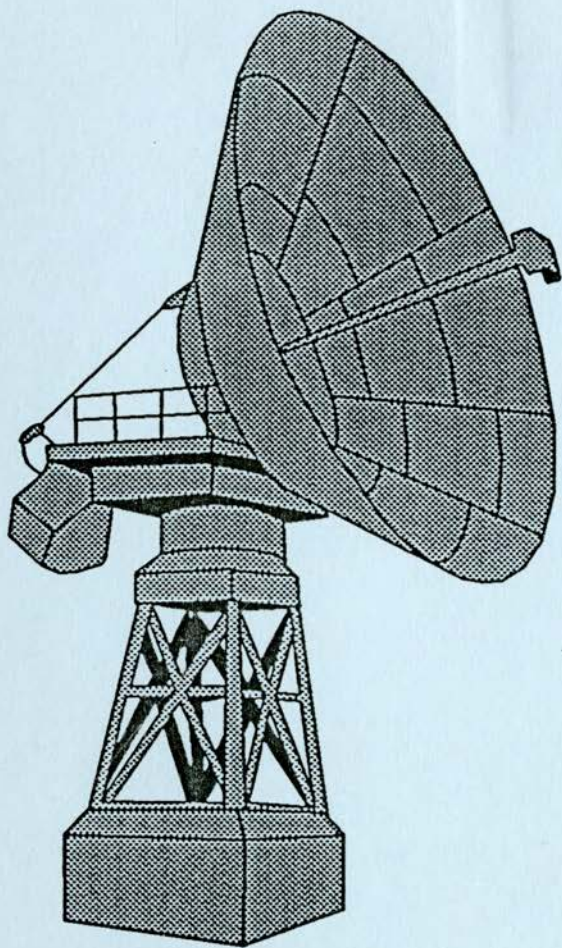
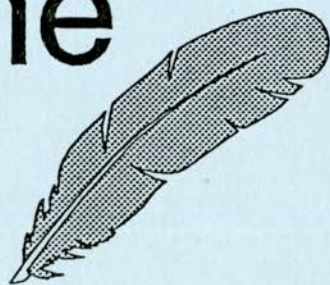




Writing the Future



Southern Quill:

1989-1990

EDITORS:

Stephanie Chidester
Christopher Metcalfe

ASSISTANT EDITORS:

Amber Burton
Travis Epperson
Joni Jones
John Rollins
Tiffany Taylor

STAFF:

Kim Gubler
Karen Lowe
Melanie Parsons
Julia Shannon
Jennifer Sweeny
Pete Witcher
Dora Wymer

ADVISOR:

Ace G. Pilkington

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GLORIA T. SMITH
MELANIE M. STARNES
PAULINE J. WEGGELAND

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JOE GREEN
SHARON LEE
DON SQUIRE
PHIL WILLIAMS

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	
1958-59	Karen Vawdrey	Juanita Brooks & Betty J. Allen
1959-60	Barbara Larkin	Juanita Brooks
1960-61	Titine Spillsbury	Juanita Brooks
1961-62	Joan Esplin	Reed Blake, Jr.
1962-63	Joan Esplin	Robert O. Dalton
1963-64	Ilene Harmon	Robert O. Dalton
1964-65	Emily Cottam	Pansy L. Hardy
1965-66	Kay Lichtenwalter	Pansy L. Hardy
1966-67	James Force	Pansy L. Hardy
	(second volume published)	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
1974-75	Cathy Pam Heaton	& John G. Hacking
1976-77	Michael Perry	Pansy L. Hardy
1977-78	Marilee Camp	& John G. Hacking
1978-79	Bill Batzlie	Janice F. DeMille
1979-80	Laura Lee Graff	James Force
1980-81	Kurtis Crist, Linda Hedrick, and Aderianna Smith	Pansy L. Hardy
1981-82	Melanie Madsen	Pansy L. Hardy
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
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

THE QUILL'S MARS DECLARATION

Dear Reader,

Since the theme of this issue is "Writing the Future," the shaping of science fiction and science fact into tomorrow's realities, we thought it appropriate to indicate our support for a particular program of exploration.

Throughout the last four decades, a tremendous amount of information has been gained about our solar system, our Milky Way galaxy, and the universe beyond from space exploration. Indeed, the last half century has been labeled a "golden age" of astronomy. However, the discoveries which have been made and the exploration which has occurred are dwarfed in dimension when compared to the progress which could have been made if it weren't for a lack of government funding and a shortage of forward-looking human beings.

For instance, the technology for space colonization has been available for almost twenty years. If scientists had taken advantage of this technology (or, more realistically, if the government had provided the funds for scientists to use this technology), we could have had a functioning colony by 1988 and could presently be expanding that colony from space. People could have emigrated into space, creating an ideal ecosystem and, perhaps, sparing the Earth's ecosystem from further destruction, rather than merely trying to repair, belatedly, our damaged environment.

We might applaud the United States for their 1990 launch of the *Hubble Space Telescope*, but before we do, let us consider the incredible amount of time wasted in attempts to acquire funding and the concessions which had to be made because of budget cuts implemented by the government. The original project--the *Large Space Telescope*--was first conceived soon after World War II, and the next four decades were spent attempting to obtain funding for it. The plans for the telescope were first delayed when Nixon became President, and again after Ford succeeded him. As

David H. Clark puts it, Nixon's "lower opinion of science" (*The Cosmos From Space* 106) was detrimental to almost all scientific programs, and Ford's "austerity program" (108) decreased the telescope's budget by 50%. The U.S. government, under Ford's presidency, determined that the *LST*, which was initially intended to have a 120-inch aperture, be made into a smaller telescope (the *HST*) with a much smaller (94-inch) aperture.

We can no longer afford the attitude that science and the exploration of space are luxuries. Indeed, as Loren Eiseley pessimistically wrote as early as 1970, they may be our only means to survival:

"My eyes swept slowly over the midnight clearing and its hidden refuse of fallen trunks and cogwheels. This was the pyramid that our particular culture was in the process of creating. It represented energy beyond anything the world of man had previously known. Our first spore flight had burst against the moon and reached, even now, toward Mars, but its base was a slime-mold base--the spore base of the world eaters. They fed upon the world, and the resources they consumed would never be duplicable again because their base was finite. Neither would the planet long sustain this tottering pyramid thrust upward from what had once been the soil of a consumed forest" (*The Invisible Pyramid* 133).

The *Southern Quill* would like to join with **THE PLANETARY SOCIETY**, Isaac Asimov, Gene Roddenberry, and Carl Sagan in endorsing President George Bush's proposed manned exploration of Mars.

Sincerely,

The Editors, Staff, and Advisor of the
Quill

I. Writing the Future

Doug Tolley

Roads of Destiny

*I go to seek on many roads
What is to be.
True heart and strong, with love to light--
Will they not bear me in the fight
To order, shun or wield or mould
My destiny?*

"Unpublished Poems of David Mignot"

This poem from O. Henry's short story "Roads of Destiny" asks an old yet relevant question. Are we controlled by an unavoidable destiny, or are we in control of what happens to us independent of any other being or force in the universe? Additionally, are we on an unalterable path? Is it worth it to try and change and improve ourselves if we are, indeed, just pre-programmed disciples moving on an eternal conveyor belt?

Belief in an all-controlling Destiny is an often used excuse by those who have no personal desire to improve. After reading "Roads of Destiny," a friend of mine remarked that just as David Mignot died from the Marquis de Beaupertuys' pistol on every road he chose, he (my friend) could make any decision at a given crossroads in his life without worrying about the eventual outcome, for all roads lead to the same end. This attitude is echoed in the first stanza of the James Fenimore Cooper Jr. poem, "Fate":

*Are we mere pieces in the hand
That moves this universal Game--*

*Whom one by one some Power has
planned
To follow some predestined aim?
Then Hope, thy burning words erase;
This world is but an abject place.*

What a sad interpretation of O. Henry's story; what a sad commentary on a life that has never discovered that joy also comes from the journey toward an end, not just from the arrival at that end.

I don't think that O. Henry was stating that man is trapped in Destiny's iron grip: remember that David Mignot had a choice of which road to follow. The story reads:

*Three leagues, then, the road ran, and
turned into a puzzle. It joined with another
and a larger road at right angles. David
stood, uncertain, for a while, and then took
the road to the left.*

David had a choice of three roads. As he took each of these, he met different challenges and obstacles. Each road taught different lessons about life. Each road was a unique experience that could not be duplicated by taking any other road. On the first road, he died in the defense of a girl he loved. The second road brought the sorrow of betrayal by someone he trusted. Road three brought David the agony of rehearsing the devastating act of suicide as he contemplated and then carried out this form of self-destruction. Although all roads eventually led David to his death, each road was a different journey; and it is the journey that brings the joy, not the destination.

Each of us is on a similar journey; and all of our journeys will end in the same manner as David's journey--with death. That part of the story is unchangeable. From birth until that eventual demise, the plot of the story is up to us. And so we

stand each day at a road that joins with a larger road at right angles. A true heart and a strong heart can indeed wield or mold our journey into one of happiness, if that is the road we choose.

Dawn Houghton

ROAD WEEDS

*Grinding and tocks,
That is what I hear as
I lie upon the floor,
Pensive in the night.
I untouch you
And raise my mind
Above our room;
In my pajama bottoms
I float away,
Pretending I have
Died and I am
Experiencing one of those
Death movements
Where you look down and
See yourself sleeping.
I travel at 1 a.m.
To my old homes
Where those sleep
Who should remember.
I whisper my
Name in their
Ears. I close my eyes
With them and lie still;
Then, before I leave,
Kiss them softly.*

Dawn Houghton

WALLPAPER GYPSIES

*Those people ...
Those people lined and sullied,
Questioning simplicity,
Definite yet bitter.
The daylilies
In a tea cup
Stand naked and
Have no answers
Collected from mornings.
"Seek more,"
The lilies finally whisper,
Then curl cool petals
Against glass.
Instead I ask
If I might
Sit on the sill
With the violets and the vines
And wait for the sun.*

Stephen Cluff

BORN IN THE LIGHT

I float in the darkness
Between sane and sleep,
And I wander with thoughts
Too eternal to keep.
I turn to the skies
Upon whose birth I linger,
When all formed a point
Making infinite of meager.
Where the canopied heavens
Still dance of the spheres,
And sing songs of the fire
That outshine their years.
And upon this green jewel,
Bathed in fusion's light,
We, the proud Phoenix-Born
Dare make sense of the night.
And, as my darkness explodes,
I'm born in its tide
The greatest wonder of all--
Starshine in my eyes.

Chris Metcalfe

Masquerades

No more than ten minutes had passed since Linda had sashayed into the gym dressed as Dorothy from *The Wizard of Oz*--a stuffed terrier jammed tightly under her left arm--but to her, it felt as though a decade had gone by. The "Halloween Ball," as this dance had been horrendously billed, was a monumental flop! This fact didn't really surprise her. All of the twelve dances that had preceded this one had tumbled from the sky in burning heaps.

Up on the stage, pushed as far back behind the curtain as was humanly possible, was the live band (if such a word as *live* could be used in this context). The four-man group consisted of a bass guitar player whose instrument sounded as though its strings hadn't been tightened in years; an electric piano player who had just graduated from the "Mary Had A Little Lamb" school of music theory; a saxophonist who sounded as though he was suffering from asthma; and a throaty lead singer with a voice as raw as hamburger and a knack for mangling Neil Diamond songs. They had just finished "Girl, You'll Be A Woman Soon," and the singer was making a lewd comment about a heavily endowed girl wearing an Elvira outfit. Her date, dressed in what was meant to be a knight's armor, brandished his cardboard sword like a reject from a Bing Crosby movie about King Arthur's era.

Groaning disgustedly, Linda decided to drown her sorrows in punch and moved to the refreshment table. Opting against trying her luck with the malformed "peanut butter surprise" cookies, Linda plunged the huge silver ladle into the huge

silver punch bowl and filled her paper cup near to overflowing with red, syrupy goo that was supposed to taste fruity. As she gagged the stuff down, a renegade thought warned that the punch might be spiked. She pushed the thought away. She had reached the point where she almost didn't care. "Besides," she consoled herself, "A slight head-buzz could, and probably will be the most excitement I'll have tonight."

So far, in the excruciatingly short time she had been inside the gym, she'd danced with a geek of a guy, trying to hide his stick figure in a fleshed-out Batman suit. When he had noticed her ruby slippers, a sickening leer had crossed his lips as he suggested that if she would click her heels three times, he would show her that there was no place like home, his home. Her right hand had begged to slap him silly. Instead, she had calmly extricated herself from his vice-like grip and gleefully replied that he wasn't man enough for her. Her second "suitor," dressed as Ronald McDonald, had squirted her in the face with his lapel flower and had tried to steal "Toto" when she became too "boring" for him. And a third paragon of manliness, dressed as the Alaskan oil spill, had asked her for directions to the Yellow Brick Road.

Deciding against gulping down the lump that had coagulated in the bottom of her cup, Linda disposed of her trash and turned toward the exit. Her path to freedom, however, was blocked by a large body. Glancing into the face of the intruder, she found herself looking at Frankenstein. Although the costume was quite realistic, she noted that only a small amount of make-up was required to achieve the effect.

"Hi, Bob," she muttered half-heartedly. "I didn't see you there."

"Of course not," Bob replied, grinning sheepishly, "I just came in a minute ago."

Rolling her eyes, Linda slumped into one of the cold metal folding chairs placed against the back wall of the gym. She'd have to endure the pain a little while longer until she could find a way to slough off Bob. He had already moved to the refreshment table to get donuts from the huge silver tray.

"Great dance, isn't it?" Bob said as he returned, his mouth leaking crumbs down the front of his shirt.

"Oh, I've had non-stop excitement from the moment I walked through the door," she answered sarcastically.

"No doubt," he mumbled as he began to consider her more carefully. "Did you come with someone?"

"No," Linda replied warily. "I brought myself."

"You didn't need to come here alone. I would have been your chauffeur if you'd asked me to," Bob said hopefully.

"Thanks for the offer, Bob, but I felt like going solo tonight."

"Oh," Bob whispered as he turned to gaze over the crowd. "Man, there are some great costumes here," he said in a lame attempt to change the subject.

Linda leaned back in her chair, closed her eyes, and gently began to rub her temples. It wasn't that Bob was a bad sort. She had gone out with him a couple of times before--mainly because he was paying for the date--and she didn't mind his company if her mood was good, but she had reached her limit. She had been coming to these civically sponsored dances for nearly a year now, and they had all been the same. One could only put up with consistently bad music, ten day old donuts, and sludge punch coupled with the same worn out guys and their trite,

shallow pick-up lines for so long before beginning to fray about the edges.

"The worst thing about most of the guys who come to these dances," she thought to herself as she looked at the others in the room, "is that even if they weren't wearing costumes, they'd still be hiding behind facades. They're so worried about 'making an impression' on everyone they meet, me especially, that they end up exuding the personalities of badly programmed robots. Shoot, I'd have more fun wrapped in the top blanket of my bed, squeezing my stuffed Garfield, watching the latest installment of *Nightmare on Elmstreet*."

But just as she was about to graciously part with her unwanted companion, the band began to play a ghoulish version of "Cherry, Cherry."

"Come on, Linda," Bob said with a large grin, "let's dance! It will do you good."

Linda felt trapped. She knew that Bob would reach out and wrench her arm out of her socket in his anxiousness to get her on the dance floor if she refused. Resignedly, she started toward her green-faced friend but a tugging at her sleeve made her stop. Spinning about to face her newest assailant, she found herself looking down at a grotesquely malformed court jester.

"Jerry," she snapped as she recognized the latest entrant in her private horror show, "what do you want?" She had gone out with Jerry once and had regretted the decision ever since. He had spent the entire evening arguing with her over any minor detail he could think of and had sped off without saying a word after dropping her off at the curb near her house. He had then had the audacity to call her the next night and insist that she go out with him again.

Before Jerry could reply, Bob lumbered over. "Hey, Jerry," he called, "that's

an awesome costume! Who are you supposed to be?"

"Hop Frog," Jerry quipped.

"Hop who?" Bob queried.

"Hop Frog," Jerry repeated. "He's an Edgar Allen Poe character. He's a misshapen dwarf with a hunch back who was a jester for a king. In the end of the story, Hop Frog torches the king in revenge for the king's mistreatment of Hop Frog's girlfriend."

"You should have dressed up as the king," Linda muttered icily as the band struck up a molestation of "Solitary Man."

"But enough of that," Jerry continued, ignoring Linda's comment and grabbing her right hand. "Come with me, Linda, they're playing our song."

"Just a minute, Jerry," Bob cut in as Linda yanked her hand free. "I asked Linda to dance before you did."

"So," Jerry replied evenly as he pulled himself up by his jockey shorts to his full height (5'4") and did his best impression of a peacock with its tail feathers fanned out behind it. "Listen, Bob, I've already told you to stay away from her; that I had the inside track"

"You've only gone out with her once," Bob growled. "She told me she never would go out with you again after the way you treated her"

"You're lying," Jerry sneered "Besides, why would she pass the time of day with a nobody like you?"

"I'm not a nobody," Bob yelled

"Stop it, Jerry," Linda said, stepping between them "I've had enough of your childish posturing. I don't know where you got the idea, but I am not a piece of land that you can stake your claim on! You seem to think that I'm 'yours.' I don't even like you! You can cool it with the 'Mister Macho Show.' I'm not impressed!"

Not waiting for an answer, Linda spun

about and began to push her way through the gathering crowd. The King Arthur reject halted her progress and asked if she would like to lop off Bob and Jerry's heads with his sword. Her piercing glare made the smile melt off his face. Finally, the pathway to the exit was clear.

As she pushed open the steel doors, Linda shook her head sadly. Perhaps there was a gym somewhere in town that held good dances instead of a constant stream of masquerades with or without costumes. Maybe she would begin to ask around tomorrow. Right now, she wanted to go home and go to bed. The door slammed shut behind her, and the shattered strains of "Thank the Lord for the Night Time" dissipated into the cold, October air.

Tiffany Taylor

SIBLING SWORDPLAY*

We clash and clamour
Like steel meeting steel;
My mouth is my sword,
And with this weapon of words,
I ratify an anger, uncontrolled.
But this could not be swordplay;
We are neither knights
Nor noble.
We are cats,
Spitting and hissing
Felines with eyes afire
And claws flaring.
We wait surreptitiously
In corners,
Ready to pounce
In unguarded moments.
We defend
Our territory of pride,
But I am much better
And always win.
Perhaps
I would feel remorse
For such bloody handiwork,
But the injuries are internal,
And I have only
To savor victory
In peaceful ignorance.

*Third place winner 1989-'90 Annie Atkin Tanner Poetry Competition

Pete Witcher

What Comes Around

The southern half of New Jersey is blanketed by a huge pine forest. Tourists flying to Atlantic City from New York see the forest as horizon-to-horizon green carpet, snaked with little ruts that are the roads and rivers. There is only one main road that wanders through, and dozens of smaller thoroughfares extend out from it like the legs of a centipede. Each of these legs leads to its own little cluster of cul-de-sacs and houses. One of these clusters is called Sweetwater.

On any autumn morning, the forest in and around Sweetwater is busy. Billow-cheeked squirrels, the color of rainclouds, skitter and leap among the pine branches and naked oak trees, doing their last-minute shopping before hibernation. Moulting jack rabbits, eyes wide and ears erect, nibble anything green that they can find, and deer gnaw and pull at the remaining leaves of blueberry bushes.

But the wildlife scatter deeper into the woods at the roar and skid of a '77 Maverick as it hurtles around a corner of the pothole-ridden road that cleaves the flora. It is driven by a thin man with taut facial features that always express desperate, bitter anxiety. His eyes are sunken and circled with bruise-colored skin, and his brown greasy-gossamer hair points in all directions. He propels his car at the edge of control, racing with punishing ferocity across the track of potholes and lumps of asphalt that used to be potholes. The battered car rattles and creaks and whines along the road, never slowing until the first few houses approach. The scarecrow at the wheel swerves violently to the left lane, jams the brakes and slides to the loaf-shaped

orange container next to the resident's mailbox. He impales the container with a small newspaper, barely stopping. He repeats this process at each house, working with the maniacal determination possessed only by amphetamine users like himself. He is always late delivering these papers because he is usually recovering from a night of drug abuse, and this makes him furious. He's not sure just who he's mad at, but he's mad at somebody.

* * *

David was always the first person at the bus stop. Slight of build even for a twelve-year-old, he looked much younger than he was. David's mother made him wear his big brother's old green parka, his big sister's old red scarf, and the yellow hat with the black-and-white pompon on the top that she had given him for his birthday. It wasn't very cold yet; it was only October, but his mother paid more attention to bills and checkbooks than the weather and her children.

Walking on the right shoulder of the road, he had textbooks and note pads under both arms, to avoid the unnatural lengthening of one or the other, but this posed a problem as his nose was running. Still, he was a resourceful boy, so he just dragged his soggy proboscis across his shoulder when necessary.

Despite his uncoordinated appearance, heavy cargo, and runny nose, David felt that today promised to be a good one. It was Friday, no tests were scheduled, all his homework was done, and he was going to see Susie Gurley today, the girl in English class who had a crush on him. The day before, at recess, she had punched him in the stomach (a blatant display of affection) and told him to drop dead. Ah, young love.

David approached the last bend in the road before reaching the bus stop. He must have been lost in thought because he didn't even hear the car until he saw its headlights and grill leap out from around the corner and bear down on him. His reaction was reflexive: he

dropped everything and sprang sideways, towards the woods, even as the Maverick rushed past him. David plunged into the four-foot-deep ditch that bordered the trees, and thorn bushes clawed his face and hands as he hit the stagnant water at the bottom. The driver never even hit his brakes.

Stunned, David painfully rose to stand dripping quietly in the cold, shallow, stinking water. He realized with embarrassment that he was crying. Adrenaline filled his veins, and he scrambled out of the ditch to find that his books and notepads were now a long, scattered pile of blackened, filthy paper. He stood in the road, dumbfounded, open-mouthed, with his hands cold and bleeding and his face stinging, especially where his salty tears found the cuts. He was trembling uncontrollably.

The Maverick approached once more, roaring and rattling, on its return trip from the cul-de-sac. David drew himself up and stood threateningly in the road. As the car swung past him, he shouted an obscenity, the only one he knew. The tail lights flared, and the vehicle skidded sideways. The transmission clanked as the rusted lumbox charged backwards toward David, stopping only inches away from him. The driver threw the door open and got out, loomed over David's cringing face and bellowed a stream of violent, vulgar filth wrapped in rancid breath and punctuated with stray drops of saliva. David began to cry again, and, satisfied, the driver bared stained teeth, got into his tortured machine, and roared away.

Greg was always the second person to arrive at the bus stop, right after David. Greg was also the oldest of the bus stop crew, since he had started school a year late and had flunked fourth grade. After David tearfully related his story to him, Greg's eyes narrowed and he took a deep

breath. He told David to go home and tell his mom he had gotten beat up. She'd believe that before she'd believe what really happened. David had just rounded the corner where it all took place when the rest of the kids arrived. Once Greg had told them what had happened, he said, "Guys, we can't let that sonofabitch get away with this. He coulda killed little Davy, and he wasn't even sorry for it." The boys nodded (the girls were off to the side discussing *One Life to Live*). Kirk Kimmerling's raspy voice raised in anger--Kirk was the youngest of three brothers, the other two being Keith and Kevin. They all resembled young cavemen: stocky, with curly shrubs of black hair, low brows and small eyes like drops of motor oil. Greg often joked about their father being Bigfoot. That always made Kirk yell. Kirk was always yelling about something; in fact, he never spoke. Just yelled. Greg spoke a little louder to drown out Kirk for a minute. "You guys know Old Man Sampson, right? That crazy old black guy that lives in the junkyard off of Indian Cabin Road? Well he had three pit bulls not too long ago. Know how many he's got now? One. That sonofabitch driving around here like crazy hit two of those dogs. Didn't stop either time. I got a feeling that it's gonna take a person getting hit to get that maniac off the road."

Kirk flew into a frenzy. He started running in circles around the group, slobbering and yowling incoherently. As the school bus pulled up, Andy, the tall, lanky boy from Michigan said, "So we gotta do somethin'. Got any ideas?"

Greg looked dramatically grim. "Better believe I do."

* * *

The boys spent that afternoon preparing and practicing. Greg chose a section of forest that had a reasonably clear trail

running through it to the Hurst's property, which bordered a small private road that bent around back to the main road. This trail was ideal because it had a deer stand, a camouflaged platform suspended in a tree twenty feet up. Greg, Andy, David, and the Kimmerlings stood beneath the platform arguing over who would man this post and how they would get him up there, when Keith noticed that Kirk and his perpetual racket were missing. As soon as he pointed this out to the rest of the guys, the racket reappeared, but twenty feet above them. Kirk had scrambled up the tree and was on the platform, rambling loudly and proudly. Problem solved. The rest of the afternoon was spent discussing and rehearsing what would happen the next morning.

That evening, Greg stole a six-pack of Heineken beer from his dad's fridge in the garage. He also took a flashlight and a small aluminum pail. Then he walked to Old Man Sampson's. Sampson lived in a tiny shack made of old signs, sheets of metal, storm doors, and two-by-fours. It was surrounded completely by a large field that was filled with huge heaps of junk as tall as a man, consisting of almost any item imaginable. Bowling balls and pins, wheel rims, a ouija board, broken baby cribs, handless clocks, mattresses, countless auto parts, a few rusted automobile carcasses, and hundreds of unidentifiable items. Greg wound through the maze until he reached the shed. Sampson was sitting on a stack of wheel rims, talking to his dog. When the old man saw the boy, he smiled toothlessly. When he saw the beer, he produced a harmonica from his shirt pocket, and it glinted in the Coleman lantern light as he tapped it on his knee. For a couple hours he drank beer and made love to the harmonica, wheezing and whining songs out

of it for his young friend, who was seated on a milk crate. The pit bull yelped occasional harmony. Sampson didn't even think the boy was strange when requested that Sampson use the bucket when the beer he had drunk wanted to come back out.

The next morning, the boys were up early. Greg, David, and Kirk met under the platform and went over the plan a final time. David looked uneasy. He was scared. So Greg reminded him what the driver had said and done to him, and the young boy's adrenaline flowed, and he was angry again and ready to go. Kirk scurried up the tree, a length of yellow rope around his arm. A lethargic goshawk pooped on his head, setting off an unusually energetic barrage of four-letter words, even for Kirk. Greg feared the plan might have to be postponed while the storm subsided, but instead of waiting, he took action. "Kirk! Shut up or you and me will trade jobs!" Silence. One end of the rope fell to the ground and Greg tied it to the handle of the bucket, which was filled with pale yellow liquid. Kirk hoisted it up, and the other boys took their places. Greg walked with David to the edge of the wood by the road. They hadn't waited ten minutes when they saw and heard their target rattle past. The pair emerged from the trees. They stood right in the middle of the road and waited. And waited some more. Greg fingered the explosive in his pocket. He held a Bic lighter in his left hand. David said that he had to take a pee, and as Greg asked if he could hold it, the metal monster careened around the corner and slid to a stop a few feet away from the boys. The driver looked fiendishly amused. Greg took David by the arm and walked him to the driver's open window. He looked at David and said casually, "Is this the guy?" David nodded. Greg bent down to the window, secretly removing the M-80 firecracker from his pocket. David walked to the other side of the road. "Now look here, Sir," Greg began diplomatically, "I hear that you ..." But

the driver cut him off with foul, degrading remarks about Greg's mother. Greg lit the fuse out of the driver's sight and looked interested. "Well, okay, if you feel that way. But please, stick this up your nose." He threw the M-80 into the car, stepped back and covered his ears. The ensuing explosion stunned the driver for almost thirty seconds--he was half blind and all deaf when he threw open the door and got out, fell down, got up again and charged Greg, who ducked onto the trail and into the forest, running at top speed. David did his thing. He got into the Maverick, gently shut the door, and drove away, carefully avoiding the really big potholes like his dad always did.

Greg never looked back. He knew how close his pursuer was by the volume of his bathroom-wall soliloquy. He sprinted between blueberry bushes, under leaning tree trunks, over puddles, and around thorn bushes, and he had just enough of a lead to avoid the spray of recycled Heineken beer that fell from the sky onto the driver's bony body when they passed underneath Kirk. He never knew what hit him, but he would have if he were able to hear Kirk's triumphant crowing. Greg kept running. His chest felt like it had an icicle stuck in it, but he concentrated on his goal, and in no time he saw it: Andy, sitting on his idling motorcycle in the Hurst's dirt driveway. When Andy saw Greg, he started driving away slowly, and Greg ran along side of him and jumped on the back. The dripping, reeking delivery driver was beyond furious, beyond enraged; he was a lunatic, shrieking and flailing his arms. As the boys pulled away from him, he collapsed to the ground, exhausted from the physical exertion. As he lay there, stinking of urine, he felt a great deal of pity. For himself. He considered himself an innocent victim, tormented by

spoiled, cruel juvenile delinquents with nothing better to do than torture a hard-working citizen. With that thought in mind, he picked himself up and started walking back the way he had come, fully expecting to find his poor car waiting there for him.

But the car was not there. David had driven it with care to Old Man Sampson's place, where Keith and Kevin were waiting with their tools. When Andy and Greg got there, the car was unrecognizable. The wheels were gone, the headlights were missing, three quarters of the sheet metal had been stripped, and the seats were propped up in the front of the shack, with Sampson in one of them, playing an old blues tune on the harp. Greg noticed that the front bumper was half-off and tilted at an angle that made it look like the car was smiling. The pit bull pranced and smiled and whipped her tail, excited by all the new visitors.

David was looking at Greg with a smile on his face as big as the car's. Greg smiled back. "Something on your mind, Dave?"

"Kinda."

"Well, how 'bout letting us in on it?"

Dave grinned wider. "When I was driving over here, I saw a familiar car. I knew they'd see me driving, and I was afraid it would be somebody that knew my folks and would rat on me. But it wasn't." He continued grinning. Kirk could be heard approaching in the distance. Everybody but the old man was looking at David.

Andy demanded, "Who was it?"

David said, "I didn't recognize the lady driving, but the passenger was ... well y'know that girl named Susie Gurley?"

Joni Jones

THE FALLEN APPLE*

The old man crouched,
Huddled
Against the cold cement,
Fending off indifferent winter
While watching the ocean of people
Crash by.
He resembled a gnarled apple tree
Uprooted by an angry flood.
Floundering helplessly
Amidst hostile waves
That drifted past,
Not caring,
While the old man,
Ripened with disease,
Like rotten fruit,
Stinking too.
His red-rimmed, bleary eyes
Held a warning,
But no one saw, or asked,
And season after season passed,
While the old man still crouched.
He was joined from time to time
By twisted branches,
Thrown up by the waves
That tumbled in the troubled,
Surging sea,
And the crowd still passed.

*Second place winner 1989-'90 Annie Atkin Tanner Poetry Competition

Dora Wymer

GROWING OLD

They are nearly hidden
Amid the young green spray
Of leaves and bright blossoms,
Creased and weather-ridden,
Though fair in their own way,
Embossed faces, quaint and awesome
Feint of autumn,
Distant season's traces--
Souls of another day.

A breeze will shake the leaves
Unsteady in the new-born spring,
While these old saints still cling;
Each barely quaking, grieves
For friends of other years,
Torn from the tree's frail limbs
And shed like tears--all lost
To other chilling winds
And winter's killing frost.

Here, framed by time, they stay,
Etched memoirs, antiqued gems,
Gilded by a thousand changing sun-rays,
Fragile as frost of latent fall,
Life's diadems...
Such beauty should be lauded, praised
By artist's brush and poet's pen,
But in the rush of gaudy, glazed spring days,
Who'd even notice them?

Joni Jones

OLD ROSE

Elma had been beautiful once,
With skin fresh and tight
Like a new peach,
Ripe-filled with sweet nectar.

Life contained three wishes for Elma:
An adoring husband, happy son,
And hordes of money.
She got them all.

But Age, and Time, and Life
Gobbled everything up,
Greedily,
And left her alone, bewildered.

Her husband dead,
Her son gone,
And her beautiful face
Hidden beneath folds of flesh.

Norma Whitehead

High-Buttoned Shoes

The wind whistled around the old, two-storied house. It rattled the windows and blew snow through the cracks. Jack Frost had paid a visit again last night. He had painted a "c" on the window, a beautiful, sparkling dream picture. It was the one thing of beauty in the crowded, shabby room. She sat on the edge of the bed, dreaming of living in that lovely, frosty world. The house would be like a fairy house. There would be lots of big windows where she could look out at all that beauty. Everything would be shiny and glistening. There would be pretty furniture that looked too nice to sit on--new! What was it like, she wondered, to have something brand new? She loved beautiful things, but they seemed to be for other people. Seldom did she have even a new dress or pair of shoes; hers were always handed-down from her older sister or kind neighbors.

As usual, she was the last one to go downstairs. It always took her so long to dress. Her panty waist was hard to get into. It twisted so! It was hard to fasten the long black stockings. Everything always seemed to end up twisted! She was still struggling to button her high button shoes. The button hook was so hard to use, but she had finally learned how to do it. Not many children her age could button their own shoes, but she could! It took a very long time. The first button kept popping out of the hole as she tried to catch the next one with the slippery little hook.

Then she heard the creak on the stairs! She held her breath and listened--yes, there it was again. Someone was sneaking

up the old wooden stairs--someone who didn't want her to hear him. Her heart started pounding. She sat as still as she could, trembling. She told herself it was foolish. There was really nothing to be afraid of. She knew very well who it was. It was just her brother, Roy. Two years older than she, he was her special playmate, but he loved to tease her. He delighted in sneaking up the stairs, jumping out, and scaring her. He did this almost every morning as she was buttoning her shoes, and even though she told herself she wouldn't scream this time, she always did.

Well, this time would be different. She was a big girl now. He wasn't going to catch her again. She would keep right on buttoning her shoe. She would not jump and scream this time.

She worked on her shoes, saying over and over to herself, "It's just Roy. I'm not afraid of him. I am not going to let him scare me again."

The creaking on the stairs grew closer. But now she wasn't scared. Why should she be? This time it would be different. She felt so good, there was no way he could scare her this time. No way! Suddenly, he let out a terrible scream and fell into the room, howling and rolling on the floor trying to pull the cockle burrs out of his bare feet.

II. Terraforming Time

Stephen Cluff

Mars Refuted

The thin, white crust of snow crunched under the hooves of the leisurely moving horse. The horse's rider sat easily in the saddle and, relaxed by the slow, lumpy rhythm of the horse's movement, opened his senses to the land around him.

He was riding up a gently twisting game trail that had recently been trod by a number of elk; he clearly recognized the large, distinctive tracks, superimposed red in the white snow. On either side of him, the forest breathed with a life of its own. A light breeze, carrying with it the faint harmonies of distant birds, gently tousled the tops of the sturdy pines, producing a sweet sound that brought the hint of a smile to the rider's face. Ahead, the trail sloped higher as it wound its way up the steepening mountain slope where finally, the rider knew, it would level out and connect with the High Plains. Behind him, the trail sloped downward to lose itself in the trees. Far below, almost hidden in the soft light of the small rising sun, the rider could make out a thin, charcoal ribbon of smoke that marked the ranger station where, a few hours earlier, he had traded his well-used jeep for the sturdy horse that now bore him.

A large, powerful bird voiced its shrill cry, gracefully circling, and landed on a thick branch of a bare and leaning pine tree. The rider looked up at the majestic bird and openly smiled; then, patting his horse's firm neck affectionately, he said softly, "Wonderful!"

He stopped his horse and removed a small, worn notebook from his shirt pocket. On a page titled with the current date, he added to the scrawled list that already took up a third of the page:

Large Bald Eagle, (Haliaetus leucocephalus v.II) Male, 6-8 years.

After the ranger returned the notebook to his pocket, he gently nudged the horse into movement and watched the eagle until it was hidden from his sight by the trees.

A few hours later, the ranger crested a ridge and continued on the trail that now followed a gentle curve into a shallow, bowl-like depression. He always had the same impression when passing through this area, that he was riding along the bottom of an immense inverted lens, wedged between the weathered peaks of the mountain range. The forest widened into a series of long meadows, an expanse of grasslands that made up the High Plains.

He paused at the edge of the snow-covered meadows. The snow wasn't more than a few inches thick, and soon it would be gone altogether, with summer coming on. The rider didn't need to use his binoculars to find what he was looking for; it stretched before him like a muddy red scar across the dusty-white fields. He followed the expanse of turned-up mud and snow as it wound through the irregular meadows, and in a few minutes he could see the huge herd of buffalo that he was looking for. Again he smiled openly and removed the worn notebook from his pocket.

"Hi, guys," he said to them, "it's been a long time."

The huge herd responded by stomping idly in the muddy snow and bellowing from time to time.

"It looks like you survived the winter just fine," he said as he began to write in

the notebook. The herd's numbers were up, and their general health looked good. The ranger had been optimistic about the condition of the herd, but even he was pleasantly surprised.

"We brought you close to extinction more times than I care to number," he told them after the notebook was once again safely hidden in his pocket. "But it looks like we finally found a place where you can be left alone."

The buffalo continued their shuffling and bellowing, and a white mist rose from their dark, shaggy bodies.

The rider looked up to see another eagle spin graceful spirals in the crystal sky.

"You too," he told the powerful bird, knowing that it probably understood.

Four hours later, as the mountains receded and the slope gentled beneath him, the ranger was gripped by an impulse. He turned his swift-moving little jeep from the main road, preferring to make a visit before following a more round-about way home. The land had now leveled, and verdant fields stretched into the darkening sky, the churning grasses billowing like wind-swept hair in the chill breeze.

Ahead lay a cluster of small, angular buildings surrounding and connecting with a semi-spherical dome. The chalky, off-white color of the buildings made them seem to glow in the thickening twilight, and backlighting in dramatically placed alcoves gave the whole complex the air of a monument.

After he parked his vehicle, the ranger entered the building through a pair of large, clear doors that bore the word "Beginnings" etched across their surface. The interior of the building was inviting, clearly made for visitors, its walls alive

with flickering vid screens and colorful photographs. The hallways were full of consistently pleasant and constantly informative voices and sounds, but due to the hour, empty of all but a few visitors.

This went almost unnoticed by the ranger who moved through the displays with the speed, and the cursory glances, of one who already knew the scenes well. He turned to the left and passed through a pair of wooden doors that led him directly beneath the large dome. Only then did he stop.

Before him, a rocky, windswept plain stretched into the distance. Dark, jagged rocks littered the powdery red surface, and along the far horizon, the thin band of an alien sunset glowed a wispy red in the steepening darkness. In the middle of it all, solitary and defenseless, squatted a small, conical form, its smooth, grey surface darkened and smudged as if by great heat. Beneath the scarred capsule coiled the powerful descent engines that were responsible for the streaked crater at the craft's feet.

The ranger smiled faintly as he recognized a slight disturbance in the holographic horizon, a disturbance that he had first noticed years before. This knowledge detracted nothing from the overall effect of the display, which was evident in the ranger's rapidly misting eyes.

Under the growing brilliance of the darkening night, attached to the base of the scarred landing craft, an engraved plaque gleamed with a metallic luster. Beneath the raised forms of two flags, one adorned with stars and stripes, the other with a hammer and sickle, was engraved a single sentence:

"We came to the God of War together, and in peace."

Ace G. Pilkington

NEW MAP FROM THE MOON*

From the moon we are mapping the earth,
That globular luminescence of fruit hung up to shine.
Sometimes we fear it will fall; so far away,
It seems a flickering fragility, almost imaginary,
Where the heights of air swell to blue in a scatter of light.
The lunar sky blackens through absence;
Sections of night are sliced by the sun's whitest knives.
On our kinder world, contours shade into colour,
Refracting a wood like an autumn of water,
Drowning in deep ripeness slowly.
Distracted by the strange dust we see
And the changing mists we remember,
We are mapping the earth from the moon,
Redrawing the soft weathers we owned,
To which no present moment belongs.
Retouching the spheres of our minds,
Searching a sea-breathing orchard,
We watch the reordering of leaves by the wind;
So far away, we fear we have fallen among dreams.

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Dawn Houghton

WHALE SONG

I will call to
You over the
Ocean foam,
Lengthy and untamed,
Graceful
Through water cypress,
Green and dangling,
Held by brown moss.
Listen,
Patterns and currents
Send sounds,
Messages on driftwood
And bamboo sticks;
You are not
So far away
To hear.

Amber Burton

TRUTH IN SILENCE

With astounding intensity,
Realization quietly whispers
The danger in which I live.
Novelty has defeated reluctance.
Similar to an amusement park ride,
Scaring one senseless
But producing a severe challenge
To overcome.

Awaken to full consciousness
Pessimism entangles,
Knowledge dissolves aspirations,
As fantasy is erased by frigid facts.

We have erected walls
Around us as a people.
Built stone by stone
With superficial emotions.
Appearing to have rotating
Optional responses,
Adhering only to societal rules.

For a fraction of a moment,
The need to shout over my
Silence overcame me.
And I was pulled
With amazing velocity
Into the world of reason.
Only to emerge
Vowing to speak my truth
More effectively
In silence.

Tiffany Taylor

UNBOUND

A majestic throne of sandstone
Rests regal on the flaring hill
Where a royal few will climb
In search of a different view;
The quest is panorama,
A kingdom's prospect, put
In perspective, unbound
To a peasant view below.

Montré G. Larkin

THE PRAIRIE

Infinity in all directions,
Land and sky
Merge as a beginning and an end
Of dreams and visions,
Solitary quietness,
Grayed pink grass
Caressed by the wind,
A sky veiled in a froth of pink
At sunset--
Trees stand as sentinels
In a land of promise;
On soil like polished ebony
Man casts a mere shadow.

Joni Jones

COTTON PICKING

Fingers swollen,
Puffed
Like a black eye.
Abrasive, work-worn skin
Stretched taut and bloody
Over guitar strung knuckles,
Likely to burst apart
If played too hard.

The blistering boil of sun on hands
Stains white puffs scarlet with fate;
No amount of soaking
Strokes cramped muscles straight,
When abused in endless agony
Of talon-filled bushes' hate.

Montrue G. Larkin

AUTUMN

A blur of light fused
With color,
Trees framed in blue sky
Gold, yellow, crimson,
Magenta, red,
Shout back at me.
Vision swims--melts
And the world becomes
A kaleidoscope for all to see.

Cynthia Sullivan

THE FALL OF AUTUMN

She is the evening of the dance
Dressed out in radiant hue,
A pirouette in fancy flight
Before the fiddler's through.

A burnished, sun-scorched maiden
Left alone to weep,
As blazing Gods of summer
Refuse her love-lorn keep.

She sighs with frantic whispers,
Echoing her plight,
And mourns her faithless lover
In the deep chill of night.

She cries on every place and town
I'm falling, falling, falling down.

Evelyn Hughes

SUMMER CAMPFIRE

We are drawn like moths
To this flame,
As it kindles a torch
Driving darkness,
Deep into the pines.

Mesmerized, we watch light leaping,
Feeding upon the forest's dead,
Blossoming with scarlets of lost sunsets,
Bloody as fallen deer.

Little tongues of liquid gold,
Licking around the aged logs,
Taste what is left of summer's sunshine,
Igniting molten treasures
Of lost autumns.

Flickering purple
Flames through black char,
Fluttering like spent breath
Of ancient winds.

Icy-blue winter flares
Blaze and crackle,
Devouring mysterious secrets
Known only to shadows and snow.

Charred logs fall apart,
Revealing small crimson hearts
Pulsing for life.

We rekindle the coals,
Smoke swirls
Like demented shade,
Uncertain where to go.

Showers of sparks leap skyward,
Small tails of light
Enticing us to watch celestial fires
Where lightyears away,
Galaxies spinning, burning,
Dwarf us to infinitesimal size.

Montrue G. Larkin

OUR COUNTRY

Miles away in the hazy distance
Clouds shadowed giant monoliths;
Eternity strode through the world of myths:
This ever-moving land,
Ripples of red sand,
Patterns shifting in the wind,
Forever, present and future,
The mystery of ages past
Clothed in red rocks and blue sky.

Evelyn Hughes

SUMMER CAMPFIRE

Dawn Houghton

TO REMAIN

Gentle are those silent

In fields

With still postures and

Rust weathered hands.

If only I

As the tillerman

Might leave, savor the

Hard earth,

A lasting raw touch of

Quiet calloused strength

Upon one.

I would

In the olive tree grove

Search for secrets

Which hold tight as stoneless fruit

To the earth, to find

What all seek:

To be preserved.

Then only when it is dark

Could I number

Barley stalks

As wishes

Swaying and changing

With shallow winds

And know somehow

All abyss fades and

Begins.

Evelyn Hughes

SUCKLEY PARISH, ENGLAND 1856

Now whisper to the wind our love's refrain,
 For when I'm far beyond the ocean's foam,
 Some vagrant breeze could ease my pain,
 Repeat your name and sing of hills of home.
 Will memory be enough to fill the years,
 Or will I learn to laugh and live anew?
 But Eros may not send a second dart. I fear
 Each long and lonely year away from you.
 When spring's green fire is ice within my veins,
 Will I find solace from my earthly woe?
 When nothing but my stoic faith remains,
 Will there be recompense that I may know
 The soul can heal the heart with gospel leaven
 For one who barter love for hope of heaven?

Amber Burton

TIME

Fragile is time.
 Hands reach in and
 Take a precious slice
 That was once thought
 To remain forever.
 Hurriedly ticking away
 While I, ignorant, did nothing.
 Now with a horrifying
 Realization, tears burn
 My eyes.
 And you leave
 Having felt, but not touched.

To the mark, to find
 What all seek,
 To be preserved.

There only when it is dark
 Could I remember
 Barely steady
 As winter
 Sweeping and changing
 With shallow winds
 And from somewhere
 All alone followed
 Night.

Kalynn B. Snow

DAWN BREAKING

Today
 Small sunbeams
 Came creeping
 Across my window pane;

They doused
 The drowsy bedroom
 In luminescent
 Morning flame.

Montrue Larkin

A BURDEN OF BEAUTY

A world of white
Limbs bowing in acquiescence
To a carpet of perfection,
Not a footstep,
Not a line--
Endless white.

Branches of filigree,
Fences of exquisite lace,
Layered snow crystals
Hugging the branches
Stretched heavenward.

Such beauty
Makes the heart ache
With wonder and awe
That all imperfections
Are clothed with a garment of purity.

Evelyn Hughes

SECOND RAIN

Across the summer mountain wide and vast
Great caravans of clouds race up the sky;
Soon savage lightning--thunder's crashing blast--
Shatters the startled killdeer's poignant cry.
A raging wind comes sweeping through the pines,
These heaving giants' branches writhe and shake--
A rush of rain in dagger-pointed lines
Sends silver shivers through the wrinkled lake.

Then sudden calm--the forest, liquid green--
Primeval silence settles everywhere;
No sound or movement cracks the crystal sheen
As eagle's pinions slice the breathless air.
Now only memories of the storm remain
With sunlit fern fronds dripping second rain.

Scott Rhoades

TO THE ARRIVING STORM

Waves come in layers like blankets to
Shore. Four brown pelicans fly in a line.
Young sea lions look west to your islands.
Their elders have told them you'll bring them
Fat fishes. Lighthouse, a candle, celebrates
Your coming. May you find comfort and tarry
A few days. Our lakes are almost dry.
At rest by your hearth, remember your hosts.
Tell your brothers they too are welcome.

Melanie Parsons

SEA

The beautiful rasping sea,
The tide comes raging in
And quickly ebbs away.
Sunlight greets the water
With a glittering reflection;
Hours pass like broken glass.
The sun is gone,
But the bright moon dissolves
Its image in the sea.

III. Composing Tomorrow

Sarah Montes

LADY OF THE LAKE

Lady of the Lake, could you learn to love,
If he changed his name would it be enough
To melt the frozen waters that plunge out from your heart,
That leave his powers reckless, tearing him apart?

Sister, when he calls, will you take him back
To forbidden paradise where time forever lasts?
Magic is his treasure, yet he's blinded in love's light;
Win him and surrender in covers of the night.

I know we hold all fate, but which way should it go?
Living life eternal seems to pass so slow.
He watches in the moonlight, by the water's edge;
If he loves you lady, do you bring him death?

Dark and mystic lady could you learn to love
And whisper his name softly, will he feel your touch?
Oh, my sister, do you seal him in your spell?
For love your name will stay with him--
His silenced lips can't tell.

Sarah Montes

A TOUCH AWAY

Leather and lace, black heels on the floor,
Longing to taste, we crave for more.
Break the chains, set myself free to touch it;
We dress in costumes of fantasy
That control the selves we want to be.
They portray what we need, twist what we see
Lost inside it.

• Chorus

*It's a touch away, all our fantasies;
Someone out there doesn't want me to see,
Lost in a fantasy held in dreams of stolen sleep.*

Time has no meaning, the night takes control--
Fantasy dreams that cut the soul--
It's there in the darkness, the ecstasy, and I like it.
It's a touch away, all our fantasies,
In the dark of the night we pay to believe;
Come whisper to me so addictively
I can't fight it.

• Chorus

*It's a touch away, all our fantasies;
Someone out there is watching me--
Caught in a fantasy deep in the night
As you whisper to me--
I'm caught in a fantasy deep in the night
As you whisper to me--
It's a fantasy,
It's a fantasy.*

Sarah Montes

GYPSY SKY

He moved me with his eyes
That familiar place I touched,
So many times and oh so long ago,
And in his reflection
I heard a singing voice--
A wind of spirits he said to me,
"Come follow," and I could tell it was a Gypsy sky.

• Chorus

*It was a Gypsy sky that led me,
Calling softly to my heart,
Drifting--his voice was thunder in my ear--
And I could tell it was a Gypsy sky,
And I followed in his Gypsy sky.*

I wandered on feathered wings;
He was oh so many things--changing--
But my vision was not clear,
And time is just a memory,
An illusion--I was there--he held me
Till the moon would next appear,
And I could tell it was a Gypsy sky.

• Chorus

Dora Wymer

PIANIST

His hands upon the keys--
Ivory touching ivory,
Long-necked swans mirroring,
Glide perfectly
Along the lake beside the wood.
Clear water ripples around them ...
Are they mortal,
Or white-winged seraphs sent by God
Because I'd stopped believing in divinity?
Their music like new life
Fills me until my spirit wakes to shout
"I'm free!"
Then dances out
Three steps ahead of me.

Ace G. Pilkington

PERIOD PIECE*

He plays a fortepiano, double of one owned
By Mozart. The incense from the treble is
Like light-dulled old crystal, yellow as candles
Broaching the smudge of dusk. His hands appear,
Disappear, in the mirror of lacquer, a refracted
Pallor and lustre half-seen on the surface of black
Water. Outside, the London air spills winter
Sun down through new ropes of smoke, sinking grit,
Swelling car smells, clown-white breath from crowds.
The pianist, looking like Walter Matthau, whips
The allegretto, whispers the singing tones, whoops
(Silently but with a whoosh of sucked-up fire audible
To the first four rows) out the bass notes, all
In a three-piece suit impeccably blue-gray. He cajoles,
Carols, controls the piano into that soft, slow sound
It might have made for Mozart in a place which tastes
Of mist, like mint in imagination, implacably far away.

*Originally published in *Prospice* 24

Pauline Weggeland

Grey Transmogrification

There has been a grey wolf sitting across the room, waiting and watching.

"Terrific!" she thought as she opened the mailbox and observed the fattened brown envelope that held the prescription. Juggling the packages along with letters and magazines, she returned to her home and dove for the ringing phone. Between sentences she propped the receiver with ear and shoulder so she could open the ubiquitous, white-lidded container. With a swallow of water she washed down a grey pill. Grey? They're usually pink. Oh well, must be generic, she thought.

"Okay, sounds fun. I love you." She hung up the phone with one hand and with the other flipped the volume higher on the C.D. and danced a few quick turns to Nat King Cole's "On the Sunnyside of the Street."

She swallowed one grey pill a day, at first not noticing a spiral down a slippery sided hole. After two weeks she could answer yes to ninety-nine percent of the "Are You Depressed?" questions in the Mental Health Mail.

Yes to rapid weight loss (scales verified twenty pounds in six weeks).

Yes to loss of appetite.

Yes to inability to enjoy experiences that in the past were pleasurable.

No to crying often, but yes to inability to cry. She would have welcomed the catharsis of tears, but the emotion was stifled.

Yes to insomnia. She dreaded going to bed because after a couple of hours of night, she'd be awakened by nightmares. It was as though a tape had flipped into

fast forward in her head, sending sparks of anxiety through endless nights.

By day she was aware of her heart as it swiveled and banged about beneath her ribs.

"What's wrong with me? I must make myself eat! Perhaps if I get more exercise. I must pull myself together! Everyone is coping better than I am. If I'm falling apart now, with no big problems, what will happen if I have real trouble?"

On the fourteenth day of grey, while she was reading a newspaper, words jumped from the page. "Enderol, a beta blocker, caused depression in six percent of users." Enderol was her medication.

She dialed her pharmacy.

"Doug, would it be important that the pills you sent two weeks ago were grey rather than pink?"

"Just a minute. I'll check your records."

When he returned, he said, "Oh, you should have told me! They are double strength."

"Would that account for insomnia?"

She said. Yes, yes, yes, and yes he said as she checked off her symptoms.

This was a brief moment of light.

"There's the answer. I'm not crazy. I don't have to kill myself. I'll just stop taking the wrong medication. The wolf will leave the end of my bed."

It was close to two years before the grey wolf moved to the other side of the room.

Stacy Brown

MOONLIT TAPESTRIES

Shadowy pictures of dreams
Woven with silvery threads.
Images flirting in the wind,
Messages carried on moonbeams.
Lonely tears falling, crystalized
In moonlight. Sirens' songs
Echoing on in shimmery night.
Tapestries of silver-silken threads,
Scenes playing on the wind.
Whispers of fantasy drifting
Across darkened sky, hushed
By morning's soft light. Fading
Into harsh reality, then creeping
Quietly back as light recedes into silver.

Pauline Waggstaff

Grey Transmogrification

Amber Burton

RELATIONSHIPS

Oozing, like used motor oil
 Drained on the unsuspecting
 Pavement in the royal
 Heat of summer,
 Black, full of lumps, impurities
 And
 Grime. My deepest thoughts
 Stretched, like double strength
 Saran Wrap over
 Unwanted left-overs.
 Like a half-eaten lolly pop
 Laid upon the counter top.
 The temptation arises to
 Taste it.
 But wouldn't that be
 taboo?

Dora Wymer

LOVE

At times I feel coerced
 By some invisible
 Life force--
 I'm lost between feelings
 And wondering
 What is it that draws me,
 Holds me there blundering?
 Is it the warmth
 That makes the flowers turn,
 Opening to the sun,
 Bask in the blinding brightness, wilt and burn
 Before the summer's done?
 And could it be
 The luring voice that holds them bound,
 Holds me, and keeps me down?
 What is this power which,
 Like sickness, fills my mind
 Till, like a coward, I forsake the will to fight,
 And dumbly welcome in the numbing pain?
 Confused, I find
 That when the fever breaks
 And leaves one night,
 I cry to have the aching back again.

Jacki Ashbrook

FALLEN

Crystal prism, decorating my shelf,
Reflecting the lights of the day,
A tiny reflection of myself,
Unique in every way.
When I clear the dusty veil,
I see my dreams in you--
That sparkle which will never fail--
Alas, a vision of my sparkle too.

A symbol of a single tear--
Tumbling, rolling, slowly falling--
Yes, falling is the biggest fear.

Crystal prism and my shattered dreams
Lie broken on the floor.
Shattered in such a way, it seems,
You'll never sparkle any more.

Mirror Image

Amber Burton

MESHED MINDS

Meshed minds intermixing
Like rain pouring relentlessly
Into a scum-infested pool.

We search endlessly
To find some hidden meaning,
Sifting through the rubble
Of the meaningless.

And you

With your educated mind
Attempt to dissect
Our temporary state,
To place authentic emotions
In appropriate compartments,
Reaffirming apparent anxieties.

And I

Wade heavily through thick masses
Of primitive, aggressive drives,
Asking not to zealously iterate
The obvious need for change
But only to survive this absurdity
Someone labeled life.

Dawn Houghton

CIRCLE BLUES

Upon traveling--
To leave and return,
It occurs:
The need to tidy thoughts
Imminent
Longing
Similar to
Mason pickle jars
In a line,
Sturdy,
Uncapped,
Waiting to be filled.

Open

And it is about this time
(While trains click, buses hiss
And planes lift to silence)
That I think of you ...

So, some spring evening
When yellows fade and
Crooked jade lines the sky,
Imagine the wild flowers
And remember--
What you have not said--
That is what I will listen for.

Karen Lowe

Mirror Image

It was nine o'clock on a Friday night, and Julie was feeling very sorry for herself. No date tonight, as usual, she thought. Another boring night spent washing her hair. Stephanie, her roommate, was out with Cliff, and Julie hated to be home alone. Ever since she had been a child, Julie had been afraid of her own shadow. She was pretty, everyone said so, but she wasn't popular. Stephanie had once tried to explain what it was that she lacked. She had finally given up by saying that it was as if Julie wasn't there--only half alive somehow. Julie often dreamt of being a different person, more vivacious and exciting, but she just couldn't seem to make it real.

She moved from room to room, turning on all of the lights, and checking every door and window. Then, feeling a little better, she went into the bathroom to run a hot bubble bath. She hated the sound of the running water, because it might mask footsteps climbing the stairs. But the absence of sound was even worse, because it made her realize how vulnerable she was. She looked at her reflection in the mirror, but the image seemed distorted by the steam.

Julie undressed carefully and stepped into the hot water. It felt so good, cleansing and relaxing. The water enveloped her body, cradling her on all sides. Every part of her body felt wonderful, and she closed her eyes and sank deeper into the water. She wondered if everyone felt as strange underwater as she did. She felt detached from her body, and separated from the outside world. It was almost like the beginning of sleep, when you feel adrift in

a world without sounds, except for those of your own body.

Seconds? Minutes? Later, Julie sighed and reluctantly opened her eyes. About ten inches from her face was another face--frightening and familiar. She opened her mouth to scream, but all that escaped from her mouth was a pitiful gurgle, as her head was pushed under the water.

She came to the surface, coughing and spluttering. The face looking down at her smiled, and winked as if at a great joke. The face was a mirror image of her own and yet strangely different.

In that instant thoughts rushed through Julie's head, as if from outside herself, and she knew what it was that she was seeing--a doppelganger. Time slowed as she realized why it had come. It had been sent to take her place. It could kill her and take over her life so easily. No one would ever guess that it wasn't the real Julie. Even she couldn't tell, except for the twinkle in its eye and the mischievous grin. The doppelganger looked more alive than she did.

Maybe it would be the vivacious, carefree and popular girl that Julie had always wished to be. Maybe it would live a better life than she could ever hope to. Maybe she should just surrender now, without a fight. It would be so easy. Julie shook herself mentally. How could she be so weak! Now was the time for her to fight for the first time in her life. No more fearful shadow person, but a real, vibrant Julie. She wanted to live now more than she ever had before. She had to fight for her right to exist.

The new Julie pushed the old Julie under the water, and smiled as she killed herself.

The last thing that Julie saw was her own face smiling down at her through the clouded bathwater, and an ironic wink.

Stephanie Chidester

LUNAR ECLIPSE

The cyclops lies somber at the mouth of his chamber,
Caressing the darkness of Odysseus' anger.
His hate finds a harbor in black skies and shadows,
An abscess of passion that numbs as it furrows.
Unwilling to think of the shades he remembers,
He dreams without sleeping and sees only embers.
The ocean sounds lazy, its waves seem like wrinkles
As he wades into water which licks at his ankles.
His walk becomes wishless, a motile slumber,
As he calls to the tide and slides deep in its umbra.

IV. Filming Forever

Stephanie Chidester

Stephen Cluff

"Some Tears in the Rain"

Performers

SWIMMING WEST

The man in the water breathed deeply
And lifted his feet from the stones.
"Gone West," his old friends will say of him,
Though secretly they'll never know.
Distant apple-shores beckon silently,
Alive with bright spring-smells and days,
Where the waves of the ocean surrounding
Dance on the shores of her bays,
Whose nights of crystal and diamond
Make impossible all thoughts of hell.
The land, a purified Eden,
Where only the living may dwell.
Fear and confusion behind him,
Like oil, a stain on the waves.
Ahead only the humble horizon,
Smeared gold with hope of new days.

In time the westing man floundered,
A swelling blue, the last sight he'd see.
"Avalon is not drowned," he cried,
"The wind's blown her sails out to sea."

Joni Jones

A FRAGILE RAINDROP

A raindrop fell on my eyelash today
And stayed.
Can you imagine?
A perfectly round, fat, drop
Which wouldn't leave.
I blinked and blinked
And shook my head,
Hard!
But it wouldn't budge.
Finally, I decided to brush it off,
Carefully,
With the edge of my finger.
I wanted the raindrop
To reach the ground and finish
Its journey.
But when I touched the drop,
It smeared away
On my
Hand.

IV. Filming Forever

Stephanie Chidester

"Some Tears in the Performing of It"

The 1989 Utah Shakespearean Festival exploration of *The Tempest* centered around Ariel's examination of emotion and his journey toward humanness, echoing some aspects of Marius Goring's 1940 performance at the Old Vic and paralleling certain filmic entities who take on the characteristics of humanity. In personal interviews, both dramaturg Michael Flachmann and director Jim O'Connor referred to the spirit as an emotionless, "Spock-like" alien who curiously observes and eventually comes to terms with the storm of human emotion in which he is caught. Richard Hill played an Ariel who, through the play, gradually realized the power he had to hurt people, and who finally developed sympathy and even perhaps empathy.

This interpretation emerged during rehearsals when director Jim O'Connor was attempting to deal with the problem of having Ariel constantly on stage. O'Connor explained (and complained):

"Ariel was a problem for me every day; Ariel was kind of around, and I knew I wanted Ariel on stage more, but I kept getting in a position [where] he was around but not doing anything, so I kept exiting him: 'Get him off stage--I don't know what he's doing.' And then one day during rehearsal (it was during a Miranda-Ferdinand scene) it was in part the way Richard was looking at them, in part ... an understanding of the script. I stopped and

talked to Richard ... 'Let's just make an assumption here. All who have been here are Sycorax ... Caliban, Prospero and Miranda.... [He has] never seen any love, other than father to daughter--This is a new thing. I would like you to play as if you found it intriguing. Let's see where that leads'" (Lecture, 13 July 1989).

Ariel's first exposure to grief came at 1.2.459-90, when he was luring Ferdinand about the island; he gave an elaborate performance for his master as he playfully sang the taunting song, "Full fathom five ...", not conscious of the pain he inflicted upon the grieving prince. He persisted until Ferdinand emitted a cry of anguish, and Prospero, sensing that Ariel had gone too far, signaled the spirit to cease his teasing. (This scene was paralleled later with an interesting twist when Ariel indicated at 5.1.11-20 that Prospero should show compassion for the King and his courtiers.) Barry Kraft, describing this sequence, said, "This one came halfway through the performance.... One day, [Ferdinand] gave this *cri de coeur*, this scream of anguish, and I turn to Ariel and I say, 'No, that's far enough.'"

After Ariel had brought Ferdinand to Miranda, he was confronted with the peculiar and confusing emotion of love. He watched the behavior of the two lovers with amazement, not understanding their actions and wondering what magic had created this strange reaction. He continued to observe the couple with curiosity, occasionally neglecting to pay attention to Prospero.

After 4.1.53, Ariel was again seen intently watching Ferdinand and Miranda. He then walked to Prospero and hesitantly asked, "Do you love me master? No?" Before the second question, Ariel bowed his head as though he feared a disavowal of affection or thought Prospero would

punish him for this betrayal of his emotionless state. Prospero, after overcoming his initial surprise, responded emphatically, "Dearly, my delicate Ariel." Ariel's countenance brightened visibly, and before he exited, he paused once more to watch the young couple.

Ariel encountered other passions as he witnessed the actions of the conspirators and courtiers. When he watched the three conspirators, he showed in turn disgust, curiosity and surprise. At 3.2.97-98, when Caliban told Stephano that Ariel and all his subordinate spirits hate Prospero "As rootedly as I ...", Ariel's expressions immediately contradicted the monster's statement. Also, in the next instant, he appeared to be considering and comparing the concepts of hate and love. Hill stated in a personal interview that Ariel feels "a little bit of an affront--kind of a superior, 'What an idiot--thinks he knows all the spirits--this earth creature!'"

Another indication of Ariel's progression toward humanness was his petition for mercy on the behalf of the King's party and his half-expressed wish to be human (5.1.9-23). Katherine Briggs writes in *The Anatomy of Puck*:

"It is difficult to say why the simplicity and brevity of that reply ('Mine would, sir, were I human') are so moving. It seems to contain in it the meaning behind all those stories of the Neck and the mermaid and the Scottish fairy who long for human souls, a sudden sharp reminder of the humanity we lose and insult by silly grudges. The marrow of a hundred fables is in it" (53).

For instance, Isaac Asimov, whose three laws of robotics provided part of Robby the Robot's character in *Forbidden Planet*, wrote "The Bicentennial Man," a short story which has a number of parallels with Ariel's examination of emotion

and Prospero's return to humanity (and therefore mortality). The story's center is Andrew Martin, a robot who gradually modifies himself until he becomes human in almost every way, including the death he suffers at the end of the story.

In the fifth act of this *Tempest*, when the King and his courtiers had been brought on stage and spell-stopped, Prospero wiped a tear from Gonzalo's grizzled cheek; this sparked Ariel's curiosity, and the intrigued spirit experimentally touched his own face in search of similar drops. Finding his cheek dry, he passed by the counselor before exiting and felt Gonzalo's tear-stained face. Finally, as Ariel ascended the fire pole after he had been given his liberty, he discovered a tear on his own cheek and held out his hand to show Prospero.

The use of tears to signal emotion is a common means of indicating a change from non-human to human status or separating humans from non-humans. This technique has been employed many times in film and fiction, including *Bell, Book and Candle*, where tears indicate a witch's transition to humanness; *Blade Runner*, where an android cries to signify her human reaction to being called a replicant; *Electric Dreams*, where a computer becomes sentient through a series of accidents, one of which involves a tear falling on its circuits; and *The Wizard of Oz*, where the Tin Man cries repeatedly as an indication that he already has the heart which he is hoping to find.

In the *Star Trek* episode "Amok Time" (number 34 of the 1967-68 season), tears are used to distinguish between human and non-human behavior. Spock, the Vulcan in the television series, who is attempting to suppress severe emotional trauma, touches the tear-streaked cheek of the ship's nurse and says, "Your face is wet."

Ariel's inquiry into human behavior (and its emotional underpinnings) was additionally spurred on by Barry Kraft's emotionally wrought Prospero. Kraft's Prospero also progressed toward humanness in the hours after the storm; he had, understandably, become disillusioned with human society and had withdrawn himself as far from that group as possible, both physically and mentally. During his twelve-year exile, the magician attempted to suppress his human qualities, and only when his enemies lay at his mercy did he begin to release the pressure of accumulated emotion.

Throughout the first four acts of the play, this Prospero gave way to his more violent emotions (anger, revenge and hatred) but gradually unearthed his capacity for compassion, love and mercy as he witnessed Ariel's journey toward humanness. The first sign of compassion Kraft's Prospero showed toward the island's latest immigrants was seen in his unusual display of sympathy for Ferdinand at 1.2.490, when he signaled Ariel to stop his unintentional torment (which was, after all, a simple enhancement of Prospero's orders). The only other individual who elicited (and benefited from) this emotion was Gonzalo, whom Prospero pointedly protected throughout the play. In fact, it was Gonzalo's tears, along with Ariel's prompting, which caused Prospero's affections to become tender. Just before 5.1.38, after Ariel has moved him to mercy, Prospero acknowledged the lesson he had learned by bowing solemnly and deliberately to Ariel. The spirit, startled at this change of behavior in his master, gave Prospero a long and puzzled (but pleased) look and ran off to retrieve the King and his compatriots.

Because Barry Kraft chose to play a passion-ridden Prospero and also because

Richard Hill and Jim O'Connor decided to present an Ariel driven by curiosity about emotion, the remaining characters (comic and otherwise) became subordinate sections of humanity for Ariel's observation and Prospero's manipulation. Spirit and mage became a center of gravity around which the other characters revolved, a complementary pair, aiding one another in their learning and relearning of human feeling. As Prospero enacted his revenge upon his enemies, placing each one in circumstances which would bring his worst characteristics to the surface, he unintentionally assisted Ariel in his discovery of emotion. Ariel, carrying out his master's orders, watched Ferdinand and Miranda falling in love, witnessed Caliban's hatred of and plot against Prospero, and observed Antonio's habitual malice and Gonzalo's benign despair. Through Ariel's objective study of (and journey toward) human emotion, this Prospero found value in his own nature and learned to forgive his enemies for their all-too-human failings and to accept his own equally human feelings.

The stresses and discoveries of the rehearsal process produced an interpretation which explored the natures of Prospero and Ariel and their interrelationship more thoroughly than is usual in productions of the play. In fact, Richard Hill's Ariel became a focal point for the exploration of humanness, the discovery of a net of relationships which binds the reclusive wizard and the excluded monster, the naive daughter and the super-subtle brother; it is a family of resemblances and empathies that ultimately ties even fire and air into a human context.

Ace G. Pilkington

PROSPERO'S THIRD THOUGHTS*

My island lives, a seedling of the sea,
Where Ariel sings our secret roundelay.
Were my drowned power to surge from sleeping waves,
I would return and summon his belief
To magic's pageant, a final fantasy,
For I have lost the last of my old dreams
In reaching out the brittle bones of age--
My love grows duller; all that glows is pain.
Each passion in its motion meets this winter;
At best, delay will furbish us until we enter:
I wait in rags of flesh and ducal clothes
To claim that darkness I have always owned.
So, sheathed with frost, the December rose
Goes glittering to its bleak repose.

*Originally published in *Amazing*, September 1988

John Rollins

HOW DO I SEE THE KLINGON SHIP?

Like a Romulan Bird of Prey warping through the neutral zone:
Blow it up
With phasers?
I'm not sure.

Like a Vulcan mind-meld bridged without much patience:
It would flounder,
Probably missing--
Maybe not.

Like the *Enterprise* warping purposefully
From shore leave on Starbase Four--
Klingons will be annihilated--
It's only logical.

Maureen Booth

ON VISITING AUSCHWITZ, 40 YEARS LATER

The first thing you sense is the stillness.
 The silence is eerie--you feel the quietus--
 No sounds of the screams which have since vanished
 Into the air like ashes from the smokestacks.
 The only sounds are the farmers,
 Swinging their scythes,
 Cutting and gathering the straw
 Growing in the fertile soil around the camp,
 Soil fertilized by human bones.
 Infamous antagonists,
 Oppression hangs over this place
 As if it were a thundercloud,
 While ashes fertilize and enrich
 The soil for farmers to fiendishly glean.
 The Farmers of Jews were ferocious
 In tending their gardens.
 Gleaning not straw but jewels and teeth,
 Clothes and shoes, hair and glasses--
 Useful in the fertilization of a chosen nation,
 While eliminating a race they thought of as manure.
 Could not just once their human crop have failed?

Evelyn Hughes

GHOST TOWN ON THE PARIA

Now the only tenant is the wind,
 A sad, demented shade
 Searching through tumble weeds
 In deserted dooryards
 For the long ago children
 Who lent him their kites.

He whines against sagging doors,
 Then rummages in dusty corners
 Seeking the Spartan women who lent him
 Lines of overalls, sheets and shirts
 For a summer morning frolic.

He explores the ragged fields,
 Combing through tattered willows
 And rusty tamarack
 For the strong men who wrestled
 With him, winnowing their wheat.

He wanders among the cottonwoods,
 Tearing at their last browning leaves,
 Then vents his rage against the bastions
 Of bright vermillion ledges
 Towering above the sluggish Paria.

At last he seeks for solace among
 The weathered gravestones
 In the small cemetery,
 With a comfortable sigh,
 Caresses the dry November grass
 Where Mirah cradles her infant son;
 Then rubs a brittle stem above
 Young Jamie, dead of snakebite;
 Sighs over beautiful Millie, taken
 With diphtheria and a broken heart.

His scratchy fingers claw at stones
 For answers to his loneliness.

Amber Burton

In the Fall of '88

I was sitting in the back seat, listlessly watching the scenery as it whizzed by, wondering how much longer I would be forced to remain confined in the family car. My parents were in the front seat talking primarily between themselves. I had grown accustomed to it, as children often do. Bits and pieces of the conversation were drifting back, and I could tell that the topic hadn't changed. They were discussing my grandfather's recent death and had been for the last three hours. My grandfather's death had been the reason for the trip and the well-worn topic. My grandfather was a wonderful man. He deserved much of the praise he was getting. It is just ironic how mere men become gods after death.

The circumstances surrounding Grandfather's death were all but typical. My grandfather had committed suicide after a full life. We had learned that his doctors had suddenly had forbidden him to take the drugs he had been on for approximately thirty years. The family verdict was unanimous: Grandfather had been rendered not guilty of premeditated suicide due to his inability to make a sane decision. Our religious family coped with the death on these grounds, and likewise so had I.

We finally arrived in Idaho to find my grandmother faring rather well considering her loss. Casseroles, pies, bread and cakes were covering a large portion of the dining room table, evidence that the neighbors had been alerted and had gone into action.

That night was full of memorabilia and assorted stories about a man I realized I never really knew, but loved just the same. To cope, I wandered off to be alone and read a religious book that stated people determined insane could not be held accountable for their actions. If we had established one thing that night, it had been that very principle.

I begged to sleep in Grandfather's room that night. Most of my relatives experienced chills at the thought of spending an entire night in the room where the "accident" had occurred. But, in my own unique way, I was saying good-bye to him. Everything in the room had his distinct smell of basic male and Old Spice cologne. I smiled, remembering the man with his white hair, sitting in his favorite chair, dressed in a crisp, white shirt, polyester pants, and brown suspenders. He was always smiling and telling a collection of "moral of the story" stories. He would lift his hand that was shaking uncontrollably, and say his favorite line, "Always remember who you are and what you stand for and you'll be fine." Looking down, I finally mumbled the reply that was as useless now as it would have been then, "If only we knew who we are and what we stand for, Grandpa."

I continued rummaging through Grandfather's things when something caught my attention. It was a white piece of paper with strangely familiar handwriting. Suddenly, my stomach churned, my recently eaten dinner threatening to spill forth. The handwriting was almost illegible. The shakily formed letters I instantly recognized as my grandfather's. The words were addressed to my grandmother, telling her of his years of trial and pain. He felt it would be easier to end life now instead of prolonging it. The note ended by begging forgiveness

from my grandmother for the act he was about to commit.

I went to sleep fully weighted with the decision I would be forced to make the following day. I was thoroughly frustrated. Everything had fit together nicely, until now. The truth was literally written out; he had just given up.

The next day was the funeral. I felt secluded, in my own lonely world, hiding my secret away from everyone. Should I stand up now and tell the crowd, in the middle of another "insanity explanation" that he knew exactly what he was doing and that I was almost on his side? Grandmother deserved to know. She deserved to read those words, that final good-bye, from the man she had shared her life with. But her whole ability to cope was founded upon the fact that he was not responsible for his actions, and could not comprehend the severity of his choice.

I cried at the funeral. The only time the tears had ever come. I cried for the loss of the man and for the responsibility that I was forced to bear alone. I couldn't handle it: I could not accept the responsibility. Nevertheless, fate had not given me a choice, and I was forced to make the best decision possible.

Everyone was watching me, sympathy evident in their faces, as I sobbed alone, and for all the wrong reasons. Grandfather, in an attempt to spare others pain, had killed himself. To fulfill his last wish, I would not tell them. The desired outcome would surely happen now. Grandfather deserved as much, as well as everyone gathered here.

It was fall then. The wind was blowing wildly, and I was secluded (purposefully) from the crowd. Soon, it would be winter, followed by spring. New life would come forth. This day would be forgotten, and Grandfather's memory (the perfect one)

would still linger. A man, human, now made inhuman after death.

Slowly the casket lowered, and the crowds dispersed. My grandmother, crying openly--trying to gain composure--threw that final dirt upon the pinewood case that held the deceased, signifying that it was time to let go. I felt that fatal note folded safely in my pocket and turned solemnly away. A friend of the family touched my arm, attempting to comfort me with sympathy. "He was a great man," he said matter-of-factly, "You should be proud he was your grandfather." Then his head lowered. Trying to fight the tears, to be strong for me, he choked out, "I'm so very, very sorry."

"So am I," I said with heavy heart and swollen eyes, tearing up that final note, moist with tears and nervous anticipation, "So am I." I threw the pieces into the chilly fall wind and sadly smiled, "Soon, it will be spring."

Dora Wymer

EDUCATED*

I remember when the world was
 Fresh lilacs, hot baked bread,
 Ivory soap ...
 Mama bathed me
 In front of the wood stove--
 The fire was crackling warm
 And red with love, like her laughter.
 We always waited for daddy--
 He was pine boughs,
 Sweet, purple alfalfa blossoms,
 And green willow whistles.
 Dandelions were beautiful--
 They smelled like Saturday mornings
 And spring picnics,
 And the new year--new life--
 Began on Easter day.
 Now they are gone.
 How life's rhyme scheme has changed:
 Lilacs are fragile wisps of hope,
 A loaf of hot baked bread won't last a day,
 Alfalfa blossoms turn to hard, black seed,
 There's hardly even a scent to Ivory soap;
 Dandelions are weeds--
 They are undependable--
 They quickly spend their gold, then blow away;
 Pine boughs only stay home for Christmas trees
 And are expendable;
 The willow whistle fantasy
 Is a childish desire,
 And the world will end one day with
 A crackling, warm red fire.

*First place winner 1989-'90 Annie Atkin Tanner Poetry Competition

Tiffany Taylor

SAD ALAIS (Chinon, 1183)

Lock away your crown,
 For no kingdom will be yours;
 Curl up small kitten
 And purr.

Smile often, hope for little,
 Little's the reward,
 Little choice, less respect
 And no control.

The golden circle at your neck
 Hangs heavy with love,
 Chaining pride
 And choking will.

Your bravest stand is,
 At its best,
 A batting paw
 Or cornered hiss.

The lion will roar,
 For the day is his
 While kitten mews
 Her pathetic wish.

Ace G. Pilkington & Sarah Montes

ANGEL IN THE ORCHARD

There's an angel in the orchard
With bat wings of white leather
Who's hung in bands of willow,
His cloven feet together.
There's a maiden touching apples,
Like a unicorn she wanders:
Her hair is bright as sunlight,
Her kiss a guarded treasure.

● Chorus

--There's an angel in the orchard--

She hears a merman singing,
Calling from a fountain;
The moss-bronze water beckons,
His love she could drown in.
She smiles lazily at the water,
As he gently reaches for her.
The cool, cool wetness swallows
Innocent young lovers.

● Chorus

His body gives her safety,
The fountain grants her pardon,
Twirling summer slumber
In her lover's garden.
The angel watches them in wonder,
His wings turn black like charcoal;
His green eyes are now shadowed,
The angel filled with hunger.

● Chorus

Merrick Nielson

MACBETH

Deep, thoughtful, calculating in his mood.
Should he believe the specter's word
Bidding him, pulling him, to partake of the deadly food
Greed.

Gone now is the common man's sense of reason.
Only power and progression dominate a mind
Numbed by countless sins and acts of treason:
Nowhere to go but down.
Nothing to do but fight.

Jackie McAdams

MEMORIES

Sweet, simple, vague,
Forgotten.
Recollected and cherished,
Distorted.
Pondered,
With a strain of remembrance.

Brings a glimpse of a smile
And the spray of a tear.

Longing to go back
While looking to the future.

Here for a moment,
Lost for eternity.

Experiences fade, wither and die
As the rose,
But I claim the memory of the precious scent.

Evelyn Hughes

CHRISTMAS IN THE THIRTIES

Dad, on snow shoes,
Sleighs a pinion from the hillside,
Fitting it with a pine board
To hold it upright.

Children chaining threads of puffy popcorn,
Spinning it like a spider's web
Through needled limbs,
Laced with green and red paper chains
And flaming candles,
Clipped to tips of bending branches.

At night,
Cuddling beneath heavy woolen quilts,
Listening to the steady rhythm of
A treadle sewing machine,
Wondering why mother never sleeps.

Behind the pantry door,
In forbidden territory,
A potpourri of pies covers the table.
Fruit cakes, iced and stacked, ripen in a crock,
A curing pan of head cheese,
Ginger cookies,
Plates of candles line shelves,
While the aroma filters through cracks.

Whispering and rustling paper,
Writing, stamping, mailing cards
Homemade gifts,
And the postmaster repeating,
"Tell your Ma there's a parcel for her
And no, you can't have it
It's for your Ma!"

Heather Douglas

JARED

Deep in those blue eyes a brave knight shines for you,
Turquoise blues that search the soul.
He reached out twisted fingers to touch;
To translate his cooing would mean so much.
At thirteen, he lies paralyzed without control,
His pallid, restricted body cannot do
Much but force a friendly smile through.

Frustration hides deep inside those eyes;
Surrounded by silence, he is white, motionless stone.
Gasping for life's breath, he releases a moan.
Stand and walk to the door. No one's good at good byes--
Hoping tomorrow to see again those two opened eyes.

Mary Kessler

HIGHLAND GYPSY

Babbie
Is an endless undulation through the day,
Speeding, turning, swiftly braking.
Darting--
Leaping--
Catching--
Seizing worlds within her grasp,
Shaking the oddments,
Furious with curiosity.

Occasionally,
She lies in wait:
Eyes watching, wondering,
Musing on the fate
Of creatures small and stumbling.

Then,
Sprung as an arrow to the skies,
Ecstasy exuberant in shining eyes,
She pounces
Past all the smiling faces; races
Chasing gophers, moles or mice
Into the shadows of the night.

Bred by ancient Highland Lairds
To make of rats rodents rare,
Her paws in rapid fire unearth
The menacing burrower's berth.

Her task complete,
And holding it between her teeth,
She drops it at my feet
And looks at me as if to say,
"I know I've earned my way today."

Then I, in condescending pride,
Enfold her in my arms,
And stroking,
Speak of charms.

Exhausted from the day's commotion,
Upon the heated hearth she lies;
Running, stretching, grrring, moaning--
Old glories, once more roaming.

Scott Rhoades

DANCE

*Except for the point, the still point,
There would be no dance, and there is only the dance.*
--T.S. Eliot

To see the moon through
My clouded shroud and
Stand upon that still point
Where nothing moves, to view
All creation as it dances
Around me and realize, at last,
I am the dancer.

Tiffany Taylor

BACKSTAGE

An energetic, eager audience
Throgs the theatre doors;
I hear their voices
Rise and fall
Backstage.

On an obscure piece
Of setwork,
Unyielding and insensitive,
I wait in anticipation
Backstage.

A bright shaft of light
Cuts the enclosing curtains;
Through an unnoticed gap,
I peer secretly, enviously
Backstage.

I note nervous, harried entrances,
And exits where a character drops
Smiling or muttering expletives;
So, the performances end
Backstage.

I am afraid I will always wait,
Watching the world perform
While life and drama
Both pass me by
Backstage.

Amber Burton

TIME STANDS STILL

Time stands still as passion takes over;
 A yearning soul reaches for warmth,
 Too long forgotten in a world
 Where having does not satisfy the wanting
 And where the line between love, lust and hate
 Is so thin it is often unrecognized.
 A small whisper conspires in the darkness
 To break the silent chill of the night--
 Another lie has escaped the lips
 Of a stranger needing the feeling of power,
 Uncontrollably obsessed with sinister desire.
 And time stands still as passion takes over;
 Though it doesn't qualify as love,
 It does mean something.

Stephanie Chidester

DESDEMONA'S SPECTRES

The old and constant questions will not find sleep,
 Not even in this cold, persistent peace;
 An insistent, incessant sob of nothingness,
 Impossibly heavy with regret, nags my unrest.
 What does one do, having fallen clumsily
 Into such early, insensible slumber?
 I have nothing left except helpless conjecture,
 No occupation other than restaging final failures,
 Paying passionate attention to the last inconstancy;
 I will act an eternity of implausible possibilities,
 Never to stumble upon the perfect fusion.
 Then, when I am ultimately alone with (and distanced from)
 The ghosts and shadows who grew from my necessity,
 I suppose I might resort to some textual self-scrutiny.
 The fault could not be fully, inextricably mine--
 Unless a few small, crafty lies
 Told (so I thought) for domestic tranquility,
 Are all it takes to damn me.

CONTRIBUTORS AND STAFF MEMBERS

JACKI ASHBROOK, from Washington, Utah, is a sophomore speech/communication major at Dixie College.

MAUREEN BOOTH is a Dixie College graduate currently majoring in English at SUU.

STACY BROWN, from Hurricane, Utah, is a sophomore math major at Dixie College.

AMBER BURTON, from Altamont, Utah, is a freshman English major at Dixie College.

STEPHANIE CHIDESTER, an English major who will be attending Middlebury College next fall, is the 1990 Dixie College valedictorian; her essays will shortly appear in *Midsummer Magazine*, *On-Stage Studies*, and *Shakespeare Edition*.

STEPHEN CLUFF, from St. George, Utah, is a sophomore at Dixie College.

HEATHER DOUGLAS, from St. George, Utah, is an art major at Dixie College.

TRAVIS EPPERSON, from Heber, Utah, is a freshman computer science major at Dixie College, who was the Graphics Editor for the *Vespine*, the Wasatch High newspaper.

KIM GUBLER, from Hurricane, Utah, is a freshman English major at Dixie College.

DAWN HOUGHTON, editor of the *Quill* in 1983-4, is currently working for the *San Diego Reader*.

EVELYN HUGHES is the first place winner in the 1989-90 Heritage Writers' Guild poetry competition.

MARY KESSLER, from St. George, Utah, is a psychology major at Dixie College.

JONI JONES, from Santa Clara, Utah, is a freshman English major at Dixie College.

MONTRUE G. LARKIN, from St. George, Utah, is a graduate of Dixie College and SUSC and a continuing student at and supporter of Dixie College. She currently writes a travel column for the *Color Country Spectrum*, and her work has appeared previously in the *Quill*.

KAREN LOWE, originally from England, is a freshman English major at Dixie College.

JACKIE MCADAMS, from Bountiful, Utah, is a general education major at Dixie College.

CHRISTOPHER METCALFE, a history major from Idaho, graduated from Dixie College in 1989 and is continuing his education in the University of California system.

SARAH MONTES, a member of the *Quill* editorial board in 1984-5, is a singer-songwriter from St. George, Utah, whose poetry has appeared in *Minas Tirith Evening Star*.

MERRICK NIELSON is a freshman theatre arts major at Dixie College.

MELANIE PARSONS is a Dixie College graduate from Salt Lake City, Utah, currently majoring in education at SUU.

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*. His book *Screening Shakespeare from Richard II to Henry V* will shortly be issued by the University of Delaware Press.

SCOTT RHOADES is a former *Quill* staff member who is currently editing software manuals in San Francisco.

JOHN ROLLINS, from Ely, Nevada, is a freshman French major at Dixie College.

JULIA SHANNON is a freshman art major at Dixie College.

KALYNN B. SNOW, from St. George, Utah, is a general education major at Dixie College.

CYNTHIA SULLIVAN, from Hurricane, Utah, is a general education major at Dixie College.

JENNIFER SWEENEY, from Newport News, Virginia, is a sophomore French major at Dixie College.

TIFFANY TAYLOR, from Houston, Texas, is a freshman English major at Dixie College.

DOUG TOLLEY, from Eagle, Idaho, is a pre-med. major who graduated from Dixie College in 1989.

PAULINE WEGGELAND, from Salt Lake City, Utah, has taken art and English classes at Dixie College.

NORMA WHITEHEAD, from St. George, Utah, has taken English and art classes at Dixie College.

PETE WITCHER, from Las Vegas, Nevada, is a freshman speech/communications major at Dixie College.

DORA WYMER, from Pleasant Valley, Utah, is a sophomore English major at Dixie College.

