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THE JOGGER

Marty Simpson

Iris McDowell, flanked by matching afghans, made a stumbling dash up the slight grade in front of my house. A hundred yards behind, three silent, grey figures seemed to be losing ground in a foot race with the sixty-year-old spinster. My impulse to lock the door was stifled as she passed by the gate. Besides, what would a person do with Iris if he caught her? As the suspected muggers got closer, I recognized their leader as George Everson, novice jogger. George is always leader. Right behind George was Von Gutter, acting as if he would like to pass. (He wouldn't dare.) Wilbert Jones was a hundred yards back and having trouble.

George's new sweat shirt was pasted to his body by dark grey splotches of sweat. The soggy cotton wrapper clung to his fat stomach, quivering with every grunting, puffing step he took. Von Gutter was dealing a death blow to the Aryan myth. A hundred yards back Wilbert seemed to have plenty of wind, but baggy sweat trousers were forcing him to jog with one hand--the other hand kept his trousers from slipping to his ankles.

Somehow the sight of three bald heads dotted with perspiration was very amusing. My gaiety was quelched as soon as I noticed the back of George's sweat shirt. Bright green letters advertised OVERLOOK JOGGING CLUB. Jogging club meant members; members meant me. Me meant Fred Simms, investment broker, the fellow who used his rich neighbor's money to produce his livelihood. Using my neighbor's money meant that if someone needed a bridge fourth, golf partner, or blood donor, old Fred could be counted on to do the job.

The next morning I had Miss Tye hold all calls for fifteen minutes. Behind a cloud of cigarette smoke, I considered my response to the ultimate invitation. They narrowed to two. Myra didn't want me to jog because she didn't like messy clothes; it would also interfere with my sex life.

Or maybe a blunt approach would be best. "Joggers, I'll have to pass up your gracious offer. Since I have no desire to make the Olympics, and at age forty I probably have less than forty years to live, I will spend my last days in as much comfort as possible, allowing my already overworked body to deteriorate at its natural pace."

My delusions of independence were cut short by Miss Tye's buzz.

"Mr. Simms. Mr. Lawson on one."

"O.K. Tye."

Francis Lawson was one of George's vice presidents; he was also George's trusted social assistant and errand boy. "Freddy," Francis gushed, "Long time no see. You old fox. You must be working overtime to make us all rich."

"Well, Francis, I have been busy. Myra and I have been getting the lawn in shape. . ."

Francis took the cue. "Speaking of getting in shape, Freddy, George and some of the fellows are starting something to get us all in shape. We've got jogging suits with OVERLOOK JOGGING CLUB printed across the back, and every evening we go out and shake up the old cardiovascular system a little."

"Hey Francis, that's a great idea! Who thought of it?"

"Actually George started jogging several weeks ago; then a few fellows began to join him, and the idea snowballed. Can we count on you to join?"

"Couldn't keep me away!"

"I thought you'd get in Fred so I had Grace drop a suit off at your house this morning. See you tonight about six thirty."

Myra met me with one of those so-you're-going-to-build-model-airplane smiles and said, "You boys. Why in two months you'll all be so thin and pretty we won't be able to let you out of our sight."

"Where's the suit?"

"Oh Fred, it's adorable. The lettering is so . . ."

"I'll be late Myra. Just tell me where to find the suit."

Myra acted hurt. "It's on the dresser. But you don't seem to be very enthused."

"Myra, you know physical I am. I have trouble pulling the tab off a beer can."

Myra pleaded, "Please don't grumble and ruin it for everyone else."

I didn't have time to argue; I went in and put on my suit. It was a good suit, rubber-lined with tight fitting cuffs to trap the body heat, and I couldn't help modeling before the mirror. The unrestrained use of Camel cigarettes and a nervous stomach had kept my weight very low. In fact, I was so thin that I resembled Rubber Man, the old comic book character. But Rubber Man didn't have stooped shoulders nor did he have a pouch. I dubbed myself the elastic question mark. Myra's warning that I was late roused me from my fantasy. I left for the George Everson estate.

My daydreaming got me behind schedule, forcing me to cover the half mile to George's house in a half run. Popping over the little knoll gave me a good view of the George Everson estate--I couldn't believe my eyes. In one night the OVERLOOK JOGGING CLUB had grown from three to thirty. I felt better about the whole thing because at least I had sound economic reasons for showing up; these other bastards just wanted to keep in George's good social graces.

George made an appearance shortly after I arrived. He mumbled something about the vigorous life; then he explained

the program. The first week we would jog a mile then walk a half mile. The second week we would jog a mile, walk a half mile, then jog a half mile. We would continue to increase our distance by one half mile a week and always walk one half mile between each mile we jogged.

The jog began. The first quarter mile our group developed a certain order. George was always in the lead. Behind him we ran in rows of three according to our standing in the OVERLOOK community. The front ranks were reserved for people who were employed at the Everson Frozen Food Company. Next were doctors and lawyers. I was in the third row from the last followed by the ministers and school teachers.

By the second quarter mile I was very sorry that I had run to George's house. My elastic question mark jogging suit had become very heavy with cold sweat. A pain was creeping up my left side making every step unbearable. The third quarter mile I noticed my feet becoming numb. The numbness crept up my legs giving me the sensation of a man being eaten by a shark. The fourth quarter mile I was delirious; visions of breaking away flooded my mind. I pictured myself jumping the white picket fence that surrounded my house and finding security behind a locked bathroom door.

Finally our mile was finished. The half mile provided little relief; it just allowed time for my oxygen-starved brain to realize the exhausted state of my body. Near the end of our half-mile walk George turned, surveyed us over his shoulder and shouted, "Hey fellows. Let's do another quarter mile to separate the men from the boys."

My instant reaction was to turn on George. I was sure my neighbors would join me in the mutiny. Just trip old George and run over him. Who could tell from his crushed body that we hadn't accidentally jogged him to death? But when George increased his pace to a slow jog, everyone followed.

The last quarter was a nightmare. All efforts to hide the signs of fatigue were forgotten. Jerry Bolden looked like a madman. His face was distorted by swollen nostrils, and at times his eyes rolled back in his head until the pupils were out of sight. One of the ministers behind me had begun a whimpering mumble that was probably an exhausted attempt at prayer. Someone toward the front of the line sounded like a whistling teapot every time he inhaled. The last quarter finished we began to drag our tired bodies home--Thank God we all proved to be men.

The rest of the week I left home early so I could walk to George's, and the jogging was bearable. The fourth week I had to give up my Camels to make the two mile mark, and by the sixth week the OVERLOOK JOGGING CLUB was stuck. I think George could have pushed himself on but many of the members had reached their limit. The eighth week found us still bogged down on three miles, and some of us were secretly bragging that we could do more.

Not smoking, sleeping well, and eating more had increased my endurance. So on Thursday of the tenth week I sneaked over to the

local high school and jogged an extra mile after we had run our usual three. The asphalt oval behind Overlook High was enclosed by a high wire fence. Thank God the gate was unlocked because my paranoia had almost reached a critical mass. I slipped through the galvanized opening and began my run at the same choppy jog employed by the Overlook Joggers. But with no one in front of me I soon lengthened my stride. The lengthened stride allowed me to cover ground much more quickly so I lengthened my gait even further. It felt good. Even though two laps around the quarter mile track brought a dull pain to my side I knew that I had discovered my natural pace. I also knew that this was the first thing I had discovered about myself in years. This slight awakening may have been the sum total of knowledge concerning Fred Simms. From then on the extra jog was part of my nightly routine. By the twelfth week I was jogging twice as far as the rest of the club.

On Saturday of the thirteenth week we ran at five instead of six thirty; George was throwing a party to celebrate our third month. We covered our usual three miles, and as everyone expected we went ahead to try and break the three-mile barrier. The last mile began to take its toll on the aging athletes, and Ed Bell (who always jogged right in front of me) began to slow down. One of the young ministers to my rear was crowding me so badly that he stepped on the back of my sneaker, causing me to stumble. To avoid the crowd I stepped out of the ranks.

The moment I broke free I realized that I would never have a place in the line of joggers again. My lengthened stride broke the rhythm of sixty feet hitting the pavement in unison. The sound of my rapid steps made their grunts, groans, and gulps inaudible. In moments I was beside George Everson. George acted as if he were going to give me a run for it, but realizing how fresh I was brought the joggers to a halt.

Now I was done. Running through the deserted OVERLOOK street was barely an effort. I must have covered four miles before I decided it was time to go home.

Myra was dressed and waiting when I came through the door. She chided, "Hurry Fred, I don't know why we always have to be the last to arrive."

"We're not going," I answered.

"Not going? Aren't you still running?"

"No. I guess you could say my running days are over."

PLAYING AROUND IN CLARISSA DALLOWAY'S "ATTIC ROOM"

Then, for that moment, she had seen an illumination; a match burning in a crocus; an inner meaning almost expressed. But the close withdrew; the hard softened. It was over--the moment.

Clarissa Dalloway in Virginia Woolf's Mrs. Dalloway

I.

After dinner,
we laid on the floor
and awkwardly explored each other,
like two children setting upright dominoes in a row
just close enough that when one of you pushed the domino on either end,
everything went.
We tried hard as hell to make things nice:
remembering, and promising, and finally making a composite photograph,

II.

And now, the next morning, for you, one grumpy Jewish boy:
somebody I made up over the week-end,
I want to expose myself.
By the same God of sweet-smiling children,
for you I want to strip quietly
out of the me that served yesterday's passerbyer's smiles,
and stand before you,
almost moving into an embrace,
as the same me I've been dragging around for twenty one years.

I hold before you me as an autistic child,
shaking my head as my brother pees--
in front of all his friends--
wildly on the shubbery in our front yard;
and as a skinny, lisping first-grader
who sneaks to the girl's lavatory to suck her thumb;
and as a seven-year-old religious fanatic, emptying
beer, wine, and whiskey straight down the drain.

Turning, almost on the brink of puberty,
I give myself to you in a kiss
and all the while bemoan my lack of breasts.

And here I am again: I am the girl in bed next to you,
the cynic on the make,
who after cutting throats,
after indulging in massacres in general,
like a television Indian on the warpath,
can no longer afford to offer anything but the package deal.
I, too long preoccupied looking around in time's empty closets,
demand that you appear
because I fear myself lonely.

III.

The home movies are over now and you turn over and go back to sleep.
I tell the story once more to myself.
I know that I have lied
and at the same time didn't even make up a good enough story to believe,
I let go and lay me down to sleep on your soft stomach;
(everybody needs somebody to hide inside sometimes).

IV.

We, like a ball and a bat,
were thrown together and touched only in mid-air,
leaving no bruises.

V.

If it is true that after the hit the ball goes in left field
and the bat is flung on home plate;
that it is Clarissa; Peter; Clarissa; Richard;
Clarissa; Elizabeth; Clarissa; Miss Kilman, and never anything more;
that this "is a thing that has to be,"
like the "frigidity" and "bareness" of the hotel rooms in which
Peter Walsh stays,
then I don't want to play baseball;
I don't want to give parties.

Susan Garland

GETTING READY

Gloria Sawai

She sits in the green upholstered chair and watches her father. He is sitting in the black director's chair in front of the desk in her living room getting ready. She does not know what he is writing, sitting there in a white shirt and the trousers of his best suit. But for two days he has been writing, folding, sealing, busy preparing. Perhaps it is more complicated to die when you are in someone else's house.

"Get me a paper clip, will you?" he asks without looking up. She rises from her chair and nudges him over while she opens the drawer of the desk and rummages. She lays a very small paper clip on the red desk blotter littered with papers.

He holds the clip up to the sunlight, examining it with a faint smile. "Is that the best you can do?" he asks. "It's not much of a paper clip."

"Beggars can't be choosers," she answers, trying to be flip-pant, and sits back in the green chair again. He clips the papers, folds them, and stuffs them into a brown envelope.

"Well, I've been paying these long enough. There are two premiums left. I think you can take care of the rest yourself. Mail this, will you?"

She is glad to go outside, into the April evening, and walk the block to the mail box. How long has he been paying her premiums? Fifteen years now? Every year, paying the premium. She had even forgotten about the policy. But she remembers now--how disappointed she was to receive an insurance policy for graduation when she really wanted The Moonlight Sonata. The recording would have been cheaper too, and Lord knows they had little money. She knows now that even if he lived fifty more years he would not give her The Moonlight Sonata. "Beggars can't be choosers," she had said. She lifts the metal handle with her fingers and drops the envelope into the red box. She turns and walks back to the house. Is he still at the desk, or not? If not...? What would her mother do alone with him if he should die while she is out mailing the letter? She hurries across the yard, past yellow forsythia, up the porch steps, into the front hall.

He is not dead. He is standing in the hallway making a long distance telephone call to her brother.

"...Glad to hear that, Joe. Say, would you look into the hospitalization matter again? I haven't received the forms yet. I want to get this bill taken care of before I leave...Oh, in a week or so. Good of you and Robbie to come up, by the way. Thanks for the shaves." He hangs up the receiver and walks back

to the desk. He stops, bends over a little, rubbing his chest. His face is a pale grey. She turns from him and walks quickly into the kitchen.

Why is she so afraid? Hadn't the doctor told her only this morning the symptoms might recur even after...? Her mother is bending over the kitchen table chopping walnuts. She does not speak. Her plump hand holds the knife firmly and she chops vigorously. It is after supper, but she still keeps herself busy. Her own husband will come home late again. It has been over a month now since her parents came to visit, and her husband finds the house oppressive. It was easier, those two weeks in the hospital. One could rest, thinking of white uniformed guardians hovering over him, feeling his pulse, examining the flickering graphs on the small screen over his bed. And her own two brothers there to feed him and shave his stubbled cheeks. But there are no guardians here. Only two nervous women who know nothing.

The lingering food odors in the kitchen nauseate her, and she walks down the hall to the bathroom. Nothing happens. Although her stomach feels loose, it is already empty. She locks the door and sits on the stool. There is no place where she can be alone.

Her father has begun walking again. She can hear him from the bathroom. He walks through the living room, dining room, kitchen, and hall in an even pace, as the doctor has told him to do. Living room, dining room, kitchen, hall, living room, dining room, kitchen, hall, living room... He has stopped in the living room.

She leaves the bathroom and walks down the hall to the living room, her heart pounding. She sees him sitting in the green upholstered chair, his slippered feet on the stool in front of it. He is reading the comics. The chair is old and out of fashion. It is her father's favorite chair. He drops the paper on the floor and leans back, his head resting on the strong, worn back of the chair. His neck rises out of the stiff collar of his shirt. Pale freckles sink into the neck's deep folds. He is very thin. His hands rest on his lap. She can see the dark blue marks on them. They look like bruises, but they are not bruises.

He bends over and reaches into the magazine rack for another section of the newspaper--that same section. It is the one with the story of Franklin Roosevelt on the front page. The story angers him.

"After all, he's dead. Why can't they let him be?" he says. "If they wanted to bring up stuff like that, they should have done it while he was still alive and could speak for himself." The page shows a picture of Franklin Roosevelt and a strange woman. Further down, there's a picture of Eleanor, looking angry.

She sits down on the black director's chair. "That's what I say, too," she answers. She feels sick and nervous again. He's remembering that day. Why can't he forget it? He's asking us to forget it. Begging us. Why can't she forget? Out of a thousand memories, why does that one catch in her mind like a hook?

She was sitting on a cane-backed chair in her mother's dining room. An August sun filtered through thin woven curtains onto the rough top of the table. It sank into the tiny cracks on the table's surface. It flickered in little dots on the wide fronds of the fern standing green and luscious by the window. It permeated the room, seeping into its farthest corners. There was no space anywhere without the light. Nevertheless, she was surrounded by a pall that contained her and her family and the house itself in a sunless box of fear. She didn't know why.

Her younger brother Robbie sat on the brown davenport in the living room. She could see him turning the pages of a magazine. Was he reading? Or was he, too, sensitive to the gloom that prevailed? He was only twelve, but he was the smart one in the family. Perhaps he knew. He turned the pages rapidly. His leg dangled over the arm of the sofa. How ugly he was getting. Long legs stretched out of proportion to his small torso. Orange hair lay in clumps on his head. A thin, obscene fuzz had appeared on his upper lip. And when he talked, his voice wavered hoarsely between the sounds of child and man in him.

Joe, her older brother, was upstairs. She heard him walking on the floor above her head. She heard the door of his closet open and close again. He was eighteen and handsome. He worried his mother with his good looks and smooth ways with girls.

Evelyn Budd had left. She was the teacher who had roomed in their house. She left suddenly a couple of weeks earlier. She was a young woman, but very plain and quiet. Even so, after her departure the house had become increasingly dismal.

The door between the dining room and her parents' bedroom was closed. It was frequently closed now. Her mother for reasons wholly unknown to the daughter had withdrawn into that room day after day, closing the door after her. She hated her mother then. Silent and distant, her mother with a strange, perverse power had enshrouded her family in a floating grey guilt that puzzled them. That puzzled her, at any rate. Her father was also behind that door. She could hear his muffled voice from where she sat on the sun-soaked, cane-backed chair.

She heard heavy, awkward thumps on the stairway. Her brother was coming down from his room. What was he hauling? Boxes? The door to the hallway flew open and Joe appeared carrying two suitcases--one large case, its threads worn, and a smaller metal one. His eyes were red, his face streaked with crying. He heaved the suitcases onto the floor by the table and ran into

the hall to the closet. Her heart pounded as she sat there, looking at the two suitcases lying in the sun.

The door to her parents' bedroom opened, and her father stepped into the dining room. "Joe?...I'm calling you, Joe. Come here. Now."

Joe's voice from the closet was twisted from crying. He was leaving, he said. He was not staying in the same house with her. Not when she felt that way. Not when she hated him like she did. He re-entered the dining room, carrying a blue jacket. "She said it herself." His voice was hoarse. "She said it." He pointed to the bedroom. "'We both can't live in the same house.' That's what she said." He wiped the tears from his face with the back of his hand and picked up the metal suitcase. Her father leaned against the doorframe. Her mother lay hidden under the sheets and blankets of her bed.

She had never before seen her father look so sorrowful. "I have something to tell you. All of you. There is something you don't know that I must tell you," he said. What grey and heavy message did he have, she wondered, that the words came out with such an agony.

Then she heard her mother's voice. "No. No. No. No. No," she moaned from her gloomy cave among the pillows.

"Yes," her father said. "Can't you see? He thinks he's to blame. He thinks he's the cause. Can't you see that? He thinks it's him."

Then the message. Her father. Her gentle, righteous father. standing tall in the doorway, his neck strong and brown, his arms muscular under the sleeves of a blue shirt, his eyes heavy and tearless. Her father, whose only flaw as far as she could see was a sometimes tiresome, out-dated sense of responsibility. A responsibility that had perhaps grown prodigious. Her father. And that woman. That plain, unexciting woman. And he was telling them. Joe and Robbie and her. Giving no reasons, making no apologies. Only telling them in front of their mother. Crushing himself between bedroom and dining room of the sun-laden house. Why? Why was he telling them? Lots of men did what he had done. She knew that. But they didn't tell their children. Not their twelve-year-old sons. What a terrible thing he was doing--telling them. Was there no other way? Could there be no evasions for him? Or for them?

And her mother. Her jealous mother. How did she find out anyway? She had felt no pity for her mother--only a sick resentment. Not until later did she find out what it was like to be so jealous. But it hadn't always been so with her mother. There had been light around her and humour and cheerful energies that filled the house with warm cooking smells. But now--an expressionless, hollow withdrawal.

What a pitiful thing a family was. How ugly and pitiful were the ways of families. There must be better ways, easier ways, ways without commitments, exposures, pain.

Her father stood silent in the doorway. Her mother lay on the bed quiet. Joe leaned against the wall with his eyes closed, his jacket dangling in his hand. Robbie. She looked in the living room. Robbie was kneeling on the floor, his head sunk in the brown seat of the sofa. He was crying, sobbing in his crackling adolescent voice. She hadn't heard him until now. Or seen him there, his shoulders shaking. She got up from her chair and went to Robbie. She knelt beside him, put her arm around his shoulder, and cried quietly.

She remembered little else. The sun lay hot on her back and on the rough fiber of the sofa. It lay over Robbie, warming his orange hair until it seemed a flame. Yet it hovered over them, a canopy of quiet, yellow light. What followed was in no way miraculous, unless there were such small and homely miracles. Joe lugged the suitcases up to his room. Robbie went outside and shot baskets. And later, days or weeks or months later, she couldn't remember, her mother left her sorrow-filled room and sang again as she sliced the vegetables. The event slipped quietly into a far crevice of their memory. They had not spoken of it since.

The room is dark now except for a light shining in from the hall, a yellow band dividing the darkness. Her father is still sitting in the green chair. She wants to tell him, sitting there with the paper on his lap, that it doesn't matter. It doesn't matter at all. If only he could know that it doesn't matter. But she can't tell him. Saying it would only let him know that she remembers. And it matters. But that is only one truth. The other truth--the greater truth--is that it doesn't matter. A thousand times it doesn't matter. She knows no word for that. But the other words rise from her stomach to her throat and stop there, packed tightly. She opens the desk drawer and puts her head down close to it, as if to look for something, a paper clip or something.

Her father rises from the chair, letting the newspaper fall to the floor. "I guess it's time to turn in," he says and walks out of the room, down the hall, to their bedroom.

She sits on the black director's chair in front of her desk in the dark room.

She rises and turns on the floor lamp. She will have to go in and say goodnight. She hates saying goodnight. But it isn't much really. She thinks of her mother who will sleep by his side. What would her mother do if she woke up and...? She leans against the green chair and looks down on the wrinkled face of Franklin Roosevelt.

She knocks on the door and enters. Her father is in bed. Her mother is busy about the room--smoothing the white bedspread, plumping a pillow, picking up a sock. She lifts thin stems of withered forsythia from a vase near his bed, crumples them into yesterday's paper, and buries it in the wastebasket. She talks about unimportant matters. Did he feel a draft last night? There's a lump on her side of the bed that she can't get at. Has he seen the letter from Sarah lying around anywhere? She would like to

read it again. He thinks the letter from Sarah is with the other cards on the bookcase. Her mother leaves the room to find it.

She stands at the foot of the bed and looks at her father. She sees his arms with their purple blotches resting on top of the white spread. And his head, hard against the pillow. She sees his face with eyes averted. She looks at the eyes until they look at hers. She lays her hand on the small white mound of his foot. She holds a toe between her fingers.

"Goodnight, Dad," she says.

He does not smile. His head lies hard against the pillow.

"Goodnight," he says.

I CARRY THE BURDEN

I carry the burden of not loving,
Heavy as mutton,
In my arms and fingers.
No tiny whip-like energies of hate
To make a door slam,
A cup drop, or handle break.
Only a carrion pull. This little
Pot I scrape tires me
As if I'd dug a channel.

Gloria Sawai

LAMENTATIONS FROM A BROKEN DREAM

Night crawling frequenter,
a sun-shy sleeper bobs
lazily into dawning evening.
Tandem eyes inquiring from a
shoulder-rooted head, he
Reaches in a no-neck stretch
to search the bank for
Day-strewn intruders,

A serene salute of tow-headed
foxtails dips welcome
to him and night,
a pair
of one.

Still timid in half-dead light,
He slides from the scum-covered
Quarry pit,
his night
in day.

Onion-skin tadpoles lie stranded
in sun-sucked puddles.
The night-soaked sky bulges
as the belching bass voice
Laments the failures of
truth
and
faith
In never-known day.

David E. White

NIGHT JUNCTION

I used to travel a night line
which made a quiet sweep through a silent junction
on a lonely distant back road.

A junction with a gas station and a house or two
in which dreamers slept untouched by my motor's muffled tone,
where lovers shrieked beneath their sheets
secretly frightened to their own;

They buried their heads and reached in their beds
trying to hide from the silent unknown
of my carlight's glow that creeping roamed
on and off their window
as I quietly drove past them in the night.

And Love...

I always thought her to be at some window.
Secretly she peered through a curtain slit
and always somehow would never forget
when to look for my passing.

So fair, long-haired, Love,
watching Alone through the years
waiting for my carlight's playing,
sometimes crying, weeping on her soft,
pleading for my staying...

Ive Standard

HOMEBREW

Mike Norris

Fred Newcross has run the service station just outside of Pilot Hill for as long as boys who are seniors in high school can remember. He does good work, but he doesn't say much. If a car is brought in that is overheating, Fred will lift up the hood, put his foot on the bumper, wipe his hands with a rag from his back pocket, and then mumble, "seewhaticando." But he somehow gets the car fixed, and he does the cheapest work in town. Fred is short and almost forty, and his big nose seems to grow redder every day. He always keeps four or five cane-bottom chairs in the front part of his station, and high school boys from the town congregate there and drink soft drinks and eat corn cheese and peanuts and loaf.

On a Sunday afternoon Pete Isaacs and Junior McPhalen were recounting an unsuccessful attempt at making homebrew to the other boys, when a girl in her late teens pulled up in a new Oldsmobile. Fred scurried out and the girl told him to fill her up and asked him where the ladies' room was. Fred pointed to the side of the station and she headed back there while the boys watched her through the station window. She had thick brown hair that curled over her shoulders and she was barefooted. Her blouse was a small white cotton affair, gathered at the shoulders, and it displayed the bulging tops of her breasts which seemed to be pushed upward by some unseen force from below. Her skirt was short and black and revealed her smooth, brown legs almost to the point where they stopped being legs and started being something else. She held her mouth open a little as she walked past the station window, and the boys could see her white, even teeth, which would have been perfect if one of the lower ones hadn't been missing. When the boys heard the door slam, they all rushed over to the wall and listened for her in the next room, but all they could hear was the sound of running water.

Fred finished filling her up before she got back from the ladies' room, and as he walked back into the station, everybody started talking at once.

"Christ, did you get a look at that, Fred?"

"She's not from around here."

"Fred, here's your big chance," Pete said, "Virgie won't be back from church till late tonight. All you got to do is turn on the charm and that sweet thing'll take you for a ride in her new Oldsmobile."

The boys laughed and Fred's nose got a little redder, and he pulled a rag from his back pocket and began to rub his hands.

He didn't say anything, but sat down on some cases of motor oil that were stacked up behind the cash register. Just as Fred got settled the girl walked in fumbling around in a flimsy, rawhide purse. Everyone stopped talking at once, and she looked up and asked Fred how much she owed him.

"Six-forty-six," said Fred in a low, funny, raspy-like voice.

"I beg your pardon?"

"Six-forty-six," said Fred a little louder.

She bent low over the counter and began filling out a check, and the boys coughed and fidgeted nervously in envy of Fred's point of view.

Finally the girl looked up at Fred. "Can you tell me how to get to Kingsdale from here?"

"Turn right about five miles up then keep that road to Maury get on 421 at Maury and that takes you into Kingsdale," said Fred looking down at the cash register.

"Could you go over that a little slower," she said, tip-toeing and leaning toward Fred as she handed him the check.

Fred looked up for a second, and then with a voice that sounded like he needed to clear his throat said, "You tell her Pete."

Pete told her again and she said, "Thank you," with an almost singing voice and walked out of the station.

As soon as she pulled out of sight, all the boys immediately began expounding upon the feats they would perform if given half a chance, except Fred who pulled the rag out of his pocket, began to rub his hands, and slipped quietly into the grease room.

"Hell," Pete said, "if I'd of been in Fred's place I'd have invited that little honey into the back and given her some real directions, instead of clamming up like an old man."

"Yeah," Junior chimed in, "if that storm hadn't ruined our homebrew, we could've all went back in the back and had a little party, with Virgie gone to church today."

The boys continued to talk about what could have transpired if things had been handled correctly and how it was a shame that all of the opportunities came to people who were too old and out-of-it to be interested in them, until in a few minutes Fred came back in and asked them if they knew where to get anything to drink today.

Pete told Fred that Mack Webb had quit bootlegging on Sunday, and that all the stores over in Richfield were closed, and that unless he wanted to try some vanilla extract or after shave lotion, he was out of luck.

Fred asked Pete and Junior if they had checked on their homebrew since the storm and they said no they just figured it was ruined. Fred rubbed his hands with a rag from his back pocket for a minute and then said that it might not be and he'd give them five dollars if they'd take some gallon coke syrup jars and fill them with homebrew and bring them back to the station. They

agreed and Fred rinsed out four jars he had for people to carry gas in and cleaned off an old oil funnel. They asked Fred if they should strain the homebrew through a cloth or something if it wasn't turned over, but he said hell no he was in a hurry.

When they got back to the station the other boys had gone home for supper and Fred was sitting under the "no checks or credit" sign staring at the cash register. He didn't look up until the boys opened the door, but when he saw them he jumped up and helped them carry the jars to the back part of the station where he and Virgie lived. The living quarters consisted of a combination kitchen and living room, a half bath, and a small bedroom, and they were separated from the rest of the station by a ragged piece of flowered cloth that was nailed over the door. The floor was covered with worn gray linoleum, and above the dinette set, hanging on a rusty nail, was a small round picture of Jesus, who looked like somebody was pointing a flashlight at the back of his head.

As soon as the jars were set on the table, Fred went back out front and turned off the gas sign and all the station lights and locked up the pumps. He walked back into the kitchen and looked at the homebrew mumbling something about how it didn't look too bad. He took the cap off one of the jars and put his first finger through the glass loop, and swung the jar around so that it layed in the crook of his arm. Then he tilted it up and began to drink. His Adam's apple bobbed up and down with the jerky regularity of a worn piston, and the mud-colored homebrew ran out the corners of his mouth and down into his shirt. After he had drunk off about a pint, he set the jar down on the table and let out a long, hoarse breath and shook his head. Then he sat down at the dinette table and took another long drink while the boys waited for their money. Several minutes of strained silence followed, interrupted only by the bubbling of the homebrew as Fred proceeded to pour it down, and the drumming of Pete's fingers on the table as he looked doubtfully at the jar of homebrew in Fred's lap. When the jar was about two-thirds empty, Fred's eyes began to shine and his nose began to look something like a red neon light and he suddenly looked up at the boys, who had been fidgeting all the while, and said he had just about forgotten about paying them. He laid a five dollar roll of quarters on the table, and Junior quickly picked it up, and the boys started to leave, but Fred looked up and said, "You wouldn't run off and leave a fellow with three gallons of homebrew would you?"

The boys exchanged a surprised glance, but after a brief hesitation they sat back down. Fred tried to get them to drink some of the homebrew, but they said they didn't believe they wanted any. Fred kept drinking and his eyes kept getting redder and more watery and his nose was positively ablaze when he suddenly blurted out, "Well, what have you boys been up to this summer?"

They looked at each other in surprise because Fred never did say anything like that, and now that he was getting pretty drunk,

he talked about as loud as a normal person and it sounded funny. The boys just sat there for a minute and finally Pete told him that they had been shooting a lot of pool and that was about all.

Fred stared over the top of their heads for a minute, and then said, "Yeah, I used to shoot pool all the time when I was in the army. We used to play nine ball with five dollars on the five and nine."

Pete said he didn't know that Fred played pool and they would have to play cutthroat together sometime.

Fred said no, he hadn't played in a long time, and then he took another long drink and said hell yeah he could play sometime if they wanted to. He took another drink and looked over at Pete and said, "I guess you boys know all sorts of girls like that one that stopped here today."

"No," Pete said, "but I wouldn't mind knowing a few like her."

"Hell," said Fred, "don't give me that. A couple of young bucks like you've probably got everything in this county treed. Why don't we load this homebrew in my old Chrystler and take off and maybe you boys locate us a woman or two."

Junior looked up quickly when Fred said "us," but after a pause Pete said, "Well, they sent Wanda Bunch off three weeks ago, and Janet Sizemore's knocked up, so the only one I know is Betty Lou Sowder, but I don't know if I can get her to come out for an...three people or not."

"You can do it," Fred said. "You can do it. Just let me finish off this jar and we'll take off."

Fred lifted the jar unsteadily and tilted it up and began to drink in long sloshing gulps. The homebrew emitted a sour, vinegar-like smell, spattering on his shirt and onto the floor as he finished off most of what was left in the jar. He started to set the jar on the table, when he paused and dragged it back into his lap. He closed one eye and bent his wobbling head over it as if he were looking into a microscope. About that time Pete and Junior saw what had attracted his attention. There, in the drugs of the homebrew, laying on its side with its long legs crumpled up in a bow, was a slimy, black and red spotted spider.

Fred grabbed his neck with both hands, letting the jar crash to the floor.

"I'm poisoned. You must've let this stuff work off in a commode."

He pressed his lips together and arched his back as he held down a gagging belch, while Pete and Junior looked back and forth at each other and the broken glass on the floor.

Suddenly Fred jumped out of his chair and staggered over to the sink and began to retch and stick his finger down his throat. As Pete and Junior sat looking at each other and at Fred, they heard someone opening the station door, but before they could even stand up, the flowered cloth flew back and in walked Virgie.

She stopped short as she came into the kitchen and put her hands on her hips and glared at Pete and Junior and the jars of

homebrew and Fred, who was bent over the sink. Virgie was of medium height but her two hundred pounds made her seem much shorter than she actually was. She had on a black dress which was tightly encircled by a black patent leather belt, creating an effect much like that of a sack of flour which has been tied around the middle with a rope. She had a drooping carnation pinned to her chest, and she stood with her legs a good distance apart and her toes pointed slightly inward. Her black patent leather shoes were bent out of shape at the sides, and she tip-toed and rocked back and forth from time to time as she looked into the kitchen. Finally she spoke.

"You sorry s.o.b. I spend the whole day at church and when I come home I find the station closed and you here drunk with these two boys. Do you know what their parents would do if they knew you was giving them things to drink? They'd have you thrown in jail and I wish to hell they would. Maybe then I wouldn't have to worry about coming home and finding you dead drunk every time I step out of the house. I can't even do church work anymore because I can't trust you out of my sight."

She paused long enough to direct a hot, narrow-eyed glance at Pete and Junior, but a new fit of coughing brought her attention back to Fred.

"For Christ's sake. The idea of a grown man exposing young boys to such things is enough to turn anybody's stomach." She paused and shook her head as she looked at the broken glass on the floor.

"Well, what do you have to say for yourself, Rudolph?"

Fred let out a long gagging moan and started throwing up on the side of the sink, while Pete and Junior stood like awkward statues looking out of the back window. Finally Fred stopped throwing up and said, "Virgie, I'm dying."

"No such good luck," Virgie said. "Anyway, anybody that would drink that stuff ought to die. It's probably got bugs in it."

When she said that, Fred started throwing up again.

Virgie marched over to the sink and said that the Lord knew she tried to keep her linoleum rug clean and as she hung Fred's cap on a nail above the sink, Pete and Junior saw their chance.

They eased out while Virgie's back was turned and were out the door and gone before she had time to turn around.

It was an evening two days later, after Pete and Junior had lost all their money playing pool when they stopped back at the station. The place was empty and Fred was sitting under the "no checks or credit" sign staring at the cash register. He just glanced up for a moment when they walked in. Pete looked at Junior with a wink and walked over to Fred and said under his breath, "Let's ride over to Richfield and get a cold one or two tonight, Fred. We might even get a couple of big honeys to come along."

Fred looked up for a second with a surprised smile and whispered, "Well, Virgie's going to prayer meeting in a few minutes, I guess I could close up a little early."

Suddenly Virgie's voice rang out from behind the flowered curtain, "Well I swear to my God." She walked through the flowered curtain looking at a check which had a bright red stamp on it. "This does it. I can't trust you out of my sight for a single solitary minute. If you're not getting dead drunk, you're taking in cold checks. I'm going to have to give up church altogether and keep my eye on you every second or we'll end up on welfare."

While Virgie was talking Pete and Junior slipped quietly out the door.

Fred's eyes followed them as they walked out into the evening darkness. Just before they went out of sight, a new Oldsmobile went by the station and Pete waved his hand at the car, which stopped just long enough for the two boys to get in, and then took off with squealing tires.

Inside, Fred looked at Virgie as she shook the red-marked check at him and pulled the rag out of his pocket and began to rub his hands.

THE FERRIS WHEEL RIDE

I used to envy you
 when we would ride
the empty ferris wheel
 and you could squint
into the bottom of a tiny
 shot-glass and see
a whole skyscraper.
 But then one
day at dawn, I showed you
Niagra Falls on a pin's head,
 We never rode the ferris wheel
 together any more after that.

William A. Baker

THE SHADOW-EATERS

Their metaphors extending
beyond the marginalia of their lives
each hissing strand of the Gorgon's hair
they have personally defanged
the heroes
rocking themselves asleep in their own arms
in hammocks
strung between the pruned stumps
of suburbia's bare yards
the sulphur of Nietzsche's pyrotechnics
priming the monstrous artillery of their dreams
The Will to Power pillowing their senses
beyond mortgages & installment plans
Tarzans & Flash Gordons
Their heroines
slung limp as bagged doe across their shoulders
the cabins of their starships
glow with the wall-to-wall nap of the Great Bear's hide
while Africas of apes
move toward the source of a distant howl

Things nothing in themselves
are like nothing of the selves they were
Cattle become kings
absolutes
limited to the loosest translations
Pity the prey
the dream-devoured shadows
monsters
crouched in the lowest branches of twisted forests
onto the backs of dreamers dropping
not as monsters
but as letters shaken from a printed page
petals of imagined flowers
plucked & eaten
Pity the prey
the victims of the dream

When the war was over
the heroics of the tyrant's speeches
were lost in foreign places
In the faceless syllables of soldiers
meaning starved for meaning
the tyrant

feeding on the Blueplate Special of their features
the cannon fodder of the crowds
the airbursts of The Great Unwashed
dangling like participles
from the gibbet of his rhetoric
Pity the prey
under the sun's thumb
at the center of a day
that never was
pity the prey
the ghosts & shadowless
rocking themselves asleep in their own lives
descending the stairs of nightmare
step
by step

Estill Pollock

Dress Rehearsal for a Death

The nothing that was called for
comes to nothing
In this clinic
for the menopausal in mind
a suicidal daughter of the moon
survives the razor's edge of sadness

... After a night of gauze & hypos
when the whips & chairs of madness
would drive the mind's zoo
through the firehoop at my wrist
after the adhesive clank
of cages reclosing
death itself
seems more remote this morning
though less medicinal than breath
As if my presence were the punchline
life's long humiliation
corners me with smiles
Starched punctual the nurse's crepe soles
tanktreading toward me... breakfast in bed
B movie starlet I've committed my part to mind
and committed to the ins & outs of mind
my lines

my pits smoothed with rouge & pancake
each close-up
stalled in the macadam of my features
The laughs are faceless
Grease-paint menagerie
the beasts behind the sideshow scenes
are circling for the kill
Nothing clowns
in this vaudeville of the ill
Barium by the beaker
I'd spell my role in chalk
bolt through the haywire of these losses
Stripped to my leanest self of selves
I cower behind the fluoroscope & swallow
The script old the act is folding
The windows within these walls are barred
Turn the page
My earmarked senses glow
Turn the page turn the page
The drinks are doctored
the stars
fixed to fall

Estill Pollock

THE BURIAL OF A MAN ABOUT TO DIE

I had a father,
but he died; abandoned to memory now,
itself a dying sensation. & while
I no longer mean
to think such things,
thought miscarries,
& turmoil assumes the familiar shape
of loss
:-- his spent flesh
propped amid flowers...
a bubble of bad air,
cramped within a sun-washed prism
forever.

He lay,
out of living's earshot,
the punchline
of some

irrepressible joke.

The movements of his life
dissolve in a delirium
of misremembered motion,
& though I no longer think
to mean, the mind
buckles beneath the weight
of death's immeasurable footfall.

Forgiveness, forgiveness.

His life
would
in the shroud of my neglect....

& though I no longer mean,
nightly, now,
my heart's blood
tides with love.

Now, now,
for him,
I hull a living space
from the deepest soil
of my deepest dream.

& though I no longer mean:

though the joke is endless,
the punchline unmentionable,
at the heart
of the grave,
for a life
gone out,
until the memory of feeling
fails
I'll war
against the final
unloving laughter.

Estill Pollock

THE FAITH MERCHANT

Because I love you
I offer you this sample this
free sample mind you yes
it is because I love you
that I have gone to
the highest mountain not a hill
let me say but a mountain
at the top of the world at the end
of your lives where a well is
& from the water in this
well with my own
breath have fashioned
a kind of bottle & in this bottle
corked a cloud a small
cloud but a cloud nonetheless
& while you were sleeping
forgive me but your door was
open I took your thinkings
the stuffed animals beneath
your pillows & they've been drinking
what was in the bottle so please
don't be surprised finding their teeth
turned into flowers
& their pinfeather hearts into swallows
& yes
it is because of becauses & yes
for the why of you to
survive in my caring to
endure yourselves yes

Estill Pollock

AGAINST THE GORN

Donald Onkst

"Fifth man, second squad!"

"Sirp!"

"Your other left, dip, your other left! Heoyuh, tuyuh, threoyouh...."

Boy,, she was something else. I wish I hadn't let my poetic license expire. Less than a month ago. A month, another month, just a month. Goddam drop of sweat on my nose. Brown hair, brown eyes, dark, beautiful skin. God, she was beautiful. Young, too young maybe. Put one leg in front of the other, one leg....

"Fifth man, second squad!"

"Sirp!"

"Look happy, dip, you volunteered."

Those eyes, Jesus, they drove me insane. Maybe that was why - the eyes. Yes, that must have been it. Clomp, clomp, ten sets of heels behind me. That night she was behind me, softly, slowly. I can never forget that, never. I think she liked me, I think. Why couldn't I do it?

"All right, you dips, I wanss heah some heel beat, heel beat yhear? Heoyuh, tuyuh...."

There she was again, another night. Damned fly. Sun glare. Clomp, clomp. Here come the ghouls of old long since, playing jokes on me again. She was looking at a window display, about dusk, heat going down, river smells coming up from the river. She defied the enormity of the square of the hypotenuse. Maybe I wasn't ready for someone who defied the enormity of the square of the hypotenuse.

"...hadda good home and you left your right your left...."

Oh, God, that other night, walking down the river. Dusk again, river smells, taco smells. Why couldn't I do it, why why why why why?

"Fifth man, second squad!"

"Sirp!"

"Git a haircut, boy."

No, it wasn't the haircut, couldna been. It was embarrassing for a while, but that was all. Damn, my feet are killing me. Clomp, clomp. One leg in front of the other. I can see us now, walking down the river. Alone, but not together. I've had some wild dreams lately, maybe it was a dream. If I could just remember which direction the river ran in, I could tell if it was or not. Clomp, clomp ten sets of heels. If I stop - I hate crowds. How beautiful she was, beautiful, beautiful.

"That heel beat is beautiful, dips, beautiful. I believe you've finally by God got it. Jet lissen to that music."

Clomp, clomp. Music, juke box - now I remember. There she was again. Drug store doors open, smell the hot dust coming in. Gonna have to polish my shoes again tonight. If that sun would just go down, must be a hundred. Had to have a coke, drug store, there she was. Mirror on the end, winking bright eyes, hers I guess, on the other side. I could have then, why didn't I? I just sat down.

"A teasesmokeemifyougotemokputemout."

Just sat and smoked and drank. And wondered.

"Git up gi down git up gi down - together, dammit!"

We were there, together. Still slone. She drank a coke too. Coca bloody cola. Sad eyes, waiting. Eyes that defied the enormity of the square of the hypotenuse. Eyes not dulled by the horror of normality. Eyes that blinked in the dusty wind. Eyes that sparkled at dusk. Eyes darker than the night river. Eyes brighter than the festival lights, or the green and yellow "Bienvenidos" sign.

"All right, dips, this is a M16 make sure the safety catch is on load ten rounds don't look at the site look at the target make sure it's on semi and don't get your finger caught in the..."

At the movie, that was it. One please. There she was again. Stars and moon in phosphorescent paint on the ceiling. Eerie. Balconies high along the side walls with fake windows and lanterns, reflective stars and moon in phosphorescent paint on the ceiling. One please. Forty-seven Indians and a family of seven destroyed.

"That ain't just a silhouette down there, boy, that's the enemy and you gonna put his eyes out. Ain'cha boy?"

She sat three rows in front of me. Why not, Lord, you tell me. Why?

"Hey you!"

"Sirp!"

"Git that damn gun off automatic, boy, you wanna kill somebody?"

There I sat and there she sat. Barehanded against the Gorn - that's what I've been trying to remember. The spaceship captain was on the planet to fight the Gorn, all by himself. Little spaceship talk box making little spaceship talk box noises. GRk squeeerer. Bleep blip. Down here on this planet, barehanded against the Gorn, a mindless creature from another world somewhere.

"Ready on the left. Ready on the right. Ready on..."

But that was on TV. She defied the enormity of the square of the hypotenuse. I wasn't ready for someone who defied the enormity of the square of the hypotenuse. Couldn't do it couldn't do it couldn't do it couldn't.

"...the firing line. Fi-"

Couldn't do it couldn't do it couldn't. God love you,

Sawrjint. They just ain't as many Gorns as they used to was.

PARIS, FRANCE

I just came in to get out of the rain
How uncultured I am
There's Renoir's
And Matisse's
And Cezanne's
And the Venus de Milo
Welcomes me with no arms
Here are tourists who can go home
And tell their neighbors
And tourists who are ashamed
Not to worship the masters
So they pretend
And I'll go
'cause I just came in to get out of the rain
Now it's stopped
And someone is trying to sell me dirty pictures.

Donald Onkst

the almost father Dundee

the almost father Dundee
is fat and thinks he's warm
and he smiles with a very small mouth
with very crooked teeth
and he looks at the universe
with his near-sighted eyes
and almost everybody in town loves
the almost father Dundee
because he lets them talk
and he listens and umms and ahs
in all the right places
and knows when to use his hands
and whose shoulders he must strengthen
and whose bank books need a boost
for the almost father Dundee
is in love which
makes him most loyal among us all
and makes him most wanted
by his own ego system

the almost father Dundee
has never taken vows of any sort
unless you count drinking and smoking
and dope
for the almost father Dundee
is his own secret self
and he cries for nobody else
and the almost father Dundee
has had a hundred platonic love affairs
which is probably why in the middle of the night
he calls him-self in the middle of his bed
alone and unaided by vocal chords
the almost lover and father Dundee

John Begley

the gospel according to Kroger

escape
through a grocery store maze
and say hello to Jesus
who is cashing checks in the third aisle
but please don't wave
because he is busy and you could get him fired
and
by the way of tuna and okra
see if you can find my dime
i left it there for you
a little surprise
to give to your children
and if there's any left
to mine
and
while you're squeezing tissue paper
and wondering if you're all that great
remember that a fish-eye mirror
is watching so be careful with your eyes
and pockets
and
if you see a window for sale
would you pick one up for me?

John Begley

a fair proceedings

going broke in mexico
watching a flame of casual red hair
floating near my face
(something for me to play croquette with)
if you please
me
have some oysters served
on lilac petals
before we kiss one another into stone
before we chip away like a snowball
and melt into a brown parade of firecrackers
(so much paper on the floor)

there is no time to read Mays' score
being busy picking up
and keeping
tidy lines of flesh
outside the door like leather whores
waiting to buy a whip

John Begley

season well

easily
i could fly
i believe
until such time
as bone and blood and concrete met
such as
the times when barefoot
i walk in the mists
of the city
where i
live
excited
for days
at a time
being in someplace new
and before too long
in someplace
older than
i want
to be
older
than this page
can ever become
older than my flesh
could ever be

John Begley

ESCAPE

Sherry Brashear Holstein

That night Shirley's parents talked about school. She was drying the silverware. Her father brought up the subject.

"I guess we ought to think about buying Shirley some school supplies with the next pay check. Will she have to have some new clothes too?"

Shirley's mother grimaced and shook her head. "I don't know what to do with her. She gets her dresses so dirty. And she's taken to wearing that good little red dress she got for her birthday for everyday. She'll have to have her hair cut. She won't brush it. I don't want no child of mine going to school locking like she was half-raised. But they'll fix her at school. Put some sense in her head and show there's more to life than play. I hope she does good. You know that little Caudill boy that was so wild? Turned out to be smart as a tack,....."

Shirley couldn't find any diversion in the silverware. And she couldn't shut out her mother's voice.

"Shirley quit throwing that silverware around. You're going to knock all the plate off of it."

She looked around the kitchen walls, at the fly-specked and greasy paper that covered them. She glimpsed the twilight outside the window and in it, like a photograph, half a poplar tree, mountain ridges crowded with green and sky the dull blue color of the Lux detergent caps she collected. She glanced at her pinched and worn mother, whose dun-colored hair, skin and dress blended so that she seemed a thin upright lizard. She scanned her father at the table cleaning his hunting gun with his great calloused farmer hands that never seemed to be clean of coal dust. Shirley felt sick.

She slammed the drawer and ran to her room. She looked at her favorite red dress and thought. She tried to think of happy things to put the ugly idea out of her mind. Before Shirley had been able to put bad things away from her by looking at her red dress, by drawing upon her imagination or by thinking of her friend Britton, but now none of these worked. She would not go to school. Then she knew that she must escape. She could go to her aunt and uncle's farm. They had a big house and a barn full of wooly sheep. And they had no children. When she visited them they gave her candy and told her how pretty she was. Shirley knew her aunt and uncle wouldn't make her go to school.

Shirley undressed and got in bed. The idea of her escape was a bright warm spot floating the darkness each time she closed her eyes. Finally Shirley drifted into sleep, letting the spot

become a dull red glow that filled the whole black world of her bedroom.

In the morning it was cloudy. Shirley's mother said she couldn't wear the red dress because it was dirty. She put it on anyway. Her mother slapped her but she wouldn't take it off.

"I'm too busy with these apples to have any aggravation. Now you eat your cereal. Wear the dress. Wear it out. You won't get any new ones to wear to school if you don't quit acting so foolish and stubborn."

Shirley spooned at her cereal, holding her stinging cheek. She hadn't been slapped in a long time and it made her so aware of her mother that she watched the woman select the yellow apples for making applesauce and split them carefully. She was absorbed in the precision with which her mother worked. Standing each apple on the tabletop, she guided the thin knife blade through it and dropped the two halves in a pan. As Shirley shoved her chair back and rose she shook the table and one half of an apple skidded across the table surface and hit the floor with a bruising thud. Her mother grimaced, but said nothing. Shirley ran out the door.

* * * * *

Shirley's favorite escape had been her friend, Britton. They had only known each other since the beginning of summer. They met when Shirley went to get the mail one morning. The mailbox was nailed to a fence post at the bottom of the hill where the driveway ended. Britton had come walking along the road from up the hollow. Shirley stared at him, and Britton stared back at her. He was tall and skinny like her daddy, but different. He looked grown-up, but not old. The arms that stuck out of his shirt sleeves and hung limp at his sides were as thin as Shirley's. Stringy blonde hair hung down against his forehead. His eyes and skin were of the same almost transparent hue, like the liquid called blue john that was left when Shirley's mother skimmed all the cream off fresh cow's milk. Shirley had sat on the bank by the road many times and watched their neighbors pass by, but she had never seen him before. He looked afraid, like he was lost or wasn't supposed to be there. Finally he began to move his mouth and touch his lips together. Shirley was too impatient to wait for him to speak first.

"Hello."

He shifted his thin legs and worked his mouth. "Howdy." His voice was high pitched and wavered in the middle of the greeting as if it might break.

"My name is Shirley and I live up there on the hill. Up there in that white house...." Shirley paused because his eyes were blinking hard with every word she spoke, and he kept shifting his feet restlessly.

"Mmy nnn-name's Britton. I...I live up the holler. Our

house ain't white. It ain't nothing." He stopped suddenly and stood very still.

"You want to sit down on the bank here." The dust was hot under Shirley's bare feet. "I came down here to get the mail. We don't get mail every day but I always come to see anyway. Sometimes I get letters, when it's my birthday. And Christmas. I get cards at Christmas sometimes. Did you live somewhere before? I play on the bank and I know everybody that lives up the hollow. Did you come to see somebody?"

They were sitting in the stiff, short grass that covered the ledge of earth beside the road.

"I been gone." Britton ducked his head to dodge Shirley's unconscious stare. "I been gone away for a while until they let me come back. If I be quiet and don't throw no fits I can stay. And I been good too. My Ma let me come out today to go to the store and get a pop. I sure like pop."

Shirley smiled. "I like pop, too. Only I don't get to drink it much. Mother says it will make my teeth rot out. I wish I could go to the store with you. Mother won't let me go by myself."

Britton was staring at her now. He didn't look scared anymore. He nodded his head up and down. "You can go, Shirley. You go with me and I'll give you some of my pop."

Shirley wanted to go very badly. She never got to go anywhere. There were few children in the hollow her age and her mother wouldn't allow her to play with them. But Shirley was afraid to go without asking. Her mother would see her on the road as it curved down below their house. The tiny store in the bottom where the hollow met the road could be seen from any on the windows.

Shirley jumped up. "I better go ask Mother." Britton started to get up. "You wait for me, Britton."

Shirley's mother was hanging out the wash, her mouth full of wooden clothespins. Shirley noticed the pins start to waggle even before she finished asking. Her mother was shaking her head and frowning. She jerked the pins from her mouth.

"No, you can't go. And you shouldn't be talking to Britton Halcomb. He's mentally retarded and he shouldn't be out on the road. I guarantee his mother don't know it. I bet he's run off. He used to take spells and do stuff like that. His mother don't take half good care of him. Anyway, don't talk to him. You never know what crazy people will do."

Shirley's mother went out and stood on the hill in sight of the mailbox while Shirley told Britton she couldn't go. Her mother watched Britton walk down the road toward the store. She shouted for Shirley to come back to the house.

Shirley played on the back porch for the rest of the morning. She trapped families of ants in houses built from wooden blocks, then knocked the structures down noticing how many escapees there were. She tried not to trap those that got away in the next bunch,

but she played until there were no more ants and it was lunch-time.

Night had slowly seeped through the trees like dark green water. Shirley watched it until it seemed to her that all the mountains were immersed. As she ran into the kitchen, she heard her mother talking about Britton, saying that he was supposed to be locked up. Shirley ran past her parents and noticed on her mother's face a painful, horrified adult look that she despised. It was mirrored in her father's eyes and it made her hate them both. She liked Britton. He had been so nice. and talked to her. He was her friend.

"Shirley, get in here and dry the silverware. It's been washed for an hour." Drying the silver was one of Shirley's regular chores. She had disliked the job at first, but she had made it into a game. She could make anything be something else if she wanted to, and she was proud of it. The pieces of silver assumed different personalities as she laid them in the sectioned plastic tray. The forks were men, big strong heroes. The coffee spoons were beautiful pink women. The soup spoons were women too, but fat, ugly and mean, always complaining. The knives were evil men, skinny and cross. The teaspoons were tall, sad girls, whom nobody liked. The fat soup spoons were constantly fighting to get into the part of the tray that held the nice forks. They wanted to keep the forks and coffee spoons from liking each other. The bad knives tried to get to the coffee spoons. Everybody left out the unhappy teaspoons. Sometimes Shirley would torture the coffee spoons by putting them in with the forks and let them fight. She would dry them and switch them around until the arrangement for the day satisfied her. She would leave them thinking that when she came back to set the table they might have eaten each other up. Shirley was glad though, that they never did.

With her mother scolding her for being so slow, Shirley dried the silver, rubbing each piece very hard. She noticed her distorted reflection in the shiny metal, and in her mind spoke to the silverware people. She placed the nice pieces with the bad ones, but they were stubborn and wouldn't quarrel with each other. Shirley slammed the drawer shut and heard them clank together in confusion. She ran off to her room.

Before she went to bed Shirley had to get in her closet and take out the red dress. It was her favorite because red was her favorite color. The red dress had little black figures all over it. Sometimes Shirley thought they were spiders and sometimes ants. They crawled and paraded around her on the material making the dress alive against her body. She would often jump with the feeling, right out of her chair, or off the ground and begin twisting the dress and swirling around until everything was a dizzy red blur and she couldn't stand it any longer, and would fall down, weak and happy with her power.

Shirley knew the ants and spiders were marching in groups of six because six was her favorite number. She was six years old

and would be six forever. She had gotten the dress for her birthday, from her nicest and prettiest aunt. That had been a long time ago in the spring. Now it was warm and barefooted summer. Shirley couldn't believe that there was any other season until she remembered winter, and Christmas without snow. She had heard her parents creeping around in the darkness, putting her presents under the tree, pretending at being Santa Claus. Then later and colder Valentine's Day came and Shirley's Mother got candy. She found where it was hidden and sneaked out an occasional piece, eating it in the darkness of her closet, even sucking on the savory, rich-brown fluted paper that held it. After hazy and anonymous weeks full of toys and nothing, Easter came. There was an Easter Bunny too, her Daddy said. But Shirley had seen the food color stained newspaper in the garbage, and her Daddy leaving the house during breakfast. She noticed him out in the yard, stooping here and there in the grass, while her Mother tried to interest her in something on the cereal box. Finally her birthday came and Shirley's aunt gave her the red dress.

Whenever Shirley felt bad she would put on the red dress. Her mother let her wear it occasionally, now that it was warm. Shirley was supposed to save it for the fall, for school. But she refused, she would wear it now. Because she would not go to school. Her defiance was automatic, a simple mechanism that dropped the protective green curtain of summer between the present and awful fate that awaited her called "school."

Shirley left the closet door a little open on the red dress, turned out the light and got in bed. She had stopped saying good-night to her parents in the spring. She wanted to be near them as little as possible because they would talk about school. Or tonight they might warn her about Britton. Shirley heard her mother coming to the door. She turned her back and pretended sleep.

Shirley had the awful dream again that night. She hadn't had it since cold weather, but as soon as she closed her eyes on the warm darkness, there it was. The Lord had come, like the preacher said in church, and was taking them all up into the clouds. Shirley was on her own separate cloud floating up into the white-wisped sky, with golden angels all around beating on xylophones, making tinkling noises. The big head and shoulders of the Jesus from the picture on the wall of Shirley's bedroom was sticking through a huge wreath of clouds. The eyes in the head were blankly opaque because Jesus was waiting too. Up to that point it was a good dream, but as before, Shirley felt the cloud she was standing on begin to fall. She looked down and it was all red and bloody and her feet were sinking through it. She looked up and the angels were screaming; Jesus was gone. In his place there was a beast with a big, polled hereford head. There were black numbers printed on his white blazed face, like the preacher talked about when he wanted someone to come up the aisle and be saved. Shirley tried to shake herself awake. She was

standing on the grass by her window. The nightmare was still there. The trees around the house were whirling in flames. She knew the end had come and she was going to the place where there was "wailing and gnashing of teeth," because she was a bad person. Shirley watched the flames swirl closer, begging any power higher than herself to let her please wake, asking for it to be a dream. And it was.

Shirley opened her eyes on the wet early light. She felt weak and hot from her struggle, but she had fought the nightmare and escaped it. She knew the world could only end after dark.

Shirley lay in bed and drowsed through the love, forcing herself awake when she became aware of the light's growing strength. She climbed out of bed and dressed. Shirley wanted to be sure and get out into the morning while the sun was first dizzying down in yellow bars that seemed to be full of fine dust. She ran into the garden, threading her way through the thick, shifting shafts. Finding the best place, she stood still with her head back and her hands on her hips, letting the quick warmth crush her. The musky smell of cucumbers and the acrid green apple odor of the other plants were good and clean in the new sunlight.

"Shirley, Shirley! Get back in here and eat your cereal." She rushed from the garden before the yellow bars of sun could slide together and hold her. Besides, the enjoyment of the early light could only last a few minutes. Soon the sun would begin to burn, and the smell of cow manure from the pasture or the sick sulfur odor from the dog's bed under the back porch would defile Shirley's nostrils.

Shirley ate her breakfast intently. She tried not to hear her Mother's complaints about how bad she slept, and about how the beans had to be hoed and the cucumbers canned. Shirley didn't think about her mother at all if she could help it. She tried to stay far away in her mind, to remove herself from the horror her mother seemed constantly to live in, that her mother wanted to renew every morning. Shirley was aware of some terror adults were always facing. She felt smug because she knew how far away that mental destiny was from her. Perhaps she could even stop it from coming. If she would only get through the one barrier and escape going to school. Her parents said she must, and she hated them for it, for their locked doors and funny night noises, and for that ugly look in their eyes if each day facing some new outrage that they were sure they wouldn't be able to bear.

Shirley heard the noise of her mother's complaints but she did not distinguish words. She drew her body into her eyes and sent herself out the window, narrowly through the glass between the dark, varnished crosses that held the panes to the sill. She was out there among the tender, bitter-green poplar leaves. Her mind hung itself among the rough scallops and half-star points. Shirley had a full awareness of the poplar trees. She had bitten and crushed the leaves and knew their faintly acrid taste and smell. She had picked at the fallen poplar blossoms until the

yellow cone at the center was left and she had shredded it away to nothing. Her mind was placidly neutral in the leaves, accepting the natural bitterness of the poplar.

That day and the next Shirley went around the hill, out through the cow pasture and down into the road above the driveway, looking for Britton. She told her mother she was going to get the ripe paw-paws before the cows found them. On the third morning Britton came along. Shirley ran to him and gave him a paw-paw. He stared at her like before, holding the paw-paw as though it were a piece of broken glass. Shirley talked and asked Britton to sit down on the bank. Then Britton talked too, and said he liked paw-paws. They both talked about what they liked. Shirley told him about her red dress and her games. Britton liked everything. He was shy, but he said he liked Shirley best of all. They sat there for a long time talking until Shirley was sure it was lunchtime. She told Britton she had to go, and he said he hoped he'd see her again. Shirley went back up the hill and around to the house.

Every two or three days Shirley waited for Britton and they talked. It was very nice and she was glad to have a friend. Britton reminded Shirley of one of her uncle's baby sheep. He was so thin and shaky and white. He blinked his eyes a lot and liked to sit down by the creek out of the sun. Britton seemed to get skinnier every time Shirley saw him. She brought him cookies and paw-paws to eat, but he took such small slow bites it made her hungry. He wouldn't talk about his home much until one day Shirley asked him to tell her about it. He began to cry. He looked so strange, a big skinny man shaking and slobbering, with shiny mucous covering his upper lip. He made Shirley think of the milk-white grub worms she found under rocks and wanted to crush because they were so pale and sick, like they didn't belong on top of the ground. Shirley was glad when Britton hushed. He said he was afraid to talk about his mother because she would make people come and take him away to this place where they beat you and tied you up and locked you in a room. He said every time he talked to his mother, or asked her for pop, she told him she would send him away again. Shirley told him they were going to do that to her too, send her to school. Britton began to cry again. Shirley hated to see him pink-faced and snotty, so she told him she had to go and left him sitting on the bank with his head between his thin knees.

That night Shirley dreamed about the end of the world. She was outside the house and the sky was lighted up by flames all around, the same flames seemed to leap from the red dress she was wearing. She kept looking up and trying to rise. The clouds were open and there was the outline of Jesus in his familiar pose, but the face was Britton's. He was staring at Shirley, looking afraid, trying to tell her something with his moving mouth but no sound came. Then all of a sudden they were in the store, she and Britton. They were drinking pop, and Shirley looked and saw her mother coming. But flames leaped up and her mother disappeared. She

and Britton were laughing. Shirley woke up, not scared and not happy. She thought about her mother's maddened dilated eyes and Britton's transparent blue ones. Then she realized why he was called crazy. He had refused to go to school, or be grown-up. They kept him locked up so other people wouldn't see him and feel the same way and not want to be older and have awful secrets. Shirley was so glad she had figured things out that she quickly fell asleep.

* * * * *

They had been happy, Shirley thought as she walked out through the cow pasture. Why did things have to change? The memory of her mother's words from the night before brought back the sick feeling. So Shirley quickly shifted her thoughts to the escape plans. She must tell Britton!

But Britton didn't come for a long time that morning. Shirley was afraid he wouldn't come at all. She was glad when she saw him wading down the creek with his oversize pants rolled up to his knees. He came up and stood beside Shirley on the bank, but he didn't act very friendly, and his face seemed so pale and thin as Shirley looked at him against the gray clouds that she turned away.

Shirley quickly told what had happened the night before. Britton didn't say anything. She told him she was running away to her aunt's so she wouldn't have to go to school. Britton started to cry. He didn't bawl like before, but big tears rolled down his white cheeks and he clasped and unclasped his slim, waxy hands. If Shirley went away he wouldn't have anyone to talk to, and if he tried to talk to his mother she would send him away to the place where they tied him up.

While he was speaking Shirley decided he must go with her. When she told Britton he looked scared. His body started to jerk and shake.

"But they'll catch me. They will. Then they'll never let me go and they'll beat me and beat me. They'll get you too, maybe, and beat you. They'll lock you up and beat you, and beat you,...."

Britton was breathless, almost screaming. He was clenching and unclenching his hands and twisting around on the bank. Shirley tried to soothe him. She told him stories about her aunt's house and the sheep. But every time she tried to suggest running away, Britton got scared again. After a while Shirley felt worn out. She became quiet. She asked Britton to pick some sweet williams for her.

Shirley saw the terrible thing outlined in the darkness of her head like a horrible devil. She wanted to meet the thought alone. She could not escape. If she ran away to her aunt and uncle they'd probably bring her back. They liked her, but if they wanted children they would have them. And they probably weren't

as nice all the time as they were on visits. They wouldn't like Britton either. In a frenzy of desperation Shirley scratched around her mind to see if there was any escape from the devil thought. But it was still there and she coldly met it, recognizing the fact that she would have to go to school.

Shirley went home for lunch, dropping sweet williams around her. She did not say anything or think anything when her parents mentioned school that night, or the next night. She did not mention it to Britton again. But she was cold and neutral, and she felt half-asleep. It seemed as though she had lost her imagination and she drifted through the days seeing things at their realest and ugliest.

She did not tell Britton when school would start. The day came, just like any of the other recent days, with the sun glittering on the dew green cheaply metallic. Shirley didn't care if she got to walk alone out of the hollow, to meet the bus in front of the store. She didn't care. She felt less than a twinge weeks later when her mother told her that Britton Halcomb had been sent off to the crazy house again, that he had attacked his mother. She didn't care; she didn't care.

CRASHING

The revelry sounds shrilly
Phosphorescent people
clutch,
Drowning in a Coca-cola world

Silently screaming I gulp my
saviour chemical and begin ascent into Numb
Transcient half-dreams catch and
slowly seep
Careening colors melt fusing
into unfettered vistas
Pastel meadowed landscapes
Thick touching silences communicate
to free running forms
gently swirling pulsing eluding

CRASH

The revelry sounds shrilly
Phosphorescent people
clutch
Drowning in a Coca-cola world

LAMENTING WARRIORS

Warriors lamenting
 lie in horizontal mud cathedrals,
 They praying-mantis cling
 to the sincere drama of contrition;
 Forgiveness
 for dying so close to YOUR home and car.

Regret issue from reversible lip corners
 of their tragi-comic masks
 Erasing the blush that sprayed
 YOUR laminated lawns livid pink
 Flushing tree leaves
 with the red look of autumn,

They are sorry:
 for imprints of saintly stigmata
 that marked their secret registration
 on YOUR faked flesh
 super market purchases.

They bemoan;
 their muscle melting
 that scalloped YOUR oily beaches
 with blue bulges
 of congealing tissue.

They confess:
 to the high frequency scream
 that pulsar oscillated
 the linear screen
 of YOUR cognition.

One abandoned lamenting warrior
 murmured the liturgy,
 His eyes dully capturing
 the emerald flicker
 of post-monsoon vegetation.
 The gurgle of liquid in his throat
 bespoke the beauty of domestic violence.

"I am grieving," he said,
 "The death of companions
 who perished in tobacco fields
 victims of lung exploitation.

Who were eagle spread on macadam
a good red jelly.

Who were blinded
in medicinal whiteness
of the miracle of sterility."

"But I am not sad,"
insects pulled at his grinning mouth;
"For lamenting warriors,
They will worship
the secret and disappointed churches,
Crawling hollow naves,
Confined in bone pews
of raw regions
where water drips impressions
in limestone kneelers.
They will mourn
pomegranate-poisoned counterparts
who are plushly coffined
at the day of birth.

OUR hands grasp their weak digits
across the sea
gathering strength
that is strange
to trivial mortality.
Begging and receiving
an excuse
for dying
so
close
to YOUR home and car."

Sherry Brashear Holstein

SOME OF OUR DEAREST FRIENDS

Barbara R. Getman

Betty was on duty in the kitchen and a lavish buffet was arranged in the dining room when the doorbell chimed its first greeting. On her way through the spacious library and living room Julie made a final check. She was pleased. She winked at good old reliable John, the neighborhood bachelor who served as bartender each time. He would always be a little in love with her, she was sure. Bill considered him harmless and a little queer. Maybe he was right.

Julie opened the door to Dr. and Mrs. Christopher Parkins. "Chris, come in!"... "Hello, Ruth. You look lovely."

The doctor and his wife were standing a little apart. There were two people on the Ballinger's doorstep who seemed totally removed from each other. Ruth seemed agitated and somewhat unsteady. Her eyes didn't appear to be focusing on anything--not Julie--not anything. Chris studied Julie with his deeply penetrating, yet seemingly emotionless, gaze. The eyes... windows of the soul... Julie shook her head slightly to break the mesmerization. The moment had been long and a bit awkward. She stepped aside and allowed them to pass. She was smiling and her arm was gesturing in welcome. She felt a sudden chill which was just as suddenly gone--an icy stabbing along her spine.

After the doctor had guided his wife's faltering steps to the couch, he turned to Julie and took both her hands in his. Neither of them looked down as his fingers lightly touched the gauze covering her wrist. "How are you, Julie?" His look was concerned. "You should know just how wonderful I am, Chris, if anyone should." She tossed back her bright hair and her hands dropped away from the warmth of him. Poor Ruth was fussing on the couch with her purse and was trying to light a cigarette. She already had a good start on the evening. Her husband went to her aid.

Julie moved over to the bar. She was tall and well-proportioned. She had not been girlish since she was fifteen years of age. Now she looked over the well appointed bar and checked some labels. "Three martinis John, extra dry." She felt strangely removed from her guests--even from her home. She felt weightless--airy. Bill, her Bill, was with the Parkinses. She motioned Betty away from the tray and took it over herself, leaving orders for the woman to bring over another for Mr. Ballinger.

"You're beautiful, Julie." Ruth tried to blow a kiss.

"Watch her, Chris. She's too damned eloquent. Besides, I

don't like her breathing down my neck and patting my backside!"

Uproarious laughter all around.

The doorbell started in again. "Put on some of that Latin American stuff, Julie." The newcomer was Ted Franklin from Lowell Advertising, Bill's workaday world. He had brought along Barbara Ponti, a lush, striking brunette. She was a part of the workaday world too. They came steadily for an hour or so. The Teds and the Barbaras one and all...the kisses and the darlings...the shaving lotions that guaranteed a stud...the careless-looking hair carefully arranged to look careless...the scented cleavages...the fascinating fragrance associated with the aroused well-to-do not to be confused with the rutting smell of the lower classes...the rings remounted or replaced...the wraps that no precious creature should have died for...ceramics class...the latest abortion...the most current affair...the most expensive divorce...where we are flying next month...where you must go to avoid others like you..."...the Very Best child-psychiatrist in town--With the most sensual mouth I've ever seen"...Tennis?... Golf?...My attorney...Support a child overseas...Invest...The Indians...Buy...Sell...Leave the bitch...Why, the son-of-a-bitch...My brand...Namath...Warhol...Susann writes crap...Freud...Peace...War...MY BOY...THE PILL...passione...Women's Lib...Bras? Why, I gave them up before it became fashionable!--So what? You could afford to!...He's in...She's out...she's in...he's out...passé...what a day...someday...

"Everybody happy?"

Stereotyped sons-of-bitches...

"Oh, yeah!"

Living clichés...

"Who's tending the hell to the bar?"

"John's been to the john."

Laughter as the dispenser of good cheer scurried back to his post.

"Don't you know it's New Year's Eve, John?"

Bloody fools...Who talked anymore? Really gut-talked?...

Julie was getting up and Chris Parkins was frowning at her obvious difficulty in doing so.

"Julie? Want to rub bellies to Jobim's nymphomaniacal guitar?"

"Oh, no! Not now, I feel..."

"Come on."

"Come on, Julie girl!"

Ruth Parkins was crying.

"Why don't you love me, Chris?"

"I do. Now be quiet, don't make a scene."

"A scene! A scene! Is that all that's worrying you, Doctor?"

"Ruth, please."

"Don't tell me to please, I won't please. I can't please you, can I? What do you call me? Frigid? Maybe with the

proper inspiration, I could..."

"Ruth, we're going home."

"No, damn you, no!"

"Julie, excuse us please. I'm sorry, I've never seen it affect her like this before."

"It's quite all right, Chris. We hate to see you leave so soon. The part's just started."

"Well, I think it is necessary. I certainly would love to stay."

Seeing her early guests make an early exit upset Julie. "I was beginning to need him."

Julie couldn't swallow the bitterness in her throat. Dizzy...she sought the bathroom and was sick. There was too much light here; it was too sterile. She avoided looking into the mirror.

With a toss of her head, she made an uncertain path to the kitchen. Betty was dozing in the breakfast nook while ice melted on the cabinets.

"Betty!"

The older woman snapped to with a start. If she's been drinking...

"Yes Mam?"

"Betty, take care of this mess and help John serve at the bar."

"Yes Mam."

Well, at least she hadn't been in the liquor cabinet.

Leaning against the door for a few seconds, Julie noticed how cool the painted surface felt to her cheek. It was a good house. Comfortable, well furnished and big. Big enough to contain bits and pieces of humanity, of life, of death. Windows of the soul are more revealing in this house. They are cool, hot, brown, blue, green, whatever. But, they are windows. The lights twinkled around the pool and Julie touched her abdomen with her bandaged hand.

"Julie!"

"Yes, Bill?" Her voice was almost too low to be audible.

"Come on back, darling. Are you feeling all right?"

"Yes. I'll come."

Arms around one another, her head on his shoulder, they started in again.

Someone was bringing mattresses out of the basement to lay around the pool.

"You don't mind do you folks?"

Julie didn't know him. She'd never seen him before in her life.

"No, that's a good idea. They weren't being used anyway."

Laughter pierced the back of Julie's skull like hot steel, as she retreated.

"Betty, clear all the food away. Nobody's going to eat anything that they can carry on a plate." She chuckled at her

cleverness.

"Yes Mam."

She climbed unsteadily upon a cocktail table and accosted them in her strongest voice. "You can all go to hell, my dearest friends. You can all go straight to hell and screw the whole perverted lot of you."

They all laughed at the joke Julie had made. All however many there were of them, that is. I've never seen half of these people in my life. Why them, why now, why here?

John and Betty were absent. Why hadn't they answered the role call?

"John and Betty front and center!" If they're screwing I'll kill them with my bare hands. She was screaming inwardly. She did find them. They weren't screwing, not exactly that is.

She made it to her room. What, nobody here? How come? Why not? Not even under the bed, in the closet, or in the bath?

She locked the door, stripped, and lay down upon the bed. I'm so exhausted. I'd better take stock right now. I feel so empty, drained, unclean. The air was heavy and it stunk. She saw the rosary on her table and a tremor passed through her body. Tears coursed down her cheeks.

Call Father Malloy. Call him. No. No priest should see me like this, or see such a perverted lot of souls bound for damnation. That's his job though, isn't it? Her hand reached for the phone and then dropped. No. I'm too tired. Maybe when everyone goes home tomorrow morning, I'll call him.

Somehow, she could remember being young, and being pure. My mother and father were wonderful. Both dead but still a wonderful memory. No sisters and no brothers to be close to, no one to be a part of.

I remember waking up eager for the day. Especially I remember when I was a child on brisk fall mornings I'd dress in my bright plaid skirts and my soft new sweaters. My shoes would always hurt my heels and they were very new and squeaky. They weren't any good until you got them dirty. Oh, God how I used to love those mornings. The wind was my playmate as it ruffled my hair and stung my nose. The apples were juicy and tangy in the fall and it was a beginning. Each new pencil and book was a delight and each virgin sheet of notebook paper was a wonderland to explore.

"Julia is a very, very, intelligent girl, Mrs. Chambers, a very, very, very, capable, lovable child." Where did the child go?...

She faded and withered and died.

In her place came an adolescent with all the horror, pain, and problems of adolescence. This new me was always growing, crying, and struggling with the body and the mind and the spirit. The trinity of the human body, mind, and spirit...If one of these componet parts is dominant, weak, or inactive, the trinity falls apart. It's harmony that keeps us going or helps us to

face another day. My philosophy had better be strong, it had better be solid, it had better be applicable. When I first discovered that I was created to compliment a man, I was amazed. No one had told me about such things, you know. The mere physical structures and differences were astounding. To imagine being created in such a way to propagate the earth. That should be the only reason for the creation, damn it all anyway! Sex gets much too complicated and involved to sort out all the facts.

Love is laughed at. It's going out. Oh, yes. Love is thrown in your face with a laugh and a brutal force. Why? So much love coming back onto the individual giving it will eventually corrupt and destroy. Why can't people cherish other people anymore? Don't they feel? What's happening? Life is love and love is life. I need help, I need somebody. Somebody? There's nobody, Julie. Give up, turn out your lamp, Julie, nobody's coming home. Nobody cares, Julie. Be strong! Be tough! Partake of the many pleasures around you. Cast your lot upon the barbecue with the "in" crowd. Come on baby! Get with it! Julia thought about a shower, a hot tub, something. I need a drink. She opened the bedside drawer and withdrew a virgin bottle of bourbon. Poor little virgin, I'm pulling away its resistance. Despoil the bourbon, Julie. As the warmth entered her stomach she lay back, bottle at her side, and continued to remember. I remember that my mother was a good cook once upon a time, and that my father was a good provider. I remember that they were capable of hurting me as no one has ever done since. They would say hurtful things and pick at a wound to keep it open and bleeding. Sweet people though. They sort of lost interest in everything before they went. Where was love?

Loneliness used to prevail, but not now. Julia has so much fun, so many activities and so little time to feel left out. Tears ran down her cheeks and she took another long drink of bourbon.

"You're an out-and-out bitch." Somebody yelled across the once beautiful pool. Feminine laughter joined masculine laughter and reached its climax in Julie's room.

To hell with it, where was I? If I could only have had a child, one little bitty child. Is it so much to want? I could have been a good mother. I could have been president of the P.T.A., active in church...No fruit, I'm barren. No pain of childbirth, no broken toys, no dirty diapers, no joy of life had Julie. To conceive, to produce another human being, to live, to die. I wanted too much. Bill had been wonderful, patient and wonderful. But adoption was out of the question, he said. Like a grab bag, he had said. Imagine comparing a tiny, living, breathing, body to a grab bag. A tiny baby, a soft little...

Somewhere he had a few sleeping tablets. She found them and took a couple. Wait! She rummaged through the mess and

found her tranquilizers. "A couple of them should help", she thought. Another long swallow and settle in again, baby. What else is new?

"You in there, baby?" Bill was asking her something from the other side of the door. No answer. Don't come in and find me. Please dear God, make him go away...Thank God.

Father...Father Malloy. Not yet. I'll go in and see him tomorrow. Confession will be so good for me. It always was. I always felt so good for days afterward.

There was a sound of breaking glass downstairs.

Where were those pills? Maybe a couple of those sleeping pills aren't enough. Now, another sip. I'm feeling better. Not so much tension now. My legs are somewhere--but where? My head is weightless and there is a tiny buzzing starting in my ears. The room looks fuzzy but that's only because all the lights are out. My heart isn't pounding now--it's very, very, nice. I have to go to the bathroom, though. Up, Julie! Let's go now, easy does it. Not too fast. Watch it. Now, better? Depend on Julie, Julie, nobody else and you'll be all right. Unclean. That was the word I used wasn't it? I need a shower. Turn on that nice warm spray again, Julie. You can see the priest tomorrow and get this mess cleaned up. No more! You hear me! Yes, Julie, this is Julie. I hear you. Things seem far away, but everything looks golden and beautiful. So beautiful. "...Quiet nights of quiet stars..." Was it she singing? She didn't sound like herself and that she didn't like. I just need rest, lots of good rest. That's the ticket, baby. Rest is the ticket. Rest alone, that's what I'll have to do. There's that shimmering razor. Give the blade, just the beautiful blade, Julia. The body, mind, and the spirit must be in harmony. I need to be clean, so clean. Into the warm shower.

She looked in fascination at the bandage on her left wrist. Slowly, deliberately, she started removing the stitches with the shimmering steel. Probe deeper, Julia. Purity...That's it, baby. The other one doesn't match, what a shame. We'll take care of that. How beautiful to lie here and look up at all the lovely golden stars in the heavenly golden mist. Music, beautiful music is all around me and I'm feeling cleaner by the minute. Love, that's it, and don't forget it. Cherish it, cherish somebody. I'll see the priest in the morning after I rest.

Downstairs, somebody laughed.

TEA AT THREE SHARP

Sheila Fouts

Rolling in waves of pure lemon, stroking first his quilt and then his rug and then the floor boards, the beacon from the London airport hypnotized Earl Earl to sleep. Waking, lemon...lime...his eyes tasted of the flavor, savoured it, and hung onto it as its waves swung across his room. Anchoring his elbow into the mattress, he put his hand right into where a little straw basket brimming with lemon sherbets was sitting at his bedside. 'Brovo, Wotsit!' he said, fondly naming his butler, that immaculate man with his apple-polished cheeks and black blazer that just buttoned around his middle--ample girth--Earl Earl corrected himself.

The crinkly paper jarred the citron strokes into tissueed strips of swinging lantern light...Earl Earl sucked at the bon bon, extracting the sweet bite and sharp tang that moved across his tongue like the beacon. First light then dark or was it dark then light? He giggled at these speculations. Odd for nearly five in the morning. As one wave washed the length of his body he chuckled at his wiggling toes. 'I'm glad I didn't tell them to do that--they're surprising creatures!' At that, one foot slid from under the blanket. He examined his toes, 'Hmm...five, yes! How jolly!' At the sound of his own voice he gave a start. 'What's that you're saying?' he asked. No reply...He muttered, 'Nothing, nothing at all.' The sherbet titilated his tongue. 'No woman can kiss me like this anymore.' He chuckled, almost choking on his sweet.

A tube rumbled in the distance. His open window rattled, the gold-fringed draperies stirred while he pattered about in his memory searching for just a snatch of his old favorite song. What was it? Years ago he had sung it--sung it everywhere, especially to Annabel when she wasn't about to listen. Marjorie and the chaps at the City Barge swung their mugs in time. Dee dee do da doo dee dee...No use. Whenever one tried to prod the memory on, it sunk itself further in, like a rear tire in the sand. And Wotsit shaking his new chauffeur's cap at the sunken end of the middle-aged Rolls while some young people honked and squealed behind them. Hadn't been along the Devon coast since. Those violets--fields and fields and in the tiny alabaster vase at the last bed and breakfast stop. That hostess, too, a woman of courage. All alone there in that rambling cottage. No one near for at least a mile and taking in tourists with a smile that lit up the hall when she answered the door that afternoon. 'Evenin' Gents' just like that. Wotsit, cap in hand, inquired but all the while peered over her right shoulder into the cool green foyer papered with a fern and leaf pattern. There were spanking white fish nets draped across the far window. 'Fishers of men' dawdled about on his tongue

until jeweled fish swam through the window panes--ruby, emerald, sapphire, topaz amethyst--trapped in the crisp empty squares.

The suitcases and bags brushed past, so many bass and trout against his trouser leg as he stood immersed in the prismatic light that broke on the window panes. He caught one of the pink-apricot sunbeams, put it in his vest pocket to show Wotsit some bitter day back in London. The dumb conversation dribbled on... His hand slipped along a driftwood lamp hand-crafted with a bamboo shade. The hand in his pocket hadn't even noticed the other's goings-on. The scrubbed white pine table under the lamp glistened like a bald crown. Fringed homespun circled beneath a beer bottle that was transformed into a vase with red, blue and mauve anemones sprouting from its neck.

Earl blinked his eyes repeatedly--open-shut-open-shut-this is it-no it's not-open-shut-open-shut-light-dark-open-shut. If he were Chagall, he told himself, he would paint it all--the lady and the anemones--entangled with driftwood--and the sea pounding. Funny how even a mile away and one could still hear the swells, the throbs, and the roll and slip of the tide.

And tide it was too, Nen said, high and low, ebb and flow, her voice brimming with the affection that accumulated over the years. She and Roger, God rest his soul, and of course the children, Geoffry, Carole, and Peter--all up to London. Only home once in a donkey's years--and then it was usually Peter--had the sea in his eyes, he did...Youngest, quite a lad and the roast chicken was served with roasted potatoes.

'Missus,' Wotsit began...

'Nen' she scolded, helping him to more peas. 'Just out of the garden today' and the plump round little spheres rolled on his tongue and burst into green flavour--Succulent, he supposed was the word for it but it really wasn't adequate for the peas.

...Peas porridge cold...peas porridge in the pot-nine days old. Bother--a flipin nuisance Earl Earl mused, but still his hands itched to slap other palms, to bounce against his thighs. It was all so easy when he was six and so forbidden now...An amber fish swirled to his attention, the dining room refocused. Yes, he agreed with Wotsit, 'this was a charming spot.'

...That orange at the arch of his foot shivered up his leg. The silver flecks dotted his eyes--the sun was even dancing silver on his knees. (On account of this mist) everything was mistified--the sun blurred over. Earl Earl tried to say it, tried to pronounce it. It was beyond utterance--that golden feeling, jelly melting in the heat? That baked, well-done sensation? He wiggled his toes.

The sea was an Indian-giver, rolling in, making a big splash, Hello!, showing off then slipping away just at the surrender of the gift...The rocks, sedate and poised, always ready to be exploded onto. Thousands of fingers of water waving at the sky, stroking the shore--laughing, wailing.

'Are you there, Sir? Earl Earl?'

'Yes, uh...I mean...No...that is..um.hum..Jolly good feed, Missus..Nen. But do, please, call me Earl. I can't abide redundancy. Earl, you'll find will do nicely..Sea air gives one quite a capacity, eh, Wotsit?'

'Quite right, Sir.'

Nen smiled. Bewildered, she wasn't sure whether she was on a formal or first name basis with the Earl. Perplexing chap he was too, so caught up in himself, she thought, passing the rolls.

'Where did I come in?...I do apologize...I must have drifted... What lovely candles...'

'We were just saying what a difference a lighted candle makes at dinner with the twilight at the windows. Cozy. There's nothing more intimate, I find, than watching a candle dwindle by melting.'

If only he weren't so full of asbestos, Earl Earl thought, he could become enflamed and melt. How wonderful to consume one's own wick and to seep. Wotsit was beaming over his brandy and demitasse at Nen. He was so attentive to everyone, Earl Earl observed.

Yes, that was it, 'attentive' and he reached for another sherbet lemon. Lemon light was the morning and violets waking up in Nen's alabaster vase poised directly in a sun stream. Devon and dawn and London, April 16th, awakening. The crickets had hushed their chirping, bird song was on the wind. Earl Earl felt his heart vibrating with lemon throbs, yellow notes. Blast!...What was that song? He yearned to croon with the symphony out-doors. He tugged at the sheets...well, he could check the time now. Wotsit should be along soon.

The tree in his window sparkled crystalline green. It was an old chestnut tree, its candles open and glistening with sun dew, nodding to him. It promised a glorious day...candles aglow in the morning.

A day for walking along the shore, letting the ferns tickle your knees and ankles and having a really first rate meal on the waterfront, he anticipated it was. It was enough to make one ravenous, lying in bed, wiggling one's toes.

Wotsit bustled in, plopping his hat, neat as you please, onto the hat rack, propping his cane in the cranny on the wall and swirling off his scarf in the regal manner of a conductor or a ballet master. He jiggled down the hall...'da-dee-da-dee-dee'... first left and a skip, then right and a hop, just neglecting to kick the rococo chira gray boat of a vase encrusted with cupids, cherubs and entwined flowers...'One of these days!...One of these days!' Wotsit said.

'One of these days, what?' Earl Earl called.

'Oh good morning, sir, cold enough for you?'

'Never too warm. One of these days, what?'

'Oh, yes, I shall kick that flippin' vase on the bottom of the bookshelf.'

'I wish you'd do it soon. Damn silly thing. It's been through too many generations as it is. It's about time someone destroyed it. I shouldn't be at all surprised if it doesn't sit

there all through the night patiently waiting, wondering if the next morning will be the death of it--a funeral would be such a refreshing thing in its life. Yes, Wotsit, you won't fail to kick it tomorrow, will you. Yes, that would be very good of you.'

'Very well sir, I shall do my best.' Wotsit approached the mahogany bedpost. 'Lady Deverra Bennett is coming to tea,' he announced in his roly-poly accents.

'Drat! Not today...I couldn't be...oh, no: The day I never thought would come at last has come! Bring me the calendar please Wotsit.'

He swept the leather datebook from the impeccably neat desk. 'Here it is sir, the 16th of April, sir...just the day.' Earl Earl's eyes fell upon the ominous scrawl--'tea with Lady Deverra Bennett, 3 sharp.' The horror of it all...the clinking of tea cups, the milk and sugar when what he wanted was a good pint--and he hazarded, so does the old girl. For he recalled those jolly times back in 19--oh, yes, when he was but a young chap. Verra would nip in the City Barge with her school chum, Annabel Bartly. The Bennett's and the Bartley's were always being written up in the Daily News together...Lady Annabel Bartley and Lady Deverra Bennett attended the Waverly ball last evening escorted by the Right Honorable...and the clippings whisked by so that Earl Earl only heard their rustle and glimpsed the photos of two young women. Their mouths were in fuzzy smiles, and noses indistinguishable from the newsprint, except for the bright spots that were Annabel's eyes and the faint, rather dusty eyes of Verra. If it weren't for the gothic arches of her eyebrows, her eyes would go unnoticed in the general drift of her face. How catastrophic! Earl Earl gave a start...His left ear was itching again.

'What's the time? Where am I?'

'Really sir, such questions should never come before breakfast,' Wotsit said, bringing in the tray. Another tray, another triumph! The Spode dishes glistened gold and white under their silver covers. Looking at the elderly gentleman, tucked up in bed, a brown and ochre quilt crossing his pajama top at the second button on the nose, Wotsit traced the familiar lines up the neck to the whiskered jowls, puckered mouth, pudgy English nose, and watery blue eyes. Earl Earl was having his breakfast--but he must always wait a moment or two to savour the idea, to appreciate Wotsit's efforts. His standards never wavered a hair--the tomatoes broiled to a turn, the gammon, the chips, and the soft-boiled eggs all exactly right.

'Wotsit, you're a gem!'

Wotsit sparkled before he spoke, 'O, it's nothing at all, sir!' He turned to go.

Dancing through the window, the pale sunlight glanced at the teak table, a present from the late ambassador to Malaya, Sir Bryan Windeer....Sir Bryan Windeer, that blackguard whom he could never bear to think about without a blush coming over him like mercury rising in a thermometer. Once, at a reception,

Windeer had tricked him into exclaiming, 'How delightful!!' to the chipper, lighthearted remark, 'I just killed my mother-in-law.' The belly laughs still burned his ears...when he tried to explain... even Verra had a smirk on her face. Uncomfortably, he shifted his gaze to the oriental carpet...bouncing from the deep ruby to the dense blue of the pattern. There now, staring had told him without the abominable assistance of his watch that it was the uplifting hour and that from this moment forward until long after twilight, he would be upright...

Annabel had the laugh of an angel who never divulged the universal joke and she took herself lightly about, tossing her dark mane the same way whether at a ball or on a pony. He recalled (buttoning his white shirt) dancing with her in and out of the light, weaving a game of motion, turn and return, to and fro at a debutant ball once. And Verra there, bustling about, her hand smoothing a curl here, fiddling with a button on her glove there. She looked quite put upon and then, upset the bowl full of snap dragons, baby's breath, lilies of the valley and tea roses in the foyer. Annabel had but moments before, inclined her curls to breathe in their fragrance. Yet for all his attentions, his favors, and his obvious admiration, Annabel never troubled over him.

Wherever Annabel went, there was always drumming and dancing, sonorous vibrations throbbed in the air. Bubbles swelled and burst but rhythm crept into every cranny, making even the marble fireplace sway when she leaned against it. He gave his boots a stiff brush. Now then...he called, 'The old girl will be here promptly--I daresay she won't be late for her tea.' Watching the sheet crinkled in Wotsit's hand slide smoothly across the bed, he added, 'God willing,' and felt quite a fool.

Wotsit watched the color mount from his jowls to his forehead and reached for the coverlet. 'Damn,' Earl Earl said. He had known perfectly well what damn meant since his first form days. Damn was something one says when something is wrong and there was something wrong. It's that woman--Lady Deverra Bennett.

'Down right dismal on the first really nice day--She would, Wotsit? I say, do you hear...?'

'Umm, she's a bit of all right, I'd say. Getting on...but aren't we all and she tries...'

'Tries me. Always so clumsy. Stepped on my toes every waltz. Still--a pity she never married. She needed taken in hand by some man.' (He buried his nose in the Times.)

Nen's kitchen actually glistened, Wotsit reminded himself, as he fussed with the chicken salad. One never forgot a good dinner, especially a most bit of chicken. He arranged the clery chunks on the board next to the slivered almonds. Baby sandwiches, a relish tray, lemon tea cakes, and cinnamon bread and butter would do nicely. The orange of the carrots nestled beside the radishes would be lovely, and that pale citron frosting faintly glistened of moonlight. Preparations, preparations. he chanted silently... how gorgeous to see it all unfold.

The sun warmed the ochre of the den walls. 'Fascinating,' Earl Earl remarked... 'That's it, by George, that's it, Wotsit!'

'What's that?'

'It was fascination...'

'What was, sir?'

'The name of the bloomin' song that's been on my mind all day. Surely you remember how I was always chortling it...when I was sweet on Annabel. I'd practice it to Verra...believe I'll step out and check the tide...'

Afternoon was coming in the window...Verra would spoil a perfect fishing day down by the Thames. He could set his line just in front of the City Barge and have a few rounds as he fished, the river flowing beside the bank. 'It was fascination, I know,' he sang, 'seeing you alone in the moonlight above...just a passing glance...' Some huddled woman, a market basket over her arm, turned to watch the elderly whiskered man, his baritone voice just quavering a bit, his arms outstretched as he neared the corner and disappeared onto the Strand. 'And I might have gone on my way empty-hearted...' Quite so, Earl Earl thought, as the melody still spilled from his lips, I remembered and it is fascination and it is the day for a song. Old Marjorie was dead these last few years..But, there you are. As Nen would have said, 'God rest her soul.' The new chappie at the Barge was a nice sort. He'd knock a few back before his guest arrived, just as he'd done before Wotsit and he cheerio'd Nen for the last time that afternoon. In her flowered apron, she made a fine figure of a woman. A bit broad about the hips, still that was agreeable on a woman..Verra had always been frail. Her wrist, holding that champagne glass, was so fragile it was no wonder she'd dropped it at Hampton Court... and her pink organza, splashed like so many wet ferns had slapped against her in a storm...

'She is a violet!' Earl Earl heard himself say, tossing the violets and ferns at Wotsit. 'When I saw Widow Macnamara on the corner, I couldn't resist. And I thought maybe you could do something with that flippin' vase. His gesture swept to the antique gravy boat vase Wotsit threatened each morning...

'Women appreciate flowers,' Earl Earl announced. At least, I do, he told himself, so I'm sure women would even more...And Verra made such a fuss, always noticing whenever anyone troubled over her. Annabel gave her a brooch once and she chattered about it for weeks. (He put on his maroon silk weskit. He was too old for his Balliol tie.)

The sparkling fish from the window pane cavorted in the beams. He tried to catch the jeweled creatures--they changed to flowers. The chinks of light dissolved, reformed, glittered and flew at him. He blinked his eyes to clear them away. The sea sound--tantalizing--still it wasn't here in London. He mustn't imagine. Oh well, he would admit it would be nice to visit Devon again, call in to see how Nen was getting on. He supposed it was lonely for her. Poor soul. Still, she had such merry eyes--a love--lovely smile. Lady Deverra Bennett was coming to tea...The

chestnut candles waved in time--vanilla mingling with the lime leaves. 'Fishers of men,' what the devil did that mean?...It was fascination, he told the dancing spots of light. Lemon was all he tasted today. Even the gin at the pub smacked of lemon. The ripples of the Thames lapped lemon and lime to the bank on the strand...stroke upon stroke...

He listened to Wotsit's kitchen sounds...the kettle sucked in just before it whistled...Ah, ha--there was the bell...Lady Deverra Bennett had come...and he hadn't finished his sweet. He tried to project that calm demeanor onto his face. His glance about the room told him that placid aura had suddenly shattered into tiny pieces...

'Good afternoon...'

'How do you do...?'

A cane tap in the hallway...then, CRASH, followed by a tinkle... The china flowers, the cupids were but morsels of tinted porcelain chips and wedges. Violets lay in puddles about her feet, the ferns were strewn hither and yon. Lady Deverra Bennett had come to tea.

DAY WORKERS

Vigilant, footsore
Dark sentinels wait at dusk
 on street corners
Their quiet faces guard paper sacks,
 satchels, faded carpet bags,
spoils from the battle-hall.
Their fingers bend,
holding the peace with troubled hands.

Georgia Hill

NEON GOD, HOW MANY TIMES HAVE I LOOKED THROUGH YOUR WINDOW?

Neon God, how many times have I looked through your window?
In the room, my mother lies in bed.
She watches me--hardly ever speaking.
Tonight she asks, "Is it dark outside?"

I want to explain the many beautiful things the darkness shows
I want her to feel as intensely for them as I do.
I feel she wants to go to sleep.

So I answer "No."

And I wonder
How could I tell her that it's always dark there?

Joan Cottongim

WORDS

Words are for finding out
A person's last name
His college major
Whether or not he likes boss
His favorite football team
Whether he prefers
Brut or Mennen after shave
Martinis or Vodka Collins.

But words are also for finding out
What he values in life
What he believes about God
How he votes and why
Whether or not he hates blacks
If he loves you
If he's happy with his life
If he wants something -- or someone

Betsy Hill

OLD AND VAINGLORIOUS

Old and vainglorious-
what once braved fire and ice with
liquid-red steely sheen, what once
so smugly spat such chunk of rock
and earth from sharp and oiled
jaws;
so cruel a mistress of white-skinned denim
crouched on your limbs - soothing, stroking,
curbing your awful heat...

Rockeater, firebreather, mankeeper...

i find you now dull and heavy-fatted
with green dumb weed growing from
broken places on your body;
coat scarred, jaw splintered, the last
vestige of grace mocked by crooked
height and useless weight.

I can not walk here without sensing the dull pull of life
grow quick and sharp in the rusty passage of time.

Mike Buzek

R E M I N I S C E

When we through liquid moments
loved still more
clung yet tighter
spoke softly
Faced the ebbing future
brighter

We learned each in the other
a kind of

dim-lit

peace

Faded with the
washing draining
ocean force
of

age-old

repetitions

Alliterations out of course
Reminiscence.

Debra M. Brown

AN OLD BOOK

Falling rain cleansing
A green blade that needs it not;
Dirt in the corner

Foolish, pretty girl
Wasting spring's pleasure-filled days
And a young man weeps

Contentness always,
Never to work for a joy. . .
A beef steer grazing

Low summer rumble
Of the brooding, coming storm. . .
An army 'wakens

Leaves cling to the tree,
Long after their season's past. . .
A dying old man

Hunched up on the hill
Winter sky of palest gray. . .
A cat on a wall

Winter's whip and slash
Of cutting, swirling daggers. . .
A cheery battle

Sad at the New Year
With new chances to be found. . .
An old book is lost

David A. Siereveld

PATRONS

Jay Roberts	Mr. & Mrs. Phillip Harris
Doris Sutton	Dr. & Mrs. Lundy Adams
Leroy Conrad	Turley B. Tudor
Ordelle Hill	Kentucky Arts Commission (Prize Award of \$50)
Gordon Browning	
Martha Grise	
Charles A. Sweet, Jr.	
William Sutton	
Janet Oldham	
Walter Nelson	
Robert Burkhart	
Francis Davy	
Kay Hopkins	
Barbara Sowders	
Harry Brown	
Hazel Chrisman	
Gerald S. May	
Kelly Thurman	
John Long	

We regret any omissions necessitated by our press deadline.



