



Perspectives 69

P E R S P E C T I V E S

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MORNINGSIDE COLLEGE

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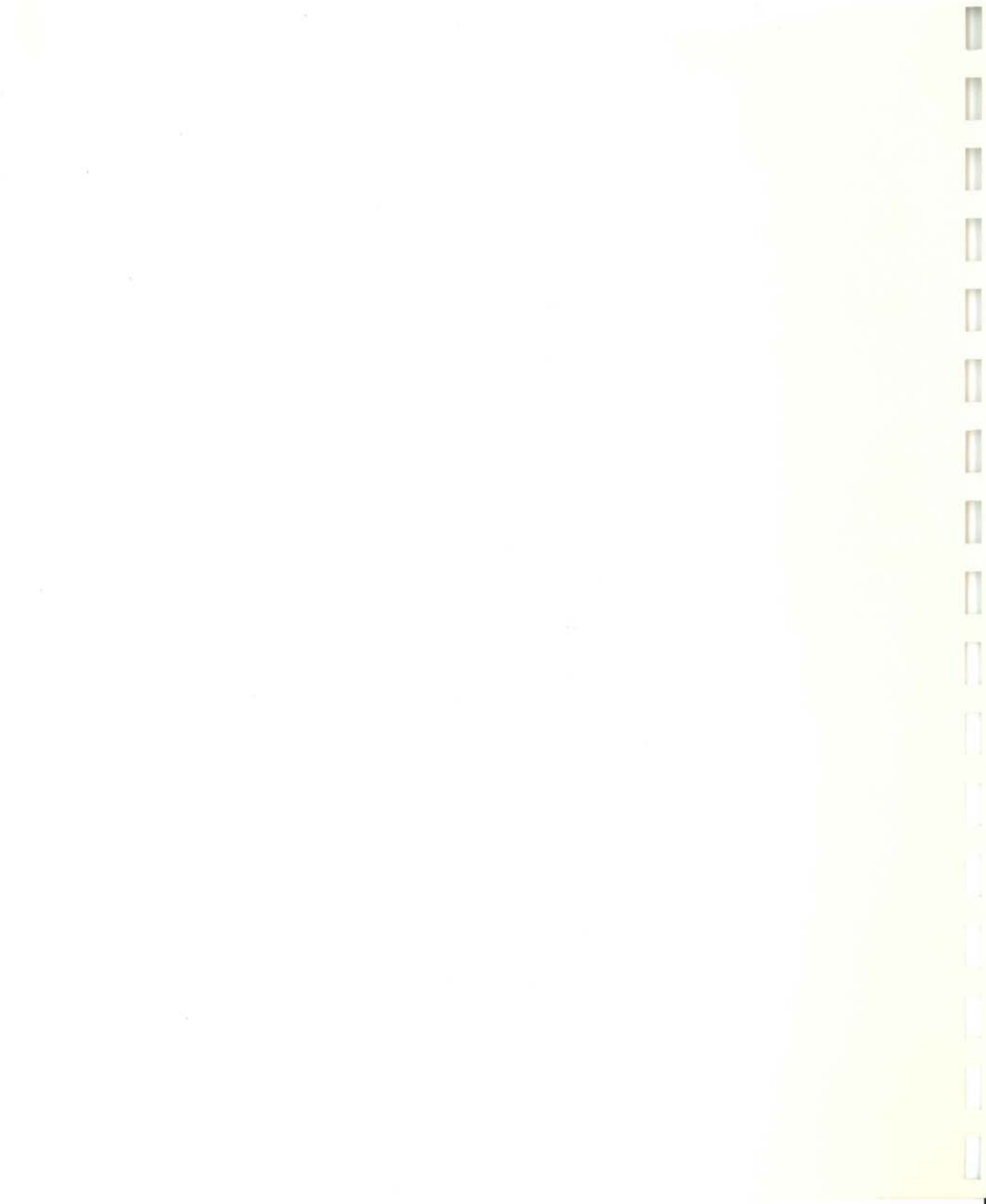
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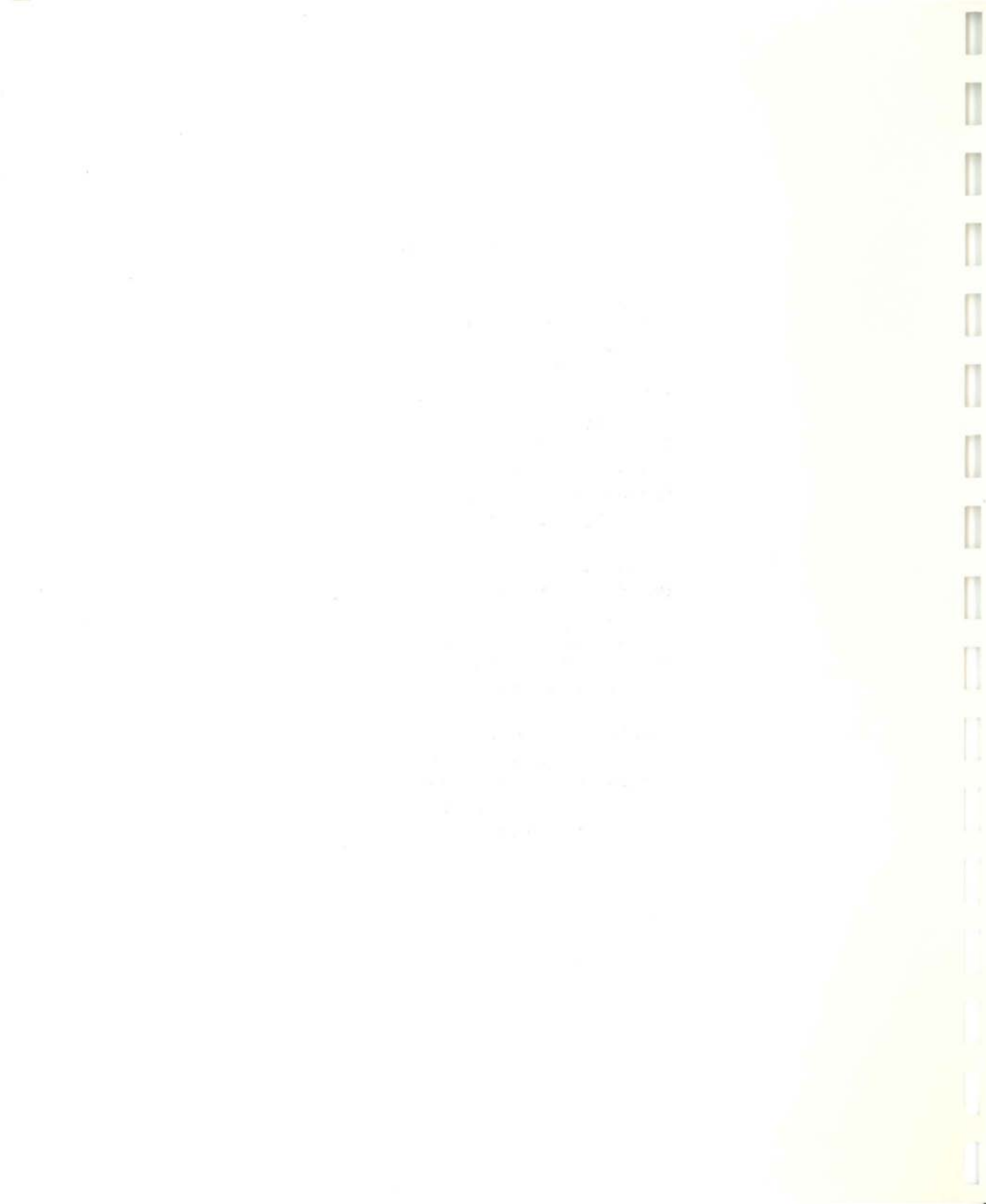
A thought
Must be contemplated
Before shared.

Bridges are to be crossed,
they say--
I'd much rather
sit beneath,
amongst the pillars--
skipping stones.

A year is a long time...
But I'm going back,
just the same--
to make the decision again,
And perhaps, this time--
to be certain.

A trio must be formed
of two sometimes--
The third member developing
with the passage
of time.

Chris Stanley



Snow in the Night

A snowflake falls
To crash into the ground
With a sound that begs to be heard.
It is not.

More flakes fall
To jostle, to shatter, to crush each other
Until all are one.
All are dead.

Snow drifts.
Frozen tears form quietly,
Wind Blows,
Darkness remains.

Raymond Newell

time passes with the wind
night sounds are the day sounds
where trees grow and fall
as silently as conception and death
and no one dreams of the forest

driftwood rolling, rising on the shore
clutches the sand like a leach
and grows into houses there
until storm winds lift the waves and houses
 over mountains
smothering the parks and the moss-grown earth

each house is yet a shell
abandoned home of some lost sea-thing
that found a strange predicament
breathed the misty air
and losing contact with survival
ran blindly into a forest of dead summac.

Jean Anderson

The Dog's Tale

Speed won't always win the race.
With perseverance sustained by victory's taste,
The dog pursues his tail--in vain.

While seeking after ends,
We stop to laugh and ridicule the pup.
Despair and failure haunt us--if only
We knew the pain of success!

Lynn Potter

Marching, marching, marching to the beat;
Ten thousand laughing children raise their feet.
Plastic drums about their middles pound
As hands beat out a simple child sound.
An ancient beat, still studied as before,
Across the oceans on an Asian shore
Brown children there in circles on the ground
Beat out a not-so-simple child sound.
And the song the child sings will always be
A song with a percussion melody

Jean Anderson

Cynicism

Who will sleep as Jamie sleeps
A thousand winters off?
And who will mourn when Jamie
Doesn't feel spring breezes soft?
And will summer miss his blue-eyed squeal
And his wild hair mussed and tossed?
Who will miss him in the autumns?
JACK FROST?

Jeff Streeby

Out here where I fight my fight
And all I see is a funny sad
Fight on the inside that isn't
Really Fought but on the outside
Here with me; but I don't
Fight it because I don't really
Like it, but they tell me
"Here is the place to be": but
I'm not there

Randall Gates

#3

Studied brown
Flits
Between
Stark discs and spires
Seven rings and more
Cloven with white
Near-white
Buff
Near liquid brown
Squirts
Soundless
The rest gleams
Standing still.
This mirror casts a meager recollection.

Jeff Streeby

Moms Boyer

Death
comes upon you
with its yellow nicotine stained fingers
and its red tired eyes.
Bringing rivers of tears
which drain you of any hope,
or will, or happiness;
leaving only bloodshot depression
and repeated recollections.
touching the world with its egotistical finger
and stopping.
-stopping the quickly swirling madness of life
to stand alone in its center;
(smiling); making all else petty.-
Yet you smile;
a false smile with empty laughter,
but still a smile.
And slowly
slowly
the world begins to spin again.
And Death
with all its self
is caught and drowned
in the swirling twirling world,
which fills your smile
and amplifies your laughter.

Bill Caffrey

Newspaper Excerpts

The enemy blew up the single span bridge
as members of Morningside Post 697,
American Legion,
Commemorate Pearl Harbor Day.

These animals are steadily being killed,
to keep the state herd at its optimum size.
No allied casualties were reported,
there was no immediate American comment,
serious enough to cause retaliatory fire
from American planes.

Still at issue is the shape of the table,
we will not knowingly be undersold
on identical items.
Do you have any information
that might help police
solve or prevent a crime?

Nixon plans searching look
at nation's defense strength
with the same six players
that they have used so far in the season.
Anyone can play.
No one under seventeen admitted.
By public demand,
no disqualification rules.

James Wixson

Almost Haiku

Autumn's brown leaf, swirling--
Resurrected
By the compelling spring breeze.

Illuminated
Dandelion clouds adrift
On the sea of grass.

Sharon Shreve

1968 Gremlins

They say the gremlins did it.
Goldpots underground, all filled
With ugly, horrid things, digging
Into daylight--bang, you're dead.
Digging up--it doesn't matter,
It's done, all gone, wash away
Blood, grime, bullet holes, all pink
And red and brown. This year
It was spring when the gremlins,
Oh please, say it was the gremlins,
Dug a bullet hole, another.
Green trees growing down in
The ground. The flowers were
Pink and red. And the gremlins knew--
They came with gold pots full of bits
of nothing.

Don't you have enough dead

Gremlins, gremlins don't hurt me,
I'm a good girl. I pray the devil
Every day, take all my sins
Away. I carry bits of nothing
Paper, string, knife and gun--
Kennedy and King, gone,
All gone away. Gremlins, gremlins,
Let me stay.

Suzanne Blom

Experiment in Black and White
A Play in One Act

Setting: A large white room very brightly lit, a door stage-1, a window in the center of the upstage wall. The room is empty except for a hospital bed in which an older woman is lying, a metal cabinet with a black phone on it, a straight-backed chair beside the bed upon which a nurse is sitting and knitting, and three chairs of the same kind in a semicircle around the foot of the bed facing the woman.

Characters: An older woman, obviously has been ill for some time, but energetic despite her condition; her tone is usually very businesslike and capable.

A nurse, very crisp and neat, not extremely beautiful, but not ugly, very intent upon her knitting, which she has just begun; the yarn is black and kept in an oversized knitting bag beside the chair.

Three men

An assortment of police and firemen

Old woman: (shouting to no one in particular) Elaine!
Elaine! Get me the telephone!

Nurse: (rises from chair, goes to telephone, picks up the receiver and dials three digits) Hello. This is Stephanie Fairfield calling. (waits) Hello. She's dying again. Can't you send something out to shut her up? She's driving me nuts with her Elaine! Elaine! (sais) I didn't say that. I'll stay as long as I'm needed. I just thought if you'd send something out it would be better for her. She's terribly restless. (waits) Yes. I'll be expecting it. Thanks. (hangs up phone, resumes knitting)

Old woman: Dear God. I must be calm about this. There's so much to do before I go. (shouts) Elaine! Will you bring me that phone book? I've got to call a mortician. (looks over at the nurse) What's the normal procedure for arranging this sort of thing? I'm completely lost in a situation like this. Well, I'll call the mortician, you'd better call Lawrence and see about communion. Tell him it's urgent- (nurse rises with her knitting and walks to the window where she looks out as she knits)-and don't forget that phone book. I've got to find those numbers.

Nurse goes back to the chair, puts down the knitting, and begins checking the old woman, pulse, straightening the bed, etc.

Old woman: How long after clearing the bladder does rigor mortis set in? You know Elaine, I'm scared. For the first time in my life I don't know what to do. The doctor said I'd live through Saturday but I thought I'd die last night. I just don't know Elaine. I wish Lawrence would get here. You did call him, didn't you?

Nurse: Of course not, Mrs. Price.

Old woman: Well, good lord why not? I've got to have communion. The mortician will be here soon. I can't be embalmed before communion.

Nurse: (stops her work) You're not going to be embalmed Mrs. Price, because you're not dead. And for God's sake, you're not going to die, you've just wet the bed, a simple accident. Please be quiet and go to sleep.

Old woman: (tenderly to nurse) How very like you, Joanne. Trying to console me. I'm so glad to have you here with me. Yes, we've been close haven't we Joanne. From that first day we've hit it off, seeped into each other's heart and mind. I only wish I could tell you how dear you are to me. Never forget me Joanne. (very businesslike again) Oh, and I want you to keep this for me (removes a wedding ring and holds it out to nurse) It's all I have in the world. I want you to keep it until Francis arrives, then give

it to him. I know I can trust you Joanne. (nurse turns away without taking the ring and the old woman replaces it on her hand) Now get me my purse Elaine, I've got to get my papers sorted.

Nurse shakes her head, opens the cabinet and takes out a shoe box full of old Christmas cards and puts it on the bed beside the old woman. Old woman begins mumbling and sorting and nurse sits down in her chair and begins knitting--as three figures pass the window. There is a commotion at the door. It is forced open and three men walk in single file, go to the chairs, sit down and begin talking quietly among themselves and making obvious gestures toward the old woman. Each man wears white face, making his features as unnoticeable as possible, each has medium-long black hair, wears white buck shoes, black slacks and shirt, and a black jacket with white spots of various size. Each carries an oversized doctor's bag.

Old woman: (looking frightened but trying to keep control demands) What's going on here! What do you men want! Who do you think you are banging into my house like crazy men! This is my bedroom. Have you no decency? Get out! Get out!

The men seem to find this amusing but begin to talk among themselves. Nurse looks at her watch and continues knitting. The knitted piece which was very small at the beginning has now reached the size where it is obtrusive. It covers the nurse's lap and is beginning to pile up on the floor.

The men reach a climax in their discussion, become silent, rise, then briskly move forward and around the bed hooking up tubes and bottles to the old woman's arms and legs. The old woman begins reciting childhood nursery rhymes as the bottles which have been placed on the floor begin to fill with a red liquid as the light slowly turns to deep red. When the bottles are full, the men remove them from the ends of the tubes and replace them with bottles full of black liquid. Holding the bottles high, they drain down the tubes and the light slowly changes to as black as possible to still see the actors, as the old woman begins to recite the Lord's Prayer. When she is done the bottles are empty and the men begin packing the bottles, etc., away as the light comes back up to former intensity.

Old woman: (seems to revive as the men walk out the door laughing and talking among themselves.
She seems to gather all her strength to scream)
POLICE! (and falls back on the bed asleep)

The nurse has finished her knitting as sirens are heard in the distance. They come closer, the nurse rises from her chair, taking the long black scarf which is about twelve inches wide and drapes it from the top of the bed across the old woman and

over the foot of the bed to the floor as the white walls rise to reveal glass walls the sirens get fantastically loud as police and firemen rush onto the stage from all directions, running around the outer walls, beating on the door and window trying to get in. The nurse returns to her chair, picks up her needles and begins a new scarf as

the
curtain
falls.

Jean Anderson

Near the Railroad Station Inya

Warm air, hazy air
It smells of soap and water.
Upon a steel spring
Between the sky and land -

A wooden trough.
A fibrous cradle
Covered with a white rag,
The man is six weeks old.

A wooden railroad car is shelter
A scrap of a wet sheet,
Washing - drying,
Washing - drying,
A quiet, little breastfed boy.

This noon, in this hard frost
I visit her.
Why she lives without a husband,
Is none of my business.

She asks of me nothing:
And the railroad car is tight
And they bring her a newspaper
And the small stove does not smoke.

She cannot look enough at her son.
In the "arrangement" - she is alone. Long
ago...
The white plain looks
Into the misty window.

The boy must be fed
And she must sit with her back to me...
This is the air of motherhood,
lonely and giving...

It is the sweet-sour smell
"Good bye" - hastily
This cradle on a steel spring,
suspended....

Where then is grief, where is the insult?
The doors are wide open. There is a lump
in the throat
The whole plain
Is drowned in mother's milk.

Sleep, baby, my beauty
In the broad day light,
In the wonderful space
Near the railroad station Inya.

V. Leonovich
New World, Vol. 6, June 1968
translated by Linda Peterson

The Lamp

The young brunette crossed the patched lawn to the steps of the once-white house. It was a grey Tuesday afternoon that didn't seem to fit into the spring of her senior year. She hugged her school books close to her, looking only at the door ahead.

The day had been just as the morning had suggested, dark grey. She had dressed near the radiator to keep warm, and had gone downstairs to cocoa and toast before leaving early. She passed her day just like she prepared for it--in silence, avoiding involvement with just about everything. She liked it that way; then no one bothered her.

Shouldn't rush in, she thought to herself. Stop and talk to Mom, just to be nice. Musn't upset Mother! she sneered.

"I'm in here," came a voice that greeted the squeaky door. The old house seemed to require gentleness; the whole house jumped at any disturbance. "How was school?" asked Sue's mother.

"All right, I guess. Same things every day, though. Just threats and lectures." Oh boy, she thought. Mom won't like that. Sue, however, wasn't in the mood to pacify anyone with polite smiles and remarks.

"Listen, young lady, you'd better listen to some of those 'threats' as you call them." The brunette turned her head immediately and walked to the stairs.

"Did anyone bother you on the way to school?" continued the mother. "Any boys or men?" Her mother was stern now.

"No, mother," Sue answered quietly, her head down.

"And on the way back?"

"Nothing, Mom."

"Good. You know how I want you to stay with the girls. Don't let those others pester you, or drag you into anything."

"Yes, mother." She left the older woman at the foot of the stairs. The same questions every day, she thought. Why is it always like this?

The books dropped from her arm to the bed. The greyness penetrated even her room, despite its greenness, and gave the room an air of tiredness. The room was as much a cloak as Sue's whole life had become. She sighed and relaxed as she felt the release which solitude brought.

Then her eyes found the lamp. Her lips turned up into a shy smile and her eyes widened. It was an antique-styled lamp which her mother had bought when Sue was fourteen. It had a broad, flat base under a large, white shade. There on the base sat a young man and a young woman as lovers in a classical garden. The china figures reached out to embrace each other.

Sue smiled now as if the day were sunny-blue. She wanted to reach out to the figures; she wanted them to reach out to her. She wanted desperately to possess some of the world and be possessed by it.

She walked slowly across the room to the table which held the lamp. Downstairs her mother started the vacuum. The smile began to turn downward to a frown, almost to tears. The lovers, she thought, belonged only to each other, not to her.

Her envy and desperation grew. Why does he love her? She fondled the figure of the young man. "Why not me?" She gazed at him, and then at the girl. Her hand clutched a nearby book and a swing of her arm smashed the girl's figure. The china splattered to the floor.

The young man was alone now, reaching out to no one--or to someone not there. Sue felt the tears.
"Why couldn't you love me?"

Randall Gates

Soldiers

Scene: A simulated jungle setting. Two very well-dressed gentlemen are seated at a round table in the center of the stage, playing chess.

(One man comes on from the right dressed as a medieval foot soldier, clothes dirty and ragged, carrying a large rifle. He passes upstage of the chess table, glancing at the game as he goes by. He sits on a tree stump to the left of the table. He stares at the ground for a while, then another man comes on from the right dressed as a medieval knight, armor clean and shiny, plumes on his helmet, carrying a machine gun. He stops in front of the table and addresses the soldier.)

Sargeant: Benton! What the hell do you think this is, a picnic? Get back to that village and help load those bodies on the truck.

(Benton starts to go off to the right. The sargeant leaves to the left. Benton watches him go and sits back down. Willis comes on from the right dressed like Benton.)

Willis: Well, I see I'm not the only one goffin' off. Mind if I join you?

(Benton looks at him briefly then continues staring at the ground.)

Willis: So does that mean I can join you or not?

(Benton says nothing. Willis sits on the ground beside him.)

Benton: You know, I'm fed up with this whole mess.

Willis: So, who isn't?

Benton: You don't understand, though, I gotta get out, it's really gettin' to me.

Willis: Oh sure, as much killin' as you've done and now it's gettin' to you. Look at me, man, I just got over here. Hell, you've only got six months left.

Benton: I've never killed anybody.

Willis: So just how do you figure that? I've been through a couple of fights with you and I've seen you use up your share of the ammo.

Benton: But I never aim at anybody.

Willis: (Standing) You mean to tell me with all those Charlies coming at us you never even tried to hit any of 'em?

Benton: That's right.

Willis: And just why the hell not?

Benton: Because this isn't my fight. I didn't ask to come over here and most of those Charlies probably don't care for the job either. Anyway, I've had it and I'm gettin' out.

Willis: (Laughing and crossing behind the table) Oh great, so after all the time you've been over here in this mess now you're suddenly a conscientious objector.

(Benton glares at him. His tone becomes more sympathetic.)

Okay, I'll buy that, but just how are you gettin' out?

Benton: (Standing) Why should I tell you?

Willis: Because you're dyin' to tell somebody.

Benton: (Defiantly) Well, in case you don't know it, the Cambodian border is just on the other side of that jungle. (Points toward jungle)

Willis: Great, really great. So just what're you gonna do in Cambodia?

Benton: Turn myself in somewhere and ask for political asylum, something like that. Anyway, if I stay here I'll get killed.

Willis: (Mockingly) Oh no, your nice VC buddies probably don't aim at you.

(Benton glares again. Willis shrugs and starts to walk off to the right.)

Well, before you make your "big break," I think it would be nice if you helped us clean up this mess.

Benton: I'm not goin' back there. I'm makin' my "big break" right now.

Willis: Hey man, are you serious about this or what?

Benton: You're damned right I'm serious. This isn't my fight and I'm not gettin' myself killed for it.

Willis: So neither am I. I shoot back.

(The sargeant enters from the left.)

Sargeant: (Sarcastically) Well gentlemen, I suppose you're on your coffee break. (No longer sarcastic) Benton, I told you once to get back to that village.

Willis: We were just goin' Sarge. We got into a little discussion about the war.

Sargeant: So what're you guys, soldiers or politicians? Come on.

(He exits to the right motioning Benton and Willis to follow. They start to follow, Benton in front of Willis. One man playing chess suddenly looks very pleased and moves one of his pieces in a confident manner. A shot is heard from the left, Willis falls face down. Benton stares at him wide-eyed. The sargeant runs on, stops in front of the table, and fires a burst into the trees, then turns and kneels by Willis.)

Sargeant: He's dead. Stay here with him. I'll go get a medic. (exits)

(Benton stands staring down at Willis. After a while he looks up at the trees where the shot came from and back down at Willis.)

Benton: So maybe they don't aim at me.

First Chess Player: Well, it looks like that move put us into a stalemate. That was a lot of time wasted. With all the money I'm spending on this tournament I'd rather have the games decided one way or the other. Well, set up the board and let's get on with it.

(He gets up, turns around, and starts to light a cigar. The other player slowly pulls a revolver out of his coat and very casually shoots him in the back, then gets up, picks up the chess set, looks at the dead man, breaks into hysterical laughter and exits.)

(Curtain)

James Wixson

B Girl

Don't look past the plaster face,
or the artificial hair.
Just enjoy the bawdy jokes
and inhale the cheap perfume,
staring all the while into
brightly painted vacancy.

Keep your screaming, bleeding wounds
underneath a barren smile.
Don't extend your psychic grasp
into dancing rhinestone eyes.
Unseen tears inside the jewels,
seeping through an open skull,
drown a mind too sensitive.

James Wixson

I found a sad bird
shivering in the mailbox
It had shat upon a letter
from someone important
but I can't remember who
I just remember the bird
and the sun on the snow

Jean Anderson

#4

17 raindrops dribbled
Out of a pot-bottom gray dky
Onto a sheaf of dry flax
Soaked into it
Rotted it
Dumped seven white spirating slimy maggots into
 life
With a bubbling slurp.
Squirmed into buzz-winged maggot-makers--
A vicious
Circle of filth.

Jeff Streeby

The deepening
pulsating regenerating
MASTER-PEACE

this shroud of stillness
quiet-peace
slowly engulfs the room
covering me with its contentment
pulling the strings of its closeness
tightly around me
all else, but this ever increasing happiness is excluded
and people move mechanically
saying pre-recorded perfect lines
I laugh-and the music
flowing in its majestically intertwining mists
finds its way through this silenced cloth
refreshing my inner self
with its pulsating vibrance
wetting my spirit--quenching my thirst
i am filled and refreshed
and the plug is pulled
all else stops...
I have robbed the electricity of life
and held its brilliant light within my mind
within this picture of
silent love

Bill Caffrey

Three quick marks
across time's distance
mean nothing in its existence
except maybe that time is
One smooth stream of non-reality
flowing over eternal passages
by which man passes from one dream to the next
in a limbo of existing time
If time does pass this way
then I do follow in the same manner
each day dying in a steady gentle way
so that each hardly seems separated from another
except for the almost unnoticed lapse of breathing
by which days are counted.

Jean Anderson

The earth still holds the prisoners of the past
The echo of the words that make their secrets last
As the rivers of the mountain hear the sea
And when I hear the river, I'll know that I am free.

The fog-choked jungle forest holds the night
Till sunlight finds a way to turn the black trees white.
So the rivers of the mountains find the sea,
And when I find the river, I'll know that I am free.

As the white streams of the snow-line meet and rear,
And the long arms of the willow feel the coolness
 from the shore,
Those same rivers of the mountain touch the sea,
And when I touch that river, I'll know that I am free.

Jean Anderson

Hong Kong

IBM computer cards,
erect along a hillside,
stare with rows of concrete eyes
over broken bamboo homes
entombed in drying mud.

Secret faces alone in a crowd
hide beneath meaningless signs.
The beauty that those faces knew
is imprisoned in an open cage,
above garages,
overshadowed by ads for European watches.

We had lunch at noon, exactly,
laughing at attempts to eat with sticks.
We ate their fried rice,
corn soup, sweet and sour pork,
but one man preferred spaghetti.

James Wixson

Love is Walking Barefoot

Love is walking barefoot:
To be free of shackles, away from convention;
Far from shoes made to fit now,
But lacking room for growth.

Love is walking barefoot:
Vulnerable to hurt from jagged glass,
Pointed rocks, broken walnuts,
Burning asphalt, sticky tar;
A thousand pitfalls waiting.

Love is walking barefoot:
Warm sand, cool grass;
Running for the sake of running;
Running to meet the wind.

Sharon Shreve

Cybernetics

Entombed by the walls of the womb,
Impatiently awaiting the doctor's face,
I entered life
Anxious to unwind.

I marched through life and kept in line;
Controlled remotely by the Manufacturer.
Final surrender came to
King Arthritic Rust of Time.

My soul after Death's distillation
Drifted into the elevator, tingling with
titillation
Till the tin operator
Tapped the lower "H"!

Lynn Potter

#8

Once between a million
It starts up red in a sea of green
A single flower in a lonely field
A small exclamatory point of nature
Healthy
Or eaten with the little vermine plagues of
 beauty
Loving day and sun above all else
Seeing nothing farther off than now
Living less and less each moment

Now at life's last whisp of breath
Stem droops
Leaf sags
Soft petals
One
By
One
Drift-
A withered velvet trail
Across the grass.

Jeff Streeby

