Contrast
The Creative Magazine of Middle Tennessee State University

This is Collage! Enjoy!

Cyndie Wright

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Editor

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COLLAGE

The Creative Magazine of Middle Tennessee State University

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A Fistful of Apples

by Duke

PART I

"Surface noise," muttered the Major. Then he called together his most trusted Captains and had the men go out and investigate the matter.

"Surface noise," echoed the assemblage of Captains as they put on their silver suits.

"What the hell could it be?" mumbled Jenkins, the oldest of all the Captains. He stepped out of the hatch. It was Thursday, he remembered. The sun and the power satellite were beginning to eclipse.

Jenkins turned on his walkie-talkie and told Turk to load the radar gun. "We might need it." Click. They started marching with Jenkins at the head.

Suddenly, Adams broke away and ran at lightning speed to everybody's left. He had spotted a foreign box. The others soon caught up and surrounded the object.

"It's a damn communicator," yelled Jenkins into his walkie-talkie. "Nothing to be worried about."

"What shall we do with it?" stammered Adams.

"Take it back to the base and disconnect its memory."

And so they did that and so ends Part I of this tale.

PART II
YEAH, WE'RE READING B.B. LEWIS POEMS

It was Thursday. Everybody knew it. Jenkins was beginning to become aware of his hunger. Nonetheless, he was reading a book in his bunk.

"Listen to this," announced Jenkins in a very Captain-like voice. "49-16-62!" There was a pause. "Now, doesn't that send chills down your spine?"

"Are you reading another B.B. Lewis book?" asked Turk while rising from the arm chair and gliding his person over to the book shelf.

"Yeah, it's his fourth book entitled, *Poetry in Numbers*."

"I think his seventh book—yeah, here it is, *Poetic Numbers*, is by far, his best. Listen to this," and then leafing to page thirty-seven, he read a passage: "19-306-7."

Just that very second Adams and Edmonson entered the room. "The Major just received the new B.B. Lewis book, his sixteenth," boasted Adams as he waved the book in Turk's face. "His best by far. Listen to the great title, *Poems ⅔ 1*. What a mind." Just about then (there could have been a slight pause, but no one noticed) Edmonson grabbed the book and turned to page sixty-one: "99-7-1."

"Ooooooooooh," moaned Jenkins as he closed his eyes.

"There's more. 77-36-77."

"Great! Great! Great!" shouted Turk. "No one, but no one is more of an artist than B.B. Lewis."

"Aye aye," agreed Adams earnestly.

Just then (then and there at that exact point in time and space) a buzzer sounded, signaling everyone to be quiet for the daily announcements. The speaker box above the door cackled and then everyone heard someone blow into the microphone.

"Phoo. Listen up crew. It's time for chow. Elliot's got a good one cooked up, boiled cotton candy basted in oatmeal and cheese and to drink—banana spiked sno-cones. But before we head to the dining room, I'd like to read one of my favorite B.B. Lewis poems." The Major cleared his throat. "16-16-16."

"Boy," sighed Turk. "That really makes me feel like eating."

"Yeah," agreed the others as they made their way to the dining room.

PART III
NO JELLY

Jenkins, Turk, and Adams were all sitting around the game room shooting the casual bull.

"Do you remember old 'Hucklebuck' Reynolds?"

"Yeah, yeah, what a joker."

"I remember the day he was out on the surface goofing around."

"Didn't he have some balls or something?"

"Two yellow balls about the size of computer discs. He said the balls were something salvaged from the Old Orb. He was tossing the balls up into the atmosphere. Damn, it was funny to watch him."

"I never understood why he wanted to throw those balls around."

"Neither did I."

"The Major sure didn't go for that tomfoolery."

"Yeah, that's why he's working on Satellite 4."

No sooner were these words spoken than the sirens sounded and the emergency lights flashed signaling all persons except the Major and Elliot to report for duty.

"Must be the Food-Ship," stated Adams somewhat dryly. Jenkins, Turk, and Adams thought about staying in the game room and delaying the necessary work that comes with unloading the Food-Ship. But just then the speaker clicked and the Major told the men to 'hop-to-it.'

"I wonder what kind of jelly they sent us this time," muttered Jenkins because he was a fond lover of jelly with Jelly No. 79 being his favorite. Adams didn't care for jelly; neither did Turk, Edmonson, Elliot, nor the Major. So it was very unlikely that there would be any jelly at all.

It was no surprise when all the cargo was unloaded that there was, indeed, no jelly.

QUESTIONS TO PONDER:

1. What parallels can you draw between the yellow balls and no jelly?

2. Why do you suppose the men wanted to delay the unloading when they knew all along that the cargo was unlikely to contain jelly?

3. Have you ever dreamed about having no jelly? Yellow balls? Unloading a Food-Ship? or 'Hopping-to-it'?

4. Sit down and think about all the times in your life that you had no jelly. Do you think that you are a better person because you had no jelly? Why? Why not?

Write a short paragraph about any interesting experience you have had with jelly or with no jelly and address them to Duke c/o *Collage*, Box 61, Campus Mail. Duke will make special arrangements to pick these paragraphs up because Duke is very interested in reading them.

Teatime in Cologne

Across the palisade people
Scatter from the rain
While I, sipping tea, imagine
Fires along the Seine.

Sagan and I chat
Mostly about me.
I dream she is writing a book
And I am having tea.

Frozen where I left it
I think--this afternoon
Le Monde on the bureau
And ashes on my spoon.

Yet, despite the flames
My tea has grown cold
And the talk once possessed of life
Likewise has become old.

"My avocation now," I said
"Is to sit and stare
At places where buildings burn
And at those who burn there."

All the while, in another room
Shadows painted on the shade
Faces, my dreams told me
The flames had made.

Joseph O. Stinson

A Road

My dear friend,
I've something to share with you.
So please listen to me
and don't build a wall,
shutting me up and shutting me out.

Please listen to me,
I know you don't want to hear me.
But life is too short.
As the sands slip through,
in a time too brief.

My message is simply this:
Put away your flighted fancies
and gems made of glass.
Settle for one purpose and
decide which road your life will travel.
Then your life will have
meaning,...
reason,...
and.....
me.

Ellen Beveridge

Bound Afield

The statue felt her pressing weight
Atop herself as she lay
Clutching
The crumbling dirt late
In the evening
Face down
In the dry and crumbling dirt

The roots of Beech discovered how
She gave then solid base
Binding
Her white granite brow
And her mother's
Patience
Begot no dismissing wave

In time the rain cascaded down
And mud obscured her back
Drowning
Her sudden sad frown
Revealed some other
Care
For Beeches washing away

Bret Lynn

Charmed

In the glance of her eyes
Was perhaps a gleam
Perchance
The glimpse lay
In a hopeful dream

In the forest, a knight
Is bewitched by charm
He knows
But he rides
He decries the harm

In sudden glade he saw
Her planning a lie
Ghostly
She alone
And Mordred wondered why

Bret Lynn

Leslie Salzillo

James Tucker

An Aerodynamic Woman

by William Prather

It was a typical on-campus undergraduate's apartment: a plastic disc-top table, two beds, a chair, a low couch upholstered in green vinyl, a refrigerator and stove, a few piles of books, a blue and white university banner, a clutter of sundry odds and ends--all of it squeezed into two small rooms, all of it encased in tile and slag block and low-slung cratered board.

Heavy of frame, overweight, as flaccid as a bowl of sleepy milk gravy, Breen Swender sat slumped in his chair in the middle of the combination living-dining room of his apartment. He was a first semester freshman--the worst kind--and sole tenant of the two-bed apartment. And he was impatient. Rather loudly, he cleared his throat and glanced at the man lying on the couch.

Mike Pittsfield, the man lying comfortably on the couch, took no apparent notice of the throat-clearing. Wide shouldered and thin at the waist, he was a virtual marathon man. In fact, it would have taken little or no imagination to picture him running along some white graveled path, a herald of victory or defeat, his ample muscles glistening with streams of sweat, his nostrils flaring to admit more air. Just now, however, he wanted to nap, so he lay there, pretending to be asleep and trying to ignore his itching nose.

He was a first semester freshman...

It was late on a hot and humid September day. That in itself was enough to explain his drowsiness. But there was another reason--a good one. He had been working. Now he was tired and, besides, his voice was fatigued. He was a graduate student, he lived off-campus and he worked for Breen to make money for tuition and books. He had been working for him all day and now he simply wanted to scratch his nose and go to sleep. He held off moving for another minute.

"Ah-hummmmmm," said Breen, feigning another throat-clearing.

That does it, Mike thought. Either he knows I'm still awake, or he's just plain not going to let me rest. He lifted his hand to his face, bent it at the wrist and used the hump in the wrist to rub his itching nose.

It was not that he had anything against Breen. No, it was nothing like that. It was simply, well, it was simply that Mike wanted to nap. He was plum tuckered out the way he figured it, wallowing around on the cushions. He had been talking all day about formulas to determine speed and acceleration. He had helped Breen with crazy problems about trains that went off in different directions at different times of the day. He had even derived the quadratic equation, for goodness sakes. And if that did not take the cake, there was something else. He flexed his right arm, in-

specting the contour of his forearm. It was Breen. It was like working with a stuffed doll. Every word he said seemed to go in one of Breen's ears and then out the other. It was useless. He had been trying to get the equation to determine the speed of an object into Breen's thick head for nearly two weeks. There was something wrong. He thought it might be the pills.

"I'm lonely, Mike. I need companionship," Breen said sheepishly.

Mike heaved a long sigh. He glanced over at Breen. It's just not right, he thought. Here I am working twelve hours a day for this guy and he won't let me get a little shut-eye. Just one time, for one hour, he ought to let me sleep. At least till seven, till his father comes.

Breen went on: "And I know what I want. I know exactly."

Mike yawned and rolled over on his back. It was no use. He had to say something. "Oh, you do, do you?"

Breen replied, his words slow, measured. "Yes, I do. I want a brunette."

Mike smiled. Here we go again, he thought. Here we go with the subject of women. He propped his feet against the armrest. It was one of Breen's favorite subjects, women. In the two weeks that Mike had been working for him, the poor guy had nearly worn the subject out. Mike crossed his arms loosely over his massive chest. He could pretty well guess what was coming next. Breen was about to launch into a lengthy digression on some lass he had seen coming back from class.

Meanwhile, from his chair situated about four feet from the edge of the couch, Breen had observed the smile form on Mike's lips. He reacted by squinching up his nose as if he were about to sneeze. He had a wide range of facial expressions; and he could use his nose, which was small and flat and reminded Mike a little of a bulb of garlic, brilliantly. "Yes, that's right," he said now, his tone firmer. "I need a woman...and she's gotta have long brown hair."

Glancing sideways, Mike looked at the grey linoleum floor. The disc-top table was positioned nearby, and he noticed that there were several balls of lint lying on the floor by one of the table legs. Cool air was rushing out of a neighboring wall duct, and as he watched, the current of air touched the balls of lint, nudging them slowly toward Breen's chair.

"Aren't you interested?" Breen asked.

"Sure, I'm interested," Mike replied, following the balls of lint with his eyes.

"Well, why don't you ask me something about her, then?"

Mike looked up. He focused on Breen's plump oily face. "All right, all right," Mike said, cupping his hands together under his head. "What about the rest of her? What's this woman look like?"

Breen hesitated, his head wobbling. He was having another spasm. For a moment his whole body shook. Even his hands, which were swollen with excess water. After an interval, gradually, the shaking subsided. Faintly embarassed, he said, "Sorry about that."

Mike shook his head.

"Did I remember to take my pills at lunch?"

"All three of them," Mike answered, his hand massaging his cheek thoughtfully.

Weakly now, Breen raised his chin, stretching the skin around his Adam's apple. "She'd have a different face, this woman," he said, twisting his head from side to side. "It'd be kinda long like...kinda nice--not round and fat like mine."

Mike fixed his eyes on Breen and watched him as he rocked back and forth, struggling to hoist himself up straight in the chair. He heard Breen's laugh, that old familiar laugh that he squeezed out of the side of his mouth in a series of short, rasping notes.

"She'd have green eyes, too," Breen added, seconds later. "I've thought about it a lot and I know she'd have to have them." He leaned forward, his mushy chest pressing against the wide strap. "You see, Mike, it's this dream I keep havin'." His voice lowered. "I keep dreamin' that I'm on this beach and the sun's shinin'--

everything perfect like, and well..." His voice faltered. "And there's this woman, Mike. I see her standing there and it's just like she's waitin' for me--no, no, she *is* waitin' for me. Cause I go up to her, and she's got long brown hair. Just the way I like it." His voice had smoothed itself out now. "And let me tell you something else, Mike. The woman in my dream's got green eyes. Green, green, green," he repeated, rolling his head around. "Green like you've never seen before." He paused, his expression rapturous. "It's luny, ain't it?" He snorted, blowing the air out of his nose. "But I swear to you. That's just the way it is. And it just keeps comin' back."

For a moment neither one spoke. Mike had not wanted to engage in a conversation in the first place. For that reason he had been a bit annoyed when Breen had started talking. But now something else was happening and Mike was feeling increasingly uncomfortable. No, this was not Breen's ususal ramble about the assets of a pom-pom-tossing cheerleader. This was something else. All this talk about companionship and needing and women and dreams and all--it was getting a little too thick for him. He had not planned on that. Lifting his legs off the armrest of the couch, he sat up and put his socked feet on the tiled floor. I just want to get home, he thought, bowing the stiffness out of his back.

"She's got green eyes"

A fly had been trapped inside the apartment. Now it was in the window behind Mike. He could hear it, behind him, in the window, buzzing. It sounded angry, too. He listened as the fly swished through the warm stale air of the room in great looping semicircles. He heard the soft thumps it made as, again and again, it struck the glass windowpane. It was trying to escape. It was trying to get out of the cramped apartment and into the fresh open air of the courtyard beyond. It must be hell, he thought, to have something close like that. To have it where you could see it, like that fly, and still not be able to get it. Buzz. Swish. Thump. Again and again. Buzz. Swish. Thu--

"And of course there's more," Breen said, distracting Mike's thoughts from the fly.

"Yeah?" he said, smoothing his short blond hair.

"Sure. I mean, the woman I want's like the woman in my dream. She's...well, it's her shape." He nodded as he spoke. "She wouldn't be too round or too thin, you see. She'd have--" His voice broke off sharply. "Maybe you'll think it's funny, but she'd have...she'd have an...an aerodynamic body." He glanced quickly around the room. "Yes, that's it. That's the only way I know to describe her."

Above the stove, pinched and cut in half by a dark band of shadow, a square of sunlight was edging toward the ceiling. Mike gazed at the patch of light, absently biting his lip.

Breen jerked back in his chair and shimmied up against the strap. Then he peered out through the window, his face set in thought.

Outside, the sun was sinking down to touch the low campus skyline. Groups of students were strolling over the grass courtyard and along the sidewalk just outside Breen's apartment. The murmur of their voices and the muffled echoes of their footsteps sifted into the room, where Mike sat, pondering Breen's dream.

"It's companionship. That's what I need." Breen's voice was more emphatic. "I need somebody I can talk to. Somebody I can go to when the world goes wrong." His eyes narrowed and he looked searchingly at Mike. "You know what I mean, don't you?" The words sliced through the stale air.

Mike stammered. "I...I don't know," he said, shaking a

continued page twenty-eight

It's Bed-Time For a Little Girl

I remember when I was just a little girl,
How I would look longingly into the mirror
Wishing that by some magic it could tell me,
how I would look as I sit before it tonight.

The long warm nights sitting up in bed,
Listening to the crickets chirping
their love songs out to each other.
While watching the moonbeams fall silently
on my soft little girl skin.
Till my leaden eye-lids closed with innocent sleep.

Pushing myself higher and higher,
On the swingset we helped Daddy put together.
Before we ran around with jars and foil,
to capture all of the flashing bugs,
We thought were so nice to watch
blink before our little faces.

Then I didn't know what a DMZ was.
I didn't know who,
Martin Luther, Bobby, or Neil were.
And it somehow scared me to watch
little boys and girls just like me
lying in a hospital
scarred in Saigon, on T.V.
While the nice man said something about
casualties, guerrillas, and napalm.

Flower-children, Love-ins, Hippies, Woodstock, the Beatles.
They were just words,
to my young, unstocked mind.
How far is it to the moon, momma ?
I don't know, but it's bed-time for a little girl.

Ellen Beveridge

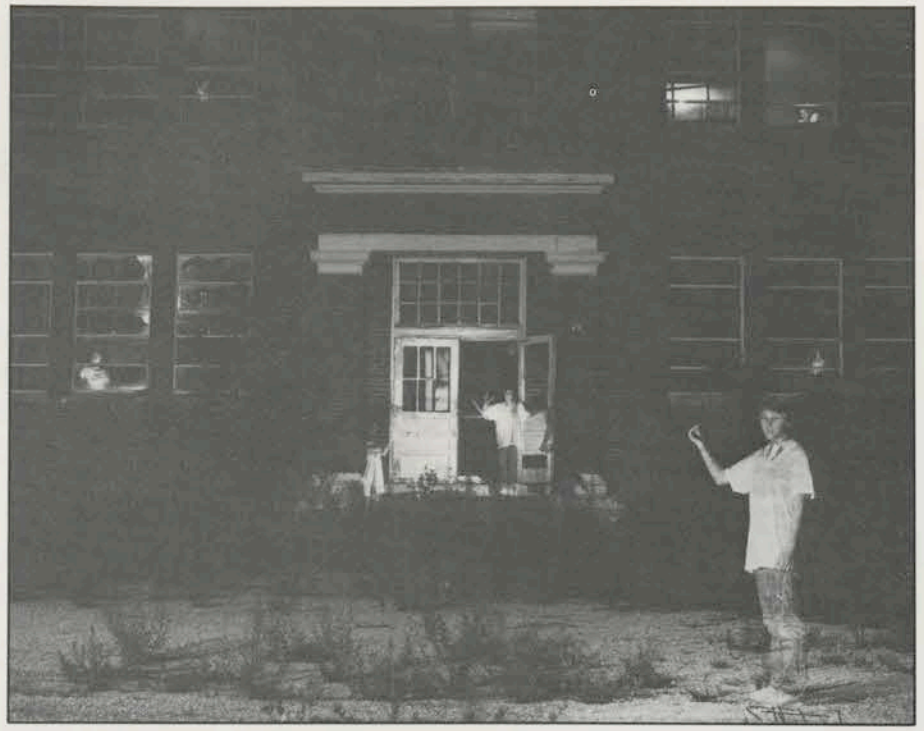
Mike Mallory

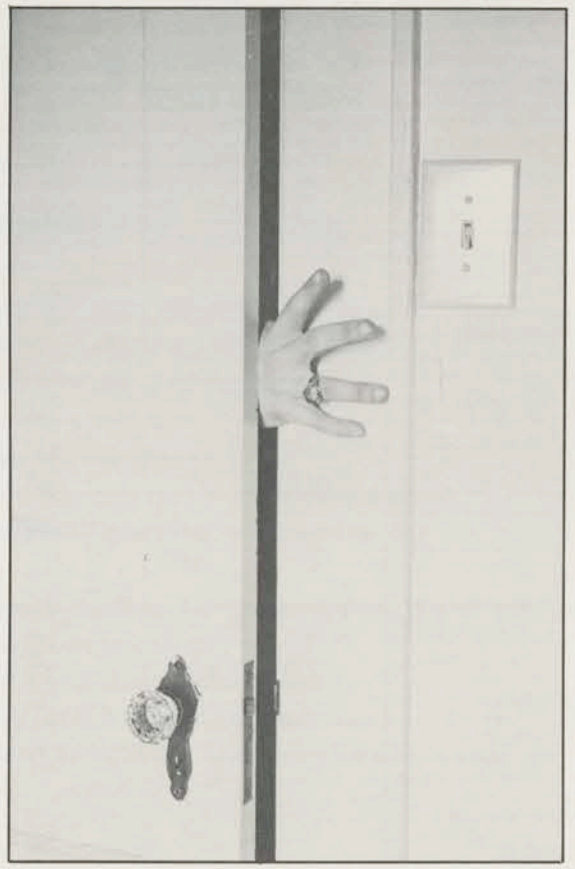
Dreams (Where are they now)

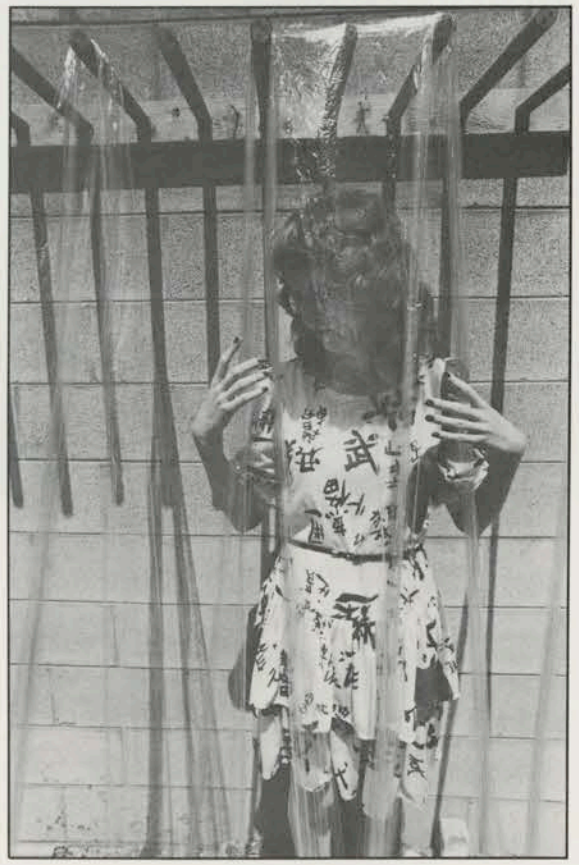
Remember the dreams,
the schemes, the adventures
of life as a child.
Why do they all disappear.
Problems arise,
pressure,
No way to solve them.
Tension mounts,
Like an atomic bomb
you explode.
As your flesh is charred,
your life gone.
Where are the dreams,
the schemes, the adventures
of life as a child.

Paula Ramsey

Portfolio: Halloween







Retrospective

Photographs

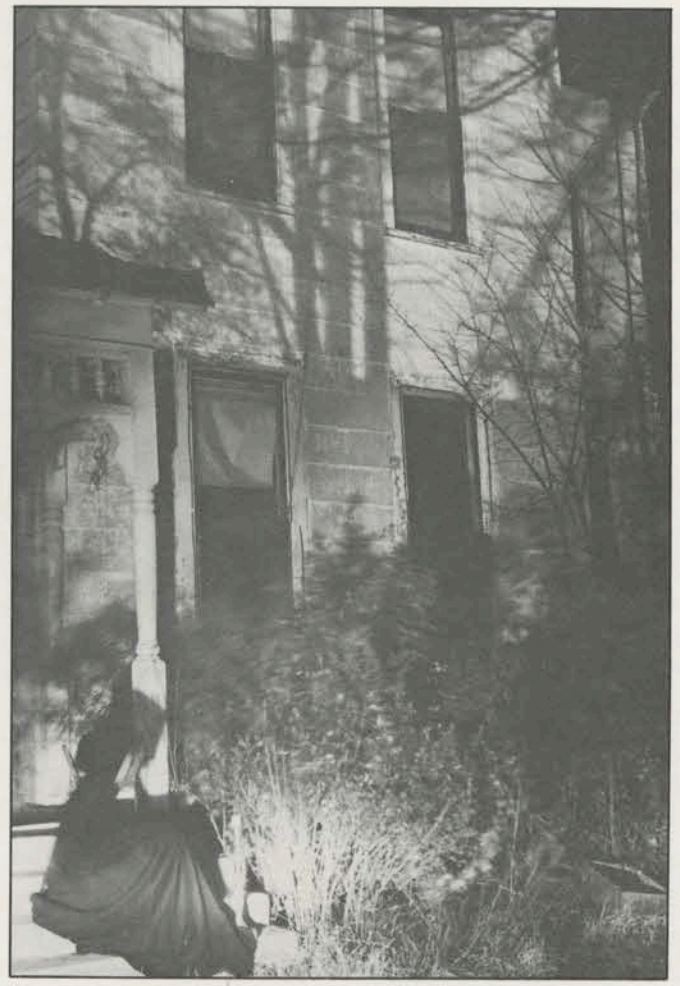
by

Debbie Gillis

Dewayne Harvey

and

Mike Poley



A Wild Place in the Woods

by David J. Tirpak

There was a girl, and there was a boy. They walked along a river, to breath the coolness. They played with stones, to feel the earth. They washed under falling water, to feel...

Fish swam in the river. Other people hunted them, but could see none. The boy, and the girl, looked into the water, only to see. To them, the fish showed themselves.

Deep in green they darted, they basked. Of those that hovered motionless, the girl asked "Do fish sleep?"

The boy, who was of the world above, could not know the answer.

"They have swam in silver wreathes about my head," he replied. "They have darted about my legs and eaten my scabs. I have killed fish, but I do not know if they sleep."

The girl stared at the water. "Sometimes I awake and I remember my dreams. I have traveled, and I am tired. Perhaps we do not really sleep."

As the girl and the boy sat in silence clouds began to cover the sun; clouds the color of fast, deep water. The air began to smell wet. Wind blew and smelled of growing plants. The light became powerful and shot deep into pools of the river where before it had turned the light back in blinding melodies of gold.

"Do fish sleep ?"

The boy and the girl had come to stand on a large stone at the edge of a pool. In its now clear depths a fish showed itself to them. The fish was large; the length of their arms. Its gills pumped like the beat of a large heart; its fins rippled like white air in a breeze. As it drifted, the fish showed scales the size of small fists.

The girl became excited. "My father would shoot that fish with an arrow."

"I will catch it" the boy said. "We will ask him if he sleeps and then we will kill him."

They came to the edge of the rock, the boy and the girl. The fish continued to pump its gills, but showed no fear. It turned to face the girl and the boy while soft eddies drifted it partially under the rock. Its tail--the size of the boy's face--rippled invitingly within reach.

The boy lay on his belly and poised his arm as the girl watched. The fish was making an invitation to the boy; it was making a dream. In the dream the boy saw himself plunge his arm into the water and grasp the fish just above the tail.

continued page twenty-six

The Dreaming

Jim Sherraden

I was dreaming, she said, her eyes dawning open. I was dreaming of a rockpile. You have to leave your dreams there if you dream about a rockpile. Way under, hoping you can get to them again. Hoping the rock washes away. Hoping it's sandstone.

She sat up in her seat, gazed around the train cabin and passed back into sleep. She was beautiful. He let himself watch her, let himself be taken in by her beauty. While she slept, his arm touched her leg, it was alright. One can expect to be brushed against on a night train. Hours.

Where will you be traveling? The train seemed deserted now. A few voices still whirled around beyond the compartment but left them alone. Outside he watched the people who didn't even hear the train anymore. The whistle screamed.

The second time she woke with a start. Bubbled something about a dream, paused for a few seconds to let her tongue find its balance and then, without looking up, asked, where are we?

Four hours yet. It was hard to say which country. You can never be sure of anything on a train except for the time. The border police hadn't come for hours. New rules maybe.

She slept in a cool blue dress with skirts underneath, unheard of these days, like a troubled still life under the fleeting television scene of the window. Now and then she gave a start when a door slid open.

She lay with her legs bent a little at the knee, her fingers curled between her thighs like useless sentinels who could not guard her, alerting him instead, as guards do, to the arena of their protection. In a flash the door shreiks open. Billets! Tickets! An accent. The ticket man's voices strong. It rises above everything else. Even if the train makes him lose his balance he never loses his voice. They both react to him. She gives him her ticket first. Her hands are red hot. Because he leaves the door open they lose a lot of heat.

Two hours still. The silence lay in waiting with him while she slept, the silence confused them for partners. You can never be sure of anything on a train, except the time. Now it is stopping. Outside was just the countryside. The whole train seemed to settle, nothing groaned underneath. The axles were good. Above them some wind lost its way in a vent a little larger than itself, whispering over them. They shuffled. They were moving again.

Now her eyes are open. She sits up but her breasts are too small to tumble. This time her words are in order. I was dreaming, she says. There was a man and a woman. She is lured to him by what she confuses for lonliness. Because of his swollen eyes and his sunken head she sits there. Two coffees. Across the street a woman stands erect on the sidewalk. She has quit walking. A man approaches into the scenario, but away from the cafe. She wavers a little into the building. She feigns it some, but isn't pushed. Only her sleeve touches the rock. A moment later they are walking again. His hands are in her pockets and she lets him. The woman in the train is breathing hard now. She inhales the air into her shoulders and waits to shout. I was dreaming! she thinks. Nothing more. I was dreaming!

There she slept in a blue dress with jeans underneath, unheard-of these days. The lights had been switched on hours ago. Only now did he begin watching her. For hours it seemed he had been murmuring something. Barely whispering. Had she heard? Now he is sleeping; the poor train tossing them in and out of each other, half witted. What does a train know?

And it could happen, you see, if on an autumn night you're traveling, ten thousand miles from home, there is no moon, but you want for one; there is no judge, but you'd pay for one, to give license to your exhaustion, while night waits like lead to be let in.

Portfolio

Sherry Cooper

Tonda McKay

Dog Days' Dementia

by Kathy Brady

It was just before dawn in the first days of fall. Cool, yet not so cool that they had to put the fan away for the summer.

Dog days' dementia clung to them still.

They felt it in conversations that whizzed about like a death match of ping pong between demons, in nakedness that wore on them like sweat-stiffened clothing,and in paths that converged in meadows full of nettles.

"Come," he would say, "make life to me."

"I am dying," she would answer.

Pictures crowded her head. Words clogged her mouth. She realized something was seriously wrong, but she could not pinpoint the ailment.

"I see a lady in an Elizabethan gown. There is a rose bush blooming where her face should be. Her eyes and lips are pink petals. Sculpted leaves form her hairdo."

"How romantic you are."

But she knew he was only being facetious; he did not care anymore about 17th century women. He was a man of his own time these days. A time of disposable flames and instant desserts. His passion had become a programmed and calculated technology.

She saw herself suddenly as an incredibly ancient and brittle lace doilie ringed with stains.

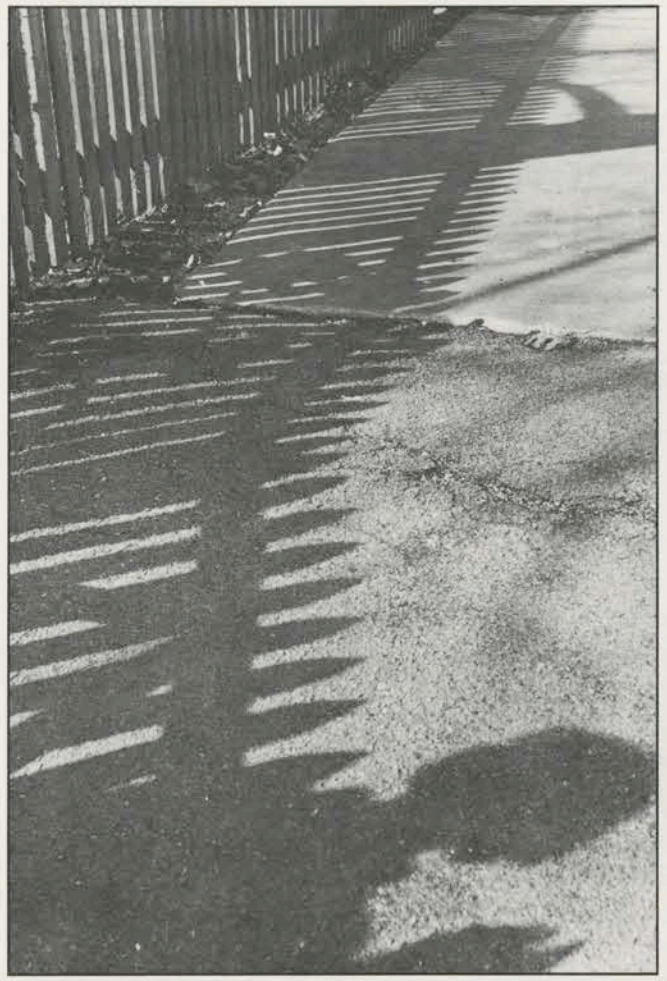
"Come," he said, "make life to me."

"I am dying," she answered.

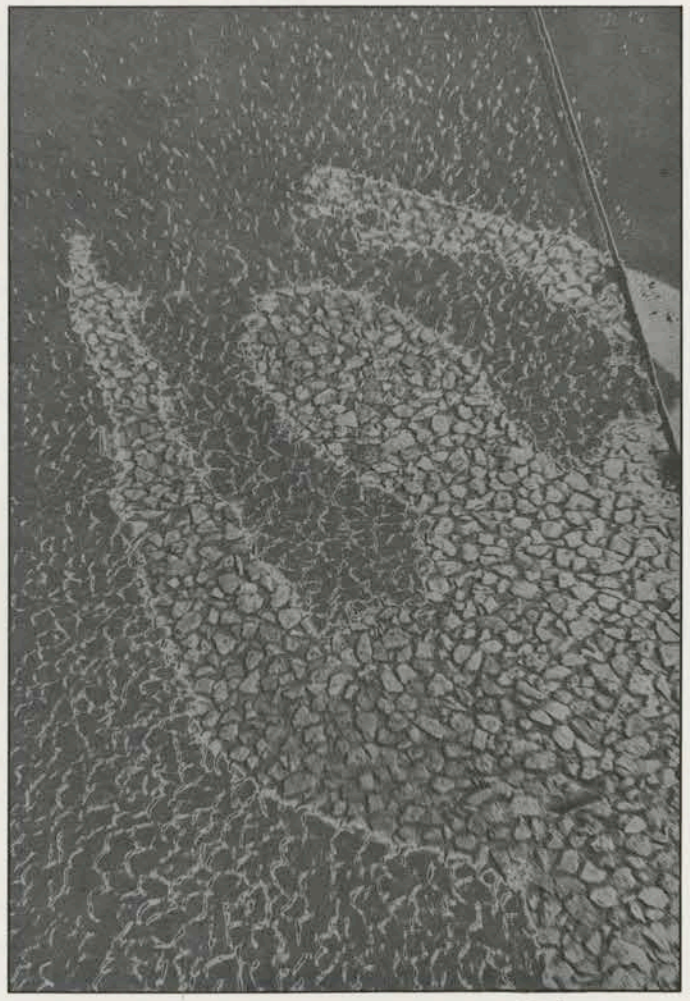
Her fingers danced across his skin like hurrying spiders unnoticed by a slumbering child. His breathing echoed the click-whirl of computers. He put on his plastic suit, swallowed chemicals, and left for his megacorporate employment facility.

It was just after dawn in the first days of autumn. Cold, yet not so cold that they had to bring out the heater for the winter.

Dog days' dementia clung to them still.



Mike Poley



Mike Poley

From A Waning Senorita

Loved me,
Thou'd feel my agonies drenched with tears.
Is this wretch a leaf rolling with the wind,
Who composes a requiem with moans of pains ?

The crying out to my beloved Adonis
Dies away I know not where,
But manages to leave only an Echo in the air.
This outcry returns love for love,
No response to my call returns hatred for love.

Just as a dying candle flashes the same — —

So the frail breath gripping my heart,
Gathered to wreathe all the flowers of the world,
Put only dewy petals on the burning brow,
Then heartens me to call thy name again.

The craving redone with my heart and soul
Dies away I know not where,
But manages to leave only a shadow on the wall.
This outcry returns love for hatred,
No response to my call returns hatred for love.

Now, no movement; for pains bind time
And time binds pains with a period.
Thus are they vanishing into eternity ?

Albeit body and soul are playing hide and seek,
Thou still keep silent like no rustle of time!

Kwang-Mi Lee

Various thoughts passed through my mind as I walked away from the cemetery that day. The events of the last forty-eight hours were nothing but a fog that had invaded my body and soul. Now it was over.

Was this the end or a new beginning? Only time would tell, because at the moment I was too confused to give myself a rational answer. My walk turned into a run...

The Invalid
by Melinda Hopkins

The summer sun seemed to furnish me with energy as I pedaled along on my bicycle. I had chosen a beautiful day to make the journey across town and I was keenly aware of every sight and sound that I encountered. The bicycle gained speed with each turn and brought me closer to the confrontation I so dreaded.

As I neared my destination, I couldn't help but wonder if the old man was enjoying the sunshine as I was. My only hope was that it would furnish him with the energy he would need to face the uncertainty of his future.

The tiny brick house came into view and I turned in the drive. I quickly scanned the landscape and was unable to put my finger on what was wrong. Then it hit me. The shrubs were imprisoned in a maze of honeysuckles and the rose garden was drowning in a sea of weeds. For a moment, I saw him, over there, on his knees. He had a rake in one hand and a shovel in the other. He wore a smile on his face. Then, he was gone.

I brought myself back to reality and preceded to the patio. I knew he would be there, like he'd been every day since the illness had invaded his body. Rounding the corner of the house, I saw him sitting in his wheelchair. He seemed to be waiting for death to finally come and overtake him. As I approached him, I silently cursed myself for the sick feeling that was growing in the pit of my stomach. This feeling seemed to come to me every time I saw him, a prisoner to his own body.

He immediately sensed my presence and turned his head. Did I see that old familiar gleam return to his eye? I will never know because if it had been there, it left just as quickly as it came.

I took my accustomed seat next to him and began reading the newspaper aloud. When I finished, he became content just to have another human in close contact, to be his umbilical cord to the outside world.

This quiet time gave me a chance to inspect his profile.

The years of life and the months of his illness had taken their toll on him. It never ceased to amaze me that this broken and defeated man was once the strong and loyal friend that I remembered as a child.

Suddenly, a rabbit cautiously jumped from behind the shed. The old man stared at the creature and then to the once cared for and pampered garden. I wondered if he was reminiscing to the days long ago, to the days when a simple walk in the yard was taken for granted.

Emotion suddenly filled my heart and "I love you" slipped from my lips before I was even aware of it. He slowly turned his head and I saw a tear form in his eye.

That was the last time I saw the old man alive. As I walked through the cemetery toward his grave, that old sick feeling returned to my stomach. The marker had just been put up. It read 1912-1981. I knealt down and touched the marker and said, "Granddaddy, I will always love you."

Without a tear, I turned and walked away.

Getting the Signal

Mad at myself!
Mad at the world!
Mad to be mad is more the word!

Mad at this day!
I don't know why.
I cut myself shaving and couldn't zip my fly.

Fall down the stairs,
as I rushed out the door.
Forgot to kiss my wife; tonight she'll settle
that score.

Had to face the boss,
for being late to work.
Threatened to fire me after fourteen years,
the lousy jerk.

I looked at the calendar.
Another day the same.
My dad telephoned today; called me by
my brother's name.

With two tickets to the Steeler's game,
I asked Bill if he'd like to go.
He said, "Not tonight,"
and should have just said *No*!

The evening was full of work.
I had to stay overtime.
The boss really piled it on,
but I'm earning every dime.

Everyone else had plans too.
That's when I got this hunch.
But, Bill put all theories out of my mind
as we discussed it over lunch.

After what he pulled this morning,
I ought to knock him in the noggin.
It's like he doesn't remember that every Saturday
we play tennis, and most every evening we go joggin'.

It seems unusual for Mr. Richards
to pull this kind of stunt.
Ah-ha, he and his ex-wife must be at it again,
that would explain why he was so blunt.

It's eight o'clock at night,
My work is finally done.
I've still got the tickets;
but by now the game's begun.

Driving home on the freeway like this,
gives me time to think.
About the rotten day I've had
and about fixing the kitchen sink.

My kids have all forgotten.
I guess they're still too young yet.
But, my wife, my dad, my friends;
How could they forget?

I'll just put this day out of my mind,
and when I get home, I won't let on.
But if they say nothing of it;
tomorrow I'll make my case known.

I mean, after all,
today I turned thirty-five.
It doesn't mean that I'm dead;
I'm still very much alive!
Pulling into the driveway,
and even after the pep talk,
I feel very down and lonely
as I hasten up the walk.

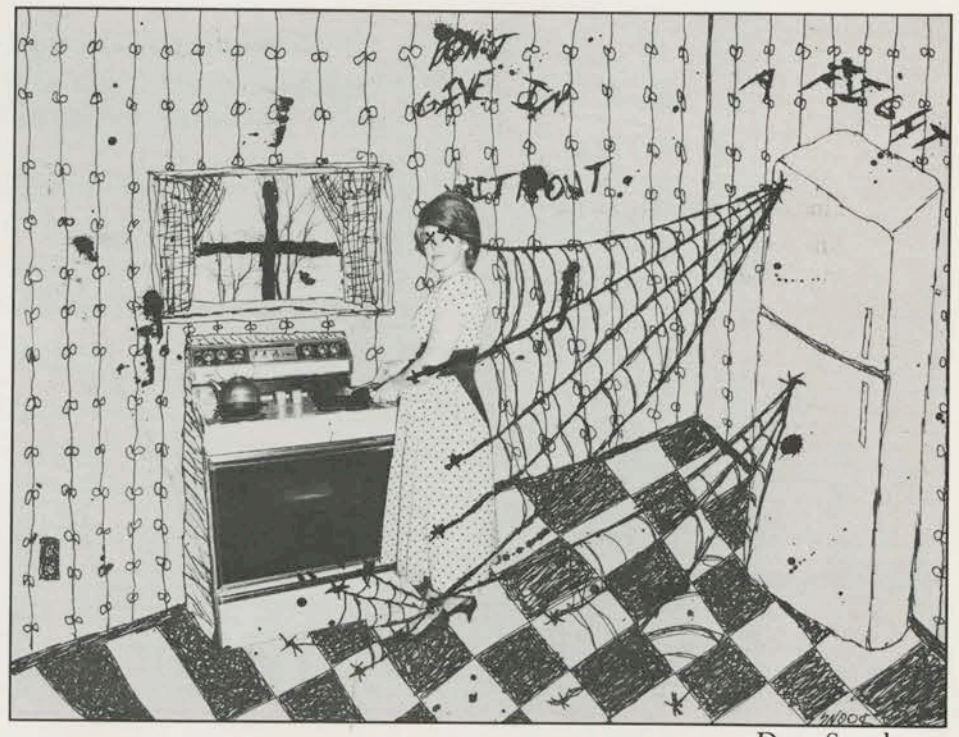
Way down deep inside,
I feel I'm not loved anymore.
And I pause for a silent prayer
before I open up the door.

"Dear Lord above in Heaven,
I have but one small plea.
Please send a sign or signal
to prove they still love me.

As I turn the key the latch clicks.
Some tears come to my eyes.
My heart is heavy and saddened,
till I hear the word, "*Surprise!*"

Anthony L. Graves

Mike Mallory



Dean Snook

Old Man

The old man sits in the corner creaking in his own
old rocking chair.

It's the only piece of his furniture
that's left over
From all of his beautiful antique relics
that they sold in order
to send him away
in a home
- for antiques.

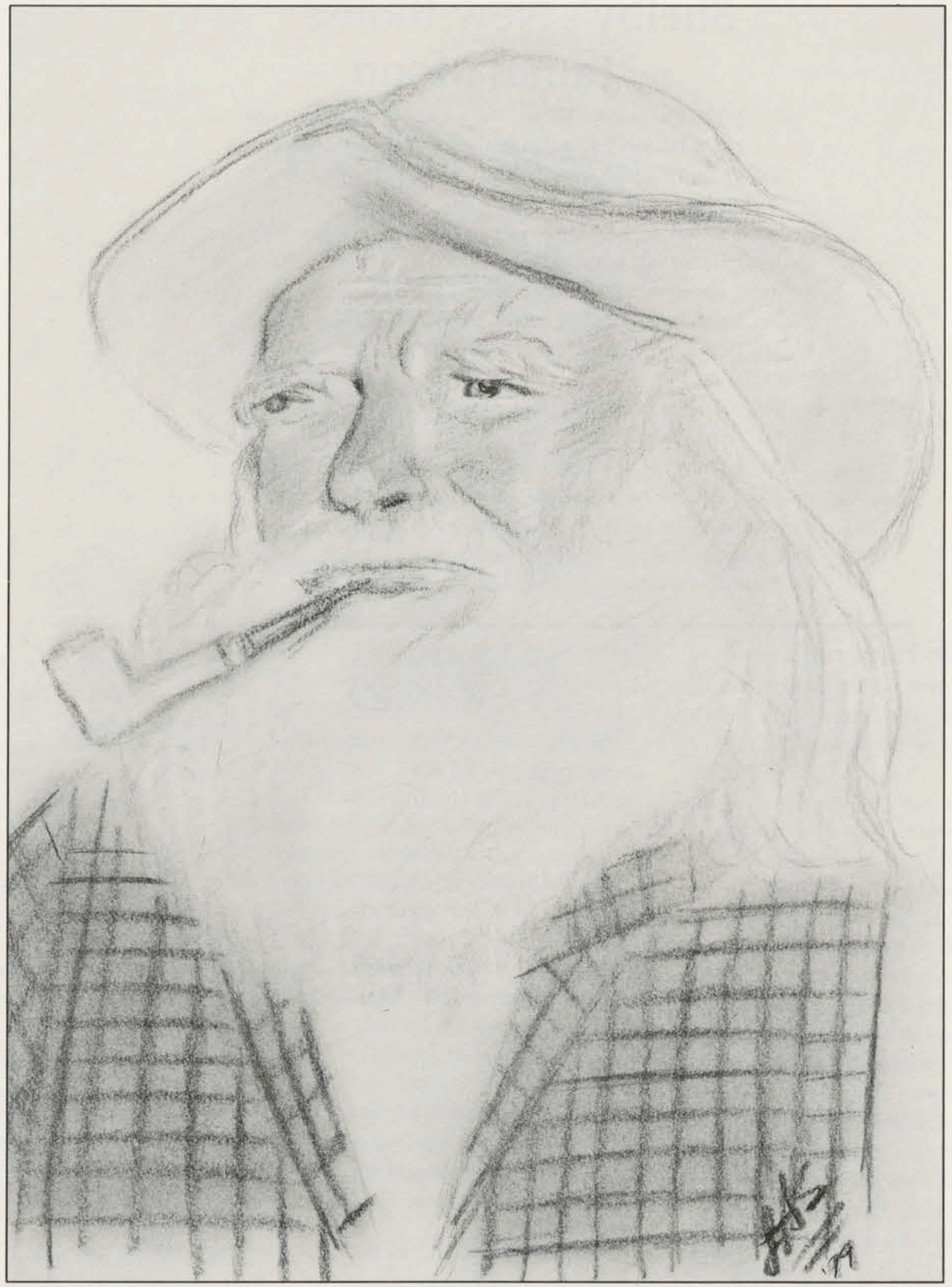
He sits and thinks of all the years of war and wisdom.
—But where have the years gone?

He speaks to himself in a whisper
of the friends and loved ones he once knew.
—But where are they now?

The dark creases around his sad eyes
reveal the many days he laughed and loved
when he was a younger man.
—Where did his innocence go?

Finally, as deep sleep comes,
One tear trickles down his leathered cheek.
It is his last tear and his eternal sleep.

Cathryn Maghielse



Leslie Salzillo

Shelby's New Blouse
James Moore

Shelby put on her new blouse. She smiled in self-admiration as she walked to school. In class, Anita commented on it to her.

"I like your new blouse," she said.

"Thank you," replied Shelby.

Anita looked at her for a moment and asked her why she thanked her for saying she liked it.

"You gave me a compliment," Shelby explained.

"No, I was merely stating a fact, the fact being that I like your blouse. That is not saying that it is nice-it could be awful-merely, that I like it."

"Still," Shelby said, somewhat puzzled, "you like it."

"So?" came back Anita, "Why should you thank me for liking it? My opinion of the aesthetic value of the blouse is still my opinion, not to be misconstrued as mere flattery. I made a statement of fact, of truth. In saying that I like it, I only stated a fact, no compliment. I only said the truth."

"That is why I thank you," said Shelby slowly.

"Oh."

A Wild Place cont.

The water on his brown arm showed the strain of his muscles as he heaved the fish out.

Then the boy saw the deep green water, the cavern in the rock that the fish drifted into and waving fronds and soft things in the water. The boy seemed to fall into its quiet. Stories pushed into his mind of young girls falling down rabbit holes and tiny people wriggling in the black pools at the base of beech trees.

The girl's voice cut him. "He will bite you." It was enough to make the boy want to kill the fish--to show her. But he could not make his arm move. The electricity in his muscles flowed back through his body until it sounded through his belly; through the rock and into the water.

The fish heard for it pumped its fins in time to the boy's own throbbing. Yet, it lay still, like the white thigh of inviting young girls.

The boy pushed the girl aside with his legs to clear space for the struggle. She waited, but again the boy fell into the deepness of the water. He heard the sound of his body above. He watched birds fly through the air, rippled and strange. He saw the wind, but could not feel it. The water made his movements and his thoughts seem distant and unreal.

As the first rain fell, the boy came back to the rock, still on his belly. The girl had wandered away looking for a place to cross the river. The fish drifted into the cave.

The girl was stepping into the water as the boy caught up to her. "Do fish sleep?" she asked.

The boy stepped into the water, but would not look at her. Instead, he watched the river. "Fish have swam in silver wreaths about my head," he replied, "they have darted about my legs and eaten my scabs. I have killed fish. But I do not think they sleep."

Rain fell and the river made silver music about the legs of the girl and the boy. They both wondered to themselves if they had been there before.

"No, fish do not sleep." the boy repeated. "But fish--they *dream*."

The Poet's World

When I close the door
And return to my secret world
My mind becomes an avenue
For all things to travel.
There are things in my life
That cannot be explained
But when I reach my promised land
Of solitude, I find many answers.
The echoes of silence
Beat like a drum; spurring my mind
To expand and drink it all in.
The rays of light which dawn
Within my secret world enlighten
Me like no other thing can.
It is here, on the page
That I close the door and
Visit my secret world.
It is like the place of comfort
For my weary mind.
It is when I sit
With pen in hand
That I can begin to understand.

P. Vaughn

Aerodynamic cont.

wrinkle out of his blue jeans. "Don't you already have someone like that? Someone you can talk with?"

"No," Breen answered quickly. "Of course there's my parents. But that's not the same. That's not what I'm talkin' about." He lowered his chin and rubbed it across the collar of his T-shirt. "You know that."

Mike swallowed and noticed that his throat was dry. "And Andy?" he suggested. "Your friend from high school. What about him?"

"Andy?" Breen's voice rose. It descended slowly as he continued. "Oh, yes, he's a good guy all right. And we can talk just about anything." Here he glanced momentarily out the window. "But I need something else. Besides, I told you it had to be a woman." Small hollows formed in his cheeks and his forehead wrinkled. "Don't you think I can find a woman like that?"

Mike recoiled from the sudden intensity of the question. He wanted to give Breen an answer. He wanted to make everything all right.

"Sure. There'd be problems," Breen continued, apparently not noticing Mike's uneasiness. "I know that. She'd have to be patient. God, how she'd have to be patient." He halted, breathing in deeply. "But we'd make it. I'm sure of it."

Mike scooted back on the green vinyl cushion. "Well, I don't know," he said, fumbling for words. "You'll just have to wait and see--"

"But, Mike," Breen interrupted, his anxiety surfacing. "I'm certain that *somewhere* there's a woman like that." He pursed his lips comtemplatively. Then, calming his voice, he went on. "Have I ever told you about Kathy?"

Mike sighed and leaned back in the cushions. "I don't think so. Who is she?"

The sun was down behind the campus buildings now and, inside, the room was darkening. As Breen went on, Mike remarked the way he held his face up to the window, how his face was illuminatd by the reflected light of late evening.

"Kathy was somebody I knew about three years ago; when I was fifteen." Breen's eyes flickered. "We met one day at the swimming pool. It was like lightening struck." Enthused in reliving the old memory, he continued in a voice that was animated, almost gay. "Really. It was like that, Mike. Heck, soon we were doin' everything together. We went to dances and movies. We went ridin' around and studied together. Once we even went on a hayride together." He stopped. It was if he had heard an anthem, far away, unidentifiable. He shook his head. "But then something went wrong, Mike. I don't know what it was."

Mike sat on the edge of the couch, his elbows resting on his knees.

"Anyway," Breen said, "she had a brother at home. And suddenly, everytime I'd pick up the phone and call, he'd be on the other end. And when I'd ask for Kathy, he'd give me the same old cock and bull story. '*Sorry*,' he'd say, '*Kathy's not home yet.*' Once I heard someone gigglin' in the background before he'd hung up."

Breen's face hardened. "Well," he said, "my mama didn't raise *me* for no fool. I knew what was goin' on." He cast his eyes down. "I stopped callin' her right after that. I didn't see her for a long time."

The air had kicked on again. It was still hot outside and warm in the room. Mike heard the air pushing into the room. "Was that the end of it?" he asked.

Breen jerked against his strap. "No, it wasn't. Later that summer I ran up on her at a dance. It was on a Saturday night. Suddenly, whappo, up she walked. Didn't say Howdy-do or nothin'. Just started askin' me questions. '*Where you been, Breen. Why don't you call me anymore?*' I couldn't believe it. I didn't know what to say. Finally, though, I got it together enough to explain about her brother. I told her that's why I hadn't called." He stopped, threw back his head and sucked his lungs full with air. "*Don't you fret yourself 'bout that none*, she told me. *That'll never happen again.*"

He looked at Mike. "I forgot about everything after that. All I wanted was Kathy. All I wanted was to have her back again, just the way it'd been before." He paused for a moment and worked his tongue reflectively over his lower lip. "There's a lake close to where my parents have their house. And in the middle of it there's an island. I told her that I wanted to take her there. I told her we ought to have a picnic. *Sure*, she said. Just like that: *Sure*. He stretched his neck. "We were goin' to do it that next Tuesday. I couldn't believe it was really happening. It was just too much. Everything was goin' so good."

The muscles in his jaws drooped. His eyes darkened. "But I never made it," he said. "You already know about the car accident. Just twenty-four hours later and it was all over--"

"Hey!" Mike broke in. "It's not all over. It's not all over by a long shot." He did not like to talk about the accident. "You're still here, aren't you? You're still here."

"Oh, sure," Breen said, a note of forced confidence in his voice. "Wait a minute now. Don't get me wrong."

Mike lifted his head. "Did you ever see her again? I mean, did anything happen later?"

Breen leaned against the strap, gazing down in his lap. "Yes, she came to see me...once. Now I don't know where she is. She's disappeared."

For a moment they were quiet and that moment added itself to another and then another, until Mike realised that a silence had formed between them. Realising this made him even more uncomfortable, and not knowing why, he leaned over and began putting on his tennis shoes.

"Are you hungry?" he asked Breen, as he finished tying his laces and stood up off the couch.

"Sure," Breen said, craning his head to look toward the pantry over the stove. "How about a can of ravioli?"

"If there's one left," answered Mike, walking briskly to the pantry over the stove. He threw open the doors and began rummaging through the cans of soup and sausages. Finally he found a can of ravioli. He opened it and poured the biscuits and red sauce into a pan. Then, as he was setting the pan on the burner, he heard a sharp metallic click.

How many times have I heard that click? he thought, turning from the stove and looking at Breen. A thousand? Two thousand? Now he watched as Breen fit his chin into the soft rubber cup on the control box. That was how he made the chair move, how he made it turn. Mike marvelled at how deftly Breen could throw the switch and work with the rubber cup. And he did it all with his chin.

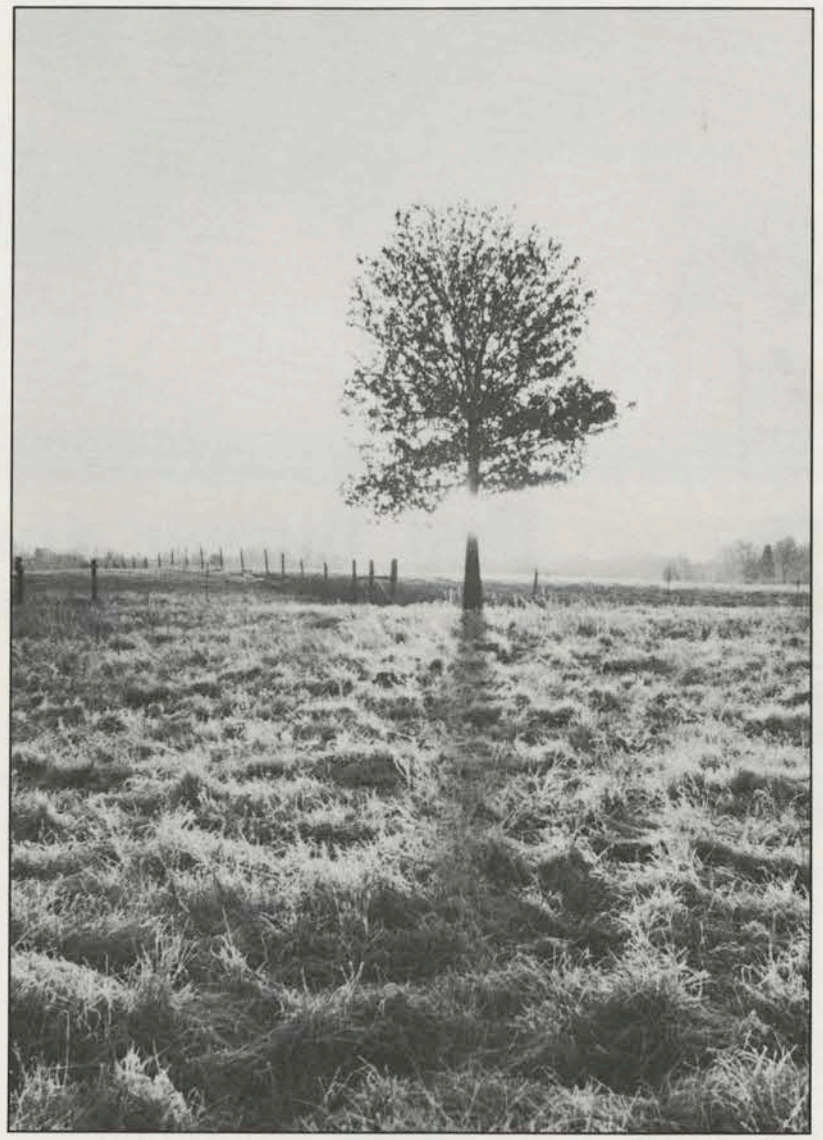
Mike left the stove and walked back to the window. He wondered what he would do in Breen's place. He wondered what he would do if he had an accident and was paralyzed from the neck down; if he would be able to adjust to that; to operate a chair.

He stood at the window, his back to Breen. Behind him, he could hear the chair lurch forward as Breen pushed on the cup. He heard the chair roll up behind him and stop.

"What do you see out there?" Breen asked, a quiver in his voice.

Mike looked out the window. He made himself look out the window. He saw the courtyard, which was dark now. He saw the dormitory on the other side, standing up in the glow of the western sky. Above it was a planet. It beamed steadily in the purple air. He knew he ought to turn around, but instead he watched the pulsing light of a small plane as it flew between the planet and the dormitory. Finally, after what seemed a long time, he turned away from the window. "Come on," he said, flipping on the light switch. "Let's eat."

Keith Tippitt



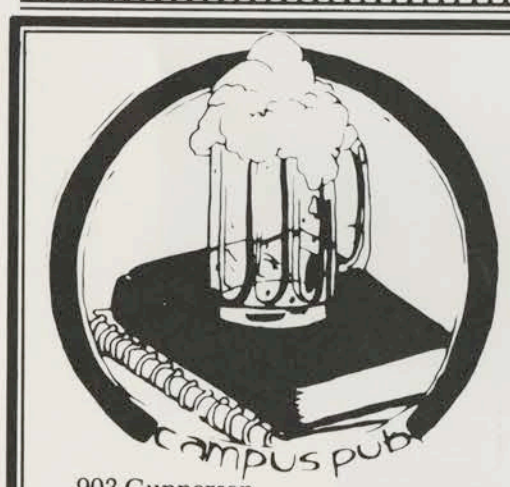
Dean Snook

Hope You Enjoyed It

Cyndie

Lisa

Gina



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Nov. 30	Memphis State	There
Dec. 03	Tennessee State	There
Dec. 05	URBANA COLLEGE	Here
Dec. 16-17	Tenn. Classic	Clarksville
Dec. 21	Georgia State	There
Dec. 30	Western Kentucky	There
Jan. 02	GEORGIA COLLEGE	Here
Jan. 07	*Tennessee Tech	There
Jan. 12	*Morehead State	There
Jan. 14	*Eastern Kentucky	There
Jan. 17	GEORGIA SOUTHERN	Here
Jan. 19	*YOUNGSTOWN STATE	Here
Jan. 21	*UNIVERSITY OF AKRON	Here
Jan. 26	*AUSTIN PEAY	Here
Jan. 27	*MURRAY STATE	Here
Feb. 02	TENNESSEE STATE	Here
Feb. 04	GEORGIA STATE	Here
Feb. 09	*Austin Peay	There
Feb. 11	*Murray State	There
Feb. 16	*MOREHEAD STATE	Here
Feb. 18	*EASTERN KENTUCKY	Here
Feb. 23	*Youngstown State	There
Feb. 25	*Univ. of Akron	There
Mar. 03	*TENNESSEE TECH	Here

*starred items denote OVC games

Lady Raider Basketball
1983-84

Nov. 26	Florida State	There
Nov. 28	BELMONT	Here
Dec. 08	UT-CHATTANOOGA	Here
Dec. 16-17	Ole Miss Dial Classic	University, Miss.
Dec. 30	Western Kentucky	There
Jan. 05	UT-Chattanooga	There
Jan. 07	Tennessee Tech	There
Jan. 09	Kentucky	There
Jan. 12	Morehead State	There
Jan. 14	Eastern Kentucky	There
Jan. 17	VANDERBILT	Here
Jan. 19	YOUNGSTOWN STATE	Here
Jan. 21	UNIVERSITY OF AKRON	Here
Jan. 23	UT-MARTIN	Here
Jan. 26	AUSTIN PEAY	Here
Jan. 28	MURRAY STATE	Here
Jan. 31	Vanderbilt	There
Feb. 07	UT-Martin	There
Feb. 09	Austin Peay	There
Feb. 11	Murray State	There
Feb. 16	MOREHEAD STATE	Here
Feb. 18	EASTERN KENTUCKY	Here
Feb. 23	Youngstown State	There
Feb. 25	University of Akron	There
Mar. 03	TENNESSEE TECH	Here
Mar. 09-10	OVC TOURNAMENT	
Mar. 15-17	NCCA - first round	

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