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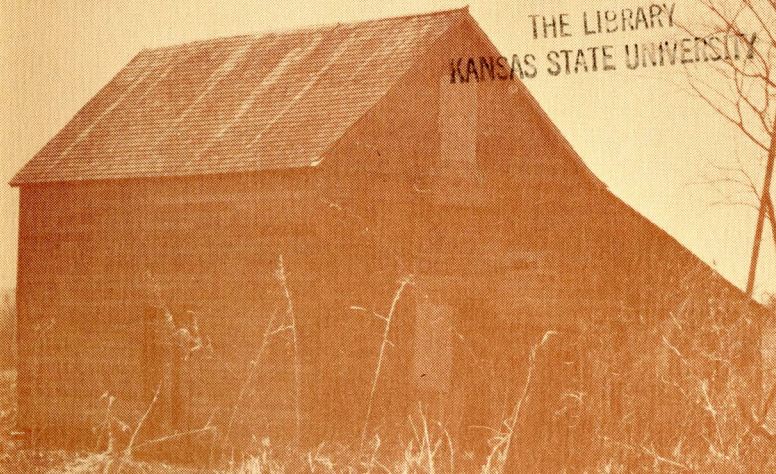
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SUMMER-FALL 1977

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Barnyard Autumn by Eric Spannenberg, Senior, Clothing Retailing

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Helen J. Williams

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1977

A Magazine of Creative Arts

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Manhattan, Kansas

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Additional copies of TOUCHSTONE are available at the SGA office and from staff members.



by Pam Warren

You are living color

by Kathleen Cashman

and so alive, that you
on canvas, cloth or wall
would be garish—
perhaps a bit painful.
But the kaleidoscope
of you allows a
blandness of dailies
to blend, and diffuses
flash to shimmer.
And when you are gone
I will find you—still moving,
in the strawberries on the teacup,
in a stripe on a milk carton,
in the design of the curtains.

Return

by Judy Sasse

Again, the walls held stark white, cornering
The bent form that brought the smooth thickened stick
Across her body, the only unhidden remains which
Ever betrayed the silence. Against torturing
Stillness she withdrew to worlds of mountaintops
And evergreens and bright faces exchanging greetings,
Climbing into a silver airplane, scaling
Heights in dreams that, almost, never stopped.

But, her room has changed now. White curtains border the
Window pane. A handmade spread inlaid in seas
Of clovers and hearts and contrasting blues and greens
Covers the bed. In dreams the memories
Return with numbing clarity, but she leaves them
There and turns under the touch of homespun.

such a red wagon

by Bilal F. Abdur-Razzaq

seemed like may had come at last to blanche, as she sat sunning herself upon a lichen-riddled boulder, just this side of kaycee, wyoming. her thoughts were the thoughts of a girl of twelve, green but fast growing. she thought of how she would be going up into the high country in a few weeks, soon as the snows melted some. this was to be her first year helping to herd the family's sheep. blanche knew that she would be all alone with the sheep during the daytime then. she shivered a little just thinking about it; and there were goose-pimples on her arms.

blanche had liked it when the summer days wound out in secret escapades through the forbidden shoshoni burial grounds up on bone mountain; or when she and her younger sister, leona, would comb the mountain glens and parks in search of boysen-, or goose-, or perhaps, simply blackberries, their mouths and hands all sticky with the purple juices. but journeys and berries, blanche was only fond of them, and could give them up for the mountains. quite different were the things she would miss way up near the big clouds: for instance, mr. too-fat's mound.

it is there, right next to the lichen-riddled boulder. a very, very special place: none of the grown-ups knew she knew about it. for blanche was always sure to give some excuse or the other for the time she spent in too-fat visitations. that day, as most every, blanche had placed her small bouquet of monk's hood and columbine at one end of the mound, whispering something beneath her breath. the grass, she thought to herself, would cover mr. too-fat's ground entirely this spring. surely, she thought, mr. too-fat would be pleased.

"you know, mr. too-fat," blanche began outloud, "you are quite lucky to have your home on the edge of a cliff. i bet sometimes you sit up and just look out over this huge, huge valley, don't you mr. too-fat?"

but mr. too-fat didn't quite feel like talking right then; so it was only natural that blanche's thoughts wondered elsewhere—like to mr. goway. he was so odd. and blanche figured he was pretty mean, too, because he hadn't let her ride in his charming redwood wagon. and she wasn't so sure mr. goway was normal. he saw things nobody else saw.

yesterday blanche had met mr. goway for the first time. she was busy making her way down the old dirt road that hugged the mountain side, when she heard a voice up ahead. it sounded like singing, so blanche hastened to catch a glimpse. the little redwood wagon was the very first thing that caught blanche's eye. the wagon was about two feet by four feet in size, with redwood siding and four metal wheels, trimmed with black rubber tires. most of all, there was the long, black handle that the tall man in the dirty white suit pulled it by. bang, bang, the wagon rattled behind him.

not surprisingly, blanche was a little leery at first. she hung back, trailing the man around each bend and lash of the road. now and then, she caught a bar or two of the song he was singing. it wasn't like the ones blanche sang at church, nor

similar to those her family sang around the yellow piano. the rhythm seemed very odd, and the words as strange.

i saw a little injun boy,
and this is what he said.
i was a little indian,
now i'm a little dead, dead, dead.

now since blanche walked the road most everyday, as she came and went from mr. too-fat's mound, she realized that the white-suited man was only two or three turns of the road from her house, the freesome estate. her parents never let blanche play with strangers. so she decided that if she were to have a ride in that wagon, it had better be before they reached her house. she broke into a sprint.

but just as suddenly, the man stopped. blanche was surprised enough to lose her balance for a moment and stumbled forward a yard or two. when she looked up, the man was staring at her. but without speaking a word to her, he reached down into the wagon. he fumbled around for a second, acted like he was talking to something inside it and then straightened back up. for an instance their eyes met again. the man smiled shyly, then turned and resumed pulling the wagon down the road.

"hey, mister, mister, stop, please, stop!"

"wha-a, what?"

"please, hold up a second."

"n-no, no, i-i can't. i go', i gotta go too far."

but even as the man spoke he came to a halt and looked warily at blanche.

"hi! my name's blanche freesome. what's yours?"

"m-my name's billy goway. an', an' that's mr. o-ono in the wagon. he never walks 'cept at night, 'cause he's real scared o' sunshine."

"i don't see mr. ono."

"that's on account o' i got'm hid under this here tarp, s-, so as to keep him shaded-like."

"oh."

blanche slowly looked away from the wagon bed and the drab green tarp wrinkled inside it. she had a little frown on; and it made her freckles stand out remarkably.

"do you think mr. ono would mind very much if i rode with him up to my house? it's just a little ways ahead."

"oh, no! no, i'm s-, sorry, but mr. ono's real scared o' people, too—even little'ns like you. why, i-i know he'd jus' wail and carry-on, if'n, if'n i was to let you crowd in there with'm."

well blanche didn't see anything poking up under the tarp. and she sort of figured that either mr. ono was awful grumpy for his size, or else mr. goway didn't want to tote any extra loads. whichever, blanche knew she was getting the short end. so she got a little angry.

"but mr. too-fat always let leona and me ride on his shoulders whenever we wanted. i don't see why you can't give me a ride just as far as my house."

the stranger didn't answer right away. he started shifting his weight from one foot to the other. things grew intense. during most of his unusual trek, mr. goway had had problems with the big people, like the railroad men who threw him off a boxcar at cheyenne. they had no sympathy for mr. ono's condition. they even threatened to crush the red wagon, mr. ono and all, with the train. it was only when mr. goway fell down, choking and wheezing in the snow, that the men decided they'd give him his wagon and be done with the whole mess.

perhaps it wasn't the best year for travel. but what else was there but to flee. even mr. goway, when he managed to catch a few cold hours of sleep, could still see the high, leaping flames that were always there. they burned and burned 'til his face felt like fever. and then he would always see, right before he awakened in a cold sweat, the purple coals that were buildings. even to shiver in the snow was better than roasting on those coals. and that's why billy goway wandered.

"wh-, who's this mr. too-fat, anyway?"

"oh, mr. too-fat was the best friend i ever had. he was always happy to give me a ride on his shoulders—well, almost always. but won't you give me a ride in your pretty red wagon, mr. goway?"

"a-, almost a-, always?"

"just one time he wouldn't. father says that's because he was getting too big. but i think it was just because he was too hot. leona kept pulling mr. too-fat's arms and on his ears, hanging around his neck, because she wanted him to push her back and forth in the swing and trot her around the house on his shoulders.

"wh-, what'd mr. too-fat do, then?"

"nothing! that's just it. i told leona he was acting like an indian, because father says indians never want to do anything but sit around under a tree and drink whiskey. so i told leona that what mr. too-fat really needed was a nice, cold bath. so i ran over to the horse tank and fetched a bucket of water back to the big oak tree where mr. too-fat was trying to sleep.

"wh-, what happened . . . you didn't . . ."

"oh, of course not. it was leona that threw the bucket in mr. too-fat's face. but i guess he didn't like it much, because he jumped up and shook little leona 'til i thought she was rubber and knew she was white. well, father came running out on the back porch, helling and screaming and firing his pistol up in the air, i put my hands over my ears. mother was screaming and crying. and mr. too-fat was so scared that he dropped little leona in the horse tank and took off running for the woods as fast as he could."

"an', an' i bet you n-, never seen hide nor hair o' him again, huh?"

"sure we seen him. he came back that same evening. father said it was because mr. too-fat was hungry and had a habit of eating with us—and because he wasn't too smart. father said he just had to be shot, because there was no telling what he might do next to leona. my father and uncle tobkins took mr. too-fat over to blood cliff on the old flat-bed. but that's supposed to be a secret!"

"oh, an', an' a very sad secret, miss blanchhe. i'm real sorry about mr. too-fat."

"don't feel bad, mr. goway. mr. too-fat has a very nice view from his mound.

and father says it doesn't really matter to mr. too-fat, because bears sleep half of their lives away, anyway."

"i-, i see. well, i guess i'd better be going then."

"but where are you going, mr. goway?"

"i-, i gotta take mr. ono to shadow-land."

"shadow-land, where's that?"

"a long, long ways, or a short'n, depending."

"you could ask my father. he knows where all the places are."

"ai- ain't no-, nobody knows where shadow-land is, -cept them who's already living there, miss."

"but i don't understand."

"mo-, most folks don't."

mr. goway smiled again, then started off, pulling his wagon."

"oh, but what about my ride?"

"sorry, ca-, can't help you any."

blanche stood watching mr. goway saunter down the road with the wagon popping and popping at every rock. then she got an idea and started running after mr. goway again.

"if you won't let me have a ride, won't you just let me pull your wagon as far as my house, mr. goway?"

"i-, i better not. you see, i-, i gotta . . ."

"please, please!"

"ok, ok, but just to your house an' no further."

blanche reached out and slowly touched the shiny metal loop with one finger, with two and then grabbed the handle firmly with both hands. she turned around and tugged with one arm, finding the redwood wagon not half so hard to pull as she had imagined.

"hear now, miss blanche. you got-, you gotta take it real slow-like, or else you'll shake mr. ono silly. an' lord knows, he been shook plenty already!"

but blanche was dumb to mr. goway's admonition, so much did the thrill of pulling the redwood wagon enthrall her. the road widened unaccountably; the sky expanded before her eyes. and from the back of her mind, a single, haunting impulse thumped 'faster and faster!', until blanche was nearly running at full-speed. it must have been hard for mr. ono. time and again, the wagon shuddered and leered radically to one side, even threatened to overturn once or twice. the redwood siding wobbled left and right with such furor and cacophony of creaking, that blanche even thought she once heard a small, thin voice coming from behind her. of course, it had to be her imagination.

one thing, however, was very real: mr. goway's concern. when blanche ran, he had followed, running too. blanche was certain he must be very angry, because he was breathing very heavily, just like her fatherr did when he was mad. and blanche managed to sneak a look at her pursuer. it was frightening. there was mr. goway, trying to do his best to run, while he tugged at his black neck-tie with one hand and pointed at her with his other. he face was so red. in fact, it looked a lot like uncle tobbsins', when he swallowed a fish bone once during sunday dinner,

and it chose to dig in about half-way down his esophagus. blanche had never cared much for uncle tobbsins. and that's why she ran even faster and the wagon kicked even higher.

there was pounding in her ears and a sharp pain in her chest. blanche thought she'd never reach home. and then, suddenly, she was there. it took a second to get re-orientated. but sure enough, there were her three older brothers and father freesome relaxing in the shade of the front porch, having a smoke. as usual, mr. pickins, the hired hand, was having problems keeping his pipe lit. rather, they had been relaxing. for they had heard the ruckus coming around the bend and had risen to a crouch of anticipation. they couldn't make sense of what the man was yelling. all they saw was their twelve-year old blanche, pulling an odd little wagon and being hotly pursued by a tall, red-faced man, who was hollering and wild-eyed.

but blanche didn't have to explain a thing. even her father didn't bother to ask her about the red wagon. everyone was just too busy with mr. goway. it happened so suddenly. her mother came scurrying out the front door, holding her apron down with both arms. blanche had never seen her look so frightened. she came right for blanche, grabbed her by the arm and hurried her into the house and up to her room. she ordered blanche not to leave. the door slammed. blanche figured she had done something pretty wrong and that it wouldn't be long before she heard her father come trudging up the stairs to give her a whipping. blanche sat down slowly on her bed and summoned a few tears, prepared for the worst.

but he didn't come. the fact is, everyone was so interested in mr. goway that little attention was spared for blanche. now that was alright with her, although she did wonder about the whereabouts of the wagon. but that night at supper, no one wanted to talk about either mr. goway or the wagon. when blanche asked her mother why mr. goway hadn't been invited to supper, she was told that he had had to leave unexpectedly and that she wasn't to talk further about mr. goway or his wagon with family or strangers. she wanted to ask where the wagon was, but thought better of it.

"so you see, mr. too-fat, i didn't get to keep the pretty red wagon. and i so wanted to!"

blanche leaned back against the large boulder next to too-fat's mound and let her eyes slip down over the cliff's edge and fall among the large rusty-colored rocks that clung there. it wasn't an especially steep cliff. there were steeper ones along the road. blanche could even scale it with little difficulty. but the rocks were red, dark red. and that is what made it different. uncle tobbsins had once told her that the reason the rocks were red was because the shoshoni used to throw their war captives down upon them. and that that was why it was called blood cliff, too. but uncle tobbsins was known to stretch a story. blanche wasn't sure she believed him.

then blanche's eye caught something. a tingle ran up her spine. red, she saw a little swatch of bright red sticking up between a couple of boulders, about fifty feet further down the slope. at once blanche decided to investigate. slowly she eased herself from one rock down to the next. in ten minutes she was just some

ten or fifteen feet above the object. but in order to see it properly, blanche had to lie flat on her stomach and gently ease herself out on a small ledge that jutted from the cliff. that deep, fast thumping returned to her ears. she leaned out just a little bit more. then there it was.

she saw it fully now. or rather, she saw a part of it fully. for what had been the redwood wagon was now a littering of splintered wood, mangled and torn into a dozen or more large and small pieces. for a second all that blanche noticed was that there were little tiny grains of sand sticking to the creases of her palms. she felt sick and shut her eyes. when some of her strength returned, she opened her eyes again and started locating the wagon once more. after a while, blanche spotted the black iron chassis that had supported the redwood sidings and which extended out into the shiny black handle. but there was something more. there was what looked like a hand. there was a torn sleeve of dirty white cotton.

blanche spent no more of the day at blood cliff. she climbed right back up the cliff and didn't even stop when she passed by too-fat's mound. she crawled up the dirt embankment and scampered on to the road. not once did she turn to look back. all the way home she was silent. her head seemed as empty as the sky above her. a solitary thought, small but dominating, was aloft in her mind. she wasn't certain whether she was angry or sad. but she was disappointed, truly unsatisfied with the course of the day. it was such a sad, sad outcome, she thought, for such a redwood wagon.

The balloon-man-clown

by Melinda Melhus

The balloon-man-clown floats on down
the cobblestone streets of Tivoli,
parting the Copenhagen air
in hues of red and green, yellow

and blue bobbing lightly on the
edge of long white strings as children
jingle copper coins and tug grey
baggy pants, screaming for just one more.

The lights go down on Tivoli
and cobblestone streets grow silent
as the balloon-man-clown lets loose

his strands of silver—a floating
offering of red-green-yellow-
blue marbled into one white moon.





Ice-scape by Eric Spanenberg

Five Below

by Scott Razak

and the sun is held overhead
in a frieze
of white marble,
shaves of snow
fall from the thickened cloud-white sky
and etch the
field of icy air
about me
sharp and clear

grainy snow has dusted sweeping white
the frozen brown prairie;
hills of brown thatch poke stubbornly through—
their stiff rattle in the wind
a requiem for summer's pliant
green sweeps through evening air.
their harmony now is of a sharper tone—
windblown snow scatters upon brittle leaves
and shards of jack-in-the pulpit beat hollow
rhythm, gone to seed

five below
and winter's white well
collects with snowfall.
frozen white-water masses in drifts
along a far landscape dead and brown;
from underneath this snow and ice
the grasses will inspire themselves to stand again
when presently winter's silent whitefull well
melts down to mingle with spring water.

Jacob's Well: Perspective

by Carol Suderman

The Woman:

Asks me for a drink, this Jew
Of them who call us scum?
Surely he mocks me, a Samaritan,
Surely he mocks me, a woman,
 But how-to ask of him
 Living water, the gift of GOD,
A man, he is a Jew
Oh, how he vaunteth himself—
He a Jew; and I the scum—woman.
 Water from which never thirst—
Ah! Give of this; I draw no more.
 But who is He—this Jew;
 He who knows me—the men I've known;
 A prophet that I have met—this Jew?
But I, the rest, are scum.
How visits this prophet, and speaks of GOD?
 This Jew; who is He? Who is the Christ?
 "I who speak to you am He."
 This Jew—He knoweth me; and I—

The Disciple:

Robbery, that's what I say
A loaf of bread, some wine—
And they the Samaritans cheat us.
 But here is the Master; smile.
 He is the one we serve, we love.
My mouth is dusty as my feet,
We walk in the scum—Samaria.
 Master, Thou speakest to a woman.
 My Lord . . . But say nothing.
"Master eat."
 "Food I have you know not of."

My feet are scummed, and we are cheated.
And who has fed our Lord, the One we serve?
We are cheated, we—the chosen ones.

 "My food to do His will, accomplish His work."
 The fields, they are white—
 Where you have not labored, reap."
Master, the One we love, we serve:
This Jew, who is He? And I—

Birth

by Anna Climenhaga

Ulysses, from a further shore we part
Than ever battled by you or sung by me
Or even dreamt of in our child's heart.
We sail outward from this quiet sea,
The light a stranger shade of coraled green,
Our mother's breast a different shade of blue,
Than it appeared from there, inside the womb,
In the blood and water home that we once knew.

Our shelters gone, we meet the cooler air
Eager for breath, not craftsmen at the skill,
Choke and shiver, and in our blindness, tear
Uselessly at our deliverer's hand. Still,
Although in pain through the gates we come,
We learn to sail this different ocean.

Kadesh-Barnea

by Cindy Bily

You know, I used to be afraid of water,
(placing little faith in papyrus and pitch)
never dreaming that one day
I would turn it to blood
or send it leaping from a desert mountain.
Remember that day at Baal-zephon?
So long ago—so very long ago. And now,
think of it—
all that we have worked for
depends on the obedience of this rock.
Who would blame me, Aaron—
who would blame me if I tapped it just once or twice
for luck?

Rain

by Giovanna T. Cook

Rome sings in the rain.
A nordic nymph dances
in the Trevi fountain.

The wet smell of pines
wafts in shining streets
that reflect neon signs.

Cacophony of sounds,
music and foreign speech
and traffic all around.

No parking in Babel's Tower,
in Babylon revisited,
seat of the Pope's power.

From a sky like cement,
rain streams down to wash
marble monuments.

Turn off the spout,
Jupiter Pluvio,
and let the sun out.

Rome is a wanton.
Laughing, she shakes the flowers
from her hair to taunt you.

Pastoral #4

by Mike Hurd

My love is fair,
summer fields
ripe with grain and sun.
Her hair sifts the wind;
enchanted, warm breezes
linger in her curls,
mingle with her perfumes.
She breathes upon my neck:
August sighs in fields
of dry, tall grass.
Her face is peace,
green meadows
in high mountains.

The Sower

for Vincent Van Gogh

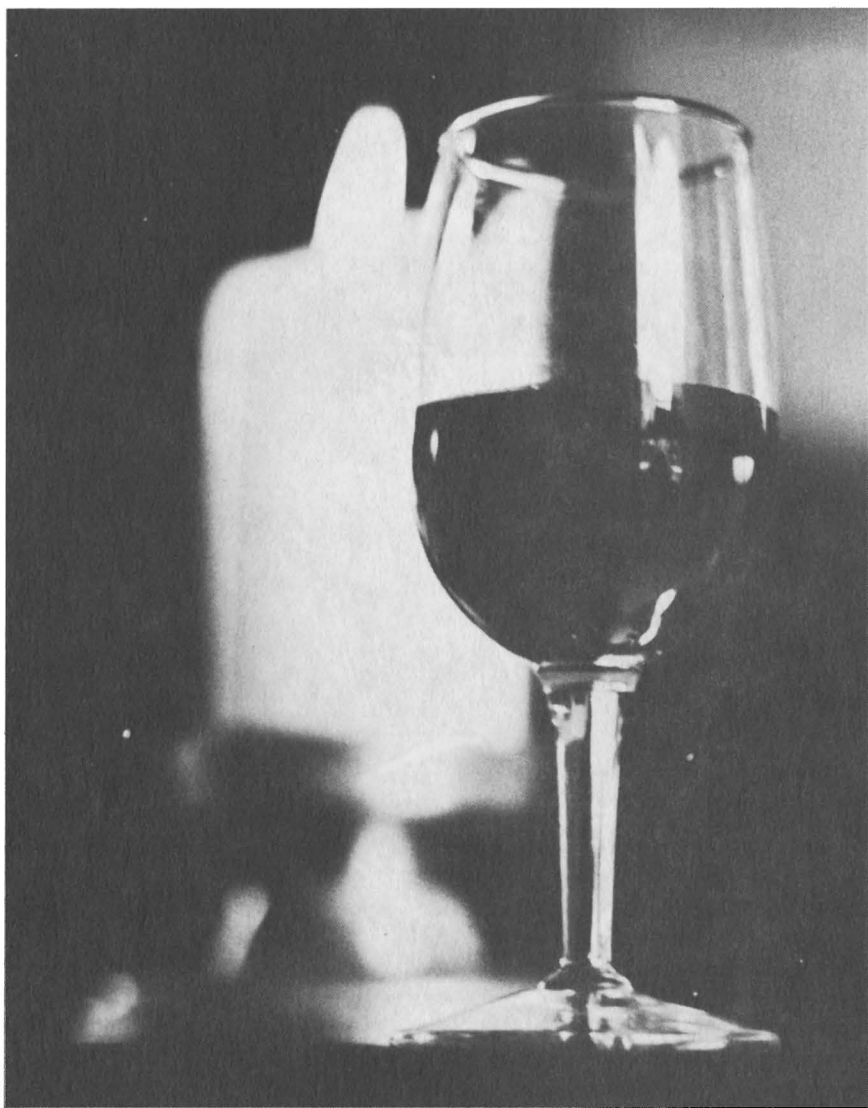
by Ken Shedd

Infused by revelation's harsh,
quick strokes, and the turning of the
spade, the power of a violet field
swells below the sunlit, golden
glitter of a sea of wheat.

And you are there, alone—
the bridge between the
heaving waters; your body
swimming with the field,
your eyes harvesting the horizon.



by Dan Brazil



Wine-glow by Melinda Melhus

He Leaves at Dusk

by Carol Wright

It is dusk,
and the leaves whisper monotones
like muddled murmurs from a still cat,
while they huddle outside her window—
shaking, striking, and swinging.
And the lamp on the chest
touches her hair with a weak,
whimpering sigh.
The room leans back; the leaves are cold.
Her mind's quiet mood is hypnotized
by shriveled sounds
that leave trailing ashes
behind the dim corners of her eyes

where dreams drown
in a flood of sifting memories—
misty thoughts and lingering losses
of men who left her wandering
thru a shifting sand-wind.
She knows time scattered these leaves,
but together she remembers:
we were so much alike; apart,
we had nothing in common;
the leaves watched her, and she the men—
words could never settle colorful arguments
when leaves parted in separate shreds.

It is dusk,
and she sits upstairs
by her bedroom window,
sketching a stranger—
the man she often visits in
an endless dream,
who now blends into
a scattering fall's undressing.
(He leaves soon, but will he?)
Lonely, she thinks,
how some freed leaves scurry from his shoes,
but a stranded one wants to stay.
And she hesitates . . .
then turns from the window,
preserving the company of his captive shadow
within her secret, locked walls.

And the full moon fades into
the branches that are released
from the wind's persistent punishment . . .

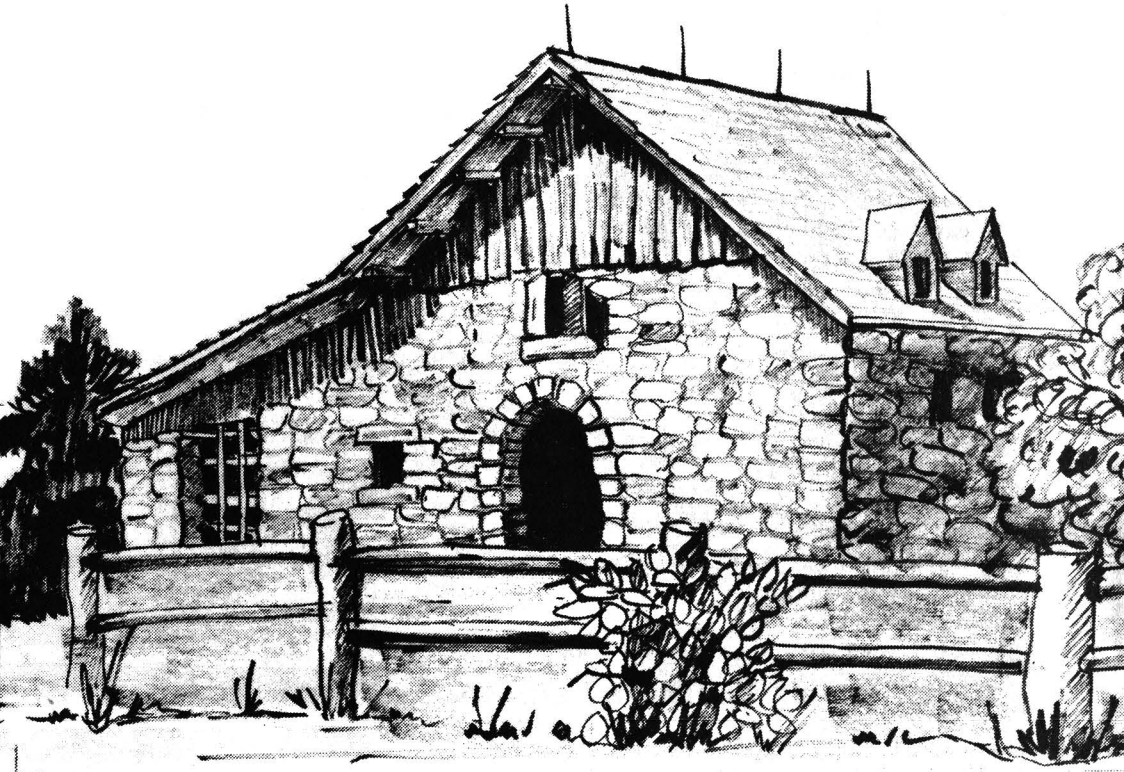
Depression

by Laura Peck

Greybreak, another sunless day
Holding cold and damp
Inside.

Twilight at ten
And every hour darkens
Deepens

Blacking into
Starless arctic
Noon.



by Cheri Spener

Tuttle Cove

by Kim Wilson

They flooded the farmland
when I was a child.
Damned the dirty water
and kept us a lake.

Back in the coves,
sleeping sailboats
now rest, where
tractors in winter
once rusted.

Back in the coves,
a hundred naked trees
jut their trunks and limbs
from the chilled water.
Many a time I have
fished in this cemetery,
ignoring their stark statement,
ashamed at playing amongst
their death.

Dark Iris

by Giovanna T. Cook

Wind currents brewed storms of air, plunging
on inland-locked seas of winter wheat,
waving, waging war and submitting;
and I, battered, mastered, bent my head
else I would not have seen the loveliness
under the jagged brambles, still unleaved,
of your night-born flower, star-opened,
untroubled, sturdy-stalked, strangely secured.
There, in the harbor of your purple depths, immersed,
circled by your green swords, I, protected,
explored your world, inky-blue-watered,
sailed each outlined petal, yellow-downed,
and quietly, in the violet vortex, drowned.

The Automated-Bear Blueberry Picker

by Daniel P. Paretsky

"This," thought Abernathy P. Bear, dropping a blueberry into his pail, "is no life for a bear," and he dropped a handful of berries down his open mouth. Another berry went into the pail and six into his mouth. "Honeybears manage quite nicely on their honey," he continued to himself, "and you never see a thin polar bear. But who ever heard of a blueberry bear? At least one who was not self-employed?"

Abernathy chewed the last of the berries in his mouth, plucked a few more of which he tasted two and kept one which plunked hollowly against the bottom of the pail barely covered with the blue fruit. He gathered up the pail, ate one more berry, and set off down the hill from the blueberry patch humming the blueberry blues. The closer he came to the cabin the bluer he got. He just knew that Ms. Hawkins was going to be angry.

Ms. Hawkins didn't say anything when she looked at the berries. She didn't say anything when she looked at Abernathy. Abernathy shifted uncomfortably from one foot to the other and pretended to scratch his nose while washing the blueberry juice from the corners of his mouth with his paw. Ms. Hawkins dumped the berries out on the table and proceeded to count them. When she had finished she looked back at Abernathy again.

"Abernathy P. Bear, how many jars of blueberry jam do you suppose we can make from all of these blueberries that you picked today?" She sighed. She knew that he knew that she couldn't make even one jar of jam with thirty-seven blueberries.

"With all of the berries that you have picked this week I can make three jars of jam. Last week I made four and the week before that I made five. If I eat one jar, and if you eat one jar, then we will have a grand total of one jar to sell when the person from the jam company comes tomorrow. Abernathy, you and I cannot live on the profits from one jar of jam!"

Abernathy shifted feet and hung his head. He knew that she was right. They had agreed that he would pick the berries, for nobody knows how to find the plumpest, juiciest blueberries like a bear does, and she would make the jam, for nobody made jam like Ms. Hawkins did, and they would split the money they made by selling the jam and keep at least one jar apiece to eat themselves. This arrangement had worked fine for some time. The more berries Abernathy picked the more jars they could keep for themselves, and if there was one thing in life the bear liked better than fresh picked blueberries, it was fresh blueberry jam.

At last the day came when he had picked so many blueberries that Ms. Hawkins could not keep up and gave him the afternoon off. He decided to watch her at work in the kitchen boiling, sugaring, and stirring. Abernathy noticed that she tasted every batch of jam before pouring it into the glass jars.

She had smiled at him, had given him the spoon to lick, and said, "After all, only the best for Real Bear Blueberry Jam!" Abernathy had started thinking

about that. If Ms. Hawkins tasted the jam to see that it was the best, then he could help by tasting the berries. It only made sense: The very best berries would make the very best jam.

The next day Abernathy P. Bear began tasting the blueberries he picked. Every time he gathered a handful of blueberries he tasted one before dropping the rest into his pail. Then he tasted two from every handful, just to be absolutely positive that he picked only the best. It was not long at all before he was tasting a handful of berries and keeping one, and the output of blueberry jam had dropped to almost zero.

The following morning when Mr. Peabody from Jams, Incorporated, pulled up in front of Ms. Hawkins cabin she had only the one jar for him. He pushed his hat back and scratched his forehead thoughtfully. "Well, Ms. Hawkins," he began slowly, "Real-Bear Picked Blueberry Jam is the very best blueberry jam we've ever been able to find anywhere, but I can't keep coming all of the way up here into the mountains just to buy one jar. That doesn't even pay for my gas. Guess we're just going to have to find somebody else."

Mr. Peabody turned to go and then stopped. "One thing I don't understand though. I mean, there are all of those blueberries up there, and you've got the finest bear blueberry picker in the country. But only one jar of jam! It just doesn't make sense." He scratched his head again, climbed back into his car, and rolled away down the mountain.

That was Saturday. On Sunday they never worked. Monday morning bright and early Abernathy P. Bear showed up at the little cabin to get his berry pail. He knocked once before he saw the sign on the door. It read:

REAL-BEAR BLUEBERRY WORKS CLOSED INDEFINITELY

A light burned in the kitchen window and he could hear hammering and sawing coming from the basement, so Abernathy knocked again but there was still no answer.

His head hanging, Abernathy headed back to his cave. It was all his fault, he knew. "But, bears **like** blueberries," he mumbled to himself. "Almost as much as they like blueberry jam, and besides, I just wanted to be sure that we used the very best blueberries. However, I must do something to help Ms. Hawkins or we shall both have to leave the mountains."

Unfortunately for the bear, by the time that he decided to give up tasting the berries that he picked, Mr. Peabody, true to his word, was standing at the door of another small cabin. "Yes, Carl, Jams, Incorporated will buy all of the blueberry jam that you can make. I'll be by this Saturday to pick up the first batch."

Carl True smiled. Ever since Ms. Hawkins and Abernathy P. Bear had started Real-Bear Picked Blueberry Jam, he had been unable to sell True Blue Blueberry Jam, not only because Ms. Hawkins' jam was so good, but also because his jam was so bad. Now that Abernathy was eating blueberries instead of picking them, True had the only jam on the mountain.

Carl had waited for this day for years. He hurried to the shed behind his cabin and began dusting off a machine that looked like a combination of

biplane, fifty-cup coffee percolator and garden tractor. "Tomorrow the True Blue Blueberry-Picking Machine will make me rich," he laughed.

Every week when Mr. Peabody came by, Mr. True had hundreds of jars of True Blue Blueberry Jam ready. Every week when Abernathy knocked on the door of the little cabin on the mountain, he could see the light in the kitchen and hear the sawing and hammering, but the sign remained and nobody ever answered. As the bear would walk back up the mountain to his cave he could always hear the sound of Carl True's blueberry picker roaring in the distance. The smell of cooking jam from the kitchen where Carl True worked over his hot stove drifted over the mountain, and the other animals who lived there began talking about moving away for that blueberry picker picked not only blueberries; it also gather in weeds, rocks, old rubber tires and much more. In short, it picked everything it passed near and the jam it made smelled and tasted terrible.

Early one morning, Abernathy stood in the door of his cave and announced, "Maybe Ms. Hawkins is willing to take this lying down. I am not. My job is to pick berries. Hers is to make jam. I am going to do my job, and if she doesn't do hers, the it will be her fault that people have to buy **his** jam."

Abernathy took his last clean pillowcase and headed for the choicest blueberry patch. He had not been picking very long when he heard the thundering roar and before he could move Abernathy was flattened by the True Blue Blueberry Picking Machine as it rolled by grabbing berries off the bushes. As the bear tried to pick himself up it rushed back by. "This," thought Abernathy as he watched the contraption disappear over a hill, "is going to be more dangerous than I had thought."

Despite several return trips by the machine during which it would try to pick the bear, Abernathy managed to pick many handfuls of blueberries. Enough of these found their way into the pillowcase that when the sun set and Abernathy walked to the cabin it was almost half-filled with the juiciest fruit that only a bear can pick. He was sure that soon Mr. Peabody would be coming back to buy Real-Bear Blueberry Jam. He set the berries on the porch of the little cabin and knocked on the door.

Something was wrong. No light burned in the kitchen. No sounds came from the basement. "Maybe she has gone away to live with her cousin in New York," thought Abernathy sadly. "At least she could have said good-bye. If that's the way she is going to be, I'll just come back tomorrow and make the jam myself."

Abernathy started for the cabin early the next morning. Even from the top of the mountain he could see that the door of the cabin stood open, and as he drew closer he could see Ms. Hawkins standing on the porch with another bear. Abernathy sat down on a rock and buried his face in his paws. He felt just awful. His old friend and partner had hired another bear to pick blueberries. He watched as the new bear headed up the mountain straight for that choicest blueberry patch where he had been the day before. It picked only the best berries and dropped them all carefully into the pail without eating any.

This went on all morning. The bear picked many pails of berries, carrying them down to the cabin where smoke came from the chimney for the first time in



by Maryanne Odell

a month. Finally Abernathy's curiosity got the better of him and he walked over to the new bear.

"Ahem," he coughed, clearing his throat. "I'm Abernathy. Abernathy P. Bear. Ms. Hawkins has probably mentioned me. I helped her get started in the blueberry jam business."

The other bear just kept on picking the choicest blueberries. It didn't turn to look at Abernathy or stop to answer his questions. Abernathy walked a little closer. There was something strange about this new bear. Something very strange indeed. It looked more like an overgrown teddybear than a real-bear blueberry picker, and a low hum came from its chest. And right above the tail there was a sign: **The Hawkins Automated-Bear Blueberry Picker**. This was what Ms. Hawkins had been building in her basement.

"No wonder it doesn't eat the berries," sighed Abernathy. "Only real bears eat berries. Now I shall have to move away and take a job as a honey bear. Or maybe even as a polar bear." He shuddered at this last thought.

Abernathy walked down to the cabin for the last time to say good-bye to Ms. Hawkins before he left for the North Pole to find a job as a polar bear. He raised a paw to knock one last time on the door. Then he saw a new sign.

NEEDED: REAL BEAR TO LABEL JAM JARS FOR
AUTOMATED-BEAR PICKED BLUEBERRY JAM COMPANY.
M HAWKINS & AP BEAR, PROPRIETORS

It was not long before Carl True returned his machine to the shed. Everyday Ms. Hawkins and Abernathy worked in the kitchen turning out hundreds upon hundreds of jars of jam. Only, Ms. Hawkins had to watch Abernathy P. Bear closely.

For if there is one thing that a real bear likes better than fresh blueberries, it is fresh blueberry jam.

Times

by Kim Wilson

may seem
smoothed and straightened,
properly curled at the ends,
but always underneath
there lurks,
at the nape of the neck,
a knot.

God Doesn't Entertain with Skateboards

by Laura Peck

God doesn't entertain with frisbees or skateboards
But spends his time overworking, looking
Over the universe. His mien accords
With sunset painting, sermons and tea-sipping.
Is he never tempted to stop and go
Fishing, to don hat and oil diving
Into cerulean blue, sparkling flow
Of water, or to relax against sand, sipping
Red wine. Is he Monday-weary of taking
Up his work where he left off to play
A young unearthing, teaching, water walking
Before taking up with thieves ended his day.

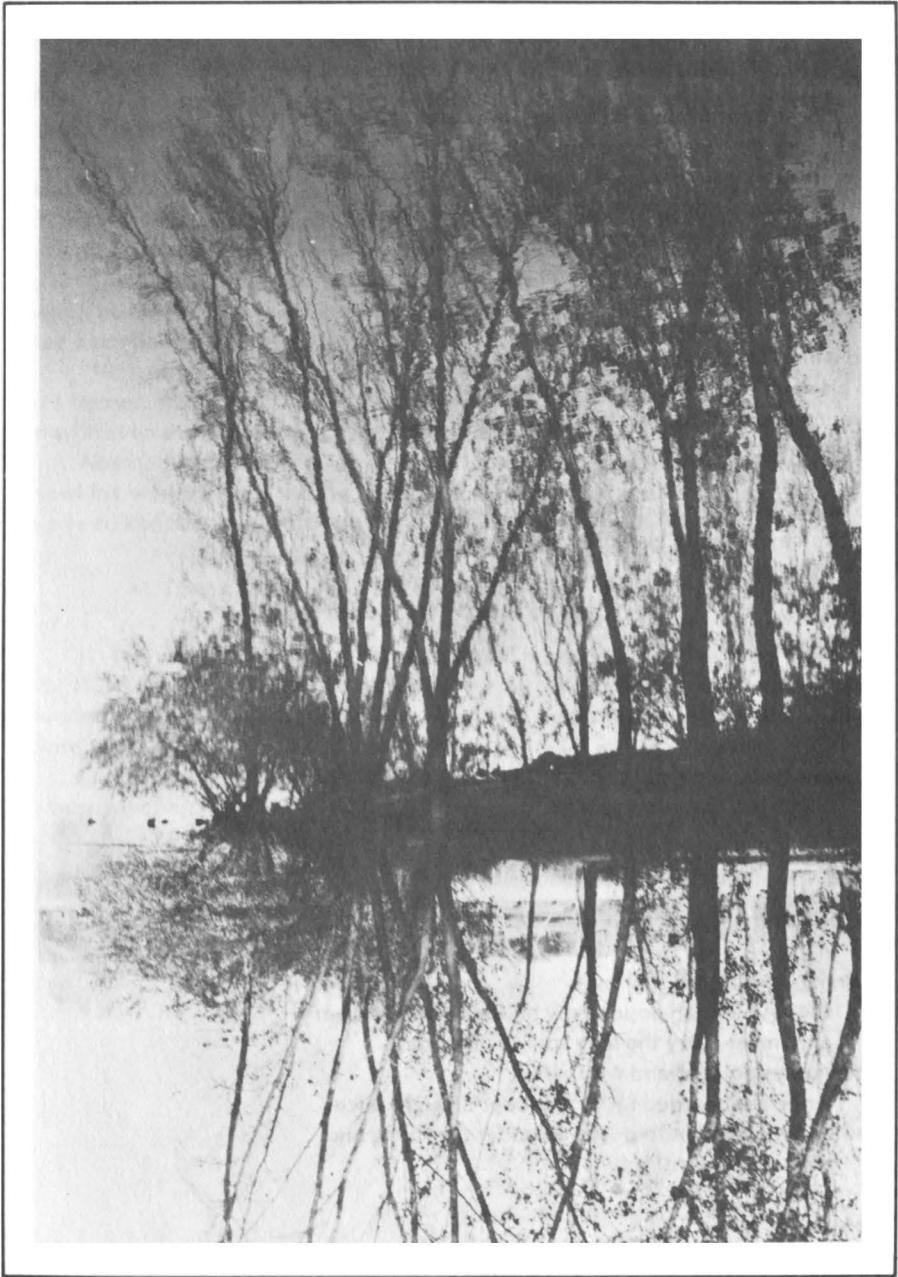
Do saints and angels bore him? Does he crave
That spice of devilry his fallen angel gave?

Circus

by Judy Roth

Turning—while still smiling—
the fat old man popped my balloon with his cigar
and in her hurry the lady spilled my soda.
The masses pointed and whispered
while the bearded fat lady looked straight ahead;
and someone forgot to put a net under the flying man
with the bronze body.

The next morning
walking through the rubble of discarded Pepsi cups
I crawled under the side of a tent hidden
by the facade of the midway
and found the fat lady—without a beard—
crying.



Rocky Pond by Eric Spanenberg

Love in state

by Velina Houston

It does not matter how goes the song
within my hollow heart.
I know I am done with
 Barrett's grace,
whether turning from praise
or striving for right (of way).

Done with shadows
that pound behind my eyes
 urgent in their demands,
 shameless in their directions.

Mine will be a time
of pregnant silence.
The widow of
a state of affair(s).

Rondeau at Sunrise

by Mike Hurd

The song is light: its flutter wings
blend color with dawn, as sun rings
golden on dew-moist feathers. Night
shadows one final chord; the light
reply up from the high grass springs.

Pinions spread as morning breeze wrings
out the dew's melody which clings,
then scatters into three-part flight.
 The song is light.

No morning's consort pipes or strings
will ever sound such grace in king's
chambers, for human music quite
stills before the resonance bright
of the valley's dawn-feathered things,
 whose song is light.

Verona

by Giovanna T. Cook

The stars that curtained
that one night of love,
once again shine
fragmented in the river,
reflecting, casting
multiplied images
of Juliets in pink gowns.
They gather in the garden
where the wind still whispers
the promises and the vows.
The night, the same;
only the music changes.

3113 Revenge Street

by Carol Wright

"Once upon a time," I hummed.
I used to live alone, I thought,
on a boulevard for boulevardiers
with just an air of fresh aplomb.

Now, the air shakes and clanks
my shining armor;
the giant sunball rolls and hits
my cracking skin.
My foundation rocks;
I could split anyday,
but I must hang on to live here.
My tale's a real "tear-jearker"
(as my friends along the block say),
thus, my old attitude goes this way:
It's 19 Souls Invading my Private quarters!
Tsk, spitting sinks, oozing drains,
what a pain!

My pipes are weak, but I still can speak.
The couple in 204 can barely sleep,
because (heh-heh) I leak, leak, and leak.
(Why should I suffer? I'm a simple complex).
Johns erupt, pets scream, and kids hide
anywhere. (And my basement's strangled
by a sewer).
Those "pot puree hot-heads" in 315
are fuming my lungs both high and low-
my rooms (alas) are victimless crimes,
until vented, they smell like
ole "so and so . . ."

Ah . . . here trots the landlady once a month
(singing off-key)
who intimidates and tries to explain
"theories of gas thermos" in 202,
when really she sucks and B.S. is her name.
She's dressed in haze from head to toe;
her eyes emit putrid greedy-greens
(psst . . . they're truly a rip-off blue).
Anyway, who cares? She smiles just the same.

Four cramped floors curve this old body,
and more than my canes—by boulders
refuse support . . . I say, I see what's going on,
for I may be old, but my mind is young . . .
And calmly I'll blow a fuse in 407,
pardon E.S.P. on stair's tranquility,
and throw an architect fit in 511!



by Dan Brazil

Retrospect

by Donovan Hendricks

Janice the bank teller
Looks as crisp and clean as
A new dollar bill. At one time
She waged a war against the
Twinkies and thought that
Ronald McDonald should be run out
Of town, flying hamburger and all.
But she gave up her carrot sticks
And poncho long ago for a carpeted,
Air conditioned nine to five.
She says it's a living.

And Thomas used to say that
Love could save the day; and he
Always made a point to bring his
Guitar (with the ugly hand painted
Portrait of John Lennon on the back)
With him everywhere and sing, "I'd
Love to turn you on." I heard
He's since moved to the country,
Saying it doesn't make any difference
One way or another because the world
Is doomed; so all he does is
Read Jeffers and Revelations.

Yesterday I saw Pee Wee or whatever he's
Called now chanting Krsna Krsna
In front of Woolworths with
Cymbals on the fingers that used
To play Clapton note for note.
His Camaro, you know, was the
Fastest car in town.
But '69 was a long time ago.

Raisinettes

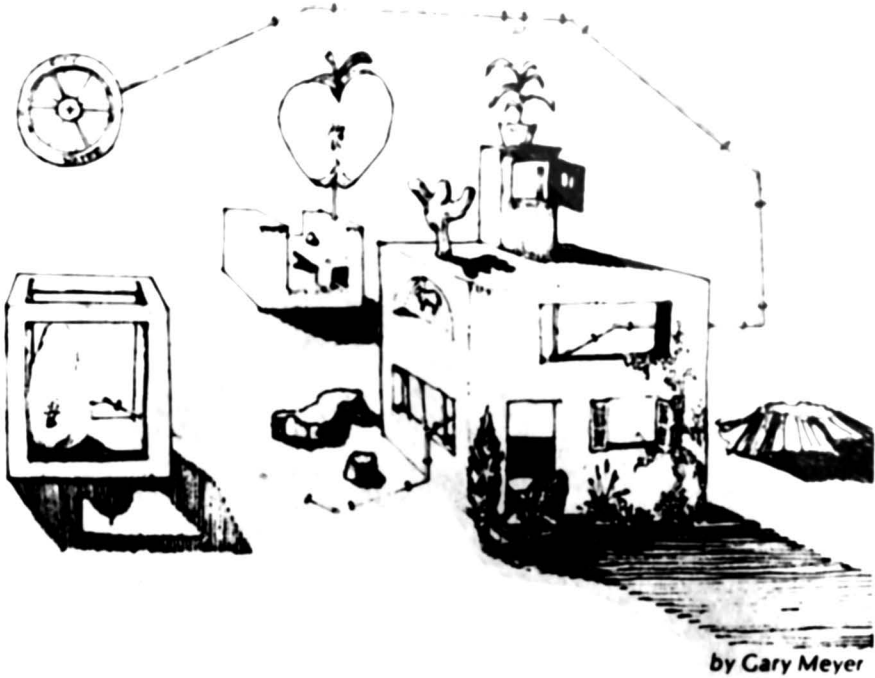
by Carl Huffman

I think,
a mouse got
into your candy jar.

Mind Warp

by Kim Wilson

The music loud
enough to hear
in the bubbly tub
vibrates the silver fixtures.
The scratches on
the album
click close overhead
like invisible
science fiction flies,
ready to attack
the pink islands
of my nipples and knees,
but I'm saved
by the next floating
note.



Northeast Industrial Park

by Judy Roth

Narrow brick streets quilted that part of town
seldom visited by the city fathers.
And the railroad seamed in the edges.
Old heavy branches provided
peaceful shade for wooden front porches,
beckoning the occupants to afternoon siestas
and cool evening neighborhood gatherings.
Homes were shared by aunts and grandmas
and children.
And Our Lady of Guadalupe, in the midst,
echoed Spanish hymns on Sunday morning.

Wind whips the unmowed grass—wild weeds;
and old driveways grope for imaginary houses.
Even Our Lady of Guadalupe succumbed to the rat poisoning
and then the bulldozer.
Only the roads remain, waiting for fulfillment
of that promise of progress.



Barn-siding by Eric Spanenberg

Respects

by Melinda Melhus

The people didn't even turn
when I screamed; only a man
from the aisle in a dark blue
suit and skinny black tie
said, "Jesus Christ, girl;
don't you have any respect for
for the dead?"

He was cold and clammy—the
earth began crawling up
his arm. I ran,
looking for dandelions in a
ditch or children laughing with
a slippery-slide; but
the ground was only cold

and wet.
Clear, cool rain mixed
with the salt on my cheeks
and my tongue; no fresh
cinnamon bread smells came
through the dark,
blue-black clouds.

Death Without The Sea

by Myrna Spangenberg

On dry,
barren
sand,
groping
for breath,
between garbled,
half-heard sea stories
and gulps
of froth and foam,
old, drunken sailors,
like dying fish,
fathom the sea
as none
other.

Aftermath

by Sandy Siebert

The moon has forgotten the tide
And a glass-still sea
Stretches toward an empty sky;

Cold sands lie
Where once foamed waves
Battered quaking rock;

The air is still,
Heavy as the sea,
My foot leaves no impression

In the sand,
My cries, no
Impression in the air,

The stone is smooth
Unshivering in
The cold.

The Dream (Part Three)

by Ted Grossardt

Through eyes narrowed to wrinkled windows, I see the highway ticking under me, disappearing behind the turquoise hood of the car. On either side, dark fields are freshening into green. Above, the steep hill crests appraise me and the valleys below both sadly and thankfully; sad to see the wounds and cancers inflicted by men on their sides, but thankful they have fared better than the valleys. The hills have only a collection of angry weeds to show for their overgrazed condition. Small meandering crevices trace where their tears have rolled away through the valleys to be collected and diverted by men—"irrigation." The hills have seen the first fearful testings of men, the bold rush, the methodical destruction, and now the disfigured complexion of progress growing up and across the land. They lie patiently waiting; someday they and the sky will again be master of their world.

The clouds bunch in blue moodiness and gather their forces against the blazing light above them. To my left, a bleached white sheen springs from the forms on the landscape, signalling a skirmish won by the sun. The inane music disco-hopping out of the radio yields to a pseudoserious d.j. reciting the A.P. wire. After that, a reminder about the blizzard raking the country side ahead of me. I look up to notice that, sure enough, the clouds have closed in around the hills again, shouldering aside the sun for good. I've been on the road an hour already, and I'm still searching the ground ahead for the first telltale dandruff flakes of snow.

Off to my right, I notice a billboard battered to the earth by the low-hanging tree beside it. Strangely, the image seems not unusual—a few moments of memory stirring turn up a sleep-rending dream from years before where I see a burrow on a hillside . . . there . . . on a hillside . . . Out of the corner of my eye I see the mound on the road in time to avoid it. In the rearview mirror appears the tan underbelly and masked face of a badger—in the slow movie in my head he emerges from his burrow to check the progress of the blizzard. My memory begins skipping ahead in the dream and I fight to ignore it—it and the three clear signs now foretelling my dream. The only element missing is the snow, and it is sure to follow.

"Dreams are only dreams," I mutter, "and besides, the man really didn't look like me at all. He seemed more like . . . like a hungry animal—like that badger," I conclude triumphantly. Then, the memory of its bloated form lying on the highway silences my argument.

I've found that freezing to death is really a peaceful thing, a sort of coaxing away from life. Still, I've never like being lead anywhere, especially to my death. No matter, though. Everything is already in motion, and I am in it. The final

element now will be the snow on the teeth of the wind already sweeping down and across the highway. There is nothing to do but continue driving and see how soon it comes. The hills march slowly by, stately against the deepening blue. I am thirty miles from home, inspecting the air and the road every mile of the way—but still nothing. With fifteen miles to go, my palms begin to sweat; any minute, any second the flakes should start, tentatively testing; then, bolder, swirling down in graceful ballets; then, stronger, slanting in towards the earth, knife-sharp needles biting at the landscape.

I remember an old high school physics text describing earth as having collected a “scum called life” on its surface. What a way for this piece of scum to die. Now, I turn off for a last stretch of five miles. Gently, ever so gently, I ease onto the accelerator, afraid of upsetting whatever balance it is that has kept the storm dormant to this instant. With the engine only murmuring, I roll down the road, staring, staring, searching. No snow. Only wind. In the car it is frozen motion—I only move as I must to keep the car on the highway. The parakeets huddle in their cages, a multi-banded bundle of feathers dotted with eyes. I have to concentrate to keep from shivering.

The clouds watch closely, peering at me through nimbussed eyebrows, while the scarred hills glare through weed-grown eyelids at me, huddled in my car. Over a rise, and I can see but not yet feel my home, its yellow windows banding the ground around it with dull patches of silver. One last excruciating corner and I come flying through the drive shouting and laughing at my own stupidity. The badger in my dream hadn’t died—he had gone back to his burrow. The dream had never meant anything at all.

On the way back a few days later, I scarcely noticed that the badger’s body was gone from the road. The sinuous meanderings of the snow on the road were too distracting, and I had promised Mark I’d be back in time for supper. Already my stomach was growling.

Only On Occasion

by Scott Razak

Jim laughed,
like a chair gone through
the roof: suddenly, with a whoop,
it was up and gone—
as real as anything you’ve ever seen:
a chair-shaped hole in the ceiling
bore mute testimony.



Cycle

by Kathleen Cashman

Passage

Plies say
Welcome back
With familiar
Ups and downs
And outs.
The same
Beginnings
To refresh
The memory
Yarn of legs —
Stretch to fit,
Warm to tendus

Stretch by Eric Spanenberg

Study in Serenity

You gotta
Do a
Dichoto-
My on
Yourself—
The head
And torso go
To Johnny's
Tonight Show
And chat
About your
African violets.
And the rest
Stays in
Another
Studio—
And sweats . . .

Continuity

One foot
On the barre
Pointing
To a bird's
Nest outside
The window,
The other foot
Rooting into
The hardwood floor—
Forehead
To knee,
Almost, almost
Easily.
Tomorrow
The toe
Points to
A higher limb.

Suspension

One foot
Reaching
For support,
Pointing
For a momentary
Foothold,
And in
That quest—
Eases down
To a more
Solid support.

A Toast

Eyebrows phrase
A request,
Satin-clad
Toes comply
In organdy
Ascent, ruffling
The air with
Their esprit,
And dusting
The wood
In descent,
Welcoming
The audience
To choreographed
Champagne.

Angel of God

by Bill Macomber

The sun beats gold and warm
Upon the worn dust path,
And the wind hushes the murmur
Of man with the one-noted chant
Of wind through the trees.
The pitch is ever steadfast,
Though hard brought to the strain of breaking
Into warbled song
From its monotonal roar.

This is the furious magic
Of the fir tree branches,
Outside the stone walls,
Outside the lamplight,
The domesticity.
This is the sound that hushes the t
And the thoughts of men
As they cock their heads away
From the firelight circle
And listen, listen, listen.

It is you I hear lifted up in the clean sound
Of those tormented branches,
Arriving softly, strongly, sagely.
For in that storm brewing between us,
A sacred note
Of motion and resistance howls,
Spawning the wind-song of the tree;
Mighty in summer,
Clear in autumn,
Discordant in winter
But soothing through spring.

One with the tonal moods of the wind,
And one with the accumulated motion
That wore threadbare the grass here,
You, with the mystery of my heart in hand, stand,
Spirit sent with a bright rod to render
Service, and salvation of God.

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