

**THE  
CRUCIBLE**

**A Collection of Original Poetry and Prose**

**THE CRUCIBLE**  
Autumn 1979

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Student Publications  
Lock Haven State College  
Lock Haven, Pennsylvania 17745

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**Lady-Cat**

**By Pam Yoblonski**

*Pearly-mist smoke strokes  
The skin and surrounds the bar,  
And frames the sleekness  
Of the Lady-Cat.  
Stacy, sparkly electric shocks  
Vibrating from her shadow  
Set the air on fire,  
And catch hold of her prey  
Like rats caught in a trap  
Ready to pounce, she waits  
'Till she sees her next john--  
Her Victim.  
She makes her move, and  
The trap is sprung,  
Throwing them into the bed of pretend.  
At least the money is good.*

*Glistening, green-eyed,  
She cries when alone,  
And sometimes when she isn't  
(Even though nobody hears her).  
Emerald tears falling,  
Slicing straight through  
Her brain to her heart  
Form a puddle in her soul  
and burn.*

*Neon lights proclaim  
The soul of the city  
And the home of the whores.  
Inside, a pearly-mist smoke strokes  
The skin and surrounds the bar,  
And once more, frames the sleekness  
Of the Lady-Cat.*

## To The Quintessence Of Living

By Allen Rabert

*With a voice calling from his heart  
He set out with flourishing ink  
On the empty paper beckoning  
To tell of anxiety filled emotions;  
Devised by the circumstances at hand.*

*In his head thoughts were spinning  
And memories flashes  
Of the quintessence of living  
That the lady had brought him;  
Now to be taken away with a farewell.*

*In sarcasm he let out a long and contrived laugh  
Knowing that farewells need not be ultimate,  
But underneath he cried silently to himself;  
His saddened state never revealing.*

*With this, although an illusion,  
He in the twilight of passion,  
Brought her forth once more.  
His only link of sanity  
Now and forevermore being;  
The bygone memories and dreams.*

*Upon this discovery he no more shed a tear  
Or shook in anxiety held fear  
For the seemingly final farewell.  
Because in these verses  
He knows for certain;  
That the lady will understand,  
His not so final farewell.*

## Snapped Back

By Edith W. Durham

*It was a futile cry  
with which the wind called me in  
carrying something I could almost hold  
in words  
in rain sprung from the downspout.*

*Music rings  
lamps and glows placed on edges,  
held yells on walls  
smiling to a distant sun  
that only the dark is burning.  
Out  
of narrow halls  
windowed in viewing  
burst to a near cracking  
framed in yellow.  
Out  
into the world  
for words of more.*

*Potted,  
the plants in need watering,  
as if to call for a rest from the stretch  
were enough of a hint for the wind.*

**By Lois Showalter**

*And the poet goes hungry  
The artist without a canvas  
Only to create is their existence  
Only to exist has become the over-worked  
masterpiece.*

**Winter Scene**

**By Pam Yoblonski**

*The looming bulk of the mountain,  
Solid and steady,  
Sits purposefully in the foreground,  
Challenging the bleak backdrop  
Of strengthened gray clouds and  
Winter-husky skies  
To a play of power and might.  
The toothpick trees stand straight in the snow  
As pins do in a pincushion,  
Looking as if they were javelined there  
By some unseen Olympian of the sky.  
They outline the magnitude and force  
Of the mountain,  
A prickly-tipped divider between  
Heaven and earth.  
A silence is experienced in this  
Pressurized stillness,  
A silence which draws the mind from reasoning  
And the sense from knowledge,  
As you feel the presence of  
Beauty amid the gray,  
Life among the dead,  
And power among the helpless.*

**By Mike Bartlett**

*once  
well, hell...  
yesterday  
i met a woman*

*younger than most  
but older than most  
experienced  
in the world's  
finest and dullest  
situations*

*not dying slowly  
of the conformity  
cancer  
but growing  
in a way  
of her own*

*i call her a woman*

**By Jonathan Bravard**

*I look out my window  
And I don't see a thing  
cause I've been blinded  
by love. A love that causes  
pain, a love that causes  
Joy, a love she doesn't  
Just know how to deal with.  
So let's go away.  
I worry about her and  
I care about her,  
But her brown eyes just don't see it.  
And they don't see my tears, the  
Tears that make me blind.*

**A Rainy Friday**

**By Sandra D. Thompkins**

*Rain tapping out secrets in natures' own  
Morse code.  
Wind rustling whispered  
names to unknown ears.  
Water running swiftly and silently  
to a guardian harbor.*

*Mother nature telling her tales of life and living  
to all who listen and learn.*

By Lois Showalter

**Hurrican**

**By Silvana Paulina DESETA MILES**

*When the rusty light  
breaks up in the  
middle of the sky  
hiding its power  
cracking up its fears  
behind the blue line.*

*Treasures of images  
will blow the wind  
Thousands of fantasies  
will bury abstract impressions  
in every sand land.*

*While the hurricane  
will come crying  
encouraging itself  
enrapturing the silence  
painting paleness on  
the velvet space.*

*And now in the emptiness  
of the white  
the black is no colour  
and there in the Kingdom  
of the forsaken God.  
Existence will flow into  
the antiquity of its past  
the future will be prisoner  
of the time gone  
and fortune  
will roll its own wheel  
between inner visions and realities.*

**A Stranger Even At Death**

**By Cathy Brickley**

*Who is this white haired stranger,  
lying before me, pale and breathless,  
in his pine walls?*

*Oh, yes, now I remember,  
He is the one that planted the seed  
that began my mother's labor.*

*But why then do silks and roses  
surround him now?  
He had no room in his brown bottle  
for Humpty Dumpty, picnics or recitals.*

*My drought-plagued eyes will shed  
no tears to fall upon his empty  
cold expression.*

*My stubbled hands can lend no  
drama to this occasion, by  
gripping his departing body.*

*I guess it doesn't matter  
I see no room in his pine  
walls either.*

**By David Martin**

The hulking cattle car stood motionless on the tracks, still from its long, eight-day journey. It was showing age from wear and use: its wood was a very dull and faded red, and many spots in the wood revealed decay. Years and miles of continuous shakings of the car were taking their toll on its once-solid, durable structure. This most recent trip had begun just south of Ruse on the Danube River in Bulgaria. The train had proceeded north over the Danube into Romania and then northwest through Hungary and Czechoslovakia, then into Germany. No sound came from within.

The November day's sunlight was bright and made visibility of the car's external features clear and defined. From the few clouds overhead had been sifted several white flakes of snow. They were drifting almost horizontally in their paths and courses towards the cold earth.

In a semi-circle facing the high door, five helmeted guards, machine guns readied, steadied themselves.

Just behind the soldier farthest to the right, a stoic, erect officer nodded to the husky private positioned at the door. At that, the private undid the bolted latch, and although the door's base only came as low as his chest, he had no problem with it. He clasped the handle, and the cattle car door, large and wooden, thundered open.

The opened door revealed a multitude of forms and faces of men packaged inside. At the explosion of the sudden light, those nearest the opening reeled backwards. Nearly all brought their hands or arms to their faces, shading their eyes against the bright light, and all faces visible from the outside grimaced at the brightness. At once the officer began shouting orders in their native Slovakian language to emerge from the car and leave their bags and packages on the ground alongside the train.

In the cattle car, the Slovaks did not react to the officer's instructions.

Up and down the long train similiar scenes were taking

place: officers dictating commands, doors sliding and banging open, bewildered forms starting to emerge from the darkened interiors of the cars.

The stoic officer glared at the Slovaks. Their forms remained motionless, and all were standing facing the open door. The denseness of the persons was fairly great; physical closeness hindered much movement. The expressions of those who were further from the front and deeper into the car were not easily discernable. But expressions on the faces of those nearer the door showed utter fright at the five soldiers, their weapons pointing at their heads and upper bodies. Their nervous eyes moved swiftly from the guns and faces of the tensed soldiers, to the large private, to the precise German officer, to the wooden buildings beyond. Their expressions were now taking on the dread realization of some inevitable, terrifying destiny. On all their lapels were stitched Stars of David.

Their stillness infuriated the offices. From all the other cattle and box cars deportees were now spilling out beside the train without incident. But not a single Slovak had emerged yet from the car, which stunk from human sweat and waste. This could not be tolerated. In an instant, he gave an order to the private and one of the armed soldiers. At the order, the eyes of the private darkened, and the armed soldier uncocked his sub-machine gun. The two soldiers approached the opened door and harshly grabbed hold of a thin, old Jewish man who had just begun to climb from the darkened car. The old man cried out in a soft, high pitch as the soldiers fiercely thrust him from the opening. As his body hit the crusty surface of the hard ground his weight landed on his right arm. Bone cracked loudly above his elbow and from his soldier, where the ball was ripped from its socket. The snapping pierced the air and unnerved several Slovaks standing just at the opening.

The old Jew was unable to utter a sound. He breathed quickly and loudly through his mouth. Tears were streaming from his eyes. Movement then began in the cattle car.

By Diane J. Orban      **Memories**

Well, here we are...  
Saying goodbye again  
We've said it so many times before  
Yet this time is so different.  
This is the real thing  
This is the goodbye that means  
"Hey...you know something...  
We may never see each other again."  
It means that everything we have shared is gone  
And you...  
You too are gone.  
And I...  
I am left behind  
With only the memories of what we had.  
How can this be?  
We've just met  
And we've been through so much  
In so little time.  
We've grown together.  
How can we just part...  
Never to return?  
It just isn't fair.

You know, life is really queer  
And time...  
Time is the culprit  
It slowly sews together a friendship  
Stitch by stitch  
And then rips the seams  
With no regard to the material.  
The material...  
Made of two helpless hearts  
Yes, yours and mine  
Our hearts  
Time is doing this to our hearts  
We will soon be coming apart at the seams  
And we both know it.  
Yet we are still helpless  
The day is coming soon  
When you will go your way  
And I will go mine  
But the memories...  
Oh the memories...  
They shall stay forever.

**Mouse Turns**

By Edith W. Durham

The problem,  
being a maze or part  
the mouse flounders  
falling on brown worn paws  
without tears scraping elbow  
without a shoulder.  
Barely one incandescent bulb  
flings itself on and off  
too fast and slow.  
Running finds walls,  
Cracks in walls  
and another, another gone  
down the hall.  
Asleep in a corner until down  
ruffles fur,  
pats and mats  
and begins with a stirring shalce  
the pain  
of a maze or part  
where walls are lifted.

**The Way Of It All**

By Mike Bartlett

The Highway's strewn with burnin'  
Wreckage you know we all get old  
There's no place for U-turnin'  
The Bridge behind's been sold  
The Highway winds are churnin'  
The Highway winds blow cold  
You warm your hands on burnin'  
Wreckage forget what you've been told

**By Jonathan Bravard**

So I broke the rainbow  
and slashed my wrists  
only to have darkness  
exit the wounds  
and surround me with  
a black shroud of evil  
And then having left a  
trail of broken lovers  
and maimed friends I  
ran to the nearest exit,  
having never looked back  
to witness my future.

**By Teri Mahon**

In this, the house of my soul,  
I live and die  
As days pass by  
just to grow old

I see life dance by my eyes,  
pretend to smile.  
Of course, at times,  
I have to cry.

**By Allen Rabert**

reality forming the shrouds of misdirection  
Confronts my death forseen future,  
Capturing upon its surface  
The epitome of mankind;  
The surface of which likens itself to hope  
Becoming the great deceiver of time.  
Upon this warning the supernatural forces overcome,  
Saving the shattered soul,  
Again calling me to its darkened shawdows,  
Of which once again become my existence;  
As I become a seemingly eternal prisoner  
Of the eternal spirit's pressence.

**What if...**

**By Brian Hunt**

What if I were a cat  
Stalking through the meadows  
To pounce on the unsuspecting field mouse  
Playfully tugging at a piece of string  
Dangling from my mother's tail?

And what if my friends were cats  
Frollicking on the fresh cut grass  
Playing leap-frog with unwilling father?

That would be nice.

But what if my enemies were dogs  
Chasing me from the meadows with their howling cries  
Scaring my friends from their playground in the lawn  
Disturbing their sleep with their resounding barks?

We would run to the shelter of the huge Maple tree  
Leaving them at the base to continue their  
frustrating growls.

**What if...**

**By Brian Hunt**

What if I were an apparition  
here but there,  
Floating over the rainbow of time,  
Touching a star with an extended finger,  
Grasping space in my hollow hand,  
Sailing somewhere on that thin border  
between reality and imagination?



**By Teri Mahon**

*The smile in your eyes  
never faded.*

*Through misty blue  
I saw you laugh  
And I laughed too.*

*Your touch was like magic  
I felt warm.  
It's raining now. (But you don't know)  
We loved the rain  
I feel cold.*

### **The Machine**

**By Cathy Brickley**

*The soldier machine recycles men  
from lovers, husbands and best friend  
to robots of marches straight and tall  
minds erased and programmed to recall,  
the command of killing North Nams Men  
and crawling on bellies through wet rice den.*

*Not of touching my body in a lover's sweat  
nor of warm beating hearts when lips once met.  
It leaves my hand cold as I touch his chest  
the sound silence with ear to breast.*

*As propeller spins the robots wheel aboard,  
weapons magnetically clinging, gun and sword.  
The robots are off to ravish as the wild,  
for what do they care if woman or child?  
They have no ears to hear the weeping,  
of the innocents of war they are reaping.*

*Upon his return can the machine restore,  
My lover's beating heart as it was before?  
Or will they erase and program again,  
the killing and ravishing of another country's men.*

### **Life Screams**

**By Silvana P. DESTA MILES**

*Purple glow  
its mirrored image  
in the space of nonsense  
something smelling wild  
Build the first wind  
that flew over the  
ancient muddy waters  
The light was the darkness's absence  
And as ironic presence  
nothing started the change  
Greens and yellows  
wrapped the ground  
and crispy rusties  
dressed the deeps browns,  
While a vitreaux spirit  
reflecting their life and death faces  
came through the window  
of existence, and took  
the shape of human race  
And in the beginning of the ending  
the Kingdom of creativity  
was the flesh wall  
which stopped the  
territory of emptiness.*

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