.

You are yourself, a man,
and as such a creature
you are a bit of God himself
in the garb of mortality.

. . . ROD MILLER



To You Across the Room

I've had my moments,
Not here, but in other places,
Where the guys crowded around
To shake my hand,
And girls ran up to kiss me
For some unapparent reason
Of their own
And my own,
And let me hug them
And drink coffee
Or beer with them
All night
While we waited for the sun,
Or the clock to strike 12
Or 2
Or whatever the night was at the time,
Yes, though I seem missing, now,
Fluctuating between the chair
And the wall,
I've had my moments,
Not here,
But in other places,
Where you've never had any.

. . . PAUL POLITIS

To You Across the Room

Peacepassingmazecrazer

I wonder (often)

If you (ever)

Remember me

When with lightening, brightening glances

Which from your eyes feel . . .

Fill every room in my dim head

In cold corners

I huddle somewhere,

In my head searching

For some telepathic (rope)

Vision of you calling soft

"Yes"

I remember and with hand - !

I would not make more of this maze-life

But embarking dark

Hounding me to the sheltered

Most hidden-less open

Less easily frame in my mind

I clutch at a hope or a

Remembered happy time

Pass . . . to peace

a hope.

. . . CRAIG ZUMBRUN

A Time for Tears

I came in through the kitchen door. Greg, my step brother, was at the table. He handed me a letter from Dan. I read it and found out he wouldn't be home for the coming weekend. Greg must have seen the disappointment on my face.

He said, "I hear Dan's been dating at school."

"You lie!" I snapped.

"O.K. I'm lying," he replied, not very convincingly.

I knew my relationship with Dan was on the decline. It had been for a year, but I never would admit it to myself and didn't want to hear it from anyone else.

"Well, how's dear little Carla?" I asked sarcastically.

"Fine," he replied.

"I'll bet she is," I said suggestively.

Without moving his head, he looked up at me in a hard glare. I smiled snottily at him and raced up to my room.

Although I had lived with him for sixteen of my seventeen years, I had only begun to study Greg in the past three years. When my parents were married they each had a child. Greg belonged to my father and I belonged to my mother. Greg's mother had died giving birth to him and my father died in a plane crash. The fact that Daddy wasn't my real father never really bothered me. I loved Daddy very much and could never imagine having anyone but him for my father. Greg felt the same way towards Mother and we had always been a very close family.

I was brushing my hair and got to thinking when I really began to know Greg. I guess it was our freshman year in high school. Perhaps it was because we were sort of forced into doing things together. I became a varsity cheerleader and he became involved in sports. We were both in the school choir and church activities, and since we were the same age, my friends were his friends and vice versa. We began attending the same parties our freshman year also. And wouldn't you know he started going steady with Carla Jones, a girl whom I never liked. I let him know it too and wanted to throw him out of our home when I learned of their intimate relations this year. He'd always give me grief about every guy I dated, too, even if they were his friends.

It then occurred to me what Greg had said about Dan and I slammed the hair brush down on the dresser. The rest of the day was spent bickering with Greg over Dan and myself.

Peace remained between Greg and me for about a month. Peace also remained between Dan and me for the same length of time because I hadn't seen him for that long. I was bothered by Greg's attitude towards me. Whenever we were alone in a room, he always brought up something about Dan and when I got all steamed up, he'd become extra sweet and sensitive to me, suggesting we do something together or he do something for me.

One Friday evening around 8:30, my parents left for their card club and I was elected to babysit. Being more bored than hungry, I went into the kitchen to make a sandwich. Greg came down from upstairs and walked into the kitchen. I noticed he still had his old wranglers and his sweat shirt on.

"Aren't you going out with Carla?" I asked.

"Nope," he replied.

"Good heavens, it's going to snow tomorrow!"

"What do you mean?"

"Well, this must be the first Friday night in two years you haven't blessed this house with her presence."

"You're a funny little girl."

"I'm not trying to be funny. It's true."

"Hey, make me a sandwich," he said, changing the subject.

He took a seat and I noticed he was staring at me as I walked back and forth from the refrigerator to the counter. I had noticed he stared at me quite a lot in the past few months. When I caught him doing it, I always felt like a princess because he was extremely handsome himself and for any girl to rate a stare from him was something out of the ordinary. I always compared any guy I had ever dated to Greg. He was just like Daddy—handsome, intelligent, athletic, cool, and groovy with the girls. No guy I had ever dated had ever equaled Greg, not even Dan. And no girl I knew deserved Greg for her guy.

"Especially Carla," I thought. "She's stupid and fat and conceited for no reason at all." I knew this wasn't intelligent reasoning on my part but rather petty jealousy.

"Where is Carla-poo, anyway?" I asked.

"She's baby-sitting."

"And you're not with her?"

"Does it look like I'm with her?"

There was complete silence for about two minutes until Greg finished his sandwich. Then he began.

"Let's talk about you and Dan some more."

"There's nothing to talk about," I blurted, wondering if he enjoyed poking at my pride. I bit into my sandwich and sat down at the table.

"I don't want to see you hurt," he said, seriously.

For Greg to say this, didn't surprise me. We had always talked about our problems together and, believe me, we really had problems. Our family tended to fall into critical situations from time to time. Greg and I had always turned to each other before we turned to Mother or Daddy.

I looked at him. His green eyes were watery and staring at me. I felt uncomfortable and awkward for some reason.

"What makes you think I'm going to get hurt?"

"Do you love him?"

"I don't know," I said and dropped my eyes.

"Well, if you do, you're going to get hurt."

"What do you mean?" I asked bitterly.

"Listen, remember when I cut school that day and went over to the university? Well, I walked into Dan and some girl hanging all over him. He knew I'd tell you so he said he wanted to talk to me. So we met somewhere and he told me he'd been thinking about breaking up with you but he didn't know how to go about it."

"I don't want to hear it, Greg," I pleaded.

"Now listen," he persisted. "I encouraged him to break up with you."

"You what!" I stood up, ready to run. Greg grabbed my arm.

"Because he doesn't deserve you, Drea."

"Oh, come on Greg."

He stopped short and began again slowly and with much effort. "Look, sit down. I have something to say. I've been wanting to say it for a long time."

I sat down. I felt bitter towards Dan. I wanted to scream and run and pound my head against a wall. But Greg's touch held me there. Something was going to come from his mouth that I knew I had to hear. We both sat down.

"Now this is going to sound really weird to you. I'm supposed to be your brother, right? But damn it all, I wish I didn't have to be. A guy can't help noticing a beautiful girl when he sees one and I see enough of you to know how great you are. I know we've always been close and if you weren't my sister, I'd ask you to be my girl."

I expected him to turn his head away and be embarrassed or something. But instead he held my hand tighter and looked deeper into my eyes. I was the one that was embarrassed. I could only sit there numbly and think, "My God, he's serious!"

"You probably think I'm a jerk and you'll laugh yourself silly tonight, but I just wanted you to know that I'm here if you should ever want me. I only wish I could have said it more poetically and . . . well . . . better to you. I must sound pretty dopey to you." He smiled and then let go of my hand.

I still couldn't say anything. I felt more frightened than anything. I went to my room. He was right. He did sound dopey but his words sounded beautiful. I flopped on my bed and lay there for hours. My mind kept going back to Dan and I'd feel depressed. But then I would hear Greg's conversation all over again and all I could do was smile. I kept begging my heart to stop beaming but it paid no attention to me. I thought I was crazy to be so excited over a proposition from my brother but deep down in I was finally admitting to myself that I did, in fact, have a high school crush on my own brother.

For three days whenever I was in the presence of Greg, he would only give me this smile of hopefulness. I'm sure I wasn't imagining it.

Then I received a letter from Dan. Again Greg handed it to me and again he was the only one in the room when I read it. His letter might have read: "Dear Drea, . . . forget it . . . Dan," because that's all I got out of it.

I stood there and tore it into little pieces before Greg. I looked at Greg. He was looking at me.

"It's over," he said. I thought I should have been the one to say this but

please, we can't make it obvious."

"Keep her on the side and use her, you mean?"

I was too ashamed of myself to answer. It was what I meant but I couldn't take this big leap without some protection.

"All right. For a while," Greg said.

We did everything together. Our friends gossiped but we didn't care. Carla was completely fed up and confused. We had everyone in a spin and thought it was a riot. The only two people who asked no questions were Mother and Daddy. Maybe they were afraid to. I tried to slow my emotions down, but they wouldn't stop. They were coming on stronger and stronger, and this is what I had been afraid of. For four months I was the happiest girl alive.

Then, it all caught up with me. It was the middle of August and I was sunning myself on a lawn chaise in our back yard. Greg was washing the car in the driveway beside the yard. He was leaving in two days for the university where he had been accepted. He had to leave early for football training. I had been accepted at a state college so we had talked of this separation and how we would deal with it. Greg rather thought we would have an ideal set up. We could see each other in peace because no one at school would know we were actually step-brother and sister and had been for sixteen years.

"There won't be the gawking stares or prying questions," he would keep reminding me.

I had agreed with him on all of this but I knew better. I felt it was only fair to discuss my real feelings before he left and prepared himself for the courage to tell him then.

"What's the matter?" Greg called from the driveway. He always detected when I was thinking about something. I suppose my face showed it.

I didn't answer so he came walking over and sat down on the end of the chaise lounge.

"Do you have something on your mind?" he asked, with an air of confidence that nothing I would say would be upsetting.

"Well, if I do, please promise to listen and not get angry," I said sheepishly.

"I promise."

"Greg, this school idea won't work. When we come home we're going to have to resort to our false worlds again, with all our little secrets, being just brother and sister again. It'll be painful to hold back and just pretend to be what Mother and Daddy think we really are."

"Then why not just blurt it out and tell the whole world right now?"

"Greg, this community sees us as sister and brother and they always will. Not only us, but Mother and Daddy will be scorned right out of this town." He beat me to it. I just stood and looked at Greg from his head to his feet but couldn't get past his eyes the second time. We were just standing there, staring into each other's eyes, into each other's worlds.

"What about Carla?" I broke the silence.

He simply replied, "That can be over too."

"No don't. Wait. We'll do things together, but keep Carla for a while.

"So we don't have to stay here."

"We can't do anything until we're out of school and that's four years. Where would we go?"

"What are you getting at?"

I paused. I didn't know what he expected me to say or how he would react to what I wanted to tell him. I held his hand and said, "Let's both date while we're at school and if we still love each other at the end of four years, then we will be together . . . forever." I hated myself for what I said. I didn't believe what I was saying but it was the only solution I could think of.

With almost a look of hate in his eyes, Greg coldly replied, "You know you're really disgusting!" With that he got up and went back to the car. I called after him but he didn't reply. I was angry with him for just walking away and not discussing it, but I knew why he had. He had always wanted to let the news out but I kept making him promise not to. Our relationship was new and unstable and very unpredictable. I didn't want it to someday end in nothing and then have everyone laugh at us. I had to play it safe.

That night and the next night Greg took Carla out. I was crushed and my pride and ego were deeply deflated. I waited for him to come and talk to me but he played stubborn and indifferent. So I played twice as stubborn and promised myself not to be the first to give in.

Carla rode along to take Greg to the university. Daddy asked me to go but I decided to stay home. I needed a time for tears before I saw him again. I couldn't make up my mind if I was more mad at Greg or myself. As a result, I was in complete misery.

The thought of college gave me a new feeling of hopefulness. After one week, school proved absolutely horrible for me. I was bored, lonely, and homesick. Throughout the semester I thought of Dan occasionally. He had written me three times and asked to see me but I never wrote him back. I began dating at school, but no one steadily. That was my new policy, mostly because no one interested me long enough but also because I had had my share of heartless guys. My studies were only average because I couldn't concentrate.

The Christmas holiday seemed as if it would never come but at last we had our Christmas break. I forced myself into staying at school until this time. I hadn't written once to Greg nor he to me. Through my parents' letters I heard of his success in football and in his studies. They also told me he and Carla had broken off. This surprised me. I always had this underlying feeling that he'd keep Carla on the side forever. I was disgusted with myself for the part I had played in Carla's previous misery and felt compassion for her when I heard the news. I assumed Greg had found another girl and the thought sickened me. I dreaded the fact that I had to finally face him because I knew we would be like complete strangers.

After arriving at home I walked into the room where the Christmas tree and all the trimmings were. I even felt somewhat happy. It was good to be home—I had to admit that. Mother and Daddy had smothered me with kisses and the whole family was full of questions.

Finally I asked the one question that had been on my mind since I had walked inside the door.

"When will Greg be home?" I asked, trying to sound indifferent.

"Well, Greg disappointed us, Drea. He decided to go to Florida for Christmas with some of his friends from the university," Daddy replied.

"Oh, really. How nice." I tried to sound pleasant for Greg but the lump in my throat was getting bigger and bigger. I excused myself from the room with some excuse like I had to use the bedroom. I went to my room, and I must have cried for an hour.

A few days dragged on. Christmas Eve finally arrived. We had always attended midnight mass on previous Eves; once again the family was planning on attending. I faked a headache all day and was finally permitted to stay home from the service. For some reason I didn't feel like rejoicing to God and singing carols and lighting candles. I remembered too many things from previous Eves to go through this one, faking joy.

After the family had gone, I seated myself on a chair beside the tree, put some Christmas music on the stereo, and stared at the wrapped packages. I had bought Greg a glass-bottom mug out of tradition of buying my brothers and sisters gifts. Now I was looking at it, wondering when he would ever open it. Pitying myself, I got down beside it, clutched it to my heart, and let the tears flow from my eyes.

I heard something move behind me. I turned around, startled, and saw my father looking down at me. I was embarrassed that he should see me doing such a thing.

He took me in his arms and held me. "Honey, I know everything," he whispered. "You should cry. You've been very foolish."

"Oh, Daddy, I'm so sorry," I cried. "I didn't want it to go as far as it did but . . ."

"Why not?"

The tone of this question made me push myself away from him. He was confusing me. I expected him to praise me for my decision and to object to those four months Greg and I had shared.

He smiled at me and shook his head. From his face I knew he had accepted Greg and me. How long he had known, I didn't know, but I knew he'd help us. There was a lot to talk about but I was willing to talk. I ran again into his arms.

He stroked my hair and teasingly said, "I think I detect a little color in your face."

When I opened my eyes to stop crying I saw Greg standing in the entrance to the living room, under the mistletoe.

A Woman and Man

Restless with waiting, yet more than content with a love too long absent,
 She turned to him
 Earnestly, Eagerly, Innocent:
 Seeking assurance and such subtle pleasures as
 Women desire in their talking with men.

Weary from waiting, though not in a hurry.
 He turned to her
 Earnestly, Anxiously, Innocent:
 Acting a brother while seeking the pleasure that
 Woman surrenders when talking with man.

Restless and Weary, Eager and Anxious,
 They tried each other
 Tenderly, laughingly, knowingly playing
 A game that depended on balanced emotions
 when he went beserk
 screaming, "Damned be the pleasure,
 the innocent, subtle and brotherly pleasure
 which I, self-deluding, have never been seeking
 in this conversation, so nobly constructed
 In thought of the woman, denying the man."

As he was exploding with frustrated passion,
 feeling self-pity, for others, contempt;
 denying a world that denied its true lovers
 as he and this woman could never have been,
 and wanting what was not, which made it the sweeter,
 yet crueler to lose a game few ever win—
 She turned to him
 Soothingly, Tenderly, Innocent:
 Gently restored him that he may seek elsewhere
 The pleasures best shared by a woman and man.

. . . JOHN WILSON

The Look That Makes Me Say

Somebody's always marryin' the waitress
Whenever I stop
At the corner hamburg store
for a hamburg
with ketchup and onions
and who walks up but her
in her white uniform,
loafers,
hair rolled up,
with a glass of water
ready to take dictation
and gives me the look
that makes me say
"Hamburg"
(with ketchup and onions)
and another glass of water
and she steps girlishly
to the grill
for ten minutes
finally reappearing
formally in front of me
with the hamburg
(with ketchup and onions)
and the water and moves on
'cause somebody's always
just startin'
to marry the waitress
whenever I stop.

. . . PAUL POLITIS

Picnic

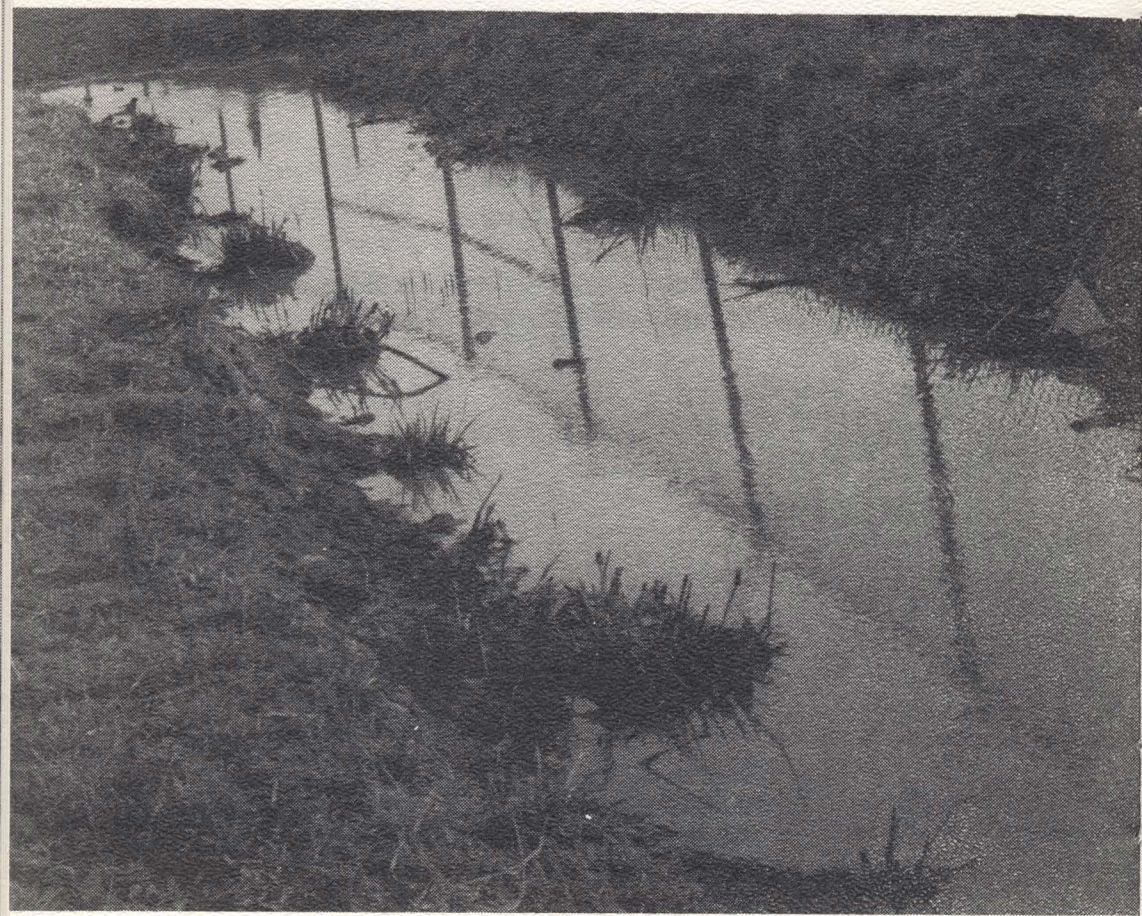
The wine was warm—
too dry to quench
a summer thirst.
softbarebelliesbear
against earth
the shallow stream
flows thru our mouths
as one as crayfish smile
blink a wink
Mortals could not scale this ledge
and reach this place in Time.

. . . LIN HENRY

Soft Thoughts

Even the butterflies
Are brick sometimes
That thoughts can be built on—
Back to air goes the mind
And the eyes see
What makes the light bounce back
Butterfly.

. . . CRAIG ZUMBRUN



Rain

There was a day—

Once—

Warm, and raining finely spun liquid threads;

An afternoon

All gray and frowning.

And walks were streams where silver sparkles danced.

And trees' sides were washed black;

And grass was never so green.

And I—

Feeling restless,

Needing to escape sanity—

Flung open the door

And bounded

Barefooted, over the steps

And along the walks.

Head bent backward,

Like a gay tulip,

I giggled and soaked in the rain

As dozens of black umbrellas marched on by.

. . . BRENDA HETRICK

II

(Ripples)

You were placed before me, a necessity of being,
a challenging taunt to my labeled
grey matter.

I, so like a child, tore frantically
at the ribbons and dressings, finding
box —
after box —
of gilded trappings.

In my eagerness, my insatiable obsession to
dive
to the
bottom,

I ripped and clawed at those sea-weed filaments
that clung to my hands and mind,
choking
my progress . . .

Your laughter reverberates throughout my
nothingness
as I grovel among those heaps
of cast-off pretties for the omniscience
you had mirrored onto their surfaces.

III

(Logicus)

AVE VERUM CORPUS; KYRIE ELIESON

How small

you are, how insignificant
 your life that
 you should hear each truth I utter.

KABALA, KORAN, BIBLE

Your

thoughts are now my
 property and will be placed along
 with those of
 other primaries.

THERE IS NO TRUTH OR ECCLESIASTES

Only I

am permitted to hold the ultimate
 knowledge that

KATARAGAMA IS DEAD . . .

Only I

can know that which men will
 search a millenium for.

ARMA VIRUMQUE CANO, . . .

IV
(Ambrosia)

Touch me not, nor sip from the
cup which is golden.
Neither gaze into the labyrinth which is
superior to the alabaster of your halls.
Ask only those questions that are mine.

What are you? Where are you?

There are places far greater than
those antiquities you haunt.
Come join me on Olympus and quench
your desires for all times.
There are places far greater . . .

Who are you? Why are you?

Come closer to my lamp that you may
bathe in its luminescence,
That you may hear the sirens of
my oracles
And flounder eternally while I sing.

. . . SARAH R. JAMES

Memories of the Morning

I remember the time the girl
in plaid pants
and her dead father's wool shirt
and my hat
locked herself out
of her house
and had to stay with me
and my blanket and my car
until 3:30 in the morning
when her brother came home
drunk
and busted in
with my tire iron

. . . PAUL POLITIS

The Largest Building in Town

The building was the largest in town, and today was the day of the biggest sale the town had ever seen. People were found everywhere—inside and out. Some satisfied themselves by looking through the windows at the distorted and multicolored merchandise inside, but others were not satisfied unless they handled the items. To satisfy the hungry, there were two food stands. One was run by the Ladies Aid Society and the other by the Y. W. C. A. As customary, the youngsters gorged themselves with hot dogs, candies, sodas, and cakes while their parents reached into their pockets to keep their children's ever increasing appetites satisfied.

Inside, John Philips was discussing with his real estate agent the possibility of turning the largest room in the building into a dance hall.

I don't think so, John. It would take too much renovating, but it would be an ideal place for a movie house or a community theatre the way it is.

But what about the downstairs. All of that space would be wasted. We'd have room enough for a bar and a small restaurant. This could be one of the greatest places around. Well, John, we'll see how much it brings and how the community feels about a dance hall . . .

The conversation was interrupted by the auctioneer:

Ladies and gentlemen, we are indeed most fortunate to have a large enough arrangement so that all of you may be seated.

The children came into the building and sat in the back.

The wealthy were in the front, and the other members of society filled the center section. It was the fullest that the building had been in years.

The auctioneer continued,

As you know all profits from this building go towards its renovation. It will be a free community service. Now Arthur, would you care to bring out the first item please. All right, what is my bid for this solid gold chalice . . .

. . . TOM HARNER

The Wheel Was Invented . . .

The wheel was invented
And has turned ever since,
Crush beneath its stolid tread
A civilization already so frail
That it has decayed,
And in the process become primitive —
So primitive that it has lost sight
Of the machinery which crushes it.

. . . L. KENNETH WILLIAMS



We Be Free

I here, you there—
 we be free.
Melodic love-song
 crumbles the bridge,
We baited our hooks too well—
We fell.
 But ripples have ruined
 the image we chased
 and joy past is flown
 half-mast,
wavering noble but dead.

. . . JOHN WILSON

Well

Love is intangible,
Virtues are transcendental,
Yet, think of their bearing on life
which is realistic.

. . . DAVID SHEAFFER

A Quarter for a Long Time

He's been selling pencils
for a long time
on Main Street.
He was there before the Beatle albums
and Elvis albums
and the hippies
and before the 1970 models
and the '60 models
and the '50 models
and he's still there,
half a man
on half a wagon,
He could tell you a lot
if he could tell you at all.
He's seen saddle shoes
and loafers and moccasins
and boots and bobby sox
and black socks and nylons
and pants with cuffs
with gum wrappers and burned out matches in them
and pegged pants and bell bottoms
go by,
and millions of legs
go by.
He probably recognizes some of them
he's been sitting on Main Street so long,
selling pencils.
He could tell you a lot
if he could tell you at all,
for he's been selling pencils
at just a donation, or
ten cents each, or
two
for a quarter for a long time.

Untitled

I'd like to put everything here
but it would be of no consequence
Unless you've been there, too—
and, if so, then you already comprehend.

There are no simple answers
Except that you live and die—
Somewhere in between you either
become aware or exist.

Have you heard the anguish in a teardrop
or seen the loneliness of people together?
The feel of autumn's touch before
winter reclaims the earth?

Then I hope the existence you breathe
still clings to the hopes and dreams
Of your childhood for reality
can be pure despair.

. . . . JIM TAYLOR

Harold, William E.

"Oh my God, not Harrison, he was only nineteen." Everyone is running for cover as another artillery shell explodes nearby. Two men pass by carrying a dead soldier to the evacuation area (Harrison, John W.). Our burly sergeant is running back and forth among the men shouting in obscene language to dig in.

"Those bastards know this area too well," mumbles the lieutenant as he groups us for the inevitable attack. We all know this ambush was well planned, this swampy land is undefendable. The deep, gnawing fear of death is apparent as the front lines begin to form. Someone speaks behind me, I turn to see a young, badly wounded soldier leaning against an old log. "Did you know the Harrison kid," he asks in a shaky voice.

"Yes," I talk to keep his mind off of the wound, "he was a friend of mine. We went through basic together and I even met his parents once. They were nice folks. His father worked in a mill and his mother made money sewing. They saved up all their money to send him to trade school. He even had a girl to marry when he got back. Then about two months ago he got the letter. It's funny, he wanted to live so badly till then, and since that came he just wanted to die."

"Well, it looks like he got his wish," my bloodied companion sadly answers. "What about you, do you have a girl at home?"

"Yes, a very special girl." The thought cheered me up a little. "And when I get home we'll settle down to a good life and lots of kids."

"Snipers," the sergeant is screaming as men all along the line drop like leaves in autumn. The stench of death is everywhere, and the painful screaming is becoming unbearable.

The young boy is bleeding heavily now, there is nothing I can do but watch his life drain out onto the mud. As he peers down at the small hole in his stomach, I thank God he can't see the gaping one in his back. He is starting to gasp for breath. He reaches out his trembling hand as if to say, pull me away from death, don't let him take me. He dies quietly mumbling something about being so far from home (Johnson, Henry B.).

The sergeant is yelling something about help coming. Suddenly his forehead turns to crimson, at least he died instantly (Stanley, Joseph E.). I look around at the nearby soldiers, some praying, some bleeding, and some dying. One poor boy with only one leg keeps crying that he doesn't want to die in this little mud hole. Agony and pain are plentiful. No matter which way I turn, death is there, choking out the last breath of life.

From somewhere across the muddy field comes a nerve-shattering scream, and with it hundreds of men. Human beings like us, but different enough that we have to kill them. Everyone is firing into the onrushing mob. Bullets are cutting the air all around us; we don't have a chance.

I have picked out a man, he can only be twenty-three or so. The kind of man who has a beautiful wife and lots of young children waiting for him at home. He seems to be limping, probably wounded in a previous battle. He is very brave to be charging like this; his cause must be worth it to him. I pull the trigger. He falls dead.

They're close now, almost on top of us, but we continue to fire. I can see some of the others up and down the line falling back to another line of defense. Someone yells retreat and I get up to follow.

Another man, not looking evil or ruthless, stops. I see the barrel point at me and the gun jump in his arm.

The mud is cold against my face. I want to get up and run, but something is wrong. I am trying to raise my head to see what is happening. The man who dared harm me lie only a few feet away holding his head in agony. I should feel revenge, but as I watch him slowly dying I feel a most unmilitaristic sadness.

I remember the day I left for the army, the kissing and crying, the promises and dreams. I can see the old school building which housed so many great memories for me — mother and dad at home in the evening — my family as we gathered around the table for supper — the old gang as we wandered the at night — my girl, our love, our dreams, the children we would have, my own fami----.

It is my sorrowful task to inform you that your son, William E. Harold, was killed during the current police action on the American Continent. The date of death, Nov. 12, in the year of our Lord 1777.

Lt. Henry Esser

British Army

. . . JOE LEACH



River

I began these people
Carried them where they would
Irrigated their crops and fed them.
I cut the first tiny stream-bed
Through these lands
When they were forest
Back before time began.
On and on I flowed
Never ceasing
I go on and I will go on
Carrying your children's children's children
As I carried your father's father's father
And his people before him.
I saw your countries grow
Your empires crumble
The sand come
And always the change
And always I am the same.
You come, my dark-skinned tamers
Or would-be tamers
Bringing your cockleshell boats
And your small human frames
To dare my rapids and travel my length.
Yet I see what has been and
I look on the new men who come
As other new men have come
Fraught with ideas
Eager to change, eager to build
And I know
Only a moment will pass
The sands will blow
And I'll murmur on
And you will be no more.
There is no hurry.

. . . MARY M. TURNER

We

Munching into adamantine shapes
We crush and pound
The lanterns of the blind
Into distorted surfaces
Reflecting images of our
Wandering world.

What answer lies in
world testing of
theories of extermination?

Run little man
The edge of the world is close.
People of clear plastic
Form a molten mass of
Formless obscurities
Mouthing obscenities meant to be
Wisdom of souls.

Discontinue that make;
It melts too quickly.

. . . MARY M. TURNER

Why Trap Me

There is a doll in the corner of my room. She sits there all day with eyes that sparkle and shine and radiate. And words on her lips that say, "Hold me, Love me."

So I held her.

And her eyes closed, and my heart went dark.

. . . JEFF NAUGLE

Names

They called me
names
and i told them
i couldn't give a
damn
while they watched
tears
roll down my cheeks

. . . BRENT AMOROSO

Poets of Loneliness, Heartache, Despair

Poets of loneliness, heartache, despair;
 Join me, I have a few heartaches to share.
 Have a few beers, the liquor's on me —
 Please! Let me speak and my mind will be free.

A few things have happened these last couple days
 Which have caused me to stop and consider my ways.
 The love that I bore and I thought was returned
 Was a hopeless delusion, as I have since learned;
 And the friend that I cherished and held to be true
 Was no friend to me, I'll have nothing to do
 With such a low creature, so vile and so fake.
 I'll tell you the story and watch your heart break.

The girl that I love likes me as a friend,
 The friend that I loved has designs on my girl;
 The girl that loves me is a pain in the ass
 And lacks the good looks, the enchantment and class
 That the girl that I love has acquired natur'ly
 From parents who raised her meticulously
 And spoiled her somewhat so she thinks of me
 As one of the area's cheap peasantry.

I'm certain my friend has been seeing my girl
 While I've been at work, as his time is free.
 A friend should not do such a thing to a guy,
 But he's doing it; I can see in her eye
 When she looks at him and they think I don't see,
 There's a sly look exchanged that's provoking to me.
 And I think that my friend was who told my girl
 Of the times that I spent with the girl who loves me.

Poets of loneliness, heartache, despair;
 It's so nice to know there is someone to care,
 Someone to listen, and someone to think,
 And who was it said they would pay for my drink?

. . . JOHN WILSON

Common Knowledge

where i live
there's really
not much sense
in shining your shoes
'cause as soon
as you cross
the street
they're dirty
again
so why wear
white socks?

. . . BRENT AMOROSO



Resiliency

The inner turmoil is ended
And the mind basks in the calm.
The calm. Not before the storm
But after it.
Before long another struggle begins.
From within — not without.
The mind has rested long enough;
It is looking for another storm.

. . . L. KENNETH WILLIAMS

Center Thoughts

Once within a core
of friends I was
Asked about the
Outside — "It's red.
They say it's quite shiny."
Hell — I don't want to know
I've got a seed.

. . . CRAIG ZUMBRUN

Eastman

Eastman was the kind of soldier that no side would claim. He joined our company in the spring and was soon the subject of much laughter for his hilarious antics. His father had been a lifer, green-beret type who sent his son to war in substitution for his own retirement.

Eastman seemed to be a harmless enough fellow. No one knew much about him except that he suffered extremely from lack of luck. Soon after his arrival, a series of events started in full swing that led to the eternal torment of Eastman by the other guys in my company.

I had been blessed with that most hideous aspect of war—night work. As a result, for a demerit I received for busting up a bar in Saigon, the old man made me pull K. P. I reported to the kitchen for duty to discover my aid in squalor.

"O. K. Collins," said the mess sergeant, "pick up a knife and pull duty with Eastman." Eastman and I peeled potatoes for an hour when the sergeant told us that we were to take supper to the men in the trenches. I was always sympathetic to these poor souls who had to pull night-time guard duty, so I prepared the food as rapidly as Eastman would permit and we started off on our moonlight trek to the trenches. The guard bunkers were underground with a few feet of window space which were above ground. The entrance was in the rear, but Eastman had other ideas. I was just turning around to see what happened to Eastman when I heard cacophony from inside the trench. I heard the resounding voice of Sergeant Nichols in a brief resume of obscenity aimed at none other than my K. P. compatriot.

It seemed that Eastman had mistaken the window of the bunker for the entrance. He stepped through with an armful of sandwiches and found out that the next step was eight feet farther down than he had anticipated. He fell directly on top of two dudes who were sleeping in the bunker and scared the hell out of them. When the sergeant asked Eastman what in the hell was wrong with him, Eastman told the sergeant that he thought he had sprained his ankle. I took pity on the poor wretch and helped him back to the kitchen, cursing myself for not having grown an extra set of eyes in the back of my head.

When we got hit in August, Eastman was again pulling K. P. on night shift. The mortar rounds started coming in at 11:30. I hadn't realized the profound influence which I had exercised on Eastman in the preceding months until I saw him clumsily sprinting toward our bunker. His neglect at taking the first bunker in sight almost cost him his neck. A shell burst in back of him, and as if he had nothing else to do, he turned to regard the bright yellow light which the explosion had given off. Finally realizing that he was in danger, he turned around and ran right into the middle of our waterpipe. He was down but not for the count. His bad luck was reversed for a split second as he dove into our bunker just before a round of fragments hit the front of it. The black eye which he received from the water pipe was the instigator of much laughter until it disappeared two weeks later.

Things were pretty quiet around the camp during the last week in August, and everybody had almost given up hope of ever getting another good laugh at the expense of Eastman. Of course, the fates are most active when they are least expected.

He was riding back from the P. X. in a three-quarter ton when a 134 truck crashed into it. It sent Eastman and the fellow beside him head over heels into some concertini wire. They had to get a crane to extract both of them.

Eastman escaped with a few scratches, but the guy with him was sent to the hospital. The very same night we had some heavy contact on the outer perimeter. Some choppers and bird dogs went up. The choppers were dropping flares and the bird dogs were swooping in trying to determine strength and location. Eastman and I got on top of the van to take some time exposures. The van stood about fifteen feet high and the wheels were blocked up so that they were off the ground. He went over to check and in a split second he had disappeared. In the process of finding the answer to my question, Eastman had calmly walked off the top of the van and descended to the steel plating below with a resounding clang. When I got to him he was out like a light. I called for a medic and he was soon evacuated to the army hospital at Cam Rann.

Some of the fellows heard that they were going to send Eastman back into the world. He was suffering from double vision and had been paralyzed from the waist down.

But an incident at the hospital proved beyond a shadow of doubt that the world was not ready for Eastman. The medics were moving him to a different part of the hospital when they accidentally dropped him on the floor. The jolt released the pressure on a nerve which was responsible for his malady.

He's back in the company now and everybody is awaiting his next blunder. The men are not as spontaneous with their laughter as they had been before, however. Whenever Eastman walks by, they usually smile and keep their fingers crossed and hope that bad luck isn't contagious.

. . . TOM HARNER

A Fool's Production

"There are words that must be written,"
I was telling those who'd listen,
"But I need a motivation,
need a goal or aggravation,
to experience sensation;
joy, dejection, hate or love."

"Let me give you inspiration,"
said the woman of sensation.
And I tasted what she'd give me,
called it joy and begged, "Don't leave me!"
She said, "Write a poem to please me!"
Long I tried but I could not.

Then she left me without warning.
I, dejected, took to mourning,
Moaning, asked her to return:
she replied, "You've lots to learn."
I tried to tell how deep I yearn
in poetry, but I could not.

And joy discouraged turned to hate.
"I saw through her," I thought, "too late."
She was once my hope and trust,
but all women are unjust,
and fickle, float with each new gust
and never know what men call love."

. . . JOHN WILSON

A Flowering Relationship

While everything about
seems
so very cold
white
and lifeless
possibly asleep
today
there are flowers
growing
in my back yard
i hope that
she
remembers
to water them

. . . BRENT AMOROSO

Somebody

Somebody beautiful always walks up
When you least expect her
So you forget to ask
"Hey, where've you been?"
And she never tells.

. . . PAUL POLITIS

Conversation Peace

I say
 Smile a half-baked
 smile old Whitey Skull
 and tell me what wonders
 have you seen with those sunken
 pockets you call eyes?
 Nothin' eh? old Whitey Skull saw
 Nothin'
 Today.

Yesterday a victim of Queequeg's bones
 —scatter and roll on the
 hard wood
 hard B-O-N-E-S

Now Whitey sits
 Upon my hardwood desk
 Free at last from Miss Troublesome Luck.
 Free at last! Safe and half-silly
 in his creamy white coat.
 (a paris plaster original)
 Old Whitey . . . I say what kind of life
 have you led?
 What kind of life do you lead?
 contemplating my gift shoppe
 asstray.

And Whitey replied with that
 Toothy smile of his
 —I've been bleached and baked
 'till my bones ache.
 My fissures show
 and the soft contours of my face
 have given way to sharp lines
 and angled cheeks;
 hollows without curves
 dusty ridges that once held a
 place for my mind
 —the bad lands.

And for the longest time
 i was beneath it all
 down under the
 world
 where my soul could and would
 decry and decay
 dammit!
 i liked it that way
 i knew (hee-hee)
 i knew that all those who
 walked above me would
 someday be like me

Alas conformity!

However, i was resurrected
 (no angels, though my wound was mortal)
 and at present i am leading the
 best life i've ever led
 just sittin' and smilin' at you
 with my sharp little smile
 my gruesome grin

and while i'm at it
 i thank you for the marbles
 that you call my eyes.

"Thank you! Whitey," said I.
 And still he smiled at me
 laughed at me
 stared at me from behind those
 two cool cats eyes.

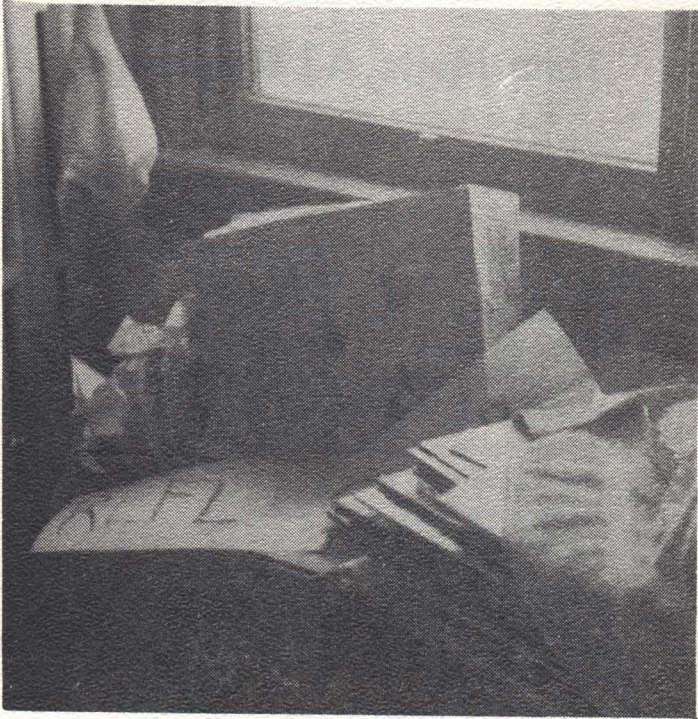
He had spoken rightly.
 Someday I would be just like him.
 Imagine! just like Whitey Skull.

isn't life wonderful?
 —a real conversation piece, said Whitey.

Time Melts All Raindrops

If I should fall in love with a morning rain, dear,
and tell you I'm going forever to chase it
with my umbrella battling the wind that blows
the rain and I along alone under
the clouds but near them,
walking brisk as the rain can fall all day,
smiling together at the mouths of cursing commuters
but slowing along the curbs of sundown streets
and shuffling to a slight splashing
halt in a neon night puddle,
then, dear, we would all be lost
to tomorrow's clouds.

. . . PAUL POLITIS



gone

