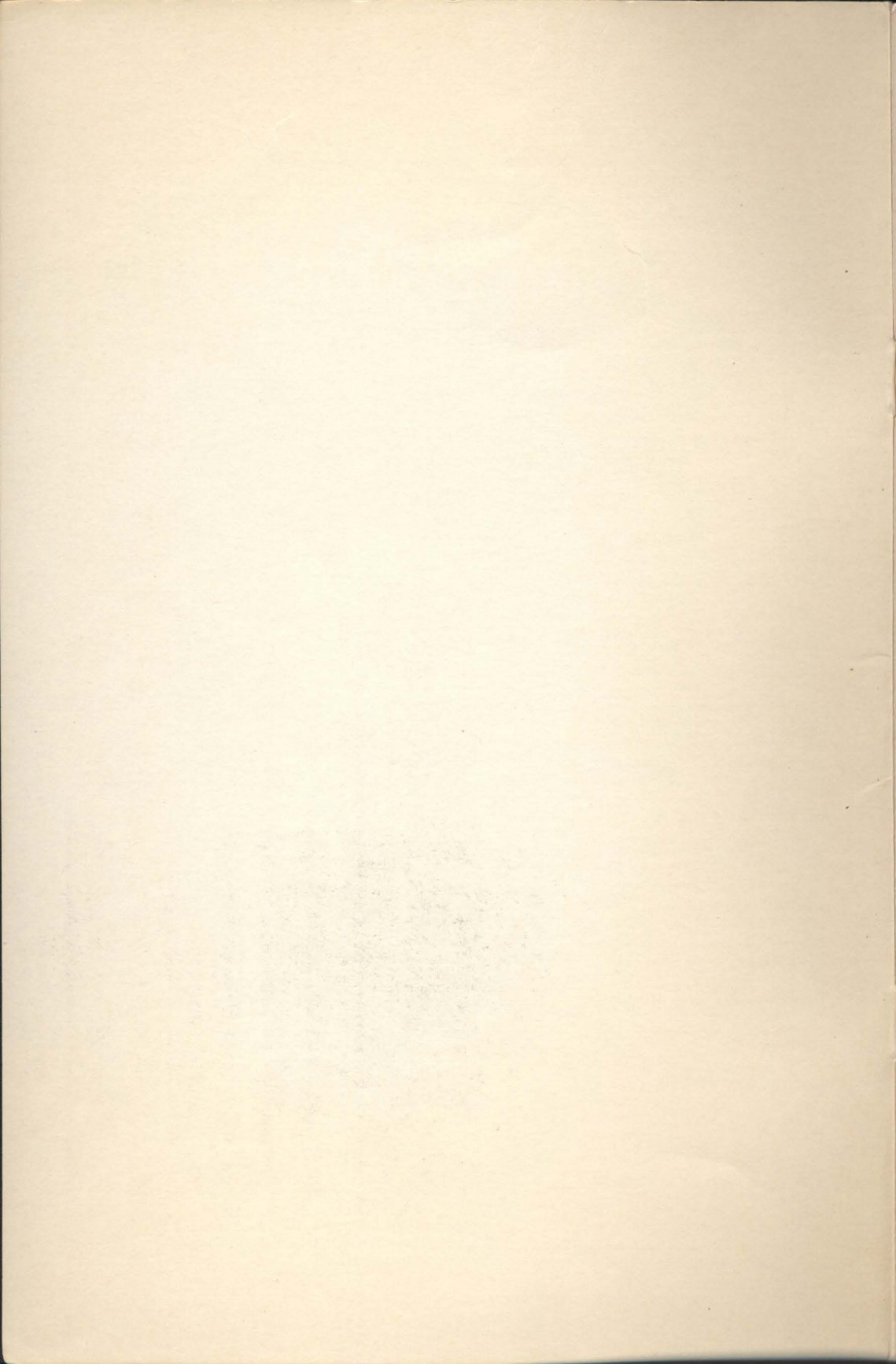


Reflector



REFLECTOR

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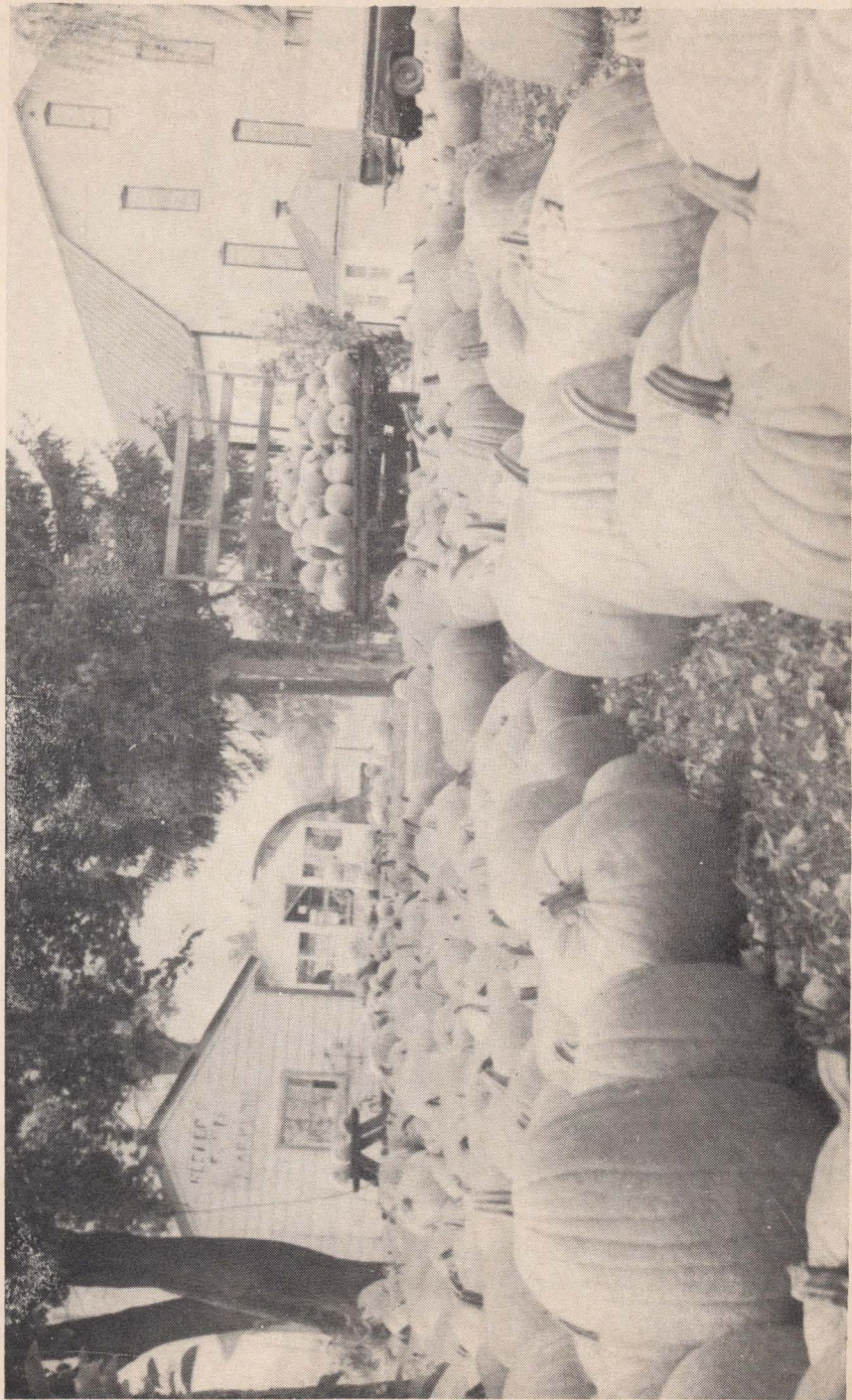
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AUTUMN, 1969



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THE REFLECTOR

COVER...

who knows if the moon's
a balloon coming out of a keen city
in the sky—filled with pretty people?
(and if you and i should

get into it, if they
should take me and take you into their balloon,
why then
we'd go up higher with all the pretty people

than houses and steeples and clouds:
go sailing
away and away sailing into a keen
city which nobody's ever visited, where
always
it's

Spring) and everyone's
in love and flowers pick themselves.

e. e. cummings.

cover photo by paul politis.

I, Silent Snowman

. . . JOHN E. WILSON

Somewhere inside of this diminutive mass of contrasting
gayety and solemnity
Is a poem which is scratching my insides and repulsing every
effort to dislodge it.
The wind which dulls this valley slaps my cheeks and re-slaps,
numbing the poetic powers I would call
To voice the words that must be spoken perfectly.
The chill that grasps our situation further locks them in, and
I who played nimbly in the heat am reduced to a shaggy,
speechless snowman.
"What kind of fool," you say, "to put such faith in words, such
trust in art."
But that is all I have, or am, or ever want to be . . .
until she smiles . . .
and snowmen melt.

Commencement Address

. . . PAUL POLITIS

When the game is over
We'll put
All the play money
Back in the box,
Winners and losers.
And the tokens,
And cards,
All back in the box,
Winners and losers,
And even the dice
Will be numb.

Mary

LINDA GEPHART

black of hair her eye brown
sits on the bed edge reading
and somewhere within a nook of her mind she keeps the stories
adventurous dashes she will recall from her fifth grade
walking cold to school
her memory
smallish thin-boned
colicly lined
fretted papers of her childhood
and at fifty-five she does not doze
but is dead
gray as her last web rung days
her secret confidences
smiles
singing her sighs
mary in the bold ice
counting her claimed suns.

Chalk

BRENT AMOROSO

I wish I was
A piece of chalk
And be scribbled
All over the board
And everyone could
Sit and watch
And wonder
Why I'm me?
And don't erase me
Just right now
Because
You cannot understand
For I want a chance
To live
A little
Before I'm wiped away.

Another Alice

. . . KITTY MITCHEL

As I followed Sue into the trailer I saw a living collage of smoke, the liquor, strange faces, and country music albums. On the one couch sat a pudgy little fellow, who bore a remarkable resemblance to a Kewpie doll. He clutched a glass in his hand, and grinned at us until his fat red chin poured over his turtle neck jersey.

Nancy, who had arranged the blind date tonight, went over to him, and placed her small hand on his chubby shoulder.

"Sue and Janet, I'd like you to meet my husband, Larry."

Larry was as speechless as a Kewpie doll, he only grinned a little more and with a free hand he saluted us. I had just met Nancy an hour earlier. She was a friend of Sue's and on our ride to the trailer we had talked about ourselves. I envied her when she showed me the pictures of her chubby little boy. I remember thinking how much fuller life was, and she being younger than me, too. I told her about the silly things we do in the dorm and she laughed. When she laughed I felt that she was the older of us.

"Jan and Sue," she startled me into the collage's reality again, I want you to meet Lonnie and Jim."

Sue would share the evening with Lonnie. He wasn't bad looking, kind of a gangly Steve McQueen. My companion was awfully old looking, at least over twenty-five, maybe even thirty. I rather liked his eyes; they were the only soft quality of his face. While his blue eyes were kind, his face was all red and leathery, and his mouth was slightly sunken as if his dentures were faulty.

We all were silent for what seemed like a long while. I couldn't be sure of what the others were thinking. I was conjuring visions of the evening at hand that were far from pleasant. I thought Sue was feeling that I was mad at her for arranging the whole affair. Nancy was attending her husband and perhaps didn't have time to think. What the men were thinking I didn't care to know.

Jim broke the silence by asking if I'd like a drink. "I'm not really thirsty right now," I said. I wasn't used to alcohol and their store of goods seemed to contain little else besides bottles of beer and whiskey.

"Come on, you'll like this one," and he poured orange juice into a clear liquid, and handed it to me.

"Where do you work, I mean what do you do?" I asked him.

"Well, he began with his slight lazy accent, I climb telephone poles, fix the wires and that. I been working out in Perry County lately."

"Tell her about Perry County, Speedy," Lonnie dropped Sue's conversation long enough to pipe in on ours.

"Speedy, why do they call you that?"

Lonnie butted in again. "Tell her why they call you Speedy."

"Shut up, Lonnie. Well, what was I saying, something about my work. Oh yeah, did you ever hear about Perry County?"

"No, I never even heard of it till just now. What's it noted for?"

"I don't know what it's noted for," he said. "But I was going to tell you some funny stories about it." He moved a little closer to me and all I could smell was his breath, all alcohol and cigarette. He sipped on his gin or whatever it was, and continued to tell about Perry County. "Perry County is called God's Country. Got a dentist up there that couldn't get his lawn mower to work, so he got a shot gun and killed it." I guess that was my cue to laugh, but he did enough laughing for the both of us.

Nancy came over to us and said how sorry she was, but Larry was a little under the weather and she had to put him to bed. She looked so very tired, and the sandwiches and deviled eggs that she had made for this evening's festivities looked pathetic somehow.

"Ever been west?" Jim asked.

"No, I've been as far south as Key West and as far north as Connecticut, as far east as the shore, and only as far west as Pittsburgh."

He seemed delighted that I'd never been far. "I been all the way to Las Vegas." He seemed so proud as he spoke.

I had finished my glass of whatever it was. Jim was quick to get another.

"Want to see Donald Duck?"

"Where is Donald?"

"Here he is," he said. "Why the poor little character nearly is froze to death. Got lots of orange juice for breakfast and beer for the lunches and suppers."

"I don't want anything but a little orange juice."

"Come on, have a screwdriver, you like them."

"I never even tasted one."

"You college girls aren't all bright are you? That drink you just had was a screwdriver."

I was getting annoyed fast; he was a bore and how was I to know about names of drinks. I don't spend all day soaking in liquor. I tasted the drink; it was not all orange juice—more the other way around. I never felt orange juice's tang like now.

"About Las Vegas," he kept on talking, "a regular garden in the desert. Me and Lonnie, we left, now get this, we left Friday night and were back from Vegas the next Saturday night, and to boot for four days we were drunk, I mean smashed. Can you believe it? Left Friday, and in just a week we were back here, think of that, a week."

I was thinking of that: imagine a week, and how long the evening seemed to last might even surpass the fantastic journey of Speedy and Lonnie. All of a sudden I saw the kitchen light go around and once again I put down my glass; it was all empty.

"Ye God's, I think I'm going funny."

"Get some cigarettes, Speedy," Lonnie was yelling again.

"Get them if you want them, I'm discussing things now."

"Tell you what, Speedy; you and I will toss for who's to go out and buy some."

Speedy lost. He got my coat for me and actually helped me get into it. I assumed I was going with him. Once in the car Speedy put on enormous glasses. "You don't mind me wearing glasses, do you? I can't see too well without them. I almost laughed because when he wore them his appearance of roughness melted. He bent way over the wheel and squinted, and what was the most strange change of his character was the tortoise pace which he kept.

When the car pulled into the shack with the glowing title BAR I wasn't really alarmed, but then Speedy insisted that I accompany him and I refused to. I was under age, never been in a bar, never wanted to go in one, that's what I said the whole way into the bar's alcoholic dusk.

"Hi, Speedy, who's that you got there?"

"This is Janet. Janet, this here is Fred; he and I are buddies. Sit down and I'll get you something to drink."

"No."

"Come on, what will you have?"

I was in the bar but I was going to stick to not complying any further with Speedy. "I will sit here till you get your drink and cigarettes, but I don't want anything to drink."

He and old buddy Freddy got their drinks and started to relive old bar room experiences. Fred was awful shoddy-looking, every thing and every one was shoddy looking. A couple more of his buddies joined us. I heard them talk but it was only story after story of some brave moment in their dingy little refuge. I wanted to go home so much. I noticed so many sad and sly eyes, and each pair were looking at me. They must have hated me because I was apart, and I hated them because they were so sad, so small so . . . No! I just hated them because I felt so much like an "Alice In Wonderland."

Leaving

. . . ED SADTLER

I will walk this walk with you
again,
No matter how many men
Will have come between us.
We will talk in low voices,
And speak of where we've been,
And when we can
We'll talk of where we're going
And you will understand then
Why for now I'm leaving.

A Traveling Companion

. . . BRENT AMOROSO

I've been traveling
this road
for quite sometime now
the same windy breeze throughout
the unforeseen bends that lie ahead.

I ride no steed
but walk on the roadside
the dust gets in my eyes
never ending trees
shading the rays
that could lead me home
and guardrails
confining me to monotony
comparatively

I think of myself
as a nomadic sojourner
with no contemplated direction
my burden is heavy
the yoke of an ox
heavy thoughts
of how

I might escape
then I cite the church
like an oasis
in a sea of sand
tis no mirage
abandoned
but
safe

smiling statues
and a beam of light
through a chapel window
I unpack my meditations
refreshed

I start again
my burden much lighter
knowing

I'm traveling
not alone but
with God
and the road
continues on
only now

I travel much more swiftly
more anxiously
to an aspiration — a hope
of finding a town
where dwells
a fair young maiden
and a time
of
happiness.

Farewell, My Son

. . . ANNE YOUNG

The roar of the jets drowns out my futile weeping. I had braved the parting; but now that unwavering front is shattered. Tears fell from my eyes, blurring his figure as he winds his way through the throng to the plane, tears I have experienced before.

As I watch him cross the runway, I remember my desolation when I first sent him off to school. That day was not much unlike this. Clouds had grayed the sky that morning; the air had been cool and damp. A thunderstorm had been forecast. I remember now I bundled him up in his mustard-yellow slicker and little black boots—and how he had complained that he was too hot and had persisted in taking off those boots every time my back was turned. Finally, we compromised: he carried his boots, promising to put them on if it rained.

He was eager to go to school. His father and I had told him how interesting and how much fun going to school was. We had taught him the alphabet, and he knew how to read the easy words in his Golden Books. He claimed he wanted to learn to read books that "big people" read. He liked the idea of painting, too; in the past he had repeatedly finger-painted his bedroom walls. His father had always been the one to spank him for those little misdeeds; I never had the heart. Because he was our only child, I yielded to his whims more often than not. As I remember now, though, our most convincing argument for his going to school was that his friend, Jimmy, was going, too. I guess we conspired against the boys: Jimmy's parents had used the same reasoning.

Despite the fact that I knew school would be good for him, I couldn't convince myself that I wouldn't miss him. I walked with him to the bus stop that first day and saw him board the school bus. I remember his excitement—how he hurriedly brushed my cheek with a kiss, and how he happily chattered to Jimmy beside him as the bus pulled away. When I returned to the house, a frightening silence awaited me. I tried to keep busy; I washed the breakfast dishes, dusted, and swept. But even above the din of the vacuum cleaner, I heard the ticking of the clock. There was no childish laughter or patter to cheer me as I went about my daily household chores. I telephoned Jimmy's mother, hoping to find comfort. The conversation was brief: she was enveloped in the same sorrow. I tried to persuade myself that I was being silly, but the more I tried, the less convinced I became. My sadness was inconsolable. Finally, I broke into uncontrollable sobbing.

Now as I watch him board the plane, I am overcome by the same tears. He willingly reported to the recruitment center after graduation. His closest friend, Jimmy, had gone over two months ago. His father and I wanted him to go to college, but he said he was tired of school: the service would make a man of him, and he was ready to fight for his country. His father, believing the last war had made a man of him, accepted his action calmly, without argument; but as on that first day of school, I was unconvinced.

I feel as though I am reliving that day. Now he's climbing the steps to the plane. Yet this day somehow is different. His walk isn't so jaunty as before. He's turning around in the doorway to wave good-bye. Yes, this day is different. His expression is strained. I believe I see tears in his eyes.

5th Down Power

. . . BOB ZUGAY

Walk high man, things are shady,
opaque glass hides those tears.
Blue sleeves are standard;
high test keeps you loose
and professor Jones keeps teaching biology.
Fiery homes are real warm,
ask the little guy with the one eye,
who lost it on the end of a stick.
Trying to maintain a cool,
but they still rumble and smoke.
Your mother is sad,
and so is God—I believe?
He might try and start over;
little babies know no hate.
This is the only hope for your brother,
but mother—please—be quiet,
you are the cause of the red lights and the smoke.
The king was shot by harry smith
white was his soul, but he just died.
It's hot,
and remains hot.
(I love you in a whisper with my back turned)

Words

. . . JAMES W. BERRY

Words of love,
Words of hate—
In other words,
Just words.

Rainwater

. . . J. E. STEINER

I cut a grapefruit in two halves. I ate every wedge of my half, then I licked the center core where the sugar was still on top. I squeezed the empty shell until every last drop of juice was on my spoon. "Rainwater," I said. "This is all only rainwater." It came down from the clouds and went into the grapefruit tree. Now it's on my spoon going into my belly.

I ate nothing else. I wanted to be skinny for you . . . thin, attractive, nice to look at, all for you. But you don't love me, and now rainwater splashes down on to the paper before me.

It is really only rainwater. From the clouds or the grapefruit, or my eyes. It's all rainwater.

Quiet

. . . MARY ANNE DONOVAN

Quiet —	
Peace?	— perhaps
	life inanimate
Serenity?	— doubtful
ah no	— stillness
Contentment?	— maybe
Boredom?	— indeed
waiting	— there
	lies the pained truth
	waiting for . . .
endlessly	(waiting for no more)
Let us not wither	
Rather	— Become

Shelter

. . . LINDA GEPHART

Against the hollow of my neck rubs a woolen cloth
Shielding wind from entrance, keeping out the frost.
Above the night blow clouds of darkly pictured grace
And in a circle round the moon silver figures race.
The shapes of unknown faces loom in hours yet
Unspent, un-lived, un-hoped for and unmet;
In floating changing patterns of scenes that mimic earth
The laughter of strange Saturn makes little of its worth.
Upon the grass rest moments in the form of fallen leaves
Brushed into piled hillocks that smouldering life-spent cleave.
Their pyre scent of ending is lifted by the air
And muffled strikes my fabric's flesh;
as I stand shivering bare.

Nocturne Of Life

. . . BEVERLY ZIMMERMAN

Grey of the moon,
Black of the shadow,
White of the sun;

Running over grass and lakes,
Long, black, pensive shadows.
Under the tallest tree to the smallest twig,
Round the creeping bug.

Fusion of colors,
Fusion of thoughts . . .
Make a safe place to hide.

Empty Faces

SARAH R. JAMES

"... Yes, Mom. I should be able to catch the 9:05 express out of the city. That means I'll be arriving around noon. So — see you in two days. Bye, now."

Michael Brooks was looking forward to spending Christmas at home. It wasn't really **that** much fun living by yourself around the holidays. The big city didn't hold any of the fellowship that Mike knew was waiting for him at home.

"December 20th ... at least I still have some time for my last-minute shopping. I think I'll go down to Macy's after supper and pick up that cookbook for Mom."

It would take a little while for the spaghetti to boil, so Mike ran down to the bar two doors away and bought some table wine for his meal. He noticed they had a new bartender. Somehow, he just didn't seem to fit in.

"Hey! Where's Sam?"

"Sam? Oh, yeah — he's taking his vacation a little earlier his year. Anything else, Mike?"

"No, I guess that's it for today. Thanks."

As he hurried back to his room, he wondered how he had formed such a cold impression of the man behind the bar. Sure, he looked like an old Bela Lugosi, but he was really friendly enough. Why, he even knew Mike by name.

The combination of spaghetti and wine tends to make most people sleepy, and Mike was no exception. Deciding to put off his shopping trip for a few hours, he lay down on his battered couch to nap off his fullness.

He awoke with a start much later. Something had awakened him: something that he couldn't quite put his finger on. It was as if all of a sudden a window slammed shut, a light blew out, or the temperature dropped 10 degrees. Shaking off his drowsiness, he detected the smell of gas, and thinking he might have blown the pilot when he was cooking, he got up and began to check the stove.

"Everything seems to be working. I don't even smell the gas anymore. Oh, well, it's 11:30. Might as well turn in."

It was late when he awoke the next morning. The sky was one of the bleakest he had seen in a long while, almost as if a blizzard were brewing. As he was getting dressed, he happened to glance at the clock.

"That's strange. The clock stopped at 3 A.M. I guess the electricity must have gone off during the night. But why didn't the clock start again when it came back on?"

He flipped the lights to make sure there was current, and as he started to reset the clock he sensed a faint tapping at his door. Not being sure of his ears, he stood waiting for it to be repeated. In the silence that followed, he assumed that he was just hearing things. But to be on the safe side, he went to the door and looked out into the hall. It was then that he realized that everything was unusually quiet. His fighting neighbors were even taking a day off. It was an eerie stillness that met him at the door.

As he shut the door, he glanced out the window and noticed still another oddity. There were a few people on the sidewalks, but they seemed to be walking aimlessly, as if they were in a trance or a state of limbo. And there was no traffic in the street, not one moving vehicle. Even the parking lanes were empty.

Almost immediately Mike felt strangely alone, as if he were an animal trapped in a cage. He had to get out of the apartment. He didn't care where he went just as long as he got out.

"I might as well go get Mom's present. At least it's better than standing around waiting for something to happen. I guess I'm just excited about going home."

He wasn't too upset about the absence of cabs and buses. It was only a fifteen-minute walk, and he needed the exercise anyway. As he went along he took a closer look at those people who were walking the streets. He noticed that not one of them was smiling and they all wore the same vacant look. There was just that same stony silence that he had encountered in the hall.

By the time Mike reached Macy's, his uneasiness had deepened to something near fright. Then, as he approached the ground level entrance, a man came to the door with a CLOSED sign. It took Mike but a glance to recognize the man as the bartender from Sam's Place.

"Why, it's nowhere near 9 P.M. Why would it be closed now? It's only . . ."

He looked down at his watch and realized that it, too, had stopped at 3:00 A.M. He turned to walk away and felt a growing panic. More than anything he longed for the safety of his apartment. He was in a hurry now. It was twilight and he had to get back to the apartment before the darkness stole him away. As he rushed home, he kept bumping into **those** people. They said nothing, but turned and smiled at him.

"What kind of people are these? Are they people? They're little more than shells or images. And the only time they smile is when they turn to me. It's as if they're laughing at me or as if they know something I don't."

Once he reached the apartment he felt safe. Never had four walls looked more inviting. He threw himself into his remaining chores: cleaning, wrapping, and packing. He didn't even stop for supper. He was so absorbed in keeping himself busy that he didn't notice that it had gotten pitch black outside. And, too, he **almost** didn't notice the knocking at the door. It was louder now, so he knew that it wasn't his imagination. But he wasn't going to the door — he was just **too** busy.

He finished packing his bags and went to bed so he could get an early start in the morning. The clock still didn't work, so he hoped that he could will himself up on time. He couldn't miss that bus.

It was still half dark when he got up. There was time to call home and tell them he was on his way. He dialed and listened to the echo-like sound of the bell ringing miles away. But there was no interruption of a familiar voice at the other end of the line.

"Why doesn't anybody answer? Dad surely is home, and Mom should be getting everything ready for supper. Somebody should be home. I guess I'll see them at the station."

Mike had picked up his bags and was getting ready to leave the apartment when the knocking sounded at the door again, more like a determined pounding this time. He was tired of playing games. Irritated, he shouted, "All right. All right! Whoever you are, I'm coming!"

Then he set down his bags and flung open the door, and there stood **that** man.

"Rochester News, December 22nd
 "Thank you, Mike. I've been waiting . . ."

DEATHS

Early services were held this morning for Michael Brooks, 27, son of Mr. and Mrs. Daniel Brooks of 207 Kenmore. He was found in his bed dead of asphyxiation yesterday morning in his New York apartment. He was discovered by his next door neighbors who had noticed his bags sitting in the open doorway. Estimated time of death — 3 A.M. December 21st."

Once In A Land . . .

. . . ED SADTLER

once in a land where
 the sun always shone
 and every man trusted
 only his shadow
 as all he had that
 would stay by him
 the sun went in.

Make Believe

. . . ED SADTLER

In a land where all things floated,
 Someone discovered gravity.
 A great many people were killed.

On The Beach, That Morning

. . . ROBERT MADDY

It was quiet on the beach that morning. The clock had not yet wakened the sun, and she was still in the far off land of burgundy wheat fields where phosphorescent clouds skim the crystallly tops of trees.

I walked alone down in front of our beach house letting the sand sift through my toes watching the waves coming and going, back and forth.

I thought about us a few hours earlier so wrapped up in each other's dreams and realities creating our own waves of emotions.

Now, all was in the past. Tomorrow would soon say good-by as would I.

I thought of her. How she would feel. Would she be angry or hurt, disappointed or afraid, disillusioned or discontent?

I wanted so much to tell her to be happy—to let the good times fill up her human canister of emotions, to open her eyes and remember and not to let the mind take over where the heart should reign. But instead, I smoked a cigarette and went back into the house and lay beside her—this time readying myself for the good-by of today.

Farewell To Summer

. . . DONNA MIKULA

Summer was gone. Marsha walked desolately along the edge of the beach. She stared unseeingly at the wide expanse of churning water. "Where are you, Bill?" she asked the frothy waves. The wind whipped her hair back and wet sand oozed from her toes. She sat down and began to think. "Why did you do it? . . . Why did you lead me on, Bill?" she asked the salt spray which dampened her face. Suddenly she was reliving the past four weeks. Oh to recapture the life and the love she had experienced in those wonderful weeks. She saw herself beside Bill . . . running hand in hand down the hill on a sunny afternoon, riding the merry-go-round in the park, watching T.V., or just walking quietly in the moon-light. And finally—in Bill's arms. It was just meant to be; his strong arms supporting her, protecting her, and his lips warm and comforting against hers. But then came Diane. It had been so simple for Bill. He had simply explained that there was someone else now. He hoped she had enjoyed the summer romance. Oh Bill, she thought. It was so easy for you, but for me it was different. It was warm and real and not just for the summer.

Suddenly, Marsha looked up. The sky was gray. The wind had grown bleak and cold. Gone were the cool gentle breezes. It was September, and this was a winter wind. The tide moved out. Marsha stood up. She smiled. Once more she spoke to the waves. "The summer is gone."

Fall

. . . ED SADTLER

Memory of you
Floated leaflike
Down from the highest
Part of my mind
To the ground
Where in time
It withered
And got stepped on

*On The Beach, That Morning***Meeting**

. . . JOHN E. WILSON

My mind is often wandering,
leaping frivolously through a maze of memory
and imagined future, until it lingers
on a set of romantic thought and
the beautiful accessories.

But my mind never created her
or anything near so gentle,
so full of life,
so loveable.

I didn't even meet her—
she met me
and enticed me
and I, then starving for the bait,
fell harshly down the steps of love.

The hopes she stirred,
the emotions she unravelled,
should have never been disturbed.
She chose to love the world from a throne I dared not reach,
a pedestal no mortal man can hope to attain.

Yet I am constantly reminded by
dark hair, mysterious eyes,
a tennis racquet and, on occasion,
the ocean.

I dare not hope but cannot forget, 'til
Rude Reality segregates
my heart from my illusion.

To Mother

. . . CHARLES DYER

"Is everything loaded?" he asked his wife.

"I think so. Except the tent. And your mother. I'll wake her."

She went into the tent and his eyes followed her. All right, get snotty. She never did like my mother. She didn't want to bring her. She said she would only take up space. I know mother has a bad heart but this was only a little vacation, a camping trip. She never gets out. That's why I brought her along. That's why.

He shut the trunk and called for the boys. Then his wife yelled his name. He ran into the tent where his wife stood with her mouth hanging open, pointing at the cot with his mother in a sleeping bag.

"What's the matter, dear?"

She steadied herself and blinked.

"I think she's dead."

"Don't be absurd. I'll get her up." He shook the blankets, gently at first, then harder but there was no response. "Mother. Mother."

He backed away to where his wife stood.

"I think she's dead," he said.

She nodded.

"Don't panic. These things happen often."

"What?"

He pushed her out the door. The boys were outside, feeding the squirrels. "All right, boys. Here are the keys. Open the trunk. We have some more luggage."

He could feel a panic coming, growing like a cancer. He shivered and went back into the tent. She was still there. What do I do? There's no town for forty miles. Probably no doctor in that place. I had to go to one of those middle of nowhere camping places, to get away from it all. His wife had said no. She always disagreed. She was always right. Mother always agreed with me. He stuck his head out the door and looked at his wife, who was sitting at the picnic table, staring at the ground. She looked at him finally.

"What should I do?" he said.

"I can't help you there." She turned away.

Thanks a lot. You're a help. He zipped the bag up completely, covering the entire body. He lifted and carried it to the car. It's not like it was sudden or totally unexpected. She did have a bad heart. I guess I shouldn't have brought her, I guess.

He managed to fit the sack into the trunk. I guess I'll get her to a doctor. I guess that's the thing to do.

They packed the tent and got into the car, he and his wife in front, the boys in the back. Did she tell them? She must have. I can't ask her. I can't tell them. She must have told them. They seem sad.

He started the car down the rough road that led off the mountain. He was driving about five minutes when it hit him. She's dead. All right. She's dead. All right. He looked at his wife. She certainly is stoical about it. The boys are falling asleep. And I can't understand the thing. He saw his wife's eyes flicker. It was coming. Here it comes.

"I knew this would happen," she said calmly. He made no reply except to step on the accelerator.

"I told you this would happen." Oh, shut up. Please. She looked at him.

"Why did we bring her? We always take her places. We never should have brought her."

"She was in excellent health except for a bad heart. Please show a little respect for the dead."

"All right. I won't say another word." She shut her mouth. Thank you, thank you.

He was moving on a straight section. Why did she die now? What an inconvenience. I shouldn't say that. But it's true. I loved her. I think. I needed her. Someone to back me up. She won't be around anymore. She's gone. What's this all about? Here I am driving a road with the body of my dead mother in the trunk. That I am sure of. I **was** sure of more. She used to be so helpful in the little things like making decisions. She made me feel like a person. I guess that's the whole thing. I felt like someone. I was only her, my mother in a coat and tie, teaching college English. My wife is useless. Even **feeling** like someone can be good. She makes me feel like a fool. She is probably sitting there mad because of the way I am acting. I'm not sad enough. Maybe she's right. It was my mother. She probably thinks it's all my fault. But I don't feel guilty. But that's not the problem. The way it happened is confusing me. That's it. I have to look at this and find out what it's all about. If you find out what it's all about you learn how to live in it. Hemingway said that, I think. I taught it in class. Sounds good. So now this body. I'll analyze it like a story. Does it symbolize the aura of death hanging at my back? Maybe it means Death is pursuing and cannot be lost. I think I am losing my mind. No, I'm confused. How about the pathetic fallacy? The trees don't seem to be drooping or weeping. I am crazy.

They were in town and he parked. I guess the police. He left his wife and children in the car and crossed the street to the station. The sun was not helping him. Sweat beaded a veil on his face and he walked like he was in a funeral procession. The police station consisted of a white-washed building that doubled as a fire house. A man in uniform sat behind a desk, feet propped on the edge. He was eating a sandwich and taking a swig of beer after each bite. He wiped his mouth on his sleeve, smiled jovially and sat straight.

"Yes, sir. Can I help ya?"

He'll never believe this. He won't understand the way it was. He stumbled onto some words, explaining in an emotionless voice what had happened. Throughout the policeman kept listening with a smiling face. When it was finished, he was still smiling.

"Doc won't be in town 'til tomorrow. Too bad."

"What do you mean?"

"No Doc in town this size. Christ, nothin' in a town this size 'cept some jailbirds passin' through. Doc comes from down the road once a week to see people. He'll have to check the body. Autopsy and that stuff. Ya know?"

"Well, I'll just drive down to him."

"Nope. I'm afraid that now you're here I can't let ya leave. Sheriff wouldn't like that. I'm only a deputy, ya see. Not that I'm not in charge, ya understand. But I can't let ya leave town with that body. Ya know how it is. Might be foul play."

O, please.

"Where can I put the body then?"

"I got no stuff for that. It's your mother, your problem."

Maybe I'm the dead one. That's it. The death of my mother was the death of my alter ego, thus of my own self. That certainly is a Nabokovian trick. He was conscious of signing a form and getting a warning: "Don't leave town."

I'm in a television western. It's as unbelievable as one. If this were a story no one would believe it. He was out the door and over to the car. He told her.

"So what do we do now, dear?" I could have done without the sarcasm. "Why don't we just leave? We need not go through this."

She's right. Maybe the fates are after me. I am man alone fighting the cosmos.

"Well, what about it, big man?" She stopped and leaned over towards him, putting her hand on his arm. "I'm sorry, honey. That was bad. But I don't enjoy this. Please decide what to do. I'm sorry." But what do I do? I never seemed to have so many decisions to make.

She decided they should get a room and something to eat. The room had a double bed and cot. The bathroom was down the hall, to the right. It was the biggest room, the best room, the only room.

"I'll leave the car out front, I guess. All right?"

"Yes, dear, of course." She seemed very tired. "We'll get something to eat."

"I think I'll sleep, if it's all right with you. I'm very tired."

They left him. He sat down on the cot and rubbed his eyes. Some day. I thought I had it down but it doesn't fit. I'm still confused, to say the least. He walked to the window and looked at the car. Mother had to go in a grand finale. Spectacular performance of great significance. But I don't know what it is. Mother, you left at a bad time.

He lay down on the bed. We have to find out what it's all about. I thought I had it for a little while. Then this. Maybe it doesn't, isn't part of a plan. Beckett and Camus were right? That can't be it. Leaves me nowhere. It's got to be something. It must.

He couldn't remember what exactly woke him up. Thinking about it later he concluded it was the sound of feet on the steps. That had to be it. The steps, then the knock. It was the policeman.

"I'm terribly sorry but I don't know how to tell ya this. We looked all over."

He was kind of groggy so he didn't catch what the deputy was saying. He began to answer.

"I guess I'll never figure it out. I don't know why I brought her."

"I just noticed it a little while ago. With these jailbirds we got to be careful but I slipped."

He rubbed his eyes, bleary from the long sleep.

"I'm a little confused, officer. What are you talking about?"

"Your car. Somebody stole it. Can't find it anywhere. I figure they headed for the mountains."

He smiled and shook his head.

"But that's absurd," he decided and then everything was all right.

Beyond A Tranquil House

. . . ROBERT MADDY

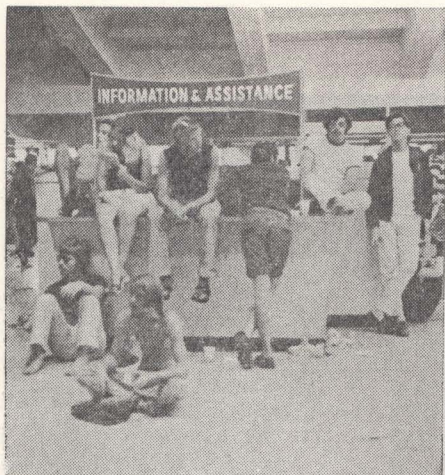
I saw it slipping away—
right through my fingertips—
and I couldn't stop it.

It hadn't been the same for quite awhile—
our love no longer generated the pounding of the waves—
the moving of the clouds—the low incessant quietness
of ease and satisfaction. We lost all anticipation
and gained routine.

Funny thing, but we never for the slightest
moment believed that it would happen to us. We were
too secure in our tranquil house on the beach of
sand, water, and time to be bothered with minor
annoyances that grew into a hiatus between two
hearts. No, not us. Never us. But it happened
nevertheless.

Now, where are we? What has become of us?
Parted, gone our separate ways. No more hurt piled
on hurt. No more running through the yard playing
with the dog. No more long walks on summer evenings.
No longer do we hear each breath in the dark, feel
the closeness of body and mind. No more late movies,
drive-ins with beer cans, football and baseball
games, dinner with friends and dinner alone,
holidays together, you beating me at golf and me
beating you at bowling. No more window shopping—
weekends with stores and people. No more love,
but why God?

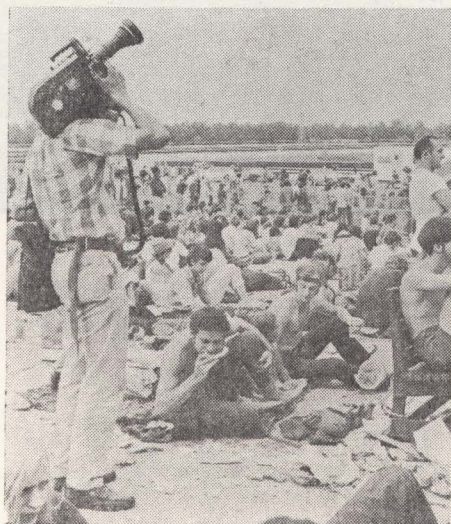
We always go onward learning from others and
ourselves. But we are the better because of it.
We have grown a little taller and wiser and a little
older. For a while we belonged to each other. Now
though apart we belong to the world. Thank you God.



Madness

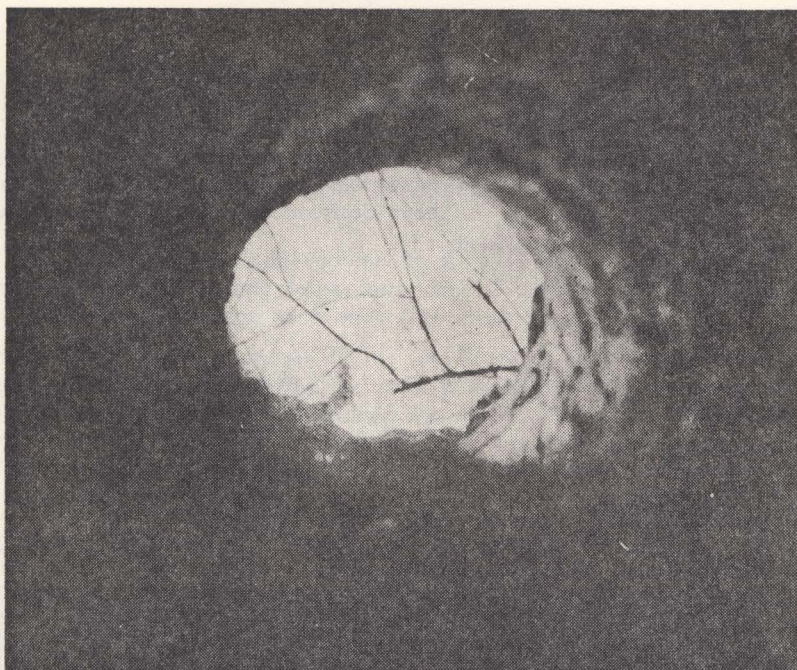
. . . DEBBIE GLESSNER

Madness
Of patchwork society
That preys upon color
And feasts upon flesh.





The boys stands secure
In the water.
He knows very well
That fish don't bite.



Looking up
From earth,
We see the sky
And a little of the world
And the universe,
little by little.

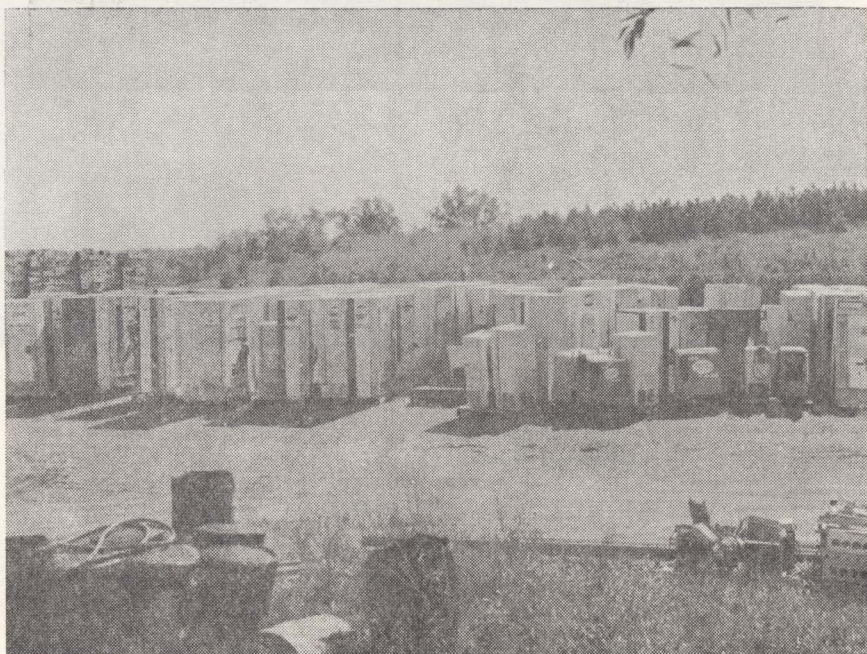
Monsters

. . . RICK STUEMPFLE

I used to sit
On my front porch
and watch
ugly people
steal my mountain
barbarous pieces of
uncouth man-made junk
and hairless monsters
unwanted by my mountain
have destroyed ——— all my pleasure

Someday ——— I will come back
destroying demons
my mountain will live
again ——— with its own
precious monsters
that were meant to be there
I shall revenge,
reak havoc among
the unlettered but numbered
ugly painted bodies
that steal monsters
from my mountain

My monsters are stupid
they flee.
Monsters!
you are greedy
have not you enough?
I did once
as I sat on my front porch



The Hunter

gailim2 . . . RONALD BURCHFIELD

It was a beautiful fall day complete with multicolored leaves and cool crisp air. The sun shone brightly, even though most of its warmth had been lost for the season. An icy breeze ran through the trees warning them of the eventual coming of winter. Nature was quiet, tense, and still, for it was the time of the hunt.

The hunters walked slowly and quietly through Nature's Garden in search of their prey. Their greedy faces were excited with the promise of a successful hunt. They reminded each other how much they enjoyed it.

One of the hunters was silent. He was a young man, about twenty. Although he looked very much like the other hunters, he was somehow different. It was his face. From his eyes you could see the sensitivity of his character and the warmth of his heart. A closer look made you wonder if he could be a hunter like the rest. He was that different.

As the silent hunter walked, he seemed unaware of his surroundings. He walked onward absorbed in thought. He thought how good it was to be alive and to breathe the cool fresh air. He thought of love, happiness, and himself. What would he do when he met his prey? Would he do as he was taught? COULD he do as he was taught? He didn't know—he was still a stranger to himself.

The hunter continued walking, unaware that his prey was in his path. His head was lowered, still in deep thought. Suddenly, he stopped and raised his head. There it was—his prey. He looked at it, and the prey returned the look. Nature was silent and tense. The stare lasted. Nothing moved.

At last the prey broke the stare.

"You don't look like a hunter," she said.

"Yes, but I'm supposed to be," replied the hunter.

"Why don't you make your move?" she asked. "I'm your prey, your victim. Kill me!"

The hunter lowered his head. He was thinking.

"Let's get outa this mess," he said.

"Sure," she said.

The hunter and the prey walked arm in arm through Nature's Garden. They seemed unaware of what was happening. They didn't hear the exploding guns and the clamor of the hearts that suddenly stopped beating. They walked together.

Sweet Smiling

. . . . JOHN E. WILSON

Sweet smiling Cindy
 You know that you own me;
 My mind is a plaything
 With which you can fondle
 Whenever you want to—
 I cannot stop you.
 You've mastered the put-down,
 the put-on, the fake frown;
 the pouting expression
 which caused my depression;
 the look that says: "ne'er
 will I ever care;"
 And the sweetest of smiles which makes me still love you.

Kitten

. . . . SUSAN K. MENTZER

An impish paw bats . . .
 Scent of costly perfume
 rises from shattered glass.

Parties

. . . JUANITA CONDON

Whoever said that people have fun at parties is either an idiot, a liar, or both. I know, I've been to many parties. Sometimes I was invited, sometimes I just wandered in, but I was always bored or disgusted. Take this party, for example. It's going to be typical.

Henry and Grace (they're the people I live with) think they belong to the jet set or something. I think they're phonies, but they give me a bowl of milk and a blanket to sleep on, so I make allowances. They do a lot of entertaining so I get plenty of opportunities to observe human nature."

Over in this corner we have one of my favorite twosomes: Mad Marty and Crying Kate. Marty is an artist, complete with beard and paint-stained pipe. He fancies himself to be God's gift to the women of suburbia and that's "wifey" is known as "Crying Kate." Oh boy, there he goes again. This time it's the old banker's young wife. Someone tell Kate to drag out the Kleenex. It's crying time again.

Grace just missed baptizing me with the punch. Old Gracie better lay off the sauce, or we'll both end up covered with the stuff. That's the girl, Grace, smile. Henry's looking.

Oh, and there's Hysterical Harriet. She pretends to be Miss Happy-Happy of the year, but I can see through the act. If she would just relax, she might be all right, but . . . Oh, no! Now she's attacking me. Look, lady, put me down, or I'll bite! That's better.

I'm going to hide behind the chair so that won't happen again. Too bad, Harriet can't find a male human, but then, who really wants a bad actress for a wife? Ah, what's going on over in the corner? Crying Kate is brandishing a jar of olives. Don't hit poor Marty, Kate. He's going to feel badly enough in the morning as it is. Oh, well, you'll be sorry. Here it comes, here they come. Henry and Grace are getting slower and slower at breaking these things up. Another minute and Kate might have made contact with Marty's head. Ugh, look at all the olives on the floor! Now if it was sardines, I might be interested, but olives . . .

The madding crowd is getting restless. We seem to be heading toward Kiss-Everyone-Else's-Wife time. Sure enough, it is. The music is getting louder, too. Perhaps no one will notice if I appropriate a few sardines or some cold cuts. Ah, the ham looks good. I'll just,—hey, what's this action? Oh, rats, Grace got me!

"Now it's time for pussycat to go play with other kitties. Mama's guests want to have fun. Kitty go have fun, too." Grace isn't too cool.

I gather the torn mantle of my dignity and walk down the garden path to the alley where the real cats are throwing a party.

Look Back

ED SADTLER

remember a day
when the girl
in a hurry
would kiss you
anyway

don't play with it

she was the girl
who you loved
who loved you
and left you
anyway

A Paradox of Love

BRENT AMOROSO

Love
is an
attempt
to understand
those
you
will
never
really
understand

North Perry Street

. . . NANCY EVERETT

He got on the 7:25. The bus was already full except for a few places in the front where the seats face the center aisle.

Some coins jangled in his baggy trouser's pocket, but his hand could not seem to grasp any of it. Finally, after a long time, the arthritic fingers handed the impatient driver the correct change. As he turned to sit in a vacant spot, the bus lurched forward. The old man lost his balance, falling on his knees. He was like a cat after jumping downward a great distance; he was stunned. He struggled strenuously before he could raise his once agile body into the seat. No one helped him.

The old man was pleasant-looking, and clean, yet his eyes were dull and lacked luster. People laughed at him because he could not move his legs fast any more, or because he was always dropping something or knocking an article off a counter.

The bus slowed down in front of the elementary school, and then picked up speed.

He stared pensively at his hands. His mind began to wander.

* * * *

"Mr. Roe, this is the most beautiful piece of crystal engraving that I have ever seen. You have great talent in your hands." The young man smiled faintly, but there was a warm inward glow. He knew he had talent. He had told his father so three years ago when he left home.

The first two years had been the hardest. The furnace room at Steuben Glass was always stifling and constantly smelled of man's natural cooling system. He often had trouble distributing his salary among food, clothing, and rent, yet he always had plenty of paper, pens, and time. He loved to draw, especially the delicate lines and curves of leaves and flowers.

One night he had forgotten to take his sketches home. The following morning when he returned to the place where he had left them, he could not find them. He was disappointed, but at lunchtime he started another clematis blossom.

Not long after this incident, the foreman of the furnace room asked if anybody had lost any "pretty pictures." The boy was embarrassed to go forward in front of his friends. He was even more embarrassed when he learned he had to go to the Big Boss's office to have them returned.

He did not go back to the furnace room the next day; he had been told to report to the designer's pool. He liked it here. The room had more light and it was not as hot as downstairs. He was free to draw designs all day as long as they were neat, and he handed in a substantial amount of work to his new foreman, or supervisor as he was now called.

"Riverdale."

Coveting the praise and the plaque he had just received, Mr. Roe thanked all those responsible for honoring him with the title of Best Designer of the Year. His hands tingled with life and enthusiasm.

"Tenth and Broad."

Often during the day, the frosted glass door was opened and closed. Behind this door was a desk at which sat a silver-haired gentleman. He was known to have great insight into the process of crystal production and engraving. Quite often at night a beam of yellow streamed from under the door.

The distinguished looking gentlemen and ladies rose in their seats, the air vibrated with their applause. The noise quieted as Mr. Roe placed the golden bowl beside the lectern. "I do not know quite how to thank you. It is indeed an honor to be named President of the Steuben Glass Company."

The bus swished past the unkept cemetery, and for a moment the man came back to reality. He breathed a long sigh.

Some days there was a sign on his door, "Do not disturb; in conference." However, had not the glass panes ever been etched by a stylist, one could have seen the sparsely covered head of a bent-over man drawing an episode in the life of Diana. The whole scene was completely surrounded by leaves and flowers.

"North Perry Street."

A tear trickled down the folds of his sagging facial skin.

"Hey, old man, ain't this your stop? I ain't got all day. Move that bag of bones."

With Ice

. . . PAUL D. RUNYAN

A thin old gray dog
With ice frozen in his fur
Walks down a snowy road.

Sylvia

. . . SUSAN K. MENTZER

She felt very depressed. Thankfully, these periods of feeling isolated from everyone and everything around her came infrequently. Sylvia looked up from her brooding as her roommate, Kathy, bounced into the room.

"Hi! Want to go to the basketball game with us?"

Sylvia shook her head. "No, I don't think so. Who's going?"

"Oh, a whole gang of us, Peggy, Nancy, Mary, Joyce, and me. Sure you don't want to come? What are you going to do all night?"

"Study, I guess."

"Well, okay. Guess I'll go downstairs to pick up the gang. Game starts at 7:00. See ya'. Don't study too hard." And with that, Kathy was off.

Suddenly, ridiculously, Sylvia felt terribly left out. Kathy could have prodded her a bit more, she didn't have to take her first answer as final. They just didn't want to be with her, didn't care if she went or not. "Oh, stop being silly," she told herself severely. "It's your own fault you didn't go." But a tiny nagging doubt still remained. What did her friends really think of her?

These continuing doubts weren't getting her anywhere. Her mind went round and round in circles. Don't want to study. Don't want to go to bed. Don't feel like listening to the stereo . . . A walk! Yes! The thought of a long walk alone suited her mood. But a small corner of her mind laughed. Yes, a walk like that appeals to your sense of the dramatic, doesn't it Sylvia?

Oh, shut up, she thought furiously. Why are you always there analyzing and criticizing? Can't I ever just feel depressed. Must there always be a hidden motive or a selfish reason.

My! Aren't we touchy? queried that small voice.

Sylvia refused to acknowledge its presence. She dressed quickly, grabbed a coat, and left the dorm. The April night was misty, and a warm drizzle beaded her hair as she walked. Not many people were out on a night like this, she thought. But that just goes to prove how odd you are. Must enjoy being different from other people.

She remembered that even when she was a child she had enjoyed a special sense of separateness from other people. But as she grew older her isolation lost its specialness. She ached to have friends and be one of the gang, but somehow she just didn't seem to have the knack. She had only one best friend all through high school.

When she came to college it was the same old story. She was shy, afraid to take the first step in making friends for fear of being repulsed. Lucky for her someone had taken the time to look underneath that cover and discover . . . "Sylvia."

Sylvia stopped short. She turned, peered back through the mist, but perceived only a hazy outline silhouetted by the golden light from the street lamp behind the dorm. She waited. The figure strode rapidly toward her. Sylvia knew who it was before the silhouette reached her.

"Hi, Nancy. You gave me a scare there for a minute."

"Did I? Sorry. Hey, how come you didn't go to the game with us tonight? I missed you."

"You did? Really?"

"Sure. Where are you going anyway?"

"Nowhere in particular. Just for a walk."

"Mind if I join you?" Nancy gave her a searching glance, but Sylvia was looking down at the ground and didn't see.

"No, if you don't mind getting wet."

Nancy laughed. "Couldn't get much wetter than I already am. Besides, I believe it's starting to clear off."

Sylvia raised her eyes to Nancy's. "Yes, I believe it is," she said softly.

East Caribbean

. . . LINDA GEPHART

they carried me here

and set me to work

rebuilding my loss.

the first shock was destroying

but slowly i became whole

and swallowed the taste—

i flowed for many degrees

and became again the rhythm

breaking in the current

as the gulf tide beckoned

and the fish runs tickled my ribs

yet i doubt that i will ever breathe

in this immensity

or totally relinquish my fear of drowning—

The Road

. . . RONALD BURCHFIELD

The source of the road is unknown . . . Some say it starts in the mountains; others say the sea. Most people, however, travel that road without knowing from where it came or where it leads. One quite young and foolish thinker has ventured to say that the road has no beginning or no end. To him, the road is a dream, an image planted in the minds of men to occupy that thing called time. No one believes this theory. People say that since everyone sees and touches the road, it has to be real. The eyes don't lie.

(The reader must be wondering the intent of such rhetorical nonsense . . . Remember, clever reader, that the mind of the poet is quicker than yours can ever be. Have patience, and you will experience a tale that opens doors which before did not exist. Since your mind is already filled with countless measures of jumbled jargon, why don't you take part in the tale and save yourself the bother of hearing about a character who means nothing. No character means as much as yourself. Give the poet your mind. Release your thoughts . . .)

The road is narrow. It is worn and scarred with deep chasms caused by those who have traveled before. It winds around rivers and mountains placed at intervals to challenge the strength and endurance of the travelers. It is a monotonous road filled with obstacle after obstacle, mile after mile.

Notice, kind reader, as you and the poet travel down this road, the faces of the travelers who walk by. Some are content as they walk the weary journey. Others look for this same contentment around the next bend or beneath the heavy stones. Notice the smiles of the contented ones. They've found what they want, and they walk forward with a kind of blindness in their eyes which prevents them from seeing pain or sadness. Notice the faces of those who search. Their wrinkled brows show years of search after search for what they want on the road. These people know pain, and they know defeat. However, they never stop searching. Why should they travel the road unless they search for something? The road is too difficult to travel for nothing.

Walk this way, in the direction of those playing children. Leapfrog—That's what they're playing! Listen as they shout enjoyment! If only everyone could be this happy. To these children, the road is a huge playground filled with innumerable swings, sliding boards, and riding horses. They live day by day and travel mile after mile just to seek new games to play and new adventures to have . . .

Walking behind the children is a lonely woman, so worn and blinded by age that she appears too weak to end the journey. She will make it, though, for she has faith in herself. She walks slowly, but yet she is concerned with all those who pass her. When she stumbles, she picks herself up and begins again, just as she has picked up others who have fallen along the road. Yes, she will get there. She has faith in herself . . .

Watch this next traveler. He runs the road, for his journey must be quick. He has no time to pick up the fallen, and he has no time to rest himself. The road is painful to him, and this pain burns his nimble feet, causing them to want to end the journey quickly. He'll end his journey, but yet he'll miss so much . . .

Look, here's one more passing by. This traveler is so burned that he lags far behind the rest. He gluttons his food and robs the weak. He carries his many riches with him, hoping some day to enjoy them at the journey's end. He has actually convinced himself that he enjoys this type of life. To him, riches are everything, even though he is so burdened by them that he can hardly walk . . .

Such is the road, and such are those who travel the road. Each traveler goes his way with his own visions of what lies ahead . . . From here on, reader, you must travel the road yourself. Walk on, and soon you will see that the road divides. Some will choose one way to travel, and others will go different ways. None of the new roads guarantee a happy ending, although all of them have some type of ending. You must decide which you will take, and then you must prepare yourself for what lies ahead. The poet leaves you now; the journey is yours. . .

Limited, II

. . . LIN HENRY

a smile laughs,
I, tripping toward its sunshine
drop my lap of tears
a lean hand blurs
your memory
as Now stands
across the gully
beckoning.

The Mask

. . . KATHY SLYWCZUK

Carmella was busily changing the bed linens when she paused to watch Jennifer dressing for her lunch date. "She is so pretty," thought the young Italian maid as Jennifer breezed out the door.

Alone in the room, Carmella glanced at herself in the huge mirror. The reflection tended to fascinate her. She was only a frail girl, not much to look at. She had a rather smooth, dark complexion marred here and there by few moles. Her eyes were much too large for her face, and her mouth was a bit too wide. Her hair was very short—too short to style in any fashionable manner. Carmella then turned away in disgust and took notice of the cosmetics on Jennifer's vanity tray. She had watched Jennifer apply makeup so many times that she herself had mastered it. Jennifer was a pretty, stereotyped, society girl from the United States on tour in Italy for the summer. "It must be nice to be so pretty and so rich," thought Carmella.

She then looked down at the cosmetics on the dresser. "Maybe I can be pretty like Jennifer," she thought. "Besides, Jennifer won't be back for a few hours."

Just like a child imitating her mother, Carmella began to apply the makeup. First, she spread on the liquid base, followed by a peach blush. Carefully she pasted on the false eyelashes and curled them. She applied blue eye shadow all the way to the brow as she had often seen Jennifer do. Of course the white stick helped to cover the dark circles that she had under her eyes. Finally, she painted her thin lips and attempted to style her hair. She was all set.

Now in her own little world, a world of American Society, she walked to the closet and picked out one of Jennifer's cocktail dresses. Unconscious of time, she danced around the room. A few moments later the knob of the door handle turned. Jennifer stopped, and wide-eyed, looked at Carmella.

"You little Italian bitch! What are you trying to do?" Carmella tried to shut her ears to the screams, but it was no use. Her eyes swelling with tears, she took off the dress and returned it to the hanger. She proceeded to the bathroom and washed off her artificial face. She then looked into the mirror, and this time she saw Carmella in a different light. She no longer wished to see the beautiful American face. She saw what was really there—a plain Italian maid. It was silly to think that she could be anyone else. Carmella picked up the dirty linens, and humming, closed the door behind her.

To M. A. Miller

. . . CRAIG ZUMBRUN

"Just catching a cat-nap." A sun streaked face,
Which some 90 winters have helped the sun
Form, this old farmer, resting now.

This then was the planter, the plower,
The harvester. Veterinarian and butcher.
Creator and maintainer—a god or his peasant-king existence.
Trading his life, in those years for a bit of the earth
Land-lorded by a highly disputed party.
Is he resting now?

There is an old cat left.
Big black and tailless.
Fat old and ear-mauled
Sleeping friend.
Cat no longer steps out inspecting his domain.

Rising slightly, quite slowly now,
Does he see through the window the peeling paper on the wall?
Also from another time.

Can he see the weed-filled fields.
The overgrown meadows, the dull grey and in protected places
Red boards that once were the walls of some sheds?
Or see his eye his own reflection of the world he built
Will he protect this 'til his end — Be that what ever it can be.
Not giving up,

Not giving up, he's only resting
Perhaps he wonders what he must trade for these late
Minutes — or have they been bargained by the past.
Faintly smiling he catches another cat nap.

The Secret of the Sun

. . . BEVERLY ZIMMERMAN

She is a small, delicate woman with great dark eyes fringed by long lashes and long brown curls hanging femininely around her pale, tear-stained face. She sits like a shadow in a dark dress, enveloped in the silence of the solemn, still church. As she moves her trembling lips, I can barely hear the words she speaks. She seems completely and totally absorbed in thought, as though she had surrendered herself unto some unknown experience. I wonder what brings her here; what thoughts and desires occupy her mind?

I don't come to churches. I don't like their quiet solemnness. Everything about them seems dead, like a tomb. The reason I'm here now is that the rain came unexpectedly, and I went out unprepared for it this afternoon. I darted into the first building I saw that had its door open. I wonder what the curator in his black garb would think of that if I told him.

She is still mumbling words in a hushed, awesome voice and looking intently at the small altar with its gold cross. I wonder does she know that I'm scrutinizing her foolish actions and words, I wonder . . . Then, suddenly as a flash of lightning, I see a transformation on her pale face; it becomes pure, white, lovely, and peaceful, as though someone instantly paints her in new fresh beautiful pastels. Her dark eyes sparkle, and she looks so beautiful; I follow the gaze of her shining face to the cross on the small altar. It is gleaming brightly, shining, and throwing rays of golden light all around it; but of course I think, it is only the sun casting a ray upon it. I look around as she leaves to see if the ray of sun is slipping shyly through one of the windows. I hear the thunder and pounding rain shower down on the roof—but the sun isn't even out . . .

Dawn

. . . LIN HENRY

Strange a night wind,
here now, with sun
apparently there.
Funny falling this far,
thudless.

The Town Of The Future

PAUL POLITIS

Every night
The town of the future
Sits on the step
In front of the store
Until it gets sleepy
And walks out of its pseudo-nightmare,
Around the block,
Stopping randomly,
To lean for a while
Before resuming its journey
Around the block,
And around again,
Walks the town of the future
At night,
Looking into cars
And at passersby,
Waving when it pleases
At the customers
And doners
And friends,
And the rest of the lovers,
And all waving back
At the town of the future
As it walks around the block,
And around again,
Avoiding a nightmare.

Park, 2 A.M.

. . . NANCY MILLICHAP

The storm-quick slash of horsepower headlights
Whisks in rhythmic waves across the grass.
The nappy night darkness of city sky
Swirls sinuously enfold us.
The silk slip-slap of water in the lake
Sings soft songs that slumberers cannot hear.
The silence of small space and stalking time
Spreads from the slatted, crouching benches.
The city-bright rims of our universe
Blot out all stars but those in our eyes.

Haiku

. . . MARY ANNE DONOVAN

The sun shares with you
and me the morning freshness
of children's laughter

The Sandcastle

. . . BRENT AMOROSO

I built a sandcastle
to the girl I loved
on a distant shore
an edifice
a stronghold
where all would
be safe inside
its texture was
one of love
gathered grains
from my soul
And I thought
it would not crumble
under waves
nor
raging sea
I stood
proudly
waiting for her to accept
my humble gift
but along she came
and — she kicked
it — and
it fell
and so did I.

Yesterday

. . . PAUL POLITIS

He was the last
To see her before
She was driven
Into the oblivion of tomorrow,
While he remained
In today

To Who May Be Concerned

. . . CHARLES DYER

I am the oldest man on Earth. This evening I took a walk. Not a long walk. Just a stroll around the front of my home. No, not long really. Long and lasting are so short. But this stroll. It was the climax of realizations. The realizations of today. No, not of today. I ceased to be now when I become when. But not when, I do not think. I thought of continuously. But that is my problem. Time. Where am I in it? What is time today?

But let me start at the beginning. The end is quick. I reside in a nice neighborhood of prefabricated life. People live here a short year or two. Bah! It's a lifetime to these half-lives. But to continue. I live with my nephew, a young teacher. Just Richard, me and my paintings. Let me tell you about my paintings. They are my life. I began collecting them while quite young. I also paint my own. I have a little corner of my room set off for my easels. The house walls are covered with the paintings. Portraits, landscapes, sea scenes, brilliant colors, dulled tones, everything. I have no famous painters except my Monet. It is not a famous Monet, but still a Monet. I have little money to purchase the great artists. I paint a little, as I said before, but nothing great. Still, there is nothing like painting. The great flourishes of the brush strokes, blending the colors you so carefully mixed to the proper shade, standing back and saying, "I have created something of enduring value." Baloney, I think now.

But to this confession. I had been to my physician's for my semi-weekly check-up and he told me I am still a physical freak. It is certainly reassuring to my heart to find I am still a freak. Anyway, he said I had many long years ahead of me. Wonderful, you think and I think, then, but no. Not wonderful.

When I got home and was sitting around, I realized a vague worry was gripping me. Richard was out, with his girl, Susann, I suppose. But I don't think being alone in the house caused this uneasiness. If you are thinking I was worrying about getting old, I mean forget that, aging has become monotonous. A part of living. I was worried about not knowing what I was worried about, I think. Anyway, I looked for a magazine to read. To take my mind off. I found one, sat down in my big rocker and began to read.

The first article was about drug use. Need I say more? The use is so widespread, the article said, that three out of five college students have experimented with drugs. The drugs give them a "trip" that lasts several hours. You all know that stuff. It seems they take these things for a sensual experience. A vague sense of satisfaction. Vague.

Then I read an article about our changing sexual morality, how people sleep around before marriage. The author saw an over-emphasis, a childish pre-occupation with sex. He called it "morality of the orgasm."

The final article I read was by an American psychologist. He claimed there was in today's world a lessening in "constructive living". Constructive living is the seeking of satisfaction, not sensation. Man should find a dedication to dedicate himself to. The young people of today want to destroy the institutions of this country. This whole sense of "nothing endures" is exemplified by the drugs, revolutions, and declining sexual mores.

The reason I told you this is that I agreed with it all. I now knew what the problem was. Nobody worries about permanent things! The people only seek the short sensation, not the lasting satisfaction. Let me explain. I have my paintings. They are my source of satisfaction. Others have books, politics, etc. But these satisfactions are not for today's generation. There is a gap. The young have nothing to construct their lives around.

But I thought there was hope. Some people do care about the old things and old ways. Amidst the cheap buildings, the "quickie" affairs, the sensations and pleasures, stand some people who try to live good lives. Like Richard and Susann. Like me. This is what I thought.

The articles and these thoughts troubled me. This is what I had been uneasy about. I had been worried about these things for several days, I realized. So I got up to walk around and calm down and think. It's the nuclear threat, I thought. The bomb threatens sudden death so they seek fun while they can. But the excuse was flimsy. I was hot and needed fresh air so I went outside.

Richard's car was parked out front, but I didn't see him. I approached the car to see if he was anywhere near it. And now I tremble, to think of it and to write of it. It was he. Richard. My nephew. The back seat. The two of them. Morality of orgasm. And not even Susann!

I ran. Back to the house. I was panting, sweating, shaking. Hopes shattered and I act like this. Then I knew. Sensation, but above all nothing can endure. No satisfying endurances. I saw my Monet hanging over the fireplace. Monet. This man had been around since the 1870's! He was not of my time? So his life, period. I grabbed a knife and slashed at the paintings, ripping, tearing, ruining. I threw them in the fireplace. Now, I thought, now I am of today. I fit beautifully. No satisfaction except the satisfaction of watching these paintings burn.

But that's not it, I thought, you're all wrong. The problem is me. My very existence is not fitting. I know that I had many long years ahead. I especially know that when I think of all the physical labor involved in destroying those paintings and me not even panting. Many years ahead. Wrong, all wrong.

So now you know what the trouble is. You know why I wrote this. I suppose when you began you didn't realize you would be reading the last thoughts of a man. You hold a suicide note, as you of course realize, since my brains will lie at your feet when you read this. After I write this, I will take a gun, put it in my mouth and pull the trigger. Now don't you go and feel sorry for not being here to stop me. It is comforting that you are concerned. If you are there. But you think about it. The oldest man. In today's time of short fame and fun, where nothing is to stay long, to be satisfied, in a time like this, who am I to be different?

Frosty Windows

. . . CRAIG ZUMBRUN

Dreams slowly leave, prying as they pass
Each immobile eyelid.
A yawn, two winks, and finally a stretch
As sleep slips out the rebirth of rest rush
to the fingers the thumbs then the toes.
Eye catches light streaming through frosted glass;
Transfigured morning spreads in and settles itself—
Filling the room and the ten year old boy.
Remembering Saturday's morning window.

Early

. . . BETH TEOFILAK

When

the air is cool and fresh,
there is no one to feel it.
the sparrow's sweet song floats on the wind;
there is no one to hear it.

Fie, you cowards who crouch beneath the covers.
Fie, you who refuse to greet the morn.

To Michael

. . . LINDA GEPHART

child of rain
the mountains crept to a low and speaking space
where trees bit the air
where brickly trimmed farms
presented their flying kites—fastened.
the birds alit upon a turned tomb
and ate the seed of mankind
leaving the red and bitter pods
of rattling joy.
child lie down
here in the fields where water once ran
and smile the sky your tide
you are the flower.

Punch-Lineup

. . . GREG RUSS

Vicky Virtue behind her mirror
Loves her house because
Her house is not a home.
—"What is it then?"
That's her business . . .

Lil

. . . JEAN ETTER

Saturday night had crept up on us like a prowling cat. Before we realized what had happened, it was Saturday afternoon, and nothing had been planned for the evening. The Saturday before, it was a combo, the one before that—the drive-in. All we had was a couple of bucks and three-quarters of a tank of gas.

The guys always seemed to have a good time together, and never failed to find fun and mischief; either way, a great time. We all got together to decide what we'd do—there was absolutely nothing doing on campus, except, of course, a ten-year-old movie that has seen this school twice already this year.

Once we started the discussion, it became obvious that we'd either have to 'drive around' or sit in the local snack bar until closing time. Either way, there was nothing exciting to do. Then a spark of life enlightened our little group. Jerry had come up with a fantastic idea!

"Remember," he said, "when we went drinking in West Virginia? And remember the little place on Locus Street?" He paused and looked around for a reaction from the group. Pleased, he added, "And Lil?"

Everyone began speaking at once.

"Sure!"

"Yeah!"

"Wow. Didn't we have a great time!"

"Hey, gang, let's go. What are we waiting for?"

We were on our way. It wasn't unlike us to jump into something like this. That's the way it had been before — last year about this time — when we went to West Virginia and met Lil. We had all chipped in for gas, piled into the car, and headed for West Virginia. We had arrived within the hour. With what other money we could scrape together, we toured the town, or at least all the bars we could hit in the town. Most of them were crummy and full of weird characters — some suspicious of the young strangers and some drunk and delighted to listen to anyone who would listen to them.

We pressed on from joint to joint, not really having that good a time. Finally, we aimed ourselves down a dark, uninhabited street, pledging that the next bar would be the last. We were tired and discouraged and ready to go home.

Then we saw it. Cramped between two apartment houses was the tiny brick building with the small flashing red neon sign in the window: "Lil's Bar and Grill." It looked, from the outside, like just another Ballantine-Budweiser Bar, but we were too tired to walk any further to a new prospect, so we went in. There, sitting in the far corner of the dimly-lit smoke-filled tavern, was Lil. Her face was slightly withered and strewn with faded blond hair that had fallen from her topknot. I will never forget the smile that nearly covered her face when she first saw us.

Of course, none of us knew the woman, but there was an uncanny friendliness about her that we, or at least I, sensed at once. She must have been a mother image to us or something, because when she asked us to sit and talk to her, none hesitated. Oh! Was that a night! We stayed there for hours and listened and talked to her. She told us of the son she was putting through college and how her husband was killed not long ago in a car accident. The place belonged to him until that time and then she took it over and changed the name. Her son had only one more year in college. She must have told us that a hundred times — "Only one more year." She asked us how we liked college and if we were well fed and well taken care of.

As the evening grew older and older, we found it hard to explain that we had to leave. It wasn't that she wanted us to stay and talk to her as much as it was that we wanted to stay. If it hadn't been for our final exams the coming week, we probably would have been there all night. When we got up to leave, she thanked us for coming and asked us to stop in again, very soon. Then, she asked us to wait for "just one more minute," disappeared into a back room, and shortly returned. She gave each of us a pair of goldish-looking cuff-links and bade us farewell. We really didn't want to take them, but it gave her so much pleasure to give that we couldn't resist. We swore that we would come back someday.

Tonight we would fulfill that oath. We didn't even stop at some familiar bars along the street. The neighborhood looked different — there were more lights and flashing signs. As we drew near the place where we had, for the first time met Lil, we talked about her and wondered if she would still remember us — after all, it had been nearly a year ago. Then we saw it. A parking lot, with meters, cars, and a car wash in the rear, all where Lil's Bar and Grill once stood. Nobody said a single word. We turned and walked back to the car.

Finite

. . . LIN HENRY

a dead leaf tells
a sadder song
wise in its travels
it does not stay long
just long enough
to make you sorry
it's gone
men are thus.

Tour Number 19-q:

The Realm Of Insanity

with a slight digression
in the specific direction
of Infinity

. . . SUZAN MILLER

I

Once upon a time
 there was a god
 picked from the hall of gods
 who shall remain nameless
 in order
 to protect
 the innocent

II

And every step I took
And every breath I drew
 added one more syllable
 to the
 endless
 middleless
 beginningless
 prayer
 to
 whom?

III

when he was young
 he began
 for an uncommunicable reason
 with an inexpressible goal
 'from humanity to sanity' were the words
 with which he attempted to define
 his own personal
 indefinable abstraction
they had caught him
 at the approximate age of
 seven hundred and forty-three
 or was it sixteen
they had caught him
 (or his mind, as it were)
 trespassing on what was supposedly
 forbidden territory

and had sentenced him to

life
or death
(depending upon how one
looks at it)

He stood in front of me

tall in a majestic mental sort of way

his steel-grey hair and beard

glistening in the light

from the small window

his sad eyes looked

through the window

and saw no bars

'O, to have eyes such as those' I thought then

they were greyish-blue

with a shadow of abyssal black

they had seen all

and reflected none

He knew

but had stopped teaching

being convinced

it was worthless

empty eyes

eye-fire

the loss of which is more tragic

than that of hair or teeth

or

life

He turned to me

looked deep into my eyes

listened long to the wordless sounds

of my mind

and handed me

a yellowed, parched paper

clasped desperately

in his once-strong hand

and he walked off

silently

a wraith of a man

shrouded in midnight

Long I had stood there, staring into the vagueness of human memory (inaccurate at its best) into which he had disappeared, when I became aware of the crumpled paper held in my left hand. Slowly and unwillingly, I dragged my mind and then my eye from the horizon to the paper. Slowly and reverently, I lifted the tattered, once-cherished page to my eyes. And there, on his time-tried parchment, was written:

