



THE REFLECTOR

Literary Magazine

Shippensburg State College

Shippensburg, Pennsylvania

SPRING, 1967

Editor-in-Chief: Jeffrey Walker

Prose Editor: P. B. Frank

Poetry Editor: James Hummer

Faculty Advisor: Miss Mabel Lindner

Editorial Staff: Judith Bohon, Lois Dickson, Carroll Jones,
Paul Politis, Cheryl Weaver

Cover: Wayne Truitt

Circulation: David Torzillo

Typists: Patricia Artman, Evangeline Benner

Student Association Fiscal Officer: Mr. Elmer Naugle

Printing: Beidel Printing House

Member: Columbia Scholastic Press Association; College and University Division

THE REFLECTOR is published once during each of the three terms of the college year by the Beidel Printing House, Shippensburg, Pa., from the literary contributions of the students of the Shippensburg State College and is financed by the Student Association Fund.

THE REFLECTOR

Literary Magazine

SPRING, 1967

FIRST PLACE AWARD

TO

THE REFLECTOR

Shippensburg State College

March 10, 1967

Columbia Scholastic Press Association:

College and University Division

Contents

A Few Comments	P. B. Frank	1
What is Why and Who Can Answer	Letitia Clever	7
The Big Box House	Lois Dickson	8
When No One's Around	Paul Politis	10
Spark	Kay Morningstar	10
To "Z"	Dawn Rutledge	11
Born Free: Part II	James Hummer	12
A Love Letter	James Hummer	13
The Visitor	Diane Krall	14
Last Syllable	Judith Bohon	15
The Shiny Part of Town	Paul Politis	16
Through A Window	H. H. Buchanan	16
The Story of Sam Austin	J. Marshall Bachman	17
Notes	James Hummer	19
The Reign of Early Spring	Lois Dickson	20
Involvement	James Hummer	21
Emptiness	Paul Politis	22
Nightmare	James Hummer	23
The Moon and a Little Bit More	P. B. Frank	25
Dementia Scholastica	James Hummer	27
entitled "2"	Catherine Belsak	28
Nunundah	Laura J. Anderson	28
To	Linda Gunnett	29
A Taste of	Honey Siska	30
Across the Meadow	H. H. Buchanan	30
Address to a Baby	Paul Politis	31
Universal Absolute	Lois Dickson	33
To a Sister	Judith Bohon	34
Sonority	H. H. Buchanan	34
Banshee	James Hummer	35
visitation	Ronald A. Peiffer	37
Affair de Coeur	Nancy Frederiksen	39
Where No One Fell	Dean R. Koontz	40
Blooded	Larry Stanevich	41
Carousel	Judith Bohon	43
Flash	Lois Dickson	43
Sonnet for a Sunday Sermon	Jeffrey Walker	44

Prelude to The Cover

I grow old . . . I grow old . . .
I shall wear the bottoms of my trousers rolled.

Shall I part my hair behind? Do I dare to eat a peach?
I shall wear white flannel trousers, and walk upon the beach.
I have heard the mermaids singing, each to each.

I do not think that they will sing to me.

I have seen them riding seaward on the waves
Combing the white hair of the waves blown back
When the wind blows the water white and black.

We have lingered in the chambers of the sea
By sea-girls wreathed with seaward red and brown
Till human voices wake us, and we drown.

From "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock"

By T. S. Eliot

*Editor's Choice: Prose****A Few Comments Concerning a Boy, a Girl,
and Time***

. . . P. B. FRANK

If you have a free moment, let me tell you (very carefully, for that is how I would like to tell you) of the first girl I ever loved. I will try to keep the events as chronological as I can, but they have probably become muddled with the passing of time. Since it is a true story, events will assume an importance which they originally lacked, but I am not particularly concerned with truth. I am concerned with love; I am concerned with time.

Sandy was a beautiful girl. Oh, all right. She couldn't possibly have been beautiful, for she was only ten or eleven. Anyway, she had long blond hair. I think. The truth is I don't know. She had brown eyes. I guess . . . it was all so long ago that I've lost all conception of color. She was four feet three inches tall. Or five feet twelve inches. Or seventeen one. Now see here; how am I supposed to remember how tall she was? She was the appropriate height for me. Which was (and still is) an inch or two or possibly three inches shorter. I mean what possible difference could it make how tall she was except in relation to me? OK. She had long hair. She had eyes (!). She was an appropriate height. Good. I imagine she had the scrawny legs of most ten-or eleven-year-olds, though I never really looked. I wasn't interested. She was thin all over; not gaunt, now, just thin. I'm not making her sound too attractive, am I? But she was, dammit. You should see her now; she's grown into a real woman. Beautiful legs, from the toes on up to—but I'm getting carried away.

She was, at any rate, pleasing to look upon. And a girl is probably never more pleasing to look upon than when you first ask her for a date, and she says I'll have to ask my mother, and you know she wants to go. As I remember it, it happened in the fifth grade. She was standing at her desk, opening and closing a book, shuffling some papers, generally nervous. A girl friend of hers came across the room to me.

"What do you think of Sandy?"

"Sandy who?" (I considered that remark appropriate for a sophisticated *gentilhomme* such as me.)

"Sandy Grimsey." She nodded her head in Sandy's general direction.

"Yeah, she's okay." (Please note my confidence, my detachment, my non-chalance.)

"She told me she'd go out with you anytime you asked her . . ."

Of course that didn't surprise me at all, for I was the very essence of all that was suave, the epitome of masculine sex appeal. I strode across the room to her desk.

"How about a date this Thursday, kid." (Incredible, wasn't it?)

"I'll have to ask my mother first . . ."

"OK. You can tell me tomorrow."

That was that. Will you promise not to tell anyone how elated I was? It was tremendous. I was the coolest, most sophisticated person alive. But I had to tell my parents. I think I almost puked down my shirt, into my pocket and onto the floor when I thought about telling them. They would laugh and make fun of me. So would my big brother. "Oh . . . Big man's got himself a date, huh?" This from Father. "Don't you think you're a little young to be going out on a date? Where will you go? What will you do? Then Mother would whisper a few comments to Father. ". . ." That from my brother along with a smile and much inner laughter. Then when we were alone: "Gotcherself a **girl**?" He would poke me in the ribs. Horrible. All very, very horrible. It would be even worse if they would not let me go. My God! Suppose they wouldn't let me go? I would have to tell Sandy . . . what reason could I possibly give?

It rained on Thursday morning. It rained on Thursday afternoon. It also rained on Thursday evening. So at dinner I told them.

"I have a date tonight."

"Well, guess I'll have to drive you since it's raining." This from Father.

"What?" I couldn't believe they'd actually let me go.

"I said I'll have to give you a ride in the car. Where does she live?"

Never trust a father to react in the way you expect him to.

We saw **The Invisible Boy** or **Man** or something. Who knows? I was never more embarrassed or ill-at-ease in my whole life. I thought I'd probably have to kiss her goodnight, but I knew I'd never be able to do that. I have forgotten exactly how the date ended; all I remember is my father driving me home—a light drizzle, the open window, drippy, dark trees, the cold air burning my sleepy eyes—home to bed, home to remember all the brilliant, half-witted things I'd said, her smiles, the doors I'd gallantly held for her, the popcorn I'd bought and dropped on the floor; it was all incredibly beautiful, idyllic. I slept well that night.

It did not end there. Many people might think it would, as it does in the movies. But I actually saw and talked to her the next day. I walked her home after school. I remember little of what we said. I do remember one time I asked her if she liked me. It was a ridiculous question. I asked her if she liked me a lot. Yes, she did. Do you love me? Yes, Paul. That was on a Friday, I think. The next day we had a date to go to the movies. Do you still love me? It was a "for heaven's sake" kind of answer. Yes, Paul. I was ecstatic when she said yes the first time; but the second time, when she seemed annoyed by my asking, I felt rotten, forlorn. I felt lousy all week and afraid to talk to her for two or three days. I learned that love can really be hell.

The kids at school made fun of us. We were almost always together. We ate lunch together in the cafeteria. She bought hers, but I brought mine in a paper sack. After lunch I'd fold the sack and put it in my back pocket. The guys used to swipe it from me and taunt me about Sandy. "You pull her off into the bushes on the way home and kiss her, I bet." "No I don't!" "Yeah, I bet you do! I betchadoo! Ya, ya, ya, ya, Paul lo-oves Saaandy, Paul loo-ooves Saandy." "Gimme back my bag." "You just try gettin' it back." They'd toss it back and forth among themselves. It was impossible, frustrating, embarrassing. It was hell, was what it was.

One Saturday afternoon I boiled over. Sandy and I were walking down Washington Street when we saw Ronnie and his girl, Susan, ahead of us. He was always making fun of me. Suddenly I was mad, angry, furious. Obviously, I would have to kill him. I took a dull penknife out of my pocket, opened it, palmed it.

"Paul, put away the knife. Please." She was holding onto my elbow.

"This is man's work, Sandy. Don't worry." I was brave, a real hero. (I was also scared out of my mind).

"Please put it away, Paul."

"I won't start anything if he doesn't." I was hard, I was noble; I was going to defend my one, my only love against this ruffian's insults. (He may not have actually been insulting Sandy, but that wasn't the important point). He would have to learn his lesson. If he starts something, I will kill him.

"Hiya, Paul. Howya doin'?"

What brash insolence! Well, he started it. I revealed my formidable weapon. He leaped into some kind of protective stance, looked as if he could tear me apart.

"You better put that thing away, Paul, before somebody gets hurt."

"Get ready to die." Who said that? Was that me?

"What?" He stared at me incredulously. Suddenly he relaxed. "I told you you should've put that knife away."

"It's dull. It couldn't hurt a flea." What's going on here? How'd I get on the defensive? What'd you tell him that for? He'll crack your head open.

"Dull, huh? Look at your thumb." He was laughing.

There was blood all over my hand, pouring out of my thumb, gushing. I turned hot and red, folded up the knife, walked home. I would have to think of an explanation for my mother; I would hide it from her. But my spine didn't stop tingling until I turned the corner. I didn't see Sandy for a week after that; I couldn't have faced her.

Well, I was at loose ends for two weeks, but after about three weeks, everything was back to normal. Oddly, it seemed that my estrangement from Sandy only made her more dear to me; I felt as if I had to make her all mine. I would have to marry her; maybe not now — but we could at least become engaged. I decided that I would give her a ring. The only problem was where to get one.

I tried to braid one from string and twine, but it came out all twisted and knotted. I found a small rubber gasket which just fit my finger, but it forced my fingers about five inches apart; I couldn't even make a fist. I found a wire coat hanger, cut off a piece, bent it into a circle, slipped it on my finger, slipped it off my finger, and applied mercurochrome and a band-aid. I thought of using the ring from around a bubble-gum cigar; it had Bubble-O written on it; altogether inappropriate. Finally, in desperation, I ransacked my dresser drawers. Ah! There it was: a hand-carved Indian ring cast in something shiny that might have been sterling. It was perfect. Perfect!

I will give it to her at the movies on Saturday. I can see it now. It will be beautiful. "Sandy, I have something for you." "Oh? What is it?" I would pull out a solid gold box, slowly, smoothly, with great care; the music would rise to a peak, reach a crashing finale, then surpass itself in silence as I opened the box . . ." For, you, my dear, until we can be married." Tears would flood

her eyes; she would throw her arms around me with joy while the music gently sighed in the background. The lights would come up as the movie ended, and the world would see and envy us in our happiness. Beautiful; tender. I went to the window and watched the world move by in the still night.

It is astounding how hard, how cruel, how brutal the daylight can be compared to the soft, romantic glow of dusk, the gentle whispering of the cool night air, the hot and frantic ambitions concocted when the world goes to sleep and only you exist. Saturday came, and I sat through the movie silently, unable to speak, horribly sick. I walked her home, miserable, blind, deathly afraid of the lump in my pocket, yet vitally pregnant with the compulsion to give the ring to her, even to just throw it at her and run. I said goodbye, doing nothing, a coward, a craven slacker, a timorous, shuffling poltroon. I lived wretchedly until the following Saturday.

We had another date to the movies; I would give it to her this week if for no other reason than that I couldn't stand another week like the last one. I was a fool, an idiot, a jerk, and like a fool, an idiot, a jerk, I sat in my seat, sinking lower and lower, the time getting shorter and shorter. There was a pause in the action of the plot, my stomach reeled.

"Close your eyes, Sandy."

"All right."

In the blurred reality of a movie theatre, in the dim shadows cast by the beam of light from the projection booth, a little of the quiet hum of the dark loneliness of night, a little of the tinkle of moonlight flowed into me. I grabbed the box from my pocket, yanked out the ring, and slipped it slowly onto her finger. She smiled, opened her eyes, looked at the ring, twisted it about her finger. We held hands and walked home under the afternoon sun.

The ring seemed to bind us closer together even though she didn't wear it. She said she kept it in a box on her dresser; her mother wouldn't let her wear it. But it didn't seem to matter. I had given it to her; she had it, and that was all there was to it.

I began to lie in bed at night and dream about how wonderful it would be to be married to her. I would lie in bed, pretending to be talking to her, then suddenly reach out, grab my pillow, and smother her in kisses. I'm not quite sure when I first became aware of the fact that she would want to have children, but the idea horrified me. I had a rather weird, distorted notion of the sexual process at the time, garnered from the guys at school and from some pornographic pictures the high school kids sold them. To say the least, the whole idea was thoroughly repulsive, and this fact probably explains my shyness about everything from holding hands on up. I had only held her hand once before, but it didn't seem to bother me, for I had no particular desire to. It was enough to be with her. The idea of kissing her had never really occurred to me until after I had given her the ring. Now it was a passion; but I was too much of a coward to do anything about it. I continued to live with dreams, pillows, and anguish.

But such a state of isolation could not possibly last forever. Sandy would not let it. She had a party at her house one Sunday; she invited me. I thought all kinds of people would be there but when I arrived, there was only one other couple. I was surprised, although I suppose I shouldn't have been. We started off with dancing and a few Cokes. The Cokes were no problem, but one thing I

had never learned to do was to dance. I simply could not get the hang of it. So Sandy taught me to dance. Dancing is great! What could be more wonderful than holding someone you love in your arms and gliding over the floor with her, music flowing from beat to beat in the background? I'll never forget her laying her head on my shoulder, breathing softly, warmly on my neck. I was never more nervous in my whole life as we danced into the dining room, from there into the living room. Suddenly, we were both on the couch, and I was leaning over her, holding her . . . I was scared. I didn't know what to do, so I stood up in a daze — empty, hollow, incredibly lonely. She left the couch smiling, twirling about me; now, all was right, blithe, joyful. Then she was against the door jamb, and I was smiling stupidly down at her. Kiss her, you fool! Now I knew what I was supposed to do; I couldn't. I was petrified — an old, dead, hard fossil. She darted away into the kitchen, leaving me miserable.

After some verbal self-flagellation, I wandered back into the kitchen. Sandy was sitting, drinking a Coke, and the other couple was dancing. The music stopped; Sandy changed the record, opened a Coke, and handed it to me. Things continued rather sadly and quietly for a while, then someone brought up the idea of playing "'spin the bottle.'" Sandy said she didn't think we should, her mother was upstairs, but it seemed to me that she gave up arguing pretty easily. We grabbed a bottle and sat in the middle of the floor in a circle. The other couple each spun first, and they kissed each other. Then came Sandy, and she kissed the girl, which didn't seem quite right to me, but I wasn't willing to argue. It was my turn. I took hold of the bottle, set it on the floor, and spun it. It whirled crazily, knocking and bumping loudly against the floor for what seemed like eternity, and I thought sure Sandy's mother'd come down and throw me out of the house for trying to corrupt these innocent friends of mine with such immoral games. Finally it slowed, stopped, and pointed at Sandy. I kissed her. On the cheek. It was easy. It certainly wasn't romantic; nor was it unromantic. It was neutral with a chaser of clandestine enjoyment. I discovered I liked kissing. I knew I would. I knew it all along.

My father was in the army, and we were transferred to Germany. I was used to leaving good friends; Sandy and I had an argument; altogether, it wasn't too hard. We spent four years in Germany. It was a lot of fun.

We had been in Germany for about three years when I began to think of her again. Horror of horrors! I had forgotten her address. You are never going to believe this. I went to bed one night thinking about her, about writing to her, visiting her. I dreamed I was in town, walking. I glanced at a street sign: Washington Street, South. I continued walking along the street; suddenly; there, just beyond that tree, was her house. I ran to the door and above it was a loaf of bread, as there had been many times in the past. Below the bread were three raised numbers, painted over. But I couldn't distinguish them, for I had forgotten my glasses. I began to feel them . . . 3 . . . 2 . . . I ah! yes! yes! yes! 321 South Washington Street. I wrote her a letter the next day. It was passionate, ridiculous, trite, horrid. She answered very coolly, with just a shadow of a hint of encouragement . . . I thought. I wrote another letter — passionate, ridiculous, trite, horrid. There was an ice cube in her next letter. Love really can be hell.

Since then I have gone back to see her three times, succeeding only once.

The first time, she talked to us for about half an hour. I was restrained, trying to impress her; it was a flop. About ten months later, I made a date with her on Hallowe'en. It was a moonlit night, the town was alive; she wasn't at her home. I wandered, hunting, but I couldn't find her. I spent some time down by the piers and docks overlooking the bay; I wandered along the riverbank, finally left. I still can't believe she wouldn't at least have left a note. But I looked, and she didn't. I went back one more time after that, but she wasn't home; away at a camp somewhere.

I think I'll write her a letter; I probably will. Sometime.

The Big Box House

. . . LOIS DICKSON

It was so nice and warm inside
the big box house—
prefabricated—
I couldn't think of leaving it
for any need.
But a draft crept under the windowsill
and I thought
how nice it was
and wanted more.

Out in the air
Over the ground
I run walk skip leap in the
glittering shattering shocking shimmering splintering
snow
a thousand tiny crystals
glassing
reds blues yellows oranges greens
in the sun
and I look about the
white world
transforming trees roads houses hills—all
to a fairy-tale land.
What glory!
What more could Heaven be?

Running back madly to
the big box house
to greet smiles with smiles,
to say what I feel,
I find in
the big box house
only darkness: blindness there.
I could not find
the faces I had known and left
I could see only
flashes of
reds blues yellows oranges greens
across the darkness,
and I tried to tell them—

but they could not see
the colors
across
the darkness there.

Perhaps it would have been
better
had I never breathed
that initial draft—
not knowing what I would have missed.
Or, having breathed it, left
the big box house
with shaded glasses on my face—
not sensing the first sting of the eye-piercing snow
nor the second worse sting of darkness only
once back in
the big box house,

Then, gradually my sight returned:
colored flashes disappeared
faces reappeared
and I tried to tell them now
in terms they'd understand:
"How nice it was
out there in the snow!"
But it was so nice and warm inside
the big box house
they couldn't think
of leaving it
for any need.

When No One's Around

. . . PAUL POLITIS

The walking feet walk up the street
the days are getting colder
on happy street, the people meet
and talk of all that's older
it's wonderful to know them all
we'll hate it when they're gone
we'll go and try to have a ball
and end up on the lawn . . .

Spark

. . . KAY MORNINGSTAR

I have a little spark
within my heart
that
upon a tender word
a soft touch
or a gentle kiss
will ignite
and become a bright passionate flame
that can only be extinguished
by your nearness.

To "Z"

. . . DAWN RUTLEDGE

A face and a temperament
I know only by black ink
etched on college stationery.
One letter and a postmark
from a town I have never seen—
that is all I have to go on.

But I care what happens to you—
blond, green-eyed image of a boy
I have never met.

Gentle and sensitive—
are you that?
Yes you say
And I agree
But the cold facade
of one who has a child
that will never be his
hides your heart.

Sentimental poet of the
 jet
 set
has anyone ever loved you?
Boy with a charm
who can do no wrong
but is never right—
I care.

Born Free: Part II

. . . JAMES HUMMER

free to cheat
free to lie
free to kill
free to die

he can marry his mother
and worship a god
so painfully built
out of clay and of sod

born free to beware
and to stare and to fear
to die in a second
or die in a year

bound to convention
by mortar and trowel—
cursed with invention
and evil intention
so black and so foul
it is too black to mention

he can murder his uncle
advised by a ghost—
a scene never mentioned
by emily post

born free to gag
and to spit and to choke
born free to be
the celestial joke

A Love Letter

. . . JAMES HUMMER

You are away
and I am alone with sad jazz on the phonograph
No single blithe obscenity
echoes in the corridor

I could be the only one alive upon this spinning joke
You could be dead; I would not know
The sun explode; I would not know
until I ceased to know
when eight minutes passed,
and I would be the last

You are away
but just in time and space
In not a week, I'll feel you speak
Our eyes will touch
A week's too much

to wait for paradise
I think of you and mostly hope
that you think now of me
Two little subjects, really,
small as eternity

You are away,
and no essay of wit or rhyme
can hurry space or compress time
So I will wait
and thank a fate
for what I'm waiting for
But still,
you are away

The Visitor

. . . DIANE KRALL

Anna was happier than usual today. Her best friend was coming to visit her. Soon, very soon, he would be opening the door and coming to her. Sometimes he brought her presents — the red ribbon in her hair, the tiny doll which she cuddled in her arms. She looked down at the doll and stroked its shiny black hair. It looked so real to her. Its eyes seemed to blink as she rocked gently back and forth.

Anna looked out the small window at her side into the garden with its high surrounding walls. The sunshine was so bright and warm — a pretty day for a visit from her friend.

Where was he? How impatient she grew after a while. Back and forth, back and forth she continued to rock the doll. Suddenly, she heard footsteps coming down the hall and then pause before the door. There was a faint knock and then the turn of the knob.

In stepped a young man dressed quite immaculately. He paused a moment before the open door, then quickly walked toward Anna. Kneeling down beside her chair he said, "And how's my favorite girl today?" All Anna could do was squeeze her doll tighter in her arms and giggle, completely infatuated by the young man.

They talked and laughed together for quite a while — until the sun just faintly shone in the window. Then he rose from his position, patted the doll's head, and walked to the door. There he turned around and looked once more at Anna — her grey hair caught up on her head by an old faded red ribbon. Her eyes, in a setting of wrinkles, glistened and seemed to stand out from the small pale face of an old woman. Her feeble bent fingers still clutched at the doll, and her almost useless limbs hung from the chair like those of a rag doll.

"Good-by, Dr. Randall," she called in a voice which was barely more than a whisper.

"Good-by, Anna," he answered, then turned and left the room which by now had grown quite dark.

Once again Anna turned to look out into the garden, this time leaning over against the rusted bars which separated her from the garden.

"It's such a pretty day," she sighed.

Last Syllable

. . . JUDITH BOHON

And then, just when she had finally managed to subdue the stubborn car and was beginning to feel that she might get there on time after all, the light at the intersection turned red. "Damn," she said, and hit the brake. Her car slowed to a stop.

She sat there, her impatient fingers tapping quick staccato on the steering wheel, her eyes darting nervously from side to side. Suddenly the car behind her honked once, imperiously; she looked up, startled, to see that the light was now green. She moved her foot from the brake at once, pressed it to the accelerator, and the car hopped forward.

Around her traffic crawled down the crowded street. She had no choice but to crawl along with it. Occasionally the long line stopped altogether and she had to sit there, waiting, until it began to move again. There was no chance to pass anyone.

Once a woman carrying an ugly chartreuse and coral shopping bag darted out in front of her and she had to slam on the brakes to keep from hitting her. Then her car stalled and, for a few horrible moments, she could not get it started again. Once more the car behind her blew its horn and other cars, behind it, followed its example. She was almost crying when her car finally began to move.

A little further down the street she saw what had been holding them up. Two cars, a small loden Volkswagen and a huge ruddy Cadillac, had collided. Now they stood face to face, surrounded by milling crowds and a number of policemen. Off to one side an ambulance, topped with a revolving flame-colored light, bathed in scarlet the white figures who climbed in and out of it.

One of the policemen was directing traffic. When she saw that he was waving her on with a flashlight he held in one hand, she inched her car forward, skirting the accident as much as she could. Once beyond him and the two wrecked cars, she speeded up, pressing the accelerator almost to the floor. Her car leaped forward; the car behind her, she noticed, did the same thing.

A few minutes later she was there. She parked quickly, then opened the door and climbed out, catching her green stockings as she did so. She felt them rip and swore once, briefly, then slammed the door and began to walk hurriedly down the street, her shoes clicking on the old brick sidewalk.

Ahead of her a small boy in a red muffler ran down the street. He was dragging behind him a discarded, week-old Christmas tree that dripped with cold aluminum icicles. She hesitated for a second, watching him and his tree. Then she began to move again toward the old house just in front of her; in a moment she was caught in the rays of the red light it held over her. Suddenly a man appeared, walked out of the street's shadows, and saw her. "So—," he said, "a change in our routine. This time you come out to meet me. What gives?" Quickly, without allowing her time to answer, he took her arm, led her through the first door and up the stairs to the other where he waited for a minute while she fumbled, opening it, then followed her through. The door closed behind them.

The Shiny Part of Town

. . . PAUL POLITIS

They come out of the stores
With packages in hand,
And give a nickel to the
Salvation Army Band.

They go in fancy restaurants
And pay high for low food,
And everyone walks chatting out
Seem in a happy mood.

They walk around out in the cold
Protected by fine furs,
And go home, take a bath, and wipe
on towels marked His and Hers.

The women who live in
The shiny part of town,
Where everybody's sad
And no one wears a frown.

Through A Window

. . . H. H. BUCHANAN

my horrible screen
squares off beauty into such
hunks of ugliness

The Story of Sam Austin

. . . J. MARSHALL BACHMAN

About a year ago, my band had a job at a dive in York called the Queens Hotel. It was on Queen Street, as you might suspect, a most unsavory neighborhood, in any event. Friday night, we played to the walls and the bartender. Saturday night, we arrived at nine o'clock as usual, expecting much the same sort of boredom, and much the same kind of "practice night." That's what we usually do in that situation: try out new songs, review old and unused ones, and fake a lot.

"We" were the Rogues, and there were five of us then, plus the underage organplayer's father, and the rhythm guitar player's fiancée, Edna, a businesslike, pretty blonde girl. We made quite a crew, and the night before, the seven of us had been responsible for most of the bar's profits. Saturday night, things looked just the same. We were there, the bartender was there, and two men were there. From the way they were acting, one could guess they had been there a while, and could probably outdrink the seven of us. We joked as usual as we set up our equipment. It's a time-consuming job and leaves wires, rubber bands, and cases everywhere. Then we sat down for a beer until the time when we were supposed to start. We were all in a pretty good humor that night. When we got up from the table to go on stage and start, one of the two men at the bar came to me with a request. That's not unusual, but most people wait until we get started.

The man was around thirty years old, had curly, wavy blond hair, blue eyes, and needed a shave. He was an agreeable-looking fellow and was trying not to act drunk. And he had a request. "Can you guys play 'Johnny B. Goode'?"

"Johnny B. Goode" is an old rock-and-roll song (say, mid-50's?), recorded by Chuck Berry, and I doubt if one band in fifty can play it. We play it.

When I told the man we could play it, he was delighted — "Play it right now, please?"

I told him, "First thing, right after our theme." We have a really sharp theme song; sometimes people ask us to "jam" on it for a while. We played the theme, and swung right into "Johnny B. Goode." We do it pretty well, and nice and long, about three-and-a-half to four minutes. It's always been one of my favorites, even though it wears me out to play it.

After we finished the song, this man came up to me and thanked me very politely for playing the song; I thanked him for the request. He really enjoyed it, I could see, because he grabbed his friend, the other man at the bar, and they danced around all over the floor. In fact, he was so grateful, he bought drinks for us all while we were on stage. Well, it looked like a dull night, so we drank our beers and cokes between songs.

Right away, this man asked us to play the song again. I said, "After a couple other songs, okay?" and he agreed and went back to the bar, where he leaned on his elbows, facing us and our table, looking at Edna from time to time. As we started to play a slow song, he came to me, and asked to dance with Edna. I couldn't help chuckling as I told the man to ask the rhythm guitar

player, Ron, on my left, if he could dance with her. After all, she was Ron's fiancée. So he asked Ron. Ron said, "'Ask her!'" so he walked to the table, and we could see his mouth move, and Edna shake her head. We couldn't hear a word, over our own noise. He was apparently very polite, although he wobbled a bit. We saw the organ player's father offer a chair to the stranger who accepted and sat down. The three of them, the father, Edna and the stranger, talked very animatedly until we played "Johnny B. Goode" again. Then the man bought us another round of drinks. We still had them when we stopped for our first break and carried our drinks to our table and sat down.

His name was Sam Austin, and he was a steeplejack. He was one helluva man. He was a fascinating fellow to listen to, and he told us many interesting things: his unbelievably high salary and insurance premiums, and his credos about steeplejacking and money. About steeplejacking: "They put 'em up, I figger I can paint 'em." About money: "I don't have no family, so I spend it. What else is it for?"

Sam spent a good deal of money on us; we played his song six times that night, and he bought us a round of drinks each time.

When we sat down during that first break, we found out Sam had asked Edna a second time if she would dance, and she refused. During the next "set," however, they did dance.

After the second "set" when we sat down, Edna had stars in her eyes, and Sam was very forcefully telling Ron that he had "an angel on earth." "Yessir, when I was dancin' with her, I thought she was hangin' on a thread from Heaven. Yeah, she's a earth-angel." And he was not putting it on. He wasn't sophisticated enough for that. He was a nice guy, trying not to talk too loud, or be too wobbly. He had a man-to-man talk with Ron, and when he found out they planned to be married, he was delighted, and insisted on an invitation so he could pay for the wedding! "She's a real earth-angel." Edna glowed.

We were all on a first-name basis now. About one o'clock in the morning, Sam decided he should go, so he and his friend left. We were on a break, and the two youngest boys in the band were outside getting some air as Sam drove off. They waved and hollered, "G'night, Sam!" The car stopped, reversed, and parked. Sam jumped out, reached in the back seat, and said, "I got a present for you guys."

Sam strolled back into the place, carrying the biggest pie pumpkin you'd ever want to see, and set it down in front of Edna. We had to wait until after the last set to hear about this pumpkin, so we played "Johnny B. Goode" again for Sam, and cut the set short a few minutes. As we drank the beers that Sam had waiting for us, we found out he had swiped it from a farm in Lancaster County.

The time came when we had to leave. It was quite late, and we had a long drive; at two thirty A.M. anything is a long drive. We told Sam we had to go, and he said he ought to be going, too. But he asked Ron if he could kiss Edna goodby. "Just on the cheek. Here, see? I mean . . . I wouldn't . . . you know . . . please?" Ron said it was okay for him, and Edna was still beaming from Sam's "earth-angel," and speechless over the pumpkin, so Sam kissed her. Then he roared, "By God, lemme kiss ya all!" So he went from one to the next, this rock-solid, beerbreather, bristle-faced man we didn't know, saying goodby to each of us, by name, with a warm embrace.

Notes

JAMES HUMMER

intro to art
or
instant culture in 36 easy lessons
colored slides swim on and off a screen,
mirrored in eighty-eight glazed eyes
the three musicians
picasso influenced others
rivera
salvador dali
hello, dali
suspension of memory
willing suspension of disbelief
rationality and world war two
ration cards
tarot cards
cross my palm with silver, pretty gentleman?
gentlemen
gentle men can kill you
just as fast as maniacs
shooting from a tower
she is as a tower of ivory,
a house of gold
ninety-nine and forty-four
one-hundredth's percent pure?
price fixed at thirty-five an ounce?
an ounce of flesh
a pound of flesh
ezra?
oh, my ducats! oh, my daughter!
my god, my god,
why have you forsaken me?
et tu, brute

The Reign of Early Spring

LOIS DICKSON

The rain of early spring is something like
Orchestral music. Drums of thunder roar
The coming of the **tinkling, brassy notes**
Of rain upon the tin-top points that strike
The cue for reeds to writhe beneath the score
Of saddened tune, while a single flute floats.
And suddenly the rush of majesty!
A thousand strings of straining, reigning rain.
They sweep across the stretch out there of plain
And flood—unseen because it's night, you see.
Rescinding softly, gently now, the song
Is almost over. Hush! A shy refrain
Lingers a melody that will remain
Beyond the waning, unseen night—and long.

Involvement

. . . JAMES HUMMER

I wake up,
yawn,
and greet the long-gone
dawn,
toasty warm and drowsy
in the center of my world.

But—

A couple interested in Peace decides to join the Corps,
But the husband gets a letter to fight in Johnson's war.
A girl in Micronesia will get no food today,
While an atheist in Paris is finishing his play.
A corporation president is cheating on his wife,
While a colored hood in Harlem is sharpening his knife.
A million junkies everywhere are longing for their dope,
While far away in Italy, a bishop greets the pope.

Meanwhile—

I, almost uncaring,
certainly unsharing,
harmless in my little room,
go gently back to sleep.

I am not in a giving vein today.

Emptiness

. . . PAUL POLITIS

One day,
Very soon,
It will all disappear.

It was always there.

It's just that—
During my early years
It didn't bother me.
I didn't notice it.

Slowly though,
I began to feel its presence.

At first it was just a new feeling.
Then it began to claw at me;
Tearing me apart;
My mind,
And my body.
I began to work against it.
Sometimes I hoped it would go away.
I planned,
And plotted,
And imagined
Against it.
A few times it really did go away.
But it always came back.

Soon it will go away again.
But this time will be different.
It won't come back—
ever.

Nightmare

. . . JAMES HUMMER

I really don't know why you should want to hear all this. I don't even see why I should have to tell you. After all, it's just a strange dream—all right, a nightmare, call it what you will. You still have no right to make me tell you. You're all doctors—you should be out healing someone or something, and I have tests to study for. If you insist, though, I guess I have no choice.

I dreamed that I was at my grandmother's house with my mother. I looked out the window and saw my grandmother get into a new blue Volkswagen which was parked in her yard. She started it, but it took her quite a while—longer than it should have. Then she drove off the lawn and so was out of sight for a moment. When she next came into view, she was inside a large grey Chrysler, one of those old ones which look like fastback panel trucks. I told my mother about this, about the two different cars, but she didn't seem to care much. She didn't pay any attention. She never does.

Then I woke up, or at least partly so. I almost started to cry, for my grandmother is dead, and the dream was so vivid it raised a host of once-pleasant memories twisted and made horrible by the black fact of her death.

I told my dream (all this is still a dream, you understand) to my roommate, a hulking athlete whom I detest. I'm to get another roommate next semester, but even that heavenly hope can do nothing to blot out the present reality of the faint odor of old gym socks which hangs over my room like an ancient malediction.

At any rate, my roommate started to laugh and said a few things which made me very angry. I jumped up and pushed him with all my strength against the cinderblock wall. I must have caught him off guard, for he is much stronger than I am, a fact which he takes endless delight in proving. I kept hitting the back of his skull against the wall, and I must have lost consciousness (in my dream, you see—I insist I was asleep the whole time) because the sound his head made against the wall became less and less distinct.

The next thing I knew was that I was lying on the floor. I felt exactly as if I had been drinking too much — I knew what I wanted to do, and I knew that I had to do it, but yet I just didn't care. Somehow I had to get to my feet and clear my head. I had to study, and in reality I really do. I had let my grades slide lately and if I didn't get all A's I might lose my scholarship. Yes, I have a scholarship, a very good one in fact. So you see, I **had** to become clear-headed.

I made my way down to the shower somehow, thinking that a cold shower would do me some good. It didn't though, and when I stepped out of the shower stall, I seemed to be in a strange room. It was very long and there were several feet of dirty water on the floor with black undefined shapes floating — or swimming — through it. I had to get through all of that in order to reach the door. I couldn't see very well, everything looked dim, but I made it across the room. I fainted just as I reached the door.

When I came to — at least, I think I came to — I was lying on the floor looking down through layers and layers of black shapes which were twisting listlessly, without meaning. It was like a Jackson Pollock painting come to life. I tried to shout for my roommate — I knew I was asleep and I thought maybe if he heard me cry out in my sleep he would wake me up. Eventually some one came by. "Out drinking again, huh?" he said. I said that I was not. He tried to help me to my room, but he wasn't supposed to. No one could be in my room but me.

Then I was back in the hall of the house where my girl lives. I was going to eat breakfast with her parents. They started to make jokes about us and ask when we would be married. In the dream, they didn't know, and they still don't know, that I might really have to marry her pretty soon. I don't know. Anyway, they asked me what time it was. I told them, and realized that I had to be in class in five minutes to take a test. I ran out of the house and I was on campus running. I had to make that class — if I missed that test I couldn't possibly get an A in the course. Then I couldn't run. I couldn't even move. Still, I managed to get up to the classroom building. There was barbed wire all around it, and some Army trucks and tanks parked outside. Then I was back in my dorm. There were several old wooden boxes bound up with brass lying in the corridor. One of them was a coffin. I was lying in the corridor, too. I couldn't move. There were some nurses and a doctor there, too. What do you mean, you know? This is my dream and it's not over yet. One of the nurses was an old girl of mine who really is a student nurse. She wanted to marry me. Here, though, she was talking about me to the other nurse. "Just look at him, he's completely helpless. He can't move around or see or hear us. I always hated him. He was a phony. He thought he was an intellectual, a poet. He was a phony" Then she started to laugh and I woke up.

At least, I think I did. You see, everything is so confusing. I looked at my roommate. He was lying on the floor. There was a lot of blood all around. I must have dreamed that, too, because the scene changed and there were a lot of people and the scene changed again. Maybe I'm still dreaming. I don't know, and I don't really care. Why can't you let me alone? No one ever lets me alone.

The Moon and a Little Bit More

. . . P. B. FRANK

Imagine, if you will, a boy and girl lying together on a blanket just as a red sun is setting. The moon is high and bright in the west, still trying to outshine the sun.

"I don't like the idea of men going to the moon," says the girl whose name, shall we say, is Carol. "I don't like the idea of man disturbing the surface of a moon that has lain empty and barren for millions of years. It destroys the mystique; it removes the wonder."

"Ah!" says the boy in answer. Shall we call him—no; rather let him remain nameless. He slips his hand into hers. "Ah," he says again, this time a little softer. "You have not gone far enough, Carol. For the last half a million years man has stared up at the moon as it rode across the back of the sky. He has wondered; he has been mystified. Now, after so long a wait, after so long a dream, he is finally on the precipice; he is about to discover."

"That may be," says Carol. "But what is he about to discover? There is no life on the moon."

"That is indeed what man has told himself. That is what he believes to be the case. But if you will think back, you will remember that in grammar school you were taught that the moon has no atmosphere. Now man has discovered there is an atmosphere, however tenuous it may be. Who knows? Perhaps there is a rudimentary form of life in that atmosphere. Or perhaps there is life on the inside of the moon where there may still be heat. It sounds preposterous, but the moon might be a way-station for the flying saucers people claim to be seeing."

"I find that difficult to believe," says Carol, turning her head toward him. "But I suppose it is a possibility."

"Yes. It is." He props himself up on his elbow, considering whether he might kiss her. But it seems to be the wrong time.

"It costs so much, anyhow," she says, turning her head back to the moon when he did not kiss her as she expected him to. "Couldn't man spend his money doing things here on the earth?"

"Yes; he could. Indirectly, he does. Did you see the picture of the crippled child in last week's Sunday paper? He was in a machine that enabled him to walk. That was a by-product of an attempt to develop some type of mobile transport for use on the moon's surface. It seems very small, I know, for the amount of money spent in space research and exploration. But every little bit helps. And that was just an isolated case; there are many more such applications of knowledge resulting from the basic research necessary for the space program. But I don't suppose that really satisfies you, does it?"

"Partially. If I thought there were some economic good, something material to be gained, the spending of all that money wouldn't bother me as much as it does." She turned her head back to him, brushing a lock of hair from her eyes.

"I think I can help you there. It has been suggested that there are minerals

on the moon which might be transported back to earth. But that would be highly impractical, for the cost of the transportation would probably be more than the value of the minerals. A more practical suggestion, and one which seems feasible, is to use the moon as a huge dynamo. When coils of wire are moved through a magnetic field, an electric field, an electric current is generated. Well, there is a magnetic field around the earth. Suppose that one were to wrap wire about the moon (a difficult feat, I will admit, but not impossible); if this were done, an incredible amount of energy would be continuously generated in the wire and could be tapped on the surface of the moon. This energy could be transmitted back to the earth, used on the moon for various purposes, or used to propel spaceships deeper into the solar system. The methods by which all this could be accomplished are known at the present time. It is simply a matter of doing it. Think of it! Millions of kilowatt-hours of free energy once the initial expenditure had been made—energy available from now until the end of time.

"There is yet another reason. It is not quite so tangible, not so concrete, but I think it even more important. Gibbon has shown us (and his evidence and logic are not easily refuted) that when a society lacks goals, when it becomes lazy and slothful and begins to exist only for its own end, it starts to decay, to fall. The opposite of this can be seen in the settling of the American West. When a frontier is to be conquered, man becomes aggressive, progressive; he grows. I cannot help but think that this was not at least part of the reason for Kennedy's slogan, "The New Frontier." So you see that the moon, the outer reaches of space may keep man alive and vital." He has spoken volubly, easily. He ends with a wide gesture that encompasses the brilliant moon, the silvery stars, and the wide, dark sky.

"But we can't even control the earth yet. We can't control ourselves; we understand ourselves so little. How can we expect to reach and grasp the universe?"

"Ah, yes," he says with a smile. "That is true; and that is the wonderful part of being human."

Imagine the conversation stops here, for our young man thinks the moment has come for a kiss. He bends his head as Carol smiles, and their lips touch gently, fleetingly. In that kiss is the beginning of understanding, the dawn of love. And here, I think, we may cease imagining and be content.

Dementia Scholastica

. . . JAMES HUMMER

Walls are closing in on me,
walls that no one else can see,
walls of parceled time
and stolen sleep.

The walls have disappeared.

Voices fill the throbbing void
as facts like fabled furies
come to plague my mind
and make of me a demi-dante
without a guiding sage.

The facts are closing ranks—
rows of facts in shining steel,
facts that I must master—
glowing vital facts.

In 1869,
Professor Mutztafutkin,
Dean Emeritus of Pure and Applied Hubris
applied the deathless principle
of weltschmerz
without schmaltz . . .

hail nada, full of nada

and so to bed

I dream I am Raskolnikov
with a rubber axe

entitled "2"

. . . CATHERINE BELSAK

In my own world
I go to dream
Of far away and far-off things

of sandbox hills
and valley kings

In my own world
I go to dream.

I see the happy faces there
who laugh and breathe the crystal air

They beckon to me to stay, and still
I go to dream, and someday, will.

Nunundah

. . . LAURA J. ANDERSON

What narrow stream winds
through this lonely valley but
a branch of the sea?

To . . .

. . . LINDA GUNNETT

Do not await me in the quiet night
 When moonbeams slant upon the gentle waves
 And oceans wash the salty, dripping caves
 Along the shore, when weeping stars lie bright
 And ev'ning hills are whispering in the light
 That spanned the day and echoes from the graves
 Within the earth, and mystery engraves
 The face you would behold upon your sight.

But I will wait you in the early morn,
 And I will long to lean upon your breast,
 For when the weary light of morn has borne
 The weary night away, I'll love you lest
 The darkness was too long and fears adorn,
 And then together shall we two find rest.

A Taste of . . .

. . . HONEY SISKI

I have dreamed many years
 and seen
 tears
 in a smile
 felt arms so strongly
 yet gently
 wrapped about my soul
 as if I were fragile
 and would shatter to
 nothingness
 or airy and would fade
 into the mist of a
 too-soon-in-coming morning
 I have dreamed many years
 to see that too-sad-smile
 and
 feel those too-loving-arms
 and found them only
 in a face too beautiful for the light of the world

Across the Meadow

. . . H. H. BUCHANAN

the solitary scarlet scarf
 whips upon the barbed and rusted fence
 and saddens me

Address to a Baby

. . . PAUL POLITIS

Friday morning; 6:00 A. M.

Come on, Wake up, baby.

Today, you and I are going to see the world; I will show you.

Well, babies aren't used to being awakened against their will; at least this one wasn't, but I finally managed to open his eyes. I fed him a jar of that Gerber's stuff, put another jar of it in my pocket, picked him up, and we headed for central city, public square. The morning sky was a bright gray when we arrived at the center of the square, for the sun was just beginning to rise. Except for the dishwasher in the all-night restaurant, who was standing at the bus stop, and a few strap produce trucks from the wholesale section, the streets were deserted. The guys who spend their nights on the benches were awakening to the sunrise, and some of them gave us strange looks. At about eight, Louie came over with the bag of bread that Eddie, the dishwasher, saves for him every day. Louie's the old Greek man who always feeds the pigeons on the square. Louie had been kinda' worried recently 'cause the city was trying to get rid of the pigeons.

Pretty soon the stores will be opening up. That big department store over there—the one with the new front on it—is having a grand re-opening sale, so all the people are pushing and shoving, trying to get nearer to the door. The people are all so competitive, all trying to be first into the store with the new front. They don't realize that it's only a front. Inside it's the same old store. But there's a lot of things like that in this world.

The people who control things are starting to arrive. First come the Chryslers, driven by the bankers and businessmen; then the Fords and Corvairs. Yes, baby, these are the people who get things started every day. In just a while thousands of people and cars will be here, and the city will be bubbling all over. You don't believe me? Well, you wait, you'll see.

The playground, which takes up about one-fourth of the square, should be opening soon. It's directed by the city parks department, and any kid can get in, as long as he's brought there by an adult. Some kids grow up thinking that's the worst thing about this world. It seems they always have to be accompanied by an adult. Ya' see, not every kid has an extra adult to take him around all the time. Some kids had two adults, but either they didn't get along, and one of them left; or else one of them died. I guess they're better off than some kids, though. Some kids never had two adults. Then there are kids who have two adults, but they both have to work. I guess all that is kind of hard for you to understand, isn't it.

Things'll be getting busy in a little while. The first full busloads of people from outlying areas are starting to arrive, and the streets are getting crammed with cars. Everyone's looking for a place to park their car, and there are big lines in front of all the four-story parking garages. All those people; waiting for the big opportunity to park their car for 15c an hour.

Yes, baby, this day is really moving along. It's almost noon, now. All those thousands of people out there are starting to line up at the restaurants and snack bars. I don't know why everyone always eats at noon. I know that they're not all hungry. Some people are never hungry, and some people are always hungry, yet they all eat at noon.

It's like they're on some sort of unofficial schedule or something. They can't enjoy their food, 'cause there's always somebody waiting for their place, and you can't enjoy food when you have to eat so fast.

The streets are really teeming with people. All the really late sleepers are up, all the people who waited to eat lunch at home have eaten, and now, they're all up town. That furniture store over there is extra busy today, because they're having their annual "going out of business" sale. Well, it's time that you eat something again, I guess. Lucky thing I remembered to bring a spoon. Let's see if I can get the lid off this jar. There. There ya' go boy. Eat it up. Ahh, sloppy. Watch out now. You're getting it all over. Boy, I wish you'd grow into eating something that isn't quite as messy. What a guy.

Pretty soon the busiest two hours of the day will begin. That's when the kids get out of high school, and all the girls come over to town, trying to find the beautiful skirt that their best friend had on in school today. Or they heard that "Boot And The Shoes" have a new album out, and they want to stop in town and see it. They probably won't buy it today, though, because they don't have the money with them. Kids don't carry much money with them to school, because there's too much chance of it getting stolen. That's the way it is these days; seems you can't trust anybody.

See, I told you they'd be here. The nearest school is only a block away, and the kids from there are here already. They always come, and the ones from the school down at the southern end of town and from the school on the hill, are here too. Yes, the town is really flooded now. People are starting to go home though, because the stores close at five-thirty. The cars are lined for blocks up and down Main Street, and the same problem exists over on Market Street and on the bridge going on to River Street. Nobody in their right mind ever takes their car into this area between 4 and 6 on week nights.

Nobody can move, yet everyone's blowing their horns, and revving their engines, and yelling out of their windows. Every night this happens. Imagine that! Every night.

Here comes Louie out of the restaurant over there. He's got another bag, and he's coming over to feed the pigeons again. That Louie's really a great guy. He not only likes pigeons, but he likes all living things — even people; all people. Everybody! Let me tell you, that's really unusual; when you meet a person like that, be his friend, because **he** is your friend.

It's dark now. The girls are taking over the benches on the square again. They come up here almost every night and sit on the benches, sometimes even when it's cold, hoping that some guys will stop and take them for a ride. Some hope it'll be guys they know; others don't care; they're beyond that point. I guess they don't have anywhere else to go, or anything else to do, so they come up here and hope something will happen. The guys always come up and drive around and around the square, blowing their horns at the girls. I've seen guys drive around the square dozens of times. That's the way it is these days;

everyone's going around in circles.

Well, it's 11 o'clock now, and the girls are all gone. They've all either been picked up and whisked off into the night, or they have given up. The last few couples are coming out of the movie theater, and the old guys are returning to the empty benches. It's a quiet night. The night air provides a soothing contrast to the day it follows.

Yes, it's a good night for sleep. You see all those old guys on the benches? They're all sleeping. There's Louie over there; he's sleeping. You know; your mother's sleeping now too. That's why she's not with us right now. She's sleeping too.

Hey. You don't even hear me, do you. You're sleeping. Okay, I'll take you home. I shouldn't have brought you down here today, but I guess I wanted somebody to talk to. Okay, boy, we're on our way home.

Here comes a pigeon. Hi, pigeon.

Universal Absolute

. . . LOIS DICKSON

A room holds two clocks ticking
out of time. Sometimes
one tick is for both the clocks.

To a Sister

. . . JUDITH BOHON

Because I can't believe in Right and Wrong—
though I will not deny they may exist—
all that remains to ask is are you strong
enough to hear bold accusations hissed
at you, and laugh, and not believe them true.
Can you meet knowing stares upon the street
with lifted eyes and, never doubting you
know more than they, walk on on steady feet?
And have you stamina to stand the pain
men will inflict, should you do what you say
that you shall do, and then, to yet maintain
you would not have things any other way?
If so, I envy you; if not, poor child!
Your life will be as dull as it is mild.

Sonority

. . . H. H. BUCHANAN

the silence of night
as the roar of working late
quietly howls on.

Banshee

. . . JAMES HUMMER

The last tick of the tock was duly performed, several trillions of electrons streamed through several hundred feet of copper wire to activate several solenoids; the bell rang. Class is over as a collective sigh rises like mist from a swamp.

Books tucked manfully under one arm leaving the room to enter a hall, exit the hall, and down the stairs and sevarious right and left foot ninety degree turns later to be outside the building. Fingers in all their thin-skinned gaunt-ness after few minutes exposure to the merciless elements curl nimbly numbly over books, and appendage to which fingers belong ambles (but purposefully — always purposefully — sic semper fidelis) to warmy ans sustenance of prosaic dining hall and food.

Venerable desert boots defile and in turn are defiled by voluptuous mud underfoot. Old boots, but how to get new? Money, the great levelaller and equalizer, glorious clams instantly invertable to ignoble goodies of any sort the sickened mind can conjure up. A job such as last summer perchance. Indeed an opportunity for one to start at the bottom and after diligent application of the mind to rise to the middle or even hail nada full of nada to the upper middle of the bottom. Princely wages indeed of one and one-quarter clams per hour, plus all one can steal, lift, boost, or otherwise manage to procure (procure? small businessman perhaps with small herd of cattle girls. Herd of cattle? Sure I've herd of cattle). Thwarehouse is dirty and hot likewise the men who toil and in the sweat of their several brows earn their daily bred, married or otherwise it's all the same, so I have herd from her. Else back to the graveyard shift of ye olde truck stop. Wash those dishes, thrust the rubber hands into the steaming green-blue water and watch the food dissolve even while it be on the ancient chinaware. Rubber hands in gloves of thin rubber, thin-skinned but without gloves doomed to dissolve like a fragment of blueberry pie in the relentless detergent. Stand tall and proud and occasionally toss the leonine mane out of the eyes and remember the mane. And then she came in and no one else was there anymore even though no one left. The beginning, or the end, alpha or omega, never mind never mind. Proudly then wear the modern shining armor embodied in the hotten sweatshirt of ones deer old alma mater, but it really doesn't mater. Stand proudly as the imperial armpit of the imperial washer of plates exudes yet another trickle of sweat to crawl down the torso nakedly.

The dining hall is nearly bereft of humanity and huwomaniy. A wet cold tray and warm wet food consumed with no great relish as the schoolboy washers of dish cheerfully throw the unsuspecting porcelain into its daily watery hell. I should not scorn them, I too have been a washer of dishes. But then are we all not brothers and sisters under the skin? Beauty is only skin deep and also in the eye of the beholder. Is it my fault indeed if so many on this madly spinning orb have such thick skin. You're too thin-skinned, thats what she said. I did not care for her propensity to rub backs not mine or to regard the sacred school ring as jewelry for decoration alone. Thin skin. Thinskinnd and helter-

skelter, the nitpickers recited mumbo-jumbo and studied the beri-beri culture in the agar agar. There is nothing like a gar, nothing with a scar. To kiss a scar (ah, what ecstasy! Coleman would exult!) is the ultimate acceptance of rejection—then again, maybe not, and maybe no is in turn the greatest objection ever voiced by mind of man. Thin skin, indeed. Damn her, sensitivity is not not thin skin. (Greenwich village papers, please copy).

One must perforce perceive taut truth, but truth cannot be taught. One small truth is that there are always teeth to brush after the orgies over and after the balls are threw. There is always the price to pay, but why should I be held responsible if my price were not so negotiable as those others. She's not that attractive, really. Her fingers and toes are too long and she always looks so out of proportion when she is nude, wooed, renewed but if so, digital deformities notwithstanding, why is it that the muscles in the back of my legs tighten so when I see her and why does my heart feel like its trying to get out of my chest to see her for itself? Heart disease, the opposite of ease. She's my opposite but never mind, I have a paper to write and miles to go before I sleep. Well, would you believe kilometers?

Typewriter duly unveiled. How many pieces of paper have been abused under the pounding metal keys since Twain first submitted a typed manuscript? Ottmar Mergenthaler would indeed be proud, but what's me to Mergenthaler or he to Hecuba, indeed? Hamlet was thin-skinned, too, country matters or no country matters. Damn groundlings anyway as the cue-key sticks and other keys pile up blindly behind it. Knuckles resound off the door, once twice thrice.

—Will you be through typing soon, I'm trying to study?

—I suppose it could be arranged, but don't hold your breath.

—Thanks lodes.

The typetempo slows, hesitypes once, and finishes in a grand flourish of ambiguities and half-truths. Thanks whatever gods that be that that quelque no longer shows. My head is bloody but unbowed but still bloody and I made the angel I was wrestling cry uncle but you probably couldn't hear it over my cries of pain. Suddenly a headache comes fresh from painland—the mainland of painland, and holy trepan, bathmat, what a headache.

A lovely expedient would be the ingestion (gestation? don't think about it) of several grains of salicylamide salicyanide or to the great unwashed masses, aspirin. Two five-grain tablets swilled down with liquid tepidness. So much for today's headhurt, but what of tomorrow? Two more and still two more and so on until one headache a day for the next month or so has been prematurely vanquished. The swirling flakes of drug in the glass look like a small snowstorm. Where are the Snowdens of yesteryear?

Ly down with some light reading (very light as the head is starting to feel rather odd and the odds are good indeed). Skin is starting to feel strange, too, as if I were wearing almost ineffable gloves. Maybe my skin is thin, but at least I won't have flies in my eyes. At least I'll be rid of her, and everything else. Let her marry him, god rot his soul. May they be a little more than kin and less than kind. Let her sing of her kin and remember a tower but she is not as a tower of ivory, not by a long shot. Let her remember, for I no longer have need of such mental baggage. May she remember the baseness of a basement and the ripping pain, feigned I found, and the tortured eyes and the

visitation

. . . RONALD A. PEIFFER

I walked into a church and sat
 thinking all
 alone
 an organ softly played a
 righteous melody
 my thoughts were
 wandering far away in things
 that troubled me

I saw the altar sparkling brightly
 in the
 candlelight
 my random glances caught the
 shadow

of Christ upon
 of the Christ upon
 a mahogany cross
 I surveyed the plaster figure
 crown to foot
 a humble crown
 a quiet anguish
 upon his face
 his eyes were closed and he was
 dying

staring longer into space
 my thoughts became
 a kaleidoscope
 of swirling changing thoughts
 somewhere in the crevices
 of my dreaming mind
 I saw his pallid eyelids
 suddenly transformed
 into open painful staring orbs

horrified I looked away
 then back again and saw them still
 looking down on me as if to say
 take me down
 from this
 mahogany cross

my God my God what can I do
take me down

from this
mahogany cross
in helpless awe I leaped
over the glistening altar rail
I tried to pull the

brittle body
from the wooden cross but could
not budge the pleading savior

He
was hanging silently so all

alone
without
but could
not come down
nor ever would

my God I'm sorry
but I am only
a mortal man
I cannot take you down
yes you can
I cannot Lord
yes no
I turned my back and
walked away

then turned to see
the savior on
the mahogany cross
his eyes were closed and he was
dying

I cannot

Affaire de Coeur

. . . NANCY FREDERIKSEN

Curtains of opaque rain mute the brilliance of the blinking vacancy sign
Inside four rented walls two forms unite in a delicious throng of sensations
Expectation becomes impatience
Impatience becomes desperation
Desperation . . . mount

scale

scramble

ascend

To the culmination.

Half-suffocated with triumph we separate—

Eyes full of wondering interest.

It was a sheer exuberant instinctive unreasoning careless joy

And only our sighs penetrate the pervasive silence

Which wraps us in a mantle of content.

Where No One Fell

. . . DEAN R. KOONTZ

Feel the wind of Cherry Mountain
Taste the sugar of Chocolate Sea
Hear the music of Harmony Forest
See the girl—so pretty is she

Tumble down hills of sweet, green grasses
with the cutest and softest of lasses

Run through the fields of golden flowers
Leap across streams of melon juice
marvel at the giant diamond towers
in the land of pure, perpetual truce

Swim in the pools of blue-white pearls
with the loveliest of lovely girls

Lie in the shade of a gingerbread tree
Hold her close and hold her well
Enjoy a land where no one fell

Blooded

LARRY STANEVICH

My father knew about this. And so did Jeremiah. They both had experienced it and now it was my turn. You didn't learn this. You weren't taught this. It didn't come to you in a blindingly dramatic flash. It was passed on from father to son, from old to young. You absorbed it slowly through the senses until it became instinctive and it really wasn't yours until you first drew blood.

In the beginning I got up and helped them pack their lunches while it was still dark and cold and I watched them as they went off, their heads in a black, ethereal fog. After a few years I was allowed to oil the guns and clean and prepare the game for the stew or storage in the cellar while the men sat around the fire-place upstairs and drank to warm themselves. Through the creaking wooden floor above I could faintly hear them speak of the day's events and events of days in years past and things their fathers had told them.

Later, when I had finished oiling and rubbing down the guns, I sat in the kitchen with my mother with a closed door between us and the men and watched her prepare the stew. Jeremiah called it Brunswick stew and it was he who supervised the making of the stew though he never made it himself. Flesh from domesticated animals was not allowed to be used in the stew. To vegetables and potatoes were added the sanctioned game meats — rabbit, turkey, grouse, squirrel, venison, pheasant — and they simmered long in beef stock with pepper corns and salt. Later in the evening, when the men's appetites were whetted by the long day of walking and the drinking around the fire, they would partake of the stew with black bread and ale. Only then could I have a chance to clearly hear them speak of their hunting. But their windburnt faces didn't speak of it then. After the meal they would smoke and drink again at the fire and I would grasp dangling phrases of their conversation from my bed.

Years later they let me walk with them in the fields and woods during the hunt but I carried no weapon until I was ten and then it was an old and heavy one. It was empty and I carried it just to get the feel of it. It was then that I learned the way the wind hugs a valley and how to follow a spoor trail and how to lead a target in high winds. I learned what a hog-back ridge was and how the birds stick to the ground in wet weather. I learned the habits of game, how in the beginning of the season the birds go out close to you and then near the end go out wild, far ahead. I saw a squirrel, shot from his tree, fall in a ball on his back in his final bed of dead leaves, blank eyes questioning, mouth quivering, tail jerking, feet curled in. I saw birds stopped in the air, haltingly bucking a strong head-wind and I listened as a small stand of silver spruce spoke the whispers of the winds. I heard the rattle of the dry corn stalks and saw a pheasant explode in the air, saw his thin, delicate neck go limp, feathers dead and body broken and bloodless before the roar of the gun reached my ears. And I woke the still sleeping, mist-blanketed clover in the early light of day and picked burrs from my jacket at noon while we ate, hoping then that later, in retrospect, it would not be any less mystical than it seemed at the mom-

ent. Jeremiah told me anyone could see and hear these things as I did, but if they weren't absorbed into the blood and instincts, into the crux of the soul, they were just learned and were of no value.

When my father thought me ready he gave me a gun of my own, a new gun that had been chosen to fit me, to feel good against my shoulder. It was in a red velvet-lined walnut case which locked and had recesses to hold the three parts of the gun and a cleaning rod and swatches and oil that smelled like black bananas. My first day in the field with the gun loaded I shot a pigeon for practice and my father, speaking anger from deep in his eyes, made me take the bird to the farmer on whose land we were hunting and apologize to him. My father seldom explained more than once. If I didn't learn from that solitary explanation, his wrathful silence made me quiver in anxiety to please him. Jeremiah often then would take me aside and carefully put me through my paces until I learned whatever my father didn't have the patience to teach me. Jeremiah instilled in me a pride of my heritage as a hunter, a heritage of disciplined skill tempered by patience in waiting for this day.

After lunch we walked the fields and fence rows again and as we came to the end of a corn field where the rows thinned out and the red, barren earth showed through, I flushed a pheasant and shot, and the brilliantly rainbow-bow bird, still alive, fell to the cold earth. When I reached him he was churning and thrashing about, spurts of blood from his agonized, raw neck spotting my clothing. I had seen my father snap the neck of a bird to kill him and I clutched the bird's voiceless head in my hand and felt his eyes and skull against the palm of my clenched fist and I snapped his neck to kill him and his body tore free and he was still flailing the air while I held his head and bloody neck in my hand.

My eyes wouldn't stay dry in the face of the cold wind and my father was angered then, and later he had the look of a victim of a broken trust as on the way home the intensity of my withdrawal gave away the fact that my gun case, now locked, probably would never be opened again.

Carousel

. . . JUDITH BOHON

Love the city.
 Love its nights
 and lights
 that twink,
 slink
 up
 and
 down
 up
 and
 down
 and
 blink,
 and its people.
 Love the sights
 and, so, the city.

Flash!

. . . LOIS DICKSON

Flash!
 Serpents' tongues
 light up the darkened sky
 above the solitary hill—
 Photo negative
 black is white
 white, black—
 Camera snaps: tongues withdraw.
 It is finished.

Sonnet for a Sunday Sermon

. . . JEFFREY WALKER

Beneath is spread like a waveless green sea
A peopled labyrinth of high city walls.
I walk down to the darkened streets and see
nothing but loneliness. I call and pause
for someone to answer my cry divine;
hither the Poet comes. His eyes behold,
through their own wan light, the reflected lines
of my thin face, distinct in the dark cold
of that still fountain; as the human heart,
gazing in dreams over the gloomy grave
sees its own treachery. He says, "thou art
but undulating wood and silent slave."

The winged Poet, standing 'neath the moon,
gave to me wisdom for the words of noon.

