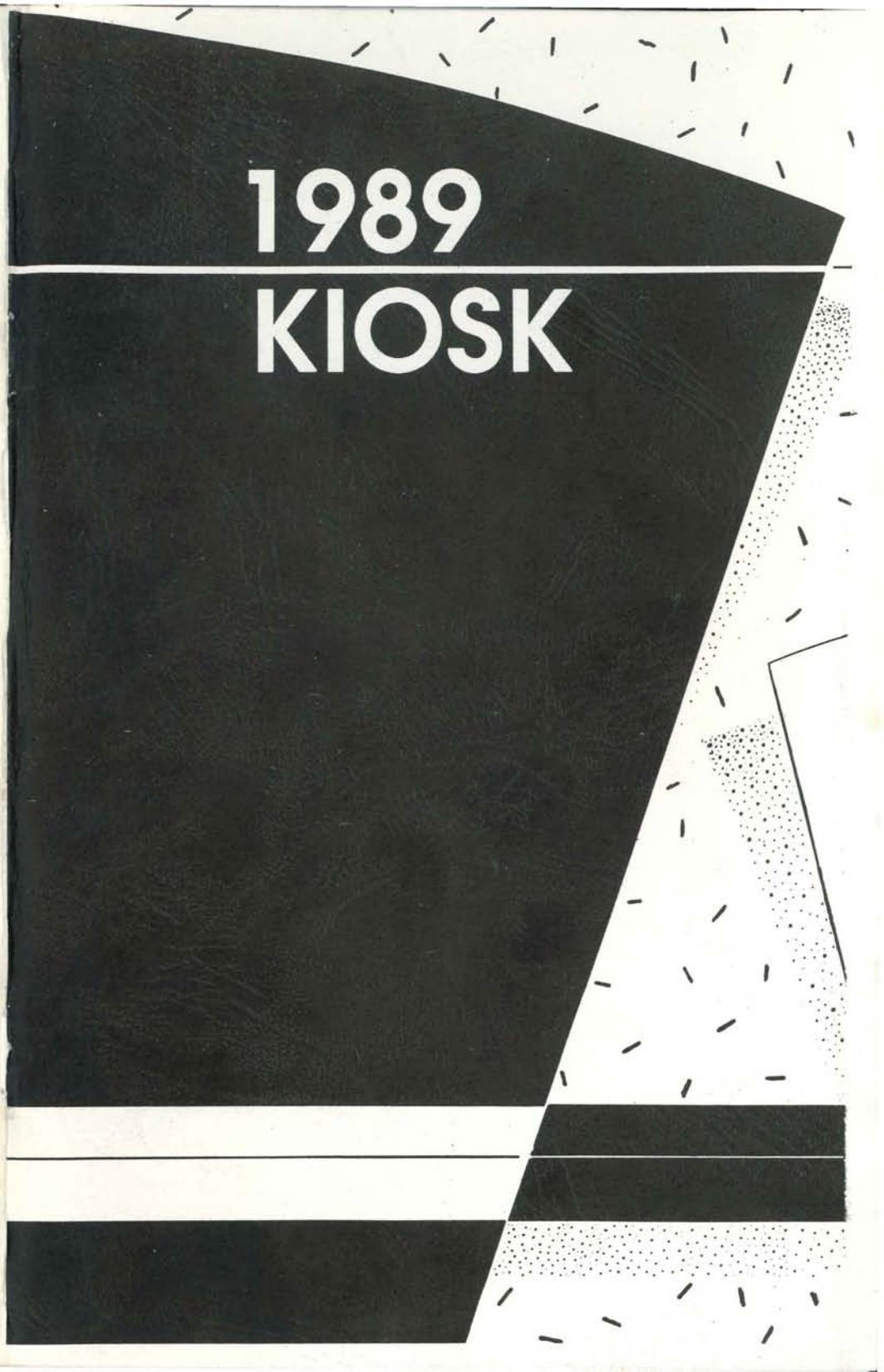


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TIMOTHY T. ORWIG

# Swift Fates

High above the boy on the highboy rack,  
Three swifts ride the updrafts, fielding locusts  
Flushed by the tractor and pitching baler that  
Reap the windrows, snapping crepe paper wings.  
Bird's eyes that viewed the spider rake spin  
Withered alfalfa to a strand that spiraled  
Inward across morning's stubbled cutting,  
See harvesters unwind a web of death.

Reckoning a western thunderhead's crawl  
While fingering the billed Golden Sun cap,  
Father watches the Oliver's wheels notch  
The windrows past. On his pedestal seat  
He turns and yells, "We don't have much more time."  
With eyes bright from fatigue, his son stacks blocks  
Of twined leaves, stems into houses of hay  
That will feed his father's flocks all winter.

Rack swayed, swift gazing, the boy sees beyond  
The man's shoulders to the windrow's end, where  
A whirlwind snaps the row to chaff.

DEBBIE SHARP

# A Lesson in Love

The sun beat down angrily on my head and back as I yanked weeds from the garden and flung them over my shoulder. I could hear the patter of dirt as it rained down on the sidewalk behind me making a mess I'd have to sweep up later. I didn't give a damn. I was as mad as hell and it felt good to pull at the grasses. I imagined grabbing a handful of Cindy's hair and pulling it. I didn't really want to hurt her, but I was so angry I had to work hard at something to get rid of the fire that burned against her in my mind.

"How could she be so stupid?" I muttered out loud. The girl I'd married two years ago had brains to spare. I just couldn't understand how she could have made such a ridiculous mistake. The screen door slammed behind me. So, she's come out to apologize, I thought and continued to pull the weeds. Sweat ran down my bare chest, the seconds rolled by, but no one tapped on my shoulder. I reached the end of a row of tomatoes and, as nonchalantly as I could, peeked over the top.

She was standing at the far end of the yard wrestling a sheet onto the clothes line. The wind whipped it around her body as she stood on her toes trying to get one end of it up and over. I nearly laughed out loud, but caught myself. I was supposed to be mad, and mad people don't laugh, I sternly reminded myself. I just couldn't let her think I was sitting here waiting for her to come over and make up. After a few more minutes of vigorous pulling, I heard the sound of sneakered feet stomping across the yard. From the sound of it, she was either going to slug me or run me down, but I kept on pulling at those weeds. The screen door slammed.

"Oh well, if that's the way she wants it," I said and started down the third row of weeds.

"Lettuce is comin' up nice, Steve."

I groaned inwardly and squinted up at my next door neighbor Art Forbes. He was the last person I needed to see today. Art had a habit of talking about his wife Lucille. There's really nothing wrong with that. It's just that she's dead. I generally have a hard time listening to him repeat stories I've heard a half a dozen times. Occasionally he talks about something new, and then it's interesting, but here lately he just droans on and on. Art squatted in the next row and silently began to pull weeds too. Well, maybe he needs a little quiet companionship, I thought and leaned back to examine my scratched, sore hands.

"Don't you have a pair of gloves to use?"

"Forgot to put 'em on."

"Oh," he said and turned his back to me. He crawled down the row backwards, pulling as he went. "Been thinkin' 'bout heading out West. You know, me and Lucille have a trailer out in Arizona."

"Yes, I know about the trailer."

"We bought it in, say, oh—musta been 'bout '59. Cathrine was just a baby then."

"Yes, I know." He straightened up and twisted to look at me. I stared back, not quite sure of what to say next. Art settled back on his heels, rested his hands on his lap, and stared off into space.

"Lucille and I always had such good times together. We were friends, not just man and wife. We'd go to ball games when the kids were home and we just kept going after they grew up. She really loved them ball games." He glanced over at me to see if I was still listening.

"I used to get so embarrassed 'cause she'd scream and jump around just like a kid. We had fun together. After the games we'd go out for pizza and beer—hell, we were just like teen-agers." He chuckled to himself and shook his head, then stared at the ground. I didn't know

what to say to him.

"Went out to see her yesterday."

"It rained yesterday."

"Did it? Hmmm, musta not noticed. Well, I pulled weeds out there too and cleaned off her stone. I brought out some daisies. She always loved daisies. She even had fake ones in the house, you know, those silk ones. These that I brought out to her yesterday weren't fake though. They were the real thing."

"She would have enjoyed them."

"You bet she enjoys them. That's why I brought 'em out to her."

"Art . . ."

"Then I sat down on the ground beside her and talked everything over. We talked about the kids and selling the house . . ."

"Selling the house?"

"Yes, selling the house and moving out West."

"Would you really go out there to live alone?"

"Oh, I wouldn't be alone. Lucille'd go with me, just like she always does. Any time I go anywhere she's right along side, keepin' me company. Her body may be dead, but she still lives in my heart."

Art turned away, working his mouth furiously over clenched teeth. Art was a member of the generation of men who believed that real men don't cry—not even when they've lost their reason for living. He stooped over, suddenly seeming older than I had ever noticed before, and began pulling weeds again. I just sat there, as I had been since Art started talking. I had no idea that his pain was this deep, he never let anyone see this part of himself. Suddenly he was no longer the gruff old man who monopolized my time and attention. He became a real person carrying an exquisite load of hurt, anger, and loneliness.

"People today talk about not being able to communicate with their

spouses. Lucille and I never had any trouble with that. Hell, if she had something to say to me, she just said it—and vice versa, you know. Do you have trouble talking to Cindy?”

I licked my lips and started to reply, but Art continued talking.

“Those last few weeks there in the nursing home were as hard on me as they were on her. She couldn’t talk any more. She’d just look at me when I tried to talk to her like we used to. All she could do was grunt. Oh, sometimes she’d talk, but it was all garbled. It didn’t make any sense. I used to get so damn mad, I’d just want to shake her. I never did though. What good would it do? She couldn’t help the way she was.

“Every night I’d go up to the home and we’d sit and watch TV, just like we’d do at home. We liked to watch the national news, then we’d watch that game show, you know, Spin for a Win. Well, one night she dozed off in her chair and I turned the TV off. She woke up right then and hollered, ‘Turn that damned TV back on, I was watchin’ it.’ She said it just like that. I turned the TV back on. You know, I’d give anything to hear her say something to me—even if she’d holler at me. Just to hear the sound of her voice again . . .”

“Steven, dinner’s ready.”

“Well, guess it’s ‘bout time I went home and fixed my supper. See ya later, Steve.”

“Bye, Art,” I said, as I watched him walk slowly across my yard into his. I stood to stretch the kinks out of my legs and back. On the way into the house, I picked a rose for my love.

DON MCCORMICK

# Passed

Visitors seldom came  
To his gray house—  
Dry dirt in the sill box  
And wrinkling paint.

I saw him take his walk everyday  
And would say hello;  
He only grunted  
Through the loose skin hanging  
Over his shirt's top button.

Noosed with a thick black tie,  
He leaned on a cane  
Made of rosewood—  
Its worn handle sharply square  
To take his weight  
Straight on.

The older folk remember a wife;  
Tell of how the two  
Walked to church every Sunday  
Holding hands even at sixty.  
Some say she died.  
Others don't recall.

The cemetery is one block north.  
Old Man Bitterman,  
As the children call him,  
Walked on the south side of our street.

One day he didn't walk past.  
The children played stickball—  
A boy ran up the steps  
To get a ball fouled on Bitterman's porch.  
His house looked dark,  
Nothing new.

Little changed when he moved  
One block north.

JANE ECKERMAN

# To the porch

On this hot night  
a light breeze calls  
from the screen door.  
I answer  
to the porch swing  
caught in the music  
of creaking wood overhead.  
Between tree-shadowed houses  
I study the line of stores  
on main street.  
The drug store window  
a bright glow  
from my childhood.  
An aura, shining apparition  
origin unknown  
but tonight, its light reveals  
a watch case.  
Frequented that store  
for years.  
Never made the connection.

A sultry breeze  
swoons the trees,  
excites the oak  
in my front lawn.

A fine tree  
straight and tall and  
like God's own hand,  
shades the roof  
from a wicked summer sun.  
Years back, my first born  
fell from this oak.  
He ran weeping to me.

Oak, you remind me of  
my grandfather.  
I feel a need to  
adopt you  
to my family.  
Funny thing, I believe  
they beat me to it.  
Hadn't noticed till now.  
Irony, sight improves  
with age. Or,  
could be this summer heat  
on my brain  
makes me think  
so deep. Or  
destiny that called me  
to the porch.

LEANN KAMM

# Shower

Church basement  
"Praise the Lord" and  
A chilly sort of Christ  
Hang on a wall.  
Bent ladies, limp like willows,  
Assemble in corners  
Red-rimmed, wrinkled lips  
Announce a clumsy merriment.  
Pale bride-to-be  
Wears taudry gaudy  
Cringes for a smile.  
Tight permed mother  
Perches  
Exchanges captain-may-I's  
With a tight-fisted fidget.  
Mrs. (what-is-her-name-anyway?)  
Talks to false nods  
Balances defiance on the tip of her nose.  
Pastor's wife is untamed  
"Bless you, bless you, dear."  
Then somebody sneezed.  
Four-year-old with pink bows  
Grins dimples  
Plays hopscotch on basement tile.

RANDY CLYDE UHL

## nothin to lose

Ma made stew tonight  
from an old ham-bone.  
Didn't have no carrots or nothing  
just some week old okra.  
Tasted like pink water.

Sitting here listening to the wind  
and thinking how much i hate it.  
Sweeps through the house  
like it were that flimsy sweetheart negligee  
i saw in Mr. Carlucci's dime store window.

The same one that Ms. Loren,  
from Wilson High,  
bitched about  
until he moved it to the back of the store.  
Pretty and red, like..  
Like what was on old man Filmore's door step  
the night they drove him away.  
Come to think of it,  
i haven't seen him around.

Cut my arm on a beer bottle yesterday.  
i washed it,  
but the damn thing keeps oozing  
that yellow shit.  
Ma wrapped an old pair of stockings  
round it before she went out tonight.  
She'll check on it when she gets home  
tomorrow morning.  
Ma's got a job in town.  
She takes her overnight bag.

My bed smells like my little brother  
and piss.  
His nose is running  
bout as bad as my sore  
and we're out'a Kleenix  
and the milk's gone bad.  
He's laying there  
with his hand clutched  
to a cherry, lint-covered tootsie-roll-pop  
half tangled in his hair.  
His dirty face smears pictures on the pillow.  
i pray for him sometimes when nobody's looking.

DEBRA FREESE

## Widow

One year to the day: I still sleep  
with one of your abandoned shirts  
beside me to keep your smell nearby.  
I still feel the grip of your eyes  
staring at me while you died.

Yesterday, I saw you in the park  
jogging away from me. Of course,  
it wasn't you. I laughed out loud  
at the humor you'd see in my mistake  
when I got home to tell you.  
Of course, you wouldn't be there.

I stumble at unguarded moments,  
shot down by little ambushes of grief.  
Blindsided by your forgotten work gloves  
that turn up out of nowhere,  
I feel bruised and hate you.

I try to rid the house of evidence of you.  
Piece by piece, I rescue your remnants  
from the garbage. Piece by piece,  
I pack them all away.

One year. I have survived.

DEBRA FREESE

# A Man Shall Leave His Mother

The sheets, stained with Mogen David,  
stink like sex and your cologne.  
Like a bitch in heat, I wander the house  
sniffing for you. Like a dog  
staking out his territory,  
you've left your scent everywhere.

Last night, I stared past your shoulder  
at the ceiling, bare and white.  
Eyes slit, you cleaved me  
with your hips, grunted,  
dripped sweat on me.  
My stomach quivered.  
When it was over, I slid  
from under your weight.

You raised the flag to pledge allegiance  
again this morning. You work too hard  
to prove you love me.

DEBRA FREESE

## Sex on a Country Road

Amaretto mingled with coffee,  
the taste of a man I don't know.  
White shock of skin in the darkness,  
who are you? I want you  
to be somebody.

Lightning rips the horizon—  
a blinding dichotomy—  
east and west, yin and yang, me  
and a man I've never met.

Thunder claps.  
The world is one again but I  
am split up the middle  
by a stranger.

I go down  
any dark road with any drunk  
who'll have me.  
I don't know who  
I am.

DEBRA FREESE

# Hysterectomy

1

I bathed in hot water  
and left behind my womb.

My children,  
I could not have you but I knew you  
were waiting. I chose names  
and saved dreams for you.  
I squeezed into myself to hold you.

2

I buried my womb in an orchard  
and gathered fallen fruit.

My children, I dream you  
lost in a dark forest  
swimming carefree in a secret pool.  
A search party's coming, armed  
with bright lights and knives.  
Children, you must hide.

3

My womb takes off on startled wings  
and bursts into bloom.

DEBRA FREESE

# Haiku

(for Carol)

1

Birds fly so near me  
I can hear their frantic wings.  
They skim the river.

I return lazy  
stares of boaters drifting down-  
stream while others

struggle stubbornly  
against the flow. Looking for  
a comfortable rock

I will wade upstream  
placing each foot solidly  
before the other.

2

I found a woman  
soft as river silt and strong  
as channel currents.

She swept away fear  
and dragged me down to the deep  
dark muddy secrets

of my soul. I drowned  
for her love but she revived  
me and restored me.

3

Carp jump at midnight  
to exclaim their existence.  
I walk on water.

STEVEN R. BLENDERMAN

# Untitled

The day before November died to winter,  
The hills of battered corn waved to the sun,  
And all our secrets showed themselves to none,  
Except the crows who gorged on each blonde splinter  
Of wheat, knowing in their spacious sweep  
That tomorrow the now blue sky would weep  
Vast mountains of white and innocent anew,  
And all the secrets we had need to know  
Would sleep beneath layers of a new day  
Now too far away to let itself be felt.  
Upon the pagan altar, earth, we knelt  
And held each other close on hard, cold clay  
As then we heard the leaden steps of time,  
    Take pause, and let us enter the sublime.

STEVEN R. BLENDERMAN

# Messalina

So lonely are the nights I lie alone,  
In tawdry, twisted shapes of anguished love,  
With dreams of torment glad to push and shove  
My battered heart against the very bones  
That made a hero of my sanguine limbs  
When we were lovers, lost to life's great dream,  
Not knowing, soon that you would be a queen  
Of madness, full of treachery and whims.  
Had I but known the danger in the lies  
That flowed from heart to eyes, and hands to hips  
Disguised by dark desires on scarlet lips  
That formed all naked falseness in your sighs,  
I would have spared my heart from such a chase  
Into the dizzy heights of your embrace.

STEVEN R. BLENDERMAN

# The Rose Windows of Notre Dame in Paris

In an unseen shroud of mystic weave  
The virgin bride  
Remarries timelessness each new day  
As philtres of colour  
Penetrate dark, winding passages  
Like daggers of love  
Flung from the east  
In unending,  
Undulating,  
Circle upon circle of concentric waves  
Floating mid-air  
On intangible beams of promises  
Lost to the memory of another place  
A different age  
Suspended by an ancient dream  
Streaking the stone columns  
In stains of luminosity  
As radiant to behold  
As a ripple of eternity  
On the thin lens of time  
Set in place by forgotten hands  
Long-since ceased to cut the glass  
Or bend the lead  
Or shape translucent passages  
To beyond the fear of death  
In colours made on a whisper  
Poised between God and man.

STEVEN R. BLENDERMAN

\*

Ode

To\*an

Egyptian

-Alligator-

(\*) (\*)

Agile reptile,

Nile navigator,

What empires

your curled smile beguile

a

H

Lotus sniffer,

Glib sun-soaker,

Where did you hide

When your

Ancestors died

In the ice that

Undid them all?

Man-eater,

Fleet of paw,

Jaws as neat

As a bear trap:

Moonlight goddess

With the oddest bright

Green, dreamy eyes.

Silent glider,

Ripple rider,

Do you like the fright

That you excite

ong the lungfish and the dung diner

m

A

Or do you wonder

Underwater

?

With time  
To ply  
The slime  
And silt,  
If we're  
From  
The same  
Creator?  
Or was  
One of us  
A strange  
Mutant  
Evolved  
From  
The same  
Mad urge  
To mate  
And not  
Remain  
An  
A l l i g a t o r ? !

LEANN KAMM

# One Night

Zig-zags  
Crack the dark in two  
A wetness  
Drips  
And drives drunken paths  
Down the glass  
Air peeps through a window crack  
With sleepy breath  
Bus engine  
Resumes a snore  
I shift in my seat now  
Noticing a kind of slumber  
Embracing the others  
Then, it shackles me too  
Slides through my soul  
And imprisons me in its dreams.

LEANN KAMM

# Hobbits

Brown eyes, looking like a destiny  
Talking Tolkien  
For a moment he grasps my hand  
As if it were his own story.  
Oh, wonderful Gandolf, in thy whiteness  
Command a well-aimed ball of fire  
To suit my enchantment!  
I relinquish a walk on the green earth in daylight  
For a stroll with hobbits into an unknown Blue.  
Talking Tolkien  
For a moment, or maybe more  
I stop to notice  
A coldness in my hand and  
Brown eyes, looking like a risk.

JOANN DONNER

# Cleaning Out Pa's House After He'd Gone

Grime settled thick  
Upon the glass,  
Filmy, smoky, dust  
Fades the features  
Of the people  
Caught in living.  
Photographic holdings  
Of a moment taken  
From a life gone  
On unheeding.  
Brown-haired boy  
In the cookie jar

Caught in fleeing,  
Timid smile;  
A treasured garden's  
Flowers froze in time  
Packing up a lifetime  
In a tiny cardboard box  
Saving certain pieces  
For myself;  
Strangers stored away while  
Freshened memories, restored,  
Will sit around my home  
To gather dust.

RANDY CLYDE UHL

# Stained Glass

you do not understand how I love  
you with your petty hang-ups and bible covers  
pointing your Godly fingers  
and sitting in the front pew  
reeking of holy water

Jesus died for us all

JEAN MCGINNIS

## His Wife

The taste of grape upon  
Your lips would be so sweet  
If only you'd come home,  
My love.  
I promise this time I'll  
be good so you won't  
have to leave again,  
My love.  
Please come home alive to me  
And please come home tonight.  
I worry so  
When I'm alone  
And the darkness  
Grows so deep.  
I'll love you better this time  
If you'd come home.  
Oh, please come home.

YOKO SAKANE

## Long Voyage

Her shoulders were trembling,  
As if she were supressing her laughter.  
But she was crying.  
At least they thought she was.

On an afternoon in June  
She received a letter.  
"His ship sank."

She was crying joyfully,  
As if she was enjoying crying.  
She was in a black dress  
Which made her look beautiful.  
Red rouge matched with the bouquet.  
White handkerchief neatly ironed.

The funeral was over.  
She looked down, kept silent.  
As if she was trying to remember something...  
Something sad, like the first moment.  
She was still in her grief.  
At least they thought she was.

After the long voyage  
He was gone.  
This time, he would never come back.

After the long words of comfort,  
People returned to their lives,  
As if nothing happened.  
Nothing happened.  
She was left alone as usual.  
Nobody visited her  
Except her cousin, she called him  
From the next town.

YOKO SAKANE

# Waiting Game

"Hold your breath  
Until the next car passes,"  
I order myself,  
"Or Mom will die."  
I whispered in my mind.

"Late. Late. Late,"  
I muttered.  
"She is always late.  
Nobody around the school."  
I thought.

Then,  
She honked the horn.  
"I lied,"  
I whispered.  
And I kissed her on the cheek.

PHYLLIS PARKS MALLESS

# Hestia

Shelter the coals, Woman  
Don't let the wolves in  
Ignore their wild yelping  
And calling your name.  
Tend the hearth carefully  
Sing to your children  
And quietly, gently  
Rekindle the flame.

Hold the man close, Woman  
Next to your body  
Your pale arms around him  
This cold moonlit night.  
Shivering, drowsy,  
He needs you beside him  
But dream your dreams first Woman  
Stir that fire bright.

Burn the log through, Woman  
Watch while it crumbles  
Let moonshadows deepen  
Let coals glow and fade.  
Then as a kindness  
You'll let the old dogs in  
Their eyes toward the light  
That the night mother made.

JEFF ARNOLD

# Images

A child is playing in the rain, a soft gentle sprinkle, actually. His mother tells him to come indoors; he pretends he cannot hear her. He blows a bubble with his bubble wand; he'll need to get some more soap soon, he thinks. There is a rainbow in the bubble as it flies away.

A raindrop falls 5.6 miles; neglecting wind resistance, it has a velocity of 109.76 miles per hour. Defying all odds, it finds its target in the bubble. The rainbow shatters.

The mother takes the child by the hand, and together they go inside, out of the rain.

JANE MASKE

# The Strange Visitor

The autumn leaves tumble to the earth  
Like gold nuggets dropping from a rainbow.  
They crinkle beneath my feet  
As I walk alone to the cemetery.

The smell of burning leaves fills the air,  
Tickling the delicate hairs inside my nose.  
I stare at the billowing smoke,  
Feel the warmth from the bonfires.

The wind clinks the icy branches of the trees.  
They tremble and bend.  
I shiver and pull my coat around me  
And walk alone to the cemetery.

I absorb the geometry of the gravestones  
Lined up beneath the shade of the lifeless elms.  
Shadows scattered on the ground  
Create a scene of disillusion in my eyes.

I shudder as I creep over the dead,  
Stop in front of a partially concealed stone  
And rub my hand over the words on a gray marker,  
Feeling the cold indentation of my name.

MEREDITH R. COOK

# Sole Exception

Englassed,  
The butterflies  
Bent to our will with pins  
Display everything of themselves  
But flight.

MEREDITH R. COOK

# Nightmare

The runaway that pitched and bucked all night  
Has thrown me to the surface of the dawn  
And spun away, not pausing in its flight;  
So, groaning, I arise when it has gone.  
It's said, I hear, that sleep's a gentle mare;  
I thought her skittish, noted nervous eyes.  
She fled, spooked by the flapping sleeve of care.  
I fought all night to stay on, fell, now rise  
Pain-jointed, weary enough that senses hum  
And time and thought move slowly. I survey  
The pointed desolation I have come  
To climb upon—my other steed—the day.  
I fling myself atop its bony hide  
And cling because I dare not cease to ride.

MEREDITH R. COOK

# Spring Invocation

Sing,  
weaver  
of long  
strands  
of melody,  
fever  
our spring  
with song,  
make us strong  
against the lurking chill of memory  
unmelted in the shadows, piled in stands  
of leafless trees, in stippled bands  
along the roads; leaver of lands  
given to winter, wanderer, O wing  
back, wheel the season back, lift our sight  
from raddled wrong with kaleidoscopic flight,  
kindle color in the black-and-white  
world until it grows so bright  
that you, who long to rest,  
light  
and, best,  
nest.

MEREDITH R. COOK

## Backwater

About the house the lakes of trees  
Bobs and eddies with the breeze;  
And lapping branches sound a slow,  
Low, rippling murmur; while below  
In cool shadows gnat-schools dart,  
Frenziedly alive, a part  
Of food's kaleidoscopic chain  
As surely as fish, birds, and pain.

Elsewhere the years are car-tire dizzy  
With revolution, fall-squirrel busy.  
Here—serene, piscene, remote—  
The waterlogged years barely float  
Through cycles of birth and death of leaf,  
Eternal as gnats, and gnat's-life brief.

DON MCCORMICK

# Tease

After the flash  
And distant crack,  
The rain's perfume  
Floats  
Through your window.  
You are brought to the sill  
To see lamplight gleam  
Catching needle point drops  
On car tops  
And bicycle seats.

You want her  
To ring down  
In sheets.

Minutes pass,  
But she falls  
As before—  
No less,  
No more.

And still at the sill you wait  
As she shines  
And puddles places  
In the street.

Then she stops  
And silence grows  
As her trickles smile  
Along the curb,  
Carrying herself downhill,  
Away.

YOKO SAKANE

# Why I Write

"Why do you write?" This was the first question in my Advanced Composition class. There must be some significant reasons for writing. So many books and magazines are published every year. Why are they written? Some people keep diaries for years which are not even intended to be published. Why are they written? Probably there are many answers. Some people simply enjoy writing itself. But for me writing is not fun; rather it's suffering.

It is said that a language makes it possible for human beings to have ideas. Other beings communicate their impulses with each other, but no ideas. You must have a language in order to develop ideas. It can be said that language enables us to have abstract ideas, and that writing makes it possible to change those abstract ideas into logical thoughts. This is one of the important functions of writing. We can develop our vague ideas through the process of writing. Some might say that it is possible to develop abstract ideas without writing them down. However, how can one show his or her ideas without using a form of language? New ideas have led to the expansion of language, and at the same time writing helps to develop the ideas more clearly and logically. Probably this is the reason why papers sometimes turn out to be different than expected.

Although my experience with writing is not as long as the history of human civilization, I have been developing my ideas through my papers. Sometimes I find a paper different from what I thought it would be. In some cases the argument in my paper falls short. Even though I thought I had some good ideas in the first place, I find that they are not clear enough to develop logically. In other cases my papers turn

out pretty well, better than I expected. While I am writing, I have to force myself several times to decide which direction I am going to develop my argument. Through this process, I sometimes come to better conclusions or notice something which I never thought of.

In my first paper at Morningside, for example, I wrote a discussion paper on American Indian culture. My main point was that if one understands the language better, one can understand their culture better. I learned in the class that on many reservations, the first language the children learn is their native language. Because that language is different from English, their ideas and the process of reasoning must be different. I discussed this linguistic and cultural difference in my paper. And I noticed the interesting parallel with the difference between English and Japanese language. While I was discussing the difference between Indian culture and American culture, I found myself thinking and writing in the Japanese style, which is different from English. I think this difference reflects in my discussion paper which was in a sense not logical. In many cases, the most important point comes last in Japanese writing. You never know what the point is until you get to the last page. In my paper I wrote down some of my ideas, but they were not clearly written nor logically ordered. Unlike English writing, which is more geometric and mathematical, Japanese is more ambiguous and vague. If the reader can see the whole idea and image from your writing, it does not have to be well ordered nor clearly supported. My first paper was Japanese in this sense. But I was beginning to learn how to write clearly and logically.

Another paper I wrote was on Poe's short story "Ligeia." That was a strange story. In the first place it did not seem to have any theme, or at least I could not find anything significant that I could write about. I really liked the story, but I did not know why I liked it. After I did research on the story and read several articles on it, I got to know how

others read the story and what they thought of it. I was beginning to find out why I liked the story and what fascinated me. I listed some points which I thought interesting. Although I was not yet quite sure about what I thought was most significant in this story, I started writing. In the beginning I was groping in the dark; I did not know where to go. I was just writing down what I was sure about as clearly as possible. It was like paving a mud ground with blocks of stone. The more solid the foundation, the higher I could pile the stones. Until I came to the conclusion, I was not sure if I had come in the right direction. At the end of the paper I noticed the interesting contrast in human nature between Ligeia and the man who is fascinated with her. I thought that I finally found what I was looking for through the process of writing. But when I got the paper back with an interesting comment from the professor, I noticed that my conclusion was just beginning. He had written, "An interesting idea for development and it could have made a good paper in itself."

I had another new writing experience in my creative writing (poetry) class. Usually, I try to write as clearly as possible in order to develop my ideas. At the beginning of the class, I hesitated to express my feelings, because they were not logical or well ordered. Poetry is another form of writing. I had never thought of writing a poem, especially in English. I was not used to expressing myself in poetry. However, I found it very interesting. In the very beginning of the class, I wrote some Haiku, a short Japanese poetic form. It took me quite a while to write three lines. One of my Haiku is: "Pine tree on the hill/Without knowing the ocean/But the wind comes through." I meant that the pine trees in Iowa have never seen the sea or even smelled the sea. I was born by the ocean. I remember that there are many pine trees by the sea. That is why I wrote this Haiku. But when we discussed our Haiku in the class, other

students' interpretations of this poem were fascinating. Some students said the the wind which comes through the trees may make a sound like the waves of the sea. I had never thought of such a nice image. The readers gave my poem more meanings than I had meant. This was a new experience to me, presenting my poem in front of other people and hearing what they think of it. I had a strange feeling that my writing stood up and began to walk somewhere and meet someone beyond my control. Writing can be developed by being read by others.

As I have discussed my writing experiences, I have found some important functions of writing. So I like to go back to the first question. Why do you write? Why do I write? I write to communicate with myself and with others. Writing is meaningful for its own sake; it helps me to develop my ideas and leads me to new ones. Sometimes my writing inspires others to carry my ideas in directions that I had not thought of. Writing is not always fun, but it is valuable, and sometimes it can be magical.

MEREDITH R. COOK

# The Sword of Ivrian

It was a poem in light—this sword—silver, tapered, graceful and cold, a moonbeam with a hilt; and like all things of beauty, legends were about it. Ivrian made it, they say—the joy worker, the wondersmith—when time rose in the east. It had never tasted blood, this sword, nor been drawn by such as had. Such was its beauty that veterans wept who saw it, that they could not pour the blood they had shed back into its accustomed veins and so take the sword. But it will not be ever thus. One day a warrior will come who will draw the sword and die by it, and beauty will go out of the sword and, some say, the world.

So it came to pass one day that Anion rode out of the west—Anion, who loved Judice the Fair, most beautiful woman in the world, and was scorned by her—to see if legends are liars.

He was a proud man, this Anion, and little given to the love of others. So it was that he went forth and slew dragons, not to succor those they oppressed, but that men might say, "That is Anion, who is great." And he gave gold to the beggars and cloaks to the travelers and wheat to the starving that they might bless him in their hearts and spread word of him in their wanderings, saying, "That is great Anion. There is none other such as he." And he dressed like the sun—glittering in gold and amethyst, splendid in velvet and ruby—that it might be said of him, "That is Anion the Magnificent whom all wish they were." But he saw Judice the Fair, and her beauty smote the shell of praise he had built about him. And part of him fell at her feet and loved her. And part of him stayed within the Sundered shell and said, "She is beautiful. Truly, were she mine the praise about me would glow brighter than the sun."

Judice, that moon of fairness, saw him before her; and there was no love of him about her. "Who is this Anion," she said, "that sets himself before me? He is nothing to me and less than nothing. I will not suffer his presence." And her words kicked and trampled the Anion at her feet so that he grew numb, and the Anion in the shell had to assist him back within. The courtiers laughed about this—that Anion had sought Judice and been humbled—and had a story burning on their tongues to cook their food with for many a day. And the shell about Anion shivered and cracked. And Anion could do nothing—he who had killed men before in open and in secret for less and only been thought the more of for it—for they that loved Judice were many, and many were high in the world.

Then he bethought him of the Sword of Ivrian, and that thought was a corona about him. It melted the shell and fused it back together. So he bowed to Judice and left; and praises were about him once more, Anion, whom no blow could shatter.

Within the glow of praise, hidden from the eyes of men, he rejoiced. Love had fled out of him with the numbness, and his mind had feathered the sky behind the traitor with arrows. He hoped he'd skewered it, but love is always elusive. Still he rejoiced. Judice the Fair would die when beauty passed from the world, and not all the mighty of the world could save her. And if Judice the Fair, Judice the Stern, Judice the Well-Beloved could be dust beneath his heel, what mattered it if his heel was dust as well, and half the world besides. For lives are cheap in monster-slaying as swords are cheap in monster-slaying, and he sought to slay the greatest monster in the world. She mocked him, and what greater monstrosity could there be?

He rode until he came to Tiempa, where time is kept in dim green bottles. Here he asked after the Sword of Ivrian, but no one had heard of it, for beauty is timeless. So he turned his back upon that place and

left it behind him.

He rode until he came to Regenance, with its streets of marble, where the winds are kept chained as chariot-horses, and thunders are only heralds calling, "Make way!" And he cried out in this pace: "Where is the Sword of Ivrian?" But no one there had need of it, so they answered not. So he curses Regenance the Mighty that would not help him on his quest and put it forever behind him.

He rode until he came to the Aureate City, Allegelt, where the buildings were gold and the streets were gold and the children played marbles with gems in the gutters. Here he was no longer splendid, for the glow of praise was behind him many miles and his velvets were stained with travel and his gold was dark with the dust of travel. They took him for a poor man in the Aureate City, a poor unfortunate in Allegelt, and their pity was moved. They counseled among themselves and said unto him: "Whatsoever you wish, ask us; and if it is in our power, we will grant it." And he said, "I seek the Sword of Ivrian." And they said, "That we have not." Then he tore the gold even from his garments and flung it among them so that it mingled with the dust of the road, saying, "Then I give this dross to you—be it ever accursed—for it cannot buy me my heart's desire," and he wheeled and departed out of the land of Allegelt.

He rode until he came to Plesaunce, where the buildings were of ivory, amber, cedar, and sandalwood. Here they raised peacocks and cats and thornless roses. And the food of Plesaunce and the wine of Plesaunce were celebrated even in the uttermost west. He rode in Plesaunce, did Anion, and did not smell the perfume in the air, nor feel the warmth of the sun or the heat of the fires, nor taste the food. And he took no joy in the dancers of Plesaunce nor in the singers of sweet songs. He grasped one and asked of him, "Where is the Sword of Ivrian?" The

singer laughed gently, as are all laughs gentle in Plesaunce. "Everywhere," he said. "We sing to it in the morning with the birds and dance to it at midday with the butterflies and the flowers that turn their faces to the sun. Then we sing again at even with the crickets and cicadas. Come join us." But Anion pushed him away. He turned his back to Plesaunce and went from it.

He rode until he came to the piecemeal city. So he called it though he never learned its name for—while the grass grew around it tall and green and splendid—there were, between the grass and the city, hundreds of patches of moss of all the colors that moss can be, so that the city seemed to wear a beggar's garment sewn together piecemeal.

Here in this city peace dwelt, as it had a thousand thousand years; and none that lived therein sought out the stranger—rather they hurried indoors and locked their shutters. But sometimes when he had passed, they would open their shutters, look after him, and shake their heads.

In the center of the city he came upon the Sword of Ivrian in its scabbard set upon a pedestal of tourmaline and faience. Of this he was certain, for beside its beauty the tourmaline and faience paled to nothing and less than nothing, and it hurt his eyes to look upon it. But he did not go upon his knees before it, this Anion. He had traveled far with one idea upon him like a vulture. He reached out and grasped it, and all the world went white. He could not see the sword nor the pedestal nor the city. There was only himself and emptiness. And he smiled, this Anion, in the void; for beauty had gone out of the world.

In the morning they of the city came forth from their dwellings and went even into the center of the city. There they came upon the body of Anion, the stranger, next to the Sword of Ivrian in its sheath. They bore him away from that place, out beyond the walls of the city, and delved deep under the rich green grass. They put him in this hold and covered the earth over it. Then they went back into the city where, peace had dwelt for a thousand thousand years. But the grass never grew again on the grave, only moss—black and brown with slight gold tinges.

DON MCCORMICK

# Hair

I am driving home from college tonight, having been away six months. My anxious foot earned me a speeding ticket not ten minutes ago but I have calmed down with each driven mile. Thirteen to go before I see the runway of the Hastings Municipal Airport. Already I see the encompassing beam of the circling tower light blue, white, blue . . . It sweeps me home like my mother's broom stroke, becoming clearer every mile.

I soon come over the hill and predict the blast from my brights on the city limits sign—HASTINGS POPULATION 23,543. Someone has recently added in vandal red 18,000 ON WEEKENDS. I remember traveling this 30 mile stretch of road when it used to be HWY 281—now it's the Tom Osborne Expressway. The asphalt runs between Hastings and Grand Island, a town of around 80,000, and there it meets Interstate 80, the umbilical to Lincoln and Omaha. My mom and dad would sometimes escape Hastings to one of these three places on weekends.

I remember one trip to Omaha when I was seven or eight years old. We had gone to a mall for a couple of things not available in Hastings: good billiard balls for Dad and "just the right fabric pattern" for Mom. Detesting "girly" sewing shops, I waited for Mom in the pet shop next door. There were animals there I had only heard about but never seen before—cocatoos, exotic tropical fish, boa constrictors. After looking over all these strange things, I knelt down by a cage to let a black lab puppy lick my fingers through the chicken wire. I heard voices above me discussing what to get their son for his birthday.

"A cat, Gerald? I think a cat might be better for him."

"Naw."

"How about a . . ."

"Listen, Meg. The boy wants a dog and I'm getting him a dog. A dog that'll grow big. We got lots a running room for it on the farm and besides, he ain't no sissy that'd want just a cat."

"Fine, fine. But you just watch him get into all sorts a trouble with that thing. Fights with the neighbor's collie, tearing up the house in the winter. I'm just warning you. At least let me pick it out. How about this one?"

She points to the dog licking my finger.

"Naw, that one's a nigger dog. Get him a yellow one or red."

They decided on a golden retriever and left with me the lab and a strange new word echoing in my mind.

About an hour later we stopped in a Hallmark shop. Waiting for my parents to decide on a card, I began playing with toys set up for display in the inevitable aisle of knickknacks. The salesman found me tip-toeing for a Garfield doll on the top shelf and asked, "Hey, Man, need a lift?"

He was a tall black man and wore a fashionable thick afro. I didn't know a single black person in Hastings. Being somewhat suspicious, I wondered whether to let him pick me up. But he was older and had addressed me as "Man," so I let him pick me up by the waist to get Garfield. Once up here I saw the man's hair more closely. It was unlike anything I had ever seen. Inches of black velcro, I thought. I wanted to touch it. Knowing that such an opportunity would never knock in Hastings, I gently pressed the palm of my hand against his afro, just enough so I thought he wouldn't notice. But he did.

"Fun, isn't it? Nothing like it in the whole world."

Still up in the air and now embarrassed, I said, "Uh. Yes. My mom's at the counter now. Better go."

On the floor again, I handed him the doll.

"Heyyyyyy. All right, Man. Just gimme five."

I did and heard him return "Heyyyyyy," as I ran quickly behind Mom's coat.

Out of the store, my heart was pumping a mile a minute. I had experienced something none of my friends had. I fantasized that I had become a bold explorer that day, but did not tell anyone of my venture.

Liking the idea that what I had done was something unique in human experience, and wanting to use the new word I heard in the pet store, I said to my mother the next day as she was sweeping the kitchen floor, "Mom, I touched a nigger's hair, yester. . ."

Wack! My mother's broom swept me home.

JAN D. HODGE

# Patterns

Here in the bed where father died  
and mother lay alone and cried  
I wake beside my two-week bride

and listen as she gently sleeps  
to rhythms that her breathing keeps.  
Out in the rain the hickory weeps.

Cold beneath a quilt of years  
pointed by my mother's tears  
and father's unrelenting fears,

I think of other nights I lay  
awake and watched the lightning play  
against the oak; the lonely way

the whistle of a passing freight  
would carry through the silence late  
at night; the disconcerting weight

in father's face when bills came due;  
the shoes I ruined walking through  
the swamp; the spanking; having flu

and mother reading "Thunderhead"  
for days as I lay sick in bed;  
going to see Aunt Martha dead

whom I had never seen alive  
(that must have been when I was five;  
all I remember is a drive

that took forever, a pasty face  
and hands that didn't move, Aunt Grace  
crying, an ugly purple vase

with yellow mums, a long gray dress);  
losing a thousand games of chess  
to Kenny and Michelle; the mess

I always made of . . . A blazing slash  
of sudden lightning knifes a gash  
in the deep dark, and in the flash

clear across the room I see  
(broken, dusty) the orrery  
that years ago father made for me—

circle in circle, day and year.  
Circle in circle, day and year,  
the measured patterns brought me here

to wake tonight by my sleeping bride  
in the very bed where father died  
and mother lay alone and cried.

DAVE DIAMOND

# Dying

Fall, falling, fallen  
dark, chalky sky  
a northern wind pushes  
the lake in rolling white caps  
that look like foaming lips

The trees weep leaves  
One clings, hangs on  
I think it's waving goodbye

Battered lawn chairs lay  
upside-down on the patio  
rain splashes the sliding door  
temperatures drop

It will snow tonight  
when the change howls in

I can pack my life in the car  
head south down Highway 71  
outrun it, stay ahead of it  
beat it, kill it

stay alive

STEPHEN COYNE

## On the Bus at Night

Reflected in the glass,  
she could be anyone who drifts  
diaphanous across house fronts  
and grows vivid, almost real,  
against vacant lots at night

Each backdrop changes  
her face, and she could be  
the one who made herself  
as good as a ghost to you  
and haunted every smile  
you've loved since.

So you turn toward her,  
there on the bus, and mouth  
some vague, meaningless words,  
some love hidden like a bud.  
But she only stiffens and gathers  
together her pocketbook  
and looks for another seat.

Soon, there is only pavement  
in her place and silence  
dark as road between cities.  
You go far without her—  
as you would have gone  
without anyone else.

## CONTEST SPONSORS

The following contributed prizes for the Kiosk literary contest:

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MASS COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT

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## CONTEST JUDGES

George Bilgere won a \$20,000 National Endowment for the Arts grant for poetry this year. His work has appeared in numerous magazines including Prairie Schooner, Chicago Review, Kenyon Review, Sewanee Review, Kansas Quarterly, and elsewhere.

Ken Schiff's novel, Passing Go, was nominated for a National Book Award. He is an Assistant Professor and Director of the Writer's Institute at Mercyhurst College in Erie, Pa.

Dave Evans is a professor of English at South Dakota State University. He has published two volumes of poetry and two collections of prose sketches and essays dealing with Siouland.

## NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

Jeff Arnold is a sophomore Mass Communications major from Orange City.

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Yoko Sakane is an exchange student from Osaka, Japan. She is an English major.

Debbie Sharp lives in Rome, Georgia. She studied creative writing at Morningside with Robert Conley.

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