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PERSPECTIVES

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The Generation Of Leaves

Judith H. Abbott

She closed her eyes again, obliterating the morning light that filtered into the room through the half drawn Venetian blinds which cast long shadows on the barren gray walls. Soon the stillness of the slumbering hospital would be stirred into the living motions of this day. Sterile nurses in odorless starched white uniforms with "good morning, time to get up" smiles would be disturbing her and pressing her with "how are you feeling" questions to which they sought nor awaited an answer. If only this morning she might rest in peace, foregoing the process of being lifted from her bed into life. She would once again sit before the window observing those who passed by on their way to work or school. She was experiencing the transformation of autumn into winter as she watched the leaves one by one descending from their height to the earth.

"Good morning, Mrs. Robbinson. Time to get up."

The nurse crossed her room to the windows and opened the blinds letting the full brightness of the day flood the room. From her bed she could see only the blue sky and the top of the oak tree whose leaves in summer nearly blinded her view of the outside world.

"My, it is a lovely day after the wicked storm we had last night. Did you hear it blow? It certainly won't be long now before we see the first snow fly, will it, Mrs. Robbinson?"

No, it won't be long now. She lay watching the rhythmic movement of the nurse as she cranked the bed upward so that she sat almost upright in the bed. Rooftops and barren trees could now be seen from her bed. She searched the branches looking for some sign of life, but there were no leaves. Had every leaf fallen while she lay sleeping? The lifeless barren branches swayed in the wind like fleshless bony hands reaching out for help. But she lay there helpless. Yesterday there had still remained a few. Perhaps when she was near the window she would be able to spy a leaf that still had not given in to the wind. If there were no leaves to watch, autumn was no longer and there would be no need for her to sit before the window. She could lay in peace here now.

"Morning, Mrs. Robbinson. Your favorite orderly is here to put you into your throne. How is the old queen feeling today?"

"I don't want to get up today."

"Now that's what you say everyday. How would your children feel if they knew you didn't want to sit in this new wheelchair they bought for you? Come on now, where would you like to sit? In front of the window?"

Sitting by the window, all of her world was again before her. The school children were strolling by now, kicking the dead leaves with their feet. Each day she had watched these leaves as the life went out of them. At first the fading autumn colors had seemed so beautiful, but as each leaf withered and turned brown, relinquishing its place upon the tree, all beauty perished with the leaf. They did not all go at once; some drifted down easily, almost willfully. Others clung to the branches as if it were within their power to live eternally. But were there no leaves left now? She leaned forward in her wheel chair to observe the oak tree beneath her window. Perhaps there were still some leaves that were not apparent to her. They were hiding from her. She pressed her head to the cold window pane, and from here she beheld one leaf that hung nobly upon the tree. How odd and out of place it looked. Fragile and unprotected, it gave no beauty or life to the tree, nor did the tree give life to it. Yet this one leaf hung to the tree.

"Here's your breakfast, Mrs. Robbinson. Perhaps I should wheel you over here."

"No, let me be."

"But Mrs. Robbinson, you have to eat your breakfast before it gets cold."

Leaning back in her chair, she looked at the young nurse who held her tray.

"Just set my tray on my bed table, and I'll eat it in a moment. I'm busy now."

"Busy? I think you had better eat right now, Mrs. Robbinson, and be busy after breakfast."

"Don't move this chair. I have to watch now. I'll eat later."

"All right, Mrs. Robbinson. If you promise to be only a few minutes. I'll be back in a few minutes, and then you better have eaten all your breakfast."

How could she escape from her vigilance? She had to watch; they would just have to understand. Again she rested her head against the window pane; relaxing now she could see

the leaf hanging there. The coldness of the window pane had gone, and she remained there watching.

"Mrs. Robbinson, you had better eat now. You promised you would."

But there was no response. The leaf was drifting to the ground unobserved.

Three In The Dark

Judith H. Abbott

It seemed suffocatingly hot. The sound of their dull rhythmic breathing gave each of them consciousness of their own existence. Their future was precarious; in fact, their present state had been questioned by each of them individually. Perhaps they were fooled by their own senses, and now were a part of non-existence, of death. The bleak blackness of the mine enveloped them. The lack of light seemed to take from them their full state of consciousness.

"How long do you think we've been down here now?" Rod had continually asked this question, for he knew that he would be able to have a definite answer. Eric lifted his arm and looked at the face of his fluorescent watch. It had been a gift from his family, and they thought it particularly appropriate for him, because he would be able to use it in the dark mines. Eric gazed at his watch, for this was the only thing they had been able to look at and see, yet what did this tell them? The time, ten to two; but ten to two had comes and gone so many times that he could no longer comprehend it. It was shortly after two when the cave-in occurred. He did not remember what time, or how long he had been lying underneath the rocks before he was conscious of his situation. He had hollered for help, but heard nothing. Then Al had responded; he was alive but could feel nothing, and could move nothing. Rod had not responded, and they had thought him dead, but as they lay quietly they became aware of the breathing of a third person. It was Eric who began to struggle to free himself, but before he had succeeded, Rod regained consciousness. He was able to move, and was not pinned under any rocks, and he began to crawl toward Eric.

"Hey, Eric, I asked you what time it is."

"Almost two o'clock."

"How long does that make it?"

"Too long." Eric ran his hands over his aching cold body. He hesitated when his hands came to his legs. They were broken. Rod had had to drag him through the darkness and over the rocks to the corner where he had been, that was somewhat free from rubble. Then he had sat and listened as he had gone over to help Al. But he could not remove the rocks alone.

"It must be about two days or so. Sure do think we should have heard them digging or something. It's this horrible stillness and blackness that really is getting to me."

"Shut up, Rod." Eric closed his eyes and seemed relieved. But he did not dare to stay this way, for he would fall asleep again. Before when they had had the strength, they had passed the time away by exploring their situation. Rod had crawled around in their enclosure groping to discover if there was a way out. The exit was not completely sealed off, so he had tried to move some rocks and boulders. The hopelessness of this effort soon became apparent, for the rocks he could move, he found no place to push them without endangering their own situation. And the rest of the blockade was immovable to him. It was particularly difficult for him to move around, because he had to move like an animal on all fours; but he lacked the agility of the common animal. He had tried to search for the so-called emergency kit, but it obviously was lost beneath the rubble.

At first they had talked confidently about someone finding them, of help reaching them in time. But as the time stretched into oblivion, their infinite child-like hope dwindled. Eric and Rod took turns sleeping, and Rod would crawl over to where Al lay, and talk with him. Perhaps Al had lost consciousness, or hope, he did not know, but he would not speak or reply to his questions, so Al did not go over to him. He remained propped up against the wall next to Eric. It was becoming more and more difficult to remain awake while the other one slept. Rod was dozing when he was awakened by the rasping voice of Al.

"Jesus, I'm thirsty." He was alive, and was at least exerting his will to live. Rod felt hope surge within himself at this. But Eric cut into his hope.

"Don't talk, and you won't notice it so damn much. Save your strength." Eric was attempting to be sympathetic, but there was a tone of irony in his voice.

"Take it easy on him, he's dying, but at least he is strug-

gling." Rod was leaning toward Eric and whispering. But Eric replied loudly.

"God, don't you think I know that? And we're going to die, too. We haven't heard a sound but our own gasping since we've been down here. Sure, they're looking for us, but there are probably plenty of others buried in here, and they'll dig them out first. We're way down deep, remember? How much longer do you think we can hang on? Aren't you hungry? If you're thirsty, why don't you come feel the blood on my legs . . . "

"Shut up!" Rod lurched forward and began to crawl toward Al, following the gasping voice which lay buried there. His whole body ached and was cold, but before he had gone very far, he stopped. There was no sound to guide him. Al was silent. As if frozen, he remained crouched down.

"Al?"

Mat wanted to cry out his name again, but knew that there would never be a response.

"Well, we might as well face it. Try to find him and get his jacket. It'll at least help in warming us up." Eric was trying to sound steady and sure, but he revealed his own fear.

"Get it yourself. I'm no buzzard."

The silence that followed was deathly, and finally Rod crawled back in the corner and huddled up in order to find some warmth in his cold body.

"Mat, you asleep?"

"No."

"We should try to stay awake."

There was a silence before Mat responded. And then it was his turn.

"Why?"

"Don't be so damn stupid. You know why!"

"I'd rather die in my sleep."

"Now look who's giving up! We should at least try . . . "

Mat interrupted him with a forceful cry that summoned all his remaining strength.

"God help us . . . "

Sunday Is For Satan

Duane Brundevold

Groan! Every Sunday, this same process. Eight o'clock and time to get the wife and kids up and ready for church. Why did the Worship Commission ever decide that a nine-thirty service was needed in addition to the original eleven o'clock service? The size of the congregation hasn't increased much lately. And besides, no one is going to listen any better at an earlier hour anyway. But the wife and kids insist on going to the early service so that the pews won't look so empty. I doubt if that really improves the sermons.

"C'mon, Honey, up and at 'em. Start the oatmeal cooking and I'll round up the kids."

No sense in treading lightly down the hall here. The kids know I'm coming and they're probably in the midst of preparing a sneak attack for me. Suzie's room; better open the door slowly. Sure enough, she's pretending to be asleep again. It's too bad that certain persons who sit in the back pews aren't as perceptive with their eyes open as Suzie is right now with her eyes closed. She knows, and understands, what is going on. "Let's go, sleepyhead. I know you're awake."

"Aw, Daddy, how could you tell? I can never fool you. Next Sunday I'll try harder!"

I know she will. Next Sunday her eyes will be shut even tighter than they were just a moment ago. Little girls are so innocently unaware, but they try so hard. How unlike their elders!

Now I need a little less tact and a little more technique. The boys are probably planning a flying-pillow ambush down at the corral, which will require a sneak attack on my part. Let's see now; if I get down on all fours thusly . . . throw open the door . . . rush in . . . thud! I knew they'd aim high and hit the door. But this position of mine makes me somewhat akin to a horse. There is the familiar "Hiyo Silver" and in a flash two riders are avidly jabbing me with their spurs in order to get some action out of the old steed. "All right, twice around the room. But then you two had better hurry up and get ready for church."

Well, that takes care of the roughest part of the Sunday morning "ritual." Now to shave, dress, and eat. I hope that

mirror is deceiving me; my mask couldn't really look that bad, could it? People wear such funny masks to church. They're so afraid of being themselves that they have to hide the unique individuality that is theirs. They present the picture of perfect understanding and humility, but inside them is a disarray of disgust, bias, and misinformation which clashes like the many colors on a palette before they are worked into a unified whole by the artist. These people don't want the church to be the artist; they want to do it themselves; and their inexperience is obvious.

"Good breakfast! Thanks, honey! The kids are about ready to go."

She's a great wife. Wonder how I ever found that gem? "Hold still, you two! I'm just going to straighten your ties. Better tie your shoes again, Jimmy. Suzie, put the paper down until after church. All right now, let's line up by the door so we can leave. C'mon Jean, we're all ready."

Walking this one short block every Sunday is like taking a weekly walk to the execution chamber. We'll be met at the door of the church by a pair of smiles plastered on a couple of faces; a very effective mask, but so empty. Then, as the rest of the congregation arrives, we'll be under close scrutiny as though some sort of perfection were expected of us. Gossip will be flowing forth freely like water, as though the reservoir of sin had to be drained before one could enter, sinless, into the service. After the introductory gymnastics of rising for the hymns are completed, the people will comfortably arrange themselves—if that is possible in those pews—and will piously bow their heads in a moment of rest; at this point, rest will become indistinguishable from sleep. A passive atmosphere will reign until the sermon has been completed; the sudden chords of the organ will rouse them into a final burst of activity—preparation for the mass exodus. The dust of inspiration which might have fallen on them during the service will be casually brushed off as they pass through the doorway.

And then, once free from the environs of the church, they'll begin to criticize the sermon. It was too long; it didn't say enough; it didn't apply to life situations; too much fire and brimstone. But then I wonder: just what kind of sermon **should** be given? What must the minister do in order to please, instruct, entertain (?), and improve his disinterested flock of sheep? Should he put the blade down where it will cut the hay?

Or should he put it up higher where more havoc will be created?

Well, there is the church. If my guess is right, Mrs. Holmes is waiting just inside the door; waiting for some of her other elderly friends to arrive. She's getting on in years but her dedication and regular attendance is hard to match.

The doors are wide open; not like welcoming arms, but rather like claws waiting to entrap some victims for an hour or so. "Good morning. Nice to see you this morning." I hope this morning's sermon shatters those phony smiles. I hope Hell breaks loose!

"Good morning, Mrs. Holmes. You're looking cheerful today."

"Thank you, Pastor. I so enjoy your sermons. They make me feel so good."

To The Frosh

Arlie Daniel

What could a high school senior possibly have to say to a bunch of idiotic freshmen in an assembly? What would an intellectual like me have in common with those dopes?

When you're given the assignment of greeting the freshmen in the first assembly program you'll understand what I mean! It's a most difficult task just deciding on a topic, but then what do most kids talk about anyway? Why the teachers, of course. Why not talk about the teachers?

I could begin: "Members of the faculty, students and friends." Then I could tell them a joke or do something to get them to laugh.—"I accept the privilege of speaking to you today in all sincerity—on—humility—that's it—humility—the topic is one to challenge the mind of any deeply thoughtful—uh—uh—intellectual, and who am I to deny that I can not qualify?"

Now the meat! "I offer to you my greatest adventure—and what could that be to a senior? My friends, my greatest adventure is—is—not education—uh—obtaining an education. And who turns the wheels of education, my friends? Why, the teachers, of course, and so my subject—like the wheels of—no—like the wheels that turn, evolves around teachers." That language ought to get them. It sounds almost professional now, think what it'll sound like when I'm finished.

Now I should quote someone—I could say—"—uh—Horace said—, No, Horace Greely said—No, I believe it was Horace

Mann that said, 'Education is a boy on one end of a log and a teacher on the other'." Then I could say something funny to get their attention again, like—"It is not the boy, and not the log that I wish to talk about today, but what was on the other end of that log, yes, the TEACHER."

I'll just say what most kids think about teachers. Like—oh—"To most students a teacher is a monster! And I would be—uh—inclined to agree—uh—most of the time—Teachers tower above us—absolute in knowledge and authority. Their word is law—and—their authority is unquestionable—uh—uh—this is a teacher to some students."

To other students he is something else. Let's see—"to some a teacher is a policeman—he keeps order—he makes me—us—take off my overshoes in the classroom, and my cap as I enter the 'hallowed halls'—he sees that I don't run up the stairs—uh—that I don't slam the door—that I don't loiter in the halls—that my clothes are in order—that my nose is clean—that I wear a belt—that I keep my hair combed—that I write my papers in ink—that I eat all my lunch"—uh—uh—I guess that's about enough.

I've got to get a punch line in here somewhere and put in a good word for the teachers, or I may not make it through the year. I might exaggerate a lie—like—uh—"fellow students, take pity on me! I'm being surrounded by teachers! One pulls one way and another pulls another until I'm so confused I don't know which way to go. You see, my grandfather was a teacher, my grandmother was a teacher; my mother and father are teachers; my brother is a teacher and my sister is going to be a teacher next year, and if I turn out to be the color my ancestors want, you can color me a teacher, a cold cruel monster!"

I think I'll end the speech with a glory and flag-waving not of—uh—honor—?—to the teachers. Something like—"And so, to that great, glorious adventure, education, and to the teachers that turn its wheels, may I offer a—a—a small, grubby—uh—handful of dandylions, a melted chocolate heart—a few bright autumn leaves—and—uh—a bright red highly polished apple!"

That ought to get to both the teachers, for the good grade bit, and to the freshmen, to let them know what they are really in for.

I should write that down so I won't forget it—now how was I going to start that—?—uh—"Fellow teachers and friends—", no—uh—"Fellows and teachers?"—may'be I'd better start all over.

"Pride Goeth Before . . . "

Mary Ellen Long

"Young woman, come out from under my bed immediately!"

Professor Gilroy eyed the white-canvased foot sticking out past the wrinkled, brown spread and wondered briefly if he had gotten the sex right. All the students dressed alike these days. A barely perceptible twitch was the only response to his command. A frown skittered across his brow.

"See here, I am not a strong man, but I will manage to extract you forcibly if you do not come out." He had known students to do some odd things, but this was beyond his imagination.

The frown planted itself firmly as he began to struggle with the problem of dragging a female about by her feet without losing his dignity. To his relief, the foot disappeared, and a slightly dusty arm emerged, followed by a mop of brown hair. Blue-gray eyes peered at him over a pair of thick bifocals, and a pale sliver of a mouth quivered into a weak smile. The girl slid the rest of the way out and sat up clutching a Spiral notebook to her chest.

"Hello, Professor Gilroy. How are you this evening?"

He stared at her a moment, taken aback. "Get up, get up! And don't change the subject. What are you doing under my bed?"

"Hiding."

"That is obvious," he snorted as he motioned her into the living room.

"I guess that I shouldn't have tried to hide from someone of your discernment and keen eye. But I didn't expect you to come back so early, and then there you were, coming in the door. I didn't know what to do. Your closet was so full of stuff that under the bed was the next best thing."

The professor stiffened. "That 'stuff' is valuable work—notes, files, manuscripts. But what are you doing in my apartment in the first place?"

She lowered here eyes and after a pause and a deep breath said, "Well, you see, sir, I'm in Professor Cassidy's writing class. We are supposed to write a character sketch of someone we admire very much."

"Oh? I didn't know that Cassidy was offering that course

this term." He offered her a chair and settled into his easy chair.

She gazed at him warmly. "There was never any doubt in my mind as to who I would write about. Ever since I took your introductory course, you have been my image of a truly great man and scholar."

Gilroy smiled and studied her more closely. He vaguely remembered having a quiet, studious girl in his class who conscientiously wrote down everything he said. This girl must be she. Strange that he hadn't noticed her other sterling qualities.

"I decided that to really do justice to your character, I should get to know what your more intimate surroundings are. But I couldn't bring myself to bother you during your important free time for truly deep thought, and so I thought that I would just creep in and out without causing any trouble."

"No trouble at all, Miss ....., ah, Miss ....."

"Schlau, sir."

"Schlau, oh, yes, of course. German, isn't it? Great minds, the Germans. I'm German myself, you know, by way of England. Is there any way I may be of help? I'm working on some very interesting theories on the mid-thirteenth . . . "

"Oh, no, really, sir. I couldn't bother you. I have all the notes I need. I was just ready to leave when you came in." She stood up. "If you will excuse me, sir, my mother will be wondering what ever became of me."

She moved toward the door, and Professor Gilroy hurried to open it for her. "I do hope that you get a good grade on your composition, Miss Schlau."

Lanci hurried down the stairs and out the door. She put several blocks behind her before she slowed to a saunter. Soon she spotted Rick's blue Ford. He looked worried, but relaxed when she waved the notebook. She crossed the street, and he leaned over to open the door for her.

"What took you so long?"

Lanci smiled as she slid in and tossed back her hair. "I just had a little chat with Professor Gilroy."

"He caught you?"

"Now did I say that?" she replied archly.

"I told you not to take any chances. There is no sense in cutting your throat just to prove a point."

"It was slightly trickier than I expected, but I meant it when I said that no file is off limits to Lanci Loring. I've built

up a reputation for being reliable." She slipped a folded sheet from the notebook. "But tell Al that next time I'll charge extra for any more of Gilroy's tests. It might not be so easy a second time."

He's Gone Away

Thelma Johnson

There were four of them—three men and a boy—who came down the rutted road that hot, July morning, and the old woman stood and watched them come, the hoe in her hand, her eyes black and bright behind the protection of the slat bonnet. She was standing motionless in a patch of dried-up Kentucky Wonders that were dying on the vine, and the ground where she had hoed was full of clods and clay.

"We need rain," said the man who was in the lead, unconsciously glancing at the sky, and then spitting into the dust at the side of the road. He was the sheriff, and he was aware of the woman's scrutiny as the shrewd, black eyes took in the badge on his belt and the gun on his hip before she looked at the man himself. "Ma'am, are you Mrs. Broom?" he asked, touching his hat brim.

She motioned toward the house with the hoe handle, and then turned her back on them abruptly and began hoeing again, making short, vicious, chopping motions at the hard ground.

They cut through a triangle of pasture toward the house, with the sheriff going first, picking his way through the buckbrush and handing branches back to Webb Warner, the highway patrolman, who followed with a Rolleiflex camera around his neck and a twelve-gauge shotgun in his right hand.

The third man was Adam Bellows, the county medical examiner, who was too fat to make a trek like this on a hot July morning. "I didn't know we had land this rough in Carey County," he said, wiping his face and neck with a handkerchief.

"You want to go back to the car and wait?" asked Warner.

Bellows snorted.

The sheriff stopped, and stood for a few moments with his thumbs tucked into his hip pockets. "How will we ever get a body out of here? We'll have to carry it out on a stretcher."

"There isn't any body yet," said Warner.

"Want to bet?" asked the sheriff. Warner didn't answer.

They went on, making a single-file procession toward the

neat framehouse, the blue vervain and the horseweeds brushing their pants legs, and the dust rising in little puffs behind their feet. They crawled through a barbed-wire fence, the boy holding up the top wire with one hand, and holding down the next one with his foot, and the men climbing through carefully so they wouldn't tear their clothing.

The house was tidy, but it needed paint. The men expected to be met by a pack of coon hounds, but there were no dogs around, only a cat with three kittens, who lay in the shade of an elm tree that grew in the front yard. As they approached the house, they became aware of a song, sung in a thin, feminine voice that had an untrained, plaintive quality.

" . . . He's gone away, for to stay a little while
And he's comin' back, though it were ten thousand mile . . . "

The minor key and the ancient words seemed appropriate and expected. "A folk song," said Bellows. "I didn't think these people down here along the river had enough education to know a good folk song when they heard it."

" . . . Oh, who will shoe my feet, and who will glove my hand?
And who will kiss my ruby lips
When he's gone away . . . "

When they got to the porch, they saw the singer. She was a young girl, not pretty, in a homemade dress, with a look of incomparable unawareness in her eyes. She was sitting in a rocking chair on the front porch with a high school literature book open in her lap, and it was in this that she found the words to the song she sang. She was perhaps eighteen or nineteen, with an undernourished body and a large head. Her skin was olive and her dark brown eyes had a faraway look.

The woman who was her mother came to the door. She was a dumpy woman with an unsuccessful permanent wave and gold on her teeth. She looked worried. "Are you Sheriff Quinn?" she asked.

"I'm Sheriff Barney Quinn," said the sheriff, shaking hands solemnly. "This is Adam Bellows, the county medical examiner, and Webb Warner, a highway patrolman. The boy is my nephew. Where is your husband?"

"He's not here. He's gone to kill Jim Baylor."

"That's what you said on the telephone. I notice you don't have a phone. How did you call me?"

"I went to the neighbor's. It's two miles back the way you came."

"Are you sure he's going to kill Baylor?"

"He took a gun with him."

"What kind of a gun?"

"A twenty-two rifle."

"Well, that could do the job if it's aimed at the right place," said the sheriff. "Is this . . . " He indicated the girl who sat rocking with the open book on her lap.

"This is Bonnie," said Mrs. Broom, brushing back her hair. "Jim gave her a ring. Show him your ring, Bonnie."

Bonnie held out her hand, and the sheriff looked at it. The ring was a fake sapphire on a brass band; it had probably cost twenty-five cents at a variety store. "He's going to marry me," said Bonnie, her eyes shining.

Quinn started to say something and then changed his mind. "That's very nice," he said. He turned to the mother. "Which way did he go?" he asked.

She pointed. "Over to Jim's place. Through the woods and over the bridge. The bridge is where she's been meeting him. Every night after school and every day since school was out. We didn't know about it. Then this morning she wore that ring at breakfast and told us that Jim is going to marry her. He can't marry her. He's already married."

"I know, said the sheriff, starting off for the woods. "You'd better stay here, Adam," he said. "It's pretty hot."

"I'm all right."

They set off, with the memory of the girl's happiness before them. "Watch out for snakes," said Warner.

"Don't you think we'd better hurry?" asked the boy impatiently.

"We can't stop what's going to happen by hurrying."

They crossed another barbed-wire fence, and plunged into the woods, watching where they put their feet. All but the boy wore boots, and all but the boy were patient and steady. Once they stopped under a cottonwood to rest, and Warner sat on his haunches against the trunk of the tree and wiped the back of his neck with a handkerchief. Bellows and Quinn sat watching a chattering squirrel on a branch above them. "You went to high school with her," said the sheriff to his nephew. "What kind of a girl is she?"

The boy shrugged. "She's okay, I guess, but she's not very bright. She just barely got through."

"Any boy friends?"

"Are you kidding? Who'd date a girl in an out-of-the-way place like this? You can't get a car within a half-mile of the house in dry weather, and when the road's bad, they leave their car at the Williams place where the telephone is. Besides, who'd date a dummy like her? There's only one reason a fellow'd go with—" He stopped, slightly embarrassed at where his analysis was leading him.

"What about Jim Baylor?" asked Bellows. "What kind of a man is he?"

The sheriff spat at a stump. "He's a man about forty-five years old who is married with a family, and if Phil Broom kills him, he's got it coming."

"It's a tossup," said Warner, getting to his feet. "Jim and Phil are two of a kind. They both get drunk on Saturday night, they spear fish through the ice in the winter, they steal gas from their neighbors' gas tanks, they trap out of season, and they do anything else they think they can get away with."

"There's one big difference," said the sheriff. "Phil Broom has a daughter."

They went on, picking their way through the scrub oak and buckbrush. Once a timber rattler slid away from them through some dry leaves and disappeared into the underbrush.

After about fifteen minutes they came to the bridge over the river. It was a makeshift footbridge, but it was sturdy. Warner went over first to test it. The rest of them followed.

They found Baylor, his body lying on the river bank, half in and half out of the brackish backwater of a pool that had been captured and imprisoned along the side. Warner got there first and turned him over. "He's dead," he said. "He's been dead an hour or so, maybe."

"Let me take a look," said Bellows. He scrambled down to the water and looked carefully at the bullet hole in the man's shoulder. After a moment, he said, "The bullet didn't kill him, but the river did. I'll guess that he drowned, but we'll have to have an autopsy to know for sure."

Warner kicked at a rock near the man's head. "He may have hit his head on this rock when he fell."

The sheriff was looking up the hillside. "Adam, that hill's too steep for your arteries. You stay here with the body and we'll go get Phil."

"How do you know he's up there?" asked the boy.

"I don't." They climbed straight up the hill past a skunk den,

picking their way through the undergrowth, looking for footholds on the ledges of limestone that protruded from the ground. "He could live in these woods all summer and we'd never find him."

"What good is this land?" asked the boy. "Do these people own it?"

"No, they don't own it," panted the sheriff. "They just live on it. Somebody in town owns it and runs cattle in here during the summer. That's all it's good for, and it's not even much good for that."

They reached the summit of the hill and stopped to look around. "We may be over in Greentree County by now," said Warner. "Not that it matters, I guess." They were on a kind of plateau and far away to the west they could see the single spire of a church and near it, a silo.

"I'll take him in, even if he's not in my county."

"Well, you're going to get your chance."

Phil Broom came walking toward them, the twenty-two slung over his arm as if he were out hunting rabbits. He had been sitting on a rock waiting for them.

"Throw down your gun, Phil," said Quinn.

Broom handed the rifle to Warner, stock first, and Warner broke it. There was a spent shell in it. "Shooting squirrels out of season?" asked Warner.

"You know I wasn't," said Broom. He was a tall, thin man who had worked too hard and had too little to show for it. He wore a pair of demin pants and a faded blue shirt.

"I'm going to have to take you to town with me."

"You know what he did to Bonnie?"

"Yes, I know, but I'm going to have to take you in anyway."

"Jim Baylor and I were friends for years. Is he dead?"

"Yes, he's dead."

"I didn't aim to really kill him. Just scare him some. But it was goin' to school that did it. Bonnie was a good girl till she got romantic notions from those books they gave her to read. All about long-lost lovers and knights on horses."

They started walking back the way they had come, three men and a boy. Warner went first, still carrying the sawed-off shotgun in one hand and the rifle in the other, the perspiration beading on the back of his neck. He began to whistle softly to himself, and then quit when he realized what he was whistling. But the words of the folk song still ran in his head all the way back down the hill.

" . . . There's more pretty girls than one,
There's more pretty girls than one,
There's more pretty girls than one, two, or three,
But none like Bonnie and me."

Saturday Night Incident

Thelma Johnson

Going to town on Saturday night in the summertime became a pattern of my childhood that was rarely broken. It was during the depression years and this was the only diversion, other than an occasional after-supper visit to a neighbor, to while away the long, hot evenings. There were many Saturday nights, but the one that remains a quintessence of all the rest of them occurred in July, 1936 or thereabouts; it was not only a depression year but a drought year. Even the children don't forget those easily.

Saturday night always began with a bath. It was probably the only time during the week that the whole family was clean at the same time. Water was scarce and nearby Mosquito Creek was brackish and full of sandbars. The water we used at the house had to be carried from a well near the barn, so we didn't waste it. Sometimes we used each other's bath water, and I remember taking a bath one time in the wash boiler, using water that had been previously used to rinse clothes. It is still impossible for me to waste water. A dripping faucet drives me frantic, and the hot and cold water rushing into a porcelain bathtub is still something of a miracle.

After the bath, it was my duty to get dressed up and wait for the rest of the family to get ready. That summer my dress was a white voile with multi-colored coin dots. I was very fond of it. It was the only dress I had. I wore sunsuits the rest of the time.

The town where we shopped was Caryville, fifteen miles away. It wasn't a very large town, but I thought it was, and there were a great many things for a six-year-old child to observe and absorb. We arrived about seven o'clock, parked the car, and went our separate ways—my father to find some other farmers to visit with, and my mother and I to do the weekly shopping.

The farmers in those days wore clean dress shirts and a

fairly new pair of bib overalls and a snap-brim hat when they went to town. It was a kind of uniform. When the weather got cooler, they added a suit coat. They would stand on the curbs and talk, one foot on the bumper of a car, and some of them chewing tobacco and spitting into the gutter. The talk was endless—crops and cattle, drought and depression, markets and politics. Sometimes the talks would adjourn to a nearby beer parlor, but this was not the rule. Money was too scarce to waste on beer.

My mother would go from one store to another with me tagging along, and whenever she found someone to talk to, she would stand and visit for fifteen or twenty minutes about chickens and gardens and recipes. The time became endless for me. I am certain that I learned to read out of boredom, standing first on one foot and then on the other, staring at the neon signs up and down the street, and identifying different business places—Montgomedy Ward, Penney's, McDonald's Dry Goods, Flossie's Hamburger Shop, the Ballyhoo Hut.

Sometimes on these hunts, we ran into relatives. Nobody has more relatives than I do, and some of them lived in Caryville. My mother didn't care much for them, because they were all relatives of my father, and she always secretly believed that, in the last analysis, she had married beneath her. My father's people were Irish—black Irish—with the quick temper and the black despair of that unfortunate race. They had a tendency toward intra-family feuds and bitter quarrels that remained unreconciled unto the second and third generations. It was a problem for my mother to keep everybody straight and remember who was currently not speaking to whom.

One branch of the family was particularly unfriendly and quarrelsome—my father's sister, Lee's family. Aunt Lee was a sullen woman who never came to town, and it was rumored that her husband, Dave, had killed a man in his youth. Whether or not this was true, the legend gave him a romantic aura. He talked like Edward G. Robinson and said "see what I mean" all the time. His children, my cousins, emulated the current movie stars and gangster heroes, and the names of Greta Garbo, John Dillinger, Pretty Boy Floyd, Carole Lombard, Clark Gable, Jean Harlow, and the Barrows gang were all of a kind.

When Aunt Lee's oldest daughter, June, approached my mother in the Self-Serve Grocery Store, even I knew that there

was something unusual going on. It was past nine o'clock, and the stores closed at ten. Everybody waited until the last minute to buy the groceries, because they had to be carried to the car and that was the signal for the trip home to begin. My mother was carrying a sack of sugar, I remember, and talking to my Aunt Ann, another sister of my father, when June came up and said hello. June was big and fat. I suppose she still is. Everyone I have ever known named June was big and fat, but she was the first one to set the pattern.

I didn't like her. She was never very congenial, and I suppose she was embarrassed to acknowledge that she was related to "country people." She was about twenty, married, and her husband was on relief, but she lived in the city. There was a difference.

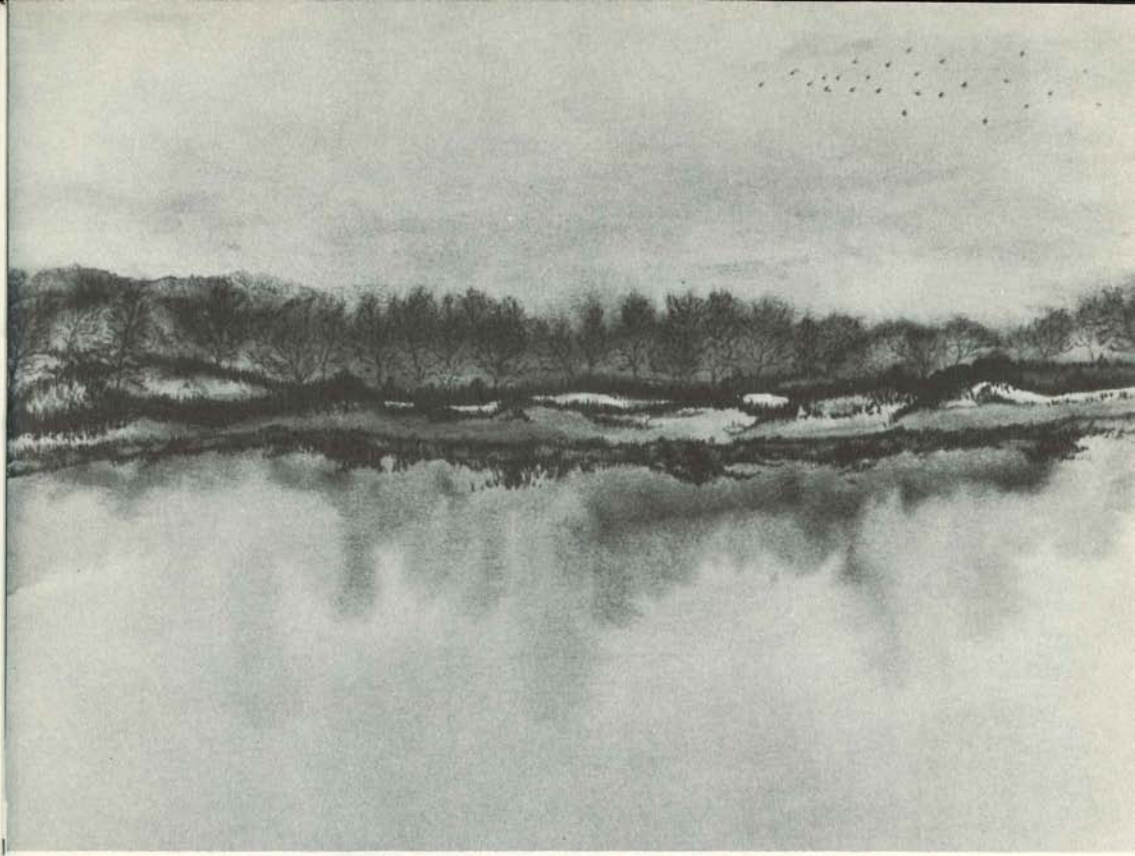
She walked up to my mother and said, "Aunt May, Uncle John's in a fight with Walter Tuttle. They're down at the Ballyhoo Hut and they've been drinking beer all evening."

My mother didn't even stop to question it, and neither did my Aunt Ann. My mother dropped the sack of sugar and grabbed me by the hand and hauled me out of the store behind her as fast as she could walk. It was only three blocks from the Self-Serve to the Ballyhoo Hut, but it seemed longer, and I had to run to keep up. My mother was in the lead, the sleeves of her flowered voile dress flapping in the breeze she created.

My mother's normal expression was one of disapproval. I used to think she disapproved of me, but there wasn't anything really personal in it. She disapproved of everybody. She spent quite a bit of time disapproving of my father, and several items in June's cryptic and shocking bit of news had disturbed her. I was aware of it, even at six.

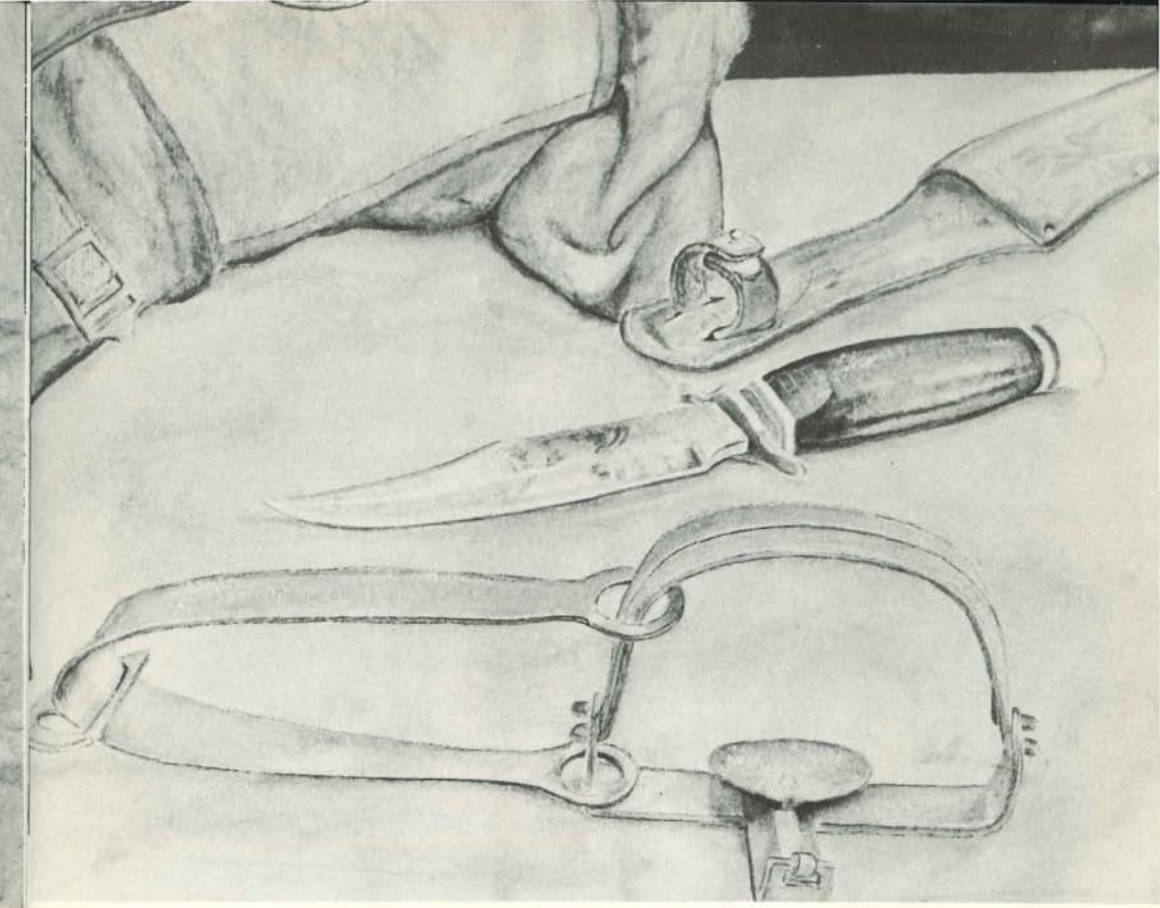
The first thing that bothered her was that he had been drinking beer when there wasn't enough money for luxuries like that. The second thing was that he was in a fight. My father was not a large man, and Walter Tuttle, his brother-in-law, was about a hundred pounds heavier. My mother didn't approve of fighting anyway. Civilized people didn't do it.

The trip to the beer parlor was urgent and rigorous, with my mother yanking on my hand and telling me to run. My imagination created all kinds of perils. I was afraid my father would be killed, or at least badly hurt.



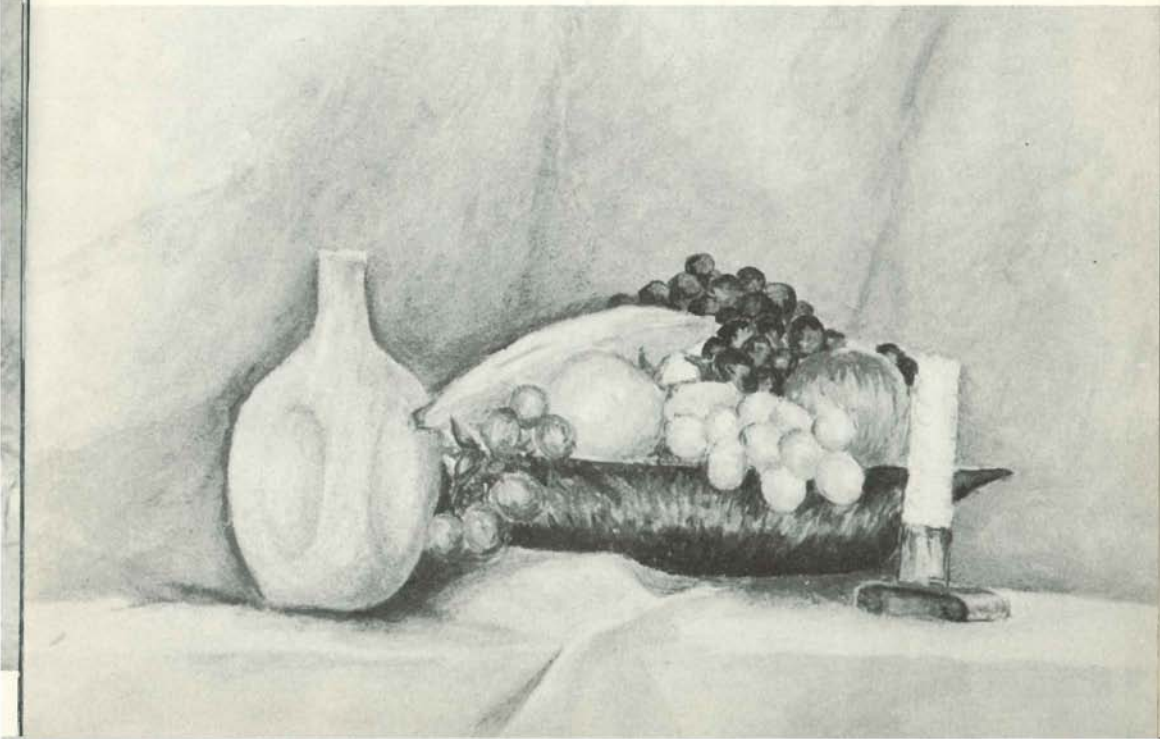
Mary Hicks, "High Flight"

Deniece Walker, "What is Human"



Joseph Meyer, "Remnants of the Old West"

Wilma Clem, "Still Life"

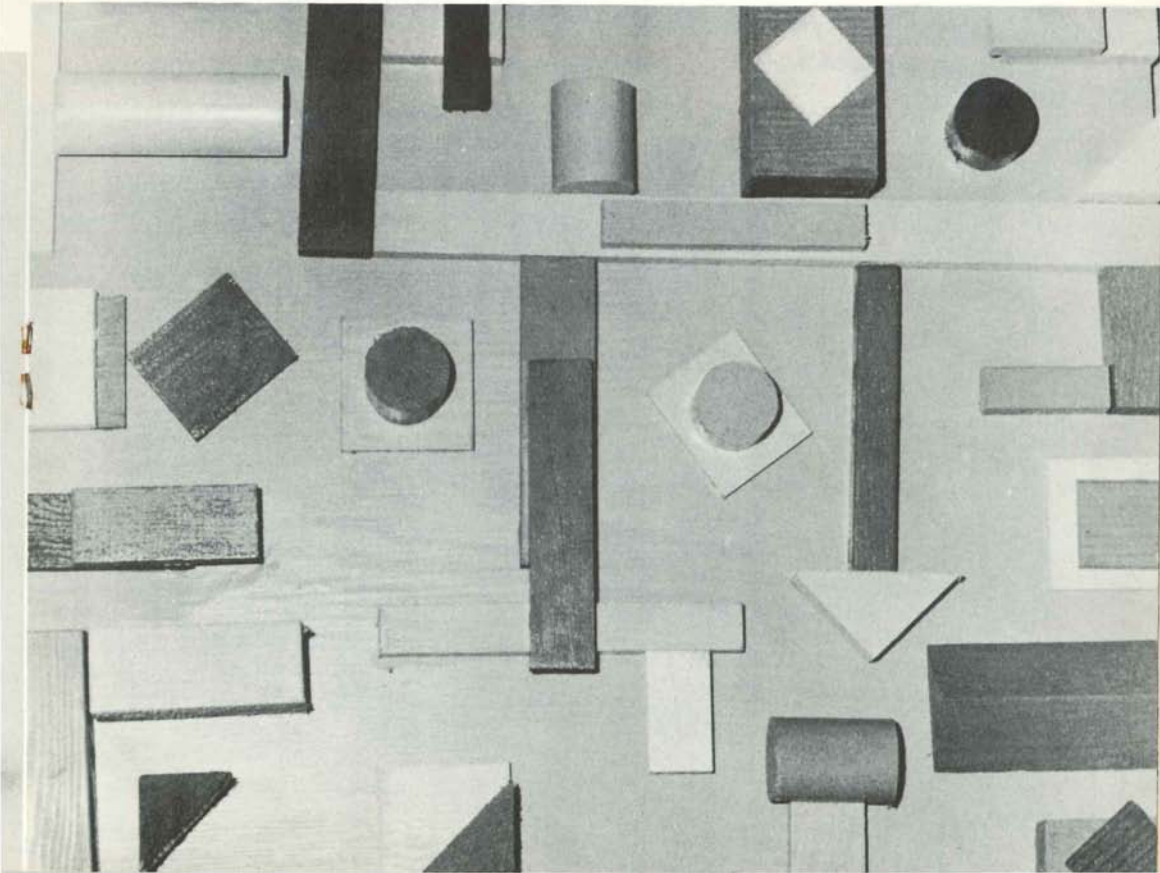


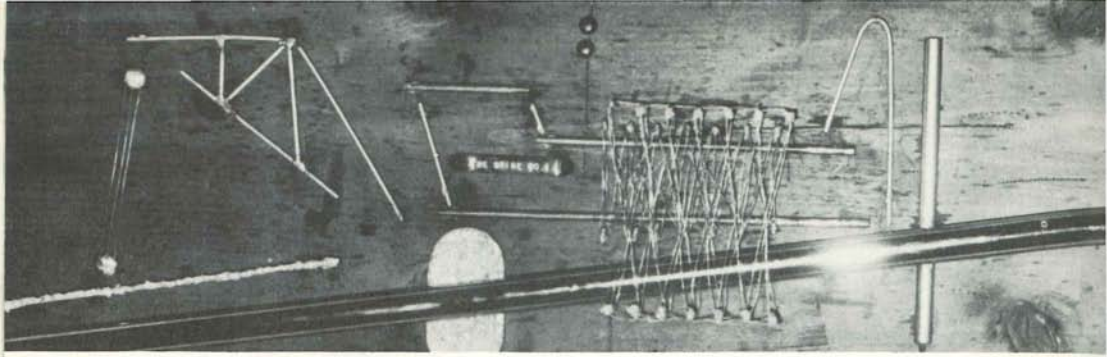
Helen Anderson, "Moses"

Ransom Choto, "Untitled"

Above: Deniece Walker, "Annaxebreism"

Nancy Merrill, "Plant Cell"



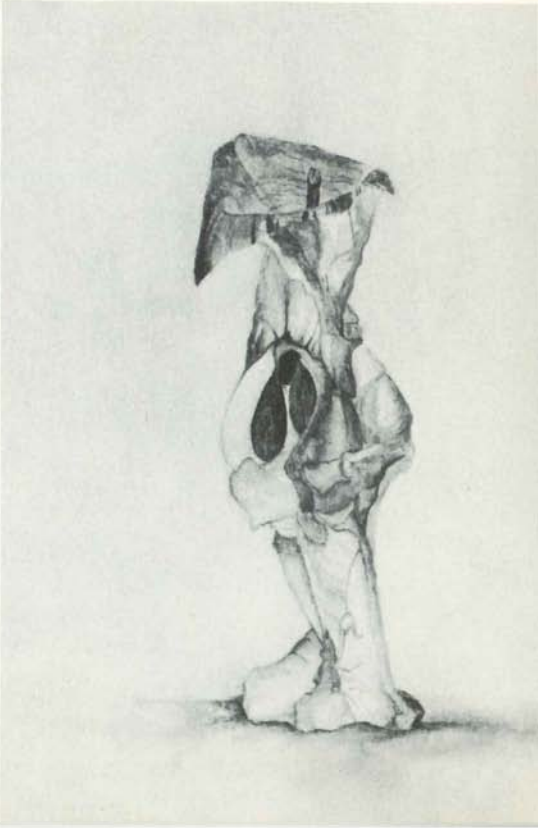


Lois Dawson, "The Bride No. 1"

Right: Lou Langos, "Oedipus Rex"

Lois Dawson, "Intoxication"

Below: Claudia Krnoch, "Untitled"

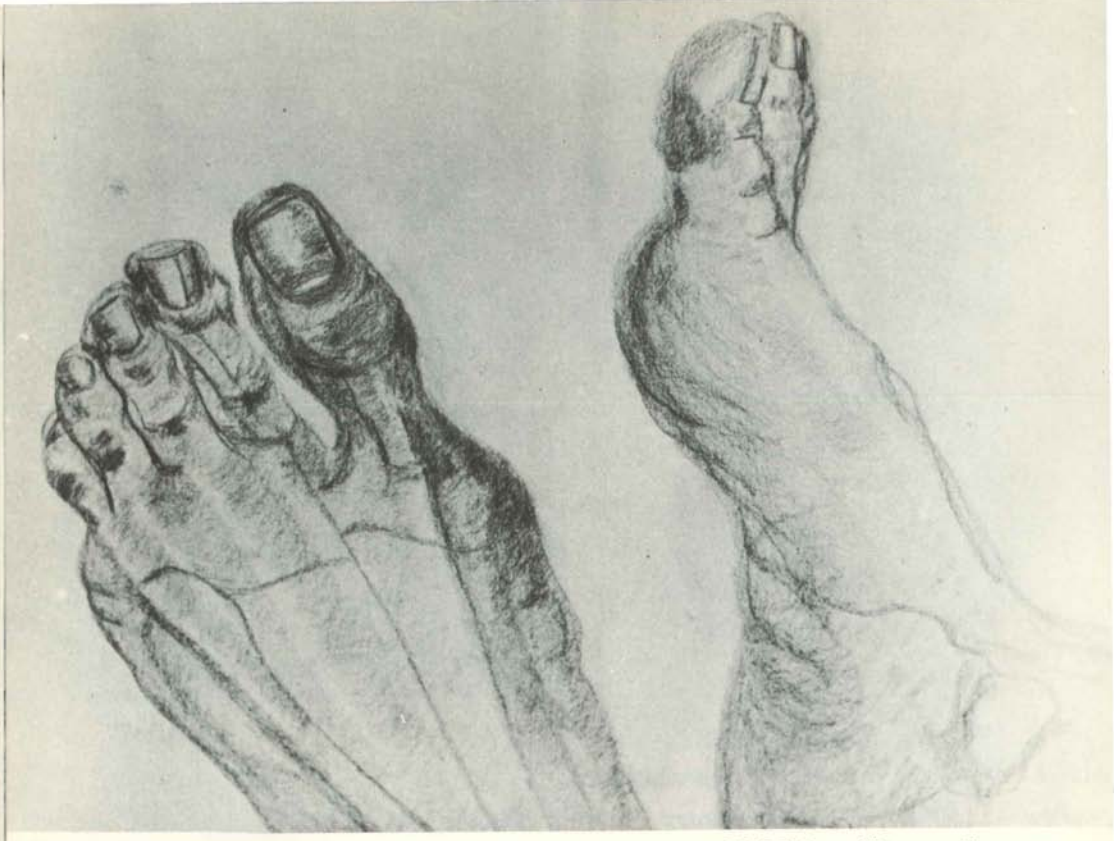


LOIS DAWSON

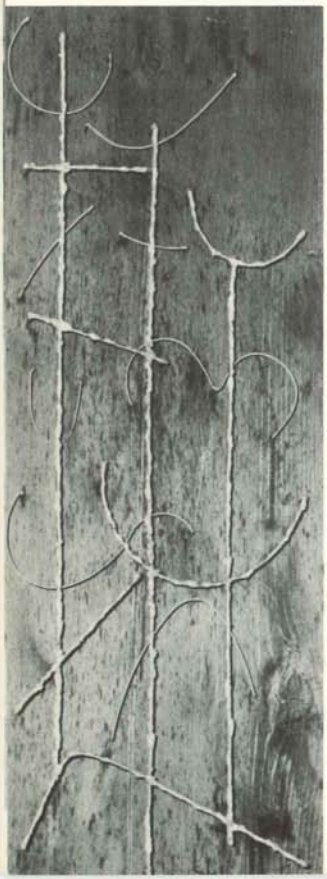
UNTITLED

DENIECE WALKER

FEMININE

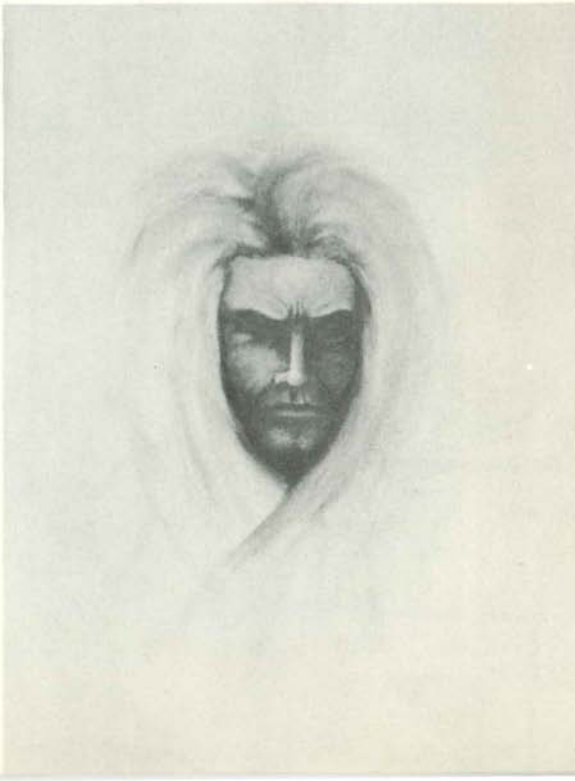


Above: Mary Ann McMains, "Repose"



Lois Dawson,
"Bundling"

George Spade, "Heraclitus, The Dark One"



The Expert

Mary Ellen Long

Benjamin Ashur bent his frail body against the winter wind with fierce determination. He was already five minutes behind schedule, and nothing, not even the wind, would slow him still more. The walks were slippery from the night's sleet storm, but he moved at a breathless pace and with little care. His thoughts were barely on his footing and not at all on the cold. The eager anticipation of the victory close at hand kept him warm.

So, Mr. Peter Collinson, you think that you know so much. You'll see. You can't just walk in and take over Benjamin Ashur's position. I have been the one and only cataloger at the Masefield College Library for thirty years. Almost every book on the shelves has been through my hands. I put them where they are, all in order, all cataloged properly, by my decision. Of course, I have some help now, but just for the easy jobs. Any fool can write numbers on a book spine.

My mind is as good as ever; better for all those years of experience. Experience comes with age. All those young people scurrying up and down the stairs, scraping chairs, banging doors, getting books out of place, ruining pages with their dirty hands. If I had my way, we would have closed stacks. Keep those juveniles away from the books.

Collinson and his "the right book for the right person at the right time," and "the most books for the most people." Spoonfeeding, that's what it is. Haven't enough brains in their heads to use the card catalog correctly. They aren't scholars, any of them. Especially Collinson. Fresh out of graduate school. Barely knows what life is all about. Certainly not dedicated.

And those young girls. Crost should hire some sensible elderly women. That little snippet with the short skirt and the flyaway hair. Sneaking up on me and whispering so loudly that Crost could hear in his office, "Excuse me, sir, but I don't think this book has the right call number. None of the other books with this call number are about television announcing." Damned television anyway. Dewey hadn't made provision for it in his book. How could you expect the man to foresee all these new inventions? It was getting so you just got the revisions in numbers organized when they came out with a new book. No sense in it.

Mary Ann McMains, "Etude"

Claudia Krnoch, "Untitled"

. . . *And Your Children, They Will Burn*

Sharon K. Nelson

The wind shrieked at the moon; and tore at the earth, like a wrathful god. Great waves of grass blew like foam; and the trees groaned at the feel of it. Their leaves twisted, and shook, and made angry sounds with each blast. The ancient cottonwood heaved, and grunted, and rattled its bony old branches.

The aging gray house was almost indistinguishable in the storm. Only one dim light, in a downstairs window, gave any hint that it was there at all. The house had survived many such storms, but its stiff old frame creaked and moaned, and the wind in the bedroom window made a lonely whining sound.

Only one dim lamp had been turned on. It gave the already shabby room a dreary appearance. Wallpaper hung limply on the walls, here and there exposing an older layer. A large crack had started across the ceiling until it ran into a fly specked bulb, held up by a network of exposed wires. Plaster shaken loose by the storm lay scattered across the floor. An old bed, held up by two chipped frames, drooped unhappily under a window. There were no curtains, only distorted yellow shades. Someone had attempted to cheer the room up. A picture of Mona Lisa, cut from a magazine, smiled mystically. The self-contained Madame Pompadour, torn from a school book, stared knowingly into space.

A thin young girl paced back and forth across the room. She was alone except for her three sons asleep upstairs. Her nervous steps halted in front of the mirror, as she ran her fingers futilely through her fine brown hair. The storm had made it wild; she swept it back with her hand. Her eyes were tired and dark looking, and her shoulders slumped wearily forward. Her cotton dress was neat, but too old for her. She began to sing lightly to herself.

"Rain, Rain, go away,
Come again some other day."

The wind wailed again at the windows, and rain began to rise and fall with the passions of the storm. There was nothing she could do to curb the turmoil within herself. Her dark absorbent eyes turned to the lamp; deep and haunted, they did not reflect the light, but burned from a source of their own.

It frightened her to be alone. All the restlessness that welled up in her came out when she was left by herself to think.

Yet tonight there was a certain calm in her panic. She moved

But Mr. Crost wouldn't think about that. Oh, no. He just said the next day, "You know that the library appreciates all your years of service, Ashur: but you needn't feel obligated to stay on if the work is getting too difficult." He said it in his patient, friendly way, but I know that he was thinking that I can't be trusted anymore. Giving the Rockwood collection to young Collinson to process. He didn't know that I could hear, but I heard him tell Collinson to take care of it.

Mr. Ashur turned the corner and started across the campus. Just wait until I walk in and notice the Randolph's first edition lying in the discard pile with all those worthless books. He had his speech all prepared. He would walk into Mr. Crost's office and place the beaten, brown leather book on his desk. If Mr. Crost didn't recognize its worth right away, Ashur would tell him. And then he would say, "I hate to speak against a fellow worker, sir; but this is a very unforgivable oversight on the part of Mr. Collinson.

It hadn't been an oversight on anyone's part. Collinson hadn't even seen the book. Ashur had spotted it right away on the cart in the workroom. He knew how to properly value a book. Collinson might really have missed it, but he couldn't take the chance. It was too perfect a way to discredit Collinson, and so Ashur had slipped the book out of the group and put it in the discard pile himself.

Hurrying in expectation of his moment of glory, he puffed up the stairs and rushed past the circulation desk. Slow down. You mustn't give yourself away, Benjamin. He went through the workroom door, glanced casually at the pile of old books, and went pale. It wasn't there.

"Ashur!" Mr. Crost came out of his office with the Randolph in his hand. "Really, Ashur, how could you have let this get past you?" The patient friendliness was gone from his voice.

"Sir?"

"Collinson was working late last night and happened to check the discards. This is from the Rockwood collection and very valuable. It would have been a great loss to our library if this had been destroyed. I wanted to give Collinson the chance to have some real responsibility, but after some discussion, he convinced me that I should let you work with it. He was unsure of himself and thought that you should do them since you were the expert. We moved the collection to your work table yeesterday afternoon."

The realization that everything was ready startled her, but she had no time to hesitate.

She didn't go upstairs to look at her sons. She took the suitcase and carried it with her to the lamp. She clung to it tightly, afraid to set it down even as she struggled to turn off the lamp.

The storm had worn out, the night was still and peaceful, as if it had just recovered from a long illness. It was dark and misty out, but she knew her way too well to be unsure of herself. As she passed the exhausted cottonwood, she straightened her stooped shoulders, and began to sing quite suddenly and passionately.

"Lady bug, lady bug,
Fly away home
Your house is on fire,
And your children, they will burn."

Those On The Backs Of Tigers

Sharon K. Nelson

There wasn't much for a colored boy to do in a town the size of Benton. I suppose if you thought about it, there wasn't much for a white boy to do either. I guess that's why he liked school so well, it gave him something to do and it kept his mind busy. But now that it was summer he spent each day searching for something to break the monotny.

His sisters all helped his mother so there wasn't much to do at home. He had a few odd jobs around town. Once or twice a week he always stopped at Miss McGill's and helped her clean out her birds' cages. Then with a nod of her cashew-nut face, she would give him two nickels and tell him when to come again.

He liked to go for walks in the country; but he had to be careful not to let Patrolman Wilson see him wandering around. Ole Wilson was always cruising about. It was a well established fact that Mrs. Wilson ruled the roost; but when he spotted Jim, out of the car he would come, chin up, chest out, and ask the eternal question, "What ya doin' boy?" The old rooster knew damn well what he was doing! But he was too sick of the game to risk playing it today.

Miss McGill's house was only a block from Benton's only drug store, and for no explainable reason he found himself there. He watched the white girl come out of the store and stared wistfully

quickly to the closet, but hesitated for a second before she opened the door. There wasn't much on the hangers, only a couple of men's shirts and a few housedresses. Several old cardboard boxes that contained odd ends of junk, that for some reason she was afraid to throw away, sat lop-sidedly on the floor. She pushed her way through these until she came to a scarred cardboard suitcase. She cautiously lifted it, and carefully made her way back through the closet. She placed the suitcase in the middle of the old bed. It slumped awkwardly half in the sag. She had done this many times before. It had become a part of the routine enacted whenever things overwhelmed her.

How many times had she thought about leaving? Life had always overpowered her. Fighting it usually left her weak and shaken. It was like being thrown from a horse time after time, to have to climb back with the knowledge that you would be dashed to the ground once again. Her life was an irony; she had married to escape taking care of her younger brothers, only to give birth to three sons herself. There was nothing to hold her here, no hope, no love. She had married too young, and had three children before she was even willing to love her husband. She went back to the song.

"No, I won't be my father's jack
And I won't be my mother's jill
I'll be a fiddler's wife
And fiddle when I will."

She didn't really hate her sons, but she couldn't love them either. They had come so soon, she wasn't ready for them. Perhaps she would never be ready for children. They demanded much more than she could give. Her husband, too, claimed too much of her, men always did. He thought he owned her, but did not possess her anymore than her sons did.

She moved more certainly now. The storm had calmed somewhat, but the cottonwood was still shaking its brittle old branches and the wind still had a somber hum. She went briskly to the closet and flipped the dresses over her arm. One of the old boxes served as a chest-of-drawers; she calmly removed the rest of her clothes from there and walked determinately toward the bed. It took her only a few minutes to pack. She was about to close the lid when something occurred to her. She turned quickly to the wall, and removed the Mona Lisa, and shoved it into the suitcase. She snapped the lid shut and slammed the whole thing on the floor.

paddled along. He could easily visualize the delight registered on three shining faces as he showed his children the deer he had shot. They would be so proud of their daddy, and so fascinated at the sight of a real deer like the one whose antlers hung above the fireplace. And his wife would be proud, too, when she learned that, for the fifth year in a row, his trip had been successful. In turn, he would be proud when Becky served venison steaks for dinner some evening, cooked as only she knew how. Yes, Jim eagerly anticipated presenting the carcass to his family—this ten point was the largest he had ever shot.

Jim's thoughts were interrupted by Bill's hushed admonition. "Look, Jim—ahead of us!" Both men had been concentrating so hard on making progress in the choppy waters that they had not looked around them for quite awhile. During that time dusk had settled. Now the entire western sky was illuminated with the red glow of the sun forcing its rays downward through a thick mass of dark clouds. This grandeur was partially reflected on the water in front of them, with the irregular waves giving a kaleidoscope effect to the brilliant colors above. The scene was made more memorable by the appearance of a buck, standing alone and majestic on the horizon—a singular temptation to any camera bug or hunter.

"Damn!" Jim's reaction to the scene that Bill had pointed out was one of ultimate frustration. He knew that they could not afford to think about shooting another deer now, for the waters had become even more choppy as the icy wind blew harder. 'That'd be a shot even you could get. You ole son of a gun, keep your observations to yourself after this!"

"Sorry." Bill grinned as he snapped back his sarcastic reply. "Don't gripe at me, old man. You got yours."

"Yup, we did alright for ourselves, didn't we? Sure am glad you persuaded me to come. To think that I'd about decided to stay home with . . . "

His sentence was left unfinished as the brisk wind blew the canoe sideways into the current. The hunters paddled frantically, trying to swing the canoe back around again to avoid sure disaster. They worked swiftly and expertly, but the strong current and howling wind were too powerful. The canoe lurched sideways, then swung around in a desperate attempt to stay afloat. Once more it jerked violently. Jim and Bill could do nothing more than gasp as the boat twisted sideways, tipped, and

at the Coca Cola sign. He began to finger his two nickels. He stared at the strong jaw and proud head of Jefferson, a good looking man, but then he was white.

A little whirlwind scattered the dust down the road, and two little boys came out with ice cream cones. They had to eat them fast for the sun was hot.

Tired of the nickels, he put them back in his pocket and began to walk home. He was hot and thirsty; it was a good thing he lived only three blocks from the store. Why was it, he wondered, that he always seemed to be thirstier when he knew he was least likely to get a drink? A coke sure sounded better than a glass of water, but he didn't feel like walking six extra blocks to 'Joes.'

A woman came shuffling down the street. She stiffened her back and glanced at her feet as she passed. A man and woman were at the street corner passing out papers. He took one. It was all about Jesus and how he planned to save the world, complete with a picture of Jesus blessing sweet pale little children. He handed it back to the man. "I'm sick and tired of your white Jesus," he said, and walked away. The woman started in amazement, then turned to her companion, "I don't know what's the matter with those niggers," she said.

A Time To Live and A Time To Die

Nan Stone

The canoe slithered through the choppy water noiselessly. Expert hands lowered the paddles gently, accurately, methodically into the mucky water, pulled back, and lifted them carefully. The rhythm was precise, even though the men in the canoe had to fight the ever-increasing current with concentrated effort. These men did not speak; both were exhausted after a long day of tramping through thick underbrush and of laying tense and alert, every muscle tight as they waited to shoot. To a good hunter stalking a deer or rabbit or even a pheasant was quite pleasantly, yet most completely exhausting—and Jim Herold and Bill Winters were certainly good hunters. But the fact that a deer, four rabbits and two pheasants were tied in the canoe did not lessen the pain as every muscle throbbed. But they could not stop for rest; home was still three miles upstream and night was fast approaching. They could not rest now.

Home——this was foremost in Jim's thoughts as they

a windbreak. Stumbling through the dark room, he eventually located a kerosene lamp with matches nearby. With light he was then able to start a small fire in the stove. All this work was painstakingly slow because his cold body would not function quickly and because his frozen clothing allowed only a limited amount of movement. Finally, however, his efforts were rewarded as the frigid air within the tiny shack warmed slightly. However, the only effect of this bit of warmth was to step up Bill's circulation enough so that his body, previously numb and insensitive to feeling, now tingled with cold. He tried to pull off his ice-laden garments in a frantic effort to let the heat reach his body. Unable to do this, he finally cut off the expensive hunting clothes with a knife he had found. As he wrapped himself in the only blanket in the cabin, the limited supply of wood burned itself low, leaving the room without heat once again. Realizing that without a fire the cabin would not be warm enough for him to stay any length of time, he concentrated upon ways of signaling to passing boats. Suddenly he heard the sound of a boat approaching the island! There was no time to plan; he grabbed a broom leaning against one wall, set it on fire, and ran outside, frantically waving his crude signal with one hand while he clutched his blanket with the other. But he had been too late—the boat already passed. As Bill returned to the cabin, a feeling of hopelessness swept over him, for he knew that it would be unlikely for another boat to pass the remote place for several hours. Probably it would be morning before there would be even the hope of rescue, and by then he could be nearly frozen.

Bill's spirits were low as he paced back and forth across the room in an effort to keep his circulation up. His body ached with every movement. He was nearly overcome with fatigue; each step became more and more difficult, but he knew that he must continue moving. Every motion was made with this in mind. Walking was excruciatingly painful, but absolutely necessary. He concentrated carefully. Lif foot slowly . . . move it forward . . . place firmly on floor . . . lean forward . . . lift other foot . . . place firmly on floor . . . Slowly. Carefully. Can't stop.

Voices yelling excitedly outside the cottage interrupted Bill's efforts. He moved toward the dor painfully fast, reaching it just as the newcomers had succeeded in pushing it open.

"We saw the light," on of them began to explain, "and knew that somebody had to be in trouble." Help was at hand. That

overturned, dumping its occupants into the icy water. With its cargo of heavy carcasses, the canoe quickly sank.

"Kick off your boots!" Bill yelled as he struggled to remove his own heavy hunting boots. He knew that otherwise neither of them could fight the swift current. Turning toward Jim, however, he realized that the call had been futile. His comrade was floundering in the water, obviously unable to swim. Bill frantically swam in his direction, but the current was against him, so he gained only a few feet each minute. After he had not seen Jim's body for several minutes, Bill realized that his efforts would be to no avail. Despondently he allowed his tired body to relax, permitting the current to carry him for perhaps two hundred yards while he regained some of his strength. Doing so, he realized for the first time how cold he was. He was forced to swim with as much of his body as possible under water, for a thin coat of ice would form on the surface of his skin as soon as it was exposed to the air. With frightening clarity Bill realized that he would have to **swim** to the nearest house, since he would surely freeze within a few minutes if he tried to walk along the shore. He rested temporarily and surveyed his situation. Behind him was nothing but forest; thus his only hope for survival would be to swim upstream, against the current, until he spotted a house.

Bill swam for nearly fifteen minutes, gaining not more than half a mile. Exhausted, he stopped on the shore of a tiny, empty island to rest. Not ten seconds had passed, however, before ice began to coat his body. Resolutely he climbed back into the water, forcing every tired muscle to pull him a few feet further. By now he cared about nothing but finding warmth. He had lost all conception of time and distance. The only word with any real meaning for him was 'shelter'. He was beyond the point of logical thinking—all actions were entirely instictive. He no longer reacted as a human being.

After quite awhile, Bill spotted another island—and on this island, rising majestically above the landscape, there stood a tiny shack. His strength miraculously restored, he struggled through the turbulent waters to shore, then stumbled up to the building. Finding the door locked, he panicked. Warmth was so close, and yet so far away. But, as the cold pricked at him, re-alerting the mind, his senses returned. He broke a window with a rock lying nearby, and crawled through the newly made opening. Inside the cabin it was musty and deafeningly silent, but it did provide

We took the alley between the Wards store and a dress shop, darting down the uneven paving into the dark shadows. A minute later, we were in the parking lot by the Ballyhoo Hut with its red and yellow and blue balloons painted on the outside. My mother's feet slipped in the soft gravel, and I got sand in my shoes.

She went up to the door and paused just for a moment. She had never entered a beer parlor alone in her life. She opened the door and I followed fearfully, expecting to see my father lying on the floor, bleeding and dying.

He wasn't. He was sitting in a booth with Uncle Walter, and they were talking in the low-voiced way that can be heard when everybody else is shouting. They each had a glass of beer in front of them, and looked up in surprise at my mother and Aunt Ann and me.

"What are you doing here?" my father asked, puzzled.

"Have you and Walter been in a fight?" demanded my mother, looking for signs of blood.

"Why, no," said my father, reasonably. "We've been just sitting here talking."

"Well, June said you and Walter were fighting."

"Well, we're not."

My mother got tight-lipped and stalked out, yanking me along with her.

On the trip home, with the car windows open and the insects alongside the road making their interminable buzzing sound of summer, I tried to figure out what had happened. My father was imperturable as ever. Nothing ever bothered him much, and this incident seemed to amuse him slightly. My mother sat upright with her "mad look" (as I called it later), and held onto the door handle as if she were thinking of making a run for it.

I said, "Daddy, if you had had your gun you could have licked him, couldn't you?"

My mother turned around and said, "Hush," and I knew she meant it, so I did. But I spent the rest of the way home pondering the situation. I was aware that I had said the wrong thing, but I wasn't sure what it was.

was all the tortured body needed to know.

When Bill awoke he was lying on a large feather bed in the home of one of his friends. Gathered around him were several familiar faces. Doctor Brady was the first to speak.

"Bill? Bill, do you comprehend what I am saying? If you can hear me, nod your head."

Bill nodded.

"You're mighty lucky to be alive, young man. How do you feel? Do you ache, Bill? Where?"

"All over." The words came slowly, and were barely audible. "But not in my fingers and toes. I can't feel anything there."

"Yes, Bill. That's because of the cold," Dr. Brady said gently.

'Cold? What happened, Doc? Why am I here?"

"Your boat capsized in the river, we think, Bill. You'd gone hunting. You had to swim quite a ways, boy. You must be quite a swimmer."

'I remember now. Choppy waters. Canot with the deer sunk. I remember swimming . . . "

"Yes, Bill. I'll talk to you later about that. Now the important thing is that you get some sleep. You're mighty lucky to be alive, but you still have some recovering to do, boy. Sleep well tonight. Just thank God you're alive and safe. I'll be back in the morning. Good night, Bill."

After Dr. Brady had left, Bill tried to sleep. But his mind was too cluttered with thoughts. He lay staring at the ceiling for quite some time, the events of the night rushing through his head. It was ironic how thrilled they had been when Jim shot the deer, and now . . . Siddenly it hit Bill. Jim—**Jim was gone forever.** A vivid picture of the muscular body bobbing in the water reminded Bill of Jim's terrible fate. Now he could remember it all clearly—the look on Jim's face when the canoe capsized, his frantic floundering, Bill's own weak attempts to rescue the drowning comrade. These thoughts made clear the dreadful realization that Jim was gone forever—the same Jim whom Bill had persuaded to go hunting, the same Jim who had eagerly anticipated showing the deer to his family. Bill, in rejoicing that he was alive, had completely forgotten about his comrade. Jim was dead, and Bill had thought of nothing but himself. He had not cared about Jim's misfortune.

No longer did Bill feel so lucky to be alive. In fact ,he felt

more like a cad. Oh, od," he thought, "God, why couldn't it have been me. I don't have a family to raise. Oh, poor Becky. Oh, let me die, too. I **can't** live. I want to die. **Let** me die, **please.**" Bill's exhausted body shook with frightful sobs until it could no longer react. Then he fell into a fitful sleep.

A Duel With Fear

Wanda Thayer

"How is my patient this morning?" The professional non-committal tone of the doctor's voice revealed nothing. Doctors were trained well—almost too well! "You tell me how I am," Doctor." A professional, mechanical smile came and went across the doctor's face. "I can't say yet—the lab reports won't be in my hands until later this afternoon. I'll probably be back in about four-thirty and we'll talk about it then. Everyone treating you fine?" Again those automatic questions which filled up the silence and meant absolutely nothing.

Of course everyone treated me well. Why shouldn't they? I was a good patient, did what the nurses and doctors advised and made no unnecessary demands on their time. What else could I do now but wait and pray for patience to do that waiting.

Such a summer this had been! Going back to summer school to resume studies which had been gladly interrupted some years ago for marriage, was not the easiest task. But despite the difficulty, the two courses in literature had been exhilarating and interesting. How the mind corrodes when not used. It had taken three years of persistent prodding and subtle persuasion for my husband to agree that I should return to college and finish my last year's work which had to be taken on campus. On campus was the "fly in the ointment." I agreed with him that mothers belonged at home with pre-school children but the opportunity of sharing rides with two friends and the fact that I would be home in time for lunch helped to persuade him. Again I recalled the fulfillment which being back in an atmosphere of learning had brought into my life. New found friendships were

a treasured by-product of that classroom affiliation. Would this all end in what the biopsy report revealed? How would I face a negative report? There had been a time several years before when I had asked myself this same question and had found strength, given only by faith in God, to bear the burden of losing a loved one. Tears tugged at my closed eyelids as I let my head fall back onto the coolness of the crumpled pillow. "Oh, dear God, please give me the opportunity to see my two girls grow up. Please give me the chance to fulfill my duty as a mother With your help, I want so to see them grow up in a Christian home under my influence."

A cherry "Good Morning" interrupted my silent prayer and I opened my eyes. "Are we ready for our bath?" I wondered what the nurse's aid would say if I replied, "I'm ready, but are you"—or "are you going to have me bathe you while you bathe me?" Get thee behind me Satan! Besides, this aid interested me. She was a negro and a beautiful girl. "Are you married?" "Oh yes, I have two teenagers at home." "Two teenagers! You look so young." "Not that young—I'll be forty my next birthday." She looked directly at me with beautiful expressive brown eyes. Her features were finer than those of many negroes and her hair was very attractively coiffured under the stiff blue-striped cap. The snuggly fitted starched uniform revealed a slim, boyish figure. She tucked the bath sheet under my arms and around the upper part of my body and easily pulled the bedsheet from the bed. Feeling no racial prejudice, I was astounded at my reaction when she took hold of my arm to wash it. Her hand felt warm and exactly like any white person's hand. Why did this amaze me? Did I have a deep-seated prejudice which I was unaware of?

I watched her admiringly as she pulled the sheets taunt over the mattress pad and folded the top sheet back over the bedspread. She was a good nurses' aid. After several suggestions for my comfort she picked up the pile of soiled linens and quietly left the room, closing the door part was as she passed through.

That haunting fear of the unknown came back immediately in the quietness of the lonely room. Just one week ago, unaware of any possibility of hospitalization, we had all been out on a very hot rail ride. Being no horsewoman I recalled the difficulty in keeping the horse I was riding from stopping to eat the leaves from the low hanging branches which crossed the trail. It had

rained during the night and early morning and the heat of the ten o'clock midsummer sun beat down on my bare head. The gnats swarmed around the horse's eyes and nose and she stopped occasionally to toss her head and blow air out through her nostrils. My chief desire at that time, to be anywhere else but on a horse, had not included a hospital—or at least would not have had I known that was where I would be. Strange how fate turns the table and we get our desire only to find the wish not exactly what we had in mind.

The door was pushed open by the cleaning woman and my thoughts were interrupted again. "Good morning." She glanced over at me and returned my greeting. "How are you today?" "O.K., I guess." "I haven't seen you in here before. "I just started yesterday and I worked down on the second floor." It was quiet as she flushed the toilet and cleaned the lavatory. I was interested in beginning the conversation again when she came back into the room. "Are you married?" "Ya, I got three kids." "Oh, how old are they?" "I got a girl who goes to school this fall and a boy who is two and a baby that's four months." "How do you manage to have a job outside your home?" "Well, it ain't easy, but somebody's got to earn some money. I got a sister that stays with the kids. My girl whose goin'ta start to school ain't got no shoes and she's gotta hav'em or the other kid'ell make fun of her. My old man's no good. He drinks all the time." We were silent as she pushed the dust mop under the bed and around the legs of the furniture. The picked up the dust cloth aand started to dust the dresser. "You sure got some pretty flowers. Ya want me to check the water on them?" "Thank you, I would appreciate that. Yes, my friends and family have been very thoughtful since I've been here." She removed the two vases of cut flowers and when she returned with them I noticed that the withered blossoms had been removed and they looked fresh again.

The afternoon passed quickly. My friend, Patricia, arrived early and read my cards and letters to me. We played the game of pretense that everything was fine; but Pat, who is extremely sentimental, had difficulties. Some of the verses in the get-well cards were very touching and she would begin to cry. 'Something's the matter with me," she murmured between her sobs. I found myself consoling her when I was the one who

should have been crying. When visiting hours were over, I felt extreme relief to be alone again.

I reached over and turned on the remote control switch of the television set which sat opposite the foot of the bed. "Felix the cat, that wonderful, wonderful cat" exploded from the set. I snapped the button to off and glanced at my watch. There wasn't much time left to await the verdict.

You don't have cancer! My head jerked toward the door. The doctor stood there smiling at me. "That's what I said. "You don't have cancer. " Are you sure?" "Very sure; the final lab reports are negative and you are fine" . . . All my defenses collapsed and I cried.

"Ignorance"

Cynthia Cooper

UNGUIDED

My exact doctine
Lies
Somewhere between
  Here
    And
      There.

Where- — There? — Never.
Where? — Here? — Never.
MY god, where have you forsaken me?

Somewhere between
  You
    And
      Me.

Truth to everyone?
Where lies it?
I know not my own truth.

THE CHAPEL

One circle about thee;
Two lights shine beside thee;
The grail before thee.
Can we reflect the same?

One in perfect union with Thee?
Two inspiring lights beside Thee?
One bowing humbly before Thee?
They spread the image.

Not I!

UNCOMMITTED

May I never crack the wall of your moods?
You are a constant mystery to me,
And I find it hard to comprehend your attitudes,

Sometimes in your quietness
I think you are more myth than fact;
For it is hard to perceive your thoughts.

Will you keep me in constant suspense?
Or may we be joyless together?
Or may we express the delight of our love together?

Independent man! Do you need no one?

SCHIZOTHYMIA

The Greatest I am not.
The King I am not.

Sometimes "I" pretend.

I AM the greatest.
I AM the king.

Schizothymic people.
What image project we?

Reality?
Truth?

The Lover

Charles Fisher

My name is Mr. Asterias.[1]
I search the briny deep.
In inquiry mysterious,
With attitude delerious,
I comb the briny deep.
And kingfishes, stingfishes,
Bluefishes, jewfishes,
Jawfishes, crawfishes swim in my net.
The butterfish, guterfish,
Paddlefish, saddlefish;
All of these fishes I catch in my net.
But a mermaid I've never, no never been able to get.

1 Mr. Asterias is a comic relief character in Sir Thomas Love Peacock's novel Nightmare Abbey.

To stalk the elusive mermaid
I go to the sea each night:
While the moonlight's eerie glow is played
On waves whose frothy spume is sprayed
I descend to the sea each night.
And herring and mackerel,
Flounder and pickerel,
Salmon and sardines swim into my net.
The kingfishes, stingfishes,
Bluefishes, jewfishes,
Jawfishes, crawfishes,
Creekfishes, weakfishes,
Butterfish, gutterfish,
Paddlefish, saddlefish;
All of these fishes swim into my net.
But a mermaid I've never, no never been able to get.

The mermaid she is marvelous.
She is my heart's delight.
Her fine skin it is wonderous
As the shell of the paper nautilus.
She is my heart's delight.
But lobsters and barnacles,
Crustacean particles,
All sorts of nuisances crawl in my net.

And herring and mackerel,
Flounder and pickerel,
Salmons and sardines,
The kingfishes, stingfishes,
Bluefishes, jewfishes,
Jawfishes, crawfishes,
Creekfishes, weakfishes,
Butterfish, gutterfish,
Paddlefish, saddlefish,
All of these fishes swim into my net.
But a mermaid I've never, no never been able to get.

My love she dines on foxglove.
And from her watery home
To climb the rocks so high above
And find the deadmen's bells; my love
Occasionally must come.
So maybe on some misty eve
Your startled eyes may see
A mortal and a mermaid cleave
In the rocks above the sea.
And in the waters far below
A chorus you may hear
Of lobsters and barnacles
And all of the rest
Joining in wishing us all of the best
At our wedding by the sea.

Senility

Virginia Johnson

She's sitting in that squeaking, oaken rocker,
The fading sunlight streaks a careworn face;
Her crippled hands are idle, not crocheting lace.
Legs that once were strong now need a walker,
The rocking keeps a slow, deliberate pace.
Her life once vital is like a broken vase

Not needed now, but treasured for its special place;
No urge to live, but death seems only to mock her.
This aged one still lives and breathes the air,
But life is not the surging, vital force
Of younger members who must feed and care
For one who now would die without remorse.
Oh, let me not endure what she must bear!
Sweet death, not age, would be my fervent course.

Bittersweet Chocolates

Michael Meyer

Bittersweet chocolates
lay in grass fields
where only children could go
who
with dandelion wreathed heads
picked them
one-by-one

And

Bittersweet chocolates
smelling like god must have smelled
like new grass
and fishless ponds of reeds
along the edge of lily pastures

Where

Bittersweet chocolates
rolled on summers front lawn
and played together
and loved together
and knowing next to nothing
Bittersweet chocolates died in autumn
with the whole world

Regression

Sharon Nelson

Seductive little dandelion
Lures me into the grass.
There I lie
Watching others pass.

Brighter than the tiger's eye,
Mellower than China moon beams,
Richer than gold, you smell
Of youth and big dreams,
Of childhood and emerald hills.

The Seventh Seal

Sharon Nelson

Muted drums lifted in heavy song,
Moved unimpressed through the silent throng.
Clods of frightened people stood blank,
Watching the final parade, rank after rank.
Steadily forward, never wavering a beat,
Disciplined they marched down the silent street.

Only the dancing black horse broke the stride,
Tossing the empty boots from side to side.
Behold the pale horses; their name is death;
Onward they move; there is no rest.
Steadily forward, never wavering a beat,
Disciplined they marched down the silent street.

Behind death they came, their heads bowed down,
The lords of earth, the priests in black gowns.
Her face as white as the horses, the lady in black
Stared straight ahead and never back.
Steadily forward, never wavering a beat,
Disciplined she marched down the silent street.

In Invitation

JoAnn Sellers

Leave the crutch at the doorstep,
Bid farewell to the priests.
Tell love you will some day return,
And come.
With your trepidations and wonderings and mine,
Through the house of Never-Knowing we will
    peruse the labyrinths and rococo
Columns, dusty,
And clean them with our tears.

Early Reflections

David Stead

The tiny movable parts of
The precision made machine are
Now assembled, and the master-timer
Begins the co-ordination of the clock.
The hours of toil, and the
Suffering of the designer demand
Constant care and delicate
Completion of the precious task.
The emergence from the warmth of
The factory into the changing temperature
Of the owner's shop is guided by
Precision-skilled mechanics aware of the
Importance of each mechanism.
Continual care and maintenance is
Rewarded by growth of munipulative
Functions, and the chorus of chimes
Moves from an eratic disruption,
To a harmonic combination of
Movement and grace.