A black and white photograph of a weathered wooden log with a hole. The log is the central focus, showing its grain and texture. A hole is cut into the log, and a dark, shadowed interior is visible. Thin, light-colored twigs or branches are scattered across the top and sides of the log. The background is dark and textured, suggesting a forest or a similar natural setting. The title "the crucible" is printed in a bold, serif font within a white rectangular box that is superimposed over the right side of the log.

the crucible

THE CRUCIBLE

staff

Spring, 1978

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DAWN TO DAY
By Edith W. Durham

The cold darkness of the night
has faded with the stars,
Yet there still is felt the dampness
of the clear fresh dew
that lies glittering like gems
on a bed of emerald velvet.

The sun quietly peers through the trees
not to disturb the birds slowly waking.
The trees stretch and spread their arms
to hold in them the new warmth of morning.

The world yawns and the leaves
now awake flutter across the ground,
while woodpeckers with their tapping beaks
give the day its beat.

With no loud trumpeting calls
or bright glaring lights,
quietly, almost silently
the day becomes one.

WHATEVER
By James E. Runkle

I lost something along the way,
I don't know what it is,
You feel the wind,
it just died down,
an absence crystal clear
except it isn't there.

The leaves have settled the matter,
quietly covering it
like a madonna hiding a halo
in a wicker basket.
A conspicuous hint of divinity
shines on, hidden from view
of three wise men and me.

THE SIG
By Kirk Fenton

O in love all ag
Though an imp
My officers at t

But I have giv
Of smiles, gest
O and thoughts

I ask for nothing
Much as Nature
That they will f

These are the s
Spoken by the v
Could it be you

By Karen

friendship
what bitte
and empti
of acquaint
enough

THE SIGNS OF MY LOVE

By Kirk Fenton

O in love all aglow for five days now! --
Though an impulse to tell you cannot yet slip past
My officers at the gate: uncertainty and shyness.

But I have given you a warm array
Of smiles, gestures, and little acts --
O and thoughts you read upon my face.

I ask for nothing in return, and yet I hope --
Much as Nature does in giving seeds to the wind --
That they will fall on fertile ground, and take root.

These are the signs of my love for you,
Spoken by the varied tongues of the heart --
Could it be you cannot hear them?

By Karen Grossman

*friendship
what bitterness
and emptiness it holds
of acquaintances not caring
enough*

CLIMBING TREES AND FALLING OUT
By Edith W. Durham

I was floating, I had left the coarse arms
that held me, my body had risen,
suspended I was free.

Suddenly I fell, dropped hitting the hard mean ground.
Stunned, I lay not daring to open my eyes.
There is no freedom here,
inside the darkness of my mind I see.

The ground became a pool of deep water,
again I floated, circles, rising slowly, spinning upward.
The birds' twittering voices spoke to me
and I understood but could not answer
for my voiced thoughts were gone.

Gone.

My eyes were slits of lights as the lids
slowly raised, then opened, I saw.
Beside my hand that clutched the grass
highways like madmen ran across the land,
fields plowed themselves turning
to tar and asphalt.
The sky spun and choked,
nausea, overpowering hit
with black gagging sickness. I died.

In death I was absorbed into the ground,
through concrete, past worms
and buried dog bones
until I hit a force greater than mine
that spat me back to the surface
and flung me on a heap
of discarded tires that lay in a mass
at the foot of a towering blue mountain
that slept.



NOVEMBER

By Carter Burke

I'll always remember Leo for his agility with the blues. That Samoan was insane, I'm sure of that. Yet, I only remember the awe I had for his power over the strings of a mother-of-pearl Les Paul caught in a fit of the blues.

I remember a November too, when an Asian war hung in the air like a bastard brother to the days' cold gray clouds. Thanksgiving was coming and so were our draft notices.

The blues came easy in those days.

"Play," I'd say to Leo then blow a raucous chord from the base of my harp. Leo would say nothing. He sat, always stoical, in his naugahide recliner, a sphinx, a mute countenance on a Tahitian idol, black hair, almond eyes, and a rigid stone face. He'd reach to his side where the guitar stood against the wall and pick it up gently like a mother would an infant; he'd tune it with the precision of a surgeon.

"Play the rain," I'd say and he'd play the rain as though it would never fall again.

"Play the wind." And a gentle breeze would rustle over the curtains.

"Play the sky. Play the night. Play a widow and an old man. Play me and you and the street outside. Play anything but tomorrow."

And Leo would play the sky. And he'd play the night, and a widow and an old man. He'd play him and me and the street outside. He'd play everything but tomorrow.

And the blues came easy in those days.

By Joe D. Pagana

*Love you everything
I can't tell you
how glad I am to get away
and rest my heart
and see my need free
to again scour.
Again the arm
will pull the cork
to fill its cup
eternal, for a time
and seal
without wasting a drop.*

TO A GIRL ONCE LIVED WITH

By Kirk Fenton

And now, four months since we took separate ways,
If we should meet again. . . what now would we
Have within our hearts to say, to be
To each other. Imagination plays,
But finds no answer. Indecision stays,
And troubles me. Two days later, I see
You wave, and I walk irresolutely
Towards you. I resolve to let nothing raise
Anger or hope, but hope to understand.

But as we meet, uneasiness
Begins flexing its muscles, then it stalks
Our conversation continues, as if under stress
Of making amends to those we dared mock.
I smile, as I tensely skirt the issues
Whose mention, now, would surely make us lose.

SEARCH FOR THE UNFOUND

By Jeffrey M. J. Briel

Man is by nature a social being;
There is a basic need in all of us to be wanted
and needed.
So we go in search of unfound security
That we find in true love;
It allows ourselves to be used in the way it was
meant to be.
The most unnatural feeling man possesses in the
suffering loneliness brings.
People who constantly seek to be alone are often
referred to as sick.
Not always are loners that way by choice;
They just tire of putting themselves on the line
And are constantly returned unused
Because there was no real need or want
For what they had to offer.
Sure, they will try again--
They are still as human as anyone else
And still possess the need to be needed,
And the want to be wanted.
Eventually they will be smiled upon and accepted
But real success will never be theirs
Because they've been maligned by so many.
Then they will give too much and thus be used be-
yond any real purpose.
They will find that the unfound is still just that
and always will be
Unfound. . .

PARANOIA

By Karen Grossman

The were
staring
at him,
glazed eyes danced
with mirth
as he fled,
mindless, sightless--
from their gaze
they trailed in his shadow,
their mouths forming
the words
of his name
at his back
hands as ice,
he fumbled
for the doorknob
to run.

INFINITY

By James E. Runkle

A militia of marsupials,
sad-sacking their way,
across the interior
of each other.

By Karen Grossman

You speak of independence
as if you truly believe
yourself so strong, so fearless--
so much the bold fledgling
venturing out
into the chill dawn alone
to prove his ability.
And perhaps you must also;
driving, ever flinging yourself
to the winds,
Singleminded purpose
haunting your days, nights, dreams--
there is no escaping
Exist
as one bit of straw against the rain
and prove to yourself
you can stand alone.



han

dependence
truly believe
strong, so fearless--
fledgling

t
awn alone
his ability.
ou must also;
er flinging yourself
s,
inded purpose
days, nights, dreams--
scaping

raw against the rain
e to yourself
nd alone.



By Tim Olnick

To be able to smile again--
to be back at a time where everything rhymed
but nothing made sense--
and no one cared.
To be able to laugh again
to be thrilled by a clown as he rolls on the ground
and wondering how such a sad face
could make us all feel so high.
To be able to cry again--
to be saddened by news of a loved one paying his dues--
leaving this world
and leaving us behind.
To be able to know
we can return to those times--
if we just let ourselves go.



OUTCAST
by Stephen R. Hickoff

**I rest discarded.
Wet within the wormish slime.
United unjustly with muck and slug.
The decadent corpse.
Crimson flesh in ruby red.**

**I died undone in passionate assault.
Torn by demons left and right.
Vomited in vehemence I fell.
Uprooted upon the cold white cloth.
Plucked - Gathered - Obliterated.**

**I lie now.
A ghastly shape.
A menstrual blob.
A pallid pulp.
More blood than broth.**

An early demise in ash.

ANALYST

By Karen Grossman

it's like forcing a smile from a child
who has lost a balloon,
you're telling me how to feel again,
taking me by the hand
smiling
that secret, all - knowing smile
of sympathy.
i fight you
contorted with rage and indignance
at your assumptions.
what absurdity to think
you could feel my pain as i do;
the capability just isn't there.

PACHYDERM

By James E. Runkle

It's not for the thin
skinned.
Ride life like
an elephant in a condominium,
and nose it out of the cracks
in your stucco wall.

SEMIDIURNAL DEFLORATION

By Stephen R. Hickoff

day]
light s-i-g-h-s
sweetly as
en-gul-fed
by Eve,

lum-InoUs pines
rad i ate as
pen e tr[ate]d
withIn,

Eve senses
pre[sense as

day
beHolds
night,

dark sur[mounts day
t-i-m-e as

[in]
har-mon-y they uNite. . .

[the two
are as
One

as two
can
beCome]

dawn un-to Dusk un-
to dusk unto Dawn.

I: 6:47 EST
By Stephen R. Hickoff

my(autonomous)self, blind
yet secure
in barefoot verification.

spanning:
SIXTHOUSANDANDEIGHTHUNDREDFIFTYEIGHT
risings
of sun and moon.

prodded
once more
towards

dawn(golden torches
alight upon
mist gray fingers
of twilight gone)and her light.

ascending upward
in persistent diligence.

summoned
once more
by the luminary sovereign.

MOTHER'S FAREWELL

By E. H.

What will you do my little one?
Where will you dare to venture?
Will you follow the moon, the stars, and the sun,
And seek out new adventures?

How many times do failures await you?
How many tears will you shed?
How many smiles will sweeten the miles?
What thoughts will be in your head?

I wish I could somehow forewarn you,
Keep you from setting out all alone,
But I know you must go into the world,
And experience life on your own.

So I wish you all the happiness,
As you go along today,
And maybe someday when you're content,
You'll come back again this way.

TO C
By D. E. W

Students of
reading and

Rhythm and
what music

Scratchings
carefully ch

Emotions ri
you must lo

Who could
if he writes

Give to him
for doing th

Transitory,
But what is
A question
Who can a

By Jam

Cracked
torn be
A sharp
allowin

I borro
except
bleeds

TO CLEARLY SEE LIFE'S SIMILES
By D. E. Wilson

Students of English spend a lot of time,
reading and reading the same silly rhyme.

Rhythm and meter will cause you to sing,
what musical mind would plot such a thing.

Scratchings seemingly similar in style,
carefully chosen and stacked on a pile.

Emotions rise high on the allusion,
you must look up to end its confusion.

Who could this be to conceive such tones,
if he writes much more I'll break all his bones.

Give to him bad grades and send'em to jail,
for doing this deed he ought surely fail.

Transitory, transitory, as would Ecclesiastics say.
But what is the price of a man's soul?
A question with the weight of eternity
Who can answer?



REFLECTIONS ON A MIRROR
By James E. Runkle

Cracked and scarred, missing half,
torn between two corners boxing one ear,
A sharp incision across my face
allowing half sight, a broken nose.

I borrow everything, nothing owned;
except in the dark when your outstretched hand,
bleeds at my touch.

CARPENTER
By James E. Runkle

The worker warms his hands against the cold.
The woolen gloves are not enough for him.
He fears the foremen's eyes; they say he's old,
and at the fire, he softly curses them.

For twenty years he's worked with wood and stone.
His solid proof of worth is in the past.
They now use steel, and damn him for his tone,
and mimic him, "They used ta build ta last."

He built the best, and now they want him gone.
He cuts against the grain, this grand old man.
Too careful, lacking tact, he works alone.
The swift machine replaces craftsman's hands.

But knowing hands, he grabs the backs of theirs,
They shake his rough, scarred hands with awful care.

WARMER
By Karen Grossman

the geese have all flown
south for the winter; i sit
cross - legged in the dusk,
hearing their cries in my ears.
fulfilled, i rise to meet them.

BARSTOOLS
By James E. Runkle

A spinning carousel,
pleasure bound
to a circle of friends.

Losing its hold,
and wheeling away,
as both it and I
come to an ignoble end.

At the bartender's
end of the day.

MY FRIEND
By D. E. Wilson

*As the sun rises in the day,
I ponder along the way.
If I talk of love,
using words from above,
What kind of message would
my life convey.*

*If I speak of desire,
and set my soul on fire.
After the ashes of my lust,
return to the dust,
What kind of man would
I portray.*

*If I take you in my arms,
and use my worldly charms.
When it's time for me to go
would the love I show,
mean anything if I led
you astray.*

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would the love I show,
mean anything if I led
you astray.*

EXPECTATION

By Edith W. Durham

*There was a whiff, just a small infinitesimal scent
as I stepped outside today.
The sky was grey with rain,
the drops fell heavy and thick,
But in the air was a smell
light and full of dreams.
It smelled like the tiniest bud
that blooms in the winds of March.
It tasted like a blade of the shiniest green grass
and it was warm like a flower growing in the sun.
It was the smallest, tiniest of smells
but it filled the air like a thousand birds
flying with Spring on light and feathery wing.*

EMPTY WOODS

By Karen Grossman

listen, the days are silent now with emptiness,
the trees, they whisper hollow words; the birds have left their nests.
each ugly scar, still black and charred, remains as if
to mark the place of carelessness, a memory of man's gift.
the wild remember well their loss; it drove them far
from woods familiar to their path; no sanctuary there.
the heaviness of sorrow hangs where lives were lost
that never could be replaced again; yet man forgets the cost.
if only he possessed the wisdom once to catch
the true significance of thought, and just blow out his match.

DEATH UNDONE

By Stephen R. Hickoff

*With massive tail, yet subtle fin
wherein the salty sea does sail,
there lies sublime; remote and vast
a whale.*

*Of monumental magnitude:
great Polyphemus leviathan,
hulk of unpretentious character,
monstrous beast of spaciousness.*

*Yet, so it seems. . .
Pandora's ill will
of harpoon and mankind,
having long since destructed,
destroyed and maligned,
with perilous cord;
the piercing prick of obliteration.*

*He lies,
pure yet violated.
As into Jordan's bank,
he slides,
victim of deception.*

*While those of his magnitude,
in Christ-like absolution,
turn the other jaw,
and oblige the death undone.*



By M. M.

You are the one to whom I give, my every thought & prayer
The only one whose happiness, I ever want to share.
I want to walk beside you when, the sun is in the sky
And when the day is dreary and, the clouds are rolling by.
When there is moonlight on the lake, and silver stars appear
And in the whisper of the wind, that tells me you are near.
In every movement of the heart, in every song and sound
And in the last and lonely leaf, that falls upon the ground.
You are the only image in the mirror where I look
And you are all the pages and the chapters of my book.

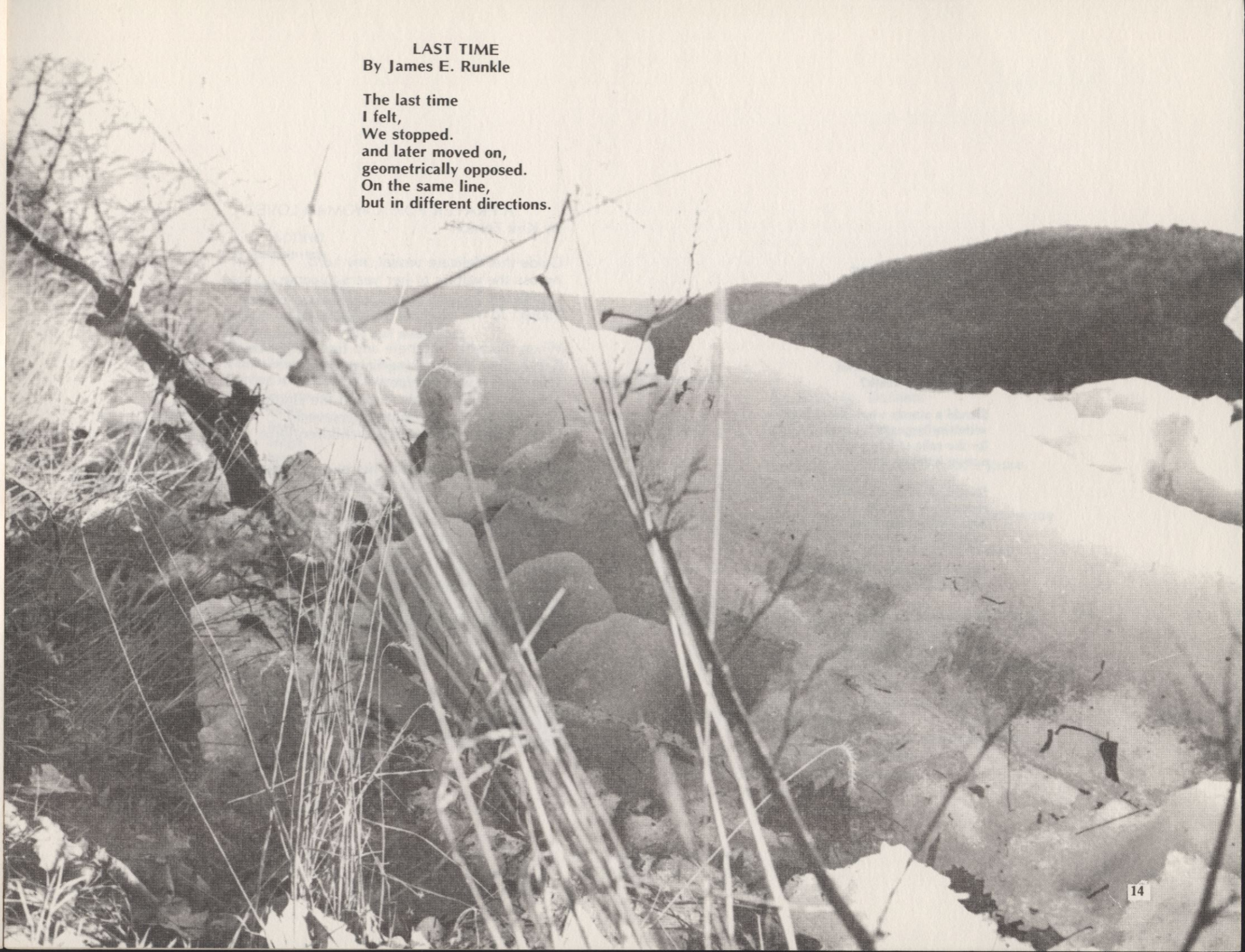




my every thought & prayer
ever want to share.
the sun is in the sky
the clouds are rolling by.
lake, and silver stars appear
that tells me you are near.
in every song and sound
that falls upon the ground.
error where I look
e chapters of my book.

LAST TIME
By James E. Runkle

The last time
I felt,
We stopped.
and later moved on,
geometrically opposed.
On the same line,
but in different directions.



DUE RESPECT

By Stephen R. Hickoff

Should a caterpillar cross hastily
a pine-needled path-
with the fear of a mortal
executing his wrath?

Should a sturdy wind-blown birch
withdraw beneath his bark-
for the sake of a human
a most hideous shark?

Should all of God's nature
succumb to our will-
And whether she does
what will we fulfill?

For the essence of our existence
without nature is nil.

So peer out the edge
of your gray window-sill,
and with awe look upon
that oak-covered hill.

A PRAYER FOR A WOMAN LOVED
By Kirk Fenton

Guide this delicate vessel, my Lord,
Across the waters of her years to come;
O may she forever be full-sailed,
Subject to the winds of your direction.

When thoughts entangle and trouble her mind,
Carve deep the creasing lines
That form a worried face, --
Then guide her steady through the storm,
Faith abiding in her will to persevere,
In the ballast her teen-aged children form.

When problems confront her at every turn,
Weigh her down and suffocate to burn
Until at last she feels drawn
To the endless round of escapes, whirling in her mind --
Then guide her to a strong and understanding friend
Until she calms into place again.

May a love of life be born in her,
Grow daily through her heart
Unalterable through all dooms:
May it someday shine in full bloom,
Uplift all those she lives among.

You whose benevolence does not alter,
Sustain and strengthen her
Unto endurance that shall not falter:
Grant her Your Peace.

AC
By Julie J

My body i
That ha
Only to be
By someo
I am no lo
I have bec
Serving a
He orders

smi
hat
laug
hop
cry,
love
die.

Amazingly
and beco
Surrounde
that hav
And the w
for a spa
All their ef
a word o
When all t
My used b
And I exist
Only to l
body

AN LOVED

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vere,
dren form.

every turn,
o burn

whirling in her mind --
understanding friend

om,

alter,

ter:

ACTING

By Julie Javens

My body is a shell
That has been emptied of my past and my destiny,
Only to be filled again
By someone else's life and memories.
I am no longer me
I have become puppet-priest,
Serving a deceivingly human god.
He orders me to:

smile,
hate,
laugh,
hope,
cry,
love, and
die.

Amazingly my new body obeys,
and becomes a person in his own night
Surrounded by other body-less people
that have assumed the shells of other peoples' identities-
And the whole race strives to live their lives,
for a space of a few, quick hours
All their efforts are directed at achieving
a word of praise from their god and congregation.
When all the offerings are collected-
My used body is returned to me
And I exist again
Only to be ambushed by another
body-less person.

By Edith W. Durham

I screamed and pounded
like a rat or bum
peering dirtily from behind a grate
under a city smelly street.

Bars, grey held by cement in the stone
looked cold
but I touched them and screamed
as the chill ran through
my fingers and shoulders.

Dark slate, stone
full of cobwebs and corners
I know but refuse to see.
Darkness behind, spiders I know by name
but will not speak.
See, know you are not there,
I am not there.
Dirtily I peer, teeth of grit I smile
looking behind bars
at open air streams.

STORY

by KAREN GROSSMAN

There were three boys sitting in the principal's office after school that day for detention. One of them was Nathan. He was smaller than the others, leaning forward in his seat with both elbows on his knees, staring at the floor. He was quieter than the others.

The other two boys were sixth graders. They huddled at one end of the mustard colored sofa, sucking big gulps of air into their cheeks, then pressing the palms of their hands against them to make farting noises. They snickered loudly at each other.

It was 3:15.

Nathan remembered that morning. He had come into the office, late again, for the third time that week. The principle had plied him with questions: why was he late again? Hadn't he realized the time? Wasn't he aware of his responsibilities? And he, once again at a loss for words, had shaken his head slowly, feeling the redness creep into his cheeks and the rage beginning to coil inside him again.

They had called his mother at work so someone would be there to pick him up in front of the flagpole at 3:30. He would rather have walked. He didn't want her picking him up. Now she would know. He would have to explain his reasons for being late, and he could never do that.

The two boys on the sofa were moistening strips of notebook paper in their mouths. Together they squinted their eyes and puckered up their mouths to spit the balls of paper against the wall behind the principal's desk. They spattered to the floor. He watched them fall and remembered.

His mother had dropped her pocketbook last night at the beginning of the fight. Her lipstick and comb and the car keys and the pen and pencil set he had given her last Christmas had all been spilled into a heap on the floor. She had screamed at his father, "See what you made me do? See what you made me do?" The rage had come then, and it had coiled so tight within him that he had thought he was about to throw up his supper, but somehow he hadn't. He had just stood there stonily, unable to move in the midst of it all. And then after a while his father had slammed out of the house and it had grown quiet.

He had lain awake that night listening for his father's footsteps upon the gravel driveway below his window until sometime before dawn when the sky was beginning to lighten. He could fight sleep no longer. His eyes closed as he drifted into merciful oblivion.

The clock face read 3:28 when the secretary told them they could go. He scuffed the toes of his shoes along the cement walk as he headed toward the car. They drove away from school in silence. He looked at her out of the corner of his eye. "Hi."

"The school called," she said. "They said that was the third time you'd been late this week." He stared at the faint trace of blue vein running through the back of his hand. "Really, Nathan, as if I already didn't have enough problems."

"I'm sorry."

She didn't turn her head from the road before them. "Well I am too. I had to leave work early to come and get you, you know. It's hard enough to keep a job these days. I thought you were grown up enough to keep a job these days. I thought you were grown up enough to take care of yourself. Responsible. I guess things just aren't the way I thought. Nathan, of all times. I can't afford to lose my job."

"I won't do it again, Mom,"

"All right then. Let's just not have it happen any more."

The atmosphere that night was particularly strained. On Friday nights the three of them would always watch

T.V. together
and then they
would carry h
he didn't prot

He was
been sitting a
floor unheede

"Hello."
watched as he

You needn't v
him. . . I supp
could detect a
there isn't an

She co
You'll be all r
head. "Be ba

He hea
could feel the
became too st

Then he open
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And th
them and lit t
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n would always watch

T.V. together and his dad would always make popcorn on the stove with lots of salt and butter the way he liked it best, and then they would drink root beer out of cans and he could stay up until he fell asleep in the rocking chair. His dad would carry him up to bed. But this time was different. Just him and his mom. She sent him to bed at 9:00 and for once he didn't protest.

He was picking the bananas off the top of his Wheaties the next morning when the phone rang: His mother had been sitting at the table cutting coupons out of the paper for going grocery shopping. The newspaper fluttered to the floor unheeded.

"Hello." She frowned, her face a purplish color in the sunlight, her voice slightly unsteady. "Oh. . . Tom." He watched as her knuckles turned white against the telephone receiver. "Yes. . . he's. . . he's fine. I can take care of him. You needn't worry." She turned her back toward him. "Well I just don't see- there's no reason for that. I'll explain to him. . . I suppose you'll be wanting your things. . . Really, Tom, I'd rather he wasn't here. It'd be easier. . . Look," he could detect a coldness in her tone, a sharpness, "You heard what I said. We'll discuss it later. We're just fine. So if there isn't anything else that you want. . . I have to go. We're going out. Goodbye."

She continued to face the wall for a time. Finally she turned to meet his gaze. "I'm going to the grocery store. You'll be all right. Finish your breakfast, Nathan." She stuffed the coupons into her purse and kissed him on top of the head. "Be back soon."

He heard her drive away. He found he could not move. A knot had begun to form in the pit of his stomach. He could feel the rage beginning to overtake him, to overpower him. He squeezed his eyes closed, fighting it down, but it became too strong for him. It washed over him, all the hurt and shame and anger he had tried so desperately to hide. Then he opened his eyes and he hated; he hated everything around him. He thought he hated so much that it must fill the whole house, for he could not breathe and he thought he would surely burst.

And then he saw them. There, lying in an ash tray in the center of the table was a pack of matches. And he seized them and lit them one by one, dropping them upon the kitchen floor until the walls caught fire and streaks of light ran along the edges of the curtains and the tips of the living room rug and he ran from the house screaming in his agony and his joy.

WOMAN NOVEMBER

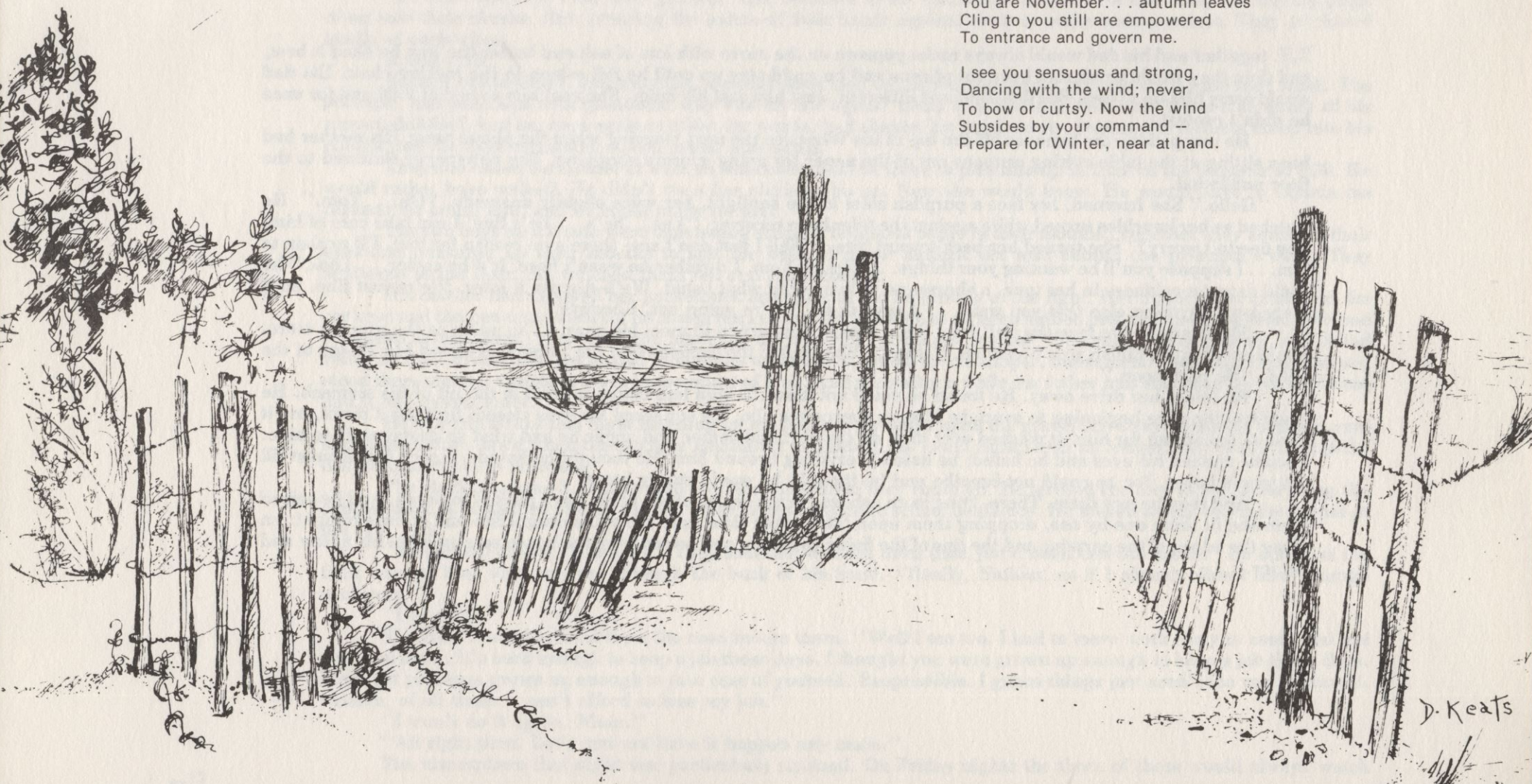
By Kirk Fenton

Your barren limbs reach out
Toward a slate-gray sky
That thickens as clouds collide --
Feel the winds cross-currenting.

Cold and wet-gilled they blow
Through branches shining black --
Gnarled and twisted hands
Touch a muted sunset sky.

Dare I call you a season?
You are November. . . autumn leaves
Cling to you still are empowered
To entrance and govern me.

I see you sensuous and strong,
Dancing with the wind; never
To bow or curtsy. Now the wind
Subsides by your command --
Prepare for Winter, near at hand.



D. Keats

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