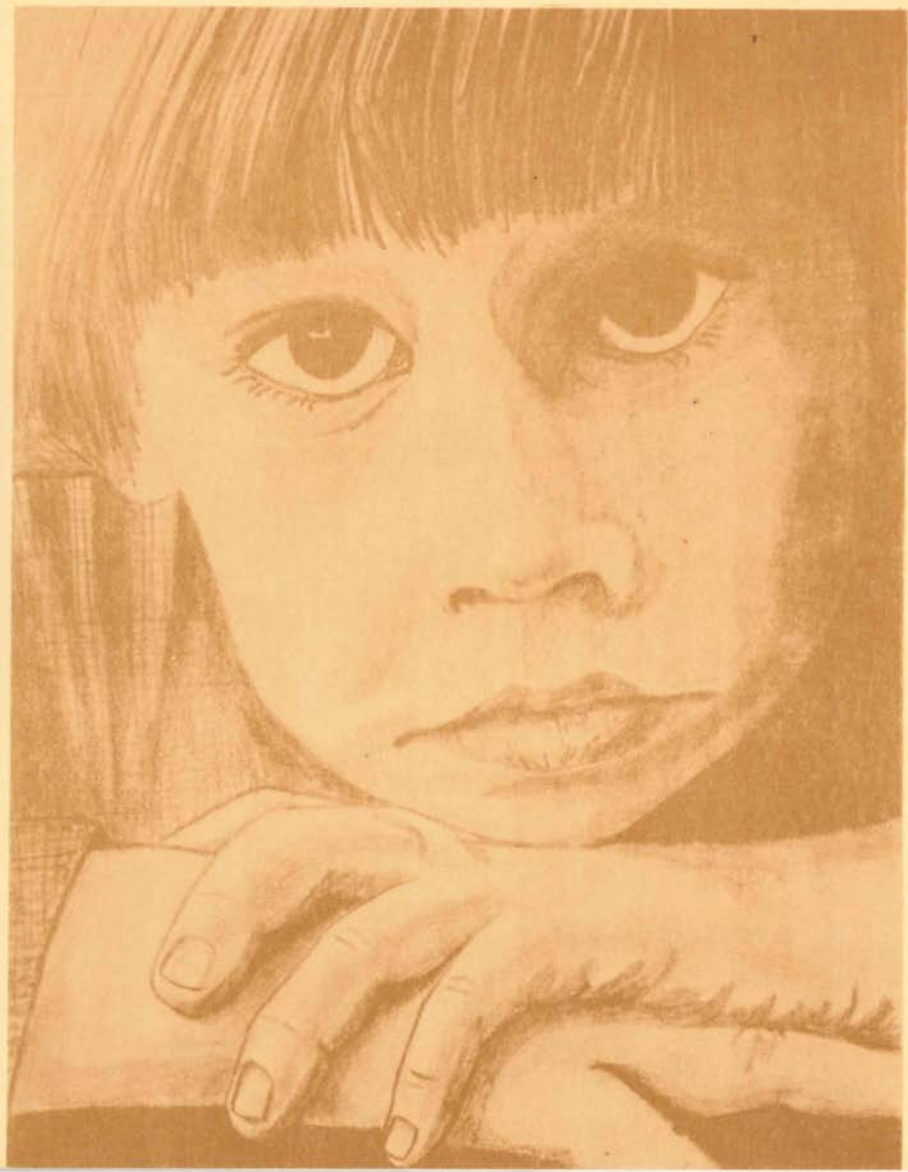


KIOSK





KIOSK

Spring 1978

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BATHROBES

When I think of my life
I see old bathrobes
Hanging on hooks
Behind closet doors.
Corduroy, whispering childhood secrets.
Adolescent flannel, muted and alone.
Frothy nylon, white of course,
Decorates the honeymoon suite
Or floats gently to the floor,
Frozen in time to a soft sigh.
The sterile lever of a hospital bed
Holds proud Chinese silk,
A fitting garment
For my spring accouchement.

The yawning alcoves of my mind
Stifle on fading old chenille
That lingers over a towel rack,
While my former body
Happily soaks
In lavender bubbles.

Mike Thompson

THE HUSTLER

CAST: Sally Benson; young receptionist in an office, 28, attractive and moderately aloof. Also single. Bennett Claire; young business man, 29, single and good looking.

SCENE: Small, crowded restaurant at noon hour. All the tables are occupied and Sally is alone at her table.

Sally: Looks up from her menu as Bennett approaches to the chair opposite her.

Bennett: Placing hand lightly on the chair as he slightly moves it backward. Smiling politely, he says with emphasis:
"May I share this rush hour table with you? I'm in a terrible hurry today!"

Sally: Returns the menu to the center of the table, looks around, and says evenly:
"Well...I suppose it is necessary isn't it?"

Bennett: In a fluid motion he sits. Places two thick file folders on the table in front of him and, with his smile becoming more formal, says:
"Thank you very much, I do appreciate it, Louie is going to have to put tables on the sidewalk pretty soon."

Sally: Sitting primly, hands together over lap.
"You're welcome."

Bennett: Relaxes and smiles a little easier.
"I have lunch here regularly and I don't believe we've shared a table before, have we? My name is Bennett Claire. I work upstairs for Williams, Inc."

Sally: Immediately says:
"No, I'm certain we never have. This is the first time I've been here. My name is Benson...Sally Benson."

Bennett: Casually adjusts his cuffs.

"Do you work here in the building?"

Sally: Hesitating a little at first. Maintaining composure.

"No. I'm employed over in the Jackson Building on 38th Street."

Bennett: Smiling as if her reply pleased him, and slightly amazed, says:

"That's four blocks away...Do you walk in this neighborhood?"

Sally: Still composed but slightly agitated.

"I enjoy walking...it's healthy."

Bennett: Gives her a visually frank appraisal, and says outwardly:

"Yes ... it certainly is!"

Sally: Flustered, she fidgets slightly, averts her eyes.

Bennett: After a slight pause, looks over to the counter beyond her, to his left, saying:

"Yep, today's special is spaghetti and meatballs. I hope that's what you're having too. Then we can share the garlic bread platter, hot-sauce dish, tossed salad bowl, and save on the table clutter." He turns and looks at her; continuing, "Do you use oil and vinegar?" With the question, he places his elbows on the table and leans forward, looking directly in her eyes.

Sally: With a pained reserve, and a trapped-but-bear-it-look, spares her shoulders, saying:

"No...no, in fact, I hadn't really decided yet."

The waitress approaches and a ritual between her and Bennett begins. Bennett reaches out to pat her on the behind. Waitress steps back a step and raps his fingers with her pencil, laughingly.

Bennett: Quickly says to waitress, looking at her:

"Hiya toots, spaghetti and meatballs, and don't be stingy on the garlic this time. Lotsa hot sauce too!" His smile changes to a questioning look at Sally and leaving it for her to order, he rises while saying, "Excuse me for a moment." He then walks away to the counter by the entrance and engages three men in animated conversation that cannot be heard and looks at his watch urgently.

Meanwhile: Sally, with a blank look on her face, glances at the two thick file folders, changes expression to indignation, then anger. She rises, picking up her shoulder bag at the same time, and without looking at the waitress says icily: "Nothing, thank you!", and proceeds to leave the restaurant.

Bennett: Almost back to the table as Sally is a couple feet from the door. He looks at her leaving with a gloating, gleeful expression and sits down calling out to his three friends: "C'mon, I told ya I could do it! Ralph has to buy! ...Louie...Four specials as usual!" and continues to laugh with gusto.

Sally: Overhears him as she steps through the door, double-takes, and realizes she's been had. Through the plate glass window she smiles slightly, then throws her hands up in an I-give-up fashion, over-emphasized, leaving the impression she'll be back, but not fooled again.

Mark McDermott

TO GEORGE R., WHO WAS MY FRIEND AND IDOL
AND TAUGHT ME HOW TO BE A GOOD KID BACK
WHEN I WAS TOO YOUNG TO KNOW ANY BETTER.

He was the shining knight of our childhoods,
A Hercules in our troubled days.
He thrilled us all with his battle calls
Of "This is a job for..." and "Up, up, and away!"

His expansive chest with the big red "S"
Could laugh off bullets and fists.
His was a guardian of truth and dispenser of justice
Who also bent steel beams into twists.

In his civilian guise as reporter C.K.
He showed how to keep our strengths in control.
The first patron saint of third-network TV
--Who quickly got trapped in his role.

Being wagonmaster to some Mouseketeers
Was the only type of job you could land.
No wonder they found you in your room, dead
From the gun you had held in your hand.

The Werthans and rumor-hounds all whispered, "Fool,
You forgot only the real thing can fly."
But the child in us cried when he heard he had gone.
When the most Super of all men said Goodbye.



Laurie Johnson

THE DREAMER

He drifts into and out of her life
as she creates fantasies in her mind--
Never a word is spoken.

She imagines torrid love affairs
of lust and violence--
The daydreams turn into nightdreams.

This tall, blond co-worker
transforms into an Egyptian god;
a Roman emperor;
A Medieval king;
a Viking warrior;

She is his maiden.

A long, white gown drapes around her body,
shining auburn hair falls to the waist--
She is the most beautiful woman.

This office typist is idolized
by the man she worships--
Upon her command his fate is determined.

The dreams are silent pictures
of dark-skinned peoples in far-off lands--
It is the setting of their existence.

Together in the visions of her mind
but not in the circumstances of her life--
These dreams and reality never unite.

3rd FLOOR ROOM 314

I looked at my watch. It was 4:30. It was also Sunday afternoon. Visiting hours were over until 7:30 that evening and I was relieved and depressed. It was too early for mealtime. Another hour at the most. That would break the monotony. In the meantime, what was there to do? I really wasn't sleepy, but I was tired of lying in bed. After several minutes of indecision, I decided to look around at my surroundings. As I was getting into my robe and slippers, I remembered there had been quite a bit of activity in the room across from mine earlier that afternoon. Maybe I could talk to someone or meet someone new.

I walked to my doorway and saw a young man who looked to be in his early twenties lounging in the bed across from my room. He had a male visitor. I noticed the guard rails were up on the patient's bed. The visitor was smoking and the room had a stale blue haze hanging midway from the ceiling. That was odd. No smoking in the room, they informed me. A sign in the hall clearly stated visiting hours were over at 4:00 p.m. Although the visitor's back was toward me, I could see he most certainly was not a doctor. Well, I thought grudgingly, some people can get away with murder.

I changed my mind about walking in the hall. It looked too deserted. Instead I walked back into my room. I took the pillow from my bed and propped it behind my back as I got comfortably settled in the big chair. My chair was toward the back of my room, yet I had a good view of the room across the hall.

I was completely relaxed and had my eyes closed. I must have fallen asleep for a few minutes, but brought my head up with a start. Somewhere I could hear a nurse saying, "I explicitly told you not to get out of bed. Your visitor will have to go. Visiting hours have been over for over half an hour. Furthermore, you are not allowed to smoke in here."

"Oh!, Oh! That's coming from Room 314. About time someone started enforcing the rules around here."

I saw the nurse leave and closed my eyes thinking I could get a peaceful forty winks before tray time. My head on the pillow was not right, so I moved to a more comfortable position. Through half-closed eyes, I saw the patient in Room 314 raise up in bed and proceed to climb over the rails while the visitor was putting out his cigarette. The patient walked toward the visitor and they held a hurried conversation. The visitor started toward the door to leave and the patient literally jumped back in bed. Now I could get a good look at the man coming out of the room. He was in his early thirties, very dark skinned and had uneven long black hair. No doubt about it, he was of Mexican origin.

He had almost reached the doorway, when I saw him spin around and walk back in the patient's room. He pointed his thumb back of his shoulder, opened the door to the closet and stepped in and closed the door after himself.

Why in heaven's name did he go in there, I wondered. A grown man hiding in the closet just didn't make sense. A nurse and the cart with the medications were briskly heading toward our rooms. She stopped at the room across from mine.

"Hi, Jim," I heard her say. "Ready for your shot?" As she walked toward him with her hypo needle and blood pressure equipment, she remarked how awful his room smelled. She administered the shot and proceeded to open the window.

"Jim, you're going to have a roommate. They should be bringing him in any minute now." With that cheerful bit of information she went on to her next patient.

Almost on her heels, two nurses wheeled in the new patient. This new admittance was a much older man. Senior citizen would be more accurate. His wife was with him as well as another woman who could have been his daughter.

There are certain procedures to be followed in getting a patient in bed and the 5:00 shift of nurses was much in evidence. Their clean uniforms, fresh looks and cheery greetings radiated all around the new patient. There just wasn't anything they wouldn't do to help this man enjoy his stay in comfort. As I watched them scurry about with the fresh ice water

and temperature-taking, I told myself I should have been a nurse. They looked so efficient and healthy.

"How about you, Mrs. Lewison? I've got a shot for you the doctor ordered."

Oh no, don't distract me with a shot now. I've got to keep my eye on Room 314. Oh my gosh, that man didn't come out of the closet. What if he should suffocate and die in there? How long does it take before a man runs out of air to breathe in a confined space like a closet? I tried calculating the time with the space. These closets have high ceilings. He would be safe for another three hours at least. But who was going to let him out? His friend had just had a shot. He could be out for hours. Or Horrors, worse yet this crazy man could come out at night when I was asleep and sneak in my room. All right, the nurse is here to give me my shot. Shall I tell her I think there is a man in the closet in Room 314. Or will she think I am daffy? Or will she think I am just trying to get attention by being dramatic? Or shall I just keep my mouth shut and let the man come out when he gets good and ready. Then again, what if he isn't in there? Maybe there's another door that opens on the other side. But it can't. It's a closet. I saw the clothes and suitcase. But there are two closets, one for each patient. They didn't open one of them. I am not making any sense.

"O.K., I'm ready," I said to the nurse. I looked at her and just couldn't tell her. She didn't appear to be the type one could confide in. I decided to wait.

The trays were brought in and I made sure I ate facing the room across from me. Both patients in Room 314 were asleep and no food was brought to them. After the trays were cleared, I tried to read, but I couldn't get the dark skinned man out of my mind. I could just see an aide carrying out this unconscious man and it would be my fault for not speaking up. Well, he had no business in the closet. I was fast approaching a panic stage. I knew I had to do something. I could let him out, but what if he had a gun?

By now, it was almost dark outside. I got up and walked over to my bed and rang for a nurse. I told her what I had seen. I told her I was sure there was a man in one of those closets in the room across from mine.

She told me she would have to close my door and go find the Security Guard and have him check the closets. My mind went over the events of the afternoon. Things like that just don't happen in a hospital, I kept telling myself. What a fool I was to get the staff involved in what I saw, or thought I saw.

About 9:00 o'clock I heard voices and a commotion in the hall. Then it was absolutely hospital quiet again.

About 9:30 a nurse opened my door, came over to my bed and said: "You can go to sleep now, there was a man in the closet."

MASSEY FERGUSON 900

Turning wheel and radio dial--

"Love, love will keep us together. . . "

"The teethbone's connected to the jawbone, the
jawbone's connected to the headbone. . . "--

Forming syncopated rhythms like the trotting of
a horse.

And they used to use the horses when they plowed.

"Shake, rattle, and roll. . . " over and over

"Crimson and clover, over and over. . . "

As the windrow tumbles once more

Smelling clover-sweet and hay.

"KBOU and it's ninety-eight degrees."

But, D.J., you're not trapped inside this tractor
cab like me.

"Get a bucket of .". Arby's tender roast beef."

I'm hungry; I think I'll kill a cow--

Grab one right out of the pasture--

"Ized mild and processed cheese from Allen's Dairy."

Make you dizzy t'watch the spinning

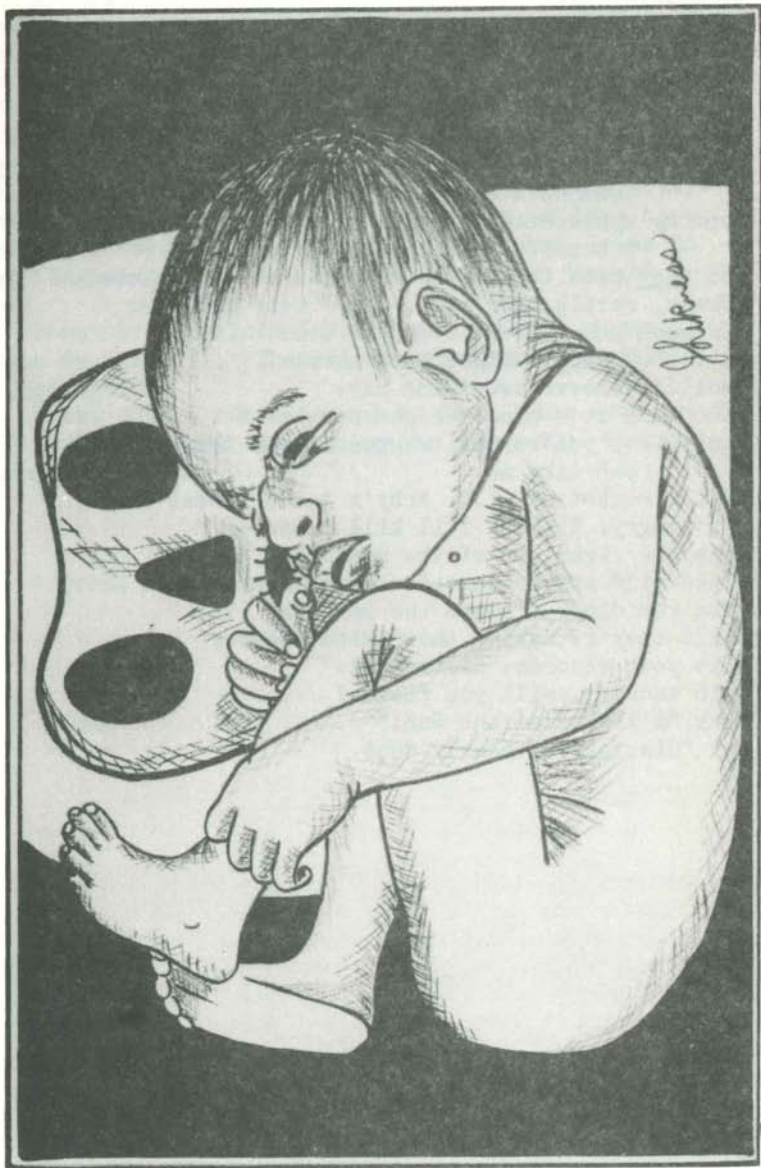
While they're making that there cheese;

Like your records, mister d.j.

Spin another, will you please?

Play "I'll Follow the Sun;"

Our "discing" is nearly done.



THE DELIVERY ROOM

the double doors were in motion.
doctors and nurses in white
were making last minute preparations
as the woman on the bed screamed
that it was too late;
that it had already begun to happen.

the husband, who was at his wife's side,
took several last swallows
and tightened his grip on her hand.
they made one last exchange
of kisses and i love yous
and everything's going to be alright lines
as the doctors and nurses
conveniently held separate conversations
as if they had seen
the couple's need to have time alone.

then pace picked up again.
and even though she had practiced the procedure
many times at home alone or with her husband,
doctors and nurses had to begin giving the wife
orders -
telling her how to move, breath, and push down,
almost as if she had never heard of childbirth
before.

the husband held onto her hand and sweated and
watched.

you could see him resenting
these men and women who were able, who had taken
over and overrun a territory that he should
know how to handle.

but as the doctor demanded one last bearing down,
death entered the room unnoticed.
it slid in and hid behind a white partition and
watched.

blood came faster as the child slid from the womb
and death would smile when it saw red.

then the husband, who saw the baby coming,
changed.

his face brightened, eyes and smile widened;
you could see him becoming a father.

next someone did something with the cord,
others were preparing for afterbirth,
and one doctor slapped the baby's bottom
as death laughed and took pleasure in the spanking.

but silence
was not mentioned in the books she had read on
childbirth,
and the mother kept asking why the baby did not cry.

by this time, death had seen its victory;
had moved its dark mass toward the doors.
the father, who spotted death on its way out,
tried to catch it, stop it, beat it,
teach it a lesson, or kill it.
but death went on;
avoided the confrontation
decided that letting the father live
might cause a greater pain.

LIBBY

As a child, she was precocious. Her friends tolerated her antics with resignation. Indifferent to others, Libby read books avidly without the slightest interest in dolls or hopscotch or other activities.

Twenty years later, Libby is holding one of the top management level positions in a multi-national, multi-million dollar corporation. She has the respect and devotion of all the line and staff employees that work with her.

John Birmingham, a newly hired method's analyst-type, in the systems and procedures group of the finance and accounting section, wants to interview her to search for ways in which she can be replaced by a computer. Unaware of his intentions, Libby greets him briskly in her office while she continues about her work.

"This might seem a bit silly to you, but I have a few questions I'd like to ask you concerning your personality. I've asked other department heads already concerning their personalities and it's quite amazing how much is revealed about general intelligence and deductive powers," John began.

"Alright, fire away!" Libby yelled back as she pulled her chair closer to her desk. "Sit down, please," she offered.

"First of all, what is the first physical characteristic you notice when you meet someone?" he asked.

"Whether they are male or female," she answered back.

"I see," he said as he jotted down her answer.

"Now, here is a hypothetical question that I want you to consider carefully. In your position as scheduling manager for audio-visual materials in this area, assume the following: A plane started out at Chicago's O'Hare field with seventeen passengers aboard and a crew of nine. At Omaha, four got off and nine got on. At Lincoln, three got off and one got on. At Des Moines, nine got off and four got on, and at each successive stop thereafter, nobody got off and nobody got on until the plane reached its next to the last stop, where five people got off and

one got on. Then it reached the final destination," John paused.

Libby blurted out, "Easy! Eleven passengers and a crew of nine."

"But, that's not the question," he sneered back. "How many people got off at Des Moines?"

"Nine," she quickly said.

John cleared his throat and became a little disoriented. "Yes, well, right. Well, how did you know?" he asked.

"Well, first of all there are nine letters in Des Moines. Seriously, I associate many things with many things," she flippantly answered.

"I see," John said. The questioning continued for the remainder of the hour and John felt his shirt wet with perspiration and his throat became parched and dry. Every trick to mislead and foil Libby has failed.

Libby enjoyed a little mental gymnastics and didn't want the interview to end. "Well, I must be going now," John said.

"Oh no, I'm really enjoying this! Do I get a grade on this or what?" she asked.

"Well, normally we classify people into three general categories--Below Average, Average, and Above Average," he answered hesitantly.

"Well, what's my category?" she asked.

"I don't know about you. You don't seem to fit into any of these categories. We'll have to program a new category for you!" he yelled as he stormed out the door.

Libby returned to the file she had put aside before the interview and focused long and hard on the first word--"Compute."

Shannon Whitcomb

THE STORE

Beauchamp, the blind boy,
 kept Granddaddy's little store
One room, a pot-belly stove
 black as the coal it burned.
Four cane-bottom chairs
soft drink box
ice cream freezer.
On the plank shelves was
 everything you needed
 to get you through to
 Saturday when you
 got to go to town.
 Bull of the Woods chewing tobacco
 hoop, cheese, fish bait,
 vienna sausages,
 soft, sugary peppermint sticks -
 not shiny and slick like they are now.

Beauchamp' gone
 and Granddaddy closed the store
and moved it
across the road.
When it rains, Uncle Coot and
Mr. Womack and Mr. Rice go to
Valiant's store, I guess.
It's bigger than the one
 Beauchamp ran, but otherwise the same,
 minus the cane.

UNTITLED

In the wake of a telephone battle with Ms. Hastings,
(No, I can not take another case--
four of mine are already on the docket for next
week....)

comes my son:

also associated with the number four
by way of years and scratches on elbows.

He needs to know if Tony can stay over-night
and help him be baby-sitted
while I go with Jack--and cheer under my breath
when he delivers those great campaign ideas
to Mr. Barrows
over sloe gins and hors d'oeuvres.

I keep wondering why I can't convince the D.A.
to settle for suspended sentence
in Monday's shop-lifting ordeal;
while I try to squelch thank-you squeals
and let the sitter in.

The longer I think about it,
the more clearly I see
the absurdity of nurturing three different lives
with one formula.

The sun in the window
catches my eye.
It is bright, yellow,
and promising.

Resolved, I start for the phone
and Ms. Hastings--
I'll research the briefs tomorrow:
after Jack has cinched the deal,
and Tony is breakfasted and
seen safely home.

Papers whirled around each other, caught in a column of warm summer wind, as two figures approached a corner streetlight. The last remaining rays of a hot blustery day showed variances of red in a cloud-pocked sky. With a quickening of steps, the bent figure of one man reached the streetlight. Stretched hands grasped onto the long metallic column and using what strength was left in tired arms, pulled him upward and closer to the silver column. He sensed having been on this corner before, but couldn't recall when it could have been. Maybe he had dreamt of this corner before.

"Hello," smartly said the second man as he approached the corner. "Beautiful sunset, isn't it?"

"Yes. The sun is beautiful, but look at the splendor of the rising moon, my son!"

Finally the column had been reached by the second man and again the feeling of having been here before many times. Sharp, cold sensations played on his nerves. Knowledge flooded his mind; the dream was proving itself to be true.

"What beauty God has created. Man doesn't need all of his senses to be aware of the power of God," proudly proclaimed the first man. "Man should dream and carry out the dreams he has, for then he will be honest with himself." The man paused and then asked, "Son, why have you become silent? Is it because you fear doing what you know you must eventually do?"

"Yes, I can't do it. I have to go...I'm late already," and with that, the second man hurried away.

A tear appeared and rolled down the cheek of the bent figure of a man. Another appeared and was followed by a stream of many more. The man's head shook and then he mumbled to himself, "Why, why do you have to always go away my son?"

Turning away from the lighted column, the bent figure retraced his previous steps, thus exiting the same as he had always entered. Tears glistened on the sidewalk and then were gone. They reappeared upon the pillow of a sleeping boy, whose dream of a son wanting to tell his father how much he really loved him had passed through his mind once again.

Judy S. Olson

JUST - SO, OF COURSE

Always immaculately coiffed and groomed
Miss Heath-Bradbury, white gloves in hand,
Glides along Bradbury Avenue.
It was named for her father, of course.

Never quite attractive, about three pounds in excess,
Perpetually dressed like the cover of Vogue.
Never too much, never too little.
She's her mother's daughter, of course.

Never stopping to stare in the shop windows,
(That would be too gauche)
The elegant lady knows just where she's going
And buys just what she wants, of course.

But, at home in the cavernous just-so rooms,
She drifts aimlessly past Daddy's favorite Matisse
Mother's Ming vase, and delicate crewel
Not at all interested, but reverently, of course.

Spotless window panes reflect empty eyes
Trembling fingers smooth the drape.
Too quiet, too empty, too lonely
Too damnable proper and suitable, of course!

Miss Heath-Bradbury can endure it no more.
She climbs the hand-rubbed Victorian staircase
Closes the door of her ruffled boudoir, and ends it all.
But, in a fashionable way, of course.

RAMBLING

What to write about
When there is free choice?
Thought patterns--
From first days of teaching
(I wonder if Delores ever learned to read--
Billy, I know, learned in spite of me.)
Now, eons later, I must, first and foremost, be
accountable,
While the media says children are learning nothing.

Or there is snow--
Beautiful, graceful, glistening snow.
(Remember the delights of going down a high drift in
a giant pan?
And riding in the bob sled to the jingle of the
horses' harness?)
Beautiful snow, unless whipped and thrown by gales
of wind
To make man and beast miserable.

Or there is being a parent, of course--
(Remember how totally ignorant we were, except we
didn't know it?
And gave advice to others, too--The answers were so
simple then.)
But parenting goes on forever and nobody is really
asking for much advice now.

Or there is solitude--
A time to let the mind expand and fly away--
(Remember walking along the creek talking away to no
one but me,
And Florence hiding under the bridge and hearing
every word of my soliloquy?)
Now, too, it's a treasured time for music and dreams
and just thoughts---

Really, in my solitude, many things to write about
come to me,
And one day I shall write about them all.

TONKA

Nona walks blindly, slowly, laboring and pregnant through the snow blizzard toward a cave in the side of a mountain. The unborn is heavier than the others she bore, much heavier. As Nona enters the cave, she goes from blindness to blindness, but this blindness is warmer and more secure than the cold outside.

On all fours, she does a simple dance of sleep, death. Her heart beats sadly. If this cub lives, he will be alone to live. No mother to teach it the ways to live. The howling wind sneaks through the cave heckling, echoing laughter at her. The labor pains are great; she retaliates with a scream of pain, shattering the laughing wind.

No! she won't die. She and her cub will live. She screams again as the oversized cub oozes out between her hairy legs. The scream is one of relief. Tonka! a male cub. Tonka cuddles close to his new mother and they dream together until spring.

But when the ground is fresh and water trickles down the outside of the cave and life is popping out of holes, underneath rocks, behind trees, bushes, caves, everywhere, Nona lies motionless. Tonka is awake and there is a smell he doesn't understand, doesn't like. It's terrible; he runs out of the cave and is stunned by the sunlight. He starts to cry and paw his eyes.

Tonka is a huge cub with yellow fur. He stares awkwardly as the surrounding nature focuses. But as he focuses with his big black eyes, the world looks puzzling, gaudy, fresh, but delicious. Tonka is impressed but hungry. He begins to eat anything in sight--grass, rocks, dirt, bark. His reverie of the cave's smell makes him puke, but he licks it back up and takes off in a gallop up the mountain, not knowing about the territorial rights of other life.

About three-fourths of a mile up the mountain, Tonka pauses for a drink from the running stream. He lunges in the water and begins playing. At his peak, he is dazed by a flashing mountain lion, which hits him with full force from behind. He tries to scramble to his feet, but is tossed from side to

side. He feels a sharp pain in the middle of his back. The cougar draws blood. Tonka runs toward new territory, and the lion is satisfied with the intruder's quick decision to vacate.

On the run to nowhere but anywhere, Tonka wonders what happened. He doesn't know and doesn't care. The thought falls out of his mind as he keeps running.

Three years pass and Tonka stands alone on two feet gazing over a cliff so high he is eye level with the birds. The trees look small, miles below. The sun shines brightly on Tonka's radiant yellow fur which covers big, thick bones and a twelve-foot mass of body. This is Tonka's land--Tonka's territory. He lifts his nose to the sky and growls the sound of victory. All obey his command, but he must obey the command of nature. All have heard the cry of Tonka, happy and sad. He leaves the high land in search of a mate.

CHECK-MATE

She whirled around and glared down at Him.
He moved forward one space.
How dare He think himself worthy.
He has no right even being here.
Straightening her embroidered silk collar,
She smiled, conceited look on her face.
She possessed them both and the others respected her.
They knew her motives deadly, her mobility unlimited.
She'd do it.
She'd do it when she was damn good and ready.

Once more, He moved forward.

The gentleman gallantly stepped out of the way.
So untidy, thought he.
Why did they allow the likes of him in?
Commoner, He smelled of lowliness.
Disgusting.
Manners, politeness, they were the key.
He did not even bow to the passing of the queen.

Again, He crept on.

Down on your knees sinner.
Only the righteous belong here, the man clad in black
thundered.
God is our only salvation.
Walk the paths of righteousness and you shall be saved.
'Tis only those without sin, see heaven.
Much too late for you.
Turn back.
The pious knight will do the deed, in the name of the
Lord.

Determined, He continued.

Fools, all Fools.
Is only cleverness and cunning will win the game.
Smiling slyly the Rook muttered.
'Tis the knife placed in the back and the hand out-
stretched that will bring him down.

For the last time, He took his final surge forward.
'Twas but a lowly Pawn caused the falling of the king.



Wanted:

Wanted:
to keep our beloved
15-year-old pet
company for three weeks
while we vacation
in California.
Must be mature and
able to speak
fluent Siamese.
If you are sincerely
interested, call 292-3602
for further details.

Reba Davis

THE CAT SITTER

Wanted: cat sitter
to keep our beloved
15-year-old pet
company for three weeks
while we vacation
in California.
Must be mature and
able to speak
fluent Siamese.
If you are sincerely
interested, call 292-3602
for further details.

Hi Jim,
It's your crazy mother
again with her weekly report.
You'll never guess
what I'm up to now.
I've taken a job for
three weeks baby-sitting
with a Siamese cat.
Since this cat is
more neurotic
than yrs. truly,

it should be
an interesting experiment.

Please write me here:

C/O M.G. Jensen
Box 979
Edina, Minnesota.

Love and kisses,

Mom

P.S. The cat's name is Kiki.

Dear Mom,

You've been going with Larry
almost two years now. I wish
he'd marry you and make an
honest woman of you,
or else you would find some
normal kind of employment.
It's somewhat embarrassing
to speak of my mom,
the cat-sitter.

Seems funny to think
of you, the former
cat-hater, in such a
weird job. Little did
I dream when Hari Cat
crept into our house
and into your affections
seven long years ago
that you would ever
come to this.

But then, they always say
converts are the worst kind!

Love and kisses,

Jim

p.s. give Kiki a kick for me.

Darling Kiki,
Mommy and Daddy will be
home a week from Sunday.
Be a good kitty
and we'll bring you
a lovely surprise.
Your adoring,
Mommy

Dear Mrs. Jensen,
Thank you so much for the
check for the full three weeks.
Of course I can understand
your missing Kiki so much
that you came home
four days early.
The five bites on my legs
and three scratches
on my arms
are healing nicely.
Sincerely,
Alicia Perrin
P.S. I'm sorry I'll have
to decline your offer
to cat-sit when you
next vacation.
I'm afraid my Siamese
isn't as fluent as I thought.

FLURRIES

Winter in the midwest was always a damp biting cold, viewed from a crackling fireplace or a snug kitchen. The only time adults left their cozy tarn besides going to and from work was when it was necessary to free walks from a cushion of white.

In empty lots and backyards the snow had been ruffled by children who actually made the cold emptiness into romper rooms: building forts, making snow angels, creating frosty playmates, even making temporary scenery changes, constructing ten-foot mountains that only the most daring would ski down and only the strongest could hold as their province for any length of time.

From inside a cozy kitchen sitting on folded knees, eyes and nose peeking over the back of the chair, Eric watched in silence with wide eyes and a broad grin.

The refrigerator door flopped shut behind him. "Eric," his mother began, "why don't you run downstairs and get your boots and parka and I'll help you get dressed so you can go outside and play for awhile?"

Eric slid off the chair, taking a final glance out the window before following his mother's suggestion. He hurried downstairs and reached up for his coat on the lowest hook and grabbed for his boots beneath the stairway, bumping his head lightly while struggling to pull them out of the boot box. He clumsily clomped back up the stairs and scooted onto a chair, holding one leg out stiff to make it easier for his mother to push the snow boot on. "Hurry, Mommy, hurry," he exclaimed, rapidly wagging his foot in anticipation.

"Hold still, Eric, or I'll never get your boots on."

He quieted while his mother pushed his boots on and snapped the safety guard around the top, so no snow could wriggle its way in to bite her son's toes.

When she was done, he hopped off the chair, holding one arm out stiff, airplane-style, while his mother slipped it through a heavy coat sleeve and he bent the other arm behind him, making desperate lunges for the vacant sleeve.

"Just a minute, Eric."

"Come on, Mommy!"

Finally the coat was on, zipped and a scarf had been tied around his nose, mouth and neck; mittens were attached to his coat sleeves with safety pins, a measure taken after two mittens had lost their mates to the white fluffy plague.

Eric bolted out the front door. His mother stared as Eric charged up the hill and gave his neighbor a shove, and she watched him clap as the little girl tumbled down the hill, then saw him fall forward when one of the boys pushed him from behind. But he scrambled to his feet and charged back up the mountain.

Eric's mother busied herself cleaning out dresser drawers. She sorted the summer things into a tall cardboard box and, when she came to her striped maroon and pink bikini, a gleam radiated from her ice blue eyes.

She tore her clothes off and jammed her winter bulges into the suit which had been challenging her. She ran to the front door and smiled at the bleak iceland which seemed to defy her, dare her, laugh at her.

She flung the door open and jumped into the polar climate. She ran madly around her home, laughing hysterically as if her antics could wrap the house up in a tornado-like flurry and sweep it to the equator.

She ran back in the house and smiled, glared back at the artificial mountain and the children who were rolling in the confetti of her victory.

Her smile melted and a tingle twisted her skin. She walked back to the bedroom and took off the swim-suit. She touched the cold red of her skin and reached for a blanket on the bed. After sitting for a few minutes, she put the clothes on that she had scattered on the floor.

Then, finished putting the clothes away, she stuffed the box on the top closet shelf. She swept the kitchen floor, now and then glancing at the children's mountain. The dusting and vacuuming were finished. Finally, sitting down at the kitchen table, pouring herself a cup of coffee, staring through the mountain, towards the brilliance of the sun, her eyes vaca-

tioned from the freezing bars of her cell.

Eric slammed the front door. "Mommy."

She walked into the entryway and helped him slither out of the slushy clothes and listened to him tell about all the fun he had and how he was "King of the Hill" for most of the afternoon.

"Did you have fun today?" he asked.



Joan Sandvick

SPOKEN-UNSPOKEN

"I hate: getting up on a cold winter's day,
worms on the sidewalk, their smell in the air,
globs of dried toothpaste left in the sink,
and white anklets."

"I hate: scraping a pan with an old metal spoon,
The Blob, Godzilla, and all of their friends,
Liver, its smell, taste and touch,
and mosquitos."

The word slides out in so many phrases.

Quite casual, used in this way.

But when it is piercing -- bitingly brutal,

It is felt loudly and clearly without even a word.

Walter Mullin

HOW I SPEND MY SUNDAYS

I go to the cemetery.
Before the morning passes away, it's quiet then.
I spend a long time there looking at the stones,
the leaves, the plastic flowers, the little dime
store flags, and moss and lots of names.
It's really a fine place to think.
Some people say you shouldn't walk across the rows.
"that's disrespectful"...when you're dead.
I walk right across they don't mind.
I talk to myself and cuss and bitch.
sometimes I pray, out loud, But I never cry.
I laugh a lot and tell myself jokes and think of all
the stupid things that happen.
It's best when it's foggy.
It disappears and you don't even notice...till it's
gone.



THE MELTING POT THAT WOULDN'T MELT

They never knew each other. Pretty dark-haired Mary O'Connor lived in the middle of the north half section of land, in a huge white house, surrounded by tall skinny silos, sprawling fat barns, and a motley assortment of sheds of a uniformly faded red.

The O'Connors were a sharp tongued clan, respecters of no position or title. Everything was fuel for the battle of wits that went on constantly. They didn't tell jokes, they acted them out, feeding one another the lines, always with a little twist or variation.

Mother Ellen could imitate with malicious accuracy her pious Aunt Lucy, her shrill Sister Tillie, or the cross old hen who tended the brood of chicks nearby. At the O'Connor's house, you opened a door cautiously, for the movement might trigger a dousing with an unseen pail of water. Wickedly leering dummies found their way mysteriously into beds and closets.

When there was music, as there often was, no true O'Connor could listen sedately. They must be on their feet, clapping their hands, doing a do-si-do or an Irish jig. Tom O'Connor, the father, would seize the dog Teddy by the forepaws and waltz him wildly around the kitchen table while son Pat fiddled and Teddy barked wildly.

Mealtime was a time for talk, laughter, and heated arguments. The family gathered around the huge oil-covered table in the kitchen and devoured quantities of food, washed down by cups of tea, without ever commenting or seeming to notice what they were eating, so absorbed were they in the quick quarrels and good natured banter that took place. Tears came as readily as laughter, and life was an effervescent mixture of sunshine and shadow.

Just across the pasture lived the Olsons, neat, thrifty and hardworking. They respected work; a well-tilled field with no weeds, a healthy flock of geese, sleek fat pigs grunting in their pens.

The Olsons were not given much to idle conversation. They spoke about the things that were necessary to the carrying on of their daily life, but it never occurred to them to use their own words for entertainment.

Music was important to them, and three of their sons sang the sacred songs of the church in clear and beautiful harmony. As they didn't use words idly, neither did they use music. They would not break into song while stacking hay or planting corn. That would be unseemly. Music was relegated to the church and church functions which formed an important part of their life.

One of the great pleasures of life for them was food. All family, community, and church festivals were celebrated with great feasts. Long tables, covered with heavy, smooth linen cloths held fine china platters and trays heaped with roasts of pork, beef or chicken. Garden vegetables, home-made sausages, glistening strawberry preserves, crusty breads and rich cakes, thick-frosted and covered with nuts. There was lefse and lingonberries and lutefisk drenched with melted butter.

The two families each had only one daughter; Myrtle Olson and Mary O'Connor were the same age. But dark-haired Mary O'Connor and blonde-headed Myrtle Olson always played with dolls, picked wild flowers and made mud pies alone. They knew of each other's existence and would peer shyly at one another when they accompanied their mothers to the village store to shop. Mary could have taught Myrtle her songs and poems and how to make May flowers into lovely wreaths. Myrtle could have shown Mary how to make beautiful doll clothes and transplant the wild flowers into a neat bed by the porch.

But no exchange was possible because Mary O'Connor was Catholic and Myrtle was a Protestant. Myrtle's father knew that the Romans were a slightly mad group with devious plans for conquering the world and forcing everyone to worship the Pope, a strange alien worship of burning candles, smoking incense and strange chants. Mary's mother knew that all Protestants were an inferior people with dangerously mistaken ideas about God.

So, living within shouting distance of one another, each looked longingly over to the other girl as she worked or played alone. Separated by a wall that neither girl knew how to penetrate, they never knew each other.



Polly Burke

HERMAPHRODITIC MESSAGE

Human Mon - ster - os - i - ty
More threatening than insecurities of scale,
More threatening than a bearded lady.

Born man and born woman
One testes, one ovary.
Born mother and father to conceptus

Put on stage to reassure us
Of our normality - -
Yet proof of the absurdity of
The sacred act.
Making "freak" undefined

And normal precarious . . .

Julie Rudnigen

INFIDEL

Promised from the first to be true to each other,
Sharing his bed.
Knowing she was his, his one and only lover,
Eventually wed.

Keep her pregnant and barefoot to keep her near,
Jokingly said.
But thoughts of her wandering brought pain and fear,
Wracking his head.

Admiring glances others threw her direction,
Noticed by him.
Suspicion and doubt of her professed affection
Burning within.

Conviction from doubt and hate from suspicion
Painfully grew.
Faithless killed faithful for some strange obsession
Keeping her true.

Ronald W. Dobbs

BALLAD OF THE CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTOR

I'm a man named Neverwas, I never was nor will be.
They asked me to carry a gun to keep my country free.
I told them that I wouldn't kill, it was against my
ways.

I went down to the draft board and was classified 1-A.
They took me down to boot camp to teach me how to kill.
I told them that I wouldn't learn, but they would
teach me still.
They cut off my golden hair and shaved my face so clean
And then they starved me half to death, to make my
body lean.

You wake up when the trumpet sounds!
You eat when the trumpet calls!
Do everything when you hear the trumpet
sounding through the halls.

They took me to the target range to learn to shoot
a gun;
Shooting at a cardboard man, hours 'neath the sun.
Out for bayonet practice with dummies filled with
sand!
The sergeant showed us fourteen ways to stab to kill
a man.

Shoot! Shoot! Shoot!
Kill! Kill! Kill!
Johnny'll be a soldier, like his mother
said he will.

Now I'm at the war front with my gun slung cross my
breast;
I saw a man across the way, he shot me in the chest.
When I first was contacted, I said I wouldn't kill.
They did not believe me then, I guess they never will.

You wake up when the trumpet sounds!
That trumpet sounds so brave.
When you're dead your family hears
the trumpet sounding at your grave.

Tim Orwig

RABBIT STEW
(for Elizabeth Bishop)

The day I turned thirteen, my parents gave me a rabbit

I built a hutch in our backyard
Right under my window so I could watch it from my
pillow.

So innocent and harmless
And yet so lonely
It must have a helpmeet

I delved into my secret compartment
Withdrew my life's savings
Counted it jealously, one last time
And purchased love for my white friend

What I'd heard of the birds and the bees
Was borne out by my rabbits
All of them more love, and yet
Not quite the same as before

While they increased, I decreased.
I no longer gave them my choicest leaves
And stopped feeding bread to all the little ones
They had grown to too many for me to love

And then one night I turned on them
Mauled the latch and splintered the bar
Then overturned the hutch
And left them to the embrace of the Dark
Striding away, I laughed bitterly

In the morning I found one
Crushed and broken
And saw the tire treads
Marking its grave
Nothing I could do would mend the broken
And no matter how deep I buried it
It would still rise again
So I flung it into the creek
Watched it sink, and prayed it would never surface

I fixed the hutch and collected the inmates
Locking them away from the world and myself
And yet, at times I still must sit
At my lonely table for two
And eat a dish of rabbit stew



FACULTY WRITING

Jan D. Hodge

AUBADE, WITH APOLOGIES TO ROETHKE

I wake to day, but take my waking slow
Despite the harsh alarm's assault. I fear
I've no desire to go where I must go.

Escaping day, I burrow far below
The blanket's dark; it is with no great cheer
I wake to day, so take my waking slow.

My conscience whispers I should rise and glow
An echo of the dawn, but, happy here,
I've no desire to go where I must go,

So linger half asleep. Although I know
I must cast off my dark and reappear,
Waking to day, I take my waking slow,

Because this morning (it is always so!),
My bones reluctant and my head unclear,
I've no desire to go where I must go.

But need prevails, and I prepare to show
A civil smile, and, bravely insincere,
I wake to day . . . but take my waking slow,
With no desire to go where I must go.

Janice Eidus

HEARTS

I insist, no matter how clumsy, our summers be shaped
like hearts.

Mine is propped near my typewriter.

Typewriter--you think--that's too...overt!

Next May when I move, the heart will be packed.
It will hide in the car trunk; two months later the
car burns on the Turnpike.

June spreads, a travel brochure before you.
Plants and bric-a-brac are given to your parents, with
careful instructions.

To your college friend Joseph go the old photos, the
antique lamps.

The heart is somehow left (not on purpose--one of
those nights, one of those
parties--you'd been lugging it moodily for days) at
the home of someone named Sebastian.

Sebastian--you think, from a bar in Maine--affected!

Sebastian works in the garden; Anatole combs the attic
for garden tools. Returning with
rake and heart, cries, "What's this?"

Sebastian, unmoved, still weeding: "Can't imagine.

Might it look good
in the parlour?

From a beachchair you think: It might.

THREE UNTITLED POEMS

- (1) GOD IS NOTHING
 without which
 nothing could exist.
- (2) Somewhere between I and me
 the region of love untouched, untapped
 is locked and going undiscovered to death
- (3) when will my sky forever blue to points of
 pins where angels live?
 we have learnt little. some dodge-um perhaps.
 no cause for celebration but celebration it-
 self will make us believe.
 my father lives, his father is dead, his
 father is dead.
- jon grace, called by me jon disgrace, and
 myself once killed a cat.
 a black cat. we planned it. we did it.
 we were proud of ourselves.
 i broke windshields and antennas and car
 mirrors
 told jokes and masturbated for the first
 time at four years old.
- my mother miscarried-twice-second time was
 my fault-she said.
 my father broke a model ship over my head.
 some girls called me a pip.
 my friend moved away a long time ago.
 after that i was the fastest.

IMPRESSIONS

There was the time I "borrowed" my older sister's prom shoes (before the dance) to attend my own make-believe Cinderella ball in the attic. Only my fairy godmother never turned me into a pumpkin when I broke one of the heels. My sister tried to, though.

And then, when I was ten, I worried about being fat because my sisters were thin and my brother hated the sight of both my stomachs hanging out. He rarely let me forget that I was a disappointment.

My sculpting and ballet careers didn't last too long. My clay horses never did stand up unless I squished the legs, and dancing caused my toenails to turn purple and fall off. Dad laughed and said, "What did you expect with such little toes and all that weight?" Besides, I looked like a baby blue blimp in a tu-tu.

Swimming was my great summer love. I was at the city pool as soon as it opened and was still ready to go when it closed. I could swim under the water clear across the width of the pool--in one breath. But jack-knife dives were my specialty.

Then I fell in love with Pat, the paperboy, and forced my best friend to sleep out on the front porch with me just so I could see him at six in the morning. Our affair was short-lived. He told me my hose were bagging around the knees when I wasn't even wearing hose.

We all hated chickens and especially having to gather all those eggs and clean them. It was great the day my brother got mad and kicked a rooster up to the ceiling of the hen house. He killed it, and we cheered. Still, I never could gas the baby cockrels when Dad asked me to do it. They were so soft and yellow. I always cried until Dad would come in and tell me he'd do it. I should never have talked to them as I dropped them into the barrel one at a time.

I loved Tom. I even swore I'd learn Morse code to prove just how much I loved him.

Sally was a year older, but we were great friends. Plus, she lived at the end of my block. We always spent the night at the house with the best stocked refrigerator. We had wonderful dreams about FINALLY being sixteen and getting married to our latest movie hero.

I wore glasses from first grade on.

The best part about being sick was that Mom pampered me AND I got to drink "Constant Comment" tea. Also, if I timed it right, I missed band and my private clarinet lesson with Mr. Grumbach. Yahoo!

Slumber parties were great. I attended my first when I was seven with twenty other girls. Jill's mom went crazy trying to keep us confined to the backyard. My mother limited my parties to five friends, and Peter could never be one of them.

My favorite books were: LITTLE WOMEN, MARY POPPINS (all four books), and BEAUTIFUL JOE. My favorite movie was THE VIKINGS with Kirk Douglas, Tony Curtis and Janet Leigh. I forced my sister to sit through the second show, and we got into trouble for being late.

My period shattered my childhood.

Frank Breneisen

IOWA

Going for a walk

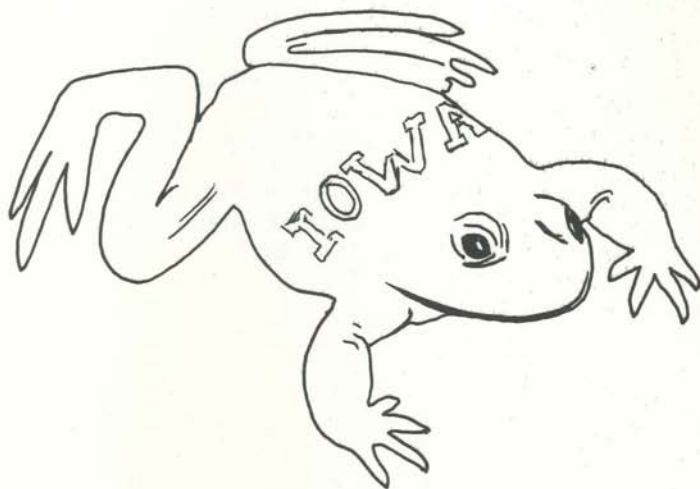
one day

I discovered a frog

from Iowa

At least he said so

(and who would lie about such)



Janice Eidus

We shyly bare old photo albums.

"This was my home in
Tuskalooska."

(A glossy color
print of a barren
hill boasting one
stray toothpick
at the height.)

"Reminds me of my own
Kentucky home."

(A black and white
of an empty brass
candleholder half-
buried in a field.)

"This was the apartment
I had when I lived on West
Ninth Street and worked for an
aeronautics journal as an
associate editor and was in-
volved with that neurotic
woman I've told you about with
the long braids and Indian dresses
who never stopped talking."

(A rusting ivory tusk
next door to a
hamburger joint.)

Then,
The photos tumble from
The pages as you place
Your teeth to my wrist.

Later,
We hope to
Refrain from rearranging
Your pictures, my pages.



