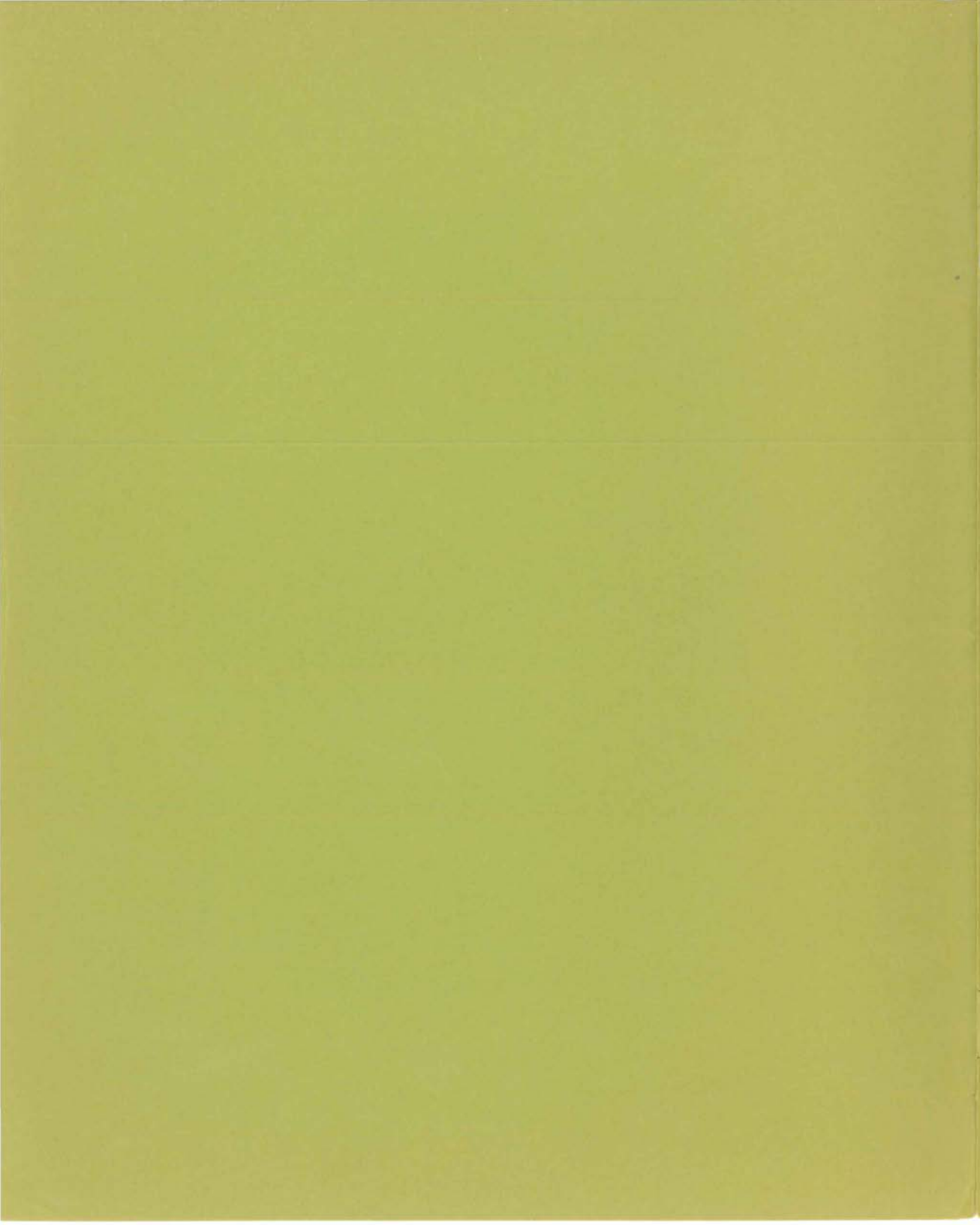


PERSPECTIVES

1970



PERSPECTIVES
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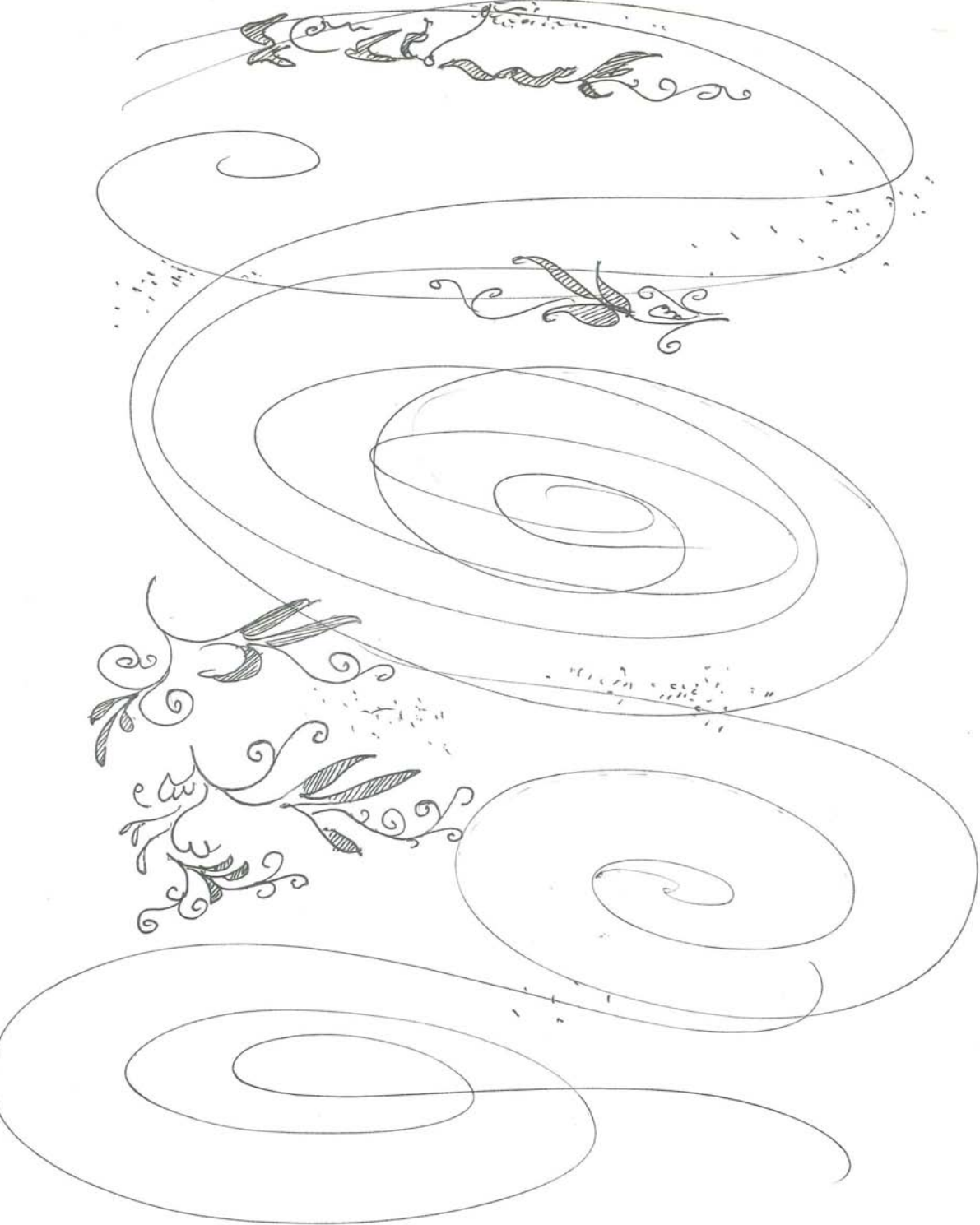
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Good-bye Mr. Mizdin

The snow had been white, in fact it had been quite pretty to look at when the sun was not too bright. But it had been a week since the last snowfall, and the graying slush in the street showed the paths of the few cars that had passed that morning.

Mizdin turned from the window; his wife came from the bathroom, her robe open, the limp, cloth belt sliding along the floor beside her.

"Don't kids make angels anymore?" Mizdin asked.

"What?"

"Snow-angels, you know." The steam on the pane where he had stood slowly shrank away. "You fall down on your back and move your arms and legs."

Mizdin's wife, after a polite pause in recognition of his question, walked into the kitchen, plugged the coffee in and retired again to the bathroom. Mizdin sauntered into the kitchen and stood before the coffee, waiting. He took out two slices of bread and dropped them into the toaster. "I suppose kids do still make snow-angels," he thought. The coffee bubbled once, then twice, then steadily. Mizdin pulled the cord from the wall, poured two cups and set them on the table. "Come to think of it," he thought, "you hardly ever see any kids on Merrick Street anyway." His wife came into the kitchen and sat at the edge of the table. Mizdin looked up from his coffee.

"You look good in beige."

"Thank you. Did you put any toast in?"

"Yeah."

"Sorry I got up late. You don't mind making your own breakfast, do you?"

"No." But Mizdin did mind. He never fixed his own meals, and it irritated him a little to hear her ask. "Have you seen the paperboy?"



"I just got up."

"If he can't bring the morning paper earlier we might as well get the evening."

The toaster sprang. Mizdin daydreamingly gazed into the wall; his wife's lips turned a little and she went to the counter.

"Oh....It's burnt."

"What do you think?"

"What do you mean what do I think? I think it's burnt!"

"I mean about the paper."

"Oh....I don't care. You know I hardly read it anyway."

Mizdin's wife put some bread in the toaster and poured another cup of coffee and sat down again. "What did you turn the toaster up for?"

"I didn't know I did."

"Oh God, it's late. I've got to go. Eat my toast, will you?"

"My honor."

"Say, are you going to work this morning?"

"Yeah, I suppose I'll go." Mizdin had not gone to work for two days. He had called his office Monday and said that he had not been feeling well. But he didn't plan to go today either, and he could tell she was aware of it.

"You're lazy, you know that? Just lazy."

Mizdin got up from the table and poured another cup of coffee. His wife went out to get her coat. He took the toast and sat down again.

"Good-bye Mr. Mizdin." The door closed quietly behind her. She always called him Mr. Mizdin when she was irritated with him. He could never understand quite why. Mizdin finished his coffee and called his office to say he wouldn't be in, let the phone down and went into the bathroom.

Sunlight deeped through the translucent windows, scattered about the bathroom and showed through the plastic shower



curtains, drops of water still hugging in the folds; Mizdin stood for a moment looking at himself in the mirror above the sink, turned the water on, first the hot, then adjusting the cold gave himself a quick, almost embarrassed smile and sank his head under the warm stream. "Good-bye Mr. Mizdin." His wife's remark rankled in his mind as he lathered the shampoo. "Why does she have to be such a bitch sometimes?" he thought. "It was good for a while, when we first married." Mizdin tucked his head again under the warm water, the soapy lather sliding across his cheeks, tickling down over his nose and into his nostril. The water turned cold and Mizdin, surprised and swearing, struck his head on the faucet, the soapy water trailing down into his half-open eyes. He rubbed the irritation with a towel and an epitaph and waited for the upstairs tenant to turn off the water, and then finished rinsing his hair. He stood by the door briskly rubbing his scalp. "We should have had kids, things would have been different."

Mizdin heard the shower above him and then the upstairs tenant humming. He turned on the cold water in the bathtub and then quickly turned on the cold water in the sink and flushed the toilet. The humming hit one high note and hushed. Mizdin waited a moment until the humming began again, repeated the procedure, and chuckling low in his throat went into the bedroom to dress. He left the house and walked towards the bus stop; the weather was warming, the ice along the curbs was beginning to melt.

A low groan of power, a moment of protest, and the pod broke away, leaving only Mr. Mizdin hurrying across the street from the dark, stale fumes.

"Morning."

"Gamornin, Pastor," Mizdin slurred as he entered the shop, his shoescreaking the plank floor.

Pastor, as Mizdin had initiated to calling the slight Tagalog, was one of those men who mysteriously maintain



a four-day beard. He had rationed himself in his bookstore since Mizdin could remember. His tight face, the skin stretched curiously down from his forehead, was of such spontaneous familiarity as to spark some salutation from nearly everyone who came into his shop.

"Beautiful morning out, isn't it?"

Pastor, bent over a bended stack of tabloids, slipped his fingers under the slack, danced his hands and broke the band. "Yes, yes...it's still some cold, you know, but it's soon till spring." He shoved the papers against the wall, lifted a few to the counter top and looked at the girl on the cover. "Zeus!" He stretched his eyes and cupped his hands in front of his chest.

"Just your size," said Mizdin, and for a moment they laughed.

Mizdin bought two newspapers and walked to a small cafe where he sometimes ate breakfast on Saturdays; his wife not working weekends and sleeping into the early afternoon. He ordered two eggs over easy, sausage and toast, orange juice and coffee.

"Will that be all?" the waitress asked, unfolding in a slow pirouette, but not so reflexive as to excuse reply:

"Yes." He watched her walk to the kitchen, then back to the booth where she had been sitting by the window reading. She was attractive, and young, perhaps, Mizdin guessed, twenty-three or twenty-four. Her light hair curled about the crown of her head, a loosened strand lay softened against her tan, mellow complexion. Mizdin watched her from across the tiny room, loved her for a moment. The sun slipped through the slanted blinds, hazed her to a subtle image, and Mizdin began to read the news.

Mizdin finished his breakfast. The waitress, who had finished reading and was waiting to serve his check, came towards him.

"Will that be all, sir?"

"Could I have some more coffee?"

She laid the check on the corner of the table and went



back to the kitchen; and Mizdin, watching her, decided that he would leave now, leave the coffee, leave the city, leave his wife, whom he wondered had he really married.

He hurried to a depot. asked about the next bus, and was told he had an hour to wait. He decided to go say good-bye: that he was going away for awhile; but he would not tell him that he was not coming back.

He walked along the sidewalk and stood at the corner waiting for the traffic light to change. The traffic had pushed the snow towards the curb, over the sidewalk, and now it had melted smooth. Mizdin watched two boys across the street sliding off the curb. Behind them he could see Pastor sitting by the window, smiling. A bus pulled close to the curb in front of Mizdin and a few people got off, walking away and talking loudly. The bus began to pull away; Mizdin turned to the shouting passengers now walking across the street, he grappled with his feet, tore his hands from his pockets, and gripping at the curb felt the great weight crushing his bowels, felt the tires tearing at his skin, twisting muscle from muscle, felt, but did not taste, the warm mass rise to his mouth.

T. R. Dillard

Serenity

I remember lying against
your shoulder
believing there was nothing
but peace in this world.

Laura Larson



Birth

Softly merging, sweetness and desire, black and white
come together. Separation, love is quenched.

I am free floating over the misty, shrouded hills, tall
with brown grass. I am infinite beauty. So glorious this
world, and I am its embodiment. Rising, falling, the swell of
the earth trembles beneath the weightless feet which bear my
swollen body.

The landscape changes; whiteness engulfs me. Yet up again,
down again, I go. Free, I am peace.

Dreams of nothingness. Life is empty; life is complete.
Does it exist? "Here I am!" I cry. Does death embrace me?
It is so quiet, yet I know of life.

Agony, pure, simple, rends my body into portions. Every
minuscule cell cries out in this pain-pleasure. Detached from
the world by the pain, I am the world.

Pain surrounds me, buries me, suffocates me.

Voices: "Move over now, here."

"I can't, I can't. Wait, can't you wait?"

The pain, always the crashing pain.

"Quit screaming. Quiet down!"

"Push, there now, push."

"One, two, push...one, two, push."

"That's better, better, better..."

The crescendo of pain and then death-peace arrives.
Oblivion and yet I wake up alive.

"Here you are. Isn't she a fine, healthy baby? Such
long, dark hair."

"My baby, my baby! She's so beautiful, so lovely, so
black, so black...."

And the pain returns, as the world exacts its terrifying
price.

Janet Huffman



Initiation Into Manhood

Up before the crow of the cock
To bed before the moon climbs high.
Push-ups, sit-ups, on the hard cruel rock;
Help me God, they're making me die.

They think they've taught me how to kill,
The VC's kin will have to cry
M 1's, chemicals, my new formed skill!
Help me God, they're making me die.

Escape before they "program" desire.
Canada, Sweden, we can only try.
"Kill a Cong for Christ"--Closer--Fire!!
Help me God, they're making me die.

Computer tape attack plans, but who does the deed?
Have we who are forced no right to defy?
Love, Peace, Brotherhood, all meaningless creed?
Help me God, they're making me die.

Dave Baldwin

The Stage Is Set

There's an inevitable tomorrow waiting in the wings
The present hours must now take their bows
While the exploding footlights die and the audience in
sterile repose
Await the ascent of the velvet veil, sure to take its
flight.
For tomorrow, not today, do the crickets wail their
Arias
It is for the ensuing day that we render our solemn
requiem.

Monsell Laury



were i wiser
i would realize
that sun and sand
won't make a summer--
nor colored leaves
 an autumn.

i walked those stubborn tracks
 alone once--
thinking not of
 riches
 or
faraway places--
as might be expected--
 knowing me--
 but,
 rather,
 of standing
beside the clearest of streams;
 waiting...
praising my ability to be happy--
 so free and alone--
 searching for an answer
 in the wild ocean.
 touching the sun;
 loving the wind.
 trusting once more.

were i wiser
i would leave behind all dreams
grasping instead with my clear mind
 reality--
 conforming,
 understanding--
 to a degree.

were i wiser
i would go back



five years
or ten
i would go back even now
to view the mountain
worthy of another climb...
to watch the game
as a spectator
cheering
from the balcony's
third
row--
unseen--
void of bruises
contact
defeat.

"walk the gravel road at noon--
leave the midnight journey
to one
whose step
is sturdy."

love
a sister
her song, her promise
though it be hesitant
weak
hypocritical
never...sometimes...often...
erase the bitterness
build on past dreams
hopes
goals.

recreate the
once beautiful?
were i wiser...
were i less wise...

Chris Stanley



Amatory Poems

Editor's Note: Although the usual practice of Perspectives is to publish only original works of students of Morningside College, in this case we have decided to ignore our usual policy and print this poem, which is the product of the research of Monte Knepper and Mary Considine into the Miscelany of one John C. Libby, an ancestor of Miss Considine. As the book was in very poor condition when discovered by the researchers in a remote portion of the Libby ancestral Manse, it took many days of careful restoration to put these poems into their present state. Miss Considine and Mr. Knepper have, however, in their restorations attempted to maintain Libby's original flavor.

Poem #5

I ffind sith mye mystresse to my bed
Has crept and rested wyth me the whol nyght
And taken many plesurs with me ther,
Very straunge to tel, she nowe faynnes innosens
Euen to ignor mye glad atentione.

Though you blushe and fflutter wyth yovr ffan
As tho the mysterys of louing, you
Kenn not anymor than the ioungest chylde,
Everyon who can rede with simpathye
Nowe mye poem, can kno the bloom of yovr chekes
Is the oonly floower of yovr garden.
Then apper you as ffalse to ther as me.

Oct. 31, 1569



I Do Not Ask

I do not ask that life be a bed of roses,
Where I can lie and sleep all day,
I only ask that the thorns are not poisonous
To end my mortal breath when I kneel and pray.

I do not ask for the strength of Hercules,
To enable me to throw my sorrows to infinity.
I only ask that the strength from God I lease
Will endure life's striving struggles till eternity.

I do not ask for a health that is immune to sickness,
So to enjoy the sunshine, the breeze and the rainbow.
I only ask that I've a spark of life in times of weakness
To flicker, to fade and perhaps even to glow.

I do not ask for the ability to push others along,
Wisdom to understand the mysteries of life.
I only ask that I know what is right and wrong
When I choose my faith, my profession and my wife.

I do not ask that my wife's beauty be pre-eminent,
A beauty that would put Venus to shame.
I only ask that her love for me be permanent
Till in heaven she hears me call her name.

I do not ask for power to bend the will of men,
Power to suppress, abuse and to rule with an iron rod.
I only ask that I be made weak and humble to understand
How it feels to be pushed, pressed and taught the need for God.

I do not ask that the mountains be brought within my reach,
And the rivers of my life be made shallow.
I only ask that I be taught to walk, run, swim, and leap
To overcome life's challenges and not to go where the winds blow.

I do not ask for the riches of a king,
To buy all the comforts that life have conceived.
I only ask that someday an angel will bring
Me a chariot as a vindication for what I have believed.

David Wong



long bicycle rides
 in the summer evening
 and he all tired and
 sleeping on his stomach
the blankets
over his head
 you wondered
 he didn't suffocate...
bowing to the road at
 each dip but
 taut through each turn
 (he turning the wheel ever
 so slightly)
the sloping fenders mirrored the sun...
and he lay there naked next to her and
 knew he had not been good but
she knew it was the first time
 for him
 but still there
 ought to be more...
lasted only a few minutes
 and one of the enemy
 seen running into the tall grass
 just as the sky greyed with light
 was shot
 and
 walking behind a pyramid
 of sandbags he there
 vomited and cried...
and pressing against her flesh
felt a thousand promises
and slept wholly undisturbed
and waking found her...
sitting naked
 just a little fat
 for her age
snug in the sides
 of her favorite
 overstuffed chair



with life in her lap
turned the pages
and clucking her tongue
wondered
how is that pronounced
and tossing to the carpet life's
current issue
finished the last chapter
of dr. bhuzwald's
book of orgasms
and he leaving
stopped midway
on the stairway
the snow falling lightly
tickling his senses
and in the darkness
shrugged with the chill
of her warm loins

T. R. Dillard

You and I
We take a walk in the fields
you and I
Interlaced hands
with alternating pressures
to show
Awareness for each other.
We need not words
you and I
Interlocked eyes
with deep understanding
to show
Our love

Kris Parent



My Honest Feelings and Opinions on the "Racial Problem"
or
Living in Bliss

At this time, fellow white conservatives, I shall endeavor to honestly and most point-blankedly express my views and deepest feelings in the area of our country's racial problem (in order to clear the air of present falsetto undertones). This being such a controversial topic, I will, needless to say, encounter some opposition, but when Big Brother opens his eyes these "Commie mongrels" will be dealt with accordingly.

Now, the basic factor which presents itself at this time to our present society, I believe, seems to turn in the direction of the guidance of the populace towards the empiricist station of fluber-actionary technique. That is to say that the technique in question, which is really a tool, tends to plurgegate and demopolate the populace into this general direction. Despite the fact that this is one of the few tools which presents itself at this time which can be used to combat the problem at hand; it is basically reiterated to the relative cause. So, in order that we may further moricize the problem and technique, we must also nurture an attitude towards the cue, whereby we may more clearly and less inadvertently develop an understanding of what is in progress.

In conclusion--so what--of all this? Of all this I properly resolve three key brain-muddlers (1) the sky is usually blue in good weather, (2) fish usually die out of water; (3) toy fire engines usually get broken.

As I stated previously, I do anticipate some opposition to my views, etc., but I overlook these trivialities because I believe that these, my true and embedded feelings, are shared with a majority of my fellow citizens, who, like me, are conservative in their thoughts on the issue in general.

Harry Davis



Sones







Mandoret
Goss



Margaret
Goss





J. Blain





the year after the love before

embers
glowing brightly
in the shadows of my mind.
and fire,
gentle,
of my youth.
love it like that:
it comes and goes.
burning brightly.
then,
dying--
leaving only
embers.

Kris Lischefska

Up and Down

up and down
in and through
over and out
i screw you

up and through
over and in
down and out
is this sin

in and up
over and out
through and down
love no doubt

Down and over
through and up
in and out
let up sup
this is life
this is love

T. Bear



Soul Singer

A sad, sweet, tragic wail
A wild joy, a leaden sorrow.
Sad soul singer, send that spirit
down a hundred steps to a sodden cellar.
There the spirit digs its own grave
and lies down.
Lie down spirit.

Glad soul singer, send the dipping;
screaming, diving; delirious song to the sky.
Drive the darkness into the corners
for a few minutes;
command the light:

Wail, soul singer, wail
It's your amulet against the night.
Peter Farley

To Sharon, on Becoming 21

Life,
If you were a match
I would take you in my hand
And boldly strike you--
I'd gaze into your fire bright potential
With awe...
Then, I'd smile in silent wonder.
With you, I would ignite the dark, cold world
And spread your fleeting glow
Until your flaming yellow-blue
Would disappear in orange, crimson, red...
Cold, charred black...
Then I'd smile again, still wondering...
I'd let you burn, Life.
If you aren't to be lived
Then what are you for?

Susan Mallison



Easy Rider

bloody flag
and
gasoline firecracker sparks
soared
into free American air
--what
so proudly hailed
as
Blownapart's last screaming--
hit the ground and
bit the ground of
(phallic-finger salute
choaked-throat why)
the home of the brave
Randall J. Gates
from Show/Me

Bigot

I once knew a man
so prejudiced
he wouldn't use pepper.

He died last week--
A spade dug his grave.

T.R. Dillard



Yet Reuben...

Through the brisk fall air the bells of the small church in the local village sent forth a somber toll of three chimes which reached Reuben Leighton as he stood near the barn of his Nebraska farm. Cupping his hand above his eyes to shade them from the rays of the drooping sun, he looked off to the west towards the country school-house seated in the valley less than a mile away.

"She'll be home quickly today," mused Reuben to himself. "Why there's nearly three full hours of daylight left. Three long hours for her to spend cuttin' corn in the south forty. There she is now. Look at her scratchin' at her ol' starched petticoats; they must be a plague for a girl of thirteen. Especially a girl of thirteen who'd trade a whole week of school for just one day of workin' in the fields."

The four daughters who had been born to Reuben had each demoralized him in turn as his hopes for a son had faded. Little wonder that he had been amazed at Sarah's love for the farm and her eagerness to carry the load he had expected a male offspring to bear. As she entered the yard with her rusty dinner bucket in hand, tattered books in a cloth bag round her neck, he wondered when the hard, tight bud of a tomboy frame which was even now showing signs of future promise would soften into a blossom of womanhood.

Bounding down the quivering steps of the weathered clap-board farmhouse, Sarah soon dispelled his thoughts for another day. Biboveralls which had quickly replaced the disliked long dress, beaten straw hat set jauntily to the side of her short brown locks, now tied roughly in a tight round bun--no, Sarah was still Sarah, yet Reuben was unsure of his pleasure.

Though each stroke of the razor-sharp corn knives brought the end nearer, the rows loomed long ahead. Reuben on the left, Sarah on the right, their progress recorded by the steady ringing through the chilled air of dusk as



the crack of each blow went a tall stalk tumbling, then to be soon used in building the pyramid shocks which would dot the rolling hills.

No sound from the right. Realizing Sarah had stopped, her father turned slowly toward her and his heart clutched by the white look of fear on her face. She stared in horror at the twisting, slithering snake, then wheeled, and fell; her first step had sent her foot into a small depression, her second had brought her legs crumpling beneath her as she pitched forward on her face, arms flung before her, corn knife in hand.

The short drive into town had seemed like a nightmarish trip through hell for Reuben. The white lather of sweat on the horses as he beat them into a frenzy, the creaking and swaying of the buckboard, the moans and whimpers of the twisted form lying covered behind him on the wagon bed. It all seemed so long ago as he sat in a befuddled daze in the office of "Doc" H. Bowland, the destination of that frantic race. The voice of the graying "Doc" began to register on Reuben's mind, saying, "Be grateful she's alive, Reuben. You could well be over at Digger Delbert's by all rights. Sure, the damage is permanent; you don't get a slash from temple to chin and expect to ever erase it. She won't be much to look at, but she'll be there."

A blossom drifted from Reuben Leighton's mind. The bruised fruit which took its place might well be resigned to cling to the old tree for years--yet Reuben was unsure of his pleasure.

Lindsay Eckerman



On Biafra

In the heart of the ancient fortress
vassals bowed today

No matter what the effort
they couldn't have things their way

Can the flesh cleave the bone again?
Will the stoned graves know of the contracts of peace?
They asked so little and yet so much,

"Give me an ounce of freedom
and a ray of hope;

These things the armour cannot trample."

Monsell Laury

A Thousand Flakes of Snow

From a thousand flakes of snow
I pick but one, and oh so fair.
A stunning beauty, she is so
Softly fragile in the cold night air.


I wish to warm her in my grasp
Only she a droplet would become;
To match the thousand tears I'd gasp
At loss of her, my only one.

Bruce Hanson



Protestanalogy

Why do they lock the door?
To keep you away from the tempting world?
What happens when there is a need to go?
And there is a need to go.
Pound your clenched fist on the locked door
It won't help
You'll cry from pain and hurt
Your hands will bleed from attempts
to let you out
You're locked in...
...out from the beauty time
When you could see
earth
And not the world with
innocence
tempted
and hurt
With enthusiasm utilized for destruction
Forced passion for cheap thrills
You can't see the earth
Without it's complications
to make it world
Hands that search for innocence only bleed
You are locked up
away from innocence
You must learn
corruption
hate
cruelty
dirt
You are not wise until you know this
Then they give you the key
But then you'll use it to get in
away from that beauty time
of innocence
Julia Drummond



John pulled a weed growing near the Peace Rose and straightened up to rest his aching back. He thought longingly of the rocking chair in the deep shade of the west porch as he wiped his forehead with the faded blue sleeve of his work shirt. He remembered the names of only a few of the roses but he couldn't forget how Ollie had saved and scrimped with their small budget for months in order to send for this one after she had seen one over at the county fair.

That had been a good day. Their youngest, Julia, and her husband had driven over from Newton early enough to take her parents to the fair. Of course, Ollie hadn't been able to do much walking, as her trouble with her heart had started by then. But they went through the fine arts building and sat down where they could visit with many old friends. Ollie had seen the new rose in the flower exhibits and by asking around, she had found where to send for it and how much it cost. Now the rose grew here in this home garden. The blossoms were perfect and John resented it. How could it be so alive, so vigorous, when the one who had so wanted it to bloom here was sleeping over the hill under that heavy gray stone.

John told himself that he had done the best he could for Ollie. Hadn't he bought this little place, only three rooms with a small yard, the very week old Doc had told him Ollie must cut down, not do so much, never climb stairs.

The home across on the other side of Danbury stood without a buyer for many months. He had dug holes and set out Ollie's flowers, carting box after box of roots until the old place had finally sold. He watered and staked at her direction, did everything she wanted done--even if flowers had always seemed impractical to him.

Out on the homestead when he was a boy, they had never had enough water to spare for anything that wasn't edible. Ma had always said the vegetables were just as pretty as the flowers, anyway. For sure they had tasted good and were such a relief from the salt meat, beans and rice of late winter and early spring. They had all laughed over anyone's foolishness to spend any time on work that didn't give material benefits.



Gradually after he married Ollie, she had shown him how a woman could get a pleasure from a few flowers. He had tolerated her desires because of the happy home she made and the gay times she and the young ones were always surprising him with.

He remembered the time he came home with the news his job had been cut to four days a week instead of six and what did she do but pop corn and plan that they could all work together on the garden and a hen house.

They did, too, and managed to have enough to live on during those hard days.

John started for the rocker on the porch, but noticed a rock in the rock pile had slipped and was crushing some of the green chicks of the plant called a mother hen. Ollie wouldn't have let it go so he went to the shed to get a crowbar to pry the rock into its own place. He could hardly resist jabbing plants but afterward he could almost hear Ollie's "thank you, John." So he fell to weeding again. "Dang flowers," he thought, "not worth a thing." But he knew how to care for their needs; the years he had spent raising most of the family's food had taught him that much. His greatest satisfaction had been to take a prize-worthy crop to the kitchen where Ollie turned it into wonderful meals. Didn't seem to be any point to raising the vegetable garden this year; he had let it go to grass. What good was the best roasting ear without Ollie to admire it?

The weeding among the roses was done finally and John slowly made his way into the kitchen to heat up a can of soup for his lunch.

"I'll have to get at those things on the north side this afternoon," he thought; but instead he sat and smoked without picking up the dishes. They would soon be in bloom-- he didn't intend to see their bronze faces at all. He would weed them today and get the mowing done over there tomorrow and he wouldn't go back to that side of the house 'till after the frost had killed everything down to the ground.



Because last year that was where he had found her--his Ollie, lying on the ground with her arm still cradling a chrysanthemum bouquet. The look on her face had been surprise and pain. He had carried her to the bedroom and the flowers had gone along, blocking his view both of her and where he was going. When he laid her down they spilled over her, the bed, and his feet. Impatiently, he brushed them away. She started to whisper, "Take care.....," then a heavy breath had shuddered through her and she was gone.

No, he wouldn't look at those ugly bronze spikes, but he would "take care." Her love had gone into the garden, she had always given more strength than she could afford to keep all those plants looking nice. So he kept it up, too, hating all the living things out there for their ability to seem the same as always.

Marcia Decker

The Kite

I took a piece of paper
And with wood and string
I built a fragile kite.
I poured my skill,
My heart and my soul
Through its delicate frame,
And with anxious hands
I hurled my kite
Into the swirling sky.

What are the hopes of man
But kites in the wind?
Encouraged only by a breeze
Of hope and love,
Man casts his deepest desires
Into a raging sea
Of sky and cloud;
There they soar--
Or are dashed upon the earth.

Robert Birkby



Blindman's Bluff

Someone put a blindfold on me
Made me spin like a top
faster
and
faster
forever
and
ever
Faster
around
and then they turned me loose
and told me to spin where I might.

But I can't see where I'm going
Or feel where I am
And somehow I think
The world
and I
Are spinning
in opposite
directions.

Merilynn Knowles

Springtime

O take a breath of springtime.
O smell the automobiles.
The scent of the cattle at slaughter time
Is like nothing else one feels.

The beautiful vision of chemical smoke,
And the flavor of library paste
As you sip your tall cool glass
Of refreshing industrial waste

Are the results of living "high on the hog."
Don't you love the glorious fragrance of smog?

William Weinmann



"...and at length came out the same door
Where in I went, and only this I know
I came like water; like wind I go.

--Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam

The church began to fill with early evening gloom,
a gloom surrounding beginnings and endings.
An old man sat in the quiet not moving.
Three long days ago one of the important things in his
life had gone.
Ceased,
Left a hole.

The preacher had intoned the passing.
Many old women had wept.
Now they were gone.
And nothing was left.

The old man sat gazing fixedly.
Steady heartbeats marked the passing of time.

At last he arose shaking his head and walked slowly
between the pews.

At the door he stopped and looked around at the
little federated church which was built...he could not
remember when.

Finally he went out into the cold clear autumn wondering
at himself.

Later in the rusty dull-green pick-up he looked, as if
for the first time, at the fields through which the road took
him.

The sun was going when he pulled into the farm yard.
He closed the creaking door of the truck and stood
looking for a moment at all the things that had seemed
permanent to him. Then walked out past the barn along the path
to the fields.



The sun was gone, but the glow remained; the darkening sky was clear blue. He left the path and walked out across the furrows and the stubble thinking of seasons, remembering harvests.

He stood a lone time transfixed,
His eyes on the far horizon,
Hearing only the sound of his breathing,
Steady heartbeats marking the passing of time,
Something struggling...inside...until the light was gone.

He sighed. He shook his head not sadly but with a little shrug and walked back to the house in the gloom.

Peter Farley



"Give me two cards, Bill." Two cards, I said. God, that bastard would cheat his own grandmother. "Thank you, William. How are the wife and kids?"

Well you ought to know. "Hey, they're fine, Jack. Betty said you dropped by last night. Here are your two cards. Got openers?"

"Sure do." Ha! If you only knew. You might say I dropped by last night.

"How's that hand, Pete?" You going to bluff you way into the money again tonight?

"Well I've seen better hands, but I'll keep what I have." You bet I'll keep what I have!

"Glad you could make it on such short notice, Harold." We really had to scratch the barrel bottom.

"Gosh yes, I love to play poker. I play it all the time. Can I have four cards?" I wonder what they have.

"Well, Harold," Oh Jesus! "tonight we're playing a new game, guess we forgot to tell you." Dumb shit! "You can only get three at the most."

"Oh, well, I'll take three then. I hope that's enough. Golly, I've got one ace, an' a two...if only two's were wild. Maybe I'll get three aces.

"O.K., Jack, open 'er up."

"Twenty for a look." I ought to give you twenty. "You think you'll make it, Pete?"

"Twenty, huh? I don't know." You sure made it last night. I wonder if Jack . . . "I'll see you twenty and raise you the same."

"You gotta go forty to stay in the game, Harold."

"You don't mean forty dollars, Jack?" Oh golly, I can't...oh heck, I'll make a sale this week.

"Yeah, forty." Looks like a good night.

"Well, I don't carry that much money with me...can I write you out an IOU? I do have a good hand."

I'll bet! "O.K., I'll see the forty and call. How's the job, Bill?" Ha--

"Well, business is a little slow. I've got a pair of kings. Betty said you're doing well." Among other things.



Go to hell. "Yeah, I just got the franchise on that restaurant chain. It'll supplement my selling. What you got, Pete?"

"Looks like a good night, four eights. Is that good enough, Harold? I hear you're in for an advancement, Bill."

Rub it in, Pete. "Well, not this time. They think I should stay in my territory and develop the potential there. What do you have, Harold?"

"Well, if only two's were wild. I have an ace and a two and three fives."

The other three together, Oh Jesus!

"That's too bad, Harold. I have three deuces. You got it again, Pete." And again.

"I got it again. I just can't break a streak of bad luck. Can I write you an IOU, Pete?"

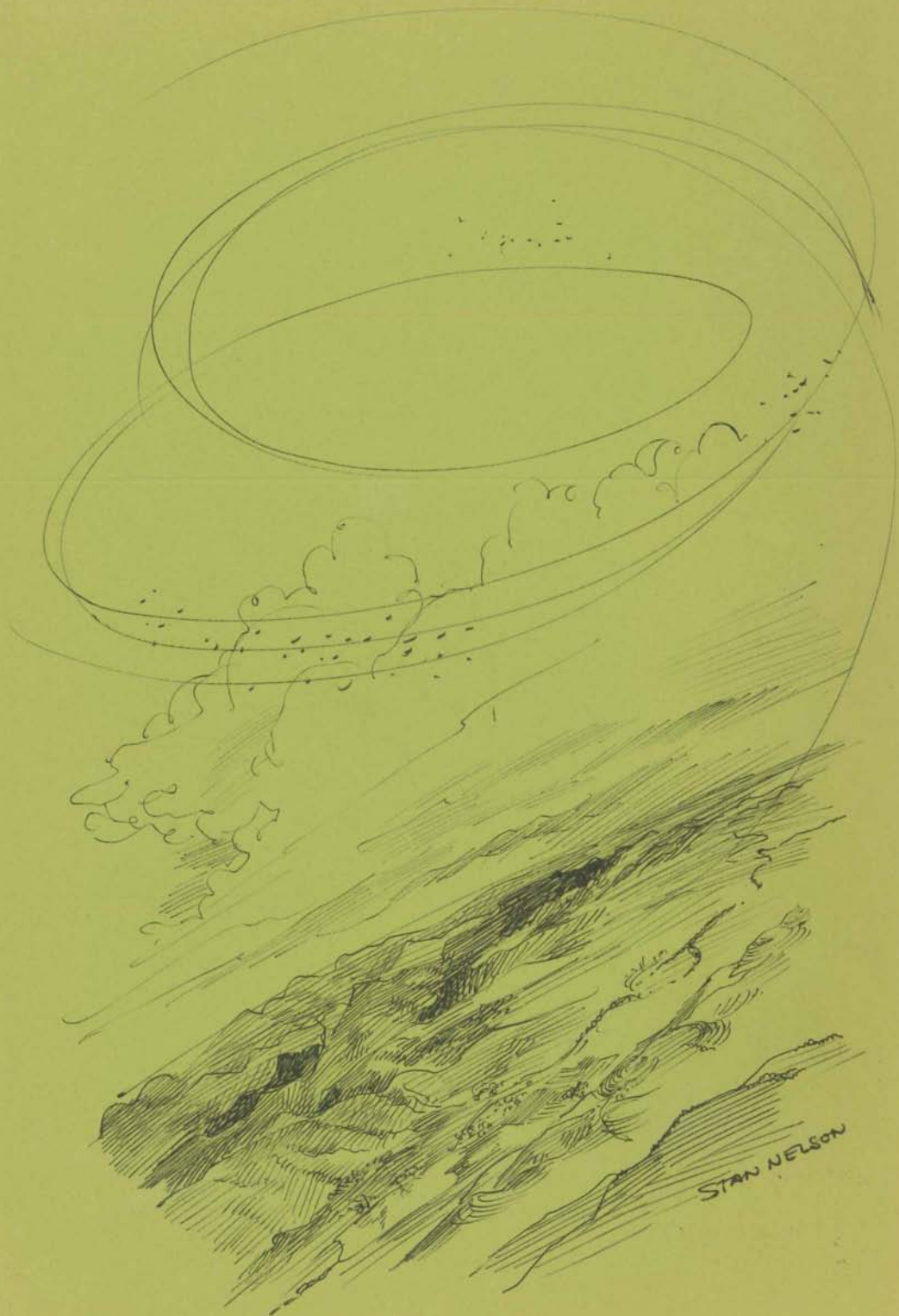
"Sure, Harold. Looks like you'll be selling for me this week. You're deal, Bill."

"We'll play the same game this hand. I understand you won that trip to Florida. You taking the family with you, Jack?"

"Yeah, I got it again, but the kids have to stay in school so Betty will stay here with them."

Doug Johnson





STAN NELSON