

A page of musical notation, likely a score for a choir or orchestra. The notation consists of a grid of notes and stems, with some notes having stems pointing upwards and others downwards. The notes are arranged in a regular pattern, suggesting a specific musical piece. The text "COE REVIEW" is printed in the lower right quadrant of the page.

COE REVIEW

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# masthead

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# Nova Song

*Samantha Hamilton*

## About the Sun, the Seer, and the Judgment

Saul is flying past his limits and knows it, but he doesn't want to stop, and so, with a dizzy shudder, he suddenly shatters into the billions and billions of separate molecules that compose his body and drifts away. He spreads himself on the wind and each molecule becomes a separate entity, each fully sentient, each surrounded on all sides by heat, light, air, sound, seeing everything, himself/each other, a semi-infinity of times. Saul swirls in the light, each tiny Saul brighter than stars filtered through sun. Soon, Saul will come back and rest with Leroy and me where we lie, feeling the warmth of sun below and above us. If I stop to listen, I am aware of the buzz of the air, and if I stop to feel, I can be Leroy beside me, feeling the same things I am, watching Saul twice, beating twice, feeling me feel him feeling the same things I feel, watching Saul twice. . . so Leroy feels it, too, when bit by bit Saul comes to me, drawing my energy to coalesce again. Each particle tingles with warmth and air as it lands on my body. I am strengthened by giving him strength, I become a sun of myself, giving, feminine, to Saul's mean satellite likeness, absorbing, receiving, reflecting me.

Saul is whole now, lying on top of me, his flesh buzzing with my energy. He wants me to go flying with him. He doesn't understand my tiredness. Leroy, who is always considerate, reminds him that he has just drained me and it would be difficult for me to put two of us back together. I feel a surge of love and gratitude. I want to be with Leroy again, but can't, of course, while Saul is with me. Once, a long time ago, I found myself wondering why it is that I love Leroy, who is gentle and thoughtful and understanding, only almost as much as I love Saul, who is constantly demanding and never thinks twice about using my energy. I knew I held the answer inside of me, so I looked and found it. A female gives, and must give in order to be satisfied. Leroy never demands, seldom requests my time, body, or energy. It makes me feel as if he is keeping a part of himself away from me. It half-frustrates me. I want to give to him, as much as I give to Saul. Leroy has explained to me that it is because of my unique situation, having to cope with two males. He is afraid of overtaxing me. I have never heard of another female doing it, but it

seems to me that if I can love both of them, I can find enough energy, too. Is there anything wrong with that?

I am spinning now, down and up and away from myself. I am alone. There must be some alone time, because males will drain you. Two of them can take all of you away until there is nothing left. So I am flying alone, well within my speed. It's peaceful. I stop and hover for a moment, to think back to Saul, and hear him singing. He and Leroy are singing together. They acknowledge my touch, and sing for me. I consider going back; I am happy and open, and then, without warning, there is another female with me. I greet her, but she is closed. I feel her searching me without allowing me to respond. Then, as suddenly as she came, she is gone. She leaves behind a cloud of anger, bitter to inhale, stinging to touch. It hurts to get near it, so I skirt around it and go back to where Saul and Leroy are waiting for me. I am puzzled. This has never happened before.

\* \* \*

I am in another place now. It is cool, but surprisingly, not damp, so I can sit on the floor. There is nothing else to sit on. The coldness of the floor through the one thin petticoat they permit me to keep helps me to stay awake. I haven't slept in a long time. I put my cheek against the cool wall. Soon I won't be cold anymore, ever. My face is already warmer than it should be. I have caught fever, I move my feet, which are blue and brown and black. They used to be pink. My petticoat is of rough cloth, and is stiff in the places my body juices have dried on it.

There is noise beyond the walls, a roaring myriad noise. It reaches me through a rectangle cut in the stones, too high for me to reach. A little light comes through the window, too, but not much. It's dark in here.

A man dressed in dark robes comes in, He asks me to confess. He offers me a choice between being unbearably hot for a short time or being cold the rest of my existence, I tell him I would rather be hot for a short time, thank you. He hopes God has mercy on my soul but he knows He won't, and then he goes away.

Something comes in through the window and hits the side of my face. It explodes on impact, and runs juice down my neck. The juice is red, and I wonder vaguely if I am bleeding. It tastes salty and sweet. It stiffens my hair and dries on my face, running down my neck and then between my breasts, full of small seeds, sticky and hardening. I let it.

The man in black and two other men come in. I get up to go with them. They will take me beyond the wall, out to the noise, and to the flames which will consume and cleanse me.

\* \* \*

I am back with Saul and Leroy. They tell me it is a very good beyond-story and ask me a lot questions which, as usual, I can't answer. I have already forgotten most of it. We join and try to remember, trying so hard that we are startled when we realize there are others with us. A great many, both male and female, they hover, quivering. They are all angry. We have done something wrong. They hate us so much it hurts, and I try to shield Leroy and Saul while at the same time protecting myself. I have never had to spread myself so thin, never been forced to fight for three at once. Saul and Leroy try to reinforce me, but the effort is still almost unbearable, every atom of me stiff and straining. They sense my weakness and let me feel the full force of their hate, all at once. For a moment I wonder if they can kill me. About the time I decide doesn't matter because I can't hang on any longer anyway, they let up and back off. Leroy tries to get them to tell us what's wrong, but they won't open at all to us. I feel their sour, dripping disgust around us. We have broken now law! Cries Leroy. You have flouted our natural law! one of them lashes out. Freaks! You will be corrected. I suddenly realize that I can't reach either Saul or Leroy. They have probably been trying to reach me, too, and can't. The anger of the others blocks us completely. They know they have won, and my inside lurches as I feel their triumph. And then they close again; I guess they are discussing the problem. I reach desperately for Leroy, then for Saul, and become panicky when I find I can't. I have never been this alone before. I suddenly want to be with both of them at once, to be comforted by being e two males I love. I have always been afraid of giving my energy to both at the same time; the probable consequence would be that I would give all of me away, and cease to be my own separate entity. But right now, I am quite willing to give up my individual consciousness rather than stay alone like this. I am so frightened I can't think; I'm not afraid of death, since that's transitory, but afraid of complete isolation, of the unknown. I don't what they can do to us. I have never heard of anyone else having to be corrected. I try to gather myself and think logically, but all I can feel anywhere is the almost physical effort of reaching two ways at once. I want to speak to them, but they won't let me. The harder I try, the more alone I am. And then they fin-

ish their discussion and skim off, a large group first, and then the few curious ones who have to stay for a final look at the freaks.

Leroy! my body screams. Saul, Saul, Saul! I look at them, see Saul trembling, Leroy lying on the ground, perfectly still But I can't feel them. We are corrected. The others are blocking us, and will continue to block us, with the combined anger of an entire unthinking, arbitrary society. I don't understand why. I don't know how to fight them. I can't even hate them, I am so confused....

\* \* \*

I am being judged. I am being condemned - I am not sure what I have done wrong, but it was a very great sin. The man in the white robe requests me to kneel as he reads the sentence. I have no choice. I kneel. There are a lot of others here, all very solemn. They do not pity me. The man says I will burn. For the rest of time, all eternity, I will be in flames, in torment, feeling the heat, the pain, smelling my own flesh charring, hearing my hair burn around my ears. I am not afraid. There is no use being afraid of what You can't prevent. I don't want to burn, but there is no choice, no escape, no higher court of appeal, no reprieve. My punishment is inevitable, unending, and worst of all, just. The man does not say he is sorry. He does not say he hopes anyone will have mercy on my soul. This is mercy.

And then the man and all the solemn angels are gone, and I am alone in my part of hell with the fire starting around my feet, singeing the hair of my single, naked body. . . .

\* \* \*

. . .confused, and so alone that if I wasn't looking at Leroy when it happened, I would not know. He rises suddenly and spins away, cutting himself off from us completely. Saul wants to comfort me and slides up over me. I am so miserable that I almost don't notice when I feel him repeating: Oh, my own, my love, I'll make it all right, I'll make it all right. . . and then I realize we are together. Joy runs through me like energy, feeding both of us, sharing our relief, until he stops and says: We have to find Leroy. But we can't, I reply, they won't let us. They'll cut us off again if we try, I'm afraid.

I want Leroy! we sob together.

\* \* \*

This place is not built of stone, nor is it a forever-place. This place is

burning around me. It hurts to breathe. It hurts to open my eyes. They are burning, too. it is hard to see. I try to out-run the flame, but there is no place to run. It forces me up against a wall. I am trapped. I try to keep my clothing from burning. My body is flowing with liquid fear. It would be pleasant and easy to stop trying to see and breathe. I would like to lie down on the floor and wait until it's over, but I am holding something that must not burn. It Is a piece of me, very small, shaped like me. It makes noise I can almost hear over the fire noise. A baby. My baby, I hold it against my body, tight, to calm it,

I find a window and try to open it one handed, the baby in the other hand. It doesn't work. I flop the baby over and put it on the floor. I raise the window, and the flames leap around me. I grab the baby, quick, and look out. It is much farther to the ground than I had realized. The air is cool and clear, but it is still hard to see. I finally spot a large group of men below me. I call to them, and they reach up their hands to take the baby. I put its head to my lips, hold it out, and let it drop. I watch. Three men catch it all at once. It's safe. The men call to me. I lower the window and lie down on the floor and go to sleep.

\* \* \*

And then it occurs to both of us, separately and simultaneously, so quickly it could not be felt or blocked by anyone. else. Saul slides away from me and shuts himself up, but I can still almost feel him say: Find him, find him, find him. . . and I try. Leroy has cut himself off totally, and I have to keep searching everywhere, every minute, waiting for the moment he relaxes and I can get through. I become unconscious of Saul, concentrating almost too hard on that one familiar spark, thinking I have gone blind, but still straining, when it breaks and I find him. I tell him and close almost before I realize I have. Saul and I lie, not daring to touch. And I have my own thoughts, and a trace of fear. I am running the greatest risk, and once it's done, there's no going back. And whatever happens will happen. It doesn't occur to me to back out.

And then I see Leroy, and there's no more time to think. Desperately afraid of getting caught, we are together and flying so fast that my next conscious thought is the good feeling of speed. It has to be perfectly timed, and as the instant comes closer, I feel a thrill of fear more exciting than flying. If I botch it, there will be no second chance, since once disintegrated, I could never find the energy to get all three of us back together. We would drift, sep-

arate, thinking, but unaware of each other or anyone else, for the rest of time. If I succeed, we will at least be together. Closer, and closer, and it has to be-- Now! I feed them my energy and life, let them absorb me completely, then draw them together, us together into one, and realize with delight that I have not sacrificed my individuality, we still think as one all together and one I am us and one we are. . . and then I feel the barrier break around us as we shatter into our lowest common denominator, three plus one times billions and billions of us equal one, and I go flying apart together away from the sun for the final time.

# Big Mac

## *Dan Tedlie*

Me? I have plenty to eat myself. But the whole human race was in trouble! It had been recently discovered that by eating organisms of a lower nature, the whole human race, was retarding itself (i.e., becoming dumber). It had something to do with the DNA and the RNA in these lower forms of life affecting the intelligence level of the human mind. There was another issue at stake. A moral issue. After the 20-years war, mankind began to ask itself "what right do I have to take the lives of life forms that are completely alien to me?" It became a religious fad, and, what with the influence the DNA, RNA discovery was having, the inevitable started happening over-night. The whole human race began to eat itself.

Slowly at first, just those who died naturally or by accident. The human race was testing out the idea. And, it was testing out the idea. And, it was discovered that the DNA RNA of the dead humans was making those who ate them smarter. This discovery, along with the scrumptious new recipes that were coming out, was getting the whole human race more and more excited about its new eating habit. And so it began to eat a little faster. It started by sending the very old to the butcheries, turning them into tasty treats fit for a king. When all the very old were gone, the whole human race turned its taste buds towards the more tender morsels, the very young. As the demand for edible human flesh got out of hand a pattern became evident. First the old folks homes went out of business, then the maternity wards. Then retirement checks became obsolete, and the next thing you knew, you couldn't find a kindergarten class to save your human sandwich. The human race was becoming smarter and smarter. First it would nibble on the top! Then it would nibble underneath! On top underneath! Geritol club, then the cub scouts. Up and down, smarter, and smarter, and smarter until, oh yes, on no, the human race had eaten itself out.

Almost. Which probably identifies the author of this tragedy. I ate the last human being well over 500 years ago. Which may make you ask "who is this person who can last over 500 years, and what does he eat?" I can answer an easy question like that - I haven't eaten the whole human race for nothing. I am what I eat, and I eat myself.

# Diary of the Sun

*Regina White*

Written: 4/15/76

April 14, 1976

To my diary of the SUN:

This is set in the past.

Madness that is what they say to me. And they call me mad. She is mad, they say. They never stop saying it. MAD. MAAAAD!!!! M-A-D. They spell that em . . . ay. . dee. Mad. When I say that I wrote Paragone they say I am mad. A little touched in the head, the kinder ones say.

Let me define they. It's the people I work with, practically in the past tense.

How long have they been calling me, this?

Only six days.

It is Passion Week and I am undergoing a little Passion Play of my own. A little spinning of the SUN, if you will. A few Medicean Stars if you will again. A little burnt out. Too much time logged under the SUNIamp, A tall SUNrise. But beyond that, I have learned:

I have touched the SUN

or, conversely, the SUN has touched me.

Everything is the SUN, but I get confused

(because the SUN blinds the truth.)

But my fellow workers don't really say I'm mad all that much, in six days you can't say much of anything, But. they noticed things amiss when I came to the office dressed in aluminum foil. Disapproving nods.

But the point being I don't need help, because. . . .

Paragone is selling well.

Yours,

Joan

April 16, 1976

To my diary of the SUN:

By now this is set in the future.

Changing tone a bit here, but first I must tell you what Grace said (she works in the office in Claims, but went to the University of Chicago.) At any rate, Grace said that Leonardo Da Vinci wrote Paragone. I shrugged and said I thought of that, but mind her own business, And I said it with a smile. A smile that sent her scurrying into a neutral

June 19, 1976

To my diary of the SUN:

By now this is set in the not-too-distant future.

The last entry was not complete. I got a long distance phone call.

I haven't kept up with the diary because the momentum kind of faded.

I haven't ever been able to keep writing in a diary, my life is dull. I'll be the first to admit that. People come up and say, "Nora, your life is dull, how can you stand it?" And I remind them my name is Joan, not Nora.

Good point to bring up, I thought. I have pretty much decided that what I am doing here is living in an alternative world. I remember back when I was four, and Sputnik had just been launched and my father took me out in the backyard (this was in Grand Rapids), well right then I knew that my generation would commune with the sky, even if I didn't quite put it in those terms.

I guess I could relate this all to having like an avant-garde clandestine relationship. Relating to the SUN. Heavily, But out in that backyard, my father explained what was going on up in the sky, and every star that seemed to move had to be Sputnik. All the stars were moving. But I'm getting sentimental here, too much so.

"Joan, SOMEDAY MAN WILL GO TO THE MOON!!!!" is what my father said, and he said it with a choke of amazement.

"Daddy, YOUR DAUGHTER HAS TOUCHED THE SUN!!!!" is what I think I would say to him now.

Yours,  
Joan

October 11 , 1983

To my diary of the SUN:

By now this is set way in the future.

I have things to say that the world must know.

The SUN is the prime mover of the aesthetic.

The SUN is the mover of my pen.

The SUN creates my diary.

I write to my diary (infrequently, yes) but only as I write in it does it exist.

.. evidence of the SUN.

Yesterday is the definition of one Mercury circuit of the SUN

And the definition of yesterday is one Mercury circuit of the SUN.

The SUN is liquid, not gaseous.

In 1494 the Medici were expunged from Florence.

The SUN Burnt up Savonarola in 1498.

The SUN is the keeper of the Aesthetic. Kantian babble aside for now.

The SUN is the SUN.

The SUN is the source of art-energy.

The SUN is all measures and the arbiter of all measures.

The SUN is called Nora.

Nora is deus.

The SUN was founded as the dens for all who would live on Earth.

The SUN is the sum of questions put forward to little children as they squirm in their school desks.

The SUN keeps track of creative linkage.

I want the SUN. I am the SUN.

I want a tan. I want warmth.

I want quick death. I need my vitamins.

I am ALONE ALONE ALONE. . .em. . .ay. . .dee.

The gaseous Nora. The liquid SUN.

The SUN as sum. The liquid Ouija.

Yours,  
Nora

To my diary of the SUN:

Oracle SUN comes up one more day, this is it. It is one more day because the SUN comes up. And yesterday is exactly that because one Mercury circuit has occurred. Just like that.

Hello Nora, take my trials from off my shoulders. Keep my heart inside

your core. My body is in your smile. Where is your core? I am aware of your smile.

Have you fire for me? Or firemen?

Bring me the firemen, the elementmen. We have firemen, windmen, earthmen, and watermen. The windmen live in the cyclonic bits of the sky, the watermen swim in the connected oceans. The earthmen are in the soil and in the rich core of Earth's own heart,

And the firemen. Is anything more obvious? They live in the SUN. Or so I read in Paragone, or wrote. . . I don't remember I DON'T REMEMBER I DON'T REMEMBER. But I don't think it matters.

WE ARE ALL THERE IS ONLY ONE SUN ONE  
SOLAR SYSTEM THERE IS NO MORE THERE IS

Thank you very much, Nora. The canon of painting doesn't matter. Thanks a heap. You can quit touching me now. I'll toss my paintings to the cyclonic bits of sky. But I have never painted.

Yours (HA!),  
Joan

October 13, 1983

Memo:

Liz, remind me of my hair appointment 4 o'clock Tuesday. Thanx.

# How the Son Wuz Gone

*Chuck Mackie*

The son explodid fiv yerz ago. I wuz fiv yerz old then and i am ten yerz old now. I can stil remembur wen it hapened bcuz the TV wus all funi and mi mom telz me so. She sez that at the sientists and stuf nu that the son wood blo up. Tha cud not du nothing abowt it so tha kinda pretended that evrithing wuz OK. Then the mad funi thingz that stuk owt of the grownd and rnak noyzz lik bbbbbb and rerererere, Wen the son went awa everibudi wuz funi and lost thar har: My trend bili lost hiz mome cuz it wuz dark a wil and she fel in a hol and her hed fel of. Hiz dade did to cuz he didnt fel good and shot him self in the noz. Then the thingz in the, grownd cam on and pepl felt hater. The TV wuz stil funy the and i got tird of eting al that mush. I hurd ons that pepl in span jumpd in the water and drownd and indea fel of the wurld tu. mi techer sez that the prezedent kilo himself bi jumping owt a plan. That wuz OK tho cuz the world got together and mad a goverment that didnt ned a prezedent of the unitd statz then, I remembur that ovr sitee burnd down wen the mushenz went at funi and startd on fir and then the ador told evribudi to go awa but hiz car blu up so he coodnt. ovr cat cawt on fir and dade thru him in a bukit and he wuznt on fir ene mor but he drownd cuz sukd water. Then we muvd her and we Iivd in a tent til the mad nu howz for evribudi and us to. the did alot for al ov us and thingz wer OK but not rel good. i remembur wen the soldurz cam to vizit and momi scremd and thingz lik that hapnd at over the plas bcuz tha misd the son and felt funi cuz it wuz gon. it wuz warm and al that and ther wuz litz on but pepl misd the son. the goverment thot for a long tim but tha were thotles and thingz got wurs than tha wur. Then a man, i forget hiz nam, had an idea and he told the goverment and the sad it wuz good idea and sad OK tu the man whuz nam i forgot. So he put a grat big smile in the ski bi sum magik or sumthing and pepl felt betur. I like the Smile Fas tu bcuz it maks pepl OK and I lik to luk at it wen I get awak from slep. the end

# Concrete Dreams XX

*Guy A. Beining*

this ripe

red

sun

splits across

Delaware,

&

Wash-

ing

ton

& clawed

in a smooth blush

over Potomac waters,

rushing

in fiery beads

we saw rubies in

our sweat.

# Ruins

*Guy A. Beining*

99

no more linens  
soap  
matching shirt  
or long line of friends.  
the bay  
diamond hard shimmers  
the sun wades  
an ear to trees  
a century of coconuts  
palm huts  
the driven ants cane.  
emelia stirred her bones  
& the brush  
grows higher  
losing circles  
& paths in too many  
directions.

# Pottered Self

*Guy A. Beining*

burning the face  
properly is the important thing  
& not knowing anything holy  
or sacred can build  
the voice inside.  
drinking sperm  
& rich blood  
I join my sister of love,  
one body in being two together.

# A Man with Three Legs

*Pier Giorgio DiCicco*

a man with three legs  
sits on a stool, against a  
corner; a white washed light.

the man is beaming & dressed in tails.

his middle leg is the extra one

identical to its brothers  
all in spats. this is a rare photo.

the man is dead. he looks like a spicier.  
he is dressed to play an accordion  
on either lap

shocking people for fifty years  
putting wild things into their heads

imagine him learning to walk

of women who'd sleep with him just  
to try it

of the time it takes to tie an extra shoe

the sight of him gliding up stairs.

he knows what you are thinking.  
any number of things.

how tie might have crossed his leg for  
the picture

but the man is catching posterity with the  
prank of himself,

and he is beaming.

# The Caw of the Domesticated Cat

*James Hemeseth*

Some years later the young wife went for a walk with her six year old daughter. It was early on a July morning, and the sun slowly dissolved the unseasonable morning haze. The sidewalk was still cold. The young wife imagined it to be a mountain stream, They walked and waded; waded and walked. She carried her sandals in one hand, and in the other grasped her daughter's hand. In her free hand the daughter carried her sandals. They both had pierced ears, and wore tiny pearl earrings.

The daughter said, "The sidewalk tingles my feet."

"But it's nice, isn't it?" the young wife said. Her husband - a librarian by profession had asked her to pick-up at the supermarket an iced six-pack of diet Coca-Cola.

Persistently, the husband's stomach threatened to topple over his belt; his situation was not unlike slightly risen bread dough, He had often said, "This has to stop. Or, I'll end up fat and won't be able to see my penis."

Earlier that morning he blamed his pre-mature ejaculation on his fat (she figured he was just in a hurry to take a shower), and dismounting to take a shower, said, "Get me a six-pack of diet Coke. Buy it cold so I can have it for lunch."

The daughter said, "why can't I have a kitty?"

"Because," her mother replied, reaching for a grocery cart.

"I don't believe you," she said. "I don't believe your story about all the dead kitties buried in the backyard."

"It's true," the young wife added. "I grew up in our house, so did my mother, and her mother, too. And when a cat died, it was buried in the backyard, always."

Coming home from the supermarket they wore their sandals. The sidewalk was already warmer than the bath water the young wife ran nightly for the daughter. By mid-afternoon it would be hot enough to fry those proverbial eggs.

The young wife remembered that when she was a little girl her father had fried an egg on the sidewalk. She said, "One very hot July afternoon my father fried an egg on the sidewalk."

"Can we?" the little girl asked. "It's July, can we?"

At lunch the daughter wiped her hands on the tablecloth. She'd been eating day-old pizza. The husband yelled at the daughter, and the young wife yelled at both the daughter and the husband.

"I didn't want my ears pierced," the six year old said. "Why did you get my ears pierced, Mommy? I hate them. The kids make fun of my ears."

Then she added, a cunning blow, "And Daddy doesn't like them either. I heard him tell you so."

She further added, "Will you try an egg on the sidewalk, Daddy?"

"Sure," he said. "But wait until Sunday. Okay? I'll do it on Sunday."

The young wife interrupted. "When I went away to college all my sorority sisters already had their ears pierced. So I got mine done, and they became infected. I asked your doctor and he said I should have yours pierced when you were still a baby. So that's why I did it. You'll thank me for it later, I saved you a lot of pain."

The husband got a Coke out of the refrigerator. "Let's go to the bedroom for a while," he said.

They did. The young wife wore a halter and cut-off blue jeans. He unzipped the cut offs and untied her top. She stared at her breasts mirrored in the bedroom's largest bay window.

She thought she saw two faces. They were cat faces. My nipples, she said to herself, are the little noses, their cold little noses.

Meanwhile the six year old watered the plants on the kitchen window sills and straightened the magazines scattered about on the living room floor. Reclining on a large cushion, she paged through a picture book of Alice in Wonderland. Her father brought all sorts of books home from the library.

She could have as many books as she liked, a dozen different books a day, if she liked--that's what the young father told his six year old daughter.

When the mother came out of the bedroom, the daughter said, "Alice has a kitty. Why can't I have a kitty?"

"There isn't room in the backyard," the mother replied.

The daughter ran past her mother and into the bedroom. The husband smoothed the sheets, fluffed the pillows, and pulled up the bedspread. "Just like new," he said. "You can't even tell we've been in it."

He thought he spoke to his wife. But the daughter replied, "Daddy, can I have a kitty?"

He groaned, stuffed his shirttail into his pants, and said, "I've got to get

back to work. Tonight I'll bring home Little Black Sambo. We just got a new non-racist version. But it's still about this big kitty-cat."

She persisted, tho.

The mother shouted from the kitchen, "Go to your room!"

"Yes. Or, I'll spank you," he added, slapping his hands together until they smarted.

The daughter retreated into her bedroom, and the husband hurried out the front door for the library. The wife fidgeted in the kitchen. She wept, and wondered if she wasn't a plaything--first, when she was a little girl for all her mother's cats, and now as a grown woman for her pudgy husband and their daughter.

The daughter touched her mother's head. It rested on the kitchen table. She looked up, and the daughter said, "Why can't I have a cat?"

The young wife said, "Take an egg out of the refrigerator. Go fry it on the sidewalk."

The daughter took two eggs. Running loudly for the front door, she had shouted, "One for you, Mommy, and one for me. Okay? They'll be good. You'll see, Mommy!"

The young wife went to the hallway closet, and took down several shoe boxes. They were empty except for the tissue paper that had protected the shoes. She retrieved the paper, and put it into a single box. She placed this box on the lowest shelf where it could easily be reached by even the shortest person.

She heard the daughter yell, "Mommy!" The front screen door opened and slammed shut; she heard the daughter's rapid footfalls and huge sobs.

"Mommy, Mommy, a dog ate the eggs."

What the daughter found on the large cushion in the living room, so-help-me-God, was a well-fed cat. The cat looked almost like a stuffed toy. But it was warm, and beneath the fur which was 99 & 44/100% white, the daughter's tiny fingers felt flesh, ribs, skull, and pelvic bone.

The, cat purred and purred. Stopping, it grinned at the daughter, it said, "This is to teach you a lesson." Then the cat stiffened, and died.

The six year old hurried to the closet and found the shoe box. Her mother had often talked about burying kitties in shoe boxes, and how her mother had always kept all the family's shoe boxes--for just that purpose--in the hallway closet.

At supper the husband asked, "Where's Mommy?"

"Gone," the six year old said. "She turned into a dead cat. Mommy was right. I tried to bury her in the backyard, but I always dug up dead kitty bones. So I quit. Do you want to see Mommy?"

"No," the husband said.

"She's in a shoe box. It's under my bed."

She added, "Can I have a kitty, Daddy? A live one, please!"

He shrugged, and finally said, "Yes. But you'll have to wait until Sunday."

He added, "Here. Go read Little Black Sambo."

And she did.

The young husband phoned his wife's mother at an old people's retirement ranch in Montana, and explained.

"Yes, that's where we always buried our cats," the mother said. "Sometimes we had nearly a dozen cats. So as the years passed a lot of them ended up in the backyard. Hit by cars, poisoned, old age, you know, and so forth. Oh, they died lots of ways."

She added, "Don't worry! She'll come back. I know my daughter."

"Good, I believe you," he said.

He sat in the twilight lit kitchen and drank a Coke. His daughter came in; she was still dirty from digging in the backyard. She carried her pajamas, and he said, "You'll have to run your own bathwater tonight."

# Automatic Writing 4/12, Beginning with the Inspiration 'When Time Ends'

*EPW*

When time ends,  
there will be a great falling away  
of walls,  
of earth,  
of flesh  
a final stretch  
and then the limp  
and endless  
sigh.

# A Note to Myself

*EPW*

There is something  
about the crumbs of a cookie  
something about the accomplishment  
to have devoured them all  
to have picked at each one  
wetting the fingertip to attract them  
crunching them separately  
between the teeth  
striking a pose  
the ponderous sifter of cookie crumbs.

there is something  
about writing upon  
a clean white sheet of paper.

# **REVIEW: Jean Kern's Dramatic Satire in the Age of Walpole, 1720-1750**

*Jack Hayes*

Although Jean Kern's study *Dramatic Satire in the Age of Walpole, 1720 - 1750* (Iowa State University Press, 1976) is by the author's own admission, narrow in focus, the exhaustiveness of Kern's research shines out on every page. The bibliography of plays referred to in the study consists of nearly 500 works. One in fact gets the impression upon perusing the voluminous catalog of unfamiliar works that Kern quotes at every turn that the author must have personally unearthed long-buried editions (something which would not be new for Kern who in 1963 discovered three previously unknown works of Charles Macklin while doing research in the Huntington Library) in order to complete this book which must be one of the most complete and clear headed treatments of its subject to date.

After an introduction dealing with the antiquity and origins of satire in general, and detailing some reasons for the sudden rise of satire in Walpole's are, Kern launches into a brief chapter on satiric theory before, during, and after Walpole's time. In this chapter, Kern offers her own definition of dramatic, satire which is concise, clear-cut, and practical. Here, she also makes important distinctions between two types of writing that she says have traditionally been confused with satire, namely, comedy and farce; and she attempts to distinguish full scale, satire from what she terms "the satiric-." In pursuing this discussion, she traces the confused etymology of the word satire, and explains how the acceptance, of that word in the eighteenth century, as well as other factors such as the scarcity of theory of satire at the time, affected the development Of the drama of the period. That chapter draws to a close with Kern spelling out some of the common elements discernible in satirical writings since the time of Aristophenes.

Chapters two, three, and four on social, political, and literary satire respectively, represent an application of the theories, definitions, and observations set forth in the first chapter to the drama of the period which roughly coincides with the decades in which the great Augustan satirists--Swift, Dryden, and Pope were most productive. As often as not, the reader will encounter in these, core chapters lengthy accounts of what does not, in Kern's mind, constitute dramatic satire; the reason for this being that Kern is, as she

explains, examining the evolution of a literary form which, far from emerging spontaneously, grew from seeds that were present in other literary manifestations of the, day. Hence, Kern may include, for example, an analysis of a sentimental comedy or an heroic tragedy (both dramatic forms introduced around Walpole's time) in order to pinpoint a particular character or stylistic element of the work which possesses satirical intentions and, consequently, represents a stepping stone to the more thorough-going form of "dramatic satire." Not until the final chapter on the form of dramatic satire does Kern present the reader with a complete consideration of pure dramatic satire, that is to say, dramatic works whose content is sufficiently controlled by the satirist's intention to be labeled satire. Kern thus depicts, throughout the bulk of the book, the spotty experimentation with satire that eventually resulted in the creation of at least five entirely new forms of drama, namely, the rehearsal satire, the muck epic, the satiric allegory, the burlesque-parody, and the ballad opera.

Also essential to the book's central portions is an examination of the targets at which satire was aimed, and the, motives of the period's satirist/archers. At this point, many works and authors come under scrutiny by Kern, which seems to have digested every scrap of dramatic material that the epoch produced. Much of this material she allows the reader to scrutinize by way of frequent quotations. Persons and phenomena such as Walpole, his dictatorial powers, oppressive laws, and corruption; relationships between members of the royal family; doctors, judges, clerics, the *nouveau riche*, card-playing, chocolate swilling, fashionable balls, and other frivolous pursuits of the aristocracy; the Italian opera, the new art forms like pantomime and sentimental comedy etc., all came under the satirists' fire at the time, and Kern provides myriad examples of each target.

In order that the reader might glean the full scope and effect of satire, during Walpole's administration, Kern also embellishes her work with just enough historical data to keep the reader who is unacquainted with the period away from the encyclopedia. Her lively descriptions of Walpole, the, conditions of the growing middle, class , the excesses of the aristocrats, and the pretensions of the bourgeoisie, though brief, give the impression at times that the author studied in eighteenth century England instead of the Newberry Library.

Nor is there any lack of organization here. The book reflects an almost

mathematical sense of order on the part of the author. Important points are continually recapitulated, very often in an easy-to-comprehend, 1-2-3 manner. Each portion of the work proceeds naturally to the next, and the conclusions reached in every discussion are clearly derived from the pretenses and examples that precede them.

Stylistically the book is lucid and fluent, an indication that Kern does not succumb to the tendency of many scholars to burden the reader with protracted sentences, abstruse or obscure allusions, and pretentious language. The book is crisp and concise, and its theses emerge with much clarity and little coaxing. Circumlocution and hyper scholasticism are maladies to which Kern seems to be immune. The study's straightforward style will please the freshman English student, while its content will satisfy the seasoned scholar.

With the publication of this treatise, Dr. Jean Kern has, after forty years of digging, perusing, pondering, and occasionally writing, put together an authoritative and lucid account of the evolution and extent of dramatic satire printed between 1720 and 1750.

# evolue'

## *manning marable*

we are the children of broken glass  
silent figures dressed in high yellow shrouds  
empty smiles bring forth our thoughts  
vacant lies create our universe  
and chain our black spirits  
to a cultural grave

we are the children of broken glass  
the anointed messiahs to a faceless black throng  
our whitened palms imprison humble hearts  
and silence the heavy sad lips  
of those who never cry  
i am a man  
of those who never dare to grasp  
that dream deferred  
we are the children of broken glass  
a gifted few who've learned the, trick  
of pavlov's amiable dogs  
we serve to please  
we hug our bonds  
and kiss our loving master's gifts  
we cherish calves of gold  
and smash the laws of our african elders  
at our white mentor's noble feet

children are blind to a fierce black anger  
like a summer storm in the ghetto  
growing bigger and blacker  
while we who dwell in glass cages  
dare to dream of invisibility

# a black scholar's god

*manning marable*

an empty shelf decays  
in aristocratic splendor  
an inscrutable symbolic token  
of intellectual purity  
the heavenly justifications  
of virtuous evangelists  
who slept with my mother's mother  
are on proud display  
the words  
rest upon ancient victories  
and forgotten morals

a black student genuflects  
in oxford's imusty halls  
he searches for the rhythms  
of the akamba and ashanti  
he whispers in his conqueror's voice  
he is the bastard  
of his mother's Christian rapist

at darkest night  
the scholar sleeps  
and his god is found wanting  
a belching, fat leviathan  
awaits with open, loving arms  
and hungry, hungry womb  
the words  
engulf  
and take nommo  
in flight

# Jardin de Plante,

*Robert Drexler*

Beyond the limits of these walls  
No one listens.  
Light snow falls beyond these curtains  
On the crisp lawn.

Our garden within generates  
A plentitude of forms. We grow  
The ovum and the seed. We are  
In sedge, orchid, in hibiscus.

Our Sun within which is we two  
Warms our zodiac. We become  
The ovum and the seed. We are  
The propagation of our flame.

Our blaze among the humid leaves  
Inhales our dew. The beaded drops  
In which we are contracted rings  
The skin of blossom, leaf, and bud.

The snow beyond our windowed walls  
Is blind to us.

**17 May, 1974**

*Robert Drexler*

I smell your burning flesh  
Fahizah, Mizmoon  
I watch the piggies try  
To warm their hands in your fire  
I do not think they will succeed  
Their hands will freeze.

That was not the way  
To steal, to kill  
Go out and cast your vote  
Decide between two brainless hogs  
Hang your freedom on a hook  
For pigs to count.

Sows will eat a child  
They'll eat you too.  
They'll chase you through the yard  
You'll flounder in the mud and fall  
They'll smear your brains across their snout  
They love to root.

When you've got a house  
That's fed on corn  
When senators  
Are rooting truffles in their sty  
When Nixon's bought & sold like pork  
I think -it's time to take  
The butcher knife  
I think the trotters must  
Be tied. I think the vein is ready  
For the knife. The, squeals will die  
I think it's time.

I smell your burning flesh  
Fahizah, Mizmoon  
I watch the piggies try  
To warm their hands in your fire  
I do not think they will succeed  
Their hands will freeze.

# Villanelle

*Robert Drexler*

He grabs my hair, like swinging on a vine  
His tyrant hands lock shut in baby glee  
It's mine he cried, your hair, creation's mine.

My cherub wild astride the blast divine  
Looks out on me from angel infancy  
He grabs my hair, like swinging on a vine.

My yelps, my whimpers do not underline  
For him my pain. He thinks I am a tree.  
It's mine be cried, your hair, creation's mine,

Babwaw asks Block about a proper fine  
"Lone contemplation" is the stern decree.  
He, grabs my hair, like swinging on a vine.

Will he capitulate? Will he resign  
His lordship and accept reality?  
It's mine he cries, your hair, creation's mine.

He says, "I'm thinking." It's our only sign  
We won. And then we, catch his side eye glee.  
He grabs our hair, like swinging on a vine.  
It's mine he cries, your hair, creation's mine,

# My Fairy Tale Man

*Wanita Zumbrunnen*

In time there was once  
a little girl lost  
who wanted a playmate  
or eight  
when a tap to her ear  
and a voice on her shoulder  
began the delight of the sight  
of a fairy tale man.  
They felt fingers  
and played words.  
His toes touched hers  
and his movement moved her  
but her eyes blew up  
and he was gone.  
It was true.  
Pouf--the horny dragon!  
Her vodka tears  
flowed and flew.  
She collected bottles  
of 100 proof.  
She began a river  
and then a sea  
when in time  
the sewer overran  
her doorway filled with magic  
and the prince again could be.  
This time she ate a banana  
while he played his plan  
and wound a weave  
that held her found.  
Thank You  
my fairy tale man

# Mulberry Tales

*Wanita Zumbrunnen*

I sit a dusk table  
dark of alone  
traveling wait and waste  
before mulberry tales  
let soul stains  
sear the anger of now.

The tree claims me  
by purple crush brands  
in leaves of laughter  
as the wind says yes  
and myths together  
a mulberry communion.

You sit a still car  
and grave watching ask  
the mulberried spirit  
strange story telling  
how a man found love  
who could help it?

# The Summer of Death

*Wanita Zumbrunnen*

Out of those days came  
out of the whirl  
the what the weep  
a spring of mad  
budding blood bright  
came worn warm time  
the summer of death.

First the father plant  
over-tilled earth strain  
a live struggle  
germinating death  
through heart burst  
for blood is  
the rain of the dead.

Second daughter of rebirth  
a stunted conception  
clinging and cracking  
layers of love  
with blood shoots  
twisting vine tight  
to death all growth.

Third the marriage flower  
the false bud blood  
blossoming death  
laying out life  
in coffins of adjustment  
claiming plots  
for the heart grave.

Now in my apartment womb

I write birth to death  
walls inked with blood  
words stoning moss  
stacking fall shelves  
for my plants publish  
the death of birth

# Pliers and Pills

*Brian Rusche*

Eleanor was home alone Tuesday night. Everybody at the Top Hat Lounge knew this. Her husband, Carl, sat alone at the bar. Tom, a friend of Carl's, walked into the bar, tore off his coat and hitched up his pants. He had finished another day's work at Duncan Hines. "Another beer, Jerry." Carl gestured with his empty shell. "And get Tom whatever he's drinking."

Eleanor walked into the bathroom, kleenex in hand. She searched through the medicine cabinet and noticed that the contact paper on the shelves had peeled. She found the pills, closed the cabinet and looked at the mirror. It was splattered with toothpaste. Eleanor tugged on her hair at the top of her forehead, trying to hold up the weight of her head. Then she knelt on the floor which she hadn't scrubbed in months.

Tom sat next to Carl. They slapped each other on the back and said howya-doins. Both men worked in quality control at Duncan Hines. Carl worked from eight to four-thirty. Tom did the night shift. They did the same work, struggled in the same income bracket, and both drank at the Top Hat. There were just three obvious differences--Tom had reached forty, weighed over two fifty, and was single. They both sipped their beers as the jukebox played this song:

I want to taste your wine,  
I want to taste your bitter fruit,  
And still remember the sweet, sweet wine,  
Because, darling, I love you.

Eleanor had picked herself up. She carried the bottle, of pills to the living room. The TV was on, suggesting to Eleanor that she buy a new pick-up truck from Richardson/Tiffen Chevrolet.

Carl waited until the song had ended before he spoke to Tom, "I heard you lost a tooth yesterday "

"Yeah, I pulled it out with a pliers--won a fifty dollar bet." Tom smiled, one tooth short. "Say Carl, how's the wife?" Tom put his hand on Carl's

shoulder.

"Oh fine. . . she hasn't called down here yet." Carl looked into his beer as he talked. He was thinking that the tooth fairy used to leave nickels.

Eleanor needed a glass of water. The pills had burnt her mouth.

"Jerry! Give me and my buddy another beer." Tom smiled and whispered, "I can afford it." Carl stared at the vacant space in Tom's mouth. It reminded him of Black Jack gum. Carl used to chew up two sticks until the black wad was as soft as tar, Then he'd shape it over his front teeth and scare the hell out of his mother.

Eleanor was sleeping. A man on the TV sang:

Don't cry--oh, please don't cry,  
These feelings may get you down,  
But there's only a tear in your eye.  
You'll be smiling--there's a new day,  
Comin' down.  
Please don't come down.

"What was the sugar level today? Tom wondered if it was as low as he thought. Both men tested sixty or so chocolate brownies every day.

"I don't know, but the oven was up."

"Hell, this morning we were testing our burnt stuff against Crocker's burnt stuff." Carl shook his head and washed the imaginary taste out of his mind with beer.

Eleanor had gone beyond sleep. The TV's test pattern had been removed and now. . . only snow. The speaker fizzed.

Tom mentioned that his tooth had a gold filling. He was sure that it did. He hoped it was worth less than fifty dollars. "You came out all right." Carl Put on his coat, slapped Tom on the back and said so-long. He watched his feet most of the way home, looking up for street corners and passing cars. Carl decided that walking was a series of falls. He thought of Eleanor, He was going to tell Eleanor that walking was a series of falls. She'd like that.

Tom had another beer. The rolls of fat above his belt grew a little bigger. Working at quality control was a middle-class job, white shirt and all, but the pay was low. Tom found it easy to eat and drink his money away to the point where he could barely afford another white shirt. . . and his size was con-

stantly changing.

Eleanor had finished the last of her dreams. The TV was still snowing, Carl unlocked the door and immediately went into the bedroom. He looked at the bed with the corner of the blankets already folded over. Then he heard the TV's static.

"Eleanor?"

Tom sat alone at the bar, wondering about his gold tooth. After he had wiggled and cracked it from his mouth, he ran into the bathroom and filed his mouth with paper towels. He opened the pliers above the toilet and watched the tooth splash and sink, sending circles of blood across the bowl. He remembered flushing it away. "Say Jerry, I need another beer. . . I got a question for you. How much gold you figure they use when they fill a tooth?"

Carl found his wife in the living room and covered her with an afghan. His mother had knit it. He turned off the TV and went to bed.

Carl woke up the next morning after dreaming of chocolate brownies. The corner of his pillowcase was saturated with saliva. In a cold sweat, he noticed that Eleanor was not there.

"Eleanor?"

Tom woke up at his apartment. How he got there, he didn't know. He had dreamt of a coin he hoped to find under his pillow. It was not there. A few blocks away, Carl plugged in the percolator and went into the living room. Eleanor was white and motionless. Tom fixed some bacon and eggs and hash browns. Carl called the ambulance.

"Eleanor?"

Tom took his breakfast and ate it in front of the TV. A game show. Carl slapped his wife. Tom missed the first question.

"ELEANOR!"

Tom watched a commercial for the right kind of toothpaste. Carl saw the bottle of pills and dropped to his knees. Eleanor didn't know that she was still alone. Tom wondered if he had more cavities. "Damn brownies."

Carl wished he had seen Eleanor last night before he turned off the TV and covered her with mother's afghan. Tom was worried that a his teeth were rotten. Maybe he could make a few hundred by pulling them out. Then he'd get dentures and still have a profit. The paramedics walked out with Eleanor on a stretcher. Carl remembered "a series of falls." The game show contin-

ued. Tom ate his breakfast and looked up between bites. The next question was this:

True or False? People afraid of dying live longer.

Eleanor was in the ambulance. It was too late for a siren. Carl wondered why Tom knew the answer.

# Road Song I

*Samantha Hamilton*

There's 3 strips of jerky and 2 candy bars  
Still in the glove compartment  
The coffee in the thermos may still be warm  
The doughnuts we bought cheap in Tulsa are  
Still edible almost  
Smuggling  
5 cartons of smokes under the front seat  
4 bottles and a half a pound of weed under the back seat  
picking up hitchers and tapping them for gas money  
Listening to the CB squawking in the truck stops  
We might make it to the state line by midnight  
I can drive another 6 hours easy but  
First I gotta go to the john.

# Road Song II

*Samantha Hamilton*

VRRRRRROMMMMM

Mrawwwwm

Anga anga anga anga anga

Gnrongng

VVooma Wooma Wooma Wooma

Gnyurromm

VVrrronng

Awwerrrrrrrrr

# Dragons

*Samantha Hamilton*

There are dragons here,  
In this place of green light  
In this airless ceilingless cave  
Dragons walk  
And their feet leave smoking spoor  
On the polished opal floor.

There are dragons here  
Who drop pearlescent blue-gray scales  
And sometimes great granite, teeth behind them  
Dragons graze  
One giant passing mouthful at a time  
On the few dead trees still standing.

They are restless now,  
Disturbed and irritable  
Butting with heavy heads  
Lashing each other with ponderous tails.

A rusted iron skeleton fourteen feet high  
Now grown to the ground, stands  
To mark where its owner dropped  
Centuries ago.

There are dragons here  
Amid the heat lightning  
And the thunder that is the herd moving.  
Dragons roar  
In frustration and panic, as  
A unicorn lifts her head to speak.

# Hate to Love

*Samantha Hamilton*

Too many things are gone  
Antelope spoor in the concrete  
Wooden beads on the sand  
Broken glass on the asphalt  
I have no other love but this.  
Candles like stars  
Over the ocean  
Crisp brittle frozen grass  
A wedding ring  
In the dust of the lane  
I can't go home  
It's haunted.

# Apologia

*Samantha Hamilton*

She was reaching for something  
And his hand got in the way  
She brushed against it by mistake  
And said excuse me  
And reached for something else.

# Clown Song

*Samantha Hamilton*

The clown sits smiling quietly  
In the far corner of the chessboard  
Empty except for  
A long abandoned crown  
And the rotting corpse of  
A long fallen elephant  
But they are miles away  
And the clown sits  
Quietly watching the horizon  
Not stirring at all  
Except to raise to his lips  
The bowl of blood beside him.  
It tastes salty, like  
The day he was baptized  
And drowned  
It runs down the corners of his mouth  
And dries into a bright red clown frown  
But the clown is smiling  
Where he has sat for nine years now  
As he considers  
I can stay here another day.  
My journey s not yet  
Half over.

# Number Seven

*Dan Groya*

The mimes came up  
from 12 E  
(the old Lower East Side)  
talking in tongues  
their red jackets razed  
the Empire State  
(we remember the view)  
52.7 square miles  
of parking lots lay  
piled like flagstone in the rain.

Vaudeville was dead.

# Number Eleven

*Dan Groya*

My first taste  
of black tobaccos  
rises to the rooftop  
tarred and TV antennas  
bare September males  
growing like Harlem  
in red brick cribs.  
Amsterdam smokes  
with congas and clouds  
dry bicycle chains  
crying like kittens on a balcony  
blinded in infant light.  
I am the boys  
(veteran roadies this year)  
living on lean meats  
a eurail pass  
and wineskin secrets  
offered to Isis  
on the wings of a swallow.

# Number Twelve

*Dan Groya*

We ride bareback  
scribbling shadows  
baptized by sand  
high tide  
sea and seaweed  
erasing each step.

# Number Sixteen

*Dan Groya*

The rector  
did not eat fireplugs  
would nor perform extreme unction  
could not anticipate  
crashing into life  
a cymbal  
ringing pure light.  
His infinite smell  
the perfect medium of pastors  
purple in mourning  
for prophets that never died  
celluloid ghosts  
in afternoon soap opera.  
For the roses  
hard red bleeding roses  
he thirsts  
for the wedding wine  
changed from water  
(on some blue desert night)  
at the hands of a stranger.

# Number Seventeen

*Dan Groya*

He sleepwalked Broadway  
eyes blinking in cadence  
with a digital courier  
time and temperature  
courtesy Mutual of New York.  
He heard streetcorner accordion mail  
wearing blue bandannas  
a beer barrel polka,  
he stood shivering  
in second hand ranch mink  
staring like a headlight  
down 42nd street,  
he saw blood neons  
squeezed from tubes  
restless financiers  
black stick umbrellas,  
subway strangers  
hissing like lizards  
in cool night rain.  
He dropped dead  
in the third stall from left  
in a men's room on the 64th floor  
the malfunctioning toilet  
flushed until he was found.

# Number Twenty

*Dan Groya*

We drank tequilas  
sucked lemons and smoked  
the day International Business Machines  
liquidated its assets.  
The telephones rang  
on Wall Street  
like starved babes' echoes  
in a railway station.

# Number Twenty-one

*Dan Groya*

We've chewed  
the alpha wave fantasies  
at dawn beach hideout  
lub lubbing away  
like motion picture urchins  
in credit card showdown  
with Bank of America  
(Perseus brandishing Medusa's head  
on Madison Avenue)  
no introduction  
satisfies the programmers  
the young boys  
who don't speak Fortran  
can't digest  
music without words  
(city without people)  
just before light  
when concrete lyrics  
dance like penguins across the ice.

# Moon Tides

*Beth Gamse*

slower now    you come back  
soft return    from midnight black  
to early morning    sunrise burn

you would stay, keep me here  
smile another    lover's leer  
I remain    watch the day  
move too quickly    leave too soon

half in hope    or just afraid  
right comes in    bonds remade  
dark and warm    evening hums  
back and forth    it's your turn

# Eating of the Grapes

*Beth Gamse*

midnight gongs at the Gate of the Sun  
one gong one grape one gulp with seeds  
spitting in the new year

3000 tourists 200 spics  
all spitting seed drinking in atmosphere  
like chugging champagne

the 200 Spaniards preening all men  
all soldiers or sailors out for prey  
bussing guapas asking their names

after the gongs crowds thin & melt  
flagging black taxis into bars  
leaving a vineyard bottles & seeds

# The Student

*Beth Gamse*

uncombed and bearded, green-eyed and tall  
turtleneck sweaters, corduroy pants  
a rucksack, a backpack & several tongues  
Spanish German English & French  
political hungry lean intense  
sons of the wealthy not staying home  
in foreign schools learning alone  
to seduce romantics in garters and parks  
leaving in summer like geese going north

# Madrid.. Split Seconds

*Beth Gamse*

stout wives shopping in supermercadoes & panaderias  
smelling kitchens & olive oil  
burnt chestnuts on grills near metros  
facades on streetsides battered brick & green awnings  
musty cafes with no women  
clucking and hissing of cocks when girls pass  
service elevators in apartment houses/  
Vittoriano our doorman in cadet grey  
Guardia Civil silhouettes on highway bridges to the city  
fountains in plazas turning off at 11  
serranos slipping & tipping during duty  
streetcleaners at 4am and late afternoons  
stretch of siesta ingrained in the air  
billboards & bar windows bright slogans Viva Rey  
administrative buildings four square city blocks big  
beggars sprawled on sidewalks hands pleading  
bars gathering ashes & trash on floors  
hole in one wc's/cardboard & burlap extract toilet paper  
only black umbrellas  
no color in clothing, everyone in gray black beige brown or navy  
military men in cheap plastic hats with straps under noses  
schoolgirls in plaid uniforms & platforms  
short men

# Hermes

*Beth Gamse*

in the corner of an evening  
drink before dinner close and quiet  
cocktail browsing for intimates  
and the fellow heading south

saunters to my chair in Andalusian murmurs  
serenading then in French  
asked me

Do you enjoy dancing  
Dining perhaps sometime soon--  
Tomorrow I leave for Sevilla,  
Home for 10 days and back to Madrid.  
May I take your number?

this handsome handsome man  
kissed me lightly the Spanish way  
kissed me

in the car going to dinner swooning  
in love in love after 1/2 hour  
the sideliners urging take him take him  
he owns a factory in Sevilla  
take him

# To Zamora

*Beth Gamse*

on the way to Zamora  
city of the North coldest in Spain  
this time of year

the sun so hard the Stranger comes to mind  
leaving plains flatlands measured and lined  
like chessboards of russet & green into  
foothills slow and rolling north into Guadarrama  
mountains trapped in winter  
hoary frosted trees sag sagebrush weighted  
drifts hiding wires too

the town, frozen in three weeks of fog  
no heat in the hotel  
charming this time of year

# Village

*Beth Gamse*

25 or 30 two storied houses  
faded brick and green or yellow jalousied  
bordered windows frilled flowers  
in rectangle pots line sills and streets  
slow briefly for Seats cutting through

plaid shod capped old men crane necks long  
around, watching eager riders  
wave quickly they smile  
stubbled crinkled skin wrinkles

in baggy trousers like penguins

black sheathed widows aged and bent  
sweep steps water plants gossip  
in cracked broken voices croon  
to infants in cradles

days stretch

# Proteus

*Arlen Burger*

He lived on the edge of the lake of dead trees. The ungrowing, half rotting, half sinking, getting deeper trees; the match-stick trees. The trees that stand knee deep in chromed reflections. The trees that pirouette with the sun, dancing on the glass window of water. The bulbous eyes of the noonies, those pale fleshy tuna fish breaking the surface like air bubbles rising,

The lake was a water lock, rising and sinking as though the sun and moon manipulated the tide with strings they had attached to it, like an aqueous marionette up and down, the strings taut and then slack. The tormented grey fingers pawed at the beach as they tried to grab hold before falling reluctantly back.

The water was a murky silver with decaying moss clinging to broken siding that stuck out of the water at haphazard angles like compound fractures or confused road signs saying, "This way to the City." And the forgotten flyers, the oily fowls, are out sliding with their greasy multi-colored wings folded. Glinting purples and blues woven into their feathers. Around in quiet circles they go, ignored and ignoring.

The beach was a mare's nest, with bits of black galloping, alarmed and frantic. The air was filled with the nervous barking of seals, individual and separate but blending in to form a chorus. All sounds and motion converging around the sitting form of Egan, an eye in the hurricane, a hiatus in a cloudy sky. Indifferent but aware, he notices the ripples I have caused but does not turn my way. The ganzfeld that he sees through lets in light but arranges it in gradients of color, lightest to darkest. I am a faint, dubious shape moving in the background, a form that has no form but a presence. He calms the seals with his murmurs.

Bald Frisco is with him. The mottled, milky eyed cat sitting quietly, testing among the seals. They are the companions gestalt, the man and the cat, without one there would be no other.

They are working on their last castle for the day. I can see it is a big one. It has a wooden gang plank but no water passes under it. And the three lowers have lighted candles in them, fat sputtering candles which give off little light, candles before twilight, preparing for the night. The outer walls are polished smooth and look as sturdy as granite stone.

Around the castle are the remains of his city, all built out of sand. Some of the buildings were trampled down by the seals that come to him in droves. The others were licked away by the lake's devastating tongue, Ecbatana by the sea, crouching on rotted wooden foundations.

Egan on the beach re-building his world. The muted, one sided joker sitting on his crescent moon, dangling the bells on his slippers over the heads of kings and queens.

Old panama hat rain worn and rotted, sits awkwardly on the back of his head. The wide eyed, white wire haired, blind man seeing with his hands, molding the resilient sand into testimony. The old man in Hawaiian print shirt and janitors pants, sitting straddled around the castle with his different colored socks rolled a ball next to him. Egan, with the bird chirping, opened mouth smile, packing the sand into battlements.

And Proteus, you old man of the sea  
you bring your sisters along to keep up vigilance  
while you sleep in the middle of them.  
When the warning is sounded  
they carry you into the water  
and changing forms you laugh at the intruder  
who was too slow to catch you.  
Your dolphin laugh admonishing  
comes back to me. "You can't catch me, You can't catch me."

"Ahhhh," the shaking head, the laughing at nothing, crying at nothing, man air child washes his feet in the. water. The idiot and the genius, the source of power and of weakness. The ascetic bread crust eating monk living in a land of milk and honey.

Egan the caricature, the equestrian clown riding a seal. The half and half, man and horse, the mad centaur. The German immigrant who invented his death, traded everything he had for a new absent beginning. Egan an embryo, a shell filled with nothing.

Our companion the sun in night began to rise, throwing its dim, relapsed shadows on everything, like cloak and dagger mystery, hiding what is there in the day. Across the water, the lights of a village are looking at me, luminous beetles or fire flies caught on sticky paper.

Egan and Frisco have finished and are meticulously picking their way up the trail to the cabin. I follow the bobbing hat on white head and listen to displaced rocks as they bounce down, "Oh I am fragile and I will break when I hit the bottom."

My feet walking in sucking mud, skiing uphill through brown, warm snow in my rough edged boots which are blunted with a coating of sludge. Pictures flashed in never ending succession. Subliminal deceiving and deception. Not dejected like the arms of a clock but liquid, pulsating fluid in the veins and rivers and oceans. Slippery, black, oozing oil bursting out pipes in ejaculations. The totem pole falling, the sparks I see passing between two people. It's like the bigger fish that gets swallowed by the gibber fish that gets swallowed in the end. The invisible clouds doing loops like the stunt planes, streamers following. The trains sliding along on greased tracks. Tonight is motion, leaving me behind.

Black against lighter black, were the contours of the cabin. A square eye that watched as you walked into it. A musky room that exhaled Angel's Revenge. In one corner, was his comic book collection, decorated with whites and greys from cat's dung (blinded Iron Man). Two swords made for dueling were on the opposite wall. The memories of "on guard" and sharp staccato slaps rest quietly on the blades like the rust that eats them away. Orange crates with pictures of women smiling under blue skies, as chairs. And a table that boasted warts you could pick up and drink from.

Later that evening at supper the fog came in and sat with us. The disdainful lip and dripping mustache, sleepy eyed fog speaking cockney, "Pass the bottle." On his left was the Lady behind the veil, subtle forms wrapped in damask, opaque eyes, iridescent, conveying her mystery; languorous and high cheeked. So now instead of one partner I had three.

"Pass the bread, please."

"Rightoooo. Could me and the Lady have. the bottle?"

"ahhhh," Egan listening and then laughing, having dialogue with the cockney, bawdy jokes passing between them,

"I'll bet you wish you had a vagina!"

"Ahhhh."

I have not died yet Lady Eyes. And I do not know how it feels. But at times it is so barren that I wonder am I not dead but just not aware of it, perhaps.

"Life sin, is sin, it sin, the sin, end sin."

I can't realize a difference between days and nights, my life is a monotone. It no longer changes as I once hoped it would. Once the mornings brought sadness that drained my energies. But now that is gone. The vacant eyed greeted me in their own peculiar way.

"But the noonies love you in their homes in the water."

And the loves I once had are gone with the memories, hand in hand they went walking, but there is still dirt under my finger nails.

"Will you look at that cat, Milady, seldom have I seen such a phenomenon. Looks like a cousin Edward I had. Or should I say existed before he died?"

Wearing coats of tweed, patched over and under, with programs in hand, the guests leave to see the Sunrise from their first tier seats. Restrained and impishly grinning the quiet comes out from its hiding place under the table.

Using a knife, I cut two peep holes, one for each eye. Enclosed in a turret of stone, I saw the blind pontific sleeping on a couch of velvet. Sleeping the children's sleep, dreaming un-heralded dreams that coat the floors with bubbles to make falling softer. The god puking, sleeping narcotic oozing out through his nose and mouth in restful exhalations, running over and dropping to the floor as stagnant rain from stagnant clouds. The car is running around the leg, Pawing at the drops that move like like, flies evading him.

Proteus the scarecrow, wooden bones and cloth rotting flesh make-up, Your effigy standing in silent tension at the edge of the field, entrails blowing like dankey's tails in gusting wind. Frisco Pulling out the threads, one by one.

"Frisco stop it. I can feel you through my legs, teasing me. Nerve-impulse-electric-tingles. Don't, we love our extremities."

The boot with rough edged sole is pressed against furry thigh. And removed the beads of blood outline the track. See the outline, it is so obvious, checked grids imposed on hair.

"Into the sack."

Grab a form and as he changes hold on.

Cold, wet sand grabbing at my toes, gunny sack bundle squirming, dragging along behind me over sharp, flint chipped rocks. A fat tail knotted at the end. And the animal soup leaving its trail is yet another tail. One is fat and short, the other is long, narrow, luminous and elastic.

The rocks are whimpering where they have fallen, broken backs keep

them from moving. The lazy wheels and axles are moving faster. The whimpering is a hum. And the voices straining are crescendo, saying quickly, faster, faster, the eye is winking.

The seals barking out their warning, their chorus ringing faster, faster. You can't catch me, you can't catch me. Listen to the splashing, water lapping at my waist. I can feel the ripples as they run away from me pulling me to the shore, Pulling me apart and then together again. Proteus, can you feel the ripples?

The castle lights are a dotted glow and by their light I can see my hands. Inside the walls I will be safe. Although the water may rise the walls will keep it out.

Eye on the mountain is shooting light, a search light looking out at the coming day. I can hear breathing coming down the hill. Hurry Proteus, hurry. See the bundle tossing; its floating but not moving by itself anymore.

Padding feet come down the beach and kick the walls into my face, Lights sizzle out, shrouding the eye. Sand as a blanket covers me. The castle is ruins, my head between two towers. Bobbing hat on white head is silent and I feel his silent reprieve. The seals surround hurt and bear him away.

Idiot on the beach, made castles in his two tone socks, that go click-click. He skipped over the sand. As his shoes, by themselves, a pair, unoccupied, shoes on the beach, untied laces. The bearfoot tracks leading into the water. Alone they sat but they turned into boats that could not float

Dolphin singing, sea horse neighing, playing out in the water, over an under, over and under. Squeezing out the sounds, forcing them out narrow vocal cords. The strenuous animal laughing. Proteus the forms changing, never ending. One day man, one day god, one day dolphin.

Tomorrow, I will wake up and the sun and water will be some where else I will sit out on the porch and I will listen,

to shoe scuffing  
puffing along a secret way,  
Listen to them fade away  
fade away.  
And the faces  
the faces are smiling

the upside down frown

contemplation study.

And those empty places

I plugged with chocolate cake

are now empty again.

The crumbs are on the floor.

The frosting I ate myself.

And Proteus' song comes back to me, "You can't catch me, you can't  
catch me

# **The Wings of Orion**

*Kay Netolicky*

Cobweb silver,  
Flashing beams of filagree,  
Black hat ember dragons  
Crazed aluminum spiders--  
No eyes  
Huffing,  
Puffing  
Til Fard McMillan felt the wings of Orion  
Carrying him away.

# Night Waves

*Kay Netolicky*

Fireside ice afloat upon molten emerald seas,

Fard McMillan:

Captive

Bound in chains of leeching eels.

Hungry skies,

Prowling

Like wolves feeding on jackals--

Laughing.

# Sea Clouds

*Kay Netolicky*

Reefs of poisonous mushrooms  
Charged  
As violet light changed  
The waves to sapphire,  
Black glass soared  
Appeasing the sky  
And Fard passed over  
Miles of the Atlat Sea.

# The Mist of Los Carlos

*Kay Netolicky*

Searing tangerine sand,  
Blood prints from the Atlat Sea,  
Lawn turquoise  
Hewn-cubes figured in pyramidal roads.  
Feather pillow soldiers  
Wisping among ultraviolet pinnacles.  
Cotton rtiellow battle rained  
Eels leeches and released  
To die.

# Shadow Of Pearl

*Kay Netolicky*

Octagon tower,  
Concentric stones,  
Myriad:  
Bas relief.  
Pearly shadow on Los Calos.  
Fard was running  
Back torn to leprous scars  
Dreaming  
He was a servant--  
Sighing.

# Bracelets of Ice

*Kay Netolicky*

Dungeon cool,  
Airy phosphorous gown  
Myriad moved,  
Released  
Priestess.  
Fard McMillan. . .  
Son of Orion. . .  
Awake.  
Crowned with bracelets of Antar Ice.

# Coronation Dawn

*Kay Netolicky*

King of Los Calos--  
Orion set.  
Morning of ruby dew  
Graveyard moon,  
Dying slumber.  
Buds of orchid,  
Lilac flame  
Seething flowers,  
Tranquil rain.

# The Black Hole Universe

*D. Crowder*

I

deep sound in the distance  
coming closer  
banging on the walls  
groaning thru the ground  
server needle  
miles away  
slow descent on thread of flame  
-- returning from the black hole

it looked just like a blind spot,  
optic nerves pinched by grimy nails  
a worn out neutron star  
collapsed inside itself

light rays bent  
time moved sideways  
gravity grew great tentacles  
-- a vortex for the winds of space

II

wind from nowhere  
worsens daily

rings of saturn  
form above

land and water  
changing places

basement shelters  
below nothing

food stocks shorten  
no more farming

# The Village

*D. Crowder*

a twin-edged laser blade  
sliced apart the marble mansion  
on the corner of Who Cares Street  
and Y. Knott Blvd.

above,  
winds dripped ocean pieces  
into the den  
where conquistadors conferred

suddenly a sun-quake  
ripped the peaks from mountains  
and tin cans from the alley

smoke rings circled the fading east wind  
star bottles and cinders flaked the noontide  
and the stomachs of fasting monks  
began to growl

there's a village west of here,  
whose picket fences exclude no one,  
whose streets are lined with cobblestone,  
where giant lobsters guard the chapels,  
whose silver steeples touch the stars,  
and awesome oak trees shade the sidewalks,  
with fields of clover where we can rest,  
with fine wines which we can sip,  
fishes and cheeses on which to nibble. . .

# The House on the Edge of the Forest

*p. mandel*

"the gate"  
sands kill the wind,  
snakes lie under a dune that heaves--  
covering streamers  
alone with six columns.

orion sinking into the dry waters of space;  
a whip slides,  
silvered dew becomes tarnished  
as afternoon approaches.

tubs of water;  
glass peaks of mountains  
clink--  
a river layered in dust.

"the rose garden"  
air, heavy with moisture  
wrapped around the flowers;  
twigs from a briar plant  
lay in grey light.

shrieks smoldered in a bowl  
that could not be seen;  
an iron railing bent and scarred by roses.

tears  
boil--  
from the  
ground.

"the house"  
searching for a door and escape,

apples in a bowl on a table--  
cores have dented the floor  
and only seeds remain fastened to each other

the floor,  
caked with light air  
and half-moons scattered in the varnish.  
wait at the back door.

# Woods and Boats

*p. mandel*

An iceberg sinks  
chill along the ground,  
the tone of a bell  
hanging from trees and boats;

Climbing into a fish;  
walls press the sky,  
anti-light inside out  
and empty.

a waterfall below  
metallic sparkled foam  
pierces the darkness,  
water rising along a path.

one casket thrown,  
reflecting woods and boats;  
pendants knock each other  
and the sides of hills.

wrinkled skin covers a damp foot  
and a skull lying in a glass box;  
cracked blood shimmers under the twilight,  
a kaleidoscope ceiling whispers goodnight

morning clouds lighting the sea,  
as water turns into sand.

smell the air as it  
opens holes in your skin and  
hisses in and through.

a stiff rose stem losing its thorns

begins to cry and slowly leans to the ground;  
trees in a wood sag and writhe like snakes,  
and one boat melts into puddles hardening knots into time.

birds frozen in air  
shatter as they hit the, ground;  
black gems claw the ice.

## **waiting**

*p. mandel*

stitches resting in a vase disappear,  
lightening hits quicksand and is caught;  
it begins to sway -  
Pulled from a pegboard.

emeralds and chunks of anthracite  
switch into tributes--  
historical memories of  
seven legged insects.

chests glow under a deep blue ozone layer  
as saucers bend  
on approach.

# Creaks in the Wind

*p. mandel*

yellow cabbage dripping under a sun  
turns around to greet a wisp of steam;  
a clock fastened with rubber bands  
becomes taut and disappears.

# **An Evil Clock**

*p. mandel*

another world  
trots to its death.  
Good.

# Warning, Cyclone!

*David K. Darrow*

A day in mid May  
Sweltering from heat  
Air so heavy you can weigh it  
On a bathroom scale  
In silence  
Nature whispers the impending doom  
Until a siren splits the calm  
Hell breaks loose  
As the funnel swoops down  
  
Sucking up everything in its path  
Leaving man  
To pick up his bones.

## resting easy

*Meg Hickman*

Stop-over in Seville on the  
long distant voyage to Rome.

Old columns and arches  
invite gazes and exclaims  
from a thousand touring Germans.

Art of masters glistens at  
every dirty sidewalk stand.

Blind vendors calmly sit by  
arabs poking in old antique stores.  
Shrieks of laughter fall  
from open bars as the  
exciting city-virtues unwind.

Wine for the people,  
ice water to the Americans  
before every long meal.  
Natives stroll 'round 'round  
the darken, crowded square  
eager for something to whisper about.

The soccer match was on tv and  
when the lottery was drawn,  
tickets paid handsomely at  
ten to two.

Inhaling one final glance inside,  
the machine gun quietly parades  
five feet and back again,  
the bus driver coughs up  
exposed black and white film,  
the old loaded geezer  
squeezes a ripe, blue jean behind.

## **such cheap pleasures**

*Meg Hickman*

backpack heavy to carry  
one steep mile to the top,  
ice path slick and melting  
rope rail slack and straining  
rest stop wet and waiting  
lake-view posed and daring  
ardent, irresistable climb.

# unforgotten

*Meg Hickman*

In slow motion across the sky,  
gypsies dance to flamenco rhythm,  
hands clap in time to  
blinking stars,  
vibrations flow along  
touching each other.  
Teasing eyes glow in the darkness  
hinting of Savin wine.  
Guitars pain from stroking fingers,  
chords drift off to nap  
in the deep mountain caves;  
as somber clouds scoot in,  
muffling the moon's smile.

# John and/or Marsha

*Charlene Hinchliffe*

JOHN

The radio was playing Middle of the Road rock softly from an alcove just outside of her bedroom door, f.m. rocking me back to sleep in the a.m. The moon light crept on icy blue toes through the window and over her side of the bed toward mine. I wished that I were asleep so that I would not have to think. . . I had a cigarette and looked at the ceiling. "How can she sleep when I feel this way?" I burned my finger when I crushed the cigarette into the broken bowl that we had used as an ashtray for the six years we had known each other. The moon moved quietly toward me, enticing me to the slumber of a lunatic.

As sleep wrapped its cool fingers around my mind, stroking my thoughts and arousing them to action a song pulled me back to the door of reality. Paul Simon, a disembodied voice on the radio sang of "Fifty Ways to Leave Your Lover." I counted seven or eight good suggestions but they all boiled down to leaving. The song ended and I looked at her lying beside me. She snored at me. I had another cigarette, "What would you say if I were leaving you?" She rolled fitfully in her sleep and faced me. The moonlight danced on her long dark hair and frosted her olive skin. She looked so at peace while she slept; like a fairy princess in a Beardsley illustration. Her hair lay long and deep as the ocean, flowing over her pillow. I remembered all the good times we had had: The laughing and the music and the theatre in the park when we met; the long walks on the beach at Sunset after she got off of work and before I left for the station and sending songs to her; the dancing, reading, play, but the fun wasn't there anymore.

"What keeps me here? I'm not tied to her. If I really want to, I could leave just like that. I could go to Ontario and be a writer or artist, become an artisan, fulfill myself. Maybe go back to the university and study history like I've wanted to. I don't really love her, she's nice to have around but that's about all. She used to be fun, but that's changed. Besides, she could support herself. She works in a shoe store and all."

In the essence of my being I knew that I had to do something, so I got out of bed and trod softly to the kitchen and had a glass of milk. "Something has to be done. I'll just split for awhile, until I get my head together."

I walked very slowly back to the bedroom, got my suitcase out of the closet and stuffed my clothes into it. I changed into a sweater and jeans and wrote a short "Dear Marsha" note. After leaving it on the dresser I took my bag to the car and left.

## MARSHA

The touch of his skin, the flavour of his kisses, the scent of his hair, the soft nuance of his voice, all these things I almost remember. The flash of his ring, the moonlight upon his hair, the sparkle of his manner, and the sound of his footsteps upon the stairs. These are mine until the floor rises to meet me for the last time.

I would have followed him anywhere. I wanted him so badly that I could have bitten ten penny nails in half with frustration. I'd had the dream of the harlot and awakened with empty arms. I walked the streets in search of his touch, looking into the eyes of strangers in hopes of recognition, and touched the lonely who were no worse than I.

I thought I saw him standing lonely in a crowd in Lafayette Square, but it was only a myth. A blurred photo from UPI made me catch my breath, but it was Lord Leitch of Dunsmoore upon his engagement. A public service announcement's voice on a distant radio station seemed so familiar that I almost choked on my Salads. I dined one night with friends and the flesh served brought memories to my mouth, the steak was exquisitely salted. The scent of English Leather makes me sigh. The sight of dark and shining hair when just brushing the collar of Edwardian jackets makes my heart almost stop beating. Firm finger tips upon my shoulder causes me to turn with anticipation.

The wind has whispered my name down alleys and whistled it through hedges. I searched as a drowning man clings to straws but it was in vain. I wander in the park where we met in hopes that he will pass by but it is never so. I think there can never be another like him.

Time has healed the wounds and left invisible scars that have never seen the light of day or candied chambers. I listen yet for his tread upon the carpet and keys on the lock. I hold my breath each time that the metal strikes metal. Even though I know it will never be, I still hope,

As I stand here on the beach and watch the tide the waves crash in my ears and the salted spray falls with my eyes and I realize that it shall never be.

# **At Least I Didn't Buy Her a Drink**

*Poindexter Costa*

It was really a drag  
No one had their shit together  
I collected the beans  
Beckoned a pitcher and 7 shells  
It was after 9 so we got plastic Bud cups  
When I got back  
She was gone  
I hadn't seen her in 9 months  
Almost had a minor rap in mind  
Zeus must have wanted her more than I

# **The Nuns Fucked Up My Touch**

*Poindexter Costa*

It was a simple playground rule  
Keep your hands to yourself

They ground it in deep  
I was a good boy  
I obeyed it  
It's still inside me

I realize it to conquer it  
I must want to

I do

It's done

Now fuck off  
I've got other shit to work on

# Blood on the Blacktop

*Poindexter Costa*

Sitting on the steps of the G.P.D.

Buzzard got shot and killed

My friend gave him mouth to mouth

The cops out front are talking about suit sales

The State's Attorney just pulled in

"Yeah, we're out looking for him now."

"He got hit 3 - 4 times"

"I thought you worked days."

"Well, you know, I'm dedicated."

Two dudes just took off in a Mustang with many tall ears

"I can't think of anyone in town who deserved it more."

"It'll be o.k. now. The King's here."

"Well we won't get anymore trouble out of Buzzard."

"You mean they called me, away from toy western for him?"

"Robberies are more important."

"Yeah, we've got some, drunks and rowdies at the scene."

"But we don't have a shotgun in that car."

"I think George knows but won't squeal."

"The county is in route now."

"I'd say 30 minutes."

# Where Have All the Hippie-Chicks Gone

*Poindexter Costa*

Have they traded their Hendrix  
for Elton John

Their overalls cut  
to shine the BMV

Do they drink screwdrivers  
instead of beer in paper-sacked quarts

Forgotten their teacher of one  
paper joints

Are they flying with First Class bankers  
instead of rock bands in microbuses

Light incense only  
when the dog dumps in the bedroom

Have they switched from Rolling Stone  
to Cosmopolitan

Burnt-out for work because  
they watched the whole late show

Skip supper not to save  
money but to loose weight

Cut their long hair  
for an artificial 'fro

Tripping only to  
the parents' house

Does their stash consist  
of Valium not Colombian

# **The Engine Went Kapooie**

*Poindexter Costa*

On the hard-road to Altoona  
The cruise control is set at 55  
A brick on the accelerator  
The 1200 c.c. jungle starts knocking  
Power begins to slack  
Soon at 40 and the beat persists  
Jam on the de-padded clutch  
Coast onto the gravel shoulder  
Find a phone  
Feel some silver  
Waste 2 before getting through  
"Yeah, I'm in Onieda,  
By the Pontiac place.  
The van broke down again."  
Why be upset  
At least someone was home  
And the sun is still out

# Speed

*Horace Wilson*

speed  
white dots

corresponding  
yellow lines  
red, green  
fragments of yellow  
flash

RED  
siren penetration  
air is separated into sound

time halts  
only to resume  
with the fading of the siren

# Wiessner's Ride

*R. Steven Schuler*

Wiessner stood beneath the overpass, exhausted, shivering. His packstraps pulled at his Shoulders seeming to cut through the heavy, quilted coat, the flannel shirt and long-johns and deep into his flesh. Twice he had removed the pack, but he'd long ago discovered that with it on he could turn his back to the wind and use it as a wind break. So he adjusted the straps for the hundredth time and bore the incredible aching to help abate the sharper pain of the cold.

I'm going to die out here, he thought. Where ever the hell I am. He wondered if he was being melodramatic, decided not. How long did it take a man to freeze to death in this kind of weather? How long had he stood here on this empty highway, somewhere in western Wisconsin, in the dead of night? Without even the light of a distant farmhouse to warm his thoughts. With no firewood, not even a can of Sterno (he cursed himself again for his forgetfulness). There was just the empty prairie and the, wind blown snow.

Carl Wiessner was miserable. And, in the darkness, he knew he was afraid.

Hours passed. Surely it was hours, though he's lost all conception of time. He stamped his feet. He prayed. He wished now that he'd stayed the night in Minneapolis, found a warm place to sleep. But he had less than twelve dollars, in his pocket, and was guarding it jealously. Besides, time was of the, essence. He had to get to St. Louis, before Rusty left for Colorado. The deal was dope,

grass, and the quantity involved was enough to make Carl's share at least four grand. If he worked it right. And if he got there in time. His credit had run out nearly everywhere; this was his last chance. Now he, feared he might never make it.

Cars came and passed in clusters. Once he stood on the pavement to flag one down and was nearly run over before the driver swerved and sped on.

Another pair of lights came over the far hill, one car alone this time. Shivering, he watched it approach as if he were in a trance. He raised his thumb apathetically. But the car sped by without even slowing. He turned to watch it disappear into the next valley, and saw the brake lights flicker once,

hesitantly, then come on steadily, growing warmly red like the coals of a friendly campfire.

He stood staring for a moment, his mind too) numb to grasp the situation, as the driver pulled off the road a quarter mile beyond him. Then he hoisted up the sagging pack, leaned forward and broke into a staggering run. It sapped up the last of his strength, his will. What if they just stopped to switch drivers--Wiessner thought--or if it's a rotten joke. They'll pull away just as I get there. But he could see the car backing up the shoulder toward him. The gap was losing quickly, now. The car would be warm, so warm! His legs felt like lead and with every step the weight of the pack bounced, jerking at his shoulders, his aching neck. Then he was beside the car and tearing at the door handle with stubborn fingers. He struggled out of the accursed pack and climbed into with stubborn fingers- He struggled out of the accursed pack, and climbed into the car, dragging his burden behind him. Then the door was closed and the car began to roll and Wiessner spoke through chattering teeth, "Thank God, thank God, and thank you, too mister!""

He unzipped his coat and peeled off his gloves, rubbing his stiff fingers together.

"Pretty cold out there, I guess." The driver's voice was young, almost feminine.

"Man, that's no shit!" Wiessner's own voice still broken by his shivers, his heavy breathing. He leaned back in the seat and tried to relax. The car was a big Ford sedan, an LTD. It smelled of new vinyl and less strongly of the familiar, friendly spice of marijuana smoke. An FM radio provided soft elegant late-night jazz. He could barely make out the driver's face in the dim, green glow of the dash lights. Wiessner sensed that he was some years younger than himself--probably not even yet twenty.

They rode in silence for a while, but for the radio and the muted lapping of the tires on the concrete. Wiessner's body slowly began to thaw. He felt as though he were a robot with nerves, his metal seams and joints creaking and popping as they expanded in the warmth. It was a painful but wonderful feeling. Finally he felt relaxed enough to make conversation.

"Where you headed?" he asked.

"Florida. Gonna catch a little sun."

"Must be nice. You know people down there?"

"Naw, but Jimmy's folks have a place on the Gulf coast we can stay."

“Jimmy?”

The driver motioned toward the back and Wiessner twisted around to look. For the first time he noticed a dark, motionless shape sprawled beneath a jumble of blankets on the rear seat.

“My name’s Dan.” The driver extended his hand. Wiessner took it, locking thumbs in the fashion that he had first known in his activist days of the late sixties and had once meant “Solidarity.” To him, at that moment, it still did.

“Carl Wiessner,” he said.

“Care for a toke?”

“Okay.” He didn’t especially feel like smoking. He was tired and nervous and spaced out, and smoking dope at such times usually made him feel worse. But he didn’t want to seem unappreciative. Dan passed him a small brass pipe and a plastic bag with the grass in it. He filled the pipe, lit it and passed it back.

“How far you going?”

“I’ll get off at Chicago,” Wiessner said. “I take 55 south from there.”

Dan passed him the pipe. He took it by the stem so as not to burn his fingers on the hot metal bowl. He inhaled and settled back into the oversized, overstuffed bucket seat. The dope was really starting to take hold--because I’m so tired, he thought--but gently. Not bad. He felt snug and secure in the womb trip--warm and soft.

“Like the dope?” Dan glanced at him.

"Nice. . . very mellow." He took another hit.

The radio was playing a flute piece, something he hadn't heard before. Herbie Mann, maybe. Whatever it was, Carl liked it. The music was delicate, intricate. The melodies of bubbling streams, the rhythm of breeze-blown leaves. He closed his eyes and let the images come. A little fountain in a lush forest. Green. Tropical. He could smell the flowers. A dark-skinned beauty, naked to the waist, was playing a silver flute. She wore orchids in her hair and other women danced.

Then she was above him, as he lay on his back feeling the hard ground beneath his sleeping bag. He looked at the woman's face and saw that it was Carrol, with her dark, laughing eyes and thick black hair. They were naked in the golden warmth of Indian summer. From beyond the tent flap he could see the rippling of an Ozark mountain brook.

She laughed, swaying her head from side to side, letting the ends of her hair brush across his chest, teasing his nipples. She lowered her body against his, the feel of her breast pressing against his belly as she tugged playfully at his beard with her perfect teeth.

But something happened--the tent. . . it was gone, disappeared. Autumn sun burned his face, his eyes. And where was Carrol?

He awoke to the sound of a car door slamming and a blast of frigid air. He blinked in the bright light and sat up. They were at a gas station. The broad, polished cream hood of the car reflected harsh neon. He could hear the gas pump ticking and dinging rhythmically. He looked around. The guy in the back sat up and blinked at him.

"Where we at?" he mumbled,

"Gas station, it seems."

"Oh." The guy kept staring at him as though he were out of focus. Wiessner placed him at about eighteen with black, oily hair, not too long.

"I'm Carl," he said.

No response.

"I'm hitching to Chicago."

The guy blinked again, groaned and laid down.

Wiessner got out of the car and went into the building, nodding at the old man who pumped the gas. Inside, the light was even brighter. Dan was there, eating a candy bar and talking to a fat, middle aged woman with a beehive hairdo. In the light he looked about Jimmy's age, lean and wiry with shoulder length blond hair. He wore a denim jacket with the sleeves cut off.

Carl got change for a dollar and bought a ham sandwich from one machine and a cup of coffee from another. He turned to the woman, unwrapping his sandwich.

"What's the temperature, have you heard?"

"Thermometer there says sixteen below, but the radio said it was 30 below."

"Probably meant the wind-chill factor," said Dan.

Wiessner shivered and finished eating in silence. When the man came in from the pump and Dan paid for the gas, they left. Outside, Carl said, "Sorry I crashed out on you there. I was pretty beat."

"That's okay. I like driving at night. Company or not, it doesn't bother me."

"You still feel like it? I could take over if you need a rest."

"No, that's cool. I'm awake."

Walking around the front of the car, Carl glanced down and noticed the Minnesota license plates.

The driver was already in his seat, twisting around to look at his sleeping friend.

"Hey, Jack, you want any coffee or anything?"

No answer.

"You gotta piss? This is your last chance for a while."

"Mmph!" sleepily, bitterly.

"All right." Dan turned the key and slipped the gearshift into drive. The car glided across the overpass and down the ramp with the arrow pointing to Madison. In ten minutes, more or less, they were there, passing the first Madison exit. The city was a sprinkling of lights and a pale melon-colored glow in the clouds. Eerie, yet somehow inviting. Nearly any city looks good from the highway at night, Carl thought. At least it does when you've been too long without a bed, a hot meal, a little human noise. Once he had driven halfway across Texas at night. He remembered the cities and towns rising one after another out of the endless, black prairie. They were like enchanted places, held together by some futuristic magic; pinpoints of hard, bright energy in a vast emptiness.

He watched the glow of Madison pass. He'd spent time here before, a few months back. He had a friend, a grad student at the University who lived in an old green communal house a block from Lake Mendota. it would be nice to stop now, spend a few days--get drunk, meet new women, get to know them for a night or two. To stay up all night talking about anything and everything.. . But there was St. Louis to think of, and Rusty, and four thousand dollars.

He heard Dan rummaging about the dashboard, searching for the pipe and the plastic bag. He handed them to Carl.

"Care to do the honors?"

"Don't mind if I do."

Wiessner loaded the pipe and lit it. He took a long pull and held it in as he passed the pipe over

"Where'd you say you were going?"

Wiessner exhaled.

"I'll get off at Chicago, but I go on to St. Louis from there."

"St. Louis. That where you're from?"

"Yeah. Been staying up in Ontario the last few months though. Little hunting, learning to ski. . . " Carl didn't tell him about the night Carol had left him, when he'd gotten drunk and done a couple hundred dollars worth of damage to a local bar, and God only knew how much damage to the bartender. He'd gotten out before the police arrived, Stopped at home just long enough to throw some clothes and his checkbook together and headed north.

He Paused a moment, smoking, thinking about the big, new car and the young driver. This seemed as good a time as any to bring it up. Not that it mattered, really, but it might help to know the score.

"Where are you guys from?"

"North Dakota - Bismarck."

"Just wondered. . . I noticed the Minnesota plates."

Dan looked at him and smiled. "Yeah, well, we picked those up just this side of Fargo, on the border there."

"How about the car?"

"Bismarck." Dan drew on the pipe, "Nice set of wheels, huh?"

"Very nice."

Wiessner took the pipe and sucked on it.

"It doesn't bother you, does it?" asked Dan. "About the car?"

Carl laughed, spilling smoke from his mouth. It came out a coughing giggle, distorted by the dope.

"Shit, no, man! I figure you guys and this car saved my life back there. How you and the car came together, I don't care. I was just curious, is all."

They rode in silence for a while. The pipe went out. Carl realized he was very high now. Up ahead, a big truck turned on its blinkers.. He watched the red lights wink, wink, wink--wondering, is he ever going to turn? Then the truck slid off the highway to the right and down an exit ramp.

Very stoned.

"That's good grass." He grinned in the darkness.

"We ought to be to the Illinois line by sun-up," said Dan.

"What are you gonna do with the car in Florida?"

"Sell it, I guess. If we can. We'll need the bread."

"Ever tried to unload a hot car before?"

"No."

"Neither have I. I wouldn't know how. What's Bismarck like?"

Dan chuckled. "Are you kidding? It's a hole. Especially in winter. Colder than a witch's tit, too. That's why we split."

Carl gazed out the window, trying to picture Bismarck in the winter. He'd only been through there once, as a child. That had been in August and the temperature was a hundred and two in the shade. Only there was no shade in North Dakota.

He closed his eyes and thought about St. Louis, then about Colorado instead, dreaming of mountains and rocky canyons. Before long he was asleep again.

There was the sound of gravel crunching under the tires, and then he heard the key click and then quiet. He opened his eyes as Dan got out. A truck-stop this time. "Arnie's I-90" in red, white, and blue neon. Rows of big diesels--Peterbilts, White Freight liners--many with their motors running. A sleepy, faraway sound. He closed his eyes again, lulled by the monotonous drone. Then Dan was back with a rush of sharp, crisp air, and they were rolling again and Carl was awake.

"How are you doing?" he yawned.

"Pretty good, man."

"Still going strong?"

"Fine. . . just fine."

They rolled down the ramp onto the grey, double ribbon of highway. Dan was watching the rear-view mirror closely.

"Everything okay?"

"Aw, there was a state pig back there had his eye on me. I guess he's gonna stay put though."

The sky seemed to have paled slightly, uncertainly along the eastern horizon. Far ahead, on the right, the lights of a town rose over the fields.

"What's that up ahead?"

"Place called Beloit."

"We're almost the state line, then," Wiessner said.

Dan grinned. "As soon as we get into Illinois, I'm gonna wake Jimmy up. He was giving me shit last night about how far he drove. It'll blow his mind if he wakes up in Illinois and it's almost light out,"

They cruised swiftly and easily in the thin morning traffic. Still not many

cars out. The truck traffic was just beginning to pick up. Dan let the speedometer creep up to seventy. Nothing to worry about, now, Carl thought. We'll hit Chicago on the tag end of the morning rush hour. Watch for the sign, about a third of the way around the city--1 55 South; St. Louis. He thought of standing on the highway in the bright midmorning sun. A lot of traffic on that route, Should be in St. Louis well before suppertime.

Passing the first exit for Beloit now, new headlights joining the flow a half mile behind them. A water tower, church steeples above the trees. Dan held the needle on seventy for a mile. Then his foot lifted from the gas and the car suddenly slowed. Wiessner looked at him, saw him gazing nervously into the mirror. He turned to look; saw headlights gaining rapidly, almost on their tail now. Then the car was bathed in blood-red flashing light.

Dan hesitated over the brake pedal, then slamming the heel of his hand on the steering wheel, cried "FUCK!" and pushed the accelerator to the floor. The heavy car paused, as though uncertain how to respond. Then it lunged forward, Picking up speed rapidly.

"Man, what are you doing?" Carl shouted.

"State line's only a mile or two away. We gotta make it, man, or we've had it!"

Wiessner sat still, gripping the frame of his backpack as though his life depended on it. From Dan's point of view there was no other way--he could see that. If they stopped it would take the cop about five seconds to realize that the car was hot. That would be it for these guys. Straight to jail--on a grand larceny, auto rap.

Carl was more worried about his own skin, though - how well could this kid drive?

"Dan, you can't outrun him!"

They were pushing a hundred now and the cop was right on their bumper. He'd turned on his siren, a screaming accompaniment to the scene of pulsing red light and break-neck speed.

They rounded a sweeping curve and found themselves practically on top of two trucks, one in each lane. The one on the left was about to overtake the other one. Dan came up on its right, breaking hard. Ahead of them, Carl saw lights flicker on the other truck. The driver had seen the cop and was breaking, trying to get off the road. They were hemmed in.

A split second while Dan gauged his move. There were perhaps forty or

fifty feet of space between the two trucks and the gap was closing. Dan kicked the accelerator and swung the wheel over, and fishtailed through the narrowing hole and out ahead of the left hand truck. The cop was left behind, totally boxed in now.

Carl had stopped breathing, but now he giggled insanely. Man, he thought--this kid can drive!

Then they were accelerating down a long open straight-away, alone but for a black dot far ahead, growing rapidly. Carl twisted to look back Jimmy was sitting up rubbing his eyes.

"Man, what's going on?"

Carl didn't answer him, was too tense to speak. Almost a mile behind them, both trucks had gotten into the right-hand lane and the cop was just passing them, lights still flashing like something from a circus fun-house.

Ahead of them, the black dot had become an old Studebaker disappearing over a little rise. They shot up the hill with the speedometer needle buried at one-twenty.

Down into a little hollow and there was the Studebaker directly ahead, not more than a hundred yards away Dan tapped the brakes and swung to the left. The car listed awkwardly to the right as the front tires lost traction on a sudden patch of ice and the rear end came around. Then they were sliding sideways, still traveling at close to a hundred, gaining quickly on the old car. Carl could read its license plate through his side window--"Land of Lincoln."

Then there was the first deafening shock of impact and a brief glimpse of the other driver's face as the Studebaker swung side on to them--a fat old man in overalls and a striped railroad cap, he stared at them with a look of stunned disbelief. Then another crash and Carl was in the air, hurtling high above the road and the snow covered fields. He wondered briefly if he were already dead and floating in a kind of limbo. Then there was only darkness.

Wiessner opened his eyes, A figure hovered over him. Woman soft. Dark hair. Carrol? Then she was gone.

He could feel that he was naked beneath a light covering. Painfully, he raised his head and tried to focus. He was in a brightly lit room with yellow-tiled walls and a lot of stainless steel instruments. There were bloodstains on the crisp, white sheet, and his hands and forearms were wrapped thickly in white gauze. Then the nurse was beside him again, telling him to lie still.

After a while a cop came in and asked him some questions, and shortly after that an intern, who poked and prodded and asked, "Does this hurt?"

They let him sit up when the next doctor came in--an older man who shuffled through a pile of x-ray prints as he asked questions.

"We'll keep you overnight for observation," he said.

"I'm supposed to be in St. Louis tonight," Wiessner protested. "It's pretty important."

The doctor looked at him thoughtfully, then had him stand up and move around, bending his limbs.

"How do you feel?"

"A little stiff, sort of achy."

"Any dizziness or nausea?"

"No."

Another pause.

"All right. . . if it's okay with the police, that is. There's no sign of concussion. No hemorrhaging or broken bones. I want you to be very careful for a day or two, though--no strenuous exercise or heavy lifting. When you get to St. Louis go to a doctor to have those dressings changed. I'll give you a prescription for some Darvon. You'll be in some pain.

He sat behind a gray steel desk to write.

"You know," he continued, "you're damn lucky you were hanging onto that pack. Apparently it was between your head and the pavement when you landed. The ambulance crew had to pry your fingers loose from the frame."

Carl dressed, carefully putting on a clean pair of jeans which had been salvaged from his ruined backpack (his others had been ripped to shreds). A nurse found him a paper bag to hold the remainder of his belongings.

At police headquarters, he was treated fairly well, It didn't take them long to decide that he was what he said--an innocent hitchhiker, along just for the ride. They gave him coffee and doughnuts and took a formal statement. Then a lieutenant spent the better part of an hour asking him questions, mostly about the dope, and about why he was in such a hurry to get to St. Louis that he had to hitchhike all night in sub-zero temperatures.

"I have to be there, for a job interview in the morning," he lied.

"You know you could freeze to death on a night like that if no one stopped for you."

"I know.

No one had mentioned the two kids. Carl asked about the..

"The driver was thrown clear but he has a broken back. It's pretty bad, I guess. They're talking about sending him to Madison for special care, as soon as he's stable enough. The other one," the lieutenant consulted the report on his desk, "James Ellis, is dead. The driver of the other car got Out okay, minor abrasions, as they say."

They let him go just before noon, with a warning about the dangers of hitchhiking. He found a pay phone and called Rusty's house in St. Louis. Rusty was out but his lady, Susan, took a message.

"Something's happened. I've been held up. Tell him to please, not leave until I get there."

"When?"

"Late tonight, I hope,"

"I'll tell him. Carl, are you all right?"

"Yeah," Carl said. "I'm okay."

Back on the highway, the bright midday sun melting the snow, which ran in little rivers in the ditch. Riding with a middle-aged gasket salesman in a green Falcon. Passing the spot where it happened, he saw that the wreckage had been cleared. The skid marks remained, of course, and Carl imagined he saw a large red stain on the pavement. He looked the other way.

Then they were over the line, into Illinois. Another two hours to Chicago, Wiessner thought, then six more to St. Louis. A lot of traffic on that route,. With luck he could be there well before midnight.

# Kiss It in Any Form

*Paul Young*

I'm going to listen to the hush of warm summer waves like I did one year at Lake Superior and think about the freaky beauty of being a stone's throw from Barcelona by boat.

Fourteen year old girls are my weakness. Lithe and almost ancient they rub me definitely the. right way. And they've learned well how to obey.

Somebody in New Jersey just killed his mother over heroin. This is hot off the wire and no play for effect. Seven years ago I told my mother to suck my dick. I never got over it and now in New Jersey somebody just killed all of them.

Revolution used to be a word you didn't mention unless you wanted to spend a few years in prison.

Seek power, not its appearance. Run to it like hounds when you sense it. Touch it, hoard it, kiss it in any form. If and when you get it the first thing you'll do is masturbate.

The Permanent Committee on Religious Disorders leaks the report of its investigation into the alleged homosexuality of the Pope, from whom the report quotes oral insinuations in five languages. "I thought he had stones or something in his mouth." Said Committee member Sen. Gale McGee (Dem.--Wyo.)

Like Sam Posey once said, you're out there, and suddenly the. true love of speed comes over you and you get hooked into something way bigger than you, and all you can do is go with it

# Poem for Mireille

*Paul Young*

Mireille:

I'm seeing New York and the old Slug's.

Lompret. mais sans le jazz hot.

I see the poem, Playing the Wheel at

Juan les Pins, where would-be lover

croons into the telephone's mouthpiece

to the voice like money, the unmet, unforgettable

joujou of all his lives

"Je suis Luc. J'arrive, j'arrive."

Toronto. St. Louis. Natchez of black Irish.

I see "la sangre de los ninoe"

in stark Basque detail and relief

Savanarola. Dupin. Poirot.

There words are places and the persons words.

Si. Le jazz hot

What I want to say is something along the lines

of Magritte:

One has a better idea of what these feelings

mean when one sees them about to occur.

# The Dream

*Neil Frolick*

Sunday night. With a heavy snow, its ascent marked in lamppost footings, mantled cartops, the unlit marquee letters and cornice tracery. David steps to double glass doors, is admitted by the doorman.

"The Gregorys'."

"14D. Yessir."

The lobby is almost a block long. It serves both wings of the co-op and every time makes David think the distant half is a reflection of the front half. Opulent, or almost, the Mingoid outsized yellow vases atop black lacquer tables and behind each a folding screen. The clash of colors, vase images at regular intervals in the screens' high polish black plus the double view lobby give David's walk to the backwing elevators a cadenced ritual effect coming in from the night snow and silence unnatural to New York City.

"I am standing on a terrace over the Mediterranean. A staircase with carved marble balustrades leads down alongside to the sand. There is the distant crash of waves on rock and the freshness of seabreeze. The light is extraordinary Botticelli's Venus. The horizon is lost between ocean and sky. And a scent of orange blossoms. I am old but my skin is still young."

At the 14th floor landing there is music a piano quartet by Dvorak. It changes David's mood. Amateur players. Even though these people, the Gregorys along with Erika and most likely Mircea at cello play quite well. Considering.

Stockbroker, partner in a small firm, one, of the few surviving, exclusive, no nonsense clientele. David can use his own discretion by and large, doesn't have to play nursemaid when the popular averages take a dive and load most offices with frets, broker explanations, analysts' 'We think the worst is over. Our charts show--'

David resigns himself. Pushes the, combination bell-buzzer for apartment 14D. The music stops abruptly, in the middle of a phrase. Phil Gregory appears at the, apartment door to see David propped against the ivory plaster, arriving late as usual, with two fingers dug into the soft flap of a Galocha.

Gregory is tall. Fiftyish. Sad eyes, gray, dark and inward, that seem never

quite to meet one. "We have rather an eccentric here tonight."

"Oh?" David flicks snow off his Galochas, settles them onto one side of the stiff rubber and carpeted doormat "Dangerous?"

"No no - nothing like that, of course not." The innuendo, David's persuasion that despite being a psychiatrist or because of Greg is fairly insular in his judgments of personality. Greg's wife Christina, with an English reserve much more so, easily made hostile in the presence of anyone extravagant or unusual.

"I just wanted to put you on your guard."

"If he's objectionable why invite him?"

"Mircea did." An art dealer, Hungarian, genteel if a bit impish. He plays occasionally these Sunday evenings.

"I turn. Behind me is a great battlement. I walk through the stone serration nearest me and find I am standing atop a tower and the sea is gone. Above me cerulean space. There are steps. To darkness. Then my eyes adjust and the spirals lead me through green half-light past gargoyles on the rounding stone walls hung too with broadswords and lances, a mace, suits of chainmail."

As Greg angles off down the hall dining room arrangement avoiding by habit the oak dinner table, David sticks his head into the kitchen to ask Christina about Malcolm. The Gregorys' two year old son. Christina is again the nature girl, not even lipstick.

"He's asleep."

"Good." But he didn't actually mean it the way it sounded. Christina takes it that Malcolm is better off asleep though she knows David didn't mean it that way, has to allow for the utterance. A single chalk wing sprouts between the two, dusting them, muffling all but perfunctory communication.

"Why don't you go in and meet Mircea's guest?"

"The steps end in art opulent hall, with massive candelabra and lighted crimson candles, a series of tapestries which portray unicorns and boars, hunting dogs, peacocks, a sumptuous banquet set in magic woods with pomegranates, ladies with flaxen hair, lutes, a singer, regal males dressed in green and apricot. There is a procession too, behind a child robed in white, crowned

with jewels and sitting astride a chestnut horse. The child and horse are being led through a medieval city gate. I enter the gate with the procession. . ."

Noticing with approval the pewter settings Christina has arranged for a late snack, David continues down the, central hall and into the bath. With an old fashioned rubber stopper and chain tub and fat white ceramic fingers, four of them on each knob of the lavatory handles.

He, washes the marks of slush from his hands, dries them, brushes back the lock of hair which perennially and annoyingly falls over his right forehead.

"Hi Eka." With a kiss.

"Mircea has an acquaintance--"

"Good. Good. Glad to." David shakes hands with Mircea then turns to the man Mircea introduces as Mr. Rehnquist.

"Rehnquest it is, R-r-obert R-r-ehnquest." He rolls the r's Latinate. Or Edwardian. His hair is long to the shoulders and almost white. Unkempt. Otherwise he'd look like a woman. His face--lots of cold cream and make-up softening the skin, preserving its vitality but changing it over the years to a babyish veneer.

"The Robert Rehnquest?" City Center Opera, music tents, creating the male lead in Best World and original cast recording, concert tours, a well-received opera movie. TV also--in an operatic version of The Damned.

"The man himself!"

David glances in commendation to Mircea who says, "You mean you know him?"

"Not personally of course, Mircea. You just don't know your singers! He's a - top pro."

"You're very kind."

David appreciates having changed certain lines of force inside the living room. Greg in a leather easychair next to the bookcases. He's surprised too. Doesn't let his jaw hang open like Mircea. After all.

"You played a male lead in the old NBC Opera's War and Peace."

"I like the way you put it." Not vicious though. Maybe thinks David not a worthy target. And until David's entry he was regarded as nothing but a blowhard.

"The child and procession vanish beside me as I enter the gate and

emerge into a vast greensward. My daughter is running toward me with golden hair blown back from her face and billows of the gown pressed into her arms and thighs creating clouds of saffron behind her. She has removed the ring I gave her for her fourteenth birthday and is holding it aloft between the thumb and forefinger of her right hand. Tears stream down her face and dimple the voile of her garments."

Rehnquest is finding David attractive, a proper foil to his mate. Erika. With marvelous hair--Venetian red ringlets now fresh from Saks Beauty Salon no doubt. And that skin! God! Like the center of a candle flame spread cooling and cohesive over the delicate nostrils caressive and circular at to the cheeks and throat and breasts. Nibbed with--ochre?

Greg's up now, rounding the piano to the hall. "Christina, you remember the War and Peace we saw? That's this man! He sang one of the leads!"

Christina pulls Greg away from the hall door. To the snow encased kitchen windows. "I don't care what he's sung Greg it's dreadful! How could Mircea do a thing like this?" Rehnquest--his dress alone, the large check-on white pants with a blue cotton turtleneck that doesn't as it should hide his grotesque physiognomy but reveal it. He looks like a bantam rooster from the neck down--hips and legs wasted, ravaged to bone by some--disease almost! The chest then begins a foot too low, pressing down the belt with an obscene little mound where his navel should be on the fat stomach.

"But he did play very nicely with Malcolm. That I'll say, Malcolm never lets me carry him on my shoulders!"

"Greg you don't know the half of it! Malcolm got terribly terribly upset later that's why I had to stay with him so long! I must have read him six books!" After Christina had finally shooed Rehnquest out of Malcolm's bedroom and back into the livingroom where he promptly upstaged all other conversants, "I'm figuring out a system of linguistic identification. It centers around four words: love, beauty, fun, dare," the autocracy of opera company managers, the duplicity of agents, his recent divorce, plans to produce, write, direct and star in a movie if he can get another twenty grand together.

"He got into bed with Malcolm."

"What?"

"He did, Greg! See?"

"Oh Christina! You're really--he was amusing him! Like before!"

"No Greg, it was wild! He even got under the covers!"

"But he was acting a part!"

"Greg you yourself said--"

"Yes Christina I know but I may have misjudged him."

"I'm not so sure, Greg."

Greg moves toward the hall, picks a stuffed olive from the can standing open until they play the Faure then serve cold cuts, "No Christina, it's Malcolm was fussy tonight anyway. Why am I even discussing it? It's grotesque."

Rehnquest has brought out a printed resume and circulated it to Erika, Mircea, and David. "I sang Student Prince till it was coming out my ears!" At this he claps the little protuberance navel high on his paunch and David asks him where he's singing at present. "Anywhere my dear fellow, anywhere at all! I sang coming up on the elevator, to a lady and her daughter!"

Mircea adds drily, "Yes, that's true,. I met Mr. Rehnquest only this afternoon, you see. I was standing in line to have Xerox copies made there opposite Carnegie - I had a letter I had purchased and some pages from an unfinished novel by Sartre. Also some music--a short piece for keyboard by Vivaldi. Just behind me was this gentleman and he said, 'Oh Vivaldi! Delighted you see? Just illuminated by someone bringing Vivaldi into that very business-like outfit."

"Yes, Charming. I think what Mircea does is fascinating. And he was very kind. Really, He invited me to your chamber music tonight and I must say you play the Piano splendidly my dear though the piano itself," taking Erika by the forearm and pulling her close "is not all it could be."

"Well. Shall we do the Faure?"

"Yes, Doctor, please do! And is Mrs. Gregory going to join in?"

Greg doesn't even turn to him. "She'll have to Mr. Rehnquest. It's a piano quartet like I said."

"I run to meet and comfort my daughter but the molecules of her flesh come unglued as we touch and my arms grasp emptiness. I have passed through her. Now the landscape is falling away from me. I bend and try to catch the new mown blades of grass but cannot hold them..."

They read music well. That David will admit. And Greg leads with an understanding which is innate and stylistically disciplined. His tone though lacks warmth. It is strident in the upper reaches and in the quick forte passages creates an aggression, ugly.

Erika has fine technical facility. And sightreads the piano score with a gift. The group's only pro.

Mircea plays cello like he is. Totally civilized, not so alert as the others, but delivering his solo passages with shape and great warmth.

Christina's playing is steady, tasteful if a bit pallid, and responsive to Greg's leadership. But she has few solo passages in the Faure and Greg's insistent tone drowns her out as a distinctive member of the ensemble.

The music is vintage Faure. Like an impressionist landscape, only greater definition and perhaps a bit decadent. Tending more toward its nineteenth century forbears than its twentieth century successors. Voices rise out of the general confluence, recede; part of a harmony which finds its way where it ought not to have gone but establishes and exploits the lingering surprise.

Rehnquest's face reminds David of the famous portrait of Franz Liszt, wearing a black cassock, the cassock and white shocks of hair even then putting him out of his time. Rehnquest's face though, is broader, the nose somewhat flatter between heavy, almost Oriental puffs of eyelid. Consonant to the rest of his face but not his physique, the eyes alone, with their opal gray corneas give Rehnquest a bit the look of a sage. A healer perhaps. He believes in ESP.

"In my hands as I grasp for support the blades of grass turn to ash and collapse. My daughter has vanished. Leaden clouds now fringe and begin to mount the sky. A feral night encloses me and there is the wail of a siren."

He's a nice fellow that art dealer, older than Rehnquest. He still doesn't know why Mircea invited him this afternoon. He'd called the Gregorys a couple of hours later and asked if it was really convenient for him to come over. Mrs. Gregory had been coolly polite on the phone, but perhaps now she considered him audacious, not knowing them and calling so late to horn in on what was except possibly for David a homogeneous group, Old World in their devotion to chamber music, insular too he suspects in outlook. But their reserve appalled him, made him creep, incensed him finally when the conversation turned to the arts and he tried to explain the difficulties of being a full time singer. He should have gone to Europe as a young man to sing and build his craft but had family obligations already, premiums to pay, a wife who refused to live abroad. And in America there was room only at the top--the

phenomenal voices. Only they could make and save enough for an ample retirement. Tolerated. Patronized a little. Offered not even a cup of coffee before they started playing.

Christina now detested him. The sudden melodramatic explosions of voice, into song as he manipulated conversations around to a role he's sung or concert he'd given somewhere. The career at least must be legitimate--David had confirmed that, but his ideas and personality! She had a solo entrance to make.

Greg had never considered it clinically, Christina's penchant for hysteria. Christina was fifteen years his junior. She was expecting again. Tired perhaps. Though the fellow was a boor. At a critical point psychologically too, Greg surmised. Mircea regretted having invited him Greg was sure. Only David seemed to actually enjoy Rehnquest. But David was oblique at times. "Heisenberg says the universe is unpredictable', or 'Sartre doesn't believe in the unconscious you know, Greg."

Greg says into the music, "I think we should leave it for tonight. Christina, why don't you serve the food now?"

"Dr. Gregory, I was wondering if you'd do me a favor. You see in this movie there is to be a dream sequence. Based on a dream I myself had a few months ago. I've written it down--it's less than three pages--would you be so kind? Tell me what you pick up from it. If it reveals something in and of itself."

The typing is bad and there are many words crossed out with penciled-in words above them. "You understand it's very difficult to analyze a dream unless one knows a considerable amount concerning that person's history and behavior." Greg is already beginning to read as he finishes the sentence.

Erika goes to help Christina. Mircea is ranging the hall, kitchen and living room, moving between objects, monitoring the action between Greg and Rehnquest. David has a foot propped on the windowseat. He can look from there, through the snow to Central Park, to a blackness which is the reservoir. No movement but a flake patchwork gathering rooftops into a luminous quilt.

"The scene dissolves and I am standing in front of some great commercial edifice. Three youths rush toward me. The middle youth is grotesque, a tiny head and long neck, stubby chalkish fingers, in them a black powder ball which he hurls at the building's plateglass windows. There is a devastating

roar, concussion, then millions of tiny glass beads pulsing in and out like peristaltic waves. I cannot tell now in which direction I am being moved. The contraction and dilation of the beads continues until finally I cannot determine even my posture. I am upside down or sideways or on my back. I am aware too of a light beating onto my face. It grows in intensity. Becomes all pervasive. It will annihilate me but I must look into its core. Its incandescence, the filament moves, has arms. Becomes a man who folds himself into a black robe and has a great solemn visage, black beard, wild eyebrows and a lock of curly black hair obscuring the right third of his forehead. The skin is pearlescent. The eyes gray with gray pupils. He speaks. A saying totally incongruous, ludicrous even, terrifying to me, "Your number is Seven. Seventh among them. You don't have a chance."

# Crystal Angels

*Cynthia Veach Espe*

The crystal angels  
have melted hands  
that beg in folds  
like chanting  
glassine eyes.

I have a lantern  
light.  
You have glass  
it gives no light.

I am not an angel.  
How could you think  
I was an angel.

I am a woman.  
A strip of skin  
with almond eyes  
that are more  
than any of your  
angels'  
glass  
eyes.

# The Trojan Women

*Cynthia Veach Espe*

Gone are your husbands  
your sons  
all murdered  
bloody their armor  
bloody their simple faces.

Your city burns  
each stone crumbling  
the flames are all  
that is alive tonight  
the flames  
and the women of Troy  
who wail  
haunted and gaunt.

The children burn  
the bodies turn to ash  
all heroes' children  
all heroes burn  
all Troy must burn.

Hector's son is thrown  
from a beach cliff  
his mother watching  
there is no voice  
inside her  
no power  
left to her  
no prayer  
no more  
he falls  
a young body of  
eight or nine

falling, falling.  
He strikes the  
sandy bottom  
each limb strikes  
no blood surfaces  
it lies  
coagulated blue  
beneath his lips  
his eyes shut  
blind.

Hector,  
dead is your son  
he lies on  
your shield  
every bone shattered  
a body,  
a young body.

They sing to him  
the heroes' song  
there are no heroes  
there are no gods.

Women of Troy  
I see you crouched  
below the walls  
the flames creasing  
your heads.  
You face the Greek sea  
and you creep  
ugly and dirty on  
your swollen knees.  
Your faces grow  
grayer, your burlap  
clothes grate

your backs  
your hair is in  
webs like spiders  
weave.

There are no words  
anymore, only the  
waxing, waning of  
your voices in screams,  
Where are the gods  
to sink the Greeks  
my children are all dead  
my sons  
my men, my men.

They fall  
they lie unmoving  
each grief mounting  
each body giving in  
to sandy earth  
each mind solidifying.  
The spirit sinks  
like stone.

The moaning stops  
only the flames moan.  
The bodies melt  
from their clothes.  
Twenty burlap dresses  
in a heap on Trojan soil  
Gone are the gods  
Gone are the men  
the babes  
Gone are the women of Troy.

# Arcana

*Alice DeLerno*

somewhere a satyr plays  
bird women skyward dancing  
sear

somewhere an ancient moon  
casts shadows on a face  
lizard child hums  
To strains of the satyr's music

bird women grounded  
pluck dreams  
tossing them rythmatically  
across the moonlit room

another figure rises  
bathed in silver light

somewhere a silent scream  
rebounds against the night

an alchemist begins to turn  
silver into gold  
the lizard child smiles at him  
and the satyr plays his flute

# The Sexual Pair Becomes Aware of Their Distinction

*Susan Kostick*

*(for C.)*

We fall back  
you to your side  
me to mine  
of the old bitch's house.  
It is clear now that  
we have taken a new position.

Looking down  
we notice basic differences  
in make up.

We are not so coupled  
as to be indistinguishable.  
Your hair for instance is  
lighter than mine in varied places.  
Take for example my left thigh  
which does not have a long white  
scar on it.

As if in introduction we shake  
hands, memorize each other's names  
faces, place of birth.

# Untitled

*Susan Kostick*

I'm not Suzanne  
not Logan's green haired muse.  
I'm not coy roses or blue eggs.  
She is lithe, love-dream youth

fair and laughing her way  
into aging fantasy.  
But I am not so young, Dark and boney. . .

High, I might run  
Barefoot down a hall or call  
for more than I can drink  
or curl

my legs into myself  
or cry.  
I might return your zigzag book  
or demand appraising eyes

or zigzag papers  
or break a bottle on your wooden  
head. Black haired, I leave no gifts.  
I'm Susan,

# Untitled

*Susan Kostick*

I expected  
dharma  
your body slumped  
on the stoop  
gnawing  
your body sprawled  
long on the sidewalk  
showing ribs  
distended belly  
your boney wrist limp  
on the step  
reminding me  
I am recalcitrant

Instead  
you slide past ml window  
smooth as a turtle  
a shellful of silent poems  
sprouting rhododendron  
and other botanical  
signs of life

# On Sex Bypassed

*Janice Neuleib*

Emotional masturbation, it's a vice

Lots different than physical.

An emotion rushes through

Stops like the evening

Train

Runs on.

Here we are like frantic passengers

Wondering where the hell it went

You can't catch the train

So you build a toy train

With real whistles and little

Short pistons that hiss

Out artificial steam

Then you ride the toy train,

Looking large awkward

Ridiculous, and try

To get off on its too

Limited motion.

It doesn't work, though

The emotion's on down

The track somewhere

No matter how hard you

Rub the transformer

The form of the thing

Has gone.

And there you are stuck with

A dumb toy train

That fills up the whole

Room and doesn't ever

Give the explosion

That might break

The room and let  
You rush off into the night.

# Simple Saturday at the Zoo

*Janice Neuleib*

Immortality's not so easy to come by.

Shelley, of course, says so, too.

But right there on this great big stone wall  
Is a list of the zoo board

Herman whoever and Jules what'shisname  
had themselves imbedded in stone  
As the permanent directors of the zoo.

The tiger and I looked at each other  
And wondered- - he, is suppose, at my  
Scent on the fall air.

I wondered if zoo's walls weren't pretty

Good places to get immortalized

Anyway,

Herman and Jules also built a restroom.

For women--

Under the pythons.

It's long and dark with grey stucco walls and

fifteen little dim stalls all with

carved wooden seats--well, some have broken

carved wooden seats.

This restroom, for women, smells of mildew

and disinfectant, but it does not

smell of tigers,

Because Herman and Jules knew that

humans would want immortally

clean rest rooms.

Women, on the other hand, might be able to handle tigers

so

In that long dark room, under

the pythons, I felt afraid, not of  
the tiger who might have eaten  
me but of Herman and Jules  
whose norms had devoured me.

# Night Life

*Frank Urbanski*

It was like spiders and all crawling things: he was afraid of his dreams. As images of vile insects had been his childhood's torment, so were his dreams now the lance of persecution. But unlike the martyr, he could summon excuses.

If Dorian Macal brought back all the days since March, it seemed his wife was always standing by a window, as she was now: arms folded across her chest; hair pulled back tight as a medieval penance (she had thick auburn curls); her back to him, almost, he, getting only a half-view of her profile in the twilight bedroom. And didn't he know what she was thinking? Didn't he, as he lay silent and unmoving beneath the crisp sheets, feigning sleep? Yes, he could almost feel the strength that she built up in her aloneness; it was more palpable, more real, than anything he could touch. That vindictive aloofness sunk in the deception of her earth-brown eyes. Oh, didn't she try to console him? But he knew. He knew what was behind it. He could see it in that ritual of search, the gaze lost in the glare that hung frost-like upon the window. No one could tell him otherwise.

"Will you come to bed, Frances," he said, but didn't know why he said it, except that six month's accumulation of anger and fear suddenly filled him up like a very small wastecan, now unsightly and useless.

Frances turned from the window, rubbing her arms as if she were cold. "I'm sorry, dear. What did you say?"

"Nothing, dear. Nothing, dammit." Dorian arched and sprung up, kicked out of bed, agitated as a tightly wound clock.

"Where are you going?" Frances took a few tentative steps toward her husband, approaching him as a watchdog might approach a stranger, her hands out like the bristles on a dog's snout, feeling, moving somehow ahead of her body that followed at a slower pace.

"I'm hungry," said Dorian. "Do you think maybe that's why I can't sleep?" And he was hungry; he made himself hungry. Any excuse to leave would have done, but food seemed the most appropriate--she made him feel so weak.

Dorian slouched from the bedroom to the kitchen, a short walk in the single-level home. It was small--one bedroom, a bath, a kitchen and livin-

groom; and neat--thanks to Frances' meticulous eye. It was, as Dorian had said after first moving in, "decidedly shoeboxular." Their former residence had been a row-home: one of those old bulky structures with three stories and two stairways and more rooms than a small family needed, that seemed always in disrepair yet always new. And they had had one of the larger yards on the block--not much compared to the acre and a half they had here, but, in the perspective of the city it had been notable. Here, everyone had an acre or two. And with the ocean inside of walking distance, its lament a pitiful sound, so different from the crescendo of strength performed in the daylight, could be heard throughout the night.

It had been some time since Dorian had last complained about the size of the house to Frances. He had been quiet because he had thought he had nothing more to say, because he had resigned himself to the fact that he could change nothing with words. God, hadn't he been a fool? Now Frances' Placidity and this house were eating him away.

In his heart he still longed for the city where he had been born and raised, that swirling mote of dust, Philadelphia, his city. Yet, here he was in this place, Cape May, quiet, neighborly and green. After Francis, his son (why had he to be named after his mother?), had died, his wife had said that it would be a good idea to get away, move to a completely different locale, to forget and rebuild. Yet didn't she bring all the old memories with her and drum them into Dorian's brain with her eyes? Beat him senseless with guilt? She would never admit it, of course.

Yes, Dorian's dream was to return to the city. His mere proximity to such a primal constant as the Atlantic proved stifling. The ocean offered no freedom; the house no refuge; his wife no solace. Why had he let her talk him into moving? Love, perhaps. Or encroaching middle aged acquiescence. Dorian was wasn't sure which; wasn't sure he wanted to know.

Dorian balanced himself against the refrigerator with one hand while he brushed his foot with the other. Goddamn sand is everywhere. And as he straightened up, a book atop the refrigerator caught his eye. He pulled it down. What could it be but some-cheap novel? Something to keep Frances busy when she wasn't cleaning or washing or hiding worry with that waiting gaze of hers.

The bookmark was unusual, though - a slip of newspaper. Dorian snatched it out and read:

MACAL

**March 12, 1974, Francis, age 16,  
beloved son of Dorian and  
Frances (nee Owens). Relatives,  
friends and...**

Dorian stopped, replaced the book, but dropped the notice into the waste basket by the refrigerator.

God, he thought, will she never give it up?

Dorian headed for the bedroom, but stopped half way. He went back, extracted the scrap of paper from the wastecan and returned it to the book. Obviously, Frances wanted it there. And as much as he hated to think about it, there was always a certain steadiness, especially lately, in whatever Frances did, as if she were trying too hard, reaching too far for what? What did she see that he could not? And his flash of hunger had smoldered. He was past hunger, like a man who has not eaten in so long that he no longer feels the pain, who is unaware that that dissipation is a prelude to death.

When Dorian reached the bedroom he tried, with as much spirit as he could muster, to splinter the door, crush it between his fingers. It was hopeless, of course, he knew, but something in the mere effort comforted him. He surveyed the neat rectangle of a house, the smallness that seemed a living force, that made the walls forever grow closer together. He could feel the still dampness of the night air, felt it stiffening his back, knew it was making the ice cream in the freezer soft. Didn't all air grow faint in this house, die there, or seem to? The walls did that.

"Reductio ad absurdum," he whispered into the darkness. There was no echo as he had expected, the house being so little, but only the decaying sound of his own words drifting into nothingness. He had come that far: expecting his murmurs to swell for his own benefit.

Softly, Dorian slid into bed and pulled the sheets up past his chin. He lay quietly with his back toward his wife, positioned much as he had been before, much as he had been for the past months. His wife's breathing came to his ears in irregular pulses. He knew that she was awake--and that knowledge prevented him from sleeping. He could almost feel the electric energy of her mind searing visions of Francis into her motherish memory.

Let her have her memories, he thought. If this (he noted the many distances between them) is reconstruction, I don't want it. Let her live with her

past, her hollow spirits.

And as if out of a haze, not totally discernable at first, then startlingly clear, came a question: Can you live with your past?

Dorian screwed down his eyelids, yet there was not darkness enough to . . .

He turned and faced his wife, watched the slow rhythm of her breasts as they rose and fell in the white folds of her nightgown. Frances carried her age well, was often told she looked much younger than her forty-five years, was still desirable. Dorian could remember a time, not so long ago, when the sight of his wife quiet beside him, in real sleep, the soft round curves of her body outlined by the sheets, would have excited a passion that sprang from a need deeper than sexual urgency, would have spurred him to wake her.

He reached out, wanting to touch her--but no, that was passed. Passed. Turning slowly, Dorian retreated to his side of the bed,

Then there was a sound, melodic, yet somber at its core; a voice, one he had not heard for a long while, the voice of times before,

"Darling? Darling, awake?"

Dorian swung over and saw Frances, her head propped up on one arm, and the image of times before vanished, a mere hitchhiker on thoughts that travel in the night.

"Are you a--"

"Yes, Frances, I'm awake."

Frances moved quickly, took her husband's face in her hands like a drowning man would snatch a line. "Dori," she said, "tell me what it is. Tell me."

Isn't that just like her? Dorian thought. As if she didn't know. As if she were innocent.

And Dorian laughed, splitting the night, a smile like cracked ice on his lips, "Tell you? I'll tell you, Frances. You've been on my back since..."

"Since Francis died?"

"That's right. You've always blamed me for his death."

"I never--"

"You didn't have to say it. You acted it. If I hadn't bought him the car he'd still be alive, right?"

"Dorian I love you." Her grip on her husband's face loosened and she trembled imperceptibly, as a young girl might at first realization of the weight of giving out those words, words so full of healing and destruction, steeled-

ness and vulnerability. "Please, don't go on like this," she said.

But Dorian didn't want to hear the softness in her voice, didn't want to feel the hands that had once excited him. No, not now. Words were the outlet now. Like a can of soup gone rank, his words had stagnated and puffed in his mind after his son's death. And like such a can, they exploded: "Don't go on like what? How do you expect me to be, what with the little mementos you leave lying around?"

"You found the...."

Dorian sat up as if physically repulsed by some discovery under the sheets. "Rather morbid, I thought," he said.

Frances choked, coughed; her eyes started to water. "It just brings back memories, I know." Dorian rose, ran his fingers through his sparse hair. "Well, I've had enough of memories, Frances. Enough."

"But I don't blame you."

"Admit it, you do,"

"Dorian, where are you going? Dorian?"

"I need a cigarette."

"Please--"

"Go to sleep."

Dorian stormed from the bedroom to the front door, grabbing up his cigarettes from the dresser as he Passed. The door opened smoothly and Dorian stepped into the mild September air. It was a quiet night, with a multitude of stars shining like the sleepy eyes of orphans. The ocean was not walling, but sobbed in a controlled whisper. It was the type of night to be found in romantic tales of the long ago; surely the kind of night through which angels would sing *Gloria in excelsis Deo*. And the character of the evening worked on Dorian, softening his own mood.

He remembered the Cape of the fifties, the little white bayside cottage he would rent for the weekend every now and again because Frances liked it so much. And he could see the beach, white, tan where the water had shadowed it, uninterrupted, with only his footprints in the sand, stretching beyond his vision. Then the woman, Frances, gliding over a dune as the sky witnessed the surging of the ocean, as it would later canopy two young..

Dorian unfolded a beach chair on the front lawn and sat there smoking, watching the stars blink as if holding back tears, empathizing with the forlorn cry of an invisible gull. Then he turned his gaze toward the house, which, if

nothing else, was his, straight cash. A thought danced out of the inescapable fact of ownership: perhaps he liked this house much more than he was willing to admit. Yes, there was much to like, to admire. One thing for certain Dorian Macal was no slouch when it came to keeping up his property. He thought, with that new aluminum siding this is the best-looking house in the area. . . And tomorrow I'll mow the lawn and trim those hedges. . . I'll...

Dorian went on like that, keeping his thoughts outside the house, until he was sleepy. He smoked one last cigarette before his eyes closed of their own accord.

And the images came upon him, soft at first, barely noticeable. They grew about him enlarged themselves in size and number. Then he could feel them. It was as if he were trapped in a pool, a pool of moist cement, and he could not make the sides. Trapped, he knew them:

February. The cold bites your flesh, rips it, endangering your health. Tomorrow, surely, your back will ache. The streets are wet as you walk, from a sudden rain or that perpetual winter dampness. Streetlights are on, bouncing reflections like the hue of dead fish. The city is rubbed with slime. One slip is all it takes to fall down. The sewers, like wounds in the street-lines, are steaming as you pass. Feculent gas kisses your nostrils, sucks vampirically at the life within you. Less than appalled, for it is nature and necessary to eat, you move on.

It is not far, this lot where they sell death in many shapes and colors. Reconsider. Obviate. You rub your hands as you approach. They are stiff, but still there. They wish they were not, it seems, and you have to subdue them. You contemplate removing them but find the prospect unreasonable, Who would button your coat?

You stop outside of this place and light a cigarette. It tastes bad. This section of town, no doubt. Late, and black above the skinny lights. There are no children dancing in this mucous illumination. The cigarette has expired and you enter the lot. Out of the darkness comes Mr. Big-smile. He has been waiting, yes, expecting you. Your eyes tear from the wind, but you can see those huge teeth, wet and yellow.

Ah, he says, I saw you coming. It's ready, all clean and shiny.

Good, good. The boy will love I, you, he, she, or it.

Small laughter under hard clouds, clouds like concrete, buildings that float.

Sir, he says, I'll need your signature here, yes, and here. Thank you. Here are the keys.

You walk the several yards to the red machine, red like blood or wine or lipstick. It is as it was the night before: a glowing ember in a pit of darkness, though it sheds no light. You could not read by it, even if you wanted to.

You get in, place the key, turn it. The machine screams at your touch, but obeys. You listen. It is good, this thing you've done. Good.

For what?

The boy (and the word was made flesh and cannot stay) will like it, even as you do, this gross phallic extension, this reminder of man's constant advance into the past. But enough, there is plenty, more than enough for all, this life of air. And yes, he will like it for he is young. Like all the young, he wants most what he can never have. Yesterday he said that the majority of Americans are a minority. You did not understand, and he could not understand that. Such things come from a young heart trying to know, do not realize that it is sometimes better not to know.

Perhaps this will help, this thing you drive, that drives you on.

It takes you home warmly, the dream of youth, in style, through gutter-washed avenues. Comfort. In front of your house it stands, solid, concrete, a physical symbol of your vision's potency.

And because of this thing your wife is not yours, merely a woman, one of many. You disagree on tactics.

She says, he is too young.

No, it's good. Gives a sense of responsibility.

Her mind is frayed, must be, you're sure. Almost.

Too young, she repeats. Just a new toy.

But you can't hear her for the sound of your own thoughts.

Tears, long, deep, but not bitter, strong with a pride that requires no support. You could see if your back was not to her.

But the boy, a man almost, you say, he likes it, the dream, quick, new, exciting. Your past is present, alive again. But the hollow of your back is pained. The cold has found its mark: age.

Days pass, flash like vindictive lightning, without talk. The woman cooks and cleans, often watches television until late, falls asleep on the sofa. You suspect she likes it there. Fine, you say. Not mean it, only mean. . .

The boy is happy, smiles like a well kept stud.

You hear the news, the officer brings it to you and you see it with your ears. And more from the eyes that have no sight. A lump of metal and seared flesh, smoke rising to the gods so that some plane can fly through it, dissipate it.

Oblivion rests with the living, it is alive in the silence that words convey. The woman tries. Time.

You are the wild thing caged, then set loose, so free that the air corrodes your lungs, air sweet with the unusual, so sweet that you choke, choke....

"Dorian."

The air is no more because of you....

"Dorian!"

Pain, then more, then it is gone. You see....

Dorian's face stung, was soft and red where Frances had repeatedly slapped it to bring him out of the coughing fit. His vision was blurred. He was not certain where he was. Then the house came into focus and he was fully conscious.

"You must have fallen asleep out here," said Frances.

Dorian lit a cigarette. "Very observant of you." He was embarrassed, as if the dream were etched on his face for Frances to view. "if you had been asleep. . ." Dorian was unsure of what he wanted to say.

"Your coughing was enough to wake the dead I heard you from the bedroom."

"Coughing, huh?"

"Really, more like choking. Some fluid stuck in your windpipe, maybe. The ciga-"

"Could be, I guess," Dorian straightened in the chair. "Well," he said, "guess I better get to bed before I choke to death, huh?"

Frances caught her husband by the arm, held on to that arm with a strength that Dorian never realized she possessed.

Dorian sat back again, stunned by his wife's sudden reaction. A dull pain was starting to beat in the core of his spine. But his eyes were fixed on the woman. They could not move; he could not even attempt to mobilize them, so great was this sudden attraction.

In the silence of the night, as each looked into the other's eyes, something rose in Dorian, something that swelled from all his limbs, his privates, his chest. There was a crazy rush on his brain and something wild was born,

straining for recognition in the way that a frenzied mute might. Dorian squirmed, began to perspire, struggled with his own mind that would not think. But no thought came: no revelation. It was a feeling then, some rising emotions. Guilt, perhaps: for being wrong, for having wronged. Or love.

And still they stared, squinting occasionally, as if they searched for one another from opposite walls of a great chasm.

Frances moved her hand slowly across Dorian's arm until she touched his fingers. "Dori," she said, her lips curving into a playful arc, "let's go swimming."

Dorian started, pulled back his hand, could not believe what he had heard. Swimming? Swimming? His eyes firmed into tight little balls. "Are you kidding? Swimming? At night, with my back? It's too-"

"Too cold?" Frances interrupted. Then her face seemed to sparkle like dew under dawn's stroke. She looked very calm. She looked very young. "Your back? I remember when you could laugh at a little pain. Can't you remember? We used to run the beaches at night with only the darkness to cover us. Remember? We would swim, then..."

"All in the past, Frances. All in the past." Dorian rose from the chair, almost tipping it over.

Frances straightened up and took her husband by the cheeks, kissed him warmly on the lips. "It doesn't have to be," she said.

An uneasiness like a pang of hunger nudged Dorian's stomach. Frances, with the feeble moonlight lacing her nightgown, appeared diaphanous, as if at any moment she might fade and then vanish completely, as her reflection in a pane of glass would vanish if she were to turn from it. And Dorian didn't want to lose her, really, wanted only to revel in a sense of loss. He was still sleep-weak, could not control the emotions which came without direction. So when Frances took his hand, he held her's firmly. And when she moved, he followed.

The night had changed. The sky was a slick black and the stars smiled in a cold way. The couple left the yard behind, and the house. They walked the streets together while the ocean played its music. Not one ray of light came from any of the windows they passed. Not one sound.

Dorian recalled, for the first time in months, how their son's death had left such a hole in Frances' life - so much larger than the aperture it had left in his own pride. Frances could have put her fist through that hole, enlarged it.

She could have crawled through and closed it behind her. But no. Not Frances, She was not like that.

And me? thought Dorian.

They were on the beach now. The voice of the ocean was a long, rolling whisper. Frances released Dorian's hand and moved out ahead of him. He stopped and watched his wife walking, watched her flesh ride up and down beneath the loose nightgown. And he felt the hunger growing in his loins.

Frances slowed as she approached the water's edge, the sea running over her feet in a white froth. Then she turned, smiling, and faced her husband.

"Don't you want to be young again?" she cried, arms outstretched, head tilted toward the sky.

Dorian froze, unsure of what to do. There was a stranger on the beach before him, a woman who was a prism of faces. He was confused; she belonged at her window. And something in the bowels of his brain pleaded with him: Speak! Speak! But he had no voice. His confusion melted into an oozing fear that caught his soul gradually, so slowly and perfectly that he did not recognize it. Solid he stood, like a tree withered and frosted. He shut his eyes.

When Dorian finally stirred and brought the stretch of sand before him into focus, there was a nightgown on the beach. And further out, in the water, was a woman, a naked woman. She was splashing water on herself, on her limbs and head, splashing freely, like a child unobserved.

She called, "The water's fine," then dove head first, moving with energetic strokes. She stopped, paddled about. "Catch me," she cried. "Catch me. Catch me if you can." She dipped downward and was gone, as if the water had tinted her its own hue.

Dorian sat down. The sand was cool and damp. "Catch me," he grunted. His back throbbed. "She'll be back soon," he said. He would wait, wait until morning if he had to, He wondered if Frances could see him, in his striped pajamas, waiting. When she's through playing, he thought, she'll come back. She knows where I am. Goddamn, it's cold out here. Lousy sand.

And he could feel it, not the pain in his back, but something turning inside of him, slowly, like a worm.

# Other Days

*terry butler*

still i'd like to walk those old alleys and streets in jingling hoots & jeans  
the way we did in the days of inarticulate brando differences & indifferences

your face over left shoulder with practiced sneer wording puffed smoke  
breathe

through a cigarette pause before each sentence as if to consider the best thing  
to say like bogart did

i'd like to still wear those same shirts & t shirts in spirit defiant beltloops  
thrown away pants strangely slung narrowly to black boottops & plain leather  
or red nylon jacket unzipped (we were always cold in the winters)

your head bent clenched fists & stiffly held arms bowlegged furious shuffle  
through ice blast atmosphere of bitter dry air as you alone stagger across  
a river bridge to the reeking greasy spoon

i'd like to sit there in the stale donut & cigarette greased air listening to  
bonging clacking of free pinball games won by cheating chugging & belching  
pepsi waiting for you & your latest madness while waitress & eggbeater owner  
argue mysterious ancient pain at the end of the counter

you stamp in swearing & raving through clouds of living music like a chain-  
gang

prophet accompanied by voices of hillbilly angles recorded in nashville or ny  
or memphis or la in cold brick basements or hard spade nightclubs

or maybe even in greasy spoons like the one where you sat digging the music  
with the wisdom of a conspirator.

# Northwestern Belle

*Ed Gorman*

Once a year  
I get her long distance call

She's always somewhere  
"The New Yorker" would approve of

Saying she's fucking girls this season  
and thinking about going to mass again

Asking me how's my drinking, my weight, my  
women, my writing

Asking me what I think of Anais Nin, Doris  
Lessing

Saying shit I'm really fucking drunk

Saying shit I really fucking love you, Ed,  
or I could if things were right

And I never ask her  
what those things are  
that aren't right

I never ask her  
because she doesn't know.

# Slave Song

*Ed Gorman*

electric chair me  
& your lights will never shine again  
hang me &  
i'll piss in your gaping face  
shoot me & your children will slip in my blood  
& break their bones  
gas me & your eyes will burn themselves  
blind  
torture me & you will go mad.

turn to your wife now  
in the last dawn left you.  
there is good reason for her silence.

# Changes

*Ed Gorman*

i've been  
so many god  
damned people  
in my  
life,  
there's gonna  
be one hell of  
a crowd  
in my  
coffin.

