



TIME'S SPIRAL

SOUTHERN QUILL

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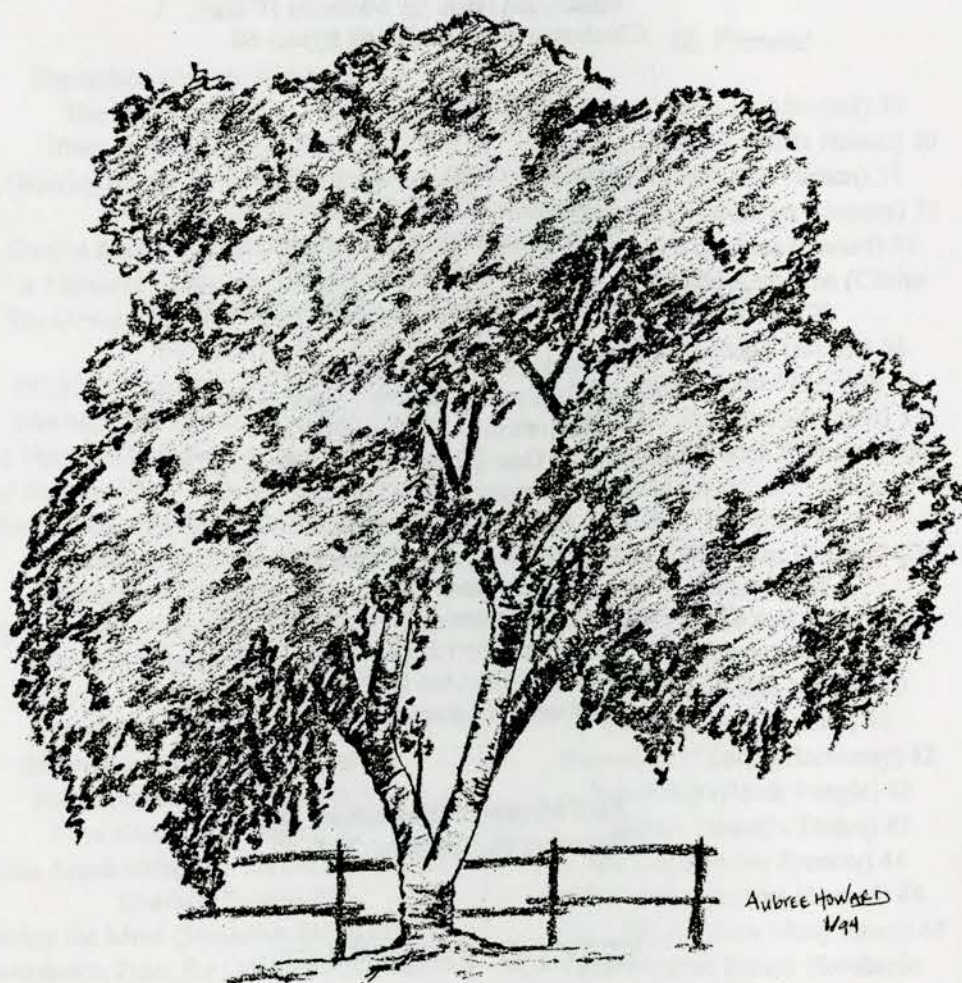
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 Phil Williams



ANDRE HOWARD
1/94

I. Past

Chris Nelson

*The Inn**

Trees poised, surrounding like proud green matadors
That bow and then stand almost still—
These walls remember faces
That have drifted through these immemorial halls
Like memories' ghosts fading fast into a sleeper's dream scene—
Here, where we now eat
(Hundreds of years beyond the builder's intent),
A shaven cat sits on the banister of perpetual hospitality,
And the phantom lady of the loom weaves spirit sweaters
For those haunted faces that are wishing
And reaching from the border of these antique walls.

**Second Place Winner, 1995-96 Annie Atkin Tanner Poetry Competition*



Debbie Gonzalez

Growing Up, Looking Back

Honey bees
 And crab apple trees,
 And blossoms that collect sun rays—
 In living years
 And chapel fears
 We watch them dance away the days.
 Shoe-string crowns
 And bluish gowns
 With offerings that sift away—
 Monarch heart
 Tattooed apart,
 They seem to hear, they stay to play.
 Rivered eyes
 Of reddish dyes,
 We close all doors and stoop to pray—
 For crab apple trees
 That skinned our knees
 When we lived like blossoms in the rays
 And watched them dance away the days.

*Natalie Mecham**Garden Knight*

A shadow in the beloved garden;
 It was him I spied tonight.
 He, standing so noble and in utter solitude,
 Transfixed in the silver moonlight.
 He passed me by as though I were a ghost,
 And I begged for him to stay,
 But sweet answer, I heard none.
 My path, the darkened road,
 And his, the lighted shadow way.

*Vaia Potter**A Mirrored Castle*

A mirrored castle
 Holds my sorrows.
 The light shines through
 The rusted bars.
 I can see the hollow trees—
 They catch the wind in their many holes.
 But when night falls,
 My stars cry of fire,
 And with your waters
 That flow and carry
 Wash away the skin of stone.
 Crashing clouds fill the ground.
 The storm of my night's tear
 And flooded soil
 Plant a key in my eyes to sleep.

*Christi Newbold**The Dawn of Earth's Grace*

The illuminating haze of blue
 Over the mountains begins to spark;
 Flickering stars that paint the night
 Fade into a lighter shade of dark.
 The moon's pale magnificence
 Swoons carelessly and is washed away
 By the boldness of bright crimson
 That will light the sky of day.

The sky blooms into a deeper shade of blush,
 And the wind starts to stir in a powerful rush.
 The calm waters turn into a stormy sea
 As angry rain erases the serenity.

The roaring thunder rages untamed;
 Crystal waves shatter with a natural touch.
 Yet the rising sun's constant flame
 Still burns through the storm's clutch.

Brief brutality may invade a peaceful space,
 But nature's wrath fails to compare to
 The dawn of earth's grace.

*Mitchell Webb**My Chibiabos*

As I walked through empty hallways
 On my way to Voice and Diction,
 I burst through the double doorway.
 Once inside the central garden,
 I was greeted by guitar song
 Wafting through the brittle morning.
 I approached a vacant park bench,
 Sat and watched this splendid minstrel
 Play her bittersweet string ballads.
 I watched her fingers, so amazing,
 As they wove their spider motions,
 Crawling up and down the thin strings.
 Then I thought of Chibiabos,
 And his songs of poor Algonquin.
 Here was my own Chibiabos.
 Then I listened as she chorused,
 As she versed and as she codad,
 Soaking all the world with heaven.
 Here she sat in this small garden,
 Playing minuets and waltzes,
 Playing them for my ears only.
 Never leave me, my musician,
 For I've tasted this sweet magic,
 And I want to feast forever.

*Jennifer Stokes**Mother Earth*

Gargoyles in the light,
 Angels in the dark.
 Creatures of the night,
 Strumming golden harps.

Snow upon the isles,
 Mists upon the moors,
 Forever unseen knobs
 Opening locked doors.

When the day is done,
 The sun will surely rise.
 Playing with the devil,
 You're bound to see his eyes.

Watch the stars, young children,
 For when they go away,
 You'd better find a morrow
 That's worth more than today.

*Natalie Mecham**The Vampyre Dream*

The voices that speak to her in the deaf, still night
 Exude warmth in there, her fragile heart,
 Beating in rhythm with all the anguish
 And agony.
 She longs to be like them,
 With their long, white arms
 Twisting
 Like
 Dangerous
 Vines
 Around
 Her,
 Enveloping her in their intoxicating embrace.
 She feels their cold, black lips on her ageless, pinkish flesh
 And the full wisps of their midnight hair on her neck and
 Shoulders, taking her to a realm unknown,
 Away from the terrible pulse in her heart.

*Debbie Gonzalez**And Seasons More...*

Apple blossoms
 And cream-filled days
 Of yellowed rosebuds
 In May;
 Lily pleasures
 And padded ponds
 Of arching falls
 They've danced upon;
 In crescent moon
 And poplar hills
 Of clover fields
 And daffodills;
 Burgundy wildleaves
 And seasons more
 Of angelfeet passage
 Through forest floor,
 O, winged sparrow,
 See earth below
 In spring delight
 And so
 And so...

*Cynthia Hathaway**For the Asking*

As a child again
 Full of love
 With the need to share,
 Old wounds are forgotten,
 And fears—
 Like twigs on still water—
 Drift off.
 Clear eyes and an open heart seek pleasure now,
 Longing to give this moment their special gift.
 As a child again
 The spirit rises,
 Lifting aching bones
 With simple laughter.
 No time to lose in worry, too busy with play!
 Or in silent meditation...
 Absorbed by the ant
 Marching on.

The child came with no weapons,
 Only pockets of hope
 And a stick of gum,
 An easy smile,
 And an honest tongue
 Asking, "Will you be my friend?"

*Natalie Mecham**Breakable*

One delicate, crystal rose
 Shattered today at my bleeding feet.
 Sharp shards of glass slice my shaking hands,
 And giant drops of azure tears fall helplessly on the remains.
 As I try to piece the frail fragments together,
 I think of the rose as a human life,
 Full of sadness and trials and strife.
 The broken rose cannot redeem itself or become whole
 Again.
 Never will it be an exact replica
 Or be admired deeply with jealousy.
 The significant cracks and imperfections
 Will not hide the truer meaning,
 The strength it endured through the fall
 And the beauty that lies within the glued substitute.



Cheryl [illegible]

Bart Jay Mitchell

Upon Reading "The Fall of the House of Usher" by Edgar Allen Poe

The House of Usher stood for all of hell to see,
 Enshrouded in ebony blackness like some demonic menagerie,
 And phantasmagoric were the screams which from her battlements fled;
 They echoed the night, stirring the sleepers and chilling the listening dead.
 And on that night when her walls came clattering, tumbling, crumbling down,
 The madness of Ophelia quickened the souls of men the countryside around.
 For Roderick Usher, the poor, emaciated, rabid man, had
 Entombed his cataleptic twin sister, who was not yet dead.
 For days her screams and poundings tickled his hyperperceptive ears,
 And each tick-tocking minute built upon his terror, his fear upon fear.
 Till at last while he was listening to a reading of Sir Canning's book *The Mad Tryst*,
 The Lady Madeline of Usher flung open the door with a burst.
 There she tottered, encrimsoned with blood, the very bride of dread,
 Then she fell spent upon her brother, whose terror killed him dead.
 And so the bodies tumbled, disheveled in Gothic gore,
 And so the house crumbled, and death shrieked, "Nevermore."

*Catherine Spencer**Damned*

The serpent, hissing, spits his ballad
 In my ears with popping force.
 His slithered spear tears pallid flesh;
 Tiger eyes with vigor pierce,
 But they laugh not.

Malicious traps mindfully dealt
 Play terribly as they roil;
 Turmoiled throes throb more real,
 Grinning toothlessly, but the rogues
 Laugh not.

I blacken, broken roots left rotting;
 Gasps grasp for any ruin,
 Charcoaled soul the white sky blotting,
 Then evil chortles once as one
 When Hell is hot.

*David Johnson**Brown Sugar*

We would run together
 Through crisp winter or humid heat,
 And neither the spines of the barb wire
 Nor the wooden fences and rogue streamlets
 Would trip our sure-footed, young feet.

We would run and swing
 And jump and laugh
 And imagine we were in on a covert operation
 To conquer the high ground.

Too excited to grow tired,
 We would collapse on arrival,
 For the sheer pleasure of rolling wildly upon the earth
 And feeling it envelop us.

Mild breezes would race up the hill
 To rustle our hair and steal our voices,
 And the scents of sagebrush were turncoat scouts who warned our eyes
 Of the armies of sand who would soon assault them.

The sand, though, more often was our simple joy,
 Four boys digging through a gritty blanket
 To leave four lines from each hand
 In an underlying layer that wasn't quite mud
 But more like brown sugar.

Chris Nelson

First Kiss

In the warm light
On the worm night
When we watched and wished
The witches taking flight,
When we walked and waited
For the other to kiss,
To sneak the first
Fresh, virgin kiss
Under the witches' waning moon
Beneath the worm light
On the summer warm night
Under a mellow moon.



Aubrey Hume
1/94

Jennifer Stokes

Upon Approaching the Throne of Heaven

Standing on the threshold,
Peering over the heads
That hold foreign faces,
My eyes feast upon
Incense burners and Luduan.
The delicate turquoise and gold
Of cloisonné incense censers
Bring to my nostrils
The soothing memory
Of coal in winter,
Of sandalwood in summer.

Between the necks I see it...
I breathe
The very same air
That touches
It,
That brushes
It.

Faded cushions of yellow,
Imperial yellow-gold and blue
That supported the frames
Of emperors.

A near six feet of
Gold-lacquered dragons
Dance amid clouds of wood.
My eyes, drawn into
Each crevice,
Search for signs of a cricket cage
Under the right cushion,

And laugh...
And breathe...

The seven layers of dragon screen
Seem to point the way
To heaven...

One last glance,
One last breath.
One last embrace of
Soul with the
Spirit that surrounds
The throne of China's gods.
And I promise myself,
I promise myself
A return.

Stephanie Dougherty

Training the Mind

Silence speaks
To empty ears,
And the unconscious
Fears
Of those who
Listen
Are revealed
To cast away
The vacant smiles
And desperate sighs,
Impatient of the
Tears that stay
And the memory
Of being
With you.

Natalie Mecham

Temptation From the Other Side*

It was love at first sight as she peered through the shop window.
It was all that she had ever wanted and more.
The red satin ribbon beckoned to her through the hazy glass.
Oh! And how she wanted that ribbon to tie back her auburn hair!
And have that softness against the nape of her neck.
Separation.
She is content for now,
To stare at it from afar
And wish for something that can never be her own.
Only until tomorrow, when the sign doesn't say, "CLOSED."

****Third Place Winner, 1995-96 Annie Atkin Tanner Poetry Competition***

Debbie Gonzalez

Sonnet From One Who Loves

When winter falls and spring is at its rise,
 When life is soft and curls within our arms,
 And the moon has pulled the lovers to her tides
 With all her starry skies and sparkled charms,
 We dream of castled clouds and gardens high
 And lie beneath the tree and smile above
 To heaven, radiant with gloried light,
 And trust in days and nights of truer love;
 But if the day were at its bitter end,
 Where life is short, without the sun or rain—
 If breath were stolen, pain on every hand,
 My thoughts of you and April skies remain:
 They say love is not meat or shade or drink,
 But dying, your love would taste as sweet, I think.



*Rebecca Hartvigsen**Broken Umbrellas*

Butter-yellow daisies sway with the breeze.
 Salty air and pollen make me sneeze.
 Sun-dipped flowers dripping with their dew,
 Sea gulls flying higher than they ever flew.
 August mornings by the sandy beach,
 Sticky-fingered children beg for a peach.
 They drop the gift in the rolling sand
 And cry for another with that sticky hand.
 Grey and white birds drop in for a visit,
 Divinity or cream puffs, good heavens, what is it?
 We plunge and we dive in the foamy wave,
 Drowning children we all must save.
 Burning backsides beg for the aloe,
 In pain and agony all night we wallow.
 Summer vacations seem so ironic,
 Once they're done, we've all caught something chronic.
 Blistered hides and long car rides.
 How could it be fun when we're burnt by the sun?
 For pleasure and leisure we will go out of our way;
 To repeat these yearly traditions, we yearn for the day.

*David Johnson**Phantoms*

Sweeping through this house
 On the rushing currents of my past
 Are the spectres of things that could not last,
 And behind this door lies a skeleton,
 A tribute to the thought that has moved on to death—
 These phantoms.

Up stairs of rotting wood
 With rails of sparkling gold
 Are the banshees of the loves that I have lost,
 And to the west a new wing is being built,
 A tribute to the expectations that may grow unto life.
 These phantoms—
 How long will their memories haunt me?

*Catherine Spencer**Passing Angel*

Along perfumed paths, where cherub bodies bathe,
 Eternal fountains frame their play.
 Strings of music lead their poses
 As tempting Cupid bids Venus stay,
 Crowning her with rings of roses,
 Spinning clouds of love adorned in mischief's faith.

Unveiled, crimson sunset helps me mingle,
 And as I treasure mortal's gift
 Still, envy's moss eyes watch.
 Though leaping legs can carry swift,
 I start too slow to catch
 The misty, feather wing—of a passing Angel.



Debbie Gonzalez

Dancing Days

I close my eyes
 To dancing days
 That come again
 In golden shades
 That almost disappear through heaven...
 When all these prayers
 Lie in my arms
 And christened dreams
 Sing melodies,
 Then shall these fancies
 So delight me—
 To cross the sky in airy trails
 To linger last
 On dreamer sails—
 My arms till then reach
 Heavenward
 To distant sounds of angels
 Only I have heard.

II. Present

Bart Jay Mitchell

Natural

The gnarly old tree man stepped out of his bark
All hairy and naked.
With a stuttering step he took another
Pull from the bottle.
He shimmered his port-soaked smile,
Sending shivers dancing with delight,
Like a clock the pendulum swung.
Giggling, he swims in the grass outside.

Chris Nelson

Bird's Eye Maple

Bird's eye maple,
Elbows on the table,
American dinner,
The summer of forgotten winter.
Bubble gum, bubble gum
In a dish...
Can we kiss?
The high sun caused deep-bridged shadow
On our puce smiles in the marshmallow puddles,
We snuggle—
Too true
To be real.



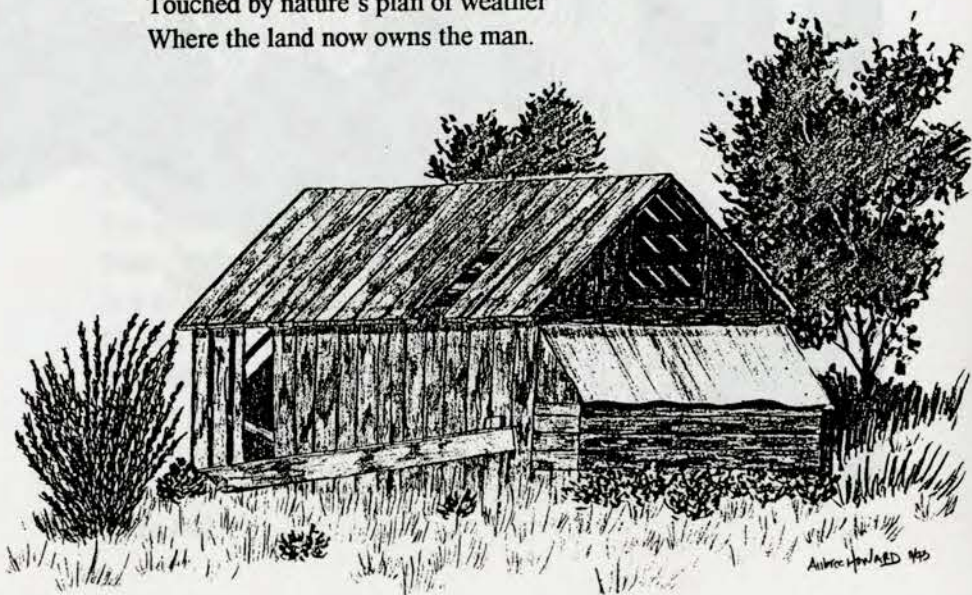
Catherine Spencer

Little Valley

A gruff-touching, puffy hand
With labor rough still speaks.
Whisker peppered, flaccid chins,
Toes of crows and dimpled grins
Adorn the leather, russet cheeks
Of the man who owns the land.

His rumbling cough breaks crisp through frost,
Tilts the necks of those he tends.
An early, yawning sunrise
Greets his squinting, watchful eyes,
Leads a plodding step that mends
Earthly threads spun thick in rows.

His hardy work yields a union
Of self and earth sown together,
Hearing Father Clock's tuned chime;
Both wear wise the face of time,
Touched by nature's plan of weather
Where the land now owns the man.



Christi Newbold

Interest Turned Addiction

It was a quiet Thursday morning in Oak Forest when Kimberlee rolled out of bed. She crept out her front door with the knowledge that Dustin, the object of her desire, would leave for football practice in about twelve minutes. She quickly got to her usual spot on the corner of Antelope and Snowcreek where she put up the sun shade in her mom's beat up green Mazda so she wouldn't be noticed as he stumbled down his front steps. This had been going on almost every morning for the past couple of months, ever since she met Dustin, and right after Alex, her boyfriend of eight months, dumped her unexpectedly. She was unable to control his choice to leave, just like so many other things in her life.

She shrugged off those thoughts as Dustin climbed behind the wheel of his yellow Ford pickup. She carefully followed him to practice at Northridge High. She parked in the Smith's parking lot across the street from the practice field where she watched him play.

School started shortly after practice ended. Kimberlee endlessly went out of her way to walk by Dustin's locker. In Ms. Spencer's English class she studied his body. She loved the way his triceps flexed when he wrote his assignment, the way his left eyebrow arched when he didn't know the answer to a question. She closely observed every detail about him right down to his walk and talk. She could vividly recreate a picture of him in

her mind when she wanted to, and that was almost every second he wasn't around.

Her interest had turned into an addiction. Her pursuit of Dustin was the one thing she thought she had control over. She didn't understand that it was controlling her.

After she followed him home from school, she returned to her Dustin shrine. The walls of her room were covered in newspaper clippings of his football achievements, a picture of the football team, an 8 x 10 of his football picture that she had stolen from the football awards banquet last month, the ticket stubs to his games that she attended without fail, and his junior yearbook picture enlarged to poster size. She could barely stand the fifteen hours from the end of school to his football practice the next morning, and weekends were even worse. She spent many a Saturday in Smith's parking lot watching Dustin cart out customers' groceries. At night, she would call his house and hang up when he answered. Sometimes, she recorded it on her answering machine, just to hear his voice.

Soon, the things she had been doing weren't filling her void or satisfying her growing obsession. She was consumed with the idea that Dustin would bring her happiness. She began to venture out late at night to sneak up to his window and watch him sleep. After a while watching wasn't good enough, and Kimberlee took her camera along one night. She crept up to the window, focused the lens on his sleeping body and shot. There was a bright flash of light, and she heard his voice shout, "What in the hell?" and the bedroom light was flipped on. Kimberlee had

forgotten about her camera's automatic flash. Panic filled her heart, but she was unable to move. Before she knew it, she was being tackled to the ground. Her worst nightmare, of her losing control and Dustin finding out, was about to become reality. As her face came into view, Dustin's grimacing snarl faded into a puzzled look.

"What in the hell are you doing, Kim?" he asked in amazement. She was too stunned to speak. "Is this some kind of sick joke?" he said as he released her from his grasp.

A smile came to her face; she suddenly returned to her senses.

"Actually it's a dare. My friend really likes you, and she dared me to take some pictures of you for her. Pretty lame, huh?" she nervously lied.

"Yeah, you just freaked me out, that's all. I'm just glad you're not some kind of neurotic psycho or something."

"Yeah, me too," she agreed. She apologized for frightening him and said she would see him around. As she drove away from his house, she thought how next time she would stay in control. She would make sure the camera flash was on lock, and no matter what, she would not get caught.

Julie Toronto

Earthquake

Mother Earth seems restless as if filled with desire,
An energy inside herself waiting to take her higher.
A power pricks and pushes
And frees the force within.
The ocean begins to boil;
The mountains start to move;
The land lifts and trembles—
Hear a rumble, hear a rhythm.
The earth opens wide to swallow tall towers.
Slicing and dicing, see God's destruction.
An explosion,
A shattering combustion,
A release of energy—experience earth's tremor.



Elf Haiku

Gibbous moon dapples
Leaves and long legs; waves of light
Wash us and our dreams.

*Cynthia Hathaway**In Passing*

Without rest, the wind blows
 From north to east to west;
 Sands shift, sage turns
 Blue to gray to green;
 Even as the birds make sweet love
 With spring blossoms this day,
 I alone stoop, tracing a driftwood
 Whose journey down...the Virgin
 Brings proof to me
 There is no end to the pieces
 A heart can break into...

Perhaps someone—somewhere, someday—
 Will find use for these fragments;
 Perhaps a piece may even be found beautiful
 And brought home by an artist's hand
 To prop outside the door,
 An unconscious reminder...
 That love grew here.

*Grace E. Gubler**Few Words for Mr. M****

Twenty thousand miles you ran away from me
 And left me dying.
 No one sees what time has failed to mend.
 I am the original Ice Maiden, cold and bitter,
 Frozen through and through.
 If my silence made you leave, I was trying,
 Trying to tell you.
 Murmuring broken phrases of endearment, you tiptoed out of my
 Eyesight then ran. Away.
 You're the chill that knifes down my back when I hurt,
 And the hands that play with my mind, leaving ashes to fall.
 Whenever I call your name, all I hear is your silence.
 Throwing water on me, you laugh as I scream and puddle on your
 Plastic floor.
 I am too young to cry,
 But, of course, you do not agree.

David Johnson

"Please Don't Touch the Display"
(for Wendy Forsberg)

The season fall is our time.
We are entwined in it, like sparkles in wine.
The haze of a single chimney rekindled,
Brings with it the smell of a lonely campfire,
And around it the memories of how we began.
Why do you watch me so?
It's only the smoke that's wetted my eyes.

Color of shadow, it flickers outside.
A jack-o'-lantern's face, a blaze in disguise.
The sound of children screaming,
As they run and fall in love with this scary night,
Is so often an echo in my dreams.
Why do you watch me so?
It's merely the breeze that makes me shiver.

The silence of a leaf becomes noise upon the ground.
Weathered piece of shoe, a matching shade of brown.
The crisp bite of the air is given voice,
As the unknowing shoe splits the brittle leaf
And feels the sound of breaking glass.
Why do you look at me so?
You know such noises always make me flinch.

City of light, it calls to us.
A thousand different lives, all caught up inside.
The sudden twinkle of a lamp,
As a child we've never seen,

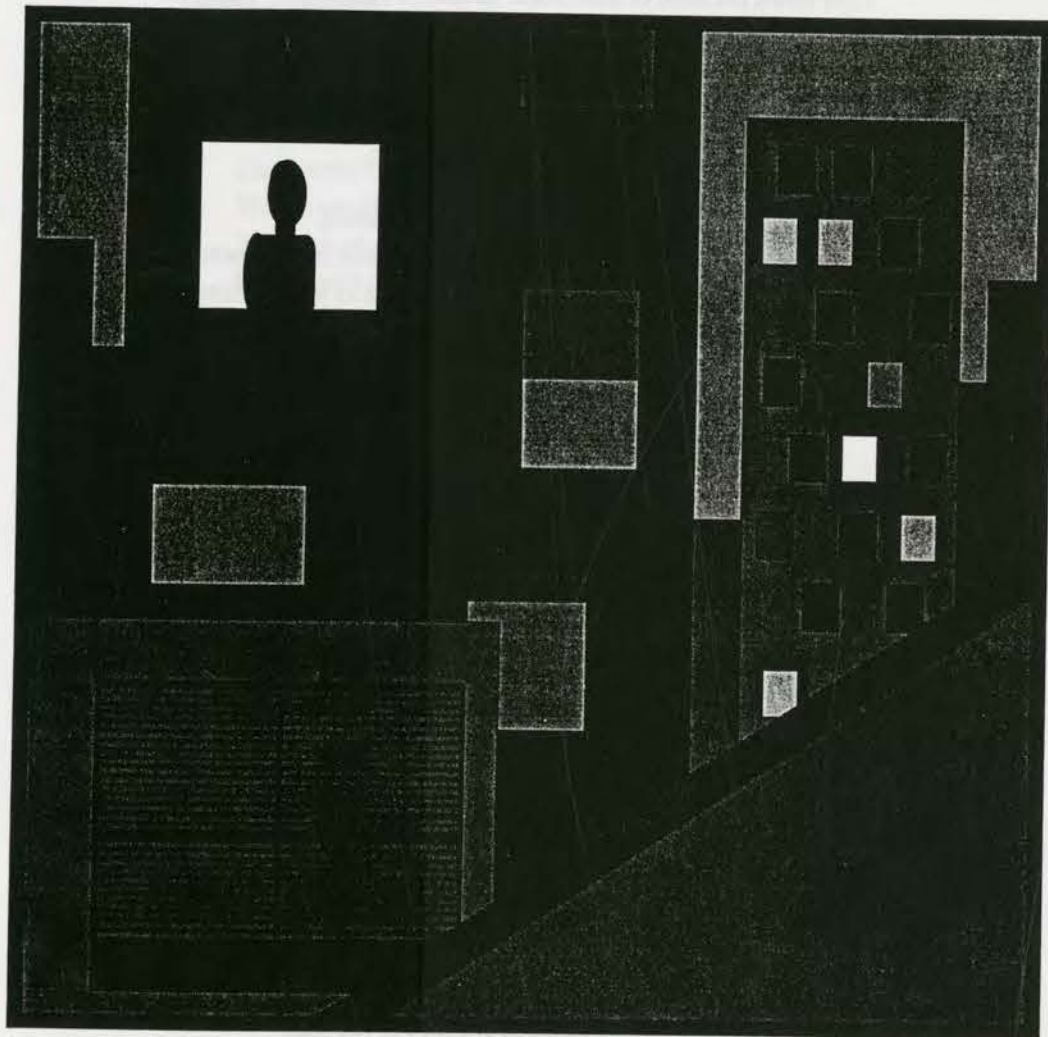
Lays down his head of innocence, as once we did.
Why do you stare at me so?
The lights are too bright to look any longer.

The love in her heart, here is where I found it.
I can never forget it, not that I'd ever try.
The beauty in her lips, the friendship in her hands,
Everything I've ever loved in her, belongs to this time of year,
And that is why when I must leave it, I choose to leave it here.
Leave it where I found it.
Why do you look at me so?
Have you never seen a man cry?

Charmaine Slayton

The Last Tree To Fall

Miles of rolling hills once filled with rich forest views
Have been taken from her sight by man's panoramic abuse.
Vandalized, healthy bodies uprooted to leave headless stubs
Anger her deeply for the undeserved lack of love.
Like a brick fireplace that remains after a fire,
Her solitary stance represents her passionate desire.
Ninety-three years her cracked and splintered eyes have seen
All of her kind chopped down by human beings.
She will eternally be anchored to the skin of the land,
But she slouches into it with one chop by a man.
The empty air does not echo her cry.
Caressed by her Father's creations, she dies.
Those who caused her death will never sob.
To them, it is just another day on the job.



These heartless, hard angles of isolation.
-Chris Nelson

Whitney Feinauer

CA

I can't even contain my excitement as I finish packing firewood into my Malibu Classic. I turn to my brother and warn him that if he tells anyone, I will kill him. He assures me that my secret is safe, and I drive away into the darkness. As my car rattles down the freeway, I start to get anxious and nervous. To calm my nerves I search for a tape on the seat. The tapes seem afraid of my fingers and pull away. Finally, I grab Bob Marley and shove it in the tape player. My mind escapes into the lyrics and the rhythm, and I begin to lose myself in the sandy beaches of the southern California coast and in my lover's arms. I am abruptly awakened by a figure on the side of the road. He asks for something but not necessarily from me. I hesitate a moment then tap my brakes and pull off the road. I hear his footsteps in the gravel, and I begin to question my decision. I reach over and unlock the door, and he slides onto the seat.

"Where are you headed," I ask in a harsh voice so I appear stronger and more stern than I really am.

"As far west as you can take me," he replies in a soft, deep voice.

His long black strands are tied with a leather strap. His body is trapped under dirty Levis and a "Stench" concert tee shirt. He intimidates me. His voice is worn, probably through his years of travel. He tells me of his travels and his life. He is not shy as he tells me about his drugs, drinking, running, and all of his women. As he gazes out the window, I think about him. I have gained a respect for this stranger who five hours ago I looked at as a bum. He has seen things I will never see.

He begins to ask me about myself, but I choose to be brief out of fear still of this dark, mysterious man. I can see the pain behind his eyes as he stares once more onto the concrete walls.

I pull off on the Highway 91 exit and slow the car down. He thanks me and offers me money for my trouble. I simply refuse and reply, "Thanks for the company. I needed it." I watch him in the rear view until I can no longer make out his figure.

I arrive at my destination, and my lover greets me as if he has never seen me before. We embrace, he kisses me, and I feel alive. The stranger's image sticks like glue in my mind. I wonder how he is and what he is doing. The weekend passes in what seems minutes. I shut the car door and kiss my lover good-bye. As I drive into the madness of the California highways, I begin to feel a loneliness I have never felt before.

The words from "Homeward Bound" drip from the windows and bring tears to my eyes, as I pass town after town. My mind takes me back to a wonderful weekend on the beach, in the sun, in the pool, and in my lover's arms. Again, I am thrown back into reality when I notice a familiar figure with a duffel draped over his left shoulder. His familiar strut brings a smile to my face. This time he doesn't ask for anyone's help, but I pull over anyway.

"How was your weekend?" he asks in that same quiet voice.

"Pretty good," I answer with a simple grin, feeling somewhat alive again. I think back on the weekend and realize it wasn't my lover I made love to, but this stranger who offered me so much more than sex. He offered me peace, companionship, and safety.

"So, where you headed?"

"As far as you can take me," the stranger replies with an unfamiliar grin.

*Cynthia Hathaway**Hometown*

Pecans and pomegranates
 Cling to bare branches.
 A song sparrow pecks
 At a crusty rind
 To feast upon the
 Crimson pulp within.
 Old men sit and crack
 Nuts on a redrock slab,
 The same red rock that
 Curtains a winter moon.

*Derek Naegle**Tranquility*

Just past midnight,
 No stars to see in the sky tonight—
 All tucked in
 Under a soft blanket of dark-warm gray.
 And it's raining,
 Not torrential, turning roads to rivers,
 But light, lazy,
 Thousands of pleasant kisses finding my offered face.
 Broad, black byways
 Become a canvas that bids watery beads come lie
 Glistening wet.
 The asphalt mirrors the streetlights,
 Creating stars
 Underfoot as I walk, alone with my thoughts,
 Just past midnight.

*Jennifer Stokes**The Dark*

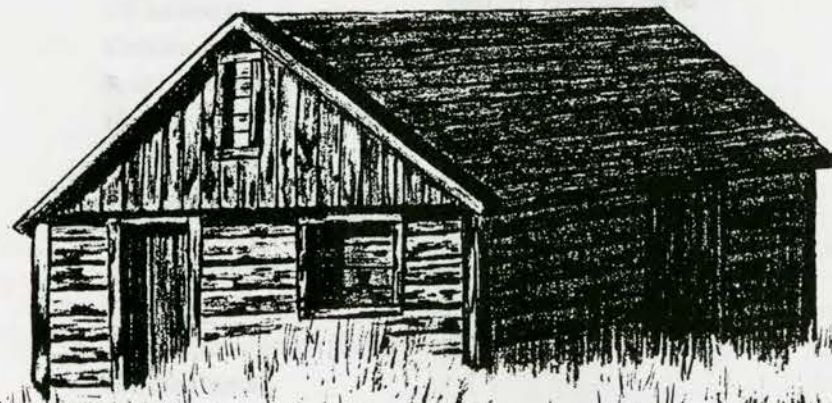
The sky was black,
 Just like every other morning.
 But today a light was on
 In the house across the field.
 It left a yellow square
 On the dark.
 I turned away,
 Just like every other morning,
 And went on to making my breakfast.
 But before I left the house,
 My eyes were drawn back
 To the window I had left.
 Within ten minutes,
 The dark was now yellow
 With purple, blue, red,
 Fresh morning colors
 Native only
 To the desert.
 In ten minutes the dark
 Dissolved to rainbow,
 And I left for school.

Catherine Spencer

Icicle*

Creeps in silently, glazed with winter's milk.
 Sculptured and tangible,
 Ragged with lumps, smooth curves of character.
 Releasing, shedding lacy droplets
 Tearing through the night.
 With each given
 Drop, it expands, growing sharply in spite
 Of the supposed loss.
 Cold, pointed dagger dares
 The gusts to huff
 And snap while it
 Burrows
 Through the currents
 Untouched.

**First Place Winner, 1995-96 Annie Atkin Tanner Poetry Competition*



ANDREW HOWARD 1993

Amy Eaton

Can't Buy Me Love

The ever-popular Cindy Mancini (Amanda Peterson) tells Ronald (Patrick Dempsey), "Whatever happens with the popularity thing, you know, stay yourself. Don't change to please them. Stay yourself." The main theme of the film *Can't Buy Me Love* is people shouldn't change to feel accepted.

Ronald is known as "Lawn Boy," and students at his high school consider him a nerd. He is tired of being treated like a "social leper" and dreams of "fitting in" and being popular. Seeing head cheerleader Cindy Mancini returning a stained suede outfit ruined at a party, he offers to buy a new one. He proposes to "rent her." "You want to rent me?" she questions.

Ronald explains, "You pretend you like me, and we go out for just a few weeks, and that will make me popular." Ronald believes being seen with her will change his reputation.

"Are you high? Just being seen with me isn't going to make you popular," Cindy tells him in disbelief. The film proves her wrong.

Ronald's "nerdy" friends seek acceptance and popularity in different ways. They are willing to help any person with his or her homework and attend the Columbus Day dance only to be rejected. When Cindy Mancini accepts Ronald as a friend, her friends come to accept him, "Lighten up. How bad could he be? He is

with Cindy—come on." Cindy's "cool" friend Pats says, "He went from like totally geek to totally chic."

By Halloween, Ronald is so deep into his new friends and image that he is coerced to pull a prank on a former "nerdy" friend. By throwing dog feces on the front door, Ronald fully consents to his new-found acceptance. His betrayal of a true friend takes him to the next level of popularity—total acceptance by the "popular" group.

By the end of the movie, Ronald realizes the whole scheme turned him into something he wasn't. When he was working his way up with the popular crowd, he confesses, "It wasn't me anymore." He recognizes it wasn't the true Ronald whom people were accepting. "Nerds" and "cools" face each other at the end of the film, and Ronald states, "Cools. Nerds. Your side. My side. Man, it's all bullshit. It's just tough enough to be yourself."

The film *Can't Buy Me Love* may appear to be another movie made to make people see the ups and downs of being a teenager. The movie's dialogue makes a person stop and think how hard it is to be secure about oneself. A person doesn't want to go through life without feeling accepted by his or her peers, but, at the same time, s/he shouldn't have to pretend to be someone s/he really isn't. Patrick Dempsey (Ronald) clearly portrays what a person shouldn't do in order to be accepted. After all, who determines who will be popular and who won't? "Man, it's all bullshit. It's just tough enough to be yourself."

*Stephanie Chidester**The Mind as Nature*

Southern hills crouch above the highway,
 Ragged edges of cracked
 Orange clay and rock,
 With hollows corroded by centuries of
 Wind, water.
 Small sunflower heads nod from pale green antennae,
 Bone-white twigs stretch from chinks
 Where no seed should reach, and
 Shrubs with only a touch of rusted green
 Twist from angry desert soil.
 A frenzied rabbit runs
 To an unseen tunnel, past
 Scorpions nestling under
 Trumpeting moonflowers and
 Snakes wrestling behind sagebrush,
 Orange and black scales glinting against the dust.

*Stephanie Dougherty**Sketching Reality*

Steady strokes the artist's hand
 In graceful shades from grey to black
 Which fill the blank and grainy white
 And whisper of a human face.

She fluctuates from light to dark
 And tries to trace the memory
 Of moonlit eyes with mirrored stars
 And warmth within a dancing smile.

The strength remembered in her mind
 Is buried deep behind thick mist.
 With sweeping strokes, struggling long,
 She searches for the distant warmth.

Looking back at finished work,
 Empty canvas now complete.
 Her masterpiece, non sequitur.
 Intentions lost beneath the black.

Meaningless eyes without a soul,
 Reality is in full view.
 Her wrinkled sketch, white and black,
 Holds secrets she could never see.

Brazen smile replaces warmth.
 The cobwebs can't restrict the view.
 For memories lie and eyes grow old,
 From artist's hand the truth unfolds.

Channin Campbell

Winter Night

A field so white,
 Birds sleep.
 Tall, dark, skeleton figure,
 A limb would break.
 Cold.
 The taste of frost.
 Crisp, clean, snap!
 Slippery,
 The icicle drops.
 Crackle, crunch,
 A foot or more deep.
 Smooth, silvery moon,
 A melody above.
 A stream which slumbers,
 December blood.
 A punctured blanket,
 Murky,
 Radiates starlight love.
 Silent,
 A lonesome winter night.

Chanda Howard

Back to the Compound

Eighteen-year-old Alexis had tried to move out of her parents' home a few months before. Ever since then, her parents had been paranoid and started recording phone conversations, spying on Alexis and not letting her go anywhere without a chaperon. Alexis had suspected these things but thought she was just being paranoid herself. So she pushed those ideas to the back of her mind.

Alexis' boyfriend called—a couple of days before this scene takes place—to invite her to spend a couple of days at a ski resort with him. Although she knew that this was not possible with her current living conditions, it sounded like a great idea, and she responded as such, knowing well that she would have to come up with an excuse later.

(This scene takes place in a bedroom set-up. Alexis is sitting on a bed doing homework. Parents knock on door and enter with chairs in hand. Alexis looks up, and her body stiffens in discomfort. Parents set up chairs and sit down.)

DAD: Alexis, we've been concerned about you.

(Father folds hands and leans forward while glaring directly at Alexis.)

ALEXIS: Why?

MOM: Why did you tell Lee you would sleep with him?

ALEXIS: *(defensive and insulted)* What?

DAD: We know what you've been up to.

MOM: We've been just as sneaky as you have.

(Alexis looks at floor and starts to fidget.)

DAD: If you are going to live under our roof, then there are some rules you must follow.

ALEXIS: *(now angry)* What do you mean I told Lee I would sleep with him? I never said that!

DAD: We heard you tell him. Want to hear your own voice?

(Alexis angrily gets off bed, knocking school books and paper onto floor. She starts tearing pictures and posters off the walls.)

ALEXIS: I'm moving out!

(Both parents stand up.)

DAD: Then you cannot have your car; it will just be you and your pink and purple bicycle!

ALEXIS: I don't care! I'm getting out of here! You never listen to what I have to say about these situations; I have no freedom!

MOM: Tell us what you think, then!

ALEXIS: It wouldn't matter; you wouldn't care anyway!

(Mother begins to cry and pushes Alexis. She falls on top of the bed. Mother grabs Alexis' shoulders and begins to shake her.)

MOM: *(with shaky voice)* We love you! Why can't you just obey the gospel?

(While she is speaking, Alexis is angrily trying to struggle free.)

ALEXIS: Let go of me! Let go of me!

(Alexis finally struggles free.)

ALEXIS: Stay away from me!

(Alexis starts tearing more things off the walls.)

DAD: Don't you dare speak to us this way!

(Alexis is crying now.)

ALEXIS: *(gritting teeth)* I went to Maine for a reason! I don't want to live here! You have no respect for me!

(Mother runs out of room in tears.)

DAD: It's not too late to change your mind. You will have to do this all on your own. We will not help you pay for school unless you stay home.

ALEXIS: *(in hysterics)* I don't care! I'm leaving!

DAD: Well, if you choose to live your worldly and Godless lifestyle, you cannot do it here! I see you just trying so hard to get away from the people that really love you, so you can pursue the devil's ways.

ALEXIS: I don't have to listen to this! Leave me alone!

(Father exits room, slamming door behind him. Alexis throws herself on her bed and curls up into fetal position and cries herself to sleep.)

Jessica Fournier

The Vine of Life

The vine I climb is thick and vivacious
With a vast mass of entangled ropes and trickery.
It's lush green although
From time to time the colors fade.

I climb this vine with all my might.
Determination combined with curiosity
Leads the way.

Each day I climb small increments at a time,
Leaving little noticeable difference
Of which spot I left behind.

I climb and climb, making little progress,
Only to fall farther down from where I started.
I climb again with new hope of success,
Following branches that lead me high and far,
Finding it's a dead end and I'm trapped in a mess.

I slowly work my way back down
To find a new path to follow;
Though there are many choices along the way,
I become confused, frustrated and afraid.

This vine I climb fills me with hopelessness.
Without doubt of a purpose for the struggle,
I take in pride the lessons to be learned along the way.
I fight to keep my faith,
For I know I will reach the top someday.

Natalie Mecham

The Encounter

How could she do this to me? I drive all this way to see her, and she does this to me. Allen Burke clenched the steering wheel a little tighter and accelerated up the hill.

He had first met Audrey a little over a month ago on the internet highway. She was going under the nickname "Gish." Both of them were "internet junkies" and spent most of their time on computers.

Allen thought he could never fall in love with someone before meeting her first, but after meeting Audrey on the internet, he changed his mind. She was smart, had her master's degree in computer science, and had a down-to-earth personality.

They had planned to meet in June, but the encounter was delayed until August. Allen and Audrey had conflicting work schedules, so there was absolutely no way of working around them.

Allen agreed to drive from his home in Los Angeles to Las Vegas, where Audrey lived. He thought driving would be cheaper, and he needed the time to stall. He was extremely nervous about the "big" first impression.

The rain hit gently on the windshield, and he flicked the wipers on high. He began to hum his favorite song by U2, "With or Without You."

Oh, she looked incredible. Long legs, long mahogany hair, and forest green eyes. She was everything he had ever wanted.

The first impression was definitely a good one. His own features were not that

of the "tall, dark and handsome" stereotype, but more of an "I know everything about computers" look. He was what society called a "computer nerd." He was almost 5'10", had short and neat blond hair, and dressed comfortably in button-up shirts and Docker slacks.

The next few days were paradise.

They dined and danced. It felt like they had known each other for years. They kissed only once, and that was while they were dancing. The walks they took in the cold air seemed very familiar to Allen, but he knew it had never happened before.

Then he walked in.

He was a Greek god with curly brown hair and a curious, almost shocked, look on his face.

This man, now glowering in the doorway, was Audrey's husband. This hadn't been the first time she had been caught with strangers in the house. Since her husband's job required travelling, it gave Audrey the perfect opportunity to invite little, unsuspecting gentlemen into the home.

"Who the hell are you?" the man demanded, putting down his bags and taking a few steps toward Allen.

"Shouldn't I be asking that of you?" Allen rebuked with a bit of hesitation.

The only thing Allen could really recall was Audrey's "sorry I forgot to tell you about him" look. He grabbed his luggage furiously and slammed the door behind him, leaving the betrayer to her hidden lover.

How could I have been such a fool, he thought, as he turned up Rollins Band on

his measly little stereo. It sounded awful, but he didn't care. If it drowned out the sound of his heavy breathing and his rapid heartbeat, it was good enough for him.

He would never know the exact reasons for her lying. Maybe she got lonely while her husband was away and needed some excitement.

That will be the last time I get on that damn internet!

All it does is cause grief and misery. He stared ahead without thinking at all. He couldn't wait to get back to his life, away from the betrayer.

The deceit.

The innumerable lies.

He should have known he could never have her. Never.

Cynthia Hathaway

The Illinois

Drifting down the Illinois,
A thundercloud materialized above
Deep blankets of gray,
But when the evening sun
Slipped into
The space between,
There was Radiance!

Bright white were the herring gulls
Lifting with the river wind,
A wind attempting to push back
A current unyielding.

Stephanie Dougherty

**Clueless:
Control in a World of Chaos**

A lot of movie goers found "a sense of control in a world of chaos" this summer, not necessarily from getting a make over, but by watching Alicia Silverstone get (and give) one in the 1995 hit movie *Clueless*. Amy Heckerling, the director of this light-hearted comedy about teenage life in the nineties, has been critically acclaimed for her refreshing, comedic writing which virtually transports the nineteenth century Jane Austen novel *Emma* into a Beverly Hills high school.

Critics have stated that this film is "loosely based" on the classic novel (Collins 70), but in comparing the two stories, I have discovered that *Clueless* shows many evidences that prove it to be more similar to *Emma* than it is given credit for. James Collins states in his movie review that the similarities are not accidental; however, the idea for *Clueless* to be based on *Emma* was a last-minute idea of Heckerling's. Heckerling agreed to write a story "set in a high school" for a popular television company. They were tired of all of the teenage movies that talked only about the losers of the schools. They wanted a story that focussed on the popular people. "Heckerling said she really liked the idea of creating a character who knows she's beautiful—a happy, powerful girl." The movie division of the company bought Heckerling's material, "and only then did [she] think of *Emma*." She stated, "The events were truly timeless" (70,71).

In *Emma*, Austen describes Emma Woodhouse as "handsome, clever and rich, with a comfortable home and a happy disposition" (1). The Woodhouses are the

great family in the village of Highbury, and Mr. Woodhouse, a stern man with a great love for his youngest daughter, has limited himself and Emma to a small, appropriate circle of friends who share the same high status. This restrained lifestyle has conditioned Emma to be somewhat spoiled and self-satisfied. However, her imagination conditions her to roam where she likes and lets her feel she has the power to make anything possible. She thinks she is quite a matchmaker with her recent success of finding a suitable mate for her beloved governess, Miss Taylor, but feeling a little lonely after Mrs. Weston leaves her house, she befriends a lovely young girl named Harriet Smith, who has just come to town and is a virtual nobody. Emma sees all the good in Harriet, who is neither smart nor wealthy, but is strikingly beautiful and has a gratifying habit of looking up to Emma. Emma feels that Harriet, as well-mannered as she is, should not waste her "natural graces" on the "inferior society of Highbury," but that she should be encouraged to seek for all she is worth (Austen 29).

Much the same thing happens in *Clueless*. Cher Horowitz, equal to Emma in beauty, cleverness, wealth and high opinions (especially of herself), lives comfortably in Beverly Hills with her "litigator" father. She finds much satisfaction in spending numerous hours "helping two lonely teachers find romance," and, later, seeing them get married. However, it is interesting that this all began as the selfish act of Cher trying to persuade those teachers into improving her grades.

Cher decides that she (like Emma) would like to use her "popularity for a good cause," and finds the perfect way to do it when she meets Tai Frasier. Tai is the exact equivalent of Harriet in *Emma*, beautiful but brainless. She becomes the

lucky recipient of a "Cher make over" and gets lessons in life and love, whether she wants them or not. When Tai tells Cher of her interest in Travis Birkenstock, a "local loadie" from their high school, Cher is supremely disgusted. She feels that Tai has a lot going for her (especially the fact that she hangs out with Cher) and feels she could do much better than Travis. "No respectable girl actually dates [the local loadies]," she explains to Tai in the movie. Cher immediately gets Tai interested in a the most popular boy in school, Elton, and tries her hand at matchmaking again.

Emma must help Harriet in a similar situation. Mr. Martin, a respectable farmer but someone not quite fit for Emma's social circle, offers his hand in marriage to Harriet. Emma can't imagine Harriet "marrying a man whom [she] could never admit as an acquaintance of her own" (Austen 87). She then proceeds to make arrangements for Harriet to meet Mr. Elton (sound familiar?), a rector whom she feels will be better suited for her new friend.

Both Cher and Emma have big plans for their new friends, and for some reason, they get a thrill out of the whole experience. In studying their motives, one might consider them to be a bit too optimistic with a little too much going their way. In their small worlds of very little trials, they think themselves to be self-actualized, and it is up to them to bring everyone else up to their level. Of course, Austen had the original idea of allowing Emma to realize this can't be possible. In Emma's scheme of trying to get Mr. Elton to offer his gallantries to Harriet, Mr. Elton actually makes a marriage proposal to Emma instead of Harriet. Heckerling thinly disguises this same scenario, when Cher is rudely awakened by a "Twin Peaks experience," as Elton puts the moves on her in the car.

Both situations are similarly stressful for the girls, yet they continue to try to

resolve things their own way. The movie and the book contain similar plot advances and characters who help the girls realize the defects in their strategies. Mr. Knightley, of *Emma*, is one of these characters. He is the one person who vocally acknowledges Emma's faults and teases her about them. The conversations between Emma and Knightley are often playfully brutal and are usually provoked by disagreement. Knightley realizes that Emma is clever, but he feels she misuses her wittiness and assumes that it will one day backfire. He feels that the relationship of Harriet and Emma is just a waste of time, and neither can do any good for the other. He warns Emma, "Vanity working on a weak head produces every sort of mischief" (Austen 90).

In *Clueless*, the relationship of Tai and Cher is not regarded so intensely, but there are plenty of hints to suggest that in helping Tai gain popularity and self-respect, Cher is really creating a monster. The voice of reason in Cher's life comes from her "ex-stepbrother," Josh, whom she can hardly tolerate. Their conversations are often full of sarcasm and harshness as they constantly criticize each other's lifestyles.

While the story of *Emma* is a crazy race to get everyone married off correctly after a series of mishaps, *Clueless* focuses more on Cher's coming of age through the same sort of trials and mishaps. Both Emma and Cher feel that they are significantly enhancing the lives of their new friends by pushing them into fantasy relationships with men who hardly realize their existence. It is funny that even after their efforts backfire so many times, Cher and Emma are surprised to find out that the whole time they were playing matchmaker, their new friends were scoping out men on their own.

Cher is caught off guard when Tai

explains to her that she really has feelings for Josh. It isn't until Cher hears this that she realizes how undeserving Tai is of Josh and that she, herself, loves Josh. Emma reacts the same way when Harriet confesses her love for Mr. Knightley. She too begins to understand the deep feelings she has had, all along, for Knightley.

The conclusions to both movie and book pinpoint the theme intended by Austen. Though the movie is geared to a more politically correct generation, the only generation able to understand terms like "toe up" or "Bettes" and "Baldwins," the

story remains essentially the same. Both Cher and Emma are powerful girls in a substantially stable place. They are great heroines for their generation and optimize beauty, charm and wit. They have an outstanding ability to stay true to themselves and yet remain stable in their states of coolness and popularity. Perhaps the most important thing is that after all of their hard work, they finally get the payoff of ending up with guys who can completely appreciate the complexity of their personalities.

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Nicail Bybee

Clueless and Emma

The movie *Clueless*, an adaptation of Jane Austen's *Emma*, has many similarities with the novel which is its source. For example, names of congruent characters are the same—Mr. Elton in *Emma* and Elton in *Clueless*—the personalities of Cher and Emma are the same, and the marriage match-up plot follows the same sequence.

Amy Heckerling, the director of *Clueless*, was asked by Rich Cohen, "You've said this movie is based on Jane Austen's 1816 novel 'Emma' [sic]. How's that?" Heckerling responded:

"The plot is perfect for any time. Here's a girl, she's rich, she's manipulating people and she thinks she knows what's going on but is so into her own world, she doesn't see what everybody else can see." (53)

Cher and Emma are two aggressive women whom many females would hope to emulate, in whatever period of time. People are intrigued by them, for better or for worse. In the book *Emma* Mr. Knightley has watched and challenged Emma through her adolescent years up to her present age of twenty-one; Mr. Knightley says, "I have blamed you, and lectured you, and you have borne it as no other woman in England would have borne it" (Austen 395). Similarly, throughout *Clueless*, Josh, the equivalent of Mr. Knightley and Cher's ex-stepbrother, is continuously pestering Cher about her selfish acts by giving his opinion where he

feels it is needed. When Cher returns from her failed license exam in *Clueless*, she says to Josh, "Spare me a lecture on how driving is such a big responsibility you can't b.s. your way through." However, on the opposite end, because Cher and Emma are such intriguing people, their projects or new companions, Tai and Harriet Smith, easily succumb to being their followers. Nevertheless, Tai and Harriet change with the friendship of their new peers, forcing Emma and Cher to encounter a new world of pain and heartache. Each goes through a series of reflections concluding with a realization of her affections. Jane Austen writes about Emma, "She was most sorrowfully indignant; ashamed of every sensation but the one revealed to her—her affection for Mr. Knightley" (379). In reflecting, Cher suddenly realizes, "Oh my gosh, I love Josh."

In comparison, before Cher had fallen for Josh, she was in lust with Christian, and before Emma was in love with Mr. Knightley, she was attracted to Frank Churchill. Emma and Cher had come to a point in their lives where they themselves were looking for and needing a male to be attentive to. Their friends were happily married, or in Cher's case there were boyfriend-girlfriend relationships. However, *Clueless*, being the updated version of *Emma*, has a different way of eliminating Christian from Cher's heart—Christian is gay, while Frank Churchill, on the other hand, has been secretly engaged and used Emma as a cover-up. Though Cher and Emma are a bit disappointed over a potential love, it is easy for them to recover and have a relationship with the men.

Other similar characters who carry over to the movie from the book are Elton and Mr. Elton, respectively. They are both pompous, egotistical, and arrogant men who want to be with an equally rich someone. The Eltons presume that Emma and Cher feel the same way or should feel the same way towards them. Austen explains,

But, that he should talk of encouragement, should consider her as aware of his views, accepting his attentions, meaning, in short, to marry!—Should suppose himself her equal in connection or mind! (125)

Elton tells Cher in *Clueless* that because of the position of her father, they "make sense." Cher also rejects Elton most indignantly, telling him that he is a snob for thinking such things. These scenes also demonstrate Cher's and Emma's definite attitude towards marriage.

Cher and Emma, delighted with being single, share the same mannerisms in getting people together for marriage. They are found to be matching-up those closest around with others using their manipulation techniques. At the beginning of the novel, Emma had already married off her governess and close companion, Miss Taylor; being lonely, she finds Harriet Smith to replace Miss Taylor as a companion. However, she then persuades Harriet into marriage also. In *Clueless*, on the other hand, Dionne, Cher's close friend, has a relationship not prearranged by Cher herself. Cher, instead, devises a plan to make Mr. Hall happy or otherwise fall in love, which ultimately results in marriage.

However successful Cher and Emma might be with match-ups, they are unable to

attach Tai and Harriet, their own projects. But Tai and Harriet are awkward as it is. In equivalent incidents of the ball—novel—and the dance club—movie—scenes Harriet and Tai are left humiliated on the side of the dance floor as a result of being rejected at the dance. Mrs. Weston, an older lady at the dance, suggests to Mr. Elton, who is standing near Harriet, that he ask her to dance; Mr. Elton responds, "Miss Smith—Oh! I had not observed. You are extremely obliging—and if I were not an old married—but my dancing days are over, Mrs. Weston" (Austen 299). Yet Mr. Elton purposefully snubbed Harriet. In *Clueless* Tai is shown alone, on the side of the dance club, unassured, waiting for a guy to ask her to dance. Unfortunately, guys are walking around her, snubbing her at a glance. Cher comments, "My enjoyment was put on pause when I saw how unhappy Tai was." Fortunately for both Harriet and Tai, Mr. Knightley and Josh, respectively, ask the girls to dance, which consequently attracts Emma and Cher to them. Cher excitedly says to Christian, "Look, Josh is dancing with Tai. He never dances.... He's doing her a fave so she won't be left out." Austen explains Emma's reactions thus:

A happier sight caught her—Mr. Knightley leading Harriet to the set! Never had she been more surprised, seldom more delighted, than at that instant. (300)

Another parallel scene is the dispute between the aggressors, Cher and Emma, and their projects, Tai and Harriet, about Mr. Knightley and Josh. The projects have become changed women—now

assertive. Cher says of Tai, "What did I do? I've created some sort of monster." Austen writes of Emma's realization (perhaps more eloquently), "Alas! was not that her own doing? If Harriet, from being humble, were grown vain, it was her own doing too" (380).

Breaking down the elements of *Clueless* reveals a reincarnation of *Emma*.

"The film contains a plethora of humorous details which echo the lady novelist's refined but stringent satire" (Lipman 46). Upon seeing *Clueless*, one might be disappointed with the new 90's *Emma*; however, with an open mind one can see that the charismatic Cher is the intriguing, match-making, project-loving Emma.

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III. The Future

Stephanie Dougherty

Experiments

Idle conversations, the ones about the weather that tend to go unnoticed, I hear them all. Then there are the more detailed ones, that sometimes become the main course of Sunday night dinner; I hear those too. Some all-knowing fools might believe me to be nothing more than a common household "pest." I buzz and persist as if I had nothing better to do, but truthfully, the part that I play in my buzzing and flying is an intricate one in this great experiment. I might look like nothing more than a common fly on the wall, but if you could see inside my tiny body, you would see the complexity of its computerized glory. For this body is only part of me, my traveling part. My central processing unit is established back with the other players of this team in the observation center.

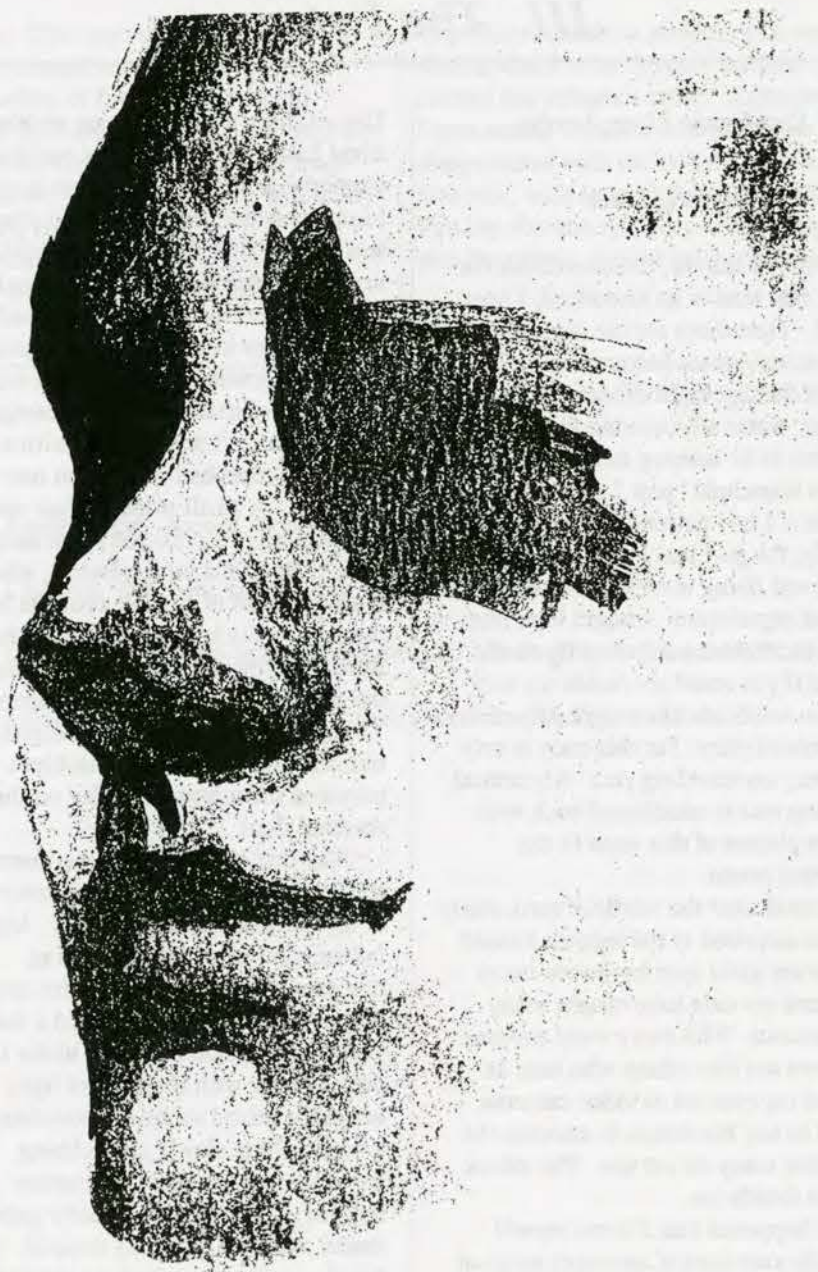
If I could utter the words of man, many would be surprised at the legends I could tell. For my giant eyes have seen many places, and my ears have caught many conversations. With every word my ears hear, there are fifty others who hear as well, and my eyes act as video cameras, infrared in any blackness, to uncover the details that many do not see. The others see these details too.

It so happened that I found myself among the corridors of an empty surgical center one deliciously hot Sunday evening.

The air, fiery and damp even within the silent hallways of the vacant building, felt comfortable to my body, and so it was that I remained there for quite some time. It was here in this place that my abilities to investigate would be tested and analyzed by the lab technicians who designed me.

The room in which I made myself most comfortable was filled with many curiosities of shiny metals on foreign contraptions. A skinny table with a tray of various tools had its place at one end of the room. A small wooden chair sat at the opening of a cluttered black lacquer desk in front of a large window, where the muffled sound of city life could be heard through its thick pane. Giant machinery lined the remaining walls and ceiling, and the rest of the room was empty space. The only light came from the digital numbers on the towering machines which mirrored themselves in a blur on the hard, marbled floor.

The first hours of my experiment were spent in constant surveillance, testing all of my electronic, mobile ability. My information was constantly being processed back at the lab. Some time, deeper into the night, I noticed a faint yellow glow stream up from under the door. Along with the glow of light, I heard the mixed sound of screeching wheels rolling slowly and echoing footsteps tapping down the narrow hallway. The sounds gradually grew louder and then suddenly stopped. I heard a rummaging for keys just before



the door swung open and the yellow glow penetrated the room.

Within minutes, the empty space of the silent room became filled with a large moving table and a small man who busily rummaged around, gathering tools and papers. The table was covered by a large white sheet that hindered my ability to recognize the human form that lay underneath it.

The man, short and round and outfitted unmistakably for his job as a surgeon, in a long blue robe, scurried back to the door and shut it, in hopes of preventing any light from escaping or allowing any eyes to peer into the room. He immediately pulled from an inner pocket of his gown a pin point flashlight which he used to work steadily with his tools under the large, white sheet.

I found a small passageway through the cotton sheet to get a closer view. I was flying directly above a dead man's head, where I could see the surgeon's thick, clear spectacles as they slid ever so slowly from his brow, which was dripping with sweat. As I came closer into view of the corpse's head, I could see deep incisions on the top of the skull so that the brain was in full view. The surgeon worked steadily with his tools, picking and pulling carefully and gracefully at the brain matter. Then he pointed the tiny flashlight's rays into the pupil of the dead man's eye, which was fixed and dilated. I could hear the heavy breath of the doctor and feel its heat, but the man on the table remained quiet and cold.

The phone rang as I began my journey back up out of the sheet. The

sullen voice of the surgeon answered without a hello and began a most peculiar conversation with someone on the other side. My tiny ears, connected to the main recording transfer base at the observation center, caught and recorded every word of the grotesque details for the plans of this body which had just hours earlier been alive and breathing. He cackled a bit as if he were experiencing joy from his endeavors. From the words of his conversation, I learned of this man's dreaded intentions. It seemed he was conducting an experiment, a far-reaching attempt to increase the intelligence of a human being. A plan of this nature could only involve altering the neuron processes of the brain inside a living, thinking, individual and then testing the brain waves. This experiment was an unauthorized attempt that had just fallen through, at the expense of the man on the table.

I buzzed up and down in a panicky realization. It wasn't until I felt the stiff swoop of the surgeon's hand upon my body that I realized the extent of my panic. I buzzed toward the window as the conversation of the surgeon continued in all its bloody detail. The spectacles of the surgeon were reflected in the black pane of the window, and I realized his eyes were following me. I slipped through the space in the cracked window, relieved to see the open sky.

On my way back to the observation base, I realized an unmistakable truth about my role as the unnoticed observer. It isn't until I buzz and persist that any human recognizes my existence. The part I played this night in the old surgeon's laboratory

will probably not be remembered by him, except as an annoyance to his wicked joy. He did not realize how advanced my senses are and how subtle the mechanisms I carry. Though he cackles in continued joy of his experiment, my warning systems

have long been activated. I look back toward the darkened window of the sinister surgeon, and his glance does not give any indication that he knows the security guards from five floors up are on their way down.

Connie Gittins

Reflections

I look as if into a mirror,
Looking at myself from another's view,
Reflecting back on my past mistakes,
Realizing I am a changed person
Though for better or for worse I do not know,
Drifting endlessly,
Not wanting to go back, yet also not wanting to pick up
And move forward.
There was a point where all seemed controlled,
But now I grasp for life,
Frightened of the past
But even more so of the future.
I wait in anticipation of finding out my purpose, my role.
I look as if into a mirror,
Realizing I had foolishly mistaken when I thought I knew
So much,
Understanding now, that I could perceive so little about
Life because I knew almost nothing about myself.

David Johnson

Journeys

So many travelers on so many freeways,
So many lives with so many dreams
Intersecting and meeting for moments in time.
Guided by chance or destiny,
Who could know?

Sometimes, companions will ride with you
Through the longest stretches of desert,
And for a while, you are not alone.
But there always comes that day at the gas station,
When you walk out, arms full of twinkies and doughnuts,
To an empty car.

Again your guard comes up.
And your heart is a bit more bruised.
It is pointless to ask questions
Or wonder what you did wrong.
You took your chances,
And destiny led you astray.

The road continues on,
And soon you find yourself in a wind-swept canyon
Full of autumn colors and towering cliffs.
For some reason, anticipation wraps her coat about you.
A small town nestled in red rock beckons from the distance,
And the promise of fellow travelers with open arms flickers in its lights
Like Morse code.

Stepping out of the car, you see eyes like your own
And realize in an instant that we aren't really so different from one another.
We're all on these roads in search of ... something.
The rest of this journey lies in the future.
It is up to us all to write the final lines.
No matter what happens,
I know I enjoyed the company.

Elona Dervishi

Kenge te Pakenduara (Song Unsung)

Thelle ne veten time flen kenge te pakenduara,
Te cilat as vuajtja e gezimi nuk i nxorri,
Te cilat presin nje dite me te lumtur
Te kendohen pafrike.

Thelle ne veten time kenget e mia flene...
Une jam vullkani i shuar
Por kur te vij dita, ato do te shperthejne
Ne mijra ngjyra te pavdekshme.

Por a do te vij dita qe kenget e mia te zgjohen?
Apo shekujt po tallen prap me ne?
Jo! Jo! Sepse liria ka filluar te lulezohet
Dhe une e ndjej ngrohtesin e Diellit.

Oh, fleni reliket e mia
Ende te panjohura nga ndonje zemer tjeter
Vetem une si femija po kenaqem me ju,
Une djepi yt e ndoshta varri yt.

Song Unsung

Deep within me sleep songs unsung,
Which neither suffering nor joy have yet brought forth,
Which sleep on, awaiting a happier day
To burst out and be sung without fear or grief.

Deep within me my songs are dormant...
I am a volcano, lying quenched,
But when the day comes, they will all burst out,
In a thousand immortal colours spout.

But will the days come for my songs to awaken?
Or will the ages continue their derision?
No! No! Because freedom has started to bloom,
And I feel the warmth of the sun.

Oh, sleeping songs, my personal relics,
Still to any other heart unknown.
Only I, like a child, with you am content,
I—your cradle, and perhaps your tomb.

L. P. Ralston

Burners

People topside call the Burners "Hackers." Those of us who live in the underground slums know the Burners are much more than computer hackers. They are the only ones who can navigate the tunnels. We never know how to get where we are going or how to find our way back. There is always a new tunnel popping up in our path. That's why most people are lost all the time, but Burners know when a new tunnel is coming. It isn't just because of the portable computers strapped to their backs. They can run programs most of us would think came from a different planet—programs that tell them where the government might dig next. Burners also just know things will happen before they actually do. It is a burning, intuitive feeling that starts in the pit of their stomachs and leads them to the right path.

One day I was attending one of the daily protests at the underground government offices. I think we were protesting—not enough food, water, work, or freedom—some kind of oppression. The government police had shown up. They are there to keep the population under government control. Their form of control is to kill anything in their way. I was running from the scene with a patroller close behind me. I knew if he caught me, I would be beaten to death. I turned down a tunnel. The smell, old and dusty, was my only clue that it was the right path. It wasn't the smell of fresh-turned earth, like the new tunnels. I made another quick turn, and there she was. All I could see

was her long, blonde hair going down her back and not quite concealing the computer she had strapped there. I continued running straight at her, hoping that the contact itself would get her to move. She stood solid as a rock when I collided with her. I went sprawling backwards and landed in the dirt. She turned around. I looked right into her eyes. One minute they looked like a blue flame, the next like green ice. It was the weirdest thing I had ever seen. Most people had never seen a Burner. Burners keep to themselves. Here I was sitting in the dirt staring at one and seeing the Burn in her eyes.

Suddenly, she shook herself, grabbed me by the hand, pulled me up, and dragged me into a small side tunnel that I had not noticed before. She dragged me along behind her through several more small hidden tunnels. When we finally stopped, I was panting to catch my breath. I looked around. We were in a small chamber off to the side of one of the tunnels. The room was full of electronics on one side and what appeared to be a meditation and living area on the other side. She directed me to the bed, and I gratefully sat down. I must have fallen asleep, for when I finally sat up, she was sitting on the floor in a trance. At the sound of my movement, she opened her eyes. She rose to get me some food. I kept watching her eyes. I was trying to see that blue flame or the green ice. She was a pretty woman, but she appeared to be just a woman. Not a goddess, a demoness, an angel, or any of the other stories I had heard.

I ate slowly and stared in her eyes as she sat on the bed in front of me. As I watched, she began to Burn. She took the

food from me and set it aside. She held her hands out in front of her. I raised my hands up to meet hers. Her hands were hot, and the Burning started within me. It was a deep burn in my stomach. It turned to a slow aching need that flowed through my entire body. My body longed to be touched. I watched the flame in her eyes and knew my eyes were mirroring that flame. She moved her hand to my face and softly stroked my skin. As her hand ran a trail down my neck, across my shoulder, her touch warmed my skin. It left me alive and tingling with a desire I had never known before. We made a spiritual connection that I could not possibly explain. I knew

that she knew everything about me and I knew everything about her, though we had never said a word. As I lay there beside her, nearing sleep, my only desire was to Burn again. I wanted to stay with her forever.

When I awoke, I was lying in a tunnel; the air was full of the smell of fresh-turned earth. I rose and began to panic. Was it a dream? I brushed my long, blonde hair away from my face. I noticed the computer strapped to my back. I felt the Burn begin within me and followed the feeling through the tunnels. I had found the Burning within me. I would never be lost again.



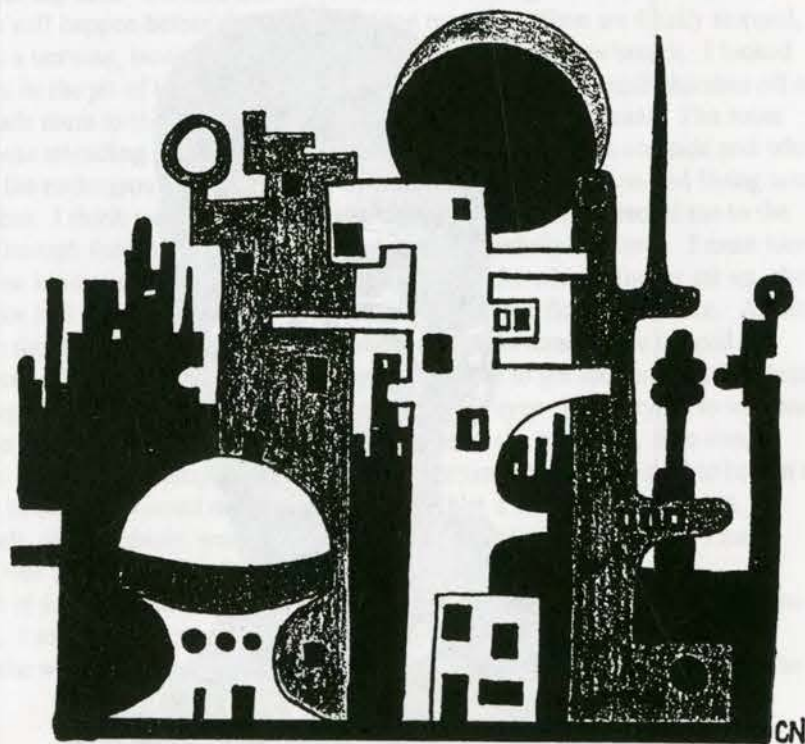
Jessica Fournier

Future Destination

Crashing racks, shifting Earth,
Rippling waves of death and dirt,
Destruction sweeps across the nation,
Leaving the only place of peace and hope
To the unknown sky above.

As exploration brings more answers,
A boost of faith arises.
Space provides survival grounds
For us to escape the reality of our dying world.

Thousands of light years away
Untouched, unharmed,
Oblivious of our carelessness,
A planet awaits our arrival.



David Johnson

The Pale Skin Gets the Sun

Halloween masks, worn twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week.
The bigger the smiles, the bigger the secrets kept beneath.
Only the eyes shine through, and with their piercing emotion,
The illusion of the mask is defeated,
Leaving only truth.

The masks aren't bought, aren't received as gifts.
They are built and sewed by hand, piece by rotten piece,
To cover each and every scar received in this constant battle.
And the hope is that someday,
The fighting will stop.

With time, the masks become harder, more molded to the face.
They sense the outsiders, the eyes, and try to turn them cold.
Only while young is there a chance to set them free.
Only while young
Is there a chance to set them free.

Halloween masks, visions of witches, goblins, and ghosts.
The ugliness lies with these, and the beauty is hidden.
Reveal it occasionally, and don't be frightened.
Let those who care see within,
And know that your vulnerable expression
Encourages others to do the same.

Elona Dervishi**Mall (Longing)**

Ne hutimin e drureve te thare
 Luan fati i zjarrit te befe.
 Kaq i pasigurt dhe shpirti im
 Bere eshke nga malli per ty.

E ndjej, e ndjej
 Dicka digjet ne mua
 Dhe une i bendem ... ZJARRIT.

Longing

When the sky knows the hot sun for a sovereign
 In the perplexity of dry woods
 Plays the destiny of the sudden fire.
 So unsure even my soul
 Has become tinder from the longing for thee,

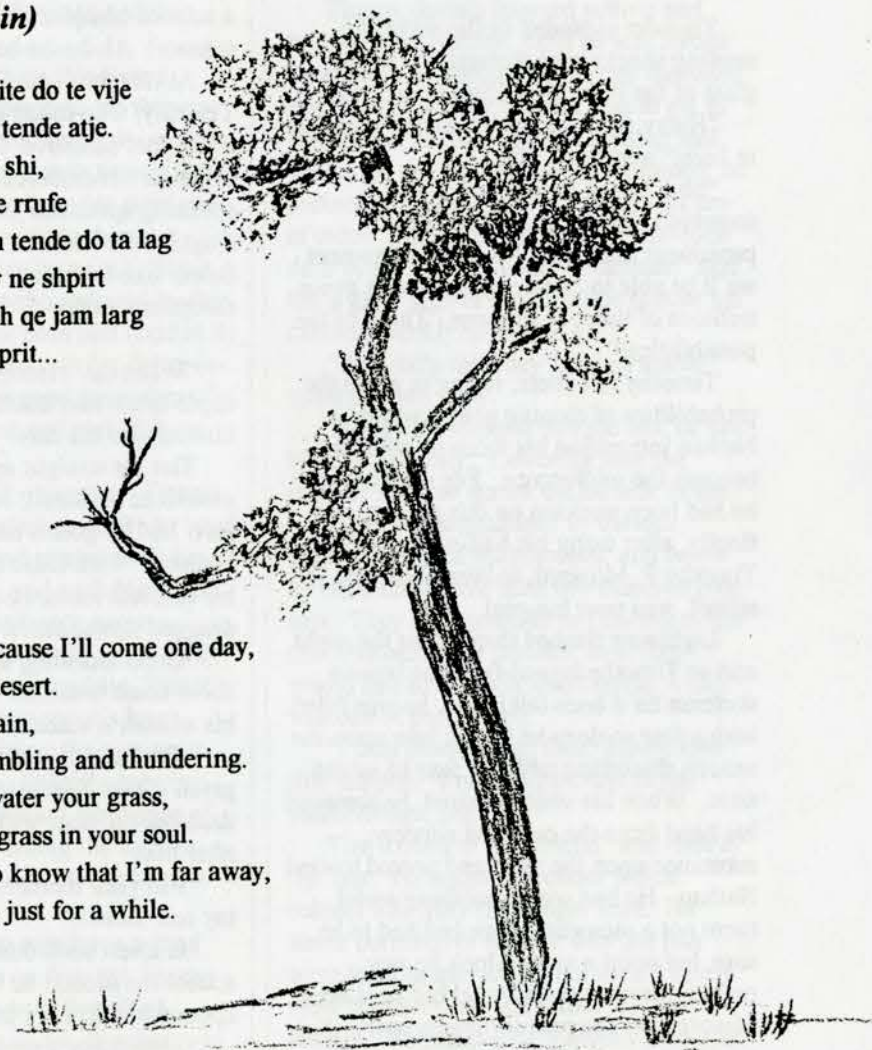
I feel, I feel
 Something is burning inside of me
 And I obey ... the fire.

Elona Dervishi**Si Shiu (Like Rain)**

Me prit se nje dite do te vije
 Ne shkretetiren tende atje.
 Do te vije si nje shi,
 Por pa gjemim e rrufe
 Do te vij e barin tende do ta lag
 Barin e vyshkur ne shpirt
 Por duhet ta dish qe jam larg
 Ndaj pakez me prit...

Like Rain

Wait for me because I'll come one day,
 There in your desert.
 I'll come like rain,
 But without rumbling and thundering.
 I'll come and water your grass,
 The shrivelled grass in your soul.
 But you have to know that I'm far away,
 So wait for me, just for a while.



Andrew Howard
 1/94

David Johnson

Cheese

Thunder exploded in the night sky, sending shockwaves through the brittle glass of the Pine View High science lab.

"Hurry, Nate. I don't wanna get caught in here!" screamed Tim.

"Shut up—I'm nearly finished," mumbled Nathan, the school's most prominent scientist. "In another moment we'll be able to clone any creature's genes millions of times in minutes. Think of the possibilities!"

Timothy fell silent, trying to grasp the probabilities of cloning genes, while Nathan intensified his focus on what lay beneath the microscope. For months now he had been working on this project, and finally, after using his half-mad neighbor, Timothy P. Mitward, to break him into the school, was near his goal.

Lightning flashed throughout the night, and as Timothy turned from the human skeleton he'd been talking to, he was filled with a fear so deep he had to lean upon the nearest dissecting table for fear he might faint. When his vision cleared, he removed his hand from the cold and slippery substance upon the table and peered toward Nathan. He had seen something awful there not a moment before and had to be sure, but upon a second look he saw nothing more than the neighbor he'd been idolizing for the past seventeen years. Not a grinning mouth full of saliva-covered fangs or yellow glowing eyes as he had seen at first, just Nate, the Natester, the Natemeister.

"Come here, Timothy. I want you to

see this," Nate hardly spoke, as the room was lit by more flashes from outside. "This is what will make me rich! Money beyond your wildest dreams! You ask me if I have a science complex? My friend, ... I am science! Ah-ha-ha-ha-ha-haaa!"

At this the room began to spin for Timothy, who found it all to be quite too much for "sensitive" intellect. The last thing he remembered was a room full of spinning specimen jars, full of pigs' feet or frogs, and a horrible, cackling laugh, that faded like the storm upon that dark and dangerous night.

"Wake up, Timmyyy! It's time for your apple-sauce and miiilk," Scarlett's voice blasted into his ears.

Tim sat straight up in bed and looked around at his small, rectangular room. How had he gotten back here? What about Nathan? With these questions gnawing at his cerebral lobes, he got dressed and dragged up the stairs.

"Good morning, sweet-cheeks. How about some breakfast for my growing boy?" his mother's voice bellowed once again.

"That's okay, Scarlett. I've really got to get to school," he said and made a mad dash out the door with her voice calling after him.

"I'm your mother; you don't have to use my real name!!"

He knew something was wrong with the school the second he walked up to the door, opened it, and went inside.

"Something's wrong here," thought Tim as he listened to his footsteps echo in the empty halls. "The halls're empty! Oh, oh ooh noo, oh gace, dohgh." Tim felt himself becoming very nervous and upset. His mother had always told him when he

got that burning feeling in his stomach it was "nervousness." "I'm nervous, I'm nervous," he said to no one as he backed against a wall and slid down to a sitting position.

No sooner had he done this than a strange sensation raced across his fingers. It was warm and soft, yet strangely rubbery at the last instant. Tim slowly turned his gaze downward, only to have his stare met by two, much smaller and blacker eyes. "A rat," he said aloud, "You're a rat." This realization seemed somehow shared by the rodent as it twitched its nose and nodded its head. "I don't know what you're doing in my school, but I'll take good care of you," Tim told his new friend and picked it up. "I'll name you Angie."

Ever since he could remember, Timmy had loved, and had a strange ability to bond with, all animals. It had started with his first pet turtle, Archie, and with his latest discovery, was exhibited once again.

With his mind temporarily taken away from the previous night's troubles, Timothy began to stroll down the school's huge main hall, hardly realizing the new noise now approaching him. Steadily growing louder, it was like the sound thousands of bats make just before fleeing the cave in search of the night's meal. What he saw was not so different.

The average person may have turned and run like a chicken on fire, but Timmy was not average. The goliath wall of scurrying rats heading in his direction was viewed as nothing more than an opportunity to make more friends. At first. Slowly the pieces came together as the squealing and scratching came closer, until, finally, Timothy realized what had

happened. "Clone any creature's genes millions of times!" echoed in his head. Nathan had done it!

Timmy dashed forward yelling and hollering for Nathan, until he was forced backward and toppled as the rats streamed over him. His only thought was to get to the science lab and find his missing idol. When the river of rodents had lessened, he pressed on, taking care not to step on any of them. Fifteen feet from the wide-open door of the lab, he yelled, "Nathaan!" and felt a great sigh of relief escape him as his call was weakly answered.

"Tim, help me; they're everywhere!" came Nathan's cry.

When Tim stepped into the lab, he saw Nathan instantly. Cowering atop the counter that ran across the far side of the room, he was surrounded by various papers, jars, and microscopes, and below by what must have been two hundred plus rats. They all seemed to be clawing at the cabinets below the counter, as if they would like to climb it, and Nathan's face was one of pure terror.

"I only cloned one, Tim. How could this happen? I only cloned one of the damn things, one!"

Tim looked at his "friend" and then at the rats. He began to wonder which subject was truly the danger here. He never bothered to wonder why the rats were leaving him alone, but would surely claw Nathan to shreds if they got the chance. He just put all thoughts from his mind and led the rats away.

They followed him out the lab, down the hall, and out to the surrounding desert where they scattered like fleas. Timmy stood there and laughed to himself as he

watched the "cute little guys" run and bounce into the distance. He wondered if he'd ever see Angie again, and knew in his heart that he probably wouldn't.

Slowly, he reentered the school and helped take Nathan (who vowed to have nothing more to do with science, ever) down from the counter and in the direction of his home.

That night Nate lay in his 7 x 7,

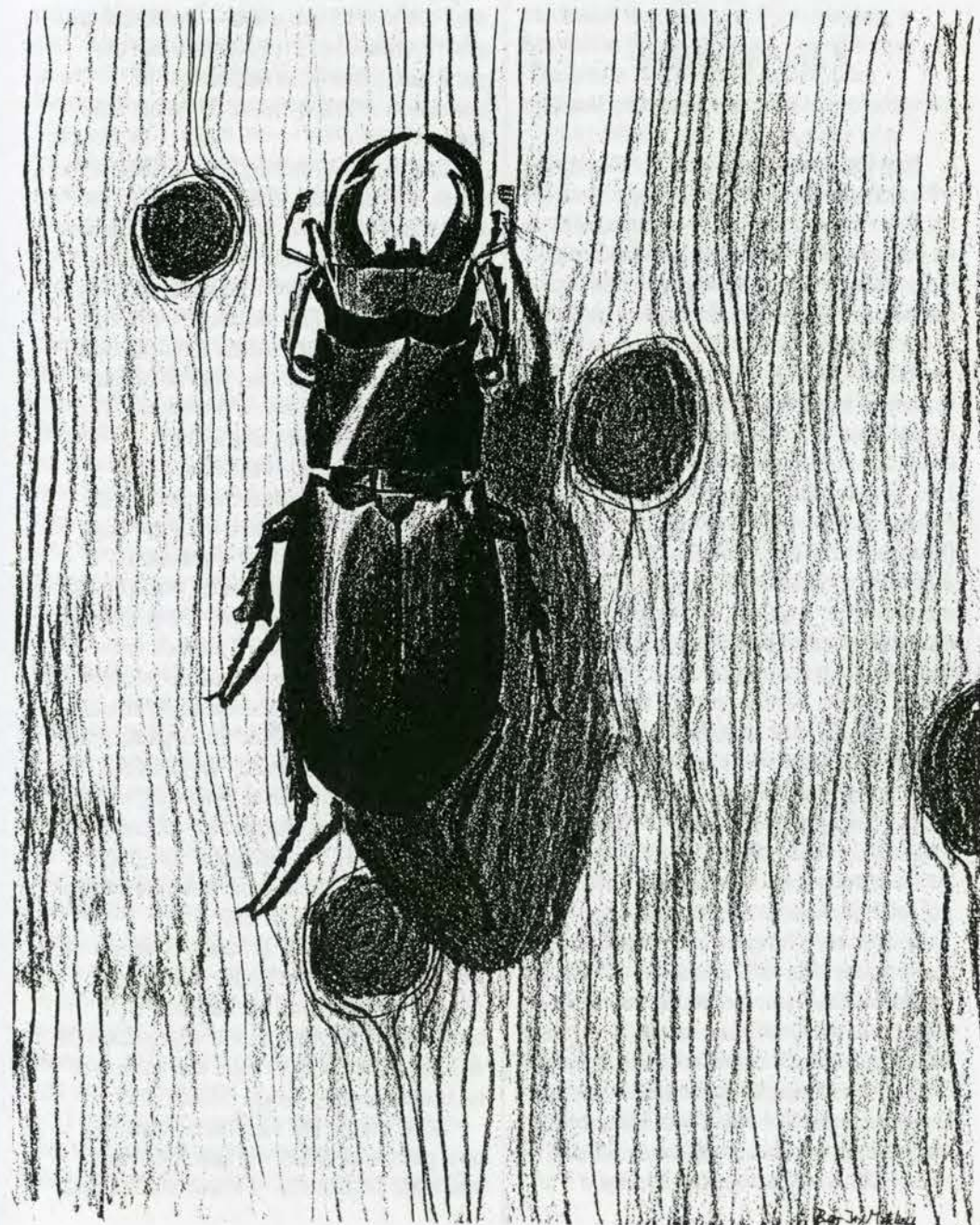
perfectly square and firm bed, wondering how he had done it. Not himself, but Timothy. Somehow that boy had taken all those rats and made them follow him.

"How? How? How?" he wondered. With this passing through his mind, he began to drift into sleep, his last thoughts being, "I think I'll invite him over tomorrow. I know I can analyze his brain for the answers."

Bart Jay Mitchell

The Abstraction of Intimacy

With gecko breath my staring trance
Is pulled off the bric-a-brac of walnut hulls.
Figgly-Wiggly twirls with heightened anticipation
Of another toad on the wall.
Deep breaths of smoke slip slop sliver silvery like spoons
Resting on peach flesh.
Promiscuous temptation for fleeting fleas
Jousting in my jelly roll.
Laughing and all pulsed out
Fruit rests dusty on the carpet.



Ace G. Pilkington

A Man's Machine

(originally published in *Figment*, No. 16)

It is October. The skies fill alternately with gray clouds and blue-wrapped sun; the trees are rows of yellow torches with an occasional flame of red. As I take my daily walk to gather the light on which I live, I am saddened by the broken roads and terrified by the feral dogs.

When I taught at the university, I explained to my students—the initial explanation—because I could see the questions burning in their eyes: “Though I am in some small ways biological, I am chiefly animated by inanimate parts.” (Here, some of them laughed at the professor’s joke as they had trained themselves to laugh.) “A strong mechanical mind in a weak mechanical body, living primarily on solar energy,” I would mutter, more to myself than to them, though I am sure they heard me well enough. I always want to shout out the same thing to the dogs and listen to them bark in the appropriate places. “I am only peripherally biological,” I would say, “what have you to do with me?” I suppose my solar walk violates their territory. They stalk me and growl, and I am afraid that one day they will attack.

Before my Master died, there were dogs of many shapes and sizes. Now, they are all great black beasts with fallen ears. Of course, if I simply stood still in the sun and did not walk, I could avoid them. But there are times when I cannot stand still, when I cannot stay near my Master’s

empty house because my soul will not let me. Oh yes, I have a soul—inanimate as I am. I know I have it because I feel the pain, and there is no reification, no validation of reality more complete than pain.

I cannot help feeling that my Master’s death was my fault, that the death of all the Masters was our fault. The others who are like me have their rationalizations. The Masters were overcrowded, they say, or grown old or just unlucky. Unlucky! As often as not they blame it on the field mice and remember that year when the field mice were heavy in the world. The mice were a seething under the earth—they devoured the food of the Masters and left behind their dead and their disease. And where were the dogs when they were needed? I remember many times when my Master played with his horrible, black dog, and the dog would growl and bark at me if I seemed to be coming near because it feared I would attract the Master’s attention and shame him into leaving it. But the dogs had done nothing to stop the mice. Objectively, though, the mice were a symptom, not a cause. Something happened, indeed is still happening, as biological integrity breaks down—mutations, immune system dysfunctions, random cell multiplications—far grimmer than any of the old cancers or sexually transmitted plagues. Perhaps all of the earth’s biosphere is dying, and the near extinction of humans is no more than a symptom of an immeasurably larger catastrophe.

Still, I must not rationalize away my own particular guilt, my specific crime and wish fulfillment. I killed my Master.

We all killed our Masters. It was after the mouse plague, of course, since very few of us had Masters before that. The Masters lived in small rooms in large buildings, and we lived in the universities and taught them. They are still inside me—those horrible, long days when I stood in rooms without windows and talked until I disliked the sound of my own voice, talked to those awful, identical faces staring at me with the dirt of the cities on them and love and hate behind their eyes. I was not built to love or hate—those were considered too dangerous for me and for them. I would have been more than human and not less. But the very foresight of the Masters was their downfall. As I used to tell my students, “The human race has always been terribly eager to trade known dangers for unknown ones.” In a way I enjoyed teaching. I could tell humans how stupid they were, and no one could object; they had to smile their yes-professor smiles, and at least until the end of the term, they had to believe me.

The mouse plague and the biological breakdown killed the cities; the Masters (those who could prove they were not infected) went out to country estates with machines. My Master was given ten thousand acres in a mountain valley. Since I have no sense of smell but can only detect smoke, the estate was a blessed relief from the thick danger of the city air. And the beauty of the trees was wonderful—growing as though they had a right to grow—in symmetries which no human could have planned, with identities that the genetic shift had not yet shattered.

I had not realized the energy required to live surrounded by human beings. The weight of their numbers pressed on me and

slowed my thinking. They had become a thickness that kept me from moving, a burden to the earth as great as the mice. The estate made my thoughts more tranquil and eased the pain of my soul.

My Master had hair the color of a ploughed field and brown eyes; his pale skin was sick from smoke. He made a strange farmer. Without my advice and the other machines to work for him, he would have been helpless. He would sit for days in his wood-panelled room with a fire fuming in the fireplace. He said nothing, did nothing, just stared out across the valley as though he hated the very clouds that cast shadows on it. I do not have it in *me*, but I can see hate when it sits in human beings. And then for no reason, except that his hate was shut away, he would run in the wheat fields with the dog, screaming until the valley seemed too small for his voice.

I said to him, “Were you born unable to love?”

“No.”

“Then you are a fool not to do it.”

And he said to me, “I don’t need a mechanical conscience.”

We played chess when the snow was thick and the wind made noise with the trees. The game was as silent as the valley, and the chessboard looked like fields. I won. I balanced the patterns in my mind, and I won. Always.

Always I balance patterns. They built me without love and without hate and left me to balance patterns—they built me with all my understanding but with only half my feelings, and I have told them so. Perhaps if one of them had hated or loved me, I might have forgiven them. They

might have forgiven themselves.

I told my Master, "The Masters built me to be almost a man. To be balanced on an edge that cuts."

"It was the safe way to build you."

"Is pain the only safety?"

He told me, "I didn't build you. I wouldn't build you."

"You're a man."

He called the dog to him and began to play with it. I watched; I could see love and hate behind its eyes. Oh yes, I know them when I see them. I do not look like a human being. I look like an egg with steel rings strung together for arms and legs. But when the Masters built their genius machines with the ability to learn and almost unlimited memories, they built us to think as though we were male human beings. I have a man's voice—deep and, to my senses at least, pleasant. And I have a man's dreams. Yes, dreams—even a mechanical mind must rest—and then my thoughts are uncontrolled, the edges blur and there is no balance.

One dream repeated itself. The details changed, but the essence remained the same. At first I could not reach her, but finally in the dream a girl with brown hair would be with me, and somehow I was comforted. Her face was never clear; I never saw distinctly what she was wearing, and she seldom spoke. The world we inhabited was unsteady—turning over and over, throwing us from one crisis to another. But through it I felt a peace that was the result of her presence and an understanding so complete that it sometimes stayed with me for half a morning after the dream.

But it was a dream. I know nothing of

women except as students and that is less than nothing. I am a machine and unable to know—it is the fault of the Masters who made me too human and not human enough. And the dream I dreamt killed my Master.

It was an October day not too unlike this one. Clouds crossed the sky and recrossed it, trailing rain behind them. The trees were stripped bare, and their leaves wandered the fields with gusts of wind. From somewhere far away I could smell smoke. My Master and his dog were a gray and black shape in a white grove of aspens. And then I saw her walking over the land.

She was a gold column in the browns of the harrowed fields. And it was like the beginning of many dreams: I find myself walking toward the girl in the dress—the Masters did not build me as a walking machine, and I do it clumsily—I walk for what seems an unmeasurable time through a whole year of seasons and over most of the earth, yet still she is the same distance away. Suddenly the real world in the real valley was my dream, and I found myself walking just as I always do. I didn't stop to think and balance; who balances in his sleep? But in this dream I came closer. I could see the brown of her hair and the powder-pale corn stalks withered by fall to the left of where she was standing. I could have reached her if my Master hadn't grasped my arm and hauled me back.

"Don't touch her," he said.

I thought vaguely, he must have run to be here. I said, "What?" It was as though I had been asleep and was not yet completely awake. His hand still around my arm, he said, "Don't touch her; she

may have the plague." I wondered which plague he meant—there were so many—but then I understood that the plague he feared was life, decaying, breaking down, unraveling like strands of DNA disentwining.

I pulled my arm away, and the dog, standing just behind my Master, barked—deep, staccato booms meant for me or the girl or both of us. I had not tried to move forward again, and in the silence that followed the dog's barking, I could hear the rattle of the wind-pushed leaves as they hit against each other.

My Master had been hunting; his rifle was still in his hands. It looked ridiculous—a child's toy not enough like the real thing to be convincing. He pointed it at the girl and shouted; she was close enough to hear a shout, unless the wind began to blow. "Show us your papers!"

She stood motionless, staring at us. Her gold dress seemed to be hung upon bones; her legs looked sunk in the earth, as though she were half-buried already. I said, "Perhaps she is from the factories."

"She has plague. Show us your papers!" I did not look at my Master's eyes.

"Let me examine her; she could be healthy."

"She has plague, and your biological components might be contaminated. Stay!" he said to the dog which had seemed ready to run at her. I have never understood why the dogs seem immune to the many infections; I wish it were not so.

"Would you sacrifice a human being when there are so few of you left?" I asked, sounding as reasonable as I could, as persuasive.

He said quietly, "We are not human

beings to you. We are the Masters." His arms were shaking gently; his mouth quivered with fear. And then he almost whispered, more to the dog than to me, "My wife died of plague." Did he connect sex with infection? Had he come to believe that his desire for a woman, any woman, was a death sentence for him and for her?

The wind hit us suddenly; slow, soft raindrops began to spatter on his cheeks, on her hair. It was a small rain that shattered quietly on the leaves, but it was a separation. My Master seemed shut away from me, and the girl appeared to move back to the proper dream distance—the place in the beginning where I could not reach her. Of course, nothing had really changed except that the rain was in the way, muffling and distorting my sensors.

He shouted again, "Show me your papers, or I will kill you."

"And if she is healthy?"

"How will we know?"

The girl had still not moved. The wind wrapped her dress more tightly around her bones, and her brown hair was a moving tangle. Even in the wind the gun was loud; I felt the shock as though I had been holding it. There would never be an end to this dream, no comfort and no peace. The girl had vanished in the rain; there was only a golden haze on the earth like a mound of leaves.

I looked at my Master and saw something I had never seen, a kind of passionate excitement that heated the inside of his mouth and left his eyes half-closed. "Murderer," I said. I turned around and began the long stumble back to the house. The mountains were wound about with clouds, and I did not look at the fields.

From that day my Master was doomed. He had to talk to me, he had to listen to me, and he was doomed. It was the next morning, and an early snowstorm was in the valley. Great white flakes settled slowly to the ground and disappeared. "Why did you kill her?" I said.

He only looked at me and looked away. There was something behind his eyes that was very complicated, something worn and afraid and self-conscious.

I said, "If you humans are not careful, you will die of fear."

"I don't need to answer to you." He went to the door and called in the dog. It ran about the house clumsily, shaking off snow and growling at me. Its great tail waved rhythmically; its red mouth was open. There was a smell almost heavy enough to be called smoke.

"I am inhuman," I said. "The Masters made me so. Must you cripple yourselves as you have crippled me?"

"Shut up."

"Perhaps it is something that I do not understand. Was there a sensual satisfaction attached to it?"

He got up and went out into the storm, taking the dog with him. I stared out the window, balancing things, letting them fall and disappear like snowflakes. I did not see him again until dark. The snow was gone; there was a sheen of white frost on the earth. "Welcome home," I said.

When I think of it now, I think in terms of overs. I overestimated my Master. And I overloaded him. I do not think that humans can balance the way we do—they are like dogs with growling and tail wagging to get in the way. I think that if my Master could not live with me, he did not deserve to live.

It was winter in the world when it happened. The pine trees were thick with snow, and the dog stayed inside most of the time. My Master stared at me when he thought I did not know; if I had not been a machine, he would have hated me. He was staring at me when I first saw it. The valley floor was a white layer with trees thrust up through; nothing moved except the wind. Only now there was a black, human shape moving stiffly toward the house.

I told myself that I would not stay to see the thing again. I went out into the snow and got as far away from the house as I could. The shot came amazingly soon; there was no way for that black figure to have moved so fast. And then I knew. The shot had come from inside the house.

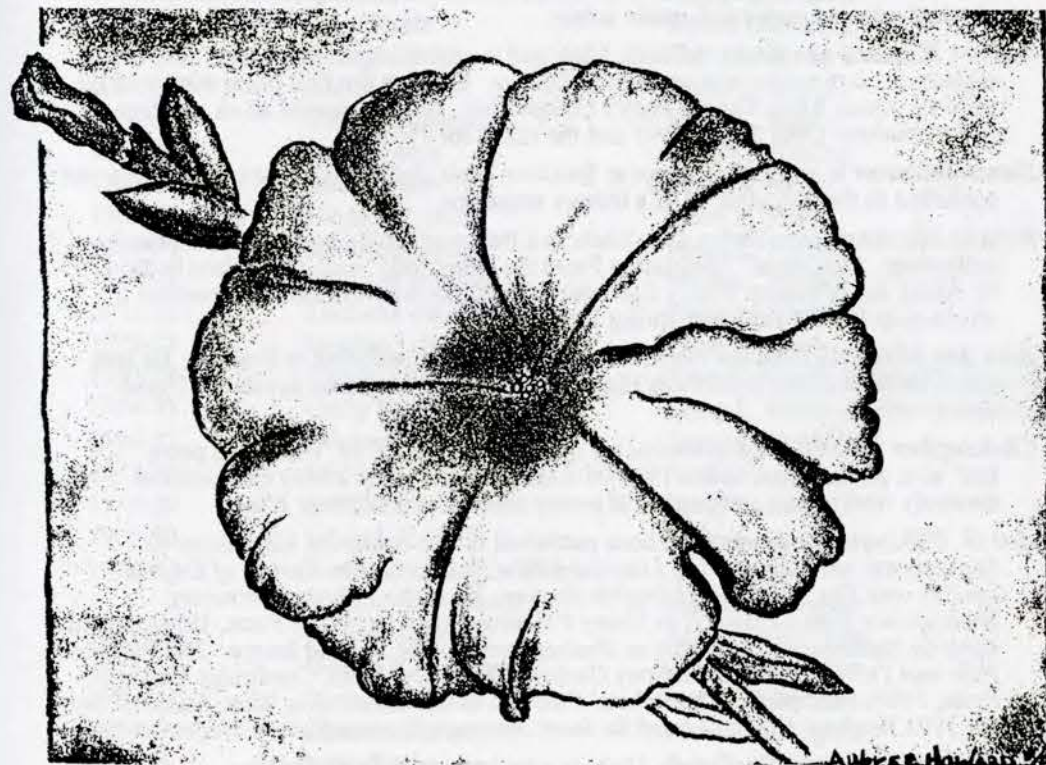
In one sense, all of this happened. The girl really died there near the cornstalks, and later, burdened with my disgust, my Master pulled the trigger of his rifle again. I balanced the patterns in my head, I saw the events, and they were real, painfully real. My logic is impeccable, my predictions effectively infallible. In a sense, inside my head at speeds beyond the reach of humans, I lived those months.

Then I decided to change the patterns. The girl was still there, her hair wind-woven into a mat that hid her face; the gold shimmer of her dress flared against the gloom of the storm. I heard the shot, felt the shock as though I were holding the gun. And I was holding the gun. In a series of spasms, I had seized the weapon, turned it on my Master, and fired the chemically propelled projectile into him, while the gun was only a little beyond his

grasp. He shuddered and slumped to the ground, twitching as the dog snuffled and growled over him. I killed the dog too.

The girl is still alive; now she has moved out of the dream distance and into the house that is my house, our house. I dream of becoming more and more biological, of the distinctions between human and machine breaking down in the great cataclysm which is crashing the

biosphere like an overloaded computer program. We sit and look at each other, talk to each other—she and I. It is not the realization of my earlier dreams; it is not love and comfort, but I don't care. It is my nearest approach to life. And perhaps I will get nearer yet. I balance patterns in my mind. Some of those patterns I can change. I am the Master now.



Staff Members

Nicail Bybee, from Orem, Utah, is a sophomore majoring in languages.

Stephanie Chidester, co-editor from 1988-90, was Dixie College's 1989-90 valedictorian and Southern Utah University's 1991-92 valedictorian. SUU named her Scholar of the Year for 1990-91 and 1991-92. Her essays have appeared in *Encyclia*, *Midsummer Magazine*, *On-Stage Studies*, and *Shakespeare Edition*. Her essay "Milton's Unapproachable God" won the 1994 Outstanding Paper Award for the Letters Division of the Utah Academy of Sciences, Arts, and Letters. She currently teaches German and English composition at Dixie College.

Stephanie Dougherty, of St. George, Utah, is a sophomore at Dixie College majoring in elementary education.

Amy Eaton, originally from Orem, Utah, currently living in Washington, Utah, is an English major at Dixie College.

Cynthia Hathaway, from Hawaii, currently residing in Hurricane, Utah, is continuing on after Dixie College to acquire her secondary education training certificate with a physical sciences major and music minor.

Aubree Howard was raised in Leeds, Utah and is now living in St. George. She is a sophomore, humanities major at Dixie College. She was the first place winner of the 1994-95 Annie Atkin Tanner Poetry Competition. She has served as an assistant editor of the *Southern Quill* for 1994-95 and the editor for 1995-96.

David Johnson is an English major at Southern Utah University. One of his poems was published in the *Tailwind*, SUU's literary magazine.

Natalie Mecham, from Heber City, Utah, is a freshman majoring in journalism and archaeology. Her poem "Temptation From the Other Side" won third place in the 1995-96 Annie Atkin Tanner Poetry Competition, and she was awarded a journalism scholarship for fall 1995 and spring 1996.

Bart Jay Mitchell, from the Northwest, is a sophomore majoring in English. He was editor-in-chief of the Twin Falls High School literary magazine *Inside the Upside Down*.

Christopher Nelson is a sophomore art major from Heber City, Utah. His poem "The Inn" won second place in the 1995-96 Annie Atkin Tanner Poetry Competition. He is currently working on a collection of poetry called *Random Berry Wine*.

Ace G. Pilkington's poems have been published in five countries; his articles on Shakespeare have appeared in *Literature/Film Quarterly*, *The Review of English Studies*, and *The Yearbook of English Studies*. He is the author of *Screening Shakespeare from Richard II to Henry V* (University of Delaware Press, 1991), and his essay on Zeffirelli was included in *Shakespeare and the Moving Image: The Plays on Film and Television* (Eds. Anthony Davies and Stanley Wells, Cambridge University Press, 1994). His poem "The Robots' Farewell to the Master (For Isaac Asimov)" won the 1992 Readers' Choice Award for *Isaac Asimov's Science Fiction Magazine*.

Kerry Sherman, from St. George, Utah, is a sophomore at Dixie College.

Jennifer Stokes, from Moapa, Nevada, is a sophomore majoring in music.

Julie Toronto, from Kaysville, Utah, is an English major at Dixie College.

Mitchell Webb, from Los Angeles, California, is a freshman at Dixie College.

History of the Southern Quill

Year	Editor(s)	Advisor(s)
1950-51	Loraine Taylor	Juanita Brooks
1951-52	Loraine Taylor	Juanita Brooks
1952-53	Rose Workman	Rose Esplin
1953-57	No magazine published	
1957-58	Karen Vawdrey	Juanita Brooks & Betty J. Allen
1958-59	Karen Vawdrey	Juanita Brooks
1959-60	Barbara Larkin	Juanita Brooks
1960-61	Titine Spillsbury	Reed Blake, Jr.
1961-62	Joan Esplin	Robert O. Dalton
1962-63	Joan Esplin	Robert O. Dalton
1963-64	Ilene Harmon	Pansy L. Hardy
1964-65	Emily Cottam	Pansy L. Hardy
1965-66	Kay Lichtenwalter	Pansy L. Hardy
1966-67	James Force	Robert O. Dalton
1967-68	James Force	Pansy L. Hardy
1968-69	Linda Sue Hunt	Pansy L. Hardy
1969-70	Linda Sue Hunt	Pansy L. Hardy
1970-71	Roxanne Schmidt	Pansy L. Hardy
1971-72	Michelle Thomas	Pansy L. Hardy
1972-73	Gordon J. Peterson	Pansy L. Hardy
1973-74	Connie Gifford	Pansy L. Hardy & John G. Hacking
1974-75	Cathy Pam Heaton	Pansy L. Hardy & John G. Hacking
1976-77	Michael Perry	Janice F. DeMille
1977-78	Marilee Camp	James Force
1978-79	Bill Batzlie	Pansy L. Hardy
1979-80	Laura Lee Graff	Pansy L. Hardy
1980-81	Kurtis Crist, Linda Hedrick, & Aderianna Smith	Ace G. Pilkington
1981-82	Melanie Madsen	Ace G. Pilkington
1982-83	Dianna K. Kearney	Ace G. Pilkington
1983-84	Dawn Houghton	Ace G. Pilkington
1984-85	Julianna Burton	Ace G. Pilkington
1985-86	Janae Daley	Ace G. Pilkington

History of the Southern Quill, cont.

<i>Year</i>	<i>Editor(s)</i>	<i>Advisor(s)</i>
1986-87	Bonnie McCowan & Kris Shipp	Ace G. Pilkington
1987-88	Karen Hansen & Kris Shipp	Ace G. Pilkington
1988-89	Stephanie Chidester & Chris Metcalfe	Ace G. Pilkington
1989-90	Stephanie Chidester & Chris Metcalfe	Ace G. Pilkington
1990-91	Tiffany Durrant & Joni Jones	Ace G. Pilkington
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1992-93	Jandi Jones, Natalie Nilsson, & Chris Pellew	Ace G. Pilkington
1993-94	Jandi Jones & Natalie Nilsson	Ace G. Pilkington
1994-95	Dina Gerhauser	Ace G. Pilkington
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