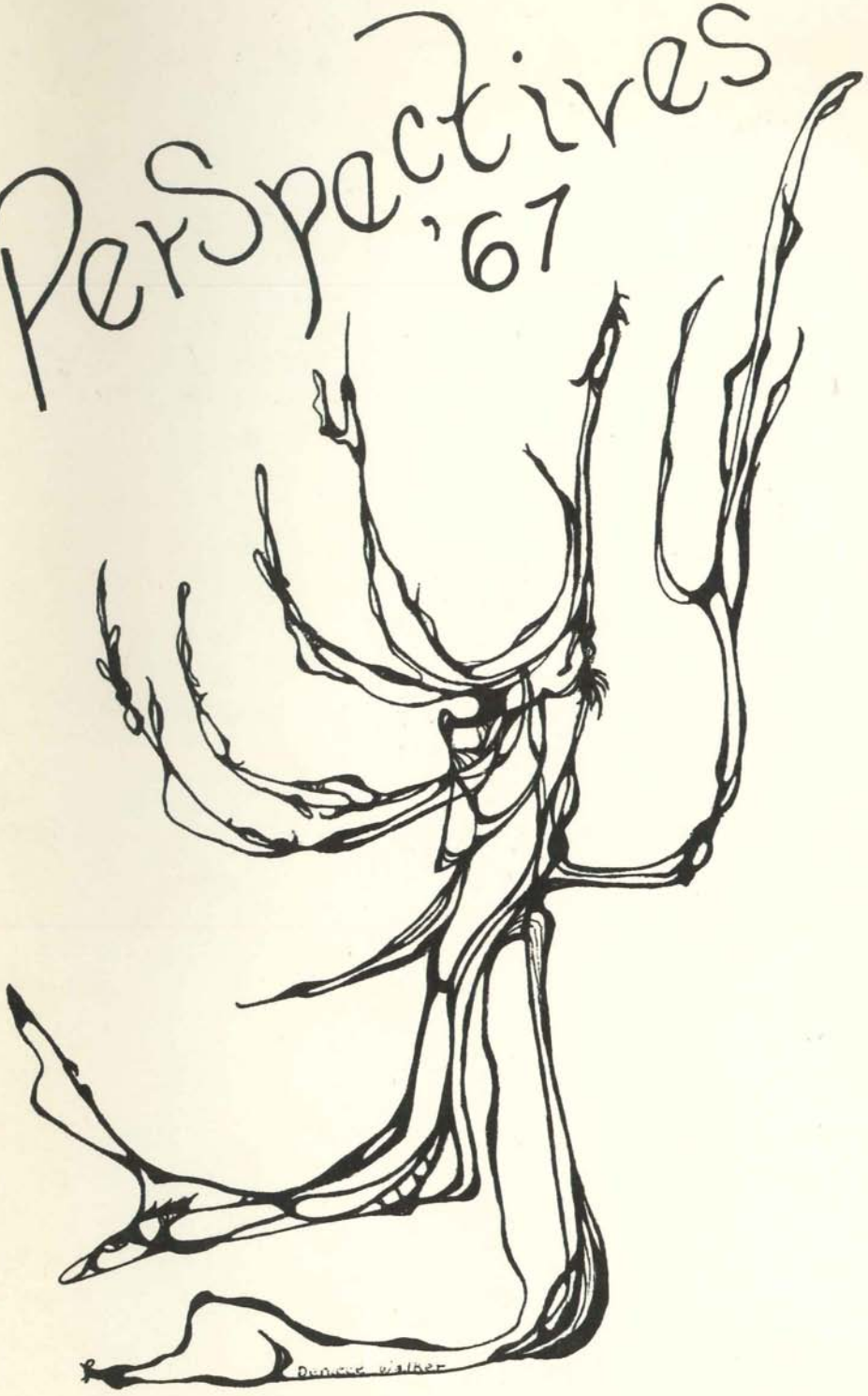
Perspectives '67



PERSPECTIVES

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New Laws, Old Racism

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Translated from the Russian by
B'Ann Bowman

One hundred years ago, after President Lincoln signed the law freeing the Negroes, a Negro in a southern town went up to a white man and said to him in just one sentence, "Hello, brother." From surprise, the white man became even whiter than the sheet in which he was wrapped at his birth. It seemed to him that the judgement day had arrived. He ran to the nearest tavern and told all of his friends, white men like himself, about it. And then the whites, in order to restore the established order, went to the home of the Negro who said to the white man, "Hello, brother," and lynched him in the presence of all the Negroes who had just read the law of the President and expected that something would come of it. After this the white southerners burned the first edition of the Constitution of the United States of America and the new law and—satisfied—dispersed to their homes.

They say that thus was born the Ku Klux Klan which last year marked its one-hundred-year anniversary from the day of its foundation.

One hundred years after Lincoln, who was killed by slave owners several months after the signing of the civil rights law, the 36th President of the U. S. A., Lyndon Baines Johnson, enacted not one but three laws on the civil right of Negroes, and a Negro from a southern town went up to a white Southerner and said to him that same sentence which once his great-great-grandfather had said. The same thing happened to him that happened to his great-great-grandfather. But unlike their ancestors, this generation of co-nationals calmly went out onto the street and began to demand that they should be treated as the laws giving them human rights stated—those written 100 years ago and those signed not long ago by the 36th President of the U. S.

Not long ago in the Alabama county of Lowndes, where out of 15,417 people, 12,425 are Negroes, the registration of voters began. According to these laws which were signed 100 years ago, and according to the last three laws of President Johnson, Negroes had all the rights to register to vote; and they registered in order

to elect their candidate in the local municipal council. Two thousand Negroes, the first ones in 100 years, registered. Among the whites in this county were 1,900 people with suffrage, but no less than 2,500 whites registered (is it really possible for the Ku Klux Klan to register twice as many as were actually in the county?). Indeed the law of the KKK by which from time immemorial the white people of Lowndes county have lived, says that black men may not govern white men even on the level of a municipal council.

Lowndes is a small county, but all America knew that the Negroes attempted to force their way to power. Then from the pages of even the most respectable publications on the Negro leadership, which demanded (according to the laws passed 100 years ago and the last three) that the Negroes be granted the possibility to participate in the electoral process, rivers of dirt were poured. The reasoning of the organizers of this verbal dirt eruption was very simple—slander the leaders of the movement for civil rights and at the same time close the eyes of world opinion: look, the racist is not guilty of the program in the Negro ghetto, but rather the Negroes who demand that they be granted power.

Not long ago fascist youth in Chicago following the example of their great-great-grandfathers dashed onto a peaceful demonstration of Negroes with sticks and brass knuckles. And then, satisfied that the established order had been restored, they burned in front of the city hall the latest publication of the Constitution of the U. S. A. along with the just-printed laws of the present President.

Gray Morning

Roger Hardy

The morning was gray. The hanging mist fused the color of spring into a neutral unfocused realm. Tires rolling on the wet pavement droned up and down the broad avenue. The sparrows of the early morning cowered on the telephone wires refusing to fly. The morning was muted and dull and there was no hope of sun.

Edmund stood stoically by a large brown telephone pole with the words "bus stop" carelessly painted in an off-orange. As he leaned against the pole he felt a moist layer of decaying wood on his fingers. Realizing what he had done, he frowned in distaste. He removed his hand and examined the soft fibers of dead wood and proceeded to wipe it on his colorless jacket. The foul taste of hurried breakfast haunted his mouth with an unsavory taste. He blinked his eyes momentarily, reacting to the cold morning droplets of mist hitting his face. Bowing his head, he dug the crystals of sleep implanted in his eyes.

The hissing of air brakes broke the monotony of the morning as the large yellow and green vehicle came to a halt before him. Mechanically, Edmund hurried into the dim light and warmth of the interior. Just as mechanically the driver gave him a smile of indifference. To secure his balance, Edmund grasped a chrome vertical bar as he felt the uneasy acceleration of the machine. He grimaced as he fumbled in his pocket for the necessary coin. He held the coin pinched in his fingers until it was directly over the slot and then released it into the grinding machinery below. After staggering to the back of the bus, he bounced onto a seat. Just as he had secured his seat and carefully placed his lunch bucket on the floor, the bus came to a halt. The doors folded open and the head of an old man popped into Edmund's view. Switching his lunch bucket from one hand to the other, the old man dug in his small black leather purse, produced the coin, and then snapped it shut. After wishing the driver a good morning and carefully depositing his coin in the metal box, he started for the end of the bus. Edmund almost smiled as he watched the old man sway from the uneasy acceleration. The old man gestured to Edmund and bounced onto the seat opposite him.

"Good morning," the old man said with a smile as he carefully placed his lunch bucket in his lap.

"Morning," Edmund replied mechanically. There was a

pause as they sat there and looked at each other; then Edmund broke eye contact by looking out the speckled window.

He noticed how much more unfocused the morning seemed with the droplets of mist on the window. As he peered out the window, he could feel the old man's eyes watching him.

That old man insists on staring at me . . . every morning he sits across from me and even when I pay no attention to him he still is there . . . I can feel his eyes on me and I can see him without looking . . . sitting there like a lump on a log . . . always the same . . . the same goofy smile and the same line of bologna to hand out. God I hate to talk to that man; he's just like a child . . . those kids . . . standing there . . . bundles in the morning mist waiting for a school but . . . books and lunch buckets . . . Catholic kids, yeah, only Catholic kids wait for a bus, other kids live close enough . . . speckled windows.

"Looks like a little bad weather out there." the old man reported to Edmund's profile.

"Yeah, rotten weather," Edmund grunted as he wiped his nose with his finger. There was a pause as they looked at each other. The old man turned and looked out the window.

That smile, that's what bugs me; every morning that same dumb smile . . . bib overalls . . . leather watch fob . . . his hands over his lunch bucket like he had something valuable in there . . . bologna . . . smell of bologna every morning and that lunch bucket with the shiny bare spots of metal . . . how many years does it take to wear the paint off like that . . . shiny spots . . . his hand over his lunch bucket, his hands look swollen and glossy and so red . . . a finger gone, second finger on his right hand . . . no finger.

"Poor kid, look at that poor kid - - bus passed him right up," reported the old man as he pointed at the boy standing in the mist making an obscene gesture at the bus.

The morning was gray and there was no hope of sun.

Edmund returned to staring out the speckled window.

Goofy old man . . . that old man . . . he never changes . . . same clothes, same shoes, same little smile, same smell of bologna, same lunch bucket . . . over and over and it never changes . . . screwing a nut on a bolt, hundreds of bolts, hundreds of screws . . . one bolt to one screw . . . the pounding of the machines . . . the sound.

"How are things at United Castors?" the old man broke out.

"Ahhh, it's going okay . . . ahhh got a raise in pay . . . ahhh starts today," Edmund spoke mechanically.

"Yup, a guy's gotta have a good steady job, you've gotta

earn that bread, that's what makes the world go round," returned the old man with his eyebrows arched. "You got a real good job there, they're good people to work for."

"Good, bad or indifferent, a job is a job and somebody has to do it, but it'll do 'til I find out exactly what I want"

"What you want?"

"Yeah, what I want to do."

Well, what do you want to do?"

"If I knew that I would do it," Edmund replied in a matter-of-fact manner. A look of disdain came over his face as he turned his head to the window.

"Well, this moisture is just what we need - -" the old man spoke in an apologetic tone.

His eyes, they're strange . . . waxen and all . . . just like Uncle Louis looked in the casket at the funeral parlor. The morning is gray . . . my heart, I can feel it pumping my blood . . . a pump . . . a machine . . . out the speckled window trees weep and children walk . . . it's been so long since I was that age; not really - - it really doesn't seem that long . . . waiting for the bus - - books and lunch bucket, waiting in the mist of morning . . . time goes so quickly . . . yet I can't imagine it moving . . . in me it doesn't seem to be change . . . it only moves outside me . . . only things out there change.

"Well it won't be long now. Nope it won't be long at all," the old man grinned ear to ear as he patted his lunch bucket.

Edmund paused as he noticed how the old man's face wrinkled into so many cracks and fissures; it reminded him of leather that had spent too much time in the sun and rain. "Ah, won't be long for what?" Edmund finally spoke.

Vacation, yes sir, two weeks of vacation - -" the old man grinned with pleasure; there was a far away look in his eyes. This smile was different from his other little complacent smile he carried with him constantly. "Yes sir, two weeks of fishing. I hear they are really gettin' big up there. Fishing's a great sport - - great." The old man settled back in his seat and took a deep breath.

There was a pause as they sat there and looked at each other.

"Where do you fish?" Edmund finally inquired.

"Lake Lathucato up near Nicetown - - a great lake . . . some Indian named it I guess. Do you know what it means - - lake of the dead. That old Indian sure was not talkin' about fish, no sir," chuckled the old man.

"Lake of the dead," Edmund repeated; "you're joking?"

"No, no that's the truth, Heaven help me," added the old man, still grinning. "You see it's an old Indian story - - old as the hills. This big Indian a long time ago said that the lake would be inhabited by ghosts - - well not exactly ghosts - - you know, those kind of people who look like they're alive but really they're dead?"

"Zombies - -"

"Yeah, sort of like Zombies."

The morning was gray and the sun would not shine.

Edmund stared out the speckled window again.

That old man . . . there he is sitting there on the bank of a blue-green lake, basking himself in the sun like a lizard . . . He's got that half-grin, just sitting there waiting, maybe for the big catch . . . look at him now; his eyes are blank.

The hissing of the air brakes broke the spell.

"Yup, just three more years and I can retire; join my retired friends up at Lathucato and fish everyday, yes sir, everyday." As the old man spoke his eyes were still far away. "Forty years, yup, I served my time on the work list and now comes the cream, when time is my own and I can fish - - forty years at the same job and now I can fish - - forty years at the same job and now I can be free to do as I please - - oh, oh, here's my stop - -" spoken in a note of finality.

The old man slowly stood up and moved cautiously to the first step, exchanged the lunch box from one hand to the other, grasped the chrome vertical bar, and turned around to Edmund.

"Good day."

"Yeah, goodbye - -"

There he goes with his baggy pants and his lunch bucket . . . his head hanging down . . . what an old fool . . . fool that amounts to nothing but a pension . . . he's an old nothing who doesn't know it.

"There is a world full of things to do," Edmund said to himself as he saw his stop approaching. "Well, I better get in gear, Edmund muttered as he picked up his lunch bucket with a swing of his arm. He rubbed the bucket and felt the bare spots of metal that were beginning to form. "In gear?" Edmund inquired silently. He felt strange.

There was no hope of sun on that gray morning.

"Time to go to work," he muttered to himself.

It had begun to rain.

The Legacy

Janice Hill

Usually I didn't visit Inez on days when the green curtains were drawn. Experience had taught me that these were the days when she wanted to be alone. But I was even lonelier than usual that day, so I rang her doorbell anyway, knowing that if she truly didn't want company she wouldn't answer the door. As I stood there shivering in my brother's old blue jeans and a torn T-shirt I could hear Inez playing her mandolin in accompaniment to her husky Spanish voice.

She came to the door wearing a white sashed tunic over black leotards. Her black hair glistened softly off her brow, flowing smoothly down her slender back; her skin was a pale contrast to the blackness of the leotard and her hair. Her green eyes, the most startling of her features, gave her a feline look, but they spoke of more than animalistic grace. They spoke of disappointment and, to some extent, defeat and disgust.

She smiled softly as she let me in and we silently made our way to the back of the house. I was only eight that fall, but I understood that any conversation must wait until we reached the room Inez called her studio.

The studio was a large room with two walls of glass which were now enclosed with heavy draperies of olive green burlap. These were the curtains I had checked so heedlessly before I rang the doorbell. The other two walls, on which were hung Inez's paintings, were stark white. There was little furniture in the room. In one corner was the low table on which Inez did her sculpturing, in another stood her easel, under the paintings was a row of bookshelves filled with her books. In the very center of the room, over some olive green cushions, a low lamp gave out a yellow cone of light. Inez motioned for me to sit on a cushion. She kneeled beside me and continued playing her mandolin.

After a time she stopped. Her eyes pierced mine and she said, "Priscilla, I think you and I are the mistakes of Blair Street." Leaving me to ponder on that, she jumped up and pulled the easel and her paints into the cone of light and began to dab at a half-finished picture.

It was a green painting, as were all of Inez's yet it was un-

like any of those hanging on the walls around us. The background was a dull mottled olive green. Over this was a lattice of beige. There were two figures struggling to climb the lattice. The first was a woman with flowing black hair, the other was that of a child. The woman was struggling to maintain her position with her feet and one hand. In the other hand she held that of the child, whom she seemed to be dragging along. I couldn't understand the meaning of the painting but I knew that Inez must mean for the figures to be her and me, and I felt sad because her hand was bleeding in the picture.

I stood looking over her shoulder for awhile, then I went back to my cushion and broke the silence that was the general rule of our visits.

"Inez, why is everything green for you?"

She paused for a moment and gazed deeply at me. It was a look I'd seen often; adults always used it when they were trying to decide if I could understand what they were going to tell me. Evidently she decided that she could make me understand, because she smiled faintly and rested her brush carefully on the tray of the easel.

Again she paused, as though planning her words very carefully. Outside the wind blew menacingly and it was beginning to rain, but I felt very safe sitting there in that cone of light with Inez. When she finally spoke, her words were so soft that at first I couldn't hear them over the wind.

". . . supposing that there is a god, I think his favorite color must be green. Everything of importance that he surrounds us with is green. The grass is green, trees are green, the largest parts of the flowers are green, with their petals serving as a gentle complement.

"A very famous Spanish writer once said that blue was the color of God. To him the blue of the sky and sea meant spring and youth and beauty. But I disagree. Yes, the sky and the sea are blue; but, you see, Priscilla, the sky is just a big blue nothing and the sea is just a reflection of this blue nothing.

"A young and very good poetess wrote:

'God, I can push the grass apart
And lay my finger on Thy heart.'

That's what I think, too. If there is a god his very pulse beats in the green of this world.

"Green is the color of spring, of hope and strength and fertility. At the same time green is the color of reality, the reality of pain and weakness and death. Green is illusion and reality at once.

"Do you know what color most of the world is today? There are some pastel pinks and blues and a few washed out lavenders, but most of it is beige. I'll bet that nine out of ten living rooms on Blair Street have beige walls and carpets, with brown couches and either turquoise or orange accents. Beige is conformity. Think of it, Priscilla! What in nature is beige? Nothing, except maybe some sand or rocks, which produce nothing.

"The world today is beige; but, you and I, Priscilla, we've got to be green. Green like the shady forest, the fertile meadow. We've got to find enough reality in us to change at least a little of the beige to green. This was the legacy I meant to leave to my daughter, but you're the daughter that I won't have, so I leave it to you."

There was nothing to say. I wondered if I should thank her for the legacy, but I didn't know what the word meant so I kept still. Inez didn't seem to expect any response from me. She picked up her mandolin and strummed a few chords of the Spanish song. Her eyes which had flashed so when she told me about the green were muted behind her long black lashes.

I felt that Inez was no longer aware of my presence so I quietly got up and let myself out of the house. When I got home I walked into my mother's comfortable living room and, for a long time, I stared at the beige walls and carpet. I think that that was when I first understood a little of what Inez had meant.

The next day my mother wouldn't let me go over to Inez's house. She said that Inez was gone. In all these years I've never asked what happened to Inez, because I know that wherever she is she still has her world of green.

Bread For The Day

Ruth H. Larson

The habit of years would not be broken; the woman woke early. In those last moments of semi-consciousness the raucous chatter of starlings in the trees across the street impressed upon her mind. Her first glance was toward the window. The sun was not yet up, but the pre-dawn light was dim; she knew it would be cloudy again today. A gust of wind sent a shower of yellow leaves against the window. The dampness in the air made the bare branches black against the sky. Involuntarily she shivered and pulled the blanket around her shoulders.

"That was silly," she thought, "I'm not really cold. This house has always been warm, even in the wildest winter storms." She thought with pride of her home. "I love it; it's part of me. Sure it's old, just like me, but it keeps me comfortable. And it looks nice." There was pride in her eyes as she inspected once again the glistening window, the crisp folds of the newly laundered curtains, the gleam of the polish on the floor. "I like it, and I like taking care of it." She sighed, "I just wish Kate wouldn't fuss so about me doing my work." She chuckled, "Wouldn't she have had a conniption if she knew I changed that light bulb myself?"

Without hurrying, she dressed for the day. Always, in the morning she moved a bit slow and stiff. "It isn't so much that I hurt, though; it's just that I don't have anything to hurry about." The warm washcloth felt good, and she talked to her mirror, "So Kate thinks I'm too old to work. Five years younger she is. You'd think it was twenty. Can't say that her not working has kept the wrinkles out of her face." She peered more closely. "No sir, I just don't believe I have any more wrinkles than I did twenty years ago." She chuckled again. "Least I can't see any more without my glasses on!"

At the dresser she picked up the photo of young Jim in uniform. No matter how many times a day she looked, she always felt this quick stab: he looked so much like his dad, only the uniform was different. "Don't reckon it's cold and damp where you are, boy. More likely so hot you can hardly bear it." Her head bowed briefly as she returned the photo to its place.

At each of the other bedrooms she stopped briefly. All

was in order. No one had slept here for many weeks, but "just in case" they were ready. Maybe Gladys would come with her girls for the weekend. Or maybe Joe would have to sell out this way next week. "It doesn't matter why they come, we're ready, aren't we, house?"

Downstairs, she took the long way through, stopping to greet the other grandchildren photographically arrayed on the piano. She patted straight the doily covering the arm of the big old overstuffed chair. Dad had been pretty careful with his pipe, but that one day he and Hans had been so excited about "that 'dumkopf' in the White House giving away our good tax money"! It was a wonder the whole chair hadn't burned before they noticed it. "Kate thinks that chair is terrible, too. Of course I never sit in it—my legs wouldn't even touch the floor. But Joe and Rich and Jim like it when they come. And last summer little Jeanie loved to sit there with her dolls and things all spread out round her. This room wouldn't look the same without it. That Kate—always knows what's best for other people."

Breakfast was a simple affair—a glass of juice, an egg fried sunny side up, a piece of toast with apple butter, a hot cup of coffee with cream and sugar. But she lingered at the table. The humming of the teakettle, the click-click-click of the toaster, and the sputtering of the frying egg had been comforting. The simple blue plate and cup contrasted with the white oilcloth, and the embroidery on the toaster cover gave the colorful warning that hot toast will make the butter fly. Bertha smiled as she spread the rich brown apple butter over the warm toast. "Mmm—it even smells good." The red-checked curtains further warmed the room, but outside a few splatters of rain hit the window. The leaves scurried down the gutter. A truck shifted gears on the big hill on the highway outside town. Children called to each other as they met on the corner to go to school. Across the street, the appliance shop truck pulled up just as the front door flew open and a tall young man dashed out the door. She smiled as the door opened again and Karen called shrilly, "Mark, Mark! You forgot your horn. And zip up your jacket—it's cold this morning." Bertha's wave was answered by the boy with a grin and by his mother with a quick wave as she led the repair man inside. "Well, at last he's come to fix her washing machine." She reached to turn on the little radio, noticing as she turned that a light shone in Hans' kitchen. "That means he's up and around okay. Wouldn't he think I was a nosey old biddy if he knew how I watched him!"

She finished clearing the table just as the news began, so she sat down again to listen. It seemed like the same things: heavy fighting in Viet Nam, a platoon surrounded, light to moderate casualties ("Oh, Jim, are you there?"); demonstrations in Chicago and Omaha; tragic car accident—two teen-agers killed; price index going up—a prediction for a rise in the cost of bread; weather outlook—continued cloudy and cool, occasional showers. She snapped the dial off. "That sure don't cheer a body up."

The phone rang just as the little cuckoo came out of his house to say it again and again—nine times. Kate was right on schedule. "It took you so long to answer. Don't you feel good this morning?"

"Nonsense, I feel perfectly fine. It's just that I was sitting and thinking about Jim."

"The news didn't sound good today, did it? Nothing but troubles, troubles, troubles. Law, I don't know what this old world is coming to. Things didn't used to be this bad."

"Oh, I suppose we always had troubles, too. Now it just seems so bad because we can't think of anything to do about it. How's John this morning?"

"About the same—so slow to get around. Then when I ask him if he has pain and shouldn't he go to the doctor he gets grumpy. Says it's just old age. I'm always kind of glad when he leaves to go down town to get the mail. He doesn't seem to notice that I might need a little help."

"Oh, don't you feel good today?"

"Now you know I never feel good. I get that pain in my bones when it's so damp and chilly. And my hands are so stiff I'm afraid I'm going to drop the dishes. I'm just glad when I'm through cleaning up so I can go sit down a while. You ought to do a little more sitting around. What are you going to do today—clean the basement?"

"Now Kate, you don't have to be sarcastic. No—I think I'll bake bread."

"Bake bread! That's ridiculous. It's too much work—and besides you'll never eat it all before it molds."

"I always did like to make bread. It's been awhile since I've done it—all summer in fact. This is a good day for baking—

it might take some of the chill out of the air. Besides, didn't you hear that the price of bread might go up. Yessir, that's just what I'm going to do today—bake bread. I always did like to bake bread."

"I sure don't know what to make of you. I do my best to watch over you and then you do these foolish things. You ought to just sit and take it easy today. —Oh, oh, John's ready to go and I want him to stop for some rolls at the bakery." The receiver clicked sharply.

"That's funny. I wonder how I ever thought of making bread. But it's a real good idea." The recipe was soiled and wrinkled from much use. Actually, she hardly glanced at it as she scalded the milk, set out the bowls, and started the yeast in warm water. "And just a spoonful of sugar to start the yeast. How was it Joe explained that from chemistry class? Can't remember that—I just know a little leaven can make 3 loaves of bread light and good. —It will have to be white bread today. Wish I had some of that cracked wheat John used to make when he and Kate were on the farm. John likes home-made bread; I'll just take him some this afternoon. I wonder if that cracking machine isn't still in his old garage. I bet if he could still make that cracked wheat there'd be plenty of people who would buy some. It would give him something to do. Oh, maybe not—these young girls don't know how to make bread anymore. Who knows, maybe it only tasted good because we hadn't tasted any store-bought bread!" The dough was stiff now, so she scraped it onto the bread board. "Now we'll just cover you with this nice clean towel, and you have a little nap. A little rest is good for bread and little girls." It seemed as if she could reach out with her floury hands and hug the little Gladys on a chair beside her, eyes shining, pigtails bobbing, nose covered with flour as she "helped Mommy make bread." There was one young woman who knew how to make bread!

There was a good yeasty smell in the kitchen now and the dough felt good as she started to knead it—fold over, push down, turn it around—fold over, push down, turn it around. It was an automatic process for her, and she found herself humming as she worked. "That's the way my mother told me—you don't need to watch the clock; it should be well-kneaded by the time you sing all three verses:

What a friend we have in Jesus, All our sins and griefs
to bear;

What a privilege to carry, Everything to God in prayer—" She took the corner of her apron to wipe her eyes. "My goodness, Bertha, you must be getting old to be so sentimental." Into the big bowl went the pliant dough; covered again, it was set at the corner of the cupboard near the hot-air register. This was the best place in the house for bread to rise.

"I'll just do up these dishes and then I'll sit down like Kate says I should. It's no use trying to hurry bread—just like raising kids— you put your loving in and do a little kneading to help them shape up and then you have to sit back and watch and wait to see how they come out."

As she went to hang her dishtowel on the line "to air out a bit" Hans was coming across the alley with a pail of apples. "These are the last ones. Just can't throw them out if somebody can use them. When I eat an apple, my teeth move all over my mouth. I guess apples are for kids."

Bertha laughed sympathetically. "Tell you what. I'll make a bargain with you. You get my mail for me and I'll make you some applesauce. Then your teeth won't fall out!"

Just before noon, Hans came in with her mail, "Well, here you are—I've kept my part of the bargain, but there's nothing much today. An ad from a lumber yard—did you want to build a new house tomorrow? Oh, and let's see, I guess there is a letter here—from Des Moines—you know anybody in Des Moines—besides Gladys that is?" It was an old joke, but still good for a smile. "Say, is that my applesauce smells so good? Nellie, she used to make a lot of applesauce. Somehow it kinda smells like home when applesauce is cooking. Hey, now, is that bread rising in those pans? You really are an old-timer today. What's got into you?"

"I don't really know what's got into me. Kate thinks it's silly, but I like to make bread. Say, now, you could help me out. She thinks it will mold before it's all eaten up, but if you came over for supper and we had fresh bread and applesauce, that much wouldn't spoil anyway."

"Well, now, as long as it would be helping you out, I guess I could spare the time from my social calendar. I don't believe I'm dated up tonight."

"Good. I hope it turns out as nice as Nellie's always did."

So the day went. Her noon meal was her dinner: a meat patty, fried potatoes, a bit of green beans left from yesterday, the last tomato from the garden, sliced, and applesauce. The bread baked as she cleaned up the apple peels and cores and washed up the dishes and kettles. The loaves were formed perfectly, light and well-rounded, and baked with a crisp brown crust. The feeling of having done something important very well was so great as she placed the loaves on the rack to cool that once again she had to wipe away a tear. The kitchen was warm with the oven-heat and filled with the aroma of fresh bread. As she sat in her rocker waiting for the bread to cool, she dozed and dreamed so vividly of days gone by when baking was a routine part of her week that it took a moment to come back to the reality of the quiet, empty house.

Carefully, she wrapped one of the loaves in a clean white towel and took it to Kate and John. Kate of course protested; she had known she would; but John was delighted. It was he who put on the teakettle, set out the flowered cups and plates, knives and spoons, and the plate of butter. "What we ought to have is fresh-churned butter to go with this. But that's sure a thing of the past." Handing Bertha the knife and the loaf, he joked, "If you want lady-like slices, I guess you'll have to cut it." It was a feast —tea and bread and butter. Even Kate admitted, "I know you shouldn't have done all this work, but I guess I'm glad you did."

The sun was shining as she left Kate's to walk home, but the sharp wind soon sent the clouds over the sun. She watched as they sped across the sky, racing against each other to shut off the warmth of the sun. Leaves crackled under her feet; occasionally she stopped to pick up one of especially bright or interesting coloring. She didn't hear the boy coming until he was almost up to her, "Hi, Neighbor, are you going my way?"

"Sure thing, young man. And what makes you so late? Teacher keep you after school again?"

"Aw, now, Mrs. Schmidt, you know I'm always a good little boy. No, we had football practice after school. Sure hope Mom made cookies today. I'm starved."

"You and your hollow leg—and I bet your Mom has been washing clothes all day. Say, do you like homemade bread? Why don't you stop at my house for a snack?"

"Homemade bread?! That's great. Gee, I haven't had fresh bread since I visited Grandma."

She watched with pleasure as he sat with his legs curled around the chair, leaning an arm on the table as he told her of his day. She cut the bread thick this time; it had an even texture under the crisp crust, so that the butter spread smoothly. With a glass of milk, two slices were soon gone. His voice lacked conviction as he politely refused more, "No thanks, honest. I'd better not eat any more. It sure is good though. Will you tell Mom how to make bread like that?"

"Here, you take this loaf home for supper. If your Mom thinks she wants the recipe, you tell her I'll be real glad to give it to her."

Gladys' letter had said Jeanie was home with a sore throat; they certainly wouldn't be able to come this weekend. She wrote a note to Jeanie, telling her how her Mother had liked to help her make bread when she was young, wondering if they made bread together, hoping she would soon feel fine again and that she would bring her dolls and stay with Grandma soon.

Supper with Hans was simple, maybe too plain—bread and butter, applesauce, and tea. The thick slices of bread were filling; the applesauce was not too sweet, the tea warmed them almost as much as the rose-colored memories of days gone by, when the simple things of life had been treasured. They had been friends a long time, the Schmidts and the Muellers; they talked on and on, remembering. When Hans left for home, he carried his bowl of applesauce and two slices of bread for breakfast toast. That left two slices for Bertha in the morning; she laughed as she thought of Kate worrying that the bread would mold before it was gone. It was too good for that!

The wind swept the clouds away in the night; the morning sun gave a luminous quality to the autumn leaves and sparkled on the window pane. Once more the phone rang just as the cuckoo finished his ninth call. Today it rang ten, eleven, twelve times and was silent again. For today the woman lay in bed, and the room glowed with the light from the sun and the leaves.

Birth And Death

John Rothfork

It was strange, very odd. It wasn't even Sunday, yet the people, in their Sunday clothes — white shirts too tight at the collars and funny hats — were all going to St. John's. Stephen didn't want to go: he went enough. Besides, the robins chirped at him, but he couldn't chase them today. He trudged obediently with his family on to the brick church, walking consciously because his sister had scolded him for tramping on Mrs. Clark's tulips. Stephen didn't like to walk on sidewalks. He usually skipped on the new grass at the edge of the concrete. He wished that now he could be skipping lightly with David on that dewy grass instead of going to church.

That was odd too; instead of loitering on the sandy steps as his father always did, today he brisked on past them and into the dark church. Stephen wished he had stopped, for when his father stopped to talk with Mr. George or Mr. Clark, Stephen knew what would happen. He would soon get red in the face even though he would have loosened his broad tie; then poke his short, fat finger at his listeners while his other hand was busy sliding up and down the brown faded suspenders. When Stephen saw that his father's attention was completely absorbed in such arguments, then he and Mr. Clark's boy, David, would steal a few yards away, behind the high, white pillars of the entrance, and have their own discussions. They would imitate their fathers, chewing on imaginary pipes and thrusting their yet unformed stomachs out in a ludicrous manner, discussing vital political questions they overheard:

—Tell me Mr. Clark, do you think it was the communists or the protestants who started that demonstration at St. John's?

—Well, Mr. Suraci, I think it was both; the communists started it and the protestants . . .

But, today they didn't stop. His father ushered Stephen and his sister ahead of him and into the church. His sister stopped at the small marble dish and delicately tapped the sponge with her fingernails, then brought her hand slowly close to her forehead and both shoulders. Stephen followed, plunging his dark hand into the wet sponge with a squelch and touched his forehead and shoulders with the wet hand while silently moving his lips.

Then, he turned half around to see if his father would follow.

They stopped at a dark, thickly varnished pew far from the altar. Stephen and his sister genuflected and quickly filed into the narrow pew. Their father laboriously made a curtsy, holding onto the next pew, and followed. Stephen felt a little strange kneeling so far from the front. Every day he and David and the rest of their class sat in the sixth and seventh pews. On Sunday his father always had them sit near the back, but today wasn't Sunday; it was strange, for his father and the rest of the grown-ups were here in church bringing with them their noisy rosaries and prayer books.

Stephen knelt on the hard green strip of vinyl and peered over the high pew at the dark altar. Outside he could still hear the birds calling, but they sounded far away and strange in the silent darkness of the church. The altar boys, Tom Larson and Jimmy Stone, came out of the sanctuary, each carrying in one hand a lighted taper and holding the other hand over their hearts. They lit the six tall candles and blew their own tapers out as they receded from the tabernacle and went back into the sanctuary. Stephen noticed that the tarnished golden sunlight broke through the high, circular, stained glass window and spilt past the altar and onto the opposite wall. The glass, the East window, contained the figure of Christ ascending from the charnel. He held his punctured limbs out to the people and, Stephen thought, looked sad.

The old, limping priest entered, following the two slow walking boys, dressed in a long shiny black chasuble with a large golden cross on either side. Stephen and the people stood, the altar boys stopped, and the priest hobbled up to the altar. After fussing with the burse and the book, he again descended and began to mumble some prayers in a Latin monotone. Stephen started to follow the priest's drone, to pray, to talk with God, but soon his attention began to wane and was caught by the noisy birds who still tittered happily outside in the sunlight. He and David used to pass notes on the back of holy cards, but the nun soon caught them and made them sit on the floor in the basement of the convent after school and write down their own prayers for those they hadn't said in church. So, he and David then sat quietly in church, their eyes barely noticeable in their wanderings to the side doors, to the flowers, to the windows. But, today David wasn't here. So, alone Stephen turned his eyes to the stained window slightly opened, allowing the sounds of the street to sift in.

Stephen stood mechanically at the gospel and caught scraps of what the bent priest said: "I am the living bread . . . if anyone eat of this bread he shall live forever . . . " Stephen brought his gaze from the bright window to the dark altar, but could see nothing other than the light from the window.

He and the others sat while the priest bent over the stone altar and mumbled more unheard prayers. The bench was hard, and Stephen squirmed in a vain effort to find a comfortable position. One day David and he had been sitting through another long Mass, squirming and shifting to find a soft spot, when suddenly, during the Communion, David got up and walked out the back door, right past the nuns without even folding his hands. Stephen was so surprised that he forgot the uncomfortable pew and left his mouth open in a vague wonder and horror of the action. At recess Stephen asked David how he ever found the courage to march out of the church. "I don't know," said David, "I was thinking of how hard the bench was and I just kept thinking and thinking and thinking and then, I got up and walked out. It felt good." Stephen almost wished he could get up now and leave, but he knew he couldn't.

Suddenly, his attention was drawn back to the dim altar by a strange action of the priest. The old man was descending the altar and coming down to the people instead of retreating back into the sanctuary where he belonged. Two more boys came from the sanctuary, one bearing a small gold bucket and the other swinging a golden thurible. But why? The four boys and the old man formed a small huddle, and though Stephen couldn't see what was happening he knew the thurible was being filled by the old man. Then, the boys dropped the chasuble and sank behind the black-clad priest while he mumbled some prayers from a small black book. Stephen thought it like a Mass for the Dead, but there were no big candles towering above the priest or a coffin. Yet, it must be; the tabernacle was adorned with black lace. Stephen felt certain for he had served one last month with David. He wished David were here, he would know. But, David wasn't here.

Stephen quickly tired of the man's mumbles and slow known gestures. Again, he turned to the blue crack at the window and the sounds of the happy birds outside. He could see a robin on a dewy green lawn not far from the church. It chirped gayly and lightly, cocking its head in a peculiar fashion and pecking at the ground

sometimes. Wouldn't it be wonderful to fly, to soar free and happy, to escape so easily the drab, dull existence and live, to spire to the scintillating blue heavens, to fly . . . to be a brilliant bird-creature, finely plumed with downy white feathers, a breast scarlet as blood, a beak sharp, talons sure, golden and deadly—wouldn't it be heaven? Stephen longed to be that free, to soar away from . . . from everything he knew. And he would. He felt that he could do it, even alone. He knew his pinfeathers would one day turn to . . .

Stephen's sister pushed against him as she stood to leave, and Stephen, startled back into the church, saw that the priest had left the altar. Quickly, he rose and filed out of the narrow pew. He turned and strode past the font to the sunshine outside.

"Shoel" Renee Nassif

Margaret Gors

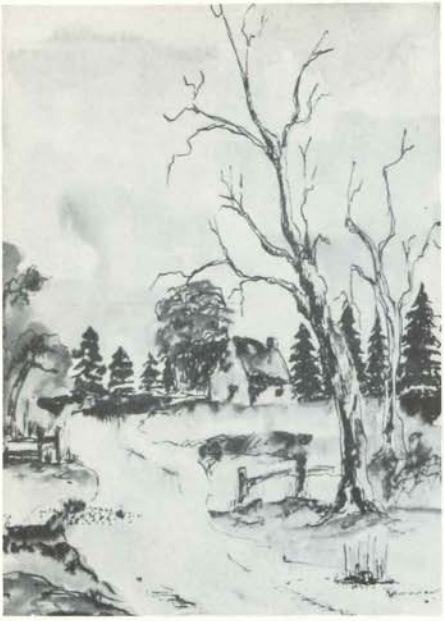
"The Fall" Ken Lewis

"Black and White Flowers"
Phil Jones

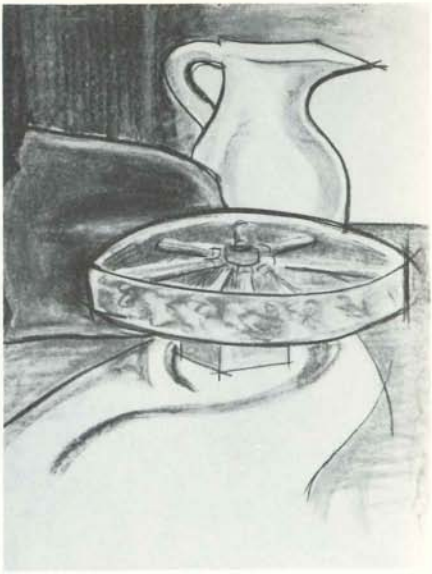
"Night Scape" Colleen Rowse

"Lamps" Helen Anderson

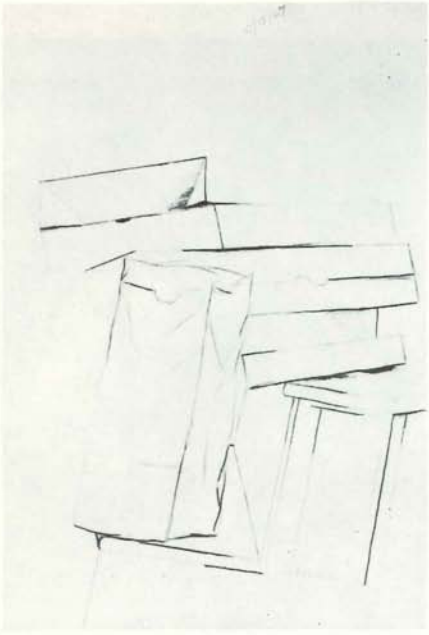
Thomas Truby



Karen Brenner



"Composition" Diane Smith

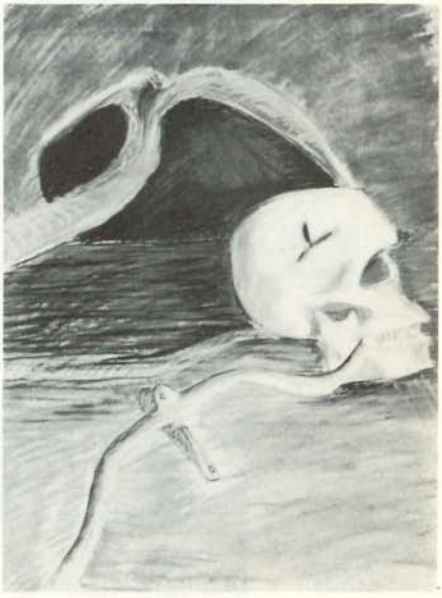


"Study" Lanida Bielenberg

Nancy Villem

"Out of Chaos" Ken Lewis

"Portrait of Larry"
Bradley Boe



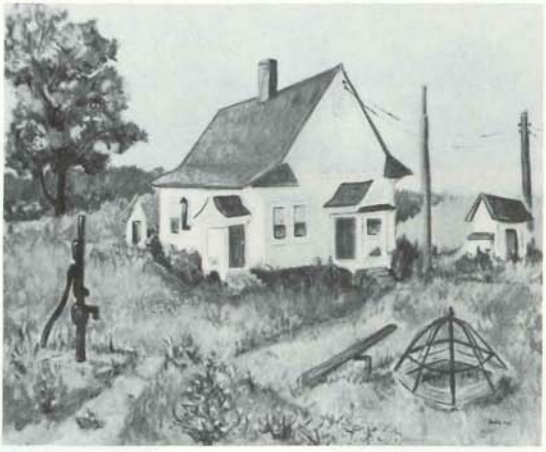
"Still-life" Andree Tracey

"For Everything There Is A Season" Joanne Volga

"Boy With the Guinea Pig"
Andree Tracey

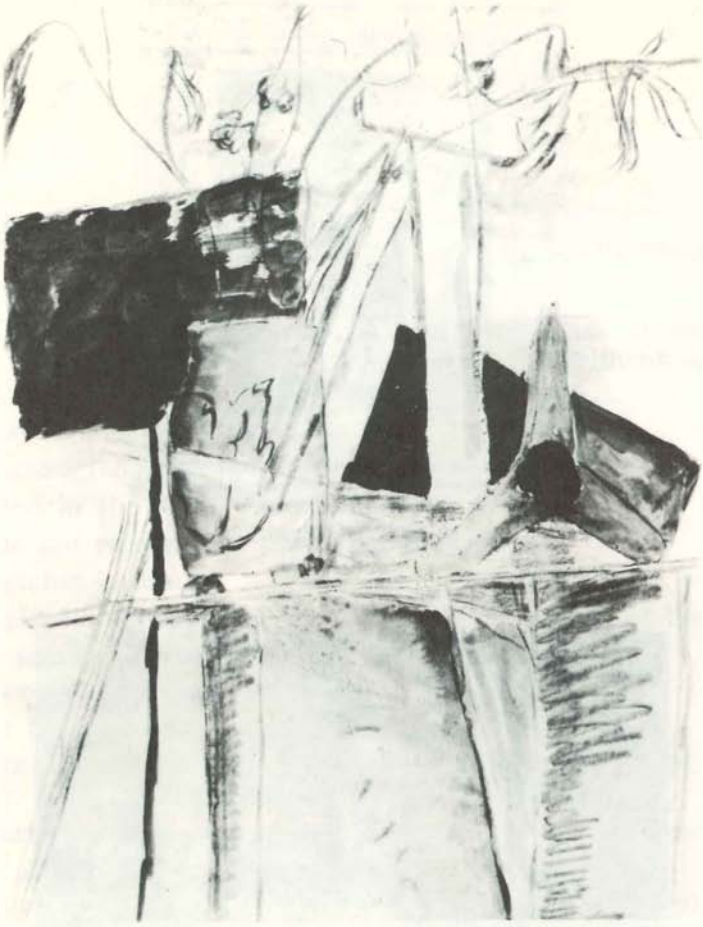
"Visions of Johanna"
Jean Andersen

"Blue Landscape" Joanne Volga



"Summer Vacation" Diane Smith

"Erosion" Joanne Volga



"Still-Life With Music Stand" Jean Andersen

Left to Right—Dave Hauff, Helen Anderson
Jean Andersen, Kathy Gast,
Jean Andersen, Dave Hauff

Gary Nashleanus

"Separation" Ken Lewis

"October Country" Roger Hardy

October Country

Roger Hardy

October country—a windy twilight—
Crusts of leaves crest among the trees, a primordial dead sea;
Trees move
Now skeletons, memories of the warm green mask of summer.
Death moves in October and deliberates its one, without concern
With a chill in a changing wind—the subtle death—
(like a hanging cloud in a pool of urine)
Shows trees for what they are
The wind in the trees wheezes a death rattle.
And the sad refrain fills the biting twilight air.
And October inside:
That splendid crystal inner glow of ochre in a glass of beer
And a woman of yellow-blonde hair and black eyes sits
alone on her stool and sings her song;
Distant music, (a song no one will hear).
She sits in her own excrement and tries to reach a sad
foul place of the heart—a world beyond her world.
The Bartender smiles "what good am I without both hands?"
And a phlegm-eyed, swollen red-faced man laughs
"that dumb son of a bitch" as he salts his yellow beer,
And young men with eyes intent as eagles, look for the thing
only eyes can see.
Songs are sung and songs will be sung.
But thoughtless wind buffs and laughs in October country.

Ain't Gonna Give Nobody None Of My Jelly Roll

James M. Stephens

"It sure is hot down here, Momma."

"It always is, son. That's one of the things you'll have to get used to. That and many other things."

The place is Rebecca, Georgia, the culminating point of a long two-day bus ride from Chicago. When we—my black family —got there, it was night time and the temperature was in the upper 70's. On the way down, below the border I noticed many changes—changes in the attitudes of the passengers on the bus, changes in the weather (yes, the temperature really had a bad effect on me—i.e., my two week stay in the South left me ten pounds underweight—ten pounds of constant perspiration), and most important of all a change in my mother.

The change in the attitude of the passengers was to be expected and it really didn't upset me much. In cities like Chicago, Indianapolis, and Cleveland the attitude of the passengers was a philosophical open-mindedness; but when we arrived in places like Memphis, Lexington, and Nashville this philosophical open-mindedness changed to the narrowness of racial bigotry. I guess this was due in part to the coming and going of the passengers. All of the Northern passengers departed in Northern cities taking along with them their philosophical open-mindedness; and the Southern passengers boarded in Southern cities bringing along with them their racial bigotry. This was to be expected, but "man it so put a hurt on me!"

The change in my mother was something totally unexpected, and one can imagine the shock which gripped me when I saw a strong domineering woman change to one of a lesser magnitude. The South with its Jim Crowism and segregation has many effects upon a Negro. This was one of them. But let me tell you a little about my stay.

After we arrived and got settled in at the house of one of my cousins— I later found out that an entire block in the city housed relatives of mine— I fell exhausted into bed. The next day I met some of my cousins for the first time. To them I was

the big city slicker. To me they were a bunch of "lemons"—people who don't know what the happenings are. My aunt made the introductions.

"Tommie Lee, come here boy. I wants you to meet your cousins from Chicago. Tommie Lee!" Thomas Lee Jones was a boy of impressive physical stature. He was a six-footer with weight and muscle.

"Tommie this 'ere is your cousin, Melvin. I wants you to show him around 'ere and meet some of our people."

"Yes'm," said Tommie to her. To me he said nothing, not even the customary "How are you?" I later found out Tommie was somewhat suspicious of me. It seemed all Negroes from Chicago raised hell when they hit Georgia. I quickly assured him nothing of the kind would happen with me. After we got to know each other, I found we had a great deal in common. At the time I had a big crush on a girl back home—Tommie was engaged to be married in late August; we both played baseball and the same club had looked at us as prospective big leaguers; and we both were born on the same day hours apart!

"Hey Melvin," asked Tommie as we were driving along a long straight section of highway—which one can compare to the highways in Iowa, but instead of the traditional rows and rows of corn in Iowa this highway was lined with cotton—"have you ever played '2 + 2=0' before?"

Puzzled by what he meant by '2 + 2=0' I said, " No, I can't say that I have, but I'm game." Right away with my quick cal-cultivating mind I thought '2 + 2=0' fool."

"I'm game! That's cool talk for I'll go along if you go too, isn't it?"

"Ya, man. That's about what it means," I said somewhat amazed. (I took a lot for granted with my cousin—I kept forgetting I was a big slicker and he was a little country boy.)

Anyway, I found out what he meant by '2 + 2=0'. No sooner had I uttered "means" that Tommie had stomped on the accelerator and we were doing 115. Needless to say I was scared and in a few seconds I had more reason to be so. A highway patrol car hidden in some bushes along the highway came busting out with sirens wailing and guns firing. I said "What in the hell is goin' on?"

Tommie, glancing into the rear view mirrow, answered calmly, "Oh, them's the police. You see they are the other part of the game. If they catches us we lose, '2 + 2=4' and then we go to jail, but if they don't catches us, we is the winners '2 + 2=0'. How do you like that cousin Melvin?"

Tommie—us—let's make it. I've heard what they do—" a bullet whizzed by and scraped the front door—do to the blood from the North. I don't want to end up out of it man, so let's make it!"

Tommie was a good man. We went into the back country and eluded the "man." I wanted to leave the state of Georgia and in a hurry, but I stayed and enjoyed myself. This game we played is only one of the several weird things that happens everyday in the South. Negroes are jailed for looking "with a gleam in their eyes" at white girls; shows are strangely integrated—Negroes go into the alley—a dirty, stinky, pissed-in alley—and pay their show fare and go upstairs into the balcony to view the show while the white kids participate in this integration by going through the front door and viewing the show from the best seats in the house. "Hey, black boy!" and "Nigger" are the customary greetings a white boy gives to a Negro who is fortunate enough to be his friend, and the back of the bus station has its "Whites Only" signs. I viewed these circumstances with a somewhat humorous attitude. I could not help but think "Is this for real?" Every insult from a white boy was tucked away in my mind and answered with "Wait till I get back home. You white bastards will be sorry."

Well, we got home safely and those white bastards were sorry. My brothers, Tony and Gene, and I were coming from downtown Chicago one day and some white boys made the mistake of forgetting where they were.

"Hey, look at them niggers. They think they're some cool duds." They were trying to be complimentary. I could tell it, but my brothers could not, especially the younger one, Tony. That Tony is something. Although he is the baby boy of the family he will be the toughest. He has the physical stature, 5'11' and 160 pounds, and the mental conditioning—meanness combined with the love of family. If I hadn't stopped him, he would have jumped that poor, blushing, grinning blond on the bus. The incident passed, or so I thought. As we got off at our stop, I noticed Gene and Tony were not with me anymore. They had slipped back and

were dusting those white boys something awful. I went back and grabbed both of them.

"Come on man! Be cool. You've already did them in. Leave 'em be. The dirty bastards'll know who to mess with next time. And they'll remember this ain't no Mississippi or Alabama."

After that little incident, things changed drastically; or better yet they went back to the old routine—going to school, playing basketball, and living. I don't mean living in the literal sense either, but figuratively speaking. Man, that semester was out of sight! Parties, girls, and parties! (And I might add: in that order.) It all came to an end in January when I graduated. Yeah, party life was over for the hard life of working, but that illusion was put to an end.

My first job was at the Post Office. Working at the Post Office was quite an experience. I really should say not working at the Post Office was quite an experience because that is just what I did. This was a job made possible by one of the government's many Youth Opportunity Centers. It was really an attempt to maintain a status quo of nearly full employment during the summer months and thus keep the standard of living at a high level. My first day at the job I was taken aside by some of the veteran employees—one was an alumnus of my high school—and told:

"Well, looka 'ere. We've got a new one!"

"You'd better be cool 'cause I ain't takin' no jive off of nobody," I said after sizing the vets up. I knew now was the time to let them know I was regular.

"Ah, we was only playing with you. Don't be a sourpuss."

After giving them the usual lowdown I was accepted quite readily, to my surprise, and taken aside and given some advice on how to succeed in business without really trying.

"Looka 'ere Jim baby. There's one thing you've got to do around here. Stick with the boys no matter what the cause or reason. We've got to show them—'them' is the white man, the boss—that we ain't gonna take no jive."

"Ya," added Maxey my fellow alumnus, "If we can show him the blood sticks together we've gone a long, long way in doing what we want."

"And if we do that," added some character in tints and wearing a goatee, "we can do as much or as little work as we want. But remember—we got to stick man. Don't be a big shot. Know your limits."

After messing around in the adult world for a little over a year, I decided I wanted to go to college. I figured that by getting a college education I could make a little money, be my own boss, and help my people. The decision was not one reached by careful analysis, but one arrived at by an outside stimulus. The stimulus was a gang fight. I had had enough of the bloodshed, seeing my boys go to jail, and the people. This was not the life for me. I was tired of the "Black Power," "Burn, Baby, Burn," and "Kill Whitey" slogans. Ghetto life was beginning to get unbearable so I came to . . . Morningside College. It is a beautiful place outwardly. There is an intermingling of the old with the new. The buildings are covered with vines and the roads rise gracefully to a peak at each hilltop. The grass turns beautifully green in the spring. The girls in their bright summer dresses polka-dot the campus, their skins a nice burnt brown. That's outwardly. Inwardly, there is a lot of trouble. In the liberalism of a small college, one naturaly assumes that this liberalism would boil over into racial compatibiity; but alas, this is not the case. A Negro with a white girl walking across the campus—a strange phone call at night saying—"and leave that white girl alone Nigger!"; a white girl with a Negro—social ostracism; and Negro with Negro—"Don't they want to be accepted?" College life is beginning to be unbearable.

After being here a while I realize this is not the answer. I only realized this a couple of weeks ago while talking to one of my friends.

"You know something Bobby. This school, the people in it, and this city can all go to hell. I was prejudiced to a certain extent before I came here but now I am more so. Why— if I had a choice between saving a black life and a white one, I'd save that black one and try to help kill that white one."

"But, Jim—you should look on the bright side of things."

"Are you kidding me?"

"There are a lot worse places than here. You could be in a rat-hole of a college. I agree with you on some aspects about this place, but it can't be that bad. Your college life is what you

make it. The only difference between you and I is: You are black and I am white."

"I see you've noticed too."

"Oh, come on now! Don't give me a hard time."

"O. K., Bobby. But listen! Do you know what it is to have so much and then not to have anything? Dig—this city doesn't have a boss radio station—a station that plays some boss sides and sounds. I hear a jam here three months after it has left the big city. There ain't nobody I can talk a little jive to. The girls here are stuck up and besides, who would talk to a boot, anyway? Damn—I was here three months before I found a Negro barber and that is a shame."

"Gee—I didn't know the situation was that bad."

So now you know. What are you going to about it?"

Fog Of Still Morning

Randall J. Gates

Why do you say I can't love the fog?
All you damned sun-lovers!
You are the incurable romantics,
Not **me** who you claim is lost.

I love (and hope for) fog—
Its mystic mystery
Its clouds, its night,
Its intrigue . . .

You practical idiots and your sun!
You can't afford
To close your eyes
And see. . . .

An Admonition

Marjorie Beasley

The raspberries of summer can be saved,
but they grow cold, or are stifled
in a jar of preservatives.

Our love my love your love
like raspberries, should be taken
while fresh off the bush and enjoyed
in the hot sweat heat of summer.

Kept too long it may turn stale,
mold, or simply lose the flavor
causing us to treasure it as now.

I offer you my raspberries, dew wet
and natural sweet. Why therefore let
tartness or retrogradation part us?

A Ride On A Candle

Randall J. Gates

Once, riding on a candle,
A flame glistening against
the dim background of
Blue walls (dark blue),

A watchword that said Lonely,
Said it not in word,
Not in the confines
Of picky poor meaningless meanings,

Rang—but not sang—
Through that drifty chasm
That was Mind, formless,
A fervor of unknowing.

Beckoning in its voiceless mystery,
The word which was not a word
Said in all its inability to "say":
"This is Being."

In reply, stumbling through
Formless thoughts of non-phrase,
Just a gaze at that
Delirious, yet somehow unruffled flame.

Rain

Rebekah Stone

The rain fills my brain
Like the longing fills my soul.
The soil is pelted by the rain
So it is not unfulfilled;
While I, in my tragic tearlessness,
Sit alone and envy the innocent soil.

Fruit trees thrust their roots in the earth,
And bear fruit and bright leaves.
Nothing is anchored in me,
I bear only loneliness and selfless sorrow
And straddle my nameless nothing world
With only rain to watch.

I dare not look at trees.

Alone

Rebekah Stone

I rush the day, hurrying each second and hour,
Waiting for dark, and sometimes only silence.
Then, I sleep; a waking, dreaming, worried sleep,
Full of hopes for the next day or the next.

The lazy dropping rain of time
Cannot be the sudden storm
I long for, desperately.
But even a gentle rain will sometime end.
Still, then should also be a time
Of soft slow showers, with every
Second slightly suspended.

How often time is meaningless
Until we are alone.

He Looks At The Water

Kathryn Bauman

He wears in his heart
A salty tongue.
He tastes his words and is still.
Bars and oranges.

What do you seek, old fisherman,
With your beard to the wind?

I seek, sir, the water
Of the seas.

And the salt tears,
From where do they come?

I weep, sir, the water
Of the seas.

And this grave bitterness,
Where was it born?

Very bitter is the water
Of the seas!

The sea
Smiles from far off,
Teeth of foam,
Lips of sky.

Song To My Age Of Love: Something Not Of A Season

Randall J. Gates

Give me light that I may see your beauty,
For your beauty is power of itself.
In other than face and shape
Do I see your charms:
You live in mood,
In soft word,
And in prayerful silence.
There lies your beauty.

I have seen your light and
Now I see your beauty.
It grows in me as it has grown for you;
For now as I am witness
To your mood and word and stillness;
Now I live in your charms:
Seeking the beauty that is you,
And loving your beauty, hoping it's mine.

hand in hand

Douglas V. Johnson

the wind through the trees dropping
walnuts
green; pungent in odor, smell them.
the rhubarb (bitter grows with rain-catching leaves.
those green apples on trees for-
bidden, with hidden desires to eat
them eat them.
while hand in hand through the park we walk
we've hidden desires to eat them.
they will make you sick,
those green apples—

Please Don't Stop The Carnival

Marjorie Beasley

Please don't stop the carnival
just because the carousel refuses to turn.
For a moment we shall dismount
from stucco steeds, and wait by a cottonwood tree.
Against future appetites shall we partake of
lemon- frosted camels and chocolate buffalo.
Pink lemonade may serve as our wine.

Keep the barker crying to come see marvels
or learn the secrets of a twisted hall.
Give children popcorn and a thousand
thrills and chills in imaginary rocket rides.
Make live the kaleidoscope of reality
in helium balloons or lights of ferris wheels.
Soon the carousel shall race again - -

Live for this cotton-candy hour,
harmonize with the rising calliope tune.
As life must go on, even though
love has stopped temporarily,
Carnivals go on in their noisy way,
even when carousels refuse to turn.

Carnivals

Marjorie Beasley

One doesn't go to carnivals alone.
They are a place for two and many.
A game of sharing, crazy-dreaming
is a carnival. And lights.
Carnivals are cheap toys-on-sticks
at not cheap prices and prizes
for that eager girl at her hero's side.
They are cotton-candy at the monkey show,
or lemonade, or mustard-on-the-chin.
They are meant to be footlongs
eaten at both ends till the center meets;
the whirled breeze of the carousel
with a tight arm on one's waist;
from the conquest of a kaleidoscope world
held but temporarily, be swept down to reality.
Carnivals are all electric lights,
a kiss in the dark.
One shouldn't go to carnivals alone.

To SM

Harley Rye Johnson

Why I let it remain, why I didn't carefullly pare it away,
I'll never know.
Perhaps a knowledge greater than mine, a power of thought more
perceptive than mine, made me know the curtain
was not to be removed - -
Indeed, was a very part of the one who stood behind it.

The Sun Loved Down

Douglas V. Johnson

Feel for light
with sight lacking distance.
Pupils enlarged you grope in the dark.

Dreaming of fight;
wanting of night;
exclaiming in bold revelations,
and the light blinded the sight.

Drunk and fed
we lie in bed;
groping, the dark
loving, the dark,
secure, the dark,
the sight blinded with light.

The sun shone down, beat down,
loved down;

the light, the light, the light,
the light, the beautiful, beautiful,
beautiful blasphemous light. . .

blinded the sight.

1964

Rebekah Stone

I was beautiful once,
But only that one summer
When the pain and joy of being
Forced itself through my body
Like a butterfly pushing through the
Shallow walls of its cocoon.
Running down the beach in the rain
Was as natural then
As opening my eyes to wake,
Or walking barefoot through the park.
People watched and wondered,
And never seemed to know;
As if they'd never been alive.
I never wondered.
The sky, the sun, the fog,
Were friends who laughed with me,
And ran, and sometimes cried
Tears just to form an oasis in the sand,
Or add a part of ourselves to the tide;
Or just the thrill of being sad.

Escape From Reality: The Aftermath Of Death

Glenda Tanksley

Dark hysteria explodes the sun,
Smashing youth upon the rocks of life.
The wounds lay open to salt and dirt.
The pain escapes the grasps of reason,
The mind fights only to survive it.
Life becomes a bitter race to escape It.
Gospel, friends, philosophy, loving arms,
All turn to stone at the touch;
Comfort cannot be given nor received,
The desperation of loneliness rips the heart
The exhausted mind screams in a vacuum, as
Dark hysteria explodes the sun.

Listen!

Rebekah Stone

Listen!

What am I?

I am neither male nor female,
Nor anything else known, or unknown
In the world.
I am the spirit of something
That never existed.

I am all the unreached goals,
Unaspired for hopes, unanswered dreams,
And forgotten stars, of all who ever lived,
And some who never shall.

I speak to you
But you hear only memories;
You look at me
And see an empty mirror.

I tell you that now
Is the time for greatness, World.
I don't expect you'll listen;
You never have.

Windowpane Boy

Kathryn Bauman

Windowpane boy,
Your childhood now a legend of seagulls
Dashing the sky
With icicles of the moon and fish of China.

Growing on seas of clouds
And on the shore of your dreams
You linger on stained glass shadows,
Yourself lost in restless solitude.

Love, love the flight of sand
Through the endless heart of whiteness
And your childhood—love your childhood
Lone boy in the murmuring ocean and color
Of the old hours,
Your childhood now a legend of sea gulls.