

1979

UA68/6/1 Zephyrus

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Zephyrus 1979

Contributors:

Doris Brown – Tangled Honeymoon

Barbara Carter – I am a woman

D.W. Eply – When Horses Get Broke

Tom Foster – cover illustration

Amy Gerstle – Poem

Martyna Gerwick – Carsick

Cindy Glaysbrook-Rogers – Poem

Sea

James Gover – Statistic

Whiffs

Cynthia Harper – Four Haiku

The Dancer

Sedoka III

Renee Lawson – Images

The hour

Dreams

Lisa Lewis – In Search of Penny Candy

I don't pick at the crust

L.L. McCaleb – Poet

Joe Medley – Into this world

Heated Pendulum

Zell Page – Unwanted Child

Martha Parks – The Woman Inside

Daddy's Little Girl

Sheila Ray – Bill Leap

A Poem for Houdini

Behind Granny Goodman's

Freddie Dean

Mr. Boss

Mark Rosenthal - Drawing

Ann Scott – Impressions of Iowa

Her Own Home

Ann Travelstead – The Phenomenal Car of Mr.

McCoober

Haiku

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Los Alamos

Shell

Kathy Van Meter – Truth

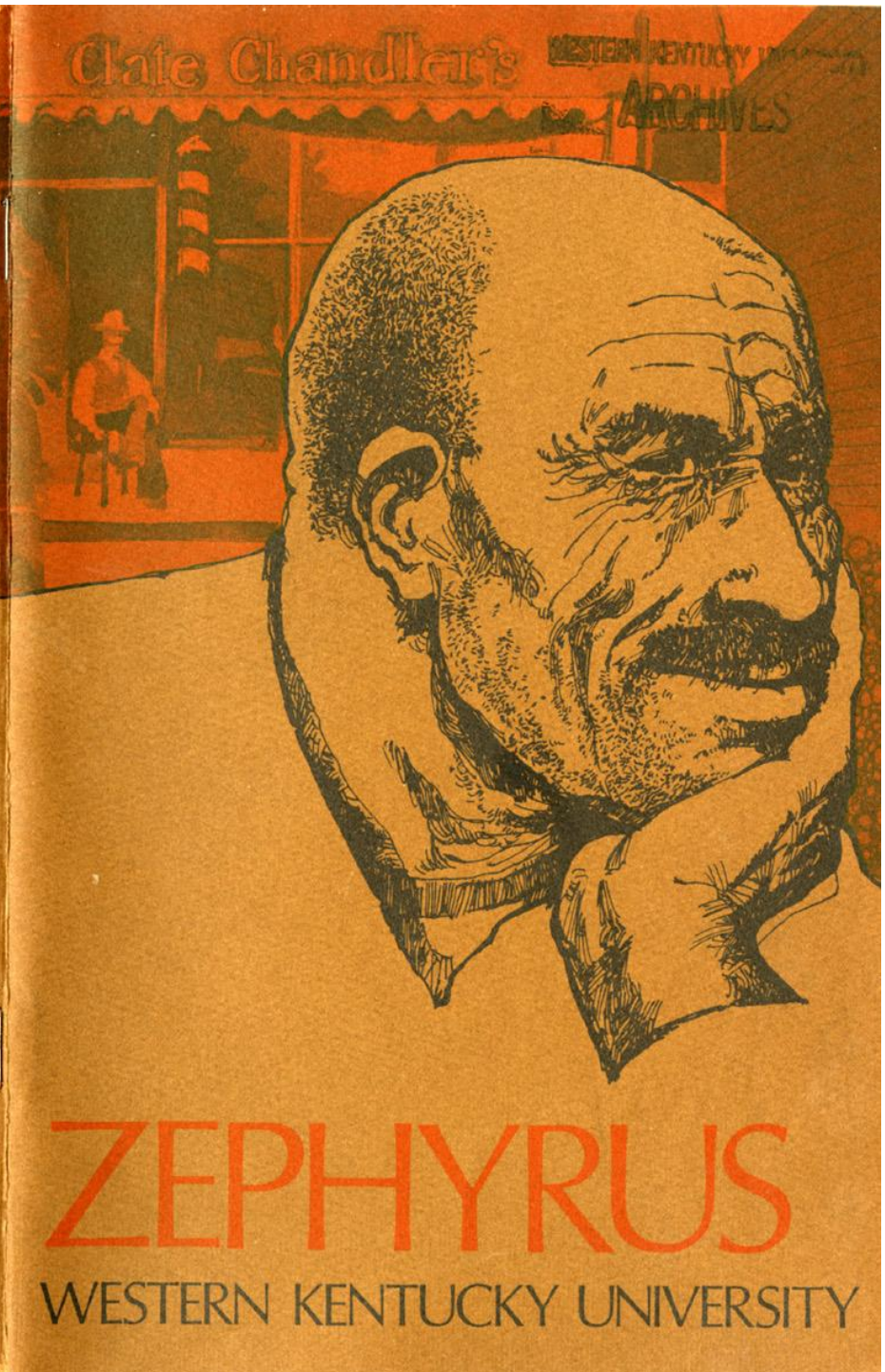
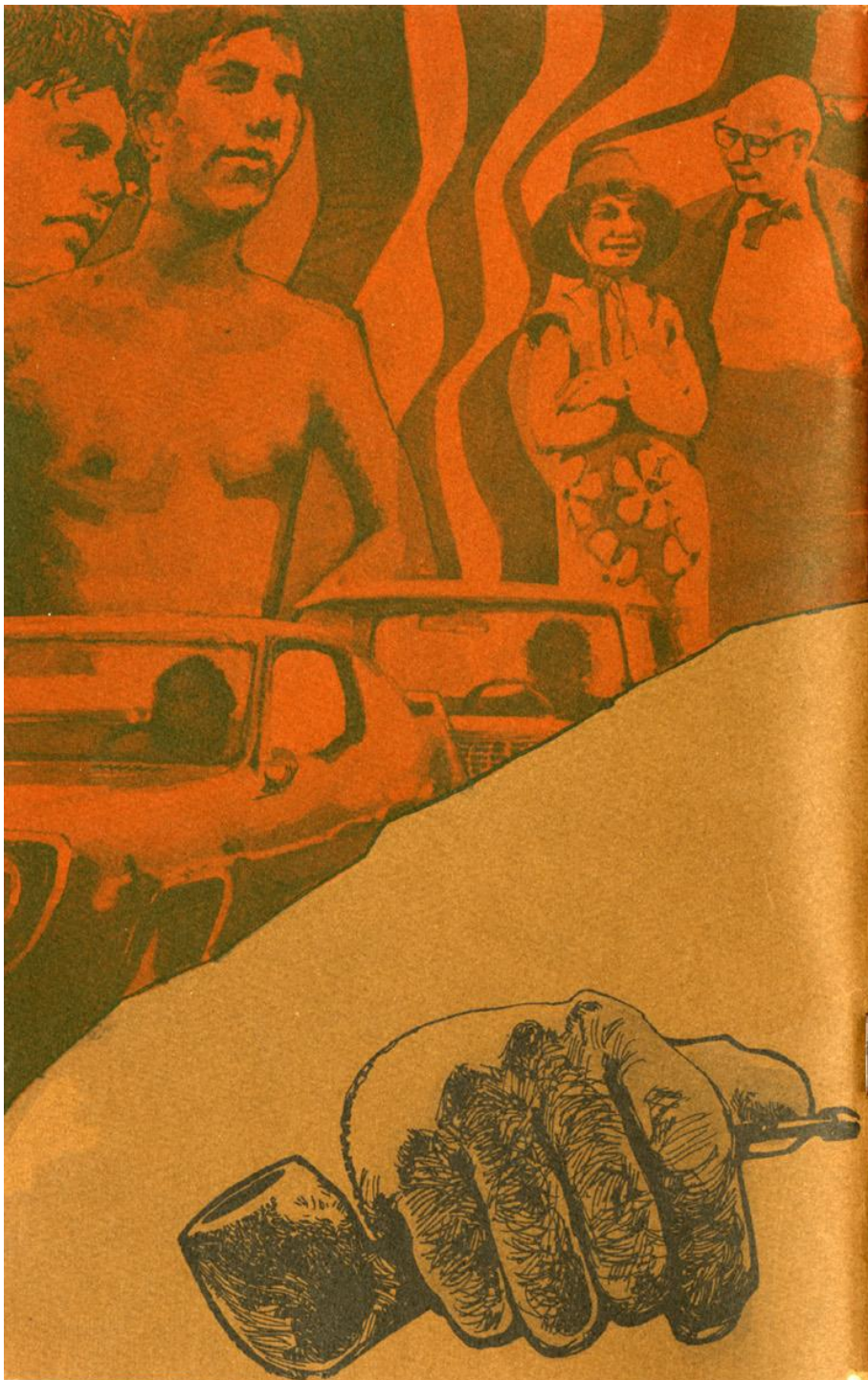
Wrappings

Debbie Wilson – The Bracelet

Mike Wimberly - Narrative

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ZEPHYRUS
WESTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY

ZEPHYRUS

Spring 1979

A publication of the English Department
of Western Kentucky University
at Bowling Green

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The editorial staff wishes to thank the Browning Literary Club of Bowling Green for providing a twenty-five dollar award for the best poem appearing in *Zephyrus*. The staff is also grateful to the Bowling Green couple who gives a matching award for the best prose published in a single issue of the magazine.

Sheila Riley

BILL LEAP

Bill Leap moved in the shack on Perry Street and called it his mansion.
He sold his spray-painted Chevy to a Jaycee-sponsored demolition derby
and for \$50 bought a used stove and sold it for \$125.
Every Wednesday Bill would hitch to Frankfort and peddle the county
paper
for a nickle profit a sale.
He'd always save one for Mam Ma and drop it by around time for the
dinner whistle
to blow, and Mam Ma always saved him a piece of chicken wrapped in
Reynolds wrap.
Once Bill Leap stopped me in the road and asked me to read a notice
he'd gotten from the government about his social security checks.
That was when I was seventeen,
and I thought how awful it must be to be 80 and not recognize my own
name.
Old Bill the Watermelon boy gave me the funnies section from the Sunday
paper and laughed that
"Ain't it funny how they only make funnies colored one day a week?"
And I laughed.
He didn't go to Second Baptist to hear the gospels preached, but spread
his joys to three blocks to town right along with "Hymns for Him Singer"
broadcast live, compliments Eveready batteries.
Once Bill spied a rattler under his porch and the fire department
and rescue squad responded with hose and axes, and laughter,
but Bill took it all seriously.
Perennial attic and basement cleaner, he probably knew more town secrets
than any biddy gossiper.
Bill Leap boarded up his windows in the winter and tied back his
sunflowers
so they'd grow straight when spring came.
Once Bill got drunk on Bud's and spent Saturday night in Dena's jail, and
ashamed to tell it, swore to courthouse cronies it must've been the bad
water
he'd been drinking since the lake turned over last July.
Bill Leap knew you if you were new in town and if you weren't he

remembered

the day you were born.

In the semi-hot June morning dust by Clate Chandler's barber shop,
Bill would scoff at vacationers passing through: City oil-slick sunbathers...
"Lookee there, if yourn got a tan like ol Bill here, no need catchin'
sunshine."

He entertained the street kids with stories of his ordinary life, but
he always seemed to come out the hero.

Bill Leap lived his Saturdays easy with monthly social security and Jack
Daniels

and never asked for Sunday School prayers.

Once he learned to sign his name and got voted Countian of the Year
and after that, Bill Leap spent most his mornings teaching white folks
how to catch sunshine.

Sheila Riley

A POEM FOR HOUDINI, AND MICHAEL, AND OTHER MAGIC MEN...

God wasn't being fair when He put us in the
20th century.

You belong in Crystal Cave,
dusting Excalibur,

conquering fair maidens' hearts...

And I belong apprenticed to Shakespeare,
collaborating on "Macbeth" and "Romeo and Juliet."

I'm supposed to be writing about illusions
while you're supposed to be making them.

The certainty of our success is frightening.
Perhaps the hardest thing to attain is patience.

God should have put us in another time,
where time didn't really mean years.

But He's left us here...

A king trying to defend his palace with a
dusty sword

and a self-suspended floating lady thinking
of lines for a poem about a magic man.

Sheila Riley

Behind Granny Goodman's dangling screen door

On a red-muddy, sun-blistering Tennessee

Sunday afternoon,

String beans with hullies and pork shank

Boil on the woodburn for

Sharecroppers and field hands and

Tomorrow morning...

And dried apples spread, curling peels,

Across the porch rail.

The spring caught in the old Fridgedaire bottom,

For "ready-water,"

Is shaded from locust tree limbs permanently bent

By the young girl before puberty,

Who now remembers losing her left tennis shoe

In a red-muddy Tennessee puddle

So many Sundays ago.

Sheila Riley

FREDDIE DEAN

Freddie Dean sat on the front-row Pew and
bowed his head when the Deacons prayed for Communion.
He stomped his mud-caked boot and lisped an Amen now and then
as the Choir sang a Special every third Sunday.
Freddie waited outside his daddy's house for the Preacher to
pick him up for Family Night Supper.
At 33 he joined the Young Adults' Class,
where he practiced his penmanship on the blackboard during Scripture
Reading.
Freddie went roller-skating with the Youth Group and played a Mummy
at the Halloween party held in the Fellowship Hall.
He gathered pine cones and tiseled the Church Windows and
played a Shepherd in the Christmas Nativity.
Freddie Dean thought the Hymnal was his Bible and
carried it everywhere he went:
The Metrical Index of Tunes became his New Testament and
he sang from the Responsive Readings.
He held his Offering in a tight fist and
filled his Annie Armstrong Mission Card with 30 dimes.
Freddie Dean sat on the front-row Pew and counted his blessings and
waited for the Invitation to Surrender All.

Sheila Riley

MR. BOSS

It was some time when it was hot enough for
July and orange sherbert that would melt in the shade.
I was five, before school, between playhouses and postoffices,
and Mr. Boss was still well enough to walk with his cane.
I was five and I could look him in the eyes and
see age spots on his neck without knowing they were age spots.
Mr. Boss smelled like old smoke and he touched like
the patch of elephant skin on display in the zoo house.
He never sweated in his black sweater when I wore my anklets in
sandals and put my hair in a pony tail.
I was five, before school, on the corner by the feedstore,
waiting for Mr. Boss with his cane
to pry out Roosevelt silver dimes between missing third and fourth
fingers.
Then being five was worth it—with a
cool coin bouncing hot in my hand on the way to the drugstore for
orange sherbert ice cream that melted in the shade.
And damn those silver dimes would be worth a fortune today.

THE PHENOMENAL CAR OF MR. MCCOOPER

Mr. McCoober liked to say that he was a prudent man with a respect for figures. Numbers fascinated him, intrigued and enthralled him. He lived his life by numbers and for them.

Among other chains of numbers, he could recite his Social Security number, bank account and insurance policy numbers and the zip codes of sixty-two cities where he knew no one. He could reel off not only the license number but the engine serial number of his shiny, blue ten year old car.

It pleased him when he was mistaken for an accountant, which often happened. In truth, he sold socks and shirts at the downtown department store and had been doing so since he left college in the first year. He was hired, primarily, because of his dark good looks, but that was before most things about him thickened and thinned, hardened and softened in all the wrong places.

He was a meticulous salesperson.

"I never forget a neck size," he would assure a customer.

And, he was in great demand at inventory time, for one of his recounted joys was finding an error in computerized stock counts.

At home, he was equally punctilious. Each time he went upstairs, he counted the fourteen steps. He brushed each upper and lower quadrant of teeth fifty times, saw his dentist two duly recorded times a year and did thirty push-ups each morning. Much of the time, he counted aloud. It was this that set Mrs McCoober's fine smile on edge. But, reminding herself of the many negative qualities that he did not have, she softened her smile, forgave him and loved him.

She thought him still handsome and she recognized the value of thrift, while regretting at times, his constant attention to it.

Twice a week, when Mrs. McCoober brought groceries home on the bus, making a transfer en route, he listed each item and cost. Over the eleven years of their marriage, his remarks on making the notations had changed only in inflection. When he and Mrs. McCoober, a rather handsome redhead who had thickened and thinned in the right places, were first married, he would enter an item with a matter of fact comment.

"Thirty cents for a loaf of bread." Period.

This later became, "*Forty-seven cents* for a loaf of bread!" Exclamation.

Now, he would say, "Seventy-five cents for a loaf of *bread?*"

Whenever a number changed, it pained him. He felt threatened to the point of outrage. Numbers were solid, fixed facts. He would have been more comfortable on finding that one of his eyes changed color than facing a shifting number, so he kept track.

In a fine and tidy hand, he entered expenditures in several unblotched books. His ledgers had numerous categories, some with long columns of entries, others with very few. Under "Entertainment," for example, there was only a short series of monthly entries that read "Gas for Mother's Outing."

It so happened that one day his entries in the little green book marked "Automobile Log and Operating Expense Record" revealed that the shiny blue car had become a liability, fiscally speaking. Although inconvenient breakdowns had made him and his entire car pool late for work twice and late getting home six times, it was the indisputable sums of figures that convinced him.

"Figures don't lie, you know," he said when he told Mrs. McCoober of his decision to buy a new car. "And, with the old one as a trade-in—"

"Trade-in? Why, you promised that car to me when we got a new one," Mrs. McCoober reminded him. It was one subject that they had discussed often. He had, she thought, really, truly promised.

"Don't get agitated, dear," he soothed. "You really won't be needing it. They're building a new supermarket just seven blocks from here. And, the car is in prime condition. Just needs a little mechanical adjustment. Make a fine first car for some young person. And, with the savings on gas, you know —." He went back to his figures.

Mrs. McCoober seethed behind unshed tears of frustration. All the soft, protective padding of forgiveness fell away from the hard knot that now seemed calcified at the base of her throat. She bit back years of accrued harshness. Petty. Mean. Stingy. All, with silent embellishments, which, of course, he could not answer.

Since he had made a study of data from consumer groups, digests and reports, Mr. McCoober knew exactly which car he would buy. He wished two things, however. He wished that such a car were a product of His Country and that They had given it a more dignified name. But, putting the wheel base, turning radius, displacement, weight, gear ratio and cost all together, he concluded that this was the one car with all the right numbers. Besides, it required only one gallon of gas to travel thirty-one miles on the highway, twenty-eight in the city. Those were figures a man could relish.

He made a careful debit from his savings account and a precise notation in his checkbook, polished the blue car until it glistened and drove to his

auto dealer. Three hours later, he drove his new car home, after having tested the odometer and taken exact measure of the fuel. It was five and seven-tenths miles to his house and there were twelve gallons of gas in the tank. It was nine and eight-tenths to the store, which meant nineteen and six-tenths each day, which meant — well, he would of course, keep a constant check. The car pool, too, would show a larger profit. His cup, if not his gas tank, overflowed.

Each night, while dinner was being prepared, Mr. McCoober would enter his daily accounts. Mileage went into the little green "Automobile Log and Operating Expense Record" book. Each night, he would close it with a proud and loving pat. Watching him, Mrs. McCoober, who seldom received such a proud and loving pat, was inspired. Awesomely inspired with the perfect retaliation.

At the end of the first week, Mr. McCoober looked up from his green book. "I can't believe it," he beamed, "even better than the EPA. I've driven 113.7 miles and the tank is almost three-quarters full."

By the next Saturday, it was obvious that Mr. McCoober owned a phenomenal car. After another 108.2 miles, the gas gauge needle swung barely left of center. To make certain, he stopped at his gas station on the way to work Monday. He needed only six and one-tenth gallons. The calculations were astoundingly correct. The attendant marveled. The car pool marveled. Everyone in socks and shirts heard his incredible report. They marveled.

In two more weeks, Mr. McCoober was reporting an average of 59.4 miles per gallon from his magic automobile. There were, naturally, those incredulous few who challenged his findings. But, confronted with the precise ball-pointing in such a fine, neat hand, even the scoffers nodded their heads over the detailing of gallons, miles and dollars, each carried out to the proper tenth.

As enthusiastic and reputable witnesses, the car pool members encouraged him to take his findings back to the auto dealer, who made copies for the home office. Also, the dealer called the newspapers and television station.

"Nothing like a little free advertising," he thought.

Looking for relief from unpleasant weather and strike reports, the television station invited Mr. McCoober for an interview. He was jovial and sweaty during the fifty-three seconds.

"I believe people pick their own lemons," he confided to several thousand people. "I have a fine machine and I give it the best of care. I have records —"

"And, how do you feel about your mileage, Mr. Hoover?"

"Coober. I mean McCoober. Good care and good records. Most people —"

"Thank you, Mr. McCurdle." The interview was closed.

The newspaper ran a vague picture of Mr. McCoober, but refused to show the remarkable car. He enjoyed near celebrity status. People stopped him in the store.

"Didn't I see you on TV? You're the fellow with the singing dog. Right?"

Mr. McCoober corrected them with patience, but he had Mrs. McCoober take three pictures of him standing with his hand on the unembellished hood of the smug little car. These he carried under a rubber band around the green book, which was losing its gilt letters. He would whip it out without being asked. He knew the numbers backwards. He basked and he beamed. Prouder than two and three-quarters peacocks, he felt charitable toward the name of his little car. Even.

One night when he was preparing charts to send off to *Motor and Man*, "The International Book of Records" and the Sunday supplements, Mrs. McCoober smiled to herself and went out to the garage.

There she took a can and a short length of garden hose from a high shelf and began to siphon off gas as quietly as she had been adding it each night. Just a little at a time, every night, done with considerable skill and relish.

Her smile broadened as she thought of the dismay in store for Mr. McCoober. Gleefully, she anticipated his anguish on reaching the four-miles-per-gallon mark. She wondered just when he would find it too shattering to continue setting down figures. She wondered if he would stop counting.

She put the can and hose back in their hiding place, stepped back from the little car and noted the date in a small green book of her own.

Cynthia Harper

HAIKU

Storms pulse against
windowpanes . . . quiet eyes
look inside the rain.

HAIKU

Still . . . between two lights
four shadows lean, pulling me
to new directions.

HAIKU

Star — flaming in night —
Full. We reach out. Our eyes
pierce the after-image.

HAIKU

In autumn, to Spring;
butterfly wings pressed between
pages of a book

Cynthia Harper

THE DANCER

It was hard to remember the slow floating snow that had so delicately settled on the lawn. As the old woman watched the gusts of spurting snow swell into frozen drifts, she no longer found beauty. The evergreens wearily bent with the weight of their whiteness. The trees shivered convulsively. An eerie moan accompanied each rush of disconcerted wind and was lost in the maddening swirl.

The fire reassuringly beckoned Annie, and she did not feel so alone when she watched its beating warmth. She curled into the old couch soothed by the purring cat and crackling logs. She would never grow used to the solitude of the old lake house and the silence that could be frightening. Last winter Earl had been with her during the storm. She had worried little when he was alive. Perhaps that was why the future held no threat now.

Annie stirred listening for the ticking of the clock, the hum of the wood and coal stove, the brittle popping of tree branches too thickly etched in white. Gazing through the window she could vaguely see the frozen lake fogged with darting mist that swirled like ghostly skaters. Near the center, a figure stood motionless in the twilight and then faded. Annie straightened. She was sure she had seen someone. She paused. Again it appeared - a feminine form draped in long flowing silver, bare-armed, and faceless in the growing dark. The long black hair sprinkled with snow, the slender body swathed in clinging folds, its oblivion to the cold chilled Annie. As she watched, it twirled and glided across the ice - a dancer spellbound by its own sweeping motion.

Annie rose. As she reached the window the soft ring of a music box met her ears. Like a pattern of tiny sleigh bells the notes rose and fell above the wind. Lulled by the dancer's music and ease of movement, memories spun through her mind. Suddenly she longed for Earl. She longed for her youth and the energy that age slowly claimed. She longed for the years of struggle that had held no loneliness. Quick tears rushed to her eyes clouding her vision and relieving her heart. She angrily shook them away despising self-pity. Her eyes strained toward the lake, empty of all but the yearning for companionship that was soothed, as it would be for years, by the sight of the dancer.

L.L. McCaleb

POET

You might've made a poet of me
if you'd known me at fifteen,
when my hormones raged
under the gaze of a little honey-blond girl
and everything seemed so relevant
to far-off dreams deferred.
But now I've balanced too many checkbooks
and signed on and off in the dead and cold
of too many mornings and nights
and seen too many other
Princes Charming ride off with my honey-blondes
to ever feel like a poet again.

Renee Lawson

IMAGES

I loved him.
Not for
What he could give me
For that was precious little.
I loved him
because
He said he was everything
I said I wanted to be.
I wonder
If looking in a mirror
is always
This painful.

Renee Lawson

The hour
grows into a gnawing,
chomping monster-
Not letting go,
but pulling me deeper
into the wanton spiel of words
flowing from the wise man's mouth.
I cannot understand the words-
over my head
dropping like marbles
behind me.

Renee Lawson

DREAMS

The escape
Hatch of the
mind.
Where one ceases
to
be
an observer
and becomes a player.
Everything is right-
there is
no pain.
God,
let me sleep
forever. . .

Kathy Van Meter

TRUTH

The unforgettable lies that you told me
Were only equalled by the unforgiveable lies
That I told myself
In order to believe in you.

WRAPPINGS

If you leave,
Then I shall pick up the discarded wrappings
Of Purity and Innocence
Pulling on the enshrouding cloak,
I shall become my Mother's little girl again,
Waiting for YOU to return.

D. W. Epley

WHEN HORSES GET BROKE

I ease my car to a stop in front of her house and cut the motor. I'm scared pretty bad. I'm scared so bad that my knees want to shake, and sometimes they do. I'm trying to control them but it is hard to do. I've had them to do this before when I am scared and it seems to me that I'm scared a lot. I am scared most of the time about one thing or another.

I'm scared tonight because I know that I will meet her ex-husband. I know that her ex is a mean man. I know that he doesn't like me and would jump at any chance to make trouble with me. And I know that the boy has told him today about the way I hurt him when we were wrestling on the floor the other night. I didn't mean to hurt him. It was an accident. But he is a little bit sissy and wants his father and mother to get back together so there is no telling what he has told his father about me. He is young and doesn't know things about his father that his mother has told me about. He thinks his father hung the moon. When we started dating, she told me that he was so mean that because of him she didn't believe that she would ever be able to love again.

I think about that now sitting here in front of her house. I think of how she told me right off the bat that she would never allow herself to become serious over any man again. I think about how she said that all she wanted to do was go to the fun places and do the fun things. I think about one night when she says "Let's go slummin'," and we go to a place called North Side Beer and Bar-B-Q," and how I unintentionally and unknowingly kept the bartender from shooting a man when I stepped between him and the guy he was after and ordered two beers. The man ran out the door and the bartender got mad at me and tells me to leave and to never come back. He said that if I did he would shoot me. I believe he really wanted to kill that man. I was scared for a week over that scene.

Somewhere along the line she has changed her mind and says that she does love me and wants to marry. I try to remember when things started to go this way but I can't. But it is good that I have made her love me. We are both happier for it.

I leave my car and walk to the house. I knock on the door, and she opens it and with a smile on her face gives me a hug and a kiss and tells me to come in.

I see that the boy is not back yet. It is only a little after five. His father seldom exercises his visitation rights and I take it as a bad omen for him to

want to see the boy so soon after I hurt him wrestling. Maybe the boy called him and told him some story and the two of them have set me up. I feel like running.

The front door opens and the boy runs in all excited and happy and tells me that his daddy wants to see me outside.

I know that this is it. I go to the door and look out. I can see his shape from the street light behind him. I open the door and start down the walk.

I think about trying to run but my legs don't feel like they would hold me up if I did. I look for things to use as weapons but I don't believe I could use one if I saw it. I don't believe I could use a weapon on a man. I am weak. I have always been nervous and weak.

I'm almost to him and I can see him plain from the light from the street light. He looks mean. Just like she says that he is. He is tall, dark, broad shouldered, and slim waisted. He stands straight like he has never known fear. I have known fear and I am afraid right now. I'm getting very close to him now.

I've known that this moment would come sooner or later since I have known her. Because she has told me of his jealousy and paranoid ways. She has told me of the many times he has made the remark that if she won't live with him then he would fix it so she would not live with anybody. She tells me that he packs a pistol and has shot at people in the past. I'm standing directly in front of him now and I'm scared to death.

I don't understand what's happening. I see his lips moving and I hear the words that are coming from them but I don't understand. He is shaking my hand and telling me that he wants to thank me for being so nice to his boy. He says his boy has told him how much he thinks of me. He tells me that the boy has told him how much he enjoys the talks I have with him and the games we play and especially the wrestling matches. He says something about how that since he and the boy's mother split up that he doesn't get to see the boy too much and that it is nice to know that the boy is not too lonesome and is not missing out on having a male image around. And he thanks me again and gets in his car and drives away.

I watch his car until it is out of sight and I turn and start back towards the house. I am still confused but evidently there is not going to be trouble so I am also very relieved.

Two weeks have passed since meeting the boy's father and something is wrong. I don't know what it is but things are not the same between the

boy's mother and me. She says she loves me very much. The boy acts like he loves me, too. When his mother and I told him that we would be married in the spring, he seemed pleased. And I haven't been worried about the situation between his father and me over his mother since the incident in the street. I'm relaxed now. But something is wrong.

I'm watching an old rerun of "The Virginian" on TV. There is a scene taking place on a train involving a drunken bronc buster and the Judge's niece or daughter or whatever she is. The cowboy is a very drunk, very loud, and very obnoxious fellow. He is telling the girl, uninvited of course, about his exploits as a horse breaker and he says that he loves a horse that is unbroken and still wild and mean and full of hate for men, but he does not give a damn for a horse that is broken. In a loud voice he declares, "When horses get broke, they bore me stiff."

And I know what is wrong.

I tell the woman that I am going to town to get some cigarettes and go out and get in my car. I crank it up and head it in the direction of the North Side Beer and Bar-B-Q. I wonder if the same bartender works there and if he will remember me. My legs feel weak and my knees want to shake a little.

Cindy Glaysbrook-Rogers

The long, thin branches
Of the beech tree
Shown in the moonlight.
They looked like the hand
Of a frail, thin woman,
Reaching for an apple
Hanging from a limb.

Oh, but if that tree
Could reach out -
Would it hurl the moon
Across the sea?
Or caress it
As a mother caresses
The head of her child.

Cindy Glaysbrook-Rogers

SEA

The horizon meets Her every dawn
With a gift -
The golden sun.
Ah, She is pleased!
And She shows her pleasure
By reflecting its light.

But today -
The horizon has broken its date.
There is no sun -
Only dark clouds.
She reacts -
Tossing, waving - furious.
The boat is overturned.
And the man succumbs to Her anger . . .

Finally -
Calm.
The horizon has returned its gift of the sun.
She smiles - Again -
And returns the body of the man
Rocking him gently to meet the shore.

Ann Scott

IMPRESSIONS OF IOWA

The air is heavy
like a rich woman's perfume.

The sky is an egg shell
the earth the yolk.

The land is a flat penny
put on the train tracks.

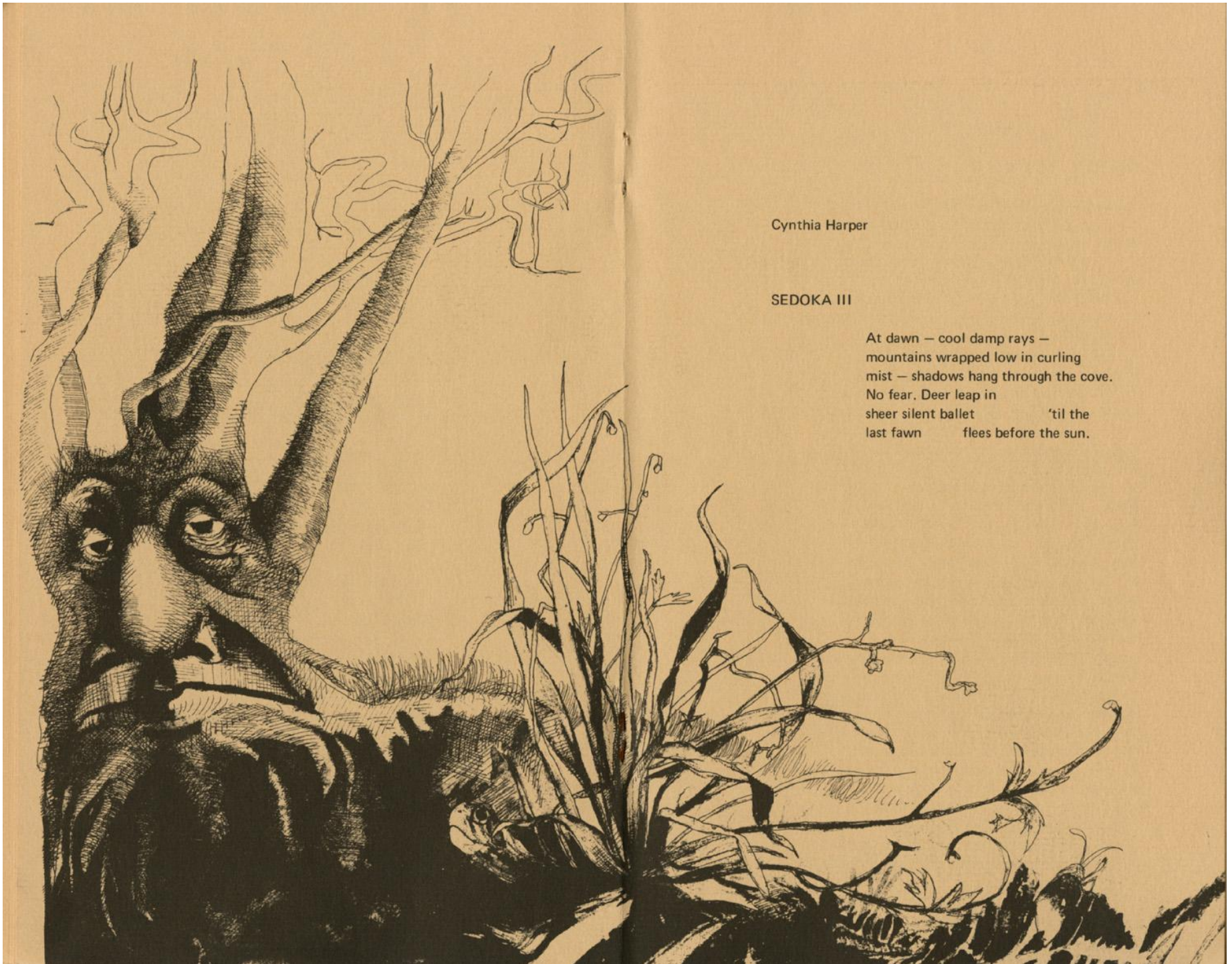
Rows of corn stretch like

G l l
r o e
a n g
n g s
d
d
a
d
d
y

Debbie Wilson

THE BRACELET

See the bracelet,
pretty bracelet,
that you wear upon your arm.
Gold and diamond,
emeralds, rubies
cast a spell of lovely charm.
wear it often
show the people
let them know that it is grand.
Watch their envy,
they'll admire
all you hold within your hand
Pretty bracelet,
lovely jewels,
precious diamonds, precious gold.
See the bracelet,
Pretty bracelet,
with the jewels hard and cold.
Found in darkness
deep in caverns—
you needn't dig so far.
If people see them
they won't notice
how you cover
who you are.



Cynthia Harper

SEDOKA III

At dawn — cool damp rays —
mountains wrapped low in curling
mist — shadows hang through the cove.
No fear, Deer leap in
sheer silent ballet 'til the
last fawn flees before the sun.

Doris Brown

TANGLED HONEYMOON

I stood there appalled, my hands full of hair pins,
As I gazed at my reflection again and again.
My hair was still sitting firmly atop my head
When it should have been drifting 'round my shoulders, instead.
My comb was sticking out at a peculiar angle.
It had become hopelessly, helplessly caught in a tangle.
My brush was refusing to budge beyond the first layer.
I lifted my eyes. I mumbled a prayer
Things were not going according to my plan
To entice and seduce my eager young man.
My hair was to be swept up in curls when my tangle I did plight,
And then float like a cloud around my face that same night.
"Oh, why? Oh, why," I asked myself in frustration,
"Would this happen on the night of my consummation?
Any other time I could have put up with this,
But not on my first night of marital bliss."
Then I happened to remember, at the hair stylist's that day,
What the little man in velvet breeches had had to say,
"When I create a coiffure, I intend it to stay.
This girl won't have to worry about this set for days."
An indeed, it was exactly as he had purported.
My hair was still standing, completely unsupported.
Not a hair pin or clippie was left in that mess.
The laws of gravity had failed me at last.
I eased the bathroom door open just the tiniest chink
And said to my beloved, "Honey, I need a drink!"
And as my bewildered spouse went searching for ice
I turned to the mirror, the light of battle in my eyes.
"You won't defeat me," I cried to my mop.
"Wait till I'm finished. We'll see who's on top."
Thus, I took up my brush and began to unmangle
That fortress of hair, tangle by tangle.
When, finally, my scalp felt ready to bleed,
I started to think that I might yet succeed.
A look in the mirror burst that bubble of hope.
My hair had taken on the look of a raveling rope.

The longer I brushed, the wilder it grew
Until, growing exhausted, I at last knew
Neither would give in. Compromise must take place.
My eyes thoughtfully rested on my gown of ribbons and lace.
Ruthlessly, I grabbed it and began to unthread
Yards of pink ribbon to wind 'round my head.
When, finally, I had done all that I could, and more,
I bravely turned and walked through the bathroom door.

The happenings of the remainder of that night must remain unnoted,
But, you know, to this day, I don't think he even noticed.

UNWANTED CHILD

When I was conceived
My destiny
Would be that my mother
Would miscarry me

By some ill misfortune
The procedure failed
A future of burden
Upon us prevailed

When she gave me life
Her death almost came
Which draped upon me a veil
Of deep guilt and shame

The load I shared with her
Indeed not my own
My concept of her
A stronger unknown

My world, a shell
An embryonic stage
Forever preparing
Escape from the cage

Time washed the rift
Between us so deep
Bedded down sorrows
Put them to sleep

Of so much love
In such a big world
A mother could find none
For one little girl.

Amy Gerstle

Where are we going?
Is love worth it?
Or is it obtainable?
There are no perfect
relationships
They don't exist
Only Cinderella knows my dream
Caught up in a rocket
You wonder when you're gonna come down
Is it love or is it infatuation?
Guy to guy
door to door
only one thing in mind
the gutter
just like toothpaste
everyday occurrence with me
Innocence is stolen at birth
Buttercups & lace panties
aren't pretty anymore
they lead
to the bedroom
dead end
with only arms
to wake up to.

Martha Parks

THE WOMAN INSIDE

To see you,
one would not think
that deep inside,
lies a woman of words.
You play the jester,
laughing at life—
building a facade.
But inside exists
a beauty rare.
A thing so fragile
a single word
could crumble it.
They never know the pain you feel
at night when the world closes in,
and the night is still.
But I know the woman is there—
because deep inside,
where no one can reach
deep inside of myself
the woman cries too.

Martha Parks

DADDY'S LITTLE GIRL

Where is the child?
Daddy's little girl.
Ride the wooden pony
back and forth,
and yes we'll go to Oklahoma
by train.
Daddy's little girl grew up.
I wonder where she is.
Brown eyes are faded,
and the innocence and faith
of a child,
are gone.
I wonder where the child
that toddled and laughed,
that gazed at you and adored you
has gone.
Well Daddy,
she's all grown up
and your duty's done.
So rest in peace
dear father,
she's gone.
The child is gone.

Lisa Lewis

I don't pick at the crust on the bread;
I trim it away with a shiny, sharp, sterling silver knife.
Once, I cut my toe on a sliver of broken mirror
I wear leather shoes with heels that step on mirrors when they
get old.
Since my mother gave us no brother, and my father died,
I can wear no clothes
all around the house and not be shamed.
Once, I was whipped for comin' in mama and daddy's room naked.
Now, I whip the air and feel it swoosh around the
old wounds of abused skin.
Crust on the bread
is not picked;
It is trimmed
sheared with a shiny sterling knife
and promptly thrown to hungry dogs.
I despise to see them savor it (unwhipped)
every crumb.

James Gover

STATISTIC

The bus station was like any other; dirtyish gray, with rows of stiff metal chairs set against the walls. The fake leather cushions had long since been ripped out by young men who knew they weren't going anywhere.

An effeminate young man wearing tight slacks and a Qiana shirt leaned casually in the doorway. A teenage girl in a dingy white uniform popped her gum while slapping soybean patties on a black, greasy grill. A sailor slumped in one of the tortuous chairs, rubbed the stubble on his face and reached under his jumper for the bottle in his waistband.

He nudged the old lady in the next seat with his elbow and asked, "want a drink?" She shrugged away from him, but kept her seat. "To the United States Navy an' old ladies too," he bellowed as she got up and walked unsteadily to the water fountain. "An' she ain't even drunk," he grunted.

Leaning over the water fountain, she muttered, "The air in here is bad." Then she spun around, nearly losing her balance. Her jaws clenched until the dentures shattered in her mouth. Her eyes were pleading, but her right hand held a .38 revolver. The hand waved unsteadily.

The leather jacketed youth who had been hunched over the pinball machine instinctively reached for his own weapon. The pretty fellow at the door hit the floor and crawled under a chair. The waitress dropped the metal coffee urn. The old lady saw none of this. She had turned the gun toward her face. "I'm sorry," she said quietly.

The sound cracked the room, the mirror on the cigarette machine shattered and a reddish mess dripped over the plate that read, "Cigarettes smoking is hazardous to your health." The body fell across the sailor's legs, staining his whites and patent shoes. He jumped up, suddenly sober. "Crazy old bat!" The youth at the pinball machine slipped his gun back into his jacket. "Crazy old bat!" he exclaimed in agreement. The gum-chewing waitress was already on the phone.

In what seemed a short time the depot was surrounded by vehicles with sirens wailing. The deputy coroner examined the body and determined that, "Death occurred at approximately 9:00 p.m.; cause, apparently destruction of brain tissue by .38 caliber slug which entered at base of nasal cavity and traveled upward." He had his answers and was finished.

The detective chewed at his cigarette and questioned a handful of people with an air of disinterest. He swallowed an assortment of pills and periodically clutched his stomach. After listening to the babbling crowd

which had appeared, he returned to his car and tore off his tie. "More paperwork," he muttered. To him this was routine, one of "those weirdos out there" who seemed to do everything they did just to annoy him. The only answers he was concerned with were the ones he had to put on his report.

The youth at the pinball machines had run at the sound of sirens, and had been caught by two patrolmen nearby and charged with carrying a concealed weapon. "Dumb luck," he thought.

The sailor was hustled into the shore patrol van, all the while protesting that he had nothing to do with what happened. Two surly chasers kept their guns trained on him, according to regulation. They were not concerned about anything in civilian domain. They had what they had come for.

The pretty young fellow was now down the street, recounting the episode. "It was just awful. You're just not safe on the streets anymore." He examined his torn Qiana shirt mournfully.

The waitress was pleased with the crowd that had formed. While they were there they bought a lot of snacks and coffee and left a lot of tips. She recounted what had happened with a flair that would put a master storyteller to shame.

Nobody asked why.

James Gover

WHIFFS

I smoked three bowls
at the fireside once
with lazy brown dog at my feet
my lady's head in my lap
serenity complete.
The fanciful swirling smoke
clouded the issues
that I could do without.
But all things pass
alas I'm on the road
no fire
no dog
no lady
damnitall
my pipe's gone out!

Barbara Carter

I am a (woman) living
contradiction
(snaggedenlimping)with
truths self-taughtenfiction,
gone (starving, raving) crazy
from too many choices
from a chanting chorus
of (biting)
Bitchyvoices
inside me: some beg
stop herenstay;
still others prompt me to be
off! with intelligent fights!
(adolescent restlessness, alight).
On they argue,
buzzing boom,
et cetera, ad infinitum
nauseamque until
(witheredenshuddering)
chidinganchastising
sliding down its nose
that voice:

All this decidingen
and garbled debating
as flat as writing
worthless as waiting.

Ann Travelstead

HAIKU

Found in the scented sleeve of an old kimono

Marku, lost poet,
Sings her weary tunes of love
In a stone garden

The robe of my lover
Is rich goldern brocade
With peonies of lies.

The bright bird of time
Is not aware that chill winds
Pluck one soft feather.

Rainbow colors caught
In a crystal drop of dew
Celebrate our death.

My ancestors weep
Over tales that tell themselves
Endlessly in time.

Fireworks in the court
Give a warmer light than love
And cast no shadows.

Ann Travelstead

HAIKU

Characters from the book of the year

Spring

Blossoms drift below
The painted fan of pale trees
And surprise the grass.

Summer

The golden carp stirs
In rings of sunny water
Where the beetle floats.

Autumn

The first crisp footstep
Etches a mark of passage
Briefly on the sedge.

Winter

Silence walks the woods
Where black trees ink their message
On rice paper snow.

Ann Travelstead

LOS ALAMOS

Who counts the grains of sand that grit the air
And bronze the sapphire sky at splendid noon,
Where eagles challenge flaunting jets to dare
And slice apart a remnant sickle moon?
Who hears the turn and glide of diamond snake
At night beneath the trembling yucca bell
Where gila lizard, owl, and spider take
Small frozen prey in blank obsidian spell?
What leaden pulse counts down the long, slow beat
That chills first opalescent desert light
With memory of frost before the heat
Of suns cremates pale souls of gods in flight?
Man coils alone in elemental flame
And hears the storm resound his former name.

Ann Travelstead

SHELL

Pressure like the ocean weight
In my ears
Entering my liquid head
And washing through iridescent eyes.
Lights of strobe and cymbals
Night of creatures
From blackened terror.
 Swirling and turning
 Against sand left
 From lives before mine,
 Long picked clean of promises.
 Rubbed by a solitary grain
 Grown hard, and forever
 And ever and ever creating
 Something others want.
Not I, content with emptiness
On the lonely shore
Bleaching in the sun
Beyond the reach of time.

Ann Scott

HER OWN HOME

She walked across the highway to Mrs. Martin's Cafe. No time to go home today. Funny she should think of her little rooms as home.

"Hello Toby," she smiles at the grimy little street cleaner.

"Good day, Miz Floyd," he grinned and a trickle of amber oozed between his brown teeth and down his stubbled chin.

No longer revolted by the sight of the little man, she had grown to know and like him. He philosophized in the evenings on the front porch of the boarding house where she lived. A small group of the townspeople and boarders sat and discussed the world and life.

She pushed open the door to the cafe and the tinkle of a bell filled the room. She'd heard the story - three times now - about Mrs. Martin's son Joe bringing her the bell from Switzerland after the war.

A handful of customers and Mrs. Martin looked up from their respective tasks of gluttony and cooking at the bell's tinkling.

Her smile was returned by Mrs. Martin and the others. Though their names be unknown their faces were familiar.

"The lucheon special is corned beef and cabbage. How about it?" asked Mrs. Martin.

"Fine."

She sat down at one of the gray formica-topped tables that matched the gray linoleum floor.

The fat Mrs. Martin was soon by her side unloading a plate crammed with corn beef and milky white cabbage, plus a glass of milk with foam.

"Figured you want milk," she beamed.

She lifted her face to smile at Mrs. Martin, when the bell tinkled again. Her face froze in the half-finished smile.

He had changed since she last saw him. The tufts of gray at his temple had spread to the back of his head. The furrows in his forehead were full-plowed now and his throat had a strange little fold she'd never noticed before.

He didn't wait for an invitation. He sat in the chair beside her and Mrs. Martin waddled back to the kitchen for another luncheon special, her eyes squinted in question.

No words passed - no hellos, not even a nod of the head.

After the second luncheon special was before him and a couple of bites settled in, the man spoke.

"How are you?"

"Fine," she answered absorbed in her food.

"We've been worried."

"There was no need."

"No, I guess not."

They busied themselves in the fragrant feast before them and Mrs. Martin brought them extra rye bread without being asked. They mumbled thank-yous.

He finished first, pushed his plate away and sighed.

"Why did you leave?"

"I had to," she said.

"That's ridiculous; why?"

"You wouldn't understand," she interrupted.

"But at home you had everything. Everyone knew you and was your friend. Our family was known — is known."

"That's it Dad! That's why I had to leave. I was the Floyd girl or the Floyd's daughter. Known for you and yours. Not for me."

"But honey, what about Karl? You just up and left him. He's doing well and I'm sure he'd take you back. You could raise such a nice family."

She stared in disbelief.

"And then be Karl's wife? Mrs. Jenkins?" she shook her head in disgust. That angered him.

"You want to be one of those free little husseys? Well, go ahead. But don't ever come back to my house."

He glared at her, daring her to speak. But instead of anger, he faced patience, even compassion.

"Dad, I love you and Mom very much. In fact," she mused, "we're rather alike, you and me. But you've got to understand. What was right for you and Mom may be wrong for me."

"So to prove yourself you run away to this dingy little town with the village idiot wandering the street."

She fought her anger down and then felt a wry smile on her face.

"This dingy little town is bigger than Newport and that village idiot is actually the village Des Cartes. Oh, Dad, it's so nice here. Everyone's friendly and I got a good job in the accountant's office. I may even become a junior partner."

"You?"

She nodded.

"And you're happy?"

"Yep. Oh, I miss you all now and then, but this is my home."

"Why don't you ever come to visit us?"

"Scared to. Scared of the pressure to stay. Scared I would."

"Here you are, Lizzie. Hot peach cobbler and ice cream for you and your friend," Mrs. Martin grinned.

"Mrs. Martin, I'd like you to meet my father, Mr. Floyd."

"How do you do, sir. Nice to meet you. It sure is nice of you to send us your daughter. I know you're proud of her."

He smiled with pride as Mrs. Martin continued.

"Yep. A town like this needs new and young blood to keep it moving. Why the people over at Bond and Owens have been braggin' 'bout your girl and her way with numbers. Well, I best be gettin' on. Nice meetin you sir."

They sat in amused silence, slight smiles on both faces.

"Would you like to see where I live?"

"Why, yes," he said, pleased.

"I'll also introduce you to my bosses, Mrs. Bond and Mr. Owens. They're wonderful people to work for."

"You really like it here, don't you?"

She nodded.

He sat in thoughtful silence and then spoke.

"Will you come and visit us?"

Martyna Gerweck

CARSICK

In the backseat of an Oldsmobile
alone

I watch the patterns of the nite
flashing across the backside of the frontseat
like some meaningless movie on an old picture screen
I decide I want to write, but have no pen
isn't this the story of my life:
no paper, no pen
never that needed friend
and no end
to the awful feeling inside
on this life-long ride.

Mike Wimberly

NARRATIVE

The only warning was the shadow, starting out small in size and then gaining in diameter as the object neared. The sun was almost totally blocked out about the time it hit. The unsuspecting had been disfigured; back shattered; legs gave way to the ground; face had been smashed by the sudden thrust. The weight of the object continued to increase and yet light could still be seen around its edges. Maybe there was still a way to reach the outer corners before it was too late. The pressure grew and grew as did the pain and still there was a brim of light to be seen around the farthest edge. The outside world could be seen around the farthest edge. The outside world could be seen, smelled, and felt, but the slick black object continued to converge. The amount of weight went beyond all limits. Death neared with the swiftness of the wind. Then came the last cry, "surely if it be animal, notice! Can you see or feel?!" It was over; death had been merciful, and ended the hideous pain caused by the object.

The man scraped the bug off the bottom of his shoe on the corner of the sidewalk then walked on down the street.

Joy Medley

Into this world we were thrown.
Jerked in, then, with a spasmodic
Wave of anger.
Forces to the left, energy to the right.
No painless middleground, but
Pulled to one side, then to
The other. Like the tightening of
An iron band around each
Tender nerve, each pinkened tendon.
A powerful vice with tentacled
Fingers of cold steel.
Weaving through skin, through flesh,
Through to bone.
Exposed is our being. In desperate
Anguish, we reach out
To protect the Shameful
Nakedness of a pained
Life,
A bared soul.

Joy Medley

HEATED PENDULUM

The rhythm of the scythe,
Hot, heavy. Swinging in
The glare of the angry sun god.
Plodding, pounding.
Feet gripped within the
Murky hold of sweat-black
Soil. Each arm, each hand,
Every tendon must bind to
Beat the baking waves of
Coal-red.
The rhythm of the scythe
Becomes man's entire being.
Wrapped in a smoldering
Blanket of awareness,
Moistened skin and pounding
Skull. Every flit of a bird's wing,
Every brief breath of cool air is
Heightened in pleasure.
The heat of it all; the pulsating,
Darkening, never ceasing
Fire.

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