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"Come, said my soul
With verses for my Body Let us write,
"for we are one."

Kentucky Library WKU
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PREFACE

We students of Western Kentucky State College interested in creative writing have this fall organized a writers' group for discussion and mutual criticism and encouragement. Our best effort will appear in this magazine founded for that purpose.

We dedicate this, our first issue, to the centennial celebration of Walt Whitman's Leaves of Grass.

"Come, said my Soul
Such verses for my Body let us write,
(for we are one.)"
I'd like to write a line or two
About the life and things I know,
But when I peruse what you have done
I feel unskilled to write at all
For my words are naked
And my rhyme that rhymes is poor and stark;
My simple thoughts are thin;
Yours perfect, fine and good
For each word from you
Strikes me, puts itself in me
And the pungency of your deepness
Aroused every sunken nerve within myself
So that your arrangements, your words
Leave me limp and satisfied
From having read immortal words
That leave me not unstirred
But interdicted from arranging words.

James Atchison
WALT WHITMAN
(A Sonnet in Blank Verse)

Here you stand, Walt Whitman, still among us:
Your great heart pumping blood through all our veins,
Receiving back the blood we pump to you;
Your great mind looking back through all our years
And forward to our greatness yet to come;
Your great hands sweating with us in our toil,
But also capable of gentle craft
And thoughtful, tender ministering to pain;
Your great soul sharing with us every hope,
And every noble thought of every man.
At times your yawp is loud; your frankness crude;
And for these faults you have been much condemned;
But fast against your foes you stand--a giant--
And dwarf so many of us little men.

Wayne Everly
TO WALT WHITMAN

So you have success
But you have known
Discouragement and failure also
And, without doubt,
You were disappointed.
Many years have passed
Since your first barbaric yawp
Over our and your country—
Since you roamed
Through the streets and fields
Of your native Manhattan.
But you are not dead, Walt Whitman;
No, nor will you die.
You lived yesterday;
You love today,
And you will live tomorrow,
Even as that same ocean
Beats the aged rocks
Of the seacoast today
That did a thousand years ago,
So shall you live.

William B. Thomas
I saw a wasp die.

His body quivered, and
In great pain,
Dropped
To the Earth
Below.

Wings too weak
To hold the air
Beat the dust,
And left weak patterns
Which were soon gone.

Adam Matheny
MIDNIGHT*

The night was quiet
Beneath the star-studded sky;
Exceedingly quiet,
Except for the far-off cry
Of the whippoorwill.
Wisps of fog lay
Like drifting white ghosts
In the moonlit valley;
The dwellers of the countryside
Were in deep slumber.
They did not know this world,
This world of fog and moonbeams
And dreams,
But I had seen and heard;
I knew . . .

SNOWFLAKE**

Snowflake,
I see you floating downward
Beyond my window.
Your feathery form
Lazily penetrates the air
And even now
You float slowly downward—
And stop—as if undecided
Whether you want
To journey back to your source
Or to proceed—
to your destiny.

William B. Thomas

Editors' Note:
*This poem will appear in America Sings, an anthology of college poetry, in April
**Because this poem was submitted to The Lyric, our Library has been given a year's subscription to that magazine.
THE BUTTERFLY

Spring, tripping forth daintily,
Brings fragrance of new-born flowers,
Awakening of life to heaven,
The softness of April showers.

Stirring to Nature's summon,
The leaves burst forth afresh.
The worm in the cocoon struggles
To free itself from its mesh.

Unaided by hand of human
It still fights gallantly on,
Emerging in robes more resplendent
Than people can hope to don.

So, as struggle, indeed, is needful
For the butterfly's beautiful dress
Are endeavors in human conflict
For a soul filled with happiness.

Mary Bridges

Editors' Note:
This poem will appear in America Sings, an anthology of college poetry, in April.
I reach for the window blinds
And throw them open to the silky night air.
I lean against the sill
And gaze upon the landscape.
Drenched in the moonlight.
Silhouetted against the sky,
Brushing the moon with its tip.
Stately towers the water tank.
It stands guard each night
Like a faithful sentinel.
Sometimes I see it
As some prehistoric animal
Stalking its unsuspecting prey,
Snatching it with its enormous forefeet
Into his hungry, waiting jaws.
Again, I see the tank
As a great friend to mankind,
Giving his very heart
For the life of the people.
Silhouetted against the sky.
Brushing the moon with its tip.
Stately towers the water tank.
I reach and open the blind
To the silky night.
I lean against the sill
And gaze upon the land
Silvered by the moon.
Silhouetted
Against the sky,
Brushing the moon with its tip,
Stately towers the tank.
It stands guard this night
A faithful sentinel.
Sometimes I can see
A prehistoric beat
Stalking uneasy prey
To plunge into his new. (?)
Again, I see the tank
A Titan friend to man
Bringing down life
Against his famishing.
Silhouetted
against the sky
Brushing the moon with its tip,
Stately towers the tank.

Mary Bridges
That was when I came to the library.

And here are the scissors.

I heard someone say, "Half-whispers are the norm.

I see it."

I see it.

It's a library...

Gradually.

Calm re-descends.

Sagacious struggle resumes.

Dead silence.

A book falls.

Someone laughs.

Mood is broken.

Another lost battle.
THE LIBRARY

Lights hum
Hardly noticed.
Everyone studies.

Door opens,
Heads rise.
Half-whispers
Break silence.
Errant fly
Distracts attention.

Gradual calm
Re-descends.
Sagacious struggle
Then resumes.

Dead silence.

Book falls,
Someone laughs.
Mood broken.

Lost battle.

Mary Bridges.
First Draft

RAIN

Butchers are those tiny drops
That knife into the meaty earth,
Cold is the hand that drives
The smarting cuts into its heart,
Bloodless beats each sharpened blade
Of driving, forcing rain
That lashes gashes on its dirty face
And muddles brooks with mucky mess
Incisioned from the fleshless plains
That try repelling watery rains
Of the scowling, severing rains.
Butchers are those tiny pointed drops
That knife into the meaty earth,
Cold is the hand that drives
The smarting cuts into its heart,
Bloodless beats each sharpened blade
Of the hacking, driving rain
That lashes gashes on its dirty face
And muddles brooks with mucky mess
Torn from the fleshless plains
That fail repelling ruthless pains
Of the scaring, severing rains.

James Atchison

Editors' Note:
Three poems of this writer have appeared in America Sings, an anthology of college poetry.
WHY?

I lie beneath the tree this autumn day
And watch the little clouds go scudding by
Like busy tugs around a crystal bay
While all around me brilliant leaves defy
Their mother, Tree, to run away as if
They were so many naughty little boys.
Here multitudes of birds and insects lift
A hymn to God his power and praise to voice.
But why--think I--amidst this peaceful
breadth
Must man forever hate their fellow man?
Why is there greed, and sorrow, war, and
death?
Why lust, oppression, creed or racial ban?
All creatures of the earth in peace do live
Save man, to whom God more than all did give.

Jeanne Jones
THE INQUISITIVE JAY

You shining black and solid thing
Why do you lie there flat
Why don't you spread your coal black wings
And fly through air and back?

I've never heard you sing at dawn
Or viewed you hop a limb
Why don't you spread your rounded beak
And sing a song to Him?

You lie there in the fine grain sand
You've erred to build your nest
I fear you'll drown, you stupid thing
Spring rise soon wets your chest.

You are the oddest bird I've seen
I thing you weigh a whet
'Twas yesterday I pecked on you
My bill still stings as yet.

I think I know what's wrong with you
Tis the only thing could be
She's helping build another's nest
And you're lonely as the sea.

Carl Dalton
A LEAF

"Cling you to the small stem,
Ye so freshly green leaf;
Hang to that majestic realm,
Not forever or either too brief."

Clamp with your powerful might,
And make the beauty appear,
For light on nature's might,
No one can ever smear.

Your beauty adds to each insight,
As a diamond to a ring,
You seem to stand upright,
As the wind begins to sing.

From Spring to late in Fall,
Your outline appears each day,
Not absent that I recall,
Since the early start in May.

Forever you cannot hold,
Impossible it would be,
For after a season I'm told,
You turn loose of the tree.

That's late in Autumn time,
When you have your long fall,
I can't express in rhyme,
The beauty of you all.

So it was you I sought
To try to summarize,
Because your beauty caught
The reminiscence in mine eyes.
"Cling small to the stem,
Ye so freshly green leaf;
Keep to that majestic realm
Not forever nor yet brief."

Clasp with your powerful might
And make the beauty appear,
A light on Nature's night
Impossible to smear.

Your beauty adds to each insight
As a diamond to a ring,
Pronged stiff to stand upright
By a wind tuned to sing.

From Spring to late in Fall
You appear each day,
Not absent that I recall
Since the early start in May.

Forever ye cannot hold,
Impossible it would be,
For after a season I'm told
Your turn loose the tree.

That's late in Autumn time,
When you have your long fall,
I can't express in rhyme
The beauty of you ---all.

It was you I sought
To try to summarize,
Because your beauty caught
Reminiscence in mine eyes.

John A. Logan
ON COMING OF AGE

Shall time no more caress with soothing fingers
Innocence in unrealities?
She scrapes more harshly our mature illusion
(Friction from a love with years gone dry).
Our finaIy pointed nerves her impulse kindles
Full with flames which scorch our very soul.
And bite our vital organs into ashes
Left to shift within these gutted frames,
And that once tender touch almost unheeding
Hurls these shells toward insecurity.

Is this the truth from which we have been
sheltered?
Void, wherein no anchored hope to grasp?
Is this the lot for which we have been
nurtured?
Plunge through night to common beds of stone!

First Draft
ON COMING OF AGE

Shall Time no more caress with soothing fingers
Innocence in unrealities?
She scrapes more harshly our mature illusions
(Friction from a love with years gone dry).
Our finely pointed nerves her impulse kindles
Full with flames which, searing, scar our souls
And bite our vital organs into ashes
Left to shift within these gutted frames,
And that once tender touch almost unheeding Hurls these shells toward insecurity.

Is this the truth from which we have been shielded?
Void, wherein no anchored hope to grasp?
Is this the doom for which we have been nurtured?
Plunge through night to common beds of stone?

Wayne Everly
Things to be done
Me to do them.
Where should I start?
I'll try the beginning.

How shall I start?
We did it like this
But who's he to say?
I'll try it my way.

Charles Sanders
The cold gray waters of a country pond
Move before the breeze, as the sun,
Angered at having to leave so soon,
Flings a glass of apricot wine in the
stubborn face.
But the placid countenance makes no motion
Of recognition, and the sun,
Remembering an appointment, suddenly,
Forgets its anger, turns, and hurriedly
climbs
Down the countryside.

Bobbe Gortin Long
NEC JAR IN A SIEVE, a novel by Kamala Markandaya, reviewed by James Atchison.

Kamala Markandaya, a Brahmin, has, in writing her first book, Nectar in a Sieve, created a subtly engaging story. No reader is bored witnessing the struggles of Nathan and his prudent wife, Rukmani, and their children. Because he likes discovering new things and considering a concept of life differing from his own, because he enjoys living vicariously experiences remote from his own, this reader enjoyed meeting Rukmani's new husband with her and being in her home. He was particularly impressed with the exotic serenity and the quietness of rustic India so pervasive in the novel and with the sense of hunger without hope.

Beauty becomes realized in the village life of Rukmani's family until the leather processing factory brings noise, dirt, wealth and immorality into their rice-growing, pumpkin-cultivating countryside. With this modern business come employment for farmers, easy money for the lazy, an open field for prostitutes. The life is trying, it is an encounter with famine, floods, overseers, sometimes incomprehensible children. The life is dear. It is nectar, sweet and good, that cannot be stopped from fleeing, flowing through a sieve.

Nathan, a wise, patient man, is made wiser and more patient by his understanding wife who can read and write. Their children are fated to live witnessing joys, sorrows and insurmountable difficulties we Americans don't believe exist.
The tone of the book is serene and its style, simple, not marred by prosy, many-times-said cliches; its story is poignant and not sentimental. Phrases that are firm yet delicate, sentences flavored from superb choosing of words, paragraphs masterfully constructed produce an effect that is a joy to meet in a new novel.

The sorrow one shares is not written but interwoven so the reader feels it. Love is a cohesive force, pure and natural, not overworked nor lightly dwelt upon by the author. And so are hunger, hate, envy, and other human emotions of the people depicted in this novel which portrays the village poor.

For me, reading "As soon as the rains were over, and the cracks in the earth had healed . . . Hope, and fear. Twin forces that tugged at us in one direction and then in another . . . Fear, constant companion of the peasant. Hunger, ever at hand to jog his elbow should he relax. Despair, ready to engulf him should he falter. Fear; fear of the blackness of death" is an ever inexplicable thrill.

This is a story written by one who knows, a story full of meaning and calmness, signifying much. Those who live in it will do their bit--others after them will do no differently.
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